

## Contribution Details

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### Research on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning in the Czech Republic from 2016 to 2021

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#### Proposal Information

This study aims to present a thorough picture of the current research on educational aspects of foreign and second language learning and teaching that has been conducted in the Czech Republic during the period from 2016 to 2021. We have conducted an analysis of books and peer-reviewed papers which are included in the field of Education within the database Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I) Information System in the Czech Republic. Therefore, we include, among others, valuable local research which cannot be easily accessed by international readers since it has been published in Czech or a language other than English.

The secondary aim of this study is to provide a socio-political context relevant to the linguistic environment of the Czech Republic. Though the Czech language has been the mother tongue for the majority of the population, there were notable foreign language influences during the last century closely related to socio-political situations in the country. The population of the Czech Republic was influenced especially by the German language prior to and during the Second World War, Russian after the War through the 1980s, and by English in the 1990s and onwards. Nowadays, it is English which holds the prominent position among the foreign languages taught at Czech schools (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2021). The position of English is further strengthened by its heavy influence through popular culture (movies, literature, music) coming from Anglophone countries and the rapid development of information and communication technologies. Also, a great number of members of older generations began to learn English, as they lacked English language education during their formal school education. Nowadays, at least a basic knowledge of English is acquired by the majority of the young population in the Czech Republic, as the majority of lower secondary students learn English as their first foreign language (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2021).

Our research questions are as follows:

1. Which languages are predominantly focused on in foreign language learning and teaching research publications between the years 2016 and 2021 in the Czech Republic and how does this focus reflect the unique geo-political situation in the Czech Republic?
2. What are the common foci of language teaching and learning research published between the years 2016 and 2021 in the Czech Republic?

As a post soviet EU country that has emerged as a political and economic power on an international scale, the continued evolution of FL teaching and learning reflects the dynamic history, promising trajectory, and unique geo-political position of the Czech Republic. In our paper, we thus aim to discuss how the recent research publications in the Czech Republic reflect local and international trends in language teaching and learning.

#### Methodology or Methods/ Research Instruments or Sources Used

We have analyzed the publications collected in the Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I) Information System in the Czech Republic (The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, 2022). This system allows searching for research outcomes using a variety of criteria (outcome type, research field etc.). We conducted a search of two types of research outcomes (books, journal articles) between the years 2016 and 2021 in the field of "Social Sciences" with the subfield "Education" according to OECD classification. The search was done on June 21, 2021. Note that after this date, additional publications could have been added in the database for the given period.

We found 370 books and 2381 journal articles, in total 2751 outcomes. Two researchers independently coded all outcomes for their relevance to foreign (FL) and second language (SL) learning and teaching. We identified 18 books and 149 journal articles, in total 167 relevant outcomes. These outcomes were categorized according to their main focus and key results.

Books focused especially on teaching or learning English, followed by German, Russian, and Czech as a FL. A few of the books also focused on comparing learning and teaching of more than one language.

Concerning the articles, about two thirds were published in the Czech Republic in educational and foreign language peer-reviewed journals. The most productive in publishing FL learning and teaching papers were Masaryk University and Charles University.

Similarly to the language focus of books, about half of the articles focus on English as a FL. Other frequent foreign languages were German, followed by Russian, Czech, and French. Additional languages were studied in less than five percent of papers and include Latin, Spanish, and Slovak. Arabic, Dutch, Polish, Romani, and Vietnamese were studied in one paper each. Note that some papers focus on more than one FL. The focus of articles on these languages reflects the socio-political situation in the Czech Republic.

Regarding education levels of researched populations, students at the tertiary level are the most frequently researched population, followed by the upper and lower secondary levels (about two times less than tertiary), while research that focuses on primary and pre-primary students is all but missing.

#### Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings

The initial results of our analysis suggest that both books and articles have a common focus on the didactic aspects of FL learning and teaching – especially the issue of language skills development (e.g., Sládková & Mackenzie, 2017), including students with educational special needs (Zitková et al., 2020), teaching styles, teacher-student relationships, textbooks analysis, assessment of learner's outcomes, classroom interaction (e.g., Dvořák, 2020), and intercultural competence (e.g. Janíková, 2019). Prevailing foci in both books and articles includes teaching EFL for specific purposes at the university level, corporate FLL (e.g., Jašková, 2017), or legal, healthcare, technical, and business English (e.g.,

Concerning articles, there is also an emphasis on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in language education (e.g., Šimonová, 2019). Concerning books, there is also an emphasis on language education in the Czech Republic, especially on governmental and curricular documents for FL teaching and the organization of FL education for learners with special educational needs (e.g., Šormová et al., 2019). Also, one book deals with teaching German at Czech schools between wars (Kolumber, 2020).

Some of the findings relate specifically to local issues in the Czech Republic such as Czech curricular documents and language foci that directly result from the specific local geo-political situation (i.e., German and Russian). While other findings examine topics that are frequently researched internationally, such as didactic aspects of language teaching and ICT use. Research in other post soviet Central European countries also focuses on such issues as historical geo-political influences and international research trends. For example, Bányi (2017) examines the complicated history that permeates Russian as an FL in Hungary and Iwaniec (2019) focuses on differences in motivation between male and female foreign language learners in Poland.

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## Intent of Publication

This preliminary conference presentation is a part of research review, the main results of which are planned to be published in a journal with an impact factor.

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