

French Language Teaching within the Czech Education System 1870–1930: school System, Official Teaching Methods and Textbooks

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of the present paper is to specify the position of French language teaching within the Czech education system in the 1870s–1930s. The period was marked by important education reforms concerning not only the school system and the general structure of subjects taught, but also the official methods used in foreign-language teaching. The changes in society, culture and education led to what is today called the Golden Age of Francophony in Bohemia, a time when French language dominated as the language of diplomacy and of the cultural and social elite. It also represented the second most widely-studied foreign language at Czech secondary schools besides German. The status of French-language teaching is presented from three different perspectives. Firstly, we focus on specific types of schools where French language had appeared for the first time as a regular subject, then on the most important education reforms which had led to the development of these schools. Secondly, we analyze the official or otherwise influential methods of teaching modern languages used in the Czech educational environment, and finally we briefly present the corpus of period French-language textbooks which is currently being analysed within our dissertation thesis research. The contribution is largely based on primary-source texts: *Methodology of French and German Languages* from 1916 and on *Methodology of French Language* published in 1926 by professor and methodologist Jaroslav Otakar Hruška, who was also the author of the so-called Mediation or Analytic-Synthetic Method (*metoda zprostředkovačí*), as well as on selected works on the history of pedagogy and on analyses of the most frequently used period textbooks.

KEY WORDS:

Czech education system, French language teaching, language teaching methodology, period language textbooks, school reforms

1. INTRODUCTION

The studied period of 1870–1930 represents only a short segment in the history of French language teaching, but within the Czech education system it enables us to demonstrate the development of all major teaching methods and approaches that had existed in the European context of the time concerned. We use the notion of Czech education system as a system of public state schools where Czech was used as the official teaching language, so it may slightly differ from its usual meaning. The formal existence of the independent Czech education system, as the system regulated by the Czech government, dates back as far as 1918 when the Bohemian kingdom officially trans-

formed into Czechoslovakia after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The development of the Czech education system should be thus studied with regard to the specific features of the Austrian system of education. French language teaching in our education environment had been forming under very interesting influences comprising the heritage of J. A. Comenius, the tradition of Grammar-Translation Method used for teaching classical languages, in addition to its modifications applied to modern language teaching during the first half of the 18th century on the one hand, and the influences brought into Bohemia by French teachers and professionals based on the reform pedagogy and the Direct Method on the other hand. The Czech education environment enriched the existing teaching methods with a new approach based on the search for compromise between the two contradictory methods. The present paper aims to present a detailed view of the circumstances under which the Mediation Method was formed.

2. CZECH EDUCATION SYSTEM (1870–1930): SCHOOL REFORMS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TYPES OF SCHOOLS

In the second half of the 19th century (1872–1874) French language entered for the first time the official school curriculum as a regular obligatory subject within the system of state schools in Bohemia. Up to this time knowledge of French had been solely restricted to the nobility, cultural elites and diplomats, although cultural and political relations between France and Bohemia had been established more than 500 years earlier. The introduction of modern languages into the school curriculum is closely connected to changes in the general approach towards education and extensive school reforms, which had been underway in the Austro-Hungarian Empire since the second half of the 19th century, and whose objective was to modernize the existing system of elementary and secondary schools based on medieval models of ecclesiastical education. The following part of the study concentrates mainly on the development of secondary education as the French language has never been obligatory at elementary schools in Bohemia.

2.1 THE EXNER-BONITZ'S REFORM OF 1849 AND THE ACT ON EQUALITY OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES 1866

The origins of the 19th century reforms of Austrian education date back to the reign of Maria Theresa in the 18th century but the first genuine step towards the modern secondary education system was the Exner-Bonitz's reform of 1849, the year after the Ministry of Education and Culture had been established. The first minister Lev Thun¹ assigned the task of the modernisation of Austrian secondary education to Prague Professor of Philosophy Franz Exner and German classic philologist Hermann Bonitz. After a short

1 The emperor Ferdinand I of Austria originally offered the post to František Palacký, who after a short reflection refused. Eventually it turned out to be the best result possible, even for the emperor himself because when the Austrian and Hungarian population of the Austrian Monarchy learned about the his offer to Palacký, there were immediate and violent reactions which forced Ferdinand to temporarily flee Vienna (Morkes, 2002, pp. 6–8).

and intensive period of work, they published, on September 16th 1849, *Entwurf der Organisation der Gymnasien und Realschulen in Österreich*, a document which influenced the system of secondary schools in the Austrian Monarchy for the next 100 years. It helped, on the one hand, to stabilize the traditional form of secondary education, which was focused on classical languages and literature needed for further study at universities, represented by Gymnasium. On the other hand, it established a relatively new type of secondary school (which had originally belonged among higher elementary schools) putting emphasis on mathematics, sciences and technical subjects needed for future study at Polytechnics and technological universities, the so-called Realschule. The existence of two contradictory modules in secondary education also represented the split public opinion on education in general. One part of society could not imagine it without Latin and Greek, which were seen as a means of attaining classical culture, philosophy and moral values, the other part declared the need for more practical education based on technical subjects and modern languages corresponding to the fast developing industry and sciences. Concerning language education, the mother tongue (Czech or German) as well as Latin and Greek were taught at Gymnasium while the mother tongue and the second national language (German or Czech) were taught at Realschule. French and other modern languages were not obligatory, but students usually chose French as the second modern foreign language. The question of the official teaching language was quite complicated because the majority of subjects at secondary schools in Bohemia were still taught in German, or partly in Czech and partly in German; thus we cannot consider German as a genuine foreign language. The Czech population was naturally bilingual. The situation radically changed after 1866 when the Emperor Franz Joseph I passed a law on the equality of all customary languages in school, office and public life which in 1867 became part of the Austro-Hungarian constitution. This meant the end of so-called *utraquist* (mixed Czech and German) teaching and the second country language finally became an obligatory subject. However, the German speaking population often refused to learn Czech and many exceptions were granted to German secondary schools in Bohemia, enabling them to teach a different modern language (in the majority of cases it was French, later English) instead of Czech. In reaction to this situation, French progressively made its way into Czech secondary schools as well (Cach – Valenta, 1990, pp. 35–44). The Table 1 shows the growing number of weekly lessons of French at different types of Realschulen.²

Year	Czech Realschule in Bohemia 1876–1898	Czech Realschule in Moravia and German Realschule in Bohemia 1876–1898	Czech Realschule in Bohemia 1898–1919	German Realschule in Bohemia after 1899
I.	0	0	0	6
II.	0	5	0	5
III.	5	5	5	5

2 Matoušek (1911, pp. 26–31).

Year	Czech Realschule in Bohemia 1876–1898	Czech Realschule in Moravia and German Realschule in Bohemia 1876–1898	Czech Realschule in Bohemia 1898–1919	German Realschule in Bohemia after 1899
IV	3	3	4	3
V.	3	3	4	3
VI.	3	3	3	3
VII.	3	5	3	3

TABLE 1: Number of weekly lessons of French at different types of Realschulen.

2.2 HASNER'S SCHOOL LAW OF 1869: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW TYPES OF SCHOOLS: REALGYMNASIUM AND HIGHER ELEMENTARY "TOWN SCHOOL"

The need for the development of industry and technologies in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy after the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 increased the demand for adequately prepared professionals. Leopold Hasner, who worked as a minister of education in 1867–1870, passed a new school law in 1869 which reflected needs of society, whereby studies at Realschule were prolonged from six to seven years and final exams, similar to those at Gymnasium, were introduced. The practically oriented education at Realschule was becoming more and more popular. However, the two different types of secondary schools still coexisted, which forced all pupils to decide at a relatively young age (10–11 years) whether to focus their studies on classical languages or on technical subjects, natural sciences and modern languages. The first attempts to create a compromise appeared in Tábor (South Bohemia) around 1860. The citizens of Tábor tried to establish a gymnasium in their town. After several unsuccessful attempts a French-language professor of the local Realschule, Emmanuel Krejč, elaborated a course structure connecting both types of secondary schools, where German, Czech, French and classical languages were taught and where students could choose as late as in their third year whether to continue in the study of Latin or whether to take up French instead of Greek, as is presented in the course structure below. A new type of secondary school, Realgymnasium, was established (Cach — Valenta, 1990, pp. 54–55).

Year	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	In total
Gymnasium module - G			G/R	G/R	G/R	G/R	G/R	G	G/R
Realschule module - R									
Religious education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16/14
Latin	6	6	6	6/-	5/-	6/-	6/-	6	46/18
Greek	-	-	4/-	4/-	4/-	5/-	4/-	5	26/-
Czech	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	17/14
German	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	30/26
French	-	-	-	-/3	-/2	-/2	-/2	-	-/9

Year	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	In total
History and Geography	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	24/223
Mathematics	3	3	3	4	4	4	2-Apr	1	24/25
Physics	-	-	1	3	-	-/4	4	4	12-Dec
Biology	2	2	-	-	3	2	-	-	9-Sep
Chemistry	-	-	1	-/3	-/2	2	-/3	-	3-Nov
Descript. geometry	5	3	2	-/2	-/4	-/2	-/4	-	Oct-22
Drawing	-	4	-/4	-/4	-/4	-/4	-/2	-	Apr-22
Handwriting	2	1	-/2	-	-	-	-	-	3-May
Philosophic propaedeutics	-	-	-	-	-	-	2/-	2/-	4/-

TABLE 2: Realgymnasium course structure³ (the numbers represent weekly lessons).

Although Realgymnasien offered a solution to the problem of separated classical and practically oriented secondary education, they remained rare till 1908 partly due to the reluctance of the Austrian Ministry of Education which was still in favour of classical secondary education based on Latin.

The most influential part of Hasner's school law concerned the reform of elementary education. The existing system of elementary schools copied, as in the case of secondary schools before 1848, the model of medieval ecclesiastical schools. There were basically two types of elementary schools in Bohemia: General Elementary Schools (*obecné školy*) which provided education to the lowest classes of the population and the so-called Town Schools (*městanské školy*) which existed in larger towns and which soon acquired the status of higher elementary schools because only they entitled pupils to continue with their studies at secondary schools. Hasner's system of elementary school education was based on eight year long obligatory attendance where pupils aged 6–14 could choose between an eight-year General Elementary School, five-year General Elementary School plus three years at Town School, or from eight years at Town School. At the age of 10, children could also continue their studies at a secondary school. All elementary schools were originally administrated by the Catholic Church (mainly Jesuits). Hasner's law reduced the influence of the Church on education by charging towns and regions to administrate them. Concerning languages taught at elementary schools, the situation was similar to secondary schools. German at Czech schools and Czech at German schools were not obligatory but after 1866 French started to be taught at German Town schools as an optional subject instead of Czech and later it entered the Czech Town schools as well (Rýdl — Váňová — Valenta, 1992, pp. 6–16).

2.3 MARCHET'S REFORM OF 1908

The last influential Minister of Education in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was Gustav Marchet who led the ministry in 1906–1908. His reform followed vivid discussions among teaching professionals concerning the role of languages in modern secondary education. The Czech idea of Realgymnasium was revived and two new types of

³ Valenta and Cach (1990, p. 55).

this secondary school (Realgymnasium and Reform Realgymnasium) with obligatory Latin and French but without Greek enriched the existing system of Gymnasien and Realschulen. The study at Gymnasium, Realgymnasium and Reform Realgymnasium lasted eight years, at Realschule it was seven years. The graduates of all four types of secondary schools were authorized to continue their studies at different universities after having passed their final exams, although in some cases additional exams from Latin or descriptive geometry were needed. The statistics show that the new practically oriented types of secondary schools soon gained popularity: according to Cach and Valenta (1990, pp. 57) there were 83 secondary schools in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia before 1908, out of which there were 33 Realschulen and 8 Czech Realgymnasien. In 1913 there were 127 Czech, Moravian and Silesian secondary schools, out of which there were 46 Realschulen and 35 Realgymnasien. The following course structure shows the total number of weekly lessons at an eight-year Realgymnasium after Marchet's reform. This system remained practically unchanged until 1918 when the education system had to react to political and social changes after the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia.

Subject	Total number of weekly lessons / 8 years
Religious education	16
Czech	26
Latin	45
French	21
History	18
Geography	11
Mathematics	23
Descriptive geometry	4
Biology and Geology	12
Chemistry	4
Physics	12
Philosophical propaedeutics	3
Drawing	10
Handwriting	1
Physical education	16
Optional German	26

TABLE 3: Realgymnasium course structure after 1908.⁴

2.4 CZECHOSLOVAKIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AFTER 1918 – BYDŽOVSKÝ'S AND DÉRER'S REFORMS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The first important task of the newly established Czechoslovakian Ministry of Education was to remodel and unify the system of secondary schools where all subjects would be taught in national languages — Czech and Slovak — and to prepare a new

⁴ Cach and Valenta (1990, p. 67).

school law. Primarily Slovakian education needed profound changes as, unlike the Czech system, it had followed the Hungarian and not the Austrian model. German language at all Czech schools was definitely moved from the position of the official teaching language to the position of a regular subject although the number of German schools in Bohemia was still high. There were 128 German secondary schools in the school year 1913/1914, 123 in 1920/1921 and only 98 in 1933/1934 comparing to 162 Czechoslovakian secondary schools in 1913/1914, 249 in 1920/1921 and 273 in 1933/1934.⁵

Owing to the importance of French diplomacy in establishing independent Czechoslovakia, French language was becoming more and more popular but in German schools in Bohemia it was often replaced by English. Despite many attempts, reform proposals and discussions, the real reform of Czechoslovakian education came as late as in the late 1920s. During the first twenty years of the existence of Czechoslovakia there were more than 18 different governments, 9 prime ministers and 15 ministers of education.⁶ It is logical that under such unstable conditions the attempts at educational reform had to make concessions to more important issues, e.g. post-war restoration of the economy, industry and infrastructure. However, in 1927 all course structures of secondary schools were revised and adjusted so there were only two systems of lower secondary education (year I. — year IV.). The following Tables 4–7 show the number of language lessons at different types of Czech secondary schools after the “small secondary school reform” of 1927 (Kádner, 1931, pp. 96–99).

1. Gymnasium

Year	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	In total
Czech	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	29
German	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	26
Latin	6	6	6	6	4	4	4	5	41
Greek	–	–	–	–	6	6	6	6	24
French	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

2. Realschule

Year	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	In total
Czech	6	4	4	3	4	3	4	28
German	5	3	3	3	3	2	2	21
Latin	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Greek	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
French	–	4	4	4	3	3	3	21

5 Váňová, Rýdl and Valenta (1992, pp. 178–179). The numbers of secondary schools in this case comprised Gymnasien, Realgymnasien, Reform Realgymnasien, Realschulen, secondary schools for future teachers and girls' Lycea.

6 Morkes (2002, p. 24).

3. Realgymnasium

Year	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	In total
Czech	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	29
German	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	26
Latin	6	6	6	6	4	4	4	5	41
Greek	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
French/ English	–	–	–	–	6	6	4	4	20

4. Reform Realgymnasium

Year	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	In total
Czech	6	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	30
German	5	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	24
Latin	–	–	–	–	5	4	4	4	17
English/Italian or a Slavic lang.	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	8
French/English	–	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	26

TABLES 4–7: The number of language lessons at different types of Czech secondary schools after the “small secondary school reform” of 1927.

The Czechoslovakian education system still followed the Austrian model but under the influence of the educational reform movement, more and more professionals (Bydžovský, Příhoda, Chlup, Stejskal and others) criticised the existing system. The demand for democratic, more effective, paedocentric and practically oriented education culminated in the 1930s during the tenure of the minister Ivan Dérer.

Dérer established two reform committees, one for elementary education led by V. Příhoda and the second for secondary schools led by B. Bydžovský. Both committees started working on a new school curriculum, they revised the structure and contents of all subjects taught, and finally they discussed in depth the objectives of both classical and modern-language education. The new goal of language teaching in post-war Czechoslovakia was to raise young people in the sense of European togetherness and to teach them about the mutual bases of European culture (Váňová — Rýdl — Valenta, 1992, pp. 213–225). The formal goal of the secondary education reforms in the 1920s and 1930s was to reduce the existing four types of schools to two basic types of Gymnasium (Latin and French/Greek) and Realschule (modern languages and technical subjects) but World War II came before the reforms could have been fully applied.

3. METHODS OF FRENCH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND PERIOD TEXTBOOKS (1870–1930)

Although we cannot go back to the past to observe the actual ways and methods of teaching foreign languages, we can learn about them from period articles on language

teaching methodology and mainly from the analyses of period textbooks. In the following part of the study, we present characteristics of the methods which were either used within the Czech education system as official teaching methods, or which had influenced the way modern languages were taught in the period concerned (1870–1930). Even though French language as a regular subject entered the curriculum of Czech schools as late as the 1870s, it had served as a model for the teaching of other foreign languages across Europe. This was caused mainly by the fact that French, among other modern languages, had the richest literature on language teaching methodology by the end of the 18th century (Hruška, 1911–1912, p. 94).

3.1 THE FIRST TEXTBOOKS FOR TEACHING MODERN LANGUAGES IN BOHEMIA AND THE LEGACY OF J. A. COMENIUS

Although we are focusing on the period of 1870–1930, when speaking about language teaching we cannot forget to mention the omnipresent influence of J. A. Comenius (1592–1670). His *Didactica Magna* (1657), *Ianua Linguarum Reserata* (1631), *Methodus Linguarum Novissima* (1644–1647) and finally *Orbis Pictus* (1658) laid the foundations for language teaching as we know it today. The enlightened school reforms of Maria Theresa brought his works back to the centre of attention of the period pedagogy. In 1777 the first *Book of Methods*⁷ was published to provide teachers with instruction on teaching German at elementary schools in Austria. It was written in German and Czech but it soon appeared very difficult to apply the method of teaching German to Czech-speaking pupils who were forced to start studying the language just a short time after they were introduced to writing and reading in their mother tongue. The solution came in the form of the small publication *Einige Hilfsmittel* published in 1779 which was strongly inspired by *Orbis Pictus*. German was taught according to the natural way children acquired their mother tongue during the first two years of the study. They imitated the pronunciation of their teacher; comprehension was assured by using pictures or real objects. The teachers also used techniques of what we could compare with the contemporary TPR (Total Physical Response) Method when children had to carry out different physical activities according to teacher's instructions in the target language. Grammar, writing and reading started to be taught in the third year of study and in the fourth year the pupils were able to follow the lesson solely in German. They worked with short texts, usually stories or fables which were used for reading, memorization, retelling and dramatization (Hruška, 1911–1912, p. 99). The influence of Comenius' approach towards language teaching is obvious. Several of the first modern language textbooks published in the Austrian Monarchy were different language versions of *Orbis Pictus* e.g. the 1779 version in the Czech language, 1817 French–German version, or J. Chmela's 1833 multilingual version written in Latin, German, Czech, Polish and French. Unfortunately, it was applied only to teaching children at elementary schools and the original form of *Orbis Pictus* was frequently simplified by the omission of pictures.

7 *Methodenbuch für Lehrer der deutschen Schulen in den k. k. Erbländern. Kniha methodní pro učitele českých škol v c. k. zemích* (1777). Praha: Nákladem c. k. Pravidelné školské kněhotiskárny.

Language education at secondary schools still followed the “Latin pattern” of the Grammar-Translation Method where students learned the language from extensive grammar books arranged according to the parts of speech, and they were forced to analyse, memorize and translate long texts. Grammar was taught deductively and systematically. The objective of the systematic study of grammar was not only to provide students with knowledge needed for reading and translating but also to form their moral values, character and to teach them obedience.

3.2 LANGUAGE TEACHING DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY – MEIDINGER, JACOTOT AND METHODS BASED ON “METHODICAL” GRAMMAR

The Grammar-Translation Method was deservedly criticized. The study of classical languages was too long and ineffective and it was impossible to apply successfully the same teaching techniques to modern languages. At the end of the 18th century and during the first half of the 19th century there appeared first attempts to adjust the existing grammar books so that students were able not only to learn how to translate and read in the target language, but also to speak and write in everyday communication. One of these attempts was the method of Johann Valentin Meidinger (1756–1822), who had lived and worked in Frankfurt. In 1783 he published his *Practische Französische Grammatik* in which he adjusted the traditional arrangement according to the parts of speech and paid attention to pronunciation. The students began with a chapter on pronunciation, continued to bilingual lists of words and phrases, declinations and conjugations, and they finished their studies with reading and translating short texts, usually humorous stories, dialogues or extracts from literary works. His grammar book had immense success and it lived to see 37 different editions. The Meidinger’s method had also influenced the subsequent Czech textbooks of J. N. Sýkora for autodidacts learning French.

Another successful modification of the Grammar-Translation Method was the so-called Interlinear Method of Jean J. Jacotot (1770–1840). In 1823 Jacotot published, in reaction to Meidinger, a theoretic work called *Enseignement universel* where he presented his innovative view of using literary works for teaching languages. Jacotot refused Meidinger’s grammar because he considered the systematic study of grammar too time-consuming. His method was based on the first book of Fénelon’s *Telemachus* where the lines of the original text were arranged in such a way that there was enough space for a word-for-word translation. Students started with the imitation of teacher’s reading which served as a model of pronunciation, then they analysed the text, memorised it, translated it and finally they tried to write their own texts similar to the original one. The main idea of the Jacotot’s method was that the majority of grammatical structures and basic vocabulary is included in every single literary work, thus it is enough to cover in detail one literary work to learn a language at a sufficient level to understand written texts. The method did not include any explicit study of grammar or speaking as everything was submitted to the study of the selected literary work. The Jacotot’s method was not very successful at state schools because especially younger pupils were not able to deduce grammatical rules from the

text and to translate it without any further study of grammar. The book of *Telemachus* soon proved not to be a good choice either as it was not comprehensible for children. However, the method was very popular among adult learners and autodidacts. Robertson modified the Jacotot's Method for English but he used much shorter and easier texts. In Bohemia the method appeared in several textbooks during the second half of the 19th century, e.g. in Březanovský's French textbook published in 1863, Schmidt-Beauchez's textbooks for French and German, and Mourek's textbook for English published in 1886. It was also used in Schulz's textbook for German students learning Czech as a foreign language (Hruška, 1916, p. 7).

The last widely used group of methods approached the question of grammar from a completely different point of view: namely their advocates refused the systematic study of grammar in favour of short sample phrases taken from everyday conversation followed by simple exercises which pupils learned by heart. This was the basis of the so-called Methodical Grammar of J. H. Seidenstücker (1765–1817). Even though it may seem strange and impossible to study a language without any systematic grammar, the task was simplified by the fact that all the phrases were arranged into meaningful groups linked by a mutual topic and translated into the mother tongue. What is more, the selection of examples was limited to those phrases whose syntactic structure was similar in both languages. The same system based on methodical grammar was adopted by Fr. Ahn and H. G. Ollendorff who further simplified the sample phrases and focused on using mechanical language drill exercises. Seidenstücker's method was approved as the official teaching method for teaching German as a foreign language within the Austrian monarchy from 1856 until 1898. It was also used for instance in Léon Grellepois' textbook for French published in 1866 (Hruška, 1916, p. 8).

3.3 THE FAILURE OF THE DIRECT METHOD AND THE SEARCH FOR COMPROMISE

Under the influence of the Reform Movement initiated by Wilhelm Viëtor during the last years of the 19th century, the existing methods based on comparison of the grammatical systems of two different languages and on translation were questioned again. This time the European teaching professionals focused their attention on the way children acquired their mother tongue and this search for humanity, naturalness and simplicity in foreign language teaching culminated in the widely known Direct Method represented by such personalities as François Gouin, Henry Sweet or Maximilian Berlitz. All these methods completely refused the study of grammar and translation. The mother tongue was forbidden during lessons and the preferred teachers were native speakers who were often forced to complicatedly explain the meaning of new words without knowing the language of their pupils. Although the objectives of the direct method were noble: native-speaker like pronunciation, fluent spoken expression and knowledge of culture and civilisation rather than the literature of the target language, they soon proved unattainable. The method was used only in private education (e.g. Berlitz's language schools). Unlike in France, where the direct method was approved as the official teaching method, the Czech Reform Movement representatives refused the extreme solution of the problems concerning the Gram-

mar-Translation Method and in conformity with the legacy of J. A. Comenius they strived for a compromise between the direct and grammar-translation approaches. The solution came in the form of the eclectic Mediation Method (or Analytic-Synthetic Method) of Prague professor of German and French language-teaching methodology Jaroslav Otakar Hruška (1866–1929). His method became the official teaching method in 1898 and it had retained its position until World War II.

3.4 THE MEDIATION METHOD OF J. O. HRUŠKA

Hruška's objective was to propose a feasible method of language teaching which would take account of the specificities of Czech learners, the school curriculum and the changing needs of society at the beginning of the 20th century. He tried to take the best out of the two contradictory approaches but he also drew inspiration from his profound knowledge of the period research in developmental psychology, pedagogy and structural linguistics. Hruška's method was based, similarly to the direct method, on the assumption that language is primarily an auditory formation, so he strictly followed the "listening-speaking-reading-writing" order of teaching language skills. Unlike the direct method, Hruška stressed that all language skills should be acquired consciously, so the students should always know what and why they are learning. His idea of language education also corresponded with the existing course structures and school curriculum, thus it was divided into three self-contained levels; the first two levels lasting two years and the third level lasting ideally three years. All three levels had three general objectives: practical (to master the language), formal (to form the moral and aesthetic values of the students) and finally to acquire knowledge of life and civilisation.

The first level comprised the basics of pronunciation, regular grammatical structures and vocabulary concerning topics familiar to students. The method was based on adequately long texts: stories, descriptions, dialogues, letters, poems, songs, etc., concerning topics such as school supplies, colours, time and date, human body, clothes, family, nature, jobs, seasons, etc. The teacher read the text, the students imitated their pronunciation, while comprehension was ensured by using real objects, pictures or explanations in the target language but also, where it was more effective, by translation into the mother tongue. The teacher checked students' understanding by asking them questions. Students learned writing by copying the text and translating (usually as their homework). The grammar was taught according to the scheme: analysis — induction — synthesis (Hruška, 1926, p. 90).

The second level focused on more difficult issues, irregular verbs, independent reading and writing practice and selected extracts from literary works. The texts usually dealt with geography, history and culture of France or other European countries. The last level put emphasis on the study of stylistics and literature.

4. PERIOD TEXTBOOKS

It is logical that the success of the Mediation Method was closely linked to the existence of appropriate textbooks and well prepared teachers. Under the influence of

the preceding methods, language textbooks tended to use excessively long and complicated texts, so Hruška repeatedly appealed to the authors of textbooks to reduce them. His method was also more demanding for the teachers as they had to be proficient not only in the target language and general linguistics but they also had to follow the precise methodical procedure and be aware of all the basic pedagogic and psychological principles. The combined influence of changes in the teaching methods, the rapid increase in the number of schools where French was taught as an obligatory subject, together with the growth of the total number of students prompted the authors to publish a variety of textbooks, exercise books and chrestomathies following the new official method and aimed at specific types of learners. The Golden age of French language teaching culminated just before World War II and as we can see from the number of textbooks published in the 1920s and 1930s it was also the Golden age of textbooks. According to the research of Zuzana Raková (2011, pp. 50–55), the total number of students of French language reached 51,400⁸ which represented more than 85% of all secondary school students. The following list shows the most frequently used or otherwise influential textbooks of the period concerned, which are being systematically analysed as a part of our dissertation thesis research.

4.1 FRENCH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS (IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

- 1830: MEIDINGER, Johann Valentin (1830): *Practische Französische Grammatik*. Wien: C. Haas.
- 1847: DUCHESNE, Jacinta (1847): *Snadné navedení ku francouzské řeči pro československou mládež*. Praha.
- 1863: KREGCZ [= KREJČ], Emanuel (1863): *Elementární mluvnice jazyka francouzského*. Praha: I. L. Kober.
- 1864: KREGCZ [= KREJČ], Emanuel (1864): *Chrestomatie francouzská pro střední školy*. Praha: I. L. Kober.
- 1868: WALTER Z WALDHEIMU, Jindřich (1868): *Le livre des demoiselles. Francouzská čítanka pro dívčí školy*. Praha: Tiskem a nákladem kněhtiskárny Dr. Fr. Skřejšovského.
- 1871: GABLER, Vilém (1871): *Čítanka francouzská pro vyšší dívčí školy*. Praha: I. L. Kober.
- 1885: HERZER, Jan (1885): *Skladba jazyka francouzského pro vyšší třídy středních škol českých*. Praha: A. Storch syn.
- 1886: HERZER, Jan (1886): *Cvičebná kniha ku překládání na jazyk francouzský*. Praha: A. Storch syn.
- 1886: HERZER, Jan (1886): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro školy měšťanské. Stupeň první*. Praha: A. Storch syn.
- 1888: HERZER, Jan (1888): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro školy měšťanské. Stupeň druhý*. Praha: A. Storch syn.
- 1890: HERZER, Jan (1890): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro školy měšťanské. Stupeň třetí*. Praha: A. Storch syn.
- 1894: KOSINA, Jan (1894): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro školu i dům*. Praha: J. Otta.

8 Compared to 28, 250.

- 1895: ŠUBRT, František (1895): *Učebnice a čítanka francouzská. Díl 1, Pro 3. třídu českých škol středních* [3., upr. vyd.]. Praha: Gustav Neugebauer.
- 1910: POVER, František — VOJTÍŠEK, František (1910): *Lectures choisies à l'usage de l'enseignement secondaire tchèque* [2. vyd.]. Praha: Česká grafická akc. společnost Unie.
- 1912: NEPOKOJ, Jan (1912): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro školy měšťanské. Díl 1, Úvod do francouzského hovorů a mluvnice*. Praha: Císařský královský školní knihosklad.
- 1921: NEPOKOJ, Jan (1921): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro školy měšťanské. II, Francouzský hovor a mluvnice. Čítanka*. Praha: Státní nakladatelství.
- 1922: BORNECQUE, Henri — BARTOŠEK, Julius — BERNARD, Josef (1922): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro reálná gymnasia, reálky a dívčí lycea. I*. Praha: Vydavatelství družstva českých profesorů.
- 1923: BORNECQUE, Henri — BARTOŠEK, Julius — BERNARD, Josef (1923): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro reálná, ref. reálná gymnasia a reálky chlapecké i dívčí. Kniha 2*. Praha: Vydavatelství družstva českých profesorů.
- 1924: BORNECQUE, Henri — BARTOŠEK, Julius — BERNARD, Josef (1924): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro reálná, ref. reálná gymnasia a reálky chlapecké i dívčí. Kniha 3*. Praha: Profesorské nakladatelství.
- 1924: NEPOKOJ, Jan (1924): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro školy měšťanské. Díl 1, Úvod do francouzského hovorů a mluvnice (pro 1. a 2. ročník)*. Praha: Státní nakladatelství.
- 1924: POVER, František — VOJTÍŠEK, František (1924): *Grammaire française à l'usage de l'enseignement secondaire tchèque* [5. přepracované vydání]. Prague: Československá grafická unie.
- 1924: ROCHER, Karel (1924): *Učebnice staré franštiny jako uvedení do historického studia jazyků vůbec*. Praha: Kvasnička a Hampl.
- 1925: BERNÁŠEK, Antonín (1925): *Apprenez le français. Učte se francouzsky. Nová praktická metoda učiti se francouzsky pouhým čtením, roč. 1. č. 1-8*. Praha: František Taufer.
- 1926: BERLITZ, Maximilian Delphinus (1926): *Berlitz, Premier livre, méthode pour l'enseignement des langues modernes, nouvelle édition*. London — Berlin — Buenos Aires — Paris: M. D. Berlitz.
- 1931: BORNECQUE, Henri — BARTOŠEK, Julius — BERNARD, Josef (1931): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro VI. třídu reálných gymnasií chlapeckých i dívčích. Manuel pour l'enseignement de la langue française pour la VIe classe des gymnases réels de garçons et de jeunes filles*. Praha: Profesorské nakladatelství a knihkupectví.
- 1930: TENORA, Bohuš — ŠESTÁK, Antonín (1931): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro střední školy: pro 4. třídu reálky, ref. reál. gymnasií a pro 5. a 6. třídu reálných gymnasií. Díl 2*. Brno: A. Píša.
- 1932: BILLAUDEAU, Eugène — BILLAUDEAU, Jarmila — HRABOVSKÝ, J. (1932): *Nouveau manuel de français pratique: Lectures sur la vie pratique ainsi que sur la France et ses institutions* [2e édition]. Brno: Rovnost.
- 1932: SMOLÁK, Vladimír (1932): *Grammaire française pour les classes supérieures de l'enseignement secondaire tchécoslovaque*. Prague: Československá grafická Unie.
- 1933: ČERVENKA, Vladimír (1933): *La Tchécoslovaquie: choix de textes de L. Leger, E. Denis, L. Eisenmann* [Lectures françaises: sbírka francouzské četby pro školu i veřejnost, 1]. Praha: Státní nakladatelství.

- 1933: BORNECQUE, Henri — BARTOŠEK, Julius — BERNARD, Josef (1931): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro VI. třídu reformních reálných gymnasií a reálek. Manuel pour l'enseignement de la langue française pour le VIe classe des gymnases réels de réforme et des écoles réales* [druhé, zcela přepracované vydání]. Praha: Profesorské nakladatelství a knihkupectví.
- 1934: SMOLÁK, Vladimír (1934): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro třetí třídu reálek a reformních reálných gymnasií*. Praha: Československá grafická Unie.
- 1935: SMOLÁK, Vladimír (1935): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro čtvrtou třídu reálek a reformních reálných gymnasií*. Praha: Československá grafická Unie.
- 1935: TENORA, Bohuš — ŠESTÁK, Antonín (1935): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro IV. třídu reálek a reformních reálných gymnasií* [druhé, podle osnov upravené vydání]. Praha: Československá grafická Unie.
- 1936: SMOLÁK, Vladimír (1936): *Učebnice jazyka francouzského pro pátou třídu reálek a reformních reálných gymnasií*. Praha: Československá grafická Unie.
- 1936: TENORA, Bohuš — ŠESTÁK, Antonín (1936): *Francouzská čítanka pro pátou třídu reálek a reformních reálných gymnasií*. Praha: Československá grafická Unie.
- 1939: PECH, Vilém (1939): *První kroky do franštiny. Premiers pas en français*. Praha: Kvasnička a Hampl.

The above presented corpus of French language textbooks comprises several types of teaching materials among which public school textbooks of the so-called basic type dominate. Sýkora (1996, p. 23) characterises this type of textbooks by the presence of such structural components which model all basic stages of the education process: (motivation) – exposition – application – diagnostics/evaluation. The first French language textbooks published by Czech authors appeared in the second half of the 19th century and they were designed to be used either at private girls' schools (Duchesne, Gabler, Walter z Waldheimu) or at Realgymnasien (Krejč). In the 1880s the number and complexity of textbooks and textbook series rapidly increased which was connected to the introduction of French language into the official school curriculum as showed by Jan Herzer's textbooks for higher elementary town schools. These textbooks were often accompanied by separate chrestomathies, reading books and workbooks focused on translation language teaching methodology or grammar books. Another typical and important feature of the school textbooks of the period under scrutiny is that it was explicitly stated (by the Ministry of Education) in which year and at which type of schools they could be used. From the point of view of teaching methods, all textbooks in our corpus published before 1900 correspond to some form of Grammar-Translation Method with the exception of Kosina's Direct-Method textbook published in 1894.

The largest number of textbooks in our corpus were designed in the 1920s and 1930s to be used at different types of secondary schools⁹ for teaching according to the official Mediation Method of J. O. Hruška. The authors of these textbooks were Czech secondary school teachers and university lecturers as well as native speak-

9 Some of the 1930s textbooks are reeditions of 1920s series which were adjusted according to the changes to course structure due to Dérer's reforms.

ers or mixed Czech-French teams who took into consideration not only the practical needs of students and teachers but also reflected a sensible choice and structuring of language content (especially grammar) which was undoubtedly influenced by the forming of the Prague School of Structural and Functional Linguistics. The 1920s–1930s also represent the peak of the Czech reform movement in pedagogy led by Václav Příhoda (1889–1979) who brought the theories of Dewey and Thorndike closer to the Czech professional public. All these factors: the solid theoretical bases (linguistic, pedagogic and psychological), the favourable social and political situation and changes in the education system contributed to the high quality of period French-language textbooks.

5. CONCLUSION

The primary basis of our research is the analysis of period French language textbooks whose objective is to clarify the development of French language teaching and its position within the Czech education system. The above presented paper however focuses rather on the factors which influenced the development of these textbooks — namely the development of the Czech education system and official teaching methods. Language textbooks are frequently analysed from the point of view of their function within the education process, a measure which cannot be applied to period textbooks as they are no longer being used. Another possibility is to analyse a textbook as a self-contained product and focus only on its structure and content. This category of research brings to light valuable data concerning the characteristic of texts (e.g. their complexity, comprehensibility), and structuring of different textbook components — both textual and extra-textual. We believe that period language textbooks represent a tangible intersection of three different but interacting levels of factors which influence the resulting form of language education — respectively, the education environment, the teaching method and the prevailing theory of language. It is thus impossible to analyse these textbooks and their development irrespective of the changes within the school system and the development of theories in both language teaching methodology and linguistics.

The studied period of the 1870s–1930s represents only a short moment in the history of Czech-French relations but it enables us to understand the circumstances of the implementation of French language into the Czech school curriculum and the reasons why this language became so popular at the time when the education system of independent Czechoslovakia was still forming. New types of practically oriented secondary schools (Realschule and Realgymnasium) emerged to satisfy the need of Czech society for technically educated graduates. It was in the curriculum of these schools where French language replaced classical languages as a regular obligatory subject. The changing general approach to language education influenced by the reform movement along with new findings in psychology, pedagogy and linguistics enabled the emergence and application of modern teaching methods in the first half of the 20th century. In reaction to traditional methods based on a comparative approach, i.e. systematic study of grammar and translation, new direct methods put emphasis

on spoken language and the inductive approach in teaching grammar. J. O. Hruška, the author of the official Mediation Method, took into account the characteristics of Czech learners and the conditions and objectives of the Czech education system which helped to consolidate the position of French language teaching within the school curriculum.

The growing importance of French language in the first half of the 20th century is apparent not only from the number of school textbooks published and from the number of students who were learning it at state schools but also from the popularity of this language among Czech people in general. There is a number of textbooks, reading and conversation books intended for autodidacts, students of private language schools, small children or people who were simply interested in French culture and who wanted to learn more about it. We believe that the popularity of French language and culture in the Czech education environment was largely influenced by the interplay of favourable social and political conditions but also by the high quality of language teaching and textbooks.

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