"What's pavement? — Chodník." Code-switching in Upper-Secondary EFL Classrooms

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ABSTRACT:

The role of the mother tongue in English language teaching has always been a contentious issue. English teachers, prospective teachers, teacher educators, language learners and researchers in the field are divided into two opposing factions over the matter. One advocates for the occasional use of the mother tongue because it has its role and significance in a language classroom, the other promotes the idea of English-only classrooms. That is why this study focuses on code-switching (i.e. the participants' alternation from English into Czech or vice versa) in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms. Since code-switching serves many functions in EFL classrooms, the goal of this conversation-analytic study is to provide insight into how teachers and students code-switch while dealing with word meaning. The data consists of 13 hours and 30 minutes of recordings from five different upper-secondary schools in the Czech Republic. In each school, three to five consecutive English language lessons were recorded in the final year. All students and their teachers spoke Czech, therefore Czech could be used to explain word meanings and everybody would understand. The analysis shows that Czech is commonly used in EFL classes to deal with word meaning, even though the teacher maximizes the use of the target language and uses English as the main language in the classroom. It also demonstrates how teachers' questions may influence students' language choice in their answers. The study thus reveals the intricacies of language choice and language use in foreign language classrooms.

ABSTRAKT:

Používání mateřštiny ve výuce anglického jazyka je stále kontroverzním tématem. Rozděluje vyučující anglického jazyka, studentky a studenty učitelství anglického jazyka, vyučující podílející se na jejich vzdělávání, samotné studenty jazyka i výzkumníky na dva tábory. Jedna skupina zastává názor, že občasné použití mateřštiny má ve výuce své místo, druhá skupina podporuje myšlenku vedení hodin pouze v cílovém jazyce. Tato práce se proto zaměřuje na přepínání kódů, tedy přechody mluvčích z jednoho jazykového systému do druhého, během frontální výuky anglického jazyka na středních školách. Data pochází z 5 různých středních škol v České republice, na nichž byly pořízeny videonahrávky 3 až 5 po sobě jdoucích vyučovacích hodin v posledním ročníku studia (celkově třináct a půl hodiny nahrávek). Analýza ukazuje, že čeština je v hodinách angličtiny běžně používána pro vyjednávání významu slov, a to i přesto, že učitelé a učitelky vedou hodiny v cílovém jazyce. Dále ukazuje, že vhodnou formulací otázky mají vyučující v rukou nástroj, kterým mohou studenty dovést k odpovědi v mateřštině nebo cílovém jazyce. Cílem tohoto článku je tedy odkrýt roli jazykového kódu ve výuce angličtiny a motivy jeho volby.

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of the first language (L1) in English language teaching has changed accordingly with the type of language teaching approach that was currently dominant. While translation was considered a beneficial practice activity in the Grammar Translation Method, the mother tongue was banished from the English language classroom with the development of the Direct Method. Its critics argued that conducting lessons in English is the most effective way for students to learn a new language (Atkinson, 1996; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Hall & Cook, 2013). This exclusion of the first language is known as the English-only approach or the monolingual principle (Howatt, 1984). It refers to the sole use of the second language (L2) as the instructional language with minimal interference from the L1, which enables learners to think in the target language. This principle stresses the importance of delivering instruction in the target language, based on the assumption that when learners have to figure out what the teacher says, it provides them with lots of valuable language input (Turnbull, 2001). However, there is a body of literature that problematizes the effectiveness of the English-only policy, arguing that there is no research proving it is the best and most effective way to teach the language (e.g. Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Kerr, 2019) and it is now starting to be commonly accepted that the mother tongue has its role and significance in the foreign language classroom.

Research shows that there are "good interactional reasons" for the use of the L1 (Gardner, 2013, p. 602), it plays a variety of significant functions in L2 classrooms, and it can help build the learner's confidence in the target language (Auerbach, 1993; Butzkamm, 1998; Kerr, 2019). Butzkamm (1998, p. 95) considers the mother tongue to be "a necessary conversational lubricant" and argues that even if the L1 is not used in the classroom, it is still present in learners' minds, therefore it can serve as "a natural short-cut" in the L2 classroom if used purposefully and not very often. Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009, p. 24) state that the students' mother tongue is actually "the most important ally a foreign language can have". This points to the significance of the L1 in the L2 classroom and suggests that if the teacher shares the L1 with their students, they can use it to their benefit. Even Atkinson (1996, p. 12), who declared that "Every second spent using the L1 is a second not spent using English! — And every second counts!", otherwise supports the occasional use of the L1 when the teacher and students share it. He emphasizes that English must remain the main language for conducting the lesson, however, he admits that the L1 "can be a vital resource" in the L2 classroom (*ibid.*, p. 13). Based on studies examining different situations in which teachers use the L1 in English lessons, Kerr (2019) distinguishes two basic, sometimes overlapping, functions of the L1 use by the teacher in English lessons: "core" functions related to teaching and "social" functions related to class management. A research project conducted by Hall and Cook (2013, p. 15) for the British Council showed that the use of the L1 was common for "core" functions, such as explaining "when meanings in English are unclear", explaining vocabulary and explaining grammar. The development of rapport and classroom discipline are the most common uses among the "framework" functions (*ibid.*). Other studies show that making a shift to

the L1 when students are not used to it might help get their attention and therefore it might help maintain discipline in the classroom (Merrit et al., 1992; Cook, 2002). The mother tongue can be an effective tool for both teachers and students in regard to time management, it can contextualize a topic shift, initiate off-task talk, build relationships, help create a supportive learning environment or keep the conversation going when students are not able to continue the interaction in the target language (Flyman Mattsson & Burenhult, 1999; Moore, 2002; Hughes et al., 2006; Littlewood & Yu, 2011).[1]

Kerr (2019) argues that the debate is shifting from "whether" the L1 should be used in the L2 classroom to "how" or "how often", as reflected in updates to handbooks for EFL teachers. In *Classroom Management Techniques*, Scrivener (2012) presents practical ideas for teachers and suggests making use of the mother tongue for attracting students' attention and managing the classroom. Ur (2012, p. 6) stresses the significance of the mother tongue in the L2 classroom and claims that there is no reason why it should not be used. Betáková (2017, pp. 17–19) concludes that teachers need to consider whether the use of the L1 is effective for students, providing they are not leaning on it because it is the easy way out. Gráf (2014), who described the development of views on the use of the L1 in the Czech Republic, advocates for the systematic use of the L1 in EFL classrooms. This concurs with Cook (2001, p. 418) who argues that the L1 can be used "deliberately and systematically" in the L2 classroom. The goal of this paper is to contribute to this debate by analyzing the use of the L1 by EFL teachers and students in naturally occurring EFL talk and reveal the actual practices that the participants employ in classroom interaction.

2. AUER'S SEQUENTIAL APPROACH TO CODE-SWITCHING AND ITS APPLICATION IN EFL CLASSROOMS

From the studies cited above, it follows that there has been a growing interest in the topic of classroom code-switching in the past decades and it has been analyzed from a number of perspectives, including pedagogical (Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005; Levine, 2011; Uys & Dulm, 2011) and sociolinguistic (Gumperz, 1982; Auer, 1988). This study follows the sociolinguistic strand and views alternating from one language (L1) to another (L2) and vice versa as code-switching (Auer, 2002).

Drawing on Gumperz's (1982) work on how code-switching operates in conversations, Auer (2002) analyzed code-switching using the sequential approach, which is closely linked to the sequential approach taken up by conversation analysts. It establishes code-switching occurrences as contextualization cues, a tool used by bilingual speakers to negotiate and interpret meaning. Auer's sequential approach examines conversational structure and sequential development in order to understand the role

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1   Li Wei (2002, p. 168) conducted a study focused on interaction between bilingual speakers in which he refers to "a cue to restart a conversation". He argues that the mother tongue also serves as an attempt to restart or renew communication when a participant feels that it would be abandoned (*ibid.*, pp. 160–161).

of code-switching in interactions, which corresponds to the interest of conversation analysis. This approach is now widely used to analyze everyday interactions as well as institutional talk, such as classroom interaction (Martin-Jones, 1995; Lin, 2013).

In classroom interaction, conversation analysts examine interactions between speakers, how participants achieve common understanding and, consequently, how teachers achieve pedagogical aims (Gardner, 2013, pp. 593–594). The turn-taking process, which is one of the main interests of conversation analysts (Pomerantz & Fehr, 2011), differs in mundane conversations and in institutional talk (Drew & Sorjonen, 2011). In the classroom, the turn-taking organization is influenced by the pedagogical focus that the teacher introduces and by the specific activity that the students are doing (Seedhouse, 2004). In frontal teaching, an activity which is directed by the teacher from the front of the classroom, the turn-taking process is influenced by the teacher, the institutional aim they set and how the aim is interpreted by the students. The teacher is usually the one asking questions and students are not expected to speak until nominated by the teacher. If the student does not provide an answer, the teacher may initiate a repair process until the expected answer is produced (*ibid.*, pp. 102–106). When the answer is produced, the teacher is expected to provide a comment on its sufficiency (McHoul, 1978). As far as the sequence organization is concerned, the teacher dominates first position turns. In the second turn, the student typically answers the question posed by the teacher in the first turn. The third turn consists of evaluation and performs multiple actions, such as moving the sequence towards the teacher's objective, providing clues or scaffolding to obtain the desired answer, and managing the classroom (Mehan, 1979; Gardner, 2013). This IRE (Initiation-Reply-Evaluation) structure means that it is the teacher who initiates the interaction and evaluates the answer (Mehan, 1979).

The sequential approach views code-switching as a phenomenon which occurs naturally among multilingual or bilingual speakers (Auer, 1988; Lee, 2000; Macaro, 2005). As speakers of Czech and learners of English as a foreign language, the students in the study are considered to be bilingual speakers,[2] therefore the language classroom constitutes a bilingual environment where speakers use code-switching as a communicative tool (Auer, 2002). While some might see code-switching in language classes as a manifestation of poor proficiency in the target language (Sridhar, 1996), Jacobson and Faltis (1990, p. 174) imply that code-switching "addresses a problem inherent in foreign language classes: the tension between the desire of the teacher to use the target language exclusively and the need of the student to understand as much as possible of what is being taught". As a result, it may be problematic for both teachers and students to avoid the L1.

Using conversation-analytic tools to investigate classroom interaction provides insight into participants' perspectives. Since code-switching is often performed unconsciously in the language classroom, even teachers are not always aware of its

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2   The term "bilingual" is used for "someone with the possession of two languages" including people "who have varying degrees of proficiency" in these two languages (Wei, 2000, p. 6). Other authors, such as García (2009, p. 322), refer to learners of foreign language as "emergent bilinguals".

functions, which can subsequently influence the learning process (Üstünel, 2016). This is why it is important to analyze the phenomenon in classroom interaction. Üstünel (2016) presents a comprehensive study addressing both teachers' and students' code-switching patterns using quantitative analysis, conversation analysis and other methods, demonstrating that code-switching serves as a valuable resource for acquiring the language for effective bilingual communication, and shows how it is used as a device to organize activities (see also Kasper, 2004; Mori, 2004; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2005; Tůma, 2016). The present paper contributes to this body of literature by focusing on code-switching practices while dealing with word meaning.

3. EXAMINING CODE-SWITCHING PRACTICES WHILE DEALING WITH WORD MEANING

Empirical research on vocabulary teaching and learning has predominantly focused on the theoretical assumptions and on what should be done during vocabulary explanation, not on how it is done (Waring, Creider & Box, 2013). Despite that, studies focusing on how vocabulary explanations unfold in classroom interaction have been conducted in various settings. In agreement with Mortensen's (2011) findings from adult Danish L2 classrooms, Waring et al. (2013, p. 254) identified the main elements of vocabulary explanation sequences based on a two-hour adult English as a second language (ESL) lesson, employing conversation analysis: "(1) set WORD in focus (e.g. repeat, display on the board); (2) contextualise WORD (e.g. use in a sentence); (3) invite (via UDS)[3] or offer explanation; (4) close the explanation with a repetition (e.g. repeat, summarise)". These elements can also be observed in Morton's (2015) analysis examining how vocabulary explanations are accomplished in secondary Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classrooms. Macaro (2009) employed experimental approaches to elucidate the effect of code-switching on vocabulary learning among Chinese learners and concluded that "some items of vocabulary might be better learnt through a teacher providing first language equivalents" (*ibid.*, p. 49). While there are studies examining code-switching in vocabulary learning in foreign educational contexts, there is very little research on this topic conducted in Czech schools, which is a gap this study seeks to fill.

In the Czech educational context, researchers examined code-switching practices in elementary schools and higher education. Najvar et al. (2011) examine the role of the mother tongue in elementary schools by quantifying the number of words which were uttered in Czech and in English. Tůma (2017b) examines how teachers and students code-switch in expert-teachers' elementary EFL classrooms. As far as higher education is concerned, Tůma (2017a) analyzes a sample of sequences collected in one language course which shows the role of the switch to Czech in English language classroom. His analysis demonstrates that participants code-switch in frontal teaching purposefully, proving that code-switching is a common phenomenon among bilingual speakers (*ibid.*, pp. 126–127). This study thus builds on the pre-

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3   UDS stands for "an understanding-display sequence" (Waring et al., 2013, p. 4).

vious research done in Czech schools by collecting data in multiple upper-secondary schools and providing an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon. The aim of this study is to broaden the existing research on Czech upper-secondary schools, where code-switching practices remain to be explored further.

4. DATA AND METHOD

The data consists of 810 minutes of recorded English lessons in five Czech upper-secondary schools. Three to five consecutive 45-minute English lessons were recorded in each school. The lessons were recorded on two digital video cameras, one focused on the teacher and one on the students. Voice recorders were placed on the students' desks in order to capture students' utterances more clearly. All students and teachers could speak Czech, therefore Czech could be used in the class and everybody would understand it, which makes it more likely for students and teachers to resort to Czech. The recordings were made in autumn 2018, in classes where the learners were in their final year of school and were preparing for the Maturita exams. The students were working with different textbooks, targeting B1–C1 levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The recordings were transcribed using the transcription notations based on the transcription system introduced by Gail Jefferson with additional notes from Klára Vaníčková (2014). The list of the notations used in this paper can be found in the Appendix. Anonymization of participants' names was required by the agreement that the authors of the project made with the school beforehand. The names which appear in the transcripts are fictitious.

The method used for the analysis was conversation analysis (CA), which uses data occurring naturally either in everyday life or in institutional talk. Its goal is to shed light on human interaction by uncovering its practices and organization. CA researchers work with detailed transcripts of the recordings, gain a good understanding of what is happening in the recordings and then identify interesting patterns, which they subject to a detailed line by line analysis (ten Have, 2007; Pomerantz & Fehr, 2011). After I read the transcripts and watched the recordings several times, I identified 82 sequences in which participants switched from English to Czech and vice versa in whole class work. I analyzed these sequences line by line and asked what the participants are doing and how they are doing it — "why that now?" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 299). The sequences showed a broad array of code-switching functions — to give and clarify instructions (24 sequences), to explain or clarify grammar (6 sequences), to give feedback (9 sequences), and to build rapport and manage the classroom (17 sequences). Teachers or students also used code-switching for clarifying the meaning of words which appeared when the class was doing or checking an exercise (26 sequences). I focused on these 26 sequences to answer the following research question of the qualitative analysis: How do the teachers and students code-switch while dealing with word meaning in whole class work? Typical situations in which the teacher and the students code-switch are presented in the analysis below.

5. ANALYSIS

As far as dealing with word meanings is concerned, it was common for teachers to ask questions such as "what's that?", "what is X?" or "what does X mean?". The following sequences are examples of such teacher-induced code-switching. The sequences are initiated by the teacher, who asks one of the above-mentioned questions and students provide Czech translations of the words. Czech words are accepted by the teacher in English, by saying "right", "yes" or by praising the student.

In Examples 1 and 2, the teacher asks about vocabulary from the texts that the class is dealing with. In Example 1, the word "pavement" occurs in a set of sentences which the students should mark true or false. The class is checking this exercise together — the teacher asks a student to read the first statement and say whether the statement is true or false. He then accepts the answer and elicits why.

Example 1 (Pavement)

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 1  Dom:   e:: the picture of Batman and Robin was painted on a
 2          burning house
 3  T:     ehe
 4  Dom:   and is e: it's false
 5  T:     mhm (.) so where is it? where is it painted?
 6  Dom:   er ehm::: hmm (x)
 7  (Ste): top of a building?
 8  T:     okay well it looks like a the top of the building but=
 9  (Ste): =but it's an (on) pavement
10  T:     okay pavement, what's what's pavement?
11  Ste:   chodník ((pavement in Czech))
12  T:     right, good one Stefanie (.) ehe right e Míša? number two
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In lines 1 and 2, a student reads the first statement from the exercise that the class is dealing with. After the teacher encourages her to provide the answer (line 3), she replies that the statement in question is false (line 4). The teacher confirms that the statement is false by saying "mhm" and asks where the picture was painted if it was not on a burning house (line 5). In line 6, the student who provided the answer produces a set of hesitation sounds. In the next line, another student nominates herself, answering the teacher's question with rising intonation, suggesting that she is not sure about the answer (line 7). The teacher starts the response by saying "okay", which might seem as if he is accepting the answer but he continues by providing scaffolding (Gardner, 2013). In line 9, the student completes the answer by interrupting the teacher and mentions the word pavement. In line 10, the teacher accepts her answer, repeats the key word after the student to direct students' attention to it and asks "what's pavement?". The Czech translation of the word pavement is accepted by the teacher in line 12, where he praises the student who provided the correct answer and then brings the aside to a close, which is further evident from how he orients to another item in the exercise and nominates another student.

Example 2 shows a very similar situation, which occurred during the same exercise as shown in Example 1. The teacher establishes that a sentence is false, then asks students to explain why.

Example 2 (Chalk)

1 T: false okay so what e what does he use? to draw?
2 D02: chalk
3 T: chalk! what's that?
4 Ss: **křída**
5 T: okay (.) do you guys e: draw with chalk

In line 1, the teacher confirms that a sentence is false by repeating the answer. Then, he asks students to explain why (line 1). The question is answered correctly in line 2 in English and the teacher accepts it in line 3 by repeating the answer. Immediately, he adds "what's that?" to ask the students to demonstrate their understanding of the word "chalk" (line 3). Students provide the Czech equivalent in line 4 and the teacher accepts it by saying "okay" in line 5. He then follows up and asks the class if they draw with chalk to check their understanding. By doing that, he also encourages them to put the word (which might be new to some) to immediate use.

Again, a similar sequence can be observed in Example 3, where the teacher deals with a word that some of the students were discussing privately while doing an exercise. Anticipating that more students could have problems with the word, the teacher approaches the students and encourages them to repeat the word so that the whole class can hear it. After they clarify the meaning, he lets them continue working on the exercise.

Example 3 (Notice)

1 T: so what was it?
2 D02: no no no no noticed (.) noticed
3 T: noticed, so what does it mean?
4 D02: **zaregistrovat**, **všimnout si**
5 T: ehe good one

In line 1, the teacher approaches the students' desk and asks "so what was it?", inquiring about the word that the students were talking about. The student repeats the word "notice" for the whole class in line 2. In line 3, the teacher echoes the verb and asks the student "what does it mean?". The student provides the Czech equivalent of the verb "notice" in line 3 and in the next line, the teacher accepts her answer by praising the student.

Example 4 is taken from a different class than the previous three extracts. However, it shows the teacher using the same question phrased "what is X" and students' responses in Czech. The class is checking an exercise with expressions related to work and jobs. The students first read a text in the textbook with highlighted words.

Their task is then to match those highlighted words to their correct definitions in the following exercise.

Example 4 (Curse)

1	T:	alright so let's check it together (.) ehm (..) /kay/ er:
2		Patrik ((points to Patrik)) first one
3	Pat:	eh the knowledge you get from doing a job (.) experience
4	T:	mhm (2s) Milane
5	Mil:	((whispers to his neighbor)) yes. ((looks into the
6		textbook)) the knowled- nah yeah a series of lessons to
7		learn (.) to do a job, training /curs-/ cour<u>se</u>
8	T:	course [yeah]
9	Mil:	((nods)) [mhm]
10	T:	what is a curse
11	Mil:	**jako ta::**
12	Eri:	(that's) **kletba=**
13	Mil:	=**kletba**
14	T:	<u>yes</u> yeah so training course, mhm
15	Eri:	close one
16	Mil:	((turns around to Erik)) **na tebe sešlu nějakou kletbu**
17		((giggles))
18	T:	eh Erik (.) four

In line 1, the teacher tells the class to stop working and announces that they are going to check the exercise together. She nominates Patrik to read the first definition and its matching expression (lines 1–2). In line 3, Patrik reads the definition and then gives the correct expression, which is "experience". The teacher accepts his answer and nominates Milan to read the next definition and expression (line 4). Milan is whispering something unintelligible to his neighbor but says "yes" to show the teacher that he is paying attention. He also gazes at the textbook to signal that he is going to start reading (line 5). He accidentally reads the beginning of the previous definition which was already done by Patrik ("the knowled-" in line 6). He utters "nah yeah" immediately to show that he realizes his mistake and starts reading the definition which was assigned to him, which is "a series of lessons to learn to do a job" (line 6). In line 7, he reads the expression he filled in (which is "training course") but says "curse" instead of "course". Milan immediately corrects himself with an emphasis on the first syllable in the word "course" to stress that he is aware of his mistake. In line 8, the teacher confirms his answer by repeating the word "course" and saying "yeah" while Milan nods and utters "mhm" as well (line 9). In line 10, the teacher asks "what is a curse?", presumably to check everybody is clear on the difference between the minimal pair "curse" and a "course", anticipating difficulties. Milan is not sure what the equivalent in Czech is but starts the word search in Czech using fillers and a prolonged vowel ("ta::") to gain some thinking time before he answers (line 11). Erik, another student, starts his response in English by saying "that is" and then gives the Czech equivalent of the word

"curse" (line 12). Milan repeats the Czech equivalent in line 13 and the teacher accepts it in English by saying "yes" (line 14), similarly to the examples presented before. Then, the teacher returns back to the correct expression "training course" that Milan filled in, repeats it for emphasis and to signal that they are going to move on to the next definition (line 14). In lines 15–17, Erik and Milan bicker and giggle. The teacher does not pay any attention to this exchange and in line 18, she moves on by nominating another student to read the following definition and expression.

In the examples above, I have shown that to questions phrased "what's that?", "what is X?" or "what does X mean?", students typically demonstrate their understanding by answering the question using Czech, and Czech equivalents of the words in question are accepted by the teachers. The collection includes some instances in which the teacher asks directly for a Czech equivalent of the word, for example by phrasing the question "is there any equivalent in Czech for this?" or "what do we say in Czech?", as we can see in Example 5.

Example 5 (Working hours)

1 T: so eh (..) Erik what is the time spent doing a job
2 Erik: working hours
3 T: working hours aha eh what do we say in Czech what what's the
4   term, for working hours
5 Ss: **pracovní doba**
6 T: mhm ((nods)) good (.) K Verčo

In this sequence, the teacher nominates a student to match a previously taught expression ("working hours") to the definition given in line 1 ("what is the time spent doing a job"). In the following line, the student produces the correct answer ("working hours") and in line 3, the teacher accepts it by repeating the expression. The teacher then asks "what do we say in Czech?", encouraging the students to use their mother tongue to clarify the meaning, which they do in line 5 and the teacher accepts it with a nod and praises the students (line 6). While in the previous examples, the teachers accepted the answers in Czech, in this case, the teacher requires the answer in Czech. This might explain why students produce Czech equivalents to questions phrased "what's that?" or "what is X?" straight away in other presented sequences.

In the following example, students are providing definitions of different jobs while the rest of the classroom guesses what the job is. When the class encounters the word "accountant", the teacher elicits the difference between an "accountant" and "clerk" after the class has already established the Czech equivalent of the word "accountant".

Example 6 (Accountant)

1 Mil: ((thinking)) it's kind of a secretary job you do (..) it's
2   (...) every company needs it runs their bills their (.)
3   (payment)=

4   Eri: =accountant ((looking at Milan))
5   Mil: yes
6   Fil: wow ((turns to the teacher and smiles)) I'm insane I'm
7   really cool (.) I'm insane ((classmates start to laugh))
8   Mil: **podle mě si to přečetl [jak to prosvítá]**
9   T: [yeah you are good] but you are not giving
           anybody <u>chance</u> yeah ((approaches Erik))
10 ((noise in the classroom, Milan hands his cards over to Erik))
11 T: OK the the job, accountant do you all know this word?
12 Mil: yes
13 T: yeah? ((turns to Milan)) this term?
14 Mil: yes
15 T: yeah? ((turns away from Milan, facing the class))
16 Eri: **účetní**
17 T: ((to Erik)) ok (.) eh ((facing the class)) what's the
18   difference between accountant and a clerk (.) the difference
19 Len: a what
20 T: a clerk and an accountant
21 S: oh clerk sounds like (.) busy ((starts laughing))
22 ((everybody laughs))
23 T: well who has to be more educated accountant or a clerk
24 Ss: clerk
25 ((T tilts her head slightly))
26 Ss: accountant
27 T: ((nods)) accountant yeah
28 ((laughter and noise in the classroom))
29 T: alright eh OK Rostislav your (..) words

In the first two lines, Milan is describing his word, which is "accountant", to the rest of the class. Before Milan manages to finish his sentence, one of his classmates, Erik, provides the correct answer in line 4, which Milan accepts by saying "yes" in line 5. In lines 6 and 7, Erik comments on how fast he provided the desired answer and praises himself, making his classmates laugh. While Erik provides his commentary in English, Milan responds in Czech, suggesting that Erik did not really know the answer, he saw the word on the piece of paper Milan is holding (line 8). In lines 9–10, the teacher addresses Erik's behavior, which is apparently not desirable. Considering the fact that the whole class is "competing" to guess the answer, Erik should have waited a little before providing his answer, as the teacher explains to him. After that, Erik seems to make an attempt to justify his behavior, but this utterance is unintelligible due to noise in the classroom (line 11). The teacher concludes this exchange by saying "okay" in line 12 and directs students' attention to the word accountant. By asking "do you all know this word?", she wants the students to "claim" understanding (see Sacks, 1992). In line 13, Milan responds "yes", the teacher turns to him and responds with "yeah", using rising intonation. Since the rest of Milan's classmates are silent, the teacher turns back to the class and asks "this term?" with rising intonation in line 14 to make

sure that everybody understands this expression. We can assume that the teacher expects an answer from anybody other than Milan, who already claimed his understanding by saying "yes" (line 13). Milan repeats "yes" in line 15, however, there is still no response from other students, so the teacher uses "yeah" again, inviting other students to speak up (line 16). In line 17, Erik provides the expected answer, which is the Czech equivalent of the word "accountant". The teacher accepts his answer (line 18) by the affirmative "okay". After a brief pause, she follows up by asking the students what the difference between an accountant and a clerk is (lines 18–19). Lenka replies with "a what?" probably because she did not hear or understand the teacher (line 20), so the teacher repeats the key words "clerk" and "accountant" in line 21. In line 22, one of the students starts explaining what they think a clerk is, which is met with laughter from the class. In line 24, the teacher clarifies her question by asking students which of the two has to be more educated. In line 25, some students say "clerk", the teacher does not say anything but tilts her head slightly, thus not accepting the answer (line 26), which prompts other students to respond with "accountant" (line 27). The teacher smiles, nods her head and confirms the correct answer (line 28). Some of the students laugh and there is some noise in the classroom, which the teacher ends by nominating another student (line 30).

The example above shows that the teacher does not accept only the Czech equivalent or a word as a sufficient answer and checks students' understanding by asking them a more specific question about the word and its meaning. The final extract, Example 7, represents the only sequence in the collection where the language choice is negotiated.

Example 7 (In charge of)

```
 1  T:    eh (.) Lenko
 2  Len:  I am in charge of the marketing department
 3  T:    mhm (.) do you agree?
 4  Mil:  yes=
 5  Leo:  =yeah ((nods while looking at the textbook))
 6  T:    so you are in charge of something ehm (.) what does it
 7        mean to be in charge of ((leaning behind the desk so that
 8        she could see Lenka, who opens her mouth))
 9  Eri:  in Czech?
10  Mil:  ((resting his chin in his hand)) °být vůdcem°=
11  T:    =sorry? ((raises her head and looks at Erik))
12  Len:          [být zod-]
13  Erik:         [in Czech] or in English
14  T:    eh: if you can describe it in English maybe
15  Mil:  no ((chuckles))        [°mít na starosti°]
16  Len:                         [be (like) responsible?]
17  T:    mhm yeah= (((looking at Lenka))
18  Len:  =for
19  T:    yeah    °that's possibly° ((nods her head))
20  Len:          [°for this°]
```

21 T: [mhm]=
22 Len: =°department°
23 T: yeah. eh: Milan (.) please

The class is checking an exercise where students were supposed to fill in the correct prepositions. In line 1, the teacher invites Lenka to read a sentence from this exercise. Lenka correctly reads "I am in charge of the marketing department" (line 2). The teacher accepts her answer by uttering "mhm" and asks the class if they agree with Lenka's answer (line 3). Two students reply "yes" and "yeah", one of the students is also nodding while looking at the textbook (lines 4–5). The teacher repeats the key phrase and stresses the correct preposition "in" that Lenka correctly filled in (line 6). After a brief pause, she asks "what does it mean to be in charge of" (lines 6–7), looking at Lenka to claim her understanding. Lenka, who originally filled the correct preposition in this sentence, opens her mouth in order to answer (lines 7–8), however, Erik precedes her by asking the teacher if she wants to hear the answer in Czech (line 9). As I already demonstrated in the analysis, questions phrased "what does X mean?" usually prompt students to provide Czech equivalents. In line with that, another student, Milan, is already saying the Czech equivalent of the phrase "be in charge of" (line 10), but the teacher does not respond to him and instead, turns to Erik and asks him to repeat the question by saying "sorry" (line 11). In the following line, Lenka starts saying the Czech equivalent of the phrase as well but she stops in the middle of the word (line 12) and lets Erik finish his question (line 13). In line 14, the teacher clarifies that students should describe the phrase in English. Milan continues responding in Czech in line 15 and at the same time, Lenka starts providing the expected answer by explaining what "be in charge of" means in English (line 16). In line 17, the teacher says "mhm yeah" while looking at Lenka and thus confirms her answer. Lenka continues in line 18 and in line 19, the teacher again nods her head and says "yeah". Lenka finishes her response in lines 20 and 22 by paraphrasing the sentence she read in line 2. The teacher confirms the answer is correct in line 21 and then again in line 23 when she repeats "mhm yeah". Immediately after that, the teacher moves on by nominating another student (line 23).

Example 7 shows the only sequence in the collection where the teacher asks the student to clarify word meaning in the target language and it is upon a clarification request by a student. Though prompted by a student who asks if they should answer in Czech or in English, the teacher does not respond to two students who attempt to provide Czech equivalents of the word in question; the only answer she accepts is the English description of the word.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study deals with practices involving the mother tongue that teachers use to deal with word meanings. Similar sequences were presented by Tůma (2017a, pp. 124–125) and Hazel and Wagner (2015, pp. 160–161), who conclude that when a teacher asks students to say what a word means, they typically answer in their mother tongue. According to Sert's (2015, p. 124) findings, when the teacher requires

clarification of the word in the target language, they ask more specific questions. This is in part what the teacher does in Example 6, when she checks students' understanding by asking what the difference is between two words that the class is dealing with. In my collection, it is much more common for teachers to accept the Czech answer and they do so by praising the student or by providing a positive evaluation of the answer, thus following the basic IRE structure (Mehan, 1979) which is characteristic for classroom interaction. Nevertheless, teachers also accept the Czech answer and then elaborate on the reply by asking additional questions in English, requiring that students use the target language, as we can see in Examples 3 and 5. Such additional questions could also be identified as "understanding-display sequences" (Waring et al., 2013). In one sequence (Example 7), the language in which students should answer the teacher's question was negotiated.

Sequences analyzed in this paper show that students have more options to demonstrate their understanding when asked about word meaning. General questions (e.g. "what's that?", "what is X?" or "what does X mean?") prompt students to answer in Czech, which is accepted by the teachers. Students might be inclined to answer these questions in Czech because sometimes teachers ask directly for the Czech equivalent of the word (e.g. "what do we say in Czech?"). Specific questions or requests to describe X in English are answered in English. The in-depth analysis is therefore relevant for foreign language teachers, prospective teachers, and teacher educators because it shows how teachers' questions may influence students' code choice in their answers. Further research on this topic in the Czech educational context can help teachers make informed decisions about the use of the L1 in EFL classrooms.

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APPENDIX

Transcription conventions (adapted from Jefferson, 2004; Vaníčková, 2014)

T	teacher
S	student
Ss	more students speaking
[ ]	overlap
=	immediate reaction to the previous utterance
w<u>or</u>d	stress
°word°	a word pronounced more softly
(word)	a dubious word
(xxx)	an unclear word
((laughs))	commentary
matka	switching into L1 (Czech)
e, ee, eee	hesitation sounds
e, eh, ehm	sounds containing [ə]
hm	one-syllable sound produced with closed mouth
mhm	two-syllable sound produced with closed mouth (affirmation)
ehe	two-syllable sound produced with open mouth (affirmation)
e-e	two-syllable sound made of two separate [ə] sounds produced separately (to express disagreement)
(1,5)	pause length
(.)	micro pause
(..)	relatively short pause
(...)	relatively long pause
-	cut-off
?	rising intonation
.	falling intonation
,	slight rise or fall of intonation

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