UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

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Ústav cizích jazyků

Bakalářská práce

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Focus on English rhythm and intonation at lower secondary school

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila pouze uvedené prameny literatury a elektronické zdroje.

V Olomouci dne 17. 4. 2023   …………………………………

Monika Trochtová

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Abstract

The purpose of this work was to determine the current state of teaching English at Czech lower secondary schools from the teachers' perspective. For this reason, a survey involving 88 teachers teaching English at lower secondary school was conducted.

The results showed that the teachers believe that intonation and rhythm are part of English language teaching, at least sometimes or rarely. The analysis also demonstrated that among the most common problems in teaching intonation and rhythm, teachers perceive a lack of methodological support or a lack of materials. Other obstacles are learners' lack of interest, teachers' lack of knowledge of the issue, the difficulty of the issue or lack of time. The choice of textbook used in teaching can play a significant role in the extent to which intonation and rhythm are included in the teaching.

From these results may be stated that teachers believe that intonation and rhythm are mostly included in the teaching of English at lower secondary schools, but there are many obstacles and problems, including the choice of textbook used, which need to be prevented and improved.

Introduction

Intonation and rhythm are important aspects of English that are relatively little discussed in the classroom but can make communication much clearer. I chose the topic of rhythm and intonation at lower secondary schools because I think it is often neglected in Czech education system or in English language teaching in general. At the same time, I was interested in connecting this topic with music, which has been my hobby for many years. Since my professional goal is to become a teacher, I would like to use this opportunity to deepen my knowledge and realize the importance of teaching rhythm and intonation. In general, I feel that it is useful to know the state of teaching intonation and rhythm and possibly focus more on these aspects in the future (as future teachers), because these suprasegmental features are an integral part of (not only) the English language.

The main aim of this Bachelor thesis is to investigate the state of teaching intonation and rhythm at lower secondary schools from the perspective of English language teachers.

The theoretical part of this thesis aims to define the basic concepts related to this issue, to describe the aspects that can significantly influence intonation and rhythm, or the importance and significance of intonation and rhythm. The theoretical part also describes the understanding of this issue in the RVP and in selected English language textbooks, the most common problems and obstacles occurring in teaching from the perspective of teachers and students, as well as methods and activities contributing to the improvement of intonation and rhythm in English.

The practical part consists of quantitative research where a questionnaire is used to determine the state of teaching intonation and rhythm at lower secondary schools from the perspective of teachers, namely whether this issue is part of English language teaching, what are the most common obstacles from the perspective of teachers and whether the choice of textbooks used in teaching influences the degree of inclusion of this issue in teaching.

1.   INTONATION

In addition to rhythm, stress, length and tone, intonation is also a suprasegmental feature and is one of the basic features of language acquisition. However, care must be taken to note the differences between British and American intonation. Considering the teaching of English in Czech lower secondary schools, where British English is recommended and more widespread, this general chapter on intonation will focus on British intonation. Important general terms will be introduced first, followed by the functions of intonation itself, the aspects that affect it, and its overall meaning and importance.

1.1. Intonation in general

The issue of intonation is very extensive and complex, thus for a better understanding of it, it would be useful to mention a few basic terms that are closely related to the concept of intonation.

Intonation is based on a unit known as the *tone group*. It is not determined by how long it should be, but it should convey some information. It includes the melody of speech. Halliday (1970, p. 3-6) also mentions the term *tonic prominence,* which is the most important content part of a tone group.

Another term is an *intonational phrase.* In essence, it is a phrase with set patterns. There are usually one, two or even more intonational phrases in an utterance. The typical feature is a higher pitch on stressed syllables. It can have several functions such as anticipating the continuation of a sentence by raising the pitch at the end of the intonational phrase. Sometimes it is mistaken with syntactic clauses which do not determine the intonation. Intonation is more a matter of conveyed information than syntactic structures (Ladefoged, 2006, p. 117-118).

The term *tonic syllable* refers to a salient syllable with a major role in the tone group where it also sets the pitch movement (Halliday, 1970, p. 4). Ordinarily, it may take the form of the last stressed syllable that conveys new information. Tonic syllable can be considered as one of the tools to emphasise information or even to slightly change the expression of a sentence (Ladefoged, 2006, p. 117; Roach, 2009, p. 130).

It should be also mentioned that there are four elemental types of intonation - fall, rise, fall-rise and rise-fall. Each of these types has basic requirements in which situation it should be used.

For foreign learners, it is good to know their existence and basic rules when using them unless they want to be misunderstood by native speakers (Roach, 2009, p. 147-148).

1.2. Function of intonation

Roach (2009, p. 146-147) mentions several functions of intonation. The most significant function may be to express emotions, our current mood and attitudes. However, it can also indicate focusing on essential words within a sentence or be useful in distinguishing the end of a phrase or sentence or, for example, in distinguishing interrogative mood from indicative mood. The use of intonation could make communication much more intelligible.

According to Yusupova (et. al, 2019), in agreement with Roach (2009, p. 146-147), intonation also has an important grammatical function, although in real speech there is no one strict rule but many variations of intonation patterns.

Yusupova (et. al, 2019) further divides the types of grammatical sentences into:

- *Information questions (with Who, what, where, etc.)* with falling intonation
- *Questions expecting* with rising intonation
- *Statements and Imperatives* with falling intonation
- *Question tags expecting confirmation* with falling intonation
- *List of items* with rising, rising and finally falling intonation.

However, intonation cannot change the whole lexical meaning because English does not belong to *tone languages* (Roach, 2009, p. 122).

1.3. Aspects influencing intonation

There are several aspects which might influence intonation. First of all, as Ward (1962, p. 169) points out, intonation is a very individual matter which may depend on our personality. He also speaks about geographical distinctions. These are also related to dialects which are mentioned by Ripman (1947, p. 154). Obviously, each dialect or even language has its specific manifestations and other requisites.

Another factor affecting intonation is the style of speaking. It makes a substantial difference whether someone speaks slowly or quickly, and it depends on the degree of formality as well (Ladefoged, 2006, p. 118).

The quality of intonation also relies on the speaker's mood at the moment. Intonation would slightly change depending on whether the speaker is happy and content or feels miserable. The same point is with the speaker's attitude towards the discussed topics (Ladefoged, 2006, p. 124).

1.4. The importance of intonation

Roach considers learning intonation as an important but very tough and complex issue which might help learners with their fluency. The time that a learner must devote to learning a tone of language is individual, depending on listening skills as well as their mother tongue language (Roach, 2009, p. 126-128). By following some basic intonational rules, speech can sound more natural, statements can convey a certain expression and it is easier to emphasize the important message. Thanks to intonation and stress we can decide or highlight what is old and new information.

2. RHYTHM

Rhythm is another of the suprasegmental features that this chapter will address. Again, general concepts, factors affecting rhythm, its importance, as well as stress and phrasing, which are integral parts of rhythm and go hand in hand with it, will be discussed.

2.1. Rhythm in general

Rhythm is deemed as one of the aspects of connected speech. Generally, the word rhythm means something that occurs at regular intervals of time. According to Roach (2009, p. 107), English is considered to have a *stress-timed rhythm*. It basically means that stressed syllables can be found at more or less regular intervals of time regardless of how many unstressed syllables there are in between.

The basic unit of rhythm is a *foot*. It could be said that one foot is the span of two stressed syllables. The important thing is that a foot should commence with the stressed one which can be described as a beat. It is worth noting that Roach (2009, p. 108) speaks about stressed syllables which Halliday (1970, p. 1-3) refutes because of its many other meanings, and therefore he uses the term *salient*. It is not necessary to begin an utterance with a salient beat and then continue in rhythm. Furthermore, dividing a sentence into feet is not unified, there are more potential ways of doing this. Influence by music is evident by Halliday's (1970, p. 1-3) comparing the foot unit to the music bar.

According to Roach (2009, p. 109-110), the existence of regular rhythm in English is not clear, perhaps because of the following aspects influencing rhythm. Nevertheless, he states that it is still valuable for foreign language learners to learn the difference between strong and weak syllables which are closely related to rhythm. On the other hand, the evidence that English is a rhythmical language supports Ward with his statement *"English is a language of strongly marked rhythm, [...]"* (Ward, 1962, p. 167-168).

Roach (2009, p. 117) considers practising rhythm as meaningful. At least, learners should be aware of such difficult aspects of English.

2.2. Stress and phrasing

In general, stress is closely tied to the rhythm and can take several forms. Conception of *tonic stress* is described as the syllable in a word which receives the most stress in a tone unit and it tends to give an emphasis on a specific word with a vital information content. It is directly connected not only to rhythm but also to intonation (Roach, 2009, p. 153-157; Hill et. al, 1992, p. 1219). Using this term is refuted by Halliday (1970, p. 4) because of possible confusion and he replaces it with the term tonic prominence (already discussed in the chapter 1.1.) showing that it is more related to intonation than to rhythm.

In the terms of phrasing, Ripman (1947, p. 162) speaks about sense groups which can be characterised as groups of words which are related to meaning and they should be pronounced together without pausing. Punctuation is not the only feature of pausing.

2.3. Factors influencing rhythm

There are several factors influencing rhythm. An important element that affects the rhythm in a sentence may appear to be stress-shift. Teachers should be able to apprise their pupils of basic rules of stress-shift and its application. Another cardinal factor is our individuality and characteristics. Rhythm (as well as intonation) might be dependent on the style of our speaking or even on our mood (Roach, 2009, p. 109).

2.4. The importance of rhythm

The correct rhythm of English contributes to the mutual intelligibility of speakers and reduces the possibility of misunderstandings. Solé Sabater (1991, p. 145-146) gives as an example of the possible substitution of positive modal verbs for negative ones when words and sentences are incorrectly stressed. Learners should note that a distinction is made between word and sentence stress, and that when word stress changes, word meaning may also change. Whereas sentence stress emphasises the part of the message that is more significant to the speaker and on which he wants the listener to focus (Solé Sabater, 1991, p. 150-151).

Benrabah (1997, as cited in Fischler, 2019, p. 2) notes the importance and explicitness of teaching rhythm, not least because word and sentence stress are to some extent unique and different from other stress-timed languages. To cite the words of Ladefoged (2006, p. 115), *"It is just that English has a number of processes that act together to maintain the rhythm."* He

mentioned primarily two of these processes. First, it is usual for stressed words to become unstressed in order to keep better sentence rhythm and flow. Second, unstable or variable stress can be found in some words. It is advisable to learn word stress in order to achieve the best possible rhythm (Ladefoged, 2006, p. 115-116). Furthermore, he also mentions that there is "[...] a *tendency to minimalize the variation in the length of words containing only a single stress, so that adjacent stresses remain much the same distance apart."* (Ladefoged, 2006, p. 116). That rhythm and stress may be one of the factors that help maintain speech fluency is also suggested by Solé Sabater (1991, p. 161).

2.5. Interconnection of rhythm and intonation

Although the basic principles of intonation and rhythm have been described individually, they go together and cannot be completely separated because they influence each other. It is important to know their specifics, but we should look at them as a whole (Hill et. al, 1992, p. 1219).

3. INTONATION AND RHYTHM REVIEWED IN RVP

To understand the issue of teaching rhythm and intonation at lower secondary schools, it is useful to find out how this issue is legislated in the RVP (Rámcový vzdělávací program), which was last amended in 2021.

RVP is an essential document of Czech education which defines certain areas and levels of education in the Czech Republic. In addition to concepts, objectives and key competencies, it also lists the so-called fields of education. In each chapter there are at least two notional parts - the expected outcomes and the compulsory curriculum. For information on the subject English, see Chapter 5 in the RVP.

The expected outcomes of English include four main disciplines: listening, speaking, reading and writing comprehension. All disciplines contain key objectives and expectations as well as minimal requirements that students should meet and are closely related to the key competencies. Among the expected outcomes there is nothing more specific to the area of intonation or rhythm. There are only elementary requirements such as that the pupil understands basic information, talks about basic topics or tells a simple story (RVP, 2021, p. 27-28).

The curriculum requirements (subject matter) are also divided into four parts: sound and graphic form of the language, vocabulary, basic topics, and grammar. Finally, the first part of the above-mentioned covers the essential points for this study, such as the development of pronunciation, the differentiation of the elements of the phonetic system by means of auditory analysis and word and sentence stress or intonation. These points and their fulfilment will be examined in the practical part of this thesis (RVP, 2021, p. 27-28).

4. INTONATION AND RHYTHM REVIEWED IN SELECTED TEXTBOOKS

For the purpose of this bachelor's thesis, four selected series of English language textbooks used at lower secondary level were used to examine content related to intonation and rhythm of speech. Some exercises from the textbooks are given as examples of materials for teaching intonation and rhythm.

4.1. Project Explore

The Project Explore textbook series is widely used at lower secondary schools and includes four volumes in total. All volumes include grammar, vocabulary, reading/writing, listening/speaking and a small section on pronunciation.

Thanks to the listening part, pupils can hear the intonation of several native speakers from the recordings and repeat after them. The pronunciation section in the first volume focuses mainly on the pronunciation of individual speech sounds (Phillips et al, 2019).

In the second volume of the textbook series, however, we can already find the paragraph and exercise on *"Sounding polite"*, where the intonation of individual sentences is directly represented by arrows, so that students can get acquainted with the basic intonation patterns (Wheeldon et. al, 2019a, p. 67).

In the *Project explore 3* textbook, for example, there is a small article on syllables, where pupils learn to count the syllables in a word and also to pronounce them correctly according to the recording. There is also, for example, an article on *"Everyday English - Giving News"*, where the intonation of the questions and subsequent answers is again indicated by arrows, which pupils have the opportunity to practise again using the recording (Wheeldon, et. al, 2019b, p. 15).

In the fourth part there is an opportunity to practise linking or word and sentence stress (Kelly et. al, 2019, p. 27,41,67).

4.2. English Plus

English Plus is a four-volume textbook. In each unit there is one page focused on speaking and also a section dedicated to pronunciation. This series of textbooks also offers many dialogues which can be especially useful in practising intonation and rhythm if a teacher uses them.

In the first volume, for example, there can be found the *Improving pronunciation* exercise focused on linking words by repeating phrases from the recording (Wetz et. al, 2018a, p. 44).

The second volume offers a little more in this area. *Making requests and compromises* (Wetz et. al, 2018b, p. 24) focuses on word stress. Learners can improve their recognition of which words in a sentence are stressed. *Expressing interest* includes exercise to practise intonation (Wetz et. al, 2018b, p. 44).

The third volume again includes practising linking words in the *Offering and asking for help* section (Wetz et. al, 2018, p. 24) and word stress in *Asking for and giving advice* (Wetz et. al, 2018, p. 54).

The fourth book in this series includes sentence stress in the *Explaining and clarifying situations* section with a link to the workbook (Wetz et. al, 2018, p. 84).

4.3. Your Space

Your space textbooks again consist of four volumes. The textbook is divided into sections on grammar, vocabulary, functions, and skills. Compared to previous textbooks, there are fewer listening and repeat exercises. Pronunciation is mostly focused on individual syllables rather than suprasegmental features such as intonation and rhythm.

In the first two parts of the textbook there is nothing about intonation or rhythm (Hobbs et. al, 2014; Hobbs et. al, 2015).

In *Your Space 3* pupils learn about word stress, syllables and their number in a word, and linking words. The sections *Giving opinions* etc. do not deal with intonation at all (Hobbs et. al, 2015).

The fourth volume of *Your Space* textbook is a slightly higher level of English. The book also includes exercise on rising and falling intonation (Hobbs et. al, 2016, p. 59).

4.4. New Sky

The New Sky is only a three-volume textbook. However, these textbooks are quite unusual because they contain extra activities such as rap, songs, games, or projects. In particular, activities like rap and songs can develop and improve the learner's English rhythm. There are also listening and reading exercises in each chapter, followed by repetition from recording. However, there is nothing that is focused more specifically on intonation (Abbs et. al, 2009 and Abbs et. al 2009).

There is a subtle difference in the *New Sky 3.* Instead of a rap, there is a limerick, which is mostly a five-line poem with an aabba rhyme scheme that can also develop a sense of the rhythm of the English language (Abbs, Freebairn & Bolton, 2009).

4.5. Summary

It is clear that although most of the above textbooks offer at least a few exercises to practice intonation and rhythm, there are not as many opportunities to practice this material in the classroom, which will also be the focus of the empirical part of this thesis.

5. PROBLEMS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH INTONATION AND RHYTHM

Of course, teaching and learning intonation and rhythm brings with it not only benefits, but also many problems and obstacles. In this chapter, some of the most well-known problems will be mentioned, both from the teacher's and the student's point of view.

5.1. Problems from the teacher's perspective

Intonation and rhythm are very closely related to pronunciation, so some general problems in teaching this suprasegmental phenomenon may be common or at least remarkably similar. Thus, in looking at the whole concept of pronunciation, Kelly (2000, p. 13). mentioned two central problems. The first could be described as a teacher's lack of interest in teaching pronunciation. This could be due to several reasons, for example: a teacher does not have enough experience in pronunciation knowledge and practise or does not know the methods and techniques of teaching it correctly. Or they simply do not consider pronunciation to be an important part of the language. The same view is shared by Bradford (1988, as cited in Kuru, 2022, p. 61), who also sees the lack of knowledge of non-native English teachers as one of the problems. However, the problem may not just be a lack of teacher knowledge, but also textbooks that do not place enough emphasis on teaching pronunciation, as Fischler (2009, p. 1) points out.

The second problem, according to Kelly (2000, p. 13), may be that the implementation of pronunciation (also intonation and rhythm) in teaching is often not well planned and structured. Thus, pronunciation is only taught when a specific problem arises in the classroom. It is, of course, necessary to correct the mistakes that pupils make, but this should not be the only way of teaching pronunciation.

Another problem may be a lack of classroom time, perhaps because teachers most often focus on segmental features of pronunciation, such as vowels, consonants or single syllables, and do not have time for supramental features such as rhythm and intonation (Gilbert, 2008; Wong, 1987 as cited in Tuan, 2010, p. 23).

Somebody argue that intonation is almost impossible to teach just because of its specific elements and different situations in which one sentence could be said in many possible ways.

However, Kelly (2000, p. 106) argues that we could at least analyse intonation patterns and try to teach intonation features. It does not matter what level students are at, teaching can be somehow implemented at all levels.

Grant (2014, p. 113) also speaks about a teacher's self-awareness, which can influence their approach to intonation. Another reason, according to her, may be poorly chosen and outdated approaches to teaching. One of the methods is to expose students to different life situations in which intonation changes depending on a person's attitude and emotions. This can be done, for example, through role-plays. It is important to expose students to these different situations (Valls, n.d.).

According to Yusupova (et. al, 2019), one of the main problems in teaching intonation may be the speaker's different attitudes towards one intonation pattern or differences such as the speaker's personal voice quality and their assumptions.

Teachers should link intonation to postures in order to increase the learner's confidence in using intonation. It is also necessary for learners to find their vocal range and feel comfortable when speaking (Yusupova et. al, 2019). Yusupova (et. al, 2019) also suggests linking intonation to a particular set of phrases in the classroom.

Teachers should also keep in mind that the learner's first language can affect the pronunciation of the second language (Kelly, 2000, p. 12).

5.2. Problems from the learner's perspective

Intonation and rhythm are much more about practice than learning theory. Learners often do not consider these features of language to be a key part of their knowledge of any language and rather focus on grammar and vocabulary rather than suprasegmental features (Kelly, 2000, p. 87).

There are some basic general rules and patterns of intonation, but on the other hand, there are still many exceptions in different situations where grammatically the same sentence can be said in a different way and tone (Kreidler, 1989, p. 182, as cited in Kuru, 2002, p. 61). Learning the correct intonation patterns is therefore sometimes a difficult task. Roach (2009, p. 119-121) points out that there may be people who are unable to distinguish between high and low notes and therefore may have some difficulty hearing intonation patterns. Intonation is such a specific aspect of a language that can be challenging to acquire. He states that compared to pronunciation; it has a completely different framework which is much more difficult for

anybody to learn. He states that it is almost impossible to learn correct intonation without regularly listening to or speaking with native speakers (Roach, 2009, p. 119-121).

As mentioned in the chapter on intonation, and as Braford (1988, as cited in Kuru, 2002, p. 61) also states, the writing of punctuation marks has grammatical rather than intonational reasons. There are no signs for stress or intonation in the normal written text. This may appear to be a problem if pupils only pay attention to punctuation marks when trying to follow English intonation.

In terms of teacher approach and methods, a poorly chosen approach to teaching intonation and rhythm can be confusing for students and can reduce their confidence in speaking English. Therefore, care must be taken to choose the right method (Grant, 2014, p. 119).

As another problem, Bradford (1988, as cited in Kuru p. 61) states that intonation patterns should remain in the subconscious level and do not affect the fluency and naturalness of the speaker's speech. However, it is not easy for a foreign student to quickly assess a given situation and organise in his/her mind certain intonation patterns to use.

6. METHODS AND ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE INTONATION AND RHYTHM IN ENGLISH

This chapter presents, to some extent, familiar methods and activities for teaching intonation and rhythm in English. It includes subsections on imitation drills, the use of gestures, jazz chants, music and song activities, rap activities and drama activities.

6.1. Imitation drills

The teaching of intonation and rhythm in English is often done by the method of imitation drills. This is one of the most classic and well-known forms of teaching using symbols. Rhythmic patterns are represented by dots, which differ for stressed and unstressed syllables. Intonation patterns are represented by arrows that indicate the direction of rise or fall intonation (Yusupova, et. al, 2019).

According to Adrian Doff as cited in Yusupova et. al (2019), *"However, intonation patterns are quite complex, and it is better for students to acquire them naturally rather than try to learn them consciously".* Pupils remember patterns more easily when they imitate them than when they just write them down or learn them by rote. Yusupova et. al (2019) suggests several other ways of teaching intonation. One of these is exaggeration, for example, or using the teacher's hand gestures. She also mentions the Back-Chainning technique, which is based on gradually adding words to longer sentences, which learners then repeat. Finally, she introduces the technique of video demonstration, where pupils improve their intonation and the rhythm of the language by repeating and imitating the intonation of a native speaker on video.

6.2. Using gestures

Yusupova et. al. (2019) suggests using the teacher's hand gestures to indicate falling or rising intonation, while Tuan (2010, p. 19) suggests teaching language rhythm by clapping hands, tapping toes, or just tapping out the rhythm on the table with your fingers or a pen. The teacher can also take on the role of conductor in the classroom, using his or her movements to control the rhythm or intonation, much like a conductor in an orchestra (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Gower et al., 2005; Kenworthy, 1987 as cited in Tuan, 2010, p. 19).

6.3. Jazz Chants

"A jazz chant is the rhythmic expression of standard American English as it occurs in a situational context." (Graham, 1986, p. 6). Even though these types of exercises were discovered in America by Carolyn Graham, and were thus created primarily for American English, it seems to be important and beneficial to mention them in this thesis.

Carolyn Graham discovered the Jazz Chants method by accident when someone spoke to her with the same rhythm she was playing on the piano (Zhang, 2011, p. 564). To cite the words of Graham, the Jazz Chants are "*[...] designed to teach the natural rhythm, stress, and intonation patterns of conversational American English."* In addition to these features, it may express emotions, feelings or the speaker's intent (Graham & S. Rosenthal, 1979, p. 5).

Each of these short poems focuses on the pronunciation of specific words or structures or on contractions. The poems are based on simple repetition, practising listening comprehension, practising questions and answers, and encouraging physical movement in the classroom. The teacher should first explain the nature and meaning of the poem to the children and then practise it properly (Graham & Rosenthal, 1979).

Loutfi (n.d., as cited in Zhang, 2011, p. 564) refers to Jazz Chants as simple but useful exercises to practise language stress and rhythm in everyday English for children of all ages. In addition, these exercises offer a motivating component and encourage role-play and pair activities. Learners may directly learn English rhythm, stress and intonation without realising it (Nurhayati, Nurhamdah, 2019, p. 86). According to Zhang (2011, p. 564), these activities are also very suitable for children with certain disabilities and their subsequent integration into the classroom.

There are also several types of Jazz Chants, which can be classified into two main groups - grammar/structure Jazz Chants and topic Jazz Chants, in which themes such as holidays, family, nature, animals, food etc. can be found. These two types can also be combined together and there are several ways to use them (Zhang, 2011, p. 564).

Nurhayati and Nurhamdah's research (2019, p. 83-96) on the effectiveness of teaching pronunciation through jazz chant's method has shown many positive benefits. It was tested in the eighth grade of MTsN Prepare. Using a pre-experimental method with pre-test and post-test, it showed that the Jazz Chants method is extremely useful for the development of

pronunciation skills. In addition, this research through questionnaires showed a positive attitude of students towards Jazz Chants.

6.4. Music and songs activities

Music surrounds us and is often a part of our everyday lives. It is also one of the methods that can help to improve the intonation and rhythm of the English language.

6.4.1. Benefits of music

One of the most obvious benefits that can be improved in language through song is a sense of rhythm, because *"The natural rhythm of songs, with a regular recurring beat between which are a varying number of unstress syllables, happens to be the stress patterns of stressing spoken English."*, especially for those whose mother tongue was a syllable-timed language (Richards, 1969, p. 162).

Incorporating music into English lessons can have a positive effect on pupils. As well as contributing to an overall better atmosphere, students are often also more relaxed and open to learning something new. It also contributes to the learner's activity. Nurhayati and Nurhamdah (2019, p. 85) also stated: *"[...] learning and understanding music is a process of learning to understand rhythm."*.

Purcell (1992, p. 3. as cited in Millington, 2011, p. 135) states that the songs allow listening to different intonation and rhythmic patterns and variations, thereby improving students' listening skills.

According to Zhang (2011, p. 563), the use of music and songs in teaching English leads to better and faster language acquisition and helps to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Murphey (1992, p. 3) adds that music can be quite easy to remember and motivating for people of all ages, who can choose from pop music as well as other genres.

Lynch (2022) has compiled a list of nine reasons to include songs in EFL teaching. The first is that the songs are sung in an authentic and natural language, which can have a positive benefit for students' pronunciation. Through songs, learners hear and recognize a wide range of different accents, which is closely related to intonation and overall pronunciation. Other reasons given include the opportunity to learn new vocabulary and grammar, but also the accessibility of songs and the fact that songs allow learners to experience fun and naturalness.

However, teachers should bear in mind that although songs are an enjoyable and entertaining way of teaching, they are not themselves capable of teaching learners communication or pronunciation in a foreign language - it is up to the teacher to make the most of the potential of these songs (Millington, 2011, p. 139; Murphey, 1992, p. 6).

6.4.2. Specifics of song selection and potential problems

Teaching English through songs can also face some difficulties, such as the use of archaic or dialectal words or irregular sentence structures and stresses (Richards, 1969, p. 163). Richards (1969, p, 163-164) also wonders whether these irregularities and incorrect stress patterns should be taught at all. He therefore recommends considering the choice of songs and using songs written specifically for English learners as much as possible or trying to write some songs on your own. Lynch (2022) also mentioned caution and prudence when choosing a song, as not every song is appropriate. As Millington (2011, p. 139) comments, some songs may be very different from spoken English (e.g., in terms of vocabulary or sentence structure). Blodget (2000) adds that in terms of vocabulary and grammar, the songs should be only slightly above the level that students actually have.

Overall, the teacher should be careful in choosing songs in many ways. Songs should be adapted to the age, ability, and interest of the pupils. They must also consider their level of English and vocabulary. The wrong choice of song could be demotivating, whether it is particularly challenging or, on the contrary, quite simple in nature (Zhang, 2011, p. 563).

6.4.3. Song activities

Richards (1969, p. 167) recommends first introducing students to rhythm and music, for example, by clapping the rhythm of a song or underlining stressed words on the board.

Yuliana (2003) states that teachers can use songs to improve students' listening and speaking skills. Talking about speaking skills - children are not reluctant to say the words in the same way as the singer, so they repeat the words in the same rhythm. One of the activities she mentioned was a mini-musical, which is a type of performance with singing (about three to five songs or just a few verses of one song) and also spoken dialogue that can be performed in class. For example, Murphey (1992), and many other authors, have written a whole book of beneficial classroom activities with music and song and some of them focus mainly on intonation and rhythm.

6.5. Rap activities

Incorporating rap activities into the classroom can have several benefits. As well as being a fun way of learning English, it can improve grammar, vocabulary or awareness of informal language and colloquial expressions (Segal, 2014). As Segal (2014, p. 27) adds *"Additionally, the beat of the rap emphasizes the correct prosody of stressed and unstressed syllables in an obvious way"*.

6.5.1. Rapping English project

The Rapping English project aims to integrate rap activities into the curriculum. Rap can be described as a contemporary style of music, specified as a spoken song in an informal language, and therefore it is not necessary for a teacher to be a musician to incorporate rap into the curriculum. It is recommended to use rap as a short two to four minute activity that complements or combines other teaching methods and materials and only supports the main curriculum. According to this study, rapping in English is suitable for teachers who do not focus too much on teaching intonation, rhythm and other suprasegmental phenomena. This is because, in addition to grammar and vocabulary, students also indirectly improve their prosody, a term that refers to the sound characteristics of language, called suprasegmental features. Students are asked to unify rhythm, pitch, and tone to achieve unity with a musical recording without realising they are learning prosody. This method is neither time-consuming nor material-intensive - the teacher simply plays an audio recording or video and the students listen and talk along. However, they should know the raps so that they can demonstrate them to the students without many mistakes. Students can also perform their own rap in front of the class. This project achieves student activity, a positive and relaxed environment and observes better results in grammar, vocabulary, but also in the improvement of students' prosody, perhaps because rap is very close to the youth nowadays. Teachers also face some problems related to teaching Rapping English, such as most often technical difficulties with audio or video recordings. However, teachers who feel confident enough can rap on their own without media equipment (Segal, 2014).

6.5.2. Fischler's research on teaching English through rap

The effectiveness of reciting rap music is also described in Fischler's research (2019), in which six high school English students participated in a four-week pronunciation course at a large high school in an area of the Midwest. However, the method used is suitable not only for high

school students, but for everyone, it just depends on the appropriate vocabulary. Fischler himself states that the method is slightly similar to Carolyn Graham's Jazz Chants method. The difference is that each activity is designed to practise a particular pattern of stress in English.

The motivation for this research was Fischler's informal experiment, where over the course of three years he began to incorporate stress and intonation into his teaching using rap beats.

Besides other activities, students were mainly asked to listen to the rap, first just following the words and then familiarising themselves with the unfamiliar words. This was followed by their own interpretation of the rap in several steps - first a choral rap without music, then a version with instruments only. As a daily assignment they had thirty minutes of time to practise both versions of the song outside of class. The results show a visible improvement in stress placement and an increase in their confidence when speaking (Fischler, 2019).

6.6. Drama activities

Dramatic activities are another category of activities that can contribute to the teaching of English prosody. They allow students to gain direct experience by allowing them to actively engage in the learning process.

6.6.1. Benefits of drama

To cite the words of Gasparro (1994, p. 4), *"Through the dramatization, students can utilize intonation, rhythm, stress, body language, facial expressions, and gestures to convey the frustrated interchange between the disgruntled and bewildered characters."* Therefore, the author proposes a technique of combining drama with poetry, which is based on the representation of drama by means of poems. Gasparro (1994, p. 2-3) also lists several responsibilities of the teacher, and one of them is to model pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm and overall oral expression.

Teaching through drama is popular perhaps because it is a fun and informal way of learning English. It helps to build students' confidence and ability not to be shy when speaking English, motivates them, and teaches them new vocabulary in context or also pronunciation and correct intonation (Heldenbrand, 2003, p. 29-33).

Kelly (2000, p. 83-84) suggests using dramatic arts to improve learner's language and pronunciation. Scenes do not need to be long and challenging. Students can take on roles from well-known plays, films or just roles from everyday life, citing waiters, chefs, and

customers as examples. It is also useful to make a video or audio recording of the scene and then analyse it with the learners to point out areas for improvement, recommended by Gasparro (1994, p. 4).

6.6.2. Specifics of drama selection and potential problems

When acting out the scene, the teacher should ensure that there is enough time to act out the scene and build the learner's confidence - it is not easy for learners to act out a scene in class or in public, for example. The teacher should also feel confident in doing so and be prepared and enthusiastic in this area (Kelly, 2000, p. 83-84).

When choosing an appropriate poem for dramatization, the teacher should consider the level of language proficiency of the pupils, their age, or interests (Gasparro, 1994, p. 4).

7. PRACTICAL PART

7.1. Introduction to research

Based on the theoretical part of this thesis, I perceive a certain absence and deficiency in the teaching of suprasegmental features of English such as intonation and rhythm, which are rather a minority area of English teaching at Czech lower secondary schools. This was one of the reasons why I decided to conduct a research that would investigate this issue from the teachers' perspective.

The aim of the research is to investigate how English intonation and rhythm are taught in English language classes at the lower secondary schools. This research problem is classified as a descriptive research problem, therefore, according to Gavora (2000, p. 28), it is not possible to formulate hypotheses for this type of research problem. Instead, the following research objectives were established based on the research aim:

- Research objective 1: To examine whether English intonation and rhythm is part of English language teaching at lower secondary schools.
- Research objective 2: To explore the most common problems from teachers' perspective in teaching English intonation and rhythm.
- Research objective 3: To investigate whether English textbooks used in the classroom influence the extent to which intonation and rhythm are incorporated into English language teaching.

7.2. Research methodology

For this research problem, I chose a quantitative research design to gain insight into the issues of intonation and rhythm in English from the perspective of many qualified practising teachers. For this issue it is useful to know the opinions of as many teachers as possible on the overall concept of intonation and rhythm, their current views on the state and importance of this subject in practice or possible obstacles in teaching.

7.2.1. Research instrument

As a research instrument I decided to use a questionnaire, which Gavora (2000, p. 26-27) himself recommends using as one way of exploring a descriptive research problem. Being

aware of the fact that questionnaires can be subjective, and given the time constraints, this was the only possible way to explore the current state of incorporating intonation and rhythm into English language teaching, while also obtaining as many teachers' opinions and reflections as possible.

The questionnaire was designed according to the Gavora method (2000, p. 99-109). The questions are asked in order from the simplest to the most complex and can be divided into three headings - the meaning, importance and general facts about intonation and rhythm, the concept of intonation and rhythm in textbooks, and methods to support the teaching of intonation and rhythm. Five factual questions are included at the end of the questionnaire because they are not as demanding as other types of questions.

Different types of questions such as closed, semi-closed or scaled questions were included in the questionnaire to increase the attention of the respondents. For closed questions, the option "I have no strong opinion" was offered and for semi-closed questions "Other (please describe)" was offered to avoid response bias (Gavora, 2000, p. 102-105).

For better clarity and understanding of the questions, the questionnaire was conducted in Czech.

7.2.2. Research reliability and validity

When constructing the questionnaire, I tried to achieve internal consistency of the questionnaire, which is one of the important characteristics of reliability. As this is an undergraduate thesis, I chose a procedure where the questionnaire contains multiple related questions that consolidate a given set of answers, thus increasing reliability, but taking into account the length of the questionnaire (Gavora, 2000, p. 106).

According to Gavora (2000, p. 71-73), validity is the most important characteristic of research. It is the ability to find out what it is intended to find out and can be determined by the judgement of experts in the field. Non-factual questions are usually answered accurately by respondents and therefore have high validity. Questions about opinions, attitudes and interests have lower validity but depend on the specific subject matter being asked or also on the confidentiality of the question. Gavora (2000, p. 105-106) therefore recommends the inclusion of so-called L-questions in the questionnaire, which focus primarily on behaviours that do not conform to the social norm and which thus reveal the falsity of the answers. However, due to the focus and topic of the questionnaire, these L-questions were not used.

7.2.3. Pre-research

Pre-research is a fundamental and particularly important stage of the quantitative research process. The formulation and clarity of the questions was verified by means of a pre-research interview with English language teachers at the lower secondary school in Francova Lhota and then a minor correction in the formulation of the questions was made (Gavora, 2000, p. 68-69).

7.2.4. Data collection

Data collection was carried out using Survio, an online platform that allows for the quick and efficient creation of simple questionnaires. The generated links to the prepared questionnaires were randomly sent mainly by e-mail to various lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic. The entire data collection process took fourteen days, during which time the number of responses from respondents was carefully monitored. The questionnaire was closed when there were no further responses.

7.2.5. Research sample

The research sample consisted of a total of 88 English language teachers at the lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic. As expected, the return rate was generally lower than the number of questionnaires sent out.

7.3. Analysis of research results

This chapter presents the results of the questionnaire survey. For better clarity, the individual questions are shown graphically. The first 12 questions focus on the concept of intonation and rhythm in general and on possible obstacles and problems. The next questions concern textbooks and then two questions are about teaching methods and activities. The last five questions are used to get to know the research sample of respondents.

Question 1: Have you ever encountered the problem of intonation in the English language?
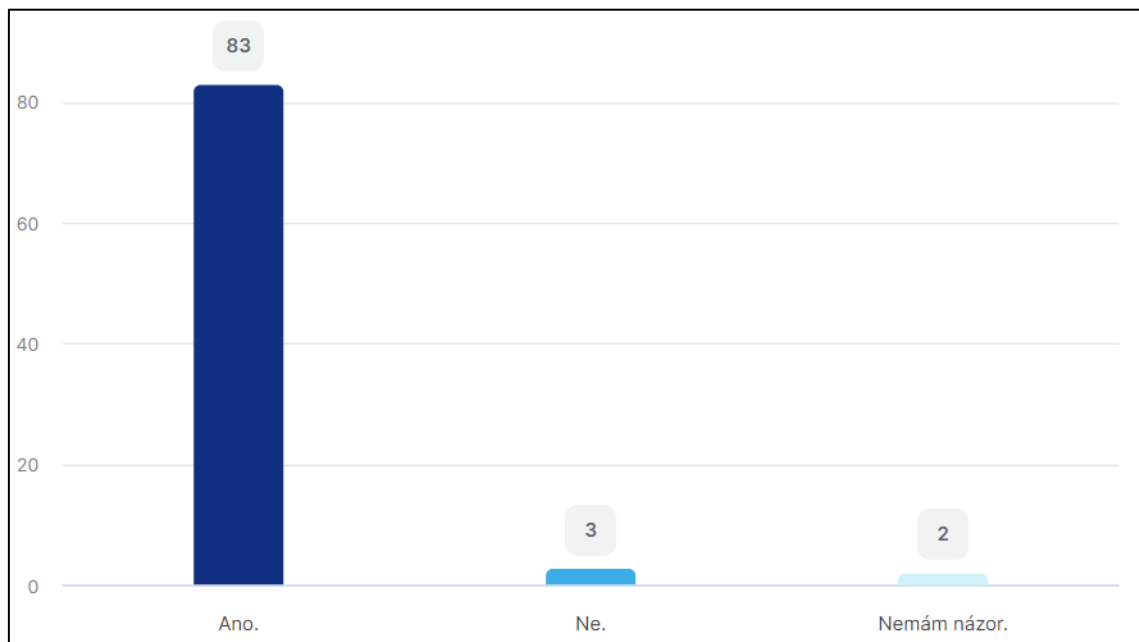
Figure 1: Encountering the problem of intonation

In the first question, 83 of the 88 respondents had experienced intonation problems in some way in the past. Only 3 respondents stated that they had not encountered the issue of intonation and the remaining 2 had no opinion.

Question 2: Do you think intonation is an important aspect of the English language?
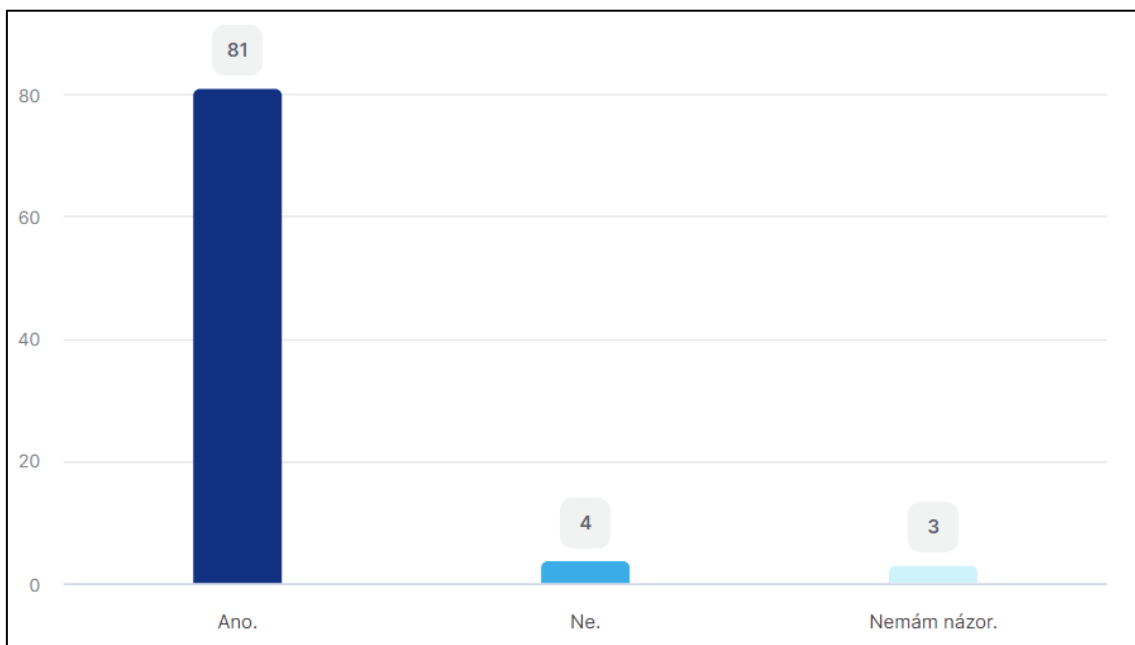
Figure 2: The importance of intonation

This question only introduces the following one, with the respondents asked to decide whether intonation is or not an important aspect of the English language for them. A large majority of

26

respondents - 81 in total - considered intonation to be an important aspect of English. Only 4 respondents do not consider this aspect to be important and another 3 do not have a strong opinion.

Question 3: On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the importance you attach to teaching English intonation at the lower secondary school.
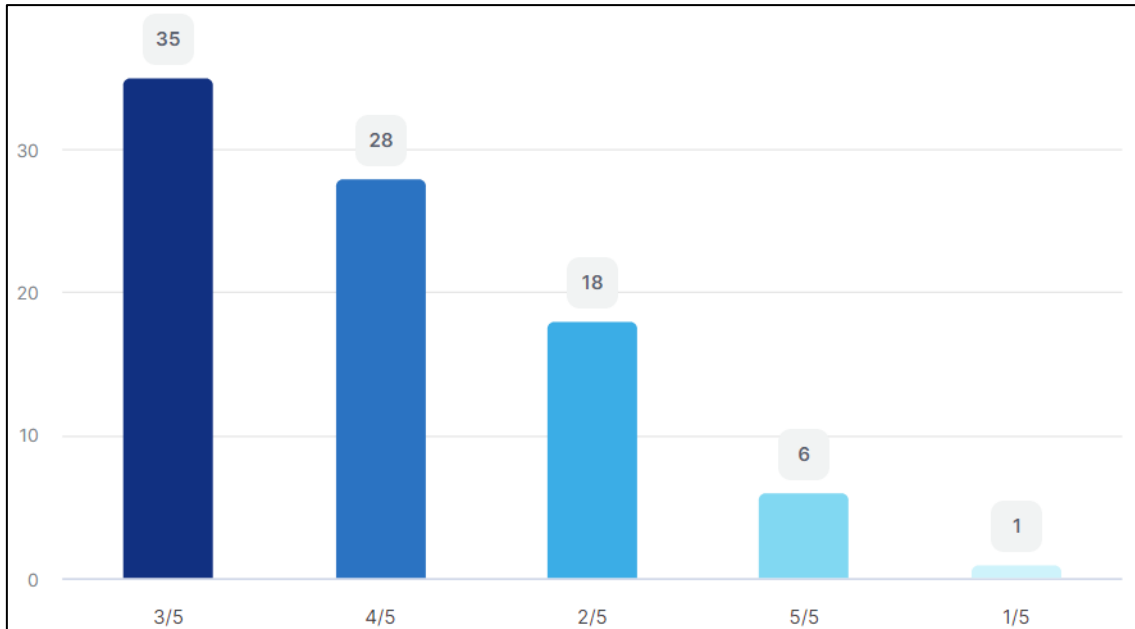
Figure 3: The importance of intonation on a scale of 1 to 5

This question complements the previous question and uses a scale to determine the importance English language teachers attach to intonation, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very important and 1 being unimportant. As can be seen from the graph, the majority of respondents leaned towards the middle - and therefore voted for number 3. 28 respondents attached considerable importance (4 out of 5 points) to intonation. Conversely, only one respondent considered intonation unimportant.

Question 4: How often do you include intonation in your English lessons?
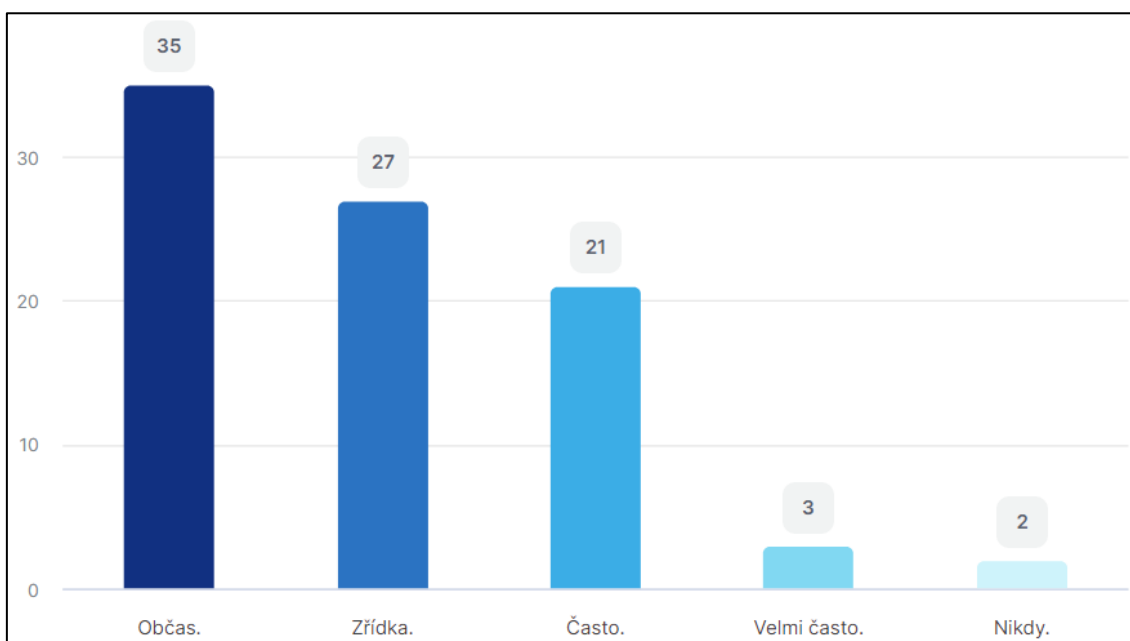
Figure 4: Frequency of inclusion of the topic of intonation in lessons

In order to find out the status of incorporating intonation into teaching from the teachers' point of view, the question is asked how often they incorporate intonation, in whatever way, into teaching. Most of them (35 in total) answered that they do so sometimes. Frequent or very frequent inclusion of this issue is the third and fourth most frequent answer. Only 2 respondents stated they never do this.

Question 5: If you answered NEVER in the previous question, please give a reason:
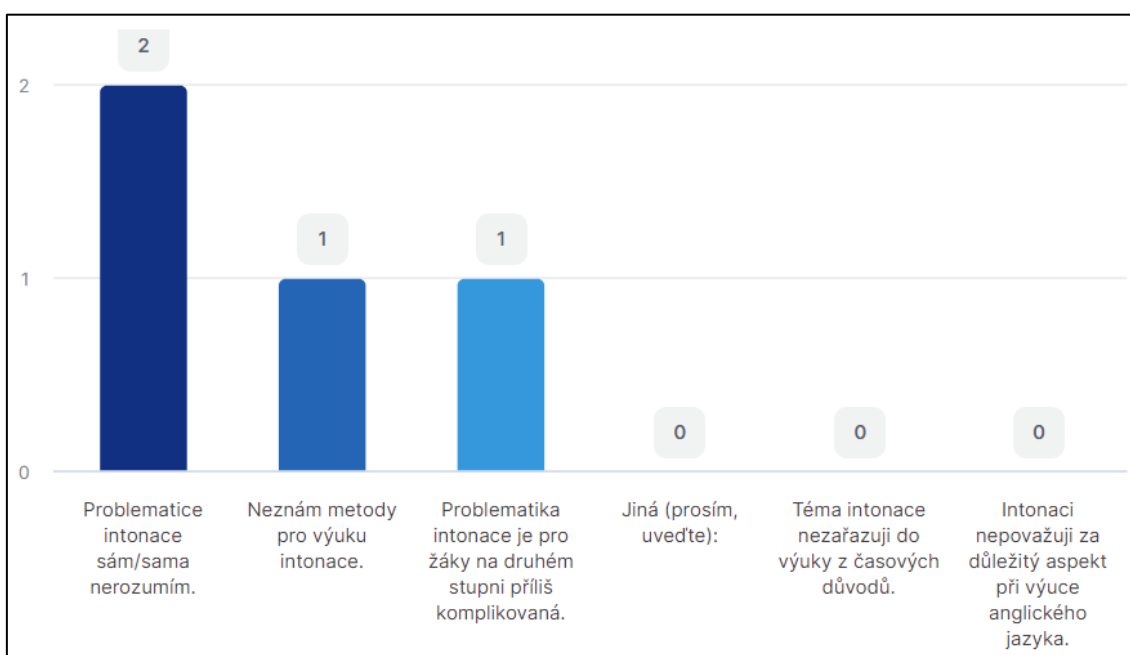
Figure 5: Reasons for not including intonation in lessons at all

This question complements the previous question and asks only 4 respondents who do not include intonation in their teaching at all why this is the case. 2 of them stated that they did not understand the subject themselves, 1 did not know the teaching methods and 1 believed that the subject was too complex for pupil at lower secondary school.

Question 6: What do you perceive as the biggest obstacle in teaching intonation?
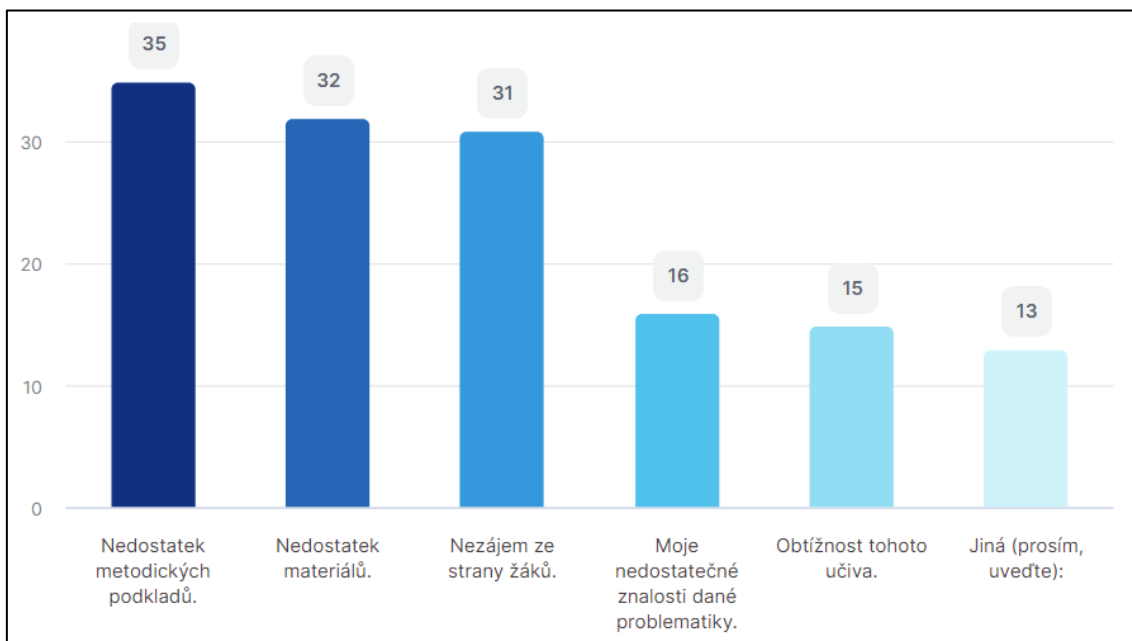
Figure 6: Obstacles in teaching intonation

The aim of this multiple-choice question is to reveal the most common obstacles and problems in teaching intonation from the perspective of teachers. Most respondents chose the option of lack of methodological support (35), followed in order of frequency by: lack of materials (32), lack of student interest (31), teachers' lack of knowledge of the topic(16), and the omplexity of the issue (15). Among the free responses where respondents could write their additional opinions, lack of time appeared the most, 9 times in total. 2 respondents mentioned students' immaturity as an obstacle, 1 respondent mentioned shyness and fear of speaking as a general problem for lower secondary students. The only respondent did not see a problem with the inclusion of intonation in the lessons.

Question 7: Have you ever encountered the problem of rhythm in the English language?
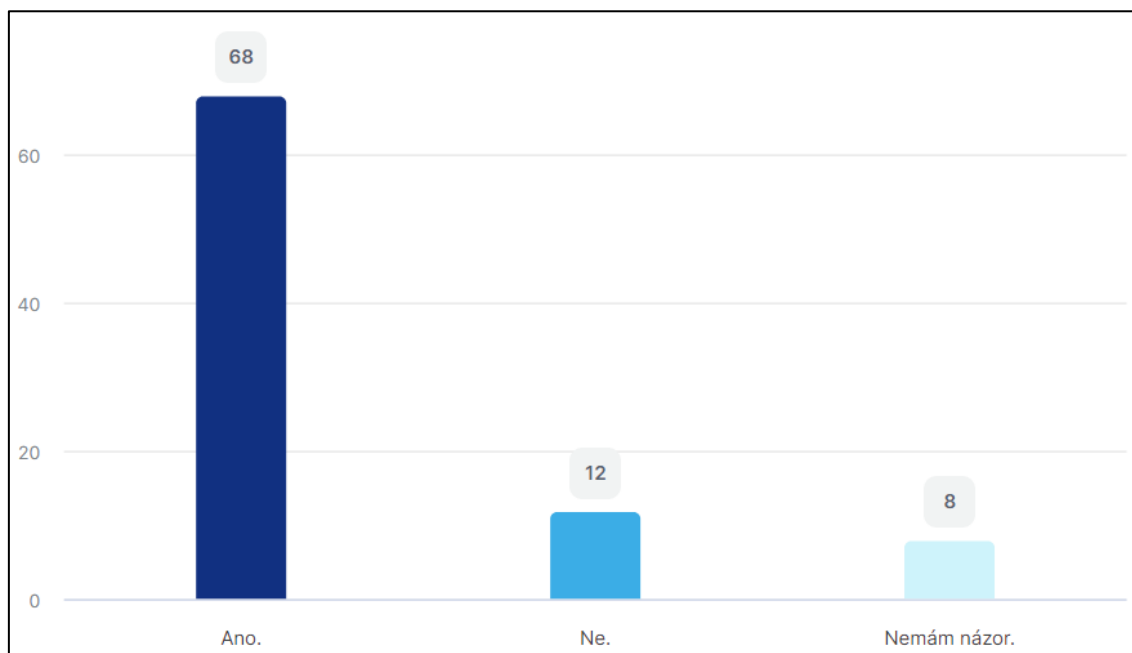
Figure 7: Encountering the problem of rhythm

The problem of English rhythm compared to intonation was encountered by significantly fewer respondents, only 68, but still an overwhelming majority. 12 respondents said they had never encountered a rhythm problem, and another 8 had no opinion.

Question 8: Do you think rhythm is an important aspect of the English language?
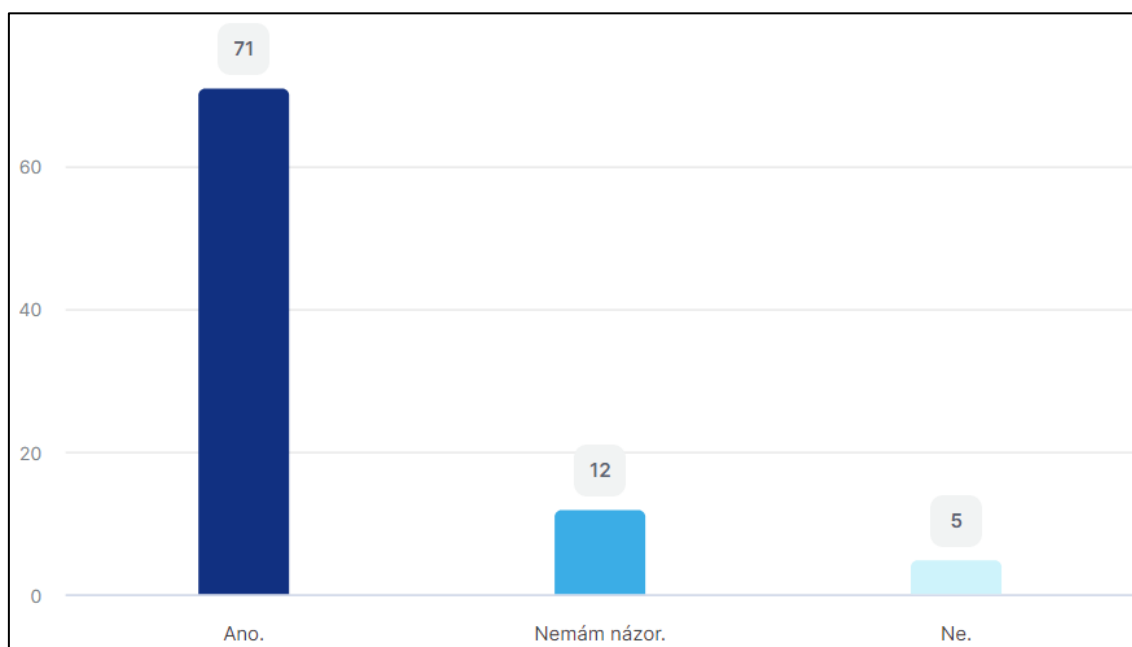
Figure 8: The importance of rhythm

Also, on the question of importance, the number of respondents who considered rhythm to be an important aspect of the English language decreased in comparison with intonation to a total

of 71 respondents. 12 respondents had no opinion and another 5 did not consider rhythm to be an important aspect.

Question 9: On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the importance you attach to teaching English rhythm at the lower secondary school.
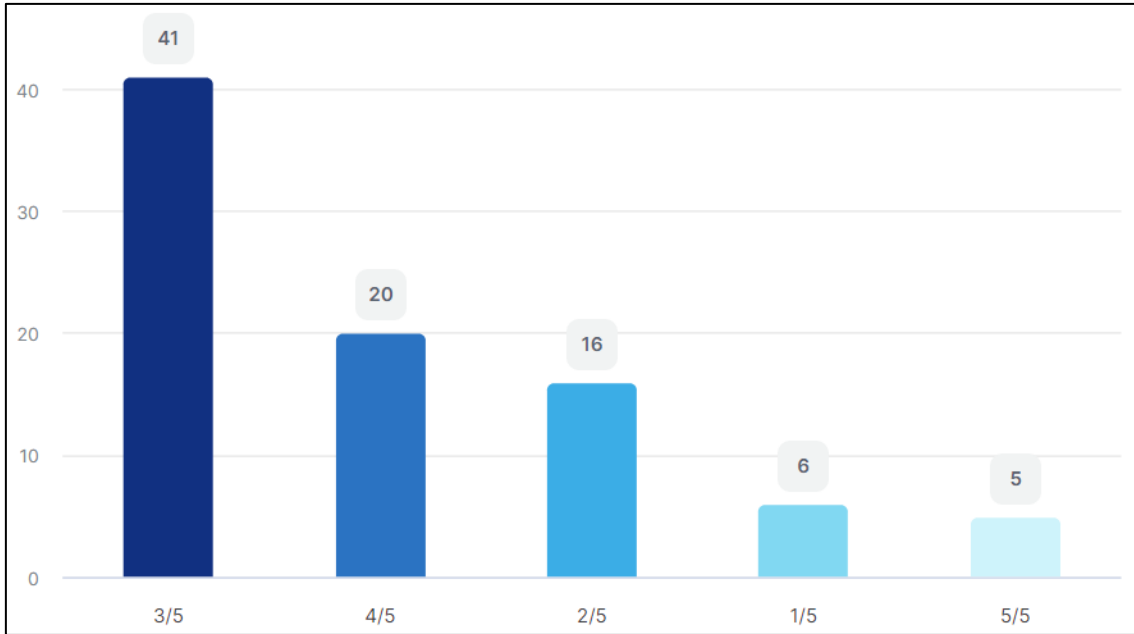
Figure 9: The importance of rhythm on a scale of 1 to 5

This question again builds on the previous one and measures the importance English language teachers attach to rhythm on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very important and 1 being unimportant. Again, the majority of respondents leaned towards the middle and chose the number 3 on the scale. It is also worth noting that there were more respondents (than when measuring the importance of intonation) who attached almost no importance to the aspect of rhythm.

Question 10: How often do you include rhythm in your English lessons?
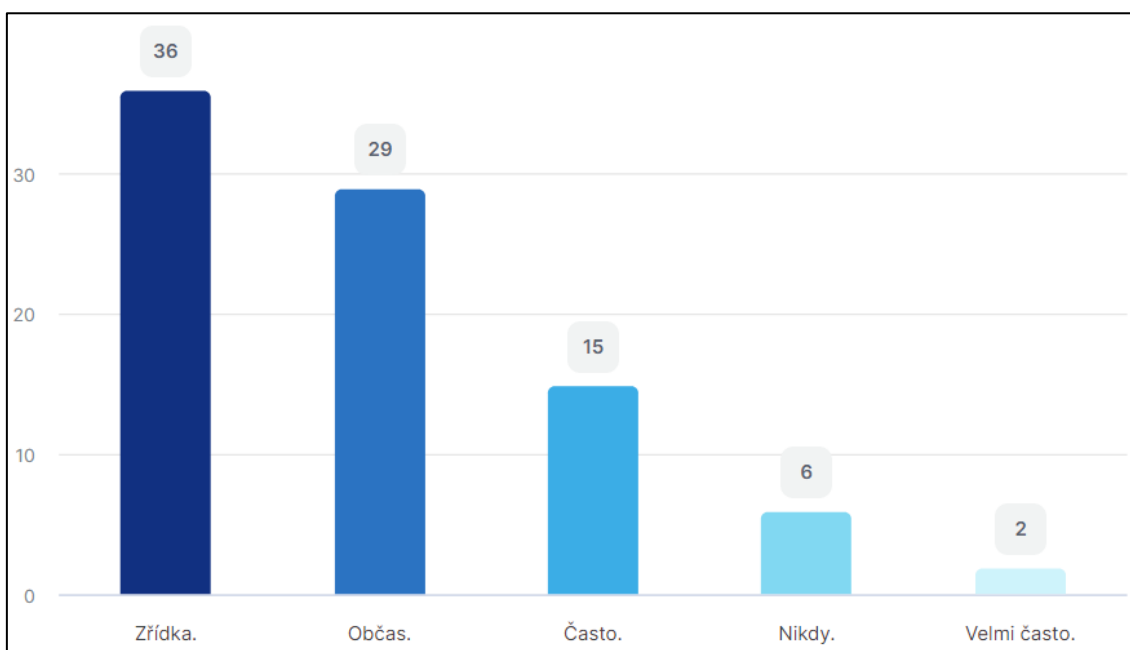
Figure 10: Frequency of inclusion of the topic of rhythm in lessons

In the question focusing on the frequency of including rhythm in teaching, the choice rarely prevailed with a total of 36 respondents. 29 respondents stated that they include rhythm in their lessons sometimes, only 15 respondents chose the option often, 6 never and 2 very often. Overall, we observe a slight decrease in the level of inclusion of rhythm in teaching compared to intonation.

Question 11: If you answered NEVER in the previous question, please give a reason:
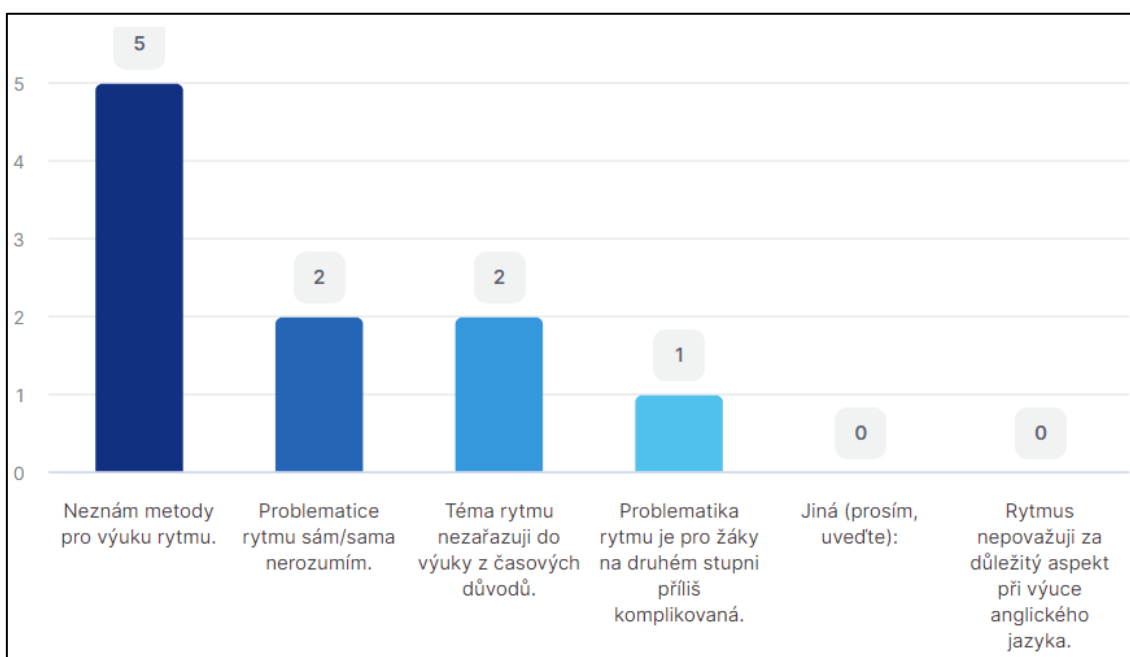
Figure 11: Reasons for not including rhythm in lessons at all

This question is again closely related to the previous question, as it explores the reasons why some respondents in the previous question stated that they do not include rhythm in their teaching at all. The most common response was that teachers themselves do not know the appropriate methods for teaching rhythm. In addition, respondents also reported that they themselves did not understand the subject or did not assign it for time reasons. One respondent thought that the issue was too complex for the pupils.

Question 12: What do you perceive as the biggest obstacle in teaching rhythm?
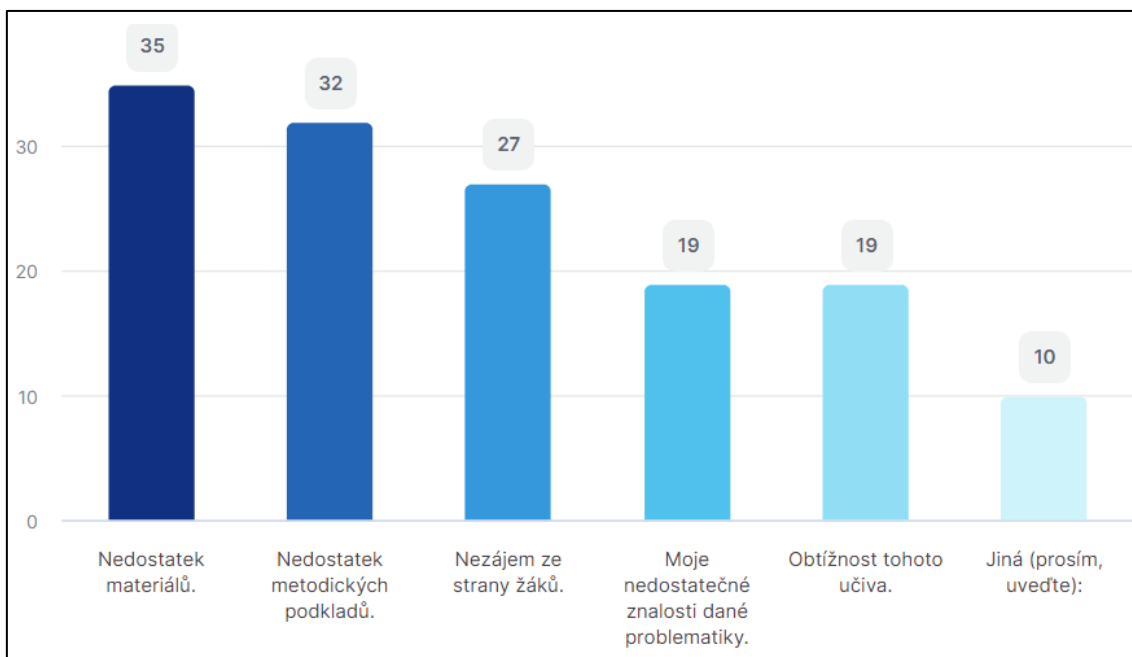
Figure 12: Obstacles in teaching rhythm

This multiple-choice question looks at the most common obstacles from teachers' perspectives when teaching rhythm. A total of 35 responses cited lack of materials as an obstacle, 32 responses cited lack of methodological materials, 27 responses cited lack of interest on the part of students, 19 responses cited lack of their knowledge, and 19 responses cited difficulty of the issue. 10 respondents mentioned another option, of which the answer insufficient time appears 7 times, 2 respondents do not see any problem in this issue and one respondent mentions the lack of maturity of pupils as an obstacle. The results of this question are not significantly different from question 6, which dealt with barriers to teaching intonation.

Question 13: How often do you use the textbook in your English classes?
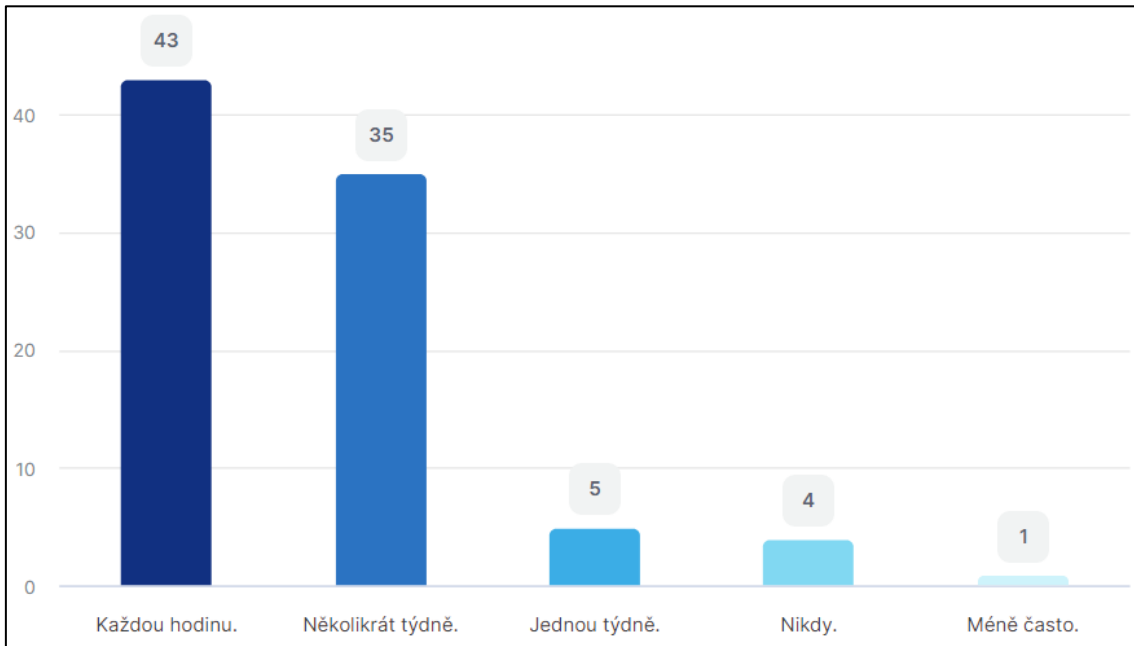
Figure 13: Frequency of use of textbooks in teaching

Question 13 focuses on the frequency of textbook use in the classroom. 43 respondents indicated that they use the textbook every hour, 35 respondents use the textbook several times a week, 5 respondents use the textbook once a week, 4 respondents indicated that they do not use the textbook at all, and only one respondent indicated the option less often.

Question 14: What textbook do you use in your English classes?
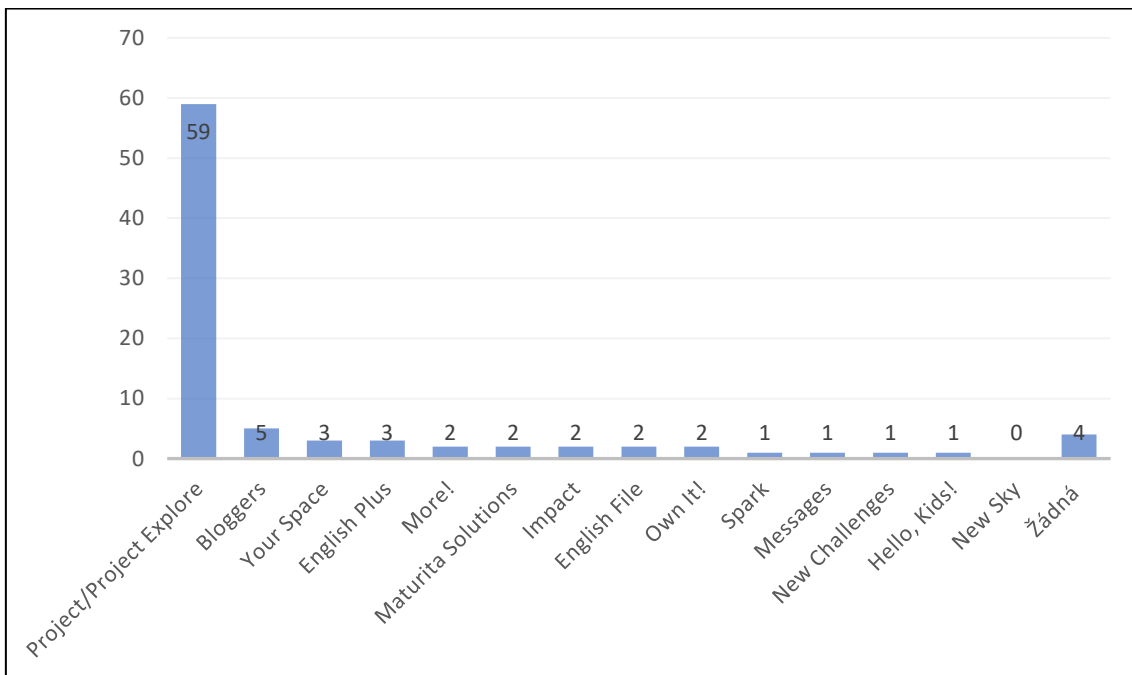
Figure 14: Types of textbooks used

The purpose of this question is to specify what types of textbooks respondents use in their classes. The Project/Project Explore option clearly dominates, with 59 respondents indicating this option. As can be seen from the graph, other textbooks are used to a much lesser extent. As in the previous question, 4 respondents indicated that they do not use textbooks at all.

Question 15: To what extent do you agree with the following statement, "There are enough exercises in the textbook I use to teach English intonation."
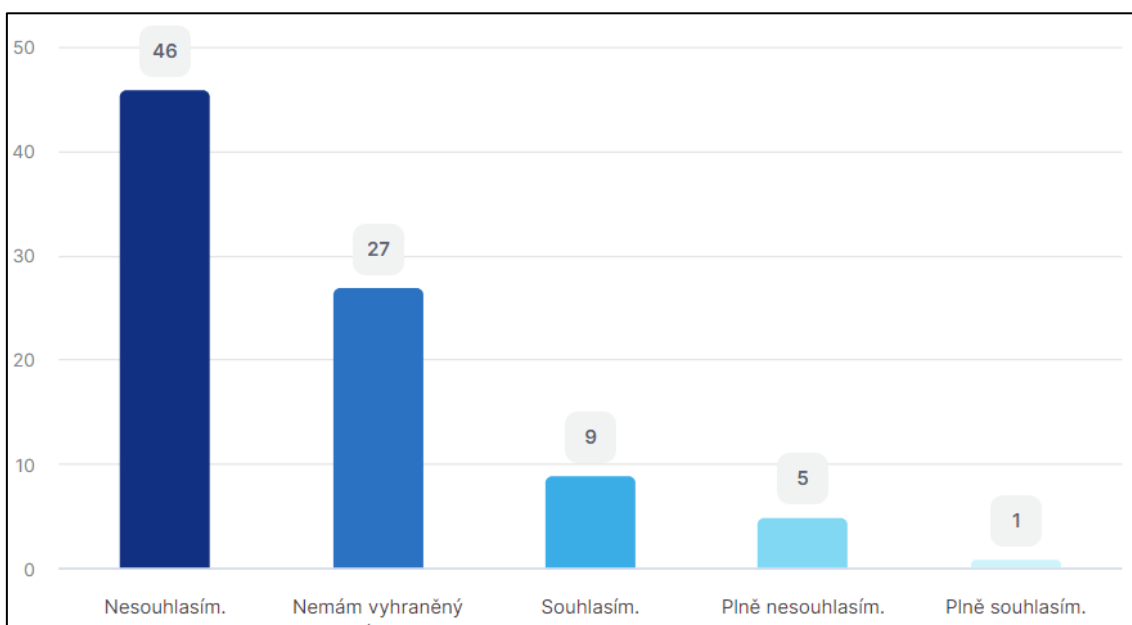
Figure 15: Number of intonation exercises in the textbooks used

According to 46 respondents, there are not enough exercises in textbooks to teach and practice intonation. Another 5 respondents believe that there is a great lack of such exercises. There are 27 respondents without a strong opinion and 9 respondents think that there are enough exercises in the textbooks.

Question 16: Would you appreciate more suggestions and exercises for teaching intonation in English textbooks?
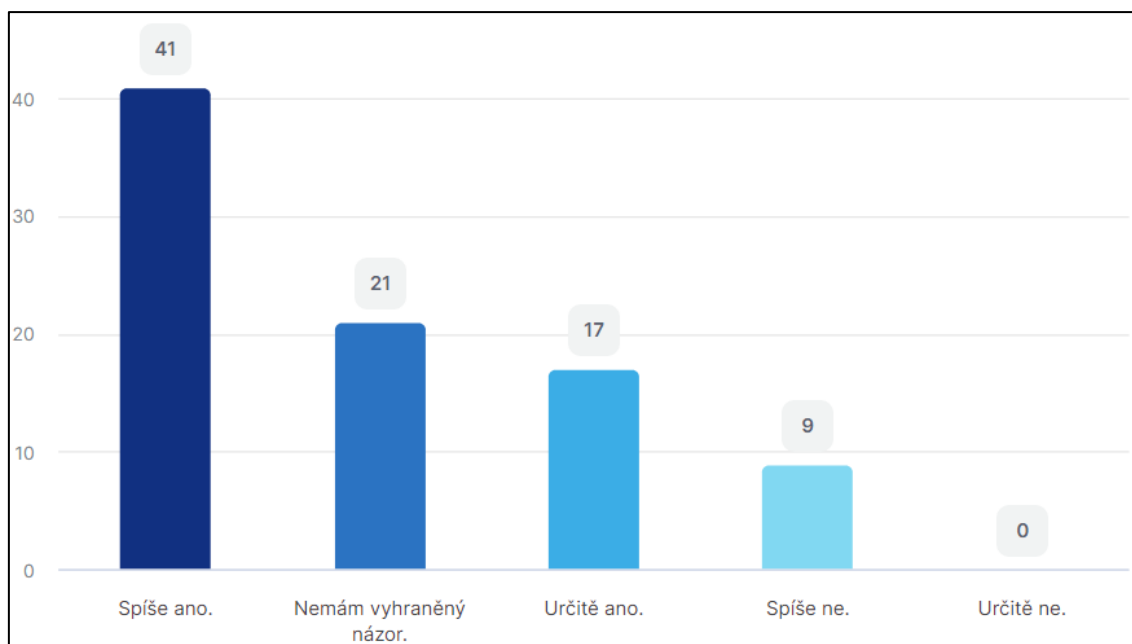
Figure 16: Appreciation of more intonation exercises in textbooks

This question builds on the previous one and asks whether respondents would like to see more suggestions and exercises on intonation in textbooks. 41 respondents would rather appreciate more incentives to teach intonation in textbooks, another 17 would definitely appreciate such incentives. 21 respondents had no opinion and another 9 would rather not appreciate these incentives.

Question 17: If there were more suggestions for teaching English intonation in textbooks, would this motivate you to include this topic more often in your teaching?
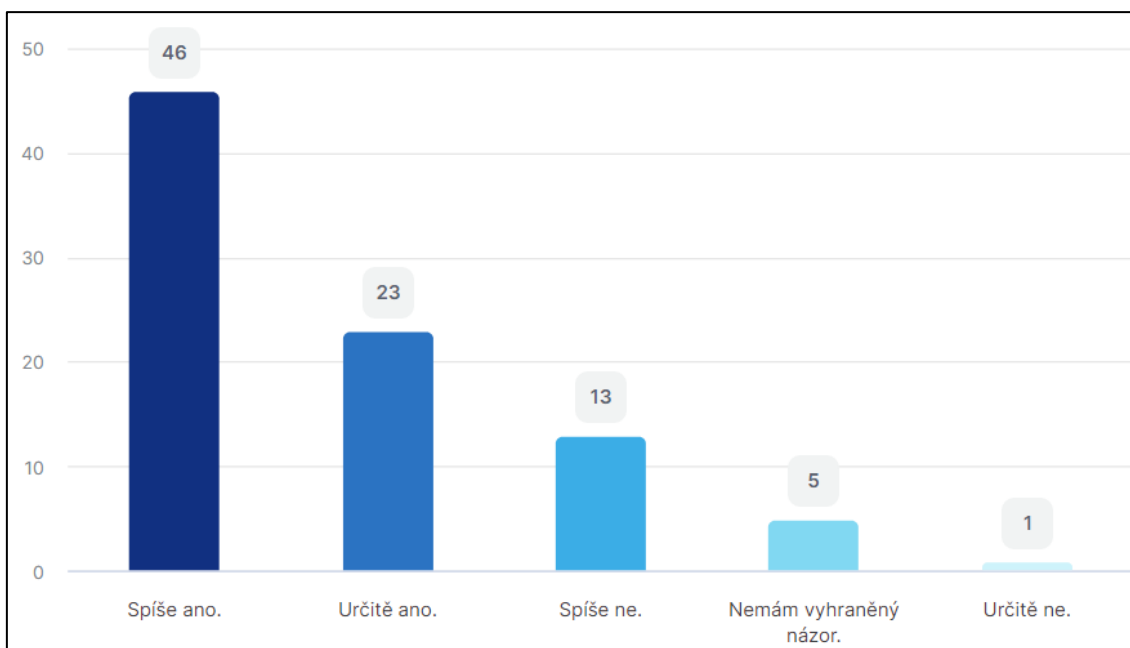
Figure 17: Motivation for more frequent inclusion of intonation in teaching based on the textbook

Question 17 is a bit hypothetical. A total of 46 respondents would be more motivated to include intonation questions in their lessons if the textbooks contained more of these stimuli. A further 23 were inclined to answer definitely yes. On the other hand, 13 respondents would rather not be motivated, another 5 had no strong opinion and one would definitely not be motivated.

Question 18: To what extent do you agree with the following statement, "There are enough exercises in the textbook I use to teach English rhythm."
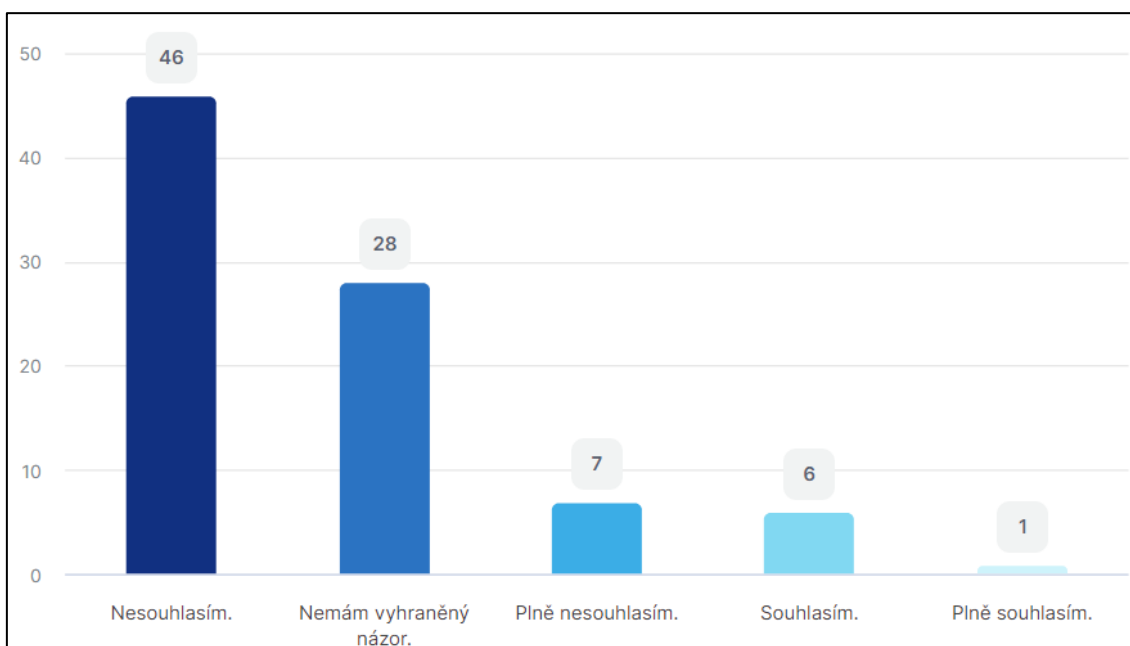
Figure 18: Number of rhythm exercises in the textbooks used

The majority of the respondents disagree with the statement that there are enough exercises focused on the rhythm of the English language in the textbooks, namely 46 respondents and another 7 respondents strongly disagree with the statement. 28 respondents have no opinion, and 6 respondents agree and one respondent strongly agrees with the statement.

Question 19: Would you appreciate more suggestions and exercises for teaching rhythm in English textbooks?
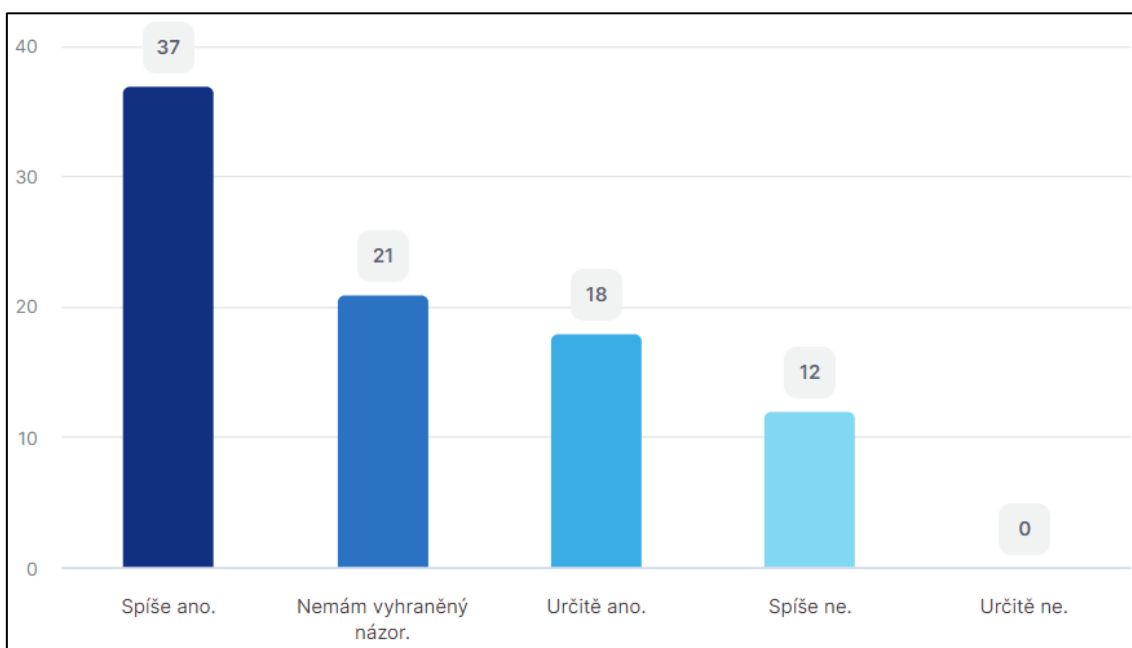
Figure 19: Appreciation of more intonation exercises in textbooks

The number of respondents who would rather appreciate more suggestions and exercises on the rhythm of the language in the textbooks is 37 in total, and another 18 are inclined to the option definitely yes. 21 respondents do not have a strong opinion on this question and 12 respondents lean towards the rather no option.

Question 20: If there were more suggestions for teaching English rhythm in textbooks, would this motivate you to include this topic more often in your teaching?
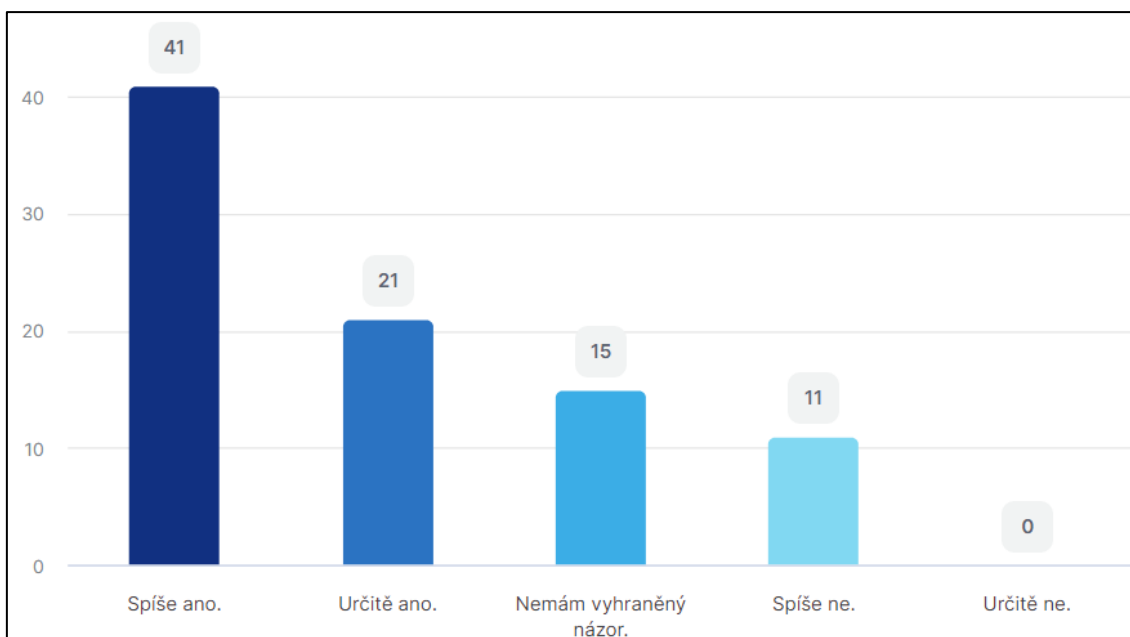

Figure 20: Motivation for more frequent inclusion of rhythm in teaching based on the textbook

When asked the hypothetical question whether they would include more rhythm in their lessons if the textbooks contained more stimuli and exercises, most respondents - 41 in total - chose the option rather yes. Conversely, 11 respondents thought it would probably not make a difference.

Question 21: Are you familiar with any of these methods and activities for teaching English intonation and rhythm?
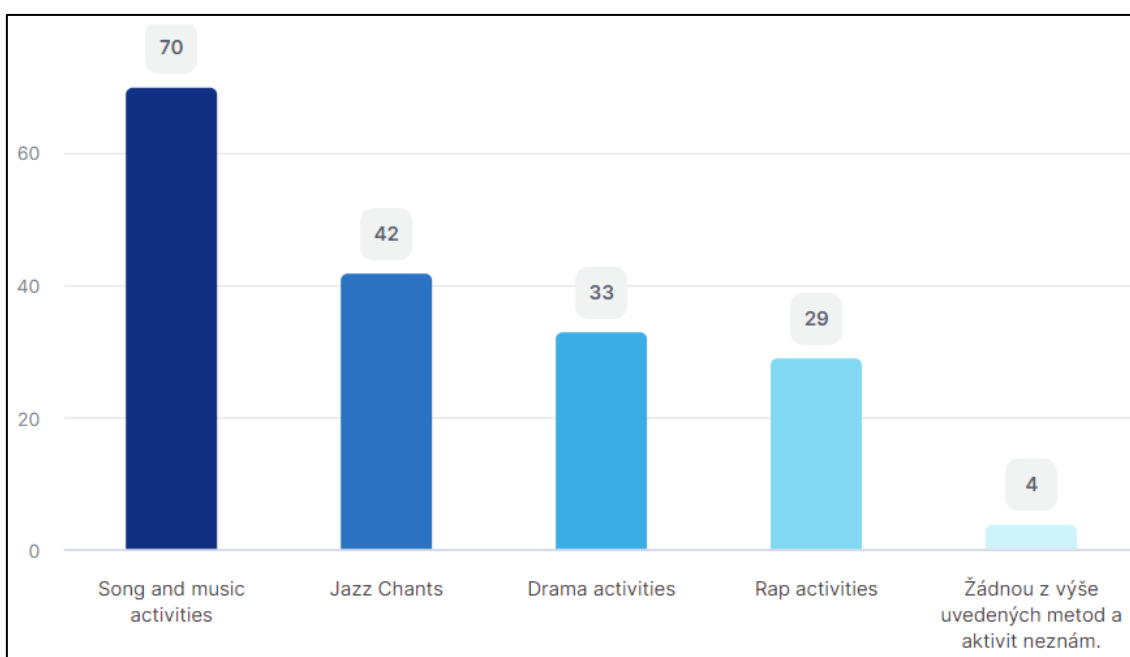
Figure 21: Methods and activities for improving intonation and rhythm

This question is related to the chapter on methods and activities that can improve the intonation and rhythm of the English language. Respondents could choose more than one answer, with most respondents being familiar with song and music activities (70). Jazz chants came second in order (42), followed by drama activities (33) and rap activities (29). Four respondents did not know any of the methods and activities listed.

Question 22: How often do you use any of these methods and activities to teach intonation and rhythm?

	VELMI ČASTO	ČASTO	OBČAS	ZŘÍDKA	NIKDY
Jazz Chants	1	2	29	22	34
Song and music activities	5	24	41	12	6
Rap activities	0	3	14	21	50
Drama activities	1	10	19	25	33

Figure 22: Frequency of incorporation of the methods and activities into teaching

This table shows how often respondents incorporate activities and methods into their teaching. Song and music activities seem to be the most common and used. On the other hand, rap activities are the least frequent and widespread.
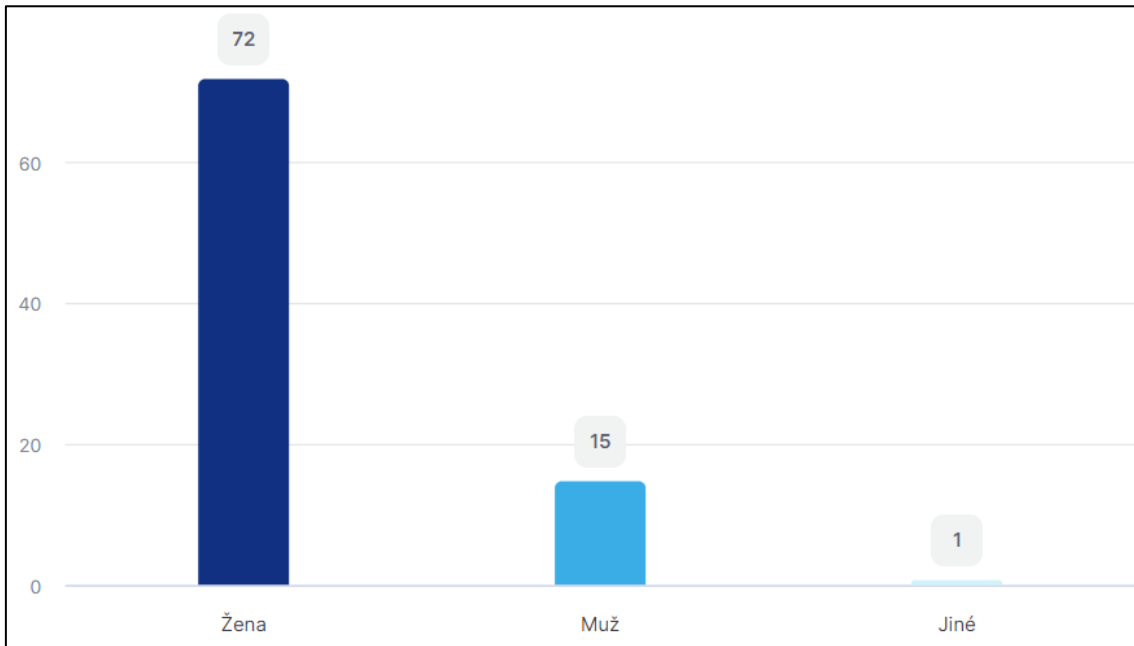
Question 23: What is your gender?

Figure 23: Gender of respondents

A total of 72 respondents were female, 15 were male and 1 respondent indicated a different gender.

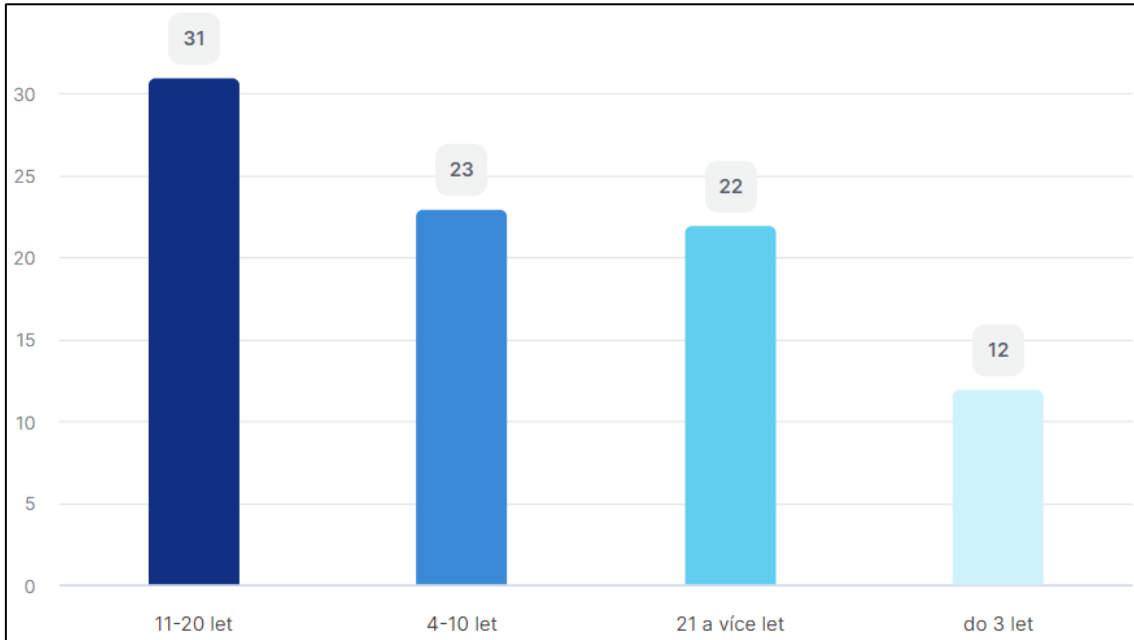*Question 24: What is the length of your teaching experience?*

Figure 24: Length of teaching experience of respondents

This question focused on the total length of teaching experience. The chart shows that teachers with varying lengths of experience were represented. Most responses (31) were recorded from respondents with 11-20 years of experience. The fewest of these are just beginning teachers who have been teaching for 3 years or less.

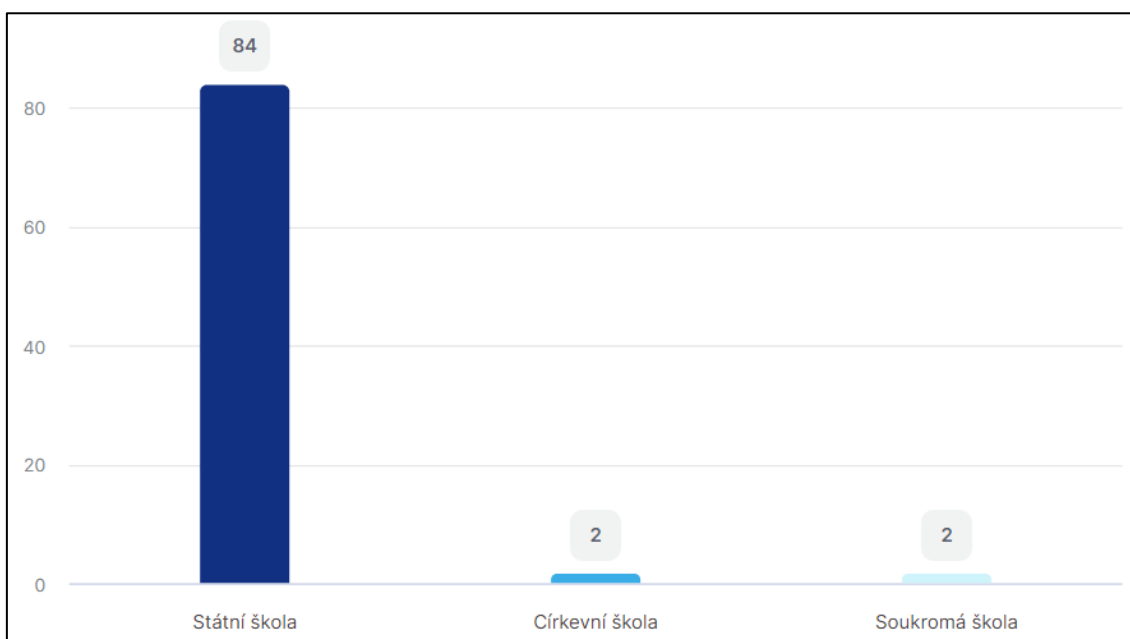*Question 25: What school do you currently teach at?*

Figure 25: Type of school

The vast majority of respondents currently teach at a public school, with only 2 respondents indicating their position at a church school and 2 at a private school.

Question 26: In which classes at the lower secondary school do you teach English?
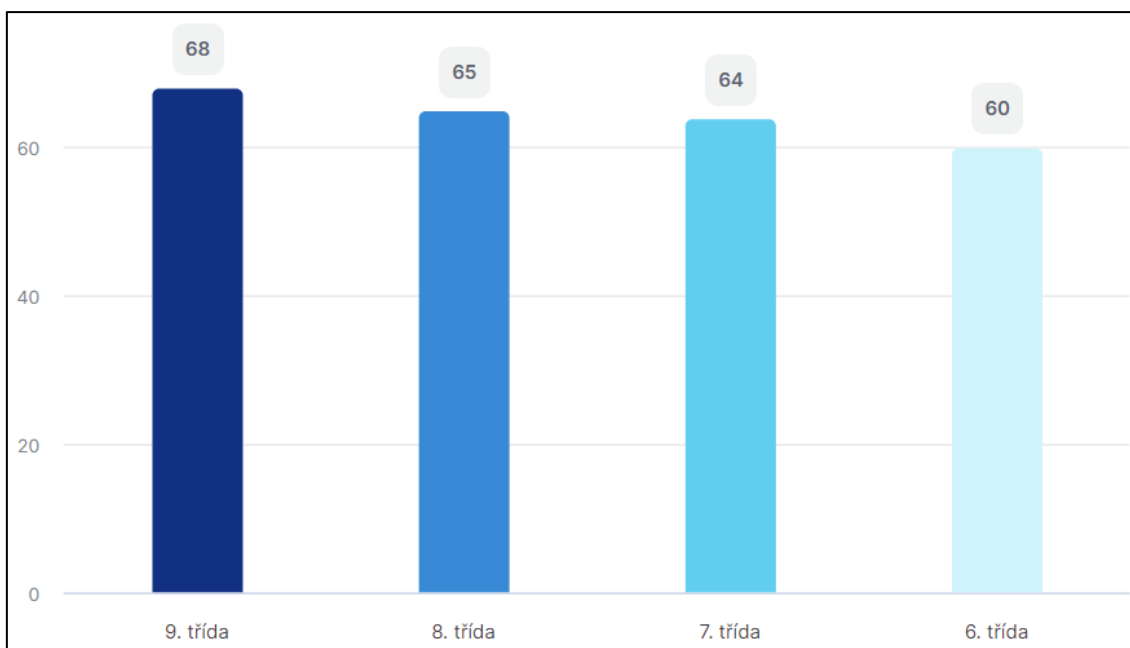

Figure 26: Classes in which respondents teach

The multiple-choice question about which class the respondents currently teach English brought more or less very similar results, meaning that the representation of teachers from different classes was almost even.

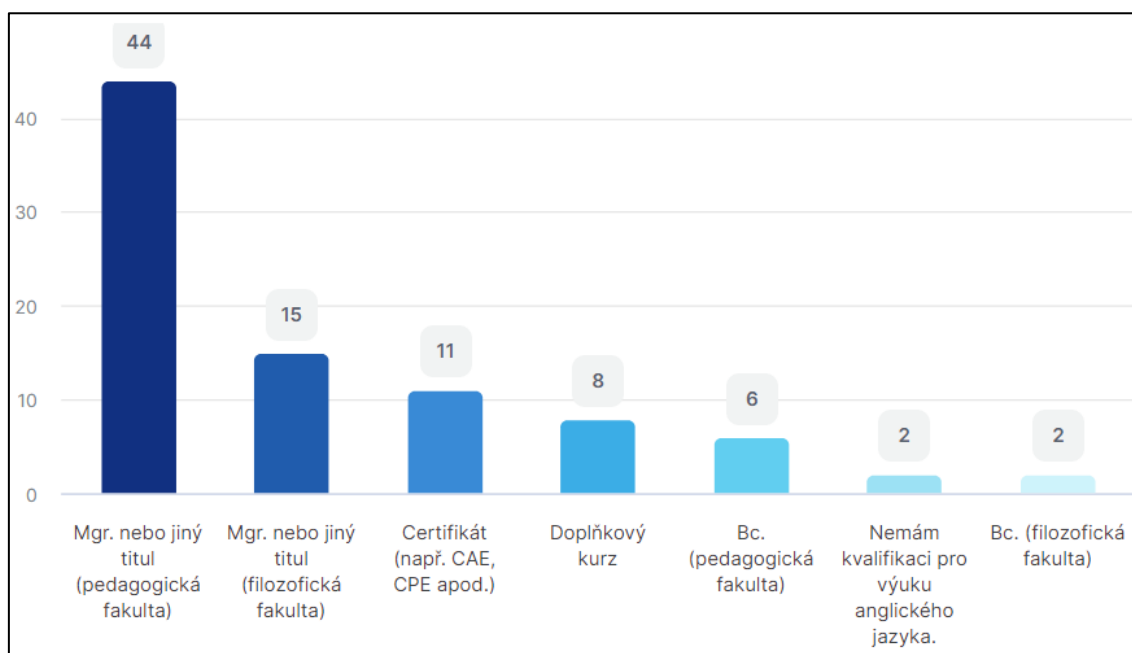*Question 27: What are your qualifications for teaching English?*

Figure 27: Qualification of respondents

There were varying degrees of proficiency in English among the respondents. The most common response was graduation from a master's degree or other program at a Faculty of Education (44). However, teachers who teach on a recognised certificate or have an additional course were also represented. 2 respondents even stated that they had no qualifications to teach English.

7.4. Conclusions of the research survey

The aim of the research was to investigate how English intonation and rhythm are taught in English language classes at the lower secondary schools. Three objectives were defined at the beginning of the research, which I then explored through a questionnaire administered to a total of 88 respondents – that is, English language teachers at lower secondary schools.

The objectives of the research were as follows:

Research objective 1: To examine whether English intonation and rhythm is part of English language teaching at lower secondary schools.

This research found out that from the teachers' perspective, intonation and rhythm are in most cases part of English language teaching, even if most teachers only sometimes or rarely include them in their teaching. The vast majority of teachers believe that intonation and rhythm are

important aspects of English language, and on a scale of 1 to 5, most respondents leaned towards the middle and therefore chose number 3.

Research objective 2: To explore the most common problems from teachers' perspective in teaching English intonation and rhythm.

The questionnaire shows that the most common problems and obstacles perceived by teachers are in a very similar order for both intonation and rhythm. Teachers consider the two biggest problems to be lack of materials and lack of methodological materials. This fact may be crucial for all developers of methodological materials, support materials and other sources needed for teaching. In third and fourth place were responses such as lack of interest on the part of the learner or lack of knowledge on the part of the teacher. This can be improved, for example, by appropriate methods that can draw students more into the subject without them realising it, but also by better preparation and knowledge of the teachers themselves. The penultimate answer in order was the complexity of the issue, which may depend to some extent on the teacher's grasp of the issue. Among the other free responses, teachers most frequently mentioned lack of time, which may more or less reflect the setup of the school system in the Czech Republic.

Research objective 3: To investigate whether English textbooks used in the classroom influence the extent to which intonation and rhythm are incorporated into English language teaching.

Answers relating to the textbooks are again very comparable for both intonation and rhythm. The questionnaire survey shows that most teachers use textbooks every lesson or at least several times a week. The most used textbook by the respondents is clearly Project/Project Explore. The overwhelming majority of teachers interviewed disagree with the statement that the textbooks they use in their teaching contain enough stimuli and exercises to teach intonation and rhythm. Most of the teachers would rather appreciate more suggestions and exercises in the textbooks for teaching intonation and rhythm, and would also be motivated to include this topic more often in their lessons. Thus, in the teachers' opinion, it can be argued that the textbook they use influences to some extent the extent to which they include intonation and rhythm in their teaching.

Conclusion

This bachelor thesis deals with the issue of intonation and rhythm at the lower secondary schools.

The thesis is divided into theoretical and practical parts. In the theoretical part, the first chapter introduces the basic terms of intonation, its function, aspects influencing intonation and its overall importance. The second chapter deals with rhythm, i.e. again some basic terms, factors influencing rhythm, its importance, but also stress and phrasing, which are closely related to rhythm, or the interconnection of rhythm and intonation are introduced. The third chapter describes how English intonation and rhythm are embedded in RVP and the fourth chapter how it is embedded in selected textbooks such as Project Explore, English Plus, Your Space, New Sky. Chapter five concerns with the most common problems in teaching and learning intonation and rhythm from the perspective of both teachers and learners. The last theoretical chapter deals with methods and activities for improving intonation and rhythm in English, such as imitation drills, the use of gestures, Jazz Chants, music and song activities, rap activities and drama activities.

The practical part mapped the state of teaching intonation and rhythm at lower secondary schools from the perspective of teachers using quantitative research. The survey was conducted in spring 2023 and a total of 88 English language teachers participated. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions and was completely anonymous, time-saving and easy to understand, which was verified by a pre-research survey. The questions in the questionnaire were closed, semi-closed and open ended. The individual questions were evaluated and graphically illustrated for clarity.

The survey results show that teachers believe that intonation and rhythm are part of English language teaching, at least sometimes or rarely. Most teachers also attach considerable importance to these aspects. Among the most common problems in teaching intonation and rhythm, teachers perceive a lack of methodological support or a lack of materials. Other obstacles are learners' lack of interest, teachers' lack of knowledge of the issue, the difficulty of the issue or lack of time. The survey also shows that the choice of textbook used in teaching can to some extent influence the extent to which intonation and rhythm are included in the classroom.

However, this bachelor thesis, which deals in considerable detail with the state of teaching intonation and rhythm at the lower secondary level, has its limitations and drawbacks. These

include, for example, the number of respondents to the questionnaire, which is far from the actual number of English language teachers in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, it is the method of the questionnaire itself that ascertains this situation from the perspective of the teachers themselves. For possible future research, I suggest comparing these results with a similar questionnaire survey, or with another method that would survey this situation not only from the teachers' point of view.

To sum up the study showed that teachers believe that intonation and rhythm are mostly included in the teaching of English at lower secondary schools, but there are many obstacles and problems, including the choice of textbook used, which need to be prevented and improved.

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Appendices

Příloha I.   Dotazník

Focus on English rhythm and intonation at lower secondary school

Vážení respondenti,

jmenuji se Monika Trochtová a jsem studentkou 3. ročníku bakalářského studia pedagogické fakulty Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci. Touto cestou si Vám dovoluji poslat dotazník s prosbou o jeho vyplnění. Cílem tohoto dotazníku je zjistit, jak probíhá výuka intonace a rytmu v hodinách anglického jazyka a jaké je obsažení této problematiky v učebnicích. Údaje, které dotazník poskytne, budou sloužit výhradně pro účely empirického výzkumu k mé bakalářské práci zaměřené právě na intonaci a rytmus v hodinách anglického jazyka na druhém stupni základních škol.

Dotazník je určen všem **učitelům anglického jazyka na druhém stupni základních škol v ČR** a je zcela **anonymní**. Jeho vyplnění by Vám nemělo zabrat více než 10 minut.

Předem děkuji za Vaši ochotu a Váš čas.

1 Jste učitelem anglického jazyka na 2. stupni ZŠ?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

◯ Ano.   ◯ Ne.

2 Setkal/a jste se již někdy s problematikou intonace anglického jazyka?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

◯ Ano.   ◯ Ne.   ◯ Nemám názor.

3 Je podle Vás intonace důležitým aspektem anglického jazyka?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

◯ Ano.   ◯ Ne.   ◯ Nemám názor.

4 Pomocí hvězdiček prosím přiřaďte, jakou důležitost přikládáte výuce intonace anglického jazyka na druhém stupni ZŠ.

Nápověda k otázce: *1 hvězdička = nedůležité; 5 hvězdiček = velmi důležité*

☆☆☆☆☆ ☐ / 5

5 Jak často zařazujete učivo intonace do hodin anglického jazyka?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Velmi často. ○ Často. ○ Občas. ○ Zřídka. ○ Nikdy.

6 Pokud jste odpověděli v předchozí otázce NIKDY, uveďte důvod.

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu nebo více odpovědí*

☐ Intonaci nepovažuji za důležitý aspekt při výuce anglického jazyka.

☐ Téma intonace nezařazuji do výuky z časových důvodů.

☐ Problematika intonace je pro žáky na druhém stupni příliš komplikovaná.

☐ Neznám metody pro výuku intonace.

☐ Problematice intonace sám/sama nerozumím.

☐ Jiná (prosím, uveďte): ☐

7 Co vnímáte jako největší překážku při výuce intonace?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu nebo více odpovědí*

☐ Nedostatek materiálů.

☐ Nedostatek metodických podkladů.

☐ Nezájem ze strany žáků.

☐ Obtížnost tohoto učiva.

☐ Moje nedostatečné znalosti dané problematiky.

☐ Jiná (prosím, uveďte): ☐

8 Setkal/a jste se již někdy s problematikou rytmu anglického jazyka?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Ano. ○ Ne. ○ Nemám názor.

9 Je podle Vás rytmus důležitým aspektem anglického jazyka?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Ano.   ○ Ne.   ○ Nemám názor.

10 Pomocí hvězdiček prosím přiřaďte, jakou důležitost přikládáte výuce rytmu anglického jazyka na druhém stupni ZŠ.

Nápověda k otázce: *1 hvězdička = nedůležité; 5 hvězdiček = velmi důležité*

☆☆☆☆☆   [   ] / 5

11 Jak často zařazujete učivo rytmu do hodin anglického jazyka?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Velmi často.   ○ Často.   ○ Občas.   ○ Zřídka.   ○ Nikdy.

12 Pokud jste odpověděli v předchozí otázce NIKDY, uveďte důvod.

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu nebo více odpovědí*

☐ Rytmus nepovažuji za důležitý aspekt při výuce anglického jazyka.   ☐ Téma rytmu nezařazuji do výuky z časových důvodů.   ☐ Problematika rytmu je pro žáky na druhém stupni příliš komplikovaná.   ☐ Neznám metody pro výuku rytmu.

☐ Problematice rytmu sám/sama nerozumím.

☐ Jiná (prosím, uveďte): [   ]

13 Co vnímáte jako největší překážku při výuce rytmu?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu nebo více odpovědí*

☐ Nedostatek materiálů.   ☐ Nedostatek metodických podkladů.   ☐ Nezájem ze strany žáků.   ☐ Obtížnost tohoto učiva.

☐ Moje nedostatečné znalosti dané problematiky.

☐ Jiná (prosím, uveďte): [   ]

14 Jak často používáte učebnici v hodinách AJ?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Každou hodinu. ○ Několikrát týdně. ○ Jednou týdně. ○ Méně často. ○ Nikdy.

15 Jakou učebnici používáte v hodinách AJ?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Project ○ English Plus ○ Your Space ○ New Sky ○ Hello, Kids!

○ Jiná (prosím, uveďte): [   ]

16 Do jaké míry souhlasíte s následujícím výrokem: "V učebnici, kterou používám, je dostatek cvičení pro výuku intonace AJ."

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Plně souhlasím. ○ Souhlasím. ○ Nemám vyhraněný názor. ○ Nesouhlasím. ○ Plně nesouhlasím.

17 Ocenili byste více podnětů a cvičení pro výuku intonace v učebnicích AJ?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Určitě ano. ○ Spíše ano. ○ Nemám vyhraněný názor. ○ Spíše ne. ○ Určitě ne.

18 Pokud by bylo v učebnicích více podnětů pro výuku intonace anglického jazyka, motivovalo by Vás to k častějšímu zařazení této problematiky do výuky?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Určitě ano. ○ Spíše ano. ○ Nemám vyhraněný názor. ○ Spíše ne. ○ Určitě ne.

19 Do jaké míry souhlasíte s následujícím výrokem: "V učebnici, kterou používám, je dostatek cvičení pro výuku rytmu AJ."

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Plně souhlasím. ○ Souhlasím. ○ Nemám vyhraněný názor. ○ Nesouhlasím. ○ Plně nesouhlasím.

20 Ocenili byste více podnětů a cvičení pro výuku rytmu v učebnicích AJ?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Určitě ano.   ○ Spíše ano.   ○ Nemám vyhraněný názor.   ○ Spíše ne.   ○ Určitě ne.

21 Pokud by bylo v učebnicích více podnětů pro výuku rytmu anglického jazyka, motivovalo by Vás to k častějšímu zařazení této problematiky do výuky?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Určitě ano.   ○ Spíše ano.   ○ Nemám vyhraněný názor.   ○ Spíše ne.   ○ Určitě ne.

22 Kterou z následujících metod a aktivit pro výuku intonace a rytmu znáte?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu nebo více odpovědí*

☐ Jazz Chants   ☐ Song and music activities   ☐ Rap activities   ☐ Drama activities   ☐ Žádnou z výše uvedených metod a aktivit neznám.

23 Jak často používáte některou z těchto metod a aktivit pro výuku intonace a rytmu?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď v každém řádku*

	Velmi často	Často	Občas	Zřídka	Nikdy
Jazz Chants	○	○	○	○	○
Song and music activities	○	○	○	○	○
Rap activities	○	○	○	○	○
Drama activities	○	○	○	○	○

24 Jaké je Vaše pohlaví?

Nápověda k otázce: *Vyberte jednu odpověď*

○ Muž   ○ Žena   ○ Jiné

25 Jaká je délka Vaší učitelské praxe?

Nápověda k otázce: Vyberte jednu odpověď

○ do 3 let ○ 4-10 let ○ 11-20 let ○ 21 a více let

26 Na jaké škole aktuálně učíte?

Nápověda k otázce: Vyberte jednu odpověď

○ Státní škola ○ Soukromá škola ○ Církevní škola

27 Ve kterých třídách na 2. stupni ZŠ vyučujete anglický jazyk?

Nápověda k otázce: Vyberte jednu nebo více odpovědí

☐ 6. třída ☐ 7. třída ☐ 8. třída ☐ 9. třída

28 Jaká je vaše kvalifikace pro výuku anglického jazyka?

Nápověda k otázce: Vyberte jednu odpověď

○ Bc. (pedagogická fakulta) ○ Bc. (filozofická fakulta) ○ Mgr. nebo jiný titul (pedagogická fakulta) ○ Mgr. nebo jiný titul (filozofická fakulta)

○ Certifikát (např. CAE, CPE apod.) ○ Doplňkový kurz ○ Nemám kvalifikaci pro výuku anglického jazyka.

Annotation

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Rok obhajoby:	2023

Název práce:	Focus on English rhythm and intonation at lower secondary school
Název práce v angličtině:	Focus on English rhythm and intonation at lower secondary school
Anotace práce:	Cílem této práce je prozkoumat stav výuky intonace a rytmu na druhém stupni základních škol z pohledu učitelů anglického jazyka. Konkrétně zjistit, zda jsou rytmus a intonace součástí výuky anglického jazyka, jaké jsou nejčastější problémy a zda mohou používané učebnice ovlivnit míru začlenění těchto aspektů do výuky. Teoretická část vychází z odborné literatury. Praktická část je založena na analýze výsledků výzkumného dotazníku mezi učiteli anglického jazyka na druhém stupni základních škol.
Klíčová slova:	Intonace, rytmus, druhý stupeň ZŠ, výuka anglického jazyka, výslovnost, žáci, učebnice anglického jazyka, dotazník
Anotace práce v angličtině	The aim of this thesis is to investigate the state of teaching intonation and rhythm at lower secondary schools from the perspective of English language teachers. More specifically, to find out whether rhythm and intonation are part of English language teaching, what the most common problems

	are, and whether the textbooks used can influence the extent to which these aspects are incorporated into teaching.
	The theoretical part is based on professional literature. The practical part is based on the analysis of the research questionnaire among teachers of English at lower secondary schools.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Intonation, rhythm, lower secondary school, English language teaching, pronunciation, learners, English textbooks, questionnaire
Přílohy vázané v práci:	1 příloha
Rozsah práce:	62 s.
Jazyk práce:	anglický