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Teachers' Attitudes towards Teaching English Pronunciation at Lower Secondary Schools in the Czech Republic

Přístup učitelů anglického jazyka k výuce výslovnosti na 2. stupni ZŠ v České republice

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V Olomouci dne …..……………..   Podpis …………………………

Content

List of Abbreviations

B2	First Level	**JCU**	Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	**L1**	First Language
C1	Advanced Level	**L2**	Second Language
C2	Proficiency Level	**MUNI**	Masarykova univerzita
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference	**MUP**	Metropolitní univerzita Praha
ČVUT	České vysoké učení technické v Praze	**OSU**	Ostravská univerzita
EAL	English as an Additional Language	**RP**	Received Pronunciation
EFL	English as a Foreign Language	**TUL**	Technická univerzita v Liberci
EIL	English as an International Language	**UHK**	Univerzita Hradec Králové
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca	**UJEP**	Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem
EP	English Pronunciation	**UK**	Univerzita Karlova
ESL	English as a Second Language	**UPOL**	Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci
GA	General American	**ZCU**	Západočeská univerzita v Plzni
IJP	Internetová jazyková příručka		
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet		

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Abstract

The aim of this master thesis is to evaluate the approaches of Czech teachers towards teaching English pronunciation at lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic. The ability to communicate is the main goal of teaching English language at lower secondary schools, and correct pronunciation is an inherent part of the process. The theoretical part briefly compares chosen segmental and suprasegmental aspects of both English and Czech language in order to emphasize the differences, and thus the need of teaching correct pronunciation to the learners. The research part then evaluates the way the teachers include teaching pronunciation in their lessons.

Introduction

The subject matter of this master thesis is to evaluate the approaches of Czech teachers to teaching English pronunciation at lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic.

The first chapters of the theoretical part deal with the comparison of Czech and English phonemic system with emphasis on differences in these two languages since these differences are the main cause of learning and thus teaching the English pronunciation incorrectly. The next chapter focuses on the reasons why teaching pronunciation is important for learners to develop linguistic competence and mainly performance. We are also interested in what might be causing difficulties for non-native speakers when learning English. Last but not least, we look at teachers' approaches to teaching English pronunciation. Obtaining this information it essential since we want to discover how learners are presented with this topic, and how they are taught to pronounce words and sentences correctly.

For the research part a questionnaire for teachers of English is created. Great part of the questionnaire is focused on their personal attitude towards both learning and teaching pronunciation. It is crucial to obtain these information since this is the base for understanding the way they teach or do not teach English pronunciation at lower secondary schools.

At the end we evaluate our research, provide a conclusion how English teachers deal with teaching pronunciation at lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic, and uncover possible reasons why teachers might be failing in passing these knowledge and skills to their learners. Finally, suggestions to improve teaching English pronunciation, will be made.

Theoretical part

1   Teaching English language and pronunciation

In todays' modern world English has become a part of our everyday lives, thus it is important to be able to understand it and to communicate effectively. Especially younger generation in non-English speaking countries is exposed to it more than they have ever been. For a long time, teachers have been focused mostly on teaching grammar and vocabulary (Harmer, 2001, p. 183), however, knowing grammar perfectly does not guarantee that a person is capable of maintaining conversation in English. That is the reason why learners should be provided with opportunities of everyday situations in order to practise their speaking. And, if most of the activities in today's modern language classes ought to involve speaking, thus pronunciation (English Language Services, 1968, p. 49). The goal is not to achieve native-like pronunciation, however, most learners want their pronunciation to be understood and, according to Hewings (2006), they are prepared to work hard for it.

As Hewings continues, teaching correct pronunciation is often 'treated as a low priority area of study' (2006). Actually, in the second half of the 21st century the term *Cinderella* arose. Due to the revolution in language-teaching approaches (for example Total Physical Response or Natural Approach), pronunciation finally achieved its place in teaching. (Lewis, 2018). As Metruk (2020) states, the level of pronunciation has a great impact on learners' communication skills, therefore it should play an important role in teaching English language. Metruk (2020) also cites that integrating pronunciation to teaching vocabulary and grammar is appropriate.

1.1   Why to teach English language?

English language originated in England during 5th century and then gradually became widespread. It is the dominant language of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and the official language of India, Singapore and many other countries (Potter and Crystal, 2020).

English is dominant due to its history, mainly colonial history, emergence of the United States as a world economic power and travel and tourism is carried on in English in most countries (including travel signs, airline announcements, hotel and restaurant employees, language of air traffic control and sea travel communication). Information exchange such as conferences, academic discourses takes place in English, it is also a dominating language of popular culture (Harmer, 2001, p. 3).

From an accustomed learner's point of view, people use English on everyday basis. With the boom of modern technology and increasing international business and industry, it is nearly impossible not to encounter English. If we want to succeed in today's modern world, we need to be able to speak English. And it can be just the modern technology that the teachers should implement to their lessons when teaching pronunciation.

Metruk (2020, p. 34) highlights the exploit of modern technology: "Besides videos, songs, the Internet, or television, dictionaries, especially the electronic or online ones, represent an outstanding example of how technology can be possibly exploited for the purposes of learning pronunciation.

1.2 English as a foreign or second language?

Jenkins (2003, p. 4) explains there are two groups of second language (L2) speakers. People for whom English has no official function within their countries are described as speakers of English as a foreign language (EFL). The other group described as people for whom English serves country-internal functions is termed speakers of English as a second language (ESL). For ESL, more contemporary term has been used and that is additional language (EAL).

That being stated, for Czech people English language has international function, thus we use English as a foreign language. In the Czech Republic, English is a compulsory subject at primary, lower secondary and high school usually taught by a non-native speaker of English. In the past few decades, the ability to communicate in English has become a condition for many employers when offering a job position since their business interests are often international.

The Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE) states one of the expected outcomes – "pupil will read aloud texts of appropriate length, fluently and respecting the rules of pronunciation (NUV, 2017). In practice, however, the objectives at schools are to teach learners mainly English grammar, vocabulary and spelling. Understanding these systems is essential for practising their skills. At school, teachers simulate different types of real-word situations to practise learner's speaking. It allows learners to start a conversation not only with native speakers but also with other non-native speakers of English from all over the world.

In this connection, Jenkins (2010) mentions other terms describing function of EFL. There is a great number of speakers using English as a foreign language to communicate with other non-native speakers. They are referred to as speakers of English an International Language (EIL) or as speakers of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). This global status of English caused that speakers of English as a foreign language outnumber the amount of native speakers, and thus it gives English language another place among languages as lingua franca. "A lingua franca can be defined as a language widely adopted for communication between two speakers whose native languages are different form each other's and where one or both speakers are using it as a 'second' language" (Harmer, 2001, p. 1).

1.3 Conclusion

In this chapter the position of English language in the Czech Republic is mentioned. It is a compulsory subject at primary, lower secondary and high schools. Due to history of England and United States of America, the language is spoken all over the world, and has become a great part of our everyday lives. If the main goal of teaching English language is the ability to communicate, the learners have to understand other speakers' utterance and also the learners themselves have to be understood.

2 Introduction to phonemic systems

This chapter briefly outlines Czech and English phonemic systems, which is essential for the next chapters of the theoretical part as the differences between these two systems will be examined in more depth. For our purposes, we will be dealing only with phonetics and phonology of Received Pronunciation (RP henceforth) since it is one of the most commonly described pronunciation models in textbooks and 'seems to be the most widely acceptable' (Cruttenden, 2001, p. 81).

2.1 Pronunciation

Dalton and Seidlhofer (2001) describe pronunciation as the production of significant sound in a particular language and also production of sounds to make communication possible. In other words, we distinguish between segmental and suprasegmental features. "The phonetics of a language concerns the concrete characteristics (articulatory, acoustics, auditory) of the sounds used in languages, whereas phonology concerns how sounds function in a systemic way in a particular language" (Cruttenden, 2001, p. 6). Sounds that are analysed separately, for example the sound of a grapheme 'o' is /əʊ/, are characterized as segmental aspects. However, the pronunciation of the same grapheme in the word "course" is now affected by surrounding sounds, and thus it is pronounced differently – /ɔ:/. Everything beyond an individual sound (syllable, word, phrases, and whole sentences) is characterized as a suprasegmental aspect. "... both phonetics and phonology must also describe the combinatory possibilities of the sounds and the prosody of the language, that is, how features of pitch, loudness, and length work to produce accent, rhythm, and intonation" (Cruttenden, 2001, p. 6). Areas of study such as stress, intonation, rhythm, linking are also parts of suprasegmental phonology.

Dalton's and Seidlhofer's (2001) claim stated above must be taken into consideration. It is essential for us to bear in mind that each language can and does have different classification of sounds and what vowels and consonants are.

2.2 Czech phonemic system

Czech phonemic system is rather simple since generally, it is not always essential to distinguish between spelling and pronunciation, at least the difference is not that major. For example, the Czech word 'srdce' is pronounced as [srce] or 'zpěv' is

pronounced [spjef] (IJP). A native person often does not even realize a minor change in pronouncing certain vowels and consonants according to their surrounding sounds when speaking.

2.2.1 Vowels

Czech language has only five voiced short vowels [a], [e], [i], [o], [u] and five voiced long vowels [á], [é], [í], [ó], [ú] (Šiška, 2002). Each of the listed vowels are pronounced only one way regardless of their surroundings. Graphemes 'y', 'ý', 'ů', and 'ě' can be found in the Czech alphabet but they are not the actual phonemes[1]. Therefore, they are not included in the phonemic chart (Krčmová, 2009).

Considering diphthongs, Skaličková (1982) highlights that Czech language has only one which is originally Czech – /ou/ (koupit, moucha, etc.). The other diphthongs /au/ and /eu/ are considered to occur only in loanwords from foreign languages ("auto", "euro").

However, there is a part of speech in Czech language where diphthong /au/ is not part of a foreign word. This group is referred to as interjections and they express emotions, feelings, and animal sounds in words such as "mňau".

2.2.2 Consonants

In the Czech language there are twenty-seven consonants[2]. Individual voiced phonemes are [m], [n], [ň], [j], [l], [r] and [ř]. Some consonants make voiced/unvoiced pairs ([p] × [b], [t] × [d], [ť] × [ď], [k] × [g], [c] x [dz], [č] x [d͡ž], [f] × [v], [s] × [z], [š] × [ž], [h] × [x]) (Šiška, 2002).

Furthermore, there are also variants of one phoneme /n/ – [ŋ] in "banka", m – [ɱ] in "tramvaj", ch - [ɣ] in "Suchdol", ř - [r̝̊] in "keř", [dz] and [dž] in "léčba"(IJP). These variations are so called allophones. The place of articulation of such phonemes is different according to their surroundings. For example, the /n/ sound is pronounced differently as /k/ or /g/ consonant follows ("ban**k**a", "man**g**o") comparing to pronunciation of /n/ in the word "kniha". The same applies to "Such**d**ol", where

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[1] these graphemes are recognized in the field of orthography, they are not relevant in the Czech phonemic transcription – 'býk' would be transcribed as [bík]; 'důl' as [dúl]; 'pěkný' as [pjekní] (Krčmová, 2009)

[2] in the Czech language, the number of phonemes can vary according to authors' attitudes towards those phonemes which are not common or appears only in foreign words (Krčmová, 2009)

unvoiced consonant /ch/ precedes a voiced one. None of these allophones above have their own grapheme (Krčmová, 2009).

2.3 English phonemic system

On contrary to Czech language, English phonemic system is substantially more complex since we need to distinguish between spelling and pronunciation of words, as the difference between a written form and spoken form of a word might be fundamental. "Spelling is not a reliable guide to know how a word is pronounced" (Widi, 2017). As mentioned in chapter "pronunciation", most English phonemes can be pronounced differently according to their surrounding phonemes. These differences will be characterized within the next subchapters.

2.3.1 Vowels

Twenty voiced vowel phonemes in total can be found in English language. Twelve of them are monophthongs, which are categorized into seven relatively short (/ɪ/, /ʊ/, /e/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɒ/, /ə/) and five long (/iː/, /uː/, /ɜː/, /ɔː/, /ɑː/) phonemes. The rest eight of them are two-segment vowels (/ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /eɪ/, /əʊ/, /aʊ/), so called diphthongs (Skaličková, 1982).

In English a vowel letter or letters can be pronounced variously. It is essential to pay attention to the pronunciation of vowels as it can completely change the meaning of a word (can /cæn/ × can /kən/ or wound /wuːnd/ × wound /waʊnd/).

Length is another prominent feature that has to be taken into consideration. A voiced consonant can prolong the vowel sound, and, on the other hand, an unvoiced consonant is able to shorten it. Melen (2010) accurately describes this problem within one particular phoneme. Two words "mad" and "cat" share the same grapheme "a". Considering pronunciation, these two words do not pronounce alike. The reason is that the voiced phoneme /d/ at the end of the word "mad" prolongs the vowel sound of the letter "a" – [æ]. Contrary to this, duration of the sound [æ] in the word "cat" is shorter as it precedes unvoiced /t/ at the end of the word. That being said, the length of a vowel can differentiate according to vowel's surrounding.

2.3.2 Consonants

There are twenty-four consonant phonemes in English. Individual consonants /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /r/, /l/ are voiced. There are also special voiced consonants /w/ and /j/ as their pronunciation is quite similar to vowels /ʊ/ and /i/, sometimes they are called semi-vowels. However, as Melen (2010) highlights, they do not fully share the syllabic quality of vowels.

Phoneme /ŋ/ has the ability to distinguish the meaning of two words ("sin" – /ˈsɪn / × "sing" – /ˈsɪŋ /). Sound /ŋ/ appears along with sounds /k/ – "nk", /g/ – "ng" and in the middle of words as /ŋg/ – "finger" – /ˈfɪŋgə/ (Skaličková, 1979).

Skaličková (1979) also describes another allophone into more depth. There is a standard clear [l] and a low-pitched variant called the dark [ł] ("let" × "whole"). As example shows, the dark [ł] occur before a vowel or at the end of a word ("sell").

British English, among other accents, is known for being non-rhotic, which means the /r/ sound at the end of a word is not pronounced – "far" /ˈfaː/. Also, /r/ is pronounced only when standing before a vowel – "berry" /ˈberi/ (Dušková et al., 2006). This rule also applies in higher speech units; there pronunciation of "her eyes" and "her heart" is quite unlike.

Considering voicing, some consonants make pairs as they differ only in the place of articulation, depending on use of our vocal cords. These are /p/ × /b/, /t/ × /d/, /k/ × /g/, /f/ × /v/, /θ/ × /ð/, /s/ × /z/, /ʃ/ × /ʒ/, /ʧ/ × /ʤ/. Interestingly, Roach (2012, p. 28) remarks to /b/, /d/ and /g/ sounds that "it is not very accurate to call them 'voiced'; in initial and final position they are scarcely voiced at all, and any voicing they may have seems to have no perceptual importance. Some phoneticians say that p, t, k are produced with more force than b, d, g..."

The only consonant that stands alone is unvoiced and unpaired /h/. Non-native speakers have to pay attention to pronouncing it truly unvoiced otherwise it is considered being rude (Melen, 2010, p. 73).

2.4 Conclusion

These part introduces the term pronunciation, explains its meaning and briefly outlines the phonemic systems of both Czech and English language. For the English language, the RP model is chosen as it is one of the most frequently described pronunciation in textbooks for lower secondary level. When describing individual sounds, it has to be mentioned that pronunciation of the graphemes in these languages does not have to be the same.

3   Defining problematic aspects (with examples)

Having described Czech and English phonemic systems, now we shall continue to define what the most problematic aspects for Czech learners are.

Czech learners often tend to read every grapheme in the word just as it is applied in our language. Languages that have distinct spelling and pronunciation need to be transcribed. Phonetic transcription helps with the individual sounds, however, as Melen (2010) remarks, the best phonetic transcription does not guarantee that we pronounce a word correctly. That should be provided by a teacher. Learners do not necessarily need to know the entire International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and principles when and how to pronounce a phoneme, nevertheless, the possible correct pronunciation should be introduced by their teacher.

Harmer (2001, p. 185) then points out that learners can master English pronunciation without ever using phonemic symbols. He supports the idea of repeating the pronunciation of similar words enough times. However, Harmer also adds that knowing these symbols is useful when using a dictionary, a skill that should be practised with learners in case they do not know a word. We have to take coursebooks into consideration as well, as they contain a list of vocabulary at the end. They often include phonetic transcriptions of words occurring in the units and learners should be able to read them when going back to them. The advantage of modern technology is the possibility to hear a recording of correct pronunciation online, unfortunately, teachers cannot expect all learners to have this opportunity. Teachers are responsible for increasing their learners' awareness of this language area. To put it rather simply, learners have to be aware of what they hear, why it sounds the way it sounds, and then they have to practise it.

In this chapter not only do we identify the non-existing sounds in our language but we also apply suprasegmental phonology to emphasize the differences in pronunciation according to the surroundings of a phoneme (namely assimilation).

As far as suprasegmental phonology is concerned, we also attend to phonological feature of word stress, intonation and rhythm. As it will be discussed below, word stress is one of the main features that differs from our language considerably.

3.1 Comparison of Czech and English phonetics and phonology

3.1.1 Vowels

Both languages have long and short vowels. They are slightly different in the place of articulation. Dušková et al. (2006) use a word "half" /ˈha:f/ as an example of "darker" /a:/ sound. It is pronounced rather in the back of our mouth.

Likewise, the length of English vowel pronunciation is dependent on its surrounding sounds as already have been described in chapter 2.3.1. Czech vowels have constant length when being pronounced and they also have their corresponding graphic symbol (/á/, /é/, etc.).

Czech language does not have an equivalent for English schwa /ə/. Thus it is difficult to compare it to Czech language. Dušková et al. (2006) successfully specify that in Czech language it is possible to encounter this sound when pronouncing single consonants ([pə], [tə]). Schwa is the most frequently used vowel in English speech (Roach, 2012, p. 65). It occurs as a reduced form of a vowel in a weak syllable ("difficult" – /ˈdɪfɪkəlt/, "famous" – /ˈfeɪməs/, "considerably" – /kənˈsɪdərəbli/ (Melen, 2010, p. 20). Strong and weak syllables will be discussed directly.

Phonetic symbol /æ/ is unknown for Czech learners since it is not contained in our phonetic system because it does not even exist. Skaličková (1979, p. 39) tries to compare this sound to Czech /é/, but it is not quite accurate. In standard Czech language phoneme /é/ is more open, always long and can occur at the end of a word ("krásné").

Although /ʊ/ sound can be seen as relatively uncomplicated, the place of articulation is, again, different. Czech /u/ is produced in the front of our mouth whereas /ʊ/ is in the back, similar to described sound /a:/ ("buk" – /ˈbuk/ in Czech and "book" – /ˈbʊk/ in English).

Last but certainly not least, is the vowel sound /ɜ:/ to which we cannot find Czech equivalent as well. Many learners find it difficult to copy. It is pronounced as a hesitation sound "er" which may be of help (Roach, 2012, p. 17).

Considering diphthongs, Czech people tend to pronounce /aɪ/ as /aj/ (in Czech /háj/ × in English /ˈhai/) except it is not the exact same sound. Similarly, English phoneme /ɪ/ in diphthongs /ɔɪ/, /eɪ/ is mistaken for Czech /j/ and hence pronounced as /oj/ and /ej/ ("my" as /ˈmaj/ instead of /ˈmaɪ/ and "boy" as /ˈboj/ instead of /ˈbɔɪ/). This

is the consequence of the Czech linking of a vowel and consonant /j/ (words such as "vojna", "kraje", "dej") which is similar to the English diphthongs containing /ɪ/ sound. (Skaličková, 1979). Such a slight change is not considered unacceptable, however, this can be easily prevented by repetition of similar sounding words which contain the diphthongs above ("high", "five", "toy", "oil", "they", "say") to practise the diphthongs.

Incorrect pronunciation can be seen in diphthongs that contain problematic schwa sound (/ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/, and /əʊ/). According to Skaličková (1982), the sound /əʊ/ is often mispronounced as /ou/ since it has the most similar manner of pronouncing (instead of /ˈsəʊ/ we pronounce /ˈsou/). It is typical for a foreign language learner to find the closest similar sounds to their mother tongue when they are not certain of the pronunciation.

Poslušná (2009, p. 101) also introduces the confusion of non-native speakers in pronouncing words that contain the set of graphemes "o" within a particular syllable. Such words might have more than just one pronunciation. "The sound of the graphemes 'oo' can be pronounced as /ʊ/ (book /ˈbʊk/), /ʌ/ (flood /ˈflʌd/), /uː/ (food /ˈfuːd/) or /ɔː/ (door /ˈdɔː/)." In addition, there is a word containing graphemes "oo" which is pronounced with a diphthong /əʊ/ ("brooch" /brəʊtʃ/). Words such as "zoology" (/zəʊˈɒlədʒi/) do not come under this category as the "oo" sound is divided into two different syllables.

As yet, the attention was drawn to individual vowels and their comparison only. A great part of English phonology is given to the feature of strong and weak vowel forms; a feature which does not exist in our language. In English, there are reduced vowels /ə/, /i/ and /u/ which appears only in weak syllables. As Cruttenden (2001, p. 252) explains, in normal circumstances, vowels in lexical words show reduction in length, obscuration and sometimes even vowel (or consonant) elision when they occur in weak (unstressed) syllables. There are also functional or grammatical words which appears generally in their weak form rather than strong form. Such occurrence happens mostly in connected speech (can /kən/; from /frəm/, /frm/; does /dəz/, /z/; had /həd/, /əd/, /d/). Conversely, the term strong form is used to describe the accented form of a vowel, mainly when being said in isolation or emphasis – can /kæn/, have /hæv/, from /frɒm/ (Cruttenden 2001, p. 252).

3.1.2 Consonants

Authors such as Skaličková (1979), Melen (2010) or Poslušná (2009) describe phonemes /ð/,/θ/ and /w/ as the most problematic consonant sounds as they do not exist in Czech language.

The first two phonemes make a pair of voiced and unvoiced consonant. Again, the transfer from Czech language is apparent as we tend to pronounce these phonemes as the most similar sound in our language. Instead of voiced consonant /ð/ in words such as "father" or "they" we try to match a suitable sound in our language which can be /d/. Dušková et al. (2006) also add consonant /z/ as another example. Those words above therefore sound like /ˈfaːdə/ or /ˈzeɪ/. The mispronunciation in words such as "think" or "month" is the /f/ sound (Skaličková, 1979).[3]

Another troublesome consonant, which is usually mispronounced by Czech people, is /w/ sound. In standard Czech language, the grapheme /w/ appears only in words of foreign origin ("Wi-fi") and its pronunciation is identical to the Czech consonant /v/. The phoneme /w/ is no longer part of the standard Czech phonemic system and it occurs only in north-eastern Bohemian dialects (Kosek, 2014, p. 83; Palková, 1994). Despite this fact, when loaning a word, it is appropriate to somehow maintain the original pronunciation too (IJP). This is the reason the Czech people pronounce the word 'Windows' as [vindo**u**s] and not as [uindous] or [vindovs], which might sound affected (IJP).

In English, actually, the place of articulation is closer to English /ʊ/. This comparison is described by more experts – Kelly (2007, p. 53), Melen (2010, p. 35) or Roach (2012, p. 50). While confusion of /ð/ or /θ/ cannot change the meaning, pronouncing /w/ phoneme as /v/ certainly can. Dušková et al. (2006) give examples such as "vine" /ˈvaɪn/ × "wine" /ˈwaɪn/. It is essential to remember that these phonemes are pronounced differently no matter how much they look alike in our language ("vest" – /ˈvest/ × "west" – /ˈwest/).

Roach correctly says that "r" consonant is important in that considerable differences in its articulation and its distribution are found in different accents of English". Nonetheless, he recommends only one pronunciation to a non-native learner. The motion of the tip of the tongue is approximately the same as it is when pronouncing

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[3] Actually, some English native dialect are characteristic by pronouncing specific English phonemes differently, for example in Cockney accent the pronunciation of the phoneme /ð/ is /v/

/t/ or /d/ except that the tongue is curled back and the tip of it is not actually in contact with the roof of the mouth. The lips are slightly rounded, although, it should not be exaggerated, otherwise the sound would be similar to /w/ which is the sound children produce instead of /r/ until they master it (2012, p. 49-50). On the contrary, Czech /r/ is produced rather in the front of the mouth and in addition to that the tongue vibrates.

In normal circumstances, English phonemes /p/, /t/, and /k/ are pronounced with aspiration when standing before a vowel sound ("posh" – [ˈpʰɒʃ], "time" – [tʰaɪm], "cat" - [kʰæt]). Melen (2010, p. 30) adds, when combined with the phoneme /s/ ([sp], [st], [sk]) there is no aspiration ("spill" – [ˈspɪl], "stamp" – [ˈstæmp], "school" – [ˈskuːl]).

Melen (2010, p. 36) states that transferring the Czech phoneme /ch/ into English is a common mistake. English alphabet does not include the letter and, except for a Scottish dialect, nor the sound. When encountering such a word consisting of /c/ and /h/ phonemes, the whole sound is mostly pronounces as /k/ – "architecture" (/ˈɑːkɪtɜːkʧə/), /tʃ/ – "child" (/ˈʧaɪld/) or /kw/ – "choir" (/ˈkwaɪə/).

The term assimilation of voice is known in both languages. In previous chapters we proved that the sound [ŋ] exists in both languages. Contrary to English, in Czech it does not have distinguishing quality. In Czech language, the [ŋ] sound cannot change the meaning of a word even though its production differs from the production of the [n] sound.

What is more, in Czech language the sound /ŋ/ does not appear in the ending position (Melen, 2010). Hence, we often make mistakes when pronouncing English -ing as /ink/ ("thing" – Czech pronunciation /ˈθɪŋ**k** / instead of correct pronunciation /ˈθɪ**ŋ**/). Simultaneously, this is another example of a minimal pair in English (bold letters) and also the transfer of a feature from our mother tongue.

The subject of assimilation goes far beyond the –ing forms. Unlike English, in Czech language we do not pronounce voiced consonants at the end of words. In spoken Czech language, words such as minimal pairs /led/ × /let/ can be distinguished only when context is provided. It is not considered a mistake, whereas in English we have to practise the voiced endings to accustom to the process of pronouncing them correctly.

Inflectional morphemes that change grammatical category are sometimes formed by suffix ending on voiced consonant. Therefore we have to make a decision whether we pronounce, for example, past suffix –ed as [ɪd], [d] or [t], depending on the ending

sound of the original word. For instance past simple of the word "work" /ˈwɜːk/, where /k/ is unvoiced consonant, is followed by unvoiced suffix /ed/ (pronounced as [t] - /ˈwɜːk**t**/). A verb which ends on a voiced sound is pronounced [d] ("die" - /ˈda**ɪ**/, past form "died" - /ˈda**ɪd**/). Past simple suffix of verbs ending on /d/ or /t/ sound is pronounced as [ɪd] ("support" - /ˈsəˈpɔː**t**/, past form "supported" - /səˈpɔː**tɪd**/). The same rules apply for grammatical categories such as third person singular, plural nouns, and possessives.

The learners also have to be aware of the wrong transfer types of assimilation from Czech to English. Words such as 'blackbird', 'since the', etc. are often mispronounced as /ˈblæ**g**bɜːd/ and / sɪn**z** ðə / (Skaličková, 1982).[4]

3.1.3 Word stress

So far we focused only on the small units of the language; sounds. When learners know the way of pronouncing the words they learn, it is still not enough to pronounce a word correctly without putting word stress correctly.

"Stress is the term we use to describe the point in a word or phrase where pitch changes, vowels lengthen, and volume increases" (Harmer, 2001, p. 32). In Czech, the stress is put on the first syllable of a word (/ˈkniha/, /ˈpjekní/). In some cases there is a secondary stress, usually when there is a compound noun ('barvoˌslepý) but it is not that significant as it is in English. Contrary to that, English is comparatively more complex as words may have more than one stress. Moreover, putting stress to another syllable within one word can change the meaning of a word (object /ˈɒbdʒɪkt/ as a noun and object /əbˈdʒɛkt/ as a verb). The meaning of the first example is a thing which can be seen and touched, and the latter word meaning is to complain, to be against something. Word stress can also differentiate parts of speech, for example the word 'insult' as a noun /ˈɪnsʌlt/ or verb /ɪnˈsʌlt/.

In English we distinguish between primary and secondary accent. Roach (2012, p. 75) describes primary stress (ˈ) by looking at the two-syllable word "around" /əˈraʊnd/. The first syllable is weak as it contains reduced vowel sound /ə/, and thus the primary accent must be on the second syllable. Here, the pitch of the voice does not remain the same, but falls from a higher to a lower pitch. Secondary stress (ˌ) is weaker than primary stress but it is stronger than the rest of the unstressed syllables at the same

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[4] in the Czech language, the regressive assimilation is most frequent – vz**t**ek [**vst**ek] (IJP)

time. A word has secondary accent if there is more than one syllable before or after the syllable carrying the primary accent. The first syllable is usually the one to carry it. We set the word 'photographic' /ˌfəʊtəˈgræfɪk/ as an example of secondary stress. Now we have two syllables before the primary stress where the first syllable has secondary stress. As Gimson (2001, p. 228) warns, this should 'be taken only as indicating tendencies rather than rules that are without exceptions.'

According to Harmer (2001), there is no problem to put stress in one-syllable word as every word which carries a meaning must have a syllable that is stressed. Thus words such as "house", "knife", "life", "star", etc. has their stress on the first syllable. Unlike these words, grammatical words are unstressed unless they are at the beginning or at the end of a sentence or in case of emphasis. This leads to learners putting stress on all the words in the sentence equally (Millin, 2011)

Each time the teachers plan to introduce a new vocabulary item, they should consider not only collocation and spelling, but also its pronunciation (Kelly, 2007, p. 75). For teaching practice it is rather pragmatic to teach correct word stress within teaching an individual word in order to avoid explanation of, sometimes, complicated stress placement theory.

3.1.4 Intonation and rhythm

'Intonation describes how the voice rises and falls in speech. The three main patterns of intonation in English are: falling intonation, rising intonation and fall-rise intonation' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Reszkiewicz (2005, p. 101) mentions that the correctness and clarity of utterance is the result of 'sentence stress and rhythm, stressed and unstressed syllables, word-linking, and intonation.

Considering Czech intonation, its functions are as follows: distinction between the end and a pause of the utterance; types of questions (yes-no question, wh- questions, etc.); and discrimination between neutral and affective content of a sentence (Petr, 1986). Similar categories are also listed by Cruttenden (2001); in the Czech language, the intonation mostly depends on the type of utterance; types of questions, sentence types, indication end of a sentence, showing emotions, etc.

Unlike English language, the Czech sentences usually start with a stressed syllable, which means the highest pitch of the voice is right on the first syllable of the very first word in the sentence. In English, on the other hand, the sentence usually starts

with a lower pitch of voice and it raises with the first stressed syllable, which does not have to necessarily appear at the beginning of the sentence (Skaličková, 1982, p. 176).

The differences in word order of these two language also affect the intonation. What can be expressed by the flexible word order in the Czech language, English has to express by intonation (Skaličková, 1982, p. 178):

Compare:

*Give me the book! × *The book give me! (Give me the 'book!)*

Dej mi tu knihu! × Tu knihu mi dej!

In both languages, the intonation of the question tags is also important. Skaličková (1982) gives the examples of different intonation of the question tags and their Czech equivalents:

<u>Grammatically negative question tag</u>

- The falling intonation suggests that the speakers want a confirmation of their utterance

  'You ↗know ↘him, ↗don't ↘you.' × 'Znáš ↘ho, ↗že ↘ano.'

- The raising intonation indicates the speakers' uncertainty of their utterance and asking for confirmation of it

  'You ↗know ↘him, ↘don't ↗you?' × 'Znáš ↘ho, ↗ne?'

<u>Grammatically positive question tag</u>

- When using falling intonation, the speaker only comments on a clearly known fact

  'You ↗know ↘him, ↗do ↘you.' × 'Znáš ho ↘přece.'

- When using raising intonation, the question tag actually does not have any grammatical function but is rather a simple question

  'You ↘know ↗him, ↘do ↗you?' × 'Znáš ↘ho. ↗Ano?' [5]

(Skaličková, 1982, p. 178-179)

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[5] Skaličková (1982) adds that the informal word 'jo' would be more suitable than 'ano' as this question tag is typical for the colloquial speech

It can be said that the English native speakers use the intonation as their tool to be more heard and to sound interesting. According to Institution of Phonetics at Charles University (2015), the 'intonation of ordinary spontaneous Czech is quite flat' and thus the utterance might sound rather disinterested.

Moreover, as Cruttenden (2001, p. 255) describes, "It should be noted that, while the variation in intonation between languages (and between dialects of English) is not as great as that involved in segments, it is nonetheless sufficient to cause a strong foreign accent and in some cases lead to misunderstanding." As far as communication is concerned, Metruk (2020) points out that opinions are relatively divided; there are many authorities claiming suprasegmental aspects of speech are more important than segmental features, and there are also experts stating segmental features are of greater importance. Both poles have relevant arguments supporting their claims. As Metruk (2020) summarizes some of the examples of these experts, segmental aspects are essential for intelligibility, and suprasegmental aspects are significant for setting a tone of the speech. Metruk also adds another perspective; "As far as speaking as a skill is concerned, two major components can be recognized: fluency and accuracy. Helping EFL learners attain accurate pronunciation, which means that their production of phonemes, stress, rhythm, or intonation begins to match an ideal patter, is just one portion. Being fluent during the production of both segmental and suprasegmental categories is equally important" (2020).

3.2 Conclusion

In this chapter, the individual differences between English and Czech language are summarized. However, describing all the segmental and suprasegmental differences is not the objective of this part, it rather highlights the most problematic aspects, in which the learners (and teachers as well) tend to make the most mistakes. Vowels, consonants, stress, rhythm and intonation are taken into account.

4   The importance of correct pronunciation at lower secondary schools

"Most of the teacher do not give correct pronunciation when they are teaching. Certainly, it will cause learners to imitate the words spoken by the teacher with the wrong pronunciation as well. As the result of this problem, learners will experience the wrong pronunciation continuously in some words that are often spoken by the teacher" (Widi, 2017).

As Gilakjani (2012) mentions, a non-native speaker is more pleasant to listen to when having good pronunciation rather than being grammatically correct and using wide range of vocabulary. Widi makes an excellent comment too: "Correct pronunciation can also give a plus value to those who master it. What do you think which makes people get amazed of your English language when their hear you speaking? Your grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary? The answer is certainly pronunciation, because it is the main aspect in speaking" (2017). Great knowledge of English pronunciation improves speaking competence as learners get more comfortable in oral communication. It also enhances language comprehension when learners know the way English language is pronounced, otherwise it can cause difficulties for a Czech learner to hear what a native or non-native speaker is saying.

When learning any second language, one of the most common errors is transferring the knowledge from learners' mother tongue. Considering pronunciation, Munro (2008, p. 193) says that "The occurrence of foreign accents provides some of the clearest evidence that knowledge of a first language (L1) influences the acquisition of a second (L2)". Metruk (2020) also writes that "It should be emphasized that a number of L1 features, whether segmental or suprasegmental, perform a powerful role in the L2 pronunciation of foreign language learners and these features can often negatively influence the target language pronunciation." According to Littlewood (1984), the majority of errors in second language acquisition is overgeneralisation. These errors, however, occur in first language acquisition as well. "We construct rules which predict how the different items will behave" (Littlewood, 1984). That is to say, a set rule cannot be applied in every instance and we need to familiarize with exceptions.

The same applies to learners' pronunciation ability. This is also supported by Yani (2012, p. 187) – "In many cases, however, EFL learners may also produce

incorrect pronunciation because of their wrong generalization." Learners who are non-native speakers tend to use rules of their mother tongue in learning another language. That is one of the reasons why there are many different varieties of English pronunciation among non-native speakers in the world. Since the main goal of learning English is to be able to communicate in that language, learners should encounter as many different pronunciations as possible in order not to be bewildered when hearing a person talking with non-standard English.

Unfortunately, as Melen (2010) says, not only is not there enough attention to pronunciation exercises in coursebooks, but these textbooks introduce pronunciation in the most general way since they are written for learners from all over the world. Such exercises expect teachers to have precise knowledge of English phonetics and phonology. They can hardly embrace the problematic aspects of Czech people as far as learning English pronunciation is concerned. The person responsible for learning from comparison of the two languages should be the teacher. "The teacher, however, either through formal training or experience, or both, should be equipped to anticipate problems, and be able to prepare or select drill materials that are most appropriate to the specific situation" (Collier-Macmillan, 1968, p. 47).

4.1   What English pronunciation to teach

Due to British history, English is a language spoken in many countries and there are many varieties and accents based on region, locality or socio-cultural background. However, it is not possible for a person to learn and speak all of them. But which English pronunciation should be taught at schools? In O'Connor's (1995) opinion, this question cannot be answered for all foreign learners of English as it highly depends on where you live. For countries where English is not taught for general communication purposes, some model of English has to be taken as a form of native English pronunciation.

One of the accents recommended for non-native learners of English is called Received Pronunciation (RP or more preferably BBC English) as it is frequently used for writing textbooks. "Faced with the great diversity of English accents, the foreign learner might wish that there existed a neutral, all-purpose, international pronunciation of English. It is claimed by some that, as a result of the great improvement in

communications, the present divergences in English as it is spoken throughout the world will gradually be eliminated and there will emerge a universally intelligible pronunciation of English which all can use" (Cruttenden, 2001, p. 297).

RP is a model which is connected with rather social standing than geography as there are different varieties of English accents within British English (Kelly, 2007, p. 14). Interestingly, the total number of British people speaking RP is currently only about 3 %. This model of pronunciation is connected with RP being a sign of prestige or language of the upper-class in the 19th century. It was taught at public schools and then become language of authority and power. In 20th century it became a norm for BBC broadcasters (Melen, 2010, p. 9).

RP is the accent which is taught at schools and universities in the Czech Republic, too. Thus the previous chapters deal mainly with features that are common mostly for British English. One can suggest there are simpler and more widely used accents of English (for instance General American; GA), however, this is not the purpose of this thesis.

There is a distinction between learning English pronunciation in order to correctly pronounce and link words together, and encountering other varieties of spoken English. Despite learning mostly RP (or GA), it is essential for learners to encounter as many different world pronunciations as possible in order to familiarise with these accents. Learners should listen to both native and non-native speakers as their pronunciation is influenced by their mother tongue as well. After all, even countries that have English as the official language have many varieties of accents. It is highly probable that the Czech learners encounter a non-native speaker rather than a native speaker (for example during school international projects among schools from all over the world; of course, English is the means of communication here). This idea is supported by Scrivener (cited in "Beyond Listen and Repeat", 2020, p. 21): "... the majority of EFL learners study English so as to be able to communicate with other non-native speakers, and many will rarely, if ever, have a conversation with an English RP-speaking native speaker."

4.2 Learners' performance and competence (why teaching pronunciation)

Many authors mention the term "intelligibility" when discussing what model should be used for learning English language. It means that we do not necessarily have to speak native-like RP, GA or other specific accent; more importantly, we have to sound intelligible when speaking. "Indeed, we may come to doubt the relative importance of vowels as a help to intelligibility, since we can replace our twenty English vowels by the single vowel [ə] in any utterance and still, if the rhythmic pattern is kept, retain a high degree of intelligibility. An utterance, therefore, will provide a large complex of cues for the listener to interpret, but a great deal of this information will be redundant as far as the listeners need are concerned" (Cruttenden, 2001, p. 5). An excellent example is then presented by Hewings; here, a highly regarded research student having considerable difficulties in pronunciation during seminars and conferences is described (Hewings, 2004). What is more, Hewings also adds that more confusing for learners can be the possibility of what they say might be understood to mean something they did not intend (Hewings, 2004, p. 11).

Gilakjani (2016) adds that many learners think they are intelligible because they can speak to their teacher and their classmates but it is far from true. As Szpyra-Kozłowska (cited in Beyond "Listen and Repeat", 2020) indicates, English teachers are often reluctant to teach pronunciation due to their own poor quality of pronunciation. It raises the question of who determines what is and what is not "intelligible" then. According to Yates and Zielinski (2009), the answer to the question is not equivocal. It depends on the other participant of the conversation whether they find the utterance intelligible. That includes their own values, abilities, experiences and prejudices.

"Pronunciation teaching not only makes students aware of different sounds and sound features (and what these mean), but can also improve their speaking immeasurably" (Harmer, 2001, p. 183). Kelly (2007, p. 11) explains that it could be discouraging for a learner with advanced knowledge of grammar and vocabulary not being able to understand or be understood by a native speaker. He gives an example of a situation in restaurant – it can be confusing for a waitress if a guest orders "soap" instead of "soup".

Considering suprasegmental aspect of the language, there are wide range of techniques to teach or learn intonation. Nevertheless, the variability of intonation has to

be taken into consideration as it is a complex topic. For mastering English intonation perfectly, not only must learners follow the rules of correct intonation, sentence stress, and rhythm, but they also need to listen to it repeatedly in order to actually hear it. Imitation is one of the excellent techniques of copying an intonation of a native person. This technique applies especially to young learners as it is more natural for them to listen and repeat the intonation rather than studying intonation techniques.

Until now we have discussed only learners' performance, however, we have to attend to learners' competence as well. Harmer (2001, p. 183) writes that correct pronunciation benefits not only to their speaking but also to their listening comprehension. To support that idea, schools have been employing native speakers of English as an opportunity for learners not only to practise conversation with a native speaker in person but also hear them talking in their lessons.

The problem is, when learners do not know the possible pronunciation of a word, they can easily get lost during listening activity. All aspects compared in chapter 3 can influence the learners' listening competence as they expect to hear something different. That applies to stress as well since learners can expect the beginning of a word just when they hear a higher pitch of voice. Unfortunately, this might be confusing as it is not always the case. The stressed syllable in English language does not have to occur at the beginning of a word, where the learners expect it to hear. Skaličková (1982, p. 171) gives an example of [ɪmˈpɪə.ri.əl rɪˈspɒns], where the Czech learners would expect [ˈpɪə.ri.əl rɪ] and [spɒns] as separate words, which, of course, does not make any sense. Accordingly, the learners do not understand what is being said and the comprehension cannot be successful. Similarly, in English language, a two words expression can carry only one stress whereas in Czech, each word of the expression have its own stress – ˈChristmas tree × ˈvánoční ˈstromek (Skaličková, 1982).

4.3   Problems in pronunciation teaching

Kelly (2007) claims that teachers of pronunciation need to have the theoretical knowledge of pronunciation, practical classroom skills and good ideas for activities that would improve learners' pronunciation. Many teachers even admit their knowledge of phonetics and phonology is not sufficient enough. On the other hand, there are teachers who know this field very well but they are focused on grammar and vocabulary too

much (2007, p. 13). It leads to teaching pronunciation only occasionally when a problematic word occurs during the lesson. "Overlooking this language system may result in poor pronunciation quality of EFL learners. Therefore, foreign language teachers need to devote particular attention to pronunciation instructions" (Metruk, 2020, p. 39). Teachers whose lack of knowledge in phonetics and phonology is greater might have problems with explaining its aspects sufficiently, and thus they do not teach pronunciation systematically. Cruttenden (2001) points out the problem; the attention is drawn to teaching grammar and vocabulary since grammatical structures can be organized, and lexical items can be taught according to different topics and situations. "Pronunciation, on the other hand, does not permit such progressive treatment, since all phonetic/phonological features are potentially present from the very first lesson, unless vocabulary items are artificially introduced. Metruk (2020) adds that "... pronunciation is assigned lower priority in comparison to other components of language, e.g. grammar or vocabulary, and is sometimes relegated to the 'end-of-the-day' aktivity or a five-minute filler to bring students some relief from the 'real' work of learning a foreign language." Nevertheless, the teacher must deal systematically with the teaching of pronunciation, even though he may be forced to postpone the correction of some mistakes ..." (Cruttenden, 2001, p. 296).

If the teachers are not proficient in English pronunciation, there is a very wide range of tools for practicing it on the Internet. Metruk (2020, p. 35) also cites: "Pokrivčáková (2014) suggests that the use of pronunciation-training computer programs and digital materials could prove helpful and useful, and may provide effective remedy to problems with teaching pronunciation (teacher unpreparedness, unwillingness, or neglect of pronunciation instruction)." The websites are full of explanations, illustrations and exercises, educational YouTube channels, which can be used during the lesson. Additionally, the Internet is a great source of inspiration for teachers to create their own materials and for exploring new methods of teaching English pronunciation.

We have mostly the RP model as the way of teaching pronunciation. In fact, the teaching is affected by the teachers' accent which they use during their lessons. It is vital that the more knowledge of different accents teachers have the more authentic the teaching process is (Kelly, 2007, p. 15). Yani (2012) also indicates that the teacher alone can be another source of learners' incorrect pronunciation. The teachers whose

skills of English pronunciation are on a low level might, unintentionally, teach the incorrect pronunciation to their learners (2012, p. 187). Cruttenden (2001, p. 297) then correctly highlights that if the teacher "is dealing with young pupils, his students will imitate a bad pronunciation as exactly as they will a good one; and, if he is using illustrative recorded material, his own pronunciation must not diverge markedly from the pronunciation used in it."

Kelly (2007) also adds that teachers should let their learners choose what accent they wish to speak as long as it is "widely comprehensible". For a teacher, it requires a great knowledge of other varieties of English. They should not discourage learners who choose different model of their pronunciation simply just because they do not have the relevant information (2007, p. 15). There is a high probability that learners encounter different English accent outside the classroom and if they choose to speak it, teachers should only encourage them. "Whatever abilities the learner may acquire in the later stages of learning English, he will be well advised at the beginning to model his productive performance on one model of spoken English and to restrict himself to a 'careful, colloquial' style" (Cruttenden, 2001, p. 297). After all, the goal of teaching pronunciation is to help learners become more comfortable in their speaking and make their communication intelligible. At schools, the goal surely is not achieving the native-like accent.

If teaching vocabulary is taking a great part of the lessons, it should be natural to teach correct pronunciation of new vocabulary items simultaneously. Kelly (2007) supports this idea by adding that learners need to be provided with the full picture in order to communicate effectively and successfully. The full picture does not only include the explanation in English, possible collocations and translation, but also the way a word is pronounced. Hewings (cited in Beyond "Listen and Repeat", 2020) points out the possibility to teach voiced endings when introducing past simple regular verbs or present simple continuous. "For instance, the pas tense –ed endings have different pronunciations (e.g. [d] is pronounced in stayed, [t] in popped, and [ɪd] in started), depending on the sounds which occur before the pronounced endings. Emphasizing and practicing this pronunciation feature can be usefully performed when introducing the past simple tense. Another good example of grammar and pronunciation can be illustrated on the pronunciation of going, which is more often [ˈɡəʊɪn] rather than

[ˈɡəʊɪŋ]. This can be highlighted and practiced when *going to* (as a way of expressing future) is introduced."

Teachers neglecting proper speaking activities is another problem. One of the frequent reason is that they do not use the target language as much as possible. There are several causes why learners use mother tongue while they should be speaking in English:

- difficult topics for discussion considering learners' level
- using mother tongue is a natural thing to do
- learner to learner explanation
- teachers themselves when using mother tongue (Harmer, 2001, p. 131).

This reasons show that teachers should set an example of the communication in classes. Firstly, they should not use Czech language themselves as they can encourage learners to do so as well. Secondly, teachers ought to choose topics that are suitable for their current level of English. They also need to assure that learners do not use their mother tongue when speaking to their partner or having a group discussion.

Harmer also suggests that teachers should not necessarily prevent all the L1 usage. There should be a distinction between using L1 for better understanding of English language (explaining more advanced grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc.) and using L1 in oral activities that aims at practicing speaking in English. That relies on the communication between teacher and learners whether they establish some rules of when it is appropriate to use L1 (2001, p. 132).

4.4 Factors that influence learning pronunciation

"Factors which will obviously determine the learner's aims are concerned with his age and his natural ability, and with his motivation and the use to which he intends to put the language" (Cruttenden, 2001, p. 298). These are all aspects, which has to be taken into consideration when preparing for the lessons.

4.4.1 Acquisition and learning

Methodology of language teaching introduces two different terms which appear to be similar. Richards and Rodgers (1989) mention that Krashen distinguishes between acquisition and learning. "Acquisition refers to the natural assimilation of language rules through using language for communication. Learning refers to the formal study of

language rules and is a conscious process" (1989, p. 18). Acquisition is a natural process that starts at a very young age and it is basically learning without being taught; the process is non-conscious. Krashen then explains that "grammatical sentences 'sound' right, or 'feel' right, and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated" (1982, p. 10). Whereas learning is a conscious study in classrooms, learning grammar or revising for a test. "In non-technical terms, learning is 'knowing about' a language, known to most people as 'grammar' or 'rules'" (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). As a matter of efficiency, learning saves time, however, it is not as effective as acquisition.

It is now obvious that acquisition helps especially younger learners as it is natural for them to acquire their first language. "Acquisition of a normal language is guaranteed only up to age of six, is steadily compromised from then until shortly after puberty, and is rare thereafter" (Pinker, 1995, p. 293). However, Krashen (1982, p. 10) opposes that this ability does not disappear at puberty and adults can access "the same natural 'language acquisition device' that young learners use." At lower secondary schools the learners are older and teachers have to rely more on their own teaching methods and learners' studying habits. English Language Services (1968) claim that teacher should help learners overcome the difficulties in acquiring English language to achieve such control that the remnants of the habits from their L1 will be as insignificant as possible.

4.4.2 Age

Krashen (1982) introduces a period of life called the 'critical period' during which our brains allows us to absorb knowledge better and faster. That is the reason why teaching correct pronunciation should begin in early stage of learning second language (L2). Learners are more likely to attain more native-like pronunciation.

Learners' adolescence starts approximately at the age of 12. At lower secondary level, the learners' age varies from 12 to 15. On top of that, Harmer (1998) also explains that it is the period of time when they may be disruptive in classes due to the period of puberty and they are trying to find their identity. This fact ought to be taken into consideration, and the teachers should adjust their teaching methods to the situation.

4.4.3 Motivation and the role of the teacher

As far as educational process is concerned, Hrabal et al. explain that teachers motivate their learners both consciously and unconsciously. The first way of motivation is particularly done via different methods and techniques in their lessons. The latter is mostly based on teacher – learner interaction and their expectations and interpretation of their behaviour. Teachers should be aware of the impact of their behaviour on their learners as this way of motivation can be both positive and negative depending on interpretation (1989).

Learners, quite frequently, think that what they learn is useless; and pronunciation included. It depends on the teacher, subject, or whether they are good at it. It is essential for a teacher to explain to them why they need to learn it. If teachers fail in making connection between learning specific sounds in the lesson and the overall meaning of learning correct pronunciation, the motivation, presumably, will disappear. It has to be evident why they learn it. According to Vágnerová (2001), the purpose of learning is a key factor in good schoolwork.

There is also a theory that teachers cannot motivate their learners, they can only create an environment which supports learners' motivation by using different teaching methods (Kalhous and Obst, 2009). There are two basic types of motivation – extrinsic and intrinsic (Metruk, 2020). Teachers should use various techniques to activate learners' intrinsic motivation and be aware that not every learner would be motivated enough. (Huitt, 1998, cited in Lokšová, 1999). For teachers, it should be essential to know their leaners, their personalities, interests, hobbies or opinions. "According to that specific personality type, teachers should identify and recognize the form of motivation that relates to that personality and highlight it in their teaching process" (Kondal, 2015). For example, teachers can use learners' interests and apply them to pronunciation activities. Probably, there are learners who communicate with their foreign friend while playing online games. Then, having a discussion with the learners and explaining them that it is important to know how English pronunciation works can be more than an appropriate way. Learners also spend a lot of time on YouTube watching foreign creators, often with subtitles when they are available. Practising correct pronunciation in the lessons and explaining the way it functions can definitely help learners to understand their favourite foreign creators better.

Renandya (2013) lists these teachers' qualities, which motivate their learners:

- A teacher who is caring, supportive, humorous, helpful and committed, who has a genuine interest in their students' learning and general well-being and who has good rapport with them, is more likely to be able to create a motivation classroom atmosphere and provide on-going support to student learning

- A teacher who uses a variety of teaching methods, customized to the individual needs of the students, will be more successful in engaging them towards achieving the L2 learning target

- Both oral and written texts used as classroom materials should be interesting and relevant to the students. They should also be pitched at or slightly above their current level of proficiency. In other words, materials should be interesting and comprehensible, and also engaging cognitively and affectively.

- Tasks that fall within students' comfort and stretch zones tend to be more motivating than those that are too demanding. Also, tasks that allow students to experience more success rather than failure are a great boost to student motivation.

- Tests that serve as a learning tool, one that helps students to see their progress in a non-threatening manner, can drive students to work harder to achieve their learning goals. Focus more on assessment <u>for</u> learning than assessment <u>of</u> learning. The former is more informative and learning-friendly than the latter.

(Renandya, 2013, p. 35)

Similarly, Metruk (2020) outlines these outside factors: "amount of pronunciation training, amount of practice, number and variety of pronunciation activities, kind of feedback and its efficacy, teachers' attitudes, opinions, interest and expertise in pronunciation, etc. All of this greatly affects pronunciation learning of an individual."

Now it is obvious that the personality of the teacher can and does have an influential impact on the learning process. Learners' negative experience connected

with the subject or with the teachers during the lessons can result in the lack of motivation.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter states the reasons for proper teaching English pronunciation at lower secondary schools. It has been confirmed that correct English pronunciation improves speaking and listening skills. The accent which is usually taught at lower secondary level is RP, nevertheless, the learners should encounter other varieties of spoken English in order to be exposed to as many accents as possible, which might be beneficial for them in the real-world situations. Finally, the problems in pronunciation teaching are specified. Here, the teachers play a vital role here; their knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, the rapport with their learners, all of these aspects have impact on their learners.

Research part

Questionnaire

5   Hypotheses

1. There is a great number of teachers who neglect teaching pronunciation properly in their lessons.

2. Teaching English pronunciation should be as practical as possible in order to expose learners to the authentic language.

3. There are not enough exercises for practising English pronunciation in the textbooks as these exercises do not involve aspects specific for the first language of the learners.

The first and second hypotheses are based partially on my personal experience as a learner and teaching experience during my university studies. Thus far, I have met only one qualified English teacher at lower secondary school. The fact that a person understands English and is able to communicate in the language does not necessarily mean they are proficient in teaching it; especially pronunciation. The lessons cover mostly grammar and vocabulary, and speaking is practised usually when the teachers ask questions, or when the learners check their answers with the teacher.

The third hypothesis is based on the textbooks I worked with during my studies. The pronunciation exercises, and the English language textbooks in general, are constructed for learners from all over the world hence they cannot reflect the differences between the first language (L1) and the second language (L2). English teachers, especially those who are not qualified for teaching English, might strictly follow the textbooks only and they might not provide any further explanation of the differences between the mother tongue and the target language. Moreover, these textbook pronunciation exercises often focus on an individual pronunciation feature, which should be put in context by the very teacher.

6   Questionnaire

Due to coronavirus pandemic and social distancing, the original direction of this diploma thesis had to change slightly as the distance education prevented me from attending the traditional lessons to verify individual respondents' statements in reality.

For the research part of the diploma thesis an anonymous questionnaire was created. It was posted on the Internet, and sent to a few schools in Moravian-Silesian

Region and Olomouc region. The questionnaire was targeted at teachers at lower secondary school in the Czech Republic.

The research was created in English language and its filling took from five to ten minutes. The total number of the questions was twenty. Three of them contained statements to which the respondents matched their attitude. The questions were closed, however, the respondents had the opportunity to add a comment to some of their answers when they considered to be needed or to specify their answer.

The first part gathered general information about the respondents, such as age, sex, faculty of education/arts they attended, how long they have been teaching, and what the level of their English was.

The next parts focus on teachers' attitudes towards both learning and teaching English pronunciation. Attitudes towards learning English (mostly pronunciation) is included as well since it might provide general overview of teachers' own experience when they had been learning pronunciation and its possible effect on their teaching. The crucial part of the questionnaire obtains information about the ways teachers implement teaching pronunciation into their lessons, and what is their opinion of the position of pronunciation in teaching English language at lower secondary schools. It is essential to obtain this information since this is the base for understanding the way teachers teach or do not teach English pronunciation at lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic.

To add slight diversity to the questionnaire, there are four short transcription exercises at the end. They evaluate respondents' actual elementary knowledge and skills of English pronunciation. The comparison of this rather practical part and respondents' previous answers to statements in the questionnaire will be made. To see an example of a filled questionnaire see Appendix 1.

7 Individual data results
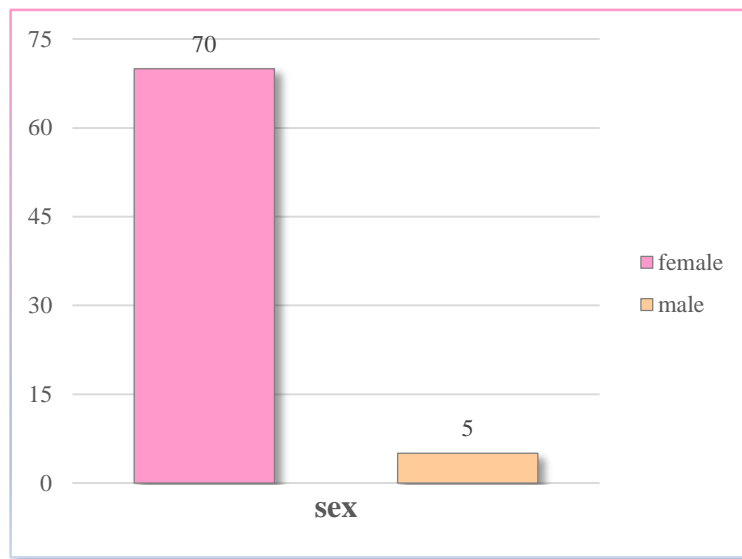
7.1 Respondents' age

Figure 1: Respondents' age (see also Table 1 in **Appendix 2**).
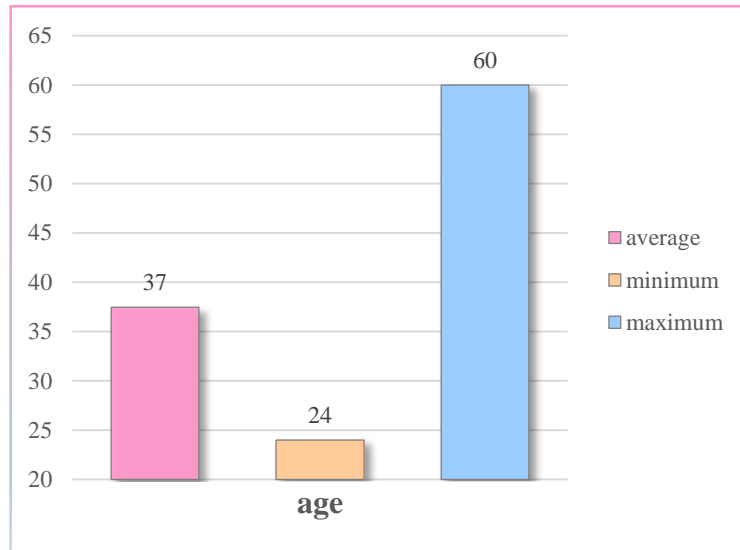
As Figure 1 indicates, the average age of respondents is thirty-seven. The minimal age is surprisingly just twenty-four, and the oldest respondent is sixty years old.

7.2 Respondents' sex

Figure 2: Respondents' sex (see also Table 2 in Appendix 2).

As expected, the majority of respondents are women, and only five respondents are men. According to European Commission (Education and Training Monitor, 2019, p 13), there were 85 % of female teachers teaching at lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic in 2019.

7.3 Respondents' qualification for teaching English language

Figure 3: Respondents' qualification for teaching English language (see also Table 3 in Appendix 2).

Question: Did you study at faculty of education/arts to become a qualified English teacher?
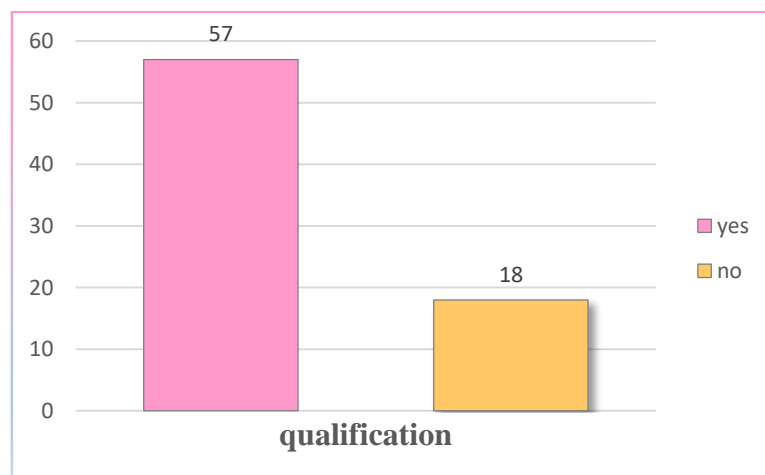
The intent of this question is to obtain information about the number of respondents who actually studied at university to have a master's degree for teaching English language at lower secondary schools. Figure 3 clearly proves that the first hypothesis of this diploma thesis is wrong. 76 % of the respondents state they have proper qualification for teaching English language at lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic. However, 24 % of the teachers do not have the qualification and yet they teach it. This raises the question of to what degree it might affect teaching pronunciation and the English language in general.

7.4 Universities the respondents studied at

Figure 4: Universities the respondents studied at (see also Table 4 in Appendix 2).

Question: (Only for those who studied English at faculties of education/arts.) Which university did you attend?
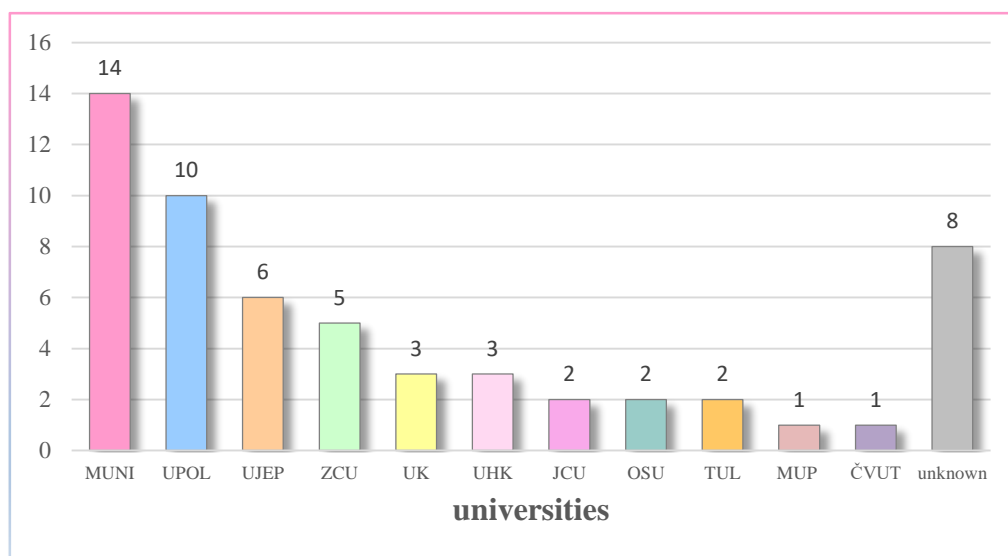

Figure 4 shows wide range of universities the respondents attended to acquire their master's degree to teach English language at lower secondary schools. The most marked university is Masaryk University in Brno (24.56 %) followed by Palacký University in Olomouc (17.54 %). These two universities are the most frequent answers. The order of the rest responses are as follows: the University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem (10.53 %), University of West Bohemia (8.77 %), Charles University (5.26 %), University of Hradec Králové (5.26 %), University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice (3.51 %), University of Ostrava (3.51 %), Technical

University of Liberec (3.51 %), Metropolitan University Prague (1.75 %), and Czech Technical University in Prague (1.75 %).

Eight of the respondents do not answer the question at all (14.04 %). The reason for this can be the misinterpretation of the question despite the effort to specify it as much as possible.

7.5 Additional qualification courses

Figure 5: Additional qualification courses for unqualified teachers of English language at lower secondary schools (see also Table 5 in Appendix 2).

Question: (Only for those who DID NOT study at faculties of education/arts.) Have you attended any additional qualification courses to allow you to teach English at lower secondary school?


Concerning Figure 5, 44.4 % of respondents who did not have qualification to teach English at lower secondary schools attended an additional course or courses to become qualified English teachers. Nevertheless, still 33.33 % of unqualified respondents do not intend attending any courses.

As can be seen in Figure 5, 11.11 % of unqualified teachers of English responded that even though they have not been qualified yet, they are planning to take a course. There are also 4 respondents who claim to have both qualification and additional courses, and the rest of the teachers (11.11 %) did not state any of the options above.

7.6 Classroom division

Figure 6: Classroom division (see also Table 6 in Appendix 2)

Question: Are English classes in your school at some point divided by learners' level of English?
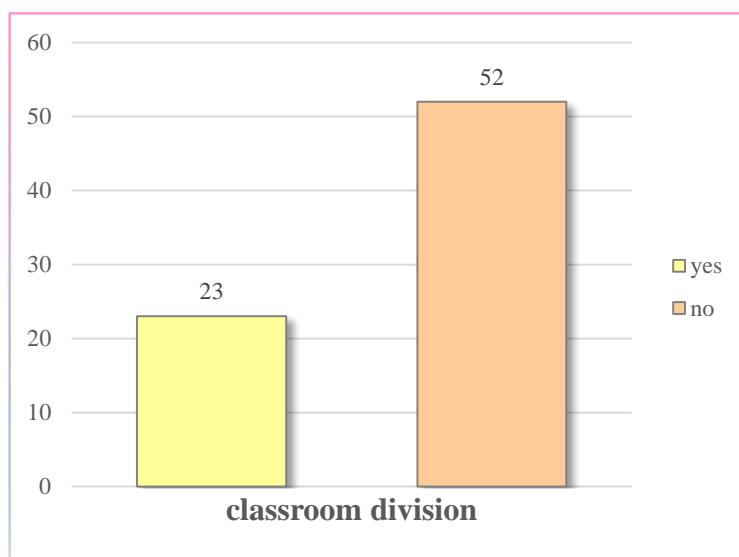
Surprisingly, the majority of responses (69.33 %) indicate that English classes are not divided according to learners' level of English.

The respondents also take the advantage of leaving a comment; five of them (9.62 %) specify that the classes at their school are divided for completely different reasons than how the original question was meant. The reason for this class division is due to learners' special needs or learning difficulties.

It is a startling finding that the division might depend on individual teachers' preferences at some schools. One respondent admits that their English teachers whose English skills are not at a sufficient level prefer to teach 'less proficient learners'. That should not be a relevant cause for dividing learners' into different groups as there are other and genuine reasons for it. The school management should probably investigate the problem into more depth and support the teachers in their professional growth. For viewing respondents' full comments see Figure 6 in Appendix 2.

Figure 6 also shows that over a quarter of respondents (30.67 %) do actually divide their learners according to their level of English. In my opinion, it is beneficial for the learners as they are provided with more time and attention they need. In order to be fluent, intelligible and not to feel shy to speak (which should be the goal of learning

English at secondary schools), they need to be given enough time to practise the language.

7.7 Teaching practice

Figure 7: Teaching practice (see also Table 7 in Appendix 2)

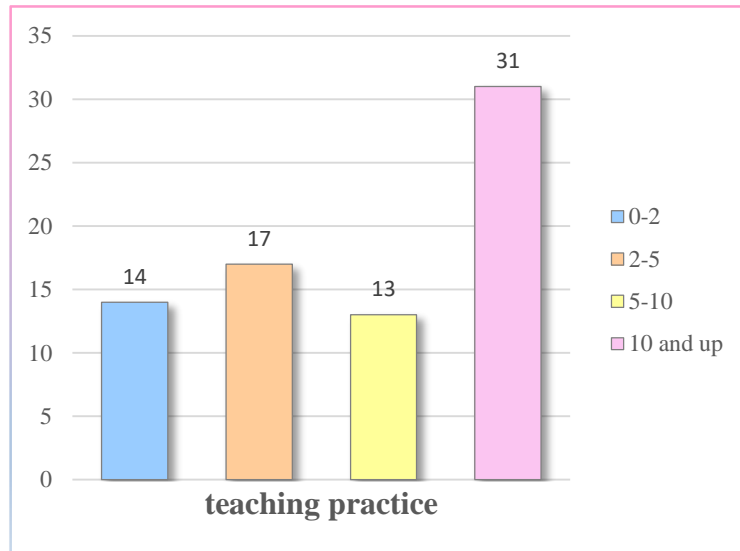*Question: How long have you been teaching?*

Figure 7 demonstrates the length of each respondent's teaching practice. As it could be seen, 41.33 % of respondents have been teaching for more than ten years. Teaching practice of 22.67 % involved teachers is between two to five years. The number then decreases to 18.67 % for practice up to two years, and to 17.33 % for practice from five to ten years.

7.8   Teachers' level of English

Figure 8: Teachers' level of English (see also Table 8 in Appendix 2)

*Question: What is your level of English?*
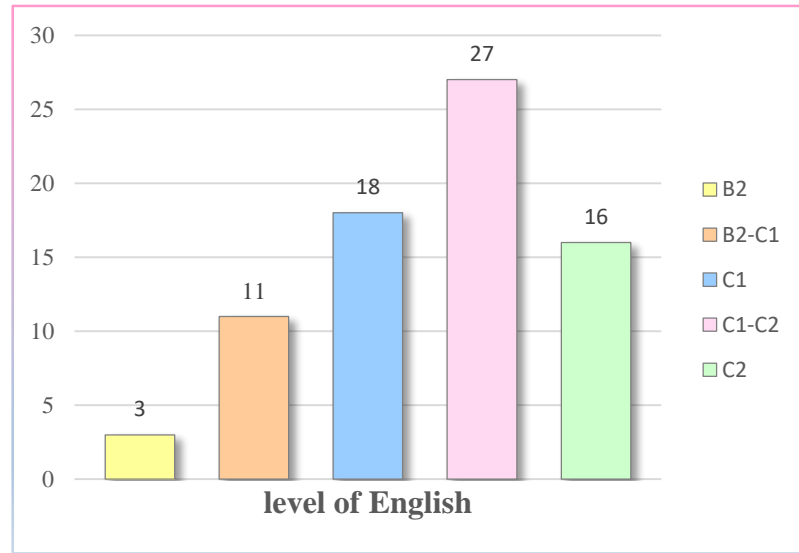
For our purposes, a **CEFR** standard is used as it is globally accepted. Concerning Figure 8, most teachers claim to have C1 to C2 level of English (36 %) followed by nearly a quarter (24 %) of respondents who state their knowledge and language skills are at C1 level. Less than a quarter of teachers (21.33 %) then mark their English proficiency at the highest level, which is C2 in CEFR. 14.67 % of individuals qualify themselves as B2 to C1 level, and 4 % of them are on the B2 level of English.

7.9 Phonetics and phonology study

Figure 9: Phonetics and phonology study (see also Table 9 in Appendix 2)

*Question: Have you studied English phonetics and phonology at university?*
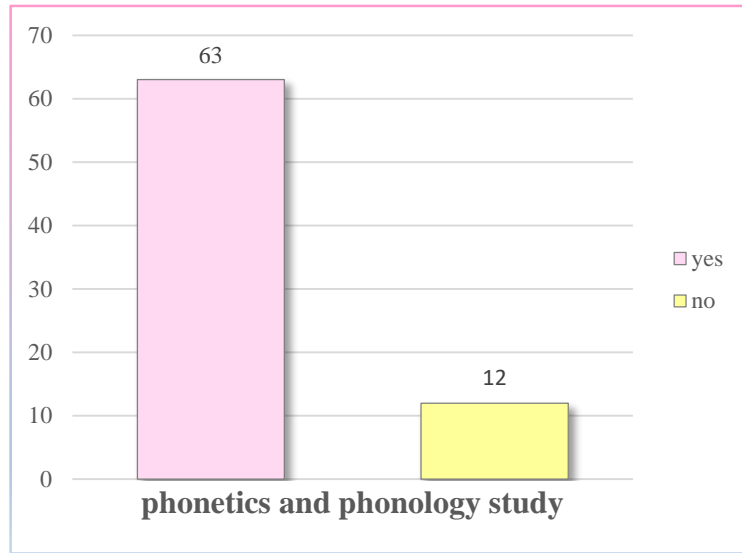
According to Figure 9, 84 % of all respondents studied phonetics and phonology at university, and 16 % of them did not attend any seminar.

Interestingly, 2.67 % of individuals stated they studied at university to become qualified English teachers, though they did not study English phonetics and phonology. Verifying the data, these respondents did not select the university they attended either. Thus the faculty programme cannot be found and investigated to determine whether it does offer such seminars or not. Another reason for this combination of answers might be simply misunderstanding.

7.10 Respondents' pronunciation confidence

Figure 10: Respondents' pronunciation confidence (see also Table 10 in Appendix 2)

Question: How confident are you about your level of English pronunciation?
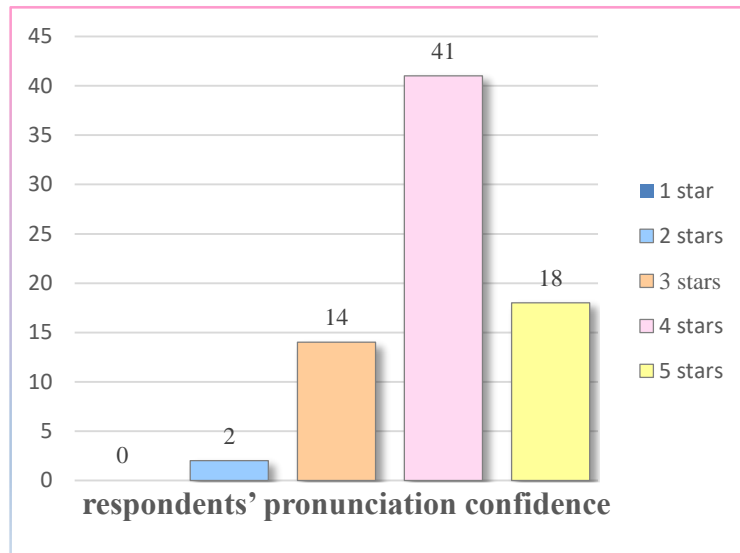
The results have shown that 78.67 % of answerers are rather confident about their level of English pronunciation; they grade their skills four and five out of five stars. The average, three stars, are responses of 18.67 % teachers. Nevertheless, as Figure 10 proves, 2.67 % of teachers are probably insecure about their pronunciation skills and therefore might have problems teaching pronunciation to learners.

7.11 Teachers' attitude towards LEARNING English pronunciation (EP)

This subchapter contains statements aimed at teachers' own experience with learning English pronunciation at schools, universities or in courses. Gathered data include their own attitudes towards English pronunciation in general, the means of learning it, the level of their pronunciation knowledge, difficulty experience, etc. Each statement is written in bold letters followed by a figure and the interpretation of the outcome.

7.11.1 Individual statements

statement: I have a positive relationship to learning EP.

Figure 11: Positive relationship to learning EP (see also Table 11 in Appendix 2)
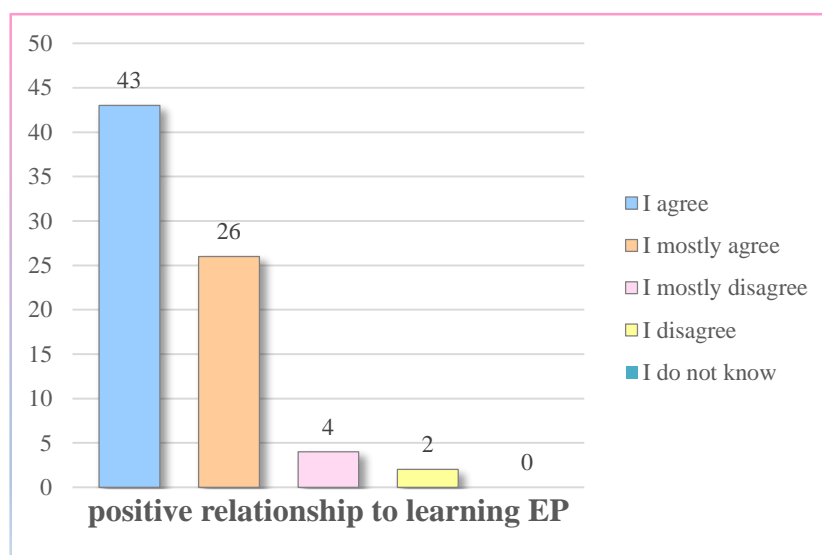

As it is obvious from the Figure 11, a large number of respondents (92 %) have a positive relationship to learning English pronunciation as they choose 'I agree' or 'I mostly agree' with the statement above. The options 'I mostly disagree' and 'I disagree' are selected only by 8 % of all respondents.

There might be a possibility that a dislike of a specific ground can be transmitted from teachers to their learners throughout the learning process. Considering teaching pronunciation, it is essential as it is presented in every single lesson; teachers and learners have to speak in order to communicate. It is simply not an ordinary topic which is taught only a few times during the school attendance.

statement: My knowledge of EP is on a high level.

Figure 12: High level of EP (see also Table 12 in Appendix 2)
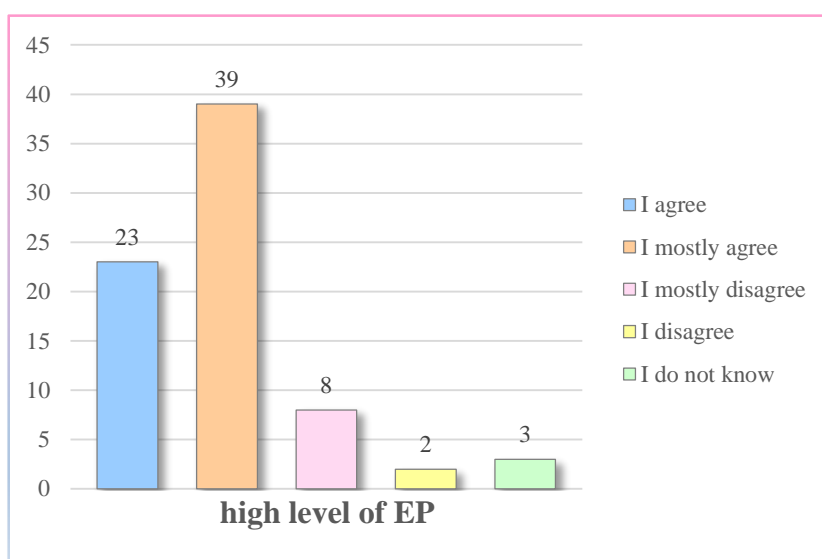
Here, the results are similar to the results from Figure 10. The majority of respondents (82.67 %) claim that their skills and knowledge of English pronunciation are on an advanced level; they choose 'I agree' or 'I mostly agree' with the statement above.

Nevertheless, less respondents who choose 'I mostly disagree' and 'I disagree' were expected. It seems that 10.67 % of all teachers involved do not quite agree with the statement and 4 % of them do not agree completely. The specification for a high level of EP knowledge are not determined, however, we assume that English teachers should either study English at university or attend a course which allows them to teach English at lower secondary schools. Teachers should be able to explain the correct pronunciation of words and, when speaking of higher speech units, to demonstrate its changes.

statement: It is important to me to pronounce words correctly.

Figure 13: The importance of correct pronunciation (see also Table 13 in Appendix 2)
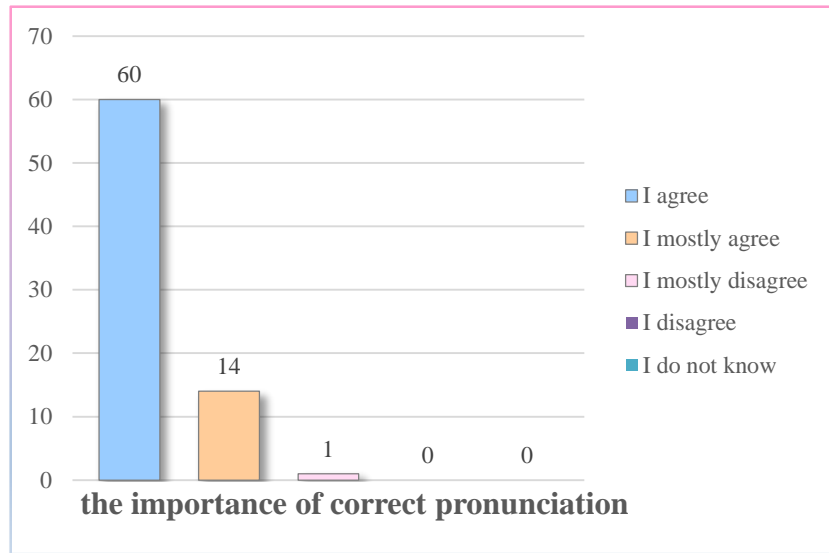
Contrary to Figure 12, 80 % of involved individuals agree that it is important to them to pronounce words correctly, and 18.67 % of them state 'I mostly agree' with the statement; that is 98.67 % in total.

1.33 % is represented by only one person who claimed pronouncing words correctly is not that important to them. Contrary to Figure 12, it is interesting to see that three respondents claim that the correct pronunciation is important to them, yet they did not rate their EP knowledge at a high level (see Figure 13 in Appendix 2).

statement: I learned EP through TV shows, films, podcasts, online videos, etc.

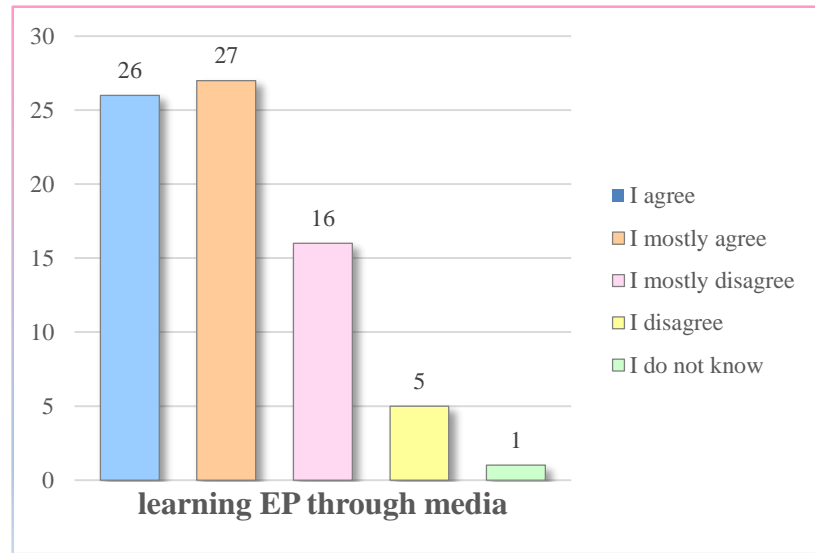Figure 14: Learning EP through media (see also Table 14 in Appendix 2)

Figure 14 reveals that 70.67 % of answerers learn pronunciation through media such as TV shows, films, podcasts, online videos, et cetera. All listed items are examples of authentic means used to educate learners, and thus it proves learning English pronunciation should be as practical as possible while using authentic materials in the lessons.

21.33 % of respondents do not quite agree, 6.67 % do not agree at all, and 1.33 % chose 'I do not know' for their answer.

statement: My pronunciation is mostly influenced by Czech accent.

Figure 15: Czech accent influence (see also Table 15 in Appendix 2)
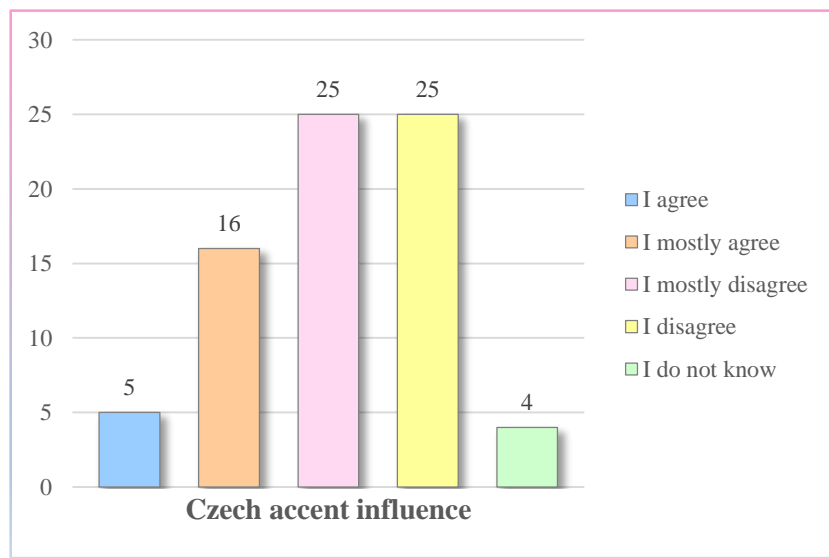
Positive results are presented in Figure 15. The equal number of respondents (33.33 %) would say their English accent is not influenced by the Czech accent. In total, there are 66.66 % of teachers whose pronunciation barrier is not a difficult problem to overcome.

Still, there are some teachers (5.33 %) who are not certain of the transfer of their Czech pronunciation to English pronunciation. Actually, these teachers claim to have C1-C2 level of English language and high level of English pronunciation previously; they should be able to identify possible transfer from one language to another.

On the other hand, 5 respondents (6.67 %) certainly know that their accent is influenced by their mother tongue, and 14 individuals (21.33 %) mostly agree with the statement.

This outcome is rather informative and it would be suitable to verify it in practice by listening to the teachers during their lessons or asking them to read a text aloud.

**statement: I have difficulties learning EP.**

Figure 16: Difficulties learning EP (see also Table 16 in Appendix 2)
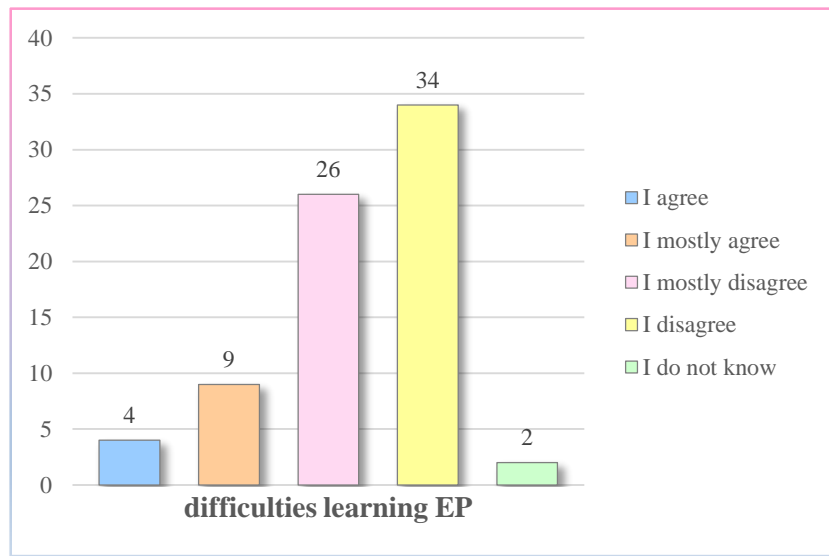
These results represent difficulties the respondents have while learning English pronunciation. As it is obvious from the Figure 16, only 17.33 % teachers find it difficult, and over three quarters of them (80 %) have no problems learning it. Two respondents (2.67 %) state 'I do not know' when deciding.

**statement: I rather focus on grammar and vocabulary.**

Figure 17: Focus on grammar and vocabulary (see also Table 17 in Appendix 2)
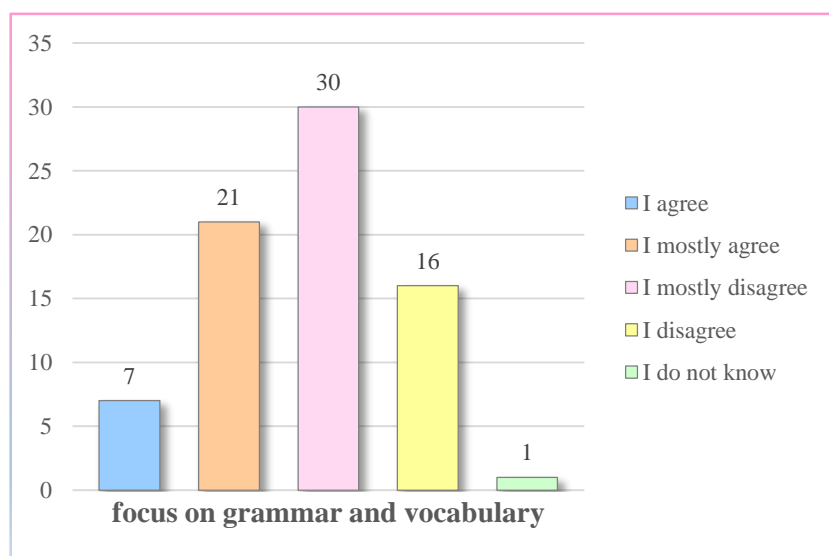
As can be seen in Figure 17, teachers put either a greater emphasis on teaching pronunciation rather than grammar and vocabulary, or they focus on these language systems equally. 40 % of them choose 'I mostly disagree', and 21.33 % choose 'I disagree'. Despite that, the number of respondents neglecting pronunciation teaching is not exactly infinitesimal; 37.33 % of them rather focus on grammar and vocabulary. Once again, there is one person who chooses 'I do not know'.

statement: It is important to me to speak with good intonation and rhythm.

Figure 18: The importance of good intonation and rhythm (see also Table 18 in Appendix 2)
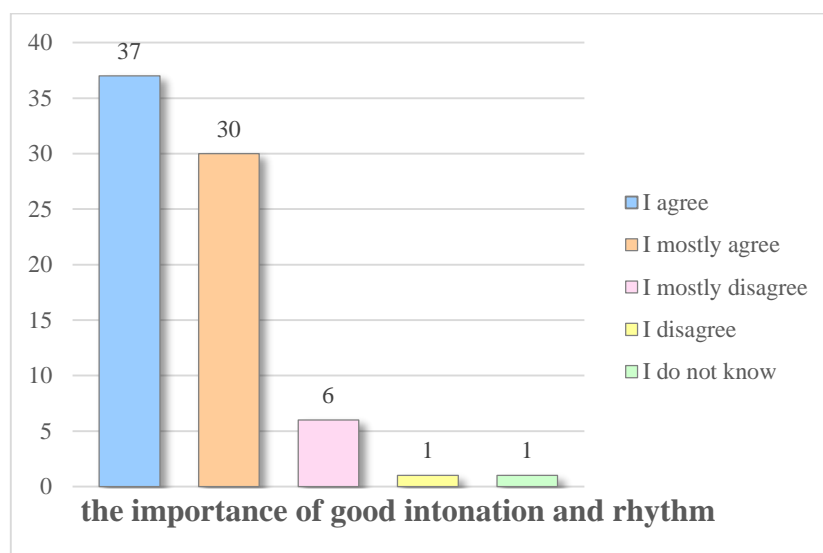
According to the respondents' answers, for the majority of teachers (89.33 %) good intonation and rhythm are important when speaking.

9.33 % of respondents mostly disagree or disagree with the statement above. Interestingly, these respondents claims that the English pronunciation is important. Intonation and rhythm are parts of learning or teaching pronunciation and therefore it cannot be separated.

There is still one person choosing not to answer this question.

7.11.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the respondents have generally a positive relationship to learning English pronunciation; the possibility of transferring a dislike of pronunciation decreases. Based on the teachers' statements, their skills and knowledge of English

pronunciation should be on a high level, which means they did not have problems learning it. It seems that the majority of respondents learnt the actual English pronunciation rather through media than at schools, universities or in courses. This implies that teaching English pronunciation has not always been given quite enough attention, and it proves that it is more than suitable to teach pronunciation with the aids of modern technology. The teachers put emphasis on both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation, and most of them claim their Czech accent does not influence their English pronunciation (they did not have any difficulty learning it). However, quite a number of them focus rather on grammar and vocabulary.

7.12 Teachers' attitude towards TEACHING English pronunciation (EP) in your lessons

This part of the questionnaire collects data concerning implementing teaching pronunciation into the lessons. It targets at teachers and their attitude towards teaching it, the influence they might have on their learners, and the usage of textbooks and other aids for practising it. Each statement is written in bold letters followed by a figure and the interpretation of the outcome.

statement: EP is an important language system to teach.

Figure 19: EP as an important language system (see also Table 19 in Appendix 2)
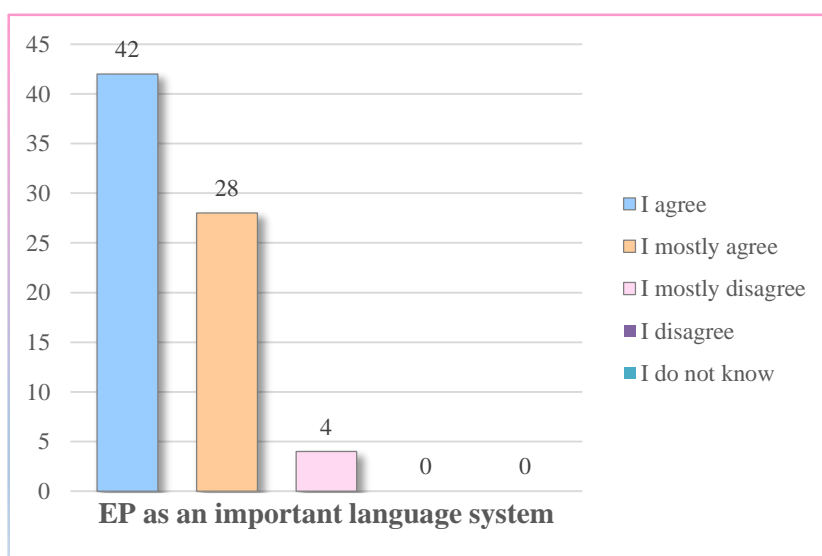
Figure 19 clearly shows that 93.33 % of involved teachers consider teaching English pronunciation as an important language system. None of the respondents disagree with the statement, and only 5.33 % of teachers choose 'I mostly disagree'.

statement: Teaching EP is important to improve speaking and listening.

Figure 20: The importance of EP in speaking and listening (see also Table 20 in Appendix 2)
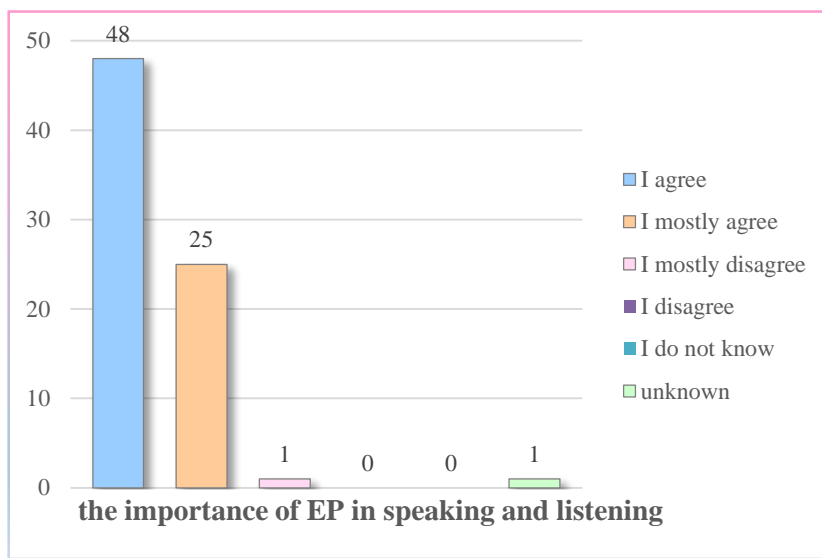
The vast majority of all responses (93.33 %) support the idea of pronunciation being important for improving language skills, namely speaking and listening. Learners need to be given necessary explanation of the way words are pronounced and the way they work together in higher speech units (phrases, sentences, etc.) in order to be able to understand the speaker when listening, be fluent and intelligible when speaking, and mostly to develop self-confidence.

statement: Teachers' pronunciation influences learners' pronunciation.

Figure 21: Teachers' pronunciation influence (see also Table 21 in Appendix 2)
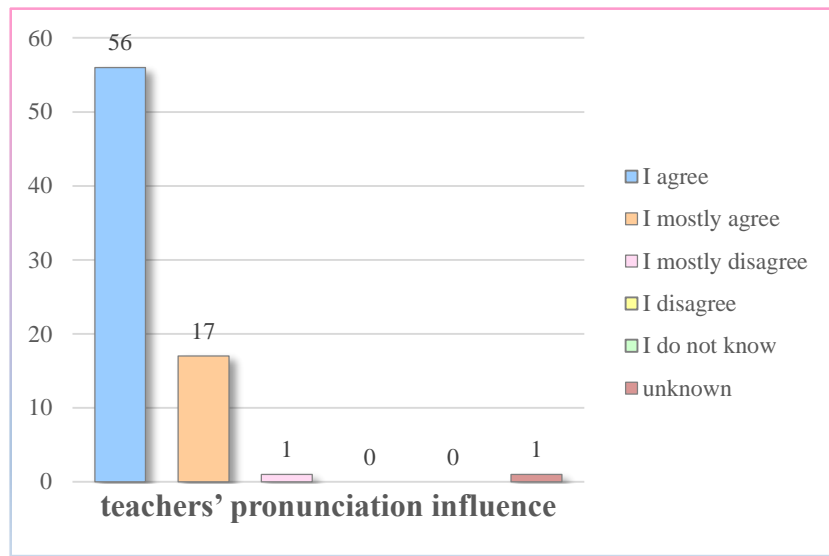
As expected, 97.33 % of all responses are in favour of the statement. At school, English teachers play a role model to their learners as they are the only persons there who speak English to them (or at least both teachers and learners should be using English language as much as possible during the lessons). Teachers' wrong pronunciation habits might be transmitted to their learners and causing them confusion when they come into contact with a native person. This is why setting a good example can benefit learners.

One answer cannot be evaluated as the respondent did not choose any of the options.

statement: Teacher should know the theory of English phonetics and phonology.

Figure 22: Knowledge of phonetics and phonology (see also Table 22 in Appendix 2)
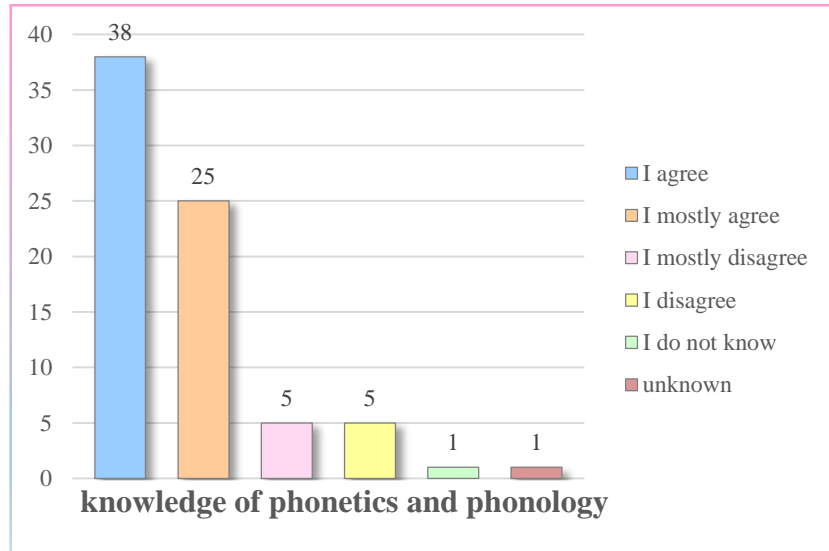
For the most teachers (84 %), the knowledge of English phonetics and phonology theory is relevant. Though having this knowledge do not guarantee a perfect pronunciation, English teachers need to have understanding and skills of English phonetics and phonology for possible pronunciation problem explanation.

The number of respondents who choose 'I mostly disagree' and 'I disagree' are alike (6.67 %), one respondent cannot decide, and one answer cannot be evaluated as the box in the questionnaire remains empty again.

statement: In my lessons I teach EP systematically.

Figure 23: Systematic EP teaching (see also Table 23 in Appendix 2)
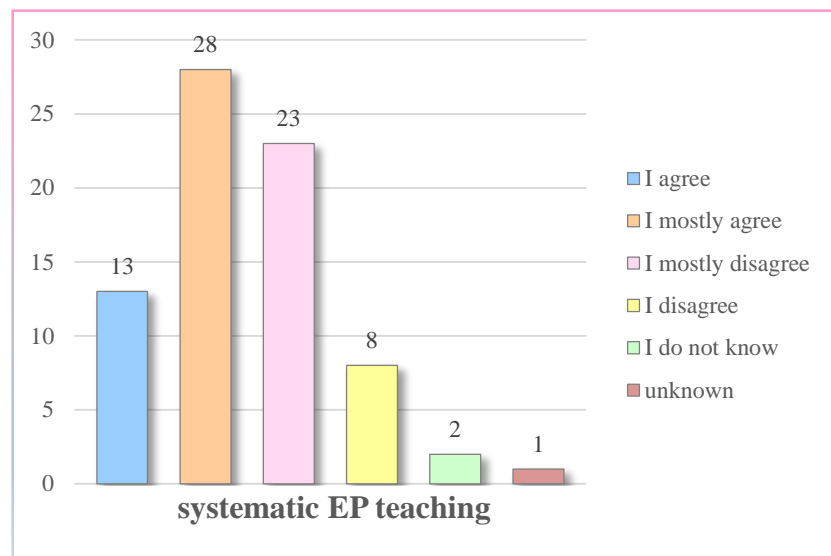
Figure 23 perfectly represents two poles of the way English pronunciation is taught by teachers. More than half of the respondents (54.67 %) claim to teach it systematically, which means regularly and by using given methods.

In spite of this fact, there is almost half of the teachers (41.33 %) who teach pronunciation rather occasionally; probably when a problem occurs, or when an error correction must be provided.

An unexpected result come out of this item of the questionnaire; two teachers do not know whether they teach pronunciation systematically or not. Strangely enough, when preparing for a lesson, teachers need to be aware of what they teach in a particular lesson – hence the possible explanation for this result is difficult to find.

Again, one response cannot be evaluated.

statement: In my lessons I teach EP only in advanced classes.

Figure 24: Teaching EP only to advanced classes (see also Table 24 in Appendix 2)
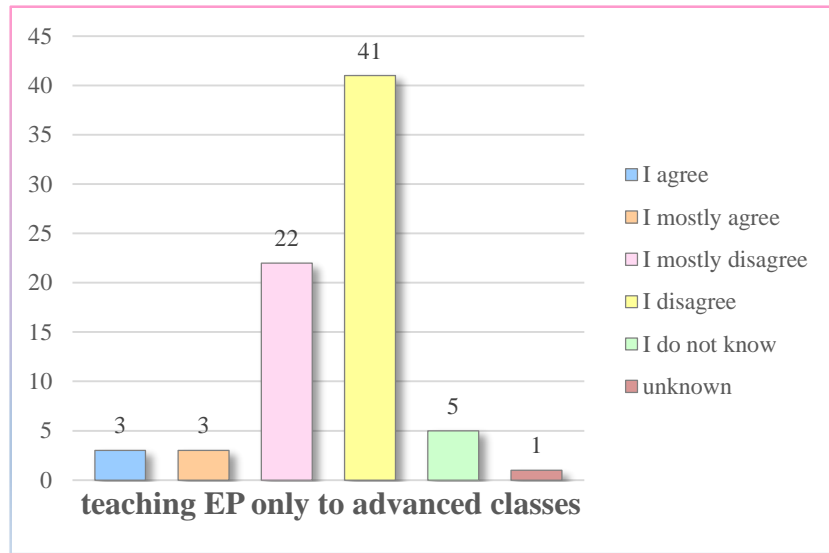
Positive results are shown in Figure 24. 84 % of all respondents do not agree with the statement above; they teach English pronunciation to all learners equally.

8 % of them rather agree that they teach it only to advanced classes. 6.67 % is the result of teachers who do not know. In this case, the reason for choosing 'I do not know' can be understood; in Figure 6 the results have shown that English classes are not divided according to learners' level of English.

One respondent did not mark the statement yet again.

statement: I use modern technology (apps, computer software, websites etc.) for teaching EP.

Figure 25: Modern technology employment (see also Table 25a and 25b in Appendix 2)
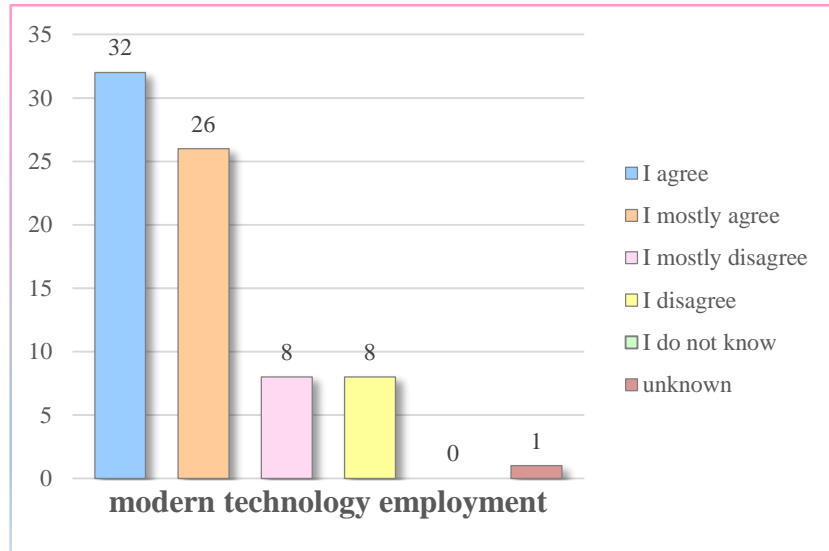
As it is obvious from the Figure 25, 77.33 % of teachers use modern technology in their lessons. The quality of the lesson is not conditional on modern technology usage, however, considering pronunciation, the benefit of using it is obvious. There are many applications, websites, computer software which can make the lesson more authentic, practical and enjoyable simultaneously.

10.67 % of teachers marked 'I mostly disagree' with the statement and the same percentage of respondents do implement no modern technology into their lessons whatsoever.

The use of modern technology in the lessons is analysed according to respondents' age. The question is whether the respondents' age might have an impact on using modern technology. The results have shown that teachers up to the age of 40 use modern technology considerably more than the older respondents (see also Table 25b in Appendix 2).

statement: Pronunciation part of the lesson should be as practical as possible.

Figure 26: Practical pronunciation teaching (see also Table 26 in Appendix 2)
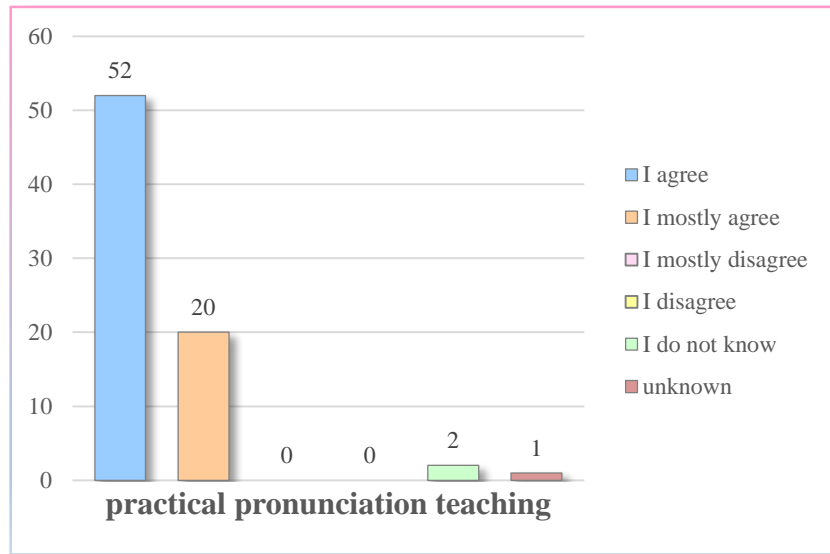
Nearly every respondent (96 %) agrees with the statement that pronunciation part of the lesson should be as practical as possible. Teachers should provide an explanation of a pronunciation item in context and give learners enough room and opportunities to practice.

Two respondents choose to mark 'I do not know' and one response remains empty.

statement: I use various techniques to teach EP.

Figure 27: Various techniques for teaching EP (see also Table 27 in Appendix 2)
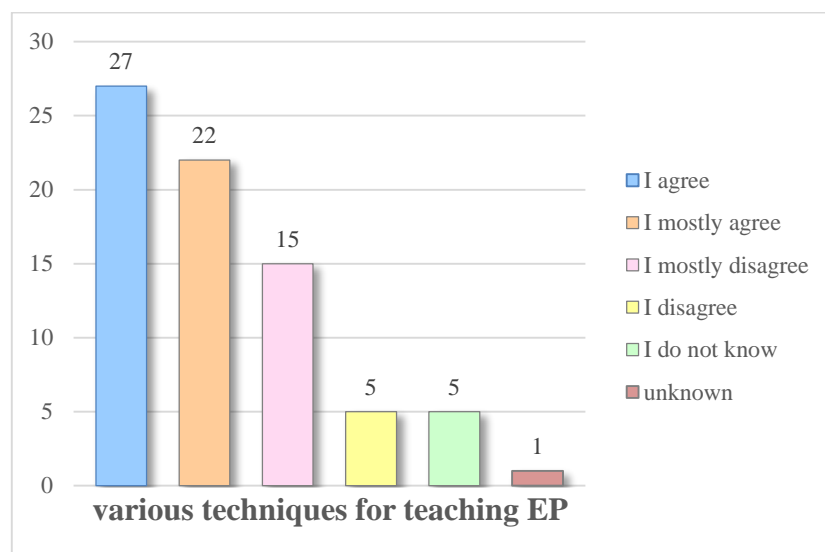
Another positive outcome can be seen in Figure 27. 65.33 % of teachers use various techniques when teaching English pronunciation. 20 % of respondents marked the option 'I mostly disagree', meaning that they use at least some of the techniques, which are suitable for their learners.

Unfortunately, there are 5 teachers who do not use various techniques and still 5 teachers who are not certain about the techniques they use as they choose 'I do not know' as their response. One person do not respond.

statement: I only use exercises from the textbooks.

Figure 28: Textbook exercises (see also Table 28 in Appendix 2)
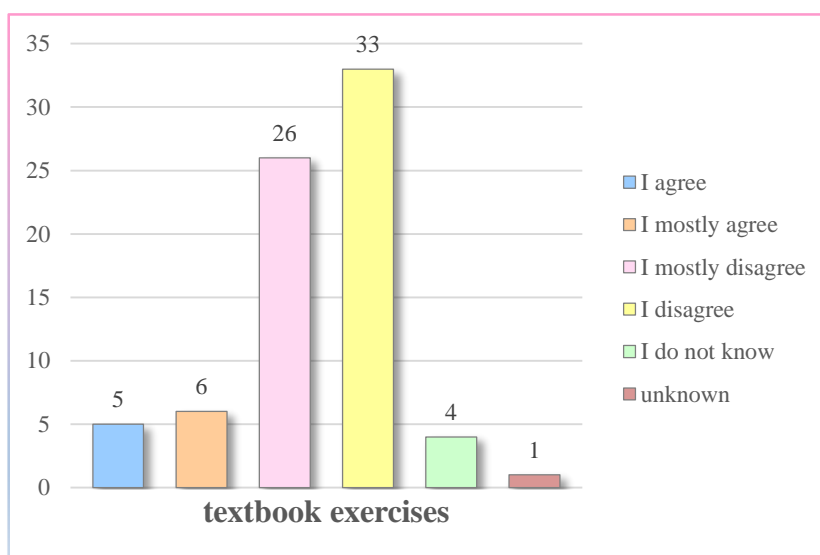
As expected, 78.67 % of all respondents are probably not satisfied with the textbook exercises, or the total amount of them is not sufficient enough. It means that they have to find other additional exercises or sources for practising pronunciation with learners in their lessons. 6.67 % of teachers use only exercises from the textbooks, 8 % of them use mostly textbook exercises and 5.33 % of all respondents mark 'I do not know'.

7.12.1 Conclusion

Generally, the majority of respondents agreed on pronunciation being an important language system, which is important to teach in order to improve not only learners' speaking but also listening comprehension. From teachers' perspective, their own pronunciation might influence their learners' pronunciation. Considering

theoretical knowledge, segmental and suprasegmental phonology are relevant to a large number of teachers. Half the respondents teach English pronunciation systematically, which means they include it in their lesson planning and they have specific approaches and methods of teaching it. Their lessons seem to be practical with deployment of modern technologies. Conversely, the use of the textbooks for teaching pronunciation in the lessons is on the wane.

7.13 Taught accents

Figure 29: Taught accents (see also Table 29 in Appendix 2)

Question: What English accent do you teach?
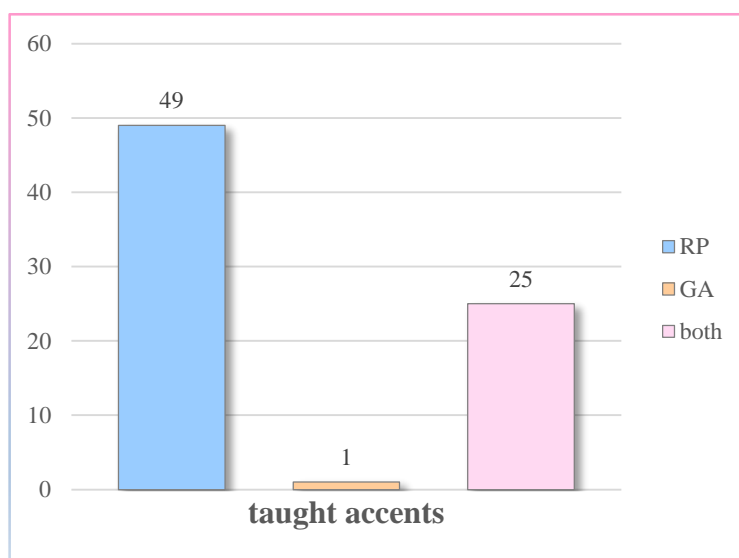
As Figure 29 indicates, the most taught accent is RP (65.33%), and GA is selected only by one teacher. 33.33 % of all respondents answer that they teach both RP and GA. One of the teachers then expands on the statement and says they teach RP and points out differences between RP and GA.

7.14 Accents exposure

Figure 30: Accents exposure (see also Table 30 in Appendix 2)

Question: What English accents should learners encounter (not learn) at lower secondary schools?
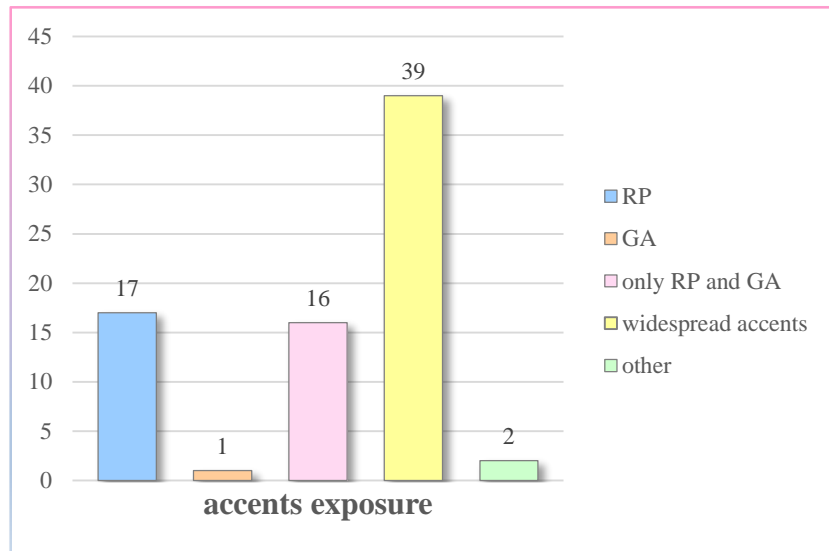
As indicated in the Figure 30, many teachers (22.67 %) consider RP as the only accent which the learners should be exposed to, only one teacher states it should be GA, and 21.33 % of teachers claim that both RP and GA are the only accents to be dealt with at lower secondary schools. On contrary, 52 % of respondents would say that the learners should be exposed to accents which are widespread. Two teachers marked 'other' and their comments are left for clarification; see Table 30 in Appendix 2). One of the comments states that learners do not need to listen to different accents as they will mostly use English when speaking to a non-native person. That is a completely relevant remark, however, when leaners become acquainted with widespread accents, the level of their listening comprehension might increase.

7.15 Textbooks usage

Figure 31: Textbooks usage (see also Table 31a and Table 31b in Appendix 2)

Question: What textbooks do you use in your lessons?
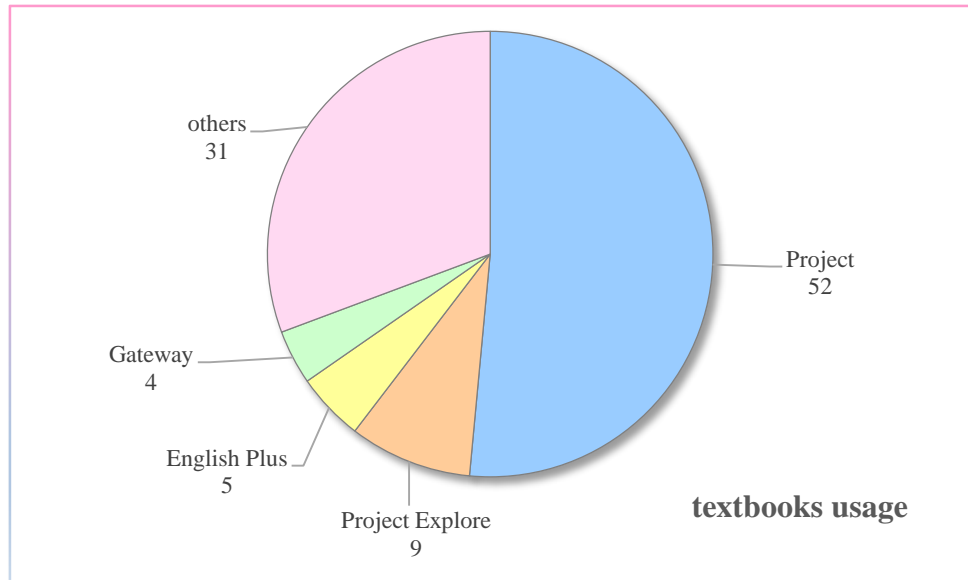
Nowadays, there are quantities of textbooks for schools on the market. Although, from Figure 31 it is evident which book is the most frequently used by respondents; Project is chosen by 54.49 % teachers involved. Project Explore is on the second place (8.91 %) and the numbers then decrease to 4.95 % for English Plus and 3.96 % for Gateway. The rest of the books which appear only three times and less in the questionnaire are included in the segment 'others'. For viewing the full list of all mentioned textbooks see Table 31a and Table 31b in Appendix 2.

7.16 Pronunciation exercises in textbooks and other materials:

Figure 32: Evaluation of the EP exercises in textbooks (see also Table 32 in Appendix 2)

Choose one or more statements
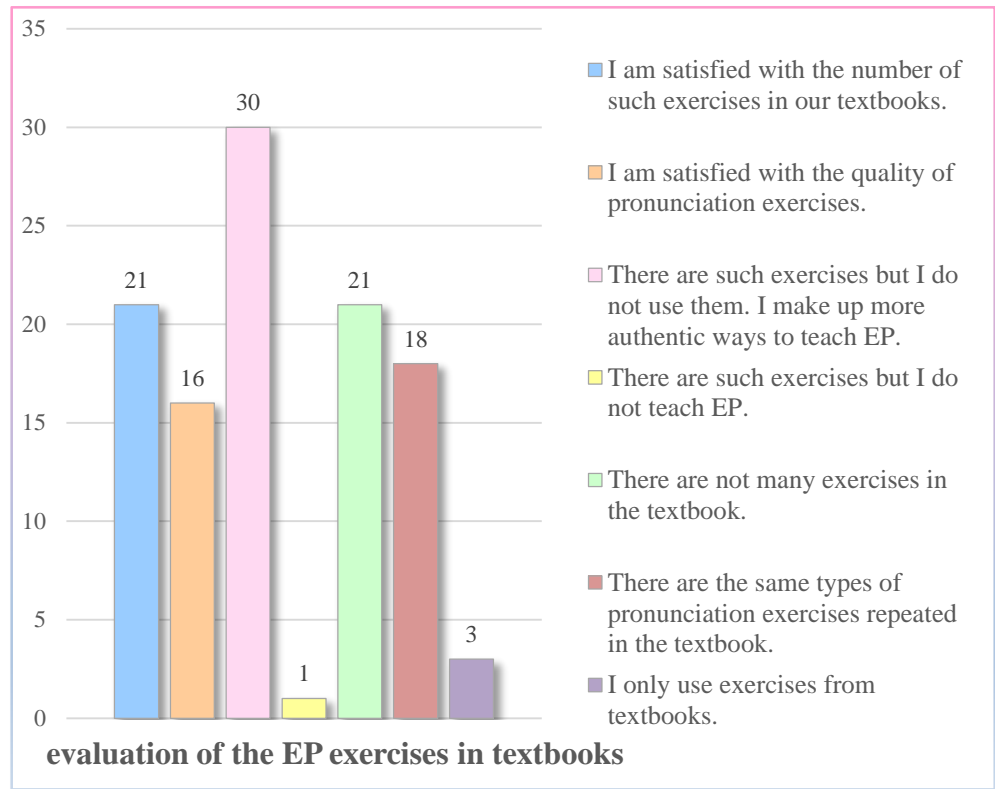
Based on the results, 40% of all teachers rather use their own materials or seek other sources for teaching English pronunciation than using textbook exercises. Teachers who prefer working with these other sources choose other statements as well; 'there are not many exercises in the textbooks' and 'there are the same types of pronunciation exercises are repeated'.

28% of teachers, according to Figure 32, are satisfied with the number of these exercises and the number of teachers who are satisfied with the quality of the exercises in the textbooks decrease to 21.33 %. Actually, one respondent claims to use only exercises from the textbook despite the fact they are not satisfied with the amount of pronunciation exercises and their types.

Another respondent also admits they do not teach English pronunciation in their lesson.

Overall, the majority of teachers react similarly. To be specific, textbooks usually contain the same types of pronunciation exercises and there are very few of them. Teachers also apply other methods and their ways of teaching pronunciation. Despite this fact, there is a certain number of teachers who rather prefer teaching pronunciation from the textbooks.

7.17 Is the phonetic transcription of the two words the same?

Figure 33: Overall pronunciation pairs results (see also Table 33 in Appendix 2)
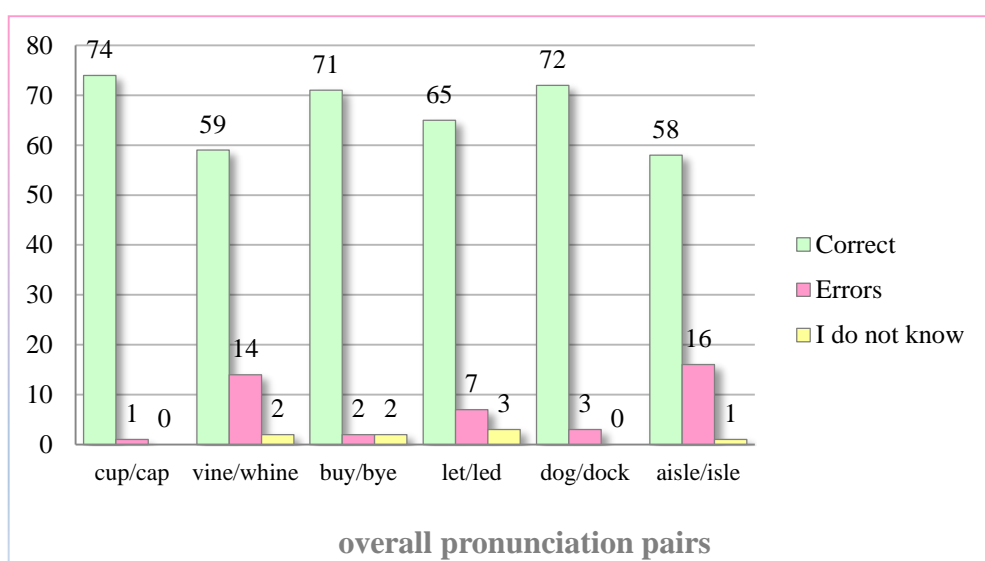
Figure 33 demonstrates the overall results of the pronunciation exercise. The task is to decide whether the two words in a pair are pronounced alike. The pairs above are chosen in connection with the theoretical part of this diploma project; each word item represents a feature described in the theoretical part. Elementary words are selected with a particular intention to determine whether the teachers pronounce the words which learners should be familiar with in lower secondary schools correctly.

As it can be seen, there is not a single pair of words in which the respondents do not make errors. The homophones 'aisle' and 'isle' seems to be the most problematic one. 22.67 % of respondents make an error by deciding the pronunciation of these two words is not the same, and one respondent do not know the answer whatsoever. There might be several problems when pronouncing this particular word. There is a silent letter 's' in both cases; thus none of these two words can be pronounced as /aɪsl/. Another problem arise as the beginning of the two words is different. In the word aisle,

there is an additional letter 'a', which might cause difficulties. Despite that, teachers should be competent at their profession, and they should not have difficulties pronouncing such elementary English words.

The next pair of words which respondents make errors in is 'vine' and 'whine'. As it has been already mentioned in the theoretical part, the phoneme /w/ does exist in English, however, the Czech pronunciation of the grapheme 'w' is the same as the pronunciation of the Czech 'v'. 21.33 % of all respondents incorrectly mark the pronunciation as the same or they do not know the answer.

Another typical error for Czech learners is confusing voiced and unvoiced consonants at the end of the words. 13.33 % of respondents claim there is no difference in pronouncing the words 'let' and 'led', and 4 % of teachers would pronounce the words 'dog' and 'dock' in the same way.

The least problematic pair is 'cup' and 'cap', only one error occurs there.

7.18 What is the possible phonetic transcription of the word below?

WORD   */wɒrd/*

              /wərd/

              /wɜːd/

              /word/

              /wɜːrd/

Figure 34: Correct/error ratio in question 18 – 'word' (see also Table 34 in Appendix 2)
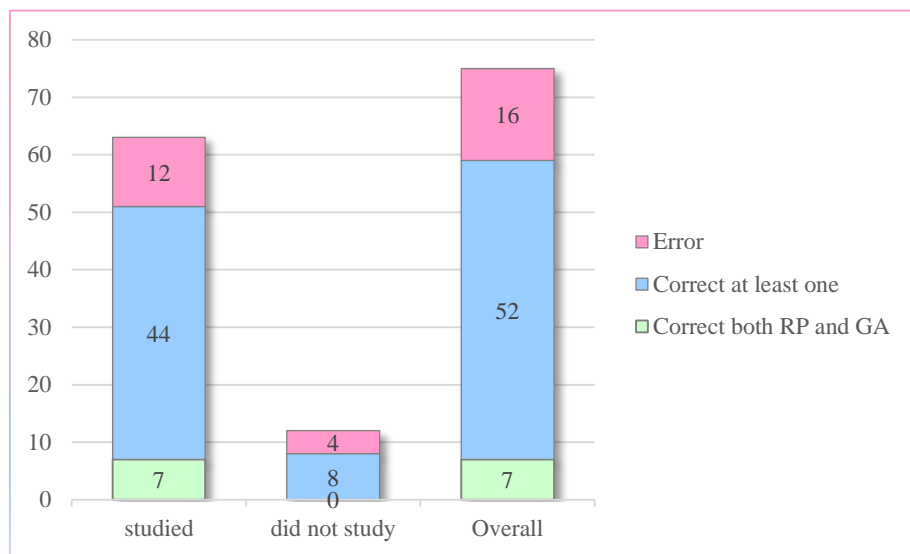
Taking the results from Figure 34, only 7 respondents correctly mark both possible transcriptions /wɜːd/ (RP) and /wɜːrd/ (GA); these respondents also studied phonetics and phonology at university. Teachers who did not study phonetics and phonology mark either one of the possibilities or the wrong transcription. Overall, those who studied the field are only slightly more successful (80.95 %) than those who did not study it (66.67 %).[7]

---

[6]division of respondents who studied and did not study phonetics and phonology at university

[7] respondents who mark both correct answer and those who mark only one correct answer are included in the percentage

77

7.19 What is the phonetic transcription of the word FATHER?

/ˈfaːdr/

/ˈfaːðə(r)/

/ˈfaːdə(r)/

/ˈfaːθə(r)/

Figure 35: Correct/error ratio in question 19 – 'father' (see also Table 35a and 35b in Appendix 2)
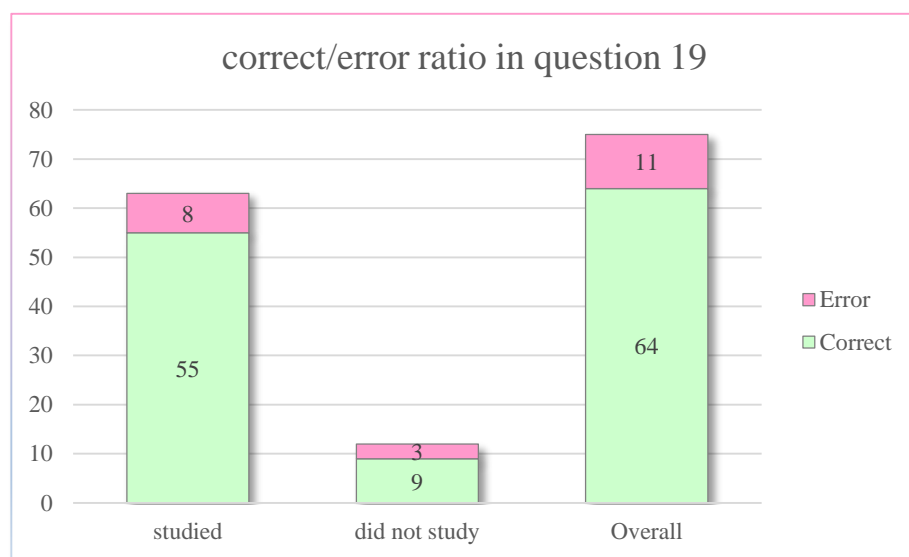
Using the data from Figure 35, an improvement can be seen here. 87.30 % of respondents who studied phonetics and phonology choose the correct answer. The number of those who did not study phonetics and phonology and marked the correct answer increases to 75 %. When investigating the most frequent errors, a surprising finding was discovered; half of the teachers (81.81%) who made an error, incorrectly chose the transcription /ˈfɑːθə(r)/ as they mistook the phoneme /ð/ for /θ/. The question is, to what extent it is the absence of knowledge or merely a confusion. In addition to that, those were more or less the teachers who studied phonetics and phonology, claimed that their level of English is between C1–C2 and they rated their confidence in English pronunciation as 4 out of 5 stars (see also Table 35b).

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[8] division of respondents who studied and did not study phonetics and phonology at university

7.20 Choose one group of words that contains silent letters only:

subtle; tomb; submit

comb; knight; calm; hour

debt; debit; knife; hope

Figure 36: Correct/error ratio in question 20 – silent letters (see also Table 36 in Appendix 2)
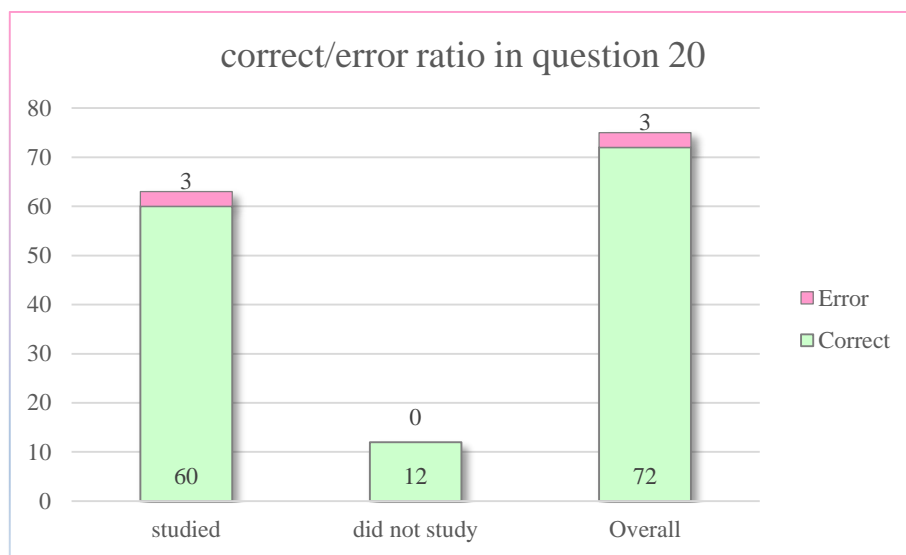
Excellent data results are presented in Figure 36; only 4 % of all involved teachers incorrectly marked the first set of words (subtle; tomb; submit). Silent letters often cause troubles to Czech learners; in the Czech language it is common practice to pronounce all graphemes in the words.

7.21 Complex Analysis

In the previous chapter, the results from the questionnaire were presented and commented on. However, it is essential to put some of these results in context and investigate them in more depth. As this diploma project is focused on teachers' attitudes towards teaching English pronunciation at lower secondary schools, data concerning this topic (subchapter 7.12) will be take into consideration the most.

One respondent's set of answers cannot be evaluated in the 'Attitudes towards teaching pronunciation' part as the person did not mark any of the statements in this part. However, the option 'I do not know' is marked quite a lot of time. These respondents use it mostly when considering statements aiming at their own lessons

planning, the way they implement pronunciation into them. It raises the question of whether they teach English pronunciation or not.

51.67 % of respondents who claim "it is important to me to pronounce words correctly" also mark the statement "it is important to me to speak with good intonation and rhythm". Interestingly, nearly 10 % of those who completely agree with the first statement mostly do not agree or do not agree at all with the second statement. In other words, segmental features are of greater importance to them. Correct pronunciation includes both rhythm and intonation, and such different attitudes towards segmental and suprasegmental phonology are rather unexpected, yet understandable.

Vast majority of respondents agree on the statement that the theory of phonetics and phonology is vital for the teachers. Despite this fact, the pronunciation exercises discover that respondents who studied it at university have worse results. This might be caused by a number of different reasons. First of all, the questionnaire, even though filled in by 75 respondents, is not distributed evenly throughout all the English levels therefore the data might be skewed. Secondly, the number of teachers who studied phonetics and phonology are noticeably higher. For that reason, there is a higher probability of making more errors.

The outcomes of the research part clearly proves that the textbook *Project* is the most frequently used one at lower secondary level. Considering this textbook, the respondents' attitudes were analysed. Mostly, the teachers using Project as the only textbook in their lessons do not do its pronunciation exercises with their leaners. They either use modern technology or their own ideas and methods instead (see also Table 37 in Appendix 2). To verify their statements, *Project 4* third edition was chosen as an example. Each unit contains an exercise introducing a segmental or suprasegmental feature (see also Picture 1–3 in Appendix 3). As have already been mentioned in the theoretical part, these exercises do not provide further explanation or comparison of similar sounds in the Czech language. They are therefore often based only on listening to either separate words (these × sees) or pronunciation of specific sounds occurring in given words (hear, wear). As can be seen, the sounds chosen for the textbook are mostly the most problematic phonemes as their pronunciation is rather specific for English language. The correct pronunciation of these phonemes has to be provided by the teacher, they have to know the place of articulation to be able to explain to the learners where the phonemes are produced (see also chapter 3.1.1).

8   Summary of the questionnaire

Considering teachers' attitudes towards teaching English pronunciation, the outcomes of the questionnaire are rather satisfying. It seems that teachers have a positive attitude towards English pronunciation in general, and they truly include teaching pronunciation into their lessons. Equally, the results of this research method has to be considered carefully when concluding the data. The respondents' answers are rather informative as their statements could not be verified in practice due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The stated hypotheses for this thesis are as follows:

1. There is a great number of teachers who neglect teaching pronunciation properly in their lessons.

2. Teaching English pronunciation should be as practical as possible in order to expose learners to the authentic language.

3. There are not enough exercises for practising English pronunciation in the textbooks as these exercises do not involve aspects specific for the first language of the learners.

The results of the questionnaire disprove the first hypothesis of the research part. Vast majority of respondents also use modern technology to teach pronunciation to make their lessons more authentic. However, the percentage of teachers who teach English pronunciation systematically is just slightly higher than the percentage of those who teach it rather occasionally or do not teach it by any means. The goal of teaching any language is to be able to communicate in it, and pronunciation is an inseparable part of the process towards achieving it.

The second and third aforementioned hypothesis are interrelated, and both are clearly confirmed. Nearly every respondent agrees that the pronunciation part of the lesson should be as practical as possible. In fact, this is the only statement where almost all responses (96 %) are consistent. The teachers also employ modern technology into their lessons, and they take advantage of the possibilities of the Internet, educational websites and software, applications, etc. That being said, the textbooks are not considered ample to work with and they do not provide a wide range of exercises for practise, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Despite that, as it has been already

mentioned in the theoretical part, many authors consider using modern technology as a outstanding way of teaching English pronunciation at lower secondary schools.

9   Conclusion

Knowing the theory of English phonetics and phonology does not guarantee that teachers use the correct pronunciation themselves. They do not have to sound like native speakers, however, they should not ignore differences between pronunciations of these two languages. Based on the practical part of the questionnaire, the teachers who did not study English phonetics and phonology have clearly better results than those who studied it (again, the data might be skewed as the number of respondents who studied phonetics and phonology is higher). And what is more, the most errors are made by those respondents who claim to be confident enough about their pronunciation skills.

All things considered, there is always room for improvement. Nevertheless, the teachers' responses proves that they do not neglect teaching pronunciation. Instead, they improve their lessons by using modern technology in order to make their lessons more authentic and also enjoyable. This conclusion is also the suggestion for all teachers of English. The lessons should be as practical as possible with the use of authentic materials. "The frequency in which students have opportunity to speak or listen to the target language is what matters here. The higher the frequency, the more proficient EFL learners may become in pronunciation" (Metruk, 2020, p. 40). The pronunciation of words ought to be presented with the grammar or lexical item simultaneously, and to obtain the English rhythm and intonation, the imitation is an excellent technique. Also, it is recommended to be informed as much as possible of the widespread accents of English in order to show the learners the comprehensive picture that there is not only one correct pronunciation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: An example of a filled questionnaire

Teachers' Attitude Towards Teaching English Pronunciation at Lower Secondary Schools in the Czech Republic

1

Age:

✓ | 39 |

2

Sex

- ○ Male
- ☑ Female

3

Did you study at faculty of education/arts to become a qualified English teacher?

meaning you have a master's degree in teaching English language at lower secondary schools

- ☑ Yes, I am qualified.
- ○ No, I am not qualified.

4

(Only for those who studied English at facuties of eduaction/arts.) Which university did you attend?

| Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem |

5

(Only for those who DID NOT study at faculties of education/arts.) Have you attended any additional qualification courses to allow you to teach English at lower secondary school?

in Czech language "didaktika anglického jazyka pro ZŠ", pedagogické minimum", usually two-term distant study

- ○ Yes, I have.
- ○ No, I have not.
- ○ No, I have not, however, I am planning to.

6

Are English classes in your school at some point divided by learners' level of English?

select one answer

◯

◯ Yes, they are.

◯ No, they are not.

◯ Other...

7

How long have you been teaching?

◯ 0-2 years

✔ 2-5 years

◯ 5-10 years

◯ 10 and more years

8

What is your level of English?

◯ B1-B2

◯ B2

◯ B2-C1

◯ C1

◯ C1-C2

✔ C2

Have you studied English phonetics and phonology at university?

- ✓ Yes, I have.
- ○ No, I have not.

How confident are you about your level of English pronunciation?

1 star = not very confident ; 5 star = very confident

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

▲
5/5

Your attitude towards LEARNING English pronunciation (EP)

select one answer in each row

	I agree	I mostly agree	I mostly disagree	I disagree	I do not know
I have a positive relationship to learning EP.	✓	○	○	○	○
My knowledge of EP is on a high level.	✓	○	○	○	○
It is important to me to pronounce words correctly.	✓	○	○	○	○
I learned EP through TV shows, films, podcasts, online videos etc.	✓	○	○	○	○
My pronunciation is mostly infuenced by Czech accent.	○	○	✓	○	○
I have difficulties learning EP.	○	○	✓	○	○
I rather focus on grammar and vocabulary.	○	○	○	✓	○
It is important to me to speak with good intonation and rhythm.	✓	○	○	○	○

Your attitude towards TEACHING English pronunciation (EP) in your lessons:

select one answer in each row

	I agree	I mostly agree	I mostly disagree	I disagree	I do not know
EP is an important language system to teach.	✓	○	○	○	○
Teaching EP is important to improve speaking and listening.	✓	○	○	○	○

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers' pronunciation influences learners' pronunciation.	☑	○	○	○	○
Teacher should know the theory of English phonetics and phonology.	○	○	○	☑	○
In my lessons I teach EP systematically.	○	☑	○	○	○
In my lessons I teach EP only in advanced classes.	○	○	☑	○	○
I use modern technology (apps, computer software, websites etc.) for teaching EP.	☑	○	○	○	○
Pronunciation part of the lesson should be as practical as possible.	☑	○	○	○	○
I use various techniques to teach EP.	☑	○	○	○	○
I only use exercises from the textbooks.	○	○	☑	○	○

13

What English accent do you teach?

select one or more answers

- ☑ British English (RP)
- ☐ American English (GA)
- ☐ Both RP and GA.
- ☐ None of them. (please specify)

14

What English accents should learners encounter (not learn) at lower secondary schools?

select one or more answers

- ☑ British English (RP)
- ☑ American English (GA)
- ☐ Only RP and GA.
- ☐ Accents that are widespread (RP, GA, Australian, Indian, ...).
- ☐ Other...

15

What textbooks do you use in your lessons?

select one or more answers

- ☐ Project
- ☐ Look!
- ☐ English in Motion
- ☐ Project Explore
- ☐ Click on
- ☐ Your Space

☐ Motivate!	☐ English Plus
☑ New Challenges	☐ Interactive
☐ Access	☐ Upstream
☐ Think	☐ Own It!
☐ Optimise	☐ Focus
☐ Impact	☐ Prepare!
☑ Wider World	☐ Beyond
☐ Gateway	☐ More!
☐ Eyes Open	☐ Oxford Discover Grammar
☐ Next Move	☐ Flash on English
☑ Other...	

Maturita solutions, activator

16

Pronunciation exercises in textbooks and other materials:

select one or more statements you agree with

☑ I am satisfied with the number of such exercises in our textbooks.

☐ I am satisfied with the quality of pronunciation exercises.

☐ There are such exercises but I do not use them. I make up more authentic ways to teach EP.

☐ There are such exercises but I do not teach EP.

☐

☐ There are not many exercises in the textbook.

☐ There are the same types of pronunciation exercises repeated in the textbook.

☐ I only use exercises from textbooks.

tps://my.survio.com/I1T7W1P3P5X9J7E1C3A3/data/view

8/11

17

Is the phonetic transcription of the two words the same?

select one answer in each row

	Yes, it is.	No, it is not.	I do not know.
CUP x CAP	○	☑	○
VINE x WINE	☑	○	○
BYE x BUY	☑	○	○
LET x LED	○	☑	○
DOG x DOCK	○	☑	○
AISLE x ISLE	☑	○	○

18

What is the possible phonetic transcription of the word below?

WORD

☐

tps://my.survio.com/I1T7W1P3P5X9J7E1C3A3/data/view

9/11

91

- [ ] /wɒrd/
- [ ] /wərd/
- [ ] /wɜːd/
- [x] /word/
- [ ] /wɜːrd/

19

What is the phonetic transcription of the word FATHER?

- ( ) /fɑːdr/
- ( ) /ˈfɑːðə(r)/
- ( ) /ˈfɑːdə(r)/
- (x) /ˈfɑːθə(r)/

20

Choose one group of words that contains silent letters only:

- ( ) subtle; tomb; submit
- (x) comb; knight; calm; hour
- ( ) debt; debit; knife; hope

Appendix 2: List of tables

Table 1

Respondents' age

Min	Max	Avg
37	24	60

Table 2

Respondents' sex

Sex	sum	%
Female	70	93,33%
Male	5	6,67%

Table 3

Respondents' qualification

Qualification	sum	%
Yes	57	76,00%
No	18	24,00%

Table 4

Universities the respondents studied at

University		sum	%
Title	Abbreviation		
Masarykova Univerzita	MUNI	14	24,56%
Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci	UPOL	10	17,54%
Univerzita J.E.Purkyně v Ústí nad Labem	UJEP	6	10,53%
Západočeská Univerzita v Plzni	ZCU	5	8,77%
Univerzita Karlova	UK	3	5,26%
Univerzita Hradec Králové	UHK	3	5,26%
Jihočeská Univerzita v Českých Budějovicích	JCU	2	3,51%
Ostravská Univerzita	OSU	2	3,51%
Technická Univerzita v Liberci	TUL	2	3,51%
Metropolitní Univerzita Praha	MUP	1	1,75%
České vysoké učení technické v Praze	ČVUT	1	1,75%
unknown	Unknown	8	14,04%

Table 5

Additional qualification courses

Qualification	sum	%
Yes	8	44,44%
No	6	33,33%
Planning to	2	11,11%
Qualification and a course	4	-
unknown	2	11,11%

Table 6

Classroom division

Class division	sum	%
Yes	23	30,67%
No	52	69,33%
Other *	5	9,62%

*only one class (there are several pupils with learning difficulties)

*only pupils with special needs - they are marked or judged a little bit different

*only some classes

*some groups are divided, some of them are not

*some are depending on preferences of individual teachers. Some teachers who are not strong in English prefer to work with less proficient pupils.

Note. Row 'Other' included in category 'Yes'

Table 7

Teaching practice

0-2	2-5	5-10	10+
14	17	13	31

Table 8

Teachers' level of English

Level	sum	%
B2	3	4,00%
B2-C1	11	14,67%
C1	18	24,00%
C1-C2	27	36,00%
C2	16	21,33%

Table 9

Phonetics and phonology study

Qualification	sum	%
Yes	63	84,00%
No	12	16,00%

Table 10

Respondents' pronunciation confidence

Stars	sum	%
1	0	0,00%
2	2	2,67%
3	14	18,67%
4	41	54,67%
5	18	24,00%

Table 11

Positive relationship to learning EP

Range	sum	%
I agree	43	57,33%
I mostly agree	26	34,67%
I mostly disagree	4	5,33%
I disagree	2	2,67%
I do not know	0	0,00%

Table 12

High level of EP

Range	sum	%
I agree	23	30,67%
I mostly agree	39	52,00%
I mostly disagree	8	10,67%
I disagree	2	2,67%
I do not know	3	4,00%

Table 13

The importance of correct pronunciation

Range	sum	%
I agree	60	80,00%
I mostly agree	14	18,67%
I mostly disagree	1	1,33%
I disagree	0	0,00%
I do not know	0	0,00%

Table 14

Learning EP through media

Range	sum	%
I agree	26	34,67%
I mostly agree	27	36,00%
I mostly disagree	16	21,33%
I disagree	5	6,67%
I do not know	1	1,33%

Table 15

Czech accent influence

Range	sum	%
I agree	5	6,67%
I mostly agree	16	21,33%
I mostly disagree	25	33,33%
I disagree	25	33,33%
I do not know	4	5,33%

Table 16

Difficulties learning EP

Range	sum	%
I agree	4	5,33%
I mostly agree	9	12,00%
I mostly disagree	26	34,67%
I disagree	34	45,33%
I do not know	2	2,67%

Table 17

Focus on grammar and vocabulary

Range	sum	%
I agree	7	9,33%
I mostly agree	21	28,00%
I mostly disagree	30	40,00%
I disagree	16	21,33%
I do not know	1	1,33%

Table 18

The importance of good intonation and rhythm

Range	sum	%
I agree	37	49,33%
I mostly agree	30	40,00%
I mostly disagree	6	8,00%
I disagree	1	1,33%
I do not know	1	1,33%

Table 19

EP as an important language system

Range	sum	%
I agree	42	56,00%
I mostly agree	28	37,33%
I mostly disagree	4	5,33%
I disagree	0	0,00%
I do not know	0	0,00%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 20

The importance of EP in speaking and listening

Range	sum	%
I agree	48	64,00%
I mostly agree	25	33,33%
I mostly disagree	1	1,33%
I disagree	0	0,00%
I do not know	0	0,00%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 21

Teachers' pronunciation influence

Range	sum	%
I agree	56	74,67%
I mostly agree	17	22,67%
I mostly disagree	1	1,33%
I disagree	0	0,00%
I do not know	0	0,00%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 22

Knowledge of phonetics and phonology

Range	sum	%
I agree	38	50,67%
I mostly agree	25	33,33%
I mostly disagree	5	6,67%
I disagree	5	6,67%
I do not know	1	1,33%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 23

Systematic English pronunciation teaching

Range	sum	%
I agree	13	17,33%
I mostly agree	28	37,33%
I mostly disagree	23	30,67%
I disagree	8	10,67%
I do not know	2	2,67%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 24

Teaching EP only to advanced classes

Range	sum	%
I agree	3	4,00%
I mostly agree	3	4,00%
I mostly disagree	22	29,33%
I disagree	41	54,67%
I do not know	5	6,67%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 25a

Modern technology employment

Range	sum	%
I agree	32	42,67%
I mostly agree	26	34,67%
I mostly disagree	8	10,67%
I disagree	8	10,67%
I do not know	0	0,00%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 25b

Use of modern technology according to the respondents' age

Age	Sum	%
up to 40	36	59,02%
40 and above	25	40,98%
Total	61	100,00%

* the average age is approximately 40

Table 26

Practical pronunciation teaching

Range	sum	%
I agree	52	69,33%
I mostly agree	20	26,67%
I mostly disagree	0	0,00%
I disagree	0	0,00%
I do not know	2	2,67%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 27

Various techniques for teaching EP

Range	sum	%
I agree	27	36,00%
I mostly agree	22	29,33%
I mostly disagree	15	20,00%
I disagree	5	6,67%
I do not know	5	6,67%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 28

Textbook exercises

Range	sum	%
I agree	5	6,67%
I mostly agree	6	8,00%
I mostly disagree	26	34,67%
I disagree	33	44,00%
I do not know	4	5,33%
Unknown	1	1,33%

Table 29

Taught accents

Accent	sum	%
RP	49	65,33%
GA	1	1,33%
Both	25	33,33%

Table 30

Accents exposure

Accent	sum	%
RP	17	22,67%
GA	1	1,33%
Only RP and GA	16	21,33%
Widespread Accents	39	52,00%
Other *	2	2,67%

*It´s difficult because the textbooks and vocabulary follow RP but the kids or pupils watch very often American films and they use American words or GA

*Any. In real life they will mostly use English to talk to non-native speakers of English.

Table 31a

Textbooks usage

#	Textbook title	sum	%
1	Project	52	51,49%
2	Project Explore	9	8,91%
3	English Plus	5	4,95%
4	Gateway	4	3,96%
5	Others	31	30,69%

Table 31b

Others category in Table X - three and less use

#	Textbook title	sum
1	Bloggers	3
2	New Challenges	3
3	Spark	2
4	Your Space	3
5	Close-up	1
6	Fraus	1
7	Happy Street	1
8	Hello Kids	1
9	HotSpot	1
10	Insight	1
11	Kid's box	1
12	Maturita Solutions	1
13	Messages	1
14	More!	1
15	Motivate!	1
16	New English File	1
17	Perspectives	1
18	Prepare!	1
19	Wider World	1
20	Activator	1
21	DK English for Everyone	1
22	None *	3

Table 32

Evaluation of the EP exercises in textbooks

Statement	sum	%
I am satisfied with the number of such exercises in our textbooks.	21	19,09%
I am satisfied with the quality of pronunciation exercises.	16	14,55%
There are such exercises but I do not use them. I make up more authentic ways to teach EP.	30	27,27%
There are such exercises but I do not teach EP.	1	0,91%
There are not many exercises in the textbook.	21	19,09%
There are the same types of pronunciation exercises repeated in the textbook.	18	16,36%
I only use exercises from textbooks.	3	2,73%

Table 33

Overall pronunciation pairs results

	Phonetic Pairs					
Answer	cup/cap	vine/whine	buy/bye	let/led	dog/dock	aisle/isle
Correct	74	59	71	65	72	58
Error	1	14	2	7	3	16
I don't know	0	2	2	3	0	1
Per cent	98,67%	78,67%	94,67%	86,67%	96,00%	77,33%

Table 34

Correct/error ratio in question 18 (the word 'word')

	Studied phonology		
Answer	Yes	No	Overall
Correct both RP and GA	7	0	7
Correct at least one	44	8	52
Error	12	4	16
Total	63	12	75
Percentage	80,95%	66,67%	69,33%

Table 35a

Correct/error ratio in question 19 (the word 'father')

	Studied phonology		
Answer	Yes	No	Overall
Correct	55	9	64
Error	8	3	11
Total	63	12	75
Percentage	87,30%	75,00%	85,33%

Table 35b

Choosing /ˈfɑːθə(r)/ as a correct answer

C2	1
C1-C2	4
C1	0
Total	5
Percentage	6,67%

Table 36

Correct/error ratio in question 20 (silent letters)

	Studied phonology		
Answer	Yes	No	Overall
Correct	60	12	72
Error	3	0	3
Total	63	12	75
Percentage	95,24%	100,00%	96,00%

Table 37

Users of Project and modern technology

	sum	
Statement	Total	Technology
There are such exercises but I do not use them. I make up more authentic ways to teach EP.	14	7
There are not many exercises in the textbook.	11	11
I am satisfied with the number of such exercises in our textbooks.	10	8

Note. Teachers who use the textbook Project, their evaluation and implementing modern technology into their lessons.

Table 38

Use of modern technology according to the respondents' age

Age	Sum	%
up to 40	36	59,02%
40 and above	25	40,98%
Total	61	100,00%

* the average age is approximately 40

Figure 37: Picture 1: Phonetic alphabet: revision (textbook Project 4, 3rd edition, p. 5)

Pronunciation

Phonetic alphabet: revision

8 a Are the symbols for vowels (v) or consonants (c)?

/ʊ/ /ð/ /ɜː/ /ɒ/ /tʃ/ /ʒ/ /ə/ /ʃ/ /ʌ/ /θ/

b Match the symbols to the parts of the words in bold.

fun shoe moment usually think
girl match wrong look this

c [1.5] Listen, check and repeat.

d Write two more words for each sound.

Figure 38: Picture 2 Sentence stress (textbook Project 4, 3rd edition, p. 7)

Pronunciation

Sentence stress

9 a [1.10] Listen and repeat. Keep the rhythm.

1 They're going to take ...
   They're going to take the bus.

2 I'm going to clean ...
   I'm going to clean the car.

3 She's going to pay ...
   She's going to pay for the tickets.

4 He's going to watch ...
   He's going to watch the match.

b [1.10] Listen again. Mark the syllables with the stress in the complete sentences. There are three in each sentence.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Bc. Barbora Gomolová
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Jana Kořínková, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2021

Název práce:	Přístupy učitelů anglického jazyka k výuce výslovnosti na 2. stupni ZŠ v České republice
Název práce v angličtině:	Teachers' Attitudes towards Teaching English Pronunciation at Lower Secondary Schools in the Czech Republic
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zaměřuje na přístupy učitelů k výuce anglické výslovnosti na základních školách v České republice. Teoretická část zdůrazňuje rozdíly segmentálních a některých suprasegmentálních aspektů obou jazyků a klade důraz na správnou výuku anglické výslovnosti. Hypotézy výzkumné části se vztahují na její zanedbávání a formu její výuky. Výstupy jsou analyzovány jak samostatně, tak komplexně, a v závěru práce dochází ke zhodnocení výuky výslovnosti.
Klíčová slova	výslovnost, fonetika, fonologie, přízvuk, učitelství, 2. stupeň ZŠ, učitelé, žáci, angličtina
Anotace práce v angličtině:	The aim of the diploma thesis is to examine the teachers' attitudes towards teaching English pronunciation at lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic. The theoretical part of the diploma project is focused on the differences between Czech and English segmental and suprasegmental aspects and the importance of teaching pronunciation correctly. The hypotheses are targeted at neglecting teaching pronunciation in the lessons and textbooks usage for practising it. The outcomes are presented and analysed in the last chapter together with the conclusion.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	pronunciation, phonetics, phonology, accents, teaching, lower secondary school, teachers, learners, English
Přílohy vázané v práci:	2
Rozsah práce:	
Jazyk práce:	angličtina

Résumé

Tato diplomová práce se zaměřuje na přístupy učitelů anglického jazyka k výuce výslovnosti na druhém stupni základních škol. Cílem bylo zjistit, jak učitelé k této problematice přistupují a zdali ji ve svých hodinách neopomíjejí. Konkrétně je praktická část zaměřena na přístupy učitelů jak k učení se anglické výslovnosti, tak k jejímu vyučování. Z analýzy dat vyplývá, že učitelé k tomuto jazykovému systému přistupují ve svých hodinách zodpovědně, a to dokonce za hojného využívání moderních technologií.