



Changes of teaching goals in native language teaching for pupils with visual impairments in the Czech lands

Cambios en los objetivos pedagógicos de la enseñanza de la lengua materna para alumnos con discapacidades visuales en la República Checa

Klára Eliášková
Charles University



Abstract

Over the course of two centuries (since 1807), the Czech lands have seen fundamental changes in the paradigm of special L1 didactics for pupils with vision impairments (hereinafter the VI). The individual didactic transformations often found theoretical backgrounds in special education approaches simultaneously designed across Europe (especially in Austria, England, former Yugoslavia, Italy, Hungary, Russia, etc.) and accentuated respect for the special teaching requirements of pupils with VI. The embrace of specific European approaches usually depended on the general (especially political and social) context of the period, which also had an impact on the aims and tasks of special language teaching. The paper defines the historically shaped aims of L1 teaching for pupils with VI and contextualizes them in order to understand the current aims.

Keywords: Historical development in L1 teaching; Pupils with visual impairments; Czech language didactics

Resumen

En el transcurso de dos siglos (desde 1807), el territorio checo ha visto cambios fundamentales en el paradigma de didácticas especiales de L1 para alumnos con deficiencia visual (en adelante DV). Las transformaciones didácticas individuales a menudo han encontrado antecedentes en enfoques de educación especial simultáneamente diseñados por toda Europa (especialmente en Austria, Inglaterra, ex Yugoslavia, Italia, Hungría, Rusia, etc.) así como un gran respeto hacia los requerimientos especiales para la enseñanza con alumnos con DV. La aceptación de enfoques específicos europeos normalmente dependía del contexto general (especialmente político y social) del periodo, el cual también tuvo un impacto en los objetivos y tareas de la enseñanza especializada del lenguaje. El artículo define los objetivos históricamente formulados de la enseñanza de L1 para alumnos con DV y los contextualiza con la finalidad de entender los objetivos actuales.

Palabras clave: Desarrollo histórico en la enseñanza de L1; Estudiantes con discapacidades visuales; Didáctica del checo

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF TEACHING THE BLIND IN CENTRAL EUROPE

In the European context, school-based care of the blind had been forming since the late 18th century. The evolving profile of educating socially excluded groups, including the blind, was based on the principles of charitable care. By looking at the development of the goals of language teaching to the blind in the Czech lands when they were still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before gaining independence in 1918, we will introduce one of the many didactic models of special native language teaching created in Central Europe.

Neglected by society, the blind traditionally earned a living by street begging. As a result of the growing charitable efforts, they began to be placed in educational and provident institutions. The primary aims of the institutions set up were originally geared towards providing for the begging blind with the aim of “turning the blind into obedient subjects, nothing more, in order to prevent them from being a burden on society” (Solarová & Šarbach, 1992, p. 11).

In France in 1784, teacher and philanthropist Valentin Haüy (1745–1822) founded the first ever institute for the education of blind children (Smýkal, 2006). In his approach, he purposefully followed not only social but also didactic goals, admitting the possibility, among others, that blind children can be taught to read and write, and, using memory learning, that they can also be taught other subjects (e.g. mathematics, geography or foreign languages). As a result of Enlightenment-inspired efforts across Europe, other European institutes began to be established in rapid succession. After several English cities – Liverpool (1790), Edinburgh (1792), Bristol (1793), Dublin and London (both 1799) – institutes were set up in Brussels (1800), St. Petersburg (1803) as well as Vienna (1804) (Enerstvedt, 1996; French, 2007). It was the Vienna institute that had a key importance for the development of institutionalized care in the Czech context. Its founder Johann Wilhelm Klein (1765–1848) had to come to terms with the initial negative attitude of the society, for no-one wanted to financially participate in the operation of the institute or, for that matter, the education of the blind, who were generally considered as uneducatable. Klein was convinced of the opposite, just like the aforementioned Valentin Haüy. This is why he persisted in his efforts, overcame the initial obstacles and gradually began to extend the activities of the institute (Smýkal, 2006). Many of these also involved teaching (e.g. systematization of teaching using simple teaching plans, etc.). Klein’s ideas as well as agile lay teaching procedures influenced the establishment of institutes for the blind in Bratislava and Wrocław, as well as in

Austria and Germany, and they were also crucial for the education of the blind in the Czech context. Three years after setting up the Vienna institute in 1807 (Klar, 1831) the Private Institute for the Education and Treatment of Poor Blind and Visually Impaired Children was set up in Hradčany, Prague (hereinafter, the Hradčany Institute), with which the beginnings of institutionalized education of the blind in the Czech lands are bound. Gradually, other institutes were established (Praha, 1832 and Brno, 1835).

The beginnings of special native language teaching for blind children

In addition to provident and treatment activities, Europe's institutes focused in their educational activities on the instruction in handicrafts or music. Gradually, however, a specific pedagogical process began to establish itself in these institutes. The original teaching accentuated, in particular, the viewpoint of social care and work placement of the inmates, which was very limited. The crafts traditionally performed by the blind, such as basket weaving, rope making or brush making, were for instance taught in Denmark and Austria-Hungary; moreover, in Russia or former Yugoslavia, shoemaking was taught (Zeman, 1930). The teaching of the native language made its way into the classes slowly and with many difficulties.

Originally, the blind were not taught to read and write, because no special writing system existed; in spite of that, however, some elements of language teaching found their way into the activity of the first institutes. The classes took the form of a subject called "Language exercises conducted by the teacher and correct pronunciation" (Klar, 1831). The content of the subject was designed as continuous speech training and was conceived as interdisciplinary in this context. The teacher was always required to pay attention to the correct pronunciation of his or her explanations and systematically correct orthoepic and orthophonic rules in all the verbal expressions of the inmates. The speech exercises were intended to teach the inmates to correctly name the objects and things they could not see, in a direct link to rigorous touch exercises. Gaining a tactile knowledge of objects represented the functional foundation of language tasks aimed at both learning word meanings (e.g. the blind inmates recognize objects by touch and other senses and name them) and the correct pronunciation of co-articulation units at the level of words (e.g. they correctly name the objects touched and pronounce the corresponding words, such as bread, wood, etc.) or sentences (e.g. the teacher recites the sentences and the children articulate them with the correct pronunciation etc.) with the aim to auditorily fix and automatize the words learned in the pupil's speech. Naturally, tactile exercises could not be practised in all words, but the training of auditory

differentiation and auditory attention constituted a dominant element of the lay language teaching of the first institutes.

Speech exercises within the aforementioned approach were especially aimed at extending and enhancing the inmates' active vocabulary (the teacher said an adjective, e.g. "warm", and the pupils matched it with suitable nouns – e.g. stove/oven, summer days, bread, bed, soup, etc.). The morphological and syntactical level of the language were included as well (the children formed simple sentences by adding sentence elements, e.g. I will recover – I will not recover my health in any way – as well as multiple sentences containing a different number of clauses – After what I have suffered in my illness, I will not be able to recover my health in any other way than through greater moderation and general regularity). The teaching was driven by an effort to consistently mention the newly learned words in a certain communication context so that pupils understood them better. Carefully created verbal and sentential examples were intended to be consistently repeated at any time during the day. The didactic design of these first lay speech exercises provided the teacher with the opportunity to implement some areas of the grammatical subject matter (e.g. memorizing of selected verb paradigms) as well as to create methodological and phrasematic support for second language acquisition.

The methodological practice of institutional schools before the existence of Braille or any other special scripts for the blind used memory learning as the basic teaching procedure, as blind pupils had to learn all the information by heart. Memorizing was used in reading out, reciting as well as in the occasional implementation of the grammatical parts of the native language subject matter.

A script for the blind and the first native language teaching curriculum

A defining moment in native language teaching was undoubtedly the introduction of a script for the blind, gradually underway since the 1870s. Following in its wake was the creation of the first special didactic procedures of reading and writing for the blind as well as the first special readers. The approach to language teaching gained one of the fundamental initial impetuses and the principal goal of all language instruction was to teach blind children to read and write using a special script for the blind. At the outset, European institutes for the blind saw the introduction of the so-called Klein's script, composed of the majuscules of the simple Roman script (Nop, 1957). Klein's writing system was partly complemented with the so-called Hebold's script (majuscule script written by pen over a template with letter shapes). It was a two-dimensional script; therefore, it could only be used for written production by the blind and reception by the sighted. The currently used Braille

alphabet was the last to be introduced to institutional schools (1879) as a universal script for the blind (Giotis, 2016).

For a long time, Braille had numerous opponents in European countries. It was rejected especially because it did not copy the form of the Roman script, instead having the shape of a touchable six-dot cell. Its adversaries claimed that only a raised Roman alphabet, as represented by Klein's script, can ensure written communication between the sighted and the blind. It was the blind themselves, as well as some progressive teachers, who forced the introduction of Braille into the teaching of blind learners due to its universal character. With the possibility of special reading and writing now available, teachers began to include topics from the traditional grammar subject matter in their classes. In addition to grammar, reading and composition were taught; nevertheless, because the institutes were frequently staffed only by nuns and unqualified teachers, the teaching remained below the level seen at schools for healthy pupils. Moreover, no curricular documents existed according to which the teaching process could be conducted.

The first common native language curriculum for blind pupils was published as late as 1928 (Eliášková, 2020). It not only reflected the results of the work of nuns and lay institute teachers, but was also inspired by the experience of foreign countries such as Italy, Hungary or Austria. The design of this native language curriculum was motivated by an effort to provide blind pupils with the same education as they would obtain at normal schools. This integrating and unifying trend has continued to permeate the historical development of special didactics, remaining a topical issue even in recent years.

The content of the subject "Language of Instruction" was divided into three levels – lower, middle and higher. In determining the subject matter, the authors respected the main didactic principle which has endured to the current state of teaching to the blind, i.e. to develop and activate compensation senses in the classes, namely auditory, tactile and olfactory perception. This is why language instruction was based on inter-disciplinary overlaps, especially to the subject of elementary science, whose goal was to develop the senses, learn to think and clarify one's ideas. In particular, this interdisciplinary connection efficiently boosted the process of vocabulary acquisition. In one of the grammar classes, for instance, pupils were taught the noun category of number using the declination pattern "fish" while, in parallel, their elementary science class was themed "in the pond – learning about fish through touch". On another occasion, they discussed the topic of "Easter in

this country” in a composition class while the elementary science class within the same week was themed “Easter through touch – customs and traditions.”

Blind pupils were unable to enhance their vocabulary by direct observation. In elementary science classes, they had sufficient opportunity for learning about objects through touch and hearing. While doing so, they formed a clearer idea about a thing which they were naming but could not see. We consider such a linkage to be a successful application of interdisciplinary relations.

At a lower level, the communication goal of language instruction was strongly accentuated. The main outputs of the lower-level subject matter (1st and 2nd grades) stimulated the development the pupils’ speaking skills and the development of their tactile and auditory perception. The blind children learned to read and write in Braille. Auditory perception was developed through memorizing shorter articles or narrating their own stories. The underlying assumption was that “reciting poems and memorizing articles provided the pupils with a lexical background and phrasemic support” (Šmejkalová, 2010, p.46). To this day, recitation remains an attractive method in teaching pupils with VI at upper primary and secondary schools.

While at the lower level emphasis was placed primarily on the development of the communication goal, at the middle level (grade 3–5) and higher level (6–8) considerable attention began to be paid to the cognitive goal. It was defined as the introduction to the basics of the grammatical system required for correct writing, speaking and understanding of the structure of language. The starting point for the grammatical and orthographic training was familiarization with flexible word classes, on the basis of which morphological and lexical orthography were practised. There was a gradual shift towards the basics of syntax, and syntactical content permeated the middle as well as the higher level. The middle level started with the subject matter of the simple sentence. Learning about the structure of the multiple sentence and sentence elements dominated the content of the higher-level subject matter. In the last grade, the aim was to systematize the teaching of grammar and orthography within the overall re-capitulation of the subject matter. The communication viewpoint was preserved in the composition part of the subject, where oral narration of stories from one’s own life was preferred.

Composition production at schools for the blind started in the 4th grade, because it took blind pupils longer before they learnt to use Braille at a level enabling independent writing. In the competition between written and oral expression, the oral form naturally prevailed. Exercises in composition focused on analyzing

linguistic means were based on real-life communication situations; therefore, emphasis was placed mainly on politeness strategies, e.g. “How I offended my loved ones by speaking thoughtlessly, Which swearwords are forbidden, How helpful I am towards my family and strangers,” etc. This key didactic means respecting the overlap with communication practice was also mirrored in other outputs of teaching composition to the blind.

However, the teaching was still conducted purely practically (Eliášková, 2020). Each lesson was centred around a specific topic, which stemmed from the teacher’s own inventiveness. In addition to traditional topics, there were also topics which would be considered didactically daring or even incorrect from today’s perspective; these reflected, among others, the social problems of those days. In their selection, attention was paid to the pupils’ authentic felt experience (ex. “How I became blind, The presents I got on St. Nicholas’ Day, My experiences during my military service, The dire effects of alcohol, How smoking affects health, My own experience of drinking alcohol,” etc.), as well as on their tactile experience (e.g. “What we touched in the garden, How we imagine things, What I like about the institute, The models I made, How our first snowman died,” etc.) and auditory experience (e.g. “Pupils talk about what they heard, From the thoughts of Mr. President, How we listened to the radio,” etc.). This didactic procedure was based on the belief that the blind had clear ideas of the objects found in their immediate environment (within their reach or hearing). Sometimes, the teacher’s attitude to graphicness could be excessively rigorous and limit them in their class preparation. Consequently, the overall cognitive demand of the teaching could be (and was – author’s note) low.

This lay approach, however, was optimized over time, with teachers being encouraged to include themes of a wider scope in their composition classes. The approach practically disappeared from current inclusive teaching of composition to blind second and third graders (Eliášková, 2017a, 2020; Galster, 2001 and others) and pupils are now assigned topics primarily dependent on auditory analysis.

THE DRAMATIC PERIOD AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR¹

A fundamental change in native language teaching in Czech lands occurred with the secularization of church schools. This step was undertaken by the ascending Communist government, which, having seized power over Czechoslovakia in 1948,

¹ This time period is described in detail in the article: Eliášková, K. (2019).

needed to weaken the power of the Church.² The process of gradual elimination of Church influence, which had hitherto been dominant in the education of the blind, was initiated by the Communist government in relation to the enforcement of the law on the basic regulation of the unified education system (Eliášková, 2020). The underlying purpose of the act was to unify all schools in the country into a single education system and, naturally, to restrict the Church's influence on education, which the ascending ideological totalitarian regime found problematic. Institutes for the blind were abolished and the existing schools for the blind were subsumed under the centralized administration of the unified school system, which found itself under the long-term control of Communist power. The goal of language teaching changed dramatically.

The historical analysis above makes it clear that shortly after the Second World War, the communication goal was still preferred to the cognitive goal in language teaching for the blind. It was often implemented using specific teaching methods. During speech exercises, for instance, pupils learned to identify communication partners according to their voice. The basis of this lay methodological approach was the recognition of another person, first during the recitation of sentences and words and, gradually, during the recitation of phonemes and unarticulated sounds. The subsequent objective was to use this method to teach pupils to recognize two simultaneously speaking persons even when they, for instance, exchanged places at the desk, thus contributing to better orientation in space. Due to the low number of hours allocated and the special pedagogical requirements, the teaching of grammar at schools for the blind had been implemented to a much lesser extent than at normal schools. The consequences of this disproportion came to the fore during the unification of schools in the form of one of the many arguments used by government bodies to defend the process of the secularization of church schools. In addition, other functional counter-arguments were voiced in the field of native language teaching. Traditionally, the generally low level of teaching was being pointed out and the religious content of the language topics taught was subjected to fundamental criticism.

Under the new conditions, therefore, composition classes were to be used primarily to advance the principles of the so-called atheist education, directly aiming to eliminate the church tradition in the remainder of the education of the blind. The pupils were presented with politically biased texts; thematic discussions were

² The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held its totalitarian power until the regime change of 1989. In that year, the Communist government was overthrown (in the so-called Velvet Revolution) and democratic principles were restored in the country.

included and tendentious radio programmes were broadcast, substituting the missing language textbooks in the Czech language lessons of pupils with VI (e.g. 30 years of the USSR, Announcement of the Unified School Act, Celebration of the Great Russian Revolution, etc.). In addition, the formerly typical religious or neutral topics were gradually disappearing from all the segments of the Czech language subject. This can be illustrated, for instance, on essay topics recorded in class books before and just after the War (e.g. How Lord Jesus created a skylark, What I experienced during my walk in the forest, How to use our savings, What I heard during my train journey, Persistence always leads to success, etc.) – and after 1948 (e.g. How I joined in the national shift, What 28th February means to us, The significance of the 11th November, Our army, our pride, What the new Education Act has brought us, 30 years of the Soviet Army³, etc.).

A similar situation was found in grammar classes. The pupils were presented the subject matter using texts or examples conforming to the new political arrangement of the country. In the spirit of the traditional teaching of pupils with visual impairments based on vocabulary development via exemplification and verbal description, pupils taking part in lexical classes were taught the meanings of words such as reactionary (backward), conservative (clinging to old-fashioned views) or a socialist (a member of the new order), which they subsequently used to create short (multiple) sentence structures. Within composition or speaking activities, they enhanced these structures with suitable appellations taught in morphological exercises aimed at the formation of the vocative case (e.g. speak to comrade commander, teacher, hero, friend, director, etc.). Other language tasks were aimed at eliminating traditional religious courtesy phrases. Greetings such as Thank God, God bless or God forbid were being replaced in composition exercises with updated expressions such as Hail to labour, Comradely greeting, etc. in order for the pupils to adapt to the needs of the new political regime.

CENTRALIZED EDUCATION

The aforementioned concept of centralized education in Czechoslovakia became an enduring element of teaching in the second half of the twentieth century (Eliášková, 2020). In special schools for the blind, teaching followed the curriculum of normal schools and was subjected to obligatory curricular documents issued for normal

³ The information cited was obtained by historical analysis of class books of the Mixed Popular School for the Blind at the Czechoslovak State Institute for the Blind in Levoča from 1922–1930 and 1945–1953, internal materials of Jaroslav Ježek Special School (formerly Hradčany Institute) from 1946–1958 and the non-arranged archive resources of Aloys Klar Secondary School and Nursery School (formerly, Klar's Institute) from 1948–1959.

schools; at the same time, however, the schools were segregated by being located in separate buildings. This meant that children with VI did not attend the same schools as healthy (intact) children. The leading role in language education was assumed by grammar, particularly study units composed of morphology and sentence structure. Their dominant position was further underscored by the requirement to include orthographic training in grammar lessons. The new tasks of the school subject's language segment were reflected in the formulation of the educational goal: "In addition to the knowledge of grammar and the basics of literature, it is necessary to develop the pupils' speaking skills so that they can assert themselves in the society of healthy people." The teaching of orthography and grammar gradually became the main content of the classes, with the explanation of orthographic rules assuming the dominant role. The rich and authentic composition topics based on speech exercises completely disappeared from the lessons and were replaced with traditional grammatical topics with orthography overlaps.

CHALLENGES OF CURRENT LINGUODIDACTIC RESEARCH

Until the beginning of the 21st century, the goal of language teaching was changing rather sporadically (Eliášková, 2020). Its formulation mainly reflected the need to acquire language and stylistic knowledge and skill to such an extent that the pupils could express themselves promptly and clearly in standard language, both oral and written. The subject was taught in three parts – language, composition and literature, and this model has more or less endured to the present despite being exposed to long-term criticism by the community of experts (e.g. Liptáková et al. 2015; Štěpáník, 2015; Štěpáník et al. 2019, 2020 and others).

The current approach to native language teaching championed by scientific linguodidactics prefers and develops a constructivistically and experientially conceived model of teaching, which, in its essence, rejects the traditional grammatical approach to teaching formed over the course of history. It is a model accepted also in other European countries, such as Slovakia or Poland (Štěpáník et al. 2019; Štěpáník et al. 2020), and it is founded on the assumption that a strong emphasis on the consolidation of morphological and syntactic knowledge gives way to real needs of the pupils' language practice.

As far as pupils with VI are concerned, their teaching is also subject to the current trend of the so-called inclusive education, i.e. the teaching of all pupils together in one school or classroom. The situation of language teaching of pupils with VI in the context of a normal classroom is complicated (e.g. the teachers are

unfamiliar with Braille, which is not taught at normal schools at all, etc.). In our opinion, however, communicative or constructivist teaching is able to respond to the challenges of joint education, because the constructivist teaching paradigm considers a pupil's overall development in the cognitive, emotional or social sphere by means of the learning process itself, designed on the basis of experience, skills or learning activities of pupils and their preconceptions (Hájková et al. 2014; Liptáková et al. 2015; Štěpáník, 2015; Štěpáník & Slavík, 2017 and others). In the implementation of learning situations structured by means of constructivist procedures, the teachers differentiate teaching strategies by which they didactically reflect the spontaneous thought constructs of each pupil. In such a didactic approach (very challenging for pedagogues), the key factor does not need to be whether the pupil is intact or whether he or she has a special education need, although this fact has to be given continuous consideration. This is because the principle of individualized approach is applied in the teaching intents across the whole classroom. Teaching based on the constructivist design of a lesson disrupts and differentiates the homogeneous educational environment of a normal classroom from the inside (and not obligatorily from the outside) and is based on the assumption that pupils have different knowledge and different perception of the problem or task at the same moment.⁴ We define this procedure for the needs of special integrative language teaching based on the communicative–functional paradigm as the *constructivist differentiation of teaching* and we see it as the basic teaching method/means enabling internal didactic individualization of teaching (or, more precisely, the subject matter) applied in homogeneous classrooms, which are (practically always) heterogeneous in terms of performance.

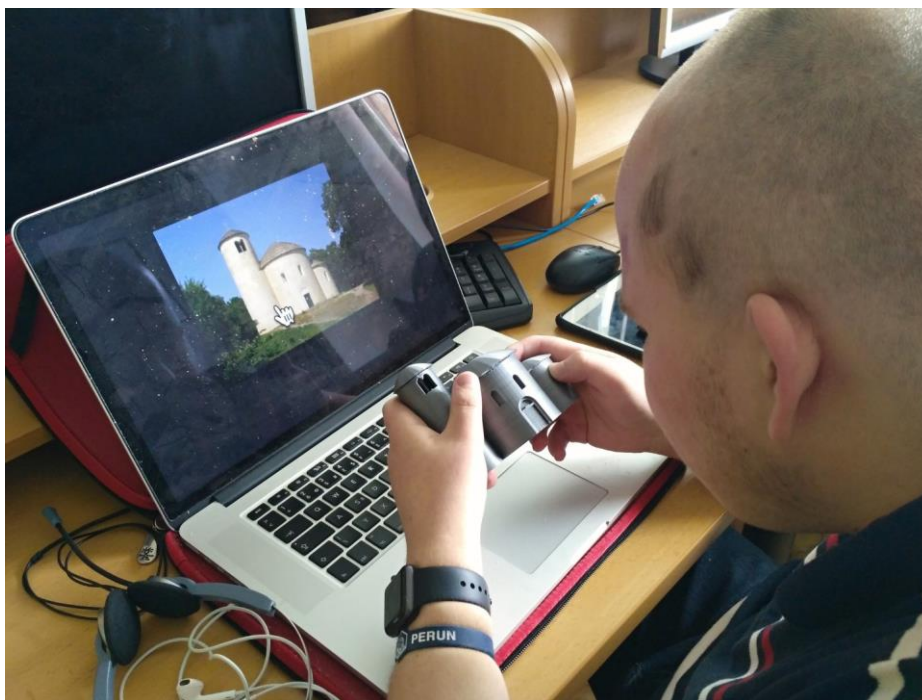
In the context of Czech language teaching, this means that it should be based on the pupil's personal experiences. Using the practice of modelling natural communication situations, linking learning with one's own experience and considering communication needs in teaching activities enables pupils with VI to learn languages naturally in a social context. A huge problem is being faced, for example, regarding the conception of language assignments in schools, for which it is essentially important to acquire a metalanguage without a previous grasp of the concept, without linking to the (spontaneous) conceptual base. Such work with language is not suitable for any pupil, not to even mention pupils with reduced cognitive possibilities or weakened application skills at the level of analytical thinking. Pupils

⁴ It is a free antonymic paraphrase of S. Štěpáník's assertion that today's teaching in the Czech Republic is based on the assumption that all pupils have the same knowledge and the same perception of the problem or the task at the same moment (Štěpáník, 2015).

have the task of creating a certain form of the word (e.g. creating the 2nd case of a noun or determining the grammatical categories of verbs, etc.), beyond their natural knowledge of these forms. Thus, they have to give a complex description of the already acquired knowledge. If teachers of common schools do not know Braille or do not know the specific practices of school work with visually impaired pupils, they must primarily deal with formal adjustments to such exercises. At the same time, the aim of the language lessons should be for the pupils to understand the meanings of words, to be able to use them functionally in communication practice. Experience-oriented didactics of language enables such approaches.

With the rapidly developing modern technologies, teaching methods are being modernized as well. A substantial didactic potential is shown, for instance by 3D print (Eliášková, 2017b; I et al. 2016, and others). By means of thematic 3D models (see figure 1) created on the basis of a pupil's authentic experience, pupils with VI can be worked with in teaching descriptive composition forms (e.g. the description of an object or a work procedure) more efficiently than when mediated by direct observation (see Eliášková, 2017b).

Figure 1. A pupil with VI working with a laptop fitted with a voice output and a created 3D model



The issue of teaching blind pupils is being didactically reflected within the Central European educational context (e.g., Eliášková, 2017b; Galster, 2001; Wolanin, 2010, etc.) and, combined with communication-based teaching, it offers new didactic pathways. The communicative and experiential approach to language teaching seeks to introduce affective experience into teaching and aims to build on pupils' felt and lived experience. By modelling natural communication situations, linking learning with one's own experience and considering the communication needs in teaching activities, even pupils with VI are able to learn a language naturally in a social context and in relation to the established goals of language education (Štěpáník et al., 2020). In many of its aspects, it builds on the historical legacy of the teaching tradition developed over two centuries.

SUMMARY

The article deals with the formation of the key goals of special Czech language teaching against the background of the historical development of language teaching of pupils with visual impairments. The position of the native language in the system of school subjects for the blind has undergone a complex historical development since 1807, when its institutionalization started. Throughout its course, we can trace the design of a unique and independent didactic system based on continuously specified goals. Defining the goals of special language education represented a necessary basis for the concretization of the special educational content of school subjects and the consolidation of other parts of the teaching process (especially methods, curricula or special textbooks).

The two centuries saw fundamental changes to the paradigm of special Czech didactics for pupils with VI, which were reflected in teaching and education goals. These transformations not only reflected the period context (especially political, social and economic), but also fundamentally mirrored society's attitudes to people with disabilities. These attitudes significantly influenced both the goal and the content of special Czech language teaching and, despite many pitfalls, accentuated a regard of the specificities of teaching blind pupils, as well as proven pedagogical experience. The period characteristics of language teaching goals bear witness to some dark times in Czechoslovak history, especially the Communist dictatorship. Against the background of historical comparison, it is revealed that totalitarian regimes show repeated interest on certain subjects, because they can be exploited for political propaganda in the educational sphere, and the native language is one of such subjects. Against the backdrop of historical analysis, a voice of warning is raised against the perilous power of totalitarian regimes, capable, through

politically motivated interventions, of systematic and targeted manipulation of the content of school subjects, and therefore also of children's thought.

In the current didactic model of the constructivistically designed special language teaching, positive references to the historical tradition of teaching the blind can also be found. The ones we clearly consider as the most significant include the emphasis on the communication aspect of teaching, the overlap of language tasks with communication practice and the regard for special needs of pupils with visual impairments in the context of joint education.

REFERENCES

- Eliášková, K. (2017a). *Specifické aspekty výuky českého jazyka na středních školách u žáků se zrakovým postižením*. Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy.
- Eliášková, K. (2017b). Využití 3D modelů ve slohové výuce žáků se zrakovým postižením. *Diaktické studie*, 9(1), 67-71.
- Eliášková, K. (2019). Výuka mateřského jazyka v kontextu etatizace škol aneb Všem vroucně děkujeme upřímným „Zaplať Bůh“. *Speciální pedagogika*, 29(2), 125–136.
- Eliášková, K. (2020). *Historický vývoj výuky mateřského jazyka u žáků se zrakovým postižením: Historical development of Czech language teaching for pupils with visual impairment*. Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy.
- Enerstvedt, R. T. (1996). *Legacy of the past: those who are gone but have not left: some aspects of the history of blind education, deaf education and deaf-blind education with emphasis on the time before 1900*. Forlaget Nord Press. https://www.duxburysystems.org/downloads/library/history/Blind_ed.pdf
- French, S. (2007). Visually impaired people with learning difficulties: their education from 1900 to 1970 – policy, practise and experience. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36, 48-53. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3156.2007.00438.x>
- Galster, M. (2001). Specyficzne zagadnienia w nauczaniu języka polskiego dzieci z uszkodzeniem wzroku ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem niewidomych. In S. Jakubowski (Ed.), *Poradnik dydaktyczny dla nauczycieli realizujących podstawę programową w zakresie szkoły podstawowej i gimnazjum z uczniami niewidomymi i słabo widzącym* (pp. 38-146). Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej.
- Giotis, P. (2016). Teaching reading and writing in mother tongue for children with visual impairments. *Journal of Mother Tongue Education*, 4(1), 100-118. <https://doi.org/10.16916/adad.67424>
- Hájková, E., Hejlová, H., Kucharská, A., Janovec, L., Babušová, G. & Höflerová, E. (2014). *Čeština ve škole 21. století – IV. Výzkum edukačních podmínek jazykových jevů*. Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy.
- I, J. H., Harianto, R. A., Chen, E., Lim, Y. S., Jo, W., Moon, M.-W. & Lee, H. J. (2016). 3D Literacy Aids Introduced in Classroom for Blind and Visually Impaired Students. *Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research*, 6(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5241/6-100>
- Klar, A. (1831). *Paměti Pražského soukromého institutu pro chudé nevidomé děti a nemocné oční chorobou: včetně námětů pro pečovatelský a zprostředkovatelský ústav pro nevidomé* (trans. Vojtko, T., 2021). Gaudeamus, Cura Mancorum Pedagogica.
- Liptáková, L., Andričíková, M., Cibáková, D., Hlebová, B., Klimovič, M., Mitrová, A., Pršová, E., Rusňák, R., Sičáková, L., Stanislavová, Z. & Vužňáková, K. (2015). *Integrovaná*

didaktika slovenského jazyka a literatury pre primárne vzdelávanie. Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, Pedagogická fakulta.

- Nop, L. (1957). *Péče o děti s vadami zraku*. SPN.
- Šmejkalová, M. (2010). *Čeština a škola, úryvky skrytých dějin*. Karolinum
- Smýkal, J. (2006). *Tyflopedický lexikon jmenný*. Technické muzeum.
- Solarová, S, & Šarbach, Z. (1992). *Dějiny nejstarší školy pro nevidomé v Čechách*. Radar.
- Štěpáník, S. (2015). Konstruktivismus a jeho didaktické implikace ve vyučování českého jazyka. *Čeština doma a ve světě*, 2(2), 11-22.
- Štěpáník, S., Awramiuk, E., Eliášková, K., Hájková, E., Höflerová, E., Kesselová, J., Klimovič, M., Liptáková, L., Niesporek-Samburska, B., Nocoň, J. & Szymańska, M. (2019). *Vztah jazyka a komunikace v česko-slovensko-polské didaktické reflexi*. Karolinum.
- Štěpáník, S., Hájková, E., Eliášková, K., Liptáková, L. & Szymańska, M. (2020). *Školní výpravy do krajiny češtiny: didaktika českého jazyka pro základní školy*. Fraus.
- Štěpáník, S. & Slavík, J. (2017). Žákovské prekoncepty jako konstitutivní prvek výuky mateřského jazyka. *Pedagogická orientace*, 27(1), 58-80. <https://doi.org/10.5817/Pe-dOr2017-1-58>
- Wolanin, M. (2010). Uczenie się i nauczanie języka obcego studentów niewidomych i słabowidzących. Wybrane zagadnienia teoretyczne i praktyczne. In *Zeszytach Glotto-dydaktycznych Jagiellońskiego Centrum Językowego*, 2, 43-54. <https://www.ejournal.eu/ZG/2010/Zeszyt-2/art/5749/>
- Zeman, J. (1930). *Svět nevidomých*. Dědictví Komenského.



KLÁRA ELIÁŠKOVÁ

Dr. Klára Eliášková is the headmistress of a special high school for pupils with visual impairment. She also works at the Department of Czech Language at Charles University. She has a PhD in Czech language didactics and her main area of research interest is the teaching of mother tongue to pupils with special educational needs.

klara.eliasikova@pedf.cuni.cz
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0799-5939>



Eliášková, K. (2022). Changes of teaching goals in native language teaching for pupils with visual impairments in the Czech lands. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching & Learning Language & Literature*, 15(4), e1159. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.1159>



Rebut / Recibido / Received / Reçu: 19-07-2022
Acceptat / Aceptado / Accepted / Accepté: 21-11-2022

<https://revistes.uab.cat/jtl3/>