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(152677)

Approaches towards English language teaching to  
young learners with specific learning disorders. A  
comparative study.

Podejścia w nauczaniu języka angielskiego uczniów  
ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się.  
Studium komparatystyczne.

Rozprawa doktorska napisana

na Wydziale Anglistyki

Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu

pod kierunkiem prof. zw. dr hab. Teresy Siek-Piskozub

Poznań, 2024

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Realizacja celów zamierzonych w niniejszej pracy doktorskiej była pod wieloma względami zadaniem bardzo wymagającym, szczególnie w niesprzyjającym czasie pandemii. Ukończenie pracy nie byłoby możliwe bez wsparcia otaczających mnie osób. Składam serdeczne podziękowania wszystkim, dzięki którym moja praca mogła powstać.*

*W szczególności pragnę podziękować mojej promotor*

*Pani Profesor dr hab. Teresie Siek-Piskozub – za ukierunkowanie konceptualne, dzielenie się wiedzą, doświadczeniem i cennymi radami. Dziękuję za okazaną życzliwość, wyrozumiałość, cierpliwość oraz nieocenione wsparcie w tworzeniu i redagowaniu mojej pracy. Dziękuję również za wszelkie uwagi i sugestie, które pozwoliły mi rozwijać moje umiejętności i poszerzać horyzonty.*

*Jednocześnie dziękuję osobom, które pomogły mi w realizacji projektu badawczego – za otwartość, pozytywną energię oraz chęć wsparcia.*

*Składam podziękowania również Moim Rodzicom – za niegasnącą wiarę w moje możliwości, budowanie mojej wytrwałości oraz wsparcie logistyczne.*

*Na koniec dziękuję mojej kochanej córeczce – za miłość, cierpliwość i zrozumienie.*

## **OŚWIADCZENIE**

**Ja, niżej podpisana**

**Olga Puzia-Sobieska**

---

**przedkładam rozprawę doktorską**

pt. „Podejścia w nauczaniu języka angielskiego uczniów ze specyficznymi  
trudnościami w uczeniu się. Studium komparatystyczne.”

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**na Uniwersytecie im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu  
i oświadczam,**

**że napisałam ją samodzielnie.**

Oznacza to, że przy pisaniu pracy, poza niezbędnymi konsultacjami, nie korzystałam z pomocy innych osób, a w szczególności nie zlecałam opracowania rozprawy lub jej istotnych części innym osobom, ani nie odpisywałam tej rozprawy lub jej istotnych części od innych osób.

Jednocześnie przyjmuję do wiadomości, że gdyby powyższe oświadczenie okazało się nieprawdziwe, decyzja o wydaniu mi dyplomu zostanie cofnięta.

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Płock, 24.09.2024

(miejsowość, data)

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(czytelny podpis)

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## **List of abbreviations**

ACLD	Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
ADHD	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
APA	American Psychiatric Association
B.A.	bachelor of art
BEH	Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped
BILD	British Institute of Learning Disabilities
CAT	computerised axial tomography
CLIL	content and language integrated learning
CLT	community language teaching
COVID	coronavirus disease
CSI	Czech School Inspectorate
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
E	expert
EDF	European Disabled Forum
EADSEN	European Agency for Development of Special Educational Needs
EADSNE	European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education
EASNIE	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
EC	European Commission
ECC	European Council and Commission
ECD	European Congress on People with Disabilities
EFL	English as a foreign language

EUA	European University Association
EUC	European Union Commission
FME	Federal Ministry of Education of Austria
FML	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection of Austria
FRSE	Federal Ministry of Education Science and Research of Austria
FMSR	Foundation for Development of the Education System
GBPD	Government Board for Persons with Disabilities
GK	basic competences foreign language alive
IBE	Institute for Educational Research
ICD	International Classification of Disorders
IDA	International Dyslexia Association
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
IQ	intelligence quantity
IT	information technology
ITPA	Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities
L1/ L2	first/ second language
LD/ LDs	learning disability/s
LDA	Learning Disabilities Association of America
M.A.	master of art
ME	ministry of education
MFL	modern foreign language
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
MHE	Ministry of Higher Education of the Republic of Poland
NACHC	National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children
NAP	national action plan for disability
NJCLD	U.S. National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities
NRP	U.S. National Reading Panel
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORE	Education Development Centre
P	parent
PFON	Polish Forum of Disabled Persons
PPP	presentation practice production



PTD	Polish Dyslexia Association
R	researcher
RP	Republic of Poland
RQ	research question
RTI	response to intervention
SDG	sustainable development goals
SEC	special education centre
SEN	special educational needs
SLDs	specific learning disorders
SLI	Specific language impairment
TBL	task based learning
TEAL	Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy Centre
TPL	teacher professional learning
TPR	total physical response
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States
UDL	universal design for learning
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights and People with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
USOE	U.S. Office of Education
WHO	World Health Organisation



## INTRODUCTION

Since becoming the European Union member state in 2004, Poland has undertaken several system transformations which, among others, encompass changes in the system of national education. Pursuant to an adoption of a common education policy, approaching learners with specific learning disorders (SLDs) requires a reorganisation of school services with a view to their special educational needs (SEN). The changes also relate to teaching English language to mixed ability groups of students, as learning a foreign language is obligatory for all students of public schools in Poland. Inclusion assumes forming new educational opportunities that are beneficial for all learners on the basis of positive attitudes related to human diversity. It is believed to help develop interpersonal skills, self-confidence and self-esteem of learners with SLDs who make greater overall academic gains in regular than in segregated classes.

Much as the concept of inclusive education is justified, certain doubts arise as to the legitimacy of implementing the inclusive approach and its potential benefits for the school community. Although inclusive education targets the elimination of social, psychological and physical barriers, achieving the inclusive goals is difficult as there are many problems of educational, organisational, methodological and social nature. So far, to the best knowledge of the author of the dissertation, apart from general amendments in Polish educational law, no constructive educational solutions have been offered by the Ministry of Education. It might be a reason why the inclusive approach is still confused with integration and understood only as a pure acceptance of individuals with SLDs into the mainstream path of education. The confusion can be noticed in the opinions of in-service teachers. Many of them lack professional training to educate children with SLDs on the basis of inclusion and therefore find meeting learners' SEN very difficult. They tend to show a rather negative attitude towards inclusive practices, what constitutes an

additional obstacle in the implementation of this approach.

Observing the involvement of other European countries in the process of inclusion on one hand, and concerning the problems associated with its implementation in Poland on the other one, assessing the present educational situation of learners with SLDs in Polish schools became the aim of the author of the dissertation. In particular, approaches towards English language teaching to learners with SLDs are analysed on the basis of comparison of their educational situation in three selected European Union countries, which are: Austria, Czechia and Poland. The choice of the member states for comparison is purposeful as Austria is a country with Western European traditions in education, whereas Czechia and Poland share a similar historical background.

Following the premisses for successful implementation of inclusion outlined in the documents of the European Union, as well as, wishing to analyse the problem thoroughly, eight research problems were developed and considered with reference to the selected countries. They encompass what follows:

- (1) the historical background of the scientific interest in individuals with SLDs,
- (2) systemic solutions introduced to the national systems of education with the view to inclusion,
- (3) legal basis for educating learners with SLDs in mainstream units,
- (4) application of diagnostic procedures of SLDs,
- (5) organisation of educational institutions and support services for learners with SLDs,
- (6) education of teachers and their (self) development of competences with the view to inclusive education,
- (7) the use of inclusion-friendly methods of teaching,
- (8) the use of inclusion-friendly teaching materials.

The comparative study is based on the analysis of the documents and specialist literature referring to the three countries. Additionally, a supplementary study was undertaken with reference to the above set problem areas, aiming at gathering more thorough information about the situation of learners with SLDs in realm of Polish schools. Within this study, five research procedures have been used referring to six out of the eight research problems.

The rationale behind applying the above comparative study is to notice strengths and weaknesses in the conditions for educating learners with SLDs in the selected countries and to confirm their actual educational situation. The outcomes of the

supplementary study presented in the dissertation is believed to help the educational authorities in Poland define the present stage of implementation of the inclusive approach and decide whether it really is the best educational solution that can be offered to learners with SLDs. The dissertation is also hoped to become a source of information for English language teachers about the inclusion-friendly methods and alternative teaching materials that can enrich their professional workshop. Finally, it may be inspirational for academic teachers in composing tertiary education programmes for teacher trainees with a view to the development of inclusive practices.

The dissertation is composed of ten chapters and concerned with the theoretical considerations about the problem of SLDs and education of individuals with SEN, followed by the comparative study of the approaches towards English language teaching to learners with SLDs in the selected countries, and accomplished with a description of the supplementary study based on five research procedures, which gives a deeper insight into the situation of learners with SLDs in Poland.

With reference to the content of particular chapters, Chapter One aims at an analysis of the learning disorders from the historical perspective. Evolution of scientific thought is divided into five phases presenting the initial descriptions of individual case studies of learning disorders (LDs) since the onset of the nineteenth century, followed by international studies on dyslexia and dysphasia, and finally the separation of SLDs in the modern understanding of the problem. The historical perception of achievements in the fields of LDs and SLDs depicts the development path how a primarily medical concepts evolved into an educational issue. It also shows the importance of applied diagnostic tools which, through remedial and compensatory programmes developed by clinicians, caused a substantial change in the educational perspective of individuals with specific learning disorders.

In Chapter Two, a modern typology of SLDs is explained and the meaning of SLDs is justified with reference to language related learning disorders and on the basis of the internationally approved classifications. Some discrepancies in the applied terminology of specific learning disorders are explained, resulting from the duality of studies conducted firstly in the field of medicine and later in the field of psychology. Also, detailed characteristics of SLDs, including dyslexia and dysphasia, are provided with respect to educational difficulties they may cause. A thorough analysis is performed with distinction to impairment in reading, impairment in written expression, impairment in mathematics and speech sound disorder. Understanding potential educational problems

invoked by occurrence of dyslexia or dysphasia is especially important from the educational perspective.

Knowing the characteristics of specific learning disorders, Chapter Three deals with some theoretical considerations of SLDs in educational perspective. Firstly, legal framework for educating learners with special educational needs is presented with respect to international steps undertaken to change the educational perspectives for individuals with disabilities, and further to documents binding the European Union member states. Attention is paid to these acts, directives and other executional documents issued by international organisations as well as special education bodies which enforce changes in national laws and factually influence improvements in existing systems of education. Secondly, activities of an institution of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education are presented due to its substantial role in monitoring, advising and supporting national governments and their local authorities responsible for introduction of strategic frameworks for European cooperation in education and training which are systematically set by the European Commission. One of the most important outcomes of the presented legal aspects of educating individuals with specific learning disorders refers to a basic priority outlined by the European Commission in the strategy from 2009. It assumes that disability is no longer a burden, quite contrary, it has a positive meaning of diversity, understood as an asset (EC 2009: objectives 1, 2). This statement is essential for realising the concept of inclusive education, and what follows, the amount of changes in national systems of education that are expected to be introduced and executed. At the micro level, these changes also refer to an adjustment of teaching approaches to the disabled learners' SEN. The realisation of SEN is essential for teachers in determining a choice of teaching strategies, as well as, for selecting foreign language teaching methods adequate for mixed ability classes. Therefore, Chapter Three ends the theoretical considerations of the dissertation with a selection of presently applied teaching approaches and strategies that are believed to be the most desirable in teaching inclusive groups of learners.

Chapter 4 enters the description of the comparative study and includes information about its methodology, including its conceptualisation, justification as to the selection of the countries for comparison, collection of data composed of formal documents and special literature of the researched countries, as well as criteria and research questions and methods of data analysis. Based on the information gathered in earlier chapters of the dissertation, four indexes are appointed for the analysis. The indexes refer to an

organisation of present systems of education in selected European countries, i.e. schools readiness for inclusion, teachers competence and (self)development for inclusive education, methods of teaching commonly applied by early education teachers of English, and also, the use of standardised and non-standardised teaching materials. The comparative study is based on an analysis of documents and specialist literature dedicated to inclusive education in three countries: Austria, Czechia and Poland.

The following Chapters Five, Six and Seven are respectively dedicated to a description of the set educational aspects in the selected countries. As the European Union assumptions concerning inclusive education are still in progress, the particular goals of the comparative study aim at establishing what formal procedures towards inclusion have been implemented to the presently applied systems of education, and which of the compared systemic solutions advance its country towards the inclusive education. Further, the comparative study is also directed to establish how learners with SLDs are diagnosed in the compared countries and how educational institutions are organised with a view to inclusion, as well as, what support services are offered to learners with SLDs and their families. With reference to the process of foreign language education, the teaching methods that are popular in the three countries will be analysed in order to notice whether they suit special education needs of the learners. Also, as the inclusive education requires certain professional skills of teachers, therefore their readiness, including professional education and self-development are searched. Finally, as the use of selected methods of teaching requires applying certain teaching materials, their accessibility and usability is controlled. It will also allow to notice the preferences of teachers in using standardised and non-standardised materials.

The results of the study are later compared and discussed in Chapter Eight, in response and accordance to the developed research questions. The results of the comparative study will allow to spot the similarities and differences in the adopted national strategies for inclusion, as well as identify the best solutions for developing the inclusive education. It is also hoped, that by the means of comparison, also weaknesses of the so far undertaken steps will be noticed and recommended for remedy.

The outcomes of the comparative study constitute the most actual information about the present state of the development of inclusion in schools of the three researched countries. However, based on the analysis of documents and specialist literature, the comparative study misses an empirical insight into the problem. For this reason, its outcomes are further verified in the supplementary study in the Polish context of English

language teaching to young learners with SLDs. The study is limited to an analysis of the educational situation of learners with SLDs in Poland, with exclusion of two other countries, mainly due to serious limitations caused by the persistent occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chapter Nine, methodology of this study is presented with a distinction to five applied research procedures which include: a survey on tertiary education programmes, a self-assessment survey for teachers, lesson observations, semi-structured interviews with parents, and with specialists. The results of the supplementary study are analysed in Chapter Ten, in accordance to six out of eight research questions developed for the comparative study of the dissertation. Their outcomes confirm or contradict the findings of the comparative study providing information about the present condition of inclusive education of learners with SLDs in Poland.

The dissertation ends with conclusion where the results of both, the comparative and supplementary studies are summarised together with implications for further considerations. Admitting that the work has its limitations, they are identified and reasoned at the end of the dissertation.



# **Chapter 1: Language related learning disorders in historical perspective**

## **1.0 Introduction**

The scientific knowledge about SLDs has been developed over time since the nineteenth century. With the view to the scientific evolution, it can be divided into a few periods dependently on revelations brought into its filed. Such a solution is suggested by some experts in the field. For instance, Hallahan and Mercer (2001), Guardiola (2001), Wiederholt (1974) suggest five stages of history of SLDs, namely: European foundation period (1800 - 1920), US foundation period (1921 - 1965) emergent period (1965 - 1975), solidification period (1975 - 1985), and turbulent period (1985 - 2000). The first two terms mark the time when the issue of SLDs gained interest of researchers due to ground-breaking revelations in the field of neurology, first in Europe and then in post-war America. Hallahan and Mercer (2001) justify the split between European and American periods by claiming that American scholars and scientists showed their deep interest in the field of SLDs not earlier than in the 1920s. Soon, their studies became more advanced than the ones conducted in Europe as a result of an outbreak of the second world war and a temporary inability of the European representatives of the scientific field of SLDs to continue their research.

The name of the third historical period of the development of scientific thought in SLDs refers to a change in perception of SLDs, which in the early 1970s became a formal category of disorders. Years from 1965 to 1975 brought solidification in the field of educational procedures for learners with SLDs when first changes in legal acts referring

to the position of people with disabilities in society were introduced internationally. Finally, the year 1985 marks the beginning of some concerns among the scientists over the discrepancy between achievement and intellectual potential of learners with SLDs as part of their identification procedure (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 30).

The suggested division into periods of scientific development in SLDs is not complete, however, as the last stage ends with the year 2000. There have already passed over two decades since its completion, then. For this reason, in the present work, the author will partly follow the above terminology, dividing, however, the interest in SLDs into following five phases which refer to various activities in the fields of research, legislation and education:

- foundation phase (1800 – 1930)
- transition phase (1930 - 1960)
- emergent phase (1960 - 1985)
- integration phase (1985-1999)
- inclusion phase (2000 and beyond).

The differences in time periods refer to the fact that years from 1800 to 1930 enhance the time of initial scientific interest in neurological studies, both in Europe and in the United States when individual experts in the field performed their research independently. The transition phase dates back to the first public discussions conducted by scientists over various causes and types of SLDs. Moreover, it was also the time when the brain research was finally applied to children. Beginning with 1960s, the existing state of knowledge about different types and causes of mental disabilities allowed to begin a discussion over a common definition of SLDs among scientists and educators. What is more, changes in social attitude towards the disabled gave rise to numerous public and non-public organisations supporting intellectual development and improvement of life skills for the disabled. What happened after the year 1980 can be characterised as intensive progress in the field of psychological and educational studies over SLDs. On one hand, these studies have helped to standardise the concept of SLDs, and on the other, opened a discussion on educational approaches in teaching the disabled students via integration. The discussion over the means and form of integration was vivid in Europe, and the shape of integrative, or more recently inclusive education, has been subjected to several changes. To understand the present educational position of learners with SLDs and the modern concept of inclusive education, each of the historical phases presented hereabove will be subjected to a close analysis.

## **1.1 Foundation phase (1800 - 1930)**

The traces of research in learning disorders root back to the early 1800s when people with disabilities, classified as uneducable idiots or imbeciles, were simply excluded from society as unable to comprehend knowledge. When in 1801 a French physician and pedagogue Jean Itard described a case of a wild boy Victor of Aveyron, the field of specialists became interested in intellectual potential of the disabled. Itard noticed that “idiots and imbeciles had the use of their intellectual faculties but lacked the power to apply them because of a lack of resistance to competing stimuli” (Race 1995: 47). Therefore, Itard, and later his pupil Seguin, developed a teaching technique that focused on attracting and keeping a disabled learner's attention prior to education. This approach was later used by Guggenbuhl in Switzerland and Reed in England on the disabled living in asylums, a kind of workhouses, where they were taught how to perform simple physical works which helped them function on the fringes of society (Race 1995: 47).

At the same time more attention was given to research on brain-behaviour relationship. In 1902 Sir George Frederic Still gave a series of lectures at the Royal College of Physicians of London entitled “On some abnormal psychological conditions in children” at which he presented psychological factors responsible for what he called “an abnormal defect of moral control in children” (Martinez-Badía and Martinez-Raga 2015: 379-380). He characterised patients as disobedient, excessively emotional and even aggressive whose behaviour provoked problems with sustaining concentration and attention. What is more, Still (1902:1009) underlined their maladaptation and resistance to disciplinary measures. Still's lectures are considered by the contemporaries to be the groundwork for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) history as they opened a general discussion on a category of mental illnesses specific to child deviance (Rafalovich 2001: 106-107).

Other specialists of the foundation phase interested in behavioural disorders were Roger Kennedy and his follower Edward Strecker. The first provided that children's “immoral behaviour” resulted from neurological processes (Kennedy 1924: 171 as cited in Rafalovich 2001: 110). Kennedy's views were examined by Strecker in 1929, who divided the immoral behaviour into a motor type, which enhanced unintentional actions beyond the control of the child, and conscious efforts of immoral conduct (Strecker 1929:

137-138). Such perception of the problem determined a psychological justification for the disabled unconventional behaviour and was an inspiration for Strecker's followers in the forthcoming years.

Apart from brain-behaviour related dysfunctions, psychiatrists of the end of the nineteenth century turned towards reading disabilities in adults who usually were soldiers suffering from brain injuries. In Austria, for instance, Franz Joseph Gall, a neurologist and psychologist, published a letter in which he described three parts of the human brain responsible for what he respectively called: vital sources (such as movement and sensation), moral qualities (inclinations of the soul) and intellectual qualities (Wiederholt 1974: 105). His achievements were further developed by Johan Baptiste Bouillaud in France who, in the 1920s, asserted that the control of speech is located in the frontal anterior lobes of the human brain (Wiederholt 1974: 105), what was further analysed and confirmed by Pierre Paul Broca in 1861 (Guardiola 2001: 5).

Fifty years later in 1874, another psychiatrist and neurologist of Polish roots, Carl Wernicke, published a book in which he described ten cases of patients suffering from brain injury who had fluent speech though the utterances they produced were often meaningless, or whose recognition and comprehension of words was incorrect. He called this kind of disorder sensory aphasia, which later became known as Wernicke's aphasia (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 3). In Germany, an ophthalmologist Rudolf Berlin of Stuttgart used a term dyslexia in 1877 for the first time in history to describe a case of an adult patient who lost his ability to read due to a brain lesion (Critchley 1964: 214). In his work Berlin was influenced by another German professor of medicine – Adolph Kussmaul who at that time reported a case of an adult patient suffering from a severe reading deficit though his eyesight, intellect and speech were correct. According to Bradley et al. (2002: 21), Kussmaul's findings gave the beginning to the idea of specific learning disabilities which he called “word-blindness”. Kussmaul's research in adults was extended by two physicians – Pringle Morgan from England and John Hinshelwood from France who got interested in cases of children with word-blindness. Morgan observed that most young patients suffering from word-blindness were male and that the reading disability ran in the family, which meant, it was potentially inherited (Morgan 1896:1378). What is interesting, Morgan underlined the intellectual potential of his patients. In his first case study described in the *British Medical Journal* in 1896 he characterised his male patient in the following words:

He seems to have no power of preserving and storing up the visual impression produced by words – hence the words, though seen have no significance for him. The boy is bright and of average intelligence in conversation. The schoolmaster who has taught him for some years says that he would be the smartest lad in the school if the instruction were entirely oral. (Morgan 1896: 1378)

Morgan's revelations were soon confirmed in 1905 by other British ophthalmologists C. J. Thomas, J. Herbert Fisher, Sydney Stephenson, followed in 1907 by Plate and Robert Walter Doyne, what boosted further developments in the field of SLDs (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 4). For this reason, Morgan is considered by the contemporaries to be the father of the study of SLDs, though, as Hallahan and Mercer further explain, it was Hinshelwood who developed the concept of word-blindness and spotted differences between so called acquired and congenital word-blindness. In his report on word-blindness published in 1904 after the Oxford meeting of the British Medical Association, Hinshelwood explained that word-blindness means inability to read as a result of a loss of the visual memory for words and letters due to “a cortical lesion or a subcortical one which interrupt the communicating fibres by isolating the angular gyrus from the other cerebral centres” (Hinshelwood 1912: 1033). Cases of acquired word-blindness referred mostly to adults who suffered from brain injury and who, in this way, “lost the visual memory of all the printed and written characters with which they were previously familiar” (Hinshelwood 1917: 81). A bit earlier in 1887, Jean-Martin Charcot, a French professor of neurology, used a term “alexia” in a similar sense, to name verbal amnesia, significant for some patients who had lost the memory of the conventional meaning of graphic symbols (Critchley 1964:214). The main difference between acquired and congenital word-blindness was noticed through the remedy results as Hinshelwood's adult patients could hardly regain the ability to read, being able to decode the alphabet letters only, whereas children with congenital word-blindness were able to learn how to read fluently thanks to proper teaching approach based on intensive and individualised instruction (Hinshelwood 1917: 77-99).

Not only British, German and French neurologists conducted studies on SLDs. The Scandinavian researchers also contributed to the field of learning disabilities in its initial phase. Swedish neurologist Apert Pötzl referred to functional deficits in children that could cause SLDs (Guardiola 2001: 9). A group of neuroanatomists from Karolinska Institute opened in 1922 and directed by Herman Lundborg, a researcher in the genetic progressive myoclonic epilepsies, focused on the function of the brain on a molecular level. The genetic studies of 1920s ran by the scientists from the Institute laid foundation

for later research in delays in 1960s that referred to speech and language, motor development and social-emotional development. However, the burst in Scandinavian research was just to come in the following years of transition phase before the breakout of the Second World War, which period is analysed later in the present work.

Although Hallahan and Mercer (2001: 30) point out that the foundation phase ends around the year 1920 in Europe and starts in America, in the present work developments on both continents are recognised under a common foundation phase for scientific activities in SLDs. For this reason, one more decade after the year 1920 is added to the first phase of studies on SLDs, which includes the first valid achievements in the field across the ocean.

As it has already been mentioned earlier, after the 1920 the USA scholars and scientists showed their interest in SLDs as a result of scientific revelations in Europe. The most significant and worth noticing were the works of Samuel Torrey Orton, a neurologist at the Psychopathic Hospital in Iowa City. In 1925, Orton conducted an experiment in which local teachers reported on students facing learning problems or being considered defective. Basing on the experiment Orton reported that most of the learners participating in research scored average or even above average in range on the Stanford-Binet IQ test (Orton 1925: 582). Several years of studies over children with SLDs brought Orton to the conclusion that “somewhat over 10 percent of the total school population” suffered from learning problems that referred to reading disabilities (Orton 1939 as quoted in Swanson et al. 2013: 19). Orton viewed reading as a complex activity involving several areas of the brain. He advocated the theory of mixed cerebral dominance or motor integrating as factors referring to many reading disabilities. He observed that symptoms such as reversal of letters (e.g. p and q, b and d), mirror reading (e.g. was and saw), as well as reading from right to left were linked to the lack of dominant hemisphere. The observed phenomena were called by Orton “strephosymbolia” from Greek “strepo” - twist, indicating the reversals, and “symbolon” - symbol. Sterphosymbolia, then, in Orton's words defined “confusion, because of reversals, in the memory images of symbols resulting in a failure of association between the visually presented stimulus and its concept” (Orton 1925: 610). As a form of remedy Orton suggested logical training based on repetitive drill on fundamentals of phonic association with letter forms which were first visually presented and then reproduced in writing (Orton 1925: 614). The multisensory approach to SLDs was further developed and advocated by scholars in America and Europe who insisted on building visual-auditory, auditory-visual, auditory-

kinaesthetic and kinaesthetic-visual linkages in approaching learners with SLDs (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 5).

Similarly to the situation in Europe where structural and functional deficits of the human brain were subjected to an analysis, American researchers also conducted their studies about SLDs via different approaches. According to Hallahan and Mercer (2001: 10), the foundation phase was the time when perceptual, perceptual-motor and attention disabilities gained interest in the USA. Among the scientists interested in studies of brain injuries Kurt Goldstein was a pioneer in the American field of neuropsychology and psychosomatics. His patients, World War I soldiers, who had experienced brain injuries were reported to demonstrate such disorders as hyperactivity, forced responsiveness to stimuli, figure-background confusion, exclusive ability of concrete thinking, preservation, meticulousness (excessive care and precision) and catastrophic reaction (Swanson et al. 2013: 20). Goldstein hypothesised that patients with brain injury had their abstract thinking affected as they were able to refer only to immediate experience and unable to refer to things in an imaginary way. What is more, patients with brain injury were excessively concerned with details and used routine as a form of protection against overstimulation and disorganisation (Goldstein 2000: 29). In the transition phase, his revelations were subjected to detail analysis by American development psychologists.

The year 1930 marks the end of the initial phase of research in SLDs, when specialists, working independently, observed and described various phenomena referring to mental disabilities. The following period brought consolidation of these initial results of research and deeper scientific interest in neurological and genetic causes of SLDs.

## **1.2 Transition phase (1930 – 1960)**

The period of research in SLDs that begins around the year 1930 marks the transition phase from individual and independent scientific research towards studies concentrated on particular causes of SLDs and conducted by teams of specialists. After the first discoveries in the field, the scientific achievements of the pioneers were further developed by their students and followers on the old continent and in the USA. The interest in neurological sciences after 1930 was strengthened by favourable historical and social conditions. In the post-war Europe, the disabled war veterans made a large group of the unemployed as their physical and psychological conditions impeded their access to the

job market. Therefore, as Race (1995: 50) put it, “for the following twenty years they became subjects to be dealt with”. On the other side, ten years after the war a large number of the disabled turned to be a main reason for which governmental authorities insisted on social services to organise support for the disabled to help them survive in the post war reality (Race 1995: 54). It can be assumed that the historical circumstances facilitated scientists' research on brain deficiencies on one hand, and on the other, revealed the rising need for educating the disabled by means of alternative teaching methods in order to return them to society. This fact was also noticed by Lawrence (2009:13) in whose opinion recognition of SLDs as a part of educational problem is a turning point from the initial foundation phase to the transition phase.

Within the field of medical research at that time, a group of European child psychiatrists initiated international contacts and started to cooperate around the year 1935. Among the scientists interested in studies in learning disorders, including SLDs, were George Heuyer from France, Moritz Tramer from Switzerland, Herman Stutte from Germany, Carlos de Sanctis from Italy, Nic Waal from Norway and Emanuel Miller from the United Kingdom (Schleimer 2012: 7). In 1937 this group of specialists gathered twelve members and composed The International Committee for Child Psychiatry, the aim of which was to support and promote the scientific approach to the so called mentally ill children. Still in the same year the Committee organised *The First International Conference of Child Psychiatry* in Paris where Louis Ombrédanne, the head of paediatric surgery at the Necker Hospital in Paris, officially introduced the term dyslexia to the cannon of scientific terminology (Miles and Miles 1999: 13). As a result of this international cooperation, and the growing need for remedial education of learners with SLDs, the first educational institution was found in 1938 by Edith Norrie in Copenhagen under the name of The Word Blind Institute. The unit provided diagnosis and remedial teaching for children with SLDs (Miles and Miles 1999: 13).

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Second World War impeded a fast scientific development in the field of SLDs in Europe. In Germany and Scandinavian countries, which declared to stay neutral in the military conflict, more attention was given to research in genetics and eugenics as the German Nazis were interested in creating a purely Nordic race. This idea was also supported by some of Swedish scientists of the National Institute for Race Biology in Copenhagen (Björkman and Widmalm 2010: 379).

After the war, scientific interest in SLDs flourished again. Edith Norrie's earlier input into the studies in SLDs became an inspiration for her colleague Knud Hermann



from the University Hospital in Copenhagen. In their common essay on a hereditary type of congenital word-blindness published in 1959, Hermann and Norrie (1958: 59) demonstrated that congenital word-blindness was a specific disorder of function, and not merely the chance result of a series of external factors. Hermann further justified that word-blindness was of a dominant parietal and genetic origin and included agraphia, acalculia, confusion of right and left sides and finger agnosia, first recognised by Joseph Gerstmann in 1924 and understood as the loss of ability to distinguish fingers (Levinson 1980: 2). His scientific analysis supported the results of research in functional deficits revealed earlier by the Scandinavian neurologists of the foundation phase. One of the Swedish experts was Bertil Hallgren who, through his clinical and genetic studies of Swedish families, in 1950 evidenced that SLDs were heritable (Lundberg and Høien 1997: 84). Achievements of the scientists in the transition phase led to an identification of various types of SLDs that were said to have different sources of derivation, namely neurological and genetic ones. Discoveries in the field of medical research finely upgraded SLDs to be considered as a separate formal category of disabilities in the following years.

Another significant milestone in studies of SLDs that had influence on a diagnostic process of individuals with SLDs was an establishment of the first intelligence test in 1948. The test was developed by two French psychologists, Alfred Binet and Théodore Simon and soon became to be used for determining children's ability to follow the mainstream school education (Cornoldi et al. 2016: 14). For many years Binet's scale of intelligence was applied as a diagnostic tool in SLDs, until much later studies of Stanovich in the 1990s which proved independence of SLDs from the disabled intellectual functioning (Stanovich 1991: 25).

The achievements in the field of SLDs in the transition phase in Europe, though significant, were less dynamic and intensive than in the USA. As Hallahan and Mercer (2001: 5) inform, Orton's multisensory approach to SLDs developed in the 1920s, was later followed by Gillingham and Stillman who advocated it as a form of education remedy. For this reason, they stressed the need of building visual-auditory, auditory-visual, auditory-kinaesthetic and kinaesthetic-visual linkages in learners with SLDs as, according to their observations, they improved individuals' reading abilities. In the opinion of Gillingham and Stillman (1960: 54), the most important factor of therapeutic exercises that the disordered learners were asked to perform was precision, strengthened by a high number of repetitions of the same training activities. Such remedial trainings

prolonged the concentration span and allowed to focus on accurate performance of a given task.

Apart from Gillingham and Stillman there was another important follower of Orton's approach in the USA. In 1940s, his associate Marion Monroe experimented on three groups of learners with reading disorders who were subjected to different kinds of instruction. Group A was instructed with the use of a combination of kinaesthetic tracing techniques and sound blending under close supervision in the clinic where Monroe applied her methods of training or at school that students attended. Group B was instructed in their home school by teachers who followed teaching suggestions of specialists from the Institute for Juvenile Research in which Monroe had a position. Group C received ordinary instruction in their home school. The results of one year experiment were presented in Monroe's book *Children Who Cannot Read* and showed a significant improvement in reading skills of students in group A, moderate improvement of students in group B and poor remedy of those in group C. The results of the experiment led to a conclusion that learners with reading disabilities need intensive instruction which can be provided by specialists operating in laboratory conditions and also by well-trained teachers of public units. Monroe summarised the results of the experiment in her own words stating that:

Progress in reading was made in a large percentage of cases studied, not only when children were trained under carefully controlled laboratory conditions, but also under conditions possible in public schools. Progress in reading was made under individual instruction and also in small groups of children. (Monroe 1946: 157)

Monroe stressed that some failures among patients resulted from irregularity of applied methods and lack of persistent and systematic work which, by the same, confirmed the validity of Orthon's approach. Throughout her studies she developed the notion of discrepancy between learners' actual achievement and expected achievement which became a tool in identifying students with reading disabilities. Monroe underlined the fact that students' reading performances may be quantitatively the same (with the same number of errors) but qualitatively different (of different nature). She also estimated that about twelve percent of the population suffered from reading disabilities, which exceeded Orton's assumptions (Swanson et al. 2013:19). The method of identification of SLDs developed by Monroe became one of diagnostic methods, commonly applied in form of an achievement-discrepancy test by contemporaries.

Although Monroe's method was successful, it was also clear that not all children with SLDs could be subjected to the same procedure of training as a spectrum of SLDs varied and still demanded further scientific research. Realisation of this fact raised an urgent need for development of diagnostic tools that would enable identification of SLDs with greater precision and allow for better adjustment of educational methods. Monroe had her follower in the person of Samuel Kirk who, previously tutored by Monroe, founded the first experimental preschool for children with mental retardation in 1949 (Swanson et al. 2013: 19). His achievements in the field of SLDs are described further, as his scientific work flourished in the emergent phase of research in SLDs.

Remedial pilot trainings suggested by the researchers of the transition phase and conducted on an experimental stage under clinical conditions led to consolidation of a new trend in the studies on SLDs in the following emergent phase of the development of scientific thought in SLDs. In fact, this new trend caused a shift of a burden of research in SLDs from the medical to educational perspective.

### **1.3 Emergent phase (1960 – 1985)**

After years of research in various areas of mental disorders and exchange of scientific experience between scientists of the transition phase, the growing need for systematisation of the existing state of knowledge, as well as categorisation of SLDs, became necessity. The following historical period dated from 1960 to 1985 that covers the period of systematisation in categorisation of learning disorders and emergence of research in direct causes of SLDs, described by specialists as pathomechanisms, is recognised as the emergent phase. This phase is also significant from the perspective of educational methods and corrective and compensatory programs dedicated to learners with SLDs. Experts of the emergent phase engaged in studies of pathomechanisms in the medical field, also became interested in developing educational methods that could improve the disabled life skills. Otherwise speaking, the issue of special education needs was proclaimed for the first time by educational psychologists of the emergent phase, who tried to improve early remedial programs and in this sense provided a foundation for the twentieth century integrative education of learners with SLDs in main stream educational systems. Therefore, from the educational perspective, this historical period is undoubtedly a breakthrough in the field of development of scientific thought in SLDs. It

is then justified to identify this historical period as the emergent phase, which term is also used by Lerner (2000), Hallahan and Mercer (2001) and Guardiola (2001), and which in their understanding covers an idea of change, improvement and ground-breaking results in the field of research.

In Europe, research in SLDs was performed by such experts as Magdalena Vernon from Great Britain, Rene Zazzo from France, Eve Malmquist from Sweden, and many others. Their contributions to the field of research are significant for the emergent phase and of a great importance for the following integration phase. As works of scientists representing the three countries of interest, Austria, Czechia and Poland deserve closer attention due to their importance, they will be given close attention separately in relevant sections of chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the present work.

The two decades of the emergent phase can be generally characterised by intensive attempts of researchers to categorise different SLDs into subgroups. However, as Gauntlett (as cited in Tarnopol and Tarnopol 1981: 221) explains, this categorisation was not easy because of variety of forms of SLDs and differentiation in their intensiveness. After examination of reading disabilities in British school children, Gauntlett noticed that lack of categorisation of SLDs precludes diagnosing of learners with dyslexia. He claimed:

Dyslexics have not been diagnosed and appear to be failing through the open mesh of the medical sieve. This most likely occurs because there is no medical category of dyslexia or specific learning disabilities that is generally recognised, and if no category exists, the conditions cannot be diagnosed by physicians (or psychologists or educators).  
(Gauntlett as cited in Tarnopol and Tarnopol 1981: 53)

Some researchers attempted to provide their own categorisation of SLDs. For instance, an English psychologist, Magdalena Vernon from the University of Reading (Great Britain) suggested a distinction of SLDs with reference to visual, auditory and abstract reasoning problems (Vernon 1971: 10-77). With reference to reading disabilities, she believed that dyslexia was caused by deficiency in the basic phonological processes responsible for forming associations between printed letters and their phonological representation (Vernon 1971: 63). Her idea differed from other already recognised causes of SLDs such as environmental factors, low intelligence or emotional maladjustment, therefore she used a new term of “specific developmental dyslexia” to name the phenomenon (Vernon 1971: 77). Interestingly, the results of Vernon's research were confirmed by studies of other British representatives of the emergent phase, including

Tizard, Bullock, Warnock, Sivler, Hagin, as well as American experts (Guardiola 2001: 14-15) whose achievements are described later in this chapter.

Apart from scientific discoveries of Vernon in Great Britain, in France a psychologist and pedagogue René Zazzo, who in his research was also interested in causes of SLDs, suggested in 1959 to introduce a concept of “oligophrenic heterochrony” to terminology of SLDs (Gilly 1996: 195). In particular, the term referred to genetic causes of SLDs. Zazzo (as cited in Gilly 1996: 195) claimed that deficits in brain tissues or their injury in the period of infancy were responsible for unequal and insufficient mental development of young children with SLDs. In his further studies, he concentrated on elaborating intelligence tests that became an alternative to Binet-Simon scale introduced earlier in the transition phase (Gilly 1996: 195). As M. Bogdanowicz (1985: 263) notices, his work was inspiring for Polish specialists in the field. What is more, also Swedish researchers followed Zazzo’s revelations about developmental causes of SLDs, what found its confirmation in their studies (Malmquist 1981: 453). In particular, it was established that the reading disorder was not a technical problem for an individual analysis but an issue associated with the child's general development. Therefore, it was presumed that remedial steps should be intimately introduced to the education process of individuals with SLDs and integrated with their physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. Additionally, a need for preparatory teaching, that would strengthen learners' general development before a standard educational instruction, was advocated (Malmquist 1981: 453-454). Such an attitude towards teaching of young learners with SLDs in 1960s turned to be inspirational for future psychologists and pedagogues who developed the concept of integrative approach in education in the 1980’s.

Similarly to the situation in Europe, also in the USA the development of scientific thought in the field of SLDs was very intensive, if not more dynamic. This was partly due to advancement of such scientific disciplines as cognitive psychology and newly born neuroscience in which American experts became especially interested in the second decade of the emergent period (Guardiola 2001: 16). Hallahan and Mercer (2001: 8) enumerate four key factors that characterise this phase in the American field of research, namely: establishment of learning disorders as a formal category, inclusion of learning disorders into the federal government agenda, foundation of parent and professional organisations for learning disorders, and finally development of first educational programmes for students with learning disorders.

With reference to categorisation of SLDs, the discussion among American experts

in the field reflected similar attempts of European scientists in this matter. An expert who was the first to provide a definition of learning disorders on the American ground was Samuel Kirk, Monroe's student, who defined learning disorders in his article published for *Exceptional Children* in 1962 with the following words:

A retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, writing, arithmetic, or other school subject resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible cerebral dysfunction and/ or emotional or behavioral disturbances. It is not the result of mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural and instructional factors.  
(Kirk and Bateman 1962: 263)

In his definition of learning disorders Kirk excluded learners who were mentally disturbed and those who were physically handicapped, for example blind or deaf. In his opinion, methods of managing and training them had already been recognised by the field experts. His findings were motivating for parents of children with the defined learning disorders, who in the same year formed the first in the USA non-governmental support organisation known as The Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (ACL D). This non-profit body is currently recognised as the largest parent organisation of perceptually handicapped children in the United States that operates under a name of The Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) (Kirk 1970: 109).

In his early scientific work, Kirk (1970: 108) also aimed at the development of special tests that would help to differentiate communication problems before the remediation. Such diagnostic tests could have an impact on an individual choice of remedial techniques that would be better adjusted to learners' individual needs. As a result of his studies and practices, the first edition of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) aiming at identification of learners' individual differences was issued at the beginning of the emergent phase in 1961 (Swanson et al. 2013: 19).

In 1965 a student of Kirk, Barbara Bateman, suggested another definition of learning disorders, describing that "children with learning disabilities manifest discrepancy between their potential and actual level of performance in the learning process, which may or not be accompanied by nervous system dysfunction" (Bateman, 1965: 220). Her definition was consistent with Monroe's discoveries in the notion of discrepancy between achievement and potential, what helped to popularise Bateman's definition.

The process of categorisation of various learning disorders gained momentum

when the U.S. federal agencies took interest in developing the subject. Two teams of medical professionals (Task Force I) and educators (Task Force II) were engaged by the government to work on a definition of 'minimal brain dysfunction' that could be used as a basis for legislation of education programmes. Task Force I defined minimal brain dysfunction as a disorder affecting children with average or above average general intelligence, and that resulted from deviations of function of the central nervous system (Clements 1966: 9-10). According to this definition, impairment in perception, conceptualization, language, memory, and control of attention, impulse, or motor function may be manifested in various combinations and arise from genetic variations, biochemical irregularities, injuries or illnesses, or from unknown causes which are critical for the development of the central nervous system (Clemens, 1966: 10).

Due to a fact that there was no agreement as to a common definition from experts of Task Force II, a definition of learning disorders that could be applicable by law remained underdeveloped until the late 1960's when the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) formed the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children (NACHC) with a chairman in person of Samuel Kirk. Regardless of the definition developed by Task Force I, the one offered by the NACHC committee resembled the definition of learning disorders firstly offered by Kirk in 1962 (USOE, 1968: 34). Actions undertaken by the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped (BEH) convinced American Congress to legislate the Children with Specific Learning Disabilities Act in 1969 in which the NACHC definition was adopted, what finally allowed for inclusion of learning disorders to the categories eligible for special education assistance (Hallahan and Mercer, 2001: 16). According to the said definition, SLDs were referred to as an ability-achievement discrepancy when:

- (1) The child does not achieve commensurate with his or her age and ability levels, when provided with learning experiences appropriate for the child's age and levels; and
- (2) The team finds that the child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematics reasoning. (USOE 1977: 65083)

In 1970, Public Law 91-230 consolidated the Education of the Handicapped Act with other programs that focused on teaching children with disabilities, which gave Kirk an opportunity to further refine the ITPA, reinforcing Monroe's earlier idea of intra-individual differences among children with learning disabilities and propagating the

concept of diagnostic-perspective teaching (Hallahan and Mercer, 2001: 18).

Apart from the national discussion about the common definition and categorisation of learning disabilities, educational aspects concerning remedial techniques and compensatory programmes were given closer attention in the emergent period. With reference to this issue, Fletcher-Janzen and Reynolds (2008: 196) notice that theorists such as Helmer Myklebust and Doris Johnson, who focused on remedial techniques of educating children with learning disabilities in the USA, also had their significant impact on the developments in the field of SLDs. Through their studies on receptive language problems, they noticed that training comprehension skills should come first before training productive skills. In the opinion of Johnson and Myklebust (1967: 137) opinion, it was beneficial for children to train whole words and sentences rather than nonsense words or isolated sounds. They further explained that words sounding different should be taught first before words that consist of sounds difficult to discriminate. Training of auditory cognitive skills, including discrimination, rhyming and blending were, in Johnson and Myklebust's belief prerequisite to the success of an auditory-phonetic reading programme and indicated the need for a global language approach (Fletcher-Janzen and Reynolds 2008: 196).

Other scientists such as Newell Kephart, Marianne Frostig, Gerald Getman, Raymond Barsch, Glen Doman, and Carl Delacato focused on development of new training programmes on learning difficulties, dedicated in particular to visual and visual-motor disabilities (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 18). Newell Kephart, for instance, launched his major publication *The Slow Learner in the Classroom* in 1960 in which he presented his theoretical ideas about SLDs together with a number of perceptual-motor training exercises. The most significant aspect of his theory, however, referred to perceptual-motor match that relied on two assumptions: first, that motor development proceeds visual development, and second, that kinaesthetic sensation resulting from motor movement provides feedback, which then can be used for monitoring visual-motor activities (Kephart 1960: 60). Therefore, Kephart applied motor training as precedential to visual perceptual training. In his approach, he also gave a lot of attention to the problem of lateralisation, establishing that learners who found it difficult to distinguish the left from the right side of the body also had difficulties with reversals, e.g. discriminating a letter *d* from *b* or *p* (Kephart 1960: 60), what stayed in agreement with Orton's earlier discoveries.

Another American scientist who worked on a development of diagnostic tools and



launched a training programme for children with SLDs was Marianne Frostig. This psychologist of Austrian roots, who in the last decade of the transition phase moved to the USA, in 1947 founded Marianne Frostig Centre of Educational Therapy in Los Angeles, California. Frostig developed a diagnostic test that measured five perceptual functions in children: eye-motor coordination, figure-ground visual perception, form consistence, position in space and special relations (Frostig et al. 1964). Children subjected to “The Marianne Frostig Developmental Test of Visual Perception with diagnosed learning disabilities” underwent a special visual perceptual training programme that included paper-and-pencil exercises performed in an established order. This specific training aimed at an increase in the precision of gross and fine motor coordination and skills (Frostig and Horne 1964: 7). After completion of the training programme, children could either continue their education in regular schools or in case of poor remedial effects were redirected to special education classes.

In addition to works of Kephart and Frostig, another theorist, Raymond Barsch advocated the so called Movigenic Curriculum in 1965 in which he developed 12 areas focusing on movement: “muscular strength, dynamic balance, body awareness, spatial awareness, tactual dynamics, kinaesthesia, auditory dynamics, visual dynamics, bilaterality, rhythm, flexibility, and motor planning” (Barsch, 1965: 15-16). His perceptual and perceptual-motor training programme, as well as remedial courses offered by Kephart and Frostig turned to be effective in improving perceptual and perceptual-motor skills. For this reason they were popularised and adopted also in Europe. Hammill and Larsen (1974: 13) admit that the above mentioned programmes were successful as forms of remedy, however, they notice that the programmes had no impact on improving learners' academic performance. Some revelations about this issue were brought at the end of the emergent phase, opening a new educational perspective of integration.

The attempts of scientists to improve academic skills of learners with SLDs was given attention of the U.S. educational authorities (the USOE). As a result, five research institutes were settled at Universities of Kansas, Minnesota, Illinois, Virginia, and Columbia within the period from 1977 to 1982 (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 21). Each unit conducted research in different areas of learning disorders, which referred respectively to: educational interventions for adolescents, the decision-making process and curriculum-based assessment, the social competence and attributions about success and failure, attention problems, and information processing difficulties (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 21-22).

The outcome of the studies conducted by researchers of the University of Kansas revealed that learning disabilities are of the lifelong nature and that many of the students subjected to research faced deficiencies in learning strategies, academic skills and social skills (Schumaker et al. 1983: 45-74). In turn, the researchers from Minnesota University found that students with learning disorders, as well as their teachers, benefited from curriculum-based assessment, due to a method of teaching based on the curricula to which students were exposed, which provided more educationally useful information than previously standardized tests of achievement (Ysseldyke et al. 1983: 75-93).

In Chicago, the team from the University of Illinois that focused on students' social confidence established that students with learning disorders had deficits in pragmatic use of language, therefore they sounded less persuasive in conversations, rarely asked for clarification in ambiguous situations, which interfered with their ability to make social bonds (Bryan et al. 1983: 1-9). Moreover, the researchers proved that students seriously underestimated their abilities and skills, attributing their failures to lack of ability, and successes to either simplicity of tasks or pure luck (Bryan et al. 1983: 14-16). Researchers from the University of Virginia observed that students facing learning disorders increased their academic productivity if they self-monitored their attention. Therefore the team tried to develop strategies directly applicable for the use on academic tasks, which contributed to an establishment of several specific techniques for instruction in reading and maths (Hallahan et al. 1983: 113-114).

The Columbia Institute which researched information processing difficulties conducted works on memory and study skills, arithmetic, basic reading and spelling, and interaction of characteristics of the text and the reader (Connor 1983: 23-44). The work of the Institute researchers raised controversy about the nature of SLDs, however it also contributed significantly to the present knowledge about them. The researchers reported that learners with SLDs, were in fact capable to improve their academic skills. As they put it:

students have not acquired efficient strategies for processing task information and therefore cannot use their abilities and experience to profit from conventional instruction [...], however, they are capable of acquiring the strategies that account for competent performance and that they can improve their academic skills and adaptive functioning when they are taught task-appropriate strategies. (McKinney 1983: 131)

As McKinney (1983: 131) notices, such conclusion of the research was in opposition to the earlier believe of the 1960s according to which students with learning

disorders faced relatively enduring deficits in the development of specific abilities, which hindered their capacity to perform academic tasks. Revelations from the Columbia Institute motivated experts to intensified educational efforts in the following phase of development of scientific thought in SLDs, which resulted in a revolutionary change in education of learners with SLDs by their integration into regular classes of public schools and enforced an improvement of teaching methods.

#### **1.4 Integration phase (1985 - 1999)**

The integration phase brought gradual stabilization in the field of SLDs, especially with reference to its convergent definition provided by various research institutes. Beginning with the middle 1980s further research on phonological processing and hereditary causes of SLDs were developed. However, as Hallahan and Mercer (2001: 24) notice, some discrepancies between researchers concerning different attitudes towards identification procedures and the debate over placement options remained vivid. It was due to the split between the two concepts of modern and postmodern perception of SLDs. Modernism viewed SLDs as a medical construct, therefore this concept was followed mainly by physicians, psychiatrists and neurologists who concentrated their efforts on remedial methods that could help to compensate deficits and push the disabled learners towards special education in order to improve their functioning, knowledge and skills. Postmodernists quite contrary, perceived SLDs as a social construct which opposed common and incorrect, or even immoral assumptions that the disabled learners are different and less able. This commonly spread opinions posed limitations on potential prospects for success of individuals with SLDs and needed to be changed. Postmodernism gathered mainly educators, pedagogues and psychologists who aimed at integration of disabled learners into the mainstream education, what was believed to have a positive impact on social constructions (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 24).

A debate over the continuum of placement on one hand requested educators to take more ownership for integrative education of learners with SLDs (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 30). On the other hand, it raised objections among experts against too much integrative practices. As Bradley et al. (2002: 87) explain, they were of an opinion that children with SLDs subjected to integrative education were deprived of sufficiently intensive and specialised instruction. The inconsistency as to the continuum of placement

led to the split of the current status of special education, which fact is of particular importance for the realisation of the present work.

With reference to medical field of studies in SLDs, lack of agreement between the specialists of the integration phase as to the continuum of placement turned some scientists to research in memory and visual deficits of learners with SLDs. Thomson (as cited in Guardiola 2001: 20) stated that reading problems were generated by deficient brains of the disabled due to their smaller capacity. This idea was accepted by other two British researchers, Stein and Fowler, who thought that an unstable ocular-motor dominance, as well as a faulty eye convergence are responsible for occurrence of the brain deficit (Guardiola 2001: 20). Difficulties in developing reading were also seen in deficits referring to phonological processes. Adams (1990: 57) noted that the discovery of the nature and importance of phonemic awareness was considered the breakthrough in reading in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the research on it had the potential to improve the assessment and intervention practices used to treat learning disabilities. According to the definition provided by the U.S. National Reading Panel (NRP) from 2000, phonemic awareness is the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes which are the smallest units of spoken language (NRP 2000: 2-1). In a report to the U.S. Senate Committee on Labour and Human Resources, Lyon (1998) explained the importance of phonemic awareness in the following words:

In contrast to good readers who understand that segmented units of speech can be linked to letters and letter patterns, poor readers have substantial difficulty developing this "alphabetic principle". The culprit appears to be a deficit in phoneme awareness - the understanding that words are made up of sound segments called phonemes. Difficulties in developing phoneme awareness can have genetic and neurobiological origins or can be attributable to a lack of exposure to language patterns and usage during the preschool years. The end result is the same however. Children who lack phoneme awareness have difficulties linking speech sounds to letters - their decoding skills are laboured and weak, resulting in extremely slow reading. (Lyon 1998: 12)

Further, Lyon (1998: 12) pointed that phonemic awareness skills can be used as predictors in early assessment of learning disabilities in children of kindergarten and those of first grade, noting that it is possible to predict with approximately 80 to 90 per cent accuracy which learners will become good or poor readers. In the report, he also advocated a need for "multiple early intervention programmes that combine instruction in phoneme awareness, phonics, fluency development, and reading comprehension strategies" (Lyon 1998: 13). In his opinion, the intervention should be provided by competent teachers who would improve reading skills of learners with learning disabilities to average levels. Lyon

was convinced that prevention was of crucial value, as any delay in early intervention until the learner's biological age of nine increased the risk of further continuation of difficulties in learning to read by 75 percent (Lyon 1998:13). The importance of phonemic awareness had its impact on the definition of learning disabilities provided in 1994 by the International Dyslexia Association along with the National Centre on Learning Disabilities and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, according to which,

Dyslexia is a specific language-based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in a single word decoding, usually reflecting phonological processing abilities. These difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not the result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment. (Lyon 1995: 9)

The fact that reading difficulties have their origins in difficulties to develop phonemic awareness, reading comprehension strategies, as well as reading fluency, prompted doubts whether teachers were ready to teach reading skills. Based on Lyon's report most teachers turned to be under prepared as they received little formal instruction in disorders and reading development during their graduate studies (Lyon 1998: 15).

Regardless of the studies on phonological processing, biological causes of SLDs were given more attention in the integration phase. Following post-mortem studies and neuroimaging studies, researchers pointed at hereditary factors as affecting learning disorders. Pennington (1990: 195) informed that about 40 per cent of first-degree relatives of children with learning disorders also faced them. Similar findings related to speech, spelling and language disorders (Lewis 1992: 586-597). Rack, Snowling and Olson (1992: 29) from the University of Colorado evidenced both phonological nature of dyslexia and its heredity. According to post mortem studies conducted throughout the 1990s by Albert Galaburda, Norman Geschwind and others (Galaburda et al. 1994: 8010) the brain of dyslexics differed from the normal brain. It was due to the fact that the left side medial geniculate nuclei (MGN) in the brains of dyslectic people were significantly smaller than the right ones, which was in contrast to brains of non-dyslexics. Moreover, the dyslectics' brains had more small neurons and fewer large neurons in the left MGN. The results of the research were consistent with earlier behavioural findings of a left hemisphere-based phonological defect in dyslectic individuals (Galaburda et al. 1994: 8010). The researchers conclude that:

Developmental dyslexics have impaired reading skills despite normal intelligence, sensory acuity, motivation, and education. Though many consider dyslexia to be fundamentally a disorder of language, there is evidence that it is associated with perceptual abnormalities that could, by interfering with normal development, lead to the higher-order defects, including linguistic anomalies. (Galaburda et al. 1994: 8010)

Apart from new findings in the field that added to biological and hereditary nature of SLDs, there was another important concern which referred to the discrepancy between achievement and intellectual potential as part of their identification procedure (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 30). This procedure in differentiating learners' disabilities on the basis of IQ tests was developed in the emergent phase, but was subjected to criticism in the 1990s due to an observation that children who were better readers in general learnt more and so achieved better results in IQ tests. Considering this obvious fact, learners with reading disorders were probable to score lower in IQ tests and have their IQ underestimated (Siegel 1989: 469). The discrepancy procedure was also difficult to implement on preschool and early elementary levels, as children's intellectual development vary significantly at the early educational levels, thus identifying achievement deficits was not sufficient for estimating learning disorders (Fletcher et al., 2007: 67). The consequence of using the discrepancy approach could also lead to exclusion of learners with reading disorders from the group of learners with SLDs, as Stanovich (1988) explained, "deficient metacognitive functioning means lower intelligence; which reduces the achievement/ attitude discrepancy; which takes the child out of the reading disability category" (Stanovich 1988 as quoted in Siegel 1989: 475-476).

All the above issues influenced researchers' attitude towards discrepancy approach and caused a turn in the studies of SLDs in the integration phase towards psychological and educational areas of a child's development (Lawrence 2009: 18). Owing to this tendency, therapeutic programmes appeared to be more of compensatory-corrective than corrective type (Augustyniak 2010: 261). Such attitude brought to life a new concept of educating learners with SLDs based on the development of their motor and intellectual skills via movement activities and experiences.

In the early 1990s, Ernst Kiphard who worked with children facing behavioural and emotional disorders noticed that applying physical activities to the therapy was a remedial method that brought positive effects. Kiphard was of the opinion that deficits in perception and movement referred to minimal cerebral dysfunction causing disharmony and destabilization of children's personalities. He developed the concept of psycho-

motorics and is recognised as the founder of motor pedagogy by contemporaries (Zoglowek and Aleksandrovich 2016: 157).

Within the frame of research on behavioural and emotional disorders, a compensatory-corrective method that turned to be effective in therapies was developed by Veronica Sherborne. Although the method was applied fifty years earlier, it gained intensive attention of therapists and educators in the 1990s. The method was initially dedicated to learners with severe learning disorders, however in the integration phase it was recognised as beneficial for all learners regardless to their problems. It was so, because Sherborne developmental method aimed at stimulation of all cognitive, emotional and social spheres in children (Zoglowek and Aleksandrovich 2016: 158).

The process of integration of learners with SLDs into the main stream education was long and uneasy. In the middle of 1990's environments focused on activities that aimed at integration of people with SLDs into various spheres of social life. However, some doubts were raised as to the selection of teaching approaches and expertise in SLDs of teachers engaged in the mainstream education. Therapeutic centres, associations gathering people with SLDs and their families, as well as parents of children with SLDs, and even schools, began to report the inadequacy of performed integrative actions in relation to its assumed effects (Haug 2017: 209). New postulates opting for changes in the integrative approach were expressed in the Salamanca Statement in 1994, however it was six year later when the problem of insufficiency of integration was finally reanalysed on the international level by UNESCO in 2000 at the Dakar World Education Forum. Regardless of positive changes and general improvement in the quality of life of individuals with SLDs brought by their social integration, insufficiency of the integrative approach was admitted and a need for its improvement in a shape of social inclusion of the disabled was manifested by UN (UNESCO 2003: 4). It was also adopted and confirmed on the European ground in a document known as the *Lisbon Strategy* (EC 2000, Art. 32). According to the assumptions of article 24 of this document, the European social model demanded modernisation, *inter alia*, by elimination of social exclusion of the disabled. The new approach, initiated in the year 2000, gave beginning to the process of inclusion, which also enforced changes in educational systems.

## **1.5 Inclusive phase (2000 and beyond)**

The inclusive phase, though strongly associated with educational aspects of children with SLDs and full socialisation of people with various disorders into the existing human society, also brought some improvements in the field of diagnosing and defining SLDs. The findings of post-mortem studies of dyslectics' brains performed in the integration phase, found their confirmation in neuroimaging studies of researchers who, with the use of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computerised axial tomography (CAT) scans, detected the same reversed symmetry for the planum temporales (a segment that includes Wernicke's area) of adults with dyslexia. The results of further studies confirmed that abnormal functioning of the brain responsible for dyslexia is located in the left hemisphere (Hallahan and Mercer 2001: 28). The research performed by Gardner and later by Galaburda which supported the view of the superior development of the right hemisphere of brain in dyslectic learners explained high level of creativity and visual processing of dyslexics in comparison to other learners (Lawrence 2009: 17). As Lawrence (2009: 17) remarked, Galaburda even hypothesised that dyslexia was not a specific disorder but a variation of the brain development, not a deficit but a difference. It excluded the dyslectics from the group of mentally retarded patients. For this reason, Bradley et al. (2002: 796) stated that the level of IQ should be rejected as a measurement factor in defining SLDs, which opinion was initially expressed by Stanovich in 1990's. It was due to the fact that the key to the reading disorders was hidden in phonological processing which was not regulated by the central processing system (Stanovich 1988: 177 as cited in Siegel 1989: 476). Bradley et al. (2002: 796) further justified that discrepancy between IQ and achievement was an insufficient factor to determine whether a learner with SLDs performs outside the ranges of mental retardation. In change, aptitude and achievement tests were suggested. This way of thinking is close to postmodernists' views who believe that appropriately selected programmes of inclusive teaching, designed to develop visual-spatial thinking, would be of greater benefit than remedial methods applied earlier to learners with SLDs, (Silver and Hagin 2002: 7).

This way of approaching learners with SLDs was also approved by a Scottish psychologist Philip Seymour from the University of Dundee, who convinced that multiplicity disabilities complicated the division of SLDs into subgroups, for which reason they should be divided only into three broad categories of semantic, phonological and visual nature (Guardiola 2001: 21). These general categories now indicate a direction



in educational approaches applied by inclusive units. A wide spectrum of SLDs, turned specialists' attention towards adjustment of various forms of therapies and methods of teaching towards learners special educational needs (SEN) that require to be satisfied individually in case of every disordered learner. As it has been mentioned earlier in section 1.4 hereabove, the integrative approach in education of young learners, introduced to schools in 1990's as an alternative to special education, unfortunately failed to meet learners' SEN, regardless of educators' efforts. Moreover, as Haug (2017: 209) notices, it also turned to be insufficient in warranting equal rights and chances to achieve an educational success by learners with and without disabilities. Therefore, from 2000 the European Union governing authorities have attempted to introduce a new approach based on the concept of inclusion to public schools. The inclusive approach is focused on adjustment of methods, techniques of teaching and didactical materials to learners' individual educational needs. In 2014, in order to mark a change of the educational approach in European countries, and give inclusive education a prioritising status, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education changed its name into the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE 2020: 5). To better understand the differences between the two approaches of integrative and inclusive nature, table 3 below is used.

Table 1: Characteristics of integrated and inclusive education for learners with SLDs after Jones (2004)

<b>Integration in education</b>	<b>Inclusion in education</b>
focus on the needs of a learner with SLDs	equal focus on the needs of all learners
expertise of specialists only	expertise of specialists and current teachers
special intervention	good teaching for all
benefit for the integrated student	benefit for all students
partial change of environment	total change of school
focus on the student with SLDs	focus on a group
special programme for a learner with SLDs	overall strategy of a teacher
importance of assessment	importance of performance

Analysing the above table, it can be seen that according to the inclusive approach all learners engaged in the process of education are expected to have their educational needs satisfied by means of employment of different strategies of teaching and learning. The choice of educational strategies depends on learners' abilities, skills and preferences.

These kinds of adjustment cause that any special intervention aiming at remedial means needs not to be taken as learners perform educational tasks in accordance to their preferable learning strategies and in an individualised manner. Therefore, as Jones (2004: 32) puts it, inclusion in education seems to be a beneficial approach for all learners regardless of their abilities as they work at their own pace, become more autonomous and do not require constant attention of the teacher.

The presented differences between integrative and inclusive approaches also show that new challenges are set for the educational environment. In general, they refer to: a need for reorganisation of functioning of schools, a shift of importance from assessment to performance, and a change of recently applied teaching strategies. Such vast and substantial changes demand rearrangements in the system of education, schoolwork organisation, teacher education and training and adjustment of teaching methods. Probably, as Haug posits (2017: 206), this is a reason why after two decades from its initial acceptance by the European Union member states, inclusion in education is still in the process of development.

## **1.6 Final comments**

In the present chapter, the process of development of research in SLDs has been outlined for better understanding of the nature of SLDs. As it was described, scientific interest in learning disorders began in the nineteenth century and is recognised as the foundation phase of scientific interest in SLDs. Initially, these were individual and independent case studies which drew public attention to the general issue of learning disorders. From the beginning of the twentieth century and together with the offset of the transition phase of scientific research, convergence of scientific efforts from individual into associated international activities of experts in Europe and the USA can be noticed. As it was shown, gradual recognition of variety of learning disorders accelerated developments in the field of medical research in SLDs of the emergent phase. Studies, often performed by international teams of specialists, turned to be more systematised and as such led to an identification of various dimensions of learning disorders. Due to the substantial differences between various learning disorders, they became differentiated between learning disorders and specific learning disorders. What is more, intensive studies in SLDs conducted over the following decades also resulted in a development of diagnostic

tools, which in turn had an influence on organisation of first remedial courses conducted by special education therapists for the disordered individuals. Positive effects of individual remedial and compensatory courses organised at medical centres confirmed high educational potential of learners with SLDs. The development of diagnostic tools and therapeutic programmes in the 1970s of the emergent phase led to a change in the perception of educational potential of individuals with SLDs. A new educational path of mainstream schooling was opened for disordered learners whose intelligence remained within the approved norms.

As it has been described above in section 1.4 of the integration phase, introduction of individuals with SLDs into the mainstream school system demanded certain adjustments in organisation of school work, methods of teaching and teacher's training. This, in turn, was to force changes in social perception of individuals with SLDs. It can be said, that integration of learners with SLDs into the mainstream education system was revolutionary as it opened new life perspectives for them, and positively influenced social perception of individuals with various disabilities. However, after almost fifteen years of educating individuals with SLDs in public general education units, it became evident that the adopted integrative approach, though right in its assumptions, seriously lacked perfection. As it has been shown, instead of adjustment of all the factors influencing the integrative process of education to individuals SEN, these were the disordered learners who had to adjust to the existing systems of education. As a result, they were subjected to stigmatisation and in consequence to social rejection. Therefore, systems of education needed to be redirected again to suit SEN of the disordered learners.

The newest concept of inclusive education, as described in section 1.5 above, has been developed since 2000 as an amendment of the integrative approach. This time, thorough changes in national systems of education have been planned, which also covers improvements in curricula for the tertiary level of teacher education. Undoubtedly, as many admit (Forlin, 2013, Haug 2017, Schwab et al. 2015, Suleymanov 2015), inclusion is considered to be the greatest contemporary achievement in the field of education of the disabled. It supports learners with SLDs in meeting their academic and social potential, enforces removal of barriers in communication and adjustment of teaching methods as well as promotes socialisation. The most important change, however, refers to an application of a student friendly teaching approach which shifts the importance of the process of education from assessment to performance.

Much as there are no doubts about the rightness of the purpose of the inclusive

approach, its implementation and performance are still problematic (Suleymanov 2015: 8). Forlin (2013: 67) explains that difficulties in introducing inclusion into educational systems depend on the policy processes that particular European Union member states apply. He stresses the necessity for national policies that address inclusion to be based on a clear and articulated concept of equity, where all complexities involved in the process of implementation are thoroughly and systematically recognised. Successful inclusion, then, depends on organisational, financial and social factors that vary for each country of the European Union and which have an impact on educational conditions. Therefore, the use of inclusive approach in educational practice is subjected to constant discussion in which some opt for total inclusion in education whereas others doubt its success.

Presentation of the scientific thought of SLDs from historical perspective showed that there are different types of learning disorders. Their categorisation was subjected to various transformations and still raises vivid discussions. In the following chapter, the commonly applied definitions of SLDs are explained and subjected to a discussion. Further, the selected SLDs are characterised, for the sake of their thorough understanding.

## **Chapter 2: Language related learning disorders**

### **2.0 Introduction**

As demonstrated in the previous chapter of the dissertation, SLDs have been differently perceived and defined by medical and educational research communities throughout the historical phases of development of scientific thought on SLDs. Moreover, sophisticated nature of learning disorders and various, often overlapping, characteristics made the process of classification of SLDs complex and difficult. Therefore, due to discrepancies between various definitions of SLDs and lack of common perception of the problem among the specialists in the field, the author of the dissertation finds it necessary to make an attempt to systematise the existing state of knowledge concerning the modern understanding of SLDs and mark the fundamental differences between nonspecific and specific learning disorders. It is further important to notice that regardless of numerous discrepancies in defining SLDs, at present there are their two main classifications that are followed internationally. Their appearance was outlined earlier in the previous chapter of the thesis. The first of the said definitions was issued by the World Health Organisation, whereas the second one was established by the American Psychiatric Association. Both are provided below and used herein as reference in defining SLDs due to their international character and appliance.

Further, as the problem of approaching young learners with SLD in their foreign language education is subjected to an analysis in the present dissertation, it is also important to characterise the legal basis for educating learners with SLDs. For this reason,

firstly, causes and types of SLDs are presented and followed by a description of international declarations and legal acts which mark the significance of contemporary education of learners with SLDs by the mainstream units in European Union member states. Presentation of legal basis for educating learners with SLDs, is also crucial for further analysis of organisational, financial and social factors that influence the implementation and realisation of the inclusive approach in education in the three countries subjected to comparison in the empirical part of the present work.

Finally, it is important to remember, that due to the author's interests in these SLDs which affect the foreign language learning process, the scientific considerations included in the present chapter are limited to two issues – dyslexia with its related problems and dysphasia only. Excluded are any specific disorders that can be characterised by mental disturbance and those which are not related to difficulties in language acquisition.

## **2.1 Defining specific learning disorders**

As it has been shown in Chapter One, the initial terminology that referred to individuals with SLDs differed significantly from the present perception of the concern. What is more, the intellectual potential of the disabled remained unnoticed in the initially applied terminology, what caused confusion and detriment. Defined as lunatic, insane, idiots or individuals of unsound mind (Tilley and Jarrett 20222: 132), they were bound to exclusion from the then society. Although the scientific development of the field has been dynamic throughout the twentieth century, the terminological changes were not introduced promptly. It was in 1962 when Samuel Kirk (Kirk and Bateman 1962: 73) used the term learning disability (LD) to define some children causing educational problems who were “delayed or retarded in learning to talk, read, write, spell or do arithmetic”. The disability was understood as an impairment of psychological nature which occurred due to a cerebral dysfunction or emotional and behavioural disorder. It was important, however, that LD was no longer considered as a kind of mental retardation or sensory deprivation. Three years later after the introduction of Kirk's definition to the existing medical terminology, Bateman (1965: 220) completed it by stating that “children with learning disabilities manifest discrepancy between their potential and actual level of performance in the learning process, which may or not be accompanied by the nervous system ‘dysfunction’”. Her explanation of the problem drew attention to neurological causes of

LDs and encouraged educators to explore the issue from the educational perspective. In 1969, the U.S. Congress adopted Kirk's definition into the *Children with Specific Learning Disabilities Act*, which was later included in the *Education of the Handicapped Act of 1975* (U.S. Congress 1976: Public Law 94-142).

It is important to notice that the terms learning disabilities and specific learning disabilities have been used in the USA interchangeably since that time. In Europe, however, these two terms have a split meaning. As M. Bogdanowicz (1997: 152-153) explains, LDs include non-specific disabilities which are conditioned by factors such as mental retardation, neurological disorders, brain damage, sensory impairment and physical injury, as well as emotional disorders. SLDs, on the other hand, are understood as disorders in basic phonological processes manifested by difficulties in reading, writing or doing mathematical calculations, in spite of a person's normal intellectual performance, and sometimes even high intelligence, maturity in general development, and appropriate cultural background. Also Krasowicz-Kupis (2008: 22) notices that defining LDs as specific disorders addresses the intelligence factor, according to which learners with SLDs remain within the intellectual norm.

Another discrepancy in defining SLDs refers to an understanding of a difference between learning disability and learning difficulty. According to the U.K. educational policy provided by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD), the two terms are defined as follows:

Learning disability – is a general term that refers to individuals who find it harder to learn, understand and communicate. Other terms that are used to describe an individual's situation include complex needs or high support needs.

Learning difficulty – is often used in educational settings and refers to individuals who have specific problems with learning as a result of either medical, emotional or language problems. Children and young people requiring special education needs (SEN) are often described as having a learning difficulty. (BILD 2011: 2).

It can be noticed that, although both terms address the same problem and are often used interchangeably, the first definition is definitely more general and broad, referring to an individual's overall psychological and/ or physical conditions due to which a person needs to be supported in developing their receptive and productive skills. In the definition of learning difficulty, however, educational conditions are stressed, in which individuals with medical, behavioural or language problems need assistance, and for which reason the idea of integrative education was born and implemented into public schools in the integration phase described herein in section 1.4 of the present work.

As it can be seen, the difference between LDs and SLDs, and the distinction between learning disability and difficulty depend firstly on the country where the terminology of either LDs or SLDs is used, and secondly, on a scientific discipline to which they refer. In association to the second aspect, it must be remembered that scientific studies had been first conducted by physicians and psychiatrists who concentrated on medical aspects of SLDs, and therefore used the term disability to mark the medical nature of SLDs recognised as a disorder or dysfunction of the human body. It was later in the emergent phase, described previously in chapter 1 of the thesis, when educationists and psychologists became interested in educational and social aspects of SLDs. Learning difficulty, then, is a term that characterises learners who, as it was put by Westwood (2003: 6), do not present expected progress within the school curriculum, and whose basic academic skill areas that cover language, literacy and numeracy are poor. Such understanding of learning difficulties, however, may be caused by various factors, not only these which refer to an individual's health condition. In particular, difficulties in learning may result from, for instance: an unsuitable curriculum, inadequate teaching, poor student-teacher bonds and/ or student-students bonds, truancy, social and/ or economic disadvantages, loss of confidence, emotional problems, repetitive misbehaviour, health problems, below average intelligence, sensory impairment, and also specific information processing difficulties (MacMillan and Siperstein 2002: 287; Naparstek 2002: 3; Westwood 2003: 6-7). The term learning difficulties, then, is definitely too wide to apply it for the context of SLDs.

Variety of terminology, as well as differences in the contexts in which SLDs are used, were convincing for the author of the present dissertation to search for a definition that encompasses intellectual problems of learners whose intelligence is within the accepted norms and who experience learning difficulties with reference to acquisition of language skills.

A definition that is broad enough to cover all of the above factors, and on the other hand precise enough in enlisting the disabilities of the author's interest is the definition developed by the U.S. National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) in 2002 and adopted by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DE) in form of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (IDEA) of 2004 with the following wording:



Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculation, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia (U.S. DE IDEA, Part 300.8/c/10).

Firstly, according to the above definition, the notion of SLDs is understood as a disorder of psychological basis, neurological and/ or biological origin that refers to learners within the intellectual norm and who experience educational difficulties in mastering language skills. These educational problems are characterised by limited functioning in the areas of conceptual, social skills and acting according to convention, which refer duly to problems with reading, writing, doing mathematical calculations and communicating with others via accepted norms of behaviour. It is important to remember that mastering of all the above listed skills is essential for structuring a successful foreign language learning process. Similarly to the given definition, then, the author of the present work recognises that the concept of SLDs includes disorders which affect a relatively narrow range of performance outcomes and are not the results of such conditions as mental retardation, lack of opportunities to learn, inadequate choice of teaching methods or primary sensory deficits. Therefore, for the reasons described in the present work, learning disorders that affect individuals' ability to learn a foreign language are considered to be of specific nature.

Secondly, it needs to be stressed, that the chosen definition and sounding of SLDs is compatible with the concept of developmental nature of SLDs. The developmental character of SLDs refers to the fact that symptoms of both dyslexia and dysphasia are manifested within the period of the early childhood when biological processes are subjected to intensive transformations. This view is approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and also advocated by M. Bogdanowicz (2003: 36) and Zawadzka-Bartnik (2010: 210) in Poland.

Thirdly, according to the newest *International Classification of Disorders* (ICD) released by the WHO in 2019, which turned to be effective at the beginning of 2022, SLDs are classified in a group of neurodevelopmental disorders that include "significant difficulties in the acquisition and execution of specific intellectual, motor, language, or social functions" (ICD-11: 06 version 2/2022). For this reason, as the term 'disorder' is formally applied by the WHO instead of 'disability', also in the present dissertation the abbreviation of SLDs is understood as specific learning disorders.

Finally, due to the fact that in the present dissertation attention is concentrated on educational difficulties that are induced by SLDs, the author of the thesis finds it necessary to introduce a term of special educational needs (SEN) to the terminology of the dissertation. This term is closely associated with the issue of SLDs and in particular refers to international standards of education. The definition of SEN was coined by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), pursuant to which the role of special education is to facilitate the learning of those who require support and adaptive pedagogical methods that enable them to achieve objectives in an educational programme (UNESCO 2012: 83). It can be assumed that in this sense, SEN entered the idea of first, integrative, and more currently, inclusive approach in educating learners with SLDs.

## **2.2 Taxonomy of specific learning disorders**

The definition of SLDs applied in accordance to the characteristics described in section 2.1 above, sets certain boundaries for a taxonomy of considered disorders which refer to their psychological basis, neurological or/ and biological origin and developmental nature. What is more, it addresses only these individuals who experience specific learning difficulties in acquiring a foreign language regardless of their good intellectual potential. In Table 1 below, SLDs which fulfil the above criteria are enlisted in accordance to classifications of the WHO and the American Psychiatric Association (APA). SLDs are classified within categories in the following manner: developmental learning disorder in the *Classification of Disorders* (ICD-11) (WHO 2022a: 6A03) which is compared to specific learning disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (APA: 315.0); and developmental speech or language disorder (WHO 2022a: 6A01) that is viewed respectively together with language disorder (APA: 315.3).

Table 2: Classification of developmental disorders in ICD-11 by the WHO (<http://id.who.int/icd/entity/862918022>) and DSM-5 by the APA (2013: 42-44, 66)

ICD-11	Identification symbol in ICD-11	DSM-5	Identification symbol in DSM -5
Developmental learning disorder	6A03	Specific learning disorder	315.0
Developmental learning disorder with impairment in reading	6A03.0	Specific learning disorder with impairment in reading	315.00 (F81.0)
Developmental learning disorder with impairment in written expression	6A03.1	Specific learning disorder with impairment in writing expression	315.2 (F81.1)
Developmental learning disorder with impairment in mathematics	6A03.2	Specific learning disorder with impairment in mathematics	315.1 (F81.2)
<b>Developmental speech or language disorder</b>	<b>6A01</b>	<b>Language disorder</b>	315.3
Developmental speech sound disorder	6A01.0	Speech sound disorder	315.39 (F80.0)

According to the information presented above in Table 1, it can be assumed that the given taxonomies issued by the WHO and the APA are quite consistent in their applied terminology and understanding of SLDs. A slight difference between them is visible only in two components of the used terms. In particular, the WHO stresses the developmental nature of SLDs, which addresses the problem of persistency of deficits which arise during the developmental period (WHO 2022a: 6A03). The APA, however, describes SLDs as specific disorders, underlining the fact of their non attribution to intellectual disabilities. According to the explanation of the APA given with reference to the educational ground, learners with SLDs demonstrate unexpected academic underachievement, regardless of their intellectual abilities which remain at least within the average norm (APA 2013: 69). It is important to notice that both of the applied terms (developmental and specific disorders) are in line with the definition of SLDs adopted in the present work by the author of the thesis.

The above Table 2 also shows two main categories of SLDs within which there are subcategories that refer respectively to impairment in reading, writing and mathematics, and speech sound disorder. Due to consistency of the given categories pursuant to the taxonomy of the WHO and the APA, it is decided that in the following part of the present dissertation the notions that are covered by the term SLDs are further characterised with the view to *ICD-11*. The choice is justified also in the light of current information issued by the WHO on its website on 11 of February 2002

([www.who.int/news](http://www.who.int/news)), pursuant to which the American Academy of Professional Coders projects to adopt the newest *ICD-11* version. The final decision is planned to be taken by 2025.

The detailed characteristics of the above stated categories of SLDs are provided in the following subsections 2.2.1 – 2.2.4, with close attention given to educational problems that arise in effect of SLDs' occurrence.

### **2.2.1 Developmental learning disorder with impairment in reading**

According to the information included in *ICD-11*, the developmental learning disorder with impairment in reading is identified as persistent difficulties in learning of the reading skill (WHO 2022a: 6A03.0). Following the explanations of the WHO, a learner's performance of the skill is significantly below his age and the expected level of education. The disorder is usually manifested by lack for reading accuracy, reading fluency and comprehension of written texts. According to the WHO's classification from 2013, this phenomenon was previously recognised in *ICD-9* as developmental dyslexia (WHO 2013: 315.02).

As it has already been outlined earlier (see section 1.1), the term dyslexia appeared as a result of the development of scientific thought and evolved in time from congenital word blindness, the term introduced by Kussmaul in 1877, via dyslexia, used for the first time in history by Berlin in 1887, and also legastenia, introduced by Ranschburg in 1916. Later, it was identified through the notions of learning disability, applied by Kirk in 1962 (Kirk and Bateman 1962: 73) and developmental dyslexia which was introduced to the cannon of terminology with *ICD-9* (WHO 2013: 315.02). More recently, a tendency to use descriptive terminology can be noticed. According to *ICD-11* dyslexia is recognised as a developmental learning disorder (WHO 2022a: 6A03.0) whereas in *DSM-5* it is classified as a specific learning disorder with impairment in reading (APA 2013: 315.00).

By analysing the roots of the term dyslexia, it can be established that the word dyslexia derives from Greek and Latin, where Greek *dus-*, means 'bad, difficult' and Latin *lego* is translated as 'read'. Combination of the two can be interpreted as difficulties in the reading skill. According to M. Bogdanowicz (2003: 362) the label of dyslexia, though replaced with descriptive terminology in accordance to the tendency of recent years, is still of common use in scientific, professional and contemporary language. As M.

Bogdanowicz (2003: 36) further explains, dyslexia has two dimensions. In its first, broad understanding it refers to SLDs conditioned by impaired development of visual, auditory-linguistic, tactile-kinaesthetic functions related to attention disorders, perception, memory, and perceptual-motor integration what results in difficulties not only with the reading skill but also with written expression and doing mathematical calculations. In its second, narrow sense, dyslexia is described by M. Bogdanowicz (2003: 36) as a verbal learning disorder of decoding and comprehending written language, what can be simply interpreted as a reading disability. Within this sense, the problem of dyslexia also refers to problems with the following: first, correct application of spelling rules, known as orthographic dyslexia or dysorthography; secondly, graphic representation of letters recognised as dysgraphia or a writing disorder. It is important to notice that in its narrow understanding, dyslexia does not encompasses difficulties in arithmetic and mathematics, recognised as dyscalculia.

For the purposes described in the present dissertation, the author decides to adopt the broad definition of dyslexia. The choice is justified by the fact that modern integrated teaching of foreign languages that encompasses elements of various school subjects, may also include elements of mathematical calculations, especially if performed with the use of such approaches as task based learning or content and language integrated learning. For better understanding of the nature of dyslexia, its most common symptoms as well as problems related to this disorder are subjected to a discussion below and presented in the following order: reading difficulties, oral and written language problems, and problems with mathematical calculations.

According to the existing scientific knowledge about dyslexia and pursuant to data provided by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA 2014: 3-4) young individuals are usually recognised as dyslectic due to delayed development of talk in their mother tongue, difficulty in correct pronunciation and acquisition of words. Later at the school age, dyslectic children demonstrate difficulties in accuracy and fluency of reading, as well as comprehension of the read texts. Kormos and Smith (2012: 73) inform that the problems occur due to poor phonological processing and phoneme awareness, and are manifested as much in first language (L1) as in the second one (L2). It needs to be explained that the issue of phonological awareness addresses the understanding that graphemes (written representations of letters) are directly related to phonemes (letter sounds). The problem can be demonstrated on the example of English language. Following Miles and Miles (1999: 45), English language is characterised as a less

transparent language, rich in both diagraphs, e.g. *sh, ch, ph, th*, and diphthongs, e.g. */ou/, /ie/, /ai/*, where there is no direct correlation between the grapheme and the phoneme. As K. Bogdanowicz (2011: 95-96) rightly notices, in case of the English language twenty six letters are represented by forty four phonemes. Therefore, a phoneme can be expressed by more than one letter, and the same letter can be pronounced differently depending on its position in a word. Thus, differences between graphemes and phonemes, and additionally orthographic differences between learners' mother tongue and the target language, as well as insufficient knowledge of syntax may generate problems in word recognition not only in L1 but also in L2.

Further, as K. Bogdanowicz (2011: 96) explains, the impairment in reading, manifested by inaccurate and influent performance of reading tasks, is also accompanied by misinterpretation of concepts. Dyslexic learners, similarly to dysphasic ones, are often confused with ordering, sequencing and remembering things and concepts such as *top-bottom, right-left, before-after*. For the same reason, for instance, dyslexics find learning the alphabet, giving directions and following instructions challenging.

As a result of their poor phonological and phonemic awareness, dyslexics with impairment in reading recognise rhymes, count syllables in words and distinguish particular sounds in words with difficulty. Words containing vowel or consonant clusters are misspelled as learners omit or reverse letters in them (Kormos and Smith 2012: 76). What is more, they have problems with remembering letter shapes, confusing especially those which have similar structural representation, like *p-b, p-g, s-z, b-d, a-o, l-t, k-h, m-n, m-w*. In the reading process the dyslexics are slow, often misread and omit words or transpose the order of letters (Zakrzewska 1981: 435). Reading in a foreign language is an additional challenge for dyslexic learners, as even correct recognition of sounding of words does not guarantee that their meaning is available to the readers. Kormos and Smith (2012: 72) explain that learners with SLDs have reduced capacity of phonological short-term memory which is a results of limited number of verbal units such as phonemes, morphemes or even full words that the learner can hold in memory while reading the text. Problems with phonological processing hinder successful reading comprehension directly, however, they also cause L2 learning more difficult indirectly as they may limit learners' capacity to acquire L2 vocabulary. As a result learners' with this type of SLDs are perceived as disadvantaged, slow and lacking knowledge. Their vocabulary does not increase fast as they read less and slower than others. On the other hand, by reading the dyslexic have fewer chances to extend their L2 vocabulary (Stanovich 2000: 61-62).

Finally, the aforementioned reduced capacity of phonological short-term memory may also account for problems with remembering verbally provided information in accurate and orderly manner and influence learners' ability to perform spoken tasks (Kormos and Smith 2012: 78). As it can be seen, difficulties in reading comprehension may also initiate other language learning problems with listening, speaking and writing skills.

### **2.2.2 Developmental learning disorder with impairment in written expression**

Impairment in reading may be accompanied by problems within the writing skill as the dyslexic learners make a lot of spelling and orthographic mistakes, which also influence grammatical correctness and the aesthetics of written expressions (Westwood 2004: 106). The WHO recognises the impairment as a developmental disorder and defines it as persistent difficulties which affect an individual's ability to learn academic skills related to writing (WHO 2022a: 6A03.1). Chung et al. (2020: 46) add that the disorder occurs regardless of an individual's sufficient cognitive potential and learning opportunity. More precisely, learners impaired in written expression experience difficulties in spelling and punctuation accuracy, grammar, as well as organisation and coherence of ideas in their written works. Similarly to the dyslexics impaired in reading, their performance in written expression is noticeably below the expected level of achievement and inadequate to their age. According to a previous classification of the WHO, *ICD-9*, the problem was recognised under a term of dysgraphia (or agraphia), identified with a code 784.69 (WHO 2013: 784.69). This term is still used by scientists, educators and experts in the field, though they notice that the descriptive definition of this developmental disorder suggests a broader meaning than the term dysgraphia itself, as it does not concentrate only on graphic aspects of the issue (Chung et al. 2020: 47).

It is believed that the primary mechanism of dysgraphia is related to inefficient communication between the phonologic memory and the orthographic memory, which Chung et al. (2020: 47) call the 'graphomotor loop'. Zawadzka-Bartnik (2010: 218) notices that the disorder may also result from impaired verbal executive functioning which refers to functioning of storage and working memory. Westwood (2004: 106) states that dysgraphia is related to problems with phonological coding, lateralisation and poor hand-eye coordination. For these reasons, dyslexic learners often manifest difficulties in speaking. They tend to omit certain phonemes in pronunciation of words as a result of

difficulties in distinguishing phonemes in listening comprehension tasks (Makarewicz 2006: 19). Dyslexics also find it difficult to differentiate the phonemes with similar sounding, what in turn has an influence on their written representation (Zawadzka-Bartnik 2010: 219). Further, according to explanations provided by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA 2014: 5), learners with dysgraphia present poor fine motor skills, write slow, often with both hands interchangeably. They also have problems to remember and copy kinaesthetic movements to form letters. Their handwriting is messy, as Jaworska (2013: 82-83) explains, they show tendency to misplace, omit or add unnecessary letters in words. Their handwriting is often illegible, with mixture of printed and cursive letters, spaced inconsistently within words. Letters slope differently, are uneven in shapes and size (Westwood 2004: 103). What is more, written texts of learners with dysgraphia lack punctuation, as well as correct use of capital letters.

Apart from its impact on fine motor skills, the impairment in written expression also has an influence on gross motor skills. Westwood (2004: 103) reports that learners with dysgraphia make impression of being disorganised, chaotic and messy. As she explains, it is so, as learners with dysgraphia find planning, generating ideas and expressing them in a written form difficult. Lack of organisational skills further inhibits the sustainable acquisition of target language grammar. Kormos and Smith (2012: 72) explain that learners with dysgraphia may first of all find certain grammatical concepts difficult to understand and follow. Secondly, they may have problems with serial processing of the presented grammatical concepts as they lack an ability to remember verbal material in the order presented to them. It explains why learners with SLDs manifest errors in applying word-order rules. M. Bogdanowicz (2004: 78-80) also draws attention to the fact that learners with dysgraphia often learn foreign languages with difficulties as their linguistic knowledge and previous language learning experience interfere with the rules of the additionally learnt language, and inability to organise and systematise knowledge of L2, precludes learners with dysgraphia from successful foreign language learning process.

To sum up, all of the characterised symptoms of the developmental disorder with impairment in written expression are manifested on the educational ground from its early stages. The enlisted symptoms often overlap and occur together with the impairment in reading, listening and even speaking skills, what additionally multiplies learning difficulties. For learners with this type of SLDs, foreign language learning resembles moving in a specific linguistic loop of difficulties where reading problems prevent



vocabulary extension; lack of well-developed vocabulary, together with poor grammatical and lexical quality of applied structures and words, impinge on the quality of written texts; and written texts are hardly comprehensible due to both, their chaotic construction and often illegible shape of letters. It is not surprising then, that the disordered learners lack internal motivation to learn a foreign language as they often detest the writing skill and tend to avoid written works. By the same, they expose themselves to criticism and to be mislabelled as lazy. Such a situation, badly affects their self-perception and self-esteem and negatively influences their correct social functioning.

### **2.2.3 Developmental learning disorder with impairment in mathematics**

Much as children seem to be pre-programmed to develop language at the preschool age, they also demonstrate the capacity to acquire quantitative features. As Westwood (2004: 117) states, young learners show their understanding of numbers, counting and simple arithmetic, whether instructed or not. Ansari (2008: 279) explains that this developmental learning disorder with impairment in mathematics is a kind of SLDs that is believed to be caused by a disruption between the activity of the intra parietal sulcus, located in the parietal lobe of the brain, and numerical distance. According to the characteristics provided by the WHO, this type of SLDs influences severely individual's academic skills which include problems with "number sense, memorization of number facts, accurate calculation, fluent calculation, and accurate mathematic reasoning" (WHO 2022a: 6A03.2). Pursuant to the WHO, this developmental learning disorder was previously referred to as dyscalculia (WHO 2013: 315.1). Sudha and Shalini (2014: 912) also inform that apart from the term dyscalculia, the problem is often addressed as acalculia or number blindness, what confirms the fact that it is perceived as a part of the broad term of dyslexia. Although this disorder is not directly related to foreign language learning, it must be noticed that due to currently followed goals of the integrated education, English language is a tool in learning particular school subjects and integrated skills at the primary level of education. For instance, the disordered learners who perform arithmetic tasks at lessons conducted with the use of some approaches, where the target language is the language of communication, may manifest their dyscalculic problems. Including the developmental learning disorder with impairment in mathematics into SLDs is also appropriate with the view to the aforementioned definition of SLDs provided in the *IDEA*

(U.S. DE 2004: *IDEA*, Part 300.8/c/10) and the broad understanding of the term dyslexia, given by M. Bogdanowicz (2003: 262). Also Chung et al. (2020: 47) notice that according to DSM-5, developmental disorders of dysgraphia and dyscalculia are in fact included under the SLD category and not defined as separate disorders.

Apart from general learning difficulties in arithmetic calculations, dyscalculic learners also face other learning problems which refer to wrong understanding of the meaning of numbers, remembering math facts, solving mathematical problems, making patterns, and performing tasks in geometry (Suhda and Shalini 2014: 912). Looi and Cohen Kadosh (2016: 3, 6) draw attention also to non-numerical cognitive disabilities and socio-emotional factors that affect dyscalculic individuals. As they explain, the disordered learners manifest impairment in visuo-spatial and verbal working memory and poorly apply place-value system. For example, they have problems with telling time and using money. Similarly to learners with developmental learning disorders with impairment in reading and writing, dyscalculic individuals are labelled to be slow and lazy, what additionally to their learning difficulties undermines their self-confidence and may even make them withdraw from social life. What makes matters worse is the fact that much as dyscalculia is the problem known to specialists, it is rarely recognised at early stages of education. As many notice (Looi and Cohen Kadosh 2016: 4; Grigorenko 2001: 97; Suhda and Shalini 2014: 913; Westwood 2004: 117), the initial delay in arithmetic is often interpreted as a lack of preschool experience in mathematical skills or insufficient teaching instruction.

#### **2.2.4 Developmental speech sound disorder**

Regardless of broadly understood dyslexia with inclusion of impairment in reading, writing and mathematics, there is another neurodevelopmental disorder of speech and sound, commonly recognised as dysphasia (WHO 2013: 438.12), which also affects foreign language learning. In fact, there are several reasons why dysphasia should be included into SLDs in the present dissertation. First of all, as Guardiola (2001: 3) informs, for a long period of scientific studies on SLDs, dysphasia was subjected to analysis and diagnosis together with dyslexia and recognised commonly as a learning disorder until the end of the nineteenth century. Secondly, both dyslexia and dysphasia are of a neurodevelopmental character (Guardiola 2001: 5). Thirdly, both of them seriously affect

the process of language learning and are manifested by difficulties in acquisition of language skills (WHO 2022a: 6A01.0). With reference to dysphasia, it is characterised in particular by learning difficulties in the perception, acquisition and production of spoken language. The disorder significantly affects communication, as oral skills are performed below the expected intellectual level and age of an individual. Finally, based on the definition of SLDs given by the U.S. Department of Education in *IDEA* of 2004 (U.S. DE 2004: *IDEA*, Part 300.8/c/10), as quoted in section 2.1 above, SLDs are understood commonly as disorders of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding and/ or using both spoken and written language. Therefore, analysing SLDs only from the perspective of learning difficulties in reading, writing and mathematics would be a serious negligence in the opinion of the author of the dissertation.

As to the terminology, it needs to be explained that apart from the descriptive terms used by the WHO and the APA (in *ICD-11* and *DSM-5* respectively), the term aphasia is used instead of dysphasia to address the analysed problem. It needs to be explained that according to the description of the issue in previously prevailing *ICD-10* (WHO 2016: F80.1), dysphasia is also interpreted as developmental aphasia, and thus, the use of both terms is applied interchangeably. Some researchers, however, mark a distinction between the notion of dysphasia and aphasia, claiming that, though both terms have the same causes and are manifested by the same symptoms, the term dysphasia refers to a less severe form of aphasia and is used with reference to a partial loss of language (Ralston et al. 2018: 1061; Sherratt 2020: 1227). This mild expression of aphasia is often defined as developmental type of aphasia, which is inborn and not acquired as a result of an injury (Sherratt 2020: 1227). For these reasons in the present dissertation, the term dysphasia is applied interchangeably with the notion of developmental aphasia and its descriptive terminology, as suggested by the WHO in *ICD-11*.

According to the diagnostic criteria of dysphasia, the problem is classified as a specific language impairment (SLI) of expressive and receptive language types in *DSM-5*. It is there characterised by speech deficits which have their manifestation in the production and reception of sounds, their articulation, fluency of speech, voice and resonance quality, as well as in quality of the language with reference to its forms, functions and use, what appears not to be in accordance to the established manner of communication (APA 2013, 315.39). Dockrell and Lindsay (2001: 373) confirm that this developmental disorder affects such aspects of the language system as semantics, the lexicon, phonology, pragmatics and grammar. Whereas Kormos and Smith (2012: 42)

even point out that dysphasia overlaps dyslexia as it also addresses literacy-related problems of expressive and receptive characteristics.

Regardless of the complexity of the discussed types of SLDs, as well as certain similarities between dysphasia and dyslexia, the aetiology of the developmental speech and sound disorder still remains only partially recognised. According to the characteristics of dysphasia included in *ICD-10*, it is “a genetically rooted impairment or delay in development of biological maturation of the central nervous system” (WHO 2016: F80). It means that the nature and causes of dysphasia can be multifarious, what makes its pathogenesis still not fully understood (Ardila 2014: 29). Such a perception of multiple causes of dysphasia finds its confirmation in the opinion of Njiokiktjien (1990: 126) who assumes that the pathophysiology of this disorder is age-related, manifested first in infancy by dysfunction of motor skills and auditory perception, and followed by linguistic problems combined with oral motor symptoms in the verbal period. As Njiokiktjien also notices, difficulties in language learning induced by dysphasia are the most symptomatic at the school age, what is of great importance from the educational perspective.

According to specific learning difficulties typical for dysphasic learners which affect individuals’ academic skills of productive type, Haynes et al. (2012: 389) enumerate firstly, incorrect acquisition and application of grammar rules and possession of limited expressive vocabulary. Secondly, they mention difficulty in organising words into sentences or explaining a procedure in a logical sequence. Finally, formulation of incomplete or inadequate utterances and the use of gestures to supplement oral language are mentioned as avoidance and compensatory strategies. It is suggested that the two last difficulties may derive from problems in coordinating movements of the articulators, meaning the jaw, tongue and lips, for speech acts (APA 2013: 315.39 (F80.0)). Ardila (2014: 53) reports that language abnormalities may include phonetic, verbal, phonological and/ or syntagmatic deviations, circumlocutions, neologisms, jargon, agrammatism and paragrammatism.

With reference to phonetic deviations, Ardila (2014: 54) explains that dysphasic individuals mispronounce phonemes which are recognisable but sound foreign like. Whereas according to phonological and verbal aspects of this SLDs, dysphasic learners often commit the following types of mistakes: errors of omission (e.g., *elephant - elphant*), addition (e.g., *pencil - prencil*), displacement (e.g., *black - balck*) or substitution (*present - precent*). The latter type of error may also appear in complex utterances (e.g., *the cage of the lion - the bowl of the fish*). In case of circumlocutions, a function of an

object is used in exchange of the target word (e.g., *a mug - for drinking*). The dysphasic also use neologisms, which in Ardil's (2014: 55) opinion are sometimes unrecognisable (e.g., *pencil - cartin*) and incorrect grammar forms, which often result from omission of grammatical morphemes or articles (e.g., *a boy played the piano - boy play piano*). In the opinion of Grimm (1993: 57), these sort of mistakes occur due to restrictions of short-term memory which prevent dysphasic learners from memorising longer utterances that are essential in the inductive acquisition of grammar rules. Remembering only single words from the input language, they are unable to discover speech units and apply grammar rules in logically formed sentences of their own.

As it can be seen from the above explanations, although dysphasia is a speech and sound disorder which affects severely productive skills, it also refers to difficulties in language reception. The problem relates to understanding of a language. According to Haynes et al. (2012: 390) it can be manifested by the disordered learners with short attention at oral presentations, poor listening skills, inability to recollect information presented verbally, difficulty in understanding figurative language and comprehending only simple sentences.

Both productive and receptive types of expressions of dysphasia are responsible for individuals' problems with understanding social contexts in which language is produced, and in applying turn taking appropriately (Haynes et al. 2012: 390; Kormos and Smith 2012: 43). Dłużniewska et al. (2018: 14) draw attention to deficits of dysphasic individuals in the emotional and social area, explaining that learners with this type of SLDs experience disturbances in motivational processes and perceptual distortions of social relations, what influences the process of socialisation and their efforts in achieving the educational success.

To sum up, based on descriptions of the classified SLDs, it is understandable that developmental learning disorder with impairment in reading, writing and mathematics, and developmental speech sound disorder significantly reduce the impaired individuals' chances for success in foreign language learning. In their studies, researchers in the field of SLDs, including Ardil (2014), M. Bogdanowicz (2003), Haynes et al. (2012), Kormos and Smith (2012), Njiokiktjien (1990), and Westwood (2004) underline the fact that inability to read accurately and fluently, express ideas in an organised and legible written form, operate on numbers, as well as concentrate on listening tasks, or order speech utterances in logical wholes, ruin widely understood communication and limit, if not

prevent the process of foreign language learning.

Realising the educational problems that learners with SLDs are exposed to, it is understandable that their successful education in terms of traditional methods of teaching is simply impossible or doomed to failure. In addition to the fact that SLDs cause multiple learning difficulties, it needs to be remembered that they also differ in their expression, what complicates the teaching process. To depict the scale of the problem, in table 2 below, main linguistic and non-linguistic differences between developmental learning disorder and developmental speech sound disorder are gathered and compared.

Table 3: Linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties experienced by dyslectic and dysphasic learners

	<b>Dyslexia</b>	<b>Dysphasia</b>
Linguistic difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in phoneme-grapheme correspondence</li> <li>in segmenting words into phonological units</li> <li>in word-recognition</li> <li>in speed of reading</li> <li>in spelling</li> <li>in speed of word retrieval</li> <li>in speed of speech</li> <li>in articulation of sounds</li> <li>in storing verbal material in phonological short-term memory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with phonological processing</li> <li>with inductive acquisition of grammar rules</li> <li>with limited expressive vocabulary</li> <li>in storing verbal material in phonological short-term memory</li> <li>with logical verbal expression</li> </ul>
Non-linguistic difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with handwriting</li> <li>with gross and fine motor skills</li> <li>with arithmetic</li> <li>with sustained attention</li> <li>in time-management</li> <li>in organising work</li> <li>in automatizing new skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with non-verbal cognitive tasks</li> <li>in social interactions</li> <li>in organising work</li> <li>with sustained attention</li> </ul>

As it can be noticed, SLDs affect all language skills and impede phonetic and phonological processes of language recognition. They also prevent learners from proper understanding and application of grammar rules. Of course SLDs, usually revealed at the early stages of primary education, affect learning processes of all languages that young individuals come into contact with. It also refers to English language which is usually the first second language they learn at school. SLDs undeniably rise a need for adjustment of traditional EFL teaching methods to learners' SEN. The concept of integrative

education advocated by the field specialists since the 1980s (see section 1.4) and transformed in the last two decades into inclusive education assumes that all children with SLDs can access public education on equal basis with others. This fact has its impact on educational approaches, including those towards English foreign language teaching. It also enforces changes in the education law of the European Union countries.

### **2.3 Final comments**

Medical discoveries of various causes of learning disorders allowed for their more precise distinction and categorisation, what also had an influence on further psychological and pedagogical perceptions of the discussed issues. Multiplicity and complexity of various types of learning disorders raised some vivid disputes as to the applied terminology. Achievements in the field of psychological studies led to a distinction between a general term of learning disorders which address conditions that appeared due to an individual's mental disturbance, and specific learning disorders which induce learning difficulties regardless of the learner's full mental capacity. The dispute over the categorisation and terminology still remains open, although the bodies responsible for cataloguing disorders internationally, i.e. the WHO and the APA, have recently presented a similar understanding of SLDs, as it is given in the international classifications of disorders *ICD-11* and *DSM-5*.

Intensive studies and gradual recognition of SLDs over time also resulted in an improvement of diagnostic tools used for identification of SLDs. Their development led to recognition of varieties of learning disorders, as well as various dimensions of SLDs. With reference to dyslexia, which is currently defined by the WHO with a descriptive term of developmental learning disorder (WHO 2022a: 6A03), it has been agreed that the problem can be manifested as an impairment in language skills, namely in reading, in written expression, and also in mathematics. According to dysphasia, which is also recognised under a concept of developmental aphasia or more descriptively as developmental speech sound disorder, thorough diagnosis have been performed on the basis of studies over time. According to their results, it is proved that dysphasia differs from dyslexia substantially, although initially both of these developmental disorders were researched commonly. Based on the characteristics of dyslexia and dysphasia included in *ICD-11* and *DSM-5*, both of the disorders are of neurodevelopmental nature and cause

significant learning difficulties in acquisition and managing of several functions, what also refers to acquisition of a foreign language. Regardless of the differences between dyslexia and dysphasia, similarities in their expression can be noticed especially with reference to difficulties in recognition of phonetic and phonological processes, as well as in developing academic skills of reading, listening, writing and speaking. It can be concluded that the most important problem from the perspective of foreign language education is the fact that the two disorders seriously lower learners chances for success in achieving foreign language competence. Therefore, in the following chapter of the dissertation, the modern educational perspective for learners with SLDs is presented.



## **Chapter 3: Specific learning disorders in modern educational perspective**

### **3.0 Introduction**

The distinction between learning disorders and specific learning disorders led to significant changes in the perception of individuals with SLDs. Subjected to remedial courses and clinical therapies they finally received an access to the mainstream education (see sections 1.3, 1.4). These substantial changes in approaching individuals with SLDs have been supported by systematic improvements introduced to the international and European laws and subsequently adopted into national systems of education.

From 1990s until the present time, education of learners with SLDs has gone through mind-changing cornerstones. The first one marks a shift of learners with SLDs from special to integrative education in which the greatest challenge was to fight off their discrimination. With a view to this aim, actions undertaken by the UNESCO led to popularisation of learners' special educational needs which became the indicators for the new direction in education. A decade after the introduction of integration it was noticed that although the undertaken approach integrated individuals with SLDs socially, schools failed to meet the disordered learners' educational goals. Therefore, since 2000 the integrative approach has been redirected to an inclusive one which aimed at elimination of the linear, 'one-fits-all' approach that demanded learners with SLDs to adjust to the existing educational methods and conditions. In inclusion, education is turned towards a more individualised approach that demands the adjustment of teaching methods to learners special educational needs. The adopted changes, however, require significant

improvements within the national systems of education, schools' qualities, teachers' competence and skills, and methods of teaching. Moreover, due to requirements set recently by the European Union commission, the inclusive approach is expected to evolve in the direction of so called 'education for all'. In its assumptions, further improvements in applied teaching approaches and methods have been planned, opting for the use of flexible approaches and strategies of teaching that would be convenient for all members of varied educational settings.

The present chapter is divided into two main sections which are dedicated to considerations about legal aspects of educating children with SLDs and English language teaching approaches and strategies recommended for inclusion. A detailed description of international and European provisions of law and declarations of will lodged by the European Union member states aims at better understanding of the substantial changes in approaches towards learners with SLDs. Pursuant to the presently adopted legal commitments, in the second part of the present chapter some most commonly applied methods of teaching are characterised with a view to their usability in inclusive environments. Additionally, in response to the new trend opting for 'education for all', a selection of teaching approaches and strategies that comply with the trend are presented.

Conclusions gathered as a result of the analysis of legal basis for educating learners with SLDs and characteristics of selected teaching approaches, methods and strategies, together with the results of the scientific considerations included in the first two chapters of the present dissertation, will constitute a theoretical basis for the comparative part of the study.

### **3.1 Legal aspects of educating children with SLDs**

The term special educational needs (SEN), formally developed by the UNESCO in the 1990s and outlined in section 1.2.1 herein, addresses international standards of education which are expected to be adapted to learners abilities. In this sense, SEN entered the idea of integrative approach in educating learners with SLDs. Initially, integration aimed at combating discrimination of learners with SLDs in gaining access to mainstream education (see section 1.4). Twenty years ago, however, the European member states noticed a growing demand for changes in the adopted integrative approach, turning towards full inclusion which promotes such principles as better efficiency of the

educational process for the disabled learners, as well as equality and equity of their social and educational rights (see section 1.5). The inclusive approach is revolutionary as according to its assumptions diversity is no longer a burden but an asset. As it was advocated by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE 2012: 8), educational culture in teaching cannot follow a *one-size-fits-all* education model because modern education needs an approach that would be tailored to learners' SEN. It means that instead of fitting the disabled learners into existing arrangements in order to provide them with compensatory treatment, schools are expected to develop inclusive environment that would be accessible for learners with SLDs.

As it has been discussed in section 2.1 of the present dissertation, the concept of SLDs is a complex medical and social problem, what has an influence on implementation of the inclusive approach in education. The systematic changes in legislation are introduced on the basis of international, European Union and national efforts, all of which unanimously support equal rights of all individuals independently of their abilities.

Below, the most valuable legal aspects of educating learners with SLDs are presented with reference to international and European Union acts that initiated changes in existing approaches to education and have an impact on the present educational situation of learners with SLDs.

### **3.1.1 Specific learning disorders in international acts and declarations**

According to the first *World Report on Disability* issued by the WHO in 2011, about 15 per cent of the world's population, that is more than one billion people, live with some form of disability (WHO 2011: 11). In 2012, the European health and social integration survey revealed that there were more than 70.0 million people in Europe aged 15 and over that had disabilities (Eurostat 2015). The data gathered by WHO shows that nowadays disability is interpreted not as an illness or physical injury, but as the social issue, arising from barriers that the disabled meet in their everyday lives (WHO 2011: 22). Such perception of the problem finds its confirmation in many international documents in which attention is drawn to the disabled living conditions, their mobility, access and participation in education, training and the labour market, and independence in social contacts. Therefore, the United Nations recognise the need to take systematic measures to improve accessibility and equality of opportunity for the disabled by promoting their

inclusion, suiting their SENs and increasing respect for their autonomy and dignity (WHO 2011: 22).

From the historical perspective, the level of social awareness about disabilities has been first given effect in the international law beginning with the year 1948. The *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was the first formal document in which the rights and equal access to education was admitted to each individual, including their right to participate freely in cultural life of the community and the right to protect the moral and material interests (UN 1948: Art. 28). At that time, however, children with specific learning disorders were still considered in formal national documents as imbeciles, idiots, uneducable backwards or children with defect of mind and as such were directed for special education (Tomlinson 2012: 59-61). Much later in 1976, the 94<sup>th</sup> Congress of the United States of America introduced amendments to *The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975* by issuing Public Law 94-142 (U.S. Congress 1976) that assured educational assistance to all handicapped children. Five years later governmental powers of the United Kingdom launched *The Education Act of 1981* (U.K. Public General Acts 1981) in which terms and conditions for SENs and learning difficulties were expressed. The issue of SLDs was then internationally strengthened by the United Nations (UN) declaring the year 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons. With the resolution 37/53 of 3 December 1982, the UN General Assembly adopted *The Programme of Action* concerning the rights of the disabled. The programme emphasised equal rights of the disabled and defined disability as “a function of the relationship between persons with disabilities and their environment” (UN Resolution A/RES/37/53 1996, sec. 6), stressing the social construction of the issue. Later, in the 1990s, *The World Declaration on Education for All* was developed by the UNESCO at the World Conference in Jomtien, Thailand. In its content, frames for governments, international organisations, and educators were outlined, setting the rule of design and execution of policies and strategies that would improve education services. It also imposed a demand on governmental authorities to put effort in meeting the basic educational needs of disadvantaged population groups. In Article 1 of the declaration, the UN member states agreed on what follows:

Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work

in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.  
(UNESCO 1990, Art. 1)

The declaration clearly defined educational problems that individuals with SLDs struggled with and emphasised the necessity for organisation of the process of education in a manner that would be adequate for the disabled abilities and special education needs. Further, in Article 3, sec. 5 of the said declaration special education needs were given close attention. According to its provisions, the disabled were guaranteed equal access to education which turned to be perceived as an integral part of the education system. These decisions gave beginning to a new education standard of integration.

The issue of educating learners with SEN was further proceeded by the United Nations member states at the International Conference in Warsaw in 1993. As a result, the UN *Resolution on Standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities* of 1994 was enacted. Rule 6 of the resolution referred to the necessity for the development of strategies that would enable learners with SEN to access education on the basis of integration with other participants of the educational process (UN Resolution A/RES/48/96). The resolution became a pattern to follow for more than 300 participants representing 92 governments, 25 international governmental organisation, senior education officials, administrators, policy-makers and specialists. Consequently, in 1994 the UNESCO adopted *the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. With reference to its content, apart from the confirmation of previous decisions referring to the equal right to education for all, the Statement emphasised individual and unique characteristics of every learner and the need for developing a learner-centred approach in teaching. It is important to notice, that in this sense, the document proclaimed an inclusive approach towards individuals with disabilities rather than an integrative one. The term inclusion, however, was not formally in use until the year 2000 (UNESCO 2003: 4). The integrative attitude towards education assumed adjustment of education systems and programmes to special needs of learners with various disabilities, as well as their free access to regular schools with integrative orientation. The parties contracting *The Salamanca Statement* were of the opinion that such form of integration would combat discriminatory attitudes, support the construction of an integrated society and provide effective education (UNESCO 1994: Art. 2,3). New thinking in special needs education aimed at setting favourable conditions for learners with SLDs to achieve equal opportunities and full participation in the educational process

that required common effort of teachers, school staff, peers, parents and families. The declaration not only set new standards of education, but it also indicated forms of support for their successful implementation. In Art. 10 of the document, it was proclaimed that children with SLDs, as well as their teachers, should receive extra support from suitably staffed and equipped resource centres.

Regardless of the initial success of the integrative approach, at the beginning of 2000's, it was noticed that the set direction in education demanded thorough modifications as it turned out to be insufficient to meet SEN of the disabled learners. At the Dakar World Education Forum organised by the UNESCO in 2000, the term inclusion in education exchanged the integrative approach and was formally proclaimed to be introduced to the policies of United Nations' countries. The basic document in which this significant change was initially declared is known as the *Lisbon Strategy*, and had been issued earlier the same year by the European Commission, (EC 2000b, Art. 24). The newly approved approach assumed an inclusive model of education which aimed at complete elimination of social exclusion and barriers in education. According to the suggested changes, it was also assumed that schools would adjust their methods of teaching to learners' cognitive abilities. By the same a success in education became measured by the effects of learners' individual sustained development rather than the achievement of the required levels of educational progress.

Due to difficulties in implementation of the new inclusive approach, six years after the acceptance of the *Lisbon Strategy* by the United Nations, the *UN Convention on the Rights and People with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) was adopted. It entered into force in May 2008 and according to its postulates the detailed rules of inclusion were proclaimed. In particular, the Convention assumed what follows: the need to promote the awareness of the capabilities of people with disabilities (UN 2008: Art. 8), the need to respect and recognise the disabled right to access education on a basis of equality and equity, as well as the need to combat stereotypes and prejudices (UN 2008: Art.24). Although the Convention was not mandatory for its signatories, countries that entered into it committed themselves to adopt the inclusive approach into their national laws so that equal rights of disabled persons to educate, find employment and participate in cultural life would be respected. To support signatory countries in their efforts for inclusion, the UNESCO issued *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education*, stressing the importance of inclusive approach in education for achieving social equity (UNESCO 2009: 4). In 2016, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued the *General Comments to*

*the UNCPRD* which referred to the realisation of its postulates. General comment No. 4 referred to Art. 24 of UNCPRD which addressed the right of people with disabilities to inclusive education. The alarming message emerging from general comment No. 4 was that discrimination and barriers towards learners with SLDs still existed. These barriers impeded inclusion and disclosed lack of knowledge and understanding about the nature and advantages of inclusive education (UN 2016: 1-2).

Independently of *the UNCPRD* report, in September 2015, 193 member states of the United Nations, participating in the General Assembly Summit signed the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (UN 2015) decided to take further steps for inclusion, setting an international framework for the disability-inclusive development. In particular, seventeen sustainable development goals (SDG) were established, each referring to different objectives. By accepting the 2030 agenda, the UN member states agree to undertake all possible steps and remove existing barriers that prevent full inclusion in the fields of economy, education, transportation, socialisation and others by the year 2030. Among the set SDG, the fourth addresses educational problems and aims at ensuring inclusive high quality education, equal for all, as well as at promotion of lifelong learning opportunities available to all individuals regardless of their disabilities (UN 2015: 19). There are several actions to be taken in the field of education by the national governments that are outlined in the SDG4. The greatest of them point at amendments in national policies and law, reforms of national systems of education, adoption of a learner-centred-pedagogy that would enable recognition of learners' unique needs, organisation of teacher and education specialist training for their full understanding of the inclusive approach, and also engagement of local communities in promotion of inclusion (UN 2015: 19-20).

Regrettably, in the UN report of 2023 on transformations in education by the year 2022, it has been revealed that the field of education confronts a dramatic crisis (UN 2023: 1). Firstly, instead of equity inclusion, it is reported that in some countries children are still excluded from the mainstream education due to no improvements in the law and national policy. Secondly, the current systems of education have been proved to fail to teach young generations the knowledge, values and skills that would be adequate to the expectations of the complex world (UN 2023: 1). Member states were also criticised by the UN Secretary-General for making education *a great divider*, outdated, with narrow curricula, underpaid and poorly trained staff that focuses on rote learning (UN 2022).

The dramatic situation within the field of education is still believed to be

transformed. For example, in September 2023, the United Nations gathered at a following SDG Summit in New York, where leaders of the member states were expected to revise the development progress (UN 2023: 1-2). However, it is important to notice that countries which committed themselves to fulfil the UN SDGs, are expected to implement them successfully by the year 2030.

### **3.1.2 Specific learning disorders in documents of the European Union**

The initiative to develop integration in education on the European ground was taken by the European Union member states in 1990 as a consequence of *The World Declaration on Education for All* by the UNESCO (UNESCO 1990). The document, accepted as Resolution 90/C 162/02 of the Council and the Ministers for Education concerned integration of children and young people with disabilities into national mainstream systems of education. In its policy, the Council drew attention to the rights of the disabled and advocated an integrative approach in schooling that was believed to fit the existing systems of education.

In 1996, due to an initiative of the Danish Government, an Agency for Development of Special Needs Education was established by the European Council within *the European Commission's Helios II Programme* (EC 1993). The main objectives of the agency were to promote quality in the field of SEN, serve national governments as a consulting body in analysing and reviewing policy developments, as well as facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience between the member states. It also conducted international research in the field of integration and developed reports for the European Commission.

To support common efforts in implementing integration into national policies, in October 1997, another international act was signed by the EU member states in Amsterdam. It was *The Treaty of Amsterdam* (EUC 1997) in which a strategy for amendments in the EU law popularising integration was postulated. Further in the same year, the European Disabled Forum (EDF) was set with its headquarters in Brussel to represent the rights and needs of the disabled, what additionally strengthened the promotion of integration. This non-governmental organisation functions until the present day and represents the interests of more than 100 million Europeans with disabilities and associates national organisations of the kind, including Polish Forum of Disabled Persons



(PFON) set in 2003 (EDF 2021).

Regardless of the international efforts to integrate the disabled socially and culturally on equal basis with others, in 2000 it became clear that integration was performed below the expected results, what was specifically described in a *Joint report on social inclusion summarising the results of the examination of the national action plans for social inclusion 2003-2005* (EC 2004). Therefore, immediate steps were needed to be taken on the international level. Yet in the same year, at the Lisbon Summit, the European Commission adopted the *Lisbon Strategy* (see section 3.1.1) which accounted for a complex reform of the EU economic and social policy. The main objectives included in the agenda referred to an improvement of the employment rate, development of social goals, and combating social exclusion. In relation to education, promotion of life-long learning, including foreign language learning, on the basis of inclusive approach was proclaimed (EC 2000a: Art. 32).

Due to the problems with the previously adopted integrative approach and laconic factual changes in national policies related to the newly established inclusion, as well as poor implementation of the latter into the national social and education systems of the EU member states, two years after the *Lisbon Strategy* additional remedial steps were undertaken. As a result in 2003, *Madrid Declaration* on non-discrimination and positive action in social inclusion was signed by over 600 participants of The European Congress on People with Disabilities (ECD 2003). It proclaimed year 2003 as the European Year of People with Disabilities and its aim was to raise public awareness of the rights of over 50 million Europeans with disabilities. In eight points, its signatories suggested how inclusion should be executed by the EU Member States with reference to anti-discrimination legislation, changes in social attitudes, support services that promote independent living and help for families of disabled people (ECD 2003: Art. 3.1-3.7). The Declaration emphasised social independence of the disabled whose subjectivity demanded governments to engage more thoroughly in decision-making and progress around the previously set objectives for equity and inclusion (ECD3: Art. 3.8).

The following years mark the implementation and execution of the *EU Disability Action Plan for the years 2004-2010* to combat disability discrimination which aimed at framing the disabled access to workplaces, employment terms and conditions (EUC 2003). In the *Action Plan 2004-2010*, high cooperation between member states was assumed which aimed at creating conditions fostering promotion of people with disabilities in social and economic fields. One of the priority areas of intervention referred

to lifelong learning which would facilitate the disabled better personal development and adaptability, as well as easier access to employment. A lot of attention was given to the use of new technologies which were believed to ensure equal opportunities and empower individuals with disabilities to become more efficient in communication (EUC 2003: 3.1). The six-year-plan also demanded the member states to maximise their co-operation in exchanging information and transferring good practices in managing disability issues, as well as enforced an opening of the European Special Needs Education Agency as an expertise body (EUC 2003: 4.1.1, 4.1.3).

Development of the adopted in the *Lisbon Strategy* inclusive approach and its further implementation in the adopted *Action Plan 2004-2010* were subjected to an analysis at the end of its period. According to the results of the analysis, it was established that some countries, turned not to be successful in promoting the idea of life-long learning (Rodriguez et al. 2010: 70). Despite the international efforts, it was reported that in all European member states disabled people were still subjected to discrimination via distancing manifested through avoidance of contact or lack of emotional engagement, devaluation via negative stereotypes, de-legitimisation via consolidation of adverse provisions of legal regulations, and segregation (Zawadzka-Bartnik 2010: 18).

In 2007, the European Council adopted the *Treaty of Lisbon* (EC 2007) which was based on a declaration developed by youths from 29 countries (including representations from all EU member states) who met at the fourth Convention of Higher Education Institutions of European University Association (EUA) in Lisbon to debate on education and issues referred to inclusion. Individuals with disabilities, aged between 16-21, declared their rights to be respected as independent students and given equal opportunities for self-development, including the necessary support to meet their needs. They also expressed views on improvements in their education concerning accessibility to buildings, computer technology and digital books, as well as the fact that disability was becoming more noticeable in society (EUA 2007: Art. 1). Moreover, they drew attention to educational needs which demanded improvement and included more time to fulfil tasks and exam papers, presence of a personal assistants in classes, better access to adapted materials, books and equipment at the same time with their classmates. It was noticed that teachers needed to enlarge their knowledge of disabilities as sometimes they showed negative attitude towards disabled learners (EUA 2007: Art. 3). With reference to inclusive approach in education, the youths declared it to be the best and most suitable form of education that allows on extending knowledge and developing social skills. They

justified that inclusion creates opportunities for gaining skills and experiences on the basis of interaction with friends and brings positive effects for all learners (EUA 2007: Art. 4).

Activities of EUA and the continuing need for promotion of inclusion were convincing for the European Parliament and the Council to declare the year 2007 the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All – towards a just society (EC 2007: Art. 1). The European Union aimed at raising awareness of a solidarity-based society. An across-the-board attitude was stressed bidding the member states to develop and implement legislation on equality and non-discrimination. It can be stated that beginning with the European Council decision, the concept of inclusion was actually implemented. Undertaking decisive steps towards inclusion find their confirmation in Art. 6 of the said European Council decision, according to which each country of the European Union were obliged to immediate designation or establishment of a body that would take responsibility for defining a national strategy for implementing the inclusive approach and that would consult and cooperate closely with national organisations fighting off discrimination and social inequality (EC 2007: Art. 6).

The term inclusion was later used in *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training 2009/C 119/02* planned up to the year 2020, in which it goes far beyond the issue of disability, addressing complexity and diversity of modern societies. First of all, it was stressed again that the diversity is no longer a burden but an asset which helps prepare individuals for life in multicultural societies (EC 2009: objectives 1, 2). Secondly, the Council set four objectives of the adopted inclusive approach: enabling lifelong learning, improving the quality and efficiency of education, promoting equity and social cohesion, and enhancing creativity and innovation (EC 2009: objectives 1-4). To achieve these goals the European Commission has launched educational initiatives for the disabled such as the European Social Fund, and appointed the former European Agency for Development of Special Needs Education, acting since 2014 under the name of European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE 2020: 5), to be the central consulting body for prompt and productive cooperation of national institutions responsible for implementation of the inclusive approach (EC 2009: annex 2). These support bodies focus on activities that promote quality in the field of special needs and inclusive education, and identify factors that support progress in integration, providing member states with guidance and information. What is interesting, themes to explore within the Agency's *Work Programme 2017* included, amongst other, inclusive early childhood education, the changing role of special

schools and support for inclusive school leadership (EASNIE 2017: 31, 52, 61). The Agency's activities followed the European Council agreed priorities, targeting to reduce school drop-out rates to below 10 per cent, removing at least 20 million people from the risk of poverty and exclusion, as well as improving the quality and efficiency of inclusive education and training (EASNIE 2017: 17).

As a result of the undertaken steps, in 2011 education ministers from all European Union countries agreed that high-quality inclusive approach is the key factor for successful education of learners with disabilities (EASNIE 2017: 29). It was also stressed that inclusive early education allowed for prompt detection of SLDs and early intervention and had an impact on better educational outcomes throughout lifelong learning (EASNIE 2017: 29-30). In order to achieve and maintain high-quality of the inclusive approach in each member state, European Commission identified seven targets that are subjected to systematic evaluation and include: a level of the child's development, staff professional performance, quality of the education service, compliance with respective regulations, curriculum attainment, parent satisfaction and working conditions (OECD 2012: 307). The third of the set targets, concerning service quality is described by the EASNIE as requiring special attention and constant monitoring (EASNIE 2017: 70). It is explained to happen due to the fact that, regardless of undertaken efforts in providing equal access to education on the national level, there are still barriers, such as insufficient policies or resources, which prevent proper application of high quality services for learners with SLDs.

In 2015 the European Council and the Commission issued a report on the implementation of the adopted strategic framework for education (ECC 2015) in which the hitherto execution of the targeted goals was summarised and followed by main challenges concerning the priorities set for the future. The Council and the Commission found that areas which still require improvement relate to high-quality knowledge, skills and competences that are attainable only through development of lifelong learning (ECC 2015: C 417/27). Further, it was stressed that inclusive education needs to be better implemented from early levels of education by application of innovative methods of education, such as for instance content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and task based learning (TBL) which allow for good recognition of skills which facilitate learning (see chapter 3, sec. 3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.2). What is more, investments in national systems of education, including development of strong forms of support for teachers and other educational staff were listed. In particular, it was underlined that the new educational

perspective is very demanding for teachers who are expected to combine in practice the subject matter, pedagogy and practice.

According to the last of the reported issues, in 2018 the EASNIE launched a project for teacher professional learning for inclusion (TPL). The project was divided into two phases. The first phase was complemented in 2020 and aimed at exploration and analysis of national policies on TPL for inclusion (EASNIE 2019: 12). The second phase started in 2021 and focused on the profile of inclusive teachers (EASNIE 2019: 10). Among the goals of the second phase the Agency (EASNIE 2019: 12-13) included: control over teachers' professional qualifications that qualify them for inclusive education, strengthening of teaching skills with respect to teachers' involvement in co-teaching, planning and developing teaching materials collaboratively. The Agency also drew attention to diverse professional learning opportunities available for teachers, the aim of which is to prepare teachers of various educational groups for work in the inclusive environment (EASNIE 2019: 14). The final assessment of the strategic framework was planned in the year 2022 in which year the Agency issued a report on the profile for inclusive teacher professional learning. The report is considered to be a guidebook for the member states in developing competence for inclusive education. Among its essential features the EASNIE enumerates a need to connect education professionals, share teacher and school perspective and use a values-based approach (EASNIE 2022: 18-22). With reference to these features, it is reported that teachers are committed to learners' achievements however they are expected to collaborate with each other, parents and other educational professionals, such as support teachers, teacher educators and school leaders, in order to develop a truly inclusive educational conditions valuing learner diversity (EASNIE 2022: 25). Further, the advocated value-based approach demands significant changes in national systems of education. The national governments are expected to develop cultures and policies that impact on inclusive education, insist on a use of strategies that fight off non-inclusive attitudes and model inclusion-friendly social relationships (EASNIE 2022: 26). In the report, also a need for a change in the inclusive role of schools is stressed. Schools are perceived to be institutions that are directly responsible for the development of quality and equality in education for all (EASNIE 2022: 26).

The completed in 2022 project has recently been replaced by a new action plan on integration and inclusion for the years 2021-2027 (EUC 2020). Approved by the European Commission in 2020, it assumes further construction of inclusive societies for

all. Its key principles in education cover the issues of inclusion for all regardless of individual disabilities, anti-discrimination attitude and targeted support (EUC 2020: 5-6). According to the outlined conditions of the education for all, national authorities are expected to undertake steps to ensure that mainstream schools are open for all individuals and that didactic methods are inclusive for all, mindful of learners' individual needs (EUC 2020: 6). Moreover, children with SEN are expected to have an access to additional educational support granted whenever it is needed in their best interest.

Following the key principles of the newest action plan, it can be concluded that inclusion is perceived to be a non-avoidable approach in modern education that demands comprehensible and accessible learning programmes. The European Commission puts emphasis on its thorough implementation via changes in national systems of education, aiming to achieve a change in mentality of their societies.

### **3.2 Recommended foreign language teaching approaches and strategies for learners with SLDs**

Amendments in the national systems of education demand certain modifications in the applied methods of teaching. The problem how to approach learners with SLDs has been a dilemma of great importance also to foreign language teachers. Traditionally, a choice of a teaching method is determined by numerous factors, among which the basic ones involve course objectives, learners' age and level of advancement, course materials and their teachability, as well as compatibility between the course content, curriculum and a chosen method. With the view to inclusion, however, in their choice of a method, teachers have to remember primarily about its suitability for learners' individual educational needs.

In the light of the assumptions of the inclusive approach in education, also English language teaching methods are expected to be adjusted to the needs of all learners. As it is explained by Katz and Mirenda (2002: 15), the inclusive methods of teaching are beneficial to all learners who are exposed to new educational opportunities and who in exchange are offered improved values and attitudes towards human diversity, more developed interpersonal skills, as well as greater maturity, self-confidence and self-esteem. There is some doubt, however, if the existing methods of foreign language teaching are compliant with the requirements of the inclusive approach.

In order to respond to this question, in the present section, a selection of most commonly recognised and applied English language teaching methods are outlined with the view to their characteristic features, teacher and learners' roles and a use of didactic sources. Each of them is summarised with attention given to their possible applicability in inclusive environments. Among the analysed methods there are a traditional method, a direct method, an audio-lingual method, a communicative language approach, a total physical response and a silent way method. Moreover, in response to the set requirements of the inclusive approach, in section 3.2.2 attention is given to the methods and strategies of teaching foreign languages that are recommended for inclusive environments. They encompass task based learning (TBL), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), a ludic strategy and a concept of universal learning design. The analysis of their characteristic features is focused on their applicability and suitability for teaching young learners with SLDs.

### **3.2.1 Popular educational approaches towards English language teaching to young learners**

#### **3.2.1.1 The traditional method**

The traditional method towards language teaching derives from a grammar-translation method which in the nineteenth century was a standard way of teaching foreign languages. Patterned on the study of Latin and Greek, the method puts the burden of responsibility on the shoulder of the teacher who is the knower and information provider for his students (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011: 23). Initially, the method was used for helping learners to develop the reading skill in order to appreciate foreign language literature (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011: 23). Rather monotonous lessons were teacher-centred, based on reading and translation of longer literary texts, accompanied by explicit grammar and vocabulary explanation. As Richards and Rodgers (2016: 6) inform, the grammar-translation method had dominated the way foreign languages had been taught until 1940s and although it was later exposed to severe criticism, its modified version is still in use, identified as the traditional method.

The most characteristic features of this method include teacher dominated

interaction with students, with seldom student to student exchanges, decontextualised rote learning of vocabulary based on memorisation of words, as well as, deductive teaching of grammar structures supported by accuracy drills (Harmer 2007: 63). Language learning is based on development of receptive skills, whereas the spoken language is given little if any attention. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 23), in the traditional method, the native language is used for class instruction and generally no attention is paid to the target language pronunciation. Vocabulary is explained on the basis of translation into learners' mother tongue and practiced with the use of memorisation techniques. Learners are expected to reach linguistic perfection through accuracy exercises, i.e. drills, based on repetition, transformation and translation techniques. The teacher is perceived as an authoritarian knower and the main source of information. According to Zhou and Niu (2015: 798), the teacher is not required to possess specialised skills, however he must have a good knowledge about the language.

The traditional method may turn to be very demanding for the learners. Richards and Rodgers (2016: 4-5) notice that the learners in the traditional method are very passive, awaiting knowledge to be passed to them from the teacher. Not surprisingly, the traditional language learning courses are remembered with distaste by school attenders, quite contrary to their teachers, who appreciate the traditional method for its explicitness.

Following the traditional method can be beneficial for learners who desire to extend their knowledge about the target language and who expect to develop their translation skills. The presence of the learners' mother tongue at lessons diminishes ambiguity, eases unnecessary tension and saves time needed for explanation. Moreover, the method does not require diverse didactic materials or multimedia sources to be applied. Unfortunately, its drawbacks seem to advantage the benefits. Only two language skills are in the centre of attention, whereas oral communication, listening comprehension and pronunciation practice are ignored. Also, the didactic sources are rather unattractive and vocabulary is presented out of functional context. Richards and Rodgers (2016: 6) stress that the traditional method lacks a theory as it is neither linguistically nor psychologically rooted. Additionally, Zhou and Niu (2015: 799) underline that the traditional method can be beneficial only for advanced, rather adult learners of the target language. Unfortunately, as many (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 6, Zhou and Niu 2015: 799, Kim 2008: 332) agreeably notice, attractiveness of the method lies in its simplicity of application and low requirements of teaching skills, what makes its choice tempting for many teachers of English.



Summarising, the traditional method is not recommended to be used with learners with SLDs, nor with any young learners as it inhibits their natural zest for communication and well-balanced development that is possible only when learners are active members of the learning process.

### **3.2.1.2 The direct method**

Since it was discovered that the grammar translation method failed to build communicative competence of the learners, there was a need for a new, more effective method. At the decline of the nineteenth century a reform movement in the field of education gave a beginning to a direct method which regardless of the passage of time and its limitations survived until the present day.

Most significant features of the direct method refer to a favourable position of the speaking and listening skills, rejection of translation and avoidance of learners' mother tongue (Harmer 2007: 63-64). According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 24), the name of the method reflects a direct use of the target language, conveying the meaning by techniques of demonstration and visualisation. The skills of writing and reading are postponed to intermediate level of advancement. Grammar remains important, however, contrary to the traditional method, it is taught inductively. Everyday vocabulary is introduced through the means of demonstration, realia and pictures, practised together with grammar structures, usually in form of oral drills based on a question-answer pattern (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 12).

Due to its practicality, the direct method makes students actively involved in the process of learning. Although they have limited autonomy, according to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 52), the relationship between the teacher and learners resembles partnership. Learners speak in the target language a lot in various communicative situations. The use of situational syllabus additionally helps to break the communication mould.

The teacher's role is not only to control learners' performance directly and correct their mistakes but also to inspire them when problems arise. Richards and Rodgers (2016: 12) underline another important feature of the teacher's tongue, that is using full sentences while addressing learners. In this way, students gain knowledge about the language structure and learn words in a meaningful context. Batool et al. (2017: 38) underline that

the method demands special qualities from its teachers which include proficient mastering of the target language, physical mental energy and wide imagination. The teacher is a decisive factor in the successful application of the method which demands the use of various teaching materials, for instance visual aids, stimulating prompts and audio-video recordings. Additionally, according to the assumptions of the method, course books are not in use (Batoool et al. 2017: 37).

Undoubtfully, the direct method is the one that can be applied to young language learners due to the application of inductive techniques in grammar practice and the use of the power of gestures which make learning more motivating and natural. Further, focus on oral practice, although controlled, involves learners emotionally and helps to build teacher-student relations. Moreover, in the direct method attention is drawn to pronunciation aspects, what is an additional advantage in teaching young learners with SLDs.

As many others, also the direct method is exposed to some criticism. Specialists, including Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 52-53), Harmer (2007: 64), Ali (2020: 289), notice that although the direct method brought some significant changes to the methodology of English language teaching, it neglects the skills of reading and writing. Postponing these two skills can be beneficial for young learners who may not master them in their mother tongue, however, permanent avoidance of reading and written practice deprives learners of chances to develop full competence in the target language. Moreover, Ali (2020:289) comments that a need to use a diversity of often expensive teaching aids is one of the most common complaints that foreign language teachers make about the direct method. In addition, teachers are expected to possess high professional competence and address learners exclusively in the target language, regardless of the arising communication difficulties. Such a way of teaching may ruin learners' comfort and a sense of security, what in case of young learners is of a primary value.

### **3.2.1.3 The audiolingual method and the PPP procedures**

Rooted in the behaviouristic theory, the audiolingual method was firstly developed as a specialised training programme for the American army in the 1942 and shifted onto the civil ground after the World War II (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 50). It is based on the stimulus-response-reinforcement model according to which the process of learning is

enabled through conditioning (Harmer 2007: 64). Following the explanation of Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 59), in this method learners are expected to respond to stimuli provided by the teacher, their correct responses are reinforced, so that new habits of good foreign language speakers are formed. Language itself is perceived as a system of structurally connected elements such as phonemes, morphemes and words composing sentences.

Among the most characteristic features of the audiolingual method Ali (2020: 291) enlists gradual introduction of all language skills with extended emphasis on speaking and listening, presentation of texts in forms of dialogues, limitation and levelling of newly introduced vocabulary, and also drawing attention to pronunciation aspects. Richards and Rodgers (2016: 55) underline that in the audiolingual method language is a set of habits and speech is language whereas other skills are considered to be just supplementary. With reference to grammar, it is taught inductively, induced from the examples provided by the teacher with no explicit rules given. Practising grammar structures and new vocabulary is performed mainly by oral drills based on an imitation and repetition pattern (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011: 70), however, as Richards and Rodgers (2016: 57) point out, the meaning of words is discovered by learners within a linguistic and cultural context, never in isolation as it happened in case of the two previously characterised methods of teaching.

A specific variation on the audiolingual method mentioned by Harmer (2007: 64), which is still commonly applied, is a presentation-practice-production (PPP) procedure. Stemmed from structural-situational model of teaching the PPP demands the use of situational contexts. As Harmer (2007: 64-65) further explains, a foreign language lesson is based on a three-stage-procedure. At the first stage, the teacher presents the language to be taught in a situational context. Then, students are expected to practice the language through a number of accurate reproduction techniques and cue-response drills. At the last stage learners are believed to be ready to use the new language independently, producing their own sentences. Keeping the order of all stages in the procedure warrants formation of a good speaking habit.

In case of both teaching procedures in the audiolingual method and the PPP, students can be nothing more but imitators of language models served by the teacher. A lot of attention is paid to their language accuracy and automatization of responses. Richards and Rodgers (2016: 62) draw attention to a certain nonsense that in a method aiming at the development of the speaking skill, learners are not encouraged to initiate

interaction. It is justified by a belief that spontaneous communication may lead to mistakes. Due to the above reasons, potential errors in learners' utterances are subjected to immediate correction. Moreover, learners are expected to memorise new vocabulary on the basis of its constant repetition (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 55).

As to the roles of the teacher, he is expected to take a very authoritarian and central role. Brooks (1964: 143) mentions a list of fifteen features related to the teacher's role in the audiolingual method, what depicts the importance of the person of teacher. The teacher is a kind of an orchestra man who uses the target language, organises lessons, controls the class, leads, models and serves to be a pattern to follow (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011: 70).

With reference to instructional materials for the audiolingual method, it is important to mention that textbooks are usually not used with elementary level students. According to Richards and Rodgers (2016: 63), an introduction of written texts at early levels of language education may be harmful to learners as it destructs their attention from aural input. At later stages of advancement, a coursebook with situational dialogues, accompanied by drills and other activities is introduced. The key didactic equipment includes audio-visual records and also special audio equipment for extended pronunciation practice such as an audio laboratory for training error-free structures.

Audiolingualism is the first method that is grounded on a theory of language learning with distinction into its phonological, morphological and syntactic levels (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011: 71). Although the method was exposed to some criticism firstly in the 1960s and later in the 1990s, it is still commonly applied to young learners of English language as the emphasis in learning is put on oral practice organised in form of student-student interaction, habit formation patterns and everyday vocabulary introduced in various contexts (Harmer 2007: 64). Additionally, in the audiolingual method a lot of teaching time is dedicated to pronunciation practice, what is of a great importance while educating young learners.

Similarly to other methods, the audiolingual one is exposed to some critical opinions. The major problem is related to theoretical foundations of audiolingualism that are proven to be inadequate (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 65). A theory of transformational grammar developed by Noam Chomsky in the 1960s revolutionised linguistics and rejected the concept of language learning that was based on habit formation via drilling and memorisation. Among other allegations Harmer (2007: 66) mentions lack of fluency practice, over-learning and extensive mechanical drilling, as

well as, a dominant role of the teacher.

Much as the raised objections cannot be ignored, it needs to be remembered that the pure audiolingual method, unlike the PPP procedure, is rarely applied in isolation from other methods of teaching nowadays. Regardless of the justified criticism, the audiolingual method has its undoubted advantages and is often applied by English language teachers of young learners. Results of a study conducted by Ali (2020: 292) confirm that the audiolingual method is positively opinionated as one of the traditional methods that is suitable in teaching oral communication to young learners. Further, the audiolingual method is believed to significantly improve their listening skill.

#### **3.2.1.4 Communicative language teaching**

Developed in the 1970s as an alternative to structure-based approaches towards language teaching, communicative language teaching (CLT) is currently considered to be a major notional-functional approach (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 154). It gained popularity mainly because of appointing communicative competence as its main teaching objective (Hymes 1972: 270). Lack of prescribed classroom techniques, what is a rule in case of language teaching methods, makes CLT a flexible and easily adaptable approach.

The most characteristic feature of CLT, which is also recognised under the name of the communicative approach (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 154), includes introduction of all language skills from the very early stages of advancement without diversification of their importance. As a lesson conduct is carried with a communicative intent, a number of communicative activities are given to students who mostly work in groups or pairs. Among favourable techniques of oral practice Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 161) mention role-plays, games, problem-solving tasks and other information-gap activities, all of which are truly communicative. Both accuracy and fluency types of practice are present, though the latter is of a greater importance. Grammatical issues are approached inductively and appropriately for learners' age and level of advancement.

Considering the nature of teacher-student interaction, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 162) inform that CLT lessons are learner-centred. Students are assumed to be intrinsically motivated to study as from the very first lessons they are expected to make attempts to communicate in the target language. What is more, they have a lot of freedom of expression while sharing their ideas and giving opinions to others. According

to Richards and Rodgers (2016: 162) it helps to build interpersonal relationships between course participants and the teacher.

The role of the teacher exceeds his duties of a lesson conductor. Richards and Rodgers (2016: 167) enumerate six of them. The first one is a role of facilitator who enables the communication process between students by organising various activities, resources and even cultural contexts. The second one is a role of participant, as the teacher is a member of a learning-teaching group. According to the third a teacher is a guide because he is responsible for leading learners throughout the classroom procedures. The following two roles refer to the teacher perceived as a researcher and learner, contributing to knowledge and abilities of his students and gaining information from them, as well. Richards and Rodgers (2016: 167) further mention that apart from the above main roles, CLT teacher is also a counsellor, analyst and a manager to which list Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 162) add a prompter, helper and co-communicator. The roles of the teacher in the communicative approach are definitely more complex in comparison to other methods. The teacher, although not authoritarian, gains more autonomy in taking decisions about the course conduct than in any other of the previously mentioned methods of teaching.

Generally, it can be said that CLT is one of these foreign language teaching approaches where advantages exceed disadvantages. Following Harmer (2007: 70), there are several positive aspects that promote CLT to the leading position among foreign language teaching methods from the perspective of communication continuum. They include learners' rising desire to communicate in the target language, having a clear communication purpose, drawing more attention to a content of the used language rather than to a form, variety and freedom of choice of vocabulary, no necessity for teacher intervention and freedom of choice of didactic materials. As to the last element, it is important to mention, that in CLT the use of authentic teaching materials is approved and perceived as a motivational factor (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011: 166). A variety of text-based and task-based materials, communicative activities and varied forms of work make the communicative approach additionally attractive and appropriate for all groups of learners.

Of course, after a decade of its high popularity, some weaknesses of the communicative approach have been noticed. For instance, according to Richards and Rodgers (2016: 174) in CLT insufficient emphasis is put on correction of grammar and pronunciation errors. As it is explained, in case of fluency practice, errors are not

immediately corrected by the teacher. Left without correction, they may lead to fossilisation. Another accusation refers to insufficient attention that is given to accuracy practice and grammar teaching. Much as intermediate students may benefit from extended fluency practice, beginners need more of controlled practice (Harmer 2007: 71). The final complaint addresses the numerous roles that the teacher is expected to take. Richards and Rodgers (2016: 174) notice that not every teacher is predisposed to use this approach. For instance, some teachers lack good monitoring skills what may negatively influence the quality of learners' performance.

To sum up, the communicative approach continuous to be a preferable approach in English language teaching settings what seems to be confirmed by a large variety of coursebooks and teaching resources dedicated to its principles (Richards and Rodgers (2016: 202). Additionally, CLT is said to have a significant influence on other approaches and methods that follow the same philosophy of language teaching.

### **3.2.1.5 The total physical response method**

Apart from the mainstream language teaching methods, in the 1970s and 1980s some alternative methods of teaching appeared with didactic attention focused mainly on language as communication settled in authentic background (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 71). One of these alternative methods is the total physical response (TPR) developed by James Asher, an American psychologist, who combined elements of developmental psychology, humanistic pedagogy and learning theory to create a method of teaching that would respond to educational needs of young learners. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 137), the TPR is the first method that respects the natural order of language acquisition where the period of understanding precedes production. This is exactly the order in which infants acquire their first language, developing passive knowledge about the language before taking the first attempts to communicate verbally. Additionally, Asher observed that meaning in the language can sometimes be conveyed through gestures, on the basis of which premise he included movement and action into his method. Another important factor of the TPR mentioned by Richards and Rodgers (2016: 73) is a fact that the method reflects a grammar-based approach with the stimulus-response-reinforcement procedure as underlying language teaching pedagogy. Therefore, lessons are based on orders given by the teacher and followed by his students. When

learners are ready to speak in the target language, they instruct each other in which way lessons are believed to be stress-free and involve a lot of enjoyable actions (Harmer 2007: 68).

Students interact together with the teacher by showing their understanding of the target language through gestures and mimicry. As Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 145) inform, the teacher often gives many commands and humour to make language learning fun. What is more, learners' native language is often used at the introductory stage of the TPR lessons in order to ease tension and anxiety.

In the TPR, the teacher directs students actions, controlling learners' understanding of commands ordered in the target language. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 144), he takes the entire responsibility of the teaching process, organising, demonstrating and controlling learners' actions. It is also important for the teacher to adjust the pace of learning to students abilities enabling them internalisation of the rules governing the target language.

The theoretical assumptions adopted into the TPR make the method an interesting alternative in educating young learners. Its teaching techniques include storytelling with demonstration, singing and drama activities which can easily engage learners in the process of foreign language learning in a stressless environment. Additionally, a dose of fun raises learners' intrinsic motivation. The method is also not very demanding with a view to teaching resources such as realia, pictures, slides and word charts which are used as a stimulating material in specific situations, for example at the supermarket, the home, the beach (Richards and Rodgers 2016: 77).

Regardless of its advantages, however, using the TPR raises some justified objections. First of all, there is no equity in introduction of language skills as emphasis is put primarily on listening and then speaking with very little attention given to reading and writing. Most of the classroom practice is based on repetition and drilling and learners are regarded as imitators of nonverbal models. As Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 144) stress it, some teachers may find it difficult to decide when there is the right moment for his learners to start to speak. Some problems are also reported with reference to vocabulary practice. According to Harmer (2007: 69), the TPR lacks cognitive depth as there are limits to which gestures can convey meaning.

Concluding, the TPR seems to be an effective method of teaching a foreign language to children. It helps learners develop not only their English language skills but also positively influences their physical abilities. Learning that is fun and play is the most



suitable form of young learners' education. However, following an advice of Richards and Rodgers (2016:79), it needs to be remembered that TPR gives best results when applied in association with other methods and techniques.

### **3.2.1.6 The silent way method**

Another method of foreign language teaching from a group of alternative methods is the silent way, launched by Caleb Gattegno in the 1970s. This method is based on an opposite to the TPR assumption in which the teacher remains silent for the majority of teaching time allowing students to discover the meaning of demonstrated objects and activities. Harmer (2007: 68) explains that in the opinion of Gattegno learners should discover and create language rather than memorise it via repetition of given patterns. This discovery process is facilitated through noticing and experiencing. Pursuant to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 81), learning with the silent way demands an engagement of learners' perception, cognition, creativity and even intuition. It is not surprising, then, that a variety of didactic resources is a necessary key factor without which the method cannot be successfully applied. A lesson is performed with the use of problem solving tasks where students play an active part and the teacher is a mute actor. As it is noticed by Bruner (1966: 83), learning is also enabled through an application of discovery techniques and stimulation of learners' creativity. Such an approach to young learners increases their intellectual potency, revives their intrinsic motivation and inborn curiosity, as well as, strengthens memorisation.

In the silent way method a structural syllabus is adopted, for which reason lessons are planned around grammatical items and accompanied with related vocabulary (Richards and Rodgers 2016:84). It is important to notice, however, that the syllabus is neither fixed nor linear, and the teacher build learners' knowledge around the language they are already familiar with (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 93). All language skills are present, though speaking precedes reading and writing. Additionally, a lot of attention is given to correct pronunciation and recognition of phonetic sounds. In the lesson conduct, the teacher who is silent uses various techniques of language presentation to depict the meaning. He facilitates students' guesses with some help of colourful charts, pictures and even real objects.

Learners in this method are left to their common sense and mutual cooperation.

As Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 93) explain, interaction between students is desirable because they are believed to learn the best from each other. They also try to enter into some interaction with the teacher who, though very active physically, remains silent throughout of the lesson. In this way they are believed to learn how to develop autonomously and become independent thinkers.

The role of the teacher is to prompt, show, suggest and encourage learners participation with gestures and body language. He needs to be a good observer, controlling learners' correct understanding and raising their awareness. The teacher rarely speaks, and when it happens it is only to give a clue (Harmer 2007: 68).

The silent way rises controversies because it differs from standard teaching procedures. Quite surprisingly, however, learners may find this alternative method liberating and exciting. As it is noticed by Harmer (2007: 69), the silent way is a method which allows learners to take full responsibility for their deeds, the teacher is just an organiser of the learning fun. The method, therefore, positively influences learners' self-esteem and activates their cognitive powers.

On the other hand, the silent way method cannot function without an engagement of other approaches as language learning is more than pure perception (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011: 94). What is more, according to the assumptions of the method, no formal tests are planned as the teacher is expected to evaluate students' progress simply on the basis of observation. Taking into consideration requirements of national systems of education, lack of formal evaluation discriminates the silent way as a mainstream method of foreign language teaching, at least for the present moment.

### **3.2.2 English language teaching approaches and strategies recommended for inclusion**

Regardless of the availability of a number of foreign language teaching approaches and methods, not all of them are equally good for educating young learners with SLDs. Due to their disorders, individuals with SEN demand psychological, pedagogical and therapeutic support in gaining knowledge and developing life skills. They also need a didactic approach where strategies and forms of teaching would satisfy their special needs. This problem finds its confirmation in a report published by the Education Development Centre in Poland in 2018, according to which children with SLDs

experience intensive anxiety, what has negative influence on their educational success (Sozańska 2018: 5). With reference to foreign language education of learners with SLDs, Kormos and Smith (2012: 182) inform that learning a foreign language can be a source of stress or even a humiliating experience for them, both of which factors lead to learners' lack of motivation for learning a language. For this reason, knowing teaching methods that are adjustable or simple appropriate for the needs and cognitive abilities of learners with SLDs is of primary importance. Pursuant to priorities of the inclusive education, these changes mean a departure from explanatory methods of teaching in favour for exploratory and discovery ones which allow learners to develop their intellectual potential and individual interests. Mittler (2000: 78) notices that the inclusive approach demands certain pedagogical steps to be taken by teachers. They refer firstly to teachers' professional knowledge about learners specific disorders and their educational needs, secondly to perception of each learner as an integral individual, thirdly to an ability to use learner's interests for the development of their knowledge and skills, and finally to setting educational expectations which would be adjusted to learner's cognitive capacity via clear and accurate communication. Having in mind the enlisted pedagogical steps, as well as the European Union premises about the inclusive approach, some English language teaching approaches and strategies that are recommended for inclusive environments are discussed in the following subsections.

### **3.2.2.1 Content and language integrated learning**

According to a Eurydice Report on teaching languages at school in Europe (Eurydice 2017: 13), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is indicated as an approach which has a major contribution to the realisation of the European Union educational goals. Based on an idea of using a foreign language as a medium in learning school subjects, CLIL is believed to be highly motivational for learners and helps to build their self-confidence. It is so, as children are immersed in education by the use of the target language in meaningful contexts, rich in communication situations. What differentiates CLIL from other teaching approaches is the concept of integration between the taught school subject and a language which is a medium and an objective of the learning process (Marsh 2002: 37). Coyle et al. (2010: 32) underline the potential of this approach which may involve the use of project work, drama, mathematical investigations and even

puppets. Unfortunately, due to insufficient proficiency in the target language of the teaching staff, CLIL is popular only in a handful of countries such as Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Spain (Eurydice 2017: 13).

According to its background, CLIL is not a novelty on the education market. Introduced in 1990 as an interdisciplinary educational convergence, it was approved by the European Union Council as early as in 1995 by means of a resolution in which it was declared to be an innovative approach that provides bilingual teaching (Eurydice 2006: 8). Based on information given by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 174), the concept of CLIL had been used even earlier in many countries in form of content-based instruction (CBI) for competency-based programmes which served immigrants in gaining survival skills or life-coping. Also Richards and Rodgers (2016:207) give two reasons justifying the development of CLIL. The first refers to a fact that foreign language learning is more successful if the target language is used as a means of acquiring information, not only as an end itself. Secondly, the approach is believed to meet learners' educational needs better than other teaching methods because it makes the content of academic knowledge quickly accessible for learners. In this sense, CLIL is also an excellent choice for those who opt for multiculturalism, inclusion and international mobility. As it is noticed by Mehisto et al. (2008: 11-12), CLIL is the approach which helps to develop cognitive, linguistic, social, cultural and academic skills, what makes it suitable for inclusive purposes. Such a view is also presented by Coyle et al. (2010: 30) who believe that CLIL can satisfy special needs and differences between young individuals.

In most of CLIL courses, a content-based syllabus is applied, organised around specific subtopics (Richards and Rodgers 2016:212). Techniques of learning can be classified into categories of, for example, vocabulary building, language skills improvement, communicative interaction, discourse organisation or synthesis of grammar (Stoller and Grabe 1997: 78). Employment of discovery techniques and engagement of learners into project works make them emotionally involved in topic content because, as Stryker and Leaver (1993: 11) explain, they feel to have power that can influence a course direction.

The primary role of learners in CLIL is to become autonomous individuals who take responsibility, understand and manage their own learning (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 286). In the opinion of Richards and Rodgers (2016: 213), such perception of the learner

results from 'learning by doing' pedagogy in which students are in the centre of attention, expected to interpret actively the input, tolerate ambiguity, explore learning strategies in search of most suitable ones for their educational needs.

CLIL also redefines the roles of the teacher. In this approach the traditional leadership has to give place to mentoring. Outlining a profile of CLIL teacher, Stryker and Leaver (1993: 292) draw attention to two features: being knowledgeable in the subject matter and being competent in eliciting knowledge from students. To make his course complete, the teacher needs to gather, plan and present a lot of authentic materials for students' analysis and discussion. They may include, for example, tourist guidebooks, timetables, TV broadcasts or internet blogs. Coursebooks are avoided as they are believed to kill the authenticity (Stryker and Leaver 1993: 295). It is needless to mention that very often teachers have to adjust these authentic sources into students' level of linguistic advancement. The approach, then, is very demanding for teachers who must be subject knowers and proficient foreign language speakers in one person. According to Richards and Rodgers (2016: 214), the demand of having adequately trained instructors is a real obstacle for adopting CLIL in many European countries. Furthermore, it is noticed that developing a CLIL course is a time and energy consuming process for schools, what additionally makes it a very challenging approach.

Summarising, CLIL is undoubtedly a practical approach that gives its users unlimited opportunities, on one hand, to develop teaching skills, and on the other, to promote learners' interests. Any CLIL course is subject specific, stimulating learners' intellectual development and strengthening their autonomous thinking. Teaching materials are varied and authentic, what additionally raises learners' intrinsic motivation. Classroom work is performed mostly in groups with the use of educational techniques that demand cooperation. The approach definitely supports the concept of inclusive education. However, it is still far from being applied by majority of schools as it is overdemanding for teachers, most of whom lack subject-specific or foreign language competency.

### **3.2.2.2 Task based learning**

With reference to foreign language education of younger learners of pre-school and primary level of schooling, an alternative approach to CLIL has been popularised since

the early 1990s. It is recognised by the contemporaries as a task-based learning approach (TBL) (Ellis 2003: 21). Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2011: 47) explain that TBL emerged as a response to constraints caused by the traditional method and based on the presentation, practice, production scheme.

Similarly to CLIL, TBL is a learner-centred approach in which a foreign language is perceived as a communicative tool in comprehending and performing educational goal-oriented activities (Burrows 2008: 11). Willis (1990: 34) informs that TBL teachers provide students with various target language resources which may be used for solving problems, playing games, doing puzzles, as well as, for comparing and sharing experiences. Popular examples of task types include diagrams and formations, drawing, using maps, timetables, itineraries, clock faces and the calendar (Richards and Rodgers (2016: 231). Most importantly, the aim of TBL educational activities is to make learners exchange meanings in the target language in order to achieve an outcome. As Willis (1990: 36) stresses, communicative tasks are not activities which are organised for the sake of the target language practice. Tasks require the use of a variety of grammar forms and vocabulary which enable an exchange of meanings and the final solution to the set problem. What is more, the difficulty of given tasks depends on learners' abilities and skills, previous experience and the degree of support available (Richards and Rodgers (2016: 224).

The learner has several roles assigned in TBL. Richards and Rodgers (2016:235-236) mention three most important of them. First of all, the learner is perceived as a group participant who cooperates with others in pairs or small groups. Secondly, he learns how to become responsible for his learning by noticing and monitoring how language is used in communication. Thirdly, as many tasks require learners to act creatively and alternatively, they are considered to be risk-takers and innovators. It can also be added that TBL learners need to be good guessers while using linguistic and contextual clues, as well as, they must be brave and open to discussions and consultancy.

Creating a learner-centred environment, the teacher needs to facilitate students work by means of organising and engaging them in a variety of activities which lead to completion of a given task. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 200) explain that to throw interesting lessons the teacher must plan a project carefully and organise a pre-task, for example an opinion or reasoning-gap task, that would enjoyably lead his students to further more creative activities. Throughout the lesson, the teacher monitors students, offering supports when necessary. He has to be a good observer, cautious about potential

changes that learners may wish to introduce to their creations.

A list of educational advantages of TBL is long. According to Swan (2005: 377), its benefits include an involvement of natural language use, application of a variety of work forms, incidental learning of grammar forms in meaningful contexts, and focus on communication in the target language. It can also be added that TBL allows learners to take control over the pace of work and the range of developed tasks, which is of a substantial value in teaching inclusive groups. This is definitely an approach which can be applied to young learners as it satisfies their natural curiosity and builds knowledge about the surrounding environment on the basis of experiences.

Following information given by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011: 205), TBL is one of the approaches that finds support from researchers in second language acquisition, however some sceptical opinions are raised with reference to its effective use by public education units. The reason for this lays in lack of traditional forms of assessment in TBL, what stays in disagreement with the requirements of national systems of education where results of exams decide about students promotion and a choice of subsequent schools.

Regardless of some discrepancies between the assumptions of approach and the systemic solutions, TBL seems to be one of the best options for young learners, as it builds their competence in the target language enabling at the same time learners' general well-balanced development. As lessons are learner-centred, all students, regardless of their individual abilities, can perform tasks accordingly to their needs and at their own pace. Preferable forms of group and pair work facilitate the process of socialisation.

### **3.2.2.3 Multiple intelligences and multi-sensory strategies**

Apart from the above characterised inclusion-friendly approaches, recent attention of language specialists is directed towards learning strategies that suit different learning and cognitive styles of learners, what allows on individualisation of the educational process. One group of such strategies assumes involvement of various senses into the acquisition process and is supported by a theory of multiple intelligences developed by a psychologist Howard Gardner (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 2011: 239). In the opinion of Gardner, recognition of learners' intelligences is crucial for strengthening their accurate understanding of what is taught because an assumption that all individuals learn in the

same way is wrong. Krechevsky and Gardner (1990: 69) are of the opinion that strategies based on the traditional method in education constitute a 'one chance model' in education, fine only with a narrow group of learners, whereas each learner has its own unique style of learning. As Richards and Rodgers (2016:115) explain, Gardner's philosophy is based on noticing of natural human talents, which are developed by means of various learning styles. Pedagogy based on multiple-intelligences is then the 'whole-person' approach (Richards and Rodgers 2016:119). There are eight intelligences according to Gardner which include as follows: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, naturalistic, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities (Davis et al. 2011: 488). Using multiple intelligences in educational practice goes beyond traditional schooling and is learner-centred. Richards and Rodgers (2016:116) add that building learners' inherent talents results in them being strengthened and lets learners be intelligent in their own way, what is also the essential assumption of the inclusive approach.

Together with the development of technology and introduction of multi-media into didactics, some new educational strategies grounded on multi-intelligences mode appeared (Christensen 2014: 12). Known as multisensory strategies, they follow the 'whole-brain learning' theory (Morgan 2019: 46). The use of multi-sensory strategies is justified by differences in learners' perceptive abilities and interests. According to Sozańska (2018: 9) involvement of all senses into the process of foreign language education helps especially young learners whose perception of the surrounding is emotionally and sensually conditioned. Pokrivčáková et al. (2015: 128) also recommend the multi-sensory strategies as they integrate the reception of information through seeing, hearing, touching, moving and even through the use of smell and taste. According to Morgan (2019: 47) the multi-sensory strategies are especially dedicated to young learners with SLDs as it has been proven to have positive influence on the development of oral and written language skills.

Multi-sensory teaching makes use of audio, visual, tactile and kinaesthetic stimuli to enable communication of learners in a foreign language (Morgan 2019: 48). Its didactic techniques entail chanting, rhyming, singing and repeating which significantly improve learners' educational potential (M. Bogdanowicz 2014: 123). Activities are dedicated to experiencing and experimental learning, therefore a variety of didactic resources are needed.

The teacher needs to be a charismatic designer because integrating goals of every lesson with learners preferred styles depends on his teaching skills and selected materials.



Itagi and D’Mello (2019: 83) notice that integration also refers to tasks that the teacher gives to students, in which the same content must be experienced by learners with the use of different learning styles. Only then, the teacher can know that students’ perception has increased, learning is maximised and comprehension is deep. Additionally, as learners are believed to open to a meaningful input the best when they are in a comfortable environment, teachers need to organise the classroom practice in group settings.

Thinking about the benefits of the multi-sensory strategies, it can be said that influencing senses of young learners, including those with SLDs, can boost their creative thinking which in turn stimulates developing of their language skills. The usability of the multi-sensory strategies is high also in relation to therapeutic programmes for children with various disabilities which proves their universality. The multi-sensory strategies definitely suit individual needs of learners with SLDs, giving them equal chances in developing their foreign language competence and skills. In this sense, they also match the new European concept of the ‘school for all’.

Much as the strategies are beneficial for learners, their application can be demanding for teachers who take the entire responsibility for the preparation and performance of interest-rising lessons. Again, similarly to previously described TBL, evaluation of learners achievements via traditional techniques can be problematic. Also, the multi-sensory strategies exclude the use of traditional coursebooks, which entails constant researching, developing, adjusting and combining of teaching materials accordingly to learners individual needs and preferences. A question can be asked if teachers are creative enough to throw multi-sensory lessons and whether schools have sufficient financial sources to afford them.

#### **3.2.2.4 Ludic strategy**

The described multi-sensory strategies are consistent with a ludic strategy which engages learners emotionally in the learning process and is thought to change foreign language learning into an unforgettable adventure. Grounded in humanistic psychology and compatible with positive psychology, the ludic strategy has been developed and popularised since the 1990s by Teresa Siek-Piskozub, a Polish linguist who used the term ‘ludic strategy’ to define an approach in foreign language teaching, applicable as a remedy to some problems of pedagogical or linguistic nature (Siek-Piskozub 2016: 99).

According to Siek-Piskozub (2001: 9-11), the primary goal of the strategy is to create a learner-centred educational environment in which learning is enhanced through play. Focused on pure fun, the strategy stays in opposition to the traditional method of foreign language teaching. Its most popular techniques include pure play, gaming, or combination of these two, simulation, elements of drama, imagery and other forms of linguistic interaction between learners that can be both teachable and enjoyable (Siek-Piskozub 2001: 34). Interestingly, the techniques allude to learners' creativity and imagination, what makes lessons highly attractive and motivating. Confronting learners with ludic techniques and engaging them in activities that develop not only their foreign language skills but also their multiple intelligences is of an additional benefit for those with SLDs. As Surdyk (2020: 23) notices, with the use of the ludic strategy, children learn about the world through play, which also helps them manage emotions and understand the rules of social functioning. Further, factors which refer to cooperation of lesson participants and their competition compose conditions which are essential for achieving a goal set by the teacher.

In the ludic strategy, the teacher plays an important role. Although classes are not teacher-centred, he takes a responsibility for the process of planning, matching the goals and organising of lessons. He can be described as a kind of creative composer, building the background of play, setting the rules for games, creating roles for children to be played, and for most, leading them through stages of joyful fun. He may even become a participant of play, tying a strong bond of mutual understanding with his students. Siek-Piskozub (2016: 102) draws attention to one important condition that must occur if the strategy is to be successfully implemented which addresses learners' willingness to use the target language for communication, especially at preparatory stages of play. In linguistically homogenic groups, learners can show a tendency to use their native language, especially while working in groups or pairs. It is then the teacher's duty to monitor students actions and insist on them to use the target language.

Much as some of ludic techniques may demand artistic talents from teachers, for instance singing, rhyming or entering into an imaginary role, still many of them show interest in the strategy and are ready to reject their inhibitions. This fact was particularly observable during the recent pandemic COVID-19. Many teachers strived to throw attractive online lessons that would constitute an alternative to standard teaching and would enable to maintain students' interest in distant education. Kaźmierczak (2021: 106) comments this situation by confirming that most of the techniques applied in distance

education are in fact a part of the ludic strategy. It is also noticed that the strategy is still evolving into new directions, also these beyond the field of education, for example gaming (Surdyk 2020: 30).

To sum up, the ludic strategy can undoubtedly be of great usefulness in implementing the inclusive approach as it complies with all its conditions. According to its assumptions education takes place on equal basis for all, by means of socialisation and with regard to pedagogical assumptions of learners' well-balanced development and freedom of expression.

### **3.2.2.5 Universal design for learning**

A set of strategies that are not exclusively dedicated to foreign language teaching but constitute a more general framework for designing proactive learning environment is known as universal design for learning (UDL). The concept of UDL derives from the field of architecture and was initially used by Ronald Mace to mark products and devices which can be characterised by their easy usability and practicality for all individuals regardless of their abilities, age or status in life (Arekkuzhiyil 2022: 19). Research in cognitive science and a development of neuroscience made UDL effective on the ground of education where it is considered to be a truly inclusive approach towards design of curricula and syllabi (Dalton 2017: 18-19). According to Arekkuzhiyil (2022: 21) UDL is not a novelty as it has already been used by educators for over the past two decades to ascertain that educational environments meet SEN of learners. More recently, as he further explains, UDL has become a synonym for inclusive practices with reference to instructional techniques and the use of multimedia materials.

According to information provided by the Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy Centre (TEAL), the UDL framework addresses three principles that count for 'know-how' of the education process. They include: multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression and multiple means of engagement (TEAL 2010: 1). The first principle opts for a use of variety of teaching methods and strategies in designing a course. The second refers to a need for using multisensory techniques in approaching mixed ability groups. As Dalton (2017: 21) specifies, it is a call for applying a variety of physical actions and options for communication and expression. The third principle urges for organising didactic material around learners' interests and needs, what can be achieved

by the use of various teaching tools. Following this principle warrants learners' interest in a course of action, helps to sustain their effort and gives a chance for self-regulation (Dalton 2017: 21).

With reference to foreign language inclusive education, it is suggested to use modern technological solutions that can enable accessibility to a course content by all parties involved in the process of education. Arekkuzhiyil (2022: 22) provides an example of electronic curricular material that can be additionally upgraded with assistive technology for better programming of its content. This solution would be of significant help especially for teachers in selecting and adjusting multimedia teaching materials. What is more, didactic resources are advised to be accessible to be used in digitalised versions so that learners, for example with SLDs, could apply them individually in accordance to their needs by adjusting the font size, highlighting or even converting a written text into speech.

What is of special importance in UDL is the fact that evaluation of learners' achievements is also possible with the use of multimedia sources. It is diversified and adjusted to individual abilities of learners who become strategic, knowledgeable and purposeful experts (Arekkuzhiyil 2022: 23).

Idealistic, as it may seem, UDL requires engagement of national authorities to introduce the necessary improvements into national systems of education. It is needless to say that these changes usually require time and financial sources.

### **3.3 Selection of teaching materials for inclusive settings**

Not only methods of teaching must be adjusted to learners SEN but also teaching materials need careful selection to suit individual needs of learners with SLDs. Considerations over didactic materials in English language teaching encompass both non-authentic and authentic teaching resources. The first type of educational tools refers to commercially-produced textbooks dedicated to the international education market, accompanied with audio and video recordings that are already adjusted to students' age and level of advancement. These resources, however, rise a lot of controversies in the light of individual SEN of the learners. In fact, Smit (2007: 67) points to three general problems. First of all, such resources lack contextualisation, and for this reason they may address tradition, culture and habits of a nation that students are not interested in.

Secondly, the layout of teaching material in textbooks may be incompatible with the school curriculum. Finally, there is no coursebook that would satisfy special needs of each individual student with SLDs in the classroom. Taking the above difficulties into consideration, a logical assumption is that teaching materials, in order to suit inclusive measures, need to be mostly developed by teachers, whether they come from authentic or non-authentic sources. For this reason, while selecting teaching resources, it is advised to follow several criteria for creating specific learning materials. Mehisto (2012: 17-25) enumerates ten key factors which indicate high quality didactic materials. These are:

- considering the learning intentions, i.e. the language, content and learning skills,
- fostering academic language proficiency systematically,
- supporting development of learning skills and learner's autonomy,
- including various forms of formative assessment,
- creating a safe learning environment,
- promoting cooperative learning,
- aiming at incorporating authentic language and its use,
- enabling critical thinking,
- fostering cognitive fluency via scaffolding of content, language and skills development,
- making learning meaningful.

Apart from the above criteria, in inclusive education, teaching resources are expected to provide for self, peer and group formative assessment. They also need to encourage students for experimenting with language and content. According to Hattie (2012: 126) self and peer assessment is of special value, as it not only improves students' achievement and influences standards of education, but it positively impacts learners' attitudes, improves relationships between peers and engages them deeper in the process of education. As content of authentic materials can be challenging for learners, they concentrate on understanding the concepts. Therefore, content information needs to be divided into small chunks. Mehisto et al. (2008: 105) notice that such materials are easily manageable, respect diversity of learners' abilities and as such foster inclusion. Additionally, they rise meta-affective awareness as they refer to learners' feelings and emotions, build safe learning environment in which learners are not afraid of making mistakes while experimenting with the target language.

The inclusive approach requires cooperative learning, therefore teaching materials need to encourage students to interact groups in order to establish correct understanding of

terminology, activate critical thinking, analyse the served didactic material, respond and report their outcomes (Mehisto 2012: 21). The use of authentic didactic materials addresses the need for applying resources which form a bond between the members of the communication process.

What is important, Little et al. (2017: 384-385) notice that pure use of authentic teaching materials is not enough for educational success, as authenticity depends on the teacher-student relationship and a number of tasks that aim at personalisation of the content included in the teaching materials, activation of previous knowledge, degree of freedom and creativity, as well as promotion of self-discovery and self-awareness. Teachers who provide intellectually challenging educational materials raise opportunities for successful learning, as students do not concentrate on language chunks separately, but use the target language as a meaningful communication tool (Mehisto 2012: 23). To make this tool meaningful and useful, however, teaching materials need to foster cognitive fluency via scaffolding of content, language and skills development (Gibbons 2014: 8). Walqui (2006: 169-178) enumerates several scaffolding strategies that teaching resources should allow on such as bridging the previous knowledge with the current context, modelling (exemplifying), adding context to the language, using thinking frameworks, re-presenting text, as well as monitoring and evaluating. Learners who benefit from scaffolding strategies become self-directed in the language learning process.

The above considerations show that selecting and adjusting teaching materials, which conform to the generally accepted norms and standards and foster inclusion, may be challenging for English language teachers of learners with SLDs.

### **3.4 Final comments**

Scientific discoveries in the field of SLDs allowed to conclude that individuals with SLDs were able to become participants of the mainstream education process. Therefore, educators and psychologists opted for their reverse from the special to general education path. International declarations and acts of will (see section 3.1), supported this tendency which was finally approved with favourable regulations in the European Union and national laws. According to the results of the analysis of the legal basis for educating learners with SLDs, the evolution in the mainstream education can be divided into two periods.

The first one includes a decade from 1990 to 2000 and is characterised by adoption of the integrative approach in education and formulation of functions of public integrative schooling. Based on the reports of the EASNIE, it was noticed that individuals with SLDs, though factually integrated in public schooling, experienced discrimination and stigmatisation, and effects of their integrative education turned to be unsatisfactory in comparison to education of learners without disfunctions. Modifications to the integrative system were suggested in 2000, a year which marked a turn from integration to inclusion.

The second period of inclusive education, counting from 2000 until now and advocated as an ‘education for all’ approach, is being implemented and subjected to improvements. On its basis, significant amendments in national systems of education have already been introduced that inter alia include a reform of higher education programmes for the field of studies of pedagogy and foreign philology. The main goals of the assumed changes target at more profound education of teachers with reference to issues such as learning disorders, educational difficulties and satisfying learners SEN. Further, based on the requirements included in EU directives (EC 2007, EC 2009, EC 2015) and guidelines of the EASNIE (EASNIE 2012, EASNIE 2017, EASNIE 2019), substantial changes in the applied teaching methods and didactive materials are assumed. The need for amendments arouse initially from differences in understanding of the integrative and inclusive approaches towards learners with SLDs. As it is explained, modern education stands in contradiction to a *one-size-fits-all* model of education in which individuals have to fit it. Diversely, according to inclusive practices, the educational system is required to meet learners' SEN. In school practice, this change entails amendments in applied teaching methods via which human rights, freedom and tolerance are promoted.

The current European Union plans (see section 3.1.2) for the forthcoming years are particularly directed to further fight with discrimination, creation of equal learning opportunities, as well as removal of barriers to learning. According to the EASNIE, the said barriers refer in particular to four aspects of education, namely: “schools' ability to stimulate creativity and problem-solving and democratic forms of governance support; the form of teaching provided; teacher-learner relations; and various forms of evaluation and assessment ensuring that different forms of learning are accounted for” (EASNIE 2017: 8).

Through changes in national laws, improvements in the existing education systems are reported to be systematically introduced. However, it can be noticed that the

success of inclusion is primarily determined more by the human factor, that is by relations between the school staff and learners together with their parents. Dependently of their good communication, identification of SEN, deliberate selection of teaching methods and didactic materials, inclusion has a chance to become the national mainstream approach.

With the view of a deliberate selection of teaching methods that suit the needs of inclusion, an insight into presently applied approaches and methods of teaching a foreign language was given (see section 3.2). The applied methods of teaching English language were presented together with a bunch of approaches and strategies recommended for teaching young learners with SLDs and coherent with the concept of inclusive education. According to the analysis of the characteristic features of the first group of teaching approaches and methods, it can be concluded that not all of them suit the assumptions of inclusion or can be used with young learners.

Methods and strategies which fit into the concept of inclusive education are usually grounded in humanistic psychology where classes are learner-centred and learners' comfort is of equal importance in the target language development. Methods that belong to this group are: the silent way, the TPR, CLIL, TBL, as well as multi-sensory strategies and also the ludic strategy. In all of them, priority is given to learners' individual educational needs as children differ not only with reference to their abilities or disabilities but also in relation to their sustainable development. The characteristic features of the recommended approaches and strategies show that application of any of them is an important step towards inclusion. They aim at successful communication in which the target language is a powerful tool. They also use the target language which is relevant and comprehensible to each other. All of the recommended approaches and strategies fit into the idea of inclusive education and can be used by subject teachers interchangeably or in compilation. However, having considered their strengths and weaknesses, it can be concluded that their accurate application, is highly dependent of four factors, enlisted by the EASNIE (see section 3.1.2) which include: systemic amendments in the national systems of education, schools' abilities to implement the changes, the teacher's competence and ability to enter into the prescribed roles and also easy access to modern multi-media teaching materials.

The systemic improvements include changes within the organisation of the evaluation process of learners' achievements, as well as, their adjustment and implementation into schools' internal systems of assessment. Nowadays, formulas of compulsory examinations are standardised and as such expose learners with SLDs to



stigmatisation because they are either released or treated differently than others. Also, formative assessment of learners' efforts is mainly organised in a form of written tests, what significantly restricts the possibility of accurate assessment of learners' communicative skills.

Not only methods of teaching are subjected to amendments in the inclusive approach. Changes also embrace the person of a teacher and his pedagogical roles. As it has been described, in all of the recommended approaches and strategies classes are learner-centred which shifts the teacher's position from a leader and a knower to an assistant and a helper. In traditional educational settings, this change can become a real challenge especially for experienced teachers who are not familiar with inclusive-friendly approaches and strategies.

The final issue that can be an obstacle in reaching for the recommended approaches and strategies refers to didactic resources, or rather to their availability and adjustability. Although majority of multi-media teaching materials seem to be easily accessible on the Internet, their accommodation and tailoring to students' SEN may cause problems. Additionally, it must be remembered that not all schools are sufficiently equipped with electronic devices that would enable teachers to use this kind of materials, as well as, not all teachers are accustomed to their use.

Understanding the concept of inclusive education and changes that its implementation into national systems of education entails, an analysis of a selection of English language teaching methods together with a view to approaches and strategies of teaching that support inclusion in education closes theoretical considerations of the dissertation. The gathered information constitutes a basis for the comparative study of English language approaches towards learners with SLDs from the perspective of inclusion. The four of the previously stated indexes of a system of education, schools readiness for inclusion, teachers competence and methods of teaching, as well as, the use of didactic materials are applied for evaluation of inclusiveness of the applied educational approaches in three countries: Austria, Czechia and Poland, respectively in the following three chapters of the dissertation. The results of the comparative study will later serve as indications for further development and improvement of the inclusive approach on Polish ground.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology of the comparative study**

### **4.0 Introduction**

Before the extensive study on English language teaching approaches towards learners with SLDs was undertaken as a part of the present dissertation, a pilot study about views of foreign language teachers on inclusive education was conducted by the author of the present work. The subject matter was analysed in 2016 on a micro scale concerning the views of English language teachers within the Region of Mazovia in central Poland. Its results brought some disillusioning conclusions about the teachers' perspective on inclusive education (Puzia-Sobieska 2017: 72-73). The outcome of that study was compliant with the results of research conducted earlier in 2015 on a much bigger scale by the Educational Research Institute in Poland, published in form of an annual report of the institute (Muszyński et al. 2015). Weighing the fact that inclusion has been advised for implementation to the national systems of education from 2000, and taking into consideration the results of the conducted pilot study, researching potential obstacles that prevent successful development of the inclusive trend in education became inspirational for the author of the dissertation. In order to establish the areas of potential problems preventing the development of inclusive education in the country, a comparative study was planned.

Spotting similarities and differences in the state of development of the inclusive approach between three selected countries is believed to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the existing state of national education with reference to inclusion. The

results of the planned study are hoped to indicate the necessary improvements for the existing state of inclusive education towards more flexible and incremental implementation of inclusion to Polish schools. Taking into consideration similarities and differences in the historical backgrounds and the functioning systems of education of various European Union member states, it was decided to appoint Austria and Czechia for the comparative study. In the present chapter, the conceptualisation of the study, including justification for the choice of the countries for comparison is presented.

#### 4.1 Conceptualisation, organisation and limitations of the study

As the initially planned research was extended in time and subjected to some modifications caused by unforeseeable difficulties connected with the pandemic, the decision of its division into two studies was taken. As a result, the comparative study of the documents and specialist literature dedicated to education of learners with SLDs in the selected countries was conducted in years 2017 – 2022 (see chapters 4-8), whereas the supplementary study giving an empirical insight into the educational situation of learners with SLDs in Poland, in which country the author of the dissertation has the greatest interest, was conducted in years 2022-2024 (see chapters 9 – 10). Figure 1 below presents particular stages of both the comparative and supplementary studies with their characteristic features.

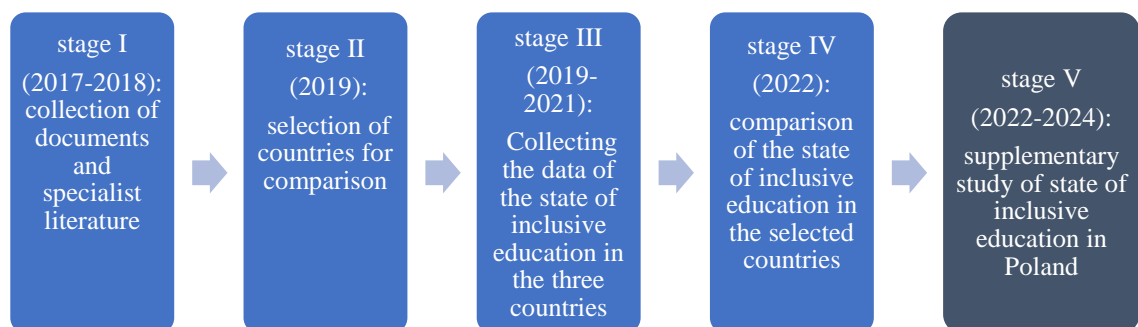


Figure 1: Stages of the comparative and supplementary studies

#### **4.1.1 Stage I: Collection of documents and specialist literature**

From 2017 until the end of 2018 international documents in form of declarations, directives, national acts and resolutions, together with specialist literature in the field of SLDs, concerning historical perspective of studies on learning disorders, as well as, language related learning disorders, were collected and read extensively (see chapters 1, 2 and 3). On the basis of the gathered data, a decision about the scope and range of the empirical study was undertaken by the author of the dissertation. Furthermore, a decision about the countries for comparison was finally undertaken on the basis of the historical and cultural similarities and differences between them.

#### **4.1.2 Stage II: Selection of countries for comparison**

In the present comparative study, the current state of implementation of the inclusive approach in neighbouring three selected European Union member states of Austria, Czechia and Poland is discussed. A decision about the choice of the countries was made in 2019 upon certain premises, as explained below.

The first chosen country is Austria. It is a nation that represents western European culture, with the system of education comparable to such European countries as the United Kingdom, Germany and France. According to Stepaniuk (2019: 328), there are several differences between eastern and western nations which reflect divergences in political, cultural and social determinants. With a view to that, Austria is a country rooted in the western tradition and as such is expected to approach the concept of inclusive education in a more dynamic manner than it is done in eastern countries.

Secondly, there is at least one significant difference between systems of education in Austria and Poland. It is the fact that Austrian system of schooling is decentralised. It means that crucial decisions about the adopted type of education, its financial sourcing and relevant implementing measures are mostly left to local governments rather than to central authorities. Such a solution may have many advantages, for instance the decision making process is simplified and therefore amendments to the system can be introduced faster. Immediate response to the needs of the inclusive environment may positively influence issues, such as teacher training, access to and application of modern electronic

teaching tools, and improved social attitudes towards individuals with SLDs.

Thirdly, differences in the historical background and achievements in the field of scientific research dedicated to SLDs in the compared countries may cause discrepancies in teaching approaches and experiences, what in turn may influence the present state of inclusive education in Austria and Poland.

Quite contrary to the first choice of the country for comparison, the next selection of the European state was based on the common features that Poland and the chosen nation may share. For this reason, the Czech Republic, with the organisation of its system of education resembling the one in Poland, was appointed as the second country for comparison. In the present work, this country will be referred to as Czechia in accordance to the national preference and governmental recommendation issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic from 2016 to apply the shorter name of the country which depicts its independent character after the split of Czechoslovakia into Slovakia and Czechia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 11.11.2016).

Similarities between Poland and Czechia also refer to historical events, political systems, governing and social policies that both countries share in common. Undoubtedly, Czechia is culturally close to Poland, moreover its system of education has been subjected to reforms similar to the ones introduced in Poland since the 1990s, the moment when the concept of integration was given international attention. Further, typically for countries from the former Eastern Bloc, their national systems of education are centralised, quite contrary to the systems of Western European countries. Local authorities have limited autonomy, especially with regard to financial sourcing and undertaking legally binding decision. This fact is of great importance as the differences in managing the system of education by Western and Eastern European countries can have a crucial impact on the pace of implementation and quality of the adopted inclusive education.

It is important to notice that after the year 2000, governments of all three selected countries agreed to shift their systems of education from integration to inclusion, appointing the latter as the mainstream approach in education, what requires an introduction of substantial diversification from traditionally applied methods of teaching towards content and language integrated learning (Eurydice 2007: 13). With reference to foreign language education, the three countries decided to introduce inclusion-friendly methods of teaching to their systems of education what enforces a substantial change in the perception of educational priorities. According to the assumption of the inclusive

education, knowing a target language is no longer an educational goal itself but it becomes a tool in developing life skills and gaining general knowledge. Therefore, a decision about the choice of favourable methods of teaching to young learners has already turned to be a key educational factor affecting learners' potential success that needs attention and analysis.

#### **4.1.3 Stage III: Collecting the data of the state of inclusive education in the three countries**

Having selected the countries for the comparative study, serious attempts were made to reach primary school teachers of English and contact specialists in the field of education in the three appointed countries. Due to a variety of the applied research tools and certain difficulties in collecting the data in each of the countries, this stage of the study lasted from 2019 until 2021.

At the beginning, academic units which offered tertiary education programmes in early pedagogy or/ and English language teaching, as well as public primary schools offering education of learners with SLDs were searched on the Internet. Contacts to the university, college and school authorities were established and noted. The selected universities and colleges were located in cities all over the countries: Fieldkirch, Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz, and Viena in Austria; Brno, Olomouc, Ostrava, Pardubice, Pilsen, and Prague in Czechia; and Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Lublin, Łódź, Płock, and Warszawa in Poland. In some cases, whenever such information was displayed on a site of a university or college, contacts to heads of sections and academic teachers engaged in educational matters were noted. With reference to schools selected for contact, priority was given to general education units with integration sections.

In a following step, a letter inviting to participate in the interview was composed in Polish language for each group of potential respondents and consequently translated into German and Czech languages. The invitations were sent to twelve Austrian, six Czech and six Polish academic units via an electronic message and addressed to the deans or academic teachers of faculties of philology and pedagogy. A similar procedure was adopted for the survey of English language teachers of young learners. A questionnaire form was prepared and also subjected to translation to German and Czech languages. Letters of invitation for foreign language teachers together with an Internet link to the

questionnaire and the attached questionnaire were directed via e-mail to school principals in the appointed countries. In total, over one hundred and fifty primary education schools received the invitation and the questionnaire (56 schools in Austria, 50 in Czechia, and 51 in Poland).

The expected answers, however, have never occurred as in the beginning of 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic was announced in Poland, Czechia and also Austria, due to which all educational institutions in the countries were closed. Students and lecturers were directed to distant form of education for a period of two years, followed by further restrictions in direct contact with educational units. As a result, only one response to the questionnaire from Czech and six from Poland were received. Further online contacts with teachers were impossible. On the basis of telephone conversations with school principals and secretaries it was established that English language teachers were informed about the study and encouraged by their supervisors to respond to them. However, as some principles admitted, they had no power to convince or even force their staff to participate in it.

With reference to planned interviews with university and college representatives, some interest was shown among academic teachers from Austria (3 persons), Czech (2 persons) and Poland (2 persons). Regretfully, it soon turned out that the respondents did not find themselves to be the appropriate specialists neither in the field of early education nor foreign language teaching, nor in the inclusive approach. Only in Poland, two academic teachers: one from the Polish Naval Academy in Gdańsk and one from the Mazovian Academy in Płock agreed to be interviewed.

As a consequence of experienced difficulties, unwillingness of the respondents to participate in research and limitation in direct contact with others, the commenced forms of the study had to be terminated. The situation forced the researcher to base the comparative study exclusively on the analysis of the collected documents and specialist literature referring to the state of inclusive education in the considered countries.

#### **4.1.4 Stage IV: Comparison of the state of inclusive education in the selected countries**

In 2022 the collected documents and specialist literature referring to inclusive education of learners with SLDs were subjected to comparison in accordance to the four research

criteria referring to systemic changes, the teacher, methods of teaching and didactic materials (see section 4.2), on the basis of which eight research questions were elaborated (see section 4.3). The read data were then described, supplemented with current information wherever it was necessary, and analysed separately for each country (see chapters 5, 6 and 7). The final results of the analysis were summarised in total for all countries and presented in forms of comprehensive figures (see chapter 8).

## **4.2 Criteria for the comparison**

Based on the analysis of the international documents, it can be assumed that inclusion is perceived as the best educational approach towards learners with SLDs. Its implementation, however, demands an introduction of thorough amendments to the existing systems of education. The most substantial change refers to assurance of inclusion-friendly teaching methods based on the use of individual cognitive and socio-affective strategies that support sustainable development of all learners regardless of their abilities (EASNIE 2017: 9-10). The need for an adjustment of the applied methods of teaching entails further improvements in organisation of school functioning, the applied system of evaluation from importance of assessment towards importance of performance, and foremost a development of teachers' roles and competence for work with inclusive environments.

Therefore, based on these premisses, four educational aspects have been developed as the research criteria for the realisation of the scope of this complex study. They entail as follows:

- historical background of the scientific interest in individuals with SLDs in Austria, Czechia and Poland, followed by modern systemic solutions for their education;
- roles and competence of the inclusive foreign language teacher in the appointed countries;
- the use of inclusion-friendly teaching methods and strategies by Austria, Czech and Polish foreign language teachers;
- an access to and use of inclusion-friendly teaching materials.

Similarities and differences between the countries under the comparison maybe indicative of the present conditions of inclusive education in each researched country.



Secondly, they may also expose positive solutions for the implementation and further development of inclusion in Poland. Also, some negative outcomes may become warning signs against practices that could withhold the development of inclusion in education. In order to conduct the comparative study in accordance to each of the established criteria, the key research questions and applied diagnostic tools were appointed and described in sections 4.3 and 4.4 below.

### **4.3 Research questions**

To settle the similarities and differences in implementation of the inclusive education to national systems of education in the three compared countries, based on the set research criteria, as well as, to learn whether English language teaching approaches towards young learners with SLDs in Poland are compliant with the assumptions of inclusive education, the following eight research questions were composed:

- RQ (1) How was the scientific interest in SLDs developed historically in each of the compared countries?
- RQ (2) What systemic solutions have been introduced to the national systems of education with the view to inclusion?
- RQ (3) What are the legal basis for educating learners with SLDs in each of the compared countries?
- RQ (4) What diagnostic procedures of SLDs are applied in the three compared countries?
- RQ (5) How are educational institutions and support services for learners with SLDs organised in the three compared countries?
- RQ (6) How are teachers of the compared countries educated and what is their (self) development of competences with the view to inclusive education?
- RQ (7) What language teaching methods are used by primary level teachers of English language in the three compared countries?
- RQ (8) What types of teaching materials are used by English language teachers of learners with SLDs in the three compared countries?

The results of the planned analysis of the documents and specialist literature are further confronted with the results of an analysis of further research instruments the use of which gives an insight into the teaching practice.

#### **4.4 Method of data collecting: Instruments**

Aiming to find responses to the research questions, set in accordance to the established criteria, varied research tools were engaged among which identification and collection of documents and specialist literature of the researched subject were of primary importance.

The data to be collected in this phase of the study derived from the formal documents, legal acts and specialist literature, which were selected for a descriptive analysis in accordance to validity of the included information under the four established criteria (see section 4.2). Legal acts, governmental resolutions, declarations and other formal documents were mostly searched on the Internet as all of the three countries offer an access to their records via electronic journals. In case of the review of specialist literature, both paper and electronic sources were researched. They included individual, as well as, collective works, monographies and articles concerning issues of inclusive education, foreign language teaching and learning, education of young learners and learners with SLDs. The gathered and selected data were then grouped and subjected to the analysis in eight subsections (see section 4.5), co-responding to the developed research questions (see sections 4.3). Research findings were presented separately for each of the three countries (see the concluding sections of chapters 5, 6 and 7), and then used for comparison in chapter 8.

#### **4.5 Method of data analysis**

The data acquired under the scope of the study and in accordance to the presented methods of data collection were subjected to a mixed type analysis. In particular, the descriptive analysis of the documents and specialist literature was organised in accordance to the determined research questions (RQ) (see section 4.3) under the following sections:

- (1) scientific interest in SLDs in the historical perspective (RQ 1),
- (2) legal basis of educating learners with SLDs (RQ 3),
- (3) diagnosis of SLDs (RQ 4),
- (4) systemic solutions and educational institutions and support services (RQ2, RQ 5)

- (5) education of language teachers, split into three subsections concerning formal requirements for becoming a foreign language teacher, teacher's competence in educating learners with SLDs, as well as (self) development of in-service teachers (RQ 6),
- (6) methods of teaching applied by English language teachers (RQ 7), and
- (7) types of foreign language teaching materials used with early education students (RQ 8).

Extensive reading was used in order to integrate the findings which were then marked as positive or negative tendency. For greater transparency, the results of this qualitative analysis were gathered in comprehensive tables with regard to the above enlisted eight sections and presented separately for each compared country (see conclusions of chapters 5, 6 and 7).

#### **4.6 Final comments**

Regardless of the unforeseeable difficulties experienced in the comparative study and caused by the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher managed to collect and analyse the documents and specialist literature from Austria, Czechia and Poland in accordance to the established research criteria. The gathered data of the comparative study of documents and specialist literature were analysed with the use of qualitative methods. The results of the analysis responded to eight research questions which had been posed in accordance to the four research criteria. Some modifications, however, had to be introduced as restrictions in direct contact and mobility precluded the use of research instruments which were planned for collection of research data abroad. For this reason, supplementary study (Stage V) was organised with regard to the state of inclusive primary education in Poland, the organisation and results of which are presented in Chapters Nine and Ten of the dissertation.

In the following Chapters Five, Six and Seven below, data from documents and specialist literature, referring to the inclusive foreign language education in Austria, Czechia and Poland, are subjected to detailed descriptive analysis, the results of which are discussed in chapter 8.

## **Chapter 5: Foreign language education of learners with SLDs in Austria**

### **5.0 Introduction**

For the last two decades Austria has developed its system of education seeking for full inclusion of learners with SEN into the mainstream schooling, preceded by over a twenty-year-process of integration in education. According to information included in a report on language and language education policies in Austria of 2008 edited by the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research, foreign language education run by Austrian educational institutions has a long history as Austria was among the first European countries where modern foreign language (MFL) teaching was introduced to primary level education in the school year 1983/84 and extended to first level of primary education from school year 1998/99. Two decades after the introduction of foreign language education to public schools, beginning with the school year 2003/04, English language became compulsory for pre-school and first two primary level students in amount of 32 hours yearly and supplemented with maximum of 80 hours of additional foreign language lessons yearly, run without student assessment. Further, it was decided in a national core curriculum that the best approach in language education was integration (Carnevale et al. 2017: 37). In order to maintain a unanimous line of language education, a national framework, known as *Basic competences foreign language alive* (GK2, GK4), was defined in 2015 and later included into *Language and language education policies in Austria of 2017* (Ebenberger 2017: 178). GK2 outlines linguistic skills which learners are expected to achieve after the first two years of their

primary education, and GK4 after the following two ones. According to the above regulations, learners are perceived as individuals who differ in their cultural and social background, interests, skills and gifts. For these reasons teaching is advised to take various social forms of work and be based on different tasks. Additionally, an emphasis is put on the selection of didactic materials which need to stimulate multiple intelligences and include activities which develop special-kinaesthetic, gross and fine motor skills, logical thinking, as well as different inter- and intrapersonal learning styles by the use of various teaching strategies (Ebenberger 2017: 179).

For better understanding of how the inclusive system of Austrian education functions in educational practice, it is subjected to a close analysis with special attention given firstly to the historical background of scientific interest in SLDs in Austria, secondly to legal basis for educating learners with SLDs in this country, followed by the procedure for diagnosing Austrian individuals with SLDs and a description of the system of public education in Austria, including tertiary level of teacher education. The considerations are finished with the applied English language teaching approaches and the use of didactic materials with inclusive groups.

## **5.1 History of scientific interest in SLDs in Austria**

The first traces of interest in SLDs among Austrian scientists can be noticed in the foundation phase when Franz Joseph Gall revealed his discovery in the field of neurology. As Tesak and Code (2008: 37-38) explain, Gall identified the areas of a human brain that are responsible for managing motor activities, emotions and intellectual qualities. He also introduced a term of faculty of language which maintains control over verbal expression and manages lexical memory. What is more, basing on scientific observations, Gall also noticed that injuries and certain diseases may damage or 'suspend' brain activities, for which phenomenon he had no word, and which was later recognised as aphasia (Lesky 1979: 51). His revelations raised interest of other European scientists among whom were Joan Baptiste Bouillaud and Pierre Paul Broca (Guardiola 2001: 5), whose achievements in the field of SLDs were mentioned earlier (see chapter one).

Among other Austrian scientists deeply involved in a development of language localisation theory, and mentioned by Tesak and Code (2008: 68), were Theodor von Meynert, Johann Baptist Schmidt and Eduard Hitzig. Their works which were dedicated

to a language disorder of hearing and reading had influence on further studies about dyslexia and dysphasia. Worth remembering is the fact that from the initial stage of research in language disorders, studies about dyslexia and dysphasia had not been separated until the end of the nineteenth century when the concept of developmental dyslexia was used with reference to non-aphasic patients (Guardiola 2001: 3, 5).

In 1913, an Austrian psychiatrist Arnold Pick (1913: 9) attempted to introduce psychology and linguistics into studies about SLDs. In his studies about dysphasia, he developed a new theoretical foundation for dysphasia theory which stayed in opposition to solid authoritative psychology. In the opinion of Tesak and Code (2008:126), his perception of dysphasic language had an influence on further development in the field of scientific research which is presently recognised as a psycholinguistic perspective. In particular, Pick (1909: 30 in Friederici 1994: 256) justified that language comprehension is not mere activation of isolated meanings of words but a complex mechanism of series of processes that are synergetic. For this reason, Pick developed a model of language production which was divided into several stages from mental formulation of a sentence schema to its final articulation. By analysing processes of each stage he indicated the reasons for agrammatism which, in his view, stood for core symptoms of dysphasia (Friederici 1994: 256). His discoveries drew attention of German scientists Karl Kleist and Max Isserlin whose work on dysphasia was unfortunately interrupted by the outbreaks of the first world war. Consecutive periods of the first and then the second world war withheld studies of SLDs in European countries due to their involvement in the military conflicts. As Tesak and Code inform, the events of two wars forced a shift of the centre of scientific research in SLDs from Europe to North America. And although scientific studies about SLDs returned to European countries after the end of the second world war, medicine was no longer the leading discipline in research of SLDs, giving its way to interdisciplinary studies of neuropsychology, neurolinguistics, speech and language pathology (see section 1.2).

In the post wars period, neurocognitive studies turned to be in the centre of attention of a group of psychologists from the University of Salzburg, including Heinz Wimmer, Martin Kronbichler, Florian Hutzler, Alois Mair, Wolfgang Staffen and Gunther Ladurner, who researched German-speaking children with dyslexia. They established that the reading disorder is of neural nature as it results from a dysfunction of left posterior areas of the brain (Kronbichler et al. 2006: 1822). Their discovery became a basis for much later studies of Gebauer (Gebauer et al. 2012: 6) from the University of Graz, who

successfully developed a morpheme-based strategy for intervention. As a result of his research, increased reading fluency and efficiency among the dyslectic learners was found. Together with his collaborators, Gebauer also established that brains of dyslectic learners which are subjected to the morpheme-based strategy demonstrated higher connectivity between parietal and frontal regions of the brain in comparison to patients without intervention. Functional magnetic resonance imaging tests used by Gebauer et al. (2012: 7) also evidenced that dyslexia can be hereditary and that early morpheme-based intervention applied to children at risk of dyslexia may improve effective functioning of their brains.

Psycholinguistic insight of Austrian scientists into SLDs added significantly important knowledge to the field of SLDs and stayed in agreement with a new educational perspective for educating children with dyslexia and dysphasia by mainstream units. However, pure acceptance of individuals with SLDs into public education schooling was not enough for their successful education. Forming mixed ability classes demanded amendments in the national law and further in the existing system of national education. In the following sections 5.2 and 5.3 the issue of education in the light of Austrian law is given close attention, followed by a presentation of an Austrian model of the diagnostic system that is applied at present and which also has an influence on the quality of educational services.

## **5.2 Legal basis of educating learners with SLDs in Austria**

The analysis of scientific developments in the field of SLDs in Austria from the historical perspective (see section 5.1) shows that there are solid foundations for development of the inclusive education in the country. Austria is one of the first European countries which introduced integration to the system of general education and as such served as a pattern for other European states. What is more, it is also the leader in implementing the inclusive approach and forming a multitrack system of public schooling after 2000 (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 87). Table 4 below shows legal changes in Austrian system of education that led from special education to inclusion, all of which are described in the present section with attention given to their most important legal provisions.

Table 4: Evolution of Austrian system of education towards inclusion

<b>1962</b>	
The School Organisation Act	- establishing education centres for children with learning disorders
<b>1984</b>	
1st pilot project on integration in Oberwart (Burgenland)	- introducing the integrative approach to public mainstream education
<b>1988</b>	
Order of 7 April 1988 of the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Sports	- learners with SLDs gain an access to public schooling
<b>1993</b>	
The 15th School Organisation Act Amendment	- establishing integration schooling
<b>2009</b>	
Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)	- adopting the inclusive approach into Austrian system of education
<b>2012</b>	
The National Action Plan for Disability 2012-2020 (NAP 2012-2020)	- developing inclusive education in public schooling; - Teacher Education for Inclusion Project (reform of the teaching profession)
<b>2016</b>	
Reform Programme of Austria 2016	- early recognition of SLDs due to unification of last year kindergarten education with two years of primary schooling; - team teaching (lesson conduct by an early education teacher and a special education teacher acting in cooperation); - establishing Units of Inclusion, Diversity and Special Education that offer training and advisory services for teachers; - obligatory in-service training for teachers yearly
<b>2021</b>	
The National Action Plan for Disability (NAP 2021-2030)	- establishing a supervisory board for NAP with the Disability Ombudsman and the Monitoring Committee for implementation of the UN Disability Rights Convention in Austria; - developing a list of priorities for NAP - evaluating stages of the NAP 2021-2030

On the basis of the gathered documents and revised specialist literature, it was established that integration of learners with SLDs has been introduced to the Austrian system of education since the 1980s. The roots of the evolution in the policies of special education, however, reach much earlier to the year 1962 when the post-war school reform started with the adoption of the School Organisation Act (*Schulorganisationengesetz* of 1962). In this document, the basis for the present Austrian school system was established



and special schools were appointed by federal authorities as education centres for children and adolescents with disabilities (Engelbrecht 1988: 70). According to the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSEN 2003: 11), providing education to learners with intellectual disabilities in Austria led to an establishment of a two-track approach: the mainstream and special school systems, which from the mid-1980s started to evolve into an integrative system of education. Buchner and Proyer (2019: 84) critically refer to the establishment of special school system which led to a mandatory segregation of learners with disabilities as their education was impairment-oriented and focused on functional limitations derived from medical diagnosis. As a matter of fact, protests were raised by parent organisations objecting against the special school system and subjecting the issue of SEN into a public debate. This, in Buchner and Proyer's (2019: 86) opinion, inspired practitioners in schools to search for new educational solutions.

The first pilot project promoting integration was launched in 1984 in a mainstream primary school of Oberwart, the federal state of Burgenland in Southern Austria. Its success drew nationwide attention to the concept of integrative education and caused changes to the law. In 1986 pursuant to a decree on physically handicapped or sensually impaired children in Austrian school system (*Körperbehinderte oder sinnesbehinderte Kinder im Schulwesen Österreichs*) issued by the Austrian Ministry of Education, the mainstream education became accessible for learners with physical and sensory disabilities (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 86). Two years later, Austrian Parliament decided to introduce amendments to the School Organisation Act of 1962, establishing basis for further integrative education projects all over Austria (Gruber and Petri 1989: 161). Together with the recognition of article 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1993, a nationwide discussion about integration started, resulting in an evaluation of the pilot projects and legitimisation of integrated education in primary schools under the 15<sup>th</sup> School Organisation Act Amendment in 1993 (Buchner and Gebhardt 2011: 298). It was a milestone in moving from a two track education system of special schooling and general schooling towards multitrack system with integrative teaching. In 1994 the World Conference on Special Needs Education was called to declare inclusive schooling an integral part of national education programmes, according to which schools and teachers were expected to recognise and respond to different learning styles (Paleczek et al. 2015: 30). Opening of general policy for integration led to an increase of learners with disabilities in the Austrian mainstream schooling. As Buchner and Proyer (2019: 87)

inform, in 2000 almost 50 per cent of Austrian learners with SEN were educated in the mainstream schooling system which number remained unchanged for over 10 years. Such high interest of students with various disabilities in general education schools needed adjustment of teaching approaches and pedagogical resources to fit special needs of all learners.

According to Feyerer (2009: 73-74), there are three different approaches that have been introduced to Austrian primary schools, namely: single integration, integration classes and cooperative classes. According to the first approach, an individual with SEN was placed in a regular class, entitled to extra four to eight support hours per week at which they worked with a special education teacher in form of remedial practice dedicated to the learner's diagnosed disability (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 87). This, however, did not turn to be the most common approach in Austrian system of education. Due to governmental policies which permanently influenced the mainstream education, the greatest popularity was gained by forming integrative classes. As Buchner and Proyer (2019: 87) further explain, they were composed of a reduced number of students, amounting to maximum twenty per class, with five up to seven students with official medical diagnosis of SEN. Additionally, teaching was performed collaboratively by teams of two teachers, one of whom needed to be qualified in special education. The last of integrative approaches mentioned by Feyerer (2009: 73-74) was also introduced to the mainstream schooling in form of remedial classes composed of small, up to ten students, groups of learners with disabilities who were instructed by a special education teacher. Students at cooperative classes partly joined some regular classes with other pupils for less demanding subjects, such as art or physical education, where academic performance was not expected to be high (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 87).

Regardless of successful initial implementation of integration projects, the Austrian dual school system of the mainstream and special education turned to be rather resistant to changes. Paleczek et al. (2015:25) notice that governmental authorities were rather unwilling to accept new educational solutions which aimed more at inclusion than integration and demanded more thorough restructuring of the education system. For this reason, the authors further explain, inclusive education programmes were implemented locally in forms of independent projects, limited in time and with poor impact on the mainstream schooling. As a result, inclusive education was unevenly introduced and developed in schools of various federal states.

The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

in 2008 broke the mould and revived the national discussion about educating learners with SLDs in general education units of Austria. It was led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and in consequence finished with a formulation of the national action plan for the years 2012-2020, developed in order to meet the obligations of the ratified UN Convention (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 88). According to the plan, two basic goals were set for achievement in the field of special education needs. The first aimed at implementation of the inclusive model regions and the second, at reforming the system of teacher education. In 2020, The National Disability Action Plan 2012-2020 was evaluated revealing significant shortcomings in both assumed goals.

With reference to the first, Buchner and Proyer (2019: 89) inform that the governmental plans turned to be over ambitious as until 2019 apart from three pioneering federal states of Carinthia, Styria and Tyrol, only one additional inclusive model region of Vorarlberg has been formed out of nine Austrian federal states. As they explain, the situation was a consequence of the drastically low budget dedicated for the implementation of the goal. With regard to the second goal assumed in the action plan, deficiencies in teacher training were reported (Sonntag 2022: 70).

Regardless of the difficulties, however, efforts around the implementation of the national plan on the governmental and local levels can be assessed positively as they brought an increase in the number of learners with SEN in mainstream units, which in school year 2016/2017 reached 61 percent of all students labelled with SEN (Mayrhofer et al. 2019: 164) and is reported as a rising tendency (Sonntag 2022: 71). Additionally, it needs to be noticed that a new education reform from 2016 resulted in a transformation of the dual structure school system. In 2018, structural changes in the system of education were introduced under The School Entry and Primary School Package (*Schulrechtsänderungsgesetz*). According to its assumptions, by the means of unification of the last year of kindergarten and the first two years of primary level education, early identification of learning disorders was facilitated and learners' competencies were strengthened (OECD 2017: 12). Consecutive packages improved school autonomy and simplified school administration (OECD 2018: 65). Additionally, based on the changes on the administrative level, new organisational Units for Inclusion, Diversity and Special Education (*Bildungsdirektion*) were formed to take responsibility for the management of the mainstream school administration (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 89). Spread locally, the units exercise a main control over the quality of inclusive practises, the process of teacher training and school development in meeting learners SEN.

With reference to teacher training issue, important steps are reported to have already been undertaken. Sonntag (2022: 71) informs that the reform of teacher education is presently perceived as the key factor in successful process of inclusive education. For this reason, a new tendency of multi-professional cooperation is promoted, assuming structural openness in achieving educational goals and tasks on the basis of autonomy and trust (Kielblock et al. 2017: 142). This multi-professional cooperation riches beyond simple cooperation between teachers. It refers to a cooperation between two groups of specialised professionals who exchange professional information and coordinate their actions. In the opinion of Sonntag (2022: 72), multi-cooperation teams can be formed between general and special education teachers, school assistants, social workers, school psychologists, therapists, counsellors, and parents. As it is further explained, multi-cooperation may involve various fields, including training, counselling, projecting, exchanging pedagogical concepts, didactic and diagnostic competences. Multi-professional cooperation is believed to enforce diversity to pedagogical approaches leading to a reduction of barriers in educating learners with SLDs and improvement of inclusive practices. Such a concept of cooperation seem to have a significant influence on current methods of teaching and teachers' competence, both of which issues are given close attention in the following sections 5.5 and 5.6.

### **5.3 Diagnosing specific learning disorders in Austria**

The endorsement of inclusive education by Austrian school law enforced changes in a procedure of diagnosing learners with SLDs. According to the analysed formal documents and specialist literature, there are several differences in diagnosis of SLDs applied in European Union countries (see section 2.1). They are partly caused by discrepancies in interpreting SLDs in ICD 11 and DSM V (see section 2.2). These discrepancies in defining SLDs had also an impact on the choice of diagnosis in Austria. As Specht (2009: 37) explains, in Austrian reality, SLDs are interpreted as “soft” disabilities for which no physical markers are known, which, however, can be manifested by significant difficulties in learning academic skills. For this reason, as it is explained by Krammer et al. (2014: 31), the commonly accepted method of diagnosing SLDs in Austria is the discrepancy model, usually performed by special education teachers.

According to the procedure, the decision about the choice of educational path is

left to Austrian parents who choose between special and inclusive education paths (Gebhardt et al. 2013: 148). According to convention, as Feyerer (2009: 79) informs, a child with SLDs who starts schooling in an inclusive unit is ascribed to a general special education curriculum, observed and diagnosed on the basis of his or her school performance by a certified special education teacher within the first two years of primary school education. What is important, only in case of controversy or ambiguity, and with explicit parental consent can an expert in person of a school psychologist complement the report on SEN issued by the special education teacher.

One cannot but agree with many experts in the field complaining about the quality of the diagnosis based almost entirely on ability-achievement discrepancy approach. Schwab et al. (2015: 331) criticise it for lacking accuracy, as IQ tests used by psychologists in many European countries, are rarely done in Austrian reality. Such a form of diagnosing can be then described as partial. Further, Gebhardt et al. (2013: 148) stress the fact that focusing on performance deficits tends to be detrimental to learners with SLDs as it leads to their stigmatisation and in consequence social segregation. Based on a study on assessing SEN in Austria performed by Schwab, Hessel, Obendrauf, Polanig, and Wölflingeseder in 2015, the ability-achievement approach shows tendency to be superseded by a response-to-intervention (RTI) model of diagnosis. This gradual change is the result of numerous complaints about the effectiveness of former tests. The researchers also notice that the RTI model of diagnosis seems to be more beneficial to learners with SLDs, though it is still far from perfection as so far there have been no indications how it should be implemented (Schwab et al. 2015: 332).

Apart from the controversies about the choice of the diagnosing approach, also the criteria for diagnosis cause difficulties for assessors of SEN as they are not standardised, and may differ in each federal state. In order to have a general view on commonly applied criteria of diagnosing, Schwab et al. (2015: 337) gathered information that special education teachers include in their reports about learners with SEN and established their prevalence. A list of such items, diagnosed most often by special education teachers is presented below in table 5.

*Table 5: Information included by special education teachers in SEN reports in Austria by Schwab et al. (2015: 337)*

<b>Collected information</b>	<b>Prevalence</b>
Personal data of the learner	91.1%
Answering the question whether SEN is indicated	91.1%
Learning and working behaviour	89.3%
Perception	88.2%
Motor development	84.0%
Description of the domains investigated	84.0%
Language	84.0%
Family situation	82.8%
Cognition	82.2%
School competences mastered	82.2%
Interpretation of results	82.2%
Developmental level of the child	79.9%
Recommendations regarding curriculum classification	79.9%
Case history	79.3%
School grades	79.3%
School achievements assessed with normed tests	76.3%
Statement about the most appropriate schooling	66.9%
Analysis of the classroom learning situation	66.3%
Sociomedical situation	62.1%
Description of the assessment methods used	62.1%
Sociocultural situation	59.2%
Socioeconomic situation	53.3%
Individual educational plan	26.6%

According to Schwab et al. (2015: 331-332), the information enquired in the reports by special education teachers refers to two major reasons for diagnosing which are: deficits in mathematics and German language, followed by behavioural disorders. Krammer et al. (2014: 35) add two more of them which include: problematic social background and autism. All of the mentioned researchers point out that applying the above criteria for diagnosis can be misleading in distinguishing learners with SLDs from learners whose deficits are caused by non-favourable environmental conditions (Krammer et al. 2014: 35, Schwab et al. 2015: 332). For example, children of immigrants who often do not use German language at home may manifest poor language skills in German. More appropriate in the researchers' view are assessment criteria applied by special education counselling experts who perform additional diagnosis on requests of

parents or school authorities. In the opinion of Schwab et al. (2015: 335) their criteria for diagnosis are more SLDs oriented and include: learning disability, mental disability, behavioural problems, sensory disability, physical disability and speech and language disorders.

In addition to the above reservations, the diagnostic criteria are not standardised and therefore a large percentage of special education teachers decide to use self-constructed assessments and observation tools or even follow subjective criteria based on their professional and personal experience (Schwab et al. 2015: 337). Non-standardised approaches for diagnosis are criticised by experts in the field of SLDs as they are issued by teachers whose decisions are relatively infrequently consulted with other specialists, for which reason they are claimed to lack transparency and objectivity (Feyerer 2009: 96).

Regardless of imperfections associated with the Austrian diagnostic system, researchers underline its advantages, admitting that the form of assessment of SEN is more oriented to educational intervention rather than to diagnosis of certain disorders. In the opinion of Schwab et al. (2015: 340), such an approach is supportive for inclusive education and beneficial in developing inclusive teaching programs. Further, it is justified that understanding various learning needs of disabled learners is more valuable for creating equal educational opportunities than concentrating exclusively on identification of learners' disorders. Additionally, according to recommendations of Austrian Ministry of Education of 2010, the diagnostic process demands constant verification and repetition in order to enable potential reclassification of learners with SLDs to the regular curriculum (Krammer et al. 2014: 33).

It is clear that diagnosing learners with SLDs and establishing their individual special needs is just the first step towards inclusive education as successful inclusive environment demands proper managing of other factors that refer to organisation of support services, specialised teacher training programs and teaching resources. Therefore, all of them are considered below, in the following part of the present chapter.

#### **5.4 Educational institutions and support services in Austria**

According to information about education policy in Austria issued by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2017, there are around 6000 schools in

this country, whereas over 90 percent of them are public units (OECD 2017: 11). Pursuant to the Austrian Federal Constitution Law, the national system of education is divided into six levels of kindergarten, primary, lower secondary, academic secondary and upper secondary, vocational and tertiary education (Nusche et al. 2016: 44). Table 6 below shows the system of education in Austria with distinction to grades and age groups.

Table 6: System of education in Austria after Eurydice ( <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/austria>)

<b>Education</b>	<b>School/ level</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years</b>
Pre-school	Kindergarten	3-6	4
Primary	Primary	6-9	4
Middle	Lower secondary	10-13	4
Secondary	Academic secondary	10-17	8
	Upper secondary	14-17	4
Vocational	Prevocational	15-15	1
	Vocational	14-18	5
Tertiary	Bachelor		3-4
	Master		1-2
	Doctorate		3-4

It is worth noticing that the first nine years of education are compulsory for all children, including these with SLDs. Education is free and schools are administered by the Federal Ministry of Education (Paleczek et al. 2015: 24-25).

Similarly to other EU member states, also in Austria parents of disabled children confide inclusive education. Based on *Statistik Austria*, in 2012, 52 percent of all learners with SEN were educated inclusively in mainstream units together with non-disabled children (*Statistik Austria 2012* in Krammer et al. 2014: 32). According to the results of a study conducted in 2016 by Feyerer and Wimberger (2016: 11), since the establishment of the inclusive education in the mainstream schools, the number of children with SEN has been rising. Avramidis et al. (2010: 192) report that in schools offering the inclusive environment, disabled learners are perceived and treated on equal basis with non-disabled ones. It is the school responsibility to facilitate both a positive learning environment and even social participation of all learners in their daily school life. Particulars for educating learners with SLDs are gathered in the General Special Education Curriculum to which learners with SLDs are ascribed, and which include the educational content, the class placement, a need for presence of special education teacher and instructional methods (Krammer et al. 2014: 33).

As to the educational content, learners with SLDs are taught according to the special needs curricula which were developed in each Austrian region for all subjects or



at least for some of them (Krammer et al. 2014: 33). As reported by the OECD, teaching conditions are comfortable for all participants of the educational process as Austrian class sizes are below the average and in 2015 amounted to 18 students per class (OECD 2017: 11). Such small class sizes are definitely beneficial for young language learners, increasing an opportunity for a use of variety of communicative activities and allowing teachers to approach students more individually.

With reference to English language teaching to young learners, obligatory foreign language education was introduced to Austrian public primary units in school year 2003/04 in amount of 32 hours yearly for pre-school, first and second level students on the basis of inclusive rules outlined in the national core curriculum (Carnevale et al. 2017: 37). Unfortunately, educational regulations imposed by the federal authorities are not performed alike in all states which maintain their regional autonomy. As Kast et al. (2021: 114) explain, language education in Austria depends on financial and human resources available for the states, what has an impact on intensity and quality of language lessons, as well as the availability of teaching materials and quality of IT sources. For this reason, not always the rule of differentiation and individualisation of the teaching process can be met, leading to differences in learners' linguistic competency at the secondary level of education (Giltschthaler et al. 2021).

Apart from internal ruling procedures that aim at supporting the development of inclusive approach in public education, Austrian federal authorities also try to meet the requirements set by the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UN 2008, Art. 24). Therefore, an institution of special education centre (SEC) was established in each of the federal states. The centres were renamed first in 2016 and later in 2018 and at present are recognised as units for inclusion, diversity and special education (see section 5.2), which fact underlines the importance of inclusion as a leading educational approach and the duality of the system of education in which there are special schools for individuals with severe disorders and general schools which educate other learners. These specialised units form advisory boards which are responsible for providing support to local inclusive education units and for monitoring SEN standards in each of the federal states (Buchner and Gebhardt 2011: 298). In particular, the SECs co-ordinate the work of inclusive teachers, provide pedagogical expertise on demand of parents and logistical support in the states (Nusche et al. 2016: 127). They are also certifying bodies for special education teachers who perform diagnosis of learners with SLDs (Schwab et al. 2015: 338).

As supplementation to governmental efforts for inclusion in education, non-governmental associations are set all over the country, functioning as institutions of support for children with SLDs and their families. Some of them such as Austrian Federal Association of Dyslexia (*Österreichischer Bundesverband Legasthenie*), LEGA Vorarlberg Initiative and Styrian Regional Association for Dyslexia (*Steirischer Landesverband Legasthenie*) are members of the European Dyslexia Association. According to the information published on their sites, the main role of these non-profit organisations is to disseminate the issue of SLDs to the public, advise and help children and adolescents with reading and spelling problems. They also provide diagnosis of SLDs for individuals, helping parents of disabled children recognise their potential educational problems. Their activities also enhance cooperation with federal authorities aiming at promotion of inclusive teaching approaches, organisation of training courses for inclusive teachers and distribution of recent information about SLDs.

Pursuant to the report on language and language education policies in Austria of 2008 edited by the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (2008a: 48), all initiatives are important for disseminating the concept of inclusive education, however, the key factor having an impact on the potential success of inclusion in the mainstream units refers to the subjects of teacher training and competence, as described in the following subchapters.

### **5.5 Education of (language) teachers in Austria**

Among factors warranting successful inclusion Booth and Ainscow (2002: 57) enumerate school culture and policy, educational practice and teachers. Teacher professional training has always been perceived by Austrian central authorities as a decisive factor, responsible for proper execution of inclusion. As reported by Schwab et al. (2015: 332), many Austrian primary school teachers complain about their poor competences in diagnosing and unpreparedness for work with learners with SLDs. The first steps towards the reform of teacher education were undertaken in 2011 by a board of experts (*Vorbereitungsgruppe PädagogInnenbildung NEU*) who elaborated changes to formal requirements in education of future teachers, extension of bachelor and master curricula for inclusive groups of students, and improvement of competence and professional skills in SEN among service teachers (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 89).

In order to achieve a comprehensive overview on (language) teachers in Austria, the below discussed key facts about their educational path, roles and competence are presented in table 7.

Table 7: Education, competence and professional (self) development of Austrian teachers

Teacher's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- bachelor and master studies in pedagogy and English philology with tertiary programmes covering inclusion, SEN and SLDs;</li> <li>- compulsory four B.A. plus one year of M.A. studies for students of English philology;</li> <li>- obligatory four-year-studies for early education teacher trainees</li> <li>- studies of inclusion;</li> <li>- post-graduate studies of inclusion</li> </ul>
Teacher's roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- flexible and individual approach towards learners;</li> <li>- good cooperative skills for team teaching and communication with parents;</li> <li>- using varied teaching strategies for individualisation of the educational process;</li> <li>- following students' interests;</li> <li>- using summative instead of formative forms of assessment;</li> <li>- collaborating with mentors</li> </ul>
Teacher's professional (self) development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- obligatory in-service refreshing and qualification courses of 15 hours a year;</li> <li>- development of an individual approach for meeting learners SEN;</li> <li>- autonomy in course planning</li> </ul>

### 5.5.1 Formal requirements

Before the reform of teacher education (*PädagogInnenbildung NEU*) of 2011, teacher education and training in Austria was based on the dual system, grouping teachers into two categories: first, of grammar and middle school teachers trained at teacher colleges, and second, of upper secondary school teachers who had to complete a six-year course of university studies (Andreitz and Müller 2015: 25; Buchner and Proyer 2019: 89). Introduction of the teacher education reform led to reorganisation of the higher education system pursuant to the European Bologna agreements. Due to the changes, all alumni of pedagogical faculties in Austria with a Bachelor degree (B.A.) have to complete a Master degree (M.A.). Exempted from this rule are primary school teachers in case of whom four-year university college studies are satisfactory. The reform also left the pre-primary education of teachers in Austria unchanged. As a consequence, it is sufficient to complete a five-year secondary school education in order to become a kindergarten guard (Andreitz and Müller 2015: 25). On the other hand, teacher training at university colleges is raised

from a three to four-year programme with obligatory one-year Master Degree Program (Fanta-Scheiner 2014: 17). Thus, the reform enforces close collaboration between colleges and universities with regard to the consistent programmes of the M.A. and B.A. levels (Andreitz and Müller 2015: 25). Supplementary M.A. studies after a B.A. programme include an induction phase which enables secondary school teachers access higher secondary school employment (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 90).

The intensified cooperation between colleges of teacher education and universities resulting from the reform, allows on combining subject-related theory with pedagogical training (Nusche et al. 2016: 159). It must be noticed that such an approach to teacher training is also beneficial with the view to inclusive education of learners with SLDs, as it enforces changes in teacher training programmes of bachelor and master degrees into which a forward trend of inclusion has been introduced (Feyerer 2015: 4). Also Sonntag (2022: 76) informs about a new trend in tertiary education studies promoted by some Austrian universities at which a joined specialisation of early inclusive pedagogy is offered instead of separate faculties of special and early pedagogy. Moreover, some academic centres, e.g. Vienna University, offer inclusive education as a separate subject of studies if it is selected in a combination with a second obligatory subject, for example English, maths or art at the B.A. level (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 90). In practice, improvements in the tertiary education curricula make their alumni better prepared for work in specialised as well as inclusive settings (Andreitz and Müller 2015: 25). What is more, teacher trainees are required to choose a specialisation in SEN during their course of studies. Buchner and Proyer (2019: 92) mention four areas of pedagogical interest: language and sensory, socio-emotional, cognitive-motoric and/ or sign language. Including subjects of special education into tertiary pedagogical curricula changed subject teacher trainees into professional inclusive teachers.

With reference to education of foreign language teachers in Austria, the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (2008a: 45-46) report that professional education before the reform was conducted by teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Akademien*) and by universities of applied sciences. Alumni of colleges gained pedagogical qualifications to teach all subjects, including a foreign language, in primary and lower secondary schools, whereas those who completed linguistic studies at universities gained full diploma qualifications. Curricula of teacher colleges assumed 6 semester training of foreign, usually English, language, cultural studies and didactics in amount of 8 weekly units. Based on the report of the

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2008a: 45-46), apart from German and mathematics, English language was the third compulsory subject to choose by college trainees who planned to find employment with lower secondary schools. From the academic year 2007/08 teacher training colleges were transformed into tertiary university colleges of education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) offering B.A. four-year diploma studies with a possibility to continue tertiary education of one and a half year M.A. programme at a university.

With reference to foreign language teacher training programmes, the Federal Framework Act on the Introduction of New Training for Teachers from 2013 orders inclusive education as a compulsory part of studies for all foreign language teacher trainees. For this reason, beginning from 2015 universities and university colleges merged former teacher education curricula by adjusting them accordingly to general, special and vocational school types (Dalton-Puffer et al. 2019: 204). Andreitz and Müller (2015: 25) admit that the reform of teacher education has already had effects on trainees who entered into professional studies after the implementation of the reform, though, not on in-service teachers. To support the latter, additional university courses financed privately or co-financed by province authorities are offered mainly to early intervention teachers as extra training to university curricula (Buchner and Proyer 2019: 93).

Aiming at full inclusion of learners with SLDs in the mainstream schooling system, it can be stated that Austrian federal authorities undoubtedly make constant effort to improve competence and professional skills of teacher trainees and service teachers. Introduction of inclusion as an obligatory subject, adjustment of tertiary programmes in pedagogy to various types of schools as well as available free professional training courses in early intervention are probably the most significant improvements in the system of educating Austrian teachers. The fact that lower level of university studies (B.A.) are prolonged to four years also allows for an introduction of a larger selection of subjects related to inclusive education. Finally, learners from pedagogical faculties are obliged to learn English language, what undoubtedly influences their ability to communicate with learners in this foreign language at lessons. It can be stated that all these improvements confirm the country's attempts to establish inclusion as the main approach in education of young learners.

### **5.5.2 Teacher's competences in inclusive education in Austria**

According to the report of OECD from 2016 on management of the teaching workforce in Austria, job satisfaction and morale of teachers appear high in the country. Nusche et al. (2016b: 157) inform about two main factors that have a great impact on teachers' performance of duties and willingness to continue their professional carriers. Firstly, small number of students per class, on average 18 children, and secondly, low number of teaching hours, with an average 779 teaching hours per teacher in primary schools annually. Undoubtedly, these two factors let teachers work comfortably as they have more opportunities and time to concentrate on students' SEN, develop and give more attractive lessons as well as approach students more individually. As mixed ability classes make the same-pace-learning impossible for all students, therefore teachers need to develop several educational roles that exceed the traditional role of an instructor. In 2012, The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE) outlined a profile of an inclusive teacher by setting three core values of their work (see sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.1). The key factors included appreciation of learners diversity, team work and collaboration with others, and constant personal professional development (EADSNE 2012: 11). As Ebenberger (2014: 12) informs, all of them have been adopted by Austrian educational authorities and implemented into teacher training programs.

The first value of appreciation of learners diversity reflects the need for individualisation of the educational process. General as well as foreign language teachers are expected to adopt and develop a flexible attitude towards learners with SLDs in their professional practice. The EADSNE (2012: 12) enlists several characteristics of successful inclusive teachers which may help service teachers develop a positive attitude towards inclusive educational process. According to the Agency, the key factor is to comprehend that it is 'normal to be different' and this 'difference' needs to be recognised, understood and valued as an opportunity for introducing a variety of teaching strategies. Ebenberger (2014: 5) rightly notices that teachers of inclusive classes not only have to face diverse learners' abilities and needs but also different cultural and social backgrounds. For this reason, they need to demonstrate their autonomous position and expand a flexible attitude towards chosen methods of teaching and didactic materials. One of the basic roles of the inclusive teacher, then, is to become a planner who prepares lessons, selects, adapts or even designs teaching materials according to learners' multiple

intelligences, different learning styles, interests and talents. Further, Schartz (2011: 25) stresses that the teacher as a manager, apart from organising learning space and controlling the lesson conduct, needs to demonstrate managerial diversity while establishing classroom culture, rules and routines. What is more, the teacher is expected to appreciate the potential that learners' diversity brings to the educational process. Understanding children's diverse abilities and learning styles demands from the teacher monitoring students peer work, providing individual support when necessary and facilitating the process of learning by applying a variety of teaching strategies. The teacher is also responsible for noticing and assessing students educational efforts. Within the roles of a diagnostician and assessor, the inclusive teacher of the Austrian primary school is advised to use new summative forms of assessment instead of formative ones, such as verbal descriptions, portfolios or pupil-parent-teacher conferences Ebenberger (2014: 5).

The second core value of successful inclusive teacher indicated by the EADSNE refers to team work and cooperation with others and is understood as teachers' ability to collaborate with other teachers and parents of learners with SLDs. Close cooperation between the subject teacher and special needs teacher has an impact on quality of inclusive education and contributes to leadership and management skills. As Nimante and Tubele (2010: 170) explain, team teaching of SEN classes is inevitable due to general education teachers' lack of experience and knowledge of psychology and social pedagogy that are crucial for managing the difficulties the learners with SLDs might encounter. Schartz (2011: 25) explains that cooperation between teachers enhances teachers' perception of their responsibilities from 'I and my class' to a wider concept of 'we and our school'. Within this wider perspective, collaboration refers to share of responsibilities, work and success with head teachers and other subject teachers. It also helps to overcome failures and stagnation as problems can be discussed, revised and corrected readily if subjected to constructive discussions in teams. Muehlbacher and Hagenauer (2023: 43) rightly notice that such cooperative organisation of the educational process requires constant monitoring of teaching practices and strategies on the daily basis. Further, with the view of young newly qualified teachers employed in inclusive units, collaboration with mentors and experienced coaches is beneficial for developing their self-autonomy. Ebenberger (2014: 8-9) informs that Austrian unexperienced teachers indicate mentoring to be a crucial factor for a successful start in the profession. Head teachers empower unexperienced teachers with strategies that are recognised to be well-considered and

provide feedback to their teaching. Beer (2014: 17) notices that the best cooperation is achievable when based on interpersonal relationships in groups not exceeding two or three newly qualified teachers per mentor. It is due to the fact that unexperienced teachers hesitate less to ask for consultation and contact mentors on daily basis.

Finally, cooperation is also regarded as a contact and collaboration with parents who are the sources of information about their children (EADSNE 2012: 15). Proper understanding of learners' social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, as well as perspectives of parents may significantly influence the choice and then application of best adjusted strategies, adding value to the educational success. Additionally, regular contacts with parents and their active engagement in the educational process influence the development of so called onboarding strategies that newly qualified teachers may benefit from.

The third key role of an inclusive teacher viewed by EADSNE (2012: 16) addresses professionalism of inclusive teachers, understood by means of constant personal professional development. Professionally aware teachers are confident of their competences and act as subject experts, they are self-autonomous but also self-reflective. By the latter, Schartz (2011: 25) means both in and on action, individual and collective self-reflection which leads to development of professionalism. For this reason, teachers in Austria are required to improve their teaching skills by attending postgraduate studies and professional courses which help them learn about new teaching approaches, reflect on their teaching methods, develop alternative teaching strategies. Finally, teachers' professionalism is expected to contribute to the development of the inclusive school as an educational community.

### **5.5.3 (Self) development of in-service teacher competence in Austria**

University and college graduates who have become professional in-service teachers can improve their teaching skills in SEN and gain additional formal qualifications via in-service training. Various professional courses in the field of SLDs are organised by university colleges, advisory boards and school psychological service units composed of educational psychologists. They support teachers with didactic knowledge, stimulate their active engagement in professional practice and provide coherent and relevant specialist expertise (Nusche et al. 2016: 153). Additionally, in-service teachers employed with inclusive units are supported by special needs teachers whose main role is to help learners



with SLDs follow the instructions of general education teachers and participate actively in lessons on equal rights with other group members. Schwab et al. (2015: 238) stress the importance of teachers' sensitivity to class diversity and their skilfulness in applying inclusive pedagogic strategies. Co-teaching is seen as a step toward full inclusive schooling where future general education teachers will turn to be high quality specialists, also in the field of special education needs (Schwab et al. 2015: 239).

It needs to be noticed that in Austria 36.8 percent of in-service teachers employed with early childhood education are under thirty, which is one of the highest ranks among the European Union countries (OECD 2023: 351). Based on the improved tertiary education programmes, young teaching staff is said to be equipped with new, inclusion-friendly methods of teaching and better understanding of learners' SEN. In order to mitigate the differences in professional preparedness of in-service teachers of different age groups, a lot of attention is given to their post graduate training. Optimistically, heading for full inclusion in education, most in-service teachers express their interest in post graduate courses in dyslexia, dyscalculia, violence and behavioural problems (Nusche et al. 2016: 153). What is interesting, under the Federal Act on the New Teacher Training Scheme 2013 (*Bundesrahmengesetz zur Einführung einer neuen Ausbildung für Pädagoginnen und Pädagogen*) upgrading pedagogical skills is obligatory for all Austrian teachers (Nusche et al. 2016: 152). In particular, general education teachers are requested to report their participation in at least fifteen hours of in-service training yearly.

Since 2012 rules for in-service training must be compliant with the national program for quality management (*Schulqualität allgemein 2012*), according to which the choice of in-service training courses depends mostly on specific needs of individual schools and teachers interests (Andreitz and Müller 2015: 27). Archan and Mayr (2006: 51) inform about two general types of in-service training courses run by universities and colleges for professional teachers, namely: update courses designed to support teachers with the newest teaching solutions, and qualification courses designed for those who desire to achieve higher quality managerial skills or acquire competencies in curricular subjects or in special fields. According to the information in the national database *PH-Online*, a demand for in-service training among professional teachers in Austria fluctuates between 60% to 70% and regards most often areas of special education needs, teaching methods, as well as behaviour problems (Andreitz and Müller 2015: 32). The high demand for knowledge and skills in applying successful methods of teaching may indicate to the fact that service teachers are in search for alternative forms of work with students

with SLDs which would satisfy their special needs better than traditional subject teaching methods.

## **5.6 Teaching methods applied by English language teachers in Austria**

With reference to English language education, there have been numerous teaching methods either rooted in Latin language teaching tradition or developed in contrast to it. Dalton-Puffer et al. (2011: 192) notice that although Austrian school curricula emphasise communicative approach, TBL and CLIL as dominant approaches, still traditional approach based on the PPP is used by English language teachers (see section 3.2). The growing popularity of TBL and CLIL is also confirmed by other Austrian specialists in the field including Buchner and Gebhardt (2011), Buchner and Proyer (2020), Dalton-Puffer et al. (2011), Dalton-Puffer et al. (2019), and Ebenberger (2017) who underline the applicability of the two approaches to the inclusive environment. Ebenberger (2017: 179) specifies that apart from CLIL and TBL Austrian teachers are advised to approach students of inclusive environments by means of multi-sensory and ludic strategies where the target language is acquired by means of interaction and fun. As it is noticed by Dalton-Puffer et al. (2011: 194) foreign language education in Austria is heading inclusion, however in some regions of the country amendments in teaching methods, and even more than that, changes of attitudes towards inclusive education are still expected.

According to recent trends, schools need to take responsibility for enabling all learners, regardless of their differences, an equal start into the future adult life, preparing them to live autonomously in society and act independently in their professional activities (UNESCO 2008: 15-18). Ebenberger (2014: 5) notices that according to the EU educational guidelines the issues of differentiation and individualisation of the teaching process are the two key factors that stand for successful approach in education. For this reason the Austrian federal government developed a new *National Reform Programme – Austria* (Federal Chancellery, 2012), which includes a national educational policy model based on these two factors. Ebenberger also points that the solid foundation of this model is composed of such features as: understanding learners' diversity, a need for competence-based methods of teaching, differentiation and individualisation of the educational process expressed by new alternative forms of assessment. With the view to the above, the most important factor in the process of education is the learner, not the target language

itself. Thus, the choice of foreign language teaching methods must cater for all his needs.

Eichelberger (1997: 146) draws attention to the fact that student-centred methods of teaching have a long tradition in Austria which reaches the beginning of the twentieth century. She notices that among promoters of the competence-based approach whose methods served as patterns to follow in Austrian schools were Maria Montessori from Italy, her follower in the USA Helen Parkhurst, German educationalist Peter Petersen and Celestin Freinet from France. Their methods of teaching had common objectives which referred to shaping a responsible, autonomous and socialised member of society via democratic and cooperative means of learning. Among forms of work the 'pattern educators' promoted education via socialising that included dialogues, games, celebrating feasts and festivals, experiments and mapping real life situations. As Schwab et al. (2015: 240) stress it, these educational concepts suit the modern needs of inclusive education which demands open learning, projecting weekly schedules for individual student with SLDs, working at learning stations in small groups, indirect instruction and discussion groups. For these reasons the said educational concepts have been applied as role models in composition of the new philosophy of the Austrian school system (Ebenberger 2014: 5).

In case of English language teaching that suits individualisation and differentiation of learning strategies and teaching materials, and by the same satisfies special needs of learners with SLDs educated in inclusive units, two approaches are mentioned in the related literature, namely task-based learning (TBL) and content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Experts in the field of education, such as Dalton-Puffer et al. (2019: 211), Schwab et al. (2015: 339-340), Ebenberger (2017: 175) and Millonig (2015: 20) enlist these two approaches as the most preferably applied ones in educating learners with SLDs, noticing that language lessons conducted accordingly to the said approaches are organised around communicative tasks which facilitate natural communication via interaction in the target language. Additionally, both TBL and CLIL are beneficial for all language learners indifferently to their abilities, as the process of learning is based on learners' individual experience and allows for self-reflection. Such an opinion is also confirmed by service teachers of English language who consider teamwork, communication in the target language and alternative forms of assessment as the key factors fostering a positive inclusive practice (Schwab et al. 2015: 240).

Much as the communicative approach dominated English language teaching in 1990's, also in Austria (Ebenberger 2017: 182), TBL has become the leading approach in

teaching English to young Austrian learners. Schwab et al. (2015: 240) explain that completion of meaningful tasks by the means of the target language provokes learners creativity, and by exploiting that creativity learning turns to be more efficient. Among task types Ebenberger (2017: 183) mentions as follows:

- problem solving tasks: puzzles, logic problems, predictions, ordering, sorting;
- matching tasks based on: sequencing, ranking, classifying, listing and comparing tasks that demand brainstorming, fact finding, comparing and finally sharing personal experience and projects;
- and other creative tasks which refer to the use of authentic educational materials and real life situations.

Seedhouse (1999: 150) complements this list of task types with dialogues, discussions and debates. Dealing with the tasks generates confirmation checks, clarification requests and self-repetitions which make input comprehensible and as such promote language acquisition (Seedhouse 1999: 154). Having such a variety of task types to choose from, the teacher needs to modify his roles of the leader and knower, and become the manager and helper who allocates and monitors tasks given to students who then act and manage the interaction on their own (Seedhouse 1999: 150). Dalton-Puffer et al. (2019: 203) also stress an important change in the compulsory assessment of students work, which is currently focused on the effort involved in gaining new skills and knowledge rather than on pure knowledge.

Some experts in the field criticise TBL for linguistic simplifications, narrow and restricted variety of communication of the language learners use for communication (Ellis 1994: 278). Much as this opinion can be justified in case of more advanced language learners, it is undisputable that in view to young learners' education TBL is an efficient approach. It helps to develop children's target language skills by the use of practical purposes where the language is usually limited to communicative and comprehensive units (Dalton-Puffer et al. 2019: 2010). Fulfilling the need for individualisation and differentiation of the educational process in inclusive units, it is not surprising that TBL has been widely adopted in Austrian primary schools.

With reference to the other commonly applied approach in Austrian system of foreign language education, Dalton-Puffer et al. (2019: 2010-2011) have recently informed that apart from TBL, CLIL is indicated in Austrian English language teaching programmes as a dominant approach and even a mandatory one on upper secondary level of education. The leading role of CLIL approach in Austrian school finds its confirmation

in formal documents, such as Language Education Policy Profile issued in 2008 by the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture and Ministry of Science and Research (2008b: 30). Additionally, these authorities call for further extension of CLIL approach towards teaching of foreign languages other than English and further commissioning work on CLIL curricula together with accompanying didactic materials. As Harrop (2012: 57) explains, CLIL is an approach in which the content happens “not *in* but *with* and *through* the foreign language”. With the use of CLIL Austrian secondary school learners gain skills in and knowledge about curricular subjects while using the target language, and by thus acquiring it. Bauer-Marschallinger et al. (2021: 1050) explain that learning a target language is enabled via implicit acquisition, not in the way of explicit teaching that is characteristic for the traditional approach. An educational success of CLIL finds its confirmation in results of a longitudinal study conducted by Serra (2007: 597) on Austrian and Italian primary school learners, due to which learners’ linguistic awareness and understanding of concepts in the target language was proven to be enhanced better through the use of everyday second language words. Moreover, the results of oral testing revealed that foreign language acquisition was successful, especially with reference to development of morphology and syntax, and with good level of accuracy (Serra 2007: 600-601).

In order to give successful CLIL lessons, the teacher must follow several organisational steps. Pérez and Malagón (2017: 634) report that a primary need is to establish a topic and associated language contents. Next, didactic written, audio and video materials must be found. If the resources are authentic, as it is often the case, they need to be adjusted and adapted appropriately to students age, level and needs. When the didactic materials are gathered and organised, the teacher must decide on sort of activities that learners may perform on the basis of the applied resources. Ebenberger (2017: 180) admits that organising CLIL lessons is a challenging task for teachers as class activities need to be individually elaborated so that they are suitable for learners’ SEN. Although applying CLIL may give in-service teachers a lot of autonomy in decision making, resourcing and teaching itself, still this demands from the teacher wide methodological knowledge and excellent managerial skills.

Undoubtedly, competence-based learning advocated by CLIL meets the assumptions of the inclusive education as it leads to construction of stronger social competences, promotes autonomous learning and allows for holistic education by combining various subjects that can be discovered by learners by the means of English

language. This constructivist approach is especially desirable in Austrian multi-cultural schools characterised by ethnic differences. As Harrop (2012: 58) notices, it enables deeper intercultural understanding and prepares learners to life in international society. CLIL is then a holistic approach with flexible framework integrating content, cognition, communication and also culture. In particular, there are five dimensions of effective application of CLIL according to Coyle et al. (2010: 33): “progression in knowledge, skills and understanding of content, engagement in higher order cognitive processing, interaction in the communicative context, development of appropriate communication skills, and acquisition of a deepening intercultural awareness”. In the opinion of Ebenberger (2014: 5), CLIL approach is a warrant of independence and self-confidence of both learners and their teachers; it eliminates rote learning for the sake of pure assessment, and as such, makes language learning a natural part of life and a sustainable life-long process as indicated in the European directives (EADSNE 2012: 15).

Of course, specialists in the field of inclusion have already noticed some potential limitations of applying both TBL and CLIL by foreign language teachers. Harrop (2012: 59) mentions the fact that both approaches, though giving teachers a lot of autonomy, might be time consuming at the preparation level. Using TBL or CLIL demands from teachers to be flexible with the choice of taught content, prepare their own teaching tools and use a mixture of non-authentic and authentic didactic materials in the educational process. For this reason, Ebenberger (2017: 188) appeals to teachers to be selective and critical in using a coursebook as many of its tasks are mainly form-focused. Also, Willis and Willis (2015: 200) complain about teachers’ hesitance for the use of different from traditional approaches which would take control away from them and shift responsibility for the learning process to students. This internal fear derives, in their opinion, from the previously applied the PPP procedure (see section 3.2.1.1) that is deeply rooted in Austrian education. It is especially popular in states where inclusion has been poorly implemented (Smit and Schwarz 2020: 295) and where the educational impact is put on language accuracy (Erling and Paar 2022: 38). What is more, avoidance of alternative approaches in foreign language teaching can derive from formal aspects of teaching such as a need to maintain traditional forms of assessment (Dalton-Puffer 2019: 217).

The still existing obstacles that prevent the development of fully inclusive system of education in Austria cannot be overcome without thorough and systematic reforms which incur costs. As it is pointed out by Ebenberger (2014: 9-10), every change in the educational system entails financial obligations, beginning with amendments in the

tertiary teacher training programmes and extension of university special education subjects, through organisation and performance of additional in-service courses, employment of mentors who support and control the work of service teachers, and finishing with revision of school administrative budgets and the need for new didactic materials that suit learners' special needs. The last issue of using alternative to textbooks teaching materials may seem the least important, however it still remains problematic to foreign language teachers for various reasons which are given more attention in the following section.

### **5.7 Sufficiency of language teaching materials in Austrian school**

Based on the analysis of the leading approaches towards English language teaching in Austrian schools it can be concluded that both CLIL and TBL give teachers a lot of autonomy in lesson organisation and class management. This freedom of choice, however, means that also didactic materials accompanying the lesson conduct need to be carefully planned by foreign language teachers. In Austria, teachers are reported to use both authentic and non-authentic materials, declaring the latter to be a more common language learning source. Dalton-Puffer et al. (2019: 221) inform that foreign language teachers in the country willingly reach for audio and video materials which accompany coursebooks, however, they do not restrict their work only to standardised resources. According to the information included in the review of school resources in Austria and issued by OECD in 2016 (OECD 2016a: 163), the use of coursebooks may stem from the fact that federal authorities are responsible for providing educational resources for learners with SLDs, what surely is convenient for the teachers, students and also their parents. However, as it has already been established in the first part of the dissertation (see section 3.3), using non-authentic materials may negatively influence teacher's autonomy in lesson conduct as well as significantly limits the possibilities to satisfy each learner SEN. Moreover, it must be stressed that the resources are granted by Austrian educational authorities only at the beginning of students' schooling (Dalton-Puffer et al. 2019: 221), what means that the financial burden of coursebook purchase in the subsequent school years remains on parents duty. What is more, usability of standardised didactic materials is reported not to be controlled. There is also no feedback as to their compatibility with school curricula. In such a situation, it is not surprising, that authentic

materials are declared by Austrian teachers to be preferable teaching resources. These are understood as both non-pedagogical materials dedicated to the general audience via the general media, and also as subject-oriented didactic materials issued for native speakers of the target language (Ebenberger 2014: 10).

Dalton-Puffer et al. (2019: 220) draw attention to the fact that more and more Austrian teachers reach for digital media in the didactic process. Whereby, digitalisation of the teaching-learning process is not limited to the use of the Internet applications or generally accessible authentic online sources. It often means the use of the Internet learning platforms which help to build linguistic cooperation across long distances, facilitate linguistic barrier-breaking, strengthen intrinsic motivation, and many others. Finally, the use of electronic devices undoubtedly enforces diversification of the PPP practices and provides alternative strategies of teaching.

Regardless of their benefits, resourcing teaching materials for self-developed lesson plans entails some difficulties, beginning for instance with problems related to their selection in accordance to given criteria (see section 3.3) and finishing with such a prosaic issue as excessive time consumption. Harrop (2012: 58) notices, that although many Austrian teachers declaratively prefer using own sources to using coursebooks, they find outsourcing difficult. For this reason, many of them tend to doubt in their abilities to use CLIL or TBL approach successfully, lacking certainty how to use self-developed teaching materials and authentic resources.

To sum up the above considerations, problems concerning sufficiency of teaching materials in Austrian schools are presented below in figure 2.



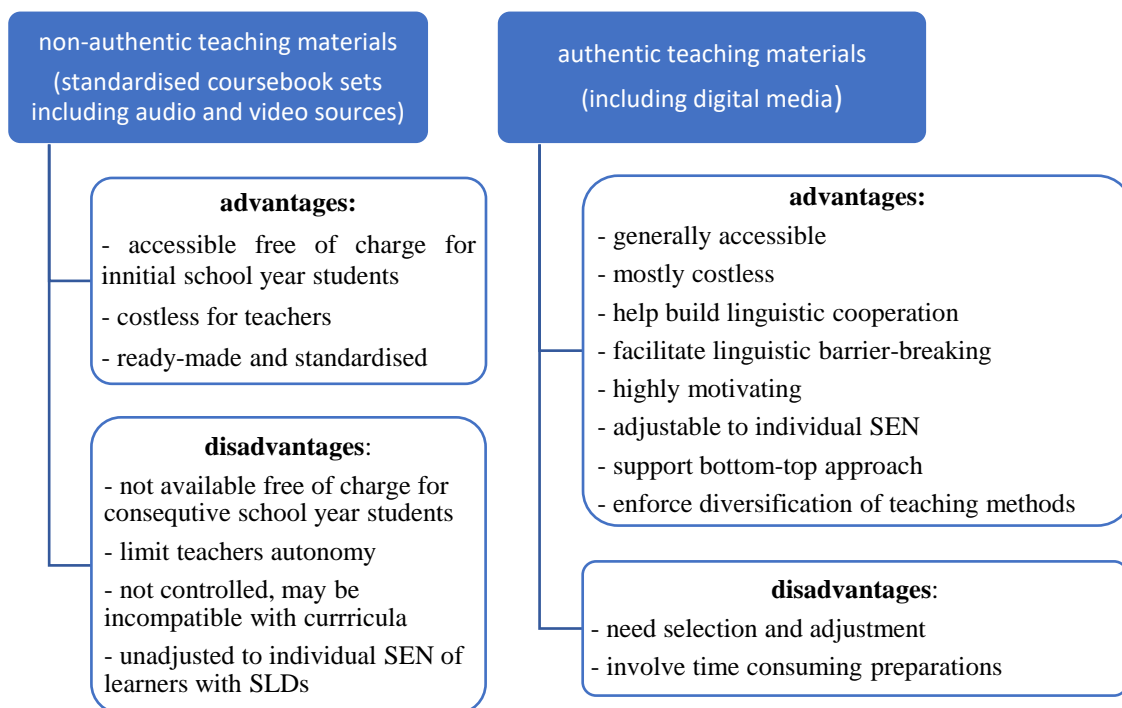


Figure 2: The use of foreign language teaching resources in Austria

The information gathered in figure 2 leads to a conclusion that a common problem of resourcing teaching materials for inclusive classes in Austria lays not in their lack of availability on the market but much more in the process of their preparation and adjustment to learners' SEN. Teaching inclusive groups enforces a diversification of methods of teaching to those supporting a bottom-top approach. Both CLIL and TBL are learner-centred approaches which need a variety of adjustable teaching materials that would be highly motivating for learners and strengthen the communicative skill. For these reasons authentic teaching materials are recommended for inclusive settings and declared to be used by Austrian teachers.

According to the above analysis, it can be concluded that problems with the insufficiency of teaching materials reported by some Austrian teachers addresses not so much lack of didactic sources but teachers who, as it is put by Dalton-Puffer et al. (2011: 194; 2019: 221), lack teaching and managerial skills in work with inclusive groups.

## 5.8 Final comments

According to the analysis of documents and specialist literature on Austrian inclusive education, it can be concluded that changes in the system of education in this western

country were unequal but quite dynamic. The development stemmed from Austrian deep interest in SLDs since the nineteenth century and long tradition in educating disordered learners. The established facts summarised in table 8 below constitute the responses to eight research questions (see section 4.3), giving an image of the present state of inclusive approach in teaching English language to learners with SLDs in Austria. The gathered information is further contrasted with the results of the study concerning two other countries of Czechia and Poland.

Table 8: Approaches to English language teaching to learners with SLDs in Austria

<b>Research question number</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Factors influencing teaching of English language to young learners with SLDs in Austria</b>
RQ (1)	Scientific developments in SLDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1913 – Arnold Pick studied dysphasic language; developed a model of language production from mental formulation to utterance articulation</li> <li>• Postwar studies – scientists from the University of Graz developed a morpheme-based strategy for intervention increasing reading fluency among dyslectic learners</li> <li>• Studies conducted individually by Austrian scientists led to development of modern diagnostic tools and further interest in general education of learners with SLDs</li> </ul>
RQ (2)	Systemic solutions for inclusion	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three mainstream education paths: single integration, integration class, cooperative class</li> <li>• Unification of last year kindergarten and two early education years</li> <li>• Obligatory foreign language education for learners with SLDs since 2003</li> <li>• Team teaching of inclusive classes</li> <li>• Control of Units of Inclusion, Diversity and Special Education over quality of inclusive practices in schools; consultancy for school principals, teachers, parents and students; organisation of in-service training and compensatory courses for learners with SEN</li> <li>• Integrative groups up to 20 students</li> <li>• 5-7 learners with SLDs per class</li> </ul> <p><u>Weakness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 – 25 teaching hours per week</li> </ul>
RQ (3)	Legal basis for educating learners with SLDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1993 – introduction of multitrack system of education (integration of learners with SLDs into the mainstream education)</li> <li>• 2009 – ratification of UNCRPD convention (introduction of the inclusive approach to Austrian schooling)</li> <li>• 2016 -reform of the Austrian system of education</li> <li>• 2020 – reform of teacher education in Austria</li> </ul>

RQ (4)	Diagnostic procedures of SLDs	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnosis performed by special education teachers in schools</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of educationally-oriented ability-achievement tests</li> <li>• No standardised criteria for diagnosis (selective use of response-to-intervention tests since 2015)</li> </ul>
RQ (5)	Educational Institutions and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture</li> <li>• Federal Ministry of Science and Research</li> <li>• Six levels of education (kindergarten, primary, lower and higher secondary, vocational, tertiary units)</li> <li>• Regional Special Education Centres since 2008</li> <li>• Units for Inclusion, Diversity and Special Education since 2018 (former education centres)</li> <li>• Non-profit organisations that are part of EDA (Austrian Federal Association for Dyslexia, LEGA Vorarlberg Initiative, Styrian Regional Association for Dyslexia)</li> </ul>
RQ (6)	Teacher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-year B.A. studies for teachers of primary level education</li> <li>• Compulsory M.A. studies in pedagogy for secondary and above level education</li> <li>• Obligatory English language education of pedagogy students</li> <li>• Issue of inclusion obligatorily introduced to university and college curricula for pedagogy and philology students</li> <li>• Since 2015, adjustment of tertiary curricula to demands of general special and vocational types of education</li> </ul> <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive cooperation between colleges and universities with reference to curricula structure</li> <li>• All teaching programmes include subject-related theory and pedagogical training</li> <li>• Teacher trainees have to choose a specialisation in LDs</li> </ul>
	A. Teacher roles in inclusion	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciate learners' diversity</li> <li>• Use variety of teaching strategies</li> <li>• Follow students' interests</li> <li>• Develop an individual approach</li> <li>• Use summative forms of assessment instead of formative ones</li> <li>• Cooperate with special education teacher (co-teaching)</li> <li>• Collaborate with mentors on daily basis</li> </ul>
	B. Teacher competence for inclusion	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obligatory in-service training upgrading pedagogical skills of minimum 15 hours yearly</li> <li>• Two types of in-service upgrading: refreshing and qualification courses</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most common courses cover: SEN, teaching methods, behaviour problems</li> <li>• Availability of post graduate studies in special pedagogy, inclusion and SEN</li> <li>• Costs of in-service training covered by the employer</li> </ul>
RQ (7)	English language teaching methods	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preference of humanistic approach due to rich traditions of democratic and cooperative means of learning</li> <li>• Commonly applied methods of English language teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicative approach</li> <li>- TBL for primary level learners</li> <li>- CLIL for secondary level students</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Newest trends in language education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ludic strategies</li> <li>- Multiple intelligences</li> <li>- Projecting and experimenting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
RQ (8)	The use of didactic resources in English language teaching	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of authentic, self-developed, materials and digital tools that foster inclusion</li> <li>• Cost-free access to teaching resources for teachers</li> <li>• Marginal use of non-authentic materials, usually at initial years of primary education due to cost-free access to government appropriated coursebooks</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No adjustments of teaching materials to learners SEN</li> <li>• Teachers tend to complain about lack of ready-made non-standardised teaching materials</li> </ul>

According to the analysed data, it can be concluded that Austria is a European country that successfully managed to implement the inclusive approach to the national system of education. Although the evolution happened unevenly in each federal state, it must be admitted that the already introduced amendments in law, teacher education and diversification of teaching methods advance Austria in their efforts for developing full inclusion in education. The initially undertaken steps based on an implementation of pilot integration projects in several federal states as early as in 1980s and later appointment of CLIL and TBL as the leading approaches in foreign language education seem to have already brought satisfying results. The gathered experience equipped Austrian authorities and teaching staff with precious experience that other European countries may miss. The analysis of formal documents shows that the Austrian way to inclusion before 2000 was not free from the periods of stagnation, mainly caused by financial shortages and lack of competent teaching staff. Regardless of the difficulties, however, Austria is a country

which swiftly reacts to the changes required under the European Union directives and guidelines. The most recent and significant improvements in the Austrian system of education that essentially influence the present state of inclusive education in the country address an introduction of a team teaching strategy to public schools and establishment of Units for Inclusion, Diversity and Special Education. Both of the undertaken changes have already influenced the quality of inclusive practices in schools. With reference to English language education, the introduced changes definitely strengthened the use of recommended inclusion-friendly methods of teaching and rose teachers' interest in professional training dedicated to inclusion and SEN. Also, amendments in the tertiary system of education substantially added quality to educational services, concerning inter alia the obligatory introduction of inclusive approach to curricula at faculties of pedagogy and foreign philology, cooperation between different types of academic units and compulsory specialisations in LDs for teacher trainees.

Due to certain difficulties in maintaining the dynamic development of the inclusive approach in the country, further recommendations were issued by the European Commission for Austrian central authorities. In accordance to them, the newest action plan for years 2021-2030 has been developed assuming, most importantly, regular involvement of the federal authorities in the revision and distribution of clear responsibilities and roles, as well as, adequate budgeting of individual measures.

## **Chapter 6: Foreign language education of learners with SLDs in Czechia**

### **6.0 Introduction**

Being a member state of the European Union, the Czech Republic systematically adopted new trends in education indicated by the EU council and commission. The analysis of the gathered data verifies whether the historical path of development of SLDs in the country, which is more nationally recognised as Czechia, created a background for recent improvements in the system of education in the country. Also the analysis of the European Union documents (section 3.1) allow to think that Czechia as a state member of EU has already opened its mainstream education to learners with SLDs. It is interesting then, whether the implementation of inclusion has already been completed successfully and whether the country of similar historical experiences to Poland struggles with some organisational or social obstacles mentioned by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE 2017: 51).

For these reasons, the content of the present chapter is organised in accordance to the set research questions (section 4.3) with focus on scientific interest in SLDs in the country, legal basis for educating the disordered learners, kinds of diagnosis of SLDs, organisation of the system of education together with offered support services and non-governmental support organisations, as well as the role and competence of English language teachers and their education reinforcing the inclusive approach. Dinh and Thu Hà (2010: 8) notice that inclusion is a voluntary model of education and its success depends in its major part on internal enthusiasm of teachers and their autonomous activities. The gathered specialistic literature shows however that not all Czech teachers

are enthusiastic about inclusive practices (Bendová and Fialová 2015: 812). It is interesting then, what might be the reasons for this state of affairs. Further, the currently applied methods of English language teaching are subjected to the analysis. The comparative study aims at detection of the presently applied methods and strategies of foreign language teaching, what is an important indicator of inclusive practices in Czech schools or their absence. A selection of the teaching approach also entails the choice of teaching materials which can be standardised or not and come from authentic or non-authentic sources. They are informative about the adopted teaching practices, too.

With a view to the comparative study of the research results, the data were gathered in tables with distinction marked between the strengths and weaknesses within each of the analysed factors.

### **6.1 History of scientific interest in SLDs in Czechia**

The history of research in SLDs in the Czech Republic dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the foundation phase (1800-1930), when brain-behaviour relationship also gained attention of European scientists. Caravolas et al. (2019: 101) inform that in the Czech Republic the first documented case of dyslexia comes from the year 1904 and was described by a psychiatrist, Antonin Haveroch. Also Šturma (1985: 258) noticed this fact explaining that Haveroch published an article about a female patient who was unable to learn how to read and write though had an excellent memory. He used the term “alexia” to mark this neurological dysfunction which in his opinion was rather frequent among school children (Haveroch as cited in Šturma 1985: 258). His findings, though significant in the field of SLDs, remained unfollowed until early 1960s, when Otkar Kučera, a child psychiatrist and Josef Langmeier, a psychologist from the Child’s Psychiatric Hospital in Havlíčké Brodě began a systematic study about developmental dyslexia (Smečková 2014: 15). As Smečková (2014: 15) informs further, Kučera, together with other clinicians, among whom were psychologists Zdeněk Matějček and Jaroslav Jirásek, and a speech pathologist Zdeněk Žlab conducted clinical research in SLDs. Their multidisciplinary therapeutic efforts led to emergence of a multifactorial theory of the development of SLDs referring to cerebral, hereditary impairment, cerebral impairment in hereditarily predisposed, and neurotic impairment. According to their findings, majority of the researched patients with SLDs belonged to a group of dyslectics with minor cerebral

damage which occurred in perinatal period of life. In psychological examination such patients demonstrated disorders in perception and difficulties in using fine motor skills.

Matějček, who is considered by contemporaries to be the pioneering figure in Czech studies about SLDs (Caravolas et al. 2019: 102), developed further the discoveries of Kučera's team of specialists by distinguishing patients with perinatal encephalopathy from the general group of those experiencing difficulties in reading and writing, naming the problem 'mild brain dysfunction'. In cooperation with other specialists, he developed first diagnostic tools for SLDs in Czechoslovakia, placing dyslexia within the frame of neurological studies and perceiving it as a medical problem which resulted from perceptual-motor deficit (Caravolas et al. 2019: 102).

A different aetiology of SLDs is suggested contemporarily by Věra Pokorná who classifies SLDs into two main categories of endogenous and exogenous factors. Smečková (2014: 18) reports that according to Pokorná, endogenous factors include dysfunctions of central nervous system caused by genetic determinants, minor brain dysfunction, deviancy in laterality or atypical dominance of brain hemispheres. Exogenous factors, on the other side, refer to environmental conditions such as the family and school whose incorrect functioning has influence on children's emotional well-being. Pokorná (2001: 112) explains that children who experience social pressure become frustrated and manifest their emotional condition by attention disorders. Also the choice of teaching methods and conditions, as well as didactic mistakes have negative influence on children's behaviour. Smečková (2014: 18) interprets such a perception of exogenous factors as inhibiting children's well balanced development though not causing SLDs. What is important, however, is the fact that educational experiences may positively or negatively influence development of children with SLDs.

Together with the popularisation of the problem of SLDs in Europe the issue gained attention not only of Czech physicians but more frequently of psychologists and educationalists. Smečková (2014: 16) reports that the first class for learners with SLDs was opened at the Children's University Hospital in Brno in 1962, and followed by a similar educational initiative at the Children's Psychiatric Hospital in Dolní Počernice. In 1966, there were already seven classes in Prague educating children with SLDs, which, as Šturma (1985: 258) explains, were incorporated into the regular school units beginning with 1972.

The tendency to perceive SLDs as an educational issue took advantage over the medical approach, what in turn resulted in a formation of a support network of educational



psychology counselling centres by Czechoslovakian authorities (Šturma 1985: 258). By the 1980s this support network reached a number of approximately 100 centres and survived until the present day (Caravolas et al. 2019: 102). The influence that support centres have on current development of inclusive education is examined in the ensuing sections 4.3 and 4.4.

## 6.2 Legal basis of educating learners with SLDs in Czechia

According to the analysis of the Czech specialist literature, the system of education in this country has its pedagogical traditions rooted in post-communism. Stepaniuk (2019: 328) explains that education in countries from the former Easter Block can be characterised by the PPP approach in teaching, standardisation of teaching practices, segregation and, what follows, stigmatisation of individuals with disabilities. As Soviet ideology opted for a perfect socialist citizen, children with various disorders who could not meet socialistic standards were subjected to a medical diagnosis, labelled as defective and directed to the special education path (Vadurová and Pančocha 2023: 246). Such an attitude towards the disabled was even expressed in the Education Act of 1948 (ME 1948, section 13) according to which children with mental or physical defects were released from obligatory education. In educational practice, it meant exclusion of learners with SLDs from the mainstream education which situation lasted until the collapse of the Soviet hegemony, from which moment a slow change in perception of learners with SLDs is dated. For greater clarity of the alterations within the Czech system of education, the most important factors influencing the evolution of this system from initial exclusion towards inclusion are presented in Table 9 below and consecutively discussed.

Table 9: Evolution of Czech system of education towards inclusion

<b>1948</b>	
The Education Act of 1948	- Defining learners with mental or physical disabilities as defective and redirecting them to special education.
<b>1990</b>	
The Education Act of 1990	- Granting access to public schooling for learners with SLDs.
<b>2004</b>	

The Education Act of 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integration of learners with SLDs into public schooling on equal basis with others.</li> <li>- The country joins the EU Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.</li> <li>- Learning a foreign language becomes compulsory for learners with SLDs.</li> </ul>
<b>2016</b>	
Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)	- Adoption of the inclusive approach into the Czech system of education.
<b>2015-2020</b>	
The National Action Plan on Disability 2012-2020 (NAP 2012-2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of inclusive education to public schooling;</li> <li>- A reform of teacher education</li> <li>- Participation in the EU <i>Teacher Education for Inclusion Project</i> organised by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.</li> </ul>
<b>2021 until now</b>	
The National Action Plan on Disability 2021-2025 (NAP 2021-2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forming fourteen regions for development of inclusive practices in the country.</li> <li>- Developing regional strategies to support inclusion within the regions</li> <li>- Organising professional training for inclusive teachers.</li> <li>- Adjusting teaching methods to learners SEN.</li> </ul>

In 1990, on the basis of a new education act first integration units were formed allowing children with SLDs to enter the general education schools. It is important to remember, however, that the decision of the central authorities put no obligation on public schools to open integration units. Additionally, due to no financial support from regional authorities, integration remained to be a declaration rather than a school reality (Stepaniuk 2019: 329).

Similarly to other European countries in 1994, the Czech Republic adopted the Salamanca Statement and headed towards changes in the education of pupils with SLDs. However, according to Graves and Gargiulo (1994: 208) the initial changes in the educational system were minor and had no influence on teaching methods, which in consequence led to continuous stigmatisation of students with SLDs in public schools. In the opinion of Graves and Gargiulo (1994: 209), there are a few causes responsible for the situation. Firstly, they point to lack of professional experience of mainstream teachers in work with disordered students. Secondly, insufficient knowledge of SLDs and teaching skills made teachers concentrate on learners educational weaknesses rather than their strengths. Thirdly, due to curricular assumptions, teachers felt obliged to put pressure on learners to achieve good measurable educational effects rather than concentrate on their

sustained development and approving of learners' individual differences. From the year 2002, together with diversification of educational goals on the international level, learners with SLDs in Czechia were warranted an access to public schooling on equal rights with others. In 2004 the country joined the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, following by the same its initiatives in the field of inclusion. A new education act was issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (ME 2004) and approved by the Czech government in 2004 (in force since 2005). According to new legislation, learners with SENs were defined dependently on types of their learning disorders and divided into those with intellectual, sensory or physical impairment, speech and language impairment, autism, multiple disabilities, specific learning and behavioural difficulties and socially disadvantaged (ME, 2004, art. 16). Moreover, as Pokrivčáková (2018: 15) notices, foreign language education became compulsory for all learners regardless of their abilities. A decision about obligatory foreign language education had an impact on educating learners with SLDs. Wight (2015: 40) confirms this fact and explains that the initial strategy of exempting learners with SLDs from compulsory language learning, due to a common believe that learning some language skills could be too difficult for learners with SLDs, was subjected to sever criticism. It was proven that the exemption turned to be more a deprivation rather than privilege, and as such led to stigmatisation of the disabled learners by peers. Pokrivčáková (2018: 15) rightly notices that such an avoidance strategy contrasted with the basic assumptions of inclusive education which refer to equality of learners' rights and duties, and therefore demanded changes. With time, the education act of 2004 has been subjected to further improvements, though a significant amendment was introduced a decade later, in 2016, when inclusion was formally adopted as the best approach towards learners of the mainstream education (Vadurová and Pančocha 2023: 248). Together with the inclusive approach, learners with SEN have been granted additional free of charge educational support in form of access to specific didactic materials, compensatory equipment, counselling services and additional support such as speech therapy, orientation and mobility teaching, as well as stimulating techniques (Pivarč 2020: 18-19). The most important change, however, addressed a diversification of the teaching approach. Schools became obliged to adjust their methods of teaching to learners' SEN by adopting the bottom-top approach in education, what imposed a change in roles of teachers from omnipotent knowers to supporters and mediators of the learning process (Vadurová and Pančocha 2023: 248). Moreover, due to the mentioned amendments, a support system for learners with SLDs, composed of five stages, was

introduced (Bendová and Fialová 2015: 814). On the top in this hierarchy is a newly formulated Support Centre for Inclusive Education which is an advisory body monitoring the development of the inclusive approach in public schools (Bendová et al. 2014: 1015).

Changes in the fundamental laws regulating the system of education in the Czech Republic led to appearance of other national documents that have had a further impact on development of inclusion in schools. An appointed Government Board for Persons with Disabilities (GBPD) have monitored the system of education and projected improvements to education of learners with SLDs by issuing *National plans for the promotion of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities for years 2015 – 2020 and 2021 – 2025*. The plans are patterned on the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and approved by resolutions of the government of the Czech Republic (GBPD 2015, *resolution No. 385*, GBPD 2020, *resolution No. 761*). The documents include detailed descriptions of the main goals and principles for implementing and developing inclusive strategies in education, culture and health. With reference to educational policy, GBPD (2015: 24-25, 42) specifies the strategies of equal treatment and protection of the disabled against discrimination, their right to access to education in public units on the same basis with others, as well as awareness raising actions and education of the disabled persons. What is more, close attention is given to creation of favourable learning conditions and application of procedures which can effectively prevent and compensate for personal disadvantages. Fulfilment of all these steps is believed to warrant continuous development of inclusive system of education on all its levels (GBPD 2015: 42).

Currently, due to the educational policy included in the national plan of education for the years 2021-2025, the central authorities assume to create fourteen regions within the country, responsible for formulation of long-term regional strategies on inclusive education (GBPD 2020: 14-16). To make the undertaking coherent, a specific guidance for schools managerial powers and teachers was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in 2017, issued as the *Framework Educational Program for Basic Education* and introduced to mainstream and special education units. Pivarč (2020: 18) informs that in the said framework program, apart from the general content and fields of education, objectives together with key competences and expected educational results are outlined. What is worth noticing, education by play is indicated as the most desirable approach to young pre-school learners, for whom foreign language education became compulsory since 2018 (EUC 2018: 5). Obligatory language education at the pre-school level is of great importance, as the risk of dyslexia can be estimated at the initial stage of

education.

Regardless of formal efforts to introduce inclusion to Czech schools there are still some doubts as to rationale of governmental regulatory steps. For instance, *Regulation 27/2016 Coll.* issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport as an amendment to provisions of the Education Act is criticised for limiting the number of support teachers accessible for learners with SENs in mainstream units to only one support teacher per class (Pokrivčáková 2018: 12). Due to the same regulation, the number of circumstances under which parents of children with SLDs can appeal to advisory centres for an assessment is, according to Oláh (2019: 2), dramatically limited. Pokrivčáková (2018: 12-13) claims that despite good efforts of central authorities, the present situation of learners with SLDs in mainstream units is far from ideal, and the responsibility for the state of affairs lays in bureaucracy, as well as in insufficient funding, which are believed to block the development of inclusive approach in public schools. Pivarč (2022: 202) notices, due to lack of financial investments in public education and general resistance to change expressed by teachers, the inclusive approach is not developed at the expected speed. Also Bendová and Fialová (2015: 813) are of the opinion that Czech kindergartens and primary schools have adopted the inclusive measures only in part as they are struggling with organisational, material, personnel and methodological-didactic expertise deficiencies. For the present moment, it can be stated that Czech governmental authorities have already introduced the necessary changes to the system of education approaching inclusion. However, there are still some important steps to be taken, especially with reference to financial sources for the development of the inclusive approach and, as Machů and Kočvářová (2013: 813) suggest, substantial improvements in the perception and acceptance of inclusion among Czech teachers.

### **6.3 Diagnosing specific learning disorders in Czechia**

Diagnosis of learners with SLDs in the Czech Republic has a long history reaching the beginning of the twentieth century when the first case of dyslectic student was described and reported by a Czech psychiatrist Heveroch in 1904 (Caravolas et al. 2019: 103). A milestone in diagnosing of SLDs, however, was made much later in the 1950s when, as Caravolas et al. also inform, specific disorders in reading and writing were researched, described and defined. Initially, diagnosing, as well as remedial courses which aimed at

improvement of perceptual-motor functions of the disordered children, were performed at medical clinics by teams of psychologists, physicians and education teachers. Matějček (1978: 15) explains that learners with SLDs attended specialised classes at mainstream schools where they were additionally assisted by special education teachers. Later, due to intense development of the scientific field of learning disorders in the 1970s, the first educational psychology counselling centres emerged. Their duties included: performance of diagnosis, organisation of intervention for persons with SLDs, cooperation with mainstream schools and parents of children with SLDs. Caravolas et al. (2019: 103) mention that by the year 1980, almost 100 counselling centres were established within the territory of the Czech Republic, performing diagnosis of SLDs until the present days.

At present there are three institutions in the Czech Republic where the diagnostic procedure is performed by educational psychologists. As Kucharská (2014: 10) informs, these are: counselling centres, special pedagogical centres and diagnostic institutes. The assessment body establishes the nature of the disorder on the basis of an IQ-literacy attainment discrepancy and defines the range of special educational support that is needed. The diagnosis is based on an analysis of the learner's development of letter knowledge, phoneme awareness and rapid automatized naming in case of kindergarten children, and on reading efficiency and spelling accuracy in case of school aged children (Caravolas et al. 2012: 679). The first three factors stand for, what Caravolas et al. (2019: 102) recognise as triple foundation of code-related skills that are responsible for development of reading and spelling skills. As Caravolas et al. further inform, in the Czech system of education, development of literacy at children is monitored from their late kindergarten age, for which diagnosis screening tools are used. Further, in the middle years of primary education individuals who demonstrate significant delays in literacy, regardless of earlier support and intervention, are subjected to thorough diagnosis performed by specialists from special pedagogical centres and diagnostic institutes (Caravolas et al. 2019: 106).

According to the information included in the *Czech Republic special education needs provision within mainstream education* (Eurydice 2021b), among the types of available remedies, the most advisable include: the need for modification of methods of education, adjustment of teaching materials, application of alternative forms of communication, as well as the use of compensatory aids or even development of an individual educational plan. According to Kaprova et al. (2006: 2), there are three educational paths for individuals with SEN in the Czech Republic at which sustainable

development of learners with SLDs is monitored and can be diagnosed. These are mainstream units, special education units and individual integration. Regardless of the chosen form of education, learners are assessed subjectively and their learning difficulties are verified with the use of standardised tests, for instance a standardised reading test or phonological discrimination test. When an opinion about the nature of learning disorder is issued by a team of psychologists, together with indications for required remedies, it is then delivered to a school where, as Kucharská (2014: 10) explains, an individualised educational plan and teaching materials for a learner with the diagnosed SLD are developed. Additionally, to these steps, the disordered learners may benefit from extra remedial and compensatory classes organised either at the mainstream unit or the counselling centre, where they receive more individualised attention adequately to the identified disorders. According to information provided by Caravolas et al. (2019: 105) such individualised courses include speech therapy services additionally to standard remedial and compensatory treatment.

#### **6.4 Educational institutions and support services in Czechia**

Organisation of education in the Czech Republic in general resembles the structure of education systems in other European Union countries. According to information published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on education in the Czechia, children aged three to six are educated in kindergartens where their attendance is compulsory for the last year which is considered to be the school preparation time (Eurydice 2021b). Bačáková (2017: 5-6) stresses the fact that the last year before enrolling into primary school is announced free of charge. With this decision, the Czech central authorities warrant equal participation of young learners from various social backgrounds in pre-school education. Additionally, considering education of learners with SLDs, detection of the risks of SLDs among young learners is possible at earlier, pre-school stage of a child's development. Table 10 below shows the Czech system of public education with distinction to grades and age groups.

Table 10: System of education in Czechia after Eurydice (<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/czechia>)

<b>Education</b>	<b>School/ level</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years</b>
Kindergarten		3-6	4

Primary	Primary	6-10	5
Middle	Lower secondary	11-14	4
Secondary	Upper secondary (mature exam)	15-18	4
	Conservatoire	11-18	8
Vocational	Prevocational	15-18	4
Tertiary	Bachelor		3
	Master		2
	Doctorate		3

The elementary school education is divided into two levels of primary education, dedicated to students of six or seven to ten years old, and of lower secondary level for students from eleven to fourteen years of life (Bačáková 2017: 6). Nine-year-education at primary school is by means of statutory requirement compulsory for all students regardless to their disabilities.

High school education (upper secondary level) follows up on primary level and lasts four years until students are eighteen years old. Pol and Lazarova (2012: 22) inform that this level of education is not obligatory for students, who can choose between general high or technical schools. Both types of educational paths end with a formal examination known as the mature exam. Its result is decisive for a choice of tertiary studies. High schools offering general education develop adolescents' general knowledge and skills, preparing them for university studies, whereas the second, technical schools, offer more professionally oriented education. Graduates of both types of high school have a right to apply for tertiary education which in the Czech Republic is performed by universities and tertiary professional schools. The latter, offer practical preparation for professional duties in the future. Students who complete their primary level education and aim at labour market can turn to vocational schools for professional training.

With reference to inclusive education of learners with SLDs, Pol and Lazarová (2012: 21) inform that pursuant to the Education Act of 2004, primary school authorities are obliged to warrant counselling services in their educational units. Consultancy is performed by so called special education centres, composed of educational counsellors in person of a school psychologist, a preventive methodologist, a special education pedagogue or even a social worker trained as a teacher (Eurydice 2021c). As Pol and Lazarová also specify, their role is generally to support students against school failure, as well as serve professional counselling for teachers of disordered learners. Following the information included in the *Guidance and counselling in early childhood and school education – Czech Republic* (Eurydice 2021c), providing direct psychological and pedagogical support for learners with SLDs, monitoring students' functioning in inclusive



units and consulting for their families on daily basis. Finally, school counselling centres are considered to be the warrants of inclusive conditions of education in schools, and as such, regularly evaluate effects of the applied support measures.

Apart from direct help services in mainstream facilities, there are also extramural forms of educational support available for students with SLDs and their families which, according to the guidance and counselling document (Eurydice 2021c), include: pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (*pedagogicko-psychologické poradny*) and special education centres (*speciálně pedagogická centra*). The earlier are established by regions and are first of all responsible for diagnostic measures which include: determining children's school readiness, recognising SLDs, as well as outlining recommendations of educational support. Secondly, they take educational measures, among which Kucharská (2014: 10) mentions: providing consulting services for children with SLDs and their parents, organising professional training for school authorities and teachers, analysing background documents and advising on modifications to educational conditions, and finally, developing educational projects in cooperation with other EU countries. As it can be seen, counselling services are of great importance as approximately 48 percent of Czech young learners with SEN are educated in public units offering the inclusive approach (Eurydice 2021b). A similar opinion is expressed by Pokrivčáková (2018: 17) who notices that support measures in the Czech Republic are granted on five levels among which only the first one, developed in form of a plan of pedagogical support, can be applied without any recommendation of the pedagogical and psychological counselling centre by school authorities.

The general supervision over all educational institutions and counselling services is carried by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and its advisory body of the National Pedagogical Institute and Czech School Inspectorate (OECD 2016b: 20). According to the information provided by Dziejulak (2020: 177), the Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce - CSI*) is a central unit established in 1995, responsible for external pedagogic supervision over educational institutions. It is also the body evaluating the system of education with reference to fulfilment of the educational framework programme by schools, quality and effectiveness of education performed by schools of all levels, as well as control over expenditures of budget sources by educational units. Apart from the central unit of the CSI, there are fourteen regional inspectorates spread all over the country. As Dziejulak further specifies, inspections of the CSI aim at control of the quality of teachers' work with the disabled learners and their engagement

in professional training that refers to the field of SLDs. The results of the regional CSI controls are gathered and published in form of reports which are then used as basis for development of long term strategies in each of the Czech regions. Regardless of the beneficial effects of the CSI's statutory activities, its inspections have recently been exposed to some constructive criticism. According to Jones et al. (2017: 810), the aforementioned reports of the CSI, which in practice represent the main accountability mechanism over schools, put pressure on educational units for narrowing and refocusing of their curricula and for constant rearrangement of their instructional strategies. Such activities introduce chaos and are believed to blur the true educational situation of learners with SLDs in schools as their educational units are in constant process of reorganisation. Moreover, as it is stressed further by Jones et al., public evaluation of schools rises competition between educational institutions and creates the need for proving good educational results rather than the need for developing equal educational conditions favourable for all learners.

Apart from the statutory institutions providing education and care to learners with SLDs, there are non-governmental institutions which run information services on SLDs for the public, as well as offer individual consulting and support services in the field of SEN. The Czech Dyslexia Association is one of such well-recognised entities. Established in the Czech Republic in 1999, it is the largest non-governmental organisation in the country. Nevřalová (2012: 4) informs that according to its main goals, the association offers advisory assistance, organises theme conferences, seminars and lectures, publishes new research revelations referring to dyslexia, and systematically develops a database of information on SLDs in the Czech Republic.

The second well known support organisation of this type in the country which runs similar to the Dyslexia Association activities is DYS-centrum in Praha, accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youths and Sport. In its offer assessment of potential learning difficulties as well as counselling in the field of SLDs can be found. The organisation also runs individual remedial courses for learners with various disorders by means of alternative remedial and compensatory methods based on so called good practice models advocated by foreign educators.

Successful education of learners with SLDs depends primarily on the preparedness of educational institutions to provide inclusive standards of education. The availability of support services also has an impact on a fast development of the inclusive approach. All of these measures, however, would be insufficient in reaching the

educational success by learners with SLDs, without an active involvement of the teaching staff in the process of inclusion. Therefore, problem oriented teacher training, professional knowledge, adequate teaching skills and positive attitude towards inclusive education among professionals and teacher trainees in the Czech Republic need deeper considerations.

## 6.5 Education of (language) teachers in Czechia

Pursuant to the Bologna Process, tertiary education in the Czech Republic offers higher education studies on three levels of bachelor, master and doctor degrees conducted by universities or higher education colleges. As Shewbridge et al. (2016: 135) inform, Czech higher education institutions have a wide autonomy and are exclusively responsible for developing educational programmes and organisation of the studies, which are then presented to the Minister of Education, Youths and Sport for acceptance. Regardless of differences in tertiary educational programmes of teacher training, they have to comply with some formal requirements for pedagogical staff presenting the ascribed roles and having core competences of inclusive teachers. The analysis of these three factors is performed in separate subsections below, however its most important outcomes were included in table [ ] for greater clarity and comprehension.

Table 11: Education, competence and professional (self) development of Czech teachers

Teacher's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- compulsory master studies in pedagogy (3+2 or 5 years);</li> <li>- certification in pedagogy required from foreign philology students;</li> <li>- obligatory implementation of modules on SEN into college and university teacher training programmes</li> </ul>
Teacher's competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- appreciating learners diversities;</li> <li>- adjusting the applied methods of teaching to learners SEN;</li> <li>- developing an individual approach for each student;</li> <li>- cooperating and sharing opinions with others (counselling centres, parents, other teachers)</li> </ul>
Teacher's professional (self) development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- obligatory in-service refreshing and qualification courses 12 days a year, payable by the employer;</li> <li>- unrestricted autonomy in course planning, choice of teaching methods and used materials</li> </ul>

### 6.5.1 Formal requirements

Requirements for teacher qualifications in the Czech Republic are defined with the Act No. 563/2004 on pedagogical staff on the basis of which educational programmes of tertiary level education are developed by colleges and universities (Pol and Lazarová 2012: 78). Shewbridge et al. (2016: 136) inform that candidates for pedagogical studies need to pass the high school leaving examination and in some cases take the entrance examination organised by a tertiary level institution. Further, university students who aim at employment with any type of school must complete master degree studies in compilation of three years of bachelor level education supplemented with master degree programme in pedagogy, or in form of one-cycle master degree studies of pedagogy. In case of foreign language studies, complete philological education with certification in pedagogy is required from graduates who aim at employment with educational facilities (Shewbridge et al. 2016: 135). As Dziewulak (2020: 189) notices, alumni of bachelor studies are entitled to work only as pre-school teachers whereas those with the master degree are qualified to teach all primary level subjects. Teachers of later primary school levels specialise in single subjects, like a foreign language or physical education, or two subjects, what in Shewbridge et al. (2016: 135) opinion is a common case in the Czech Republic.

According to formal requirements set by the Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, teacher training educational programmes need to include components of subject education, didactics, psychology, and pedagogy. A lot of attention is given to practical skills of teacher trainees and apprenticeship (Shewbridge et al. 2016: 136). Potměšilová and Potměšil (2016: 117) add that all Czech university teacher training programmes also include modules on SEN, though they are not trained to become special education teachers. Further, they inform that courses included in SEN modules usually address such issues as counselling, approaches to students with SEN, legal protection of the disadvantaged, human rights in international documents, educational psychology, and inclusive education. These additional modules depict the tendency towards preparation of future teachers to work with learners with SLDs at inclusive educational units. Michalová et al. (2012: 42), who researched teachers' readiness for work in inclusive settings, perceive this fact positively as teachers' knowledge and readiness to work with pupils with SLDs depend more on their competences rather than on the length of their professional experience.

### **6.5.2 Teacher's competence in inclusive education in Czechia**

The Czech Education Act of 2004 specifies modern education as inclusive and defines SEN of learners with disabilities which need to be satisfied by means of adjusted content, forms and methods of education that are selected and applied by the teaching staff. The Czech Republic government approved of the three core values set by European Agency for Development in SEN which inclusive teachers need to demonstrate. They include: appreciation of learners' diversities, ability to work in a team and cooperate with others, and documented constant professional development (EADSNE 2012: 11; Šmelová and Vavrdová 2017 333).

The first value addresses teachers' ability to individualise the educational process accordingly to learners abilities and needs. In the opinion of Bendová and Fialová (2015: 813), it is not a simple task as disabled learners of inclusive units cannot be considered to be homogenous groups. Their physical and mental development may significantly differ even within the field of the same disorder. This fact refers to all learners in general because all children gain various psycho-motor, language and social competences at their own pace. Potměšil and Peng (2015: 77) add that teachers need to act intelligently in the inclusive environment as they act under circumstances which are still rather new and unique for them and in which they have to react appropriately and on the spot. For this reason, Bendová and Fialová (2015: 813) believe that Czech primary school teachers need to develop, plan and implement an individual approach for each of their students in an educational group, and further explain that the rule of individualisation has to be implemented while all learners in the group, regardless of their disabilities, pursue the same educational programme. This form of appreciation of learners' diversities is possible in practice because Czech teachers are said to enjoy high levels of autonomy which encompasses the choice of teaching methods, selection of didactic materials and introduction of any improvements in applied educational approaches that teachers consider important (Shewbridge et al. 2016: 143). Wide autonomy creates inclusion friendly conditions; however, many Czech primary school teachers express their reservations towards inclusive education, which problem might be related to teachers competence to work in inclusive environment, as characterised below (see section 6.5.3).

The second core value of an inclusive teacher, advocated by the EADSNE, stresses

the role of an organiser and mediator who organises team work and cooperates with others. Czech primary school teachers are expected to develop good teacher-student relationship based on understanding of learners' SEN, share their professional knowledge, opinions and experience with school authorities, school pedagogues and support teachers, maintain regular contact with counselling centres in order to fight off barriers and monitor socio-psychological mechanisms. They are also expected to inform and gain information about learners' with SLDs from their parents, what should help teachers adjust teaching methods to students' individual needs (Šmelová et al. 2016: 327). Similarly to the first value of inclusive teachers, also in case of this scope some problems are raised by educators, what is given more attention in the following section 6.5.3.

### **6.5.3 (Self) development of in-service teacher competence in Czechia**

As far as self-development of the teaching staff is concerned, Czech teachers are required to enlarge their knowledge about practical skills in work with learners with SLDs. Completion of post-graduate studies and/ or additional professional courses positively influences teachers perception of inclusion, strengthens their professional self-confidence in selecting and applying new methods of work, motivates and improves their attitude towards the idea of inclusion. Bendová and Fialová (2015: 817) notice that majority of Czech primary school teachers feel the need for thorough methodological pro-inclusive education, as they claim to lack specialised knowledge of how to select, adjust and apply teaching methods accordingly to learners individual needs.

According to the OECD report on the teaching workforce in the Czech Republic, primary school teachers in this country have a forty hour working time weekly, based on the national Labour Code (Shewbridge et al. 2016: 141). Teachers divide the working between direct teaching at school and other activities resulted from and/ or associated with the conducted process of education which include planning and preparing lessons, developing educational activities, adjusting teaching materials to students' special needs, as well as assessing pupils' works, maintaining contact with parents and many others. Teaching inclusive groups may additionally pile up professional duties and rise negative feelings among teachers, therefore professional trainings in the subject matter are needed. Completion of higher education studies does not end the path of professional development. As Dziewulak (2020: 190) informs lifelong learning is obligatory for Czech

teachers on the basis of art. 24 of the Education Act of 2004, and necessary for career building.

In order to develop professionally, Czech teachers are entitled to twelve days of leave for self-study yearly, and any costs arising from undertaken forms of additional education are covered by the employer (Shewbridge et al. 2016: 140). According to Potměšilová and Potměšil (2016: 118), many teachers decide on post-graduate studies and additional courses in SEN, what gives them more confidence at work with the disabled learners, changes their negative attitude towards inclusion and helps them understand their role in inclusive education.

The issue of teachers' disinclined attitude towards inclusive education has been subjected to numerous studies in Czechia, bring inconclusive results. Some researchers, like Potměšilová and Potměšil (2016: 123), Bendová and Fialová (2015: 818), and Kaleja (2016: 80), inform that the problem refers to the majority of Czech mainstream teachers who are rather sceptical about their roles in building a successful inclusive environment. Dziejulak (2020: 192), Šmelová et al. (2016: 332-333), and Bendová and Fialová (2015: 817) justify that responsibility for such perception can be found in conservative character of PPP didactic model applied by Czech primary school teachers and their favouring of previously functioning system of education which accepted the split between the special and mainstream education. Becirevic and Florian (2011: 4) name such an attitude 'defectology', as it concentrates more on learners' disabilities and applicable remedial steps rather than children's abilities. This attitude was typical for central Soviet authorities (see section 6.2).

Others, like Shewbridge et al. (2016: 143) and Potměšil and Peng (2015: 22), report that mainstream teachers of Czech primary schools declare their willingness to become inclusive educators, however, due to many factors, including lack of specialised knowledge and skills to teach mixed ability groups, insufficiency of didactic materials, underpayment and low social status of teaching profession, they feel discouraged to undertake new educational challenges. Potměšilová and Potměšil (2016: 117) notice that regardless of their understanding of the inclusive education, they feel overwhelmed with the rise of workload with large groups of students and insufficient support from school authorities and counselling services. They are also concerned about the need to conduct teaching activities that are beyond conventional education. What is more, they feel insecure about their special education skills, complain about insufficiency of special educational tools and lack of time needed for preparation of inclusive lessons

(Potměšilová et al. 2013: 12).

Certain fears of teachers to educate learners with SLDs can be explained by differences in the teacher training programmes. As it has been noticed, introduction of SEN modules to tertiary education programmes is a recent demand, whereas, according to information published by Dziewulak (2020: 192), majority of Czech primary school teaching staff is over their fifties. Based on a study by Bendová and Fialová (2015: 817), conducted on five hundred primary school teachers in the Czech Republic in which teachers' competence for work with inclusive groups of students was subjected to an analysis, it was established that 89 percent of the respondents expressed their unpreparedness to teach inclusive classes as they declare to have minimal knowledge about methods and procedures for working with learners with SLDs.

Referring to teachers' organisational and cooperative skills, they often raise an issue of lack of support teachers per class what significantly hinders teachers' activities at lessons and precludes proper individualisation of the educational process (Bendová and Fialová 2015: 817). The reasons for a limited employment of support teachers can be found in schools' financial shortages (Bendová and Fialová 2015: 818). Another problem related to cooperative skills refers to insufficient coverage of intervention performed by counselling and special education centres. Šmelová et al. (2016: 330) notice that in the opinion of mainstream teachers the cooperation is poor and does not correspond with the requirements of school practice. Lack of support teachers imposes a duty of satisfying various specific needs of learners with SLDs only on one person, what in the opinion of Šmelová et al. (2016: 333) is practically impossible to be successful. Cooperation with parents of children with SLDs seems to be more successful and starts from the moment of preparing, together with parents and school advisory services, an individual plan of education which makes the recognition of the child's abilities, limitations and educational possibilities easier (Šmelová and Vavrdová 2017: 5).

With reference to teachers' need for constant professional self-development, which demand constitutes one of the three values of the inclusive teacher outlined by the EADSNE, some problems of financial and social nature have been found. Due to financial limitations and underpayment of teaching profession, many teachers are reluctant to develop their professional skills above the standard teaching. Potměšil and Peng (2015: 97) stresses the fact that financial shortages are the most serious problem of Czech education which needs an urgent action. Without well trained educational staff, support services and proper didactic materials inclusion remains only a utopian dream.



Additionally, as Dzięwulak (2020: 192) notices, poor remuneration of teaching staff negatively influences their morale and is responsible for low social perception of this profession. As Dzięwulak further informs, due to these financial difficulties in the educational sector, only 40 percent of graduates of pedagogical faculties in the Czech Republic seek employment with schools. According to the OECD report (Shewbridge et al. 2016: 142) on teaching staff in the Czech Republic, its ministry of education included the need for more financial resources for teachers' salaries into National Action Plan 2021-2025. Finally, as Pivarč (2020: 31) points out, short-term professional courses, contrary to university long-term conceptual education in SEN and inclusive approach, may not have a sufficient impact on mainstream teachers to acquire the specialised knowledge in the field of SLDs, and also may have no or very little influence on their attitude towards inclusion in education.

Lack of teaching staff that possesses problem oriented knowledge and good teaching skills at work with mixed ability groups of students may have a negative impact on the quality of teaching services. It is so, as inclusive teachers are expected to be highly autonomous in their professional acting, applying teaching approaches such as TBL or CLIL, which in turn demands the use of a variety of didactic tools and flexibility in the choice of teaching materials. In the following sections 6.6 and 6.7 these issues are presented with reference to the educational situation in Czechia.

## **6.6 Teaching methods applied by English language teachers in Czechia**

From the formal point of view, Czech school authorities and teachers have a wide autonomy in developing primary education curricula and selecting methods of teaching (Shewbridge et al. 2016: 141). On one hand, this fact is of a great advantage for language teachers who can freely decide on kind of syllabi they apply, forms of work and didactic materials. On the other hand, however, teachers' autonomy is of no use if their knowledge, skills and attitudes are insufficient or inadequate for teaching in the inclusive environment.

When it comes to foreign language teaching practice, Cimermanová (2015: 46) informs that English language teachers are not obliged to apply any specific method of foreign language teaching. They are, however, expected to adopt certain strategies within the information processing cycle of English language input, cognition and output at work

with learners with SLDs. Among such strategies she mentions: presenting language information in small chunks, the need for monitoring the load of work at a time, marking sign posts between tasks for learners not to get lost in the lesson conduct, relate the new information to the previously acquired or learnt material, use memory strategies (including mind maps and mnemonics) control and assess students' efforts frequently, if necessary. More than a choice of a particular method of teaching, then, it is important to manage the inclusive class in the wholistic way, what Homolová (2012: 51) calls after Rogers (2003: 3) 'strategopaedia'. With reference to a lesson conduct Cimermanová (2015: 46- 49) suggests the use of multisensory approach based on an exploration of available senses via kinaesthetic pathways. Involvement of the senses into cognition of new language helps learners with SLDs compensate for their deficits in phonological processing. Project works, role-plays, flash cards and all forms of work which involve movement, gestures and mimics comply with the assumptions of the multisensory approach.

Among methods that allow for the use of the above strategies, and which are compliant with the multisensory approach, there are: the total physical response, suggestopaedia, and the earlier characterised TBL and CLIL, introduced to the Czech language teaching syllabi a decade ago (Frydrychová Klimová 2012: 573). Particularly CLIL is gaining popularity in Czech educational environment as it suits inclusive goals, and as Frydrychová Klimová further explains, it is ideal for primary education as it combines five dimensions, i.e. culture, environment, language, content and learning. Early education foreign language teachers whose aim is to manage young learners' well balanced development, may use this holistic approach without any restricting rules significant for traditional language teaching methods. As Cimermanová (2015: 46) adds, CLIL allows learners to master their language skills autonomously, what activates learners' affective strategies via completion of a task or overcoming stress and anxiety.

Much as CLIL is appreciated by Czech teachers, there are certain constraints of it. First of all, Frydrychová Klimová (2012: 573) points to students' lower knowledge about English language, as teaching concentrates on other subjects and the target language is a tool of communication. A CLIL lesson, then, is not a language lesson nor a particular language lesson, but a class where the target language is a medium to broaden learners general knowledge. Such a perception of the teaching context demands from foreign language teachers to develop large and multi-dimensional competences which may exceed their professional knowledge and skills developed by university programmes of

education. Secondly, students' mixed language competences and mixed learning abilities may require a lot of individual attention, what in case of governmentally imposed limits to a number of special education teachers per class, is a serious problem. Finally, as it is noticed by Bendová and Fialová (2015: 818), Czech primary schools seem to lack suitable didactic materials to educate learners with SLDs via CLIL, the issue which is given more attention in the following section.

Much as CLIL is being implemented in Czech schools, it is not the most popular approach of English language teaching applied by Czech teachers. Frydrychová Klimová (2014: 85-86) indicates that majority of in-service teachers who prefer the bottom-top approach most comfortably feel with the presentation practice production procedure. It is a specific variation of the audio-lingual method in which the teacher presents the target language to be taught in a situational context and then expects students to show their understanding through language practice based on accurate reproduction techniques (see section 3.2.1.3). However, this procedure, notices Frydrychová Klimová (2014: 87), is not effective with inclusive groups where children of mixed abilities have difficulties to perform linguistic activities with the expected accuracy.

A study conducted by Rychtářová in the years 2003 and 2004 reveals that English language teachers of elementary schools declare to use most often the communicative approach in their classroom practice (see section 3.2.1.5). As it is reported by Rychtářová (2004: 105), 94 percent of the research participants believe that development of the speaking skill is the most important for their young learners. Unfortunately, other studies show that the use of the communicative approach with early education groups by Czech teachers is mostly declarative as they are reported not to use English language fully, limiting by the same learners' opportunities to develop communicative skills (Chodéra 2013: 76). Also Šebestová et al. (2011: 323) noticed that primary school teachers in Czechia concentrate their educational efforts on receptive rather than productive skills. This sort of acting is confirmed to be deeply rooted in eastern European educational traditions where the bottom-top model of education has always been popular (Bendová and Fialová 2015: 818).

With reference to TBL, which is perceived by the EADSNE as one of the most desirable approaches for inclusive environments (see section 3.2.2.1), Frydrychová Klimová (2014: 89) reports that it is sometimes applied by Czech teachers of English language with higher classes of primary schools and secondary schools, however in case of primary schools, Frydrychová Klimová indicates that priority is still given to TPR (see

section 3.2.1.5).

Summing up, two conclusions can be drawn from the above considerations about the methods of teaching applied by Czech foreign language teachers. The first is a problem of the dominant role of the PPP approach, which stays in opposition to the key assumptions of inclusion, i. e. treating students' educational needs individually by engaging alternative methods. The second issue refers to inclusive strategies which in the opinion of Czech researchers are applied by teachers only declaratively. Both problems require remedial steps to be taken with reference to teacher education and professional teacher training.

## **6.7 Sufficiency of language teaching materials in Czech schools**

In general, pursuant to the Czech Education Act of 2004, students of primary public schools have free access to textbooks. In this situation, parents of learners with SLDs need to finance only certain additional didactic materials (Bačáková 2017: 6). The problem of insufficiency of teaching materials, however is reported by language teachers who expect additional teaching sources for learners with SLDs, as well as adjustment of textbooks which are commonly in use. What is more, according to the study of Bendová and Fialová (2015: 818), 70 percent of the Czech primary school teachers participating in their study inform about insufficient instructional materials which would guide them into the inclusive approach.

It is undoubtful that lack of didactic sources dedicated to learners with SLDs may hinder the educational process, particularly when it is realised via traditional methods of teaching and/ or when teaching a foreign language is heavily based on a textbook. It is obvious, as well, that the potential of textbooks which are not adjusted to learners various SEN cannot be fully realised with inclusive groups. For these reasons, teachers who rely solely or mainly on textbooks in the process of teaching, are forced to introduce changes to the didactic materials for students' SEN individually and on the daily basis. Many teachers believe that participation in additional forms of professional self-development can help them solve problems with managing didactic materials. However, as Pivarč (2020: 31) notices, pure attendance at professional courses, seminars and conferences is not enough for language teachers to prepare them for inclusive practices.

As an alternative to traditional methods of foreign language teaching, Czech teachers are advised to apply a multisensory approach, TBL or CLIL, which engage learners holistically and are textbook independent (Kováčiková and Prokeínová 2012: 62). The use of such approaches demands from teachers creativity in lesson planning and organising, and in consequence reaching for teaching sources different from textbooks. Kováčiková and Prokeínová are convinced that learners with SLDs benefit from the variety of teaching materials, including these available from the external resources. Electronic devices as well as the Internet offer plenty of free educational programmes, applications and sites with didactic materials. As it is further explained, learners with SLDs, who have problems with short-term and working memories and for this reason are forgetful, may work on electronic devices where tasks can be easily adjusted. Kováčiková and Prokeínová (2012: 63) justify that visual and audio-visual materials like posters, pictures, real objects, chants, songs for kids, etc. are widely available and serve even better than standard textbooks as they stimulate learners' multi-sensory perception and provoke self-expression. The use of teaching materials by Czech foreign language teachers with reference to their advantages and disadvantages is presented in figure 3 below.

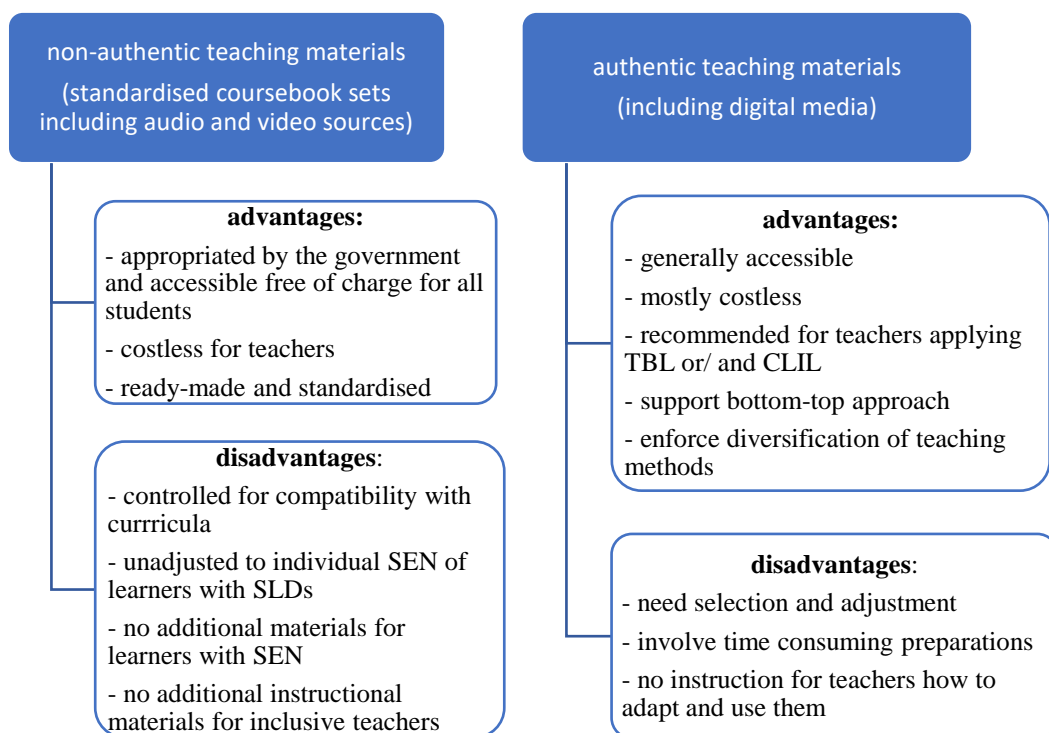


Figure 3: The use of foreign language teaching resources in Czechia

It can be concluded, then, that there are sufficient teaching materials for Czech teachers and students that can accompany the use of alternative methods and strategies recommended for inclusion, however, it is teachers' responsibility to select them appropriately to their learners' SEN. The fact that some Czech teachers complain about insufficiency of appropriate teaching materials may indicate lack of expertise or pure unwillingness of foreign language teachers to act inclusively.

## 6.8 Final comments

The analysis of documents and specialist literature on the Czech Republic situation shows its uneasy way to inclusion in education. Although the scientific interest in SLDs flourished among the Czech researchers of the 1960s, causing the development of diagnostic tools and formation of first clinical classes within the regular school units, access to the mainstream schooling for learners with SLDs on equal basis with others was enabled not earlier than in 2002. This situation can be explained by the fact that the Czech Republic is a country built on the tradition of the former Soviet system in which the central authorities ran a policy of exclusion of those who were weak and disable, and who were pushed to live on the fringes of society. Only collapse of the Soviet Blok enabled amendments in the Czech law, which in case of education happened a decade later. Table 12 below presents the key changes in the Czech system of education advancing the country towards inclusion. Wherever justified, the strengths and weaknesses are divided for maintaining a clear view on the implementation of the inclusive approach in accordance to the research questions set in section 4.3.

Table 12: Approaches towards English language teaching to learners with SLDs in Czechia

<b>Research question number</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Factors influencing teaching of English language to young learners with SLDs in Austria</b>
RQ (1)	Scientific developments in SLDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1904 – Antonin Haveroch described the first case of dyslexia in the country;</li> <li>• 1960s – first systematic studies of dyslexia in Czechoslovakia conducted by Otkar Kučera;</li> <li>• a distinction between patients with encephalopathy and general 'mild brain; dysfunction' made by Zdeněk Matějček, the author of first diagnostic tools for SLDs in Czechoslovakia;</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1962 – first class for learners with SLDs set at the Child’s Psychiatric Hospital in Dolní Počernice;</li> <li>• 1972 – incorporation of clinical classes into regular school units;</li> <li>• 1980s – formation of a support network consisting of approximately 100 counselling centres</li> </ul>
RQ (2)	Systemic solutions for inclusion	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• three mainstream education paths: single integration, integration class, cooperative class;</li> <li>• introduction of support teachers for class conduct</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• financial shortages in the sector of education limiting an access to support services</li> </ul>
RQ (3)	Legal basis for educating learners with SLDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1990 – access to the mainstream schooling for learners with SLDs;</li> <li>• 2002 – access to public schooling for learners with SLDs on equal basis with others (integration);</li> <li>• 2004 – Czechia joins the EU Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education; introduction of compulsory foreign language education to school curricula (Education Act of 2004);</li> <li>• 2016 – adoption of the inclusive approach in Czechia;</li> <li>• National Action Plan 2015-2020 – implementation of the inclusive approach into schools;</li> <li>• National Action Plan 2021-2025 – formation of fourteen regions for developing regional strategies of teaching and inclusive education</li> </ul>
RQ (4)	Diagnostic procedures of SLDs	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initial performance of diagnoses by clinicians, focus on perceptual-motor functions;</li> <li>• current performance of diagnosing by counselling centres and special pedagogical centres;</li> <li>• use of standardised IQ literacy attainment discrepancy tests for diagnosing SLDs;</li> <li>• use of early diagnosis for children of kindergarten age</li> </ul>
RQ (5)	Educational Institutions and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• counselling centres for diagnosing learners endangered by SLDs and for organising intervention;</li> <li>• Czech School Inspectorate supervising the quality of inclusive practices in public schools;</li> <li>• Government Body for Persons with Disabilities, a body supervising counselling centres;</li> <li>• leading non-governmental institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Czech Dyslexia Association</li> <li>- DYS – centrum in Praha</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<p><u>Weakness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>insufficient coverage of interventions by counselling centres and inadequate ruling of the inspectorates;</li> </ul>
RQ (6)	Teacher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>obligatory M.A. studies in pedagogy (3+2 or 5 years);</li> <li>English philology students need certification in pedagogy;</li> <li>all tertiary curricula include modules on SEN</li> </ul>
	A. Teacher roles in inclusion	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>appreciating learners' diversity;</li> <li>developing an individual approach;</li> <li>being ready to work in a team and co-organise lessons with special education teachers;</li> <li>monitoring socio-psychological mechanism in inclusive groups and Contact counselling centres;</li> <li>self-development duty</li> </ul>
	B. Teacher competence for inclusion	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>autonomy in the choice of teaching methods and didactic materials;</li> <li>availability of post graduate studies in special pedagogy, inclusion and SEN;</li> <li>obligatory 12 days yearly of professional training for in-service teachers financed by the employer (limitations introduced due to financial shortages)</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teachers' complaints about excessive load of duties;</li> <li>poor remuneration causing shortages in employment of young teachers (only 40% of alumni seek employment with schools)</li> </ul>
RQ (7)	English language teaching methods	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>newest trends in language education recommended by central authorities include TBL, CLIL and multisensory approach</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>precedence of PPP approach in education;</li> <li>favouring the former dual system of education of mainstream and special schools;</li> <li>communicative approach used declaratively but PPP model and TPR used factually;</li> <li>problems with managing inclusive groups wholistically ('strategopaedia')</li> </ul>
RQ (8)	The use of didactic resources in English language teaching	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>free access to standardised materials</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>main use of non-authentic teaching materials (coursebook sets);</li> <li>marginal use of non-authentic materials and occasional use of digital tools;</li> </ul>



- 
- lack of instructional materials guiding towards the inclusive approach;
  - teachers tend to complain about lack of pro-inclusive methodological materials
- 

Based on the analysed data from the Czech formal documents and the read specialist literature, it can be concluded that changes in the Czech system of education have been introduced with difficulties, due to political, social and financial conditions which have an influence on rather ambivalent perception of inclusive education in the country. Insufficient spendings on the education sector result in limitation of professional courses for in-service teachers and poor remuneration of teachers. The situation also has an impact on the ratio of young teachers with well-rounded inclusive knowledge and professional skills who often decide to leave their underpaid profession. Lack of teaching staff that would be fully competent in inclusive education supports stagnation of the PPP approach to learners with SLDs and the use of standardised teaching materials.

Regardless of numerous problems with the implementation of the inclusive approach that evidently need further attention, some improvements have already been successfully introduced to Czech education. The most significant of them refer to autonomy of (language) teachers who decide about the choice of teaching methods and accompanying didactic materials, introduction of an obligatory period of twelve days in every school year dedicated to teachers' self-development that is free of charge for teachers, improvements of the tertiary level programmes of education for teacher trainees and incremental introduction of inclusion-friendly methods of foreign language teaching. Finally, similarly to Austrian changes towards inclusion, also in the Czech Republic the central authorities decided to establish fourteen regions for developing inclusive strategies via inclusive project works. Most of all, since 2016, acting in accordance with the European Union directives, inclusion has been declared to be the mainstream approach in primary education. Therefore, it can be concluded that the inclusive approach in Czechia is still in the phase of its implementation, though dynamic changes within the system of education in the country make it probable to be completed successfully.

## **Chapter 7: Language education of learners with SLDs in Poland**

### **7.0 Introduction**

As many European countries, also Poland joined the modern concept of inclusive education based on the international acts and regulations as described in section 3.1. The outline of the scientific interest in SLDs in Poland and legal basis for educating the disordered learners show that approaches towards learners with SLDs in the country evolved gradually from general marginalisation of the disabled, through their integration into the mainstream education until the present moment which in fact is difficult to define.

Polish system of education is deeply rooted in Prussian model which was introduced to schools in the country after the third partitioning of Poland. According to its assumptions, the major goal of schools was to germanise Polish youths in order to achieve obedient and dedicated citizens. The most significant rules of the Prussian model included implementation of imposed curricula, forty-five minute lessons with short intervals in between, assessment of learners' efforts with grades and most of all explicit methods of teaching and verification of knowledge with the use of examinations. Learners were expected to follow their teachers' instructions and lectures in order to memorise the received information (Łukasiak 2022: 44-45). Unfortunately, the same assumptions are still present in Polish system of education, reaching over two hundred years of its continuation.

At present, Poland is one of the European Union member states, declaring a redirection of its system of education towards the western model which is more dedicated

to learners' creativity and sustained self-development. With reference to young learners, this is the model of inclusive education. Regardless of the approved new direction in Polish education and formal settlement of new educational goals, there are still many controversies concerning the present state of inclusion in Polish schools. For this reason, an analysis of the existing system of education, together with supervisory and support services are described, giving an outline of the educational conditions and perspectives for successful implementation of inclusion. Further, following the assumptions of the comparative study, also other factors such as the use of recommended methods of teaching, roles and competences of teachers, as well as, adjustability of teaching materials to learners individual SEN, are subjected to verification. The issue of inclusive education is very important as according to the report on Polish system of education from 2014 a number of students with SENs in mainstream primary schools already reached fifty eight per cent (Smoczyńska 2014: 77). This high increase of the disordered learners in general education units is a result of an introduction of the integrative approach. However, there is a significant difference between integration, where a disabled student has to meet the educational standards, and a more recent inclusive trend, where standards of education are adjusted to students' abilities. Introduced by the European Union to the standards of modern education since 2000, its position in public schooling is still unstable due to numerous obstacles, which are related to maladjustment of the systems of education, lack of competence in inclusive teaching among subject teachers, inaccurate selection of teaching methods or persistence in applying a deeply-rooted traditional approach.

The analysis of all these problems and other related issues on the Polish educational ground is performed in accordance to the established research criteria (see section 4.2) and in an order indicated by the research questions (see section 4.3). The results of the analysis will help to allay the doubts about the state of implementation of the inclusive approach into Polish schools. They are also expected to reveal a functioning of the Polish system of education in comparison to the two other European Union countries.

## **7.1 History of scientific interest in SLDs in Poland**

The three partitions of Poland and long decades of destruction of Polish nationalism, education and culture, created unfavourable conditions for scientific developments in the

field of SLDs. Additionally, the introduced by the invaders Prussian model of education excluded learners with various disorders from the public system of education. Still, the history of studies about SLDs on the Polish ground has long tradition and dates back to the period before the Second World War when a study of Helena Radlińska about school maturity among Polish pre-school children educated in Warsaw schools in the early 1930s opened a discussion about developmental and educational abilities of the disordered learners (M. Bogdanowicz 2002: 26). In her study, Radlińska determined children's school readiness by identifying children with dysfunctions in one aspect of their development and offering them remedial courses to level up their learning abilities (Łodej 2016: 30). There were also other Polish scientists of the interwar period who expressed their interest in SLDs via published articles. Among them Zakrzewska (1996: 23) mentions psychologists, educators and physicians such as Bychowski (1934-35), Uzdańska (1937), and Baley (1938). Unfortunately, the outbreak of the second world war withheld potential developments in the field of SLDs in the country.

The problem of SLDs regained attention of scientists in Europe in the post war period. Among Polish specialists the most influential were Anna Drath, Kazimierz Dąbrowski, Halina Spionek, Barbara Zakrzewska, Janina Magnuska, Teresa Danilewicz and Marta Bogdanowicz. The first of the mentioned scientists, Anna Drath, in 1959 published a pioneering work entitled "Dyslexia" where she outlined the concept of reading disorder. Drath and her colleagues from the Polish Academy of Science, supervised by Kazimierz Dąbrowski, undertook intensive studies about language disorders which aimed at diagnosis and therapy of learners with SLDs. As a result, Dąbrowski launched a method of re-education that was to help children with reading and writing disorders (Sawa 1999: 9). The method combined both didactic and psychomotor aspects of education (see also Tarnopol and Tarnopol 1981: 433-434).

In 1960s, another Polish scientific centre whose specialists engaged in the studies of reading and writing disorders was the Department of Psychology at the University of Warsaw. One of its professors, Halina Spionek, who was a clinical psychologist and also a pedagogue, interested in developmental psychology and pathology of children and adolescents, developed studies on lateralization in children, (Polish Academy of Sciences 2002: 114). As noted by Bogdanowicz (1985: 263), Spionek followed the diagnostic methods popularised in out-patient psychological clinics in France. She discussed children's lack of school readiness and addressed the importance of impaired psychomotor functions as a source of school immaturity (Łodej 2016: 31). She also

noticed that impairment of psychomotor functions influenced reading rate and dynamics, and, as such, was typical for learners with dyslexia (Spionek 1965: 94). In 1965 Spionek's investigations were summed up in the first monograph dedicated to the psychomotor development of children with difficulties in learning reading and writing skills (Spionek 1965: 94). In 1973 she suggested a distinction between dyslexia and dysgraphia, defining the latter as "only those reading, writing disorders that are caused by deficits of perceptual motor function development, estimated in relation to the child's age and evaluated in relation to the child's mental development" (Spionek 1973: 271).

Apart from Spionek, other Polish specialists in SLDs developed their research in pedagogical treatment of the disabled learners providing new therapeutic methods of remedy. Among them Tarnopol and Tarnopol (1981: 434) mention Zakrzewska, Markiewicz, Magnuska, Danielewicz and Koźmińska. In 1959, Zakrzewska and Markiewicz launched a rehabilitation programme for dyslexic children which was divided into two components: (1) psychomotor rehabilitation which focused on visual, auditory perception and motor skills; and (2) psycho-education rehabilitation which aimed at improving reading and writing skills (Smythe et al. 2004: 191). Later, in 1976 Zakrzewska issued the first publication describing therapeutic techniques of teaching children with dyslexia which in M. Bogdanowicz's words (1985: 264) was a result of the cumulative experience of Polish, French and Czechoslovakian experts. Additionally, as the reform of Polish educational system from 1972 introduced teaching reading to the zero-grade of primary schools and for six-year-old children of kindergartens, it allowed to provide remedial help at early stage of child's development. As noted by Szkolak-Stępień (2018a: 264), special classes for dyslexic children were open in Warsaw and later in Cracow and Toruń. They offered therapy based on the French diagnostic methods of Zazzo, Stambak, Santucci and Piaget.

Following Łodej (2016: 30), in the middle of 1970s, Teresa Danielewicz, Anna Koźmińska and Janina Magnuska also introduced a therapeutic and developmental programme for dyslectic and neurotic children. Their method aimed at improving emotional, motivational and social functioning of children with learning difficulties, as well as levelling up their perceptual-motor integration for better reading and writing skills and the general stimulation of the child's well-balanced development. The therapeutic programme was based on a set of various activities in which geometrical figures are recognised, cut out, coloured and composed together by children. Apart from determination to complete each task, precision was the basic criteria in improving

children's motor skills. It strengthened concentration, soothed irritation and rose motivation as children could compare their previous works with following ones of much higher quality (Łodej 2016: 30).

Achievements of all of the mentioned specialists of the emergent phase opened a new educational perspective for learners with SLDs. However, a specialist who has popularised the problem of SLDs in Poland, widely recognised for her achievements in the field of dyslexia is Marta Bogdanowicz who started her scientific career in 1960s as a team member of the Outpatient Clinic for Neurotic Children in Gdańsk. Following Szkolak-Stępień (2018: 272), she introduced to the term of developmental dyslexia to the terminology of SLDs on the Polish ground which was defined as a syndrome of specific reading and writing difficulties. The definition was accepted by the World Neurologists Conference in Boston in 1968 and later by the International Dyslexia Association in 1994. In years 1981-1990 M. Bogdanowicz conducted a longitudinal study on developmental dyslexia in Poland which aimed at measuring cognitive and motor skills of learners with dyslexia, as well as provided information about the their functioning in society (M. Bogdanowicz 2003). The results revealed that dyslectic learners faced not only educational problems, but also social difficulties and problems of psychological nature, as they played truancy to avoid lessons, were often conflicted with teachers and had negative attitude towards particular subjects. M. Bogdanowicz (2003) noticed that they showed low self-esteem, which was in disproportion to their intellectual potential. The problem was noticed by the state authorities and non-governmental organisation of 1990s which attempted at effective implementation of the remedial methods to support the integration of learners with SLDs into the main stream education (M. Bogdanowicz 2003: 357-381). Still in the 1990s, M. Bogdanowicz founded the Polish Dyslexia Association in order to popularise the problem of dyslexia in Polish society and introduced the term "risk of dyslexia: which referred to the probability of the SLDs occurrence in children below the primary school level (Bogdanowicz and Bogdanowicz 2016: 267). Throughout her longitudinal study she established that diagnosing SLDs in children of the school age was not efficient enough due to their dynamic biological development, and that diagnosis identifying symptoms of SLDs at the pre-school level was necessary (Bogdanowicz and Bogdanowicz 2016: 265). The need for early diagnosis was also justified by unequal distribution of diagnosis in the country. According to Jaworska (2011: 273), the causes for which SLDs were seldom identified in some parts of the country can be explained in two ways: either as a result of low awareness of the problem among parents of the

disordered learners or poor quality of support services offered by the counselling centres and schools. The suggested by M. Bogdanowicz concept of early diagnosis performed at the pre-school level of education improved the disorder identification process, allowing schools for early intervention regardless of parents interest and specialist diagnosis conducted on order by counselling centres.

Apart from M. Bogdanowicz, other Polish specialists of the integration phase, including Grażyna Krasowicz-Kupis and Elżbieta Zawadzka-Bartnik, contributed to the field of SLDs by developing compensatory-corrective programmes, publishing guidebooks for parents and school teachers, as well as working on teaching methods that would promote educational integration. Zawadzka-Bartnik became interested in difficulties of the disabled in learning foreign languages and in the concept of integrative foreign language teaching. Krasowicz-Kupis from the Department of Methodology and Psychological Diagnostics at the University of Maria Skłodowska-Curie in Lublin, was engaged in research of young learners, measuring their reading speed, accuracy and comprehension. The results of her tests showed that “Polish dyslexic learners were deficient in all aspects of L1/ Polish reading competence when compared to their non-dyslexic peers” (Łodej 2016:31). Her later study about the acquisition of metalinguistic functions by young learners, conducted together with Bryant in 2004, confirmed her earlier achievements and proved that phonological processing was a valid predictor of reading development (Krasowicz-Kupis and Bryant 2004: 41). In 2005, Petrus and M. Bogdanowicz (2005: 116-118) revealed the results of another research in the development of phonological competence in kindergarten children who learnt English language. According to its results, a relationship between the level of phonological competence in Polish and English languages was proven. It was also noticed that children who learnt English language were better at syllable synthesis and using rhymes.

In the opinion of specialists in the field of SLDs, learning foreign languages is beneficial for Polish children with SLDs, however, there are many factors which stand for the success or failure in language learning such as organisational issues, the personality of a teacher, as well as their professional knowledge, teaching skills and attitude towards SLDs. As Zawadzka-Bartnik (2010: 157) notices, educational problems of learners with SLDs result not from their disorders so much as from lack of motivation which is caused by the above mentioned factors. Realising the importance of a person of the teacher, their roles and competence are given close attention in the following sections of the present chapter.

## 7.2 Legal basis of educating learners with SLDs in Poland

In the 1980s Polish authorities, following the international rising interest in needs of the disabled and indirectly obliged by regulations of the European Commission, intensified their actions for learners with special educational needs. At the beginning of the 1990's Poland as a member of the United Nations signed *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN 1990/ 1991), recognizing every child's right to education, with the view to achieving educational goals progressively, being given opportunity to eliminate educational differences by facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge, modern teaching methods and ensuring harmonized development of the child accordingly to their mental and physical abilities (UN 1990/ 1991, art. 28-29). This sign post in the Polish system of education has had a permanent impact on the conversion of its education law. Below, in table 13 the most important acts and regulations on the basis of which the system was transformed are gathered for greater transparency of changes in education of learners with SLDs.

Table 13: Evolution of Polish system of education towards inclusion

The Act of 7 <sup>th</sup> September 1991 on Education	<b>1991</b> - acceptance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children Act; - free access to public education for all learners on the basis of integration
The Act of 6 <sup>th</sup> June 1997 on Education Law	<b>1997</b> - issuing the Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities against their discrimination; - guaranteeing full access to social, cultural and artistic life, sport activities and tourism; - appointing three types of schooling for the disabled: special, individual and general education
Regulation of the MENS of 21.03.2001 on the principles of providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public educational units	<b>2001</b> - adjusting exam conditions and forms to learners' SEN
Regulation of the MENS of 18.01.2005 on conditions of organising education	<b>2005</b> - appointing integration as the most required form of education
Regulation of the MENS of 23.12.2008 on the core curriculum for early school education	<b>2008</b> - establishing integrated education for grades 1-3 of the primary level of education understood as lack of distinction of particular subjects in grades 1-3



<b>2010</b>	
Regulation of the MENS of 17.11.2010 on service and organisation of psychological and pedagogical assistance in public education units	- an introduction of the concept of the inclusive approach in education
Regulation of the MENS of 17.11.2010 on conditions and methods of assessment, classification and promotion of learners in public education units	- a framework statute of the public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres.
<b>2017</b>	
Regulation of the MENS of 09.08.2017 on psychological and pedagogical assistance for the disordered learners	- expressing the necessity for adjustment of educational requirements to learners' psycho-motor abilities on the basis of specialist opinions issued by counselling centres
Regulation of the MEN of 9 August 2017 on the conditions for organizing education, upbringing and care for disabled, socially maladjusted children and adolescents and at risk of social maladjustment	- exemptions of learners with deep expression of SLDs from foreign language courses; - redirection of learners with difficulties in school functioning to individual path of education
<b>2019</b>	
Regulation of the MEN of 28 February 2019 on specific organisation of public schools and kindergartens	- dividing primary level schooling for disordered learners into four types of special, integrative, sports and championship units; - establishing the limit of 25 learners per class in integrative units; - organising revalidation classes for disordered learners at schools; - ordering cooperation between teachers, counselling centres, school psychologists and pedagogues
Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 on standards of education for teaching profession	- including the themes of learning disorders and methods of teaching that respond to learners' SEN into tertiary programmes of education
<b>2022-2030</b>	
Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Family, Labour and Social Policy of 24 May 2022	- establishing the National Action Programme for Equal Treatment 2022-2030

Since 1997, provisions of the Polish Constitution (Sejm RP 1997a) have warranted the disabled their equal rights in all aspects of their life which are additionally strengthened by the *Charter of rights for persons with disabilities* issued in the same year by the Polish Parliament, according to which people with disabilities have full rights to integrate in public, social, cultural and sport life on equal basis with other society members, as well as are guaranteed an equal access to health care, rehabilitation and work (Sejm RP, Monitor Polski 1997b No. 50, item 475). Children and youths with disabilities can choose from three forms of education: in public schools integrated with other peers, in special units or in form of individualised learning (Sejm RP, Monitor Polski 1997b No 5, item 475 sec. 1.4).

Meeting educational needs of the disabled, the MEN introduced changes to the

educational system in 2001 for older dyslectic learners of secondary level in accordance to their individual abilities. Based on *the Regulation from 15<sup>th</sup> January 2001 on the principles of providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and facilities*, learners with SEN were ensured special conditions for external examinations (MEN 2001a, Journal of Laws from 2001 No. 13, item 110). This right was further specified by the Regulation of MEN from 21<sup>st</sup> March 2001 on the conditions and manner of assessing, classifying and promoting students, conducting examinations and tests in public schools, according to which the conditions and forms of examinations taken by learners with SLDs had to be adjusted to their disabilities (MEN 2001b, Journal of Laws from 21 March 2001b, No. 29, item 323). Adjustment of conditions and forms was performed by exam organisers on the basis of a proper opinion on disability issued by a local psychological-pedagogical clinic diagnosing children with SLDs.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January 2005 another Regulation of MEN provided rules for organising educational conditions and care proper for children and youth with disabilities and social maladjustment. The regulation defined a group of children with special educational needs as those who are deaf, with hearing deficit, blind, visually impaired, with physical disabilities, the mild and moderate or severe mental retardation, with autism, multiple disabilities, chronic diseases, mental disorders, socially maladjusted or at risk of such maladjustment, threatened with addiction and behavioural disorders. The Ministry also stressed the importance of integrative form of education, perceiving it as the most appropriate one for the balanced development of all learners (MEN 2005, Journal of Laws from 2005, No. 19, item 167).

In 2000 the EU issued the Lisbon Agenda in which a change from integration towards full social and professional inclusion of the disabled was suggested for the first time. Also in Poland some changes were introduced with reference to the system of education, though they still addressed the process of integration rather than inclusion. With the regulation of the MEN from 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 on the core curriculum and general education in particular types of schools (MEN 2008, Journal of Laws from 2009 No. 4, item 17), foreign language learning became compulsory for all primary school learners. The decision was supported by the claim that the most important skills acquired by primary school students included: reading at a level enabling the acquisition of knowledge, the development of emotional, intellectual, moral values and active participation in social life. Therefore, the ability to communicate in a foreign language,

both orally and in writing was perceived by the legislator as crucial, and depriving young learners with SLDs an opportunity to learn a foreign language at school could limit their further prospects of personal and professional development.

In the core curriculum, the MEN defined early school education as integrated, without a division of the taught content into individual subjects, and due to an assumption that the educational process should satisfy children's natural curiosity and allow them to explore their interests appropriately to learners' abilities (MEN 2008, Journal of Laws from 2009 No. 4, item 17). The adopted approach introduced the concept of inclusive education and defined a student as an independent entity that takes a cognitive initiative and responsibility for developing their knowledge. The teacher, on the other hand, stood in the position of a counsellor and mentor, responsible for supporting students in their educational effort. Assumptions of the core curriculum were confirmed in a resolution of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010 issued by the MEN on service and organisation of psychological and pedagogical assistance in public educational units which introduced the concept of inclusive approach in teaching via noticing diverse educational and developmental needs of learners as well as recognising learners' individual psycho-motor abilities (MEN 2010a, Journal of Laws from 2010, No. 228, item 1487). The resolutions, which followed disability action plans set by the European Council for the years 2002-2006 and 2004-2010, also provided information on a variety of types and forms of assistance available for learners with SLDs, their parents and teachers, which included counselling, consultations, workshops and trainings (MEN 2010b, Journal of laws from 2010, No 228, item 1487). On the same day the MEN issued further five resolutions regulating detailed principles for operation of public psychological and pedagogical services (MEN 2010c, Journal of laws of 2010, No 228, item 1488), conditions for organising education, upbringing and care for disabled or maladjusted children and youths in specialised education units (MEN 2010d, Journal of laws of 2010, No 228, item 1489) and in general and integrated education units (MEN 2010d, Journal of laws of 2010, No 228, item 1490), resolution on conditions and methods of assessment, classification and promotion of learners in public education units (MEN 2010e, Journal of laws of 2010, No 228, item 1491), and on framework statute of the public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, including public specialised counselling services (MEN 2010f, Journal of laws of 2010, No 228, item 1492). The above regulations respected special educational needs of learners with SLDs, added dysphasic learners to the group of learners with specific motor disorders and obliged teachers to adjust their methods of work to learners'

individual needs and abilities by developing supportive action plans, cards of individual needs for each student opinionated by a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre and an individual educational and therapeutic program of education for students with documented disabilities (so called IPET).

Since 2010 the above regulations have been amended by the legislator, and at present the fundamental legal act that imposes educational standards in Poland is an act of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016 on educational law (MEN 2016, Journal of laws of 2017 item 59) which completes the previous act of 7<sup>th</sup> September 1991 on the system of education. The act maintains in power the previously established national model of education that comprises the following paths: general public with integrated units, individual and special education. As Wiszejko-Wierzbicka notices (2012: 75), the same model of education has been implemented in such European countries as Germany, Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ireland and Island. Polish compulsory education is divided into the following levels: a primary level of schooling for children aged seven to fourteen years, secondary level for teenagers from fifteen to eighteen years divided into general and technical high schools and vocational schools, and finally tertiary education offered by colleges and universities (Kolanowska 2021: 15).

According to the act of 2016 on educational law (MEN 2016, Journal of laws 2017, item 59), conditions of providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public education units as well as organising educational conditions and care proper for children and youth with disabilities and social maladjustment are specified by the MEN in two Resolutions of 9<sup>th</sup> August 2017 (MEN 2017a, Journal of laws of 2017, item 1591; MEN 2017b, Journal of laws of 2017, item 1578). The resolutions define psychological and pedagogical assistance and specify experts responsible for delivering support services to learners with SLDs, their parents and teachers, who are psychologists, pedagogues, speech therapists, professional experts and pedagogy therapists. Further, pursuant to article 2 of the said resolution on psychological and pedagogical assistance, teachers of students with documented SLDs or whose individual needs are recognised on the basis of their psycho-motor abilities by experts are obliged to adjust educational requirements specified in a curriculum to learners' special needs (MEN 2017a, Journal of laws of 2017, item 1591). Learners with SLDs are diagnosed by experts at local psychological and pedagogical counselling centres who issue a specialised opinion on request of parents or teachers under parents' consent. Additionally, on the basis of article

6, the school principal has a right to exempt a learner with deep developmental dyslexia or dysphasia from their participation in foreign language classes.

The said executive acts regulate the system of education and, at least generally, advocate the inclusive approach towards learners with SLDs. Unfortunately, they lack precision and often bring some controversy, especially among parents of the disabled children. This found its confirmation in a discourse analysis of the education reform from 2017 conducted by a specialist from Jagiellonian University. It was demonstrated that Polish central authorities managed to merely outline a vision of the inclusive education as a common wealth which aimed at equalisation of rights of individuals, sustained intellectual self-development and socialisation of disordered learners (Dorczak 2019: 62). The study showed that the Minister of Education used a manipulative discourse in order to create a vision of the reform without undertaking any practical steps in that direction. Moreover, in the public opinion the declared reform of education aimed at the reinforcement of so called Prussian school cherishing the traditional approach rather than promoting the inclusive trend (Dorczak 2019: 85). This can be exemplified by a decision of the Minister of Education expressed in article 12.1 of the resolution on conditions for organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public education units, according to which learners with disabilities who are able to attend school but have difficulty in functioning in a given educational unit are redirected to the individualized educational path (MEN 2017a, Journal of Laws of 2017 item 1591). In the opinion of parents this legal provision excludes learners with SLDs from school community by limiting them to home schooling. It is also unprecise what kind or level of difficulty in functioning shall entitle school authorities to redirect a student with disabilities into individualized educational path.

Summing up, the present situation of learners with SLDs is still far from being stable and equal for all, and also far from the assumptions and expectations set by the European Parliament in *Action Plans for 2010-2020* (EU 2013, Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013, Art. 5) which have been mentioned hereinabove and aim at further promotion of inclusive education and lifelong learning for people with disabilities.

The most recent changes in the system of education have been introduced in 2019 by the minister of the national education under two regulations. The first one was dedicated to specific organisation of public schools and kindergartens in which four types of primary level schools were established, including special, integrative, sports and championship units (MEN 2019, Journal of Laws from 2019 item 502). What is

interesting the term integrative school has been maintained regardless of the change in the approach towards the disordered learners from integrative into the inclusive one. Further, it was decided that the number of students per class cannot exceed twenty five. Students with SLDs are accepted to integrative classes upon an application placed by parents to the school unit and an approval of the school principal. The second regulation brought some changes in the tertiary system of education. Aiming at improvement of professional competences of future teachers in educating learners with SLDs, academic units were obliged to introduce themes of learning disorders and SEN into their educational programmes for faculties of pedagogy. Following Amtmann et al. (2017: 141), these improvements are of high value as young teachers who enter the educational job market are better prepared to manage mixed ability classes. Also, as it was noticed by Kowalczyk-Wałędziak et al. (2019: 17) young teachers share their positive attitude towards inclusion with other teachers, students and their parents, by the same promoting the inclusive approach. Without doubts the amendments introduced with new provisions of law have a positive influence on the standards of tertiary education of future teachers. On the other side, they still lack precision in some aspects, for instance appointing inclusion as the mainstream approach in primary education, recommending methods of teaching that support inclusion, outlining the scope and range of cooperation between mainstream and special education teachers, educators and other specialists.

Apart from regulating the system of education and the place of disabled learners in it, in the said regulations of MEN the Polish legislator indicates specialised institutions and teams of experts in the field, responsible for diagnosing and organising various forms of support services for learners with SLDs, as characterised in section 7.3 below.

### **7.3 Diagnosing specific learning disabilities in Poland**

On the Polish ground, efforts aiming at the betterment of learners with disabilities date back to 1975 in which year the MEN issued a leaflet noticing that children with developmental disturbances should be qualified to appropriate forms of remedial teaching (Smythe et al. 2004: 193-194). Children retarded in their educational development and demonstrating serious learning difficulties were directed by school authorities to special education or to therapies run by psychological-educational clinics. In the 1960's and 1970's first remedial therapies and methods of work with learners with SLDs were

initially developed and popularised in the country by scientists such as Spionek, Bogdanowicz, Magnuska, Danilewicz and Koźmińska, who were employed with psychological clinics and who developed studies on lateralization in children, developmental psychology and pathology of children and adolescents. Specialists in the field of SLDs worked independently and developed several ways of diagnosing and helping learners with educational difficulties. The year 1993 brought a significant change in diagnosing and treating children with SLDs in Poland as parents of children with SLDs became formally entitled to apply to the psychological-educational clinics for their children to be diagnosed and treated on the basis of the MEN regulation from 1993, No. 15 on the principles of providing pupils with psychological and pedagogical assistance (MEN 1993, Journal of Laws from 1993 No. 6, item 19) (see section 7.2). Due to popularisation of the problem of SLDs on the educational ground and pursuant to international and international acts introducing integrative education to public schools in the 1990's, children with SLDs in Poland have no longer been directed to special education schools and began to be educated in integrated units, where the burden of educating the disabled learners is shifted mostly to teachers. Remedial help for children with learning difficulties has been maintained and at present is conducted by counselling centres where teams of specialists in psychology and pedagogy perform diagnoses to learners with SLDs, serve support to parents, organise remedial teaching in corrective-compensatory small groups of learners and also conduct individual therapies (Smythe et al. 2004: 193).

According to the information published in the catalogue of diagnostic methods by the Institute of Educational Research (Krasowicz-Kupis et al. 2015: 25), the diagnostic procedure may be initiated either by parents of the child facing developmental or educational difficulties, or by the teacher who notices some educational problems. It addresses the level of a child's general development, its psycho-motor abilities, readiness for school education in case of children aged below six, as well as checks for symptoms of dyslexia and helps to decide on a form of remedy (M. Bogdanowicz 2003:12). All children who complete the pre-school level of education are certified for their readiness to start education at the primary level. M. Bogdanowicz (2003: 12) calls it the first among three steps in diagnosing SLDs. The document is of importance for primary school teachers who observe and assess children's further general development of language skills within their first three years of primary school education. The observation includes children's abilities to:

- recognise letters correctly;
- read aloud and silently with appropriate technique and in expected pace first by syllables and then by words with their synthesis;
- pronounce letter and words correctly in Polish language.

Teachers also concentrate on types of errors students make in reading and writing, analyse students' writing skills in form of note taking and reproducing content from memory; as well as check their listening comprehension expressed in writing (Szkolak-Stępień 2018: 227). For learners who demonstrate significant, in comparison to their peers, problems with any of the practised skills within the first three years of school education, the teacher elaborates a written opinion including educational concerns which is then filed by the child's parents or the teacher at the counselling centre. This initiates the third diagnostic step of SLDs' diagnosis.

Krasowicz-Kupis et al. (2015: 33) and Szkolak-Stępień (2018: 224) inform that the third step diagnosis performed by the team of specialists at the counselling centres includes five stages and is based on the diagnostic model suggested by Ziemiński (1973: 68). This sophisticated diagnosis aims at:

- a typological analysis that aims at identification and classification of the problem on the basis of specialised literature;
- a genetic analysis that allows on establishing reasons why the disorder occurs;
- a purposeful analysis that helps to decide on influence that the existing matter of facts has on the disorder in general;
- a phase analysis that establishes a present phase of the disorder;
- a prognostic analysis that projects possible direction in which the disorder may develop and indicates remedial steps.

Apart from the above, Krasowicz-Kupis et al. (2015: 33) adds to the list monitoring of progress and assessing the effects of intervention. The presented model of the specialised diagnosis is performed accordingly to the four level procedure. Firstly, an analysis of the available documentation is performed by the pedagogue and psychologist at the counselling centre. It includes an analysis of the written opinion of teacher, an application to the counselling centre filed by parents, and an analysis of child's handwriting and text organisation in notebooks, what helps spot symptomatic mistakes and assess the advancement of graphic representation of letters (Czabaj 2008: 17). Secondly, interviews with parents are conducted in order to know the child's history of psycho-motor development and the family situation. Thirdly, the psychological research



is performed to assess the child's level of intellectual development and establish the developmental reasons of learning disfunction (Szkolak-Stępień 2018: 226-227). The fourth and the last part of the diagnostic procedure is the pedagogical research which enables to assess the level of educational advancement of the child with SLDs and the range of educational process that may be affected by the discovered learning disorder. This part of the specialised diagnosis is a continuation of the observations performed initially by the school teacher (Szkolak-Stępień 2018: 226-227). At the end of the diagnostic procedure a written opinion is issued by the counselling centre on the basis of which educational requirements and methods of teaching need to be adjusted to the learner's abilities. The opinion also includes the child's achievements and strengths which are an indication for parents and teachers as to the choice of educational methods, forms of work and other means of support for the child's well-balanced development (Szkolak-Stępień 2018: 228). The child can also be directed to further specialised intervention in form of remedy and compensation courses which help the learner develop the best strategies of learning (Krasowicz-Kupis et al. 2015: 34). In justified cases, a medical diagnosis can supplement the diagnostic procedure in form of ophthalmological, laryngological, neurological or psychiatric consultations (M. Bogdanowicz 2003: 18). The child with confirmed SLDs who starts or continues its education at the mainstream unit has a card of individual educational needs and a support action plan elaborated by the school team of teachers on the basis of the delivered specialist opinion (Skibska 2012: 164).

It is undoubtful that the described diagnostic procedure on the Polish ground is thorough and prolonged in years as it starts before the child's sixth year of life and finishes with the final decision on intervention issued when the child is around ten. Within this long process, a very important role is ascribed to primary school teachers, who may first notice the child's learning difficulties and advice parents to take further intervention steps. Teachers' education and competence with reference to SLDs on Polish ground is given more attention in subchapter 7.4 below.

#### **7.4 Educational institutions and support services in Poland**

Polish system of education has been subjected to several reforms, with the last one introduced with an act on education law of 14 December 2016 issued by the MEN. The

reform reinstated the single structure education from before 1991, covering two education levels of primary school and lower secondary school, according to International Standard Classification of Education, under the primary education level which now lasts for eight years. After completing the primary level of education youths can choose among three types of secondary education schools: four-year-high, five-year-technical or two or three-year-vocational schools (Eurydice 2019: 24). Although the primary education lasts in Poland for eight years, compulsory schooling starts with the last year of pre-schooling education when children are six years old and is obligatory for all learners, including those with SLDs. It is important, as children’s early physical, cognitive, emotional and social development is observed, on the basis of which the certificate for school readiness is issued for each young learner (Eurydice 2019: 11). It is also the time when first symptoms of SLDs can occur and children can be diagnosed as endangered with SLDs. The primary level of education is divided into two stages of: early education that encompasses the first three years of schooling (students aged 7-9), and subject education (students aged 10-14). At the end of each stage students are requested to take a competence test, through which learners demonstrate their cognitive skills. The eight class competence test is of great value as its positive result enables learners an access to secondary level of education. For greater clarity, the details of the education levels in the Polish system of education were gathered in table 14 below.

Table 14: System of education in Poland after Eurydice (<https://eurydice.org.pl/system-edukacji-w-polsce>)

Education	School/ level	Age	Years
Kindergarten	Preschool (obligatory for six-year-olds)	3-5/6	3/4
Primary	Primary	6/7-14	8
Secondary	Secondary general (lyceum)	15-18	4
	Secondary technical	15-19	5
Vocational	Basic Vocational	15-16	2
Tertiary	Bachelor		3
	Master		2
	Doctorate		4

With reference to recent changes in the approaches from integrative to inclusive education, Mudło-Głagolska and Lewandowska (2018: 202) explain that schools with integrated units or integrating schools seem to be a better educational solution than special schools, as integration allows on common education of all learners regardless of their disabilities. Unfortunately, as Mudło-Głagolska and Lewandowska further notice, the authorities and teaching staff wrongly assumed that through pure presence in the

classroom together with other students, disordered learners would eventually adjust to the general system. Over a decade after the introduction of integrative education to Poland, weaknesses of this system were unveiled. Since that time the national system of education has been expected to take a new direction towards inclusive education. Some Polish researchers (Chrzanowska 2014: 112, Jardzioch 2017: 201) agree that full inclusion is the right educational direction which may eliminate the artificial distinction between main stream and special pedagogy, generated by pedagogical psychologism and the selection rule.

Beginning with the year 2017, the Ministry of Education in Poland introduced an additional form of education outside the school unit, commonly known as home education that is conducted by parents (MEN 2016, Journal of Laws of 2017, item 59, art. 37). This form of education is possible under a written permission of the principal of the education unit issued on a parental requests with an attached opinion of the psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, parental declaration assuring educational home conditions for implementation of the core curriculum and an obligation to prepare children for annual classification exams. Children educated from home have an access to all didactic materials available in school. They are also entitled to consultations with teachers and school pedagogues, as well as to any additional remedial or compensatory courses, and aptitude-building activities.

The above mentioned special courses, additional forms of remedies and help for children with SLDs and their close relatives are organised and conducted by various governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations. Pursuant to the resolution of the MEN of 11 August 2017 on public education and educational institutions, there are several governmental units spread in the country that serve specialised assistance in special education needs (MEN 2017, Journal of Laws from 2017, item 1606). Apart from diagnosing learners with SLDs and establishing their SENs, specialists from such institutions offer support to the general and special education teachers and tutors in recognising learners' SLDs and identifying their individual developmental needs and psycho-motor abilities, they also help in planning and implementing educational and professional plans, as well as indicate strengths and potential talents of the diagnosed learners (Czarnocka 2018: 39).

The first group of governmental institutions that serve to the general public are: community culture centres, sports centres, Jordan parks, youth cultural clubs, outer specialist units and libraries (MEN 2017c, Journal of laws of 2017, item 1606, art. 4-5).

They organise educational, caring, prophylactic and pro-health, cultural, sports and recreational activities for adults and children of all age.

Another group of governmental support institutions constitute youth educational centres and youth socio-therapeutic centres, located by law in each county of the country. The former are dedicated to socially maladjusted children with mild intellectual disabilities, requiring the use of special pedagogical methods, rehabilitation and revalidation (MEN 2017c, Journal of laws of 2017, item 1606, articles 13-14). The latter, youth socio-therapeutic centres, gather children with developmental disorders and learning difficulties that are at risk of social maladjustment and require individualised organisation of learning, alternative selection of teaching methods and learning strategies, as well as psychological and pedagogical assistance. Via activities organised by youth socio-therapeutic centres children with SLDs are supported in developing their strengths and interests according to their psycho-motor abilities. They also get prepared for independent functioning in society in their adult life (MEN 2017c, Journal of laws of 2017, item 1606, articles 17-19).

Children and youths with disabilities such as deafness, visually impairment, dysphasia, mild to severe intellectual disability, spectrum of autism or multiple disorders are supported by special school and education centres located and managed by local commune authorities. Psychologists and pedagogues employed in these centres run revalidation classes, provide psychological and pedagogical help, recognise children's individual and special needs, help to develop their competences and support them in gaining life and social skills (MEN 2017c, Journal of laws of 2017, item 1606, art. 37). Special school and education centres also cooperate with mainstream schools in diagnosing disabilities and learning difficulties, developing individual educational and therapeutic programs, organising revalidation or socio-therapeutic courses, as well as try to solve didactic and educational problems of learners with disabilities in cooperation with school principals and teachers (MEN 2017c, Journal of laws of 2017, item 1606, art.48-49).

Apart from the support centres, Polish Ministry of Education also manages centralised organisations and foundations which share specialist knowledge and support educational institutions all over the country. For instance, established in 1993, the Foundation for Development of the Education System (FRSE) manages EU educational programs such as Erasmus, projects, conferences, symposia and other initiatives which enable educators, school managers, teachers and students to enlarge their knowledge and

acquire new skills in teaching and learning and share their experiences. Education Development Centre (ORE) is another central institution founded in 2010 by MEN which runs activities aiming at information and popularisation of novel educational solutions. In its organisational structure ORE has a separate department of special educational needs that supports local service teacher training centres, psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, pedagogical libraries in implementation of the national education policy and improvement of professional skills at work with children with SEN. What is more, the ORE develops informational and methodological materials and prepares programs for special and inclusive education ([www.ore.edu.pl](http://www.ore.edu.pl) 2019).

With reference to non-governmental organisations of support in the field of SLDs, Polish Dyslexia Association (PTD), requires attention. Acting within the European network of dyslexia organisations it gathers parents of children experiencing reading and writing difficulties, as well as professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists and special education teachers. According to its foundation act of 7 May 1991, it popularises knowledge about SLDs, organises specialist courses, conferences, seminars, trainings for children with SLDs and teachers and social actions, for instance the European dyslexia awareness week; educational programs such as the Good Start method in kindergartens, the school friendly to dyslectic students and actions that promote good reading and orthographic practices. PTD runs a publishing activity, issues recommendations and therapeutic aids, as well as provides diagnostic and therapeutic support to children and adolescents with SLDs. Finally, it creates foundations and other forms of supporting initiatives, and examines and issues opinions in matters related to teaching learners with SLDs (PTD 2016, articles 7-8).

Summing up, the analysis of the documents and specialist literature indicates that at present Polish system of education has a well-developed net of support institutions and organisations which are at the service of all participants of the education process. It seems that their functioning since the 1990s, when it was subjected to some criticism, has improved noticeably (see section 7.3). Due to their activities, the issues of learning difficulties and the idea of integrative and inclusive teaching is said to have gained popularity and social understanding. In order to check the factual state of functioning of counselling centres as well as their cooperation with schools will be subjected to further analysis conducted in the supplementary research of the study (see Part III).

Well-functioning system of education together with the support network are still not sufficient for implementing fully inclusive education in the mainstream schools. More

recently attention is drawn to the crucial factor of this process, that is the teacher, who, together with his SEN learners, is in the centre of the educational situation.

### **7.5 Education of (language) teachers in Poland**

At the beginning of the twentieth century a Polish historian Juliusz Kleiner (Kleiner 1918 in Araszkiewicz 1967: 165) wrote that “a poor curriculum, a poor textbook and a good teacher are a better combination than a good curriculum, a good textbook and a bad teacher.” Teachers have always been considered the most important links in the system of education among curricula, learners and the didactic methods. Their role is underlined by the contemporaries, as well. Kulka (2008: 23) notices that successive reforms of Polish system of education proved that no change in this system is possible unless teachers accept it. Successfulness of inclusive education in the country also seems to be subjected to this rule. As teaching profession is regarded to be a key factor in implementing the national system of education, the educational authorities and parents have high expectations and put majority of educational responsibility on teachers. With the view to inclusive education universities and higher education schools in Poland improve their programs by including subjects from the field of psychology, special pedagogy and didactics in extended number of hours. The recent changes have been imposed by the Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education with the resolution on standards of education of teaching profession (MHE 2019, Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1450). Due to extended hours of apprenticeships in schools, teacher trainees have a chance to thoroughly develop their professional knowledge and teaching skills, what may also predispose them better for work with learners with SLDs. It needs to be remembered, however, that alumni of pedagogical and philological faculties whose age is lower than thirty and who are educated on the basis of new programs, stand only for about fourteen per cent of teacher population in the country (Kautz 2011: 193). Lack of balance between earlier generation teachers and current graduates may hinder the development and implementation of inclusive education in public schools. The situation is difficult also due to the fact that the profession of teaching is underpaid in the country, what often forces young teachers to leave their jobs and is also deeply demotivational for those how stay on the educational market (Stężycka and Etherington 2020: 18-19). Apart from very low salaries, there are other factors discouraging teachers which include excessive

workload, insufficient recognition of their achievements and poor prospects for professional development (Dziurzyński 2020: 121).

In the present section, three aspects of early education teachers of English language are considered with reference to inclusion. In table 15 the key factors of teachers' professional qualifications are outlined and analysed in the subsequent sections.

Table 15: Education, competence and (self) development of Polish teachers

Teacher's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bachelor or master studies of pedagogy with specialty in early pedagogy and English language;</li> <li>- Certification in pedagogy required from foreign philology students;</li> <li>- All college and university teacher training programmes must include modules on learning disorders and SEN.</li> </ul>
Teacher's roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To meet students' needs.</li> <li>- To learn about learners' abilities and limitations.</li> <li>- To individualise the education process and establish the zone of learner's proximal development.</li> <li>- To take responsibility for learners' education.</li> <li>- To cooperate with specialists from counselling centres, school psychologist and pedagogue.</li> <li>- To develop a positive social attitude.</li> </ul>
Teacher's competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unrestricted autonomy in course planning, choice of teaching methods and used materials.</li> <li>- Teacher training courses offered both free of charge and chargeable.</li> <li>- Poor remuneration for work with inclusive groups of students.</li> <li>- Expressing a rather negative opinion about inclusion and demonstrating stereotypical thinking.</li> <li>- Believing that learners with SLDs require a separate approach, thus separating them from others.</li> <li>- Lacking confidence in educating individuals with SLDs in inclusive groups.</li> </ul>

Polish system of higher education has been subjected to some amendments recently, the most important of which, while considering education of learners with SLDs, refers to an obligatory introduction of themes covering learning disorders and SEN into tertiary programmes of education dedicated to teaching profession. These changes, however, still are not the warrants of the implementation of the inclusive approach to Polish schools. Some problems which demand urgent changes refer inter alia to low social status of teaching profession, lack of financial assets for professional training of in-service teachers and low earnings. High expectations and often exceeded duties imposed on teachers are not compensated by appropriate remuneration, what in turn has an impact on low perception of the social status of this profession. As a result, being underpaid,

many young teachers abandon the teaching profession, and those who are experienced but lack competence in teaching disabled learners feel sceptical towards new educational solutions and unwilling to self-educate (Kautz 2011: 200, Chrzanowska 2014: 113).

In order to understand the situation of Polish language teachers, their path of higher education, roles in inclusion and professional competences for work with learners with SLDs are presented below.

### **7.5.1 Formal requirements**

Teacher education in the country is performed exclusively within the frame of higher education. Access to the tertiary education is open to graduates on the basis of a high secondary school matriculation exam (Smoczyńska 2014: 62). Until recently, teacher trainees could choose the following qualification paths: a higher professional level in the field of pedagogy lasting for three years and ending with the Bachelor of Art degree (first-cycle programs), supplementary master degree level in pedagogy of two years (second-cycle programs), higher master degree level in pedagogy lasting for five years (long-cycle programs), all of them belonging to a concurrent model of teacher training. Another option assumes higher master degree without pedagogical training but with obtaining additionally pedagogical qualifications. It is known as a consecutive model of teacher training that lasts dependently on the degree three or five years (Eurydice 2021a: 54). What is important, academics with completed bachelor degree who wish to start supplementary master degree level of tertiary education can continue the education only within the same scientific field (Wieczorek 2021: 11). Since October 2019, higher education institutions can recruit candidates for kindergarten and primary first grade teacher training programs only within the field of pre-school and early school pedagogy as part of long-cycle programs (Eurydice 2021a: 3).

Although higher education institutions have their autonomy and develop curricula independently, they have to follow the formal requirements set in the latest resolution of Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MHE) of 25 July 2019 on standards of education for teaching profession, programs of higher education prepare trainees substantively and include tutoring in psychology, pedagogy and didactics in selected subject (MHE 2019, Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1450, sec. 2, art. 2.4). With reference



to the effects of university education of teacher trainees and teaching learners with SLDs, it is assumed that alumni are prepared to teach a school subject connected with their course of study, understand the assumptions of inclusive schooling, know how to diversify teaching methods accordingly to learners' SENs, identify learning difficulties, have good interpersonal communication skills, know how to select, create and adjust didactic materials to learners' individual needs. They have to be prepared to develop and implement individual teaching programs for disabled learners in accordance to their diversified special needs and know how to work with learners with SLDs or how to detect and react to specific learning difficulties (MHE 2019, Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1450, sec. 3, art. 1.1).

A very important part of teacher trainees' education is apprenticeship the aim of which is to extend the teaching skills of future teachers, gain professional experience and confront didactic knowledge with pedagogical reality. Apprenticeship is organised in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, depending on the specialisation field as only master degree level students perform apprenticeship in secondary schools. (MHE, Journal of Laws 2019, item 1450, sec. 2, articles 3.4, 4.2).

Apart from compulsory education of teacher trainees, alumni of both bachelor and master degrees can extend their professional knowledge and skills at non-degree post-graduate studies offered by universities, research institutions, the Polish Academy of Science and higher schools of vocational education, including higher teacher education schools (Smoczyńska 2014: 61, 70). Post-graduate studies cannot last shorter than three semesters (Eurydice 2021a: 10). Many of post-graduate studies are dedicated to problems of learning difficulties and SLDs and are dedicated to persons who are qualified teachers of a subject without competence in special pedagogy or to those with qualifications in special education, who wish to develop further their knowledge of resocialisation, logopaedics, therapeutic pedagogy, early supportive therapy of child's development (Eurydice 2021a: 10).

With reference to English language teaching qualifications, they can be obtained by completion of the following levels:

- bachelor or master degree levels of education at faculties of English philology or applied linguistics supplemented with pedagogical qualifications;
- bachelor or master degree levels at any faculty supplemented with a certificate of English language knowledge of advanced or proficient grade or a state teacher exam certificate of English language knowledge;

- bachelor degree level of education at a foreign language college;
- master degree level of education in any country where English is the official language (Eurydice 2021a: 14).

Additionally, qualifications to teach English are awarded to persons who completed bachelor or master degree level of education at a faculty of pedagogy where English language teacher training in the pre-school and primary early education is a part of or an additional specialisation to the program (Eurydice 2021a: 15).

Graduates with bachelor or master diploma become qualified teachers who begin to build up their professional careers by formally established four grades of professional promotion system (Smoczyńska 2014: 85). At the beginning they are employed as trainee teachers for a probation period of one school year on the basis of an employment contract, and in the following years they are promoted to contract teachers, appointed teachers and finally to chartered teachers (Smoczyńska 2014: 86-87). The promotion scheme is based on teachers' documented professional development and achievements presented to and exams taken before a qualifying-board.

Although teacher training education in Poland is organised according to the European standards, some doubts are raised as to the recruitment procedure. Kautz (2011: 194) notices that selection of candidates for teacher trainees is often spontaneous, random and based on the negative selection rule. In the opinion of the specialist positive results of the matriculation exam is not enough, as measuring psychological aptitude and competence should constitute an important part of the recruitment procedure.

Other problems address teachers' multitasking, growing responsibilities and duties. Forced by constantly developing innovations, rapid pace of technological development and high expectations of school supervisors, parents and also students, teachers more and more often face professional burnout and even depression (Pawelec 2017: 100-101). Today's teachers are no longer one subject specialists. Kulka (2008 23-24) stresses that the greatest challenge of nowadays education in Poland is in fact education of future teachers who would be prepared to satisfy the needs of modern fast developing world and who would be able to prepare students for diversification of interests, professional reorientation, self-development, who would teach how to be flexible, creative, autonomous, tolerant and cooperative. High demands and complex competences should make the teaching profession admired socially and perceived equal to the professions of pharmaceuticals, architects and business managers as it is in Western European countries (Kulka 2008: 24). However, it stays in contrast to the financial and

social perception of the teaching profession in Poland, where teachers are often overloaded with duties, employed with more than two educational institutions in order to maintain a good standard of living, teaching more than one subject, what cannot stay without influence on teachers' quality of work and professional engagement. What is more, teachers' role in implementing and developing inclusive education is important and needs closer attention.

### **7.5.2 Teacher's competence in inclusive education in Poland**

Inclusive education demands accurate organisation of the teaching process, appropriately adjusted teaching and learning strategies and cooperation of teachers, learners and their parents, support services and school managerial authorities. The three key values of inclusive teachers, established by EADSNE (2012: 11), which include: appreciation of learners diversity, team work and cooperation with others, and constant professional development, are the factors which outline the inclusive role of the language teacher also in Poland.

With reference to the first value, K. Bogdanowicz (2011: 204) explains that teachers' initial duty while meeting their students with SLDs is to learn about their abilities and limits. Understanding this issue is necessary for accurate adjustment of the teaching approach and proper selection of didactic materials. It needs to be remembered that teachers in Polish schools have a right to develop their own syllabi for particular groups of students or may follow these which are offered by text book publishers (Eurydice 2023b). The teacher who is not a special education expert obviously cannot be responsible for diagnosing, however as a good observer he can notice the learners strengths and weaknesses, educational preferences and dislikes. Therefore, it can be stated that the teacher is capable to individualise the educational process, looking for remedial and compensatory learning strategies. Skibska (2012: 172) also confirms that the main role of nowadays inclusive teachers is to first spot the present state of the child's mental development. This educational implication was developed by Vygotsky at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to his sociocultural theory the teacher is responsible for establishing the learner's zone of proximal development, understood as the difference between the learner's actual level of development and his potential development determined through problem solving (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). Identifying the initial

educational moment consisting of the basic knowledge and skills that the child is able to manage enables teachers to take an individual approach towards each student. Establishing the zone of proximal development is also substantial in measuring learners' educational effects. Most importantly from the perspective of inclusive education, it allows children to approach educational tasks in accordance to their abilities and predispositions, and defends them against failures and continuous disappointment.

Further, Polish teachers are also expected to take responsibility for including all learners endangered by exclusion into the main system of education, engaging them into the didactic process and taking responsibility for their education. For these reasons, teachers need to organise individual and group educational tasks engaging disabled learners on equal basis with others, instead of releasing them from these activities which they find difficult to cope with. To act so, Zawadzka-Bartnik (2010: 90) believes that teachers need to choose a teaching approach that is comprehensible for all learners. Apart from the right choice of the educational approach, foreign language teachers are also responsible for forming positive social attitude of others towards learners with SENs by applying equal rights and duties for class members, breaking stereotypes, as well as creating learning conditions favourable for learners' cooperation and common understanding. With reference to learning conditions, K. Bogdanowicz (2011: 207) underlines the importance of learners' autonomy, explaining that students should be given a chance to cooperate in groups, assign roles, share duties and take responsibilities for their work in groups. Such acting helps learners with SLDs overcome their inhibitions, build self-motivation and improve their social bonds with others.

Cooperation with other educators, psychologists, school pedagogues and parents of disabled learners constitutes the second key value of the inclusive teacher. In cooperation with his students, English language teachers should be demanding and set up class governing rules at the beginning of a course (K. Bogdanowicz 2011: 197). It is even suggested that the best form of initiating cooperation between the teacher and learners is creating and signing a contract on classroom rights and rules which helps both its parties to learn about their needs and expectations. Apart from the cooperation with learners, foreign language teachers also need to contact specialists of counselling centres, seeking advice in matters related to experts' SEN opinions. They cooperate with school pedagogues on solving individual educational problems concerning learners' school difficulties and parents who are the source of information about their children. In order to become successful foreign language teachers of inclusive groups, they have to develop

the third value that addresses their self-education.

In the opinion of Skibska (2012: 162), inclusion is doomed to failure if it is implemented without deeply engaged and competent teachers. Professional competence is gained during studies at universities training teachers for inclusive education and can be supplemented with completion of additional forms of self-education. Many European countries aim at improvement of teacher education and professional development, giving this matter priority in forming successful inclusive education. Also Polish teachers are expected to develop their professional knowledge and skills by participating in various courses, seminars and conferences, as well as by developing and publishing educational projects in cooperation with other school teachers. The undertaken steps of professional self-development are important signposts in reaching consecutive steps of the professional career ladder.

Fulfilling the set roles of inclusive teacher is closely associated with the selection of teaching approach which would meet the needs of inclusive education of young learners with SLDs. With reference to English language teaching at primary units, consistency of the target language teaching approach with early general education approaches is a crucial factor (Sikora-Banasik 2017: 6), and therefore is given attention separately in the further subchapter 3.5.

### **7.5.3 (Self) development of in-service teacher competence in Poland**

Conscious about their responsibilities arising from adoption of inclusive model of education, Polish teachers present rather reluctant attitude towards inclusion. Several factors are responsible for this state of affairs. First of all, teachers themselves believe that SEN learners are different and demand different approach, and so they are convinced they lack special qualifications to work with them. Additionally, their belief about their otherness forces them to treat the disordered students differently in the classroom, what in turn leads directly to learners' social exclusion (Mittler 2000: 130). This attitude also refers to English language teachers, who claim to feel unprepared to educate inclusive groups of students, as this sort of work demands additional pedagogical skills that many of them have not acquired within the course of their professional studies (Plichta 2012: 102). Zawadzka-Bartnik (2010: 72) confirms this fact by noticing that foreign language

teachers usually take an over protective position towards students with SLDs, applying lower standards of evaluation for their work, what in fact acts against learners who are perceived as different by their peers.

Polish mainstream teachers, however, do not lack knowledge about various learning difficulties and SEN. In the opinion of Czyż (2018: 15), Polish teachers are well-prepared to work with learners with SLDs, unfortunately they function in a separating social system and poorly prepared environment for accepting inclusion, what constitutes the second factor influencing teachers' competence in educating learners with SLDs. Czyż further explains that although there are laws and regulations imposing inclusion in Poland, there are no legal acts regulating the inclusive system of education from the organisational or financial perspective. In addition, it is justified that although formally Polish education system aims at inclusion, it is still based on segregation as children with SENs are differentiated between those who can and who cannot participate in inclusion and are directed to special institutions. In the opinion of Chrzanowska (2014: 114), this situation has an influence on teachers' tendency to think stereotypically about persons with SEN, therefore they are rather sceptical about success of the inclusive approach.

A similar opinion is expressed by Siek-Piskozub (2011: 250) who notices that the problem of teachers' readiness to educate learners with SLDs is complex. According to the results of her study, there are foreign language teachers who understand the educational needs of learners with SLDs and are definitely ready to conduct lessons inclusively, as well as those who know the problem but only in theory or are indifferent to it. The researcher exemplifies that teachers have a tendency to involuntarily stigmatise learners with SLDs by making comparisons between them and 'capable' students.

Another problem refers to the concept of cooperative teaching performed mutually by mainstream and special education teachers. This type of lesson conduct is, for example, a standard in Austrian inclusive system of education, however, it is not a rule in Poland. Based on information disclosed by Chrzanowska (2014: 115) in Polish inclusive system of primary education, a common curriculum is implemented with very limited possibility for external intervention. For this reason, lessons are conducted by single teachers in groups without the threshold of learners with disorders per class. In such educative environment, as Chrzanowska further explains, lesson conducts may be chaotic due to the fact that single teachers face managerial problems. Additionally, though with extended knowledge about learning disorders, mainstream teachers often lack practical skills how to manage inclusive classes or have developed ineffective managerial tools

based on their negative experience at work with learners of SEN.

Also, job satisfaction in teaching profession is much lower than in other researched countries. According to a report from 2022 issued by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, remuneration in the educational sector in Poland is among the lowest in Europe (EUC 2022: 21). It is not surprising then, that many young teachers seek employment in other economic sectors. Poor financial satisfaction has an influence on low job satisfaction, what translates directly to their professional low-efficacy (Bartosiewicz et al. 2022: 13). This problem is also related to professional burnout of in-service teachers who find their job prospectless (Kasáčková and Jonek 2023: 74). This view finds confirmation in the results of a study conducted by Karbanowicz (2014: 141) in 2014 on stress and psychological burden of teachers in Poland. As it was established, around 90% of the teachers in the country are endangered by burnout. In such conditions, an introduction of any educational reforms is condemned to failure.

The final issue that influences teachers' competence to work with learners with SLDs refers to methods of teaching applied by teachers. Generally, Polish teachers are free to choose any methods that are recognised in contemporary pedagogy (Eurydice 2019: 84). However, subject teachers, like English language ones, are prone to apply methods that focus on language acquisition and learning rather than on general development of children. Such attitude may bring negative educational effects. Skibska (2012: 173) warns that concentrating on the implementation of curriculum and mastering the knowledge and skills of a particular school subject, means teaching for learning, not for development, what stays far away from the concept of inclusive education. In the study by Siek-Piskozub (2011: 247-248), it was noticed that teachers claimed to understand the need to approach learners with SLDs in accordance to their SEN, as well as stress their equal rights to be educated. At the same time, they reported not applying foreign language teaching techniques which were convenient for their students. For instance, teachers rarely used the associations while focusing on new vocabulary, did not organise tasks which would engage students gross and fine motor skills, as well as paid little attention to the quality of handwriting on whiteboards. Also, with reference to learners' emotional well-being, teachers scarcely praised learners' for their efforts (Siek-Piskozub 2011: 247-248).

English language teachers are exposed to some criticism also with reference to their insufficient professional efforts to enable the growth of linguistic as well as communicative competences of their learners. According to Karpińska-Szaj (2011: 74-

76), teachers fail to apply inclusion friendly strategies of teaching, focusing only on remedial steps based on exemption from certain course requirements or on ‘special treatment’ of learners’ with SLDs while assessing their educational efforts. The issue of applied methods of teaching with reference to English language education is a substantial and decisive issue in educating learners with SLDs inclusively. Noticing the sophisticated nature of this problem, it is subjected to a more thorough analysis in the following subchapter 5.6.

Concluding, Polish teachers undoubtedly constitute the most important pillar of the educational system as their attitudes, beliefs, competence, interpersonal skills, preparation of lesson contents and ability to work with learners with SLDs mark the quality of Polish education. Still, it seems many improvements, formal and personal, that have influence on teachers’ competence in educating learners with SLDs need to be implemented by educational authorities, teachers and Polish society before inclusive education becomes a fact.

## **7.6 Teaching methods applied by English language teachers in Poland**

Generally, Polish primary school teachers of English have freedom of choice in language teaching approaches, though in the core curriculum for early education classes which outlines general guidelines for teachers, they are recommended an eclectic approach that focuses on communication and development of language skills (Poszytek et al. 2005: 35). As foreign language education in Poland starts at the pre-school grade, when children are three years old, young learners are acquainted with the language during short fifteen-minute-gatherings at which they are exposed to the sound of the target language and focus on vocabulary via communicative games and play with the teacher. Siek-Piskozub (2009: 10) draws attention to the importance of using language games, rhymes, songs, tales and stories that involve physical movement, which influence child’s general development in a most effective and favourable manner.

Among various methods of teaching English to young learners, Education Development Centre in Poland enumerates communicative approach, TBL, CLIL, Total Physical Response (TPR) and various techniques of general development applicable in early education that are based on the Good Start Method, as the most desirable ones (Janicka 2014: 27-47; Herbst and Wojciuk 2014: 27-30, 41-42). However, with reference



to pre- and early school learners who are complete beginners in foreign languages, the method most frequently indicated is the Total Physical Response (TPR) (Krzyk 2017: 45). According to the assumptions of this method, educational stress is put mainly on development of passive knowledge. Listening is a dominant skill, and comprehension of the target language is conveyed through actions (Larsen-Freeman 2010: 108). Learning happens through singing, dancing, movement and activities such as painting and manual works by which gross and fine motor skills are perfected. Packed with entertaining forms that release emotional tension, the method is considered to be enjoyable for young pre-school learners (Janicka 2014: 30).

Pursuant to information included in a report on foreign language education national policy issued by MEN in 2005, the most popular among language teachers methods applied in public units are the Direct and the Audio-lingual methods (Poszytek et al. 2005: 35). Krzyk (2017: 45-46) also confirms their popularity and explains that teachers reach for the Direct and Audio-lingual methods most often as both of them allow on exposing students to the sound of the target language and using memorisation for development of vocabulary. The main focus is on listening skill, followed by speaking practiced through imitation and controlled drills (Larsen-Freeman 2000: 24). These methods, however, are dedicated only to foreign language teaching itself, and as such do not correspond with the European Union assumptions of primary education with reference to subject integration. Additionally, foreign language education in Polish educational background is compulsory for all learners, including those with SLDs, and with regard to learners' SEN traditional methods rooted in behavioural psychology and based on conditioning may not be enough for teaching learners of mixed abilities. For these reasons, a more inclusive approach, like CLIL which focuses not only on language skills but also develops learners' curiosity, creativity and imagination, is needed.

Due to teachers' freedom of choice in methods of foreign language teaching in Poland, English language teaching at present varies in primary schools. There are contradictory opinions as to the appropriateness of teaching approaches used by Polish teachers of English. Some of them are positive and promising, as for instance Krzyk (2017: 46), Herbst and Wojciuk (2014: 41-47) are of the opinion that early education students are taught English in Poland through discovery techniques, storytelling approach, educational games and songs, so that the educational process is pleasurable for them and structured accordingly to inclusive forms of teaching applicable by general education teachers. Others, like Poszytek et al. (2005: 36), report that innovative methods,

as well as simulation techniques, are rarely used by language teachers who approach learners traditionally, focusing mainly on the transmission of knowledge and learning outcomes rather than on developing learners' communication competency and autonomous strategies of learning. The latter opinion is also supported by the results of a study conducted by Czura, Papaja and Urbaniak on curricular models of bilingual education in Poland. The authors of the study distinguish four models of subject integrated education in Polish schools among which three are teacher-centred and one is based on variable instructional approaches (Czura et al. 2009: 175-176). Teacher instruction-based approaches are also confirmed in a report on effectiveness of English language education in Polish primary schools from 2015, developed by the Institute for Educational Research (IBE). It is said that primary school teachers of English lack commitment to practical aspects of knowledge and involve students in the cognitive process insufficiently as they use explanatory rather than exploratory methods of teaching (Muszyński et al. 2015: 46). Siek-Piskozub (2009: 14) enumerates factors that demotivate young learners in Polish primary schools. These are lack of movement, slow pace of lesson conduct, monotony of exercises, boring didactic materials, excessiveness of silent individual work and lack of consistency in the covered didactic material.

Contradictory views and even critical opinions of specialists prove that Polish system of education is in need for transformation towards inclusion. The educational situation in other EU countries evolves towards inclusion by various measures, including the implementation of recommended approaches such as CLIL and TBL. In Polish background, recent studies in teachers' perceptions of CLIL reveal that this approach can at all be noticed in bilingual classes of Polish secondary schools whereas TBL is occasionally applied on primary level of education (Czura and Anklewicz 2018: 48). In the opinion of Czura et al. (2009: 177), the problem addresses, first of all, the fact that objectives of these two approaches are not implemented into the national curriculum. Secondly, language teachers are believed to possess insufficient knowledge about these approaches as well as majority of them lack professional practice in applying CLIL and TBL in educational practice. What is more, many of them demonstrate their conservative opinions supporting the split between the mainstream and special education (Mudło-Głagolska and Lewandowska 2018: 205). Thirdly, teaching resources for CLIL are not standardised, what in the opinion of school authorities and subject teachers raises controversy. More about the problem with sufficiency of didactic materials is given attention in section 7.7 below.

## **7.7 Sufficiency of language teaching materials in Polish schools**

As it has been explained above, Polish teachers are not obliged to follow any specific approach in foreign language teaching nowadays. For this reason, they can choose from the plenty of teaching resources available on the market (Eurydice 2023b). Their autonomy in selecting textbooks is only subjected to one basic criteria which refers to the compliance of textbooks with the core curriculum. The Ministry of Education runs a list of textbooks for all subjects and levels of education that received its approval for use (Herbst and Wojciuk 2014: 30). Additionally, primary school learners are provided with free textbooks, which rule also refers to English language courses. The books, accompanied with additional teaching materials, were developed by a team of specialists in early pedagogy, music and also foreign languages. They are launched by the a well-recognised Polish editor, namely the School and Pedagogical Publications (WSiP), in accordance to an integrated educational syllabus for primary early education learners. The syllabus is exceptional, as in its basic assumptions it invokes the benefits of the humanistic approach. Its main goals refer to the wholistic education of a child where special attention is given to the individualised process of children's development. It also stresses the importance of personal and emotional values of the early education for the young, has an integrated and interdisciplinary nature and respects learners' individual differences (Brzózka et al. 2014: 4-5). The authors of the syllabus aim at a change of the educational model in the country from the traditional PPP towards the inclusive model. The authors advocate the flexibility of the content suggested in the composed teaching materials, considering their high adaptability to individual needs of the learners and preferences of the teacher (Brzózka et al. 2024: 6). The offered solutions assume the well-balanced development of young children which in this case is focused on their gross and fine motor skills, musicality, creativity and emotional well-being.

Regardless of a selected textbook, foreign language teachers are also advised to apply additional free teaching materials available from textbook publishing companies or developed independently by teachers, which fact was mentioned in the report of the Educational Research Institute in 2015 (Muszyński et al 2015: 28). Additionally, established by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2019, the Integrated Education Platform serves teachers as a valuable source of supplementary didactic materials for all

levels of schooling. The Platform was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic which forced the central authorities and in consequence also schools to introduce some significant IT improvements into the process of education (Panskyi et al. 2021: 5024). The resources can be accessed by various electronic means, they are free of charge and printable (Eurydice 2023b). The Platform turned to be especially useful in the period of COVID-19 pandemic enabling teachers to conduct online lessons with the use of interactive tasks, diverse activities and practising communication. What is more, resources of the Integrated Platform are created in accordance to the standards of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and as such are adjusted to SEN of learners with various disabilities.

The use of diversity of didactic resources is of great importance for better understanding of a target language and for motivating learners to become active participants of the educational process. As it is stressed by Siek-Piskożub (2009: 14), the role of didactic materials is to help stimulate the outer reality. It means that application of teaching resources which are part of our world, or which map life outside the classroom, helps to engage learners actively into a language lesson and prepares them for communication in the target language in real life situations. For this reason, Siek-Piskożub also believes that posters, photographs, flash cards, toys, games, books, authentic and non-authentic materials, written in the target language and adjusted to learners' level of proficiency, as well as everyday objects can suit well for development of children's imagination and language competence. In 2022, under the regulation of the Minister of Education and Science, public schools were once granted the targeted subsidy for textbooks, supplementary books and other educational resources, the amount of which was increased if the materials were additionally required for pupils with disabilities (MEN, Journal of Laws 2022, item 716).

In general, it must be stated that foreign language teachers in Poland have a wide access to a variety of teaching resources. Still, as it is reported by authors of the research on English language education of Polish learners, conducted for the Educational Research Institute in 2013 (Gajewska-Dyszkiewicz et al. 2014: 7), foreign language teachers prefer to base their courses on text books only. According to the research results, problems in using a variety of different materials are excused by lack of adequate or well-functioning electronic tools such as computers, multimedia boards, speakers and also an access to the Internet in every classroom. Due to the fact that Polish schooling is underfinanced, these arguments cannot be ignored. Some researchers (Tomczyk et al. 2022:250), however,

notice that the problem of avoiding the diversification of teaching resources refers directly to teachers' organisational skills. Plenty of didactic materials and freedom of their application may, quite surprisingly, cause some troubles for language teachers. They demand accurate selection with the view to learners' needs, expectations and foreign language competence. Further, didactic materials need to be adjusted to learners' SEN, compliant with the core curriculum, right and accurate in relation to a scope of a planned lesson and with respect to copyrights. However, additional teaching resources are not uniform and as such cannot be subjected to standardisation. Text books, quite contrary, are standardised sources with the content matching the system of testing learners' competence on every level of education. By this manner, the pressure on efficiency of teaching exceeds the actual developmental needs of learners. The results of testing and later formal examinations, performed in fact on every level of education, are decisive in matter of young people's promotion to a higher grade or finally of their choice of educational path.

All the above considered factors may turn teachers towards the use of standardised course books which for decades have been the fundamental teaching materials on the basis of which teachers compose lesson scenarios. Figure 4 presents the most important arguments for and against using both authentic and non-authentic teaching materials by teachers in Poland.

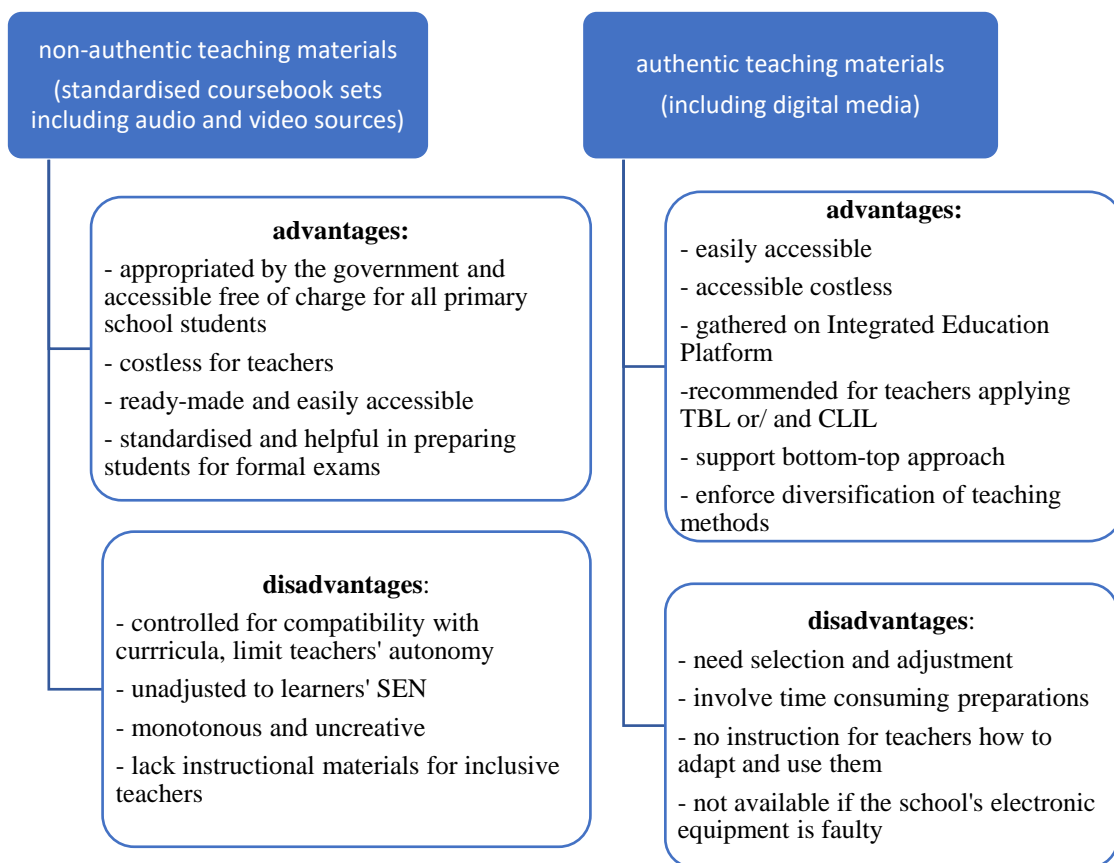


Figure 4: The use of foreign language teaching resources in Poland

As it can be noticed both types of teaching resources have their strong advantages as well as disadvantages. Unfortunately, regardless of the benefits of using authentic materials, applying non-authentic ones is safer and more comfortable from the perspective of Polish teacher. Standardisation of teaching resources warrants their teachability and may in fact discourage teachers to take responsibility for preparing and developing own materials. This sort of acting, in turn, effectively blocks the use of alternative approaches to English language teaching in Polish schools, such as TBL or CLIL which are applied mainly on the basis of resources alternative to textbooks.

## 7.8 Final comments

The analysis of the formal documents and specialist literature shows that Poland is a country with rich scientific history in SLDs. Among the greatest achievements in this field, the primary importance must be given to the determination of children's school readiness, detecting developmental problems at the pre-school level, identifying children

at the risk of dyslexia and popularising the term of developmental dyslexia internationally. Much as the achievements of Polish scientists brought important changes to general knowledge of SLDs and diagnosing the problem, amendments within the Polish system of education, which aimed at transformation of the existing top-bottom approach to firstly integrative and recently inclusive schooling, have been long, sophisticated and only superficially effective. In order to understand the complexity of the problem with implementation of the inclusive approach in Poland, the analysed data were gathered in a comprehensible table 16 below with distinction to the their strengths and weaknesses. The improvements, as well as current issues of educating young learners with SLDs in the country will be further subjected to a comparison of the state of education in Austria and Czechia under the set research questions (RQ).

Table 16: Approaches to English language teaching to learners with SLDs in Poland

Research question number	Reference	Factors influencing teaching of English language to young learners with SLDs in Austria
RQ (1)	Scientific developments in SLDs	<p>1930s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>determination of children's school readiness by Helena Radlińska;</li> <li>organisation of first remedial courses for children with dyslexia by Jan Bychowski and Rena Uzdańska</li> </ul> <p>1960s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of a re-education method for learners with reading and writing disorders by Kazimierz Dąbrowski;</li> <li>establishing the decisive function of psychomotor functions for the reading rate by Halina Spionek;</li> <li>publication of the first rehabilitation programme for dyslexic children by Barbara Zakrzewska and Krystyna Markiewicz</li> </ul> <p>1970</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduction of the reading skill to kindergarten curricula;</li> <li>establishment of the first therapeutic and developmental programme for dyslexic and neurotic children by clinicians: Teresa Danilewicz, Anna Koźmińska and Janina Magnuska</li> </ul> <p>1990s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>foundation of Polish Dyslexia Association, popularisation of a term <i>developmental dyslexia</i> and introducing a term <i>risk of dyslexia</i> by Marta Bogdanowicz;</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of a compensatory-corrective programme suggesting integration of learners with SLDs into the mainstream education by a team of specialists: Grażyna Krasowicz-Kupis, Ewa Kujawa, Maria Kurzyna, Elżbieta Zawadzka-Bartnik</li> </ul>
		2004
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discovering phonological processing as a valid predictor of reading disorder by Grażyna Krasowicz-Kupis</li> </ul>
RQ (2)	Systemic solutions for inclusion	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>three mainstream education paths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- individual education,</li> <li>- general education (with integration units),</li> <li>- special education;</li> </ul> </li> <li>certification of the six-year-olds for school readiness after a 1-year pre-primary education programme;</li> <li>obligatory foreign language education for learners with SLDs since 2004;</li> <li>support of special education teachers in the lesson conduct on the basis of an on-the-spot assistance;</li> <li>integrative groups up to 20 students;</li> <li>3-5 disordered learners per an integrative class;</li> <li>18 teaching hours per week;</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the system defines who can/ cannot be educated in integrative units (segregation!);</li> <li>no legal regulations on organisation and financing of the inclusive system</li> <li>only on-the-spot assistance of special education teachers in the lesson conduct</li> </ul>
RQ (3)	Legal basis for educating learners with SLDs	<p>1972</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opening of first pilot classes for dyslexic learners in the mainstream units of Warsaw, Cracow and Toruń</li> </ul> <p>1991</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accreditation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children (learners with SLDs gain access to public mainstream education)</li> </ul> <p>1997</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ratification of UNCRPD convention;</li> <li>introduction of the integrative approach to Polish schooling;</li> <li>establishing three paths of education</li> </ul> <p>2005</p>



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		MEN regulation of 18.01.2005 on educational conditions: appointing integration as the most required approach
2008		<p>MEN regulation of 23.12.2008 on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• core curriculum, defining early education as integrated;</li> <li>• no division into school subjects in early education</li> </ul>
2010		<p>MEN regulations of 17.11.2010 on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an introduction of the inclusive approach and establishing conditions and methods of assessments of learners with SLDs;</li> <li>• establishment of counselling centres in the country</li> </ul>
2017		<p>MEN regulation of 09.08.2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• obligatory adjustment of educational requirements to learners' SEN based on specialist opinions issued by the counselling centre;</li> <li>• assistance of a special education teacher in lesson conduct;</li> <li>• exemption from foreign language education of learners with deep expression of SLDs;</li> <li>• redirection of learners with difficulties in school functioning to individual path of education (weakness)</li> </ul>
2022		<p>MEN regulation of 01.09.2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing qualifications for teachers;</li> <li>• introduction of support teachers to lesson conduct</li> </ul>

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RQ (4)	Diagnostic procedures of SLDs	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initial performance of diagnoses by clinicians (focus on perceptual-motor functions);</li> <li>• certification of kindergarten leavers for school readiness;</li> <li>• school diagnosis performed by counselling centres and special pedagogical centres, divided into four stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- problem analysis (an ability-discrepancy test)</li> <li>- interviews with parents</li> <li>- IQ literacy attainment discrepancy test</li> <li>- Pedagogical research about learner's abilities and direction for remedial and compensatory courses</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Weakness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents decide about undertaking diagnostic steps</li> </ul>
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RQ (5)	Educational Institutions and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of National Education;</li> <li>• six levels of education (kindergarten, primary, general and technical secondary, vocational, tertiary units);</li> <li>• regional Counselling Centres;</li> <li>• governmental educational institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foundation for the Development of the Education (FRSE)</li> <li>- Education Development Centre</li> <li>- community/ youth culture centres</li> <li>- sport centres</li> <li>- Jordan parks</li> <li>- youth socio-therapeutic centres</li> <li>- education centres</li> </ul> </li> <li>• non-profit organisations that are part of EDA (Polish Dyslexia Association)</li> </ul>
RQ (6)	Teacher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• three-year B.A. studies for teachers of English (qualified to teach grades 4-8 of primary level) or five-year M.A. studies;</li> <li>• compulsory M.A. studies in pedagogy for early education teachers;</li> <li>• obligatory tutoring in psychology, pedagogy and didactics for teacher training programmes;</li> <li>• all teaching programmes include subject-related theory and pedagogical training;</li> <li>• academic units are advised to organise courses on inclusion and SEN, and also to prepare alumni to detect SLDs</li> </ul>
	A. Teacher roles in inclusion	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish a zone of a learner’s proximal development;</li> <li>• learn about learners’ abilities and limits;</li> <li>• meet students’ SEN;</li> <li>• develop an individual approach;</li> <li>• develop positive social attitude;</li> <li>• cooperate with special education teachers;</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no obligatory courses on inclusion and SEN for students of pedagogy and foreign philology;</li> <li>• poor cooperation with specialists from counselling centres and parents;</li> <li>• no possibility to direct a child for the diagnosis</li> </ul>
	B. Teacher (self-development) and competence for	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• availability of post graduate studies in special pedagogy and SEN</li> </ul>

inclusion

Weaknesses:

- no obligatory in-service training on inclusion and SEN;
- costs of in-service training covered mostly by teachers;
- lengthy procedure of career building;
- teachers' conviction that learners with SLDs require a separate approach;
- development of overprotective position towards learners with SLDs;
- teachers lack of self-confidence in educating learners with SLDs;
- reluctant attitude towards inclusion developed by teachers due to their underpayment and overload of duties

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RQ (7) English language teaching methods

Strengths:

- recommended methods of English language teaching to children:
  - communicative approach
  - TPR
  - audiolingual methods
  - direct method;
- trends in foreign language education in Poland:
  - storytelling
  - songs and games
  - discovery techniques;
- recommendation of an eclectic approach by MEN (focus on communication skills);
- autonomy in selecting methods of teaching materials

Weaknesses:

- preference of PPP model;
- lack of learners' commitment to the subject;
- slow pace of lesson conduct;
- monotony of exercises;
- overuse of silent individual work;
- excessive use of mother tongue by the teacher

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RQ (8) The use of didactic resources in English language teaching

Strengths:

- autonomy of teachers in selection of teaching materials;
- availability of non-authentic, ready-made materials and digital tools that foster inclusion;
- obligatory compliance of textbooks with the core curriculum;
- free access to textbooks for students and teachers

Weaknesses:

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- standardization of teaching materials;
  - difficulty in adjusting didactic materials to SEN;
  - limitations of autonomy and creativity of teachers basing the educational process on textbooks
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As it can be noticed, the general characteristics of the national system of education in Poland has been formally prepared to adopt the inclusive approach in education. The regulations of the Ministry of Education are compliant with the directives and guidelines of the European Union authorities. Some significant differences, however, can be spotted within the quality of the introduced modifications as the Polish system of education seems inconsistent. Although Poland declared to introduce inclusion to public schooling in accordance to the European standards of education, some governmental decisions bear the symptoms of exclusion of the disordered learners who manifest self-service difficulties from public stationary education home schooling (see section 7.2).

According to the analysed data, the difficulties in transforming the national system of schooling is a sophisticated problem conditioned by difficulties of the executional nature. Partly, it is a result of financial shortages that Polish schools have been experiencing for years. Lack of professional medical staff at schools, limited access to special education teachers, as well as, poor remuneration of the teaching staff have an impact on the present educational situation of learners with SLDs. What is more, the problems of underpayment and insufficient saturation of the educational market with young teachers possessing practical skills to teach learners with SLDs also seem to negatively influence the quality of teaching services.

With reference to English language education, it can be concluded that many early education teachers still prefer the PPP model of education. They have knowledge about the SLDs and educational difficulties caused by these disorders, however, they unwillingly reach for alternative methods of teaching. Accustomed to remedial steps such as exemption from challenging tasks, lowering the educational requirements, the teachers do not make attempts to change their methods of teaching.

The situation is similarly unsatisfactory with reference to the used teaching materials. Although Polish teachers have full autonomy in selecting and applying them, they rarely reach for alternative educational resources. The preference to apply non-authentic materials, mainly textbooks, is believed to result from the compulsory appliance of standardised teaching materials imposed by the Ministry of Education, on one hand,

and on the requirement to adjust the non-standardised teaching tools to learners' cognitive abilities, age and level of foreign language advancement.

The results of the analysis of the documents and specialist literature give an insight into the historical and legal basis for educating learners with SLDs in the country. They also constitute an outline of problems connected with the educational standards and conditions offered by public schools. In the following chapter 8, the results of the analysed data referring to the educational situation of learners with SLDs in all three countries will be subjected to comparison, giving a view to a potential development of the inclusive education in Poland and marking the areas that require remedy.

## **Chapter 8: Comparative analysis of factors influencing foreign language education of learners with SLDs in Austria, Czechia and Poland**

### **8.0 Introduction**

Having considered the development path of inclusive education in each of the three countries, in the present chapter, the most important indicators determining the success of inclusion in education are subjected to a comparison. Results of the analysis are organised accordingly to the set research questions (section 4.3) and address the following issues in the researched countries:

- the developments of scientific interest in SLDs (RQ 1, RQ 3),
- the systemic solutions adopted for inclusion (RQ2) with attention given to functioning of the educational institutions and support services (RQ 5),
- the applied diagnostic procedures of SLDs (RQ4),
- the roles and (self) development of in-service teacher competences (RQ 6),
- the conventionally applied methods of English language teaching (RQ 7),
- the types of teaching materials used by English language teachers (RQ 8).

The comparison of the research results is expected to highlight the similarities and differences in the development of the inclusive approach in the three countries with their broad distinction into two categories of changes. The first one, marking the amendments in law and in systemic solutions which resulted from the regulations imposed by international and European authorities, and further adopted by the governmental

authorities of each country in form of directives, acts and regulations. The second category of changes addresses the quality of teaching services offered by schools, and more particularly by teachers whose choice of methods and respective teaching materials is decisive for the development of the inclusive approach. Also, teachers' positive attitude towards inclusion as much as their professional devotion are considered to be of equal importance.

The discussion of the research results focused on the similarities and differences in the implementation of the inclusive approach is expected to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of this process in each country. For better visualisation of the problematic areas which require undertaking remedial steps, comparative tables were planned with reference to each respective research question. The discussion of the factors which hinder the harmonious growth of the inclusive approach is believed to outline the path of the necessary remedial steps to be taken in the nearest future.

### **8.1 Comparison of the scientific developments and the legal background for educating learners with SLDs in the researched countries**

In response to the first research question (RQ 1) about the scientific interest in SLDs developed in the historical perspective, the analysis of specialist literature showed that among the researched countries the earliest interest in brain disorders was noticed in Austria of the nineteenth century. Scientists such as Franz Joseph Gall and later Arnold Pick conducted individual studies about brain functions and dysphasic language qualities (Wiederholt 1974: 105). Their independent scientific efforts were further developed by teams of specialists engaged in studies about strategies for intervention dedicated to dyslectic learners and development of modern diagnostic tools.

In Czechia and Poland, the scientific interest in SLDs was subjected to similar transformations, though introduced with a certain delay caused by geo-political circumstances. Based on historical facts, before 1918, Poland had existed as a partitioned land divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria for a period exceeding one hundred years. Similarly, in Czechia the year 1918 marks the founding of the first Czechoslovak Republic as a result of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These political changes had a substantial impact on the development of the scientific thought, and also on the existing systems of education in the said countries. For these reasons, initial studies

about SLDs became feasible not earlier than at the end of World War One. They were conducted by scientists who acted independently in the beginning of the twentieth century. Such personalities as Antonin Hayeroch in Czechia (Šturma 1985: 258), Helena Radlińska, Jan Bychowski and Rena Uzdańska in Poland (Łodej 2016: 30), are known to have performed first scientific descriptions of dyslectic and dysphasic cases, giving the beginning to further studies about potential causes of SLDs in both countries. Their initial achievements were further developed and effected in formulation of first remedial courses for disordered children.

Also after World War Two, Polish scientists showed their determination to intensify studies on pathomechanisms of SLDs, regardless of unfavourable post-war conditions. Their achievements in this field were significant, beginning from the 1960s when the decisive factor of psycho-motor functions for the reading rate was established in the country. In consequence, a re-education method for learners with SLDs was developed what had an influence on publishing of the first rehabilitation programme for disordered children. What is more, in the 1980s, the term *developmental dyslexia* was popularised by Bogdanowicz, a Polish scientist from Gdańsk University, and further adopted internationally. A decade later, another term of children at *a risk of dyslexia* was introduced by the same specialist and added into the cannon of specialised terminology worldwide (see section 7.1). The analysis of the specialist literature showed that regardless of the delay in the development of scientific interests in the country, achievements of Polish scientists in the field of SLDs are significant and find appreciation internationally. For instance, raising social awareness about potential educational failures of children demonstrating first symptoms of dyslexia led to the intensification of early identification of the problems related to this disorder at the preschool level, as well as, added to the popularisation of the early identification procedure in other countries. In 2004, more revelations were added to the field of scientific studies about SLDs by another Polish scientist, Grażyna Krasowicz-Kupis who discovered that phonological processing is a valid predictor of the reading disorder (Łodej 2016:31).

Neurocognitive studies were also developed in Austria, resulting in a formulation of a morpheme-based strategy for intervention that was launched in 2012 (see section 5.1). Additionally to the concept of neurological causes of SLDs, Czech scientists indicated that genetic determinants can also become potential causes of SLDs which lead to deviant literacy and atypical dominance of brain hemispheres (see section 6.1). Based on the analysis of specialist literature, it can be assumed that modern studies in SLDs



have interdisciplinary and international nature. This position has been further progressed through collaborative studies of specialists teamed up internationally from various scientific disciplines. In the effect of their work, a common position has been achieved according to which SLDs have polyetiological causes and numerous pathomechanisms, including phonological deficits (see section 7.1) .

The differences noticed in the development of scientific interests also had some impact on the changes of educational attitude towards individuals with SLDs in the three countries. Although the remedial and compensatory courses conducted by clinics for individuals with SLDs raised the general pedagogical interest in the countries at the turn of the 1960s, certain differences, especially in pace of educational changes, remained. In particular, the analysis of the documents and specialist literature showed that regardless of the shift from special to general integrative education in these three countries, the integrative education was first introduced to Austrian public units. Since 1984, Austrian federal authorities agreed on an implementation of several integration projects which allowed for further development of this pedagogical approach and for gradual adjustments in the existing system of education. In case of Poland and Czechia, the concept of integrative education was also brought to public units, however, with some delay. The amendments in national acts on education, concerning the recognition of three educational paths of the mainstream integrative, individual, and special education, were introduced in Austria after completion of the initial pilot projects in 1993. In Poland, they were validated in 1997, whereas in Czechia not earlier than in 2004. The delay was caused by the differences in existing political systems of the countries, as well as in varied internal organisation of the administrative powers. The results of the analysis show that the decentralised organisation of Austrian administrative system facilitated an introduction of changes in education as they were developed in form of regional educational projects and implemented experimentally into selected federal schools. At that time, the centralised political systems of Poland and also Czechia hindered potential grass-root initiatives in national education. In these two countries, learners with disabilities, regardless of the nature and depth of their problems, were directed to the special education path. In fact, it took a decade when the concept of the integrative education finally entered the mainstream schooling, pursuant to the state approval of the international decisions.

Regardless of the differences in time when the integrative approach was introduced to the national systems of education, its implementation into the mainstream

schooling came uneasy in all three countries, meeting serious difficulties of all financial, social and organisational natures. In response to the third research question (RQ 3) concerning the legal basis for educating learners with SLDs based on the results of the comparative study, it can be judged that the obstacles in introducing changes into the national education piled up due to poor social awareness of the assumptions of integration, and even more, due to a lack of knowledge about specificity of SLDs and SEN by the ruling authorities. These assumptions find confirmation in the report of UNESCO (2008: 9) announced at the International Conference on Education in 2008 where it was concluded that integration required a large number of coordinated measures, including inter alia substantial reforms in national systems of education, appropriate teacher training, as well as modification of teaching methods and materials. Obviously, all these changes required bold political decisions on the central level and undertaking relevant executive measures, as well as financial sourcing. As it was established in the analysis, unequal spendings on integrative education in each of the researched countries stemmed from lack of binding administrative decisions. The financial constrains definitely had the largest negative impact on the pace and quality of the introduced improvements, what was especially underlined in Austrian specialist literature by Paleczek et al. (2015: 25).

In Poland and Czechia poor investments in the new educational solutions were manifested primarily by poor organisation of integration in public schools. In fact, apart from general acts in which the role of integrative approach was defined together with characteristics of learning difficulties, there were virtually no regulations delegating duties and responsibilities to particular parties of the educational process. This, in fact, left school teaching staff without professional managerial tools and support. The analysis of the situation in Poland showed that before the regulation of MEN from 2005 there had been no regulations of this kind issued by the respective minister. The same problem was described in the specialist literature with reference to Czech system of education. It was underlined that mainstream teachers who lacked experience in educating learners with SLDs were left without any practical guidelines or instructions and therefore had to develop their own understanding of the integrative teaching process. Most often, they concentrated on learners' weaknesses which in their opinions required correction rather than on strengths for further development. In such conditions integration in Poland and Czechia was condemned to failure.

A breakthrough in education in all of the researched countries came together with

the announcement of the inclusion as the most desirable approach in 2000 by the European Union central authorities. By ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2009, Austria was the first of the researched countries which declared a change from integration into full inclusion. A similar decision was undertaken by Polish central authorities a year later, whereas Czechia ratified the UN Convention as the last – in 2016. Systemic transformations were projected in forms of the so called National Action Plans (NAP). Their implementation was conducted in cooperation with the EU Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE).

Development of NAPs by each researched EU country motivated the authorities for a more dynamic implementation of changes into the national systems of education. The most important rules imposed by the EU council referred to equal rights of individuals to access mainstream education, adjustment of teaching methods to learners SEN and removal of all obstacles that would stigmatise learners with SLDs. Most importantly, a fight against stereotypes in perception of the disordered individuals in the public space was declared by the European Union member states, including the compared countries. Implementation of the set requirements triggered changes in schools of Austria and Czechia where the reforms of teacher education were conducted in 2016, introducing important amendments in tertiary programmes for teacher trainees and professional trainings for in-service teachers. A relevant reform of teaching profession was ordered in Poland with a delay by the minister of education in 2019.

Although some important changes in education have already been introduced to the national systems of education in all the countries, still more decisive steps are needed, especially in Poland. As it has been noticed, the implementation of educational reforms differ in their pace and quality. Based on the analysis of national documents of each country, it can be noticed that in Austria, the reform of education started in 2012, in Czechia in 2015, whereas in Poland it was officially introduced in 2017 by a resolution of the Minister of Education. Both Austria and Czechia developed *National Teacher Education for Inclusion Projects* assuming a range of improvement steps, for instance team teaching with inclusive groups of students in Austria and cooperation on daily basis between subject teachers and special education teachers in both countries. Furthermore, units of inclusion, diversity and special education were established in these countries as advisory bodies for school staff. Also, obligatory yearly trainings for in-service teachers were ordered to improve inclusive teaching practices. All the undertaken measures have direct influence on the quality of the educational services. Meanwhile in Poland, pursuant

to a regulation of the minister of education of the ninth August 2017, disordered learners were redirected to an individual path of education in case of problems with school functioning, which procedure bears the hallmarks of exclusion rather than inclusion. Moreover, instead of expected adjustments of the system of education to inclusive needs, a general expression of a necessity for adjustment of educational requirements was expressed by the Minister of Education (see section 7.2). In the public opinion, the declared reform of education aimed at the reinforcement of so called Prussian school, cherishing the PPP approach rather than promoting the inclusive trend (Dorczak 2019: 85).

Regardless of the fact that another regulation of 28 February 2019 of the Polish Minister of Education brought some specific improvements in educating learners with SLDs in public units, including the limitation of the number of students in inclusive classes up to 25 and ordering of a cooperation between teachers and counselling centres, the quality of inclusive practices remained rather unchanged. No regional centres for development of inclusive practices were formed, as it took place in both Austria and Czechia, what would definitely enforce changes in teaching practices and promote positive attitude towards inclusion in education. The most significant change that definitely had an important influence on the implementation of inclusion into public schools in Poland was brought by the Minister of Science and Higher Education in 2019. On the basis of a regulation of the said Minister, standards of education for teaching profession were amended. Similarly to the reform of teacher education implemented earlier in Austria and Czechia, finally in Poland the tertiary programmes of education were ordered to be enriched with issues referring to SEN and inclusion. As it is stressed by specialists in the field of education and SLDs in all the researched countries, this step was of great importance, as young teachers enter schools with professional up-to-date knowledge and practical skills that are beneficial for inclusive groups of students. Their professional readiness to work with mixed-ability classes can also positively influence their attitude towards inclusive practices. It can even have a positive impact on social perception of inclusion.

With reference to legal basis for linguistic education of learners with SLDs, the results of the comparative analysis showed that legislators in all the researched countries warrant free access to English language education for individuals with various disorders, including dyslexia and dysphasia. What is more, language learning is an obligatory school subject for all young learners, however in Poland, in certain cases students with SLDs can

be released from this duty on the basis of a specialist opinion issued by a counselling centre. What is interesting, a similar solution was suggested in Czechia by the central authorities, however, it was rejected by specialists in the field of education and the public opinion who considered it as detrimental for learners with SEN and standing in disagreement with the concept of inclusive education (Pokrivčáková 2018: 15).

Due to the developed national action plans (NAP) promoting equal opportunities for learners with disorders and on the basis of ministerial regulations, foreign language teachers in all three countries are ordered to adjust their methods of teaching to individual needs of learners and advised to cooperate with special education teachers throughout the educational process. As the issue of inclusive teaching practices is sophisticated, addressing a person of the teacher, his cooperation with special education teachers and also teaching methods and strategies, each of these aspects is considered in subsequent sections (see sections 8.2, 8.4, 8.5).

Undoubtedly, legislative changes are the basis for implementation and development of inclusion. The pace of their introduction as much as their quality are decisive for the success of inclusion. For their better understanding, all of the discussed legal aspects of educating learners with SLDs in the researched countries are presented in table 17 below.

Table 17: Comparison of legislative changes in the researched countries

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Czechia</b>	<b>Poland</b>
equal access to education for learners with SLDs	1984	1990	1991
form of organisation of the education process for learners with SLDs	- integration projects in selected schools in the country	- integration units in selected mainstream schools	- integration units in selected mainstream schools
adoption of integration as the most required approach in primary education	1993	2004	1997
introduction of compulsory foreign language education to primary schools	2003	2004	2008 (since 2017 exemption from foreign language learning of learners with SLDs in opinionated cases)
ratification of the UNCRPD	2009	2016	2012

by the country			
adoption of inclusion as the most required approach in education	2012 (based on the NAP 2012-2020)	2016 (based on the NAP 2015-2020)	2017 (assumed on expressed necessity for adjustment of educational requirements to learners' SEN)
Introduction of the teacher education reform	2016	2016	2019
Current developments of the inclusive approach	2021 and beyond (based on the NAP 2021-2030): - establishing a supervisory body for monitoring the implementation of the inclusive approach to schools - setting the list of priorities for inclusive teaching strategies	2021 and beyond (based on the NAP 2021-2025): - formation of fourteen regions for inclusion - developing strategies for inclusive teaching	2022 - establishing the National Action Programme for Equal Treatment 2022-2030 (to be implemented)

Answering RQ1 concerning the scientific developments and changes in legal background for educating learners with SLDs in Austria, Czechia and Poland, it can be firstly stated that specialists from all three countries showed their interest in SLDs. Due to their studies, important changes were introduced firstly to the field of psychology and secondly to education in all three countries. Regardless of unfavourable historical conditions, findings of Polish scientists were of significant importance for the perception of SLDs on the international ground. These include inter alia the implementation of the terms 'developmental dyslexia' and 'risk of dyslexia' to the canon of specialist terminology, as well as a discovery of the importance of phonological processing in predicting the reading disorder among young individuals.

Secondly, with reference to the legal basis which enabled an introduction of changes towards inclusion into the systems of education of the researched countries (RQ 3), it can be concluded that due to international and European obligations as well as acceptance of Bologna system of organisation of schooling by all the researched countries, the legal basis for educating learners with SLDs in mainstream units are synonymous with reference to learners' equal rights for education, school starting age and obligatory foreign language education for all individuals. The comparative analysis

revealed some discrepancies in the pace and quality of the planned improvements which lie mainly in adoption of different strategies for implementation of the inclusive approach to schools, distinct understanding of cooperation between schools and counselling centres, as well as subject and special education teachers.

## **8.2 Comparison of systemic solutions in education of learners with SLDs in the researched countries**

Apart from the analysis of legal basis for implementation of the inclusive approach, another factor decisive in its success refers to the systemic solutions applied to the national education (RQ2). According to the analysed documents and specialist literature, there are several similarities in the organisation of schooling in the researched countries which mostly result from adoption of international acts and directives by the EU member states.

One of the systemic solutions that the researched countries have in common is a similar organisation of the education path in public units. It was noticed that in all three cases, it is divided into mainstream, special and individual paths of education. Learners, whose intellectual development remains within the established norms are educated by the mainstream units which most commonly offer integrative education. Only learners with severe disturbances are directed to special education, whereas individual path of schooling is applied, especially in Austrian and Czechia, exclusively for very complex cases of learners with severe disabilities. In Poland, due to amendments in educational law from 2017, the individual path of education has been lately considered as a standard solution to various learning difficulties which hinder learners' ordinary school attendance. Such understanding of this systemic solution is considered by many as a sign of exclusive practices.

A second similar solution is the organisation of pre-schooling and early education stages of education. In all the countries, a pre-schooling stage is obligatory for all learners, what is favourable for early detection of children at risk of SLDs, as well as allows to prepare young children for further development of their knowledge and skills at later stages of school education. Further, primary education starts early, i.e. at the age of six in Austria and Czechia, and in Poland it is obligatory at the age of seven, though, an option of early school admittance for children of six is also available. Moreover, early education

in all of the countries is organised on integrative basis, which means that subject contents are relevantly joined, what gives teachers more autonomy and allows for application of inclusion-friendly strategies. Finally, in all three countries, learners with SLDs may choose single or group integration, where educational requirements are adjusted to their SEN.

Although the analysis of the specialist literature and documents revealed that certain already discussed systemic solutions show similarity, still the existing systems of education are not identical. The differences refer mostly to managerial discrepancies. Before discussing their impact onto the applied systemic solutions, some most significant solutions are presented in table 18 for their better understanding.

Table 18: Differences in organisation of the system of education in the compared countries

<b>Differentiating factor</b>	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Czechia</b>	<b>Poland</b>
type of managerial system	decentralised	decentralised	centralised
length of early education stage	4 years (students aged 6-9)	5 years (students aged 6-10)	3 years (students aged 6/7-8/9)
type of early education curricula for mainstream units	general and SEN	general	general
type of early education lesson conduct	team-teaching	'one teach, one assist' model of teaching	'one teach, one assist' model of teaching
average number of students per class	18	22	20 (integration units) 29 (non-integration units)

As it can be noticed, the Polish system of education is considered to be centralised, quite contrary to the Austrian and the Czech ones. It means that all decisions concerning national education are taken by the minister of education, what also refers to a distribution of budgetary measures. The administrative responsibilities, however, are shifted locally, what in case of centralised system often causes constraints and political tensions. Regardless of its drawbacks, centralisation in managing educational goals can bring positive educational effects. For example, according to the study by the OECD from 2012, Polish students scored significantly better at tests of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), achieving much higher results than Austrian and Czech



students in all researched educational areas. In fact, this success is believed to be the effect of a turn from the decentralised system of management. On the other hand, centralised management of the system of education is not free from pitfalls as teaching for the result does not equal education for sustainable development of young children and in fact has little in common with the assumptions of inclusive education. What is more, the system where the main focus is on concrete outcomes limits a choice of educational approaches, or is even condemned to pure training for excellence, leaving no space for alternative forms of work.

The cases of Czechia and Austria show that a decentralised system of education offers a less sophisticated decision making process, entailing more autonomy for schools in developing own educational programmes. Under favourable political conditions, this systemic solution may enable more immediate introduction of educational initiatives. On the other hand, lack of a common strategy in education often leads to discrepancies between the ministerial assumptions, and their practical realisation on the regional level. Based on the analysis of the Czech specialist literature (see section 6.4), problems concerning quality and effectiveness of educational practices performed by schools, in the opinion of central authorities, often require undertaking of remedial steps. The Czech School Inspectorate, which is a central supervising body, controls the quality of performed educational practices and enforces a need for rearrangement and constant refocusing of regional curricula. This sort of acting causes unnecessary havoc, as well as, may blur the true educational situation of learners with SLDs in schools. In the long term, it may also preclude proper implementation of inclusive activities. The problems concerning the decentralised managerial system were also spotted in Austria where the implementation of the educational reform had been withheld as a result of lack of central decisions.

As it can be noticed, there are no perfect managerial solutions that would be ideal for the implementation and development of the inclusive approach. Assuming the non-existence of political differences, the decentralised system of education seems better for inclusive purposes as it prioritises the process of education itself, aiming more at children's sustained development rather than at its measurable results. In the opinion of Buchner and Proyer (2019: 88), it only requires general guidelines, set in form of governmental regulations for federal authorities to maintain the same standards of education and equal distribution of financial sources that would be dedicated partly to the implementation of inclusive education. The example of Czechia, however, proves that

lack of a common educational strategy on both the central and regional levels may effectively block the development of inclusion. In comparison to the decentralised systems of Austrian and Czech education, Polish centralised managing of schooling is more beneficial with reference to the maintenance of national strategy plans. However, lack of good will and constructive decisions of the central ruling authorities may effectively block the actual development of the inclusive approach.

### **8.3 Organisation of educational institutions and support centres in the researched countries**

Apart from the basic differences in general managing systems of education, two other elements that are related to systemic solutions are characterised in the following subsections. They are divided into problem areas – an organisation of education in schools and support services. In response to the first part of research question concerning the organisation of educational institutions and support services (RQ5) factors referring to a division of the stages of education, the use of distinct types of curricula and also a varied organisation of a lesson conduct were considered.

#### **8.3.1 Educational institutions**

Having compared the organisation of the educational institutions, it was noticed that the length of early education differs slightly in each of the countries. Although in all cases learners with SLDs may begin their school education at the same age, in Austria and Czechia, the school starting age is six whereas in Poland the standard school age is seven. It should be noticed that specialists are of the opinion that an older age of school entry positively affects learners' educational attainment, especially in standardised educational environments (Dhuey and Koebel 2022: 247, Givord 2021:5). This view sheds some favourable light on Polish system of education which in fact is a standardised one. From the other perspective, the school earlier starting age may bring equally successful educational results if methods of teaching are well adjusted to learners individual needs, warranting their sustained development (Dustmann and Cornelissen 2019: 35).

Another systemic solution that differentiates the researched countries addresses applied curricula. In Poland and Czechia, primary schools follow general core curricula for all groups of learners educated at mainstream units, regardless of their abilities. The content and aims of particular courses have to be compliant with the core curriculum, for which reason teachers rarely develop their own syllabi, choosing options that are recommended by the Ministry of Education. For this reason, general education programmes are considered to be a more reliable solution that is commonly applied to pupils who are expected to reach the teaching objectives assumed in the programme. At the same time, schools are responsible for determining individual conditions for educating learners with SEN. However, lacking autonomy and demonstrating attachment to general education programmes and their accompanying teaching materials, teachers do not search for new educational solutions that would be favourable for individual needs of students.

A slightly different approach has been adopted into Austrian system of education where, apart from the general core curriculum, schools may choose to apply the special needs curriculum which includes separate guidelines for educating learners with SEN, pursuant to the *School Organisation Act* (BMFFJ 2018). This solution provides schools with recommendations about inclusion friendly teaching approaches and appropriate adjustments of teaching practices to learners' SEN. It is a very practical guideline for teachers who use the special needs curriculum as a safe option. Such a systemic solution is definitely more beneficial for inclusive environments as it sets clear requirements, rights, and duties to follow by all participants of the educational process in the country.

As to the last factor marking the differences in systemic solutions adopted by three researched countries, the results of the analysis revealed that in Austrian schools a team teaching model has been applied, contrary to 'one teach, one assist' model of a lesson conduct in Czechia and Poland. The advantages of the first solution exceed its disadvantages. Team teaching allows to share responsibilities and problems between the subject and special education teachers who act cooperatively as a team. They run lessons jointly or interchangeably in close cooperation, what significantly influences elimination of discrimination and segregation of learners with SLDs. Lessons are developed with a view to learners' SEN, whereas unexpected difficulties can be resolved on-the-spot (see section 5.5.2). The success of team teaching formula has already encouraged some Austrian universities to take a further step forward inclusive education by advocating a new specialisation in teacher education that is focused jointly on inclusive pedagogy rather than on special and early pedagogy separately (see section 5.5.1).

In comparison to Austrian systemic solutions, the organisation of educational institutions in Czechia and Poland are partially satisfying as the realm of cooperative education in these countries is completely different to the solution applied in Austrian schools. Firstly, special education teachers are present in mixed ability classes only under certain conditions, for instance the number of learners opinionated for having SEN. Secondly, their role has an assistive character, and their support in most cases is limited to the use of remedial strategies applied in accordance to the needs of individual learners. The above factors cause noticeable differences between learners with SEN and other class members, accentuating the problem of stigmatisation unresolved. What is more, the responsibility for the lesson organisation and conduct lies entirely in hands of the subject teacher. This so called “one teach, one assist” model defined by Szumski (2022: 54), though actually forming a working relationship, definitely misses more intense engagement of both teachers. The assisting role of the special education teacher in Czech and Polish schools, leaves the subject teachers almost entirely responsible for the educational process, what obviously may trigger negative emotions such as feelings of insecurity, anxiety and even anger, which teachers often have to manage on their own. In this sense, it can be assumed that Polish model of co-operation may benefit from transformation towards the Austrian type of cooperation where the basic truth ruling the implementation process of the inclusive approach is believed to lie in structural openness expressed by setting of common goals and tasks, building trust between all the parties of the educational process and developing of autonomy.

The last issue that marks different organisation of schools in the researched countries is the size of inclusive groups in primary schools. The analysis of national acts and resolutions revealed that the most comfortable teaching conditions in that matter are again in Austrian schools where an average number of students in inclusive groups is eighteen. Similarly in Czechia, working with an average number of twenty two students per class, it can be considered as a quite favourable condition. In Poland, the situation is only comfortable for learners educated in integration units where their number cannot exceed twenty students per group, however, in case of ordinary classes, not appointed as integration units, groups are composed of about twenty nine children. It is quite common that learners with SLDs attend schools without specialist diagnosis or disability certificates, and their educational problems are often initially identified by school teachers within the development of their process of education. Additionally, some children maybe not diagnosed as their parents are hesitant about it, postponing professional aid until it is

eventually required, for instance at final school leaving examinations. This means, that some learners with SLDs can be educated in groups larger in number than planned for integrative units lowering possibilities for applying inclusion.

Diagnosing learners with SLDs is essential for their future success in education, yet it seems to be a sophisticated issue which in the research countries depends on various measures that are undertaken by schools, special education centres, parents and learners themselves. In the following subsection the organisation of support services is considered.

### **8.3.2 Support services**

According to the analysis of specialistic literature, it was established that all of the researched countries have a well-developed net of support services for individuals with SLDs, their parents and teachers. Among the governmental institutions offering services such as diagnosis of learning disorders, consultancy, opinion giving for school teachers, conduct of rehabilitation and revalidation programs, in each country the most important role is attributed to special education centres. In Austria, they are presently known as units for inclusion, diversity and special education, in order to better underline nature of their activities, whereas in Poland they are recognised as psychological and pedagogical counselling centres. In Czechia, a difference is marked between psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, that are outer units responsible mainly for diagnosing, and special education centres placed within schools, the role of which is to strengthen co-operational activities and monitor the implementation of inclusive practices on daily basis. Duties and responsibilities of special counselling centres that refer to diagnosing procedures are considered separately in the following section 8.4. Apart from the diagnosis, counselling centres in the Czechia and Poland coordinate and conduct a number of activities oriented to child's sustained development. They issue recommendations for support measures, organise direct psychological and pedagogical assistance for the disordered learners and provide consulting services for families of children with SLDs (see section 7.4).

In each country, there are also other governmental organisations offering support services, for example FRSE and ORE in Poland, Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education in Austria, or Czech National Agency for International Education. Their activities are designed, inter alia, to promote inclusive approach in education by

implementing international educational projects, organising conferences, sharing expert knowledge and also acting as an advisory body for the executive authorities in the country.

Apart from the above main support units, the researched countries turned to have a well-developed net of non-governmental institutions. Similarly to special counselling centres, their activities focus mainly on offering diagnosing of learning disorders, issuing specialist opinions, as well as conducting remedial courses with the use of alternative teaching methods. In fact, the last of the mentioned features is of significant importance as the use of alternative, in particular problem oriented approaches allows to focus individualised attention on the identified disorders more adequately. Among the most recognisable non-governmental organisations are national establishments of the European Dyslexia Association, LEGA Vorarlberg Initiative in Austria, DYS-centrum in Praha, and SYNAPSIS foundation in Poland. Their goals include supporting people with SLDs via informing the public and organising any activities and undertakings which directly address the problem of SLDs. They also engage in promotion of inclusive practices by organising various scientific events, conducting research, performing diagnosis and organising compensatory courses for children, as well as offering professional support to parents of disordered children.

Regardless of the similarities, the organisation of support services vary slightly in their distribution of duties and responsibilities. The first difference addresses the functioning of school inspectorates which are the governmental bodies supervising educational practices of schools, established in all three countries. The second issue refers to a territorial coverage of activities conducted by support services in the researched countries.

In Czechia and Poland, the institution of school inspectorates was introduced to the systems of education in the 1990s. Its main role is to exercise direct supervision over pedagogical activities of schools, evaluate the system of education with a view to fulfilment of the curricula by schools and their educational effectiveness. Moreover, inspectorates which are settled regionally control school expenditures of budget sources as well as perform school inspections. All of their activities put pressure on schools ordering correction and introduction of improvements of school standards in accordance to the assumptions of the national curriculum. In school practice, it usually means constant narrowing and refocusing of the syllabi and hence to applied strategies of teaching. Teachers have to work under pressure, in a constant process of changes causing unnecessary chaos and in consequence blurring educational effects. Such practices also

prove that the national systems of education are highly formalised and excessively focused on procedures, what refrains teachers from experimentation in teaching. For these reasons, some changes in the scope of competences of school inspectorates are expected.

The other problem concerning support services is connected with unequal distribution of financial means for the support services. This problem is noticeable in Austria where organisation of educational institutions and support services is subjected to autonomous decisions of federal inspecting authorities. Therefore, teaching practices and range of support services differ in nine federal states as a result of unequal financing of educational activities and varied social interest in development of inclusive practices. This discrepancy is exemplified by insufficient resources in the states, and in particular the inequalities related to lack of professionals in certain states, shortages of teaching materials and advancement of IT technology (see section 5.4).

According to the above, it can be assumed that the differences between centralised and decentralised systems of governmental control over national education in the researched countries have their impact also on the organisation and range of competences of educational institutions and support services. Unequal distribution of finances, as well as differences in administrative decisions of decentralised authorities may have a negative impact on cooperation between the parties of the educational sector, and also inhibit the development of inclusive practices. Table 19 below presents the discussed essentials of the support system in Austria, Czechia and Poland, including the particulars causing the discrepancies between the offered services.

Table 19: Support services for learners with SLDs in Austria, Czechia and Poland

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Czechia</b>	<b>Poland</b>
Governmental support institutions and their main scopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- special educational centres set up in each Federal State with its representatives in schools</li> <li>- special education centres (supporting learners with SLDs, their parents and teachers on daily basis)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- special educational centres set up in schools</li> <li>- pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (supporting learners with SLDs, their parents and teachers; performing diagnosis; issuing specialist opinions; advising school teachers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- immediate intervention of school pedagogue and psychologist in urgent situations (on-the-spot remedies)</li> <li>- pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (performing diagnosis; issuing specialist opinions; conducting remedial courses for learners with SLDs; cooperating with school teachers)</li> </ul>

			-socio-therapeutic centres (offering revalidation and rehabilitation)
	- special education centres (monitoring quality of teaching practices, coordinating team teaching, certifying teachers to perform diagnosis, conducting additional diagnosis when required)	- school inspectorates (supervising school functioning; evaluating schools' execution of core curriculum; controlling inclusive teaching practices; ordering improvements)	- school inspectorates (supervising school functioning; evaluating schools' execution of core curriculum; controlling inclusive teaching practices; ordering improvements)
Presence of non-governmental support organisations	yes	yes	yes
Reported problems	- support institutions perform only partial diagnosis and only on demand - lack of common educational policy of the federal states - unequal distribution of financial outlay for education	- chaos introduced by decisions of school inspectorates, ordering changes that influence teaching practices - bureaucracy - insufficient funding	- insufficient or practically no cooperation between school teachers and specialists from counselling centres - overwhelming bureaucracy - insufficient funding

To sum up, in response to research question about the organisation and managing of the support serviced in Austria, Czechia and Poland (RQ 5), it can be stated that each of the researched countries has a well-developed net of governmental support units. A large number of non-governmental organisations offer help to individuals with SLDs and their families with the range of diagnostic procedures and compensatory courses. The institutions and organisations are composed alike in all researched countries. In their activities, they follow the requirements of inclusive education set by the European Union. However, some of the institutions, like the school inspectorates in Czechia and Poland, may benefit from depoliticization of education in order not to disturb the development of inclusive practices at schools. Also, some improvements could be introduced to the Polish system of education in form of special education centres that in Austria and Czechia conduct their support activities in schools, being easily accessible for all participants of the process of education and offering help on the daily basis. Finally, according to the reported problems, some improvements of the organisation of communication between counselling centres, school inspectorates and schools should be introduced to limit



bureaucracy and unnecessary chaos caused by contradicting decisions.

#### **8.4 Comparison of diagnostic procedures in the researched countries**

Organisation of systemic solutions in the researched countries refers not only to the setting up of the school system and support services but also to the applied procedures of diagnosing SLDs and the organisation of the support system (RQ 4). The results of the analysis revealed some substantial differences between a standardised diagnosing procedure applied in Czechia and Poland, and a non-standardised one popularised in Austria.

In Austria, the diagnostic procedure is initiated and conducted directly by the school teacher who, after noticing educational problems of a young learner, is obliged to perform the assessment of learning difficulties on the basis of the child's educational progress. Only in justified cases of ambiguity, parents of children with diagnosed learning difficulties are entitled to supplement the school diagnostic procedure with a more thorough analysis conducted by specialists from psychological and pedagogical counselling centres. The diagnostic procedure performed at schools in Austria is based on the ability-achievement discrepancy test and is non-standardised, developed by the teacher. It is usually prolonged to two first years of the early education stage. The diagnosis is mainly focused on deficits in three educational areas, including mathematical skills, German language mastering and behaviour. One of the advantages of such a system lays in its availability and commonness, as all young learners are subjected to pedagogical observation and therefore any developmental problems can be immediately spotted. The analysis of the specialist literature shows that teacher's assessment of SLDs is more oriented to learning difficulties rather than establishment of specific disorders, what fosters a development of inclusive practices and accurate adjustment of teaching programs. Regardless of its advantages, however, this type of diagnosis is non-standardised and as such rises doubts about its accuracy. Teachers who are required to conduct the diagnosis often complain to lack specialist competence to identify the learning problem with precision (see sections 5.3). Additionally, the non-standardised tests which are developed by teachers are composed on the basis of their subjective professional and personal experience. Educational decisions taken on the basis of such a non-professional diagnosis are not consulted with specialists in the field of SLDs, and

therefore they lack transparency and objectivity. The results of the analysis of the specialist literature show that pure diagnostic observations may lead to incorrect conclusion as, for instance, children from immigrant environments may underperform at school subjects due to their poor mastery of German language, what can be wrongly understood as SLDs. Finally, the discrepancy model is also criticised for stigmatisation of learners with SLDs as it is focused on performance deficits rather than strengths. Thus, Austrian system of diagnosing seems faulty or at least lacking precision.

In Poland and Czechia the diagnostic procedure can be initiated by parents, often alarmed by school teachers, who usually report educational problems of children to specialists at counselling centres. In this case, the diagnosis, certification and opinion about SEN are all performed by the centres which are obliged to follow the established rules of proceeding. Identification of SLDs happens by means of professional examination performed by specialists in the field at psychological and pedagogical counselling centres with the use of specially developed diagnostic methods, usually based on IQ literacy attainment discrepancy tests (see sections 6.3 and 7.3) The tests verify letter recognition, reading efficiency, phoneme awareness and writing correctness. Educational implications set by the specialists of the counselling centres are issued in writing and need to be followed by school teachers.

The system of standardised diagnosing is considered to be more effective and reliable than the one based on the discrepancy model. Its only drawback refers to lack of engagement of counselling centres that issue SEN certificates in developing plans of pedagogical support, what remains the responsibility of school authorities. It is doubtful, however, that teachers can develop such plans on their own without cooperation with professional support. Recent amendments in Polish education law encourage a closer cooperation between schools and counselling centres, therefore this aspect is further analysed in the third part of the dissertation on the basis of the results of conducted survey with primary school teachers (see section 10.1.1.1).

What additionally distinguishes the diagnostic systems and also the organisation of support services in the three countries are special education centres, different from counselling ones, which are set up in schools of Czechia and which offer help on daily basis. In Poland, instead of special education centres another solution has been found. Pursuant to the resolution of MEN from 2010 on organisation of psychological and pedagogical assistance, school support teams, composed of teachers, tutors and specialists in the field of SLDs are appointed by the school director (MEN 2010a, item 19 sections

1,2). Both Czech special education centres, and Polish school support teams, offer consultation services for learners with SLDs on daily basis, having an insight into their educational problems. Furthermore, they are entitled to undertake preventive measures by identifying factors inhibiting child’s sustainable development and performing an individual pedagogical care for learners with educational difficulties (Eurydice 2021c; MEN 2010f, item 1492).

Taking into consideration all the above factors, it can be stated that the systemic solutions of Poland and Czechia that developed standardised diagnostic procedures of SLDs are scientifically grounded and pragmatic, at the same time less burdened with the element of error, as it happens in the Austrian system.

### **8.5 Comparison of the roles and (self) development of in-service teacher competences in the researched countries**

The crucial role in development of inclusion in education is assigned to teachers who are expected to diversify their roles and extend their competence towards inclusive practices. The best means to achieve this goal is to develop inclusion-friendly attitude and use alternative methods of teaching that would allow on individualisation of the process of education. In order to control how this problem is managed in the researched countries, the sixth research question (RQ 6) addressed the issue of teachers’ education and professional readiness to work with inclusive groups of students. The results of the specialist literature analysis show that the set goal can be achieved by implementation of inclusive themes into the programmes of teachers’ tertiary education, as well as by offering in-service teachers a wide range of professional trainings to familiarise them with inclusive practices. In table 20 below, the most important characteristics of these two basic aspects are gathered and subjected to a discussion in separate subsections.

Table 20: The roles and competences of inclusive language teachers in Austria, Czechia and Poland

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Czechia</b>	<b>Poland</b>
professional education:			
- certification in English language at pedagogical faculties, and in pedagogy at foreign philology	required by law	required by law	required by law

- inclusive tertiary education offer	as specialisation	as an interdisciplinary programme	as a content of selected courses
-post-graduate studies about inclusion	yes	yes	yes
competence building:			
- additional trainings in inclusive teaching	yes	yes	yes
- cost covering	free of charge	free of charge	reimbursed partially
- time for teachers' self-development with exemption from teaching duties	15 hours yearly	12 hours yearly	none
assumed main roles of the inclusive teacher	planner manager diagnostician	planner manager assessor	planner manager rapport builder
job satisfaction	high (low number of teaching hours; good remuneration; small groups of students per class; team teaching)	moderate (dependent on teachers' age and remuneration)	low (due to high rate of burnout, overload and poor remuneration)
teachers' general attitude towards inclusion	positive	reluctant	rather negative

### 8.5.1 Education of English language teachers with the view to inclusion

In the analysed specialist literature and documents, the teacher holds a crucial place in shaping the future of inclusive education. In recent times, Austrian, Czech and Polish central authorities have introduced national reforms into teacher education. The amendments refer to the length of tertiary education, content of education programmes dedicated to teacher trainees and even to a number of hours of apprenticeship.

In response to the set research question (RQ6) concerning teachers' education and professional (self) development towards inclusion, some similarities were noticed. Firstly, organisation of tertiary studies in pedagogy and English philology show resemblance in length of their duration. By standard, they last between three to five years dependently on the awarded bachelor or master degree. What is important, much as students of pedagogy seeking employment in early education need to be certified in English (B2 in CEFR scale), foreign philology alumni working at schools are required to be certified in

pedagogy. Secondly, also tertiary education programmes for English philology studies demonstrate many common aspects. For instance, in all the countries programmes for English philology include compulsory hours of subject education, pedagogy, didactics and psychology. They also offer an extended programme of apprenticeship in public schools where teacher trainees have regular contact with learners with SLDs. Most importantly, higher education units are obliged by the national legislators to embody themes that refer to SLDs, SEN and individualisation of the education process within the framework of their programmes, enriching teachers with experience necessary for work in the inclusive environment. Finally, in all researched countries, post-graduation studies as well as professional trainings are offered to those who wish to gain specialist knowledge and skills in special education, pedagogical therapy, and other aspects of educating disordered learners in mixed ability classes.

Much as the selected for comparison countries implemented similar solutions in education of language teachers, there are some noticeable differences which need attention. First of all, in Austrian tertiary system of education, improvements towards inclusive education are not only limited to the enrichment of the syllabi for pedagogical and philological faculties with themes covering the problems of SLDs, inclusion and SEN. Some Austrian universities decided to open a new specialisation of inclusive studies, believing that this form of education would popularise the inclusive approach and help prepare trainees for their future roles of inclusive teachers. In Czechia, inclusive education is offered in a form of interdisciplinary studies whereas in Poland this issue is covered only by the content of selected university courses. Instead of solutions similar to the other two countries, specialisation in special education is more commonly applied by Polish universities and academies. This difference in the organisation of tertiary courses in three researched countries reflects the importance of teaching about inclusion in education but also marks the split in collective mentality between mainstream and special education. The fact that inclusion is perceived in Poland only as an addition to other pedagogical issues implies its marginal role in national education. The problem is further analysed in the third part of the dissertation where an analysis of tertiary programmes of pedagogical and English philology faculties in Poland is revised in search for inclusive contents of the offered courses.

The following two differences in educating language teachers refer more to their competence building and financial sourcing. In all three countries teachers have legal obligation to undertake compulsory self-studies with a view to the development of their

competences. In order to encourage them to an additional effort, Czech and Austrian educational authorities offer reimbursement of incurred expenses. Additionally, in Czechia, teachers are entitled to spend twelve days on self-study every year, and in Austria even fifteen days without participation in any costs. To compare, in Poland, only some courses are available free of charge, not to mention lack of any days dedicated by the legislator to teachers for self-development. According to information provided by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Polish teachers bear fifty three percent of costs for self-development, what is the ultimate score among European Union countries (EUC 2022: 13). What is more, many additional forms of education are often organised in the afternoons, what requires abandonment of private and family life. It is not surprising then, that teachers who are said to be overloaded with duties, show little interest in additional professional activities, including trainings, conferences and post-graduation studies. As a result, young teachers who completed the upgraded programmes of tertiary education and who are believed to be better prepared to teach in inclusive environments, stand only for fourteen percent of the entire teaching staff in the country. The situation then seems critical, and may seriously contribute to the setback of inclusive approach in Polish schools. Due to its importance, the problem of teachers' (self) development, including their lifelong education, is discussed in detail in the following section and further researched in part three of the dissertation (see chapter 10).

### **8.5.2 (Self) development of in-service teacher competences**

Well-rounded education of language teachers constitutes an important part of successful implementation of inclusion into schools, though their (self) development of professional competence seems to have even a greater impact on undertaking professional responsibilities. The research question six addressed this problem too, and the result of the analysis of specialist literature revealed significant disproportions between teachers of the three countries.

With reference to the roles appointed for inclusive teachers, in Austria and Czechia they turned to be convergent. In the first place, teachers are expected to be good planners and managers of the didactic process. A lot of attention is paid to teachers' autonomy in selecting teaching strategies, organising attractive lessons and adjusting teaching

materials to learners' SEN. Further in these two countries, teachers should possess good assessment skills, and in Austria also diagnostic ones. In case of Poland, being a just assessor together with possessing good managerial skills are very important values among teachers. However, assessment of educational effects is differently perceived by Austrian, Czech and Polish educational authorities.

Austrian legislator decided on the use of summative forms of assessment in primary schools. Teachers need to use verbal description, set up learners' portfolios, provide peer and group assessment. In Czechia and Poland both summative and formative forms of assessment are applied. Unfortunately, based on systemic solutions, the summative assessment is applied mostly to early education students and usually takes a form of a short description of their characteristics issued only once at the end of a school year. On daily basis, however, students in both countries are usually given grades for written and oral tests and activity performance (Brumen et al. 2009: 270). It must be noticed that the choice of assessment forms marks substantially the difference between methods of teaching applied by Austrian, Czech and Polish teachers, which in case of Austrian schools are more prone to inclusion. For instance, Skibska (2012:173) underlines that Polish teachers focus almost exclusively on educational effects, rarely paying attention to learners' sustained development, what stays in disagreement with the assumptions of the inclusive approach.

One more important role to be undertaken by language teachers with the view to inclusion is a rapport builder. In all three countries the legislator's attention is paid to teachers' ability to collaborate with other subject teachers and special education teachers, parents and specialists from counselling centres. In Austria, developing good working rapports with special education teachers is seen as a necessity in successful team teaching. This task is not complicated, as special education centres are settled in schools, enabling problem solving on daily basis. Czech teachers are encouraged to maintain regular contact with counselling centres in order to fight off socio-psychological barriers. Also in Poland this aspect of collaboration is underlined by the central educational authorities. A lot of stress is put on rapport building between teachers and students what is expected to bring an effective change in applied methods of teaching so that they become more individualised and adjusted to learners' SEN.

Fulfilling the assumed responsibilities is not simple, especially for Polish and partly also for Czech teachers. Contrary to high job satisfaction expressed by ninety percent of Austrian teachers, moderate job satisfaction of Czech teachers fluctuating

around seventy percent (OECD 2020: 2), the Polish teachers express the lowest satisfaction with reference to their earnings and load of work while comparing their job satisfaction and self-efficacy, ninety percent of the respondents admitted to be endangered by professional burnout and having low self-efficacy. The reasons for their lack of motivation lays mainly in low remuneration, poor conditions of work and failure to meet professional expectations (see section 7.5.3). Based on a report for the European Commission issued by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency from 2022, Polish teachers are among the lowest paid in Europe (EUC 2022:21). The problem of underpayment, is also noticeable in Czechia where low investments in education sector take responsibility for a weak participation of young teachers in this job market, what in turn has its impact on shortages in employment of inclusion oriented teachers (see section 6.5.3).

With reference to working conditions, Austrian teachers are in the most comfortable situation. Among the three countries, they enjoy the lowest number of students per class, work the lowest obligatory number of sixteen hours per week and are on the fifth position with the highest salaries in Europe. Having more time for developing interesting lessons, selecting teaching materials and cooperating with others, also allows them for developing wider autonomy and motivates them to use a variety of teaching strategies. As a result, majority of Austrian teachers express their willingness to self-develop and stay in the profession. They also have positive attitude towards inclusive practices and show a greater acceptance to learners' diversity, adopting slower and more individualised pace of work. Polish and Czech teachers, quite diversly, are overloaded with responsibilities. In Poland, they are additionally disillusioned with lack of convergence between constant self-development and financial rewarding. Stressed or even burnt out, they demonstrate reluctance towards inclusion. Instead of setting demands adequately to learners' abilities, they prefer to simply lower educational requirements by releasing learners with SLDs from certain duties. Being of the opinion that learners with SLDs are different, they believe such students need a separate approach, what distances them and their students from inclusion. Moreover, due to their overwhelming responsibilities, teachers are even at a loss of ideas, often throwing unprepared, chaotic lessons, not cooperating with special education teachers.

Summing up, it can be stated that teachers' responsibilities, which are set by the European Union authorities, are assumed to be the same in all the researched countries. However, the analysis of specialist literature revealed vast differences between the



realisation of teachers' roles, as well as in the execution of their competences. With reference to the teaching profession itself, the most comfortable conditions are enjoyed by Austrian teachers what undoubtedly has an influence on their positive perception of inclusion in education. Diversely, in Poland and also to some extent in Czechia, inclusion is hard to be implemented due to factors referring directly to poor conditions of teachers' work, their low job satisfaction and overload with professional duties which result in rather negative attitude towards changes entailing even more duties and demands.

## **8.6 Comparison of the commonly applied methods of English language teaching in the researched countries**

One of the basic assumptions of the inclusive approach in education refers to adjustments of teaching methods to learners' SEN. The analysis of characteristic features of popular educational approaches, methods and strategies of English language teaching (section 3.2.1) shows that not all of them are supportive for inclusion. The approaches towards young learners which are recommended by the European Union educational authorities include CLT (section 3.2.1.4), TBL (section 3.2.2.2), CLIL (section 3.2.2.1), the ludic strategy (section 3.2.2.4), multi-sensory strategies (section 3.2.2.3) as well as UDL (section 3.2.2.5). Generally, it is stressed that any method consistent with the humanistic approach, also TPR (section 3.2.1.6), would be suitable for linguistic early education of individuals with SLDs.

The information about English language teaching approaches, methods and strategies analysed within the educational environment of the researched countries shows the advancement of inclusive practices in Austrian, Czech and Polish schools. In response to a research question (RQ 7) concerning the commonly applied foreign language approaches used by teachers of early education in Austria, Czechia and Poland, the most popular of them are presented in table 21 below.

Table 21: Most popular English language teaching approaches/ methods/ strategies for young learners of Austria, Czechia and Poland

	Austria	Czechia	Poland
<b>Approach/ method/ strategy</b>	CLT	CLT	CLT
	TBL/ CLIL (older learners)	PPP	PPP
	Direct method	Direct method	Audiolingual method
	PPP	Audiolingual method	TPR
	Audiolingual method	TPR	Direct method

The approaches, methods and strategies presented in the above table are ordered accordingly to their popularity which was established on the basis of the analysed specialist literature. In Austria, for instance, due to *Language education policy profile of 2008* (FME, MSR 2008:30), TBL is perceived as the best approach in foreign language education for inclusive groups of young learners, what explains its growing popularity among young teachers. It is also the most lasting approach in some Austrian schools, though less popular in use than CLT (see section 5.6). With reference to inclusive settings, CLT, TBL, CLIL and multi-sensory approaches are indicated by the Federal Ministry of Education and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research as commonly used in educating learners with SLDs in Austria (FME, FMESR 2008a: 12). Also, in *The national action plan on disability* of 2012 issued by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, it is explained that the new trend towards a competence-based approach gained popularity as a result of the implementation of the national reform programme (FML 2012: 64). In fact, more and more Austrian public schools focus on general assessment of learning outcomes, resigning by the same from formal tests. The change is also approved by Austrian educational authorities and considered necessary as around fifty percent of pupils in the country have been proven not to be able to communicate orally in the target language at a basic level even after four years of their school education. The fact that CLT, TBL and CLIL are the most popular approaches in the country finds its confirmation also in commonly applied types of foreign language tasks which include problem solving, puzzles, logic problems, predictions, ordering, matching, sequencing, classifying and comparing, as well as project works with the use of authentic teaching materials (see section 5.6). Often accompanied by the ludic strategy, the currently applied approaches are focused on communication, strengthen social relationships and as such are definitely inclusion friendly.

Regardless of the popularity of the characterised approaches, in some states primary education teachers still reach for methods which are rooted in Austrian traditional schooling. Among them, the direct and audiolingual methods are commonly used as many teachers prioritise the importance of accuracy practice in form of oral drills and development of receptive. For the same reasons, the PPP model maintains its popularity, especially in states where inclusive practices have been introduced to schools with difficulties (see section 5.6).

In Czechia and Poland, the choice of the teaching approach corresponds to the situation in Austria only with reference to CLT. What is more, active use of CLT for early education is claimed to be purely declarative in these two countries. The results of the comparative study show that Czech primary school teachers prefer the PPP model, as they focus mostly on accuracy and reproduction techniques, conducting lessons mainly in learners' mother tongue. Furthermore, it is noticed that the main attention of teachers is directed to the use of remedial strategies for eliminating (see section 6.6). Almost the same regularities were reported by the Educational Research Institute in Poland with reference to foreign language teaching practices in the country. Numerous studies conducted by Polish scientists confirm this situation. Foreign language teachers are said to hardly ever apply innovative strategies or simulation techniques, heavily basing the educational process on the content of coursebooks (see section 7.6). Additionally, Polish teachers are reported to use of standard teaching materials excessively, making English language lessons monotonous and slow-paced, consisting mostly of individual work. In the opinion of some Czech specialists, this kind of lesson conduct is typical for educational systems of eastern European countries, and the responsibility for this state of matter should be assigned to traditionally applied in these countries bottom-up model of education (see section 6.6).

Fortunately, according to information included in more recent publications about methods of foreign language education in Czechia and Poland, the situation seems to be evolving. The system of education in both countries depends heavily on the governmental decisions. In Poland, almost every change of cabinet entails positive or negative changes in education, what may accelerate or delay the necessary improvements. Therefore, a more consistent policy line needs to be adopted by the central authorities.

Referring to the use of learner-friendly teaching methods in the research countries, the problem needs closer attention in Czechia and Poland. In many publications TBL, CLIL, multi-sensory approaches and ludic strategy are indicated to be the best for

developing of communicative skills and suiting inclusive needs. They allow teachers to benefit from wider autonomy, are more student-friendly and put pressure on holistic assessment of learners' educational progress, what stays in agreement with the assumptions of inclusive education. The fact that none of them is among the five most commonly applied approaches in Poland and Czechia may indicate that still too little attention, or too general attention, is drawn to their beneficial influence by universities training future teachers, as well as educational centres offering professional trainings for in-service teachers.

### **8.7 Comparison of the use of English language teaching materials in the researched countries**

The choice of an approach entails a use of teaching materials for which reason their types and availability for English language courses conducted with young learners in Austria, Czechia and Poland were considered in relation to the last research question (RQ 8). As it was established on the basis of the analysis of specialist literature and formal documents, foreign language teachers of all the researched countries enjoy freedom of choice of both standardised and non-standardised resources. What is more, in case of Czechia and Poland, teachers have a right to select course books from a list of standardised textbooks issued by various publishers and approved by the ministry of education (see sections 6.7, 7.7). Such an approach ensures compatibility between the content of textbooks and the national curricula. Regardless of approved textbooks available on the market, in Poland they are also designed on demand of the ministry of education by specialists in the field of pedagogy and English philology.

Another similarity shared by the researched countries is a complimentary access to standardised teaching materials. In Czechia and Poland the purchase of textbooks with accompanying teaching resources by primary schools is reimbursed. Additionally, in 2022 Polish government decided to grant a subsidy to primary school for a purchase of any required teaching materials, including maps, books, cards etc. leaving their adjustment for learners' needs to teachers. In Austria, the federal government also helps schools in acquisition of teaching tools. However, its support is not as extended as it is in Poland. Textbooks are provided by general authorities, though only in the first year of early education (see section 5.7).

With reference to foreign language education of learners with SLDs, specialists in the field of education underline the necessity of a use of alternative teaching materials which introduce greater autonomy into a lesson conduct. A wide range of non-standardised materials, their ready availability and easy adjustability make them even more appropriate and interesting for learners with SLDs than standardised textbooks. Also in this matter Polish government attempts to meet teachers' needs by launching the Integrated Educational Platform with supplementary teaching materials reachable online and printable free of charge. The results of the performed analysis also revealed that in all three countries teachers are offered training courses about the use of modern technologies, audio and visual teaching materials which stimulate learners' multi-sensory perception and self-expression. In Austria, where TBL is promoted as the most desirable approach in linguistic education of young learners, it is believed that non-standardised teaching materials steaming from digital sources are more appreciated by learners and up-to-date, trendy and therefore more motivating (see section 5.7).

Regardless of the wide selection of teaching materials and simple access to modern technology, the results of the analysis also show that many teachers in all researched countries still avoid non-standardised teaching materials. The scale of the problem seems the lowest in Austria where, due to popularity of TBL approach, many teachers reach for non-standardised and authentic resources that can be easily accessible on the Internet. Austrian schools are said to be well-equipped because of the spread of technological advancements. The most significant difficulties referring to the use of non-standardised teaching materials in Austria, though, refer to problems with their adjustability. Teachers complain about excessive time consumption connected with their selection, as well as, about them having poor managerial skills in this regard. In Czechia and Poland, the situation is even more complex as the majority of foreign language teachers base their lessons almost entirely on standardised textbooks. Czech teachers are believed to be unwilling to change the applied methods of teaching and also feel more comfortable with standardised teaching resources. Further, Czech teachers are often found to complain about insufficient availability of instructional resources that would support them in selecting and adjusting non-standardised teaching materials for inclusive environments. Likewise, also in Poland teachers are reported to excuse their commitment to textbooks with lack of or limited access to advanced technology in schools. This explanation, however, stays in contradiction to recent improvements and computerisation of Polish schools enforced partly by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a more

realistic explanation, the problem is anchored firmly in teachers' unwillingness to changes, caused by degradation of the profession, widespread bureaucratization and centralisation of Polish system of education that severely limits teachers' autonomy, as well as excessive control by decision-makers and lack of decent remuneration (see section 7.7). All the stated factors are the cause of teachers' overload, leading them directly to professional burnout.

To sum up the results of this part of comparative study, concerning the use of teaching materials by English language teachers of early education students, the most significant characteristics are presented in table 22 below. The spotted differences between the countries point to the advantages and drawbacks of the adopted approaches with a view to inclusive education.

Table 22: Use of English language teaching materials in the researched countries

Characteristics	Austria	Czechia	Poland
type of preferred teaching materials	- non-standardised	- standardised	- standardised
cost coverage of standardised teaching materials in primary school	- government (in 1 <sup>st</sup> year of education) - parents	- government	- government
additional sources of free teaching materials	- yes	- yes	- yes
teachers' freedom of choice of teaching materials	- yes	- yes	- yes
reported problems	- time consuming adjustments of teaching materials to learners' SEN	- unwillingness to diverse the applied methods of teaching - habitual use of textbooks - insufficient instructional teaching materials for inclusive settings	- insufficient classroom equipment and access to the Internet - no time for adjustments of teaching materials to learners' SEN

In conclusion, foreign language teaching materials are widely available in the researched countries, as well as they are partly accessible free of costs. In Czechia and Poland, a choice of teaching materials such as textbooks is controlled by central authorities for their compliance with the national curricula. Much as this approach helps to keep the standards on the level, it may discourage teachers from the use of non-standardised resources, especially due to extended bureaucracy in these two countries.

The situation is different in Austria, where teachers base their educational practices mostly on authentic and non-standardised resources as the purchase of textbooks is reimbursed only in the first year of early education. Additionally, more and more teachers follow the educational trends turning towards approaches supporting the development of inclusive practices.

## **8.8 Final comments**

The comparative study allowed to notice several advantages and disadvantages in approaching learners with SLDs in the researched countries. With reference to similarities noticed between the countries, the results of the analysis show that the interest in SLDs and development of the scientific thought (RQ1) occurred alike in the researched countries despite the historical circumstances which delayed intensive involvement of scientists in Czechia and Poland in comparison to Austria. Also, the general changes in national laws (RQ3) demonstrate resemblance, as their introduction was a consequence of the international decisions approved by the EU member states. On their basis, learners with SLDs have equal rights in accessing public schools, have educational requirements adjusted to their SEN, as well as can learn foreign languages on equal basis with other learners. Learning disorders are diagnosed in all three countries (RQ4) where in justified cases individuals with SLDs receive support from special education teachers. Further, in each of the researched countries, supervisory bodies are established to monitor the quality of the inclusive practices in schools (RQ5). These counselling centres additionally function as advisory institutions, supporting not only the learners with SLDs but also their parents, cooperating and sharing specialist knowledge with school staff. Apart from the alike organisation of public schooling in the countries, also the formation of the tertiary studies for pedagogical and philological faculties have already been subjected to changes with a view to improve teachers' professional competence in educating inclusive groups (RQ6). Their programmes are now enriched with issues concerning various disorders and disabilities, inclusion, SEN, as well as inclusion friendly methods of teaching.

In Austria, universities moved even a step further, opening separate specialisation of inclusive education that educates future inclusive school staff. Also, team teaching has been introduced as an alternative to traditional lesson conduct (RQ7), what strengthens cooperation between a special education teacher and a subject teacher on the daily basis.

Finally, also the roles of inclusive teachers are set similarly in the researched countries with two prioritising missions of a planner and manager. These two main roles stress the autonomy of the inclusive teacher in a choice of planning a course, selection of teaching methods and adjustment of teaching materials. They additionally depict the range of duties and responsibilities that the inclusive teacher faces.

The similarities in implementing inclusion, noticed in the national systems of education, result from a common policy of EU member states. However, the agreed transformations and educational reforms have faced several problems which are associated with uneven execution of the accepted obligations by national authorities, financial difficulties, lack of executive orders for the development of inclusive practices at schools, deficiencies in well-trained teaching staff, their overload with duties, insufficient access to advanced technology, and finally negative attitude towards changes in education expressed by in-service teachers.

In Austria, the initial problem with implementation of inclusion to schools steamed from the decentralised system of governance. Changes were introduced unevenly as some of the federal states were rather reluctant to inclusive practices. The assumed improvements were gradually brought with the reform of teacher education in 2012. Young teachers are more prone to apply inclusion-friendly methods of teaching; they are well-skilled in using modern technology in education and express more positive attitude towards inclusive practices. The problem of unwillingness among in-service teachers is tackled via development of specialist trainings offered cost free to teachers. They can also improve their inclusive teaching skills in practice by conducting lessons in teams together with special education teachers.

In Czechia, before 2005, the assumed improvements in the national system of education, though introduced by law, had been poorly executed in practice. In this country, similarly to the situation in Austria, the reforms of 2016 were the most significant, bringing improvements in the programmes of education for teacher trainees. The Czech reform of education effectively introduced inclusion to primary schools. However, problems of underpayment of teaching staff, as well as difficulties in maintaining autonomy by schools and teachers, caused by excessive control of school inspectorates, remained unchanged and still hinder the spread of the inclusive approach. Czech in-service teachers are obliged to undergo competence building courses and professional trainings which are believed to improve their teaching skills and open them more to inclusive practices. Inclusion in education is strengthened by the introduction of



subsequent national action plans which aim at efficient implementation of inclusive education.

In Poland, changes in national education towards inclusion before 2005 were rather superficial, introduced by general provisions of law; they were not factually implemented to schools due to lack of executive decisions. Some changes in programmes of tertiary studies for pedagogues and foreign philology students were ordered in 2017, however, the interest in the development of inclusive education was feeble. So far, the most successful improvement in the national system of education turned to be the reform of tertiary education programmes for pedagogy and philology faculties. The assumed changes in programmes aimed at their enrichment with themes related to inclusion and learning disorders, and an enlarged number of hours of apprenticeship in schools. However, the situation at schools has remained much more difficult. At present, more intense work is planned by the present minister of education, aiming at implementation of truly inclusive practices to schools, what has been confirmed by recent ban on excessive homework and changes in assessment of learners' educational efforts. Polish education is in a state of serious crisis. Many teachers are reported to suffer burn-out, the profession is deeply underpaid, and majority of school facilities are still in poor financial condition. Although Polish teachers are said to participate in various forms of professional self-development, they have to cover most of the incurred expenses on their own. The present situation negatively influences a social status of the teaching profession. In the public opinion, in-service teachers are believed to lack competence in inclusive education, being attached to traditional methods of teaching and expressing their unwillingness to any changes. Probably for this reason, the PPP is still the most commonly applied teaching model accompanied by the use of traditional standardised teaching materials (RQ8).

Summing up the results of the comparative study, it can be said that the concept of inclusive education has already been implemented to the national systems of education on the basis of changes in international and national laws. The central authorities have undertaken certain steps towards inclusion, though there are still many obstacles that need removal. Among the three considered countries, Poland seems to be in the least favourable situation as its education requires deep reforms. Changes in tertiary programmes are definitely insufficient, and more thorough improvements of school functioning is expected. The implementation and development of inclusion will not be successful without precise executive orders and solid financial support. Implementation

of executive measures is crucial for the accurate understanding of the inclusive approach, undertaking improvement of the condition of schools, which by the same have a direct impact on the situation of learners with SLDs. Regardless of the systemic changes, the crucial role in successful inclusive education is left to teachers. In Poland, the roles of the inclusive teacher are known but still not well-recognised in school practice.

The conducted study was based on the analysis of the formal documents and specialist literature and as such lacked the empirical verification of the state of art. Although the empirical studies verifying the actual educational situation of learners with SLDs in the three countries were initially planned to be conducted in cooperation with local schools and academic centres, unfortunately, the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic precluded the research plans. For this reason, a supplementary study (Stage V) developed in the years 2022 - 2024 refers only to the educational situation of learners with SLDs in Poland and is characterised in the following chapters of the dissertation.

## **Chapter 9: Methodology of the supplementary study**

### **9.0 Introduction**

With a view to the supplementary study, constituting Stage V, i.e. the empirical part of the present dissertation (see section 4.1.5), its aim was to verify the results of the comparative study with reference to the educational situation of learners with SLDs in Poland. The study was conducted with the use of five research procedures. Their variety can be justified firstly by the need to establish the most objective view on the inclusive education in Poland, and secondly, by the difficulties in gathering a representative number of responses in the effect of the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic, and also due to vast unwillingness of potential respondents to participate in the study. The research procedures include: (1) an analysis of tertiary education programmes offered to philology and pedagogy students in Poland conducted in 2022; (2) an anonymous self-assessment survey dedicated to English language teachers of young learners with SLDs conducted in 2022 and 2023; (3) observations of foreign language lessons conducted with elementary groups of students in primary schools in the years 2022 and 2023, (4) semi-structured interviews with parents of individuals with SLDs; as well as, (5) semi-structured interviews with experts in the field of national education, both conducted in 2023. Each of the said research procedures are compatible with the research criteria of the comparative study and its research questions, as described in section 4.3. Detailed results of the supplementary study are gathered and analysed in relevant subsections of the present chapter and finally discussed with reference to the outcomes of the comparative study in Chapter Ten. The described supplementary study also includes some explanation

of the its limitations, followed by implications for further considerations within the issue of inclusive education in Poland.

Struggling with adversity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and difficulties in collecting necessary research data online, as well as, due to the fact that the core interest in the present study is directed to the situation of learners with SLDs in Poland (see introduction to Chapter Four), a decision to conduct a supplementary study in the country was taken in 2022. Particular research procedures used in the supplementary study are outlined in the figure below.



Figure 5: Research procedures of the supplementary research

## 9.1 Research goals

In the planned research, six out of eight research questions formulated previously for the sake of the comparative study are used. Their numbering has been maintained and refers to what follows:

RQ (2) What systemic solutions have been introduced to the national system of education with the view to inclusion?

RQ (4) What diagnostic procedures of SLDs are applied in the country?

RQ (5) How are educational institutions and support services for learners with SLDs organised in the country?

RQ (6) How are Polish teachers of English language educated and what is their (self) development of competences with the view to inclusive education?

RQ (7) What language teaching methods are used by primary level teachers of

English language in the country?

RQ (8) What types of teaching materials are used by English language teachers of learners with SLDs in the country?

According to the results of the comparative study (see Chapter Eight), inclusion has already been formally adopted to the Polish system of education. However, it has also been noticed that there are several obstacles endangering its successful development. They refer to lack of executive orders and larger investments in the sector of education. These two factors have an influence on the manner of perception of inclusion by the educational environment, including school management, support institutions, teachers and parents. For this reason, the supplementary study aims at disclosure of the real conditions of educating learners with SLDs in Polish primary schools. Particularly, the its results are hoped to shed light on such issues as: practical application of systemic solutions introduced to Polish schools with the view to inclusion; further, cooperation between subject teachers and support teachers; as well as, supervision of regional inspectorates and the quality of cooperation between schools and counselling centres. Also, preparedness of English language teachers to educate learners with SLDs, their abilities to individualise the educational process in accordance to children's SEN and their professional experience in working with inclusive groups are subjected to the analysis. It is also hoped to observe a correlation between the methods of teaching advised for the use with inclusive students and these indicated by the respondents as preferable and applied by them. As Polish schools are said to be generally poorly equipped and facing many difficulties associated with an access to modern technologies, also this problem was looked upon from the perspective of English language teachers. Questions directed to discover the actual use of teaching materials should help to establish whether foreign language teaching in Poland is dependent on the use of standard textbooks or rather based on authentic sources.

## **9.2 Method of data collecting: Instruments**

The following five research procedures were used for data collection in the supplementary study: a self-assessment survey dedicated to English language teachers of early education level, direct observations of English language lessons conducted with mixed ability groups of students, semi-structured interviews with parents of learners with SLDs and

experts in the field of national education, and also a survey on tertiary education programmes for English language faculties in Poland. Below, characteristic features of each research procedure are described in details to give a greater insight into their composition.

### **9.2.1 Survey of tertiary education programmes in Poland**

As a vast part of the research has been dedicated to the roles and competence of teachers in inclusive environments, a survey on tertiary education programmes was used to establish whether English language teachers of primary level education receive well-rounded education predisposing them for work with learners with SLDs. For this reason university programmes for English philology students were revised for the academic year 2021/ 2022 (see appendix 1). The data was verified through the RAD-on platform governed by the Ministry of Higher Education in Poland. With help of the POL-on IT system, it has been established that fifty two public academic units offer higher education in the field of English Philology with specialisation in teaching. All of these academic centres run both the B.A. studies of three years and M.A. supplementary studies of two years. The Internet sites of the said higher education units, offering general or practical profiles, were searched to learn about the content of their educational programmes with a view to subjects related to inclusive education, SEN and SLDs. Whenever they were accessible on the Internet sites, specific subject syllabi were studied for the targeted content.

Findings of this study are presented in a form of a general graph showing the number of academic units which have in their educational offer subjects dedicated to SLDs, SEN and/ or inclusion. Detailed information about the reviewed programmes offered by the academic centres is included in a comprehensive table (see section 10.1.1).

### **9.2.2 Self-assessment survey for early education teachers**

In the beginning of 2022 another research instrument was added to the supplementary study in form of an online survey for English language teachers of young learners with

SLDs. The voluntary self-assessment survey that had been initially prepared for teachers in the three countries was revised and supplemented with questions concerning foreign language teaching conditions in the pandemic period in Poland. The primary goal of the survey remained unchanged and aimed at the collection of data concerning the current use of English language teaching methods towards learners with SLDs, however this time only by Polish teachers. Due to evident inhibitions of the teachers to express their views in the study, a decision to visit primary schools in person was taken immediately when the restrictions in direct contact with schools in the country were removed. The researcher encouraged teachers to participate in the study in person, presented the aim of the study together with documentation confirming her status to the school principals and potential respondents. The teachers who agreed to be surveyed were informed about confidentiality of their responses and could decide to fill in the questionnaire either on the spot or at their convenience via the use of its electronic form. The survey was purposefully anonymous, in order to ensure unrestricted responses of its participants. As a result, primary schools in thirteen cities of Poland were visited and by September 2023, the researcher managed to collect forty-seven responses to the previously prepared questionnaire (see appendix 2) from teachers of English employed with mainstream educational units in Łódź, Koszalin, Płock, Warszawa, Gdynia, Kraków, Katowice, Rzeszów, Wrocław, Częstochowa, Toruń, Bydgoszcz and Gdańsk.

As to the structure of the questionnaire (see appendix 2), it is composed of fifty two questions of open-ended and closed-ended nature that co-responded with the four given criteria of the study which included: (1) modern systemic solutions for inclusive education; (2) roles and competence of the inclusive English language teachers; (3) the use of inclusion-friendly teaching methods and strategies by Polish foreign language teachers; (4) an access to and use of inclusion-friendly didactic materials. For greater transparency they are grouped into the following sections:

- (a) personal and professional information concerning the survey respondents (questions 1 to 25),
- (b) the use of teaching approaches, strategies and forms of assessment (questions 26 to 41),
- (c) availability and applicability of didactic materials that are adjusted to SEN of learners with SLDs (questions 42 to 45),
- (d) teachers' views on educating young learners with SLDs in integrated units (questions 46 to 52).

Majority of the composed questions are of closed, multiple or only choice options. In case of the latter type of questions, a Likert scale is used with the agree-disagree or like-dislike approach to measure the respondents' opinions and attitudes. Additionally, in order to avoid random answers, closed-ended questions are usually followed by a filter question with which a respondent is asked to justify the selected answer.

Eighteen questions of the survey have an open nature. These questions refer to respondents' individual professional experiences and personal opinions, for which reason it is justified to give the respondents more freedom of expression.

### **9.2.3 Direct observations of English language lessons**

Parallel to the survey, an English language lesson observation form for early education classes was prepared (appendix 3). From 2022 to May 2023, fifteen English language lessons were observed in six cities: Łódź (1), Płock (4), Rzeszów (2), Szczecin (3), Toruń (2), and Warszawa (3). Observations of fifteen foreign language lessons with mixed ability groups of students aged between eight and nine gave a deeper insight into English language lesson conduct. The number of the observed lessons is much lower in comparison to the survey conducted on English language teachers due to the fact that many teachers refused to be observed by giving miscellaneous reasons, i.e. lack of a parental consent, different lesson objectives that would be unsuitable for observation, causing unnecessary stress to the learners with the presence of a stranger. Although all principals of the visited primary schools, as well as, early education teachers of English language were informed about the purpose of the research and anonymity of data collection, only fifteen of them agreed to have their lessons observed.

The observation sheet is composed of two parts. The introductory part which is concerned with the general data about the school unit, number of students in a class, number of students with SLDs, lesson aims, topics, the use of teaching materials and a registered code of the teacher; and the main part which refers to the following six issues:

- (1) types of classroom practice and organisation of class work,
- (2) types of activities developing gross and fine motor skills,
- (3) learners' emotional reactions to the lesson conduct,
- (4) individualisation of class work and the use of teaching materials,



(5) final comments about the lesson conduct.

At lessons, occurrence of particular phenomena were marked by the researcher on the observation sheet each time an action, activity or reaction was noticed. The results of the direct observation were then cumulated and further subjected to an analysis.

#### **9.2.4 Semi-structured interviews with parents of learners with SLDs**

Another research procedure which was used to gather opinions about quality of the educational service and conditions of foreign language education in Polish schools was a semi-structured interview conducted in 2023 with parents of children with SLDs. The main points under discussion concerned four areas:

- (1) systemic solutions for child's sustained development (RQ 2, RQ 4, RQ 5),
- (2) staff professional performance and quality of educational services (RQ 6),
- (3) methods of English language teaching applied to learners with SLDs (RQ 7),
- (4) the use of teaching materials and equipment (RQ 8).

In all cases, the conversation was preceded by an information clause about the scope and use of the interview, as well as about its anonymity. Upon the opening of the interview, parents were asked to give a short characteristics of specific learning disorder that their child was diagnosed with, inform about the diagnostic procedure of SLDs that the child underwent and clarify whether the school staff was acquainted with an opinion issued by a psychological and pedagogical service centre.

For each of the four points under discussion, three or four filter questions were asked by the interviewer. Whenever it was required by the conversation, additional questions for clarification were also added. All interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed in Polish language. Their most important excerpts were underlined in the original text, marked with the time of occurrence (see appendix 4) and subjected to English translation in the main text of the dissertation (see sections 10.1.4.1 – 10.1.4.4). The analysed data complemented information gathered in the survey for teachers and direct lesson observations.

### **9.2.5 Semi-structured interviews with specialists in the field of education**

Apart from conversations with parents of learners with SLDs, also semi-structured interviews were planned to be conducted with specialists in the field of education and SLDs. Due to difficulties in collecting data from the abroad specialists, what was primarily caused by the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of mobility, the researcher decided to use this type of research procedure with reference to specialists in the field of education in Poland. For this reason, representatives of four higher education units in Gdańsk, Łódź, Płock and Warsaw, the head of the board of education in Płock, teachers from two training centres in Płock and Gdańsk, as well as two psychologists and two pedagogues from psychological and pedagogical support centres in Płock and Koszalin were invited via electronic means of communication to participate in the interview. The key objectives of the planned interviews, of which the respondents were informed in advance, addressed four areas:

- (1) implementation of inclusion into the system of education in Poland,
- (2) organisation of educational institutions and support services in Poland with the view to inclusion,
- (3) amendments in tertiary education programmes for English language teacher trainees,
- (4) professional performance of early education teachers of learners with SLDs in the country.

Unfortunately, regardless of initially received agreements for recordings from most of the respondents, they eventually resigned from their participation in the study, although they were offered anonymity. As excuses the persons invited for the interview provided was lack of time or availability, or even lack of sufficient specialist knowledge in the subject matter. Consequently, three interviews were recorded: one with an expert from an academic unit in Gdańsk (E1) specialising in special pedagogy, another one with an expert from an academic unit in Płock who is a specialist in early pedagogy (E2), and the last one which was conducted with two representatives of the teacher training centre in Płock (E3 and E4). Similarly to the procedure of the analysis of the interviews with parents, also in this case the audio-recordings were transcribed into Polish language, and their most important excerpts were underlined in the original text (see appendix 5),

marked with the time of occurrence and translated into English in the main text of the dissertation (see sections 10.1.5.1 – 10.1.5.5).

### **9.3 Methods of data analysis**

The data acquired under the scope of the supplementary study were subjected to an analysis which was expected to show how the outcome of the comparative study (chapter 8) corresponds to the realm of inclusive education in Poland. All the results of the supplementary study were described with reference to the established research questions and co-responded with the research criteria. In the data analysis, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were used.

With reference to the first research procedure concerned with the review of tertiary education programmes for English philology students in Poland, the gathered data was analysed with the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. First of all, the researched academic units were distinguished with reference to the Bachelor and Master level of the studies in English philology. Under each category of studies, a number of academic units offering or not offering teacher training programmes was noted and counted with the use of an extended reading strategy. Particular subjects covering issues related to SEN, SLDs and/ or inclusion were written down and used in the descriptive analysis for exemplification. Findings of this part of the study are presented in forms of an informative figure concerning the number of programmes offering the subject matter issues, as well as, a table with a list of subjects that are clearly dedicated to the themes of inclusive education, SEN and/ or SLDs (see section 10.1.1).

In case of the self-assessment survey conducted with English language teachers in Poland (see appendix 2), also the descriptive methods of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were required. Four problem areas were selected for the analysis within the survey. The first one, covering questions 1 – 25 and concerned with biodata and professional information about the respondents, was analysed with the view to the respondents' formal preparedness and views on cooperation with educational institutions and support services. The aim of this part of the survey was to learn about teachers' range of autonomy, supervision of their activities, as well as cooperation with counselling centres.

Information given in the fiche of the questionnaire concerns the biodata and

general information about the respondents' place of employment, type and level of completed studies. With regard to professional preparedness of the teachers, the primary attention was given to their completion of full master degree studies, post graduate studies and professional training in educating learners with SLDs. Responses in this matter were noted under three categories as follows:

- 'rich professional education' (completion of master degree studies with qualifications in pedagogy and philology, optionally followed by post-graduate studies or participation in at least five various teacher training forms dedicated to SLDs, SEN and inclusion within a period of last five years),
- 'moderate professional education' (completion of master degree studies and participation in at least three teacher training forms dedicated to SLDs, SEN and inclusion within a period of last five years),
- 'basic professional education' (completion of bachelor degree studies with one or no teacher training forms within the last five years).

Other important issues associated with teachers' professionalism are their autonomy in organising lessons and cooperation with support services and school supervising bodies. Responses concerning teachers' autonomy were collected with the use of Likert scale and eventually grouped under three categories of 'no or very little autonomy', 'no option', and 'moderate or large autonomy'. With a view to cooperation, the teachers' responses were marked either as 'positive experience', 'negative experience' or 'no option'. Then, the repeated responses about supervision of teachers' professional performance and cooperation with institutions specialised in SEN were summed.

The following problem area covering questions 26 - 41 was analysed with reference to a lesson conduct including the size of language groups per class, difficulties in a lesson conduct and support of special education teachers, then the applied teaching approach, methods, strategies and forms of assessment. Where necessary, options selected by the respondents were counted and summed, forming a rank of most and least popular type of approaches for stationary and distant education. Additionally, opinions of the respondents about work with mixed ability classes were divided into 'positive views' and 'negative views'.

The third analysed problem area covering questions 42 - 45 referred to the availability and applicability of English language teaching materials in accordance to learners' SEN. In particular, diverse educational sources that were enumerated by the respondents, their sufficiency or insufficiency, and sources of their financing were

gathered.

The final part of the survey analysis (questions 46-52) was focused on opinions and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusive education. The descriptive analysis of the respondents' views was focused on spotting the areas of difficulties in educating learners with SLDs. Problems enumerated in the responses were grouped and ranked with distinction to stationary and distant education.

Responses to closed questions were subjected to a frequency analysis. In case of seventeen of them, the Likert-type scale was used to specify the respondents' level of agreement or disagreement, or to establish a frequency rate of a phenomenon. In this case, the analysed results were presented in forms of bar and pie charts for noticing the tendency. Seven of the closed type questions were supplemented with extensions which required justification to the chosen answers, what allowed for accurate interpretation of the selected responses. In case of responses to open ended questions, a discourse analysis was needed. Each time, the same or very similar phenomenon was noticed, it was counted and summed in order to find a tendency. For example, for question 22, *Who supervises the quality of your work with the disordered learners?*, common responses could be: *the principal*, *the principal and parents*, or *the principal and the school pedagogue*, *nobody*. In such a case, each option would be calculated separately under relevant categories of the principal, parents, school pedagogue, and no supervising body. For accurate understanding of the collected data, some significant quotations were included in the descriptive analysis. The results of the analysis were gathered in form of eleven figures and six tables presented in sections 10.1.2.1 – 10.1.2.5.

The data gathered through direct observations of English language lessons were grouped, ordered and analysed by the means of descriptive statistics shedding light onto the factual state of the inclusive education in Polish schools. Compliant with the research questions, the analysis of the results was performed in accordance to five areas of interest (section 9.2.2). With regard to the first one, types of classroom practice and organisation of class work were observed with a view to the practised foreign language skills and adjustability of offered activities to learners' SEN. For instance, presence of such activities as drawing, colouring, writing words, linking letters, loud and silent reading, and oral practice were marked together with the applied forms of classroom work. The second issue under evaluation referred to an engagement of learners' gross and fine motor skills into the classroom practice. Here, activities including cutting, sticking, linking, ordering, measuring and other kinds of creative expressions were marked. The third

important aspect of the lesson conduct subjected to an analysis addressed attractiveness of a lesson. Positive and negative reactions of the learners to the teacher's instructions expressed in wording, with gestures or facial expressions were observed and interpreted as learners' presence or absence of interest in the subject matter. The fourth of the analysed elements aimed at an evaluation of the use of English language teaching materials. The results of the lesson observations was to show whether the applied methods of English language teaching were supportive for the learners' sustained physical, social and emotional development. Any additional observations or comments were expressed in writing at the end of the observation sheet and subjected to a discourse analysis. Some characteristic observations were provided in the analysis as examples. The structure of the observation sheet required noticing and marking the frequency of requested items. Therefore, each time a particular phenomenon was noticed by the observer, it was marked on the observation form. The results of the direct observation were then cumulated, counted, subjected to an analysis, and finally presented in form of a figure (see section 10.1.3.3) and a table (see section 10.1.3.4).

A descriptive data analysis was applied mainly for the examination of both types of interviews, with parents of learners with SLDs and specialists in the field of education. Three audio-recordings with opinions of parents and also three with specialists in the field of education were transcribed in their original language. The discourse analysis was performed respectively in sections 10.1.4 and 10.1.5. All excerpts of the interviews which were quoted in the discourse analysis of the study were subjected to English language translation performed by the author of the dissertation and underlined in the original Polish transcript. Each question and utterance was consequently marked with reference to the interviewed parent (P) or expert (E) together with the exact timing (T). The same coding was consequently applied as reference marks for citations in the discourse analysis. The results of the analysis were gathered in three tables and a figure (see sections 10.1.4.1 – 10.1.4.4).

#### **9.4 Final comments**

Summing up the organisation of the supplementary study, it needs to be remembered that regardless of the pandemic restrictions and prolonged duration of the COVID-19, the researcher managed to prepare and conduct the study with the use of five different

research procedures aiming at the analysis of the present state of inclusive education of learners with SLDs in Poland. The first of the procedures checked whether foreign language teachers in Poland are prepared to work with inclusive groups of students due to improvements of tertiary education programmes introduced in accordance to the teacher education reform. Fifty tertiary education programmes were taken into consideration in search of specialist subjects dedicated to SEN, SLDs and/ or inclusion. The second research procedure was performed due to the researcher's determination, when shortly after the release of the most restricting limitations caused by the occurrence of the pandemic, the researcher managed to conduct a self-assessment survey with fifty English language teachers of early education. They shared their opinions about the implementation of the inclusive education into Polish schools and informed about their professional experience in teaching learners with SLDs. Sample English language lessons of early education level were observed as the third research procedure, giving an insight into the situation of learners with SLDs in Polish schools. The supplementary study was complemented with two types of interviews conducted with four parents of children with SLDs (study four) and four specialists in the field of Polish education (study five) who also shared their experiences and opinions about the education of children with SLDs and the general condition of inclusion in education in Poland.

## **Chapter 10: Analysis of the results of the supplementary study and discussion**

### **10.0 Introduction**

In the present chapter the analysis of the supplementary study is performed in order to verify whether the conditions for development of inclusive education in Poland are favourable, and if the problems identified in the comparative study, based on the analysis of specialist literature and formal documents, are actually justified. The four criteria appointed for the realisation of the scope of this empirical study, as well as the research questions set in the comparative study, refer exclusively to the situation in Poland. Six out of eight research questions are considered in this supplementary study. Questions one and three could only be answered with reference to the analysis of specialist literature and formal documents and cover the issues of historical background for the development of the scientific interest in SLDs (RQ 1) and the legal basis important for the implementation of the inclusive approach into Polish system of education (RQ 3), which has been achieved in the comparative study.

The results of the comparative study have already shed light on the condition of the inclusive education in the considered countries, as it was summarised in section 8.8 of the dissertation. However, as the researcher is genuinely interested in the foreign language approaches towards young learners with SLDs in Poland, she seeks confirmation for the findings of the comparative study. To fulfil this goal, five additional research procedures were developed for the supplementary study which include: an



analysis of the tertiary education programmes, self-assessment survey for early education teachers, English language lesson observations, semi-structured interviews with parents of learners with SLDs, as well as interviews with specialists in the field of education. The newly applied procedures are hoped to gather information about the following issues in accordance to the given research questions:

- functioning of the already implemented systemic solutions (ad. RQ 2),
- applicability of the recommendations developed via diagnostic procedures of SLDs (RQ4),
- the role of educational institutions and support services in the development of inclusive education (RQ 5),
- professional preparedness of English language teachers for work with inclusive groups of learners (RQ 6),
- the presently applied methods of English language teaching and their suitability for inclusive education (RQ7),
- kinds of teaching materials used by English language teachers of early education learners (RQ 8).

Results of the supplementary study are subjected to an analysis in separate sections and discussed, giving an insight into the present conditions of the inclusive education in Poland and offering potential solutions to the most urgent problems spotted in the study.

## **10.1 Analysis of the results**

### **10.1.1 Results of the analysis of the tertiary education programmes for English philology students in Poland**

An analysis of education programmes for faculties of English Philology run by academic units of general and practical profiles aims at verification whether early education teachers of English are professionally well-prepared for the role of the inclusive teacher (RQ6). Figure 6 below shows the number of academic centres offering subjects about SLDs, SEN and/ or inclusion among the total number of fifty two centres offering the specialisation in teaching. It needs to be noticed that in case of three of them the detailed

information about the content of the programmes was not accessible on the Internet as an access to their programmes is restricted only to their students and academics.

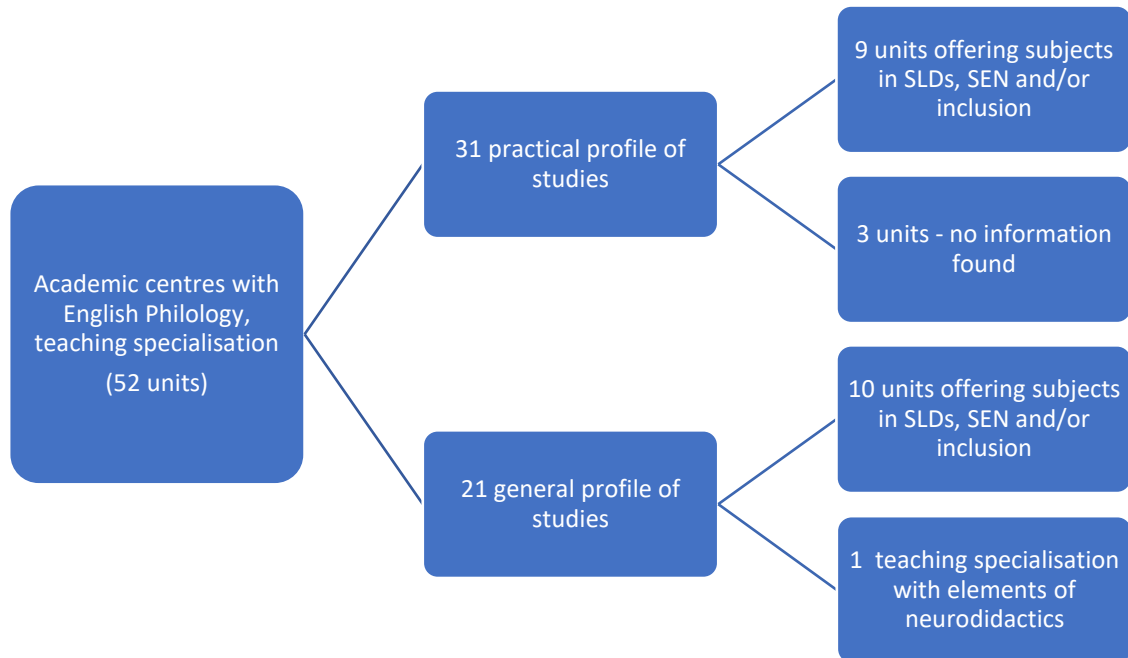


Figure 6: Number of academic centres in Poland offering subjects in SLDs, SEN and/ or inclusion

Among fifty two academic centres, the total number of nineteen academies and universities, whose programmes of studies are revealed to the general public, have already developed subjects dedicated to the issues of SLDs, SEN and/ or inclusion (see table 23). It has also been established that at the University of Humanities and Economics in Łódź ([https://ahe\\_lodz.bip.gov.pl/filologia-obca/](https://ahe_lodz.bip.gov.pl/filologia-obca/)), a separate teaching specialisation of neurodidactics at both the B.A. and M.A. levels has been opened, offering a block of subjects dedicated to the said themes, including positive psychology, alternative education trends and education of learners with SLDs. Most of the subjects are conducted for one semester in form of lectures and discussion classes amounting from fifteen to thirty hours. Table 23 below presents a list of subjects dedicated directly to inclusive education together with the name of the academic unit and its practical (P) or general (G) profile of studies.

Table 23: A list of subjects dedicated to SLDs, SEN and/ or inclusion by Polish academic centres

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Academic centre</b>	<b>Profile (G-general; P-practical)</b>
- selected educational problems of youth and children	John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin	G
- pedagogical diagnostics -developmental psychology (incl. developmental disorders, disharmony) - Work with learners with SEN	University of Białystok	G
- Learning processes and SEN - Learner's development: contexts and disorders - seminar: practical didactic experience analysis	University of Gdańsk	G
- Learner with SEN in the education system - Modern trends in teaching foreign languages	University of Jan Długosz in Częstochowa	G
- Modern trends in teaching foreign languages - SEN at English language lessons	University of National Education Commission in Kraków	G
- SEN - Creating and adapting teaching materials	University of Łódź	G
- Inclusive education - Pedagogical diagnosis	University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce	G
- Inclusive education	University of Kazimierz Pułaski in Radom	G
- Teaching English as a foreign language to learners with special educational needs	University of Warsaw	G
- Support for child development and developmental disharmonies - Pedagogy: Student with SEN - Psychological and pedagogical competences of the teacher	University of Wrocław	G
- Positive psychology - Trends in alternative education - Education of learners with SLDs - Digital didactics in primary school	University of Humanities and Economics in Łódź	G
- Didactics: SEN	Social Academy of Sciences in Łódź	P
- Learners' individual needs in language teaching	European University in Warsaw	P
- Didactics: special challenges in work of English language teacher (SEN, SLDs)	State Academy of Applied Sciences in Krosno	P
- General pedagogy: SEN, SLDs - Developmental and educational psychology: learners	Academy of Jakub Paradyż in Gorzów Wielkopolski	P

with disabilities		
- Educating children with SEN	Ateneum Academy in Gdańsk	P
- Special didactics of English language teaching	Mazovian Academy in Płock	P
- Basics of general didactics with elements of special didactics	Ignatium University in Kraków	P
- Methodology of working with students with special educational needs	Academy of Applied Sciences in Elbląg	P
- Working with a learners with SEN	Łomża Academy	P

It can be noticed that in majority of cases the titles of academic courses refer to special education and special educational needs. Only five of the subjects have a clear reference to inclusive education, either by using the term of inclusion or by referring to it through modern or alternative trends in education. Some courses are dedicated to developing and adjusting teaching materials, what is also connected with the issues of SLDs and SEN.

Among fifty two centres offering specialization in English language teaching, twenty one have extended blocks of subjects in their offer concerning pedagogical and psychological aspects of educating young learners which may include at least some problems under concern. It can be noticed that issues addressing themes of SLDs and SEN, adjustment of teaching materials to learners' individual needs, as well as, teacher's competences in educating and assessing educational effects of learners with educational problems are included in the courses dedicated to didactics. In case of University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań, also the issues concerning teacher and learners' autonomy, various forms of evaluation of educational efforts and projecting are covered by the programme within the subject of didactics.

Based on the analysis of the educational programmes of tertiary studies, it can be stated that the themes of SLDs, SEN and/ or inclusion have already been introduced to some academic syllabi of English Philological faculties in form of separate subjects. In the analysis, it was also confirmed that the said issues are often covered by other pedagogical subjects, though their range may not always be similar. In general, the results show that young teachers of English language have an opportunity to be well-educated and possess the necessary qualities for work with learners with SLDs. However, some doubts arise about teachers' preparedness to develop the inclusive approach, moving towards the concept of universal design, as many of the analysed programmes are more

concentrated on the issue of SEN than on application of alternative methods of teaching and following new trends in education. This can result in a permanent confinement in integration where teachers concentrate on remedial actions, such as adjustment of teaching materials, instead of diversifying their teaching strategies and developing their and their students' autonomy.

### **10.1.2 Analysis of the results of the self-assessment survey for early education**

#### **English language teachers**

The results of the self-assessment survey (appendix 2) were organised in relevance to four research questions (see section 9.1) which referred respectively to an organisation of public educational institutions and support services with a view to education of learners with SLDs (RQ5); education of English language teachers and their professional self-development (RQ6); further, the application of teaching methods that promote inclusive practices (RQ7); and a selection of teaching materials by in-service teachers. Additionally, the respondents were asked to share their views on inclusion in Polish educational conditions.

As this study was conducted within and shortly after the occurrence of COVID-19 pandemic, some questions of the survey also referred to the educational conditions enforced by its activity. For instance, the respondents were asked to share their opinions about any changes in the applied teaching strategies and used materials. Moreover, they had an opportunity to express their personal opinion about the problems that stemmed from the distant education.

#### **10.1.2.1 Supervision of educational bodies and cooperation with support services**

Rich and moderate professional education of the respondents predisposes them to become good teachers of inclusive education. However, their educational activities are subjected to control of supervising bodies such as the school headmasters and school inspectorates both of which may have an influence on teachers' autonomy. Further, the quality of teachers' professional performance may depend on their cooperation with bodies offering

such support services. It is understood that the relationship between subject teachers, supervising and supporting institutions and persons has an impact on the quality of teaching services as it sets certain boundaries for teachers' performance. The issues of autonomy and cooperation between the said parties are related to the research question concerning the organisation of educational institutions and support services (RQ5). Opinions of the respondents about their autonomous acting and cooperation with others helps to assess how the assumed cooperation functions in practice.

According to the received responses, majority of the teachers (58%) believe to have moderate or even large autonomy, and only nine respondents (18%) are convinced to be deprived of it. What surprises is the fact that twelve of them (24%) do not express their opinion about this issue. It can be assumed that either they do not execute their autonomy or, what seems more probable, do not want to share opinions about this issue for some reasons. In the opinion of the researcher, lack of realisation of the power of autonomy is a serious obstacle in becoming an inclusive teacher whose independent decisions as to the choice of teaching methods, selection of strategies and undertaken actions are crucial for successful development of the inclusive approach. 'No option' together with 'no or little autonomy' option definitely indicate some problems with autonomy and as such constitute a counterweight to the positive responses in this measure. Additionally, majority of the respondents who believe to have autonomy admit that it is limited to decisions concerning a lesson organisation and conduct only. Some single responses that went beyond the autonomous lesson conduct referred to the responsibility for the entire process of education and for maintaining regular contact with parents, especially of children with SEN. Among negative comments, some respondents mention lacking autonomy as majority of their decisions is dependent of the headmaster and even parents. Almost all of the respondents agreeably admit that their actions are controlled mainly by headmasters and sometimes also by parents. The teachers underline that their autonomous activities are sometimes limited by headmasters who unwillingly agree on non-standard lessons outside the school building and always have a decisive voice in every undertaking planned by the teacher. Further, some of the teachers complain that they have to ask their supervisor and parents' consent for activities which exceed a standard lesson conduct. They also complain about the necessity to always follow the curriculum as this aspect is meticulously supervised by the school inspectorate. In the opinion of two respondents, also an obligation to assess students' educational efforts on standard basis with grades precludes the use of non-standard methods of teaching. They

complain to be expected to organise classes mainly on the basis of the standard teaching materials from the textbooks, what in the teachers' opinions violates their style of work. One of the respondents also mentioned that, by the rule, any permanent reorganisation of class desks was forbidden, and their everyday rearrangement was excessively time consuming, for which reason the standard lay out was maintained.

What is surprising in the teachers' responses is the fact that regardless of their opinions about limited autonomy, the teachers positively apprise the quality of formal supervision performed by the headteachers. Majority of them (74%) express their very good or good opinion about this matter, justifying that the monitoring of their work is correct and helps them organise the necessary documentation. Only a few of the respondents (26%) chose neutral responses, however, complaining in their justifications about insufficient support from the headmasters, being left with educational problems. Figure 7 below shows the distribution of the teachers' views on formal supervision performed by the headteachers.

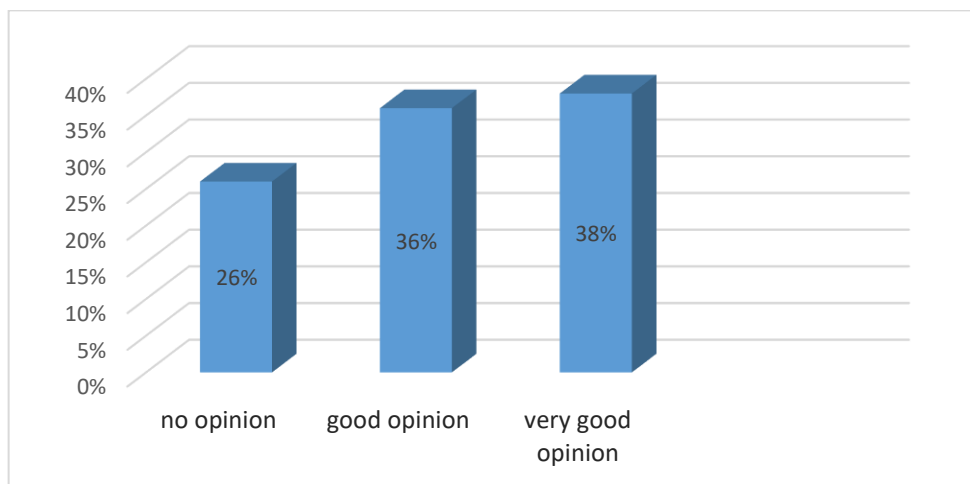


Figure 7: Opinion of the teachers about their educational practices being supervised by the headteachers

With reference to cooperation with support services, the respondents mention their relations with counselling centres that diagnose learners with SLDs, cooperation with special education teachers supporting the lesson conduct, the school pedagogue and other school teachers. Only three out of fifty respondents did not express their opinion about this issue. Figure 8 below shows the teachers' opinions about their cooperation with support services.

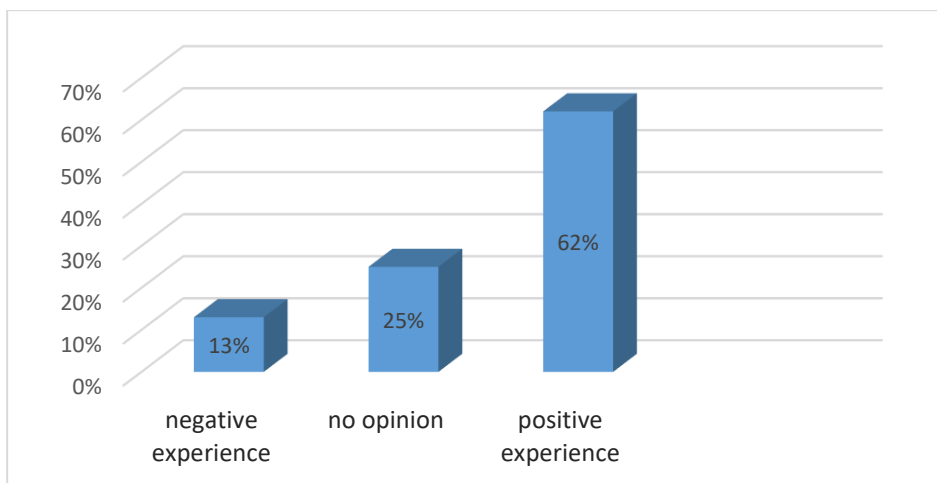


Figure 8: Opinion of the teachers about their cooperation with support services

Most positively, the respondents perceive their cooperation with special education teachers whose support for learners with SLDs is highly valued. In the opinion of the respondents, their help is beneficial for both the learners with SLDs and also for the teachers with reference to the lesson conduct. In Poland, only in justified cases, learners with SEN are supported by special education teachers at lessons. In the survey, only 38 percent of the respondents indicate that they often or always ran classes accompanied by special education teachers. What is more, 44 percent of them, are either deprived of this sort of cooperation or are rarely supported in the lesson conduct. The situation is similarly dramatic at indirect, online forms of education as it is shown in figure 9 below.

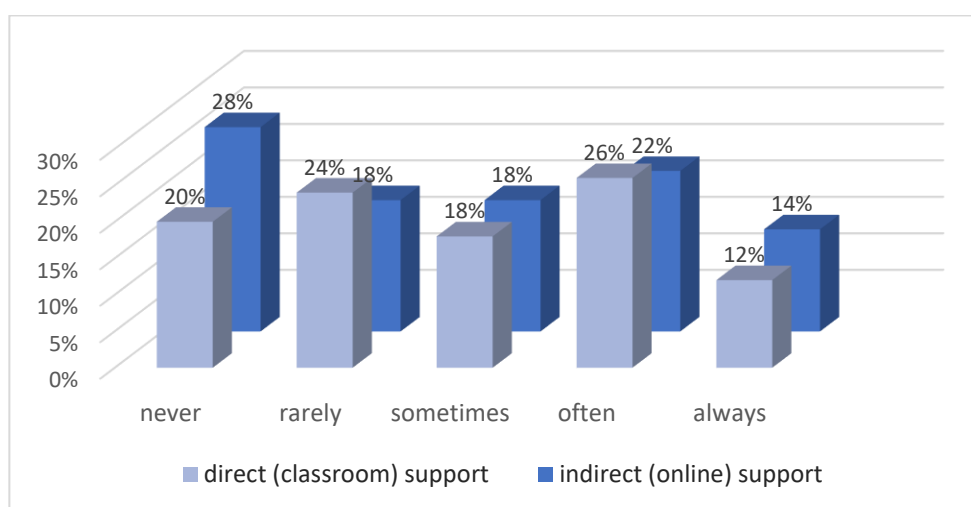


Figure 9: Support of special education teachers in lesson conduct

Another group of specialists whose support is highly appreciated by the 26 percent



of teacher respondents are school pedagogues and psychologists. They are said to know learners well and therefore are able to offer good practical advice for the teachers. Also, cooperation and exchange of experiences between subject teachers is perceived by the respondents as an important source of information. Among low rated quality services, the respondents indicate cooperation with counselling centres (6%) and parents (4%). The respondents are rather sceptical about the supportive role of these institutions, complaining that the received pieces of advice, if any, were purely theoretical, lacking an individual approach towards individuals with SLDs and providing general recommendations included in certificates. Specialists from the centres are said to fail to offer the teachers any support in solving particular problems. The teachers also notice that the recommendations issued by the counselling centres are not always coherent with the actual state or included contradicting and even incomprehensible requirements. Opinions about support services of the headteachers are divergent, either highly positive or definitely negative. They are praised for constructive support in lesson conduct but criticised for lack of interest in individual problems of the learners and teachers or quite contrary for too intensive interference into the teachers' activities. Finally, a few negative opinions are expressed about the cooperation with parents who adopt either an overdemanding or indifferent attitude. In table 24 the summary of the respondents' opinions about the considered quality of cooperation with particular bodies and persons with a view to SLDs are collected.

Table 24: Opinion of the teachers about the quality of cooperation

Type of cooperating body	Good service quality	Poor service quality
Special education teachers	36%	-
School pedagogues and psychologists	26%	-
Other subject teachers	2%	-
School headmasters	42%	26%
Counselling centres	6%	32%
Parents	4%	12%
School inspectorates	-	4%

### 10.1.2.2 Teachers' education and professional experience

In the initial part of the survey, participants were requested to provide information concerning biodata and their education predisposing them to work with inclusive groups

of students. They were also asked to reveal their current place of employment in order to confirm that their professional experience reflects the conditions in which young learners with SLDs are educated. The received responses are related to a research question about the education and competences of foreign language teachers employed in primary schools that offer education on integrative or inclusive basis in Poland (RQ 6).

According to the results, almost all of fifty respondents (96 percent) constitute women who are aged from 25 to 55 years. Majority of them are either young, within the age group between 25 to 30 (30 percent), or middle aged, between 31 to 45 (54 percent). The least numerous group is composed of very experienced teachers aged 46 to 55 (16 percent). The experience in the teaching profession vary significantly between 2 to 30 years, though almost half of the respondents (40 percent) indicate to have between 7 to 15 years of experience. These values correspond to the number of years through which the teachers have gained their experience in work with mixed ability classes. The respondents who admit to have little experience in teaching learners with SLDs, lasting between 2 to 6 years (26%) are followed by those with moderate experience of 7 to 15 years (40%). The most experienced group of teachers is represented by over 30 percent of the participants who claim to have worked with disordered learners for 16 to 30 years. In table 25 below the above information concerning biodata are gathered for greater transparency.

Table 25: Biodata and professional experience of the respondents

<b>Biodata:</b>	<b>Gender</b>	Women	96%
		Men	4%
	<b>Age</b>	25-30	30%
		31-45	54%
		46-55	16%
<b>Years of experience in teaching profession</b>		2-6	28%
		7-15	40%
		16-30	32%
<b>Years of experience in teaching learners with SLDs</b>		2-6	28%
		7-15	40%
		16-30	32%

With reference to their place of employment, all of the teachers state to be employed in public schools, indicating however, that 28 percent of them have a status of an integrative unit. In the opinion of the respondents, 94 percent of the educational institutions offer integration as the mainstream approach, and 6 percent also ran an individual path of education or special education. None of the respondents mention the

inclusive nature of the school approach towards learners with SLDs.

Considering formal education of the respondents, the results of the survey show that all of them have the required competences to work with young learners and teach English language. Their paths of education differ, though. Eleven of the respondents (27%) inform to have master degree either in pedagogy or English philology with additional bachelor studies of the other specialisation, what entitles them to seek employment as early education tutors and English language teachers at the same time. This group of respondents also includes those who have completed post-graduate studies in (specific) learning disorders or participated in numerous professional post-graduate trainings dedicated to SLDs. Due to their well-rounded education, they are considered to be best prepared for work with young learners. The second large group is composed of those who gained either bachelor (35%) or master degrees (16%) in English philology, and show moderate interest in professional trainings amounting at least to three forms of relevant trainings undergone within the last five years. They are believed to have wide professional knowledge and well-rounded practical skills in teaching a foreign language to young learners. However, they are not tutors of early education groups, but specialise in foreign language teaching only. In case of the remaining participants, their education is diversified. They inform to have completed bachelor philological studies supplemented with some or no basic professional training. Some of them are graduates of early pedagogy with qualifications in teaching English to young learners. Their participation in trainings dedicated to SLDs or SEN is rather poor (14%). In four cases, respondents provided incomplete information about their education (8%), for instance lacking details about specialisation of the studies, what precludes their categorisation. For better understanding, the data are composed in figure 10 with distinction to rich, moderate and basic professional education of primary school teachers.

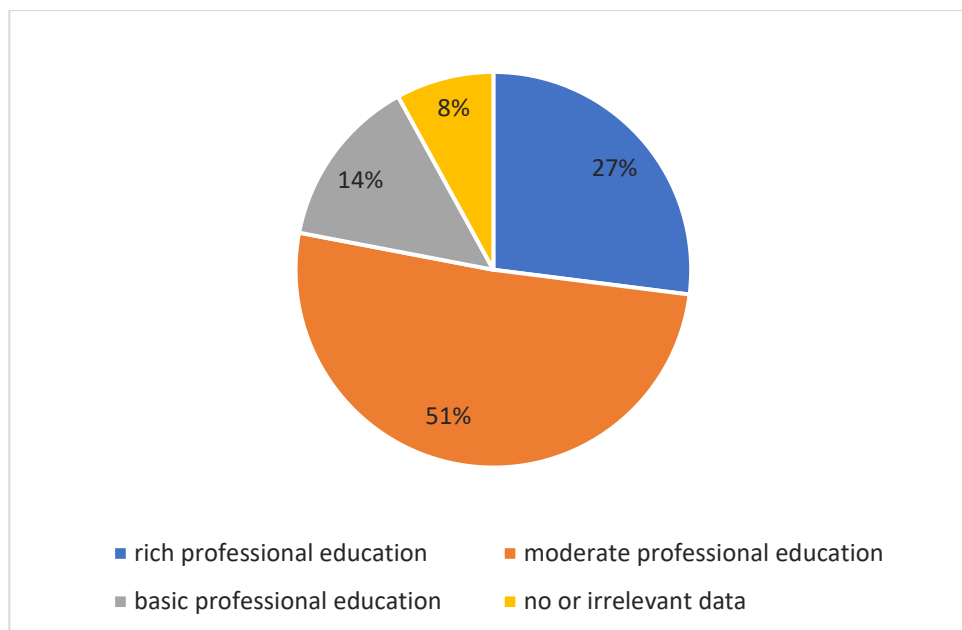


Figure 10: Professional education of the respondents

In order to confirm their professional competences in educating learners with SLDs, the respondents were asked to indicate the sources from which they gain professional knowledge and skills for work with mixed ability groups of students. In their responses, the highest rank is awarded to personal experiences in teaching learners with SEN (42%), followed by professional trainings (28%). Many young teachers also appreciate the professional knowledge gained about the problem within the scope of their tertiary studies and during apprenticeship before they became professionals (23%). Additionally, attending theme conferences, getting acquainted with specialist literature and undertaking post-graduate studies are mentioned occasionally as supplementary sources of information about SLDs (9%). The fact that the teachers participate in various professional trainings is also confirmed by the frequency with which they undertaken additional forms of training. In particular, all of the respondents claim to have taken part in professional trainings within the last five years. The highest number of them (72%) undertook a professional course only once or twice in this period of time, what can be excused by some impediments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic precluding their in-person participation in trainings. Also, the themes of trainings differ, and not all of them are dedicated to the problem of SLDs though refer to SEN. In their responses, the participants point to the problem of teaching autistic learners as the most urgent nowadays. Only 11 respondents admit to participation in trainings dedicated specifically to dyslexia, whereas barely one of them mentions a course in pedagogical edification for

learners with dysphasia. A few respondents recollect trainings targeted at the use of modern technological solutions in linguistic education of young learners (7%). In nine cases, the themes of trainings do not cover the problem of SLDs. The issue of inclusion is not mentioned as a theme of any training, though some of them are said to be associated with the concept of inclusive education as two of the mentioned courses were dedicated to individualisation of the teaching process and other three to formative assessment.

Majority of the respondents (78%) admit that they have to pay for their participation in professional trainings at least sometimes, and only a few of them confirm the courses are costless (18%). Almost all of the respondents agreeably admit that participation in various forms of professional trainings have significantly enriched their professional knowledge and improved teaching skills (80%). Only a few of them are hesitant in their opinions (15%) or express their dissatisfaction (5%).

### **10.1.2.3 Teaching methods and strategies used by the teachers**

Inclusive teachers are advised to reach for methods of teaching which are compliant with the assumption of the humanistic approach. The analysis of the teachers' responses with a view to their cooperation and supervision have already indicated that using non-conventional methods may be problematic in the existing system of education and in opposition to the requirements set by the supervising bodies. The analysis of the survey results that refers to the research question about the applied methods of English language teaching (RQ 7) allows to contrast the theoretical assumptions in this matter with the real school situation. The analysis refers in particular to four problems connected with a lesson conduct, including the size of language groups, difficulties in teaching learners with SLDs, the use of teaching methods, strategies and forms of assessment. The gathered data additionally refer to educational conditions under the occurrence of COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the received responses, English language lessons are conducted in groups from ten to even twenty eight students. More than half of the respondents (60%) indicate that an average group of students does not exceed a number of twenty. Due to presently binding formal requirements, early education classes are not subjected to obligatory division into groups for foreign language lessons and may include maximum twenty five children. This number can be additionally extended due to inclusion of

Ukrainian children, reaching a total number of twenty nine students per class, while in case of integrative units, an early education class should not exceed twenty students. In the opinion of the teachers participating in the survey (16%), non-divided classes are overcrowded, what negatively influences the quality of a lesson conduct. In their opinion, children educated in large groups have limited movability, therefore organising any communicative game or play is very difficult, causing chaos and loud noise. The teachers have admitted that partly for these reasons they choose the PPP model which helps them maintain control over the lesson conduct and discipline learners. Figure 11 below shows the layout of students per early education class.

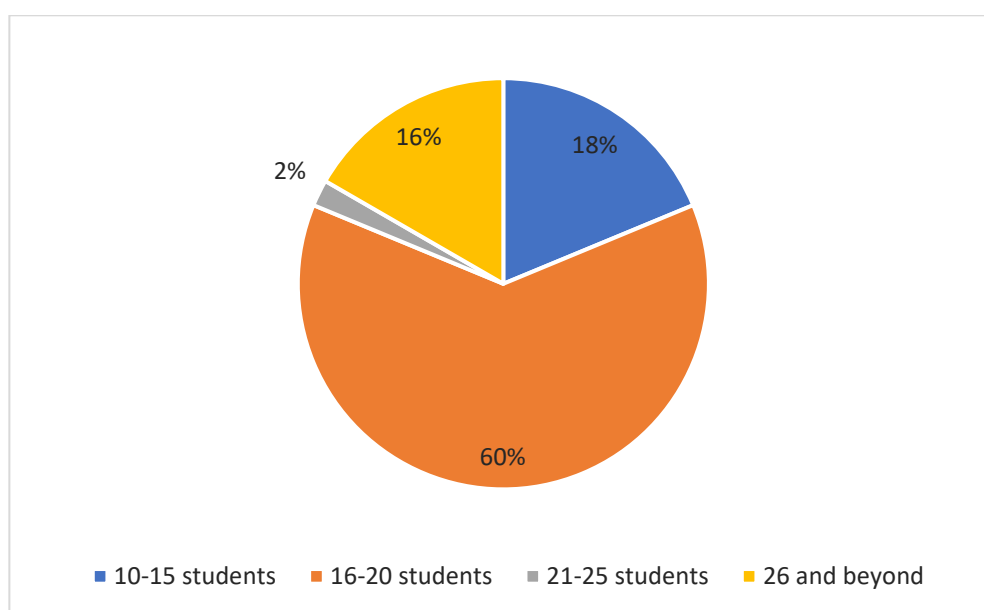


Figure 11: Number of students per early education class

Another issue associated with the number of students per group refers to the number of learners with SEN per class. In the survey, the teachers revealed that although a formally acceptable number of learners with SEN per class cannot exceed five children, this refers to individuals with learning difficulties confirmed with a certified opinion of a counselling centre. However, some respondents (14%) admit that the number of learners with SEN may significantly go beyond the obligatory limit, reaching a number of even nine learners with SEN per group. The problem seems to be serious as many parents often do not express their will to have their children diagnosed even when they are notified about educational problems by the teacher. This issue is also underlined by the respondents in relation to their cooperation with parents (see section 10.1.2.5). Moreover,

38 percent of the respondents admit that the number of learners with SEN per group reaches its top, amounting five or six persons. To have a clear view to the above presented issues, the results are gathered in figure 12 below.

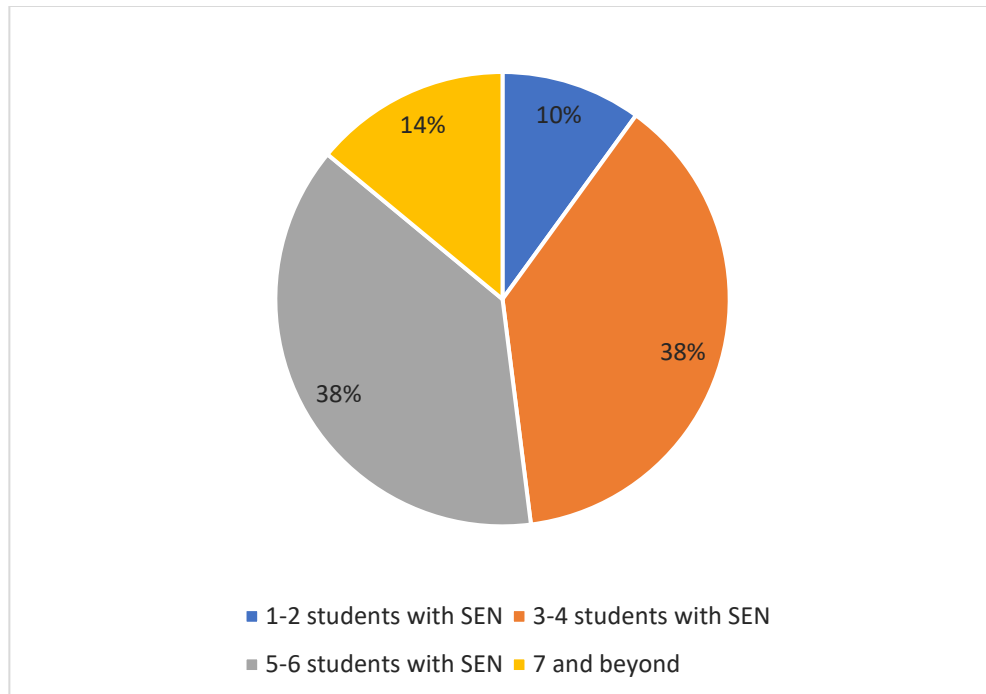


Figure 12: Number of learners with SEN per early education class

With reference to the lesson conduct, the respondents were asked to indicate the most problematic tasks in educating learners with SLDs. Among five given options two most commonly selected are: recognising abilities and limitations of learners with SLDs (76%) and adjusting the level of difficulty in tasks (46%). None of the respondents mention difficulties in organising and conducting lessons in the presence of special education teachers, what confirms the teachers' positive opinion about this kind of cooperation. A few of the respondents also mark a need for constant self-development (14%), necessity to adjust teaching materials (10%) and forms of evaluation (8%) to learners' SEN. The results of this part of the survey show that regardless of teachers professional preparedness and participation in various forms of professional training, educating learners with SLDs is still a challenge. In an educational situation where learners have different needs and struggle with various learning difficulties, the teachers believe that the best solution is to focus on individual needs of the disordered students. In this way, however, they do not really give enough attention to other learners. They act quite contrary to the inclusive approach in which non-standard methods and strategies of

teaching are used to satisfy the needs of all learners regardless of their abilities.

In order to verify which methods of English language teaching are most often applied by the teachers, the respondents were firstly asked to indicate their preferable methods of teaching the foreign language, then choose commonly used forms of work and teaching strategies. Much as the first task would show the declared approach or method, the following two tasks were used to verify the target approach or method with the class practice. Table 26 below shows the popularity rank of the approaches, methods or strategies declared by the respondents in direct teaching.

Table 26: Ranking of the most commonly declared approaches, methods and strategies of teaching English language to young learners

No	Declared approach, method or strategy	Responses
1.	Activating strategies (games, play, songs, rhyming)	26%
2.	Communicative Approach	14%
3.	PPP	12%
4.	Audiolingual Method	10%
5.	TPR	9%
6.	Drama	7%
7.	TBL (incl. project work)	7%
8.	Direct Method/ Natural Approach/ Cognitive Method	3% each
9.	Individual Approach	2%
10.	Integration/ Storytelling/ The Silent Way Method/ CLIL	1% each

The respondents mark that they rarely limit their teaching to one particular approach or method. Depending on lesson goals, they declare to use interchangeably elements of various methods. According to the rank, the teachers claim to base their teaching on activating strategies which include games and play, learning songs and rhymes. The second position in the rank is taken by the communicative approach suggesting intensive practice of language skills, especially speaking with organisation of students' work in groups and pairs. The third most willingly chosen model of a lesson conduct is the PPP based on explanatory strategies with teacher-centred organisation of lessons and mainly individual work of students. What is interesting, some teachers declare to follow TBL, recognising this approach as project work.

Asked about teaching methods applied for distant learning, majority of the teachers reply to use the same methods and strategies as in case of direct education (42%). Apart from activating methods, many respondents (18%) suggest the use of the PPP with more written grammar and vocabulary practice. They underline the importance, or even necessity, of using textbooks. The respondents complain that online education sets certain



limitations on previously applied methods and strategies. Problems occur especially in relation to project and team work, exercises engaging movement, singing and gaming. The respondents repeatedly inform to be forced by the teaching conditions to resign from activating strategies in favour of explanatory ones. From the teachers' perspective, the period of COVID pandemic brought more disadvantages than benefits in the choice of teaching methods. Also, few teachers (8%) mention the advantages of including IT solutions for education, such as using the Internet educational platforms, applications and sites with songs, rhymes and stories. The occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a rather mild influence on the teachers' selection of teaching methods, afterwards. Only twenty six percent of them have decided to improve their teaching strategies by adding new technological solutions into their professional practice.

The respondents provide various reasons for their choices of teaching methods. Most of them (36%) underline the necessity to adjust the methods of teaching to learners' developmental abilities, followed by those who underline the importance of educational success (24%). Some of the respondents stress motivational aspects of learning a foreign language (8%), lesson goals (5%), trends in education (2%), a need to use a particular coursebook (5%) and a few minor reasons as presented in figure 13 below.

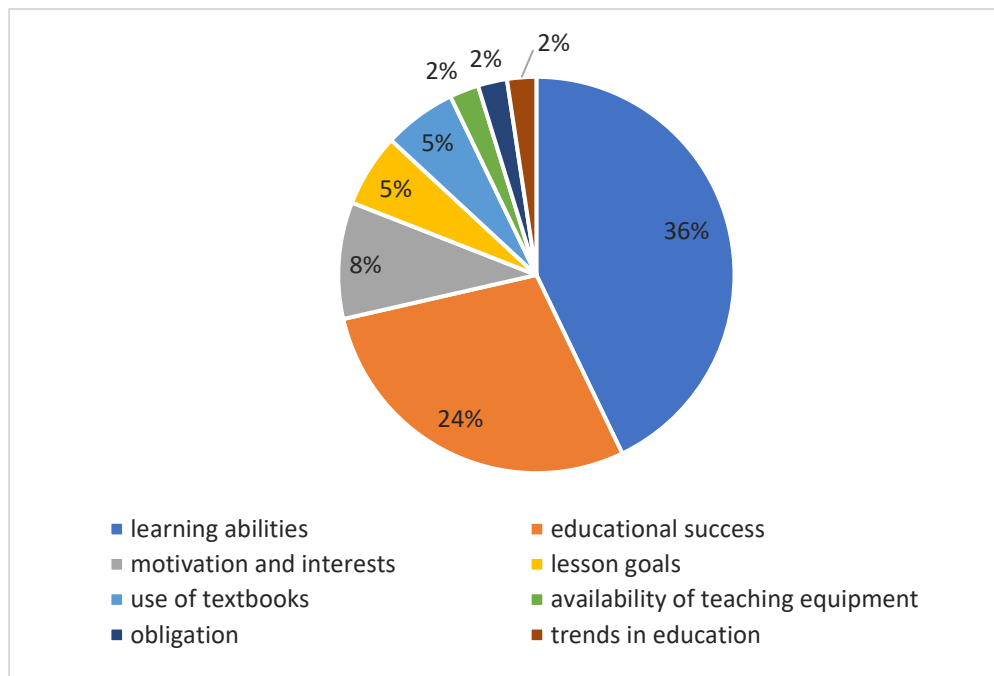


Figure 13: Reasons for selecting methods of teaching

Regardless of the teachers' declarations concerning the applied approaches, methods and strategies of teaching, their practical use at English language lessons was

additionally verified in the following part of the survey where more detailed questions concerning the lesson conduct were asked. A few more inquiries referred to the most often applied forms of students' work at lessons, usability of suggested teaching strategies and ways of satisfying individual needs of the learners.

With reference to the first aspect, the figure below shows the popularity of various forms of work applied by the teachers in direct and indirect education.

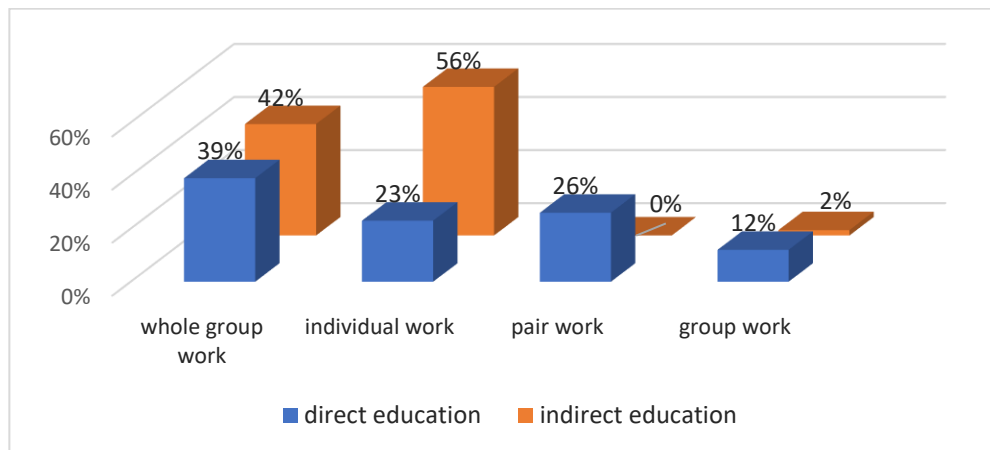


Figure 14: The applied forms of work in direct and indirect teaching

According to the gathered data, a few conclusive remarks can be made. Firstly, the applied forms of work do not confirm a vast use of communicative approach, TBL or activating strategies as pair work and group work; even summed together, they do not exceed the amount of whole work. Secondly, individual work, which in case of activating strategies is limited to minimum, is placed as the second most often applied form of work what may suggest strong popularity of the PPP model, probably accompanied by the elements of the humanistic approach (TPR, the Silent Way) or the audiolingual method. Thirdly, according to the results, the use of TBL and project work by the respondents needs to be considered as purely declarative. The overwhelming presence of whole and individual work at online lessons confirms this fact even more as only two percent of the respondents informed about the use of pair work for indirect teaching.

With reference to the applied teaching strategies, the teachers indicate brainstorming, role playing, gaming and playing at the top of popularity. Almost equally important for them are language drills, whereas problem solving activities and discussions turn to be the least valuable. In case of indirect education, the greatest disproportions in the choice of teaching strategies occur in the use of games and play which note a

significant drop of 9 percent, as well as presentations which gain popularity of more than 10 percent. The results concerning the use of teaching strategies are compliant with the strategies declared earlier by the respondents. The tendencies and changes are presented in the figure below with distinction made between direct and indirect teaching.

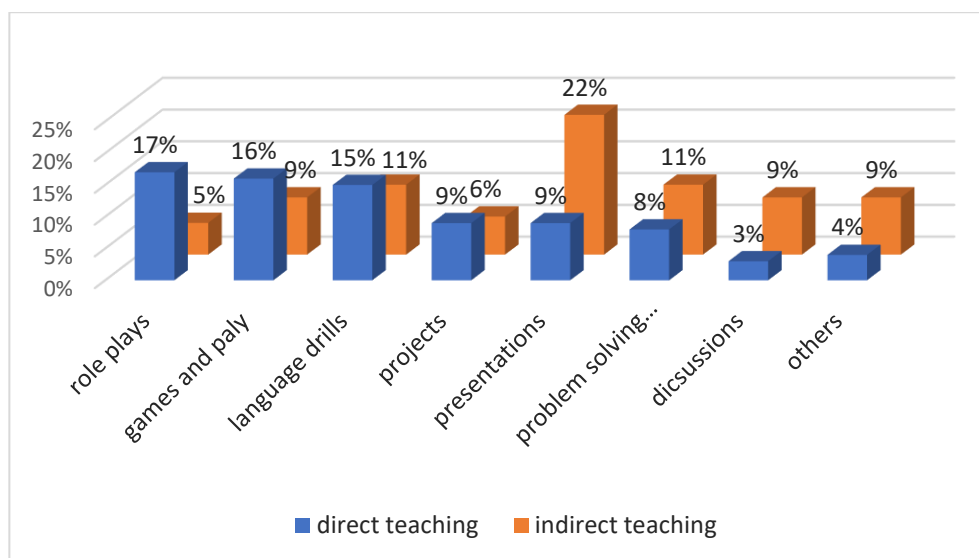


Figure 15: The applied strategies of teaching in direct and indirect education

Among other strategies of teaching the respondents mention storytelling and reading practice, language play and tasks with the use of audiovisual techniques, riddles, drama, songs and rhymes, grammar and vocabulary written practice, and drawing.

A very important aspect of teaching a foreign language to learners with SLDs refers to the use of teaching methods which satisfy learners individual and special needs. For this reason, the respondents were asked to share their ways for meeting the learners' needs. The most common solutions suggested by the teachers include: prolonged time for task completion (22%), additional explanation and individual support in task completion (20%), selection of alternative tasks (16%), monitoring (10%). The least common solutions turn out to be avoidance of correction of orthographic errors (4%) and release from task completion (4%). With reference to online education, the respondents confirm to use exactly the same forms of support. A few teachers stress the importance of following recommendations of counselling centres included in certified opinions.

The results allow to assume that teachers of English language possess specialised knowledge about SLDs and use various remedial steps to children in the development of language skills. However, providing individual support for learners with SLDs makes the

teachers feel overloaded and in consequence burnt out, especially when a special education teacher is not present in the class. What is more, teachers' financial situation adds to the problem. A firm majority of them (88%) admit not to receive extras to their remuneration for work in difficult conditions as they are employed with general education not special education units, and the factual number of learners with SLDs per class is blurred.

Another issue which is closely connected with a selection of methods of teaching touches evaluation of learners' educational efforts. In Poland, learners of early education are promoted to higher levels by positive statement of their educational achievements at the end of each school year. In school practice, however, grades are allowed by the system of education and generally used as a form of assessment by early education teachers. This state of art is also confirmed by the research results of both comparative and supplementary studies where almost all of the inquired respondents (94%) agree that educational efforts of their students are subjected to grading as this procedure is approved by the board of teachers at schools. Moreover, the respondents explain that the rules for awarding grades are composed in form of a document known as the school internal system of evaluation which includes the scale of grades that all teachers have to follow. A few of the respondents (6%) explain that, apart from the obligatory grades, they endeavour to complement students for their educational efforts.

The teachers' opinions about the relevance of using scales of grades are divided. Exactly 40 percent of the respondents state that the necessity to grade learners' efforts has an influence on their choice of teaching methods, whereas 42 percent decide the opposite. In their justifications the teachers state that the obligation to assess learners' intellectual development with grades entails organising written tests for which students need to be prepared via execution of similar tasks at lessons. Some of the respondents are of the opinion that grades are needed for students and their parents to inform them about the strengths and weaknesses of the children and as such constitute a form of feedback. It is also noticed that grades are a just and objective form of assessment that leaves no room for doubts. Those teachers who express their negative opinion about assessing students' educational efforts with grades persuade that children should not focus on their grades but on developing their knowledge and skills. What is more, they notice that poor grades are demotivating for learners and therefore they are harmful. Regardless of their different views, almost all respondents (90 percent) admit that grades are decisive for a promotion of learners to higher levels of education for which reason they should be used to them

from very early stages.

The analysis of the applied forms of assessment allows to think that Polish teachers evaluate learners' educational efforts with standard measures. Although they assure that in the choice of teaching methods they mainly follow learners' individual needs adequately to the pace of students' intellectual development, they admit that grades are a convenient form of assessment which has been approved and widely applied in the national system of education.

#### **10.1.2.4 The use of teaching materials**

Referring to the choice of methods of English language teaching in the previous section 10.1.2.3, the respondents have declared to use some strategies which definitely demand a use of teaching materials that go beyond the textbooks. Among them are songs, rhymes, materials for project works, games and play. All of them need to be sourced in agreement with learners' SEN. The results of the analysis of the specialist literature (section 7.7) have revealed that Polish teachers have difficulty in selecting and adjusting the authentic materials. For this reason, the teachers participating in the survey were asked to share their opinions about the types of materials they use for teaching English language and their availability (RQ 8).

In response to this research question, almost all of the teachers (84%) admit to always or often base their teaching on textbooks, whereas 16 percent of them apply standardised materials sometimes. The ratios remain virtually the same in case of indirect education. The fact that textbooks are considered to be the most important teaching source has already been discussed in section 7.7, and the survey results confirm the earlier findings. Textbooks are trusted because they fulfil the requirements of the national curriculum. It must be noticed, however, that regardless of their expediency and teachability, textbooks are not adjusted to learners' SEN and may also be found monotonous by students. Therefore, in the research, the use of own teaching materials was also asked about. According to the received responses, most of the teachers (62%) always or often develop own materials, whereas only 8 percent of them do it rarely or never. With reference to online teaching, also a high number of the respondents confirm to develop their own teaching materials (58%), however some of them (20%) inform to rarely or never prepare such materials. The results indicate that in case of indirect

education in comparison to the direct one more teachers base their work on standardised sources, mainly a textbook. The figure 16 below presents these trends in details for both direct and indirect forms of education.

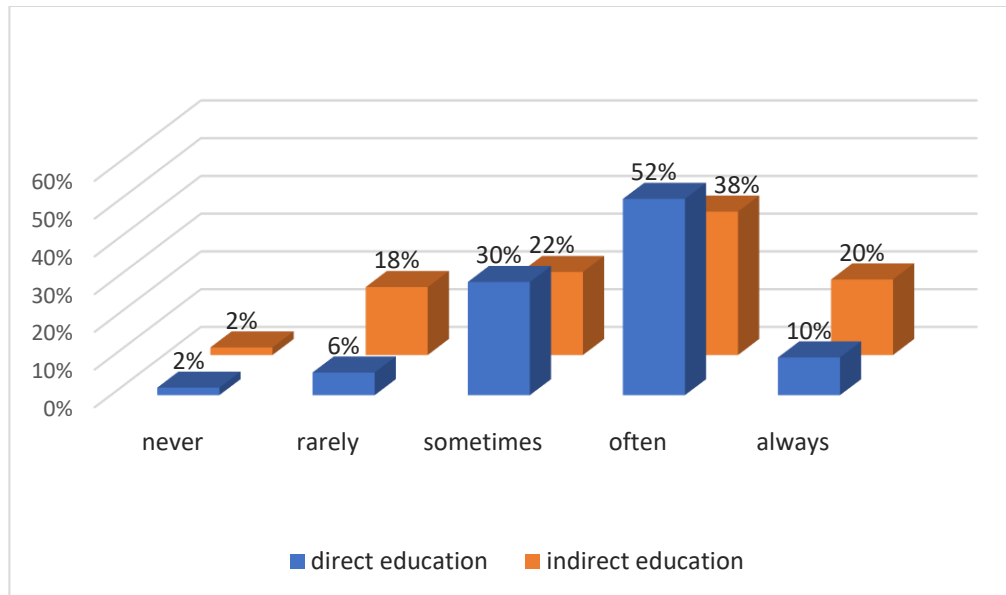


Figure 16: The use of own teaching materials in direct and indirect education

Teachers' willingness to use textbooks as a main source of teaching is also confirmed by their belief that non-standardised materials are difficult to find and require adjustments. The findings in the comparative part of the study (table 22) are confirmed by the results of the survey. Majority of the respondents declare that English language non-standardised teaching materials dedicated to learners' with SLDs are hardly reachable or not available at all (42%). Additionally, almost the same number of them (38%) are indecisive about this issue. Only 20 percent of the teachers have no problems in sourcing non-standardised materials.

In their responses, the teachers also confirm that among teaching resources only textbooks are complementary. They inform that there are three financing sources of teaching materials which include the school (11%), parents (14%) and teachers (57%). According to the explanations, the school is responsible for buying the necessary equipment like computer sets, monitors or recorders. Parents usually are asked to buy materials for writing for their children and any additional textbooks suggested by the teacher. Expenses for all remaining teaching materials have to be covered by teachers themselves. Some of the respondents notice that additional teaching materials, especially

electronic ones, are available free of costs on the Internet. They also inform that there are some English language learning platforms and applications that offer teaching resources free of charge. The figure 17 below presents the discussed proportions of financing teaching materials.

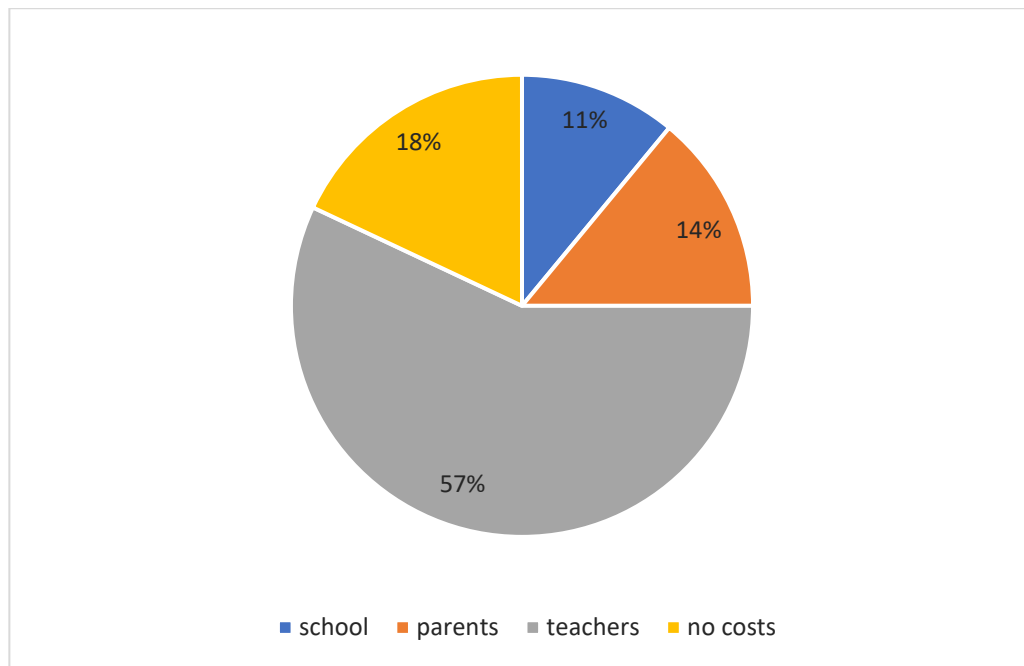


Figure 17: Financing sources of teaching materials

According to the results of the analysis referring to the applied teaching materials, it can be concluded that English language teachers in the country are committed to the use of textbooks in their professional practice for two reasons: they are easily available and costless, both for teachers and students. Additionally to the textbooks, some teachers have also developed their own materials or try to adjust the existing ones in response to SEN of their students. Their efforts, however, may be insufficient in the context of inclusive education which requires the use of a variety of teaching materials and different sources. Polish schools are underfinanced, still missing modern equipment, what has also been proven by the research results. In order to teach autonomously, teachers need to diversify teaching resources, what, in Polish educational conditions, means investing their private sources in purchase of non-standardised teaching materials.

### 10.1.2.5 Teachers' views on inclusive education of young learners with SLDs

Based on their professional experience, more than half of the surveyed teachers (66 %) believe to be well-prepared to educate learners with SLDs. Some of them (32 %) are hesitant in their opinions and only one person expressed her doubts about this issue. The analysis of the results concerning teachers' professional education (fig. 10) allows to state that they possess specialist knowledge and valuable experience in educating learners with SLDs. Asked about their views how they would find themselves in the inclusive education and whether they feel prepared for this professional challenge (RQ 6), they expressed their concerns. First of all, they underline that work with mixed ability groups is definitely more demanding both for them, as well as for students. Almost ninety percent of the teachers believe that educating individuals with SLDs is a challenge for them regardless of their professional and specialist knowledge about the issue. Similar opinions are expressed with reference to distant teaching, which in the opinion of only 12 percent of the respondents does not make a distinction from the direct teaching. At the same time, the teachers believe that mainstream units are the best places for educating learners with SLDs, by which fact they show their understanding of the concept of integrative or inclusive education. Only two of the respondents (4%) express their doubts in this matter. Moreover, majority of the teachers (58%) share the view that the legislator's decision about compulsory foreign language education of learners with SEN is justified, though twenty eight percent of them have certain doubts.

In the implementation of foreign language teaching objectives and content, the respondents report to face various difficulties which may discourage them from integration or inclusion. They are enumerated in the order of importance in table 27 below.

Table 27: A list of difficulties in direct teaching of English language to learners with SLDs

No.	Difficulties in teaching objectives and content to individuals with SLDs (stationary education)
1.	Difficulties in teaching certain language skills: writing (11%), reading (8%), listening (4%), speaking and pronunciation (4%)
2.	Necessity to use textbooks (17%)
3.	Lack of learners' concentration span (13%)
4.	Difficulties in adjusting teaching materials (11%)



5. Slow pace of work (7%)
  6. Excessive amount of teaching content (6%)
  7. Availability of teaching materials (4%)
  8. Lack of homework or textbook (4%)
  9. Overpopulated classes (3%)
  10. Lack of linguistic abilities (3%)
  11. No problems (5%)
- 

From the teachers' perspective, the greatest difficulty in teaching English to young learners with SLDs is associated with complexity of the problems. Regardless of the specificity of SLDs, their expression may differ (see section 2.2). The teachers have complained that in larger groups of students predicting problems and trying to satisfy learners' SEN is simply impossible. The same problem occurs with the use of textbooks which are not adjusted to individual needs of the learners. According to the teachers' responses, some of them would wish to resign from the obligatory use of textbooks, however, they fear to act against the agreed rules.

Lack of concentration among learners with SLDs is one of the symptoms typical for these disorders, which can be avoided by the use of inclusion friendly methods of teaching. The fact that many respondents point to this issue may mean that lessons are in fact conducted in accordance to the PPP model with the use of explanatory techniques. Also, many teachers inform about difficulties with adjusting or resourcing teaching materials that would be appropriate for young learners with SLDs. Two of the respondents would appreciate textbooks with ready-made adjustments for learners with SLDs. Although they would not satisfy all learners' SEN, at least in the opinion of the teachers, they would solve part of the difficulties. The teachers would also welcome some instructions attached to particular tasks in textbooks that would help them adapt or organise the tasks alternatively.

In case of distant education, the teachers also enumerate several problems, however they have slightly different nature, as presented below in table 28.

Table 28: A list of difficulties in distant teaching of English language to learners with SLDs

No.	<b>Difficulties in teaching objectives and content to individuals with SLDs (distant education)</b>
1.	No possibility to control written language of the learners (22%)
2.	Lack of direct contact with the learners (12%)

3. Problems with concentration span (10%)
  4. Technical issues with the equipment (8%)
  5. Time limits (8%)
  6. Excessive amount of teaching content (6%)
  7. No possibility for pair and group work (6%)
  8. Uneven work of students (6%)
  9. Lack of online/ free teaching materials for learners with SLDs (4%)
  10. Lack of possibility to move (2%)
  11. No problems (6%)
- 

According to the reported problems, the greatest difficulty in distant teaching is connected with lack of control of the teachers over learners' actions, strengthened by discipline problems caused by lack of concentration on tasks to be performed by students. Taking into consideration lack of possibility to organise students work in small groups or pairs, and difficulties in applying non-standard methods of teaching, distant education can be really demanding for both the teacher and his students. Regardless of the teachers numerous complaints, some comments regarding distant education sound quite optimistic. For instance, one of the respondents mentions that online teaching is a sort of blessing as teachers no longer have to follow the textbooks and by the same can introduce more of their own ideas into their teaching practice. Another person notices that online classes bring more fun and allow her to see a new perspective in English language teaching. Some teachers also appreciate the discovery of new language learning applications and the Internet sites that they are willing to apply in their direct teaching practice. Such views are also promising for the development of the inclusive approach. Ironically, the COVID-19 pandemic might have helped teachers in noticing better teaching strategies and teaching tools.

Apart from the difficulties in implementing teaching objectives and course content, the teachers were also asked to share their opinions about potential organisational difficulties in educating learners with SLDs. In table 29 below the most repetitive ones are gathered and ordered accordingly to their importance.

Table 29: Organisational difficulties with teaching individuals with SLDs

No.	Organisational difficulties with teaching individuals with SLDs
1.	Lack of financial sources for purchase of teaching materials and equipment (28%)
2.	Insufficient teaching equipment (22%)

3. Overcrowded classes and space constrains (22%)
  4. Exceeded number of learners with SLDs per class (10%)
  5. Traditional layout of desks without possibility for a change (5%)
  6. Lack of unlimited access to teaching resources (5%)
  7. Problems with organisation of distant education (4%)
  8. Unavailability of special education teacher (2%)
  9. No problems (2%)
- 

With reference to the first position on the list, the respondents explain that schools lack specialised equipment, for conducting sensory integration classes, demonstrations and experimentation. Also, there are no school rooms with stations for creative works, and the traditional layout of desks is not favourable for the use of non-standard methods and strategies of teaching. Finally, although the teachers know many Internet sites and applications with teaching materials for young learners, they still have a problem to find valuable, free of charge resources dedicated to learners with SLDs.

Additionally to the above difficulties in educating learners with SLDs, the teachers were also given a chance to provide suggestions for improvement of the present state of inclusive education. Their most interesting ideas refer to a possibility for dividing early education classes into groups for foreign language education, availability of special education teachers on demand of subject teachers, rejection of the traditional forms of evaluation and grades, as well as extra payment for work with mixed ability groups of students. One of interesting comments addresses the problem of communication with parents of learners with SLDs (RQ 4). The teachers complain that many parents, alarmed by the teacher about observed learning difficulties of their child, have ignored the teachers' concerns. They have not turned for a diagnosis of their child's learning problems, hoping that one day educational problems would simply disappear. In the opinion of the teachers, there are also parents who believe that due to their children's difficulties, they should be released from English language education. For this reason, many teachers opt for a change in the law to be granted a right to direct learners with educational difficulties for specialist diagnosis in case of parents' reluctance.

Summing up, the discussed problems reported by the teachers participating in the survey constitute an answer to the question (RQ 7) why few teachers in Poland opt for the inclusive approach, sticking to the standard methods of teaching, instead. Financial issues, poor cooperation with parents and limited autonomy may effectively discourage teachers from undertaking new challenges associated with inclusive education. Some of

the surveyed teachers show their disillusion with this concept, suggesting segregation of learners with SLDs from other students in hope this would be more beneficial for them and teachers, as adjusting materials and maintaining the same pace of work would be much simpler, then. Some other respondents suggest an equally harmful solution that assumes redirection of learners with SEN from general direct to individual or distant education. Such negative opinions may be interpreted in two ways: as disappointment with the so far undertaken steps or complete misunderstanding of the inclusive approach among teachers.

### **10.1.3 Results of the observations of English language lessons**

From the end of 2022 and at the beginning of 2023, fifteen English language lessons conducted in different parts of Poland, with second and third grade learners of early education, were observed. The analysis of the results of observations aimed to respond to three research questions (RQ 2, RQ 7, RQ 8) about the appliance of systemic solutions in education of young learners, currently applied methods of English language teaching and teaching materials. The observation sheet was used for noting (see appendix 3) down all the details of the lesson conduct giving an image of the classroom practice. The results of this part of the supplementary study allow to verify to some extent the occurrence of the methods of teaching English language declared to be used by the teachers in the previously discussed survey.

#### **10.1.3.1 Organisation of classes and classroom practice**

Considering the organisation of class work, it was established that young learners are educated in groups of eighteen up to twenty five students. The results confirm compliance of the organisation of education by Polish schools with the formal requirements (RQ 2). Each observed group of students included not more than five learners with SEN confirmed with certificates of counselling centres. An average number of learners with SLDs per class amounted to two individuals. Among all of the observed learners with SLDs (N = 31), children with diagnosed dysphasia were in a clear minority (N = 3).

According to the observations, English language lessons are mostly dedicated to the development of English vocabulary referring to topics included in the national curriculum. In case of four of the observed lessons, the main focus was on practising basic grammar structures, and reading and writing were the two language skills developed extensively. In majority of the observed cases (80%), lessons have a standard lay out with receptive skills preceding productive ones. The language of the lesson conduct is mainly Polish, as only in three cases, the teachers insisted on communication mainly in English language. What is more, communication is mostly initiated by the teacher who requests information or asks students to share their opinions (90%). The atmosphere at the lessons is rather friendly, the teachers apply brief interludes in form of short one-minute activities to discharge children's tension caused by the sitting position.

### **10.1.3.2 The observed methods of teaching**

In the course of each lesson three factors were given attention to in order to decide about applied methods of teaching (RQ 7). They included as follows: priority of language skills, types of activities, and also forms of work. Their frequency of occurrence was noted, giving an insight into the learning progress.

With reference to the first factor, the results of the observations show that four language skills are practiced with priority given to receptive ones at all lessons. In case of reading, both short texts as well as instructions for particular tasks are mostly read aloud by the teacher. Students usually read aloud in situations when the teacher aims to control their understanding and correctness of performed written exercises. At two of the observed lessons, learners were asked to listen to and read silently a short text from their textbooks. With reference to the listening skill, students mostly listen to short dialogues based on their textbooks (53%), occasionally watch short video recordings online (33%) – mostly in order to sing some songs. They also listen to some words spoken by the teacher in order to remember and practise their correct pronunciation. The speaking skill is mostly practiced in form of short answers to comprehension questions based on a written text (87%) and oral drills (67%). Apart from the targeted activities, students also exchange comments, usually in Polish and occasionally in English, they complement their educational efforts and express their satisfaction about performed tasks. More commonly than speaking, the writing skill is practiced in the classrooms. Usually, students are asked

to copy words or short sentences from the whiteboard. In six observed cases, they also practised word spelling. Other written exercises are usually based on colouring (40%), drawing (27%) and matching (13%).

Among the observed forms of classroom practice, individual work is the most often applied one by all the teachers, followed by the whole class communication (87%). In contrast, group work was noticed only at three lessons, applied by the teachers once during the entire lesson. Pair work occurs more often as it was noticed in case of eleven of the observed lessons. However, similarly to group work, it was used only once or twice within the forty-five minute meeting.

Based on the observed conduct of the classes, it can be concluded that in case of ten lessons (67%) the applied model of teaching is the PPP with explicit techniques, Polish as a language of communication, strong preference of individual work and foreign language practice based almost entirely on the chosen textbooks. Five of the observed lessons differ in their expression, being composed of some elements of the Silent Way, Communicative Approach and TPR. Two of them also included the elements of drama and the ludic strategy. Judging from the young learners' reactions, all sorts of games, songs and play raise their enthusiasm. In the opinion of the observer, the teachers conducting lessons that were based on games and play were more flexible and eager to satisfy learners' individual needs and expectations, for instance by allowing children to choose a type of activity or their favourite song.

Importantly, none of the observed lessons were based on TBL or Universal Design for Learning model.

### **10.1.3.3 Individualisation of class work**

Due to the fact that in early education the overall objective is to enable children to develop sustainably, the researcher was curious whether the observed lessons of English language could offer their learners with SLDs any values supporting their well-balanced growth beyond the practice of foreign language skills. For this reason, the ability of the teachers to organise activities aiming at the development of gross and fine motor skills were observed (RQ 7). Additionally, the researcher was interested in formal recommendations that were followed by the teachers in work with learners with SLDs.

Concerning the sustained development of young learners, class activities aiming

at practice of gross and fine motor skills were observed. Below in figure 18, their frequency of occurrence at the observed English language lessons are presented.

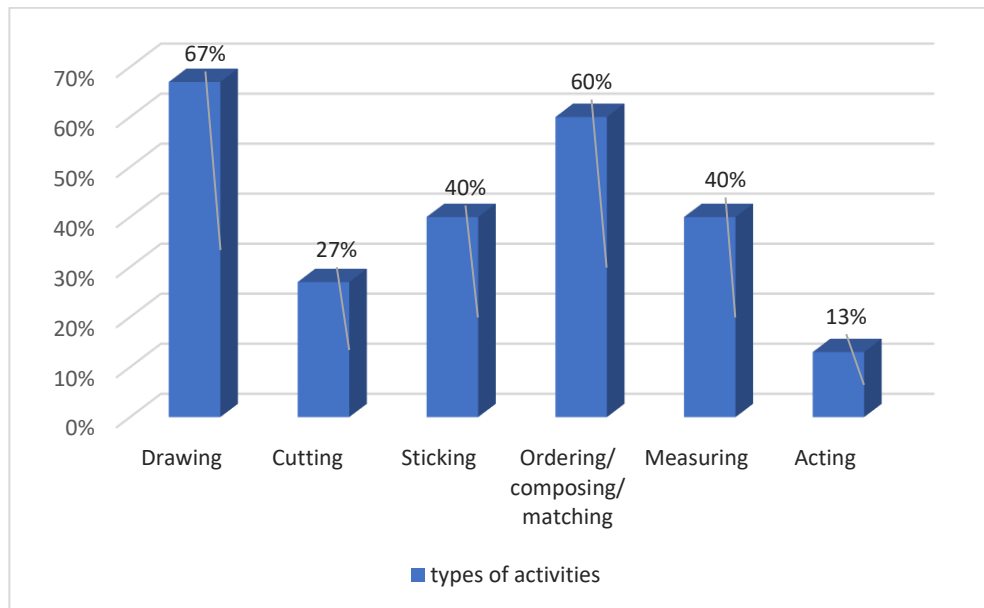


Figure 18: Types of activities influencing development of gross and fine motor skills

Mastering the correlation between the eye and hand, as well as developing the consciousness of the body are especially important for learners with SLDs (see sections 2.2 and 3.2). Therefore, any activities which engage learners' gross and fine motor skills help them overcome learning difficulties, ease tension and stay focused on tasks. At the observed lessons, activities of this kind which turned to be most commonly applied by the teachers were drawing and matching. Their popularity may derive from the fact that these types of activities are often present in foreign language exercise books. From the perspective of inclusive education, more varied activities would be recommended.

Despite the low and uneven application of activities that influence the development of motor skills, the observations show that teachers conscientiously follow the recommendations for educating learners with SLDs. During the lesson conduct, individuals with SLDs were given additional time for finishing tasks (100%), had their work monitored (100%) and were offered an individual assistance of the subject or special education teachers (three cases) if necessary. In some cases, they also received handouts with tasks adjusted to their cognitive abilities. The teachers complemented learners' creativity, praised their efforts and encouraged for further work. In single cases, students

could negotiate some types of activities to do and even select their favourite song for singing.

#### 10.1.3.4 The use of teaching materials

According to the gathered data, the sizes of classrooms are definitely sufficient to comfort groups of twenty five students. In some schools, however, an extended number of students desks hinder their discretionary reorganisation. Two of the visited schools are also equipped with soft carpets placed at the back of the classrooms marking a space for play and storytelling. According to the information received from the respondents, they have been rarely used as majority of the taught groups are overcrowded to act there comfortably.

The teaching equipment in the visited schools is varied (RQ8). Apart from teaching materials that include basic tools such as whiteboards (87%) and recorders (13%), classrooms are fitted with interactive boards (67%), computers with speakers (80%) and projectors (7%). Based on the collected data, all the schools provide free access to the Internet for teachers (33%). Unfortunately, the electronic equipment is not fully operational at times. The greatest problems are with old models of computers or monitors which cannot be operated or using them is excessively time consuming.

In table 30 below, all materials and equipment used at the observed lessons are listed with frequency of their occurrence expressed in percentage.

Table 30: Teaching tools and materials used at observed lessons

Teaching materials and equipment	Frequency of use
textbooks	100%
exercise books	93%
whiteboards	87%
computer with speakers	80%
interactive boards	67%
handouts	47%
flash cards	33%
the Internet	33%
audio recorders	13%
projectors and screens	7%



According to the results, majority of the teachers feel attached to textbooks and exercise books as main teaching materials. For practising the listening skill, the interactive boards or computers with speakers are often used. They are more commonly applied than audio recorders, probably due to the fact that currently all standardised teaching materials are available online directly from publishers' sites. They offer good quality sound and are easily accessible for teachers. Supplemented with additional educational tasks, the online sources are all accessible to learners and their parents, for instance for home practise.

A very popular equipment used for English language teaching is the whiteboard, which is usually applied by the teacher for noting down the most important information or providing a pattern of correct spelling of new words. The teaching materials which often accompany the applied textbooks are handouts and flash cards. They are used for presenting new vocabulary and memorising new words. Handouts are sometimes given as an extra work at home, they are also useful for revising test materials.

Concluding, much as there are many teaching resources, the teachers still show their attachment to textbooks. They willingly reach for new technological solutions in education, however, due to their obsolete condition or faulty performance, they cannot be always trusted. Besides, following textbooks gives a warranty that a language course is compliant with the formal requirements. Additionally, developing own teaching materials is time consuming, taking into consideration the factual number of learners with SLDs per class.

#### **10.1.4 Results of semi-structured interviews with Polish parents of learners with SLDs**

Knowing the teachers' opinions about inclusive education, the organisation of foreign language lessons and the methods of teaching applied to young learners, the researcher also wished to collect the views of parents of children with SLDs. For this reason, interviews were conducted with four parents of three children: one dysphasic (parents: P1, P2), one dyslexic (P3) and one dyscalculic (P4). The results of this part of the supplementary study complement the picture of the educational situation of the learners in Polish schools with reference to six research questions (RQ2, RQ4, RQ5, RQ6, RQ7,

RQ8).

#### 10.1.4.1 Systemic solutions for sustained development of children with SLDs in public schools

In this part of the interviews, three problems were considered and included: opinions of the parents on present systemic solutions for inclusive education (RQ 2), the quality of the applied diagnostic procedures (RQ 4) and the functioning of educational institutions and support services (RQ 5). In particular, the parents were requested to express their satisfaction with the choice of public school, reflect on the compliance of the school policy with respective regulations and guidelines for educating learners with SLDs, as well as, share their views about the diagnostic procedure applied to their children and decide about the quality of the educational services offered to them with reference to English language education. Table 31 evaluates the opinions of parents which are discussed below.

Table 31 :Quality of systemic solutions applied by school in the opinion of parents

RQ	Issue	Opinion	Respondent
RQ2	General satisfaction about the choice of school	- negative opinion - rather negative opinion - positive opinion	N = 2 N = 1 N = 1
RQ2	Systemic solutions applied by school	<u>Positive opinions about:</u> - compliance of teaching goals with the national curriculum - common syllabus for all learners - presence of compensatory and remedial courses in schools  <u>Negative opinions about:</u> - overcrowded classes (P3, T12:23) - organisation of correction-compensatory courses - access to special education teacher at lessons	N = 4 N = 4 N = 2  N = 4 N = 2 N = 4
RQ4	Diagnostic procedure	<u>Positive opinions about:</u> - accuracy of diagnosis performed by counselling centres  <u>Negative opinions about:</u> - school initial diagnosis of SLD symptoms -following recommended SEN measures by the school	N = 3  N = 2 N = 4
RQ5	Quality of educational services	<u>Positive opinions about:</u> - support services of the special education teacher at	

offered to learners with SLDs	lessons	N = 2
	<u>Negative opinions about:</u>	
	- financial shortages influencing the quality of support services	N = 4
	- reluctant attitude of teachers towards inclusion	N = 3

According to the results of this part of the study, the opinions of the parents concerning their contentment with the choice of school for their offsprings are divided. In general, they appreciate the fact that their children are educated together with other learners, what enables them an access to public education on the same basis with others, as well as, helps them build relationships with peers.

(1) *The atmosphere is nice. [P 1, T12:16]: The school does well and children both with and without learning difficulties participate in school performances. [P1, T27:29]*

All of them are convinced that teachers follow the national curriculum and that all learners have their foreign language education based on a common syllabus regardless of their abilities. In one case, an English language teacher is believed to go beyond the teaching programme, discussing with his learners some alternative topics that are not covered by the textbook.

(2) *She has a very good English teacher who doesn't just follow the core curriculum but tries to encourage the children to learn the language in a complete different, non-standard way. [P3, T7:12]*

The parents appreciate the beneficial effects of remedial and compensatory courses organised by the schools, noticing that without this kind of support, their children's development would not be so successful.

(3) *He has extra-curricular activities at school conducted in accordance to the recommendations issued by specialists from a counselling centre. Additionally, he has a training with a speech specialist three hours a week, as well as corrective and compensatory classes. [P1, T3:27]: The school has a room that allows for all sensory activities. [P1, T4:08]*

The general satisfaction of the parents with the implemented systemic solutions is rather superficial, though. Regardless of the noticed benefits of educating children with SLDs by mainstream units, all of the interviewed parents express their disappointment with an organisation of school special education services by the school managers and long lasting proceedings which delay an access to these services by their children.

(4) *We had to apply for sensory integration classes in person. (...) After a month our son was permitted to attend these classes. However, it took a year to get some help of the psychologist at school.* [P1, T4:08]

There are several reasons for which the access to special services is complicated. Firstly, some parents notice that the number of learners who require support of a special education teacher is factually higher than the formally established by the legislator in classes. It is so, as many of the learners have not been sent for a diagnosis but still expect to be assisted at lessons. Therefore, the parents underline that the access to special education services is insufficient. Secondly, the parents agree that financial difficulties prevent schools from engaging more special education teachers, claiming that there are only a few students with documented SEN per class.

(5) *No, there was no possibility to get some support of special education teacher. I tried to fight for such a teacher, especially for maths lessons, but unfortunately, due to high costs, it was not possible.* [P3, T11.19]

Apart from the financial difficulties, there are also some problems with communication between the parents and school representatives, which are described as hesitancy or even unwillingness to offer support services to children with SLDs by teachers. All parents underline that only after their persistent interventions some improvements and SEN services finally have become accessible for their children. The example below illustrates strong views of one of the parents about the problems with communication:

(6) *This was our initiative [to approach the child alternatively] (...) She should have had some lesson content explained to her differently, but this had not been respected. That is why we started to fight in small steps, simply to help her.* [P3, T9:50]

(7) *They [the school managers] react when we stop being nice, because when we are nice, nothing changes. Only when I change my tone and sound less politely, we are immediately invited to school and our requests are fulfilled.* [P1, T30:19]

(8) *I wish there would be more understanding, paying more attention to these children, to how they work and whether they work well.* [P4, T17:39]

Difficulties in gaining appropriate forms of support, as suggested in recommendations issued by counselling centres, as well as, poor quality of communication between the parents and school representatives negatively influence the parents' views on public educational services. Based on the above characterised issues, the parents express their mild content with educational services offered by the schools, reasoning that their initial choice of the educational unit depended primarily on the school's location. In some cases, a change of the school is impossible as there is no alternative school nearby.

(9) *No, we are not satisfied now. Unfortunately, we have limited options when it comes to the choice of school. Therefore, we support the child with private lessons and extracurricular teaching.* [P2, T5:02]

Responding to the problem of the quality of systemic solutions (RQ2), it can be concluded that special education services ordered by the central authorities in the country are needed and expected by the parents. Problems, however, refer to their factual implementation as schools, governed by local authorities, suffer from financial shortages, what in turn has its expression in low standards of the offered support.

The following issue, also connected with the implemented systemic solutions, refers to the quality of diagnostic procedures of SLDs (RQ4). According to the provisions of law (see section 7.3) the initial diagnosis in Poland is performed by teachers at the pre-school and early education levels. By the rule, educational problems, noticed usually by school teachers, are reported to parents who are advised to subject the child to a specialist diagnosis conducted by a team of psychologist and pedagogues at counselling centres. In the conducted interviews, the parents were requested to share their opinions about the said procedures in relation to their children.

According to received responses, the accuracy of the diagnosis performed by the specialists from the counselling centres is appreciated by majority of the parents. However, some problems are reported with reference to lack of explicitness of written recommendations issued by the counselling centre, due to which fact the children's SEN are not fully satisfied by the schools.

(10) *The problem was identified at the very end of kindergarten, after it had been investigated throughout the entire period of pre-school education. In 2021, he was diagnosed with dysphasia, luckily, because it was shortly before the beginning of his school education. [P1, T2:39]*

(11) *My daughter was sent to a specialist centre suspected for dyslexia in the first grade of school. (...) However, they [the specialists] did not fully define what this problem was. They issued only an opinion with recommendations. [P4, T1:31]: Sometimes it was necessary to intervene because the daughter had this opinion only, not the decision, so she had to act on equal basis with others. There was no chance that she would benefit from any adjustments like other children with certificates. [P4, T13:24]*

(12) *It is not possible to receive a certified decision on dyscalculia for a primary school child, so for now she is only under the care of the counselling centre. [P3, T2:20]*

Sometimes, the initial diagnosis that should be conducted by school teachers, based on noticing the educational problem and directing the child to further specialistic consultation, is not performed accurately. As one of the parents explains, the school did not react on time.

(13) *The problem was noticed by us, parents (...) At school nobody mentioned that it could be dyscalculia. It was rather seen as an educational issue that the daughter was weaker. [P3, T2:20]*

The reported problems concerning diagnosis of SLDs and organisation of support services at schools may have a common basis of the financial nature.

(14) *I was informed that the school saves money because it did not receive it from the city. Therefore, I called the City Hall to find out why the school did not receive the money for special education services. Meanwhile, the school decided to withdraw from their opinion that it was because of lack of money. So, perhaps there will be money for SEN classes. [P1, T31:05]*

Schools which are underfinanced avoid organisation of costly support services unless pressured by parents. It seems that various excuses are used in order to limit the services to the necessary minimum. For this reason, parents are forced to constantly fight for improvements of the educational conditions for their children. The problem is evident and points to some incorrections in functioning of educational institutions and public organisations (RQ5).

(15) *It is not known which of these services will be extended to the third grade. So, we will have to start this fighting process from the beginning, probably. [P1, T30:48]*

(16) *Cooperation with school is catastrophic as every decision is dependent on financial matters. What is more, the school is underinvested and there is not enough teaching staff, what entails their constant rotation. [P3, T19:00]*

It can be concluded that the quality of educational services offered to learners with SLDs seems therefore unsatisfactory for the parents who notice negative attitude towards inclusive practices by the teachers. In the opinion of the parents, violation of recommended solutions has its expression in poor test results of the children with SLDs, what usually alarms the parents and forces them to intervene.

#### **10.1.4.2 Professional performance of English language teachers**

Responding to the research question about in-service performance of English language teachers (RQ 6), the interviewed parents agree that the success of their children's foreign language education depends primarily on two factors – the personality and professional performance of their teachers. Table 32 below presents their opinions about conveniences and inconveniences of professional performances of the English language teachers.

Table 32: Quality of systemic solutions applied by school in the opinion of parents

RQ	Issue	Opinion	Respondent
RQ6	Personal features of the teachers	- open attitude towards students' needs	N = 1
		- charisma and motivational behaviour	N = 1
		- tendency for stigmatisation of learners with SLDs	N = 2
		- lack of understanding of learners' SEN	N = 2
Professional performance of the teachers		- following recommendations of counselling centres	N = 2
		- use of student-friendly strategies of teaching	N = 1
		- applying descriptive forms of assessment	N = 4

In the conducted study, only one parent praised her daughter's English language teacher for openness to learners' needs, his positive attitude towards students' educational efforts and power to motivate learners. In this case, the parent justifies that children "actually absorb what he [the teacher] is telling them." (P3, T10:27). This absorption of the teacher's words can be understood as natural language acquisition which process is more natural and practically stress-free for young learners. Unfortunately, other parents complained about the teachers' weaknesses, giving examples of their lack of understanding for the learners' SEN or even showing a tendency for stigmatisation. In fact, two of the parents mentioned that students with various LDs were seated separately from other class members, what undoubtedly underlines a distinct approach to them and thereby accounts for their stigmatisation.

(17) *Children who had some learning disorders were seated on the right side of the class, (...) separated so that the supporting teacher could easily reach them. It was in the second grade when the teacher noticed that this layout did not help in any way.*  
[P1, T31:21]

What is more, some teachers are reported to stigmatise students verbally, even without realising their harmful stance. One of the interviewed parents recollected a situation where the teacher, trying to complement good educational efforts of learners with SLDs, commented that they "scored better than **normal** students" (emphasis mine) (P1, T23:14), by the same dividing the learners into the ones with and without learning disorders. Some early education teachers are reported to have made abusive comments towards the learners with SLDs while being irritated. For example, when asked for



clarification, the teacher responded rudely, expressing publicly her surprise about the student's lack of understanding and concerns about the child's state of intellectual development by noticing that even additional lessons could not improve her knowledge and skills (P3, T15.21). As one of the parents rightly noticed:

(18) *I think it's a human thing. If there is a person who wants these kids to come to school just out of compulsion, she or he does everything to attract them to lessons. However, there are also "ossified individuals" that do not change. I would say that children are ridiculed by them.* [P3, T14:39]

With reference to professional performance of the teachers, all of the parents admit that the teachers use descriptive forms of assessment as supplementary information given to the learners. It is so, as in most Polish schools a numeric scale of grades is adopted with school regulations and is considered to be the obligatory form of assessment. Many early education teachers, however, use pictograms to inform students about their achievements and this is also the case of the children of the interviewed parents.

(19) *The teacher often writes down in his notebook 'great' with a smile.* [P1, T18:44]

(20) *(...) and stamps, additionally.* [P2, T19:13]

Concerning the parents opinions about descriptive forms of assessment, three of them appreciate alternative evaluation, which is found to be less stressful for the children, drawing attention to their achievements rather than errors.

With regard to an application of recommended adjustments and the use of student-friendly strategies of teaching, the parents are found to be less optimistic in their opinions. Only two of them agree that the teachers act in accordance to written recommendations issued by the counselling centre, whereas in other cases the parents inform to have been forced to intervene in order to enforce the necessary adjustments. Additionally, the compensatory steps are said to be implemented automatically, without deeper analysis and engagement of the teachers into the individual children's needs. The problem with teachers' ignorance is serious as learners whose SEN are neglected receive lower grades though they are not weak students. Situations described by two parents depict the issue.

(21) *It is much easier for him to read aloud and when doing so he actually understands the content of the tasks. During tests and quizzes, he obviously couldn't read aloud the instructions and so did not understand them as others did. So, during this period he received worse grades. The teachers realized that he knew more than his grades reflected. Since I had pointed it out to them, they should have been aware of this and should have made sure the problem was resolved somehow. [P1, T17:16]*

(22) *It happened that my daughter did not understand what she was reading, so I had to work with her at home and do the things again. Then, in a moment, everything became clear. [P4, T11:33]*

Almost all of the parents are also disappointed with the conduct of English language lessons, which in their opinions are monotonous and simply uninteresting for their children. The teachers are criticised for lack of invention and avoidance of alternative strategies in teaching English.

(23) *I haven't heard about a single project. Nothing more than the songs that are in the textbook. [P1, T15:23]*

(24) *Certainly I would expect learning English by conducting lessons in English. Using various learning materials, not just the textbook. Perhaps using the Internet or other more practical aids. [P4, T7:24]*

Lack of inclusion friendly approach and no deeper interest in learners' SEN may unrightly cause irritation of the teachers who do not really understand the child's behaviour. For example, one of the interviewed parents recalled a classroom situation when a substitute teacher shouted at children misinterpreting their lack of concentration with misbehaviour.

(25) *I noticed that the teacher often questions "What don't you understand?", (...) "Do you really not understand?", "How is it possible not to know it?". Then, they [children] close up and are somewhere else in a parallel thought reality. [P3, T15:21]*

The same parent, while talking about English language main teacher expresses her full satisfaction with the educational actions undertaken by him systematically. In the

parent's opinion, this teacher shows understanding to the child's condition, develops empathy and most of all does his best to keep learners motivated and actively involved in lessons.

(26) *(...) if the teacher is creative, and we are lucky to have such a teacher of English, then I think everything is fine.* [P3, T16:39]

Highly enthusiastic about his duties, he is also reported to throw interesting, non-conventional lessons that go beyond the implementation of the textbook material.

(27) *(...) he tries to encourage the children to learn the language in a completely different non-standard way. He does everything to show the kids that the foreign language is important and can be learnt in a different way than by translating vocabulary.* [P3, T7:12]

This parent further informs that her daughter and other peers attend English language lessons willingly because of assumed joy and friendly atmosphere, not because of duty.

Concluding the analysis of professional performance of English language teachers, it can be stated that all of the parents expect the teachers to approach their children individually, explain patiently, and pay attention to the learner's strengths rather than weaknesses. They are also expected to throw attractive lessons which would satisfy learners' SEN. Finally, in the opinion of the parents, the teacher of English language should involve learners emotionally and build a feeling of mutual trust, what is confirmed by the following words:.

(28) *Children and their teachers should feel empathy for each other in order to talk problems over. Then, the children would get more positive support from the teacher.* [P4, T17:39]

The teachers' professional performance is closely associated with the selection of teaching methods and the use of inclusion-friendly teaching materials. Both of them are analysed in the following subsections.

### 10.1.4.3 Methods of English language teaching and assessment of educational efforts

In the present study, one of the most important issues addresses the conduct of English language lessons (RQ7). For this reason, questions concerned with methods of teaching, language of instruction, language features of the greatest interest, classroom organisation and forms of work were asked about. Additionally, the parents were requested to share their views about attractiveness of lessons with reference to teaching strategies used by the English language teachers.

Although the parents were expected to refer to lessons conducted by the subject teachers, during the interviews, they also provided information about other substituting English language teachers. P1 and P2 mentioned one substitute teacher of English, P3 informed about two of them, whereas P4 mentioned three substitute teachers who conducted English language lessons. Together, the interviewees shared their opinions about the lesson conduct of nine teachers of English. Table 33 below presents the particulars of the received responses with a distinction marked between opinions referring to the leading teachers and substitute ones.

Table 33: Particulars of a lesson conduct

Particulars of a lesson conduct	Opinions of the parents about English language lessons conducted by:			
	Leading teachers		Substitute teachers	
Type of approach to a lesson conduct	explicit	N=2	explicit	N=5
	implicit	N=1	implicit	N=1
Type of teaching materials used	standardised	N=2	standardised	N=5
	non-standardised	N=1	non-standardised	N=1
Language of a lesson conduct	mother tongue	N=2	mother tongue	N=0
	English	N=1	English	ND*
Main focus on language areas	vocabulary	N=2	vocabulary	N=3
	grammar	N=1	grammar	ND
	receptive skills	N=2	receptive skills	ND
	productive skills	N=1	productive skills	N=1
Desk layout	standard layout (rows)	N=2	standard layout (rows)	N=6
	alternative layout	N=1	alternative layout	N=0
Work forms	individual and plenum	N=2	individual and plenum	N=5
	groups and pairs	N=1	groups and pairs	N=1
Main assessment forms	written tests	N=2	written tests	ND
	task assessment (projects)	N=1	task assessment (projects)	ND

Use of alternative teaching strategies and techniques	songs	N=3	songs	N=1
	games	N=1	games	N=0
	play	N=1	play	N=1
	projects	N=1	projects	N=0

\*ND – no data

Among all of the teachers of English language mentioned by the parents, only two are said to run interesting lessons where learners' participation is highly active. The said teachers perform tasks that help learners to develop their foreign language skills and also creativity.

According to the information gathered in table 33, however, a vast majority of the teachers approach learners explicitly, basing their lessons almost entirely on the content of textbooks. The problem is exemplified below.

(29) *No additions (...) only the textbook and the problem of teaching disappears.* [P1, T16:45]: *The classes could be more engaging and the programme could be slightly expanded because the language is very basic, just the textbook is covered and nothing more.* [P1, T28:29]

(30) *I think there were no projects.* [P4, T4:16]: *No [additional materials], just the textbook and the exercise book.* [P4, T5:00]

Apart from practice of listening and reading comprehension, the main focus at the lessons is put on vocabulary practice. This focus is mainly on words introduced explicitly, often on the basis of translation, which are then required to be memorised. This kind of teaching can be demotivational for the learners, what was noticed by the parents. In their opinions, English language lessons are schematic, dull and insufficient for developing children's communicative competence in the target language, for which reason children attend additional private lessons. Some opinions about the applied teaching materials and the teaching approach are presented below:

(31) *He [the son] knows some words in English, though in my opinion, these are the ones he has learnt on YouTube or while playing Minecraft. They are surely not the words he learns at school.* [P1, T13:37]

(32) *There was absolutely nothing going on there. I mean, she [the teacher] followed*

*the core curriculum, but the lessons were boring, the children were bored, so they started getting confused during the lessons, for which reason the teacher got angry. [P3, T20:36]: The children were bored, they didn't want to listen to her [the teacher], they were used to other types of activities. Most of these kids learn the language outside of school. My daughter still attends Helen Doron's school and has one hour a week with a native speaker. [P3, T21:47]*

(33) *The lessons were conducted not in English, but in Polish. [P4, T3:35]*

As it can be noticed, the use of explicit methods of lesson conduct with young learners leads to final irritation of both the students and the teacher, causing chaos and lack of cooperation at lessons.

Preference in applying the PPP model is further confirmed by the choice of forms of work, among which the most common are individual work and plenum, as applied by seven teachers (table 33). The reason why teachers prefer these two forms can find its explanation in the traditional organisation of the classroom which does not favour communication. In the opinions of the parents, separate desks or their combination into long rows makes classrooms look cluttered, leaving virtually no space for their reorganisation. In such conditions, activities that include movement are in fact not possible. Learners are bound to remain in a sitting position during forty-five minute lesson units. One of the parents explains this problem thoroughly:

(34) *Generally, the whole place is filled with benches with a very narrow passage between them. Arranged in a traditional way, there are three of them attached to each other, so that six children can sit in one line. [P4, T14:52]*

The position of class desks indicates that there is little group or pair work organised by the teachers at lessons, what is agreeably confirmed by the majority of parents (20).

(35) *I wish there were some group things (...) There is no integration at all. Only the textbook with which children deal individually. [P1, T34:21]*

(36) *The classes were too small to arrange the desks differently and create groups.* [P4, T15:40]

Only one of the parents (P3) mentions that the setting of desks in her daughter's classroom is different and organised to promote cooperative work (21).

(37) *Class work is mainly done in groups. This is what children appreciate very much (...). It's because then kids have incentive to try and do something more.* [P3, T17:30]

The choice of the PPP model and avoidance of the inclusion-friendly strategies negatively influences the development of foreign language productive skills. It also impedes building social relations between students and the teacher. What is more, the use of explicit methods of teaching requires the use of written forms of assessment. Based on the results of the study, in classes of the PPP model, the assessment is organised almost entirely in form of written tests, whereas the teacher preferring the alternative approach assesses students' efforts on the basis of given tasks. Much as tests are accepted by the interviewed parents and seen as necessary, they would expect a more varied selection of assessment forms.

(38) *Generally, they have a lot of grades, 90 percent of which come from tests, in my opinion.* [P1, T7:24]: *As a rule, these [tests] are ready-made, as if from the same publisher as the textbook.* [P1, T11:13]: *I have mixed feelings, because on one hand English is not a problem for us, though on the other hand, virtually nothing is required there.* [P1, T12:16]

(39) *There were such works done in class, not at home. The children made laptops, painted pictures and made designs. They were very active then.* [P3, T18:04]

In response to research question seven (RQ7), the above analysed features of the lesson conduct clearly show that the most popular model of English language classes is still the PPP. Poor creativity of teachers turns them towards a regular use of textbooks which constitute a safe and effortless educational tool. Additionally, cramped classrooms which are overcrowded with large groups of students effectively preclude the organisation

of non-standard lessons based on activating tasks where students would work in groups or pairs.

#### 10.1.4.4 The use of teaching materials

The last discussed aspect at the interviews was concerned with the use of teaching materials at English language lessons (RQ8). In the previous section (10.1.3.3), it has already been disclosed that the teachers, with only one exception, base their work almost entirely on textbooks. In figure 19 below, all teaching materials mentioned by the parents were gathered and presented in accordance to their frequency of occurrence.

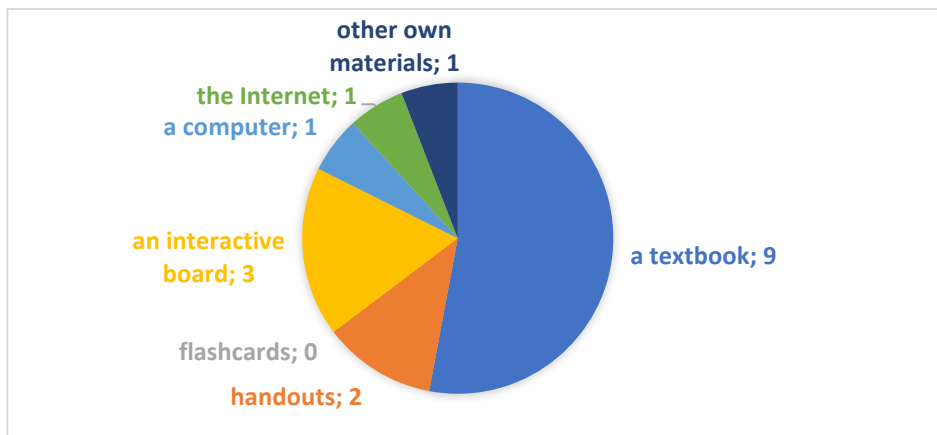


Figure 19: The use of different teaching materials by reported English language teachers

The figure shows that all teachers mentioned by the parents use textbooks in their educational practice. This fact can be explained by the obligatory lesson conduct that is compliant with the core curriculum. In such a situation, choosing a textbook with the accreditation of the Minister of Education is a safe choice for teachers. Additionally, as textbooks are accompanied by extra materials such as test booklets, CDs and online practice, their choice does not surprise.

With an exception to one of the teachers, others are reported to rarely reach for additional materials, even the supplementary ones that are attached to the textbooks .

(40) *There were no projects, but probably there were some songs attached to the textbook, though not used at lessons. The teacher told us to leave them at home. [P4, T4:16]*



(41) *They do some exercises using the interactive board, but he [the son] said that it is used occasionally, though he would like to have more of it. [P1, T8:48]*

Among electronic equipment used in the classroom that usually includes the interactive board, a computer and a CD player, only the first mentioned device is reported to be used occasionally, mostly for displaying the content of the textbook or exercise book. The interviewed parents expressed their disappointment with this fact.

(42) *(...) they should focus more on lessons that would be different from the ones based on the textbook, sing songs or draw something on the board, that would be cool. [P4, T19:46]*

(43) *Generally when it comes to English, the only thing we heard about is this interactive board. We think there might be a laptop in the classroom, as well. [P2, T35:12]*

One of the parents notices that the application of high-tech gadgets at lessons depends on the teachers' creativity and attitude towards his professional duties. In her opinion, she underlines the importance of using a variety of teaching materials.

(44) *Yes, classrooms are equipped with modern boards but their use depends on the teacher. With some teachers these boards are permanently unused. Children do not use them if the teacher has no idea how to get on with the children. And that won't change. [P3, T20:12]: If the teacher does not only use a textbook, but also uses, for example, a word wall, quizzes and also some of his own materials, learning is great, then. Children eagerly reach for such items. [P3, T16:39]*

To conclude, English language classrooms are reported to be equipped with modern technology devices which allow to organise attractive lessons that could enrich the foreign language learning experience. As it is underlined by the interviewed parents, the use of varied teaching materials depends on inventiveness and good will of teachers who, however, rarely conduct lessons with inclusion friendly methods of teaching, and therefore seldom reach for non-standard teaching materials.

### **10.1.5 Results of semi-structured interviews with specialists in the field of education in Poland**

In years 2022-2023, three interviews were conducted with specialists in the field of education, two with the representatives of academic units and one with two representatives of a teacher training centre. The field of scientific interest of the first academic expert (E1), employed with the Mazovian Academy in Płock, is early pedagogy. The second academic expert (E2) who is engaged in special education, is a university professor employed with the Polish Naval Academy in Gdynia. Two other specialists (E3 and E4) are foreign language experts working at the teacher training centre in Płock.

The interviews had five key objectives (see section 9.2.4) consistent with five research questions referring to: the implementation of inclusion to the present system of education (RQ2), organisation of the educational institutions and support services with the view to inclusion (RQ 5), and amendments in tertiary education programmes for English language teacher trainees, professional performance of early education teachers of English language in the country (RQ 6), including the use of inclusion friendly methods of teaching (RQ7), and also the use of inclusion friendly teaching tools and materials (RQ8) The analysis of the said particulars is presented in compliance to them.

#### **10.1.5.1 Opinion of specialists about the system of education in Poland**

In the first part of the interview the specialists were asked to share their opinions about the present condition of public education in the country with reference to education of learners with SLDs and more particularly, with reference to systemic solutions for inclusive education (RQ2). According to the analysis of formal documents, Polish central authorities decided to implement the inclusive approach to public schools following the guidelines of the European Union (see table 17 in section 8.1). However, much as inclusion has been formally introduced into Polish system of education, the results of the previously analysed interviews with the parents of learners with SLDs put its factual realisation into question. Therefore, the interviews with experts are believed to shed more

light on the problem.

Asked about the condition of inclusive education in Poland, the respondents agreeably confirmed that inclusive education has already been introduced into the national system of education, however, due to certain obstacles, it is still not fully executed. E1 and E3 are convinced that inclusion has already been implemented together with first provisions in law concerning the psychological and pedagogical assistance for learners with educational difficulties:

(45) *As I observe and analyze, it's definitely true in legal or procedural terms. Some quite serious steps have already been taken, primarily through regulations and legal acts, or through a number of various recommendations and guidelines addressed to principals of schools and institutions on how it should be organized.* [E1, T2:16]

All of the specialists also agree that the presently formed legal basis for inclusive education are sufficient for its successful execution. For instance, the already undertaken steps, such as an introduction of early support for child's development and obligatory recognition of learners' SEN by the school, prove that the inclusion has already been implemented into Polish system of education, at least formally:

(46) *The idea of inclusive education in systemic terms appeared more than ten years ago. (...) It has been a process that began, when regulations regarding psychological and pedagogical assistance were announced. (...) So, from the formal and legal perspective, definitely yes [inclusion has been implemented].* [E2, T2:48]

(47) *However, when it comes to practical implementation, it cannot be said for sure that [it takes place] everywhere and in the same ideal way.* [E1, T2:58]

Certain doubts occur concerning the quality of inclusive practices conducted by educational institutions. For example, E1 notices that development of the inclusive approach by schools is a long process in which administrative decisions constitute only its small part:

(48) *If someone thinks that inclusion will happen overnight through one or another administrative decision, it will not happen. Some administrative decisions have*

*been made, the gate is now open and it is time to implement them.* [E1, T4:07]

In the opinion of the experts, a list of obstacles impeding the development of inclusion is still long and includes: mental barriers and stereotypes, understanding the difference between inclusion and integration, adjustments of teaching methods to learners SEN, reorganisation of class and lesson system as well as organisation of psychological support for school teachers. According to the experts, the first problem of mental barriers has its roots in stereotypical thinking about the distinction between the mainstream and special education:

(49) *(...) there are still issues such as architectural barriers, which also need to be mentioned, as well as mental barriers in the approach to this education, and they also hinder the development of inclusion* [E1, T3:27]

The second of the mentioned obstacles impeding the development of inclusion in Poland refers to misconception of the inclusive approach which is often identified as continuation of integration. For this reason, many school managers and teachers think that following the necessary recommendations of counselling centres and applying basic adjustments to learners' SEN is enough. E1 explains as follows:

(50) *(...) inclusion is not about special adjustments for someone just because they need it, which was the domain of the integration period, but creating an environment that will be conducive to every student.* [E2, T13:54]

Thirdly, as it is further explained by the same expert, the assumptions of inclusion refer to a total change in the teaching approach and application of methods that would be favourable for all learners regardless of their SEN. Also, schools have to be ready for fulfilling their supportive duties. It is not an immediate change that can be introduced by administrative regulations but a revolution in perception of the educational goals.

(51) *Changes are planned about the specific role of schools in conducting functional diagnosis, in providing support and care to students from the moment when difficulties are noticed. It means an introduction of certain formal changes, but this is still in the process of planning.* [E2, T12:54]

As it is justified by the specialist, the last problematic area that requires urgent intervention includes reorganisation of the class and lesson system. The problem refers not only to the present architecture of schools, classroom space and grouping of students, but also to the organisation of the lesson conduct and a necessity to perform formal examinations. All of the enumerated factors have an influence on educational conditions and without their reorganisation limits to inclusion cannot be removed.

(52) *What is probably a more wishful matter is a change in the class and lesson system. If this does not change, it is as if we were trying to insert something that does not fit, something that is completely different, new, into the existing form.* [E2, T16:21]

With reference to the presently applied assessment forms, some experts notice that the present formula of final examinations conducted at the end of every stage of education requires quantitative kind of assessment which in Poland usually takes a form of a scale of grades. As it is reported by the specialists, teachers prefer to apply this form of assessment as they find it more informative than a descriptive form what, however, is not compliant with assumptions of the inclusive approach. As it is noticed by E3, parents also decide to send their children for diagnosis, often at very late stages of their education, not because they are concerned with their particular conditions but hoping for them to be awarded with exam adjustments to SEN:

(53) *In fact, parents and teachers are largely interested in how the student will perform on the school-leaving exam and whether he or she will have an extended time, whether other criteria will be applied to him or her, and whether he or she can make spelling mistakes.* [E3, T7:43]

Teachers who know the learners' abilities often doubt the validity of such a diagnosis, what might be a reason why they apply the adjustments reluctantly. With the view to the above, E4 adds that more detailed procedures and instructions how to treat learners with SLDs at exams are needed:

(54) *I also think that there are too few procedures on how to deal with students who have difficulties during the exam. (...) There are no clear procedures, whether the student*

*can or cannot write on the computer and in what cases, whether the student is entitled to extended time. This is what is missing – formal instructions. [E4, T8:49]*

Also, E1 agrees with this view, noticing however, that changes in the above listed factors, including the reorganisation of the class and lesson system, are still insufficient without an urgent organisation of psychological support for mainstream teachers. As it is justified by the expert, school environments welcome the implemented changes rather reluctantly, discussing the concept of full inclusion, support of the special education teacher in a lesson conduct, the role of special education pedagogue, and also employment and financial issues. For this reason, the problem of lack of understanding of true values of inclusion by teachers requires undertaking immediate revolutionary steps.

*(55) It seems to me that the most urgent need, which I mentioned at the last conference on neurodiversity, is support for teachers from the perspective of dealing with situations of stress and frustration, resulting from heavy burdens, not only of the organizational nature, but also the burdens associated with meeting with people who are actually in a very tense situation. [E1, T15:00]*

Viewing the number and scale of problems, E1 and E2 admit that although inclusion has been formally introduced to Polish system of education, its real execution is still under question, mainly due to mental stubbornness in perceiving inclusion as another kind of integration.

*(56) It seems to me that this view of teachers is also inadequate. (...) What in the language of tradition is called compensation, in modern language is called searching for solutions available according to resources. That is, looking for a coping strategy meaning: not everyone, not always and not the same. We must remember that there will be no captions on 'bank windows' saying 'here we serve only students with SLDs or SEN'. This is not the case. [E1, T35:58]*

*(57) I would not say that we already have inclusive education. We have good integration with a good base, well planned, constituting a good foundation for inclusion. However, implementation of inclusion is going to take some time. [E2, T31:54]*

Interestingly, E3 and E4 see the situation differently, believing that inclusion has already been introduced to school practice. One of these experts is even convinced that teachers are deeply engaged in noticing educational problems as they act accordingly to recommendations issued by counselling centres, trying to satisfy learners SEN. The expert justifies his opinion claiming that teachers are supervised in this matter by school headteachers.

(58) (...) *I see teachers' great commitment to it [inclusion]. They are able to spot a problem and help students. Moreover, each class tutor is obliged to keep appropriate documentation of a student with SLDs, as well as is obliged to report it to the school principal. So, there is no possibility for a learner with SLDs not to be cared.* [E3, T3:06]

A similar supportive view is expressed by E4 who adds that the number of learners with SEN is rising, also as a result of imperfections of distant education enforced by the COVID-19 pandemic occurrence. For these reasons, the two experts admit that a switch towards inclusion may be perhaps not willingly welcomed by some school environments, however, it has become a fact.

(59) *I think that, in general, the situation forced us, the system and teachers to introduce inclusive education. It is so because more and more children have problems, and these are not only learning disorders, but also post-pandemic problems, meaning social problems. Mental problems are common among Polish youths and children. That is why inclusive education has already been developed, though some teachers still find it difficult.* [E4, T3:10]

Finally, considering most urgent obstacles preventing the development of inclusive education, all of the experts notice the negative impact of financial difficulties in the sector of national education that withholds systematic development of inclusion. The financial problems basically refer to poor remuneration of the teaching staff and lack of modernisation of schools compliant with present comforts of living. In the opinion of the experts, the problem might be associated with unequal distribution of financial sources which are managed and distributed by local authorities. Therefore, schools which are underfunded cannot offer all SEN services. E1 suggests to introduce some immediate

improvements which would include a payment raise for the teaching staff, which in consequence would improve the recognition of this profession in society. Additionally, the expert believes that lowering the number of working hours for inclusive teachers may be a factor convincing them towards inclusion:

(60) *There is no point in fooling yourself, demands are placed on teachers, and yet these financial incentives are simply not satisfactory. [E2, T30:42]: If the number of teaching hours was reduced, early education teachers would have more overtime hours. (...) then, financial gratification would be more beneficial for them and teachers would certainly not complain about it. [E1, 28:54]*

Concluding, the experts agree that the system of education in Poland has been formally adjusted to the needs of inclusive education. However, the fact whether inclusion has already been executed in school practice is disputable.

#### **10.1.5.2 Opinion of specialists about the organisation of educational institutions and support services in Poland**

With reference to educational institutions in Poland (RQ5), the respondents mention their three categories: firstly, the leading authorities, meaning the Ministry of Education and the local government that supervise schools; secondly, school inspectorates; and finally, advisory bodies such as counselling centres and teacher training centres. The leading authorities are responsible for school administration and finances. Inspectorates are organs whose role is to directly monitor school management and its educational services. Advisory bodies offer support to teachers, learners with SLDs and their parents, as described in the comparative part of the dissertation (see section 7.4).

Considering the roles of the mentioned educational institutions, the experts were asked to share their opinions about their influence on the development of inclusion. According to the role of local authorities that govern schools and distribute financial assets for education, the experts' critical opinions have already been considered in section 10.1.4.1. Also, the roles of school inspectorates are exposed to some criticism.

Firstly, as it was noticed by E2, the primary role of inspectorates is to monitor and evaluate educational practices developed by schools. Instead of evaluation, however, the



inspectorates are said to have developed a system of control over schools that is harmful for their autonomy. For instance, inspectorates perform controls and order schools certain amendments. Schools are obliged to introduce them without constructive feedback that would indicate further steps to successful implementation of inclusion. Such activities have already been conducted by inspectorates in the past. As it is noticed and explained by E2:

(61) *Let's be honest, it is a control system, even though it is called evaluation. Focused on activities that aim at providing effective support for individual needs of students with SEN. [E2, T6:37]: It used to be a good custom to assign fields or areas that were particularly subjected to evaluation in a given school year. A few years ago, one of the areas was the analysis of the implementation of psychological and pedagogical assistance. (...) the directions of this assistance also included areas related to supporting students with learning difficulties. [E2, T7:53]*

The controlling character of activities conducted by inspectorates also has a negative effect on teachers whose professional qualifications are subjected to assessment at each stage of their professional careers. E2 explains that there is a difference between evaluation of teachers' competences and control over their qualifications. Focusing on the first item suggests not only the evaluative but also advisory role of the institution, quite contrary to the second element in case of which teachers are treated objectively as a 'personal file folder' to be assessed.

(62) *Supervision is certainly carried out in terms of hiring teachers, controlling their qualifications, and is certainly related to the expectation that teachers will increase their competences, or rather qualifications, as a result of self-improvement or professional development. Why did I say competences, or rather qualifications? – I know that because unfortunately (...) a modern teacher is a 'personal file folder' (...). Due to costs, it is necessary to collect documentation confirming qualifications. [E2, T9:57]*

In the opinion of this expert, at present, professional performance of teachers is assessed, however, without an instruction on how their educational actions should be improved.

Contrary to the critical views on school inspectorates, the specialists praise the counselling centres for their advisory activities. As it is underlined by E3, these institutions offer specialist assistance to learners with SLDs, teachers and parents. This specialist marked the difference between the activities of the counselling centres and school inspectorates in strong words, noticing that counselling centres do not invigilate schools as inspectorates do. Via written decisions and opinions, specialists from counselling centres suggest solutions that can be directly applied by teachers.

(63) *The roles of the pedagogue and school psychologist are of great importance, because very often through their hands applications are sent to the pedagogical and psychological counseling centers. The pedagogical and psychological counselling centres offer support. They do not act as inspectorates which control and invigilate, but support, and indeed their support is appreciable.* [E3, T6:09]

Apart from counselling centres which are praised for their professionalism, also teacher training centres offer advisory services for teachers. Their two representatives (E3 and E4) gave an insight into their role. Supervised by the Minister of Education, the centres develop and conduct specialist trainings for in-service teachers and students of pedagogical faculties. According to the explanation of the experts, main topics of courses are usually suggested by the specialists from the centres and refer to current educational matters or issues which in the opinion of the Ministry require attention.

(64) *The selection [of workshop topics] is made by methodological consultants and advisors from the cooperation network that we all run. Almost always, it is an outcome of an analysis of the evaluation of a previous year, that is of the previous period of education. Our offer is tailored in accordance with the needs and expectations of the teachers.* [E4, T10:51]

Interestingly, the two experts inform that sometimes workshops are organised on request of school headteachers for the teaching staff and address a particular problem which needs consideration and correct understanding. Also, teachers can suggest potential topics for workshops and trainings by voting online for topics of their interest:

(65) *A school board, together with the headteachers, decide about the theme of such a training and how they will benefit from it. Then a team of our consultant teachers conducts such a training at their school. It is really practical. I know because recently there has been a training of this type at my school. The training was actually dedicated to specific problems of children. Such trainings are very individualized, and we know what kind of children we have at school, so experts give us specific solutions on how we can work with them. [E4, T14:47]*

Regrettably, the experts admit that the issue of SLDs is not popular among teachers, failing with themes such as an access to online applications for education, international cooperation between schools and exam reviews.

(66) *I think we can admit that the issue of SLDs appears in our surveys only sporadically. It is not like in the case of modern applications, international cooperation or preparation for exams, because these are the flagship topics that appear in every training. [E3, T11:24]*

The interest in other topic areas may be caused by their usefulness. In the opinion of the specialists, problems connected with SLDs and SEN refer only to a certain narrow group of learners, whereas other issues address the whole school environment:

(67) *Maybe because it doesn't apply to all students. However, what I mentioned concerns 100 percent of students. However, here teachers individually try to deal with those individuals who have problems. [E3, T11:58]*

What is more, early education teachers are said to rarely attend trainings and workshops. In the opinion of the experts (E3 and E4), they are much more interested in discipline and managerial problems rather than in issues connected with English language teaching. As they justify it:

(68) *Early childhood education teachers take part in trainings mainly intended for early childhood education. In the case of early education teachers of English, when a child has learning difficulties, this problem is somehow pushed aside. Teachers prefer trainings dedicated to, for example, how to maintain discipline, manage the*

*class, how to deal with a child with SEN without a negative impact on the group, as there are some children with behavioural problems which have a negative impact on the others. The psychological and pedagogical aspects are more important for the teachers than the linguistic ones. [E4, T17:00]*

According to the analysed opinions about services offered by the training centres, it can be said that their support is versatile and flexible. The issue of SEN has been covered by the centres earlier, together with the implementation of systemic changes in Polish educational law. Lack of trainings and seminars on inclusion add to the problem of mental barriers and misunderstanding between the concept of inclusion and integration, so strongly underlined by the experts from the academic centres.

Summarising the suggestions made by the experts about the steps to be undertaken, support services should also be offered by special education teachers who are believed to possess good psychological and pedagogical knowledge about various learning disorders, including SLDs, as well as have the necessary professional skills which can be used for successful development of the inclusive approach in mainstream schools.

*(69) It may be special schools, which the legislator may intend to appoint as supporting centres for inclusive education in mainstream institutions. I think this is a good solution, especially if we have students with more serious disabilities, such as intellectual disorders or other disabilities that require help of a special teacher and the implementation of special pedagogy methodology. [E1, T8:58]*

Asked about the concept of interchangeable conduct of lessons, the experts commonly agree that it is a right direction, much more efficient than the presently applied support of special education teachers offered to individual learners in the class.

### **10.1.5.3 Opinion of specialists about changes in educational programmes for English language teacher trainees**

In response to the research question concerning education of English language teachers, the experts were asked to share their knowledge about university programmes and their

adjustments to the requirements to the present educational situation of learners of SLDs (RQ6). A lot of valuable information has been shared by two academic experts (E1 and E2) who are experienced in composing programmes for students of pedagogical faculties and have some knowledge about tertiary programmes for the faculty of English philology. Questioned about the implementation of the issues of inclusive education and SEN into tertiary educational programmes, both of the experts confirmed that the said themes have already been covered by lectures at faculties with pedagogical specialisation, including early pedagogy with English language and English philology with specialisation in teacher education.

(70) *It is currently included entirely in the educational standards of the education module for special education teachers, speech therapists and supporting teachers. (...) Therefore, these teachers actually have full knowledge, skills and tools to conduct classes. However, as I said, in other standards it is included, but selectively.* [E1, T14:07]

(71) *This is a matter of university responsibility. At that time, the rector was aware of it, but in fact, it [the theme of inclusive education] has been implemented with varying intensity at different universities.* [E2, T17:38]: *Though, with reference to students of early childhood education with a foreign language, I would say that yes, it has been conducted.* [E2, T18:37]

In the opinion of E1, the changes in special education programmes have been introduced the earliest since the year 2000, together with the acceptance of inclusive education by European Union central authorities. In case of other faculties, the experts confirm that the necessary improvements of tertiary programmes have been enforced by national amendments in educational law introduced in form of a resolution of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education on the standards of teacher education from 2019 (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1450):

(72) *The document I mentioned earlier [a regulation from 2019 on standards of education for teaching profession] (...) should have already been included in the education of every teacher.* [E1, T13:58]

(73) *I must say that it is not a novelty, because when I started working at the former university, and it was in 2000, the first subjects I taught as a contract employee were subjects in the field of special education, among others, for students of early childhood education with English.* [E2, T17:38)

On the basis of this regulation, more specialist subjects in pedagogy and psychology have been added to the programmes which cover the subject matter. Both academic experts also admit that they refer to the issues of inclusion, SLDs and SEN at their lectures, conducted inter alia with philological groups:

(74) *At my classes and lectures, students sometimes talk and discuss the problems in mixed ability groups. They already notice that inclusive education is necessary due to a vast diversity of students' problems. They know there is such a need.* [E1, T18:12]

(75) *At least from my experience, [with reference to inclusion] emphasis was put on educating students preparing for the teacher's role. (...) I have also conducted such classes.* [E2, T17:50]

Regardless of the extensions introduced into pedagogical and psychological subjects of tertiary programmes, there is still no certainty that the issue of inclusion is in fact the subject discussed with students at lectures. As the experts explain:

(76) *I do not have personal experience when it comes to preparing 'subject' teachers and the experiences shared by in-service teachers show that from the perspective of their studies, they lack this [inclusion].* [E2, T18:21]

(77) *I believe that they [themes on inclusion] certainly exist in this block, but how they are implemented and how it happens is difficult for me to say.* [E1, T17:02]

What is more, the academic experts agree that the issue of inclusion may be treated selectively at philological faculties due to the limited number of teaching hours or covered insufficiently at these faculties:

(78) (...) *in other standards, it is included, but selectively, I don't want to say it is only mentioned, because some things are developed, but the issue is not fully covered.*  
[E1, T14:45]

This problem is also noticed by the specialist from the teacher training centre:

(79) (...) *the point is to adjust the program of tertiary education or postgraduate studies so that the teacher will be able to teach supportively, inclusively in the future, so not only help ad hoc, but work supportively.* [E4, T28:08]

Considering the professional preparedness for the teaching profession, the issue of professional apprenticeship was discussed with the experts. According to the gathered information, students of both faculties of early pedagogy and English philology have an extended number of hours of apprenticeship which is performed in various educational units in different forms. University students of both B.A. and M.A. levels observe and conduct lessons with mixed ability groups, gaining practical skills and sharing their problems with school teachers and university internship supervisors.

(80) (...) *group and field internships are organized by the university. Educational institutions where students are exposed to all the educational challenges are selected for internship. For example, in integrated kindergartens and also in integrated classes.* [E1, T17:58]

In the opinion of the experts, this kind of professional practice is perceived by the students as one of the most valuable forms of professional education:

(81) *I believe that this is a profession that requires practice and when there is as much of it as possible, it is very good. Also, the students believe that contact with practice is a very important moment in their professional preparation.* [E1, T20:03]

Additionally, university students may join professional courses and workshops organised by teacher training centres and also be advised individually by experts:

(82) *Our offer also includes individual or group consultations, and it happens that, for example, it does not have to be a training for 20-30 people, but just a conversation, either online or stationary, let's say for 3-5 people. We have already had such cases.*  
[E4, T12:56]

In conclusion, having considered the improvements of tertiary educational programmes (RQ6), it can be concluded that university students gain knowledge about SLDs, SEN and inclusion at lectures, however the range and quality of the information depend on the content of a tertiary programme and particular subjects. According to the academic experts, during their professional internship, university students may gain experience in work with mixed ability classes and discuss problems connected with the lesson conduct with both school teachers and university lecturers. They may also join specialist courses organised at teacher training centres.

#### **10.1.5.4 Opinion of specialists about professional performance of early education English language teachers in Poland**

The last of the considered factors influencing the implementation and development of the inclusive approach in Poland is associated with the professional performance of primary school teachers (RQ7). The experts were requested to evaluate if teachers in Polish schools attempt to apply inclusion friendly methods in their educational practice and what sort of difficulties they may encounter in their work that prevent them from its full implementation.

Based on to the received responses, it can be said that not all teachers understand the concept of inclusive education despite the attempts of preparing them to work inclusively:

(83) *They [teachers] are well prepared. (...) I think they struggle, because they lack support to be able to use all the tools they have learned and have at their disposal in practice.* [E2, T26:14]

The experts notice that the quality of the offered teaching standards often depends on the school environment, in particular on the headteacher and her/his managerial skills,



as well as teachers themselves. There are schools which in the opinion of E1 are well organised and equipped, with competent teaching staff where inclusive practices have a chance to be fast developed:

(84) *(...) there are schools and institutions that are very good at this, they are not afraid and do not have inhibitions. [E1, T5:47]; It all depends on the institution. In fact, there are places where teachers don't really report any major problems. (...) However, there are sometimes voices that it is very difficult for them to work with children with SEN because they are left alone. (...) because the contribution of the pedagogue or school psychologist is faint, or the cooperation is not as it should be, or the management is not interested in the problem. [E1, T21:15]*

The experts believe that young teachers are best prepared for the role of the inclusive teachers due to their course of studies. They are said to use activating methods of teaching, as well as, are prepared to perform their functional diagnosis. What is more, in the opinion of E3, they can rightly evaluate educational problems of their learners and direct them to specialist diagnosis, what proves their good observation skills:

(85) *Early school and preschool education teachers, in my opinion, are one of the best prepared professional groups among all the teaching staff. They are certainly best prepared to conduct a functional diagnosis; they already do it in the form of a descriptive assessment and they do not fully realise that and this is a perfect introduction. [E2, T25:53]*

(86) *It happens more and more often, when I ask a student who sent you there [to the counselling centre], s/he tells me, for example, that the Polish teacher noticed some problems with writing. [E3, T7:03]: This means that the role of the teacher as an observer is very important here. [E4, T7:14]*

Unfortunately, not all teachers manage mixed ability classes. The experts inform that even highly experienced teachers may find working with learners with SLDs difficult and challenging. According to the experts, their problems stem from inadequate choice of teaching methods and lack of specialist knowledge about SLDs and the inclusive approach:

(87) (...) *teachers individually try to deal with everyone who has problems.* [E3, T11:58]

(88) *They [teachers] believe that inclusive work is something new, that it involves additional tasks, that it is a burden for them.* [E1, T21:28]

E1 informs that teachers try to work out their own ways of dealing with so called ‘difficult learners’, however without a change of the teaching approach into the inclusive one it often ends with a fiasco. Therefore, some of them are wrongly convinced that learners with severe expression of SLDs should be redirected to special education. Their disillusion and a feeling of abandonment in struggling with educational problems, refrain them from undertaking new challenges such as reaching for non-standard methods of teaching. As it is explained by E1:

(89) *They feel as if they do not fully meet the requirements of these children, they are aware that this may not be the kind of education that should be given to this child. They themselves feel not yet fully competent (E1, T24:17). Such dilemmas sometimes lead to the conclusion that maybe it would be better for the child to be in a special school, because then the child would be much better taken care of.* [E1, T24:39]

Ironically, most of teachers, including the most experienced ones, are familiar with the activating methods, which means that they possess the necessary skills to work with mixed ability groups. For this reason, in the opinion of the experts, teachers require mental support and refreshing of good teaching practices:

(90) *So, they have very good professional qualifications. (...) They lack support (...) to diminish the use of explicit, traditional methods of teaching. Maybe, they just need to be reminded. I remember that many years ago there was much noise about activating methods, group work and pair work.* [E2, T26:14]. *I think that they are able to use their knowledge in a fantastic way when working with students with SLDs.* [E2, T27:58]

All the specialists admit that teachers in Poland are granted autonomy, especially in matters referring to a lesson conduct, selection and organisation of teaching tools and

materials. However, they are reported not to act autonomously, by the same resigning from implicit methods of teaching. Main causes of this phenomenon may lay in bureaucracy and overload of duties. As it is explained by the experts, instead of concentrating on the didactic process, teachers often have to focus on other duties and maintain clear documentation for which reasons they lack time and motivation to go beyond the standard use of textbooks:

(91) *Contrary to what may seem true, teachers have a lot of autonomy. Indeed, what teachers perceive as a constraint is the amount of documentation, although it has recently been decreased. (...) The teacher has full autonomy when s/he is already in the lesson, so s/he is the one who actually decides what content and how s/he implements it.* [E2, T28:11]

Regardless of the fact that teachers enjoy autonomy, at least with reference to the lesson conduct, they are said to seldomly attend trainings dedicated to subject methodology. In the opinion of the experts from the teacher training centre, they show more interest in various forms of professional development dedicated to psychological and pedagogical issues which may be useful in their career building rather than in developing their skills in subject teaching. The experts explain what follows:

(92) *Teachers of grades one to three rarely join the cooperation network that we, the teacher training centre, run for both English and German language teachers.* [E3, T16:18]

(93) *The psychological and pedagogical aspects are more important [for them] than the linguistic ones.* [E4, T17.00]

Responding to RQ7, early education teachers are believed to be well prepared for their roles in inclusive education. The experts agreeably admit that especially young teachers possess adequate knowledge about LDs and SEN, and therefore can conduct lessons with the use of the inclusive approach. The experts also notice that more experienced in-service teachers may easily get acquainted with inclusion through the application of so-called activating methods of teaching which were introduced in the past. The fact that teachers perform functional diagnosis successfully proves that they have the

necessary knowledge about SLDs and SEN. In the opinion of the experts, teachers greatest problem is the lack of use of approaches and strategies recommended for inclusion (see section 3.2.2). The reason for teachers' reluctant attitude into inclusion is seen in their overload with duties, as well as excessive control of their supervisors over teachers' autonomous acting. It is also underlined that early education teachers rarely participate in professional trainings dedicated to the use of modern, inclusion friendly methods of teaching, focusing more on psychological aspects of their profession.

#### **10.1.5.5 Opinion of specialists about availability of inclusion friendly teaching tools and materials**

As discussed above, without factual knowledge about present trends in education and correct understanding of inclusion, teachers feel attached to the PPP model. This obviously leads to numerous problems with a lesson conduct in mixed ability groups, as trying to adjust teaching materials individually to learners' SEN is virtually impossible in classes with a large number of students with educational difficulties. Asked about the availability and use of teaching materials that would support the development of the inclusive approach (RQ8), the specialists underline that entering into inclusive education means choosing teaching tools and materials which are appropriate for all learners regardless of their abilities, not adjusting them to each individual need:

(94) *I don't really understand what it means to adapt materials because if we are talking about inclusive education, we are talking about teaching materials that are good for everyone, we need to remember about 'universal design' – a slogan meaning: what is good for a person with SEN or SLDs, is also good for everyone.* [E2, T31:12]

The experts stress that there are plenty of teaching materials in electronic and paper forms which can be supportive in conducting lessons with the use of implicit methods. They are said to be easily available and often cost free:

(95) *(...) we have plenty of teaching materials. Schools, though probably not all of them, are equipped with excellent teaching tools such as interactive whiteboards. Indeed, the problem might be perhaps with too few materials that allow for direct action as*

*we should remember that the learner should not only see and hear, but also be able to act, what stimulates his tactical system as action also stimulates the development of new brain connections. [E2, T31:20]*

(96) *Of course, they [teachers] acquire some materials by themselves and prepare them on their own, but they also inform that there are already complete, ready-to-use sets. [E1, T25:11]*

One of the experts draws attention to the fact that it is the teachers' duty to search for and prepare teaching materials for their lessons, what nowadays is not a problem, as majority of them are available online. It is also stressed that in this profession, teachers should be ready to develop their own materials if their obtaining is too expensive or simply not possible otherwise.

(97) *It is important to remember that obtaining and collecting these materials is the effort included in the profession of teaching. [E1, T25:11]*

(98) *If I wanted to conduct classes using non-standard materials, I wouldn't really complain about not having them because there are many things you can do yourself. For instance, computer programs, well, I'm not an IT expert, but we can do basic things ourselves, for example short animations. Besides, I think it's also a matter of thinking about language. [E2, T33:12]*

Similarly to the use of inadequate methods of teaching, also with reference to teaching materials, the experts underline that preparing them separately for each learner with SEN is a lost struggle, rising irritation and lack of understanding of the concept of inclusion.

(99) *(...) to individualize work and create teaching material for everyone, so that it is tailored to learners' needs, that is, let's say, hard. [E4, T24:11]*

According to the experts, an access to non-standard teaching materials is easy thanks to availability of modern technological solutions, such as the Internet, a computer, a copy machine, an interactive board, etc.; the only obstacle in using a variety of teaching

materials that is noticed by some of the experts refers to financial constraints. The problem has already been described in the comparative study (see section 7.7) and also signalled by the surveyed teachers (see section 10.1.1.4). One of the experts presents strong views about this problem:

(100) *The problem rather lies in what can be purchased and the question is up to what extent should the teacher do it with his or her own funds. There are institutions that cope with this very well, which have collected a lot of tools and their teachers actually have plenty of them to choose from. However, we just have to remember that everything wears out. Some people think that materials in schools are everlasting, that they are wrapped in foil and do not deteriorate over the years. So, in this sense, it seems to me that the teaching materials are a problem. [E2, T32:04]*

Summing up, in the opinions of the experts, there are plenty of teaching materials that can be freely used with inclusive groups of students. They are available online, printable and accessible with the use of modern electronic technology, which is also believed to be present in schools. The academic experts stress the fact that developing teaching materials is incorporated into professional duties of teachers who are expected to show creativity in their work with children. Further, the experts explain that attempting to adjust the teaching materials to individual needs of every learner is a misconception of the substantial assumptions of inclusive education. Lack of teachers' interest in non-standardised methods of teaching has its negative impact also on the selection of teaching materials and tools. Additionally, financial shortages and improper disposal of school funds by its managers leaves some educational unit underequipped, in which case teachers have a limited access to modern teaching tools.

## **10.2 Discussion about the state of inclusive education in Poland based on the results of the supplementary study**

In the conducted supplementary study five research procedures were applied to receive data that gave a deeper insight into six research questions (see section 9.1). The analysed issues referred to systemic solutions, diagnostic procedures, educational institutions and support services, education and performance of English language teachers working with

mixed ability classes, as well as presently applied methods of English language teaching and accompanying teaching materials. The findings prove that the inclusive approach has been introduced to Polish schools only in terms of formal regulations imposed by the central authorities, missing however, pragmatic solutions. This view is further discussed with reference to the set research questions.

Considering systemic solutions introduced to the educational law (RQ2), it must be noticed that the term of inclusive education is not popularised in formal documents. The present form of ordered adjustments, such as a lower number of students per class, establishing support of special education teacher for learners with SLDs at lessons and organisation of advisory services offered by counselling centres, all keep Polish education within the frames of integration. For instance, the limited number of students in mixed ability classes is provisional as it can be extended to almost thirty students if there are some refugee children. Additionally, the size of classrooms in Polish schools are often inadequate for educational needs. Cluttered with extended number of desks and almost always set in rows, they preclude an application of alternative teaching methods which often require space and discretionary arrangement of desks. Another problem affecting the quality of teaching practices is the condition of electronic devices in schools. Today, majority of schools are equipped with computers and have an access to the Internet, however, in many cases these tools are outdated or faulty, and therefore not used.

Poor financial condition of Polish schools is also noticed with reference to the offered support services (RQ2). The teachers and parents of learners with SLDs participating in the research agreeably admit that compensatory courses and help of special education teachers at lessons is absolutely vital, though insufficient. Although regulations concerning the number of learners with SEN per class are formally established, their factual number in the classroom often exceeds the set limit. It is so, because many children with educational difficulties are not sent for diagnosis by their parents and do not have the required certification of counselling centres.

Another issue referring to the systemic solutions for inclusion that needs reconsideration is the presently applied system of evaluation of educational efforts (RQ2). The results of the survey show that the scale of grades is a preferable form of assessment in majority of Polish schools, also on the primary level of education. According to the received responses, final examinations evaluating learners knowledge and skills that are organised at the end of primary and secondary levels of education enforce the use of grades which are believed to be more informative than descriptive forms of evaluation.

Much as this can be true in case of the advanced levels of primary education (grades from four to eight), this solution is useless in case of early education learners. It is difficult to find a reasonable explanation for this phenomenon, especially knowing that the legislator insists on descriptive form of evaluation of learner's effort that is obligatory at the end of the first level of education in classes from one to three.

Considering the diagnosing procedures applied in the country (RQ4), the results of the supplementary study show that in the light of presently binding regulations, school teachers are expected to perform functional diagnosis at their schools and inform parents about identified educational difficulties of their children. Regrettably, as the surveyed teachers complained, only parents have the power to send their children to be examined by specialists from counselling centres. Therefore, if they decide not to send the child for the diagnosis, it continues its education without any recommended adjustments. This situation has a negative impact not only on the child's well-being itself, but also on the arrangement of inclusive classes and difficult conditions of work. Even if the school managers know that the child has educational difficulties, they cannot offer professional support as the issues are not formally documented. As a result, classes in Polish schools may actually include many more learners with SLDs than officially recorded. This situation rises irritation of teachers who have to struggle with the problem on their own. Also, some critical views are expressed towards the quality of certificates and opinions issued by counselling centres. Both teachers and parents of learners with SLDs participating in the supplementary research noticed that sometimes opinions expressed by the specialists from the centres are too general and lack accuracy, what often precludes adequate recognition of learners' SEN and adaptation of teaching strategies.

The following problem that was analysed in the supplementary study concerned the roles of educational institutions and support services in inclusive educational environment (RQ5). Four of them were investigated: school authorities, school inspectorates, counselling centres and special educational services at school. The support of the last two services is praised the highest by all the respondents (parents, teachers, experts) – both the psychologist and pedagogues from counselling centres offer direct solutions and remedy, also in urgent school situations. Some critical opinions are expressed by school teachers who would expect deeper engagement of specialists from counselling centres, going beyond written recommendations in certification of learners with SLDs. Additionally, in the opinion of some teacher respondents, the recommended remedial steps lack precision and often sound alike, regardless of the diagnosed



educational difficulty. It is understood that teachers expect more pragmatic recommendations on how to proceed with the disordered learners.

An institution which in the view of teachers and also specialists in the field of education is exposed to the most severe criticism is the school inspectorate. It has been noticed that instead of its supervising role based on monitoring school performance, this institution executes a more authoritarian control over school authorities and teachers. The best example of this type of management is the control performed over teachers' qualifying exams. Teachers are treated objectively – as objects of evaluation, not subjectively – as professionals by the controlling bodies, what suggests that gathered by teachers documentation is more important than their professional performance. This attitude may have a negative influence on teachers' autonomy and creativity in undertaking educational challenges. Indeed, the role of inspectorates was also negatively viewed in case of the earlier comparative study, and definitely requires improvement towards a more advisory role based on monitoring activities.

Considering the organisation and supervision activities of schools, also with the view to teachers' autonomy (RQ5), the specialists are of the opinion that Polish schools are well managed and teachers enjoy a lot of independence in organising and conducting lessons. Also, teachers participating in the survey came to a similar conclusion, appreciating school headteachers for their professional advice and support. There were some critical voices against interference of the supervisors into the lesson conduct, what may signify certain disharmony in the relationship between supervisors and the teaching staff. In such cases, a more partner-like and less authoritarian approach towards staff management is advised.

Apart from the identified systemic and organisational issues, the key factors in approaching learners inclusively refer to the person of the teacher and their use of educational methods (RQ6-7). The results of the comparative study showed that young foreign language teachers in Poland are prepared for their role of inclusive education (RQ6). This conclusion finds its confirmation also in the results of the empirical part of the study. Based on the analysis of the tertiary education programmes, it was established that many faculties of English Philology in the country have already introduced the themes of SLDs and SEN to their programmes. What is more, one of the academic centres in Łódź already opened a new specialisation in inclusive education at the faculty of English Philology. Well-rounded education with the view to inclusion makes young teachers more self-assured in applying inclusion friendly methods and in identifying their

SEN. They are also more autonomous in adding alternative teaching materials to their lessons.

Regardless of the present improvements in the education of foreign language teachers, modifications of tertiary programmes are insufficient for full implementation of inclusion into the system of schooling (RQ6). Further and wider popularisation of the inclusive education is needed, especially with a view to in-service teachers who, regardless of their professional experience, lack true understanding of the inclusive approach. Due to the opinion of the specialists in the field of SLDs and early education, activating techniques are known to teachers as they were introduced into teacher education in the 1990's, these, however, are still not present in educational practice. Therefore, understanding the difference between integration and inclusion together with refreshment of good teaching practices of the Humanistic Approach are considered necessary. This goal can be achieved by an organisation of intensive courses and workshops, for instance by teacher training centres, all over the country. Although it was confirmed in the interview with the specialists from one of the teacher training centres that certain forms of training have already been offered to English language teachers, in the opinion of the researcher, the so far organised forms of training had an integrative and not inclusive nature. In fact, the interviewed specialists admitted that several courses on SEN and SLDs were offered in the past, however they were focused on providing remedial techniques, not on the inclusion-friendly methods of teaching. Such courses, workshops and conferences, dedicated to inclusion friendly methods should be obligatory for all in-service teachers whose course of studies did not cover the issue of the inclusive approach. The teachers' inconsistent responses about the applied methods of teaching, and also widespread reluctance to participate in the survey about inclusion evidently point to the chaos and lack of certainty as to the applied approach in education.

In the opinion of the specialists teachers are in poor psychological condition. Burdened with duties, limited in their autonomy (controlled by inspectorates and headteachers) and forced to use poor quality of teaching equipment, many teachers have already lost their passion for the teaching profession. They base their courses on the PPP model of education with the use of standardised teaching materials to feel safe (RQ7). The ludic strategy and project works are rarely used at lessons, where individual and whole class activities prevail. As lessons seem rather monotonous to learners, misbehaviour problems occur, and in their consequence lack of understanding of the lesson content. Believing that these problems result from learners' SLDs, teachers apply

remedial steps which are only a palliative measure, often having little influence on learners' comprehension and leading to chaos in the classroom. The COVID-19 occurrence even worsened the educational situation of learners with SLDs. Although majority of the surveyed teachers admit to use the Communicative Approach and activating techniques most willingly at both direct and indirect lessons, the types of activities and forms of work are rarely present. The results of the conducted survey and lesson observations in the parts referring to the used teaching techniques, forms of work and teaching materials prove that foreign language teachers are attached to the PPP model. Their preference of explanatory techniques, most often expressed through presentations, as well as valuing individual and plenum forms of work over group and pair work, stand in opposition to the assumptions of the Communicative Approach, and do not match with activating techniques. Monotony, repetitiveness and lack of creative activities at English language lessons are also confirmed by the opinions of the interviewed parents of learners with SLDs. In their opinion, teachers lack invention, do not motivate learners positively, focus on students' mistakes and weaknesses rather than strengths. Frustrated with learners' misbehaviour and lack of understanding on one side, and irritated by social criticism, teachers do not notice that the problem of poor educational standards lay primarily in their inadequate selection of teaching methods and materials.

With reference to the applied teaching tools and materials (RQ8), the preferential use of standardised resources, mainly textbooks, was noticed in the comparative part of the study and confirmed by the results of all of the performed forms of the supplementary study. The popularity of the textbook, which is said by the parents to be often the sole teaching material applied at lessons, is differently explained. Some of the surveyed teachers reported to be obliged by the headteachers to use textbooks which warrant the correct implementation of the national curriculum. This explanation can be true as school authorities and teaching staff often fear the results of controls performed by the inspectorates. However, basing a language course on standardised materials such as a textbook deprives teachers of their creativity and autonomous acting. It may also make them feel attached to the PPP model of teaching. Relying the whole course entirely on the textbook may be insufficient for developing learners' interest in the subject. Sameness and repetitiveness of the textbook tasks make the course undemanding and dull. What is more, with a view to learners with SLDs, textbooks may turn to be unsuitable as in their majority they are not adjusted to individuals' SEN. Another explanation why teachers feel attached to textbooks, might be a fact that they are standardised teaching materials which

do not require any adjustments to learners' age and level of advancement and can be easily accessible. They also help to systematise learners' work and are easily manageable. This point of view is not shared by the interviewed specialists and parents of learners with SLDs who are convinced that there are plenty of other interesting teaching materials, accessible free of charge on the Internet. In the opinion of the researcher, the problem why some teachers seldom reach for non-standardised teaching materials can be interpreted in two ways. Either teachers are unskilled in searching the alternative teaching materials or, what seems more probable, they do not want to adjust them to learners' needs and abilities. Many classrooms in the country have already been modernised, equipped with interactive boards with an access to the Internet, projectors, computers, speakers and cameras. Even if these electronic devices were not efficient, still there are piles of other teaching materials such as games, plays, pictures, CDs with songs and rhymes, mobile phone applications which offer plenty of ready-made lesson scenarios adjusted to learners' level of advancement and age. Therefore, the difficulty in using alternative teaching materials has its cause elsewhere, most probably in teachers' lack of skills to incorporate these materials into lesson objectives. A similar conclusion was drawn in the conducted comparative study, where according to the specialist literature, it was found that teachers would be prone to use alternative teaching materials at their lessons if they were adjusted to learners SEN.

Concluding, the responses to the set research questions discussed with reference to the supplementary study reveal serious imperfections of the presently executed system of education in Poland. They refer generally to three educational bodies, namely the central and local educational authorities, school supervisors and authorities, and finally teachers. In the understanding of the author of the present work, the main obstacles prevailing the full implementation and development of the inclusive approach in Polish primary schools stem from two major problems, which are: i) lack of precise executive regulations and financial shortage, ii) teachers' insufficient preparedness to educate mixed ability classes, resulting in the absence of inclusion friendly methods in school practice. All of the said problems are believed to be mutually dependent and require taking decisive steps. However, the most crucial of them are the education of English language teachers, especially the in-service ones, for accurate understanding of the inclusive approach and a turn from the traditional PPP model of teaching towards alternative methods that activate learners in accordance to their abilities.

### **10.3 Limitations of the study**

The conducted supplementary study has certain limitations which result from unavailability of resources caused by the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to time limits, as well as unexpected difficulties in communication with representatives in the field of education, both abroad and in Poland, the researcher had to resign from the initially planned extended research. For these reasons, the researcher focused on developing five research procedures to be applied exclusively in Poland as ultimately the subject matter of the dissertation addresses the educational situation of learners with SLDs in Poland.

It is important to add that in case of interviews with experts in the field of education, the researcher contacted many of them including heads of inspectorates, psychologists from counselling centres and representatives of academic centres, however, informed about the aim of the interview, they refused their participation. For this reason, the size of the sample is not representative, though the received answers give an outline to the discussed problems.

Similar difficulties were faced by the researcher in collecting data for the survey with teachers of English language in Poland, what forced the researcher to undertake in-person-visits in schools, requesting participation of the teachers. Their unwillingness was excused most often by lack of time or other duties. In the opinion of the researcher, unwillingness to participate in the developed studies is an indicator that the inclusive education is either weakly understood, unwillingly welcomed, or simply unknown in the school environment.

### **10.4 Implications for further considerations**

Undoubtedly, understanding the limitations of the supplementary study, repeating the research on an extended group of respondents would be suggested in order to confirm or reject the findings of the five applied research procedures. Also, the researcher is of the opinion that further analysis about the state of development of inclusive education in Polish schools based on additional studies is needed, especially with a view to the

development of executive decisions concerning further implementation of inclusion into public schools.

With reference to English language teaching to young learners with SLDs, the tendencies in the applied methods of teaching should be observed in order to spot whether the PPP model of the foreign language lesson is changing into the inclusive one where the alternative methods and strategies prevail, promoting equal chances of all learners for their well-balanced education.

## CONCLUSION

In the present dissertation the issue of teaching English language to young learners with SLDs was discussed. In particular, the work aimed at establishing how learners with such educational problems as dyslexia and dysphasia are approached by foreign language primary school teachers. The choice of SLDs, their defining as well as understanding from the educational perspective were explained by the description of medical discoveries of various causes of learning disorders which led to their categorisation and opened a discussion about their psychological and pedagogical perceptions. Having learnt about the scientific developments in SLDs from the historical perspective (Chapter One), the nature of SLDs and their influence on the process of language learning (Chapter Two), the educational aspects of educating learners with SLDs were concerned (Chapter Three); the analysis of international documents and specialist literature has allowed to establish that the presently preferred approach in education of young learners with SLDs is based on their inclusion into the mainstream education. It is possible under four conditions: development of inclusive strategies by educational institutions and support services; rising competence of teachers for development of inclusive practices; using methods and strategies of teaching that are compliant with humanistic psychology; and choosing inclusion-friendly teaching materials. As it was shown in the analysis, the modern inclusive approach advocates the application of combined elements of such methods as TPR, the Silent Way, CLIL, TBL and other ludic and multi-sensory strategies. Their successful use mostly depends on teachers' professional competences.

The said conditions were used as basic criteria for the comparative study, concerned with the present educational situation of learners with SLDs, which was developed (Chapter Four) and subjected to the analysis (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) in relation to three selected countries: Austria, Czechia and Poland. In the study the quality of educational practices was controlled on the basis of detailed analysis of formal documents and specialist literature with reference to eight research questions which included: (RQ1) scientific interest in SLDs from the historical perspective; (RQ2) systemic solution introduced to the national systems of education, (RQ3) legal basis for educating learners with SLDs in the selected countries, (RQ4) diagnosing SLDs, (RQ5) organisation of educational institutions and support services in the countries; (RQ6) education of (language) teachers, (RQ7) the use of teaching methods and (RQ 8) sufficiency of English language teaching materials.

The discussed results of the comparative analysis (Chapter Eight) show that regardless of some general resemblance in the implementation of inclusion, there are some specific differences which substantially influence the quality and pace of the transformations in the systems of education in the researched countries. The results of the comparative study were verified with reference to the educational situation of learners with SLDs in Poland. The limitation to this country was caused mainly by the persistent occurrence of the COVID-10 pandemic. The supplementary study gave the deeper insight into the present state of inclusion through the perspective of English language teaching approaches towards young learners. Five research procedures were included in this study, addressing six out of eight research questions (Chapter Nine). The results of the supplementary study (Chapter Ten) mostly confirm the findings of the comparative study.

In response to the set research questions, it was established that all of the researched countries developed scientific interest in SLDs, coming to important achievements in this field, regardless of certain unfavourable historical circumstances (RQ1). Beneficial changes in systems of education were first noticed in Austria where learners with SLDs were formally awarded equal access to public education in 1984. From the beginning of the 1990s, all of the researched countries formally adopted an integrative approach in education of learners with SEN. The similarities in approaching learners with SLDs in Austria, Czechia and Poland also relate to the changes in educational law which stem mostly from an adoption of the European Union legal solutions by the countries (RQ3). Beginning from 2000, the countries have turned towards a modified integrative approach, based this time on inclusion which assumes adjustments



of educational requirements and methods of teaching to learners special needs, warranting, at the same time, the same access and quality of educational services to all learners regardless of their abilities. Each of the compared European Union member states has developed national action plans (NAP) in order to control the quality of the educational inclusive services. The pace and range of implemented changes, however, differ in the countries, what may be caused by a different nature of the decentralised system of education in Austria and Czechia, and the centralised one in Poland. At present, the most advanced amendments concerning the reform of the teaching profession and school reform have been noticed in Austria. The experts participating in the interviews agree that the inclusive approach has formally been adopted and introduced to Polish schools, though further reforms of the system of education are needed for its full development.

In the opinion of the researcher, the privileged position of Austria results from some significant changes in the organisation of the system of education (RQ2). They include such aspects as an introduction of a separate specialisation of pedagogical and philological studies dedicated to inclusion, wide variety of post-graduate studies and obligatory professional trainings for teachers of inclusive groups, as well as a different type of lesson conduct based on team teaching model with the use of TBL approach for young groups of learners. In Poland and Czechia, a ‘one teaches, one assists’ model of teaching is still maintained. In the opinion of the researcher, it does not enforce a change of the commonly applied explicit methods of English language teaching. The results of the comparative study, also confirmed by the results of the supplementary study, show that the number of students per class in Polish schools is the highest of all the countries, what additionally may discourage teachers from reaching for implicit methods of teaching which require a more individualised approach to each learner.

According to the results of the comparative study, also the diagnosing procedures are differently organised in the three countries (RQ4). The controversies are raised by the non-standardised procedure based on ability-achievement discrepancy that is still used in Austria and exposed to criticism as its main focus is on learner’s educational deficits. Regardless of this fact, Austrian teachers are said to be more problem-oriented as they are prepared to perform the diagnosis. Still, the organisation of the diagnosing procedure in Poland and Czechia is considered by the specialists in the field of SLDs as better developed than in Austria. It is standardised and conducted by teams of specialists from psychological and pedagogical counselling centres who issue certificates confirming the

diagnosed problem together with recommendations for schools.

Much as standardised assessment of SLDs conducted by the specialists is appreciated by Polish parents and teachers, what was also confirmed by the opinions of the teachers participating in the supplementary study, some problems are reported concerning cooperation between the counselling centres, parents and teachers (RQ5). The issues mostly refer to unprecise identification of SLDs and/ or too vague educational recommendations that in the opinions of some teachers and parents are unclear and causing confusion. The problem was reported in the survey by the English language teachers, as well as in interviews with the parents of children with SLDs. Interestingly, teachers appreciate the good quality of their cooperation with special education teachers who offer support in conducting lessons, developing teaching materials and sharing their professional knowledge about SLDs with the subject teachers. Also, a positive opinion of teachers is expressed about support services offered by governmental organisations which organise trainings, prepare reports and inform teachers about recent amendments in systemic solutions which refer to educational issues.

According to the information found in specialist literature, in Czechia and Poland, the reform of one of the governmental institutions is perceived as urgent. It refers to school inspectorates, bodies that control school performance and services concerning SEN. The inspectorates are exposed to some criticism for bringing chaos to schools and hindering the development of the inclusive approach by unjustified constant controls and changes in educational requirements for learners with SEN. Similar negative opinions about the control and contradicting decisions of the inspectorates were also expressed by the teachers participating in the supplementary study and the interviewed experts from the academic units.

With respect to education of English language teachers (RQ 6), the results of the comparative study show that the reform of the teaching profession has already been implemented in all the countries, where the issues of SLDs, SEN and inclusion are said to be added to tertiary education programmes or offered in form of separate post-graduate studies. Based on the opinions of the Polish teachers participating in the supplementary study, the most common form of gaining knowledge about SLDs, SEN and inclusion are professional trainings. Only some of young teachers admit to have had these issues included in the programme of their studies. According to the results of the analysis of the tertiary education programmes for philological faculties in Poland, the decision about the scope and range of topic concerning the inclusive education into the programmes is left

to discrepancy of particular academic units. In the opinion of the researcher, this may have an influence on the preparedness of teachers to educate learners with SLDs. The parents participating in the supplementary research admit that some young teachers are better prepared to work with inclusive groups of students, due to their scope of studies and more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Another problem that is concerned with professional competency of subject teachers, refers to financial differences in educating teacher trainees in the compared countries. In Austria and Czechia professional teacher trainings are obligatory and free of charge. Moreover, teachers in these two countries are entitled to twelve or even fifteen hours period yearly dedicated to their self-development within the time of their teaching duty. Polish teachers are deprived of such privileges. Usually, they are expected to cover the costs of trainings on their own, what in the opinion of the researcher is an additional obstacle discouraging teachers from turning towards the inclusive approach. Also, an additional burden in undertaking new professional challenges is the lowest of all countries remuneration of Polish teachers.

Education, professional skills and attitude of teachers towards inclusion has a strong influence on the choice of teaching methods (RQ7). The analysis of the specialist literature has allowed to establish that alternative implicit methods of teaching are more beneficial for mixed-ability classes. The results of the comparative study prove that approaches such as CLIL and TBL gain more and more popularity in Austrian schools pushing aside the PPP model and the audiolingual method. Unfortunately, in Poland explicit methods of teaching are still preferred by teachers of English language, although they declare to be using CLT. The TBL is a rarely applied approach in Polish schools, used only by single teachers of young age. Surely, teachers have no influence on the educational conditions, such as a size of a classroom or teaching equipment. Still, the choice of the teaching approach, including a focus on communication in the target language, a use of alternative teaching strategies, as well as, a common organisation of work forms and application of diverse to tests forms of assessment, are left to the decision of the teacher. The fact that foreign language lessons in Polish schools are conducted most often in accordance to the PPP model was confirmed in the interviews with parents of learners with SLDs, as well as by the opinions of the teachers surveyed in the supplementary study. Lessons, conducted mostly in Polish language, are focused on an introduction and practice of vocabulary and some basic grammar structures. Also, the observed applied forms of work indicate the use the explicit methods of teaching. In the

opinion of the interviewed parents, children rarely sing, play or do creative works in classrooms which problem was also noticed during observations of English language lessons. Perceived as monotonous and demotivating, English language lessons are almost entirely based on the use of standardised teaching materials, often missing real communication in the target language.

The use of alternative methods of teaching entails the use of non-standardised teaching materials (RQ8). Adjustment of available sources is perceived as problematic by teachers in all the researched countries. Moreover, in comparison to the other countries, Polish schools are reported to be still insufficiently equipped, lacking modern technological solutions. The opinions of the interviewed parents and specialists in the field of pedagogy partly confirm this point of view. Classrooms are said to be overcrowded with students, whereas the access to the Internet is limited as the electronic equipment, though present, is often invalid. The interviewed parents have also noticed that some teachers, especially the old ones, miss technical skills and therefore avoid conducting lessons with the use of modern gadgetry.

Concluding, inclusive education, considered as the most desirable approach towards learners of mix-ability classes, has formally been introduced to Polish system of education. Unfortunately, the initial reform of the teaching profession, which so far has encompassed changes in tertiary education programmes and recent rise of remuneration, is definitely insufficient for its further successful development. As it effects from the results of the comparative study and supplementary research, the problem with developing inclusion in Poland has three sources: lack of educational reforms based on executive decisive steps, financial shortages in this economic sector and insufficient preparedness of in-service teachers. Decisive steps are also required with reference to the educational goals, diversification of methods of teaching and improvement of teaching tools and materials. Fulfilment of the required needs should bring a change of attitude of teachers and parents towards inclusion, what may become the best asset in improving the inclusive and linguistic education in the country.

## **Abstract**

For over the past twenty years learners with specific learning disorders (SLDs) have been educated at the public schools on the basis of integration, and more recently inclusion. Adopted by all European Union member states approach assumes common education of all learners regardless of their abilities which warrants them equal opportunities for well-balanced development. In order to achieve this goal several steps have been undertaken by national governments, concerning the changes in the organisation of the system of schooling, reforms of teacher education, a development of diagnosing and support services.

Despite the governmental efforts to popularise the inclusive approach in Polish education, encompassing an introduction of obligatory foreign language education for all learners, the situation of students with special educational needs (SEN) in Polish schools is reported to be still uncomfortable. In the specialist literature, it can be found that foreign language teachers focus explicitly on cognitive strategies, lacking commitment to practical aspects of knowledge. Children with SEN are said to be often overlooked in the implementation of particular language tasks, and the principle of individualization of the educational process is not in fact respected. Instead of adjustment of the applied methods of teaching to learners SEN, only certain remedial steps are implemented, including a general care about the appropriate atmosphere at lessons, aid in self-service activities, or replacement of their seating in the classroom. The reported problems indicate that instead of inclusion, Polish education is still deeply rooted in integration. Before initiation of the present work, a pilot study was conducted, the results of which confirmed the reported

information.

In view of the above, the principal aim of the present dissertation was formed to analyse the presently applied approaches towards English language teaching to learners with SLDs. In order to notice the advantages and disadvantages of the educational situation of children with SLDs in the country, a comparative study was developed. It concerned eight aspects of foreign language teaching to learners with SLDs in Austria, Czechia and Poland posed in form of the following research questions:

- (1) How was the scientific interest in SLDs developed historically in each of the compared countries?

The aim of this research question was to establish whether the scientific thought and education of learners with SLDs developed in a similar way in all the researched countries and how these two factors have influenced the present educational situation of learners with SLDs.

- (2) What systemic solutions have been introduced to the national systems of education with the view to inclusion?

It was important to establish the types and conditions of school services offered to learners with SLDs in the compared countries. Detailed such as the type of school managerial system, length of early education stage, the type of the applied curricula and lesson conduct, as well as number of students per class were compared.

- (3) What are the legal basis for educating learners with SLDs in each of the compared countries?

It was also important to compare legislative changes concerning education of learners with SLDs in the researched countries that were implemented on the basis of the adopted European Union directives and national regulations. The analysis of the gathered documents and specialist literature effected in noticing the dynamics and depth of changes planned in the national educational law by the governments of the compared countries

- (4) What diagnostic procedures of SLDs are applied in the three compared countries?

As accurate early diagnosing of SLDs is of substantial importance to the educational success of individuals with SLDs, the diagnosing procedures applied in the researched countries were subjected to an analysis. Responding to this research questions allowed to notice whether the applied in Poland type of diagnosing is efficient and supportive for learners and their teachers.

- (5) How are educational institutions and support services for learners with SLDs organised in the three compared countries?

Regardless of the expected general similarities between the researched countries caused by their membership in the European Union and adoption of directives and regulations concerning educational matters, some differences were assumed in the organisation of educational institutions and support services. Analysing how the educational institutions and support services are organised in particular countries, how they cooperate and what range of services they offer to learners with SLDs was important for understanding the quality of offered help.

- (6) How are teachers of the compared countries educated and what is their (self) development of competences with the view to inclusive education?

As teachers are believed to take the main responsibility for the quality of educational services, their path of professional education and formal preparedness to work with inclusive groups were compared. Close attention was paid to an organisation of tertiary education programmes, an offer of in-service trainings as well as reimbursement of training costs in the researched countries. Also, the assumed roles of inclusive teachers were considered together with their job satisfaction.

- (7) What language teaching methods are used by primary level teachers of English language in the three compared countries?

The goal was to analyse which methods of English language teaching are used in each researched country. Noticing the trends is a basic indicator in establishing whether the offered education is or turns towards inclusion.

- (8) What types of teaching materials are used by English language teachers of learners with SLDs in the three compared countries?

Approaching learners with SLDs inclusively requires the use of alternative teaching methods in which non-standardised teaching materials are used. The set research question aimed at establishing what teaching materials are preferably applied by English language teachers, whether they are easily accessible and/ or need adjustment to learners SEN.

As the comparative study was based on the analysis of formal documents and specialist literature and missed an empirical insight into the problem, a supplementary study was developed, concerning the educational situation of learners with SLDs in Poland. Narrowing the research scope only to one country was caused by the occurrence

of COVID-19 pandemic. In the supplementary study, responses to six out of eight research questions set for the comparative study were sought via the use of various research procedures which included: an analysis of tertiary education programmes in Poland, a self-assessment survey for English language teachers, direct observations of foreign language lessons, semi-structured interviews with parents of learners with SLDs and with specialists in the field of education.

The dissertation is a response to a question about the present shape of foreign language education in the country. The results of the study show the good educational practices, as well as allow to notice the weakness of the applied solutions. The findings can be considered by education authorities in projecting educational reforms with the view to further implementation of inclusion into Polish schools. They can also be applied by academic centres and foreign language teachers as practical hints for developing inclusive practices and improving the quality of foreign language teaching to learners with SLDs.



## Streszczenie

Od ponad dwudziestu lat uczniowie ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się (STU) są kształceni w szkołach publicznych w oparciu o ich integrację, a od niedawna inkluzję. Przyjęte przez wszystkie państwa członkowskie Unii Europejskiej podejście włączające zakłada wspólną edukację wszystkich uczniów niezależnie od ich zdolności, co umożliwia im zrównoważony rozwój. Aby osiągnąć ten cel, rządy poszczególnych państw podjęły szereg kroków dotyczących zmian w organizacji systemu szkolnictwa, reformy kształcenia nauczycieli, rozwoju usług diagnostycznych i różnych form wsparcia.

Pomimo rządowych wysiłków na rzecz upowszechnienia podejścia włączającego w polskiej edukacji, w tym wprowadzenia obowiązkowej nauki języka obcego dla wszystkich uczniów, sytuacja dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi (SPE) w polskich szkołach jest nadal mało komfortowa. W literaturze specjalistycznej można znaleźć informacje, że w swojej pracy nauczyciele języków obcych koncentrują się przede wszystkim na tradycyjnych metodach nauczania, nie angażując uczniów w praktyczne aspekty wiedzy. Mówi się, że dzieci ze SPE są często pomijane w realizacji poszczególnych zadań językowych, a zasada indywidualizacji procesu edukacyjnego nie jest w rzeczywistości respektowana. Zamiast dywersyfikacji metod nauczania adekwatnie do indywidualnych potrzeb uczniów ze SPE, wdraża się jedynie pewne kroki zaradcze, w tym ogólną dbałość o odpowiednią atmosferę na lekcjach, czy pomoc w czynnościach samoobsługowych. Zasygnalizowane problemy wskazują, że zamiast inkluzji, polska edukacja wciąż jest głęboko zakorzeniona w integracji. Przed podjęciem niniejszej pracy naukowej, przeprowadzone zostało badanie pilotażowe, którego wyniki

potwierdziły wcześniejsze twierdzenia.

W związku z powyższym, głównym celem niniejszej rozprawy była analiza obecnie stosowanych podejść do nauczania języka angielskiego uczniów z STU. Aby dostrzec zalety i wady sytuacji edukacyjnej dzieci z STU w kraju, opracowano i przeprowadzono studium porównawcze. Dotyczyło ono ośmiu aspektów nauczania języka obcego uczniów z STU w Austrii, Czechach i Polsce, przedstawionych w formie następujących pytań badawczych:

- (1) Jak historycznie kształtowało się zainteresowanie naukowe problematyką STU w każdym z porównywanych krajów? Celem tego pytania badawczego było ustalenie, czy myśl naukowa i edukacja uczniów z STU rozwijały się w podobny sposób we wszystkich badanych krajach i jak te dwa czynniki wpłynęły na obecną sytuację edukacyjną tych uczniów.
- (2) Jakie rozwiązania systemowe ukierunkowane na inkluzję zostały wprowadzone do krajowych systemów edukacji? Ważnym tu było ustalenie typów szkół i warunków edukacyjnych oferowanych przez szkoły kształcące dzieci z STU w porównywanych krajach. W analizie rozparzono takie aspekty jak: rodzaj systemu zarządzania szkołą, długość etapu wczesnej edukacji, rodzaj stosowanych programów nauczania, formy prowadzenia zajęć lekcyjnych, a także liczbę uczniów w klasie.
- (3) Jakie są podstawy prawne kształcenia uczniów z STU w każdym z porównywanych krajów? W badaniu, istotnym było również porównanie zmian legislacyjnych dotyczących edukacji uczniów z STU w wybranych krajach, które zostały wdrożone na podstawie przyjętych dyrektyw Unii Europejskiej i przepisów krajowych. Analiza zgromadzonych dokumentów i literatury fachowej pozwoliła na dostrzeżenie dynamiki i charakteru zmian w krajowym prawie oświatowym przez rządy porównywanych krajów.
- (4) Jakie procedury diagnostyczne STU są stosowane w trzech porównywanych krajach? Ponieważ trafna wczesna diagnoza STU ma niebagatelne znaczenie dla sukcesu edukacyjnego osób z STU, analizie poddano również procedury diagnostyczne stosowane w badanych krajach. Odpowiedź na to pytanie badawcze pozwoliła ustalić, czy stosowane w wybranych krajach rodzaje diagnozy są skuteczne i pomocne zarówno uczniom, jak i ich nauczycielom.
- (5) Jak zorganizowane są instytucje edukacyjne i usługi wsparcia dla uczniów z STU w trzech porównywanych krajach? Niezależnie od zakładanych ogólnych

podobieństw między badanymi krajami, wynikającymi z ich członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej oraz podyktowanych przyjęciem dyrektyw i przepisów dotyczących kwestii edukacyjnych, należało dostrzec różnice w organizacji instytucji edukacyjnych i organizacji wsparcia. Analiza sposobu organizacji instytucji edukacyjnych i wsparcia w poszczególnych krajach, ich współpracy i zakresu usług oferowanych uczniom z STU była ważna dla zrozumienia jakości oferowanej pomocy.

- (6) W jaki sposób kształceni są nauczyciele w porównywanych krajach i jaki jest ich rozwój kompetencji w zakresie edukacji włączającej? Ponieważ uważa się, że nauczyciele ponoszą główną odpowiedzialność za jakość usług kształcenia, porównano ich ścieżkę kształcenia zawodowego i przygotowanie do pracy z grupami włączającymi. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na organizację studiów wyższych, ofertę doskonalenia zawodowego oraz zasady pokrywania kosztów udziału w szkoleniach zawodowych w badanych krajach. Rozważono również przyjęte role nauczycieli włączających oraz ich satysfakcję z pracy.
- (7) Jakie metody nauczania języków obcych są stosowane przez nauczycieli języka angielskiego na poziomie podstawowym w trzech porównywanych krajach? Celem odpowiedzi na to pytanie badawcze było przeanalizowanie, jakie metody nauczania języka angielskiego są najczęściej stosowane w każdym z badanych krajów. Zauważenie trendów jest istotnym wskaźnikiem, czy oferowana edukacja jest lub zmierza w kierunku inkluzji.
- (8) Jakie rodzaje materiałów dydaktycznych są wykorzystywane przez nauczycieli języka angielskiego w pracy z uczniami z STU w trzech porównywanych krajach? Inkluzyjne podejście do uczniów z STU wymaga stosowania alternatywnych metod nauczania, w których często wykorzystywane są niestandardowe materiały dydaktyczne. Postawione pytanie badawcze miało na celu ustalenie, jakie materiały dydaktyczne są najchętniej stosowane przez nauczycieli języka angielskiego, czy są one łatwo dostępne i/ lub wymagają dostosowania do SPE uczniów.

Ponieważ badanie porównawcze opierało się na analizie formalnych dokumentów i literatury specjalistycznej, brakowało w nim praktycznego wglądu w problem. Z tego względu opracowano badanie uzupełniające dotyczące sytuacji edukacyjnej uczniów z STU w Polsce. Zawężenie zakresu badań tylko do jednego kraju było spowodowane wystąpieniem pandemii COVID-19. W badaniu uzupełniającym udzielono odpowiedzi

na sześć z ośmiu postawionych pytań badawczych z wykorzystaniem pięciu procedur badawczych, do których należały: analiza programów szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce, ankieta samooceny dla nauczycieli języka angielskiego, bezpośrednie obserwacje lekcji języka obcego, wywiady częściowo ustrukturyzowane z rodzicami uczniów z STU oraz ze specjalistami w dziedzinie edukacji.

Mając na uwadze powyższe, niniejsza rozprawa doktorska stanowi odpowiedź na pytanie o obecny kształt edukacji obcojęzycznej w kraju. Wyniki badań wskazują dobre praktyki edukacyjne, jak również pozwalają dostrzec słabości stosowanych obecnie rozwiązań. Wnioski zawarte w pracy mogą posłużyć władzom oświatowym do projektowania reform edukacyjnych ukierunkowanych na dalsze wdrażanie inkluzji do polskich szkół. Mogą one również zostać wykorzystane przez ośrodki akademickie, jak również nauczycieli języków obcych jako praktyczne wskazówki do rozwijania działań włączających i podnoszenia jakości nauczania języków obcych uczniów z STU w klasach inkluzyjnych.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: A survey on tertiary education programmes for English Philology students

No	NAME OF THE ACADEMIC UNIT	SUBJECT(S) COVERING SEN, SLDs		NUMBER OF HOURS: L – Lecture P – Practical Classes D – Discussion Group
PROFIL PRAKTYCZNY – PRACTICAL PPROFILE 2023-2024				
1.	Spółeczna Akademia Nauk z siedzibą w Łodzi	- Basics of didactics/ Podstawy dydaktyki	Reference to SLDs in a syllabus	30 (L)
2.	Akademia Nauk Stosowanych w Koninie	- General pedagogy/ Pedagogika ogólna - Didactics/ Dydaktyka	No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	30/ 30 L/P 30 P
3.	Akademia Zamoyska		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
4.	Akademia Nauk Stosowanych im. Stanisława Staszica w Pile		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
5.	Europejska Uczelnia w Warszawie	- Individual Differences in Language Teaching/ Indywidualne różnice w nauczaniu języka obcego		20 L
6.	Państwowa Akademia Nauk Stosowanych w Krośnie	- Didactics: specific challenges in teaching profession	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	30 P
7.	Akademia im. Jakuba Paradyża w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim	- General pedagogy/ Pedagogika ogólna - Developmental and educational psychology/ Psychologia rozwojowa i wychowawcza	Reference to children with disabilities in syllabi	60 P 60 P
8.	Uczelnia Lingwistyczno-Techniczna w Przasnyszu	- Basics of didactics/ Podstawy dydaktyki	No reference to SEN/ SLDs in a syllabus	46 L
9.	Akademia Ateneum w Gdańsku	- Work with a child with SEN/ Praca z dzieckiem o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych	No reference to SLDs	60 P
10.	Lingwistyczna Szkoła Wyższa w Warszawie	- Didactics/ Dydaktyka	No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	30 p.
11.	Poznańska Akademia Medyczna Nauk Stosowanych im. Księcia Mieszka I		Limited access to information about the programme via Virtual Deanery online.	
12.	Akademia Humanitas		Limited access to information about the programme via Virtual Deanery online.	
13.	Państwowa Akademia Nauk Stosowanych w Nysie		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
14.	Uniwersytet WSB Merito we Wrocławiu		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
15.	Akademia Nauk Stosowanych Wincentego Pola w Lublinie	Acquisition of the target language/ Akwizycja języka obcego	No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
16.	Akademia Mazowiecka w Płocku	Special didactics of English language/ Dydaktyka specjalna języka angielskiego	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	30 P
17.	Uniwersytet SWPW		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
18.	Akademia Nauk Stosowanych w Raciborzu		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
19.	Państwowa Akademia Nauk Stosowanych we		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	

	Włocławku			
20.	Wszehnica Polska Akademia Nauk Stosowanych w Warszawie		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
21.	Akademia Nauk Stosowanych im. Jana Amosa Komeńskiego w Lesznie		Limited access to information about the programme via Virtual Deanery online.	
22.	Państwowa Akademia Nauk Stosowanych im. Ks. Bronisława Markiewicza w Jarosławiu	A group of pedagogical subjects/ Blok zajęć z zakresu pedagogiki	No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
23.	Akademia Polonijna w Częstochowie	- School pedagogy/ Pedagogika szkolna	No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
24.	Państwowa Uczelnia Zawodowa im. prof. Edwarda F. Szczepanika w Suwałkach	- Early pedagogy: supporting young learners in education/ Edukacja wczesnoszkolna: wspieranie rozwoju dziecka, organizacja środowiska edukacyjnego, projektowanie działań edukacyjnych	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	
25.	Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Zarządzania w Jeleniej Górze		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
26.	Uniwersytet Ignatium w Krakowie	Basics of general didactics with elements of special didactics/ Podstawy dydaktyki ogólnej z elementami dydaktyki specjalnej	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	50 P
27.	Powszechna Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna „Pomerania” w Chojnicach		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
28.	Akademia Nauk Stosowanych w Nowym Targu	Didactics/ Dydaktyka	No reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	15 P
29.	Akademia Nauk Stosowanych w Elblągu	- Teacher’s competences/ Kompetencje nauczyciela - Methodology of educating learners with SEN/ Metodyka pracy z uczniem ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	30 P 30 P
30.	Akademia Łomżyńska	- Educating learners with SEN/ Praca z uczniem o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych - School pedagogy/ Pedagogika szkolna	Reference to SLDs and SEN in syllabi	30 P 30 P
31	Małopolska Uczelnia Państwowa im. Rotmistrza Witolda Pileckiego w Oświęcimiu		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
GENERAL PROFILE OF STUDIES – PROFIL OGÓLNOAKADEMICKI				
1.	Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II w Lublinie	Selected educational problems of children and youths (M.A.)/ Wybrane problemy edukacyjne młodzieży i dzieci (st II) Professional (self) development and the teacher’s workshop (M.A.)/ Rozwój zawodowy i warsztat pracy nauczyciela (st II)	Reference to SLDs and SEN in syllabi	30 P 30 P
2.	Uniwersytet w Białymstoku	- Functional diagnosing/ Diagnostyka pedagogiczna - Developmental psychology/ Psychologia rozwojowa (syllabus content: developmental disorders, intellectual norms, disharmony) - Education of learners with SEN/ Praca z uczniem o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych	Reference to SLDs and SEN in syllabi	30 P 30 P 30 P
3.	Uniwersytet Bielsko- Bialski		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
4.	Uniwersytet Gdański	- Learning processes and SLDs/ Procesy uczenia się i specyficzne potrzeby edukacyjne, - Child development: contexts and	Reference to SLDs and SEN in syllabi	24 L/ 6 P 20 L / 10 P

		disorders/ Rozwój ucznia: jego konteksty oraz zaburzenia, - Practical didactic experience analysis – seminar/ Praktyka dydaktyczna - seminarium		
5.	Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu	- Basics of pedagogy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dynamics of teaching profession development;</li> <li>• professional identity;</li> <li>• subjective, situational and organisational conditions for professional success in teaching/</li> </ul> (Podstawy pedagogiki : Dynamika rozwoju zawodowego nauczyciela oraz warianty tożsamości zawodowej, Podmiotowe, sytuacyjne i organizacyjne uwarunkowania sukcesu w pracy nauczyciela)  - Didactics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student and teacher autonomy;</li> <li>• Teaching materials – selecting, projecting and applying</li> </ul> (Dydaktyka: Autonomia ucznia i nauczyciela, Materiały dydaktyczne: ocena, projektowanie, zastosowania)	Reference to SLDs and SEN in syllabi	
6.	Uniwersytet im. Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu	- Didactics/ Dydaktyka -Pedagogy/ Pedagogika - Basis of didactics/ Podstawy dydaktyki	No subjects on SEN/ SLDs No access to syllabi	
7.	Uniwersytet Jagielloński	- Didactics/ Dydaktyka - Basics of didactics/ Podstawy dydaktyki	No subjects on SEN/ SLDs; No access to syllabi	
8.	Uniwersytet Jana Długosza w Częstochowie	- Learners with SLDs in the system of education/ Uczeń ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi w systemie oświaty - Modern tendencies in foreign language teaching/ Nowoczesne tendencje w nauczaniu języków obcych	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	10 L  35 L
9.	Uniwersytet Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
10.	Uniwersytet Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie	- Modern tendencies in foreign language teaching/ Współczesne tendencje w nauczaniu języków obcych  - Special educational needs at English language lessons/ Specjalne potrzeby edukacyjne na lekcji języka obcego	Reference to SLDs and SEN in syllabi	30 D 30 D
11.	Uniwersytet Łódzki	- Special educational needs / Specjalne potrzeby edukacyjne (B.A.) - Making and adapting teaching materials/ Tworzenie i adaptacja materiałów dydaktycznych (M.A.)	Reference to SLDs and SEN in syllabi	30 P 15 P
12.	Uniwersytet Przyrodniczo-Humanistyczny w Siedlcach	- Inclusive education/ Edukacja włączająca - Functional diagnosis/ Diagnostyka pedagogiczna	Reference to SLDs and SEN in syllabi	15 L 15 L/ 15 P
13.	Uniwersytet Pomorski w Słupsku		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
14.	Uniwersytet Radomski im. Kazimierza Pułaskiego	- Inclusive education/ Edukacja włączająca	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	30 P
15.	Uniwersytet Rzeszowski		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
16.	Uniwersytet Warszawski	Teaching English as a foreign language to learners with special educational needs/ Nauczanie języków obcych uczniów z SEN	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	15 P
17.	Uniwersytet Wrocławski	- Supporting development of a child and	Reference to SLDs and SEN	15 D / 30 D

		developmental disharmonies/ Wspomaganie rozwoju dziecka i dysharmonie rozwojowe (B.A., M.A.) - Pedagogy – A learner with SEN/ Pedagogika – uczeń ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnym (B.A., M.A.) - Pedagogical and psychological teaching competences/ Kompetencje psychologiczno-pedagogiczne nauczyciela	in syllabi	30 P / 30 D  15 D
18.	Uniwersytet Szczeciński		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
19.	Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach		No subjects on SEN/ SLDs	
20.	Uniwersytet Zielonogórski	Teacher competences/ Kompetencje nauczyciela	Reference to SLDs and SEN in a syllabus	30 P
21.	Akademia Humanistyczno- Ekonomiczna w Łodzi	Teaching specialisation with elements of neurodidactics. Subjects: - positive psychology, - types of alternative education, - educating learners with SLDs (Specjalizacja nauczycielska z elementami neurodydaktyki. Przedmioty: - psychologia pozytywna, - nurty edukacji alternatywnej, - praca z uczniem ze SPE)	Specialisation	



## Appendix 2: Survey for early education teachers

### ANKIETA DLA NAUCZYCIELI JĘZYKÓW OBCYCH EDUKACJI WCZESNOSZKOLNEJ PRACUJĄCYCH Z UCZNIAMI ZE SPECYFICZNYMI TRUDNOŚCIAMI W UCZENIU SIĘ (STU - DYSLEKSJA, DYSFAZJA) (ankieta anonimowa o charakterze naukowym do celów diagnostycznych)

Drogie Koleżanki i Koledzy,,

Przedmiotowa ankieta skierowana jest do nauczycieli szkół podstawowych, którzy nauczają języka angielskiego dzieci ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się w wieku 7-9 lat. Stanowi ona część międzynarodowego badania, którego wyniki zostaną przedstawione w pracy doktorskiej dotyczącej obecnie stosowanych podejść w nauczaniu języka angielskiego dzieci z STU.

Ankieta zawiera 53 pytania zamknięte lub otwarte, jest anonimowa i ma charakter naukowy. Pytania z rozszerzeniem o podpunkt „b” dotyczą pracy zdalnej w okresie pandemii COVID. Opublikowane wyniki badania zostaną udostępnione (W JAKI SPOSÓB - DO UZGODNIENIA Z INFORMATYKIEM)....

W pytaniach wykorzystujących skalę od 1 do 5 proszę o odpowiedź zgodnie z poniższą interpretacją:

**1 – nigdy/ zdecydowanie nie/ bardzo negatywnie**

**2 – rzadko/ nie/ negatywnie**

**3 – czasami/ nie mam zdania/ przeciętnie**

**4 – często/ tak/ dobrze**

**5 – zawsze/ zdecydowanie tak/ bardzo dobrze**

Wypełnienie ankiety zajmie Wam nie więcej niż 15 minut.

Dziękuję za zaangażowanie i poświęcony czas.

Proszę podaj informacje dotyczące Twojej osoby:

1. Płeć K/ M/ inna

2. Wiek \_\_\_ lat

3. Ile lat pracujesz w zawodzie nauczyciela? \_\_\_ lat

4. Ile lat pracujesz z dziećmi z STU? \_\_\_\_ lat

5. Określ typ szkoły, w której pracujesz.

A. publiczna / B. niepubliczna na prawach szkoły publicznej / C. specjalna / D. inna

6. Określ podejście edukacyjne przyjęte przez szkołę, w której pracujesz

A. integracja / B. inkluzja / C. nauczanie indywidualne / D. edukacja specjalna

7. Podaj nazwę miasta, w której znajduje się twoja szkoła .....

8. Czy w okresie pandemii COVID prowadziłeś/aś zajęcia zdalnie?

9. Jakie jest Twoje przygotowanie do pracy w zawodzie nauczyciela z uczniem z STU (np. licencjat z pedagogiki z uprawnieniami do nauczania j. angielskiego) .....

10. W jakim tygodniowym wymiarze godzin jesteś zatrudniony/a? .....
11. Jak zdobyłeś/aś wiedzę i doświadczenie w pracy z uczniem z STU?  
(np. w toku studiów, na szkoleniach, poprzez własne doświadczenie) .....
12. Jak często na przestrzeni pięciu ostatnich lat uczestniżyłeś/aś w corocznie organizowanych formach kształcenia zawodowego dotyczącego STU? (w skali 1-5).  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Jaka problematykę STU poruszały formy kształcenia zawodowego, w których uczestniżyłeś/aś w okresie ostatnich pięciu lat? .....
14. Jak często ponosisz koszty uczestnictwa w takich formach kształcenia? (w skali 1-5).  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Czy uczestnictwo w formach kształcenia dotyczących STU wywarło pozytywny wpływ na Twoją wiedzę i umiejętności zawodowe? (w skali 1-5).  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_
16. Czy masz inne zobowiązania zawodowe związane z zaspokojeniem specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych dzieci? (np. pełnione funkcje, stanowiska, członkostwo w komisjach, itp.)  
TAK (*jakie?*) ..... / NIE
17. Czy w swojej pracy z uczniami z STU działasz autonomicznie? (w skali 1-5)  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_
18. Jakie autonomiczne działania podejmujesz w pracy z dziećmi z STU? .....
19. Co bądź kto ogranicza Twoją autonomię w pracy z dziećmi z STU? .....
- 20 a. Jak często prowadzisz zajęcia języka angielskiego z uczniami z STU wraz z nauczycielem wspomagającym? (w skali 1-5)  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 b. Jak często zajęcia języka angielskiego prowadzone zdalnie z uczniami z STU odbywają się przy udziale nauczyciela wspomagającego?  
(w skali 1-5)  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_
21. Czy Twoja praca z uczniami z STU jest nadzorowana?  
A. Tak / B. Nie
22. Kto sprawuje nadzór nad jakością Twojej pracy z uczniami z STU? .....
23. Proszę ocenić nadzór formalny sprawowany nad jakością pracy edukacyjnej. (w skali 1-5)  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_  
(proszę uzasadnij swoją ocenę) .....

24. Z jakimi innymi organami, instytucjami, osobami współpracujesz dodatkowo, aby zapewnić odpowiednie warunki kształcenia uczniów z STU? .....
25. Proszę ocenić współpracę z w/w organami/ instytucjami/ osobami. (w skali 1-5) (proszę uzasadnij swoją ocenę) .....
26. Jaka jest średnia liczba uczniów z STU w grupie na zajęciach z języka angielskiego?  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_
27. Jaka jest średnia liczba wszystkich uczniów w grupie na zajęciach z języka angielskiego?  
Odp. \_\_\_\_\_
28. Wskaż warunki w pracy z uczniem z STU, które są dla Ciebie najtrudniejsze do spełnienia
- A. uznanie zróżnicowanych możliwości oraz ograniczeń poznawczych uczniów z STU
  - B. stosowanie obniżonej punktacji przy ocenie prac uczniów z STU
  - C. współpraca z nauczycielami wspierającymi przy organizacji i w prowadzeniu zajęć
  - D. obniżenie stopnia trudności zadań edukacyjnych dla uczniów z STU
  - E. stałe podnoszenie kwalifikacji zawodowych w pracy z uczniem z STU
  - F. inne (*proszę wymień jakie*) .....
29. Czy w Twoim kraju stosuje się jakieś konkretne podejście w nauczaniu języka angielskiego w pracy z dziećmi z STU?
- A. TAK (*jakie?*) .....
  - B. NIE, ale każda szkoła ustala jakie to będzie podejście
  - C. NIE, nauczyciel sam decyduje o wyborze podejścia
- 30 a. Jakie podejście/ metody w nauczaniu języka angielskiego w pracy (stacjonarnej) z dziećmi z STU stosujesz najczęściej? .....
- 30 b. Jakie podejście/ metody w nauczaniu języka angielskiego w pracy z dziećmi z STU stosujesz na zajęciach zdalnych? .....
- 31 a. Co wpływa na Twój wybór podejścia w nauczaniu języka angielskiego uczniów z STU?
- 31 b. Czy praca zdalna w czasie pandemii COVID zmieniła stosowane przez Ciebie podejście w nauczaniu języka angielskiego uczniów z STU?  
TAK (w jaki sposób?) .....
- NIE
- 32 a. Które z wymienionych poniżej form pracy stosujesz najczęściej na stacjonarnych zajęciach języka angielskiego?  
A. praca w grupach / B. praca zbiorowa / C. praca indywidualna /D. praca w parach
- 32 b. Które z wymienionych poniżej form pracy stosujesz najczęściej na zdalnych zajęciach języka angielskiego?  
A. praca w grupach / B. praca zbiorowa / C. praca indywidualna /D. praca w parach

33. W kolumnie A wybierz pięć strategii nauczania języka angielskiego jakie najchętniej stosujesz w pracy z uczniami z STU, a w kolumnie B, te które stosujesz najczęściej w pracy zdalnej?

- | A                          | B                          |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| A. gry i zabawy językowe   | A. gry i zabawy językowe   |
| B. rozwiązywanie problemów | B. rozwiązywanie problemów |
| C. odgrywanie ról          | C. odgrywanie ról          |
| D. prezentacje             | D. prezentacje             |
| E. dyskusje                | E. dyskusje                |
| F. burza mózgów            | F. burza mózgów            |
| G. studium przypadku       | G. studium przypadku       |
| H. dryle językowe          | H. dryle językowe          |
| I. projekty                | I. projekty                |
| J. inne ( <i>jakie?</i> )  | J. inne ( <i>jakie?</i> )  |

34 a. W jaki sposób starasz się spełniać indywidualne potrzeby edukacyjne uczniów z STU? .....

34 b. W jaki sposób starasz się spełniać indywidualne potrzeby edukacyjne uczniów z STU na zajęciach zdalnych? .....

35. Czy za swoją pracę z uczniami z STU jesteś dodatkowo wynagradzany przez pracodawcę?

A. TAK/ B. NIE

36. Czy w Twoim kraju prace uczniów z STU są poddawane ocenie? A. TAK/ B. NIE

37. Kto ustala w jaki sposób prace uczniów z STU są oceniane? .....

38. Jakie formy oceny prac uczniów z STU stosujesz? (np. skala ocen, ocena opisowa) .....

39. Czy Twoim zdaniem ocenianie prac uczniów z STU pozytywnie wpływa na ich zaangażowanie w naukę przedmiotu? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

40. Czy stosowanie systemu oceniania ma wpływ na sposób w jaki pracujesz z uczniami z STU? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

(proszę uzasadnij swoją ocenę) .....

41. Czy Twoim zdaniem uzyskane oceny wpływają na promocję ucznia do kolejnej klasy? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

42. Czy Twoim zdaniem materiały dydaktyczne do pracy z uczniami z STU na lekcjach języka angielskiego są szeroko dostępne? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

43 a. Jak często przygotowujesz własne materiały dydaktyczne do nauki języka

angielskiego dla uczniów z STU? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

43 b. Jak często przygotowujesz własne materiały dydaktyczne do nauki języka angielskiego dla uczniów z STU na zajęcia zdalne? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

44. Kto finansuje zakup dodatkowych gotowych lub opracowywanych przez Ciebie materiałów dydaktycznych? .....

45 a. Jak często prowadzisz stacjonarne zajęcia z języka angielskiego w oparciu o materiał zawarty w podręczniku? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

45 b. Jak często prowadzisz zdalne zajęcia z języka angielskiego w oparciu o materiał zawarty w podręczniku? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

46. Czy na podstawie własnego doświadczenia uważasz, że jesteś odpowiednio przygotowany do pracy z uczniami z STU? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

47 a. Czy uważasz, że praca w grupach z uczniami z STU jest trudniejsza niż w grupach bez nich? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

47 b. Czy uważasz, że praca w grupach z uczniami z STU prowadzona zdalnie jest trudniejsza niż praca w tych grupach prowadzona stacjonarnie? (w skali 1-5)

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

48. Czy uważasz, że dla uczniów z STU byłoby lepiej, gdyby ich kształcenie prowadzone było wyłącznie przez szkoły specjalne? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

49. Czy Twoim zdaniem byłoby lepiej, gdyby uczniowie z STU zostali zwolnieni z nauki języka obcego ze względu na swoje dysfunkcje? (w skali 1-5).

Odp. \_\_\_\_\_

50 a. Jakie najczęstsze trudności napotykasz w pracy z uczniami z STU w odniesieniu do realizowanych treści programowych? .....

50 b. Jakie najczęstsze trudności napotykasz w pracy zdalnej z uczniami z STU w odniesieniu do realizowanych treści programowych? .....

51. Jakie najczęstsze trudności napotykasz w pracy z uczniem z STU w odniesieniu do warunków pracy? (np. warunki lokalowe, dostępność pomocy dydaktycznych, liczebność uczniów, problemy techniczne w pracy zdalnej) .....

52. Jakie masz inne uwagi do pracy z uczniami z STU? .....

***Dziękuję za poświęcony czas i udział w ankiecie.***

### Appendix 3: Class observation sheet

## ARKUSZ OBSERWACJI ZAJĘĆ JĘZYKA ANGIELSKIEGO W KLASACH INTEGRACYJNYCH I-III SZKOŁY PODSTAWOWEJ

Data: 16.03.2023

Szkoła: Szkoła Podstawowa nr.23 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi w Płocku

Klasa: III

Liczba uczniów w klasie: 20

Liczba uczniów z SPE w tym z STU (dysleksja, dysfazja): 5

**Cele lekcji:** Utrwalenie nazw produktów spożywczych. Utrwalenie czasownika “like” w czasie Present Simple w 1 osobie liczby pojedynczej - zdania oznajmujące i pytające. Ćwiczenie poprawnej konstrukcji zdania. Ćwiczenia w mówieniu na podstawie dryli językowych. Poszerzanie słownika czynnego i biernego.

**Materiały dydaktyczne:** karty pracy, zeszyt ćwiczeń, zeszyt, tablica interaktywna, aplikacja Kahoot!

**Temat lekcji:** My favourite food - conversations and learning new vocabulary. Moje ulubione jedzenie - konwersacje i poznawanie nowego słownictwa.

**Oznaczenie prowadzącego:** (L)

### CECHY OBSERWOWANEJ LEKCJI JĘZYKA ANGIELSKIEGO

<p><b>PISANIE – Uczniowie ( pionowa kreska za każdym razem, kiedy wystąpi dana czynność, w nawiasach [ ] ich suma )</b> Po śladzie [ ] ; Kolorowanie [ ] ; Rysunek [ ] ; Zapis liter [ ] ; Zapis wyrazów [ 12 ] Zapis na tablicy przez nauczyciela [ 21 ] ; Zapis na tablicy przez ucznia [ ]</p> <p><b>Organizacja zapisu na tablicy</b> -od lewej do prawej strony [ ] -tylko środkowa tablica [ ✓ ] -spontanicznie (bez rozplanowania zapisu na tablicy) [ ]</p> <p><b>Jakość zapisu:</b> [ ] -łączenie liter w wyrazie: TAK [ ✓ ] ; NIE [ ] -czytelność zapisu: DOBRA [ ✓ ] ; SŁABA [ ]</p>
<p><b>CZYTANIE</b> Nauczyciel [ 35 ] ; Uczeń [ 20 ] Czytanie ciche ucznia [ ] ; Czytanie głośne ucznia [ ] Głośne czytanie tekstów przez uczniów Tekstu znanego [ ] Tekstu nowego [ ]</p>

<b>KOMUNIKACJA (pionowa kreska za każdym razem, kiedy wystąpi dana czynność, w nawiasach [ ] ich suma)</b>	
Wyrażanie opinii	[ 22 ]
Dialog w parach	[   ]
Udzielanie informacji Wymiana spostrzeżeń	[ 30 ]
Komentowanie	[ 6 ]
Opowiadanie	[ 9 ]
<b>FORMY PRACY NA LEKCJI (postaw pionową kreskę za każdym razem, kiedy na lekcji wystąpi dana forma pracy, w nawiasach [ ] podaj ich sumę)</b>	
Pary	[   ]
Grupy	[   ]
Praca indywidualna	[ 7 ]
Praca zbiorowa	[ 8 ]
<b>ROZWÓJ MOTORYKI DUŻEJ DZIECKA ( w na wiasach [ ] suma dla poszczególnych opcji )</b>	
Możliwość swobodnego poruszania się po klasie	[   ]
Zabawy i gry językowe włączające ruch	[ ✓ ]
'Przerywniki' pomiędzy etapami lekcji	[ ✓ ]
<b>ROZWÓJ MOTORYKI MAŁEJ DZIECKA</b>	
Klejenie	[   ]
Wycinanie	[   ]
Rysowanie	[ ✓ ]
Układanie (łączenie)	[   ]
Odmierzanie	[   ]
Elementy dramy	[   ]
Inne formy rozwoju kreatywności (jakie?)	[   ]
<b>ROZWÓJ EMOCJONALNY DZIECI (Przykłady wyrażania emocji przez dzieci)</b>	
Gesty [   ]	
Słowne (jakie?): [   ]	
<b>INDYWIDUALIZACJA PRACY UCZNIĄ NA LEKCJI</b>	
Dodatkowy czas na dokończenie zadania	[ ✓ ]
Zlecenie dokończenia pracy w domu	[ ✓ ]
Pomoc w realizacji zadań na lekcji (monitoring)	[ ✓ ]
Kontrola zleconych prac domowych	[   ]
Dopuszczenie dowolnej interpretacji (np. swoboda interpretacji tekstu, obrazu)	[ ✓ ]
Wykorzystanie materiałów dydaktycznych:	[TAK]
● Podręcznik	[ ✓ ]
● Zeszyt ćwiczeń	[ ✓ ]
● Nagranie audio	[   ]
● Nagranie video	[   ]
● Karty pracy	[ ✓ ]
● Flash cards	[ ✓ ]
● Inne (wymienić):	
<b>Sposoby dostosowania realizacji zadania do indywidualnych możliwości ucznia</b>	
NIE [   ]	
TAK [ ✓ ] Jakież?: n-l. pracujący z uczniem indywidualnie (student/ci odbywający praktykę zawodową)	

<p><b>Możliwość realizacji indywidualnych zainteresowań uczniów</b> (tj. negocjowanie tematu zajęć, <u>realizacja zadania wybranego przez uczniów</u> (gry, zabawy, piosenki) NIE [ <input type="checkbox"/> ] TAK [ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ] jakie?: Quiz przy użyciu aplikacji Kahoot!- sum up</p>
<p><b>Komentarz do lekcji obserwowanej (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem doboru metod pracy, adekwatności wykorzystanych materiałów dydaktycznych, roli nauczyciela oraz jego pracy z uczniami o specyficznych trudnościach)</b></p> <p>Zaobserwowane podejście/ metoda/ strategia uczenia: PPP</p>



## Appendix 4: Interviews with parents of children with SLDs

### Interview with parents of children with SLDs – Parents 1 and 2

TIME/ CZAS	SPEAKER/ OSOBA	TRANSCRIPT/ PRZEBIEG
0:00 – 2:38	Researcher (R)	<i>Drugi wywiad z rodzicami. Dziś na rozmowę zgodzili się rodzice, czyli i mama i tata razem. Wstępnie dowiedziałam się że państwo macie troszeczkę rozbieżne opinie, zobaczymy jak będą się one kształtowały w trakcie odpowiedzi na pytania. Wywiad, przypomnę, dotyczy kwestii nauczania języka angielskiego dzieci z wybranymi trudnościami w uczeniu się, w szczególności takimi jak dysleksja i dysfazja, a wybór tych trudności edukacyjnych uzasadnia fakt że zarówno dysleksja jak i dysfazja mają wpływ na możliwości rozwojowe uczniów oraz ich możliwości komunikacji w języku obcym. Trudności w uczeniu się jest więcej, ale te dwa problemy z punktu widzenia nauczania języka angielskiego są dla mnie najistotniejsze. Wywiad jest narzędziem badawczym, wykorzystywanym w badaniu naukowym stanowiącym część empiryczną rozprawy doktorskiej, będącej analizą podejść w nauczaniu języka angielskiego dzieci z wybranymi trudnościami w uczeniu się w Polsce w odniesieniu do sposobów realizacji nauczania inkluzyjnego. Polska, jako państwo członkowskie UE realizuje założenia edukacji włączającej. Przedmiotowe badanie pozwoli dostrzec mocne i słabe strony polskiego systemu edukacji w szczególności w odniesieniu do nauczania języka obcego również co do koncepcji kształcenia przyszłych nauczycieli oraz faktycznie stosowanego podejścia w nauczaniu zintegrowanym. Udział w badaniu jest oczywiście anonimowy, ani państwa dane ani dane dziecka nie zostaną ujawnione. Na wstępie naszej rozmowy chciałabym poprosić o krótką charakterystykę specyficznych trudności w uczeniu się z jakim przyszło się zmierzyć państwa dziecku w szczególności interesuje mnie, kiedy u dziecka zdiagnozowano problem, czy została wystawiona opinia lub orzeczenie o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych i czy państwo poinformowaliście szkołę o problemie?</i>
2:39	Parent 1 (P1)	<i>Syn ma orzeczenie o niepełnosprawności ruchowej w tym z afazją. Problem określono na sam koniec przedszkola, ale <u>przez cały okres przedszkola badaliśmy co to jest naprawdę. W 2021 roku zdiagnozowano afazję, także idealnie na początek szkoły. Tak naprawdę jak skończyliśmy wakacje, to od razu poszliśmy do szkoły już z tym dokumentem.</u></i>
3:15	R	<i>A czy a czy państwa dziecko zostało skierowane na jakieś zajęcia terapeutyczne poza zajęciami szkolnymi?</i>
3:27	P1	<i>To znaczy mamy w samej szkole zajęcia dodatkowe związane właśnie z <u>tym orzeczeniem. Poza wymaganymi konkretnie w tym orzeczeniu zajęciami, mamy trzy zegarowe godziny tygodniowo z logopedą i korekcyjno-kompensacyjne zajęcia. Walczyliśmy też o integrację sensoryczną raz w tygodniu, syn ma też zajęcia z psychologiem raz w tygodniu.</u></i>
3:58	R	<i>Czyli można powiedzieć że dziecko jest zaopiekowane, od strony terapeutycznej, prawda?</i>
4:04	P1	<i><u>Sami musieliśmy tego dopilnować, ale jest.</u></i>

4:07	R	<i>A co znaczy, że musieliście państwo sami do tego dopilnować?</i>
4:08	P1	<i><u>Sami musieliśmy prosić o tą integrację sensoryczną, gdzie od początku zaznaczaliśmy, że wcześniej prywatnie uczęszczaliśmy i chcemy, aby dziecko ją kontynuowało.</u> Szkoła ma taką salę, która pozwala na zajęcia sensoryczne. Prosiłiśmy o to, bo syneczek faktycznie tego potrzebuje. Niektóre bodźce wymagają utrwalania na takich zajęciach dodatkowych. <u>Po miesiącu udzielono nam zgody na to, żeby synek mógł uczęszczać na te zajęcia z integracji sensorycznej. Natomiast psychologa po roku dostaliśmy dopiero. Nauczyciele się zgodzili. Stwierdzili, że jest taka potrzeba, chociaż to był moment, w którym nasz synek świetnie sobie radził ze wszystkimi lekcjami w szkole. Niestety, po pierwszym roku ewidentnie było widać, że ma problemy. Przy afazji o wiele łatwiej jest mu czytać przykładowo na głos, wtedy lepiej rozumie tak naprawdę treść z zadań. Na sprawdzianach czy kartkówkach nie czytał na głos zadań, które wykonywały wszystkie dzieci i w tym okresie otrzymywał gorsze oceny. Nauczyciele zdawali sobie sprawę z tego, że on umie więcej niż to odzwierciedlały jego oceny. Zwróciłam im uwagę, że skoro zdawali sobie z tego sprawę, to powinni dopilnować, żeby problem został w jakiś sposób rozwiązany. Faktycznie od drugiej klasy miał już indywidualne zajęcia z polskiego z panią ze świetlicy, dzięki czemu bardzo szybko oceny znacznie się polepszyły.</u></i>
6:08	R	<i>Zauważam tu pewien problem dotyczący sposobów oceniania. Dziecko nie ma problemów kiedy może przeczytać tekst na głos. Czy to oznacza, że oceny które syn uzyskiwał były wynikiem testów pisemnych? Bo na testach obowiązuje cisza i możliwym jest wyłącznie ciche przeczytanie polecenia. Pewnie tutaj zaczęły się problemy, mam rację?</i>
6:41	P1	<i>Dokładnie z tego powodu. Dlatego od drugiej klasy przeszliśmy na zajęcia indywidualne z polskiego, no i automatycznie oceny się polepszyły.</i>
6:51	R	<i>A czy powiedziała pani, że często zdarza się, że oceny pochodzą głównie z testów pisemnych, czy raczej za odpowiedź ustną, na przykład za realizację projektu lub za wykonanie jakiejś pracy grupowej w klasie?</i>
7:24	Parent 2 (P2)	<i><u>Generalnie to mają bardzo dużo ocen z czego podejrzewam dziewięćdziesiąt procent pochodzi z testów i nawet jak zadana jest jakaś praca domowa, to pani nauczycielka prowadząca wcale jej nie sprawdza.</u> Ona jest po prostu takim sprawdzeniem do domu. Sporo mają zadawane właśnie takiej pracy.</i>
7:50	P1	<i>Oceny są głównie ze sprawdzianów, które były pisane. Jakby w ogóle nie kojarzę, żeby były jakiegokolwiek oceny z zadań grupowych, chyba że za piosenkę zaśpiewaną w trójkę.</i>
8:01	R	<i>Są jeszcze takie możliwości, że na przykład dzieci wykonują jakieś nagranie na TikToku, przygotowują jakiś projekt, pokażą slajdy, oczywiście z pomocą rodziców w przygotowaniu w obróbce komputerowej, ale zawsze jest też taka możliwość. a czy na lekcji języka angielskiego są organizowane zabawy językowe, gry, jest jakieś współzawodnictwo, ruch czy też jest realizacja podręcznika tylko i wyłącznie?</i>
8:46	P1	<i>Pytaliśmy specjalnie oto synka z tego powodu, że przez ostatnie dwa lata mogliśmy się jedynie domyślać w związku z afazją, dopiero</i>

		<i>stopniowo później zaczął nam coś więcej opowiadać co się dzieje podczas tych zajęć. Na początku zawsze była tylko odpowiedź 'fajnie', natomiast na ten moment dopytaliśmy i udało się uzyskać już trochę więcej informacji niż dawniej. Wygląda to w ten sposób, że <u>dziewięćdziesiąt pięć procent to jest praca z podręcznika. Mają tablicę interaktywną i na lekcji robią jakieś tam ćwiczenia z jej wykorzystaniem. Zaznaczał jednak, że niestety jest jej bardzo mało i że chciałby więcej.</u></i>
9:35	R	<i>A jaka jest jego opinia, czy podobają mu się lekcje angielskiego czy tak średnio?</i>
9:39	P1	<i>Generalnie rzadko narzeka, on jest zwykle bardzo zadowolony z życia i w tym sensie rzadko narzeka. W ogóle uważa, że każdy nauczyciel jest świetny, tak samo jak każdy kolega jest świetny.</i>
9:55	R	<i>A jeśli chodzi o umiejętności językowe czyli o pisanie, czytanie, mówienie i słuchanie, to syn ma jakieś swoje preferencje?</i>
10:10	P2	<i>On ma swoje preferencje i, tak można się wyrazić, nienawidzi pisać a całą resztę lubi.</i>
10:31	R	<i>Czyli tu są problemy, w ramach w ramach tych specyficznych trudności, z którymi się boryka. A czy nauczyciel reaguje na te problemy z zapisem, bo na pewno dzieci zapisują np. słówka, skoro jest podręcznik, to na pewno są jakieś ćwiczenia do tego podręcznika i jest jakiś zapis słówek. Jak syn sobie z tym radzi?</i>
10:38	P1	<i>Ogółem angielski u nas nie stanowi problemu i nie ukrywam, że tutaj uważam że wynika to po pierwsze z tego, że <u>pani raczej nie wymaga nic więcej ponad podręcznik więc póki dziecko będzie wykute na blachę, jeżeli chodzi o to co jest w podręczniku, a tego materiału nie jest naprawdę dużo, to to będzie szóstka</u> i wydaje mi się, że nawet nie wiem czy chociaż raz zszedł poniżej szóstki, gdzie może z pięć ocen przez te pół roku dostali.</i>
11:04	R	<i>A kto pracuje z nim w przygotowaniu do testów? Pani?</i>
11:13	P1	<i>Omawiamy zajęcia z synkiem. Wiemy, otrzymujemy informację kiedy będzie sprawdzian lub kartkówka, no i tak naprawdę bardzo łatwo jest się nauczyć do testu. Jego pani mówi, że tego dnia będą kolory, tego będą pokoje czy człowiek. Dziecko jest stanie nauczyć tych dziesięciu słów. Nic ponad nie jest wymagane.</i>
11:35	R	<i>Rozumiem, czyli są to testy oparte o sprawdzian słówek i ten test to jest tłumaczenie z polskiego na angielski? Trzeba przetłumaczyć te wyrazy czy są to raczej testy gotowe?</i>
11:37	P1	<i><u>Z reguły są to testy gotowe, konkretnie od tego producenta co jest książka.</u></i>
11: 54	R	<i>Czyli na pewno tam jest wszystko przygotowane pod kątem podręcznika i grupy wiekowej dzieci. A jesteście państwo zadowoleni z tego, że dziecko poszło do szkoły powszechnej?</i>
12:13	P2	<i>Ja tak, a żona się zaraz rozwinie na ten temat.</i>
12:16	P1	<i>To znaczy, <u>mąż jest po prostu bardziej zadowolony konkretnie z tej szkoły, a jestem mniej zadowolona z tej szkoły. W przypadku angielskiego no to są takie mieszane uczucia bo z jednej strony</u></i>

		<i><u>angielski nie sprawia nam kłopotu trochę ponieważ tam nic nie jest wymagane, atmosfera jest miła, raz na jakiś czas jest ta tablica interaktywna. I tak naprawdę synek nigdy nie mówi, ani że to jest jego ulubiony przedmiot, ani że jest to w jakikolwiek sposób zniechęcony przedmiot, to jest prosty przedmiot. Jest to prosty przedmiot który nie zapada w pamięć. On tak naprawdę szybciej się uczy angielskiego z Youtube'a.</u></i>
12:51	P2	<i>Chociaż, tak naprawdę nie wiemy jaki jest wymagany poziom dla dziewięciolatka.</i>
13:04	R	<i>To znaczy moje pytanie byłoby takie, czy syn podejmuje jakieś próby komunikacji, czyli na przykład w czasie wyjazdu wakacyjnego albo nawet w domu zauważacie państwo, że on posługuje się jakimiś zwrotami tj. 'I like it' albo 'I love you' albo 'let's go', czy takie hasła się gdzieś tam pojawiają? Czy czujecie państwo, że ten tego język obcy rozwija się i że on za chwilę, że tak powiem będzie mocno ugruntowany, że syn będzie nawet podejmował próby komunikacji w tym języku?</i>
13:37	P1	<i><u>Te słówka z angielskiego jakich używa to według mnie te, których się nauczył na Youtube'ie, lub od Mycraftowych youtuberów, ale nie są to słówka, których się uczy w szkole. Ale może mąż ma inne zdanie.</u></i>
13:53	P2	<i>Nie, <u>on żadnych zdań nie skleja niczego takiego generalnie.</u></i>
13:55	P1	<i><u>Pojedyncze słowo jakieś, czasem wystrzeli hasłem 'bedroom' ponieważ to jest słowo które bardzo lubi.</u></i>
14:00	R	<i>No właśnie o to pytam, bo czasami jest tak, że lekcje które są prowadzone w formie zabawy, aktywują dzieci również w domu, bo dzieciaki przynoszą tą zabawę do domu i pewne zwroty czy słowa mogą się pojawić. Nie oczekujemy od dziewięciolatka, żeby mówił pełnymi zdaniami, ale na przykład, takie zwroty jak 'how are you', 'jak masz na imię', 'jak się masz' powinny się już powoli pojawiać. To takie pierwsze próby komunikacji. Dobrze, teraz przejdziemy do kolejnego bloku tematycznego dotyczącego metod pracy i przygotowania kadry kształcącej. Dodam, że cały czas interesuje mnie język angielski. Czy państwa zdaniem nauczyciel, który prowadzi lekcje języka angielskiego potrafi zainteresować dziecko przedmiotem i jeśli tak, to w jaki sposób to czyni? Macie państwo może jakieś przykłady albo możecie przywołać z pamięci jakieś wydarzenie czy na lekcjach nauka odbywa się poprzez zabawę? Czy dzieci realizowały w klasie w ogóle jakieś projekty?</i>
15:23	P1	<i><u>Nie kojarzę ani jednego projektu, nie kojarzę nic więcej ponad piosenki które są w podręcznikach.</u></i>
15:47	P2	<i><u>Generalnie, syn jest zadowolony głównie, jeżeli są jakieś piosenki. Powiedział także, że byłby zainteresowany jakby było coś w formie zabawy, ale jak jest zwykła lekcja, to tak nieszczególnie.</u></i>
15:50	P1	<i><u>Nie było czegoś bardziej interesującego poza podręcznikiem i tablicą interaktywną.</u></i>
16:01	R	<i>Czyli dodatkowych materiałów, kart pracy, dodatkowych jakiś materiałów nie było? Bo można z dziećmi na przykład robić prace plastyczne, do których nauczyciel podaje instrukcje w języku angielskim. Lekcja wówczas się toczy w języku obcym, dzieci wykonują polecenia, uczniowie starają się wsłuchać w to co mówi</i>

		<i>nauczyciel, naśladowują gesty nauczyciela, powtarzają za nim. Może takie zajęcia były?</i>
16:45	P1	<i><u>Nawet bym powiedziała troszeczkę tak nie oceniając negatywnie, bo to nie jest tak, że mamy złe doświadczenia z tymi paniami, ale miałyśmy dwie nauczycieli w przeciągu dwóch lat. Pierwszy rok to była jedna pani, teraz drugi rok i jest druga pani. Żadna z nich żadnych dodatkowych materiałów nie używała, tylko podręcznik i problem znika.</u></i>
17:01	R	<i>A czy nauczyciel języka obcego zna opinie o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych dziecka i czy się stosuje do tej opinii?</i>
17:16	P1	<i><u>Stosuje się w ten sposób, że synkowi są zapewniane pewne udogodnienia. Jak jest przykładowo za głośno, to synek może na chwilę wyjść z sali, żeby mógł się wyciszyć. Halas powoduje, że jest rozkojarzony. To są bardzo mechaniczne rzeczy, które były stosowane.</u></i>
17:46	R	<i>Są to więc kwestie organizacyjne, nie odnoszące się do metod nauczania, ale do organizacji zajęć. Muszę powiedzieć, że gdyby lekcje były ciekawe to pewnie też nie byłoby trudno o większą koncentrację uwagi syna. Kolejny blok pytań dotyczący jakości kształcenia i ewentualnej potrzeby zmian w tym kształceniu. Częściowo już żeśmy ten temat poruszyli rozmawiając o sposobach oceniania i sposobach ewaluacji. Ja tylko dopytam jeszcze czy w klasie na lekcjach języka angielskiego nauczyciel posługuje się skalą ocen od jeden do sześć?</i>
18:24	P1	<i>Tak.</i>
18:25	R	<i>A czy bywały w ogóle np. na początku ścieżki edukacyjnej inne formy oceniania, na przykład słoneczka, chmurki albo ocena opisowa, gdzie nauczyciel chwalił, używał zwrotów 'świetnie', 'bardzo dobrze', bez stawiania ocen? Czy w ogóle nauczyciel chwali dzieci na zajęciach, dostrzega ich wysiłek?</i>
18:44	P1	<i>Proszę pani, nie sądzę, że to z powodu problemów synka pani bardzo go chwali. Ostatnio ze sprawdzianu pojawiały się niższe oceny, a u nas to była piątka. W sumie przez te dwa lata nigdy nie było niższej oceny. Pani czasami zapisuje 'great' z uśmiechem czyli chyba rzeczywiście taka ocena obrazowa jest.</i>
19:13	P2	<i>I pieczątki jeszcze.</i>
19:14	R	<i>Czyli jest ocena obrazowa to na pewno do dziecka lepiej przemawia niż słucha cyfra.</i>
19:17	P1	<i>Prawda. Oceny są dla dorosłych.</i>
19:28	R	<i>Dobrze a gdybyście państwo mogli coś zmienić jeśli chodzi o sposób kształcenia albo system edukacji albo prowadzenie zajęć to co byście państwo chcieli dodać, tak myśląc o swoim dziecku?</i>
19:46	P2	<i><u>Nie widzę powodu, dla którego nie miałyby być więcej zajęć z tą tablicą interaktywną, skoro jest już taka opcja. Jak rozmawiałem z synkiem, to on skupiał się głównie na tych krótkich momentach, gdzie tam coś śpiewali albo rysowali na tablicy, że to jest fajne.</u></i>
20:04	P	<i>No tak, bo wtedy się dzieje, rzeczywiście, i dzieci są aktywne. To bardzo motywuje i pobudza dzieci do działania, także to jest</i>

		<p>zrozumiale.</p> <p>A czy w klasie, gdzie jest państwa syn na zajęciach pojawia się <u>nauczyciel wspomagający?</u> (Obecnie mówimy o nauczycielu współorganizującym). Nauczyciel wspomagający to ten, który trafia do klasy kiedy tam jest określona grupa dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi i on stara się indywidualnie pomóc dzieciom. Czy taki nauczyciel w klasie się pojawiał i czy pomagał dziecku?</p>
21:13	P1	<p><u>Regularnie u nas w klasie jest pani wspomagająca reaguje po prostu na wszystkie kryzysy i zależności od dziecka pomaga w konkretny sposób.</u> U nas też była potrzeba wyjścia z klasy, to wyszła z dzieckiem. Jak była potrzeba uspokojenia emocjonalnie synka, bo mamy go dosyć mocno wrażliwego, to też pomaga, żeby tutaj uspokoić te emocje czy nawet pomaga po prostu rozpisać zadanie w zeszyt. Robi rzeczy które były dla synka oznaczone jako ciężkie. Czasami pomaga też innym w klasie.</p>
21:54	R	<p>Czy uważacie państwo, że słusznie się dzieje, że jest taka osoba?</p>
22:03	P1	<p><u>Bez dwóch zdań. My nie my jesteśmy w stanie zająć się tym.</u> <u>Przynajmniej ja, nie wiem jak ty.</u></p>
22:09	P2	<p>Był taki czas, że nie było tego nauczyciela [specjalnego] w klasie i wtedy było to zauważalne, bo było gorzej. Na razie jest pani Kasia, więc wydaje mi się, że to dobrze, że jest.</p>
22:14	P1	<p><u>Wtedy był problem z emocjami, jeden nauczyciel dla całej grupy nie dawał sobie rady. Dzieci były o różnych potrzebach i było widać różnice po samym dziecku jak wracało ze szkoły.</u></p>
22:25	R	<p>Czasami jest tak, że ci nauczyciele wspomagający też narzekają, że nie dają rady sami, że jest zbyt wiele dzieci, które mają jakiś problem i wtedy jest ciężko ich wesprzeć. Z drugiej strony pojawiają się też takie opinie ze strony rodziców, że ponieważ jest nauczyciel wspierający, to widać, że dziecko ma jakieś specjalne potrzeby. Dlatego część rodziców uważa, że jest to w pewien sposób stygmatyzujące dla ich dziecka, że inne dzieci w klasie widzą to, że inni nie potrzebują pomocy, a ich dziecko potrzebuje. Czy państwo też tak odbieracie pomoc nauczyciela wspomagającego?</p>
23:14	P1	<p>To znaczy tutaj są dwie sytuacje. <u>Pierwsza jest taka, że na pewno wielu rodziców dzieci, których dzieci nie mają takich większych problemów jak moje, mają wyrzuty do samych nauczycieli, dlaczego ten wspomagający nauczyciel nie może pomóc ich dzieciom. To było bardzo widoczne w pierwszym roku. Druga sytuacja dotyczy zachowania nauczycieli. Tutaj nawet mamy takiego nauczyciela prowadzącego, który po prostu dzieli dzieci w klasie. Potrafił pochwalić dzieci za to, że 'patrzcie, wy sobie lepiej poradziście niż dzieci normalne', wskazując na dzieci niepełnosprawne. Podobno od pewnego czasu już przestała. Ale w ogóle się nie kryła z tym pani nauczycielka.</u></p>
24:32	P2	<p>Tak a propos, to nie była nauczycielka angielskiego tak w ogóle. Zaznaczmy, że chodziło o nauczyciela edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. Nie mamy takiego poczucia, że w jakikolwiek sposób dziecko gdzieś tam się wspomaga, bo generalnie jeżeli chodzi o oceny, no to on jest w czubie klasowym.</p>
24:38	P1	<p>A druga rzecz, my zdajemy sobie sprawę z tego że bez tego nauczyciela wspomagającego, no po prostu byłoby o wiele ciężiej.</p>

25:03	R	<i>Dużo czasu państwo spędzacie z synem w domu pracując z nim?</i>
25:08	P1	<i>Tak.</i>
25:10	R	<i>Odrabiając prace domowe i tak dalej, czuje pani, że ma wkład w edukację dziecka? Czy to jest po prostu praca na zasadzie sprawdzenia zadań, kontroli jak dziecko rozwiązało pracę domową? Pani sprawdza czy wszystko jest OK i już, czy raczej pani pracuje z dzieckiem w domu?</i>
25:16	P1	<i><u>Matematykę sprawdzam, ale do polskiego musimy sięgnąć. Z angielskiego też. Właśnie, żeby się pouczyć i na sprawdzian przygotować.</u> Na języku polskim jest zanotowanych bardzo, bardzo dużo rzeczy dodatkowych, ponad program. I choćby z tego powodu potrzebne jest wsparcie rodziców dla dziecka.</i>
25:50	R	<i>Czy z języka angielskiego syn ma tak dużo ocen jak z innych przedmiotów?</i>
25:53	P1	<i>Nasz wkład w jego edukację, wydaje mi się, że się bardzo zmniejsza. W porównaniu z pierwszą klasą jest go o wiele mniej, co nie zmienia faktu, że z polskiego jednak trzeba. To znaczy, może inaczej, no nie robimy czegoś takiego, że dyktujemy odpowiedzi czy coś takiego, ale trzeba go wesprzeć. I tak jest o wiele lepiej w tej drugiej klasie. A co do ocen z angielskiego, no to nie, tutaj z pięć ocen było przez całe półrocze.</i>
26:22	R	<i>Czyli tak zupełnie nieprzesadzone są te oceny. Kolejne pytanie dotyczy przestrzegania unijnych przepisów dotyczących kształcenia dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi przez szkołę, tj. przestrzeganie przepisów, włączając prawa ucznia o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych, poszanowanie jego godności. Czy są one respektowane przez szkołę?</i>
26:50	P1	<i>Choćby ta sytuacja, gdzie nauczycielka podzieliła dzieci na niepełnosprawne i na te sprawne, normalne, to jest rozumiane dosłownie.</i>
27:01	R	<i>I to jest pewnego rodzaju niestety stygmatyzacja. Jeszcze mam takie pytanie o funkcjonowanie syna w klasie na równych zasadach z innymi, czyli np. czy syn ma szansę wziąć udział na przykład w przedstawieniu, czy ma szansę otrzymać główną rolę? Czy może to jest tak, że jak dziecko nie jest w stanie wykonać niektórych zadań, to po prostu tego nie robi. Jak państwo to widzicie?</i>
27:29	P1	<i>Wydaje mi się że w przypadku przedstawień akurat szkoła sobie na tyle dobrze radzi, że do przedstawień zgłaszają się dzieci i są równo traktowane. Po prostu, wypowiedzi [kwestii], uczą się wszystkie dzieciaki, więc nawet jak coś, to były raczej zbliżone.</i>
	P2	<i>W tym aspekcie jest OK. On i w konkursach startował, i na przedstawieniach występował.</i>
27:54	P1	<i><u>Troszeczkę mam wrażenie, że to nawet bardziej nas namawiają nauczyciele. Wychodzą z inicjatywą, czy na pewno synek nasz by nie chciał wziąć udziału.</u> I faktycznie w dwóch konkursach wziął udział i dzięki temu zajął pierwsze miejsce.</i>
28:16	R	<i>To super, gratuluję.</i>

		<i>Powiedzcie państwo, czy syn realizuje ten sam program kształcenia co inne dzieci jeśli chodzi o język angielski?</i>
28:20	P1	<i>Nie ma żadnej różnicy.</i>
28:21	R	<i>I czy państwa zdaniem te treści kształcenia są dopasowane? Państwo wspomnieliście, że podręcznik jest bardzo łatwy. To znaczy, że to powinien być trudniejszy czy jest jednak dobry?</i>
28:29	P1	<i><u>Po prostu same zajęcia mogłyby być bardziej angażujące. Mogłyby być choćby minimalnie rozszerzone, bo jest taki no naprawdę bardzo podstawowy zakres tego co dokładnie jest w książce i nic ponad.</u></i>
28:46	R	<i>Rozumiem a czy nauczyciel zdąży zrealizować podręcznik do końca roku, tak jak to ma zapisane w harmonogramie?</i>
29:01	P1	<i>Tak, książka się kończy jak szkoła się kończy. Nauczyciel idzie zgodnie z ta podstawą.</i>
29:07	R	<i>To teraz jeszcze dwa ostatnie bloki pytań. Pierwszy, dotyczący państwa zdania na temat współpracy rodziców ze szkołą. Czy państwo są zadowolony z wyboru szkoły i współpracy z dyrekcją, z nauczycielami, z wychowawcą właśnie w świetle tych specjalnych potrzeb waszego dziecka?</i>
29:32	P1/ P2	<i>To żona będzie miała więcej do powiedzenia na pewno. Ja co do zasady jestem zadowolony// Jeśli chodzi o wywiadówki, to mąż jest wysyłany częściej jako ten spokojniejszy. Jest też częściej wysyłany do szkoły by dogadać jakieś szczegóły, coś ustalić // Uściślę, Jestem wyłącznie ja wysyłany do szkoły.</i>
29:56	P2	<i>No była sytuacja, że byłem zaproszony do szkoły i jakieś tam decyzje, no przynajmniej na krótki okres podjęliśmy.</i>
30:09	R	<i>Jak państwo zgłaszacie jakiś problem to ogólnie rzecz biorąc, szkoła reaguje, tak?</i>
30:17	P2	<i>Ja uważam, że tak.</i>
30:19	P1	<i><u>Reagują w momencie, w którym przestajemy być mili, bo kiedy jesteśmy mili, to nic nie robią. W momencie, kiedy zmieniam nastawienie, to piszę w całkiem innym tonie. Dopiero wtedy nagle jesteśmy zapraszani do szkoły i jednak prośby nasze są realizowane.</u></i>
30:33	R	<i>Właśnie przypomniało mi się, że na początku naszej rozmowy państwo wspomnieliście, że dopiero po waszych usilnych prośbach przyznano dziecku dodatkowe zajęcia.</i>
30:48	P1	<i>No właśnie. To znaczy, zostało to zaznaczone, ale dopiero na koniec drugiej klasy wykonane. Przeciągnięte. Teraz nie wiadomo, które z tych zajęć będą przeciągnięte na trzecią klasę. Czyli od początku rozpoczniemy ten proces walki prawdopodobnie.</i>
31:00	R	<i>Skąd takie problemy wynikają?</i>
31:05	P1	<i><u>Z oszczędności? Bo słyszałam jako argument, że szkoła oszczędza, że nie dostała pieniędzy od miasta. W związku z czym odezwałam się do Urzędu Miasta, żeby dowiedzieć się, czemu szkoła nie dostała pieniędzy i w tym momencie jednak szkoła wycofała się ze swojego wcześniejszego zdania. Być może znajdują się te pieniądze na zajęcia...</u></i>



31:26	R	<i>Czyli jednak chodzi o pieniądze, tylko niekoniecznie o ośrodki nieprzekazane, a o inne ich zagospodarowanie prawdopodobnie. Ostatnie pytania dotyczące warunków kształcenia, czyli o warunki kształcenia w szkole, warunki lokalowe, czyli to, jak wyglądają klasy, ławki, ustawienie tych ławek, dostosowanie sprzętu, który jest w lasach do potrzeb uczniów, również dostęp do nowoczesnych rozwiązań technologicznych. Wiem już, że jest tablica interaktywna, ale czy jest coś jeszcze? Na przykład, komputer i dostęp do Internetu w klasie? Czy nauczyciel może poprowadzić zajęcia bezpośrednio z wykorzystaniem materiałów, które się znajdują w Internecie z wykorzystaniem pewnych aplikacji do nauki języka angielskiego, bo jest ich pełno w Internecie tak naprawdę?</i>
31:21	P1	<i>Przypomniałam sobie jedną rzecz, pani powiedziała ustawieniu ławek. To jeszcze dodam, że w pierwszej klasie, dzieci które miały jakieś orzeczenia były usadzone po prawej stronie, a reszta klasy po środku i po lewej stronie. I te dzieci siedziały pojedynczo, żeby nauczyciel wspomagający mógł się dostać i każdego wspomóc. Oni byli oddzieleni jako ci inni. Dopiero w drugiej klasie pani zauważyła, że to nie pomaga w żaden sposób i w drugiej. troszeczkę inaczej te dzieci usadziła. Nasze dziecko zaczęło siedzieć od pół roku z innym chłopcem i nagle się okazało, że świetnie się dogadują, że mają wspólne tematy. A to chłopiec, z którym się cały pierwszy rok syn nie dogadywał.</i>
33:09	R	<i>A czy ławki są ustawione w sposób tradycyjny, trzy rzędy ławek?</i>
33:12	P1	<i>Tak, dokładnie. przy czym te dzieci z orzeczeniami nie siedziały parami. One były osamotnione.</i>
33:21	R	<i>Dobrze, jeszcze mam takie pytanie, czy te ławki to są pojedyncze kostki, które można przestawiać? Czy to są takie ławki podwójne?</i>
33:40	P1	<i>Podwójne, dla dwojga dzieci, ale tylko dla dzieci bez orzeczeń.</i>
33:42	P1	<i>One dają jakby mniejsze możliwości przestawiania, innej aranżacji. To nie są takie same ławki, jak były dawniej. Można by ustawić je także jakoś bardziej naokoło, żeby dzieciaki były w koło siebie. No ale. Jest w klasie tak bardzo standardowo, w trzech rzędach.</i>
34:07	R	<i>Czyli na języku angielskim dzieci nie pracują w grupach?</i>
34:21	P1	<i>W ogóle. Żeby były jakieś grupowe rzeczy? Klasa tylko razem śpiewa. Nie ma integracji, jakby łączenia grup i w ogóle robienia czegoś w tym stylu. Podręcznik, dziecko indywidualnie robi podręcznik. Piosenka jest wspólnie śpiewana, całą klasą.</i>
34:32	R	<i>Dokończmy to pytanie dotyczące sprzętu w klasie i warunków lokalowych. Czy one są zadowalając? Czy jest sprzęt, na którym dzieci mogą pracować czy nie? Czy są mapy, plansze różnego typu? Lub chociażby takie materiały, jak wycinanki? Bo przecież nauczyciel może z dziećmi coś tworzyć, kreować na lekcji języka obcego, prawda? Językiem instrukcji może być język angielski, a działania po prostu będą się odbywały właśnie w języku docelowym.</i>
35:12	P2	<i>Generalnie jeśli chodzi o angielski? No to jedyną rzeczą, o której słyszeliśmy jest ta tablica interakcyjna. Wydaje nam się, że może być jakiś laptop w klasie.</i>
35:33	P1	<i>Nie kojarzę. Na pewno. Ale dostaliśmy za to link do strony</i>

		<i>internetowej, żeby w domu sobie tam wchodzić, taki od producenta książki, żeby posłuchać piosenek i jest tam dictionary.</i>
35:50	R	<i>Czyli do pracy domowej?</i>
35:53	P1	<i>Dokładnie, dla zainteresowanych.</i>
35:54	R	<i>W sumie jakby był Internet w klasie, to można by było nawet sprawdzać znaczenie słówek i wyświetlać na tablicy integracyjnej. Dobrze dobrnęliśmy szczęśliwie do końca. Proszę państwa, dziękuję bardzo za udział w rozmowie i za szczere odpowiedzi.</i>

## Appendix 4: Interviews with parents of children with SLDs

### Interview with parents of children with SLDs – Parent 3

TIME/ CZAS	SPEAKER/ ROZMÓWCA	TRANSCRIPT/ PRZEBIEG
0:00	Researcher (R)	<i>Dzień dobry, dziękuję, że zgodziła się Pani wziąć udział w badaniu. Wywiad dotyczy kwestii nauczania języka angielskiego dzieci z wybranymi trudnościami w uczeniu się, w szczególności takimi jak dysleksja i dysfazja. Wybór tych trudności edukacyjnych uzasadnia fakt że zarówno dysleksja jak i dysfazja mają wpływ na możliwości rozwojowe uczniów oraz ich możliwości komunikacji w języku obcym.</i>
1:47	R	<i>Na wstępie poprosiłabym panią o krótką charakterystykę specyficznych trudności w uczeniu się (STU) z jakimi przyszło zmierzyć się państwa dziecku. Kiedy u dziecka zdiagnozowano STU? Czy została wystawiona opinia, a być może orzeczenie o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych? Czy szkoła została poinformowana przez państwa o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych dziecka?</i>
2: 20	Parent 3 (P3)	<i>Problemy u dziecka zauważyliśmy my rodzice, kiedy córka była w trzeciej klasie szkoły podstawowej. Karolina słabo liczyła, słabo dodawała i mnożyła. Nie potrafiła odróżnić większości od mniejszości, ustosunkować się do tego, która kolejka w sklepie była krótsza, a która dłuższa, na przykład. Po rozmowie z wychowawcą w klasie trzeciej podpowiedziano nam, żeby zgłosić się do poradni pedagogiczno-psychologicznej w naszym mieście i tak też zrobiliśmy. Okazało się że córka ma dyskalkulię. <u>Na tą chwilę, została wystawiona opinia. Ponieważ nie można wystawić orzeczenia na temat dyskalkulii w szkole podstawowej, więc na razie dziecko jest tylko pod opieką poradni, czekamy na dalszy rozwój dziecka i zobaczymy jak to będzie w przyszłości.</u></i>
3:36	R	<i>Rozumiem. Ta diagnoza nastąpiła dość późno, czy jej objawy też dość późno się pojawiły według pani?</i>
3:44	P3	<i><u>Nie, moim zdaniem i zdaniem poradni, objawy były już wcześniej, ale były bagatelizowane przez szkołę.</u></i>
3:52	R	<i>Czyli Państwo zgłaszaliście, że dziecko ma problem, tak?</i>
3:55	P3	<i><u>Tak. Ale w szkole nikt nie wspomniał, że to może być dyskalkulia, raczej że córka była słabsza.</u> Karolina jest wcześniakiem, więc nauczyciel myślał, że być może wynika to z jakiś neurologicznych braków dziecka.</i>
4: 22	R	<i>Weszliśmy już w pierwszy blok pytań dotyczących ogólnego rozwoju dziecka, jego samopoczucia w szkole i dlatego też chciałabym zapytać o rozwój języka obcego u dziecka. Państwo zdecydowaliście, aby dziecko chodziło do szkoły publicznej. Czy pani zdaniem nauka w szkole powszechnej pozytywnie wpływa na rozwój pani dziecka?</i>
4:54	P3	<i>Tak.</i>
4: 55	R	<i>A kiedy pojawiły się problemy z nauką, czy państwo od tamtej pory nadal jesteście zadowoleni z wyboru szkoły?</i>

5: 02	P3	<i>Nie. <u>Nie jesteśmy zadowoleni, natomiast mamy ograniczone możliwości</u> jeżeli chodzi o wybór innej szkoły. Dlatego większą wagę przywiązujemy do lekcji prywatnych i do nauczania pozaszkolnego.</i>
5: 23	R	<i>Czyli rozumiem, że dziecko wspierane jest dodatkowymi zajęciami?</i>
5: 24	P3	<i>Tak.</i>
5: 25	R	<i>A jeśli chodzi o naukę języka obcego, czy też takie problemy państwo zauważyliście?</i>
5:35	P3	<i>Nie. Nie widzieliśmy takich problemów, dlatego że akurat w jej przypadku ten język obcy jest jej ulubionym przedmiotem. Ona jakby rekompensuje sobie braki w nauce matematyki, swoje kompleksy nadrabiając językiem i ten język angielski jest jakby kluczowym jej przedmiotem, powiedziałabym ulubionym. Jest to przedmiot, którego ona się lubi uczyć. Po prostu jest to taka jej pasja.</i>
6:09	R	<i>Bardzo się cieszę słysząc takie słowa. W takim razie jeśli chodzi o naukę języka angielskiego to co najbardziej sprawiało jej radość?</i>
6:22	P3	<i>Karolina uwielbia, bardzo lubi muzykę, więc lubi tłumaczenie tekstów piosenek, słuchanie angielskich piosenek, rozmowy w języku angielskim, czytanie prostych książeczek w języku angielskim. W każde wakacje Karolina od trzech lat jeździ na Euro Week, także cały czas ten język jest dla niej najważniejszy. Ona tutaj może zabłysnąć i się zaprezentować. Także to akurat nie sprawia jej żadnych trudności.</i>
7:00	R	<i>Wspomniała pani, że córka bardzo lubi takie zajęcia niestandardowe, wychodzące poza materiał z podręcznika. Czy właśnie w ten sposób nauczyciel języka angielskiego prowadził zajęcia?</i>
7:12	P3	<i>Tak. Tutaj mamy dużo szczęścia ponieważ w zwykłej szkole podstawowej Karolina ma bardzo dobrego <u>nauczyciela języka angielskiego, który nie realizuje tylko podstawy programowej, ale stara się dzieci zachęcić do nauki języka w zupełnie inny sposób, niestandardowo.</u> Prowadzi lekcje bardzo zróżnicowane, ciekawe. Staje na głowie, żeby dzieciakom pokazać, że język obcy jest ważny i można się go uczyć w inny sposób niż tłumacząc słówka.</i>
7:51	R	<i>Państwo jesteście z Sochaczewa, tak?</i>
7:58	P3	<i>Tak.</i>
7:59	R	<i>Rozumiem, wygląda na to, że jeśli chodzi o pracę na lekcji to nauczyciel chyba częściej korzysta z materiałów dodatkowych i własnych koncepcji, niż z podręcznika, czy tak?</i>
8:24	P3	<i>Tak.</i>
8: 25	R	<i>A czy nauczyciel przedmiotu, jeśli chodzi o język angielski znał też sytuację córki i wiedział, że ma SEN?</i>
8: 29	P3	<i>Tak wiedział, ponieważ Karolina według tej opinii z poradni psychologiczno-pedagogicznej powinna być oceniana w troszeczkę w inny sposób. Zwłaszcza jej największym problem są liczby, natomiast w angielskim też się pojawiają liczby i w każdym przedmiocie, gdzie się pojawiają takie zadania matematyczne, jej to sprawia trudność i</i>

		<i>ten nauczyciel o tym wie. Na przykład prace sprawdzane są kolorem zielonym, żeby nie na czerwono. <u>Nie wytyka się jej błędów, tylko pokazuje plusy jej prac. To co zrobiła dobrze, nie to co zrobiła źle. To ją bardzo wspiera.</u> Był taki moment, że ona się troszeczkę załamała i to jej podkopywało wiarę w siebie. <u>Doszliśmy do konsensusu ze szkołą wypracowując wspólny sposób oceniania Karoliny.</u></i>
9: 33	R	<i>Czy to państwo byliście inicjatorami takiej właśnie współpracy ze szkołą? Zaproponowaliście właśnie, żeby inaczej podejść do dziecka? Czy to raczej była inicjatywa ze strony szkoły?</i>
9:50	P3	<i>No, nie. To była nasza inicjatywa ze względu na to, że na początku było tak, że <u>Karolina powinna mieć wydłużony czas pracy na sprawdzianach, a to było nierespektowane.</u> Powinna ona mieć tłumaczone w jakiś sposób fragmenty, których nie rozumiała, ale to też nie było respektowane. Dlatego wolnymi, małymi kroczkami walczyliśmy o to, żeby jej pomóc.</i>
10:23	R	<i>Czy takie problemy były też na początku z językiem angielskim?</i>
10:27	P3	<i>Nie, tutaj nauczyciel był bardzo otwarty. Dzieci tego pana bardzo lubią i naprawdę on też chwali dzieciaki. Wypracowali sobie taką wspólną współpracę, że <u>oni jemu nie przeszkadzają w żaden sposób w prowadzeniu lekcji wręcz chłoną to co ma im do przekazania, a przez to jemu łatwiej się z tymi dziećmi pracuje. Jak się pojawiło dziecko z trudnościami edukacyjnymi, to okazało się, że on ma czas, żeby się nad tym problemem pochylić.</u></i>
10:57	R	<i>Czy w klasie był nauczyciel wspomagający lub współorganizujący pracę?</i>
11:19	P3	<i>Nie, u nas nie ma takiej możliwości. Ja <u>próbowałam zawalczyć o takiego nauczyciela szczególnie na lekcje z matematyki, ale niestety, w związku z wysokimi kosztami, nie było to możliwe.</u></i>
11: 43	R	<i>Czyli rozumiem, że to ze względu na przepisy, które mówią, że musi pojawić się w klasie odpowiednia grupa dzieci, aby nauczyciel wspomagający mógł się pojawić?</i>
11:45	P3	<i>Tak.</i>
11: 46	R	<i>A widziała pani taką potrzebę?</i>
11:47	P3	<i>Myślę, że tak. Teraz Karolina zdała już do siódmej klasy. Zaraz pojawi się fizyka chemia myślę że to byłoby bardzo korzystne dla niej rozwiązanie natomiast to się nie uda ze względu na to że Karolina jest jedynym dzieckiem w szkole które ma dyskalkulię.</i>
12:20	R	<i>Rozumiem. A gdybyśmy mogli puścić sobie wodze fantazji i gdyby mogła pani wpłynąć na szkołę, na system edukacji, czy chciałaby pani coś zmienić w szkole powszechnej?</i>
12: 23	P3	<i>Tak, <u>żeby były mniejsze klasy, bardzo by to było dla dzieci korzystne.</u> U nas jest bardzo dużo dzieci, bo jest ich dwadzieścia pięć w klasie. Wiadomo nauczyciel miałby więcej czasu, żeby się pochylić nad każdym z dzieci. Ponadto pragnęłabym, żeby nauczyciel w odpowiedzi na pytanie ucznia, który czegoś nie rozumie, nie odpowiadał „jak to nie rozumiesz”, tylko podszedł do tego jak do problemu, który należy wspólnie rozwiązać.</i>

12:57	R	<i>Rozumiem. Szkoły polskie są zobowiązane postępować zgodnie z przyjętymi przez nasz kraj regulacjami unijnymi. Te przepisy odnoszą się przede wszystkim do poszanowania godności ucznia, do jego równego traktowania wraz z innymi uczniami w grupie. Czy pani zdaniem prawa ucznia o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych są szanowane przez szkołę? Mam tu na myśli zarówno dyrektora, nauczycieli, jak i innych uczniów. Czy dzieci które mają specjalne potrzeby edukacyjne funkcjonują w szkole na równych zasadach z innymi dziećmi np. są w tym samym stopniu zachęcane do brania udziału w różnego rodzaju konkursach czy formach autoprezentacji? Na przykład, kiedy jest organizowany teatrzyk klasowy, to czy te dzieci są chętnie wybierane przez nauczycieli do głównych ról czy tylko do statystowania? Jakie jest pani odczucie?</i>
14:39	P3	<i>To zależy. Wydaje mi się że to jest kwestia człowieka. Jak jest taki człowiek któremu się chce, który ma siłę i chciałby, żeby te dzieciaki do szkoły nie chodziły tylko z przymusu, to robi wszystko, żeby zajęcia je przyciągały. Natomiast są też takie skostniałe jednostki, które nic się nie zmieniają. Powiedziałabym, że dzieci są przez nie ośmieszane. Wszystko zależy od człowieka.</i>
15: 18	R	<i>Czy to że to są skostniałe jednostki odnosi się według pani bardziej do cech charakteru czy grupy wiekowej nauczycieli?</i>
15:21	P3	<i><u>Do grupy wiekowej.</u> Zauważyłam że właśnie im starszy nauczyciel, to częściej można usłyszeć: „jak możesz tego nie rozumieć?”, „czego ty nie rozumiesz?”. Nauczyciele denerwują się, że dzieci uczestniczą w zajęciach dodatkowych pozalekcyjnych typu korepetycje. I wtedy też mówią: „dlaczego chodzisz na korepetycje?”, „Dlaczego nie przyjdiesz do mnie?”, ale dziecko boi się pójść zapytać, bo jeżeli raz, drugi, trzeci usłyszało „nie rozumiesz?”, „jak możesz tego nie wiedzieć?”, „jak możesz tego nie rozumieć”, „co tu jest do niezrozumienia?”, to zamykają się w sobie i są gdzieś tam w ogóle w równoległej rzeczywistości myślowej. I to tak właśnie wygląda.</i>
16: 06	R	<i>W związku z tym, że wspomniała pani o nauczycielu zwracającym się do ucznia z pretensją w głosie czego on nie rozumie, czy uważa pani, że treści kształcenia które są przewidziane podstawą programową, również w odniesieniu do języka angielskiego, są dopasowane do możliwości poznawczych dziecka?</i>
16: 39	P3	<i>Jeżeli chodzi o język angielski to uważam, że tak. Jeżeli nauczyciel nie korzysta tylko z książek szkolnych, czyli z podręczników szkolnych i posiłkuje się jeszcze jakimś tam word wall, quizlet i jakimiś swoimi materiałami, to jest super. Dzieciaki chętnie wtedy sięgają do tego przedmiotu. No bo umówmy się, myślę, że te dialogi w podręcznikach szkolnych są coraz trudniejsze z roku na rok, natomiast cały czas podobne tematy i to może dzieci jakoś tam zniechęcać. Natomiast jeżeli nauczyciel jest kreatywny, a my z angielskiego mamy szczęście właśnie do takiego nauczyciela, to uważam, że jest wszystko ok.</i>
17:25	R	<i>Zapytam dodatkowo, dużo było na lekcji angielskiego pracy w grupach? Mówiła córka?</i>
17: 30	P3	<i>Tak, właśnie praca odbywa się głównie w grupach. Pan potrafi dzieci bardzo docenić. Nie mówię tu o ocenach, ale w ogóle dobrym słowem plusem jakimś tak taki tak zawsze te dzieciaki mają taką zachętę właśnie żeby się starać, żeby coś jeszcze pokazać panu tak coś jeszcze zrobić.</i>

17:50	R	<i>A jak jest z ocenianiem, szczególnie mnie interesują klasy właśnie 1-3, czy zawsze ocena wiedzy i umiejętności z języka angielskiego odbywała się na podstawie testów? Czy były inne formy oceniania? Na przykład, odpowiedź ustna albo realizacja jakiegoś projektu.</i>
18:04	P3	<i>Tak, były takie prace, robione na lekcji, nie w domu. <u>Dzieci robiły lapbuki, rysowały, projektowały.</u> Naprawdę pod tym względem dzieci były bardzo aktywne.</i>
18:26	R	<i>To świetnie. Pozostają nam jeszcze dwa ostatnie pytania. Pierwsze dotyczy opinii pani jako rodzica na temat współpracy ze szkołą. Czy gdyby miała pani podsumować te lata, które dziecko spędziło w szkole, czy pani jest zadowolona z tej szkoły, do której uczęszcza córka i jak pani ocenia komunikację przepływ informacji pomiędzy rodzicem a szkołą, wychowawcą i nauczycielem?</i>
19:00	P3	<i>No właśnie <u>ze szkoły zadowolona nie jestem.</u> No powiedzmy, że z wychowawcą już porozumiewamy się w jakiś sposób, nauczyciel języka angielskiego jest super, <u>natomiast ogólnie współpraca ze szkołą jest katastrofalna. Wszystko rozbija głównie o pieniądze.</u> <u>Szkoła jest niedoinwestowana, nauczycieli brakuje cały czas, duże zmiany w kadrze co roku.</u> Jeżeli chodzi o język angielski, to jesteśmy bardzo zadowoleni i nie zmienilibyśmy tego, natomiast pozostałe kwestie budzą wiele zastrzeżeń.</i>
19:36	R	<i>Rozumiem. Czy warunki kształcenia są też takim punktem zapalnym? Czy wybierając szkołę dla swojego dziecka zastanawialiście się Państwo jakim zapleczem dydaktycznym szkoła dysponuje? Na przykład, jeśli chodzi o język angielski czy szkoła posiada nowoczesny sprzęt do nauki, tablice interaktywne, która pozwalają na organizację lekcji z wykorzystaniem Internetu?</i>
20:12	P3	<i>Tak. <u>Klasy są wyposażone w te nowoczesne tablice, natomiast ich użycie zależy od nauczyciela.</u> <u>Są klasy, gdzie te tablice są permanentnie wylądzone.</u> Dzieci z nich nie korzystają, jeśli nauczyciel nie ma pomysłu na to jak trafić do dzieci. I to się nie zmienia.</i>
20: 34	R	<i>Zastanawiam się czy to jest kwestia pomysłu czy może braku wiedzy i umiejętności...</i>
20:36	P3	<i>Też tak może być. Szkoły powiatowe mają to do siebie, że ci nauczyciele... No umówmy się, że w większym mieście łatwiej znaleźć dobrych nauczycieli. Natomiast w szkole powiatowej bywa z tym bardzo różnie. My mamy szczęście, ale wciąż zabiegamy o naszego nauczyciela angielskiego, żeby uczył dzieci dalej. Niech mi pani wierzy, że rodzice robią wszystko, żeby trafić do grupy właśnie tego nauczyciela. <u>W trzeciej klasie dzieci miały zastępstwo przez jeden semestr na języku angielskim z panią i to była po prostu porażka. Tam się nie działo kompletnie nic. To znaczy w ogóle była taka podstawa programowa, ale zajęcia były nudne, dzieci się nudziły przez to też zaczynały się kręcić rozrabiać na lekcjach, a pani się denerwowała nie potrafiła sobie z nimi kompletnie poradzić. To wynikało z tego, że jej lekcje były po prostu strasznie nudne. Z tego co dzieci opowiadały, to to była tragedia.</u></i>
21: 46	R	<i>A co mówiły na przykład?</i>
21: 47	P3	<i>Głównie, że <u>pani krzyczy.</u> Dzieci były znudzone, nie chciały jej słuchać, były przyzwyczajone trochę do innego rodzaju zajęć. Poza tym większość tych dzieciaków uczy się języka jeszcze poza szkołą.</i>

		<i>Moja córka jeszcze korzysta z zajęć w szkole Helen Doron i ma jeszcze jedną godzinę w tygodniu z native speakerem. Dlatego właśnie odpowiada jej nauczyciel, który jest bardzo kreatywny i pomysłowy. On w inny sposób pokazuje dzieciom wiedzę, a to dla mojej córki jest bardzo ciekawe.</i>
22:50	R	<i>Podsumowując, dodałoby pani jeszcze jakieś życzenia odnośnie polskiej szkoły? Czy jeszcze coś można by było tutaj usprawnić?</i>
22: 55	P3	<i><u>Myśle, że brakuje pieniędzy, po prostu. Problem jest też z zarządzaniem szkołą, bo bywa że nie każdy dyrektor szkoły jest dobrym zarządcą. Tak jest u nas. W naszej szkole nie jest dobrze.</u> Podsumowując naszą rozmowę humorystycznym akcentem, można powiedzieć, że nasz pan dyrektor jest z zawodu po prostu dyrektorem. Bywa i tak, niestety.</i>
23: 43	R	<i>Dziękuję bardzo za rozmowę i za chęć podzielenia się swoimi uwagami.</i>
23: 48	P3	<i>Dziękuję bardzo i pozdrawiam.</i>



## Appendix 4: Interviews with parents of children with SLDs

### Interviews with parents of children with SLDs – Parent 4

TIME/ CZAS	SPEAKER/ ROZMÓWCA	TRANSCRIPT/ PRZEBIEG
0:00	Researcher (R)	<i>Wywiad czwarty z rodzicem dziecka z dysleksją. Witam serdecznie na wstępie powiem, że niniejszy wywiad dotyczy kwestii nauczania języka angielskiego dzieci w wieku wczesnoszkolnym z wybranymi trudnościami w uczeniu się takimi jak dysleksja i dysfazja. Wybór tych trudności edukacyjnych uzasadnia fakt, że zarówno dysleksja, jak i dysfazja mają wpływ na możliwości rozwojowe uczniów oraz ich możliwości komunikacji w języku angielskim. Wywiad jest narzędziem badawczym, wykorzystywanym w badaniu naukowym, stanowiącym część empiryczną rozprawy doktorskiej, będącej analizą podejść w nauczaniu języka angielskiego małych dzieci ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się w Polsce w odniesieniu do sposobów realizacji nauczania inkluzyjnego. Polska jako państwo członkowskie Unii Europejskiej realizuje unijną koncepcję edukacji włączającej. Przedmiotowe badanie pozwoli dostrzec mocne i słabe strony polskiego systemu edukacji, kształcenia przyszłych nauczycieli oraz faktycznie stosowanego podejścia w nauczaniu zintegrowanym w kraju. Wyniki badania zostaną przedstawione w rozprawie doktorskiej. Na wstępie naszej rozmowy poprosiłabym o krótką charakterystykę tych trudności edukacyjnych, z jakimi przyszło się zmierzyć państwa dziecku, czyli kiedy zdiagnozowano u dziecka te trudności, czy problemem jest dysleksja czy dysfazja, czy została wystawiona opinia bądź orzeczenie o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych i czy szkoła została poinformowana przez państwa o tym fakcie.</i>
1:31	Parent 4 (P4)	<i><u>Córka została wysłana do poradni z podejrzeniem dysleksji w klasie pierwszej. Tam została zbadana, pani psycholog i pani pedagog stwierdziły, że jest jakiś problem. Jednak do końca nie określiły jaki to problem. Wystawiły pismo i została szkoła poinformowana. Zostały zlecone zajęcia korekcyjne w szkole.</u></i>
2:07	R	<i>W tym piśmie, opinii nie padło jasno stwierdzenie jaki to jest problem?</i>
2:14	P4	<i>Jasno nie, ale chodziło o problemy z ortografią.</i>
2:20	R	<i>Dobrze, przejdźmy teraz do części zasadniczej badania. W jaki sposób, Pani zdaniem, nauka w szkole powszechnej wpływa na rozwój dziecka? Czy widać postępy w nauce? Czy wybór szkoły był zasadny?</i>
2:41	P4	<i><u>W pewnym sensie był zasadny. Natomiast trzeba było skorzystać w późniejszym czasie z lekcji dodatkowych z języka.</u></i>
2:58	R	<i>No właśnie, a jeśli chodzi o lekcje języka angielskiego to, które z umiejętności językowych były w ocenie córki najciekawsze, najfajniejsze, a z którą umiejętnością językową było najwięcej problemów? Mam na myśli czytanie, pisanie, mówienie i słuchanie.</i>
3:19	P4	<i>Największy problem był z mówieniem.</i>
3:26	R	<i>Ale to wynikało z niechęci córki do udziału w takich ćwiczeniach, czy raczej z faktu, że było mało możliwości ćwiczenia języka?</i>
3:35	P4	<i><u>Lekcje były prowadzone nie w języku angielskim, tylko w języku</u></i>

		<i>polskim.</i>
3:41	R	<i>Ok. A te lekcje języka angielskiego odbywały się w oparciu o podręcznik?</i>
3:53	P4	<i>Tak.</i>
3:55	R	<i>Dobrze, a było coś takiego jak nauka poprzez zabawę, czyli śpiewanie piosenek, rozwiązywanie jakiś zadań problemowych? Czy była może praca w grupach lub parach, realizacja projektów edukacyjnych, zbieranie i prezentowanie informacji?</i>
4:16	P4	<i><u>Projektów raczej nie było, natomiast prawdopodobnie były jakieś piosenki dołączone do podręcznika, chociaż chyba też nie. Nauczyciele kazali zostawić je w domu.</u></i>
4:34	R	<i>Czyli praca na lekcji, można powiedzieć, opierała się głównie o materiał z podręcznika, tak?</i>
4:42	P4	<i>Tak. No, <u>może na początku w pierwszej klasie były ze dwie piosenki.</u></i>
4:46	R	<i>A gry i zabawy językowe?</i>
4:47	P4	<i>To chyba raczej nie.</i>
4:48	R	<i>A jeśli chodzi o pracę domową, dostawała córka taką pracę do wykonania w domu?</i>
4:54	P4	<i>Tak.</i>
4:55	R	<i>I ta praca to było coś, co nauczyciel przygotowywał dodatkowo, w oparciu o dodatkowe materiały?</i>
5:00	P4	<i><u>Nie, tylko z podręcznika. No i z książki ćwiczeń.</u></i>
5:12	R	<i>A jakieś dodatkowe materiały do pracy z uczniem o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych? Dostawała córka jakieś karty pracy?</i>
5:15	P4	<i>Nie. Nic takiego.</i>
5:40	R	<i>I alternatywne zadania na przykład, jeśli miała problem z poprawnym zapisem, bo tutaj problem dotyczył ortografii, to dostawała jakieś alternatywne ćwiczenia, albo materiały do przygotowania na przykład na sprawdzian ze słówek? Bo wiadomo, że należało tu oczekiwać problemów ortograficznych. Czy zamiast pisać test, nauczyciel na przykład pytał o to słownictwo ustnie?</i>
5:48	P4	<i>Nie, raczej nie. Chyba, że były jakieś dodatkowe zajęcia, lekcje w zastępstwie, ale tak to nie.</i>
6:00	R	<i>A nauczyciel języka angielskiego stosował się do zaleceń, które znalazły się w opinii poradni psychologiczno-pedagogicznej.</i>
6:03	P4	<i>Nie wiem. Nie sprawdzałam tego.</i>
6:05	R	<i>Ale problemów na tym tle też jakiś nie było.</i>
6:06	P4	<i>Nie było.</i>

6:08	R	<i>Podsumowując, jest pani zadowolona z jakości kształcenia oferowanego przez szkołę?</i>
6:17	P4	<i>Myszę, że tak.</i>
6:26	R	<i>A jeśli chodzi o sposób oceniania, o typy sposobów ewaluacji wiedzy ucznia, nie było z tym nigdy problemu?</i>
6:32	P4	<i>Czy nie było ocen? <u>Sposób oceniania był opisowy. Nie było ocen.</u></i>
6:41	R	<i>I uważa Pani, że ten sposób oceniania był właściwy, a informacja, która służyła do rodzice i do dziecka, była czytelna i wystarczająca?</i>
7:00	P4	<i><u>Nie do końca. No bo jak jest skala, to dziecko widzi, czy dostało lepszą czy gorszą ocenę. A tu były tylko pieczątki. Buźki.</u></i>
7:04	R	<i>Ale córka potrafiła się w tym odnaleźć, tak?</i>
7:06	P4	<i>Tak.</i>
7:08	R	<i>Gdyby miała pani szansę zasugerować jakieś zmiany w stosowanym systemie kształcenia, to czy byłoby jakieś udoskonalenia, które pani by zaproponowała?</i>
7:24	P4	<i><u>Na pewno nauka języka angielskiego przez prowadzenie lekcji w języku angielskim. Wykorzystanie różnych innych materiałów do nauki, a nie tylko podręcznika. Być może korzystanie z Internetu lub innych pomocy bardziej praktycznych.</u></i>
7:46	R	<i>A czy córka na przykład mówiła, że język angielski jest bardzo fajny, że lekcje są ciekawe?</i>
7:52	P4	<i><u>Nie. Zawsze mówiła, że to są nieciekawe lekcje. Niekoniecznie lubiła ten przedmiot.</u></i>
8:14		<i>A mówiła dlaczego?</i>
8:16	P4	<i><u>To też zależało od nauczyciela, który prowadził lekcje. Bo w klasach 1 - 3 zdarzało się, że byli różni nauczyciele na zajęciach. I to, czy lekcja była ciekawa, zależało od nauczyciela.</u></i>
8:27	R	<i>A kiedy córka mówiła, że było coś ciekawego?</i>
8:31	P4	<i><u>Było dwóch czy tam trzech nauczycieli. Ale córka najbardziej lubiła jedną panią, o której mówiła, że bardzo ciekawie prowadzi lekcje.</u></i>
8:37	R	<i>Co oznacza 'bardzo fajne lekcje'. Czy one były też realizowane na podstawie podręcznika? Czy to były jakieś lekcje alternatywne?</i>
8:43	P4	<i><u>Nie, raczej z podręcznika, ale mimo to bardziej ciekawe jednak, bo dzieci chciały, żeby była ta pani, a nie inna.</u></i>
8:50	R	<i>Jeśli chodzi o przestrzeganie przepisów unijnych dotyczących kształcenia dzieci o potrzebach edukacyjnych, czy prawa ucznia o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych, takie jak na przykład poszanowanie jego godności, czy one są respektowane przez szkołę, czy uczniowie ci są równo traktowani, nie stygmatyzowani?</i>
9:23	P4	<i>Myszę, że tak.</i>

9:28	R	<i>Czyli, że dziecko funkcjonuje w szkole na równych zasadach z innymi. Ma równy dostęp do konkursów?</i>
9:30	P4	<i>To znaczy, niekoniecznie zostaje wybrana do takich wydarzeń. <u>Zgłasza się, ale to nauczyciel sam weryfikuje kogo chce wybrać.</u></i>
9:39	R	<i>A dlaczego tak jest? Z czego to wynika?</i>
9:52	P4	<i>Myszę, że nauczyciel wie lepiej, który uczeń daje sobie radę lepiej z nauką. I może chodzi tutaj też o wyniki, nie tylko dla ucznia, ale też dla nauczyciela.</i>
10:20	R	<i>Czy chodzi o wynik tego konkursu?</i>
10:22	P4	<i><u>Tak. Nie chodzi o wygranie czegoś, tylko chodzi też o to, że oprócz ucznia, nauczyciel też dostaje dobrą ocenę. On też ma satysfakcję z tego, że ma dobrych uczniów i że dobrze ich przygotował.</u></i>
10:40	R	<i>Czy Pani córka realizuje, realizowała w klasach 1-3 ten sam program kształcenia co inne dzieci?</i>
10:51	P4	<i>Ten sam.</i>
10:53	R	<i>A treści kształcenia, które były realizowane były pani zdaniem dostosowane do możliwości poznawczych dziecka? Czy zdarzało się tak, że były treści lekcji niezrozumiałe dla dziecka i że musiała pani z nim indywidualnie pracować?</i>
11:19	P4	<i>Zdarzało się, że tak.</i>
11:20	R	<i>I to przynosiło pozytywne rezultaty?</i>
11:33	P4	<i>Myszę, że tak. Na przykład, <u>zdarzało się, że córka nie rozumiała tego, co czyta, a w domu siadałyśmy raz jeszcze. No i za chwilę wszystko było jasne.</u></i>
11:43	R	<i>Czy treści lekcji były realizowane zgodnie z programem nauczania?</i>
11:48	P4	<i>Tak.</i>
11:49	R	<i>Czyli jeśli podręcznik się kończył wraz z końcem roku, to nauczyciel informował o tym fakcie rodziców?</i>
11:53	P4	<i><u>Zdarzało się, że nie do końca został jakiś tam temat zrealizowany, ale na ogół tak.</u></i>
11:56	R	<i>Pytanie dotyczące opinii rodzica na temat współpracy ze szkołą. Powiedziała pani, że jest pani ogólnie rzecz biorąc zadowolona z wyboru szkoły. A jakby pani oceniła komunikację? Przepływ informacji pomiędzy szkołą a rodzicami?</i>
12:18	P4	<i><u>Kontakt z nauczycielem wychowawcą też był, np. przez sms. Rodzice byli zapraszani na rozmowę za pomocą smsów lub pisemnego zaproszenia do szkoły na rozmowę.</u></i>
12:30	R	<i>Na zebrania też smsami? To ciekawa forma kontaktu z rodzicami. Często się nauczyciel kontaktował? To były sprawy dotyczące klasy czy kwestie indywidualne?</i>

12:41	P4	<u>Na przykład informacja o zbliżającym się sprawdzianie, o konieczności przyniesienia jakiś ćwiczeń, których dzieci wcześniej nie przynosiły, a były konieczne. Czasami też były pytania, czy dziecko jest w szkole danego dnia, co się stało, jeżeli nie.</u>
13:02	R	<i>I Pani jest zadowolona z tej formy komunikacji?</i>
13:05	P4	<i>Myszę, że tak.</i>
13:06	R	<i>A miała miejsce taka sytuacja, kiedy jakiś problem się pojawił na tle edukacyjnym i musiała pani interweniować w szkole? Bądź musiała pani przypomnieć, że moje dziecko ma opinię, że prosiłaby pani, żeby inaczej podejść do córki?</i>
13:24	P4	<u>Czasami trzeba było interweniować, bo córka miała opinię a nie orzeczenie, więc musiała funkcjonować na równi z innymi. Nie było szans na to, żeby po prostu skorzystała dostosowań, tak jak inne dzieci, które miały orzeczenie.</u>
13:46	R	<i>To było w porządku, według pani?</i>
14:49	P4	<u>Według mnie nie, bo dziecko się buntowało i widziało, że ma problemy. Chodzi do poradni, chodzi na zajęcia korekcyjne, a nie ma przywilejów, które mają inne dzieci.</u>
14:01	R	<i>Czy myśli pani, że ten problem, który powstał w przypadku pani córki, to jest problem po stronie szkoły? Czy szkoła nie wyszła naprzeciw uczniowie, mimo tego, że uczeń miał opinię, chociaż nie do końca stwierdzającą może wyraźnie jaki to był problem? Czy bardziej był to błąd poradni, która nie określiła jasno zaleceń?</i>
14:21	P4	<u>Myszę, że to był raczej błąd poradni. Chociaż szkoła też mogła podejść do tego w inny sposób.</u>
14:25	R	<i>Dobrze. Ostatnie pytanie dotyczące warunków kształcenia. Te warunki w szkole, warunki lokalowe, dostosowanie sprzętu do potrzeb uczniów, dostępność do nowoczesnych rozwiązań technologicznych, czy one pani zdaniem są satysfakcjonujące? Dostosowane do możliwości poznawczych dziecka i rozwoju technologii jaki w tej chwili mamy?</i>
14:52	P4	<u>W trakcie edukacji mojej córki nie było dobrze w szkole, ponieważ klasy do nauki języka angielskiego były bardzo małe. Generalnie całe zastawione ławkami. Bardzo mało przejścia między ławkami. Te ławki były ustawione w sposób tradycyjny tak, że stały trzy ławki obok siebie. Siadało przy nich sześcioro dzieci w jednej linii.</u>
15:22	R	<i>Aha, w takich długich rzędach i dopiero wtedy było przejście.</i>
15:24	P4	<i>Tak. A dalej była jedna ławka, gdzie siedziała dwójka dzieci. Było bardzo mało miejsca.</i>
15:29	R	<i>Właśnie dla ćwiczeń ruchowych, zabaw nie było miejsca.</i>
15:31	P4	<i>Nie było.</i>
15:33	R	<i>Ok, a czy zdarzało się, że np. córka mówiła, że była ciekawa lekcja, bo dzieci pracowały w grupach, albo przy oddzielnych stolikach w zespołach, albo w plenerze?</i>
15:40	P4	<u>Nie, klasy były zbyt małe, aby można było zestawić ławki inaczej i</u>

		<u>zrobić grupy. Natomiast zajęcia, które były gdzieś w plenerze? Ale to tylko raz maksymalnie dwa razy.</u>
16:15	R	<i>A takie kwestie jak tablica multimedialna, dostęp do Internetu były w klasie?</i>
16:21	P4	<u>Tablica multimedialna. Czy był Internet to nie wiem, nie umiem powiedzieć.</u>
16:33	R	<i>A mówiła coś córka na ten temat? Na przykład takie zajęcia, gdzie korzystali z jakiejś aplikacji, albo że korzystali z komputera w klasie i na przykład sprawdzali informacje razem z nauczycielem?</i>
16:38	P4	<i>Czasami oglądali film.</i>
16:48	R	<i>Nie pamięta pani, co to za film czy był to film rysunkowy?</i>
17:03	P4	<i>Świnka Peppe.</i>
17:06	R	<i>Czy jest jeszcze coś, co pani by chciała dodać, jakiś komentarz lub życzenie co do kształcenia i edukacji dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami?</i>
17:39	P4	<u>Nie wiem, może życzyłabym sobie jakiejś większej wyrozumiałości, poświęcenia większej uwagi tym dzieciom, zwrócenia uwagi, jak pracują i czy dobrze pracują. No i żeby dzieci czuły empatię do nauczycieli i żeby w razie problemów miały możliwość poprawy. Poza tym oczekiwałabym pozytywnego wsparcia dla dzieci ze strony nauczycieli.</u>
17:40	R	<i>Dziękuję bardzo za udział w badaniu.</i>

## Appendix 5: Interviews with experts

### Interview with expert 1

TIME/ CZAS	SPEAKER/ ROZMÓWCA	TRANSCRIPT/ PRZEBIEG
1:12	Researcher (R)	<i>Spotkałyśmy się dzisiaj ponieważ chciałabym przeprowadzić z panią profesorem wywiad do części empirycznej mojej pracy doktorskiej, będącej wnikliwą analizą podejść w nauczaniu języka angielskiego małych dzieci ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się w Polsce, w odniesieniu do sposobów realizacji nauczania inkluzyjnego w naszym kraju. Wywiad podzielony jest na trzy części, pierwsza część odnosi się do systemu kształcenia, druga do kształcenia wyższego przygotowującego kandydatów do pracy w zawodzie nauczyciela i trzecia część dotyczy nauczycieli uczniów ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się. Jeśli chodzi o blok pierwszy, moje pierwsze pytanie jest takie, czy można stwierdzić na dzień dzisiejszy, że edukacja włączająca i jest już w praktyce stosowana w polskiej szkole?</i>
2:16	Expert 1 (E1)	<i>Moim zdaniem tak naprawdę w stu procentach nie można [tego] stwierdzić. To znaczy, jak obserwuję i analizuję, to na pewno pod względem powiedzmy prawnym czy proceduralnym tak. Są pewne poczynione już takie dosyć poważne kroki, przede wszystkim poprzez rozporządzenia czy akty prawne, czy poprzez szereg różnych zaleceń czy wskazówek, które się kieruje do dyrektorów szkół i placówek jak to powinno być zorganizowane, czy nawet poprzez szkolenia dla nauczycieli. Natomiast, jeżeli chodzi o realizację praktyczną, to nie można powiedzieć na pewno, że [odbywa się ona] wszędzie i tak samo idealnie. Część szkół jest bardzo mocno zaangażowana w edukację włączającą i sądzę, że są nawet takie grupy nauczycielskie, które pasjonują się wprost tym. Natomiast moim zdaniem, wszystko zależy od człowieka, bo jeżeli chodzi o pewną bazę, podstawę do działań, na pewno ona już jest stworzona w polskiej szkole. Natomiast jeszcze kwestie, takie jak bariery architektoniczne, o których też trzeba powiedzieć, jak również bariery mentalne w podejściu do tej edukacji są i też utrudniają rozwój inkluzji. Jednak, moim zdaniem na bazie tych obecnych uwarunkowań prawnych edukację inkluzyjną można już realizować.</i>
3:58	R	<i>Pani profesor wspomniała tu o pewnych barierach psychologicznych, czy mogłaby pani profesor wyjaśnić w szczególności o co chodzi?</i>
4:07	E1	<i>To znaczy, te bariery psychologiczne tkwią właściwie we wszystkich podmiotach związanych z edukacją inkluzyjną. Mianowicie, wiadomo że te bariery są w środowisku nauczycielskim, bo na przykład cały czas trwa taki spór i dyskusja, które właściwie chyba nie będą nigdy do końca rozstrzygnięte, czy dopuszczać sytuację taką, aby absolutnie nie było szkolnictwa specjalnego, czy też przekształcać szkolnictwo specjalne w ogólnodostępne i tylko, i wyłącznie pójść w kierunku masowej edukacji. Są nauczyciele specjaliści, pedagogzy specjaliści, którzy uważają, że inkluzja jest niemożliwa w niektórych przypadkach, i ja się też z tym zgadzam. Również rodzice dzieci, które mają specjalne potrzeby edukacyjne, zależnie od potrzeby, od stanu dziecka również mają takie bariery, bo uważają, że ich dziecko być może będzie stygmatyzowane w szkole lub będzie źle przyjęte i z tego powodu nie chcą narażać siebie, ani dziecka. Są to kwestie mentalne, które wymagają czasu, ale również wymagają stopniowego przejścia małymi krokami. Dlatego, jeżeli ktoś uważa, że inkluzja nastanie z dnia na dzień poprzez jedną czy drugą decyzję administracyjną, to tak się nie stanie. Pewne decyzje administracyjne zostały podjęte, furta jest już otwarta i powoli czas na ich realizację. Trzeba tutaj zachować pewien</i>

		<i>rozsądek i dać czas na wdrożenie tych decyzji, jednak tak jak już wspomniałam wcześniej, są szkoły i placówki które bardzo dobrze się w tym sprawdzają, nie boją się i nie mają wspomnianych zahamowań.</i>
5:55	R	<i>To by znaczyło, że tak naprawdę edukacja włączająca już w polskim systemie edukacji i funkcjonuje w praktyce.</i>
6:05	E1	<i><u>Tak, funkcjonuje. Jako taka, tak na pewno, tylko w jakim zakresie i stopniu, to jest dyskusyjne.</u></i>
6:11	R	<i>A czy sam system edukacji uległ zmianie?</i>
6:14	E1	<i><u>To znaczy, tak. Na przykład, rozporządzenie ministerstwa edukacji z 2012 roku zawiera tak zwany profil nauczyciela edukacji włączającej. Został on wypracowany w oparciu o udział Polski w wielkim projekcie międzynarodowym. Ten profil nauczyciela edukacji włączającej został wykorzystany do standardów kształcenia nauczycieli. W standardach kształcenia nauczycieli, które obecnie funkcjonują u nas i które zostały zmodyfikowane w 2019 roku, mamy szalek zapisów, które wynikają z tego profilu nauczyciela edukacji włączającej. Krótko mówiąc, poprzez takie prawne zapisy ta edukacja do nas dociera. Kolejną sprawą jest kwestia wczesnego wspomagania rozwoju dziecka i jego rodziny, która została wprowadzona również systemowo i obligatoryjnie poprzez rozporządzenie. Tak więc naprawdę, nauczyciele, szkoły, placówki nie mogą tego nie realizować. Są procedury, muszą być powołane odpowiednie zespoły, więc to jest również też jeden z elementów włączania dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami. Te specjalne potrzeby są bardzo różne, ale mam tu na myśli dzieci z orzeczeniami z poradni.</u></i>
7:46		<i>Ostatnio wprowadzone zmiany, o których się dyskutuje, są częściowo kontestowane przez różne środowiska, nauczycielskie również. <u>Dotyczy to głównie kwestii pełnego włączenia, kwestii asystenta osobistego ucznia, dodatkowych godzin, nauczyciela wspomagającego oraz roli pedagoga specjalnego.</u> Uważam, że te działania obligatoryjne, prawne, które są obecnie podejmowane, stanowią bazę, do której musi się odnieść każda placówka, czy chce tego czy nie.</i>
8:38	R	<i>Jeszcze mam pytanie dotyczące nadzoru realizacji tego procesu kształcenia włączającego. Czy w Polsce istnieją instytucje bądź organy wykonawcze, które taką kontrolę sprawują?</i>
8:58	E1	<i><u>Ja tak naprawdę przyznam szczerze, że tutaj nie mam takiej pełnej wiedzy. Zastanawiam się, w obecnej sytuacji, w której jesteśmy, jakie będzie miał tutaj kompetencje kurator. Bo wiadomo, że jest taka zmiana jaka jest, więc też myślę sobie, że może właśnie tutaj kurator może mieć większą rolę i być może będzie miał większy wpływ, będzie organem decyzyjnym na przykład w kwestiach problemów lub sporów z rodzicami.</u> To jest pierwsza sprawa, a długa ta sprawa jest taka, że być może to nie do końca będzie ten organ, ale na przykład będą to szkoły specjalne, które mają stanowić w zamierzeniu ustawodawcy rodzaj centrum wspierania edukacji włączającej w placówkach ogólnodostępnych. Uważam że to jest dobre rozwiązanie, szczególnie jeżeli mamy uczniów z niepełnosprawnościami poważniejszymi, takimi jak niepełnosprawność intelektualna czy innymi niepełnosprawnościami, które wymagają pedagoga specjalnego i włączenia pedagogiki specjalnej, włączenia metodyki pedagogiki specjalnej. Dlatego uważam, że takie wsparcie szkolnictwa specjalnego dla szkolnictwa ogólnodostępnego jest bardzo dobre.</i>



10:17	R	<i>I potrzebne.</i>
10:18	E1	<i>I potrzebne. <u>Tak, bo nawet jeżeli mamy pedagogów specjalnych, którzy będą powiedzmy zatrudniani w szkołach publicznych czy w klasach, to jednak całe zaplecze szkolnictwa specjalnego, całe zaplecze infrastrukturalne, sprzęt, różne urządzenia, metodyka, która też jest tutaj ważna, będą naprawdę stanowić wsparcie dla nauczycieli.</u></i>
10:47	R	<i>Pani Profesor, jeszcze takie pytanie, czy te instytucje, które Pani Profesor wymieniła, takie jak kuratorium, które sprawuje kontrolę, chociaż na dzień dzisiejszy jeszcze nie wiemy do końca jaka będzie jego rola w kształceniu włączającym, czy też właśnie te organizacje zdaniem pani profesor będą miały realny wpływ na proces kształcenia?</i>
11:15	E1	<i>To znaczy na założenia mają na pewno.</i>
11:26	R	<i>A czy na przykład mają wpływ na to w jaki sposób tworzone są sylabusy?</i>
11:30	E1	<i>To znaczy tak, na pewno tak, bo przecież pojawiają się wskazówki, na przykład <u>pojawia się bardzo dużo materiałów dydaktycznych udostępnianych dla nauczycieli wspomagających w klasach integracyjnych, nawet w Internecie, które mają im pomóc w przygotowaniu dokumentacji nauczyciela wspomagającego, są to np. arkusze diagnozy.</u> Dlatego to są już pewne wzorce, z których nauczyciele korzystają i na pewno pod tym względem uważam, że to mogą być wzorce do naśladowania. Natomiast, wie pani, moje zdanie jest zawsze takie, że to co jest napisane nie do końca może być zrealizowane, bo jest to jest kwestia naprawdę bardzo dobrego przygotowania zawodowego nauczyciela, kwestia jego świadomości i odpowiedzialności oraz przełamania jego bariery. <u>Gdy dzisiaj zapytamy nauczycieli, gdybyśmy zrobili taki sondaż i zapytali nauczycieli czy chcieliby uczyć uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami masowo, czy raczej woleliby mieć wybór, to by tego nie chcieli. Podejrzewam że byłaby duży odsetek tych którzy by powiedzieli, że gdyby mieli wybór, to wołałby nie.</u> To dlatego, że jednak jest to bardzo wymagająca edukacja, choć zdajemy sobie sprawę, że jest nieunikniona, czy wcześniej czy później jest nieunikniona.</i>
13:05	R	<i>Ostatnie pytanie w tej części Pani Profesor. Jakie są zdaniem Pani Profesor obecnie najpilniejsze potrzeby edukacji włączającej?</i>
13:19	E1	<i>No to przede wszystkim uważam, że <u>jeśli chodzi o kształcenie nauczycieli, to w tym obszarze jest zawsze coś do zrobienia, bo nie oszukujemy się, nauczyciel to jest zawód permanentnego uczenia się.</u> Już na studiach studentom mówimy, że jeżeli ktoś przyszedł i myśli, że nauczy się na całe życie, to absolutnie nie. Zresztą wiemy doskonale, że tak jest we wszystkich prawie zawodach. Natomiast jeśli chodzi o kształcenie nauczycieli, to istotnym jest kształcenie o profilu nauczyciela edukacji włączającej.</i>
13:58		<i><u>Dokument, o którym mówiłam wcześniej jest bardzo ciekawy ponieważ on tak naprawdę powinien być też włączony w wykształcenie każdego nauczyciela. Jest on obecnie zawarty w całości w standardach kształcenia w module kształcenia pedagogów specjalnych logopedów i nauczycieli wspomagających. Tam jest piękny moduł edukacja włączająca, w którym jest świetnie to wszystko rozpisane.</u> Dlatego też ci nauczyciele mają rzeczywiście pełną wiedzę, umiejętności i narzędzia do prowadzenia zajęć.</i>
14:07		<i><u>Natomiast, tak jak mówię, w innych standardach, jest on umieszczony, ale wybiórczo, nie chcę powiedzieć, że hasłowo, bo niektóre rzeczy są konkretne, ale to nie jest tak do końca. Każdy z nauczycieli w metodyce tak naprawdę swojego przedmiotu powinien nauczyć się pracować z każdym dzieckiem, również ze specjalnymi potrzebami i tę edukację włączającą po</u></i>
14:45		

		<i>prostu mieć jako status quo edukacji, nie jako metodykę przedmiotu, nie tak jak do tej pory metodykę danego przedmiotu. To jest kwestia przeorganizowania programów kształcenia na studiach. Pewnie będziemy mówić o tym w przyszłości.</i>
15:18	R	<i>A czy te programy kształcenia na studiach wyższych zarówno na poziomie licencjackim jak i magisterskim, czy one uległy już przemianom i jeśli tak to w jaki sposób?</i>
15:28	E1	<i>Tak, one ulegają przemianom. Na przykładzie naszej uczelni, tu również prowadzone są pewne bloki przedmiotów, pewne kursy, przedmioty, które mają służyć edukacji włączającej. Tak, na pewno w każdej metodyce nauczania, na przykład tak jak na kierunku edukacja wczesnoszkolna czy przedszkolna mamy dużo rodzajów metodyk, bo jak wiadomo jest metodyka języka polskiego i środowiska czy matematyki. Tam właśnie są zapisy w efektach kształcenia, sformułowania dotyczące specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych. Oczywiście w tych zapisach mamy też na myśli uczniów zdolnych, bo włączenie to nie tylko myślenie o dysfunkcjach, przecież problemy mają też uczniowie wybitni w masowych szkołach.</i>
16:27	R	<i>Czy pani profesor posiada taką wiedzę jeśli chodzi o studentów filologii angielskiej którzy przygotowują się również do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela i w przyszłości będą pracowali w klasach młodszych, czy tutaj takie zmiany w programach również zachodzą?</i>
16:49 17:02	E1	<i>No niestety przykro mi bardzo, ale tych programów filologicznych nie znam. Natomiast wiem że na tam gdzie jest przygotowanie nauczycielskie, to znaczy kształcenie w kierunku pedagogicznym nauczyciela języka, tam na pewno musi być blok przedmiotów pedagogiczno-pedagogicznych, więc nie wyobrażam sobie, żeby znając wszystkie te kwestie obligatoryjne nie zostały tam umieszczone zagadnienia dotyczące edukacji włączającej. Uważam, że w tym bloku na pewno są, natomiast jak one są realizowane, jak to się dzieje, trudno mi powiedzieć. Uważam też, że każdy nauczyciel, bez względu na to jakiego jako przedmiotu uczy, on musi mieć świadomość edukacji włączającej i tego żeby umieć nauczyć języka każde dziecko.</i>
17:47	R	<i>A czy studenci Akademii są zobowiązani do odbywania praktyk nauczycielskich w jednostkach które prowadzą edukację włączającą?</i>
17:58 18:12 18:54	E1	<i>Jest to kwestia wyboru studentów. Wiem na pewno, że w naszej Akademii odbywają się różne rodzaje praktyk studenckich. Są pewne praktyki, które organizuje uczelnia. Jest też praktyka indywidualna, którą student realizuje już pod koniec toku studiów, kiedy idzie do jakiejś wybranej przez siebie szkoły i jej wybór jest już jego samodzielną decyzją. Natomiast te pierwsze rodzaje praktyk, tj. praktyki grupowe, terenowe organizuje uczelnia. One są wybierane właśnie w placówkach takich, w których student ma się zetknąć ze wszystkimi wyzwaniami edukacyjnymi. Czyli na przykład w przedszkolach integracyjnych i też na pewno są w klasach integracyjnych. I tu takie zderzenie jest, bo na bo nawet na moich zajęciach czy wykładach studentki czasami opowiadają, dyskutują jakie to są właśnie problemy w takich klasach, i one też już dostrzegają, że edukacja włączająca jest niezbędna ze względu na ogromną różnorodność uczniów. że jest taka potrzeba. Kiedyś powiedzmy jakiś uczeń wymagał w klasie pomocy, dziś studentki zgłaszają, że dawniej w klasie jak chodziły do szkoły to takich uczniów to było może dwoje, a w tej chwili jest może dwoje czy troje takich, którzy nie potrzebują indywidualnej pracy. Także studenci są świadomi, ale również nasza uczelnia o to dba.</i>
19:30	R	<i>A godzinowo jak się przedstawia taka praktyka?</i>

19:32	E1	<i>Jeżeli na przykład jest taka szkoła [integracyjna], to oni [studenci] są w grupach i zmieniają się rotacyjne. <u>Czyli nie ma a tak, że ktoś nie trafi do klasy czy grupy integracyjnej.</u> Musi to zrobić w tej praktyce, natomiast godzinowo praktyki są określone w standardach [kształcenia] i to jest minimum. Jednak u nas jest zdecydowanie dużo więcej godzin praktyki.</i>
19:55	R	<i>Czy zdaniem pani profesor ten kontakt z uczniem o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych jest wystarczający?</i>
20:03	E1	<i>To znaczy moje zdanie jest takie, że praktyki jest zawsze za mało. Ja uważam, że to jest zawód, który wymaga praktyki i kiedy jest jej jak najwięcej, to jest bardzo dobrze. Z resztą studenci też tak uważają, że <u> zetknięcie się z praktyką jest naprawdę tym momentem bardzo istotnym w zawodzie.</u> Ja uważam, że w tej chwili to tak naprawdę nie ma jakis ograniczeń godzinowych i ile można tyle trzeba studentom tej praktyki dawać.</i>
20:39	R	<i>Przejdźmy do trzeciej części wywiadu, czyli do nauczycieli, którzy pracują z uczniami ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się. Czy pani profesor znane są problemy z którymi borykają się obecnie specjaliści właśnie z zakresu specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych oraz nauczyciele, na przykład w odniesieniu do diagnozowania takich uczniów lub jeśli chodzi o współpracę nauczycieli, szkół z organami nadzorującymi?</i>
21:15	E1	<i>To jest tak, z tego co ja wiem, co wynika z rozmów z nauczycielami i moich kontaktów, to wszystko zależy od placówki. Tak naprawdę są takie placówki gdzie tak naprawdę nauczyciele nie sygnalizują jakis większych problemów. Oczywiście, uważają że praca inkluzyjna to jest jakaś nowość, która wiąże się z dodatkowymi zadaniami, że stanowi ona dla nich obciążenie, ale też są świadomi tego że taki jest stan rzeczy, że takie dzieci przyszły do szkoły i tak to traktują. <u>Natomiast są też czasami takie głosy, że jest im bardzo trudno pracować z dziećmi z SPE, bo na bo na przykład są pozostawieni sami sobie. Mają dziecko czy dzieci w grupie, które kolokwialnie powiem są rzeczywiście bardzo problematyczne i tak naprawdę ten nauczyciel jest sam pozostawiony sobie, bo wkład pedagoga czy psychologa szkolnego jest niewielki lub kontakt jest nie taki jak być powinien, czy też dyrekcji problem nie interesuje, tylko ma sobie [nauczyciel] z tym poradzić i koniec.</u> Natomiast, powiedziałabym, że to są jednak głosy pojedyncze, bo jednak z moich obserwacji wynika, że nauczyciele to jest taka grupa zawodowa, która rzeczywiście może werbalnie dużo się buntuje, ale w rzeczywistości naprawdę jednak podejmuje wyzwania zawodowe. Czasami odbywa się to metodą prób i błędów czy powolnych kroków, ale jednak wykonują te wszystkie zadania. Chcę też powiedzieć, że często od nauczycieli słyszę, że mają takie poczucie, że ta edukacja dzieci z poważniejszymi dysfunkcjami, na przykład z orzeczeniami o jakiejś poważnej niepełnosprawności wywołuje u nich dyskomfort. <u>Oni mają poczucie jakby nie do końca spełniali wymagania tych dzieci, mają świadomość, że może to nie jest taka edukacja jaka powinna być wobec tego dziecka. Sami czują się nie do końca jeszcze kompetentni. Są to są najczęściej nauczyciele kierunkowi czy edukacji wczesnoszkolnej, którzy poprzez różne szkolenia, kursy, warsztaty, studia podyplomowe stają się właśnie tymi nauczycielami wspomagającymi, którzy cały czas się doszkalają.</u> A ponieważ często tkwi w nas coś takiego, że to wykształcenie kierunkowe to jest kierunkowe, to jeszcze często myślą, że może jeszcze nie do końca są przygotowani. Takie dylematy prowadzą czasami to wniosków, że może jednak byłoby lepiej, aby dziecko było w szkole specjalnej, bo wtedy byłoby dużo lepiej zaopiekowane. Może mają taką świadomość, że jednak w tej szkole masowej dziecko coś tam traci. Z drugiej jednak strony [nauczyciele] zauważają aspekty społeczne, kwestie takie jak integracja społeczna dzieci, budowanie wzajemnych relacji. Jest to widoczne szczególnie w młodszych klasach, bo w starszych klasach to już</i>
22:48		
23:54		

		<i>bywa różnie, ale w przedszkolu i w klasach I-III dzieci są bardzo tolerancyjne i otwarte, a jeżeli postawa nauczyciela jeszcze bardzo w tym kierunku idzie, to tam żadnej stygmatyzacji na pewno nie ma, to się rzadko zdarza. Więc takie właśnie mają dylematy nauczyciele. Natomiast jeżeli chodzi o aspekty narzędziowe, to też zdarzają się głosy, że istnieją problemy architektoniczne, choć to się rzadko zdarza, bo jednak jest zrobionych szereg remontów, doposażenie klas. Nie można powiedzieć, że to jest problem, przynajmniej w miastach. Warsztat pracy nauczyciela jest już coraz lepiej wzbogacany.</i>
25:02	R	<i>A czy nauczyciele zgłaszają problemy z brakiem odpowiednich materiałów dydaktycznych, które byłyby dopasowane do specyficznych potrzeb uczniów?</i>
25:11	E1	<i>To znaczy wiedzą i mają świadomość tego, że muszą pracować na innym materiale. Część oczywiście zdobywają samodzielnie i przygotowują samodzielnie, ale też mówią, że są już całe zestawy, komplety, że jest dużo materiałów gotowych. <u>Trzeba pamiętać, że to jest wysiłek nauczyciela, którego zadaniem jest zdobyć i zgromadzić te materiały.</u> Przecież nie we wszystkich klasach są jednakowe dzieci. Wiem też, że niektórzy nauczyciele bardzo liczą na pomoc pedagoga szkolnego i psychologa szkolnego. I tam, gdzie są ci pedagodzy i psychologowie prężnie działający, zainteresowani tą edukacją włączającą, to tam jest w porządku. Tak jak już powiedziałam na samym początku te opinie nauczycieli są zróżnicowane, chociaż nie mogę powiedzieć w oparciu o moją wiedzę, że ta opinia na temat inkluzji jest bardzo krytyczna.</i>
26:17	R	<i>Pani profesor, jeszcze trzy pytania. Jaka jest standardowa w Polsce liczba godzin dydaktycznych dla nauczycieli klas I-III? Czy ci nauczyciele mają takie samo obciążenie godzinowe, czy mają tych godzin mniej ze względu na tą utrudnione warunki pracy?</i>
26:36 27:00	E1	<i><u>Pensum jest niezmiennie i wynosi 18 godzin.</u> Z tymże wiem na pewno, że w klasach integracyjnych jest określone pensum tak zwanych godzin wspomagających. To znaczy, że <u>dyrektor ma jakąś tam pulę godzin, którą przydziela właśnie dla wybranego nauczyciela wspomagającego.</u> W szczególności nie znam tej procedury, jak ona się odbywa, ale z mojej wiedzy wynika, że z tymi godzinami jest bardzo różnie w różnych szkołach. Zdarza się, że jest ruchoma liczba tych godzin, bywało 12 godzin dla nauczyciela wspomagającego w tygodniu w jednej placówce a w innej na przykład było tych godzin 18. Natomiast nauczyciel wiodący, prowadzący ma normalnie 18 godzin pensum i pozostałe godzinki jeżeli mu tak wynika z programu. <u>Wiem też na pewno, że jak nauczyciel ma dzieci z orzeczeniami, i to muszą być orzeczenia, to przysługują mu dodatki jakies, jest jakaś gratyfikacja finansowa, ale nie wiem jak to wygląda jak to wygląda w szczególności.</u></i>
27:56	R	<i>A szkolenia nauczycieli, czy ich koszt pokrywa szkoła?</i>
28:04	E1	<i>Wiem na pewno, że szkolenia które są robione przez nasz ośrodek, które są zamawiane przez rady pedagogiczne, <u>bo jest taka procedura i można sobie zamówić szkolenie, to one są bezpłatne.</u> Wystarczy dobra wola, <u>tylko że czasami bywają szkolenia sobotnie, weekendowe, co zrozumiałe, bo poważne tematy wymagają czasu.</u></i>
28:46	R	<i>A czy byłoby korzystniej dla nauczycieli wiodących, gdyby ta pula godzin w etacie była jednak zmniejszona, tak żeby mieli oni trochę więcej czasu na właśnie chociażby szkolenia czy przygotowanie materiałów dydaktycznych?</i>
28:54	E1	<i>Tak, tylko że tylko w nauczaniu początkowym jest taka zasada, że to</i>

		<p>wiodący nauczyciel powinien prowadzić wszystkie zajęcia z dziećmi, więc tyle ile jest godzin powiedzmy w pierwszej, drugiej i trzeciej klasie tyle powinien ten jeden nauczyciel z dziećmi być. Więc gdyby była zmniejszona pula pensum, to byłyby to nadliczbowe godziny. Co więcej, to by się wiązało jedynie z tym, że nauczyciel pracowałby mniej w szkole przy tablicy, ale w szkole i tak musiałby być. Gratyfikacja finansowa byłaby jednak dla nich korzystniejsza i na to by nauczyciele na pewno nie narzekali. <u>Wiadomo, że i tak jesteśmy cały czas niedofinansowani i nie ma nie ma co się oszukiwać, wymagania są stawiane nauczycielom, a jednak te finansowe bodźce nie są po prostu satysfakcjonujące. Tutaj jest jeszcze inna kwestia. Jak czytałam o edukacji włączającej w innych krajach, to tam też się z tym borykają. To nie jest tylko tak, że u nas są problemy. Jest na przykład kwestia dwóch nauczycieli prowadzących lekcje oraz problem obecności nauczyciela wspomagającego w klasie, którego rola nie jest do końca, byśmy powiedzieli, określona. W zależności od placówek czasami jest to nauczyciel, który tylko i wyłącznie zajmuje się jednym lub dwoma dziećmi z orzeczeniami czy z ADHD czy z autyzmem i praktycznie nic więcej go nie interesuje. Bywa, że nauczyciel wiodący nie oczekuje nic więcej od niego i dlatego on nic więcej nie robi tylko po prostu zajmuje się wybranymi dziećmi. Tutaj też czasami pojawia się problem stygmatyzacji tych dzieci, bo one z jednej strony są w klasie, w grupie, ale one są tylko z tym nauczycielem wspomagającym, i tylko on ich uczy, więc pozostali uczniowie kompletnie ich nie uznają. To jest jeszcze problem, który należałoby przedyskutować. Gdyby wspomaganie było równoległe, czyli gdyby w klasie lekcje prowadziło dwóch nauczycieli działających na równych prawach, to wtedy miałoby to większy sens. Wtedy można by podzielić się zadaniami. Taki system został przyjęty w Austrii i uważam, że to jest dobry punkt odniesienia. Ważnym jest, że w ten sposób unika się stygmatyzacji, bo z dzieckiem trudnym, dajmy na to z upośledzonym umysłowym, pracuje nauczyciel nauczania początkowego, z nim się kontaktuje, rozmawia i wykonuje ćwiczenia. Również pedagog specjalny pracuje z dziećmi kolokwialnie mówiąc zdrowymi. Dziecko z SPE jest wówczas z innymi dziećmi i wtedy mamy takie pełne włączenie. Natomiast my tu w Polsce próbujemy takie specjalne kształcenie w pigułce robić.</u></p>
31:40	R	<p>Czy podsumowując to co pani profesor powiedziała czy my możemy powiedzieć że Polska szkoła ta edukacja w klasach jeden 1-3 to już jest edukacja włączająca czy my nadal jesteśmy jeszcze w integracji?</p>
31:54	E1	<p><u>W integracji. Niestety w integracji zaawansowanej. Ja pamiętam czasy kiedy zaczynała się integracja, to też były czasy mojej pracy metodycznej, wtedy było bardzo trudno pracować w grupach integracyjnych. Czas pokazał, że jednak to wszystko stało się normą. Mamy placówki integracyjne i już nikt nie robi tego żadnego problemu. Natomiast ja bym jeszcze nie powiedziała, że mamy edukację włączającą, mamy taką dobrą integrację, edukację integracyjną z dobrą bazą, z dobrymi przemyśleniami, dobrymi podstawami do wprowadzenia włączenia. Samo włączenie jednak jeszcze troszeczkę potrwa.</u></p>

## Appendix 5: Interviews with experts

### Interview with expert 2

TIME/ CZAS	SPEAKER/ ROZMÓWCA	TRANSCRIPT/ PRZEBIEG
0:00	Researcher (R)	<i>Dzień dobry, witam serdecznie Panią doktor. Akademia Marynarki Wojennej, Wydział Nauk Humanistycznych, katedra studiów edukacyjnych. Dziękuję bardzo, że zechciała pani wziąć udział w moim wywiadzie z ekspertem dotyczącym kwestii nauczania języka angielskiego dzieci w wieku wczesnoszkolnym ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się, takimi jak dysleksja i dysfazja – znana również pod nazwą afazja. Czy pani doktor zechciałaby powiedzieć parę słów o sobie czym pani doktor się zajmuje zawodowo.</i>
0:41	Expert 2 (E2)	<i>Dzień dobry, dziękuję bardzo za zaproszenie do wywiadu, chciałam uściślić, że reprezentuję wydział nauk humanistycznych i społecznych. Jestem pedagogiem specjalnym, a problematyką specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych zajmuję się od lat. Fakt, że szczególnie interesowałam się uczniami z niepełnosprawnościami, aczkolwiek w tej chwili zagadnienia, które mnie mocno zajmują to są zagadnienia związane z tak zwaną neuroróżnorodnością i myślę, że dla pani też jest to interesujące, ponieważ problematyka określana mianem dysleksji, dysgrafii, dysortografii mieści się w kategoriach neuroróżnorodności. Tak jak miałyśmy okazję chwilę podyskutować wcześniej, edukacja włączająca, różnie rozumiana, jak najbardziej też jest przedmiotem moich zainteresowań. Generalnie mam na myśli inkluzję osób, które znajdują się w sytuacji odmiennej jeżeli chodzi o możliwości percepcyjne przetwarzania czy ekspresji.</i>
2:04	R	<i>Tym bardziej cieszę się, że pani doktor zdecydowała się wziąć udział w rozmowie. Wywiad podzielony jest na trzy bloki tematyczne: pierwszy dotyczący systemu kształcenia, drugi dotyczący kształcenia wyższego studentów, którzy w przyszłości będą pedagogami oraz blok trzeci dotyczący nauczycieli, którzy pracują z uczniami o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych. Zacznijmy może od pierwszego bloku. Mam takie pytanie wstępne, czy można stwierdzić, że edukacja włączająca jest już stosowana w praktyce edukacyjnej szkół w Polsce?</i>
2:48	E2	<i>Tak, chociaż istotne jest to, jak rozumiemy pojęcie edukacji włączającej. <u>Rozumiemy to jako tworzenie nowego środowiska, w którym każdy uczeń niezależnie od tego jakie ma dyspozycje, ewentualnie na jakim poziomie są jego możliwości i zasoby, ma prawo do jak najbardziej efektywnych sposobów uczestniczenia w procesie.</u> Jeśli tak rozumiemy inkluzję, to zdecydowanie tak, biorąc pod uwagę fakt, że idea edukacji włączającej w kategoriach systemowych to jest mniej więcej już historia kilkunastu lat. To nie jest sytuacja, która zadziała się teraz, ostatnio. <u>To był proces, który rozpoczął się myślę, że od momentu kiedy wprowadzono zapisy w przepisach oświatowych dotyczące pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej.</u> To był taki wstęp, później bardzo mocno rozwinięty z wcześniej już funkcjonującego systemu integracyjnego wraz z rozwiązaniami z zakresu pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej. <u>Późniejsze zmiany w 2017 roku podkreśliły konieczność rozpoznawania potrzeb i możliwości uczniów i wydaje mi się, że to było bardzo takim wyraźnym akcentem mówiącym o tym, że edukacja włączająca jest faktem.</u> Ministerstwo też o tym mówiło w 2020 r albo w 2021, w tej chwili dokładnie nie pamiętam. W bądź razie odbyła się taka bardzo ciekawa konferencja, organizowana między innymi przez uniwersytet śląski przy współpracy z ministerstwem edukacji narodowej, gdzie już nie pytano o to co należy robić, żeby edukacja włączająca była efektywniejsza, ale o jak monitorować jak ewoluować efektywność tej edukacji. <u>Tak więc z</u></i>

		<i>perspektywy systemowej, jak najbardziej tak. Mówią o tym zapisy w ustawie prawo oświatowe z 2016 r., mówią o tym rozporządzenia wykonawcze, wspominałam 2017 rok. Oczywiście to rozporządzenie ulegało zmianie, ale to było rozporządzenie, które w wyraźny sposób wskazywało na pochylanie się nad potrzebami każdego ucznia, który jest w systemie edukacji, więc z perspektywy formalno-prawnej zdecydowanie tak.</i>
6:03	R	<i>Dziękuję bardzo, praktycznie pani doktor odpowiedziała już na moje drugie pytanie dlatego mam jeszcze takie krótkie pytanie o organy lub instytucje nadzorujące proces kształcenia uczniów z STU w Polsce. Czy pani doktor wie jakie są ich role, jakie są te instytucje i czy one mają bezpośredni wpływ na proces kształcenia?</i>
6:37	E2	<i>Nie bardzo wiem o co dokładnie chodzi, jaki jest kierunek tego pytania, dlatego, że możemy mówić jak gdyby dwutorowości nadzoru. Mamy organy prowadzące i mamy organy nadzorujące w postaci kuratoriów z całą siecią. Mamy organy doradcze w postaci ODNów, które w tej chwili są ośrodkami doskonalenia nauczycieli o różnej jak gdyby kategorii. Ja nie pracuję w tej chwili w szkole, więc z perspektywy praktyki ciężko mi jest w tej chwili określić jak to wygląda. Natomiast myślę, że pewne elementy rozwiązań systemowych mają miejsce. Warto by było przyjrzeć się jak wyglądały kierunki prowadzenia ewaluacji wewnętrznej i zewnętrznej, które były domeną wcześniejszego trybu kontrolnego, bo nie oszukujmy się był to system kontroli, pomimo że nosił nazwę ewaluacji. Działania, które miały na celu efektywną pomoc, bardziej wycelowaną w indywidualne potrzeby, jeśli chodzi o uczniów z SPE. Myśmy chwilę prowadziły dyskusję na temat specjalnych trudności w uczeniu się. Dysleksja, dysgrafia, dysortografia i dyskalkulia były kiedyś taktowane jako specyficzne trudności w uczeniu się w odróżnieniu od tych niespecyficznych, które doświadczają uczniowie z daną niepełnosprawnością, ale to jest tradycyjna terminologia. Ta terminologia ulega bardzo mocno zmianom. Wracając do odpowiedzi na to pytanie, było kiedyś takim dobrym zwyczajem nadawanie kierunków czy obszarów, które szczególnie były poddawane ewaluacji w danym roku szkolnym. Kilka lat temu jednym z obszarów była właśnie analiza realizacji pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej. Ja tutaj mówię o pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej dlatego, że w kierunkach tej pomocy znajdowały się również obszary dotyczące wspierania uczniów z trudnościami w uczeniu się, nie tylko dotyczące samej działalności psychologiczno-pedagogicznej, ale tak czysto edukacyjnej, więc to było robione. Czy teraz ten nadzór jest prowadzony? - na pewno, jeżeli nie bezpośrednio to pośrednio. Nadzór jest prowadzony na pewno w kategoriach zatrudniania nauczycieli, posiadania odpowiednich kwalifikacji, na pewno związany jest ze zmieniającymi się ścieżkami rozwoju zawodowego i oczekiwaniem, iż nauczyciele w wyniku samodoskonalenia czy doskonalenia zawodowego będą zwiększali swoje kompetencje, a właściwie kwalifikacje. Dlaczego powiedziałam kompetencje a właściwie kwalifikacje? - dlatego że niestety nadal, i ja o tym już dawno pisałam wcześniej i pisała o tym też profesor Putecka, że współczesny nauczyciel to jest 'teczka akt osobowych', no i to nadal chyba troszeczkę tak funkcjonuje. W związku z kosztami niezbędne jest to zgromadzenie dokumentacji potwierdzające kwalifikacje. Ponadto jeszcze pojawiła się funkcja pedagoga specjalnego co oznacza, że ten problem uczniów ze SPE czy STU jest widoczny, jest obecny. A czy jeszcze inne formuły? – myślę, że tak, dlatego, że spotkałam się w praktyce z różnymi sytuacjami trudnymi wynikającymi z nieporozumień z braku umiejętności interpretacji pewnych przepisów i kuratoria wówczas włączają się jako organ, który prowadzi nadzór nad przebiegiem procesu edukacji. Także projektowane są zmiany specyficznej roli szkół w prowadzeniu diagnozy funkcjonalnej, w obejmowaniu wsparciem i opieką uczniów w momencie dostrzeżenia trudności, które mają przelożyć się na</i>
7:53		
9:02		

9:57		<u> pewne zmiany formalne, ale jest to jeszcze wszystko w procesie. Ja myślę, że pani zna ten kalendarz działań związany z projektami pilotażowymi i z wprowadzeniem ewentualnych zmian, aczkolwiek to nie jest nic nowego, bo te założenia były już przedstawiane w 2014 roku jeszcze przed wprowadzeniem rozwiązań z zakresu pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej. 2016 przyniósł zmiany, które były finalizowane różnymi dokumentami, różnymi opracowaniami wydawanymi pod egidą ośrodka rozwoju edukacji czy ministerstwa edukacji. <u> Z perspektywy formalno-prawnej jest to proces bardzo zaawansowany natomiast wydaje mi się, że problem tkwi w tym co jest w praktyce szkolnej. Z perspektywy teoretycznej wszelkie rozwiązania organizacyjno-prawne są zrealizowane.</u></u>
12:54		
13:29	R	<i>Zdaniem pani doktor, jakie są obecnie najpilniejsze potrzeby edukacji włączającej w Polsce? Już wiemy, że od strony formalnej rozwój edukacji włączającej jest właściwy, natomiast te najpilniejsze potrzeby na dzień dzisiejszy co to by było?</i>
13:54	E2	<i>Ja kiedyś też popelnilam artykul, zreszta teraz też jestem w trakcie pisania artykułu, gdzie między innymi podjęłam analizę obszarów, które warunkują skuteczność, warunkują rzeczywiste powodzenie i realizację edukacji włączającej zgodnie z jej ideą, bo <u> w inkluzji nie chodzi o stosowanie jakiś tam specjalnych dostosowań dla kogoś bo ma taką potrzebę, co było domeną tego okresu integracyjnego, ale o tworzenie środowiska, które będzie sprzyjało każdemu uczniowi, a nie będzie wywoływało jakiejś radykalnej zmiany czy euforii, albo paniki na temat tego czego to ma dotyczyć.</u> Ja wiem, że wiele osób mówi na temat finansów, ale ja uważam że to nie jest tylko kwestia pieniędzy. <u> Wydaje mi się, że najpilniejszą potrzebą, o której zresztą mówiłam na ostatniej konferencji poświęconej neuroroznorodności, jest w tej chwili wsparcie nauczycieli z perspektywy radzenia sobie z sytuacjami napięcia stresu i frustracji, wynikającymi z bardzo dużych obciążeń, nie tylko organizacyjnych, ale obciążeń związanych z spotykaniem się z ludźmi, którzy podobnie jak my wszyscy są w rzeczywistości w sytuacji skłaniającej do bardzo wielu napięć.</u> Tak jak w wielu firmach, korporacjach mamy rozwiązania w postaci suportu dla pracowników, coachingu czy wsparcia psychologicznego, myślę że w polskiej szkole nauczyciele bardzo by tego potrzebowali. <u> Druga kwestia to jest obecność pedagogów specjalnych.</u> Ja w tej chwili piszę artykuł na ten temat i to jest bardzo długa opowieść o ich roli i zadaniach. <u> Na pewno dobrze, że oni się pojawili. No i po trzecie, to co jest chyba bardziej życzeniową sprawą, to jest zmiana jeśli chodzi o system klasowo-lekcyjny. Jeśli nie ulegnie to zmianie, to jest tak jakbyśmy do formy, która jest, próbowali wkładać coś co nie pasuje, coś co jest zupełnie inne, nowe.</u> W związku z czym <u> wydaje mi się, że te dwa najpilniejsze obszary to jest przede wszystkim wsparcie na poziomie psychologicznym nauczycieli a po drugie organizacja systemu klasowo-lekcyjnego.</u> Reorganizacja, bo myślę że tutaj nie trzeba jakiejś rewolucji.</i>
15:00		
16:04		
16:21		



17:06	R	<i>Dziękuję bardzo za trafne uwagi. Przejdziemy teraz do drugiego bloku pytań dotyczącego kształcenia wyższego. I tu moje pierwsze pytanie, czy problematyka specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych jest obecnie zawarta w programach studiów wyższych, zarówno tych na poziomie licencjackim jak i taki magisterskim? Czy jest ona też przedmiotem szkoleń i warsztatów dla nauczycieli? Czy pani doktor posiada wiedzę na ten temat?</i>
17:38	E2	<i>Tak, oczywiście jest i muszę powiedzieć, że to nie jest żadne novum, dlatego że kiedy ja rozpoczynałam pracę w dawnej uczelni, a to był rok 2000 to pierwsze przedmioty jakie prowadziłam, będąc pracownikiem na zlecenie, to były przedmioty z zakresu pedagogiki specjalnej między innymi dla studentów pedagogiki wczesnoszkolnej z językiem angielskim. <u>To jest kwestia odpowiedzialności uczelni. Wówczas rektor zadbał o to, miał tego świadomość, natomiast rzeczywiście to jest prowadzone z różnym nasileniem na różnych uczelniach.</u> Przynajmniej z moich doświadczeń tak to wynika, że szczególnie nacisk kładziony był na studentów przygotowujących się do roli pedagoga. Ja teraz też tak robię. Natomiast nie mam doświadczeń osobistych jeżeli chodzi o przygotowanie nauczycieli 'przedmiotowców' i z doświadczeń jakimi dzielą się nauczyciele to wynika, że gdzieś ten brak jest z perspektywy studiów. Natomiast jeśli pytanie ograniczałoby się tylko do studentów edukacji wczesnoszkolnej z językiem obcym, to powiem, że zdecydować tak, było prowadzone, jest prowadzone i sama też takie zajęcia realizowałam i realizuję.</i>
17:49		
18:21		
18:37		
19:26	R	<i>Dobrze. A czy pani doktor a z grupami filologicznymi też takie zajęcia prowadziła?</i>
19:30	E2	<i>Nie, właśnie jeśli chodzi o filologię angielską to nie mam doświadczeń z grupami nauczycieli języków.</i>
19:36	R	<i>Czyli rozumiem, że programy studiów wyższych też już od dwutysięcznego roku uległy przemianom i ta tematyka specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych i STU jest uwzględniona w programach, czy też jest wyodrębniona jako oddzielny przedmiot.</i>
20:05	E2	<i>To znaczy przedmioty są bardzo różne. <u>Był taki pomysł w 2018 r., aby w standardach kształcenia nauczycieli, którzy przygotowują się do pracy w szkołach, żeby wprowadzić pewną określoną liczbę godzin z zakresu pedagogiki specjalnej, a edukacja włączająca jest mocno z tym działem zintegrowana. Ten pomysł upadł, natomiast jest obszar dotyczący zagadnień dysfunkcyjności, czy zaburzeń rozwojowych.</u> Z tego co wiem, to jest to bardziej ujęte w kategoriach i mają być realizowane takie treści, ale ja nie wiem jak to wygląda na innych uczelniach. Tu polecałabym przeanalizowanie programów. Jako takiego przedmiotu, z tego co wiem, to nie ma, natomiast w efektach kształcenia na kierunkach nauczycielskich ten obszar zagadnień jest sygnalizowany, więc powinien być, ale jak jest realizowany, tego nie wiem.</i>
21:22	R	<i>Rozumiem. A czy studenci uczelni wyższych są zobowiązani do odbywania praktyk zawodowych w jednostkach prowadzących właśnie edukację włączającą, czy to jest dobrowolny wybór studenta?</i>
21:35	E2	<i>Wydaje mi się, że to pytanie jest troszeczkę sformułowane w taki sposób, jakby istniały placówki, które są włączające i które nie są włączające. Wrócimy do samej idei inkluzji. <u>Każda szkoła, zgodna z przepisami, jest szkołą, która ma być gotowa do przyjęcia każdego ucznia i to w ogóle nie ma czegoś takiego jak podział na szkołę włączającą i nie włączającą. Po prostu każda szkoła jest szkołą dla każdego i to wynika z przepisów. No więc to jest zależne, gdzie studenci realizują praktyki, bo każda placówka</u></i>

		<i>jest placówka włączającą. Bywa, że jest w nazwie szkoły zapis, że jest to placówka specjalna. Absurd polega na tym, że w jedną stronę działa włączanie, czyli każda placówka oświatowa z założeń jest włączającą, czyli jest szkołą dla każdego, jednocześnie to włączenie nie działa, bo placówka specjalna jest specjalną, zarezerwowaną tylko dla określonej kategorii niepełnosprawności. To taki absurdzik.</i>
22:47	R	<i>Czy pani doktor będzie posiadała wiedzę na temat organizowanych przez ośrodki doskonalenia nauczycieli konferencji, sympozjów bądź szkoleń i warsztatów na temat inkluzji i specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych uczniów?</i>
23:07	E2	<i>Moja wiedza jest sprzed kilku lat, ponieważ sama realizowałam szkolenia z tego zakresu na zlecenie MSCDN [Mazowieckie Samorządowe Centrum Doskonalenia Nauczycieli] i na zlecenie ośrodka doskonalenia nauczycieli w Skierniewicach. Więc tak, realizowane są takie szkolenia.</i>
23:40	R	<i>Czyli tu również dużo się dzieje.</i>
23:45	E2	<i>Tak, dzieje się, tylko proszę zwrócić uwagę że są różne tendencje. <u>To znaczy, pewne tematy uznaliśmy, że one już są, że jest już to temat zamknięty to o co pani pyta to była tematyka bardzo mocno zaznaczona w okresie 2015-2018, czyli w tym w tym okresie kiedy przygotowaliśmy się do nowego rozporządzenia o pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej.</u> Ono zostało wprowadzone, żeby na przykład wzmocnić potencjał nauczycieli, jak oni mają sobie z tym radzić. Na dzień dzisiejszy przepisy nie uległy w jakikolwiek sposób zmianie, w związku z czym myślę, że inne zagadnienia stały się topowe, bo tendencja jest taka, że zawsze szkolenia w placówkach doskonalenia nauczycieli dotyczą tych obszarów, które aktualnie są wprowadzane, czy wymagają jakiegoś dopowiedzenia lub komentarza.</i>
24:43	R	<i>Rozumiem. Przejdźmy teraz do trzeciego bloku naszej rozmowy dotyczącego nauczycieli pracujących z dziećmi o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych. Jakie zdaniem pani doktor są kluczowe problemy dotyczący właśnie specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych, z którym borykają się obecnie nauczyciele edukacji wczesnoszkolnej, nauczyciele języka angielskiego, którzy również w tą edukację są zaangażowani?</i>
25:21	E2	<i>Ja nie jestem nauczycielem, nie chodzę na praktyki zawodowe.</i>
25:30	R	<i>No to może z komentarzy nauczycieli, z rozmów z nimi coś wynika?</i>
25:33	E2	<i>To znaczy, <u>nauczyciele edukacji wczesnoszkolnej i wychowania przedszkolnego, moim zdaniem, są jedną z najlepiej przygotowanych grup zawodowych jeśli chodzi o wszystkich pracowników placówek oświatowych. Na pewno najlepiej są przygotowani do prowadzenia diagnozy funkcjonalnej, robią to w formie oceny opisowej i sami nie do końca wiedzą, że to co robią to już jest doskonały wstęp.</u> Więc na pewno mają bardzo dobre przygotowanie. Mają przygotowanie z zakresu psychologii dziecka, zdecydowanie na to jest położony nacisk z czym się myślę borykają, bo <u>brakuje im wsparcia, aby mogli ten cały aparat narzędziowy, którego się uczyli, który jest w ich dyspozycjach wykorzystywać w praktyce.</u> Mam na myśli podejście mniej podające, mniej tradycyjne, może po prostu trzeba to przypominać, a pamiętam kilkanaście lat temu jaki był ogromny szum wokół <u>metod aktywizujących, pracy grupowej, w triadach.</u> Wtedy bardzo wielu nauczycieli to stosowało i wystarczy pewne rzeczy mi teraz przypomniać. Mam wrażenie, że nauczyciele mają to w swoich zasobach. Myślę, że nic nie stoi na przeszkodzie, żeby odkryli, że to czym dysponują, mogą w fantastyczny sposób wykorzystać w pracy z takimi uczniami. Drugi problem to jest kwestia pewnych sztywności, które znajdują się w podstawie programowej, bo pewne sztywności jednak są. Pewne rzeczy możemy bardzo elastycznie realizować, ale pewne sztywności są. Ja myślę, że</i>
26:14		
27:58		

		<u>nauczycieli trzeba po prostu wzmocnić, żeby mieli więcej odwagi. Po prostu odwagi i wiary w to, że to co wiedzą, co potrafią, mogą wykorzystać w sposób dla siebie bezpieczny.</u>
28:09	R	<i>Czyli chodzi również o to, aby wzmocnić autonomię nauczycieli w działaniu, prawda?</i>
28:11	E2	<u>Nauczyciel ma wbrew pozorom bardzo dużo autonomii. Rzeczywiście to co nauczyciele dostrzegają jako pęta, to jest ilość dokumentacji, aczkolwiek ona ostatnio uległa zmniejszeniu, to na pewno pani też wie. Natomiast nauczyciel ma pełną autonomię, kiedy jest już na lekcji, więc to tak naprawdę on jest decydem jakiej treści i w jaki sposób realizuje. Co do treści ograniczeniem może być to, że są pewne obszary w podstawie programowej, które mogą stanowić trudność dla niektórych uczniów. To są rozwiązania systemowe, no i na to jakby sam nauczyciel nie ma wpływu, ale to jak program do tego napisze, a nie weźmie gotowy, ewentualnie jak go zmodyfikuje, to jest już jego dyspozycja. Na pewno nie jest łatwo z perspektywy tego, że nie ma podziału na grupy, jednak jest duża swoboda w samej realizacji treści. To jest moje zdanie, ale ja nie wiem, czy każdy się z nim zgodzi.</u>
29:31	R	<i>Z opinią nauczycieli, tak przynajmniej wynika z moich badań, bywa różnie. Nauczyciele biorący udział w przygotowanej przeze mnie ankiecie, którą przeprowadziłam wśród nauczycieli języka angielskiego w klasach 1-3, skarżą się na niedostateczną ilość materiałów dydaktycznych, które byłyby dla nich wsparciem w pracy inkluzyjnej. Czy pani doktor też uważa, że to jest zasadne?</i>
30:02	E2	<i>Tak? A jakich materiałów by oczekiwali, bo ja nie wiem o jakie materiały chodzi? Mówimy o nauczycielach języków obcych czy nauczycielach edukacji wczesnoszkolnej?</i>
30:13	R	<i>Akurat badani byli nauczyciele języków obcych w klasach 1-3 i to oni wyrazili opinię, że muszą dostosowywać materiały do specjalnych potrzeb edukacyjnych uczniów.</i>
30:33	E2	<u>To znaczy, ja nie jestem językowcem. Ja w tej chwili zaczęłam się uczyć znowu języka angielskiego muszę powiedzieć, że po zajęciach w troszkę innym systemie niż normalnie się uczymy, jeśli chodzi o ilość materiałów, które są dostępne online dla osób dorosłych, to ja nawet nie miałam świadomości ile jest tych zasobów i rzeczy darmowych. <u>Uważam, że nawet jest ich za dużo dla mnie i mam z czego wybierać, to jest pierwsza rzecz. Druga rzecz, nie bardzo rozumiem co znaczy dostosowywać materiały dlatego, że jeśli mówimy o edukacji włączającej, to mówimy o materiale, który będzie go też dobry dla każdego i tutaj taki wtręt drobny –</u></u>
31:12		<u>'projektowanie uniwersalne'. Ja tylko rzucę to jako hasło, czyli to co jest dobre dla osoby z SPE czy z STU będzie dobre dla każdego. Wydaje mi się nawet, tak pobieżnie przeglądając zasoby internetowe, że materiałów mamy mnóstwo. Szkoły są, choć pewnie jest tak, że nie wszystkie, wyposażone w bardzo fajne narzędzia w postaci na przykład tablic interaktywnych. Rzeczywiście problem polega na tym, że być może jest mało materiałów, które pozwalają na bezpośrednie działanie. Tu też oczywiście powinniśmy pamiętać, żeby uczeń nie tylko mógł zobaczyć i usłyszeć, ale mógł również działać, no ale to jest już jakby moja działka, czyli stymulowanie układu taktylnego. To jest też pamiętanie o takiej prostej zasadzie, że działanie stymuluje także rozwijanie się nowych połączeń mózgowych. To jest neurodydaktyka i jeśli jest mowa o takich pomocach materialnych w postaci na przykład puzzli, klocków, układanek czy rozsypanek, bo jest tego mnóstwo, to myślę, że te rzeczy są. Problem raczej tkwi w tym, co można kupić i pytanie do którego momentu nauczyciel ma to robić z własnych funduszy. Są placówki, które doskonale sobie z tym radzą, które bardzo dużo narzędzi zgromadziły i rzeczywiście ich nauczyciele mają z czego korzystać. Tylko musimy jeszcze pamiętać, że</u>
31:20		

32:04		<i><u>wszystko się zużywa. Niektórzy myślą, że materiały w szkołach to się nie zużywają, wszystko jest w folii i w ogóle jakby po prostu nie niszczy się przez lata. Więc jak pani powiedziała o tych problemach finansowych, to wydaje mi się, że materiały są. Nauczycielem mogą mieć jedynie problem z dostępnością, ale to jest moje zdanie. Bo jeśli ja bym chciała prowadzić zajęcia z wykorzystaniem materiałów, to jakbym miała pieniądze to naprawdę nie skarżyłabym się, że czegoś nie mam. Poza tym wiele rzeczy można wykonać samodzielnie. Programy komputerowe, no ja nie jestem ekspertem w IT, ale podstawowe rzeczy możemy robić sami, na przykład krótkie animacje. Poza tym wydaje mi się, że to jest też kwestia myślenia o języku. Ja jestem niemieckojęzyczna, żadnych problemów z tym językiem nie mam, ale może dlatego, że nikt mnie nigdy nie ograniczał w nauce czy mówię poprawnie czy niepoprawnie. Z językiem angielskim też nie mam problemu ponieważ nikt mnie nie ogranicza. Myślę, że są metody dla dzieci, które jak pani wie, najlepiej by się wpisywały w ich potrzeby i inne dzieci też by chciały z tych metod korzystać, a nad poprawnością językową możemy po prostu w każdym momencie jeszcze pracować.</u></i>
33:12		
35:11	R	<i>W zupełności się zgadzam z panią doktor. Na koniec jeszcze jedno pytanie dotyczące finansów. Czy pani doktor wie czy nauczyciele otrzymują jakieś dodatkowe wynagrodzenie za pracę z dziećmi o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych?</i>
35:29	E2	<i>Wie pani co, nie mam pojęcia. Kiedyś były takie rozwiązania, ale nie pamiętam, ale jakieś dodatki chyba były.</i>
35:53	R	<i>Czy to nie było tak, że one były zależne od ilości uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi w klasie?</i>
35:58	E2	<i>Nie wiem jak to było, ale proszę podpytać, bo wiem, że Płock takie rozwiązanie stosował na pewno. <u>Na pewno były jakieś dodatkowe środki, tylko nie wiem czy to dla wychowawców były jakieś dodatkowe środki z tytułu obecności uczniów SPE, czy to dotyczyło wszystkich uczniów takich z opiniami i orzeczeniami, czy dotyczyło tylko uczniów z orzeczeniami o potrzebie kształcenia specjalnego. Taka praktyka była kiedyś realizowana w jakimś tam obszarze, ale to na pewno nie były to środki z tak zwanych subwencji, tylko po prostu gmina z tego obszaru dotacyjnego dawała. Musimy pamiętać, że wagi są bardzo różne. Wyższa waga jest tylko dla uczniów, którzy mają orzeczenie, więc są w kategorii niepełnosprawności, niedostosowania społecznego, czy zagrożonych niedostosowaniem społecznym. Abstrahując od tego, ja jestem też dyslektykiem i dysortografikiem i tak naprawdę wydaje mi się, że to jest tylko kwestia po prostu wspólnych rozwiązań, strategii. Ja nie mówię o dzieciach, które są głęboko dyslektyczne, bo to jest już inna sprawa, to są o wiele większe trudności, ich frustracja i dyskomfort. Natomiast przyjrzyjmy się jak wygląda rzeczywistość społeczna w tej chwili. <u>Coraz mocniej idzie się w kierunku uniwersalnego projektowania, co spowoduje że właściwie osoba, na każdym poziomie dyspozycyjności jest w stanie zdobyć podstawowe informacje, jeśli nie drogą wzrokową, słuchową, jeśli nie poprzez jakieś tam dostosowanie w postaci wytłuszczeń, wyboldowań, czy z zastosowaniem kontrastu na przykład w formie tekstów ułatwionego czytania, to mamy takie możliwości na portalach internetowych, na różnych stronach, gdzie nawet osoba, która ma niższe dyspozycje intelektualne może zapoznać się z podstawowymi informacjami. Więc to już jest i wydaje mi się, że też takie spojrzenie nauczycieli jest nieadekwatne. To nie znaczy, że ja mam lekceważyć pewne problemy i</u></u></i>

		<u><i>mam się nie starać wspierać dziecka, żeby pewne problemy pokonywać, ale z drugiej strony musimy się zastanowić, gdzie jest ta granica walki, prawda? Żeby równocześnie prowadzić coś co w języku tradycji nazywa się kompensacją, a co w języku współczesnym nazywa się szukaniem rozwiązań dostępnych zgodnie z zasobami. Czyli poszukaniu strategii radzenia sobie - nie wszyscy nie zawsze i nie tak samo. Musimy pamiętać i ja to od lat powtarzam, że nie ma później okienek z bankach jest zapisane 'tu obsługujemy uczniów ze specyficznymi trudnościami czy potrzebami edukacyjnymi', no niestety tak nie jest.</i></u>
39:21	R	<i>Dziękuję bardzo i jeszcze jedno ostatnie pytanie dotyczące roli nauczycieli wspierających. Na początku naszej rozmowy pojawiła się osoba nauczyciela wspierającego, a pani doktor określiła jego rolę bardzo pozytywnie. Czy pani doktor słyszała o takim rozwiązaniu, że nauczyciel wspierający prowadzi zajęcia równoległe lub naprzemiennie z nauczycielem prowadzącym? Chodzi o to, aby ten nauczyciel wspierający nie był widoczny jako nauczyciel tylko i wyłącznie do dyspozycji uczniów o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych, co pani doktor sądzi na temat takich rozwiązań?</i>
40:14	E2	<u><i>O tym teraz będę pisać. Zgodnie z rozporządzeniem od 2017 r. mamy nauczycieli współorganizujących edukację. Mamy w tej chwili też wprowadzoną funkcję pedagoga specjalnego. On jest wpisany jako nauczyciel specjalista i on jest dopisany do działań z zakresu pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej. Mamy też rozporządzenie dotyczące kształcenia, gdzie jest mowa o nauczycielu współorganizującym i jeszcze dodatkowo nauczyciel współorganizujący, który może być obecny dodatkowo, żeby wspierać w uczniów ze spektrum zaburzeń autystycznych i sprzężonych z nimi. Jest i tutaj kwestia dyskusyjna i mam nadzieję, że to będzie mogła pani przeczytać w moich rozważaniach. Natomiast to rozwiązanie, które było obecne w klasach integracyjnych, rządziło się pewnymi określonymi strategiami związanymi z mniejszą liczebnością uczniów, z proporcjami uczniów pełno i niepełnosprawnych i w związku z tym z obecnością drugiego nauczyciela. To rozwiązanie jest zdecydowanie dobre, ale prowadzenie równoległe lekcji w ogóle nie zaprzecza idei włączania. Nauczyciel jest jeden w klasie, drugi nauczyciel jest nauczycielem współorganizującym, wspomagającym i jego rola jest oczywiście wspierać, ale to rozwiązanie o którym pani mówi, żeby uświadamiać uczniom, że mamy dwóch nauczycieli, jest świetne. Jest nawet filmik na Youtube, można sobie obejrzeć jak organizować pracę w klasach inkluzyjnych. Takie rozwiązanie jednak narażone było na bardzo duże zarzuty, że rolę nauczyciela wspomagającego sprowadzono do roli albo opiekuna albo do roli osoby, która prowadzi proces edukacyjny z uczniami. Ponadto, dyrektorzy szkół mówią, że nauczyciel współorganizujący powinien mieć przygotowanie przedmiotowe, żeby prowadzić lekcje. To myślę, wynikało po prostu z kompletnych nieporozumień i niezrozumienia tej funkcji nauczyciela współorganizującego, więc to o czym pani mówi, zdecydowanie jest dobre. Uważam, że naprzemiennosc to bardzo dobry pomysł. Musimy rozumieć, że to nie chodzi o to że nauczyciel funkcjonuje jak w klasie integracyjnej. Nauczyciel wspierający w integracji nie jest językowcem, jest osobą, która na przykład w pewnym momencie może zrobić jakąś notatkę, może na przykład przygotować dzieci do jakiegoś konkretnego ćwiczenia, a w tym czasie prowadzący po prostu podchodzi do uczniów i ma czas na to, żeby zindywidualizować pracę. Taki nauczyciel wspomagający zajmuje się całą grupą, czyli de facto uczniowie nie czują się osamotnieni. Taka też była idea, żeby uczniowie, którzy nie wymagają takiego wsparcia, nie tracili na tym, że w pewnym momencie nauczyciel prowadzący jest nieobecny, bo skupił się na jakimś uczniu. Takie rozwiązanie było stosowane. Nauczanie naprzemiennie natomiast jest świetne. Jeszcze raz podkreślam, nauczyciel współorganizujący to nie musi być nauczyciel, który ma przygotowanie z</i></u>

		<u>języka, czy z jakiegoś przedmiotu. Nauczyciel współorganizujący to jest człowiek, który ma przygotowanie pedagogiczne, zna metodykę pracy z dzieckiem, metody nauczania i zna specyficzne potrzeby, możliwości uczniów. Natomiast on nie ma zastąpić przedmiotowowca, to nie o to chodzi.</u>
45:08	R	<i>Jasna sprawa pani doktor. Dziękuję bardzo za wyczerpujące odpowiedzi, niezwykle ciekawą rozmowę i wiele kwestii, które pozostają stale aktualne co świadczy o tym, że niewątpliwie zmierzamy w kierunku szkoły dla każdego.</i>
45:44	E2	<i>Proszę bardzo i dziękuję.</i>

## Appendix 5: Interviews with experts

### Interview with experts 3 and 4

TIME/ CZAS	SPEAKER/ ROZMÓWCA	TRANSCRIPT/ PRZEBIEG
0:00	Researcher (R)	<i>Dzień dobry są ze mną przedstawiciele ośrodka doskonalenia nauczycieli. Państwo jesteście ekspertami w zakresie języka angielskiego i niemieckiego. Dzisiaj spotkaliśmy się ponieważ chcę z państwem przeprowadzić wywiad, który dotyczy kwestii nauczania języka angielskiego dzieci w wieku wczesnoszkolnym z wybranymi trudnościami w uczeniu się, takim jak dysleksja i dysfazja. Wybór tych trudności edukacyjnych uzasadnia fakt że zarówno dysleksja jak i dysfazja mają wpływ na możliwości rozwojowe uczniów oraz ich możliwości komunikacji w języku obcym. Wywiad jest narzędziem badawczym wykorzystywanym w badaniu naukowym stanowiącym część empiryczną rozprawy doktorskiej, będącej wnikliwą analizą podejść w nauczaniu języka angielskiego małych dzieci z STU w Polsce w odniesieniu realizacji nauczania inkluzyjnego. Polska jako państwo członkowskie Unii Europejskiej realizuje unijną koncepcję edukacji włączającej, dlatego też przedmiotowa analiza podejść stosowanych w nauczaniu języka angielskiego dzieci STU pozwoli dostrzec mocne i słabe strony polskiego systemu edukacji, koncepcji kształcenia przyszłych nauczycieli oraz faktycznie stosowanego podejścia w nauczaniu zintegrowanym w kraju. Wyniki badania zostaną przedstawione w rozprawie doktorskiej. Nasz wywiad podzielony jest na 3 części. W pierwszej części będę się odnosiła do obecnego systemu kształcenia istniejącego w Polsce i stąd moje pierwsze pytanie, czy można stwierdzić że edukacja włączająca czyli edukacja inkluzyjna i jest już stosowana w praktyce edukacyjnej w polskiej szkole?</i>
2: 32	Expert 3 (E3)	<i><u>Tak, wydaje mi się, że tak. Jesteśmy do tego zobligowani przez podstawę programową, przez Ministerstwo i musimy pomagać uczniom nie tylko jeśli chodzi o specyficzne trudności w uczeniu się, ale również uczniom z jakimiś niepełnosprawnościami, czy to fizycznymi, czy z jakimiś problemami z niedosłyszeniem, niedowidzeniem. Także, jak najbardziej wydaje mi się, że to jest w szkole obecne. Natomiast nie mam pewności czy wszyscy nauczyciele sobie z tym dobrze radzą.</u></i>
3: 037	R	<i>Czyli z jednej strony możemy powiedzieć, że wprowadzono już zmiany do systemu edukacji, natomiast jeśli chodzi o praktykę zawodową to temat jest jeszcze otwarty, tak?</i>
3: 06	E3	<i><u>Na pewno, ale widzę duże zaangażowanie w to nauczycieli. Mogą dostrzegać problem i pomagać uczniom, a każdy wychowawca jest zobligowany do tego, żeby prowadzić odpowiednią dokumentację ucznia ze specyficznymi trudnościami i rozliczany jest z tego przez dyrektora szkoły. Także, no nie ma wyjścia, żeby nad tym uczniem w jakiś tam sposób się nie pochylić, tym bardziej, że bywają klasy, w których takich orzeczeń z pedagogiczno-psychologicznych poradni jest wiele.</u></i>
3:10	Expert 4 (E4)	<i><u>Ja myślę, że w ogóle sama sytuacja wymusiła jak gdyby na nas, na systemie i na nauczycielach tą edukację włączającą, ponieważ coraz więcej dzieci ma problemy i to są problemy w uczeniu się, ale też problemy po pandemiczne, gdzie to są problemy społeczne. Też ze zdrowiem psychicznym nie jest najlepiej wśród polskiej młodzieży i wśród polskich dzieci. Także ta edukacja włączająca jak najbardziej działa, ale</u></i>

		<u>tak jak mówił E3 niektórzy nauczyciele mają jeszcze z tym problem.</u>
4:04	R	<i>A czy wiecie państwo jakie organy i/ lub instytucje nadzorują proces kształcenia uczniów ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się w Polsce? Jakie są ich role?</i>
4:10	E3	<u>Po pierwsze na pewno kuratorium, bo jak pojawia się w szkole kuratorium to ta dokumentacja ucznia z STU jest zawsze sprawdzana. Po drugie, poradnia pedagogiczno-psychologiczna, bo one są w stałej współpracy z nauczycielami i otrzymujemy od nich wszelkiego rodzaju dokumenty typu orzeczenia, opinie. Po trzecie, wychowawca i rada pedagogiczna, w szczególności ta część rady pedagogicznej uczącej ucznia, która zobligowana jest, żeby zapoznać się z tym dokumentem. No i odgórnie ministerstwo.</u>
4:43	E4	<u>Ale oczywiście też dyrektor szkoły. Poza tym też w obszarze finansowym na pewno organy prowadzące, ponieważ one rozdzielają środki finansowe na to, aby finansować zajęcia dodatkowe z tymi uczniami indywidualnie czy grupowo.</u>
5:03	R	<i>Czyli możemy stwierdzić, że te instytucje i organy mają bezpośredni wpływ na pracę z uczniem z STU?</i>
5:09	E4	<i>Jak najbardziej.</i>
5:10	R	<i>Rozumiem. A czy może państwo posiadacie wiedzę, albo słyszeliście opinie, jak wygląda współpraca między szkołami a tymi instytucjami? Czy to jest taka współpraca dobrze zacieśniona, rozbudowana, jak to wygląda z państwa perspektywy?</i>
5:30	E4	<u>To też zależy od placówki i od tego ilu uczniów i z jakimi trudnościami borykają się uczniowie. Też dużo zależy od rodziców i współpracy rodziców ze szkołą. Szkoła jak najbardziej, mogą powiedzieć to ze swojego doświadczenia, współpracuje u nas z poradnią psychologiczno-pedagogiczną. Dzieci, jeżeli takie trudności zauważy nauczyciel czy rodzic, są poddawane diagnozie i ta współpraca jak najbardziej układa się pomyślnie.</u>
6:09	E3	<u>Istotna jest też rola pedagoga i psychologa szkolnego, bo to bardzo często przez ręce tych pracowników przechodzą wnioski kierowane potem do poradni pedagogiczno-psychologicznej i poradnia pedagogiczno-psychologiczna wspiera. To nie jest tak jak z kuratorium, które sprawdza, inwigiluje, tylko wspiera i rzeczywiście o to wsparcie od tych instytucji jest odczuwalne.</u>
6:35	E4	<i>Tu bardzo ważna jest obserwacja nauczyciela wychowawcy, nauczyciela przedmiotu, bo nie w każdym też przedmiocie dzieciaki mają problemy. Wiadomo, że jak dysleksja czy dysgrafia, no to mają problemy czy z pisanem czy z ortografią. Są jednak dzieci, które na przykład w niektórych przedmiotach nie przejawiają tych trudności, ich problemy nie są widoczne.</i>
7:03	E3	<i>Ale tak coraz częściej się dzieje, że właśnie jak pytam ucznia kto cię tam skierował, to on mówi mi na przykład, że polonista dostrzegł jakieś problemy w zapisie.</i>
7:14	E4	<u>Czyli bardzo ważna jest tu rola nauczyciela jako obserwatora.</u>
7:18	E3	<u>Ale ciekawe jest to, że nie zawsze rodzice się z tym godzą. Czasami nie chcą, żeby dziecko miało jakieś dodatkowe dokumenty w swojej kartotece.</u>
7:27	E4	<u>Ale też chodzi tu o dodatkowe zajęcia, bo opinią czasami wiąże się z</u>



		<u>dodatkowymi zajęciami, których rodzice nie chcą.</u>
7:33	R	<i>To ciekawe. Podsumowując tą część wywiadu, jak się państwu wydaje, jakie są obecnie najpilniejsze potrzeby edukacji włączającej w Polsce?</i>
7:43	E3	<i>Pomaganie nauczycielom w kwestiach nie tylko oceniania ucznia z STU. <u>Tak naprawdę w dużej mierze rodziców i nauczycieli interesuje jak uczeń wypadnie na egzaminie kończącym szkołę i czy będzie miał wydłużony czas, czy będą stosowane wobec niego inne kryteria, czy może sobie bezkarnie popełniać błędy ortograficzne.</u> I tu jeszcze nie wspomnieliśmy o roli okręgowej i centralnej komisji egzaminacyjnej. To są też instytucje, które w jakiś tam sposób starają się nauczyć nauczycieli, wspierają, instruują jak oceniać takiego ucznia. Natomiast jeżeli chodzi o czystą metodykę, dydaktykę pracy z uczniem z trudnościami, to tutaj takiej <u>zdecydowanej dużej pomocy nauczyciel mam wrażenie, że nie otrzymuje, a nie rzadko nauczyciele bardzo doświadczeni mają problem jak na przykład egzekwować pewne treści od ucznia.</u></i>
8:27		
8:49	E4	<i>To też wydaje mi się, że troszeczkę za mało jest tych procedur jak mamy <u>postępować z uczniami, którzy mają trudności właśnie na egzaminie. Bo jeszcze w klasach 1-3 to dzieciaki są zaopiekowane. Tutaj się ich obserwuje, diagnozuje i wiadomo, że terapia, którą mają będzie przynosić efekty, ale są osoby na przykład u mnie w szkole, które bardzo niewyraźnie piszą. I teraz będzie problem na egzaminie ósmoklasisty za rok, w jaki sposób on ma napisać ten egzamin, żeby egzaminator mógł go sprawdzić.</u> Więc tu brakuje odpowiednich procedur, takich od strony formalnej, czy uczeń może pisać na komputerze i w jakim przypadku dokładnie, czy ma wydłużony czas. Tego brakuje, takich formalnych instrukcji.</i>
9:47	R	<i>A czy zmiany wynikające właśnie z tego, że edukacja włączająca została już wprowadzona do szkół publicznych mają wpływ na dobór tematyki szkoleń organizowanych przez ośrodki doskonalenia nauczycieli?</i>
10:03	E3	<i>Na pewno tak, bo <u>pojawiają się szkolenia dotyczące pracy z uczniem ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się, tak samo jak pojawiają się szkolenia dla nauczycieli związane z pracą z uczniem szczególnie uzdolnionym.</u> Natomiast one są głównie nie w tej naszej grupie języków obcych tylko w obszarze pomocy pedagogiczno-psychologicznej. One są wtedy otwarte dla wszystkich nauczycieli, a nie dedykowane specyficznemu nauczycielom języka obcego.</i>
10:45	R	<i>A kto decyduje o doborze tematyki szkoleń?</i>
10:51	E4	<i><u>O doborze decydują konsultanci metodyczni, doradcy, czyli my prowadząc sieć współpracy. Raczej zawsze jest to analiza wniosków i ewaluacji z poprzedniego roku, z poprzedniego okresu kształcenia. Zgodnie z potrzebami i z tym co deklarują nauczyciele nasza oferta jest dobierana do potrzeb nauczycieli.</u></i>
11:24	E3	<i>I modyfikowana na bieżąco. Natomiast <u>chyba możemy przyznać, że w tych naszych ankietach problematyka STU pojawia się, ale sporadycznie.</u> To nie jest tak jak w przypadku nowoczesnych aplikacji, współpracy międzynarodowej czy przygotowania do egzaminów, bo to są sztanदारowe tematy które się przewijają na każdym szkoleniu.</i>
11:50	R	<i>Z czego to wynika, że temat STU nie jest taki powiedzmy popularny?</i>
11:58	E3	<i><u>Może dlatego, że nie dotyczy wszystkich uczniów. Zagadnienia, które wspomniałem to są jednak zagadnienia dla 100% uczniów.</u> Natomiast</i>

		<i>tutaj nauczyciele indywidualnie starają się radzić sobie z tymi jednostkami, które mają problemy.</i>
12:11	E4	<i>Natomiast podczas szkoleń o różnej tematyce my też zahaczamy jak gdyby o uczniów którzy mają problemy i też odnosimy się do problemów STU. <u>Pokazujemy przykłady ćwiczeń, metod w jaki sposób pracować z uczniem, ćwicząc na przykład umiejętność słuchania, pisanie, czytania i rozumienia tekstu czytanego.</u></i>
12:40	E3	<i>Czasami podczas szkolenia też pada pytanie jak sobie poradzić z uczniem z dysgrafią lub dysleksją. Rzadko, ale pada.</i>
12:56	E4	<i>Czyli <u>na bieżąco reagujemy na bieżące potrzeby. Mamy w naszej ofercie konsultacje indywidualne bądź zbiorowe i też zdarza się na przykład, że to nie musi być szkolenie dla 20-30 osób, tylko rozmowa czy to online czy stacjonarnie powiedzmy dla 3-5 osób. Mieliśmy też takie przypadki.</u></i>
13:14	R	<i>Czyli takie konsultacje są również dostępne online jak rozumiem?</i>
13:16	E4	<i>Tak, jak najbardziej.</i>
13:17	E3	<i><u>I telefonicznie i online, jak najbardziej. Materiały tematyczne, jeżeli nauczyciele chcieliby skorzystać, też są zamieszczone na naszej stronie. To wiem, bo na przykład takim dokumentem, który sam opracowałem, są wskazówki do pracy z uczniem dyslektycznym, i są to materiały dostępne na stronie.</u></i>
13:39	R	<i>A w swojej ofercie kształcenia nauczycieli jakie formy państwo najczęściej stosujecie? To są konferencje, a może są sympozja?</i>
13:49	E3	<i><u>Warsztaty są najczęstszą formą. Są też konferencje, czyli dłuższe eventy jednodniowe.</u></i>
14:02	E4	<i>Generalnie najczęściej sprawdzają się takie fora powiedzmy 4 godziny dydaktyczne, czyli 3 godziny zegarowe. <u>Teraz nauczyciele bardzo mocno przestawili się na zajęcia online, więc grupy stacjonarne są dosyć nieliczne, do kilkunastu, do 20 osób maksymalnie. Natomiast w formach online mamy grupy powyżej 20 osób.</u></i>
14:24	R	<i>Rozumiem, że państwo w swojej ofercie również macie propozycje dla nauczycieli języków obcych pracujących z uczniami z STU w szkołach podstawowych w młodszych klasach, tak?</i>
14:33	E3	<i>Specyficznie dla samych młodszych klas niekoniecznie, ale dla nauczycieli szkoły podstawowej tak.</i>
14:43	R	<i>A jak często takie szkolenia właśnie o tej tematyce u państwa się pojawiają?</i>
14:47	E4	<i><u>To też zależy od potrzeb nauczycieli. Bardzo teraz popularne jest wspomaganie szkół w ramach laboratoriów przyszłości. W nawiązaniu do stosowania najnowszej technologii, najnowszych rozwiązań technologicznych w szkole są również w naszym pakiecie szkolenia dla rad pedagogicznych. Wówczas rada pedagogiczna wspólnie z dyrekcją decyduje czy nauczycielom jest potrzebne takie szkolenie, czy z niego skorzystają i w jaki sposób. Wtedy zespół naszych nauczycieli konsultantów prowadzi na miejscu w danej szkole takie szkolenie i jest ono naprawdę bardzo praktyczne. Wiem, ponieważ akurat u mnie w szkole niedawno było coś takiego, gdzie szkolenie było nastawione faktycznie na dzieci, na konkretne przypadki. Takie szkolenie jest wtedy bardzo zindywidualizowane, a my wiemy jakie dzieci mamy w szkole, więc</u></i>

		<u>eksperti podają nam konkretne rozwiązania, jak możemy z nimi pracować.</u>
16:00	R	<i>Czy nauczyciele języka angielskiego z klas 1-3 chętnie uczestniczą w formach kształcenia związanych właśnie z edukacją inkluzyjną lub odnoszących się do problemów STU?</i>
16:18	E3	<i>Dominują zdecydowanie nauczyciele starszych klas 4-6, głównie 7-8. <u>Nauczyciele klas 1-3 rzadko zapisują się do sieci współpracy, którą jesteśmy zobligowani przez MSCDN tworzyć zarówno dla nauczycieli języka angielskiego jak i nauczycieli języka niemieckiego.</u> Tam są głównie nauczyciele tych klas starszych czyli od 4 do 8 klasy i nauczyciele liceum. <u>Nauczyciele wychowania przedszkolnego czy wczesnoszkolnego, którzy pracują z językiem angielskim to są niestety tylko jednostki w tej sieci.</u></i>
16:59	R	<i>A z czego to może wynikać?</i>
17:00	E4	<i><u>Nauczyciele z edukacji wczesnoszkolnej biorą udział w szkoleniach w obszarze głównie przeznaczonym dla nauczycieli edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. W przypadku nauczycieli edukacji wczesnoszkolnej uczących języka angielskiego, kiedy dziecko ma trudności z uczeniem się, to jest ten problem troszeczkę zepchnięty na drugi plan. Nauczyciele skupiają się raczej na tym jak na przykład utrzymać dyscyplinę, nad przebiegiem za zajęć, w jaki sposób postępować z tym dzieckiem z trudnościami, żeby na przykład nie było jakiegoś negatywnego wpływu na grupę, bo też zdarzają się tak dzieci, które mają różne problemy i wtedy to zachowanie nie bardzo działa pozytywnie na resztę. Ważniejsza jest bardziej strona psychologiczno-pedagogiczna niż językowa.</u></i>
18:05	E3	<i>Na pewno wśród nauczycieli tych klas 1-3 to nie jest taki temat priorytetowy niestety. Dużo większy nacisk na pracę z językiem pojawia się w klasach 7-8, bo jest taka konieczność ze względu na egzamin ósmoklasisty.</i>
18:30	R	<i>A czy studenci uczelni wyższych kierunków pedagogicznych i filologicznych mogą również stać się uczestnikami organizowanych przez państwa form kształcenia zawodowego?</i>
18:33	E3	<i><u>Tak, one nie są zamknięte, ale nigdy nie mieliśmy takich przypadków jak tutaj jesteśmy od trzech w zasadzie już lat.</u></i>
18:48	R	<i>Rozumiem. Przejdźmy do ostatniej części naszej dzisiejszej rozmowy dotyczącej opinii nauczycieli, którzy pracują z uczniami z STU. Jakie są kluczowe problemy dotyczące STU, które zgłaszają obecnie nauczyciele przychodzący tutaj na różnego rodzaju formy doskonalenia zawodowego? Czy to są na przykład jakieś problemy związane z diagnozowaniem z dostrzeganiem tych problemów uczniów czy to są problemy dotyczące na przykład słabej współpracy z organami nadzoru albo z poradniami pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej? Czy są jakieś problemy finansowe które zgłaszają nauczyciele?</i>
19:29	E3	<i><u>Mi się wydaje, że najczęściej zadawane pytanie jakie ja miałem to było jak oceniać takiego ucznia. Nie do końca jak mu pomóc, jak uatrakcyjnić proces dydaktyczny, żeby ten uczeń się odnalazł na lekcji, tylko co zrobić, żeby postawić mu pozytywną ocenę.</u></i>
19:55	R	<i>Czy takie szkolenia lub warsztaty Państwo również organizujecie?</i>
19:58	E4	<i><u>Takich oddzielnych [warsztatów] dotyczących oceniania ucznia to nie, ale w naszej ofercie, również tej między wydziałowej, są jak najbardziej</u></i>

		<i>formy, które dotyczą oceniania uczniów ze specyficznymi trudnościami w uczeniu się. Także są takie formy i też z tego co wiem, to są organizowane warsztaty, jeżeli nauczyciele są zapisani w sieci współpracy. <u>Sieć współpracy działa na tej zasadzie, że warsztaty są organizowane zgodnie z potrzebami nauczycieli, a ta tematyka w sieci współpracy jest realizowana na bieżąco.</u> My tak zresztą mamy, że jeżeli pojawi się jakiś problem, to jest on rozwiązywany na bieżąco i myślę że dużo wskazówek i dużo takich praktycznych porad nauczyciel może uzyskać od nauczyciela. <u>Po to są te sieci współpracy, żeby wymieniać się doświadczeniem, wymieniać się taką dobrą praktyką i tam nauczyciele mimo że nie jest to wprost sprecyzowane w naszej formie, że jest to powiedzmy warsztat dla nauczycieli pracujących z dziećmi z trudnościami, to tam można jak najwięcej się dowiedzieć na ten temat i otrzymać pomoc.</u></i>
21:30	E3	<i>Bo ta tematyka się przewija. Dzisiaj na przykład mamy szkolenie pod tytułem współpraca międzynarodowa szkoły. Będziemy mówić o niej, a na przykład Erasmus Plus wymaga tej inkluzyjności, także też będę o tym wspominał, że powinniśmy tam uczniów, którzy mają jakieś problemy właśnie natury społecznej, którzy mają problemy z nauką, żeby ich angażować do tego typu projektów. Przy współpracy polsko-niemieckiej też są dodatkowe pieniądze, na przykład jeżeli biorą w niej udział dzieciaki z niepełnosprawnością. Jeżeli dzieciaki z trudnościami biorą udział w wymianie, to wtedy jest dodatkowa pula pieniędzy. Także jak najbardziej tych dzieciaków można angażować do projektów, do różnego rodzaju wymian, bo to jest jak najbardziej kształcące i myślę, że to otwiera oczy też samym dzieciakom i ich rodzicom. Jak dzieciak zmieni środowisko, trochę zobaczy jak ono wygląda gdzie indziej, no to rodzice czasami się dziwią że przecież w domu to są takie a nie inne problemy a tutaj nauczyciel mówi co innego, że z nim nie ma problemów w jakiejś tam sytuacji.</i>
22:40	R	<i>Czy nauczyciele, którzy pracują z dziećmi z STU powinni pracować w innym trybie? Czy system powinien może o nich pomyśleć w sposób alternatywy? To znaczy czy powinni oni mieć na przykład mniejszą liczbę godzin pracy po to, żeby mieć więcej czasu na przygotowanie dodatkowych materiałów dla uczniów z STU? Czy może też należałoby zostawić obecną liczbę godzin w etacie, ale na przykład ci nauczyciele powinni być lepiej opłacani? co państwo sądzicie na ten temat? Takie rozwiązania funkcjonują w innych krajach Unii Europejskiej dlatego to pytam.</i>
23:31	E3	<i><u>Jest coś takiego jak dodatek za pracę w warunkach trudnych. Natomiast to nie jest akurat kwestia nauczycieli pracujących w klasie integracyjnej.</u> <u>Dodatek natomiast w regularnej klasie to obawiam się nie istnieje.</u> Byłoby to bardzo ciężkie do zmierzenia, jaki jest nacisk tej pracy. Osobiście nie chciałbym takiego rozwiązania ja jako nauczyciel.</i>
24:00	R	<i>A dlaczego nie?</i>
24:03	E3	<i>Bo to by budziło tylko niesnaski, no bo co jeśli ty masz pięciu takich uczniów ja mam jednego?</i>
24:11	E4	<i>To jest sprawa mocna zindywidualizowana. Nie da się oddzielić tego, że tak powiem, bo <u>może być grupa, gdzie mamy w klasie piętnastoro uczniów w tym dwoje z orzeczeniem, a może też być grupa, gdzie mamy sześćcioro uczniów, gdzie dwóch uczniów ma orzeczenia o niepełnosprawności a trzech ma opinię, więc no niby grupa jest niewielka,</u></i>

		<u>ale zindywidualizować pracę i zrobić materiał dla każdego powiedzmy, żeby był dopasowany do jego potrzeb no to jest ciężko.</u>
24:53	R	<i>Są jeszcze nauczyciele wspierający obecnie w klasach. Czy myślicie państwo, że z perspektywy tego co zgłaszają nauczyciele, którzy przychodzą na szkolenia, czy ten nauczyciel wspierający jest pomocny w klasie, czy jest potrzebny czy może bardziej przeszkadza?</i>
25:12	E4	<u>Ten nauczyciel jest jak najbardziej potrzebny, tylko teraz znów brakuje takich rozwiązań myślę systemowych, żeby ten nauczyciel wspierający miał bardziej określone swoje obowiązki i zadania, które musi wykonywać.</u> <i>Są bowiem nauczyciele wspierający, którzy po prostu przyjdą na lekcję, siedzą i przeczytają uczniowi polecenie, wytłumaczą jak on ma zrobić to zadanie, a są też nauczyciele wspierający, którzy naprawdę wspierają głównego nauczyciela przedmiotu, którzy pomagają mu tworzyć kartę pracy, wskazują na to jakie typy zadań jest w stanie ten uczeń rozwiązać.</i>
26:01	R	<i>Czyli jest to różnica pomiędzy indywidualną pomocą dla ucznia a taką bardzo zacieśnioną współpracą z nauczycielem przedmiotu. W niektórych krajach jest już wprowadzony dualizm w prowadzeniu zajęć. To znaczy, część zajęć tygodniowo jest prowadzonych przez nauczyciela przedmiotu, a część przez nauczyciela wspierającego. To wymusza na nich bliską współpracę w realizacji materiału. Czy to mogłyby się sprawdzić na gruncie polskim czy raczej nie?</i>
26:31	E4	<i>Ja myślę, że mogłoby się sprawdzić, ale bardzo dużo zależy od tego nauczyciela wspierającego, choć w sumie od obu tak naprawdę, i tego wspierającego i tego głównego nauczyciela przedmiotu. Tak jak jest do tej pory, to są ci, którzy naprawdę są zaangażowani i są ci którzy przychodzą, siedzą, towarzyszą po prostu uczniowi, żeby on czuł się, nie wiem, pewniej, bezpieczniej i coś tam podpowiadają, ale taka zacieśniona współpraca dla mnie to by było bardzo dobre rozwiązanie. <u>Tak mi się wydaje z mojej perspektywy i myślę, że w tym kierunku powinny też być podjęte jakieś odgórne działania, a być może studia podyplomowe, które naprawdę przygotowałyby studentów i nauczycieli do takiego praktycznego prowadzenia zajęć.</u></i>
27:33	E3	<i>A mi się wydaje, że to by było dosyć trudne, bo to jest tak w tej chwili bardzo często, że dany uczeń lub klasa dostaje jednego nauczyciela wspierającego. W kwestii klas 1-3 to by się jeszcze sprawdziło, ale już przy specjalizacji przedmiotowej w klasach starszych, no to powiedzmy jest polonista lub matematyk, a nauczyciel wspierający może pomóc uczniowi zapisać i przeczytać polecenie, jak powiedziała Emilia, no ale nie przeprowadzi lekcji polskiego czy matematyki.</i>
28:08	E4	<i>Natomiast w klasach 1-3 byłoby to możliwe, ale chodzi o to, żeby tak dobrać program kształcenia dla studentów, czy na studiach podyplomowych, żeby ten nauczyciel w przyszłości potrafił wspierać, nie tylko pomagać, ale również wspierać.</i>
28:25	R	<i>To już wszystkie pytania. Dziękuję Państwu za udział i wyczerpujące odpowiedzi.</i>
28:26	E3, E4	<i>Dziękujemy.</i>