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**THE USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE CLASSES**

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## ABSTRACT

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The thesis deals with the topic of the mother-tongue use which has been for many decades a subject of dispute among the foreign-language-teaching public. In general the work supports the view that students' native language, despite many contradictory opinions, should have its firm position in English language classes. While presenting both the advantages accompanying its use as well as its indisputable disadvantages, the thesis attempts to justify its employment not merely as a last resort but actually as one of the tools sustaining effective English learning. Primarily the thesis seeks to summarize the definition of an ideal mother-tongue use and it suggests the framework of principles assuring its effective use in foreign language classes. Besides, the work comprises a small empirical research whose findings provide an illustrative picture about the situation concerning the use of mother tongue at schools in Pilsen, West Bohemia. More accurately, the study examines what the attitudes towards the issue are among lower and upper secondary school teachers and demonstrates that their employment of the mother tongue during their English lessons differs in respect to the age and mainly the proficiency of their students'.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Students' mother tongue has always played an ambivalent role in foreign language learning (FLL). Within the last century its standing in language classes in general has changed a lot from using it as a natural starting point in teaching another language through translation to its total abandonment. Nowadays, the situation seems to be somewhere in the middle of both of these extremely remote ends. Still, it is true that there is a range of similar opinions on the mother-tongue use which deny it totally on one side, or fully support it on the other one. However, according to Lynne Cameron (2001), the recent research studies have shown that the situation has changed in such a degree that most of the teachers use a mixture of students' mother tongue and the foreign language (p. 199). Furthermore, Littlewood and Yu (2011) have noted that the chance to encounter an exclusive target language use in schools is, except for few cases, almost impossible (p. 67). Based on these assumptions, the question concerning the use of mother tongue in FLL has raised again provoking many new discussions primarily debating its proper use.

This paper focuses on the use of students' mother tongue in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes in particular. To be more precise, it deals exclusively with contexts where students and teachers share the same native language<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the main focus is on the teachers' use of mother tongue rather on that of students' themselves. In general, it deals with the question how teachers may make the maximum of mother tongue in order to facilitate their students' English acquisition. Additionally, the attention in this thesis is paid to classes teaching solely general English which is meant to be used as a means of global communication with any other speakers of English. Since other contexts than general EFL may alter the role of mother tongue markedly, this paper disregards different kinds of English classes for specific purposes such as English for Academic Purposes or Business English.

From the content point of view, the work is divided into two rather autonomous parts: (a) theory; (b) practice. The main objective of the theoretical part is to provide general framework for the ensuing practical part. It aims to introduce the issue of the mother-tongue use in EFL classes explaining its main problems. However, the chief goal is to summarize the most essential principles of its effective employment into teaching practice which would afterwards serve as ideal criteria for analyzing the results of the

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<sup>1</sup> Compare to English as a second language (ESL), which is usually described as being taught directly in English-speaking countries to students who have moved there for a living. For more detail on mother-tongue use in ESL context see e.g. Auerbach (1993).



conducted research. The structure of the theoretical part is as follows. First, it provides information about historical developments of the position of mother tongue in EFL. Next, another two sections attempt to investigate the reasons underlying such noticeably ambivalent attitudes towards its use in English classrooms. Therefore, the advantages and disadvantages connected to its employment are presented here. Finally, the last section of the theoretical part attempts to summarize what an effective use of mother tongue in EFL classrooms ideally looks like.

In contrast, the second part of the thesis is oriented mainly practically. It aims to roughly map what the current situation regarding the mother-tongue use at Czech schools is; namely, the research focuses on schools in Pilsen, West Bohemia. The main research question is whether there exist some similar attitudes towards the concerned issue among teachers of English. More accurately, it asks if there can be detected some regularity in the mother-tongue use among lower secondary teachers on one side and upper secondary ones on the other side. The research part of this thesis is organized into three main chapters. First, the research methodology is presented explaining the research question in more detail, providing the information about the used methods and respondents, and describing the process how the research was carried out as a whole. Second, the findings of the research are presented and followed by their analysis and interpretation. The main core of the section is the comparison between the results obtained from lower secondary and upper secondary schools, which aims to answer the research question. The last chapter attempts to apply the findings of the research to teaching practice. On the grounds of the findings and the theoretical background concerning an ideal use of students' mother tongue in English classes, some implications and advice for teachers are proposed there. Finally, the existing limitations of the entire research are stated and the recommendations for further research exploring the concerned subject are suggested. The ultimate conclusion of this graduate thesis comprises the summary of the main ideas and findings regarding the use of mother tongue in EFL classes.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The objective of this chapter is to provide the most vital information about the role of students' mother tongue in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching. Most of the theoretical facts which shall be presented here come from the literature concerning foreign language teaching in general. However, as they can be straightforwardly used for all foreign languages, they apply unexceptionally for English in particular. The chapter consists of four main parts. First, the historical overview of the position of students' mother tongue in the main foreign language learning (FLL) approaches of the twentieth century is outlined. In the two subsequent parts, the discussion over the advantages and disadvantages linked to the use of mother tongue becomes of the main concern. The last subchapter attempts to summarize some main rules for effective mother-tongue in second language education, which shall serve as a prior reference source for the results analysis of the successive research.

Mother tongue, which is often referred to as native language, or a first language (L1) has according to a certain group of linguists and teachers an important and irreplaceable function in FLL. For them, as Sheelagh Deller (2002) has declared, mother tongue is a "vital resource" from which the second language (L2), often labeled as the target or foreign language, comes from (p. 3). On the other hand, for the other group, the use of L1 in second language learning represents an inhibitor slowing down the process of L2 comprehension and command, or as stated in the prologue of Deller and Rinvolucri's work (2002), "an obstacle to progress" (p. 5).

### **Historical Development of Using Mother Tongue in EFL Teaching**

During the last century modern language teaching has undergone many transformations as it has been quite rapidly developing since then. Naturally the effort has been to design the most effective method that would enhance second language acquisition (SLA) as much as possible. At the same time, however, the changes in language teaching were sometimes so enormous that the resulting alternative approaches were very contradictory and even almost contentious. Together with these, the role of mother tongue in second language learning has changed a lot too, as shall be discussed in the upcoming

part. A brief overview of the historical development of L1 position in FLL can help us to understand still existing controversies around this issue<sup>2</sup>.

**Grammar-Translation Method.** At the beginning of modern language teaching, which is, according to Richards and Rodgers (2002), dated back to the early twentieth century (p. 1), mother tongue played rather crucial role in SLA. The first acknowledged and usually cited method is the Grammar-Translation Method. This approach is regarded as a classical one, since it is based on exactly the same way of teaching as the classical languages, like Latin and old Greek, were taught in the past. Its essentials lie, as Professor Diane Larsen-Freeman (2003) has explained, in “the study of the grammar of the target language [whereby] students would become more familiar with the grammar of their native language and that this familiarity would help them speak and write their native language better” (p.11). Thus, rather than providing learners with communicative skills in the target language (L2), this method was primarily meant to enable students to read and understand foreign sophisticated texts, whose content and elaborated language would enrich them intellectually. Consequently, the role of L1 in this phase was seen chiefly as: (a) the referential medium of an accurate translation, which was the main interest of that time; (b) the tool of instructing students (Richardson & Rodgers, 2002, p. 6). The Grammar-Translation Method has its critics as well. They warn essentially of the lack of speaking and listening skills, and the excessive drill accompanying learning grammar rules and vocabulary. In spite of these disadvantages, the method, more or less modified, is still used nowadays (ibid.).

**Direct Method.** The second milestone in modern second language learning is the Direct Method. It can be seen as the ensuing contrast to the Grammar-Translation Method, whose severe emphasis on accurate translation was meant to be surpassed. The Direct Method in order to promote students’ communicative skills allows only the target language to be spoken in the classroom. The use of students’ native language is therefore wholly excluded from the learning process. Regardless of the emphasis on the communicative use of the target language, the method is also often criticized. Paradoxically, it is especially for, as Jeremy Harmer (2007) has stated, creating “a powerful prejudice against the presence of the L1 in language lessons” (p. 64). Richards and Rodgers (2002) have pointed out another argument against the Direct method. They assume that sometimes a brief explanation in a native language could be more comprehensible to students than complicated instructions

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<sup>2</sup> Only the methods and approaches mapping the significant changes in L1 position in FLL are discussed.

in the target language, which at last can become even “counterproductive” than promoting SLA (p. 13).

**Audio-Lingual Method.** This method had developed from the Direct Method. It is based on the very same principles that only the target language should be used within classes. However, the position of mother tongue has not been seen as much pessimistically as it used to be in the Direct Method. According to Diane Larsen-Freeman (2003), teachers do not ignore the potential advantages of L1 in language teaching anymore. They use a contrastive analysis, which is a comparison between native and the target language, to help them expect students’ possible difficulties in their process of second language learning, such as a problematical pronunciation (p. 41). Nonetheless, the utilization of mother tongue is still rather negligible since it is still only on teachers’ part where realizing of the importance of the existing connection between the two languages takes place.

**Alternative approaches and methods (the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, and the Community Language Learning).** The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of various alternatives to the traditional grammar-based language teaching. In general, in the center of all these new approaches we find mainly the communicative approach to language learning. Moreover, established on humanistic principles they all aim to create a stress-free and student-centered learning environment. Regarding the role of mother tongue, its position has shifted as well. Following one of the main principles of these alternative teaching methods, which is to provide a safe atmosphere for students, a first language has become a natural medium of explaining, instructing and feedback for beginning learners, while for the advanced, teachers use it less and less frequently (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, pp. 67, 83, 101).

**Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based learning (TBL).** The main aim of these approaches is to support students’ communicative skills like in the case of alternative methodologies. However, this time the emphasis is put even more on the content of the utterances rather than on the form. In other words, the real-world communication in the case of CLT, or task solving in TBL in pairs or groups are the goal (Harmer, 2007, p. 70). Therefore, the role of mother tongue in language learning becomes again more sidelined than the target language. Yet, Larsen-Freeman (2003) says that its “judicious” use is approved of (p. 132). On the other hand, Harmer (2007) states that this very focus on students’ communicativeness in the target language has led into underestimating nonnative-speaker teachers by “expecting the teacher to be able to respond to any and every language problem” (p. 70).

It is essential to mention that in the history of FLL there have occurred many other different approaches to language teaching. Some of them were quite popular and in part contributed to drawing attention towards some aspects of language teaching which had been rather ignored before. For example, the Lexical approach and its emphasis on “lexical chunks” instead of vocabulary (Harmer, 2007, p. 74), or the approach called the Total Physical Response that stresses out the importance of students’ physical movement in order to make language learning more effective and more enjoyable (ibid., p. 69). Nevertheless, considering the position of mother tongue in FLL, none of them have affected it any radically compared to the approaches mentioned above. To conclude, the history of foreign language learning has proved that the role of mother tongue is important; however, to what extent that is the question still appealing to linguists and language teachers. Yet, there is also no doubt that its use in foreign language classes has both its certain advantages and drawbacks, as shall be the very topic of the two following sections.

### **Advantages of Using Mother Tongue**

Due to several approaches towards FLL in the past which favored the exclusive use of the target language in classrooms, e.g. the Direct Method in particular, mother tongue has gained a special status. It has become, as labeled by Luke Prodromou, “a skeleton in a cupboard” (as cited in Gabrielatos, 2001, p. 6). As a result of almost absolute domination of L2, non-native teachers started to be less prestigious which has led into their lower self-esteem. In other words, some of them have stopped believing in their own pedagogical skills which has resulted in their feeling of guilt that the use of mother tongue in their lessons is regarded as their personal failure as English teachers (Prodromou, 2002, p. 5). Along with that, for students the L1 use in English classrooms has become unsought as well, and they have started to consider native English speaking teachers better and more efficient. Nevertheless, as Prodromou (2002) has added, “this dominance of native speaker teacher of English in our profession is now being questioned and with it the stigmatizing of the mother tongue in foreign language education” (ibid.). The reason for this twist is caused by the recent appreciation of positive impacts the use of mother tongue has on second language acquisition. While some of its suggested merits are still the matter of discussion, others have proved themselves to be of an undeniable help in FLL. The most accentuated features of the latter ones could be summarized under the following headings: (a) humanistic element; (b) reference device; (c) evaluation device; (d) time saving device.

**Humanistic element.** Deller (2002) has argued that mother tongue “is all what they [learners] bring in to our classrooms and as such it cannot be ignored” (p. 3). She continued that L1 should be viewed as a foundation for all foreign languages, since students use it consciously and/or unconsciously as a sort of springboard for their other language acquisition (ibid., p. 10). Moreover, according to John Harbord, they both are in a constant “inevitable interaction ... during any type of language acquisition” (as cited in Wharton, 2007, p. 12). Therefore, students’ L1 cannot be entirely banished from English language classrooms. Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002) have provided another supportive argument. They have claimed that using a first language in English lessons can help to create a secure atmosphere, which should be one of the primary features of a modern EFL teaching (p. 11). This assumption appears to be true especially for young learners and for beginners who are not very conversant in a second language yet. Additionally, the results of the research conducted by Lithuanian academics from Mykolas Romeris University have proved that if students of English are wished to not use their L1 in lessons, they may “feel their identity threatened” (Kavaliauskiene et al., 2010, p. 37). Terence Odlin (1989) holds the same opinion by stating that in student-centered approach it is important to show learners that “their linguistic and cultural background *is* important to the teacher” (p. 4, emphasis in original).

**Reference device.** One of the most supporting arguments for the promotion of students’ mother tongue in EFL teaching is the assumption that it works as a primary launch pad for their second, third or even fourth language. David Nunan (2001) has stated that this particular characteristic of L1 is crucial to the entire idea of second language acquisition which is that “a learner’s first language has an important influence on the acquisition of a second” (p. 87). However, the L1 use as a referential instrument is rather limited. The main constraint is the so-called language distance. It is the relation between L1 and L2, or more precisely as explained by Odlin (1989), “the degree of similarity between two languages” (p. 32). Some languages are more similar – in their structure, lexis, typeface etc. – than others. For example, Romance languages have some certain linguistic features that occur analogously in each of them and make them very resemble to some degree. Thus, French, Spanish or Italian are more interrelated linguistically than e.g. French, Czech, English, and Hungarian because the latter ones come from distinctively different language families each – Romance, Slavic, Germanic, and Uralic. However, even though our students’ L1 is very distant from English, there are still many possible ways to use it fruitfully in classrooms. The following list is definitely not exhaustive; nevertheless,

it stresses the main EFL teaching and learning areas where L1 reference can effectively assist L2 acquisition. They are contrastive analysis and translation.

**Contrastive analysis.** In some cases students' mother tongue can become a valuable teaching material in L2 classrooms. Thanks to contrastive analysis, which is the linguistic comparison of two or more languages, teachers can discover the relation between the target language and students' L1. Such cross-linguistic comparison reveals two kinds of results – similarities as well as differences between languages. It is believed that the similarities facilitate SLA, whereas for dissimilarities the opposite applies, i.e. that they may inhibit it (Nunan, 2001, p. 87). In the first instant, linguists often talk about positive transfer, as it may positively encourage SLA; to the latter one they typically refer as negative. However, both of them seem to have equally important benefits in EFL teaching and learning. Robert Lado, an American linguist who is regarded as one of the founders of contrastive analysis, has summarized this claim as the following, “the teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real learning problems are and can better provide for teaching them” (as cited in Odlin, 1989, p. 15). It suggests that teachers should use inter-linguistic analysis as a common tool in their teaching practice, and thus anticipate difficulties students may face. According to Odlin (1989), cross-lingual influences involving L1 and L2 impact either positively or negatively the whole language system (p. 152). Thus, mother tongue can prove to be useful in all linguistic areas. Kavaliauskiene and her colleagues (2010) have made the same assumption when stating that the true significance of mother tongue “in English classes lies in exploiting it in order to compare grammar, vocabulary, word order and other language points” (p. 36). Harmer (2007) has added another reason for comparing L1 and L2 in English classrooms which is that students may easily analyze some errors they tend to make and understand them then (p. 133).

**Teaching vocabulary.** Languages belonging to the same family tend to have similar word forms and meaning, for example, French *comprendre* and Spanish *comprender*, both meaning *to understand*. However, similarities can be found even within not very related languages, e.g. English word *brother* and *bratr* in Czech. Positive lexical transfer thus, as Odlin (1989) has stated, “play[s] a major role in how quickly a particular foreign language may be learned by speakers of another language” (p. 77). Similar spelling helps students comprehend the words, remember them and use them actively. Moreover, vocabulary similarities thus save time that can be devoted to the study of more complicated words. Nevertheless, such intuitive approach to foreign languages may have some

difficulties. First, according to Odlin (1989), it is the ability to recognize “the formal similarities that mark a cognate relation” (p.79) which can be a problem for many students with limited linguistic awareness and perception for language distance. Second, it is the case of the so-called false friends, or false cognates. These are pairs of words that look very similar in their forms at first sight; yet due to their different etymological development they convey two very distinct meanings (ibid., pp. 78–79). For instance, the Czech word *sympatický* coming from Latin and meaning likeable, and English *sympathetic* from Greek meaning compassionate. Although among English and other languages there exist long lists of false friends, teachers still can make a profit of them in their English classrooms. If applied wisely, they can use them to raise students’ awareness of language differences, and consequently enhance their English vocabulary. Moreover, Odlin (1989) has concluded that they “can provide not only semantic but also morphological and syntactic information” (p. 83).

*Teaching grammar.* Together with the Odlin’s last quoted statement, demonstrating similarities and differences between L1 and L2 may facilitate students’ understanding of the target language structure and use. For example, Odlin (1989) has supported the idea of importance of cross-lingual influences in understanding the target language syntax including word order, relative clauses, or negation. Even though he has highlighted possible constraints, such as language distance and insufficient number of transfer investigations, he has claimed that syntactical transfer (either positive or negative) has been proved by some researches (pp. 85–111). Moreover, he believes that in the light of conducted studies a restrained morphological transfer exists as well and that it is likely to help students with their L2 comprehension. Along with that, for example, positive transfer of article use can also be suggested (ibid., p. 34) as well as positive transfer of some bound morphemes such as plural suffix *-s* in English, Spanish and French, or similar English and Spanish adjectival suffixes *-ous* and *-oso* as in *scandalous* and *scandaloso* (pp. 82–83). Nevertheless, despite the possible language distance occurring between L1 and L2 and unconvincing amount of evidence in the favor of the existence of grammatical transfer, contrastive activities can still be one of the possible ways of introducing grammar of the target language to students. Focusing on grammar similarities and/or differences between the two languages, explaining and exemplifying them can help students increase their experience with L2 and better understand its use (Wharton, 2007, p. 8). In addition, Deller and Rinvolucri (2002) have stated that by means of contrastive analysis students may find learning grammar “less frightening and much more accessible” (p. 28).



*Teaching pronunciation.* Phonetics and phonology of native language have an influential role on students' L2 pronunciation (Odlin, 1989, p.112). First, it influences their perception of sounds in the target language, which are either similar or different to those in L1. According to Odlin (1989), "misperceptions" lead to "mispronunciations" which both in the end result in mutual unintelligibility between speakers (p. 115). In other words, if L2 phonemic system contains vowels and/or consonants not existing in the native language, students may have problems with hearing the sound rightly and pronouncing it accurately. In both cases, however, its consequence is always a more demanding comprehension on either speakers' or listeners' sides. Therefore, it is vital to help students realize the similarities/differences between L1 and L2 articulation. Second, besides the phonetic contrasts teachers may effectively use students' L1 to teach so-called "suprasegmental" features typical for English (ibid., p. 117). These are: stress, tone, rhythm, and intonation of speech. Since compared to other languages, stress in English co-establishes meaning, it has a central importance in pronunciation. For instance, stress is sometimes the only means of differentiation between a noun and a verb, as it is e.g. in case of *COMbine* (a noun) and *comBINE* (a verb) (ibid.). Therefore, stress plays a crucial role in comprehension, and as such it is very important in English teaching. It may turn out very useful to focus on L1/L2 stress analysis in classrooms, for in other languages stress does not have to be as much prominent as it is in English. Next, intonation in different languages is used very differently. English is an intonational language which means that through intonation speakers convey their feelings, attitudes and other discourse information, e.g. the degree of politeness or urgency. Thus, as Odlin (1989) has concluded, "non-native speakers may at times risk giving offense simply from the use of intonation patterns that signal one emotional state in the native language and a different one in the target language" (p. 119). Differences between L1 and L2 intonation are very important, too. For that reason, the application of students' L1 in EFL classrooms in order to demonstrate them a distinctively different use of intonation in English can be found suitable and eventually very successful in its results.

*Translation.* Natanael F. França Rocha (2011) has labeled translation in the title of his research as "a teaching tool to bridge L1 and L2" (p. 179). The title summarizes the conclusion he has arrived to that translation can span the existing contrasts between L1 and L2, and thus very positively affect L2 learning. Despite of many voices against, translation in EFL learning is supported by many on the other hand. David Atkinson has suggested two reasons in favor of translation: "eliciting language" and "checking for comprehension"

(as cited in Wharton, 2007, p. 7). Eliciting language through translation can be done in several ways. The first means is by asking students for English equivalents of vocabulary in L1 and vice versa. Second, it is naturally done by students when they ask teachers for the unknown words or phrases in order to express themselves correctly; and third, by students when they for the same purpose use bilingual dictionaries or some other referential books. The latter two, however, seem to be of the main importance. They both emphasize students' individual motivation to find out L1/L2 equivalents and thus sustain students' innate cognitive needs; whereas in the first case, the need for the act of translation is artificially created by teachers themselves. In accordance with Atkinson, Rocha (2011) has claimed that the act of translating fosters learners' ability to memorize new lexical items (p. 185). It is thanks to mental associations that students create between expressions in the target language and L1 equivalents (ibid., p. 184). Moreover, he has asserted that the more bizarre or funny the connections are, the more easily students remember them. Along with that, Rocha emphasizes the importance of raising students' awareness of difficulty connected with literal translation. He has pointed out that inappropriate, odd and humorous examples of literal translation, if used correctly, can serve in teaching English (ibid., p. 186). The second argument in favor of translation is checking for overall comprehension. By asking students to translate English text into L1 teachers check their comprehension on two linguistic levels at the same time – lexical and grammatical. Thus, teachers can examine whether learners have grasped the real contextual meaning of particular text. Besides eliciting language and checking for comprehension, there is another argument for allowing translation in EFL classes. This argument is very closely related to the humanistic approach to language learning. Providing equivalents in mother tongue to English expressions in a judicious manner may create feelings of security and comfort, instead of self-consciousness springing from the inability to understand what is being said in the target language. For some students this can be very frustrating and demotivating. According to Rocha (2011), translation can “motivate and prevent them from quitting the lessons” (p. 185). Moreover, Shiyab and Abdullateef have compared translation to healing medicine that can cure students' attitude to L2; however, they have warned, “when used injudiciously, it can also prove harmful” (as cited in Rocha, 2011, p. 181). In conclusion, translation has been often labeled as “the fifth skill” together with the other four fundamental skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading) (Harmer, 2007, p. 133; Kavaliauskiene et al., 2010, p. 36)

**Evaluation device.** According to Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002), students' mother tongue has its obvious advantages in evaluation process, including lessons' evaluation as well as the evaluation of students' progress (p. 24). For teachers, L1 may be a powerful tool for "getting on-going feedback" on their courses (ibid.). Getting feedback from students on their work, activities they plan, the way they are teaching etc. has become for many teachers a vital part of their responsibilities. It may be difficult and rather demotivating for students to comment on teachers' work and express their feelings about lessons in English, especially at lower levels. On the contrary, the use of L1, or L1 and English, gives them the opportunity to express themselves despite any language limitations. Moreover, in connection to learners' autonomy, for students themselves native tongue may represent an effective device of their learning self-reflection. D Jabr Dajani has stated that discussing the topics of students' progress and further training can be done much more fluently in students' L1 than it would be when talking only in English (as cited in Harmer (2007), p. 133). In regard to formative evaluation, which aims to improve students' knowledge and skills in English, using mother tongue can represent a useful way of error analysis and quick checking for learners' comprehension, in general.

**Time saving device.** Usually, there is rather limited time, typically from 45 to 90 minutes twice or three times a week, reserved for English in timetables. Therefore, it is exceptionally essential to exploit this time for English exposure as much as possible. However, the use of English at all costs can be more harmful than useful; and paradoxically, a systematic application of mother tongue can positively affect time management within English lessons (Wharton, 2007, p. 12). Sometimes, classroom instructions restricted only to English may cause misunderstanding among some students which consequently leads into the undesirable time loss. The same applies to explanations of some complicated grammatical points that can be very troublesome for most of the students in the group. In addition, when there is a need for a quick evaluation whether learners understand grammar usage, new vocabulary, or task instructions an immediate and short switch into L1 may be a help for both, teachers and students at the same time (Harmer, 2007, p. 132; Wharton, 2007, p. 9).

To conclude, students' mother tongue has proved to play an important role in their second language acquisition. When used advisedly and in a well thought-through way, then L1 can be in many respects a valuable tool in English classrooms. Nevertheless, many linguists and language teachers have been arguing for decades to what extent its genuine share is. It is definitely not simple to decide upon that question. The issue is even more

complicated by the evidences suggesting that L1 can have some considerable negative effects on SLA, on the other hand.

### **Disadvantages of Using Mother Tongue**

However, as there are some moments which are rather questionable when talking about an entire exclusion of mother tongue from language classrooms, there are several problems with its usage as well. There are a number of questions that trouble many English teachers when advocating students' L1 use in classrooms. They are aware that its use has some significant limitations which can eventually affect the whole learning process very negatively. For example, Costas Gabrielatos (2001) has claimed that both teachers and students should be acquainted with these "pitfalls of L1 use in the classroom, as unprincipled use of L1 can have long-lasting negative effects on learners' awareness and production of the target language" (p. 6). Among the main arguments against the use of students' own language in English teaching are often included the following reasons: (a) limited L2 input; (b) limited L2 output; (c) limited learners' autonomy.

**Limited L2 input.** The most cited argument among L2 teachers promoting a total immersion in English is that the students should be exposed to the target language as much as possible in classrooms since the lessons are often very time-limited. Consequently, they see the use of L1 as counterproductive. This argument is based on Stephen Krashen's "input hypothesis" which has assumed that students acquire their L2 by being exposed to it in a comprehensible way, i.e. understandable but demanding at the same time (Harmer, 2007, p. 50; Wharton, 2007, p. 5). Teachers are afraid that by the use of L1, students lose their contact with English greatly. As a result, it may decrease an entire experience with L2 and lead into the loss of English learning opportunities. Furthermore, Miles Turnbull has remarked that in some cases teachers are the only "model" of the English language that students encounter in their English learning (as cited in Herder, 2006, p. 8). Hence teachers should capitalize on their L2 use instead of using mother tongue. The very similar opinion was held by Harmer (2007) when he has labeled English teachers as major "provider[s] of comprehensible input" (pp. 117–118, 134).

**Limited L2 output.** Another reason for excluding L1 from L2 classrooms is targeted at translation. Some teachers are strongly against including translation among classroom activities; on the same account, some have even called it a "waste of time" (Kavaliauskiene et al., 2010, p. 36). The foundations of these attitudes lie evidently in the

Direct Method and Communicative Language Teaching (see *Historical Development of Using Mother Tongue in EFL Teaching* section, pp. 2–3). These approaches authorize English-only activities and emphasize communicative principle whereby students' SLA is happening. In particular, the lack of this communicative aspect has been seen as the most central problem of translation. Merrill Swain's "output hypothesis" has complemented Krashen's SLA hypothesis of comprehensible input (Harmer, 2007, p. 53). Briefly, the core of Swain's theory is the assumption that in order to learn L2 students need to use the target language themselves, besides merely being exposed to it (ibid.; Wharton, 2007, p. 5). In other words, according to this approach to EFL teaching and learning, students have to be actively using the English language. As summarized up by Harmer (2007), they "should be involved in solving communication problems in the target language" (p. 53). Furthermore, Dick Allwright has suggested that the greatest consideration should be concentrated on the process of language learning, not on its product (as cited in Harmer, 2007, p. 53). Nevertheless, translation activities often rather miss both of these lately described principles. First, they lack a desired aspect of real-life and meaningful communicative situation. Second, instead of paying attention to students' work with L2 and their learning process, translation focuses mainly on its product and accuracy.

**Limited learners' autonomy.** The last quite frequent argument against the use of mother tongue in L2 classrooms is that it provides specific circumstances under which students' learning autonomy is likely to become inhibited. This may happen in two rather different ways – teachers' immediate translation, and teachers' explication in L1. First, the manner teachers provide their students with translations may be a cause of students' inadequate learning autonomy. Lynne Cameron (2001) has pointed out that to give students instant translation of unknown expressions can be a serious problem which in some cases may result into students' dependency on their teachers. She has written, "The amount of mental work done by learners affects how well a new word is engraved in memory; the more learners have to think about a word and its meaning, the more likely they are to remember it" (85). Moreover, she has added that translation inhibits students' inner motivation to work out the meaning of foreign word on their own. According to her, they do not have to concentrate very hard on what and how is being said in the target language because by the course of lessons they have learnt their teachers' translation is there always at hand (ibid., p. 86). This argument is quite connected with the idea of learning vocabulary from context, instead of word-for-word translation. Chris Wharton (2007) has summarized this point of view as the situation where "the students'

communicative needs [are] not attended to” as they concentrate on accuracy rather than on fluency of their L2 active use (p. 3). Along with that, Gabrielatos (2001) has stated that a quite great deal of mistakes made by EFL learners seem to result from literal translation (p. 8). The second way how the use of L1 in classrooms may limit learners’ autonomy is teachers’ frequent explanations and instructions in students’ mother tongue. As Wharton (2007) has suggested, it is not always the best choice to give everything to students “on a silver platter” (p. 3). To develop learners’ responsibility for their own learning, it is entirely essential to allow them to discover things on their own. This learning strategy is usually known as an “inductive” technique (Harmer, 2007, p. 207; Wharton, 2007, p. 6), or “self-directed discovery” (Scrivener, 2011, p. 169). The key principle of this approach is that students discover on their own how the target language works. Thanks to context-rich L2 input they think about meanings and grammatical rules of English and effort to work out its functioning. It is also thought that learning in this inductive manner helps learners to acquire English more effectively as they are mentally more active (Harmer, 2007, p. 208; Wharton, 2007, p. 6). However, students’ chances for their own L2 discoveries are lessened very much by right away explications in a form of ready-to-use formulas in their native language.

The list of disadvantages linked to the use of mother tongue in EFL classrooms is rather shorter than that of its advantages. However, despite their number, all of the drawbacks can play a very crucial role in students’ SLA, especially when they overrule teaching process. If English teachers and their students use L1 in classrooms carelessly and without any rules or limitation, then it can affect teaching and learning efforts very negatively. Teachers should be aware of these possible downsides connected with the L1 use, as well as of its advantages, to guarantee the most effective learning conditions for students and thus make their L2 acquisition successful.

### **Effective Use of Mother Tongue**

Knowing both the advantages and the disadvantages of the use of L1 in EFL classrooms is essential. However, applying this knowledge is even more vital to make teaching process as much effective as possible. It is a challenge to maintain the course of the lesson in these borders, i.e. make L1 beneficial, while minimizing its potential drawbacks at the same time. Scholars and lecturers often label this approach to mother tongue as effective, judicious, constructive, systematic or balanced. Nevertheless, there

arises a question asking what these terms exactly mean. As has been stated by Littlewood and Yu (2011), it is simply a matter of teachers' own intuition (p. 75) but that does not help too much to conclude what the use of students L1 should look like. Next, Steven Herder (2006) has claimed, "teachers who exploit the MT can be the most effective teachers ... with the entire MT resource at their fingertips [when compared to their monolingual colleagues]" (p. 16). On the other hand, he again has not presented any advice or practical implications for, as he has said, this problematic "judicious approach" (ibid.). Fortunately, perusing recent articles, publications and current discussions of experts on L1 in EFL classrooms, it is evident that there exist a few basic principles according to which teachers should attempt to work with students' mother tongue. However, before summarizing general guidelines for the L1 use in English classrooms, it is essential to resolve two things: (a) what is considered as its undoubted misuse; (b) what factors chiefly affect the choice between L1 and L2.

**Ineffective use.** Even though there is no agreement among the professionals on how a judicious use of L1 is defined, there can be detected a unity over the fact what it rather should not be like. While considering an inadequate L1 use, the criterion of the amount of English students use in classroom has been judged most frequently. In general, there has been an accord that L1 should not overtake in EFL classrooms. As Littlewood and Yu (2011) have seen L1, it may be a big danger "if it threatens the primacy of the TL" (p. 75). Another thing that has been widely accepted as inefficient is students' overreliance on L1. For instance, David Carless (2008) has been afraid that a great deal of dependence on students' mother tongue may interfere with communicative and interactive tasks whose main purpose is to provide students with an opportunity to speak English (p. 332). Furthermore, Harbor (1992) has stated that he sees any mother-tongue strategies "suspect" unless they supply "considerable benefits otherwise not available to the class" (p. 352). Therefore, he has not joined the view that L1 can be used as a time-saving device. On the contrary, he has claimed that the L1 use merely in order to "make life easier for the teacher or the students" should be considered as its misuse (p. 355). This statement is in accordance with many EFL teachers and experts who have claimed that English as the target language should be the prior means of communication during lessons.

**Opting for/against the L1 use.** As described on previous pages, both English and mother tongue, regardless the importance ascribed to them, are vital in EFL teaching. It would not be wise to wholly neglect L1 noticeable potential; neither to allow it to predominate over English. Naturally, the both languages even cannot be applied

mechanically in the equal degree during classroom activities because every single teaching situation requires different approaches to ensure that learning process is the most effective. Kavaliauskiene and her associates (2010) stated that it is very important to “reach a balance between L1 and L2 in the learning process” (p. 37). Carless (2008) has endorsed the same opinion when stating that there is an obvious call for “a balanced and flexible view” of students’ L1 use (pp. 331, 336). Then, what are the means whereby it is possible to create this balance? When comparing various ideas concerning the issue, there could be found more or less explicit agreement over the circumstances that should be born in mind when deciding whether to prefer the first one over the other. In general, there have frequently occurred several factors that should be taken into consideration. These are: students’ proficiency, students’ age, students’ previous experience, the objective of the lesson, and, maybe unexpectedly, teachers themselves (Harmer, 2007; Kavaliauskiene et al., 2010; Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

***Students’ age and proficiency.*** Even though these two factors do not have to inevitably correspond with each other, together they usually appear among the first listed reasons calling for the mother-tongue use. It has been supposed that the lower language level the student has, the higher proportion of L1 is needed to provide supportive learning conditions. In general, the same has been believed for young learners whose dependency on their mother tongue has seemed to be widely accepted, and so the use of L1 by their teachers<sup>3</sup>. Related to that, Martha C. Pennington has used the term “compensatory use of L1” when students’ mother tongue is seen as a compensational means for problems sourcing from students’ English proficiency (as cited in Cameron, 2001; Littlewood & Yu, 2011). However, according to many other authors, the L1 use in this particular context does not mean that if there is a problem with comprehension on students’ part, the teachers are licensed to switch into L1 negligently. On the contrary, in order to maximize English learning opportunities it is crucial to provide students with rich and, which is pre-eminent, comprehensible English stimuli. Therefore, it is very advisable to attempt to implement some “alternative L2 strategies”, such as visual prompts, gestures, paraphrasing, situational context etc. (Cameron, 2001; Harbord, 1992; Littlewood & Yu, 2011). In this context, the main purpose of using mother tongue should be to facilitate the transition from L1 to L2, but at the same time, gradually attempt to erase the existing gap between these two languages by avoiding the L1 use at all. Littlewood and Yu (2011) have called this

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<sup>3</sup> See Cameron (2001), who has claimed that this conclusion is rather questionable (pp. 204–205).



technique as “starting simply” which means to immerse students into English-only teaching and learning setting step by step through the help of students’ mother tongue (p. 74). However, Elsa R. Auerbach (1993) in contrast has claimed that L1 may be “a potential resource rather than obstacle” even for students with higher level of English proficiency (p. 21). She has been convinced that when the use of L1 is targeted, thought-through and systematic, then it can prove to be a very beneficial tool in English language teaching at all levels.

***Students’ previous experience.*** Teachers should take into consideration also this aspect when deciding between using L1 or not in their classes. Harry Meyer (2008) has pointed out that “most students, particularly older students, have strong opinions and beliefs as to how the teacher should deliver instruction” (p. 150). He has assumed that students’ previous language learning experience influencec to a certain degree their anticipations and expectations of what teaching/learning strategy is the best (ibid.). Furthermore, besides learning experience he has also paid attention to students’ personal negative experience with L2 leading into their “language anxiety” and causing them afraid of social embarrassment (ibid., p. 151). In addition to that, Carless (2008) has presented in his article some comments from EFL teachers among which one has stated that there exist two kinds of students: those who appreciate talking English, and those who need L1 as an encouraging support for they feel rather uncomfortable or insecure in exclusively L2 environment (p. 334). Then, it may become very challenging for teachers to satisfy both these groups of students at the same time in their classrooms. Along with that, Auerbach (1993) has assumed that students’ different attitudes towards the L1 use in classroom may cause classroom tension (p. 23). On one hand, using only the target language with lower-level students can be very demanding for them; on the other hand, the use of L1 with students who are enthusiastic about speaking English may be perceived by them as a waste of time. In both cases, the result is nothing else but increasing demotivation and lack of students’ attention<sup>4</sup>.

***Lesson objectives.*** The choice of the L1 use depends a lot on an individual sequence of the lesson, especially on its particular objective. As teachers decide among various teaching strategies to fit the particular purpose of the lesson the best, the same applies to the L1 use. On the grounds of what is to be the goal of the lesson (or of its specific stage), teachers should critically evaluate whether the use of mother tongue can

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<sup>4</sup> See “General principles of effective use of L1” section to learn about possibilities of solving problems concerning students’ attitudes towards L1 use.

productively assist English learning, or slow it. Together with that, Carless (2008) has described two different types of tasks which ought to be considered in teachers' language choice. He has distinguished between "communicative tasks", where L2 should be obligatory, and "language analysis tasks" (with the objective of raising students' consciousness about the target language), which open the space for opting for or against L1 (p. 336). Moreover, Meyer (2008) in his article has shifted this aspect even further. According to him, teachers' deliberate choice to use students' mother tongue depends a lot on the purpose of the whole language class or course. He has stated that in employing L1 in language classrooms it plays a very important role whether it is, for example, a class preparing students for a language exam, or a stay abroad, or even training them for a particular job position (e.g. as translators or interpreters) (p. 147).

***Teacher-related factors.*** Littlewood and Yu (2011) have listed among the most frequent factors affecting the preference of L1 over L2 in classrooms teachers themselves, or more precisely, their personalities. The authors have claimed that in a number of recent studies many teachers have admitted that they use L1 in their classes as a result of their personal lack of confidence in their own English proficiency (p. 69). As stated by Auerbach (1993) in the results of his survey, "they [teachers] didn't trust their own practice: They assigned a negative value to 'lapses' into the L1, seeing them as failures or aberrations, a cause for guilt" (p. 14). Cameron (2001) has labeled this employment of L1 again as "compensatory", since educators use it as a compensation for problems they perceive on their own part; this can be beside their lack of confidence, or low language expertise, even their careless preparation for the particular lesson (p. 202). However, there is a great danger of this type of the mother-tongue use that is its misuse with final harmful effects on students' SLA. To avoid this wrong L1 use, it is very important teachers reflect on their own work systematically. Littlewood and Yu (2011) have warned that "there is a constant temptation" among teachers to employ L1 merely in order to make their work easier (pp. 73–74). The authors have also highlighted the role of teachers' experience as another factor affecting language choice in EFL classrooms. Based on several studies, they have concluded that the more experienced teachers have seemed to be less vulnerable to misuse of L1 which has been assumed as a result of their higher confidence about themselves, their teaching methods, and their language proficiency (ibid.).

Making a final verdict about the use of mother tongue, or more precisely, whether it is sound to use it or not with students, is a continuous process consisting of the analyses of every single individual aspect of teaching reality (beginning with students'

individualities, to the goals of activities, and ending with teachers themselves). This statement is fully in accordance with Harmer's (2007) words that it is necessary to critically analyze and evaluate every feature so that "at all stages we should be able to say clearly why we are doing what we are doing" (p. 79). Furthermore, it can be concluded that considering different aspects of teaching process in a manner like this represents a key step in attending all the substantial principles of effective L1 which will be presented on the following pages.

**General principles of an effective L1 use.** As has been stated at the beginning of this part, different authors have different views about what should be considered as an effective use of L1 in EFL teaching. However, as a result of the analysis of various resources concerning the issue, there can be ultimately drawn some key tenets of using mother tongue, which could be without any constraints applied in every bilingual English classroom. In general, there can be described six most crucial points that should be born in mind whenever using L1. Besides, all of them are built upon the already mentioned requirement of evaluating all the elements involved in teaching/learning process; without that an effective L1 use would be almost certainly totally infeasible. The general principles of effective use of mother tongue in language classrooms are: secure atmosphere, clear rules of the L1 use, appropriate L1 tasks, maximal L2 use, versatile code switching, and teachers' determination.

**Secure atmosphere.** Jim Scrivener (2011) has suggested that an ideal classroom is "where learners were free to use their own tongue whenever they wanted, but in fact mostly chose to use English" (p. 279). This point of view may seem a little bit exaggerated and too much idealistic; however, why not to at least strive to approximate to this vision? There are at least two ways of doing so. First, a number of supporters of the L1 use in language teaching have believed that it is important to acknowledge mother tongue as a natural means of communication. For example, Deller and Rinvolutri (2002) have strongly affirmed throughout their mutual work that there is no need for guilt feelings when mother tongue is used carefully. Along with that Cameron (2001) has stated that it is "very unnatural" to avoid the L1 use when it is a shared mother tongue of teachers and their students (p. 200). There is a number of situations where L1 may help to create a secure classroom climate; e.g. informal talk among teachers and students at the beginning of the lesson (or during breaks), students' asking for clarification, or disciplining and setting up the boundaries which make the classroom work comprehensible for all the students involved (e.g. Cameron, 2001; Harbord, 1992; or Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Second

step in supporting positive atmosphere in EFL classrooms is to lower students' "language anxiety" (Meyer, 2008). For effective EFL teaching, it is essential to create such conditions, in which the chance that students experience any social embarrassment is minimal. According to Scrivener (2011), classroom should not be by any means an environment where speaking English is perceived as something frightening and potentially dangerous (p. 279). This view is very closely connected with the concept of comprehensible input already presented on the previous pages. If English input is too much complicated, students might be incapable to understand what the teacher is trying to explain to them; therefore, as Harbord (1992) has pointed out, avoiding L1 may result in students' significant demotivation (p. 352). To conclude, student demotivation (caused either by the presence of incomprehensible L2, or by the absence of L1) is definitely not a sign of a sound and secure classroom environment; and therefore, rather than ignoring students' mother tongue, it is better to make use of it

**Clear rules.** It could be said that this principle is very closely related to the previous one since feeling secure often means to know at least the essential rules of classroom work and to anticipate the expected. It is very advisable that teachers notify their students about what behavior is perceived as unwelcome or even forbidden in his or her particular classes. The same goes with students' use of L1. As Harmer (2007) has mentioned, "students need to know when mother-tongue use is productive and when it is not" (p. 135). He has added that the rules concerning the L1 use can be agreed at the beginning of the school year (a semester), or the matter can be left aside until the moment when the subject is encountered spontaneously (ibid.). In either case, students should be allowed to reflect upon these rules. Both Auerbach (1993) and Harmer (2007) have encouraged teachers to pass a part of their making-decision responsibilities on learners. As a result, students will experience a feeling of shared authority which is very important for their inner motivation and further development of their learning autonomy. Moreover, as the process of accepting L1-use rules should be in the form of multilateral discussion, students improve their interpersonal skills, such as cooperation, empathy for less proficient students etc. (Auerbach, 1993, p. 24). Teachers' role in this process is to offer students their own suggestions when the L1 use may be helpful or not, to moderate students' decisions, and to agree the final shape of rules with them.

**Appropriate L1 tasks.** Without an exception, all the authors defending the use of students' mother tongue in English classrooms have agreed that it is possible to maximize its advantages by including specific sensible activities. All the tasks should have the main

goal – to support students’ English language acquisition. There would be a whole book to present all the different tasks that effectively employ students’ L1 in order to enhance English learning. Therefore, the ideas that follow are only a subtle fragment of a total account<sup>5</sup>. The possible L1 activities are: (a) functional translation when students are trained to be aware of dangers related to a literal translation (Wharton, 2007, pp. 12–18); (b) contrastive activities comparing English with L1 at all language levels, e.g. grammar, vocabulary, discourse, stylistics etc. that can be then summarized in a simple English (Meyer, 2008, pp. 152–156); (c) peer discussions in L1 over their work (or a particular text, or a language construction) that encourage students’ mutual cooperation and their independent thinking (ibid.); (d) task repetition when the activity is done with a help of mother tongue first and then the amount of English is increasing until the task is done completely in fluent accurate English (Carless, 2008, p. 335).

**Maximal L2 use.** As has been stated many times, English for many obvious reasons should be the main means of communication in EFL classrooms. Therefore, it is greatly recommended to use so-called alternative L2 strategies (e.g. Harbord, 1992; Cameron, 2001; Littlewood & Yu, 2011). These techniques are meant to convey meaning, although still in English, but in a very comprehensible way, so that students are constantly pushed to think in the target language. There are various strategies of this kind, for example, all visual prompts (e.g. pictures, videos, and gestures), paraphrasing, multiple exemplifications, or giving contextual knowledge and background information. On the other hand, as pointed out by Harmer (2007), despite the maximal use of English, it is still important from time to time to integrate tasks focusing on L1/L2 comparison and translation (p. 135).

**Versatile code switching.** According to Meyer (2008), code switching may be a very useful technique for bringing near English to students by using their L1 (p. 152). He has held the opinion that teachers’ switching between languages may help distinctly to gain students’ attention, emphasize important language structures and discipline as required, and thus it “may keep the class moving forward” (ibid.). On the contrary, Wharton (2007) has indicated that there is hidden a great danger in this strategy. He has worried that students may become too much dependent on L1 assistance (even though gradually jettisoned as students progress) that they may “revert to it automatically without attempting to express themselves in English” (p. 11). Cameron (2001) has expressed very similar

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<sup>5</sup> See Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002), who have collected a great number of such activities.

doubts when stating that students may easily recognize teachers' regular code-switching pattern (p. 206). According to her, this may, for example, happen when teachers habitually translate commands or instructions into L1 right after the moment they have said them in English (ibid.). Learners, knowing that the translation is about to come immediately, thus concentrate only on the second half of teachers' statements that is in mother tongue, whereas ignoring the English part. This very regular code-switching pattern may cause student boredom and consequently their demotivation. On the other hand, asking for this L1 translation directly students alone (after teachers giving instructions in English) may function very effectively on their motivation.

***Determination.*** All the principles above would have no sense without teachers' own strong determination. As stated by Littlewood and Yu (2011), when teachers struggle to maximize L2 use in classrooms it is crucial "to persist gently but firmly", especially when "constant temptation" to abuse L1 in order to mitigate any pains is too easy to yield to (p. 74). Without complete commitment, consistency and long-term view of teaching approach from teachers, all the principles concerning an effective mother-tongue use would lose their whole meaning. In such a case, rather than L1 effective use, its misuse and/or abuse with its possible hazardous consequences on students' SLA is much more probable.

All the six above described principles of the mother-tongue use in English classrooms have been designed to help draw a line between a judicious L1 use and its abuse. As has been stated above, a lot of specific aspects play their roles in deciding whether to use students' L1 or not, and if yes, whether this use is going to turn out to be an effective tool in teaching English. Therefore, the guidelines for the L1 use are very general as they have been meant not to interfere with any of these particular aspects differing from class to class, from student to student. On the other hand, their generality assures that they can be applied as a rule in all various English teaching situations regardless for example students' age or proficiency.

To conclude, the attitudes towards the use of students' mother tongue in EFL classrooms have shifted a lot since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from using translation as a natural tool for English teaching (the Grammar-Translation Method) to the abandonment of L1 (the Direct method). Even nowadays there are still few strictly clear-cut opinions about the role of L1 and its use; however, numerous diverse research works have found out that most EFL teachers use a mixture of L2 and L1. With no doubts,

it would be helpful in no way to strictly decide upon this question, or in other words, to decide that the L1 use in EFL classrooms is unambiguously wrong or, in contrast, uncritically acceptable under any circumstances. The use of students' mother-tongue has its obvious disadvantages in language classrooms, but may be potentially very advantageous as well. The secret of balancing these two completely conflicting features of the L1 use lies in teachers' own critical evaluation. There are many situations when students' L1 may be used in EFL classrooms; however it is always a question whether its use is unavoidable, crucial, and effective in students' English learning, or more precisely, whether it contributes to students' SLA considerably. In some cases, the mother-tongue use in EFL classrooms could be very beneficial, but this has shown to be true only when it is used strategically and judiciously with some general rules born in mind.

Even though teachers of EFL may have agreed that the L1 use should have its place in their teaching, their points of view on what the best ways to employ students' mother tongue effectively are have appeared to be rather heterogeneous; for example, what may seem to be useful and helpful for one teacher and his or her students, the others may find as a waste of time instead of which English could be used with better results. As EFL teachers' own intuition and their own personal approach towards the use of mother tongue in classrooms have revealed to play an important role in the interpretation of what an effective L1 use means, it has become the focus of the following practical part of this thesis. The goal of the research is to observe what the situation related to the use of students' mother tongue appears to be like among Czech English teachers in Pilsen, West Bohemia. The aim is to find out the proportion of any similarities concerning the L1 use in EFL classrooms, and thus to reveal if there are any reoccurring patterns among the surveyed teachers.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As was shown in the previous part, there are dissimilar opinions over the use of students' mother tongue in EFL classes. While some teachers are strongly against its use, some are entirely in favor of it. Nevertheless, even among those who approve the L1 use in English classrooms there seems to be no firm exact mutual agreement on its recommended treatment in teaching. There are various details that make the mother-tongue use unique to almost any teacher, or at least for a group of teachers, respectively. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to map the present situation concerning the L1 use among the selected Czech teachers of English in Pilsen, West Bohemia. The purpose of this chapter is in particular to explain the main research question, describe the methods used in the research and depict the process of the entire research in more detail.

#### **Research Question**

The research focuses on the current situation in Pilsen schools where English as a school subject represents a common part of the curriculum. The main goal of the research is to trace a general tendency in the L1 use occurring among the local English teachers. The study attempts to find out whether there can be possibly observed any existing parallel among the teachers regarding the use of the Czech language in their English classrooms. It seeks the answer whether there can be detected any pattern in teachers' L1 attitudes in respect of the age of their learners. Hence, the research question is, "Is there a difference in how teachers treat L1 at lower secondary and upper secondary schools?"

#### **Methods**

Two methods were chosen to investigate the above stated research question: (a) a teacher questionnaire; (b) an interview. The decision for the combination of these two has been made on the basis of the following reasons. First, since the issue concerning teachers' attitudes towards the L1 use in EFL classrooms is incredibly multi-factorial, the facts attained merely thanks to a questionnaire would be almost certainly insufficient. Second, even though the data achieved by the interview would most likely reveal much more information than a questionnaire on its own, using the interview with the teachers exclusively would be considerably very time-consuming for them. Hence the compromise



between the two research tools; compared to a questionnaire solely, there is thus a higher chance to obtain the information which is valid and reliable.

**Questionnaire** (see Appendix A for the Czech version, for the English version see Appendix B). Since the used questionnaire was intended for the Czech teachers of the English language, its original version was Czech. It included twenty questions in total; eighteen of them were multiple-choice questions, the remaining two were provided with scaled answers (values from 0 to 5 in both cases). All the involved questions were intended to search for answers from six different areas concerning the mother-tongue use in EFL classes. These are:

- Teachers' attitudes towards the L1 use (questions number 1 and 8).
- Teachers' own L1 use (questions 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12).
- Teachers' theoretical knowledge about the L1 use (questions 2 and 3).
- Teachers' opting for/against the L1 use (questions 7, 9 and 10).
- Teachers' awareness of students' attitudes towards the L1 use (questions 13, 14 and 15).
- Class rules regarding the L1 use (questions 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20).

Each individual question was designed on the grounds of the theoretical assumptions that were presented in the theoretical part of this thesis.

**Interview.** A semi-structured interview was chosen as the second research method. All the initial questions had been pre-determined in advance of the dialogues with the respondents for they stem from the already described questionnaire. However, according to the particular answers of the teachers', the follow-up questions may have slightly varied. Along with that, all the questions were primarily designed to extend the questionnaire answers qualitatively with the intention to obtain more detailed information about the treatment of the Czech language in EFL classrooms of the inquired teachers. For the sample questions from the interview see the Appendix C (where the original Czech version is provided with corresponding English translation).

## **Subjects**

For the purpose of the research, ten teachers were interviewed; five representing lower secondary and the other five upper secondary schools. To be more precise, since the educational systems varies between the individual countries, in the context of this research the term "lower secondary" represents the grades attended usually by the students between

the ages of 11 and 15; the word “upper secondary” relates to the older students who are typically aged from 15 to 19. Furthermore, according to the explored theme, all of the teachers were solely non-native speakers of English who shared their mother tongue with their students, which was in this case Czech. Consequently, the main language whereby the whole research was carried out was Czech as well. While selecting the answerers, the main constraint was to minimize the potential aspects that could possibly distort the results of the research. Since the main question of the research concerns the lower-and-upper-secondary-teachers issue, the other irrelevant aspects were attempted to be reduced. Therefore, all the subjects were picked to sample different teaching background. For example, with the intention to prevent the data from being influenced by the particular school curriculum and its attitude towards EFL teaching, the teachers come from various types of schools to assure the curriculum variety of the surveyed sample. In order to guarantee further heterogeneity of the sample, the same goes for the age and experience of the inquired teachers (see Appendix D for demographics about the teachers).

## **Process**

The survey itself was carried out at five lower secondary and five upper secondary schools in Pilsen (see Appendix E for the list of the participating schools). The data were gathered at the beginning of March 2014 within two subsequent weeks. During the first week the questionnaires were distributed to the ten appointed teachers of English. The time needed for completion varied according to the needs of a particular teacher. Concretely, it ranged between three and seven days to collect the filled out forms back. The second part of the survey took a form of individual interviews with the same teachers who originally answered the questionnaires. All the interviews were conducted in person with each teacher in her office. The questions were, in general, follow-up queries developing further teachers’ answers in questionnaires. The dialogues were usually from ten to fifteen minutes’ long and they were all recorded by means of concise written notes.

To conclude, the research explores the question whether the treatment of mother tongue is different between lower secondary and upper secondary teachers of English in Pilsen. Both the results and the implications of the research have become the subject of the following chapters.

#### IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

The aim of this chapter is to present the gathered data and analyze them on the grounds of previous theoretical part. First, the results gained at lower secondary schools are presented. Then the data obtained from upper secondary teachers follow. In both cases, the findings are presented in the same order as the research tools were used within the survey. It means that the results gained by questionnaire are described in the first place, and then they are supplemented by verbal comments from the interviewed teachers. As another step, the data from both types of schools are compared to each other. The results of comparison are demonstrated in the form of summarizing tables, which are accompanied with their further description. Finally, the comments and possible interpretation of these particular findings based on the theory follow. Besides the interpretation of the results, the main goal of the last section is to reach a final conclusion about the research question asking how English teachers in Pilsen presumably work with the Czech language in their lessons<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, at the end of this chapter the overall results of the research are confronted with the research question and a conclusion is drawn.

##### **Lower secondary schools**

**Teachers' attitudes towards the L1 use.** (Questions 1 & 8.) According to Table 1, all five teachers showed a positive attitude towards the use of the Czech language in EFL classes. However, while one of them did not state any limiting conditions to its use, another one limited its use only at minimum and the remaining three agreed that it should have been used only when it had an effective impact. When asked more directly, one teacher said, "For me, effectively means when it is used within some boundaries where English is insufficient. For example, instead of explaining something in English twice or three times and assuming that students wouldn't understand it either, then I choose Czech for I see it will be probably a more accessible way for my students and we all will save our time." Another teacher described an effective use of Czech as following, "It definitely shouldn't be used superfluously; only when talking about special terms or some complicated language structures. In any case, English should be the main means of communication. However, let's face the reality. With lower secondary classes this is in

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<sup>6</sup> The conclusive assumption is based on the exemplificative sample of respondents solely and does not give necessarily an accurate picture of teachers' daily practice in general.

most cases a mere dream.” As for feelings about using Czech during their English lessons, three teachers answered that they do not feel any special emotions, neither positive nor negative. In contrast, other two felt guilty when using Czech themselves. As is visible in Table 1, in both cases it was the teachers who did not choose the option that the mother-tongue use should be effective.

Table 1

*Lower secondary schools: Teachers' (T1–T5) attitudes towards the L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q1: What is your attitude towards the use of the Czech language in English classes?</b>				
Minimal use.	Effective use.	Should be used.	Effective use.	Effective use.
<b>Q8: How do you feel when you are using Czech in your English lessons?</b>				
Guilty.	No special.	Guilty.	No special.	No special.

**Teachers' own L1 use.** (Questions 4, 5, 6, 11 & 12.) All surveyed teachers used Czech during their English classes; four used it sometimes and only one confessed that often. Even though two teachers felt guilty when using Czech, all five teachers bar none thought that they used it effectively; two of them were even positively convinced about an effective use of their Czech. As demonstrated in Table 2, all five teachers spent more than a quarter of a usual 45minutes' lesson talking Czech. In one case, the proportion of mother tongue was marked as between 16 to 20 minutes that is more than one entire third of a total standard teaching time. The incorporation of translation activities into the lessons was significant for all of the inquired teachers. Except for one who employed them sometimes, the remaining four chose the “often” option. One teacher explained the reasons, “It is important the students learn settled expressions and were able to express themselves, their opinions and ideas which is always happening through translation. Even if it is happening only inside their minds, the core always lies in translation; therefore I think it is important to incorporate these activities into lesson plans”. Nevertheless, another teacher who responded that she often incorporated translation tasks pointed out that translation is not a key to English proficiency. She pointed out that even though translation is very important, communicative activities should be essential; and she added, “I see translation as one of the chief means of acquiring new vocabulary. Without lexis you are not able to communicate by any means; whereas without grammar it is, to a certain degree, still possible”. On the other hand, the answers on the question whether they incorporate activities focused on language comparison were fully in the opposite proportion; four teachers answered “sometimes”, only one “often”. The teachers with “sometimes” answers

agreed that there is such a small similarity between English and Czech that they did not see a reason why they should have used this type of activities. Moreover, one of them stated that students' linguistic terminology concerning the Czech language is in most cases very poor; therefore, as she said, "The incorporation of comparison activities would be rather limited". In contrast, the teacher who answered "often" explained that she tried to use the obvious dissimilarity between the two languages as "a plus that may help students to remember easier some English structures". Refer to Table 2 for better illustration how teachers' views on their effective use of the Czech language correlates with their further questions concerning their teaching practice itself.

Table 2

*Lower secondary schools: Teachers' own L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q4: Do you use the Czech language in your English classes?</b>				
Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Often.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.
<b>Q5: Do you think that your use of Czech in your English lessons is effective?</b>				
Rather yes.	Positively yes.	Positively yes.	Rather yes.	Rather yes.
<b>Q6: What amount of your usual 45-minutes' lesson does the Czech language occupy?</b>				
16–20 mins.	11–15 mins.	11–15 mins.	11–15 mins.	11–15 mins.
<b>Q11: Do you incorporate into your lessons the activities focusing on translation?</b>				
Often.	Often.	Often.	Sometimes.	Often.
<b>Q12: Do you incorporate into your lessons the activities focusing on the comparison of language structures between English and Czech?</b>				
Sometimes.	Often.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.

**Teachers' theoretical knowledge about the L1 use.** (Questions 2 & 3.) As Table 3 shows, in general teachers' answers in questionnaires were rather negative. None of the teachers responded that they had undertaken any training focusing on the use of mother tongue in EFL classes. The same applied to expert literature; all the teachers had never become acquainted with any literature concerning the issue.

Table 3

*Lower secondary schools: Teachers' theoretical knowledge about the L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q2: During your teacher training did you undertake any preparation concerning the use of mother tongue in EFL teaching?</b>				
No.	No.	Not remember.	Not remember.	Not remember.
<b>Q3: During your teaching practice have you become acquainted with any classified literature concerning this matter?</b>				
No.	No.	No.	No.	No.

**Teachers' opting for/against the L1 use.** (Questions 7, 9 & 10.) As Table 4 illustrates, the opinions about the reasons and various aspects influencing L1/L2 choice are not fully unified among the teachers. As the most frequent reason why the teachers decided for Czech over English was definitely chosen grammar explanation. It was marked by four teachers as number five on the scale of importance, the remaining one chose number four. Other important reasons for preferring L1 and not English were translation of unknown words and task instructions. On the other hand, as the least important motives teachers named assessment of students' work and informal talk with them. As the most essential aspect which was considered when teachers decided between English and Czech most of the teachers chose students' English proficiency and goals of individual activities. On the contrary, the number of students in class and students' attitudes towards the use of Czech were marked as the least influential factors. For more detailed answers of individual teachers refer to Table 4. The answers to the question asking whether the teachers reflected the issue of the mother-tongue use during their lesson planning were rather dissimilar, too. Only one teacher considered this matter often while making her lesson preparation. Two teachers did that sometimes and the other two never.

Table 4

*Lower secondary schools: Teachers' (TS) opting for/against the L1 use*

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q7: What are the purposes of your use of Czech in your English lessons? (Select the importance of each purpose on the scale; 0=min., 5=max.)</b>					
<i>Informal talk</i>	3	2	2	2	5
<i>Grammar</i>	4	5	5	5	5
<i>Translation</i>	4	4	3	3	5
<i>Disciplining</i>	3	5	1	3	5
<i>Organization</i>	4	1	1	3	5
<i>Instructing</i>	3	5	3	2	5
<i>Assessment</i>	3	3	2	1	1
<b>Q9: During your lesson preparation do you consider the question whether to use Czech or not?</b>					
	Sometimes.	Often.	Never.	Sometimes.	Never.
<b>Q10: Which aspects are important for you when you are deciding whether to use Czech or not? (Select the importance of each reason on the scale; 0=min., 5=max.)</b>					
<i>Age</i>	5	3	3	3	1
<i>Proficiency</i>	5	5	5	3	5
<i>SS' attitudes</i> <sup>a</sup>	3	3	2	2	1
<i>TS' attitudes</i>	3	5	4	4	4
<i>Activity goal</i>	4	5	5	5	2
<i>Number of SS</i>	3	1	1	5	1

<sup>a</sup> Students' attitudes towards the use of Czech in EFL classes.

**Teachers' awareness of students' attitudes towards the L1 use.** (Questions 13, 14 & 15.) As Table 5 illustrates, the situation concerning students' stances towards the issue of languages used in English classes was notably in favor of Czech. Three teachers admitted that during their lessons learners used Czech often. Learners of other two teachers were speaking Czech sometimes. One of the latter mentioned teachers (T2 in Table 5) complained that the students were sometimes talking Czech even during communicative activities which were losing their entire function when they were approached in this manner. However, she answered that she did not know how to stop it and make them use only English. On the other hand, when the students were directly talking to their teachers, the proportion of used mother tongue slightly decreased. Three teachers stated that their students used Czech sometimes; remaining two answered that often. They all agreed that on their questions in English students frequently reacted in their mother tongue instead of English. Furthermore, three teachers did not know whether their learners prefer them speaking only English or they felt more comfortable when both languages were used. However, one of them admitted that it would be good to know her students' opinions in order to sustain some feedback. Remaining two teachers answered that their students prefer Czech; mostly in one case, always in the other one.

Table 5

*Lower secondary schools: Teachers' awareness of students' attitudes towards the L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q13:</b> <i>Do your students use Czech when they are talking to each other in your English lessons?</i>				
Often.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Often.	Often.
<b>Q14:</b> <i>Do your students use Czech when they are talking to you in your English lessons?</i>				
Often.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Often.	Sometimes
<b>Q15:</b> <i>Do you know what the attitudes of your students' towards the use of the Czech language in English classes are in general?</i>				
Always L1.	Do not know.	Mostly L1.	Do not know.	Do not know.

**Class rules regarding the L1 use.** (Questions 16, 17, 18, 19 & 20.) As is visible in Table 6, only one teacher had established some rules concerning the use of Czech in her classes. She had set them up herself without discussing them beforehand with her students. However, while she always obeyed them, her learners did that only sometimes. In addition, it was the same teacher who, as can be seen from the previous Table 5, stated that her students spoke Czech often during her English classes. On the contrary, one of the teachers who did not have any settled rules stated, "Even though we do not have any clearly stated

rules, they [students] know well when they are not supposed to talk Czech. In the course of the school year, they have learnt from my usual reactions that implicitly there are some rules and boundaries. They know that somehow intuitively”. All five teachers answered that the moment when they were to switch between Czech and English was sometimes recognizable for their students. Nevertheless, they all agreed as well that they did not find it important or otherwise useful.

Table 6

*Lower secondary schools: Class rules regarding the L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q16:</b> <i>Do you think that your students are able to recognize the moment when you are going to switch in your speech between English and Czech?</i>				
Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.
<b>Q17:</b> <i>Do you have clear rules in your English classes about the use of the Czech language so the students know when it is allowed to use Czech or not?</i>				
No.	No.	No.	No.	Yes.
<b>Q18:</b> <i>Did you establish the rules together with your students?</i>				
-	-	-	-	Myself.
<b>Q19:</b> <i>How thoroughly do you obey the rules yourself?</i>				
-	-	-	-	Always.
<b>Q20:</b> <i>How thoroughly do your students obey the rules themselves?</i>				
-	-	-	-	Sometimes.

### Upper secondary schools

**Teachers’ attitudes towards the L1 use.** (Questions 1 & 8.) As can be seen from Table 7 all five teachers, bar none, answered that the Czech language should be used in EFL classes but effectively. When they were asked what “effectively” means for them, their answers were very similar. One of the teachers said, “Whenever I see that the students do not understand, I switch into Czech to make things clear for them”. Another one described an effective use as the situation “when it is concise and very rare”. Two teachers concurred that an effective use of L1 was when it lead into maximizing the probability that the students would learn some English. The last answer coming from the eldest teacher was rather different from those previous ones as the teacher stated, “It is effective when it helps me to fulfill a lesson plan. The most important is the objective of the lesson which I am bound to fulfill. I cannot be halted by students’ not understanding”. Next, two teachers felt good when they were using L1 because they believed that its use was judicious and



rightful. Another two said that they were experiencing no special feelings or emotions for they saw the use of mother tongue as a natural part of EFL teaching. According to Table 7, it was the youngest teacher who stated that she felt “somehow guilty and even embarrassed especially when teaching older students”. Moreover, she added that she was afraid that her use of Czech may have been perceived by the students with higher English proficiency as a sign of her own incompetence in English.

Table 7

*Upper secondary schools: Teachers' (T1–T5) attitudes towards the L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q1: What is your attitude towards the use of the Czech language in English classes?</b>				
Effective use.	Effective use.	Effective use.	Effective use.	Effective use.
<b>Q8: How do you feel when you are using Czech in your English lessons?</b>				
Guilty.	Good.	Good.	No special.	No special.

**Teachers' own L1 use.** (Questions 4, 5, 6, 11 & 12.) Three teachers marked that they used Czech in their lessons sometimes, one teacher often, and one minimally. Four teachers thought that their use was rather effective; one believed that her use of Czech was positively an effective one. As is visible in Table 8, it was the same teacher who as the only one indicated the amount of the Czech language within 45minutes' lesson was between none to five minutes. In other two cases it was between six to ten minutes and in the last two the proportion of the L1 used made between eleven to fifteen minutes. However, all of them agreed that with the students whose knowledge of English was lower Czech was used more frequently in order to assure that even those students were not “lost in the lesson”. Table 8 demonstrates that the same teacher who answered her use of Czech was “positively effective” used translation activities minimally; instead she preferred alternative methods like paraphrasing, using unknown words in different contexts or synonyms. Translation was used sometimes by two teachers. The remaining two teachers said that they were using it often since they believed it was a “natural” procedure in processing English by students. One of the teachers specified that in speaking activities, the primary issue was to help students formulate what they even wanted to say in Czech first for their answers were likely to be “I don't know” or “I don't remember”; according to her, only then it was possible to hear some English sentences from her students as they were directly translated from Czech. Together with that, the same teacher pointed out that she was struggling with unwanted word-by-word translation that was widespread among

her students. On the other hand, the activities focusing on the comparison of language structures between Czech and English were used often by three teachers. In general, they agreed that they decided for them in order to demonstrate the differences existing between the two languages especially in the field of grammar, e.g. sequence of verb tenses, different word order in English sentences, auxiliary verbs etc. One teacher marked that she used them sometimes and one minimally (according to Table 8, it was the same teacher who minimally incorporated translation activities as well).

Table 8

*Upper secondary schools: Teachers' own L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q4: Do you use the Czech language in your English classes?</b>				
Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Minimally.	Often.	Sometimes.
<b>Q5: Do you think that your use of Czech in your English lessons is effective?</b>				
Rather yes.	Rather yes.	Positively yes.	Rather yes.	Rather yes.
<b>Q6: What amount of your usual 45-minutes' lesson does the Czech language occupy?</b>				
6–10 mins.	6–10 mins.	0–5 mins.	11–15 mins.	11–15 mins.
<b>Q11: Do you incorporate into your lessons the activities focusing on translation?</b>				
Sometimes.	Often.	Minimally.	Often.	Sometimes.
<b>Q12: Do you incorporate into your lessons the activities focusing on the comparison of language structures between English and Czech?</b>				
Often.	Often.	Minimally.	Often.	Sometimes.

**Teachers' theoretical knowledge about the L1 use.** (Questions 2 & 3.) Table 9 shows that while the eldest teacher did not remember whether she undertook any training concerning the use of mother tongue in EFL teaching during her teacher preparation, three teachers stated that they did not; the youngest one did. She specified that it had been as a part of her methodology classes at university where she had been warned that only-English approach was rather outdated and that the L1 use “was no more something forbidden” in modern EFL classes. As for the question whether they had become acquainted with any classified literature concerning the L1 use, one teacher had not and one did not remember. Table 9 demonstrates that the youngest three had become familiar with it. It was either by their own initiative that they actively searched for this particular type of literature, or through some courses or seminars organized for EFL teachers.

Table 9

*Upper secondary schools: Teachers' theoretical knowledge about the L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q2:</b> <i>During your teacher training did you undertake any preparation concerning the use of mother tongue in EFL teaching?</i>				
Yes.	No.	No.	No.	Not remember.
<b>Q3:</b> <i>During your teaching practice have you become acquainted with any classified literature concerning this matter?</i>				
Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	No.	Not remember.

**Teachers' opting for/against the L1 use.** (Questions 7, 9 & 10.) Table 10 illustrates that the importance of various reasons for or against the L1 use among the surveyed teachers varied a lot. However, as the most essential reason for choosing Czech over English in their lessons all five teachers marked the "organization" in order to, as one of them added, "save more time for English". As a next most important reason for the L1 use was chosen grammar explanation, then informal talk with students, disciplining and assessing students' work. Translation of unfamiliar words and task-instructing featured on the lower part of the scale (values from 1 to 3). One of the teachers provided a partial explanation when she stated, "students should already know some familiar instructing English phrases". None of the listed reasons was on the provided scale marked with a zero importance. Refer to Table 10 for a more detailed description of teachers' individual choices. Three teachers never considered the question during their lesson preparation whether to use Czech in their classes or not. The other two, those with the shortest teaching practice, considered this question minimally or sometimes. As the most important factor which helped teachers to decide whether to use Czech or not was chosen the goal of individual activities (four teachers marked it as number five on the scale); right behind it was students' language proficiency (it obtained three fives) and teachers' personal attitudes towards the L1 use (two fives). On the other hand, as the least important aspects students' age and students' attitudes towards the use of Czech in EFL classrooms were chosen. None of the listed aspects was on the provided scale marked with a zero importance. Table 10 provides more detailed information about teachers' specific answers.

Table 10

*Upper secondary schools: Teachers' (TS) opting for/against the L1 use*

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q7: What are the purposes of your use of Czech in your English lessons? (Select the importance of each purpose on the scale; 0=min., 5=max.)</b>					
<i>Informal talk</i>	5	1	1	5	5
<i>Grammar</i>	4	3	4	5	5
<i>Translation</i>	2	3	2	3	3
<i>Disciplining</i>	5	3	3	3	5
<i>Organization</i>	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Instructing</i>	2	2	1	3	3
<i>Assessment</i>	4	3	2	3	5
<b>Q9: During your lesson preparation do you consider the question whether to use Czech or not?</b>					
	Minimally.	Sometimes.	Never.	Never.	Never.
<b>Q10: Which aspects are important for you when you are deciding whether to use Czech or not? (Select the importance of each reason on the scale; 0=min., 5=max.)</b>					
<i>Age</i>	3	3	1	2	1
<i>Proficiency</i>	5	3	5	4	5
<i>SS' attitudes<sup>a</sup></i>	5	2	1	2	2
<i>TS' attitudes</i>	5	5	1	3	3
<i>Activity goal</i>	5	3	5	5	5
<i>Number of SS</i>	3	4	3	3	4

<sup>a</sup> Students' attitudes towards the use of Czech in EFL classes.

**Teachers' awareness of students' attitudes towards the L1 use.** (Questions 13, 14 & 15.) One teacher did not know whether her students preferred the target language or Czech during lessons. Three stated that their students (especially those who were intermediate and lower) mostly prefer when the teachers spoke Czech. Only one teacher answered that her students always preferred English; as Table 11 displays, it was the same teacher whose amount of Czech spoken in her lesson did not exceed five minutes. Table 11 shows that she, as the only teacher, described her students as those who minimally spoke Czech when talking to each other during lessons. Three teachers stated that their students spoke Czech sometimes; one admitted that they used Czech often when talking among themselves. As is visible in Table 11, two teachers answered that their students talked to them mostly in English, while in Czech minimally. The other three agreed that the students generally spoke with them in English; however, sometimes it happened that the students answered English questions in Czech. According to one teacher who commented on this query, "it is both, they may be a bit indolent but at the same time unsure with their English; therefore some of them choose to answer in Czech in the first place".

Table 11

*Upper secondary schools: Teachers' awareness of students' attitudes towards the L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q13:</b> <i>Do your students use Czech when they are talking to each other in your English lessons?</i>				
Sometimes.	Sometimes.	Minimally.	Sometimes.	Often.
<b>Q14:</b> <i>Do your students use Czech when they are talking to you in your English lessons?</i>				
Sometimes.	Minimally.	Minimally.	Sometimes.	Sometimes.
<b>Q15:</b> <i>Do you know what the attitudes of your students' towards the use of the Czech language in English classes are in general?</i>				
Mostly L1.	Do not know.	Always L2.	Mostly L1.	Mostly L1.

**Class rules regarding the L1 use.** (Questions 16, 17, 18, 19 & 20.) Three teachers did not have clear rules about the use of Czech in their lessons. One teacher stated that her students were “clever enough to know themselves well ensuing from a particular situation” what they could or could not. In the case of the remaining two, they both set up the rules themselves without any discussions with students. As Table 12 demonstrates, the first one stated that while she always obeyed the rules, her students did that often; the second teacher admitted that she obeyed the rules herself sometimes and the same applied to her students. Next, Table 12 illustrates that three teachers thought that their students were often able to recognize the moment when they switch into Czech since their work with L1 was systematic; two marked that their code switching appeared to be predictable for their students minimally. Based on the interviews, all of them agreed that this particular issue did not seem to them essentially important in EFL learning.

Table 12

*Upper secondary schools: Class rules regarding the L1 use*

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
<b>Q16:</b> <i>Do you think that your students are able to recognize the moment when you are going to switch in your speech between English and Czech?</i>				
Minimally.	Minimally.	Often.	Often.	Often.
<b>Q17:</b> <i>Do you have clear rules in your English classes about the use of the Czech language so the students know when it is allowed to use Czech or not?</i>				
No.	Yes.	No.	No.	Yes.
<b>Q18:</b> <i>Did you establish the rules together with your students?</i>				
-	Myself.	-	-	Myself.
<b>Q19:</b> <i>How thoroughly do you obey the rules yourself?</i>				
-	Always.	-	-	Sometimes.
<b>Q20:</b> <i>How thoroughly do your students obey the rules themselves?</i>				
-	Often.	-	-	Sometimes.

## Comparison and commentary

**Teachers' attitudes towards the L1 use.** (Questions 1 & 8.) Table 13 demonstrates that both lower and upper secondary teachers were not against the use of the Czech language in English lessons. However their attitudes were definitely not identical since the situation among the surveyed lower secondary teachers was much more neutral in respect to the manner Czech should have been used. While all the teachers from the upper secondary schools answered that the mother tongue should have been used “only effectively”, the teachers of younger classes were less confident about the same issue. Even though none of them stated that Czech should not be used in English teaching, two of them seemed to be rather unsure about its use. Same attitudes were also reflected in teachers' own feelings accompanying their use of Czech in their lessons. The upper secondary teachers did not seem to have any personal problems with Czech use, whereas the lower secondary ones proved to be much more reserved. None of them felt “good” when using Czech which could be explained as their lack of confidence that either their use of Czech is correct and effective, or that Czech should have had at all its own place in EFL classes. In contrast, Table 13 illustrates that their colleagues from upper secondary schools appeared to be much more convinced about the whole issue. Except the youngest one, all of them seemed to feel very positive and resolved about the use of Czech.

Table 13

*Comparison of teachers' attitudes towards the L1 use*

		<b>Q1: <i>What is your attitude towards the use of Czech in EFL classes?</i></b>				
		<i>No use.</i>	<i>Minimal use.</i>	<i>Should be used.</i>	<i>Effective use.</i>	
<b>Lower</b>		-	20%	20%	60%	
<b>Upper</b>		-	-	-	100%	
		<b>Q8: <i>How do you feel when you are using Czech in your English lessons?</i></b>				
		<i>Good.</i>	<i>No special.</i>	<i>Guilty.</i>	<i>Embarrassed.</i>	<i>Other.</i>
<b>Lower</b>		-	60%	40%	-	-
<b>Upper</b>		40%	40%	20%	-	-

**Teachers' own L1 use.** (Questions 4, 5, 6, 11 & 12.) Refer to Table 14 that pictures the comparison between lower and upper secondary teachers' use of the Czech language in the frame of their own teaching practice. First, the results whether they think their use of Czech is effective are compared, then the comparison of proportion of Czech follows, and finally the answers concerning L1 activities are confronted between both of the groups of the surveyed teachers.

**Effective use of L1.** One would anticipate that the answers were corresponding to those presented in Table 13, where teachers' feelings about their L1 use were presented. Nevertheless, the opposite is the truth. Even though the lower secondary teachers originally seemed to be less confident about the entire mother-tongue issue, in this particular case the upper secondary teachers were more reserved in their answers. Only one upper secondary teacher thought that her use of Czech in English classes was effective. In contrast, among the responses of the lower secondary teachers' this opinion occurred in two cases. It is rather difficult to explain this existing discrepancy but two possible explanations could be suggested here. Either the teachers from lower and upper secondary schools worked with different concepts of what an effective use of L1 looked like, or in respect to the lower secondary teachers, they felt that their use of Czech was more justified because of the lower age and English level of their students'.

**Proportion of the L1 use.** The results signified that the proportion of the L1 use varied a lot between the two groups of teachers. As is visible in the table, the amount of the Czech language decreased noticeably with the age of the students. To be more precise, the shift can be observed from occasional use, which corresponds to questionnaire answer "sometimes", to its minimal use. When converted into an approximate time spent talking only Czech, at the lower secondary schools the total from a usual 45 minutes' English lesson constituted 14 minutes; however, at the upper schools this approximate time declined to 9 minutes. The explanation of the results may be found in the fact that the upper secondary students were, according to the demographic information gained by the questionnaire from the teachers, more proficient in English than their lower secondary counterparts; therefore in their case the use of mother tongue may have been considered less necessary and inevitable.

**L1 activities.** Finally, with students' age there was connected another change in teachers' employment of Czech. As Table 14 presents, with higher age and English proficiency of the students there could be detected an evident departure from translation activities. On the other hand, the opposite applied to the activities focused on comparative analysis between English and Czech. While the majority of the lower secondary teachers decided for this type of activities only sometimes, most of the teachers from the upper secondary schools answered that they incorporated them into their lessons often. These findings could be again explained in connection with students' age and their better knowledge of English. Moreover, it could be assumed that even the knowledge of linguistic terminology, either Czech or English, may be the case why the teachers of lower

classes may have found it more troublesome to design the activities targeted particularly on the language analysis and comparison since they anticipated their students would not understand the special language.

Table 14

*Comparison of teachers' own L1 use*

		<b>Q4: Do you use the Czech language in your English classes?</b>				
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	80%	20%	
<b>Upper</b>		-	20%	60%	20%	
		<b>Q5: Do you think that your use of Czech in your English lessons is effective?</b>				
		<i>No.</i>	<i>Rather no.</i>	<i>Rather yes.</i>	<i>Positively yes.</i>	
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	60%	40%	
<b>Upper</b>		-	-	80%	20%	
		<b>Q6: What amount of your usual 45-minutes' lesson does Czech occupy?</b>				
		<i>0–5 mins.</i>	<i>6–10 mins.</i>	<i>11–15 mins.</i>	<i>16–20 mins.</i>	<i>&gt;21 mins.</i>
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	80%	20%	-
<b>Upper</b>		20%	40%	40%	-	-
		<b>Q11: Do you incorporate the activities focused on translation?</b>				
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	<i>Very often.</i>
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	20%	80%	-
<b>Upper</b>		-	20%	40%	40%	-
		<b>Q12: Do you incorporate the activities focused on the comparison of language structures between English and Czech?</b>				
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	<i>Very often.</i>
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	80%	20%	-
<b>Upper</b>		-	20%	20%	60%	-

**Teachers' theoretical knowledge about the L1 use.** (Questions 2 & 3.) As is clearly visible in Table 15, lower secondary teachers have not experienced any preparation concerning the use of mother tongue whatsoever. As a result, it could be said that they work with Czech merely on the grounds of their own intuition without any professional information and experiences. According to their answers, the upper secondary teachers were the opposite. They seemed to be more motivated to find out some information on the subject on their own, and as a result they gave the impression that they were acting more responsibly and thorough in regards of the use of Czech in their lessons.



Table 15

*Comparison of teachers' theoretical knowledge about the L1 use*

<b>Q2: During your teacher training did you undertake any preparation concerning the use of mother tongue in EFL teaching?</b>			
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Yes.</i>	<i>Not remember.</i>
<b>Lower</b>	40%	-	60%
<b>Upper</b>	60%	20%	20%
<b>Q3: During your teaching practice have you become acquainted with any classified literature concerning this matter?</b>			
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Yes.</i>	<i>Not remember.</i>
<b>Lower</b>	100%	-	-
<b>Upper</b>	20%	60%	20%

**Teachers' opting for/against the L1 use.** (Questions 7, 9 & 10.) First of all, the answers whether the teachers ever considered the question of Czech use during their lesson planning have been compared. As is visible in Table 16, the responses did not differ in any outstanding extent. However, based on the questionnaires the teachers of lower secondary classes apparently considered this question more frequently than their upper secondary counterparts, whose majority reflected on this issue during their lesson preparation rather minimally. The result may be explained in the connection with the previous findings presented in Table 14; since the lower secondary teachers seemed to perceive the use of L1 as more justified and unavoidable, they work with it more even during making their lesson plans. Furthermore, Table 16 summarizes various aspects which may play role in teachers' language option; in other words when and why they usually decided for Czech instead of English. There are several details that are significantly different between the information obtained from lower and upper secondary teachers. The purposes leading to the choice of the Czech language are presented first, and then the other aspects influencing the language choice follow.

**Purposes for the choice of L1 (Question 7).** The comparison led to the discovery that the purposes underlying teachers' language choice varied significantly in the case of these two utterly successive school periods. Probably the most noticeable difference could be observed in teachers' use of Czech in order to communicate to the class some organizational issues. Even though the lower secondary teachers were somehow disunited regarding this matter, in general it could be said that they positively did not choose Czech primarily because of this reason. On the contrary, their upper secondary colleagues answered in unison that the question of organization is one of the most important reasons for their choice of Czech. Next, their answers were very different as well in the case of

an informal talk. While more than a half of the upper secondary teachers thought that it was another most important reason for them to speak Czech with their students, teachers of lower degrees were not that definite about that. These findings appeared to signify that upper secondary teachers used Czech especially for the purposes of personal communication, instead of formal teaching. It seemed as they treated their students as equal partners in a teaching process more than it seemed to be happening at the lower secondary schools where the students still appeared to be treated more as children than partners whom it had to be helped more. Moreover, this assumption seemed to be supported by the following findings. Another very striking dissent between the two groups of teachers was found in the areas of grammar explanation, translation and giving instructions. Among the lower secondary teachers, these three reasons were ultimately the most crucial and the most determining ones. In other words, the teachers used Czech in order to “serve” their students the essential information assuring thus wide-class comprehensibility but unfortunately without any deeper language and mental work on students’ part at the same time. In contrast, the opinion that predominated among the teachers from the second group was that these particular purposes were not the most important ones in the issue of considering the use of Czech. On the grounds of these findings, it seemed that the upper secondary teachers probably preferred to incorporate in a greater degree some English alternatives to direct Czech explications. Additionally, these assumptions are reflected as well in preceding Table 14, where the results concerning different dealing with translation and language comparison are presented.

***Other reasons influencing the choice of L1 (Question 10).*** After comparing some other aspects which may have possibly influenced teachers’ language choice, no really considerable differences have occurred between the answers of lower and upper secondary teachers’. They all chose students’ English proficiency as the most important aspect when deciding whether to use Czech or not. The only noticeable departure in their answers seemed to be that the importance of students’ age was quite less irrelevant in the case of upper secondary teachers but not very significantly. On the other hand, this group of teachers thought that the number of students in the class was rather critical in regards to the issue in comparison to the answers of the lower secondary teachers. However, according to Table 16 (Q10), it is obvious that all these lastly mentioned differences were quantitatively quite low and rather minor.

Table 16

*Comparison of teachers' (TS) opting for/against the L1 use*

		<b>Q9: During your lesson preparation do you consider the question whether to use Czech or not?</b>										
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	<i>Always.</i>						
<b>Lower</b>		40%	-	40%	20%	-						
	<b>Upper</b>	60%	20%	20%	-	-						
		<b>Q7: What are the purposes of your use of Czech in your English lessons? (Select the importance of each purpose on the scale; 5=max.)</b>										
		<b>[%]</b>	<b>Lower secondary TS</b>					<b>Upper secondary TS</b>				
		<b>Importance:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
		<i>Informal talk</i>	-	60	20	-	20	40	-	-	-	60
		<i>Grammar</i>	-	-	-	20	80	-	-	20	40	40
		<i>Translation</i>	-	-	40	40	20	-	40	60	-	-
		<i>Disciplining</i>	20	-	40	-	40	-	-	60	-	40
		<i>Organization</i>	40	-	20	20	20	-	-	-	-	100
		<i>Instructing</i>	-	20	40	-	40	20	40	40	-	-
		<i>Assessment</i>	40	20	40	-	-	-	20	40	20	20
		<b>Q10: Which aspects are important for you when you are deciding whether to use Czech in your classes or not?</b>										
		<i>Age</i>	20	-	60	-	20	40	20	40	-	-
		<i>Proficiency</i>	-	-	20	-	80	-	-	20	20	60
		<i>SS' attitudes<sup>a</sup></i>	20	40	40	-	-	20	60	-	-	20
		<i>TS' attitudes</i>	-	-	20	60	20	20	-	40	-	40
		<i>Activity goal</i>	-	20	-	20	60	-	-	20	-	80
		<i>Number of SS</i>	60	-	20	-	20	-	-	60	40	-

<sup>a</sup> Students' attitudes towards the use of Czech in EFL classes.

**Teachers' awareness of students' attitudes towards the L1 use.** (Questions 13, 14 & 15.) Table 17 summarizes teachers' knowledge of their students in respect to their personal opinions about the use of the Czech language in English lessons. As illustrated in Table 17 teachers' subjective perception of their students' language preferences differed to some extent. In general, the results from teachers working at lower secondary schools showed that their students tended significantly in their English classes to prefer Czech over the target language; and the teachers, even though most of them answered that they did not know what their students' attitudes were like, seemed to be rather aware of the situation. However, this could be explained again through students' age when they are naturally less self-motivated and their self-control and autonomy are still developing. It may have appeared as well that either by not caring what their students' opinions about the L1 use were or by assuming automatically that their students preferred Czech the lower secondary

teachers demonstrated some degree of low confidence in the abilities of their students. Regardless it was true or not, these assumptions appeared to be in the very tight connection with the results summarized in Tables 14 and 16. In contrast and despite the fact that most of the upper secondary teachers stated that their students “mostly preferred” the Czech language over English, based on the results from the questionnaires their students used Czech less often than the lower secondary students. Moreover, it might seem that the upper school students were more targeted at English and were working more consciously than their lower secondary counterparts. In addition, there could be found a certain connection between these results and the proportion of the Czech language used by teachers themselves, which has been already presented in Table 14; the more often the teachers themselves chose to speak Czech, the higher tendency to speak Czech as well could be witnessed on the part of their students.

Table 17

*Comparison of teachers' awareness of students' attitudes towards the L1 use*

		<b>Q13: Do your students use Czech when they are talking to each other in your English lessons?</b>				
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	40%	60%	
<b>Upper</b>		-	20%	60%	20%	
		<b>Q14: Do your students use Czech when they are talking to you in your English lessons?</b>				
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	60%	40%	
<b>Upper</b>		-	40%	60%	-	
		<b>Q15: Do you know what the attitudes of your students' towards the use of the Czech language in English classes are in general?</b>				
		<i>Do not know.</i>	<i>Always L2</i>	<i>Mostly L2</i>	<i>Mostly L1.</i>	<i>Always L1.</i>
<b>Lower</b>		60%	-	-	20%	20%
<b>Upper</b>		20%	20%	-	60%	-

**Class rules regarding the L1 use.** (Questions 16, 17, 18, 19 & 20.) Table 18 demonstrates that the majority of the respondents, irrespectively the degrees they taught, did not establish any rules in their EFL classes concerning the use of Czech by their students. In the case they did, they always created them themselves without any mutual discussion with their students. Furthermore, while the teachers seemed to follow the rules consistently, their students tended to break them more frequently as evident from Table 18. Next, based on the personal interviews, all of the teachers, again irrespectively of whether they teach at lower or upper secondary schools, agreed that they did not think it was

important their students were able to recognize the moment when they were to switch between Czech and English. Moreover, this information is reflected in the Table 18 by the fact that all of the ten inquired teachers chose none of the far side options. On the contrary, all five lower secondary teachers stated that it happened only “sometimes” that their students knew which language to expect. In the case of teachers from upper secondary schools, their answers might be, on the grounds of their previous responses, possibly explained as follows. First, their students could predict the language change “minimally” because the main language used in the classes is English usually and the students simply expect Czech minimally as well. The matter why the upper secondary teachers answered that their students were “often” able to recognize that they were going to speak Czech may be explained as they might be rather confident and sure about their effective use of Czech in their English classes.

Table 18

*Comparison of class rules regarding the L1 use*

		<b>Q16: Do you think that your students are able to recognize the moment when you are going to switch in your speech between English and Czech?</b>				
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	<i>Always.</i>
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	100%	-	-
<b>Upper</b>		-	40%	-	60%	-
		<b>Q17: Do you have clear rules in your English classes about the use of the Czech language so the students know when it is allowed to use Czech or not?</b>				
		<i>Yes.</i>				
<b>Lower</b>		1 teacher – T5.				
<b>Upper</b>		2 teachers – T2 and T5.				
		<b>Q18: Did you establish the rules together with your students?</b>				
		<i>Yes.</i>	<i>Students themselves.</i>		<i>Myself.</i>	
<b>Lower</b>		-	-		T5	
<b>Upper</b>		-	-		T2 and T5	
		<b>Q19: How thoroughly do you obey the rules yourself?</b>				
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	<i>Always.</i>
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	-	-	T5
<b>Upper</b>		-	-	T5	-	T2
		<b>Q20: How thoroughly do your students obey the rules themselves?</b>				
		<i>Never.</i>	<i>Minimally.</i>	<i>Sometimes.</i>	<i>Often.</i>	<i>Always.</i>
<b>Lower</b>		-	-	T5	-	-
<b>Upper</b>		-	-	T5	T2	-

## Summary of the results and conclusion

With regard to the research question, it could be confirmed that the approaches of lower and upper secondary school teachers towards the use of the Czech language in EFL classes are not the same. Based on the conducted research, there have been discovered several areas in which teachers' treatment of L1 differed to a certain degree. The most important findings are presented below.

First of all, the most striking difference was the teachers' theoretical knowledge concerning the mother-tongue use in EFL classes. It was discovered that the lower secondary teachers had no theoretical base how to work with Czech in general and make the use of it. Moreover, it was found out that they, in contrast to their upper secondary colleagues, even did not make any effort to find any information about the issue on their own. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that it may have been possible that the results were merely caused by the limited number of surveyed subjects. Second, another major dissimilarity relating to the L1 use at the lower and the upper secondary schools was the amount of the Czech language constituting the part of English lessons. At lower secondary schools the proportion of Czech was definitely higher than in the case of upper secondary schools. In the case of the former, Czech was spoken rather frequently by both teachers and students. As for the latter, teachers seemed to use Czech less often and their students as well; however, even though the students themselves seemed to be more focused on English than their lower secondary counterparts, they still in most cases tended to prop themselves upon the Czech language anyway. The fact that the lower secondary teachers were using L1 more was projected in another important difference between lower and upper secondary teachers which related to the purposes of their L1 use. While the lower secondary teachers chose Czech primarily in order to secure that their students get the essential language information in a lucid way but maybe without any deeper mental effort on students' part, the upper secondary teachers in the same situation seemed to use Czech more cautiously and judiciously, not as the main means of explaining the language problems but only as a support which was always at hand. To conclude, the last significant departure in teachers' L1 treatment was found in their employment of the activities concerning translation and language comparison. The former ones were more frequent at lower secondary schools, whereas the activities focused on contrastive analysis appeared to be more popular among upper secondary teachers.

Finally, the findings signified as well that the distinct treatment of the Czech language by individual teachers may have two explanations. First, the different approaches towards dealing with the issue itself could be caused by the lack of any theoretical knowledge on the part of the lower secondary school teachers. However, since some of these teachers experienced a longtime English teaching practice, the second explanation appears to be more probable. It suggests that all the differences between lower and upper school teachers seemed to result primarily from students' age along and their current knowledge of English, which both usually underlie each other.

In this chapter, the results obtained from lower secondary school teachers were introduced first. Second, the summary of the findings from upper secondary schools followed. Then, both of the previous results were compared with each other and the outcomes of the whole research were presented and analyzed. Finally, based on the comparison the research hypothesis that lower and upper secondary school teachers treat L1 differently was confirmed. However, the results are definitely not unambiguously certain and should not be taken at face value since there were many factors that may have influenced the plausibility of the survey negatively. These factors, besides pedagogical implications of the results and further suggestions for the research, are the subject of the following part.

## V. IMPLICATIONS

The results presented in the previous chapter have shown that the lower and the upper secondary teachers treated mother tongue in the frame of their English lessons in a different way. Despite their dissimilarity, neither of the groups of the surveyed teachers could be marked as the one that used the Czech language more judiciously and more effectively. The reason why it could not be decided is, as has been stated many times in this work, there still has not been reached a definite consensus among the involved expert public on the mother-tongue matter in language classes in general. However, when the results of the research are put on the background of the theoretical part of the thesis, there occur some points concerning L1 practice by both lower and upper secondary teachers in their English classes that are calling for more attention. Therefore, this has happened to be the main objective of this chapter which is to provide advice for English teachers by highlighting the most important principles of the L1 use in EFL classes on the grounds of the findings. The implications for teachers at lower secondary schools are presented in the first place; advice for upper secondary school teachers follows right after. The second aim of the chapter is to indicate and describe the limitations of the entire research that on the whole have to be taken into account. The chapter (along with the whole thesis) is concluded by the suggestions for further research in the field of the mother-tongue use in EFL classes.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

**Lower secondary school teachers.** Based on the research, there should be emphasized several important pieces of advice and warning addressed to lower secondary teachers. First, all English teachers should always aspire to be familiar with recent information related to EFL teaching; however, based on the results, the teachers at lower secondary school were completely overlooking the whole issue concerning the use of mother tongue. Even though the L1 use may have appeared for the inquired teachers implicitly natural and unproblematic at the first sight, the research has shown that their attitudes towards the role of the mother tongue in English classes seemed to be reserved and rather uncertain. Consequently, the key advice for all teachers is to widen their personal opinions by searching for various approaches to the discussed issue because teaching is always about looking for the right choice fitting the particular situation and students. Furthermore, if the teachers were more familiar with the mother-tongue use in



terms of theory, it could be supposed that their own L1 incorporation within their English lessons would be more conscious and thus more systematic, judicious and as a result even more effective.

Next, the findings have signaled that at the lower secondary schools the Czech language was spoken maybe too often by both the teachers and students as well. On the grounds of the results, most often the teachers resorted to Czech for the reasons of grammar explanation, translation of unknown vocabulary or explaining task instructions. In general, it could be said that all these three areas usually need some further and more detailed clarification from teachers. Therefore, it could be assumed that the teachers probably chose Czech because they had presupposed that in the case they explained things only in English their students' could not fully understand it because of their rather lower level of English. In other words, the results have signified that the teachers in the cases involving some further explanations perhaps did not want to risk by overestimating their students' abilities so they rather primarily chose Czech in order to ensure that the students would understand. Even though the teachers meant it well to make the things comprehensible for their students, there has arisen a question whether this reason for the mother-tongue use in such a degree was justified or whether it was a mere camouflage for teachers (however much conscious it was or not) to use L1 in order to simplify their own work.

Therefore, to dismiss this potential clash the teachers should more consider the mother-tongue use in terms of its usefulness and effectiveness in facilitating students' English acquisition. Together with that, the lower secondary teachers should put aside their possibly misleading assumptions about their students' low-level English skills and stop impart them new information directly without any effort on students' part. On the other hand, in order to motivate the students to become more actively participating in their own English education, the teachers should approach them more like partners in the teaching process. They should show their students that they believe in their personal aptitude regarding English learning, for example by choosing a comprehensible English input which in most cases enriches students' English knowledge noticeably more than a mere direct explication in Czech. Besides comprehensible L2 input the teachers could employ some alternative strategies of introducing new English structures (such as paraphrasing instead of a direct Czech translation) that as a result force the students to become more focused on the English language for they are more demanding on their mental activity.

On the other hand, it is natural that students at this age will probably prefer the mother tongue over English (which was as well to some degree confirmed by the teachers' report on their students' language preference) since they are naturally less self-motivated and their self-control and learning autonomy are still developing. However the teachers should be definitely aware of this natural psychological development of their students' and should reflect it in their approaches to teaching. For instance, in order to increase students' learning autonomy their teachers should give them gradually more and more responsibility for their own learning by creating the English learning situation challenging but comprehensible at the same time. According to that, the research has shown a linear connection between teachers' and students' Czech speaking time during lessons. Therefore, if teachers want to maximize students' use of English, they themselves have to beware of a redundant use of Czech. Instead, no matter whether the reason for mother tongue is to explain grammar or only to sustain a secure and friendly class atmosphere, the teacher should always evaluate if its use is really constructive, useful and well justified.

**Upper secondary school teachers.** Even though the results of the research have not discovered any significant distortion between the theory and the treatment of the mother tongue in practice of the inquired upper secondary English teachers, there are some moments that merit to be highlighted, too. In general, the following suggestions are basically very similar to those appointed for lower secondary teachers; however, their entire conception is a bit different since they are focused on a different age group of the students who have their distinct psychological peculiarities.

First of all, the results have shown that the time spent talking in Czech had decreased in contrast to their lower secondary counterparts from 14 to 9 minutes in average which is 20% of a usual 45 minutes lesson. Regardless of the fact, there has again arisen a question whether the proportion of Czech was not too higher at the expense of English. Without a doubt it is a difficult task to unequivocally decide upon this matter what the right amount of L1 in EFL classes should be as the importance of the reasons for its use may vary a lot. Nevertheless, there is one key advice for the upper secondary teachers that should be born in mind anytime. Again it is a judicious use of L1 while at the same time maximizing comprehensible English input. However, this recommendation comprises a pitfall for teachers that should be pointed out. Talking in general, it may happen that teachers in order to prevent their students from confusions and misunderstandings may tend to choose more accessible ways of explication which are yet often underestimated in terms of students' real language skills. It is supposed that if the teachers have more

confidence in their students' abilities and do not resort in their teaching to mother tongue in any situation that is more demanding, the students advance more quickly and enduringly in their English learning.

Second, it is important to emphasize that as far as the issue of the L1 use is concerned, almost a half of the surveyed upper secondary teachers had not ever come across any specialist instructing. Regardless of the number of years they have been teaching, to attempt to be always updated on information concerning EFL teaching should apply to upper secondary teachers in the same way as to their lower secondary colleagues unconditionally. Moreover, teachers' further self-education in the field of the mother-tongue use is further supported by the following arguments.

The last advice for the teachers from upper secondary schools is to consider the question of the mother-tongue use more often when they are working on their lesson plans. As the results of the research have revealed, most of the upper secondary teachers were completely overlooking the whole issue while planning their lessons. Even though all of the inquired teachers were incorporating the activities focusing on translation and language comparison, it seemed that these two were all types of the activities concerning L1 that they were employing. In other words it appeared that, except translation and language comparison, the teachers did not include any other activities using the Czech language in order to enhance English learning. On the other hand, it should be highlighted that the questionnaire did not include any inquiry directly asking about teachers' employment of other L1 activities; maybe if it did, the teachers would mention them straightforwardly. However, this assumption is based on the responses of the teachers and seems to be rather probable. Taking into account their answers to the question whether they considered the L1 use during their lesson preparation, most of them answered that never. Nevertheless, if they had worked with a wider repertoire of L1/L2 activities, then it would be almost certainly reflected in their answers to this question, too. Still, it is only an assumption but leading into a general recommendation for all teachers. This suggestion is very closely connected to the argument for a necessity of teachers' deeper theoretical knowledge regarding the use of mother tongue in EFL classes. The more teachers are familiar with the thematic literature, the greater array of options how to employ mother tongue effectively into English lessons is at their disposal. For inspiration see, for example, Deller and Rinvoluceri's (2002) joint work which provides many useful ready-to-use activities that have been primarily designed to make the most of students' mother tongue in EFL classes.

### **Limitation of the Research**

It is very important to emphasize that the whole research and its results have their obvious limitations that need to be taken into account. Accordingly, the conclusions of the research cannot be taken for granted by any means. Since it was only a small empirical research whose objective was mainly to collect illustrative data from a very exemplificative sample of respondents, it apparently does not necessarily give an accurate picture of teachers' day-to-day practice. The main weaknesses of the survey are following.

First, its main constraint is definitely a very small number of respondents from both lower and upper secondary schools. On the other hand, regardless of this limitation all the inquired teachers were chosen in order to represent various teaching backgrounds and thus at least partially minimize bias of the gained results.

The problem to obtain the agreement for cooperation from the teachers has resulted in another limitation that was the length of the interviews with the surveyed teachers. Unfortunately, the majority of the teachers were able to reserve only a very limited time for personal meetings; therefore, most of the dialogues were rather short and concise and provided little information on the teachers' authentic work with the Czech language in their usual lessons of English.

Next, as a consequence of personal interviews with the teachers over their answers in the questionnaires it was revealed that some of the questions occurring in the survey were formulated rather ambiguously which led into confusion of some of the teachers. Nevertheless, the interviews were originally meant to clear out any of the teachers' uncertainties about the questions; therefore, it could be said that the ambiguity of the written questions was thanks to the personal contact with the teachers largely minimized.

Lastly, it should be also mentioned that the research methods, the questionnaire as well as the interview, are both subjective methods which means that the obtained responses are wholly dependent on the research subjects. In other words, it may have happened that in order to show themselves in a better light (regardless of however consciously) some of the teachers were not fully honest in their answers. Therefore, since it cannot be ever excluded for certain that all of the teachers were answering truly according to their usual daily teaching practice, it neither can be ensured that the final results give an appropriate picture of the L1 treatment by English teachers.

## **Suggestions for Further Research**

It would be reasonable to improve this research, as has been already stated, by assuring a great deal bigger sample of the subjects with the purpose of gaining the most representative model of the real teaching practice. Along with that, the personal interviews with the individual teachers should be more complex and profound in order to obtain some really significant information. The study could be expanded as well by a direct observation when several teachers from both lower and upper secondary schools would be objectively monitored in order to disclose how the Czech language is used in English classes by various teachers.

Furthermore, based on the findings of the research there has arisen a question which could become a central problem for another study investigating the L1 use in EFL classes. The question is how significant is the connection between the quantity of the mother-tongue use in English classes and students' English proficiency. The research has discovered that the lower the students' English level was, the more the teachers tended to use Czech over English. However, what if the reality is the right opposite? What if the reason for students' lower English proficiency is teachers' L1 use itself?

Additionally, it could be also interesting to examine the whole issue from the students' point of view. The further research aim could be, for example, to find out what the students' attitudes towards the use of Czech in English lessons are and whether they change as students grow up and become more advanced in English.

To conclude, it could be said that this chapter has provided a connection between the theoretical part and the research since it has been built upon both. On the grounds of the findings provided by the survey and their comparison with the theory, the most important implications for teaching practice concerning the use of mother tongue in EFL classes have been highlighted for lower and upper secondary teachers respectively. Finally, after discussing the limitations of the entire research the recommendations on its improvement were described; besides, there have been suggested a few further research questions addressing the L1 use in English classes as well but from rather different points of view.

## VI. CONCLUSION

On the grounds of the historical development of the mother-tongue use in EFL classes, it could be said that the majority of both the past and the modern approaches to EFL teaching have never banished the mother tongue from English classes completely (e.g. in contrast to Direct Method). Even though teachers do not always fully identify with the stand on L1 that it may facilitate English learning and some of them still even consider its use in EFL classes as an obstacle in progress, it is advisable not to overlook nor condemn it absolutely. The reason is that in point of fact it is on no account possible to avoid it entirely. Since the mother tongue is an innate part of students' language equipment, it is constantly in a mutual interaction with the target language during any language acquisition. Accordingly, it is very sensible to increase the awareness of this inevitable interaction among the teachers and their students, too. Moreover, as this graduate thesis suggests it is wise not only to be aware of this fact but as well to attempt to make the most of it in terms of English learning.

Nevertheless, it is rather complicated to apply this suggestion to teaching practice for the definition of an effective use of L1 is rather vague and limited. Regardless of the number of literature dedicated to the subject of the L1 use in EFL teaching, there exists no definite agreement on what an ideal mother-tongue use ought to precisely look like. According to Littlewood and Yu (2011) the meaning of what an effective employment of the mother tongue constitutes is "interpreted mainly through an individual teacher's intuition" (p. 75). In other words, it depends greatly on a particular teacher how he or she understands the judicious use of the mother tongue; for different teachers it may represent very different concepts. However, the conducted research has signaled that respectively to the age of students and primarily to the level of students' knowledge of English there exist some basic similarities in the work with L1 among English teachers. In addition, stemming from the conviction that the mother tongue can be beneficial for EFL teaching there can be detected some repeatedly occurring principles throughout the literature attempting to systematize its use to some degree. Despite their perhaps too extensive generality, their aim is to maximize the advantageous potential of the mother-tongue use in EFL classes.

In this regard, the main advantage of the L1 use is thought to be the fact that it is a natural ever-present resource of students' linguistic skills and knowledge. It represents an irreplaceable referential tool which is very important especially when starting to learn

the new language for the first time. By providing L1 equivalents and highlighting the similarities or conversely the differences between the mother tongue and the target language, it helps learners to implant the unknown English vocabularies and structures into the framework of their mother-tongue experience. It could be said that the mother tongue functions as a sort of scaffolding which facilitates students' English acquisition. To continue with the metaphor, like a scaffold the L1 should be gradually removed as well as the students' proficiency grows until the moment it is fully built and does not need a support any more. Accordingly, while allowing this kind of support, the use of mother tongue gives students a sense of security which may as a result reduce language anxiety often occurring in a different degree among the beginning learners and rather timid individuals.

On the other hand, it is true that there are many obvious downsides of using mother tongue in any foreign language classes. Among the most feared ones belong: (a) limited English input and output, when there is concern that the proportion of the mother tongue can be detrimental to the amount of the target language; (b) limited students' autonomy, when the students tend to frequently depend on teachers' instant L1 explanations and translations. Consequently, it is particularly important to bear in mind the possible disadvantages accompanying the L1 use for in the end they can have very negative effects on the whole process of English learning. Nonetheless, if these pitfalls are minimized or completely avoided, the mother tongue can prove to be a very beneficial device in EFL teaching.

To conclude, as the theoretical part together with the research have shown the opinions prevailing among language teachers about the mother-tongue use are still rather disunited. Moreover, even the supporters of the L1 use themselves are divided in their views on the issue considerably. For example they approve of different time proportion of the L1 use, reasons underlying the choice for L1 or L1 treatment in general. Overall, on the grounds of what has been said in this thesis, it is evident that the mother tongue has proved to have a firm position in English teaching due to its overriding benefits. In any case it is not meant that it has to be necessarily the main tool in EFL teaching; but if used judiciously, the mother tongue may be of a great help besides many other tools granting English learning. However, all of these uncertainties accompanying effective use of L1 signify that the whole issue will probably remain a subject of further discussions.

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## APPENDIX A

## Questionnaire – original Czech version

V Plzni, 28. února 2014

Dobrý den,

jsem studentkou pedagogické fakulty ZČU. Můj výzkum v rámci diplomové práce se zaměřuje na užívání mateřského jazyka v hodinách angličtiny, konkrétně na užívání češtiny mezi učiteli ZŠ (2. stupeň) a SŠ. Ráda bych Vás poprosila, zda byste byli ochotni zodpovědět dvacetipoložkový dotazník a poté se k jednotlivým bodům vyjádřit i osobně.

Předem velice děkuji za Vaši případnou pomoc, kterou bych nesmírně ocenila.

S úctou,

Martina Havlová

HavlindaM@gmail.com

739 510 002

Délka učitelské praxe: .....

Z toho praxe AJ: .....

Věk:  20–30 let  31–40 let  41–50 let  51–60 let  61 a více

Škola: .....

Aprobace: .....

Ročníky, kde učíte AJ:  6. třída ŽŠ  7. třída ŽŠ  8. třída ŽŠ  9. třída ŽŠ  
 nižší stupeň SŠ  1. ročník SŠ  2. ročník SŠ  3. ročník SŠ  4. ročník SŠ

Jazyková úroveň Vašich studentů AJ:  začátečníci  mírně pokročilí  
 středně pokročilí  pokročilí  velmi pokročilí

1. Jaký je Váš postoj k užívání češtiny v hodinách AJ?

- Měla by se užívat.  Měla by se užívat, ale pouze efektivně.  
 Měla by se užívat, ale pouze minimálně.  Neměla by se užívat vůbec.

2. Během Vašeho studia absolvoval(a) jste nějakou přípravu jak zacházet s mateřským jazykem v hodinách AJ?
- Ano.*                       *Ne.*                       *Nepamatuji se.*
3. Seznámil(a) jste se během své učitelské praxe s nějakou odbornou literaturou zabývající se touto otázkou?
- Ano.*                       *Ne.*                       *Nepamatuji se.*
4. Používáte češtinu ve Vašich hodinách AJ?
- Ne, vůbec.*               *Ano, ale minimálně.*               *Ano, občas.*               *Ano, často.*

***Pokud jste na otázku č. 4 odpověděl(a) „Ne, vůbec,“ dotazník pro Vás tímto končí, mnohokrát děkuji za Vaši pomoc. V případě ostatních odpovědí pokračujte, prosím, následující otázkou.***

5. Myslíte si, že češtinu ve svých hodinách AJ využíváte efektivně?
- Ne.*                       *Spíše ne.*                       *Spíše ano.*                       *Rozhodně ano.*
6. Jakou část Vaší běžné 45 minutové vyučovací hodiny průměrně zaujímá čeština?
- 0–5 min*               *6–10 min*               *11–15 min*               *16–20 min*  
 *21–25 min*               *26–30 min*               *31–35min*               *36 min a více*
7. Z jakých důvodů v hodinách nejčastěji mluvíte česky? (na dané stupnici uveďte, prosím, jak často češtinu užíváte právě z tohoto důvodu; 1=min., 5=max.)
- |   |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>Neformální rozhovor se studenty</i>                | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Vysvětlení gramatiky</i>                           | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Překlad neznámých slovíček</i>                     | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Udržení kázně</i>                                  | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Organizační záležitosti (např. info o absenci)</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Zadávání instrukcí k úkolu</i>                     | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Hodnocení žákovy práce</i>                         | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Jiné (prosím, uveďte): .....</i>                   | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
8. Jak se cítíte, když ve Vašich hodinách AJ mluvíte česky?
- Dobře.*     *Nijak speciálně.*     *Provinile.*     *Poníženě.*     *Jinak (uveďte): .....*
9. Během Vašich příprav na hodiny, zvažujete otázku, zda češtinu použijete či ne?
- Vůbec.*               *Minimálně.*               *Občas.*               *Často.*               *Vždy.*

10. Jaké faktory hrají roli, zda se pro češtinu v hodině AJ rozhodnete či ne? (na dané stupnici uveďte, prosím, jak moc Vás tento faktor ovlivňuje; 1=min., 5=max.)

<i>Věk studentů</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Úroveň angličtiny studentů</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Postoj studentů k užívání ČJ v hodinách AJ</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Můj vlastní postoj k užívání ČJ v hodinách AJ</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Cíl jednotlivých aktivit</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Počet žáků ve třídě</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jiné (prosím, uveďte): .....</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

11. Začleňujete do výuky aktivity zaměřené na překlad z angličtiny do češtiny?

*Vůbec.*     *Minimálně.*     *Občas.*     *Často.*     *Velmi často.*

12. Začleňujete do výuky aktivity zaměřené na porovnávání jednotlivých struktur jazyka mezi angličtinou a češtinou (gramatika, slovíčka, výslovnost, slovosled, stylistika apod.)?

*Vůbec.*     *Minimálně.*     *Občas.*     *Často.*     *Velmi často.*

13. Mluví Vaši žáci mezi sebou navzájem ve Vašich hodinách AJ česky?

*Ne, vůbec.*     *Ano, ale minimálně.*     *Ano, občas.*     *Ano, často.*

14. Mluví s Vámi Vaši žáci ve Vašich hodinách AJ česky?

*Ne, vůbec.*     *Ano, ale minimálně.*     *Ano, občas.*     *Ano, často.*

15. Víte, jaké jsou postoje Vašich žáků k Vašemu užívání češtiny v hodinách AJ?

*Nevím.*     *Vždy dávají přednost AJ.*     *Většinou dávají přednost AJ.*  
 *Vždy dávají přednost ČJ.*     *Většinou dávají přednost ČJ.*

16. Myslíte si, že Vaši žáci mohou snadno předvídat moment, kdy „přepnete“ do češtiny?

*Vůbec.*     *Minimálně.*     *Občas.*     *Často.*     *Vždy.*

17. Máte ve Vašich třídách jasně zavedená určitá pravidla, díky kterým Vaši žáci vědí, kdy je ve Vašich hodinách povoleno mluvit česky?

*Ano.*     *Ne.*

---

***Pokud jste na otázku č. 17 odpověděl(a) „Ne,“ dotazník pro Vás tímto končí, mnohokrát děkuji za Vaši pomoc. V případě odpovědi „Ano,“ pokračujte, prosím, následující otázkou.***

---

18. Domlouval(a) jste tato pravidla společně se svými žáky?

- Ano.*       *Ne, žáci si je stanovili sami.*       *Ne, stanovil(a) jsem je já sám/sama.*

19. Jak důsledně tato pravidla dodržujete Vy osobně?

- Vůbec.*                       *Minimálně.*                       *Občas.*                       *Často.*                       *Vždy.*

20. Jak důsledně tato pravidla dodržují Vaši žáci?

- Vůbec.*                       *Minimálně.*                       *Občas.*                       *Často.*                       *Vždy.*

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**TÍMTO PRO VÁS DOTAZNÍK KONČÍ, MNOHOKRÁT DĚKUJI ZA VAŠI POMOC.**

## APPENDIX B

**Questionnaire – English version**28<sup>th</sup> February, 2014*Dear Sir or Madame,*

*I am a student of the Faculty of Education at the University of West Bohemia. My research, which is the obligatory part of the graduate thesis, is focused on the use of mother tongue in English classes among lower secondary and upper secondary Czech school teachers. I would like to invite you to answer the following questionnaire consisting of twenty items and then to comment on each of them verbally in person.*

*Thank you very much for your eventual help that would be tremendously appreciated.*

*Sincerely*

*Martina Havlová  
HavlindaM@gmail.com  
739 510 002*

**Length of your teaching practice:** ..... **English teaching practice:** .....

**Age (in years):**       20–30       31–40       41–50       51–60       61+

**Name of the school you are currently teaching at:** .....

**Other subjects taught:** .....

**Grades you teach English in:**     Primary 6     Primary 7     Primary 8     Primary 9  
 Lower secondary     Upper sec. 1     Upper sec. 2     Upper sec. 3     Upper sec. 4

**English proficiency (your students):**     Beginner/Elementary     Intermediate  
 Upper Intermediate     Advanced     Proficient

1. What is your attitude towards the use of the Czech language in English classes?
- It should be used.                       It should be used but only effectively.  
 It should be used but only minimally.     It should not be used at all.

2. During your teacher training did you undertake any preparation concerning the use of mother tongue in EFL teaching?

*Yes, I did.*                       *No, I did not.*                       *I do not remember.*

3. During your teaching practice have you become acquainted with any classified literature concerning this matter?

*Yes, I did.*                       *No, I did not.*                       *I do not remember.*

4. Do you use the Czech language in your English classes?

*Never.*       *Yes, but minimally.*       *Yes, sometimes.*       *Yes, often.*

***If your answer to the question no. 4 is "never", there is no need to continue with the following questions; thank you for your participation. Otherwise, please, continue with the question no. 5.***

5. Do you think that your use of Czech in your English lessons is effective?

*No.*                       *Rather no.*                       *Rather yes.*                       *Positively yes.*

6. What amount of your usual 45-minutes' lesson does the Czech language occupy?

*0–5 mins.*       *6–10 mins.*       *11–15 mins.*       *16–20 mins.*  
 *21–25 mins.*       *26–30 mins.*       *31–35mins.*       *36 mins. +*

7. What are the purposes of your use of Czech in your English lessons? (Please, on the scale from 0=min. to 5=max. select the importance of each purpose.)

<i>Informal talks with students</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Grammar explanation</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Translation of unfamiliar word</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Disciplining</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Organization (e.g. absence information)</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Task-instructing</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Assessment of students' work</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Other (please, specify): .....</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

8. How do you feel when you are using Czech in your English lessons?

*Good.*     *No special.*     *Guilty.*     *Embarrassed.*     *Other (specify): .....*

9. During your lesson preparation do you consider the question whether to use Czech or not?

*Never.*     *Minimally.*     *Sometimes.*     *Often.*     *Always.*

- 10.** Which aspects are important for you when you are deciding whether to use Czech in your classes or not? (Please, on the scale from 0=min. to 5=max. select the importance of each aspect.)

<i>Students' age</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Students' language proficiency</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Students' attitudes towards the use of Czech</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>My own attitude towards the use of Czech</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Goals of individual activities</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Number of students in classes</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Other (please, specify): .....</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

- 11.** Do you incorporate into your lessons the activities focusing on translation?

*Never.*     *Minimally.*     *Sometimes.*     *Often.*     *Very often.*

- 12.** Do you incorporate into your lessons the activities focusing on the comparison of language structures between English and Czech (e.g. grammar, lexis, pronunciation, stylistics etc.)?

*Never.*     *Minimally.*     *Sometimes.*     *Often.*     *Very often.*

- 13.** Do your students use Czech when they are talking to each other in your English lessons?

*Never.*     *Yes, but minimally.*     *Yes, sometimes.*     *Yes, often.*

- 14.** Do your students use Czech when they are talking to you in your English lessons?

*Never.*     *Yes, but minimally.*     *Yes, sometimes.*     *Yes, often.*

- 15.** Do you know what the attitudes of your students' towards the use of the Czech language in English classes are in general?

*I do not know.*     *They always prefer English.*     *They prefer English mostly.*  
 *They always prefer Czech.*     *They prefer Czech mostly.*

- 16.** Do you think that your students are able to recognize the moment when you are going to switch in your speech between English and Czech?

*Never.*     *Minimally.*     *Sometimes.*     *Often.*     *Always.*

- 17.** Do you have clear rules in your English classes about the use of the Czech language so the students know when it is allowed to use Czech or not?

*Yes.*     *No.*



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***If your answer to the question no. 17 is "no", there is no need to continue with the following questions; thank you for your participation. Otherwise, please, continue with the question no.18.***

---

**18.** Did you establish the rules together with your students?

- Yes.     No, they did it themselves.     No, I did it on my own.

**19.** How thoroughly do you obey the rules yourself?

- Never.     Minimally.     Sometimes.     Often.     Always.

**20.** How thoroughly do your students obey the rules themselves?

- Never.     Minimally.     Sometimes.     Often.     Always.

---

***THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.***

## APPENDIX C

**Sample Questions from Semi-Structured Interview<sup>7</sup>**

- What, in your opinion, does an effective use of mother tongue mean? *Co podle Vás znamená efektivní využívání mateřského jazyka v hodinách angličtiny?*
- Why do you believe that your use of Czech is effective? *Na základě čeho se domníváte, že ve svých hodinách češtinu využíváte efektivně?*
- Could you explain why you chose grammar as the most important purpose of the use of Czech? *Můžete vysvětlit, proč jste jako nejdůležitější důvod pro použití češtiny zvolil(a) vysvětlení gramatiky.*
- Could you explain why you feel good/guilty when you are speaking Czech in the lessons of English? *Dokázal(a) byste vysvětlit, proč se cítíte dobře/provinile, když v hodinách angličtiny mluvíte česky?*
- Why and how is translation important in English teaching? *Jak a proč je podle Vás ve výuce angličtiny překlad důležitý?*
- Do you also employ some alternative strategies to explain grammar or new vocabulary instead of using only Czech explication? *Pokud chcete vysvětlit gramatiku či nějaká nová slovíčka, používáte i jiné metody než jen klasický výklad v češtině?*
- Why do you choose the activities focusing on the language comparison? How do these activities look like? *Proč volíte aktivity zaměřené na porovnávání obou jazyků? Jakou podobu tyto aktivity mají?*
- When do your students talk with you in Czech? *V jakých případech s Vámi žáci mluví česky?*
- Do you think it is important that your students are able to recognize the moment when you are going to use English and when Czech? *Myslíte si, že je důležité, aby Vaši žáci rozeznali, kdy od Vás mají očekávat češtinu a kdy angličtinu?*

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<sup>7</sup> Please, note that the additional follow-up questions were asked, as appropriate, with each participant.

## APPENDIX D

**Demographic information about the participating teachers**

Table D1

*Lower secondary school teachers (T)*

	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>	<b>T5</b>
<b>Age (in years)</b>	20–30	31–40	41–50	41–50	51–60
<b>Teaching practice</b>	3 years	13 years	10 years	11 years	30 years
<b>English practice</b>	2 years	12 years	10 years	11 years	25 years
<b>Other subjects</b>	Russia	Russian	-	-	German
<b>School<sup>a</sup></b>	4 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grades (primary)<sup>b</sup></b>	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Students' proficiency</b>	Element. Intermed.	Element. Intermed.	Element. Intermed.	Element. Intermed.	Element. Intermed.

*Note.* The same order of teachers is preserved throughout the whole practical part of the thesis.

<sup>a</sup> For full names and addresses of the schools see Appendix E.

<sup>b</sup> Besides these, all teachers were teaching 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> primary grades as well.

Table D2

*Upper secondary school teachers (T)*

	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>T3</b>	<b>T4</b>	<b>T5</b>
<b>Age (in years)</b>	20–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	61+
<b>Teaching practice</b>	2 years	10 years	25 years	29 years	37 years
<b>English practice</b>	2 years	10 years	24 years	25 years	24 years
<b>Other subjects</b>	Geography	Russian	-	Russian History	Russian
<b>School<sup>a</sup></b>	Gymnázium, Mikuláš. nám.	SOŠ prof. Švejcara	Sportovní gymnázium	SOUE	SPŠ strojnická
<b>Grades (upper secondary)<sup>b</sup></b>	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Students' proficiency</b>	Intermed. Upper Int.	Intermed.	Intermed. Upper Int.	Element. Intermed. Upper Int.	Element. Intermed.

*Note.* The same order of teachers is preserved throughout the whole practical part of the thesis.

<sup>a</sup> For full names and addresses of the schools see Appendix E.

<sup>b</sup> Besides these, teachers T1 and T3 were teaching lower secondary grades as well.

## APPENDIX E

**List of Participating Schools****Lower Secondary Schools:**

- 2. základní škola Plzeň (Schwarzova 20, 301 00, Plzeň)
- 4. základní škola Plzeň (Kralovická 12, 323 00, Plzeň)
- 20. základní škola Plzeň (Brojova 13, 326 00, Plzeň)
- 25. základní škola Plzeň (Chválenická 17, 326 00, Plzeň)
- 26. základní škola Plzeň (Skupova 22, 301 00, Plzeň)

**Upper Secondary Schools:**

- Gymnázium, Plzeň (Mikulášské nám. 23, 326 00, Plzeň)
- Sportovní gymnázium, Plzeň (Táborská 28, 326 00, Plzeň)
- Střední odborné učiliště elektrotechnické, Plzeň (Vejprnická 56, 318 00, Plzeň)
- Střední průmyslová škola strojnická a Střední odborná škola profesora Švejcara, Plzeň (Klatovská 109, 301 00, Plzeň)

## SHRNUTÍ

Předmětem této diplomové práce je užití mateřského jazyka ve výuce angličtiny jako cizího jazyka. Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část. Teoretická část nejprve sleduje vývoj jednotlivých názorů na tuto problematiku a dokládá, že se v žádném případě nejedná o jednoznačně danou problematiku. Vzhledem k tomu, že využívání mateřštiny ve výuce cizích jazyků s sebou přináší i určitá rizika, již po mnoho let je toto téma předmětem rozsáhlých diskuzí. Tato práce se snaží představit využívání mateřského jazyka jako přirozenou součást cizojazyčné výuky, která díky jeho přítomnosti může být velice pozitivně ovlivněna. Aby se však mateřština mohla skutečně stát efektivním vyučovacím nástrojem, je zde vedle kladů poukázáno i na možná negativa, kterým je třeba se ve vyučovacím procesu vyhýbat. Hlavním cílem teoretické části je tedy podat přehled základních principů, jež zajišťují účelné využívání mateřského jazyka v hodinách angličtiny. Praktická část této práce poté shrnuje výsledky empirického výzkumu provedeného na vybraných plzeňských školách. Výzkum se zabýval názory učitelů základních a středních škol na využívání češtiny v jejich vlastní pedagogické praxi. Výsledky této studie ukázaly, že používání mateřského jazyka ve výuce angličtiny u učitelů druhého stupně základních škol se do určité míry odlišuje od jeho využití jejich středoškolskými kolegy. Hlavními důvody pro tyto odlišnosti se ukázaly být jednak věk, ale především úroveň angličtiny jejich žáků.