

CONTINUITY OF TRADITIONAL AND NEW TENDENCIES IN L1 TEACHING¹

A scientific essay on the challenges and projections

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Abstract

The study focuses on the basic dimensions of the teaching of mother tongue (L1) in relation to new challenges and prospects in the European context. The introductory part of the paper highlights some stimuli and inspirations from Polish professional provenance in the second half of the 20th century. The core of the paper focuses on four basic dimensions in L1 teaching set against the background of a variety of relevant educational documents and decrees, current scientific knowledge, the author's research and authentic pedagogical practice. The dimensions are: 1. A reference framework for education in the EU focusing on the competences a person requires to function in the 21st century. 2. The training and lifelong education of an L1 teachers, including the evaluation of the results of their work. 3. Educational programmes and standards for the teaching of L1, including the output measurement tools. 4. Comprehensive cognition, diagnostics and pupil's personality development which respects the pupil's learning abilities and utilises the influence of the educational system and the overall circumstances of the pupil's life.

Keywords: teacher, pupil, school, competence, education, L1, Slovak language and literature, educational program, goals, educational strategies.

¹ A pre-version of this study was presented in the L1-Research Archives Online Repository in 2018. The paper has not yet been registered or registered in any journal publication databases.

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of mother tongue (L1)² is one of the relevant socio-cultural activities of man and society. It has a dynamic and historically conditioned nature. Its form changes and it is determined by a complex spectrum of diverse factors. Both, the conceptualisation and concrete realization of the educational process of L1 teaching, depends, on the one hand, on the needs, demands and expectations of society, and, on the other hand, on the state of the knowledge of this field and the actual developmental and specific capabilities of pupils and the teacher within their specific conditions. Therefore, the innovation or dynamics in L1 teaching represents a ubiquitous process in an open and creative sense. It means that any change in the broad context of the theory and practice of L1 teaching asserts certain pressure in order to change activities within this specific phenomenon of society's influence over the young person. It could be seen as some form of connected vessels, or homeostasis. It is the law-governed, mutual and interactional relationship of two systems of socio-cultural activity of man in the concrete historically updated circumstances of life. A new orientation and transformation of society presupposes that the conceptualisation and realization of L1 teaching will transform too.

Similarly, new knowledge gained by research—pertaining to communication, pedagogy, didactics, psychology and other related disciplines in the broad spectrum of human cognition—means its adequate incorporation into educational activities while teaching L1. Next, another aspect is the modernization and innovation of communication technologies, as can be lately observed. The suggested starting points underlie the reason why this essay will deal with a certain continuity of old and new progressive tendencies in the L1 teaching in the context of new challenges and perspectives. This is, after all, a significant issue relevant to all countries of the world, but especially to the Central European and European educational area, taking into account the common features of teaching mother tongue and literature, not just the perspective of specific national languages and literatures. I am convinced that the teaching of L1 presents certain specific features in the process of the profiling of the school and its graduates, which can be defined as common to every national language and literature. The convergence of these features could contribute to the qualitative transformation of the school and the education process as such. That is

² *Primary and secondary school curricula of some countries contain a subject called the mother tongue (L1), or specific language (e. g. Slovak, Czech, Polish) and literature, as is the case in the former socialist bloc after World War II. In the Slovak Republic and Czech Republic, this subject is taught as Slovak/Czech language and literature. In continuity with a progressive tradition and with regard to the wider international educational space, this essay will focus on the teaching of the mother tongue and communication; specifically the teaching of Slovak (Czech, English, German, Polish, etc.) language with the aim of developing the pupil's linguistic, communicative and cultural competence. The literary component will not be discussed in this paper and it will only be referred to in connection with the name used in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.*

also the purpose and the aim of this study. I want to uncover and classify the key dimensions of L1 teaching within the perspectives of developing the European educational area. It must be mentioned that my experience is primarily based on years of teaching Slovak language and literature (as L1), though in recent decades I have also closely followed the research and direction of the teaching of certain other mother tongues and their literatures; Czech, German, Polish, and to some extent Hungarian, English and Swedish. This paper will focus on new dimensions in Slovak, Czech, Polish and German.

2. PROGRESSIVE TENDENCIES FROM THE PAST IN THE LIGHT OF CONTINUITY

Recalling the late 1960s, I have become aware of the work of prominent scholars in the field of didactics and new concepts of teaching, specifically in the teaching of Polish language.³ I vividly remember the pioneering work of W. Okoń with his stimuli of creativity, especially in the concept of multilateral education, which in essence (as a modern concept) means universal, harmonious, cognitive-affective (but also cognitive-non-cognitive), integrated personality development of a pupil based on the principles of constructivism and integrated open learning. The pioneers of creative problem-solving teaching are the authorities in this world-class concept, such as Cz. Kupisiewicz or Z. Pietrasiński. In connection with the psychological foundations of learning and studying foreign language, I was inspired by the work of B. A. Jankowsky. Finally, with regard to the teaching of Polish as an L1, the modern *Metodyka nauki o języku polskim* (1978) by M. Jaworski was useful and meaningful to me.

To illustrate the innovative concept, I will highlight a few ideas from this publication. For example, the author recommends the following important steps in building textbook lessons: 1. Introduction of new material in terms of speech and psychological preparation 2. Processing of new material 3. Retaining of new material (Jaworski, 1978, pp. 38-112). Naturally, this lesson scheme should be adjusted in relation to the topic and purpose. The dimension of searching for and discovering language phenomena, while using the problem-solving method and heuristic questions, is highlighted in several areas of the methodology. Jaworski points out the importance of bringing together theoretical knowledge with practical use, developing cognitive operations of different levels, and applying methods and procedures in their rational integration (ibid, p. 89).⁴ He emphasizes the discovery of rules and relationships. He believes that an inductive approach should govern the teaching of L1, and a deductive approach should be the dominant one when verifying and using the new

³ To illustrate the issue, I chose from the Polish background before 1989 (see in more detail according to Ligoš, 2020, pp. 101-105). Currently, Poland, together with Brazil and Japan, is one of the countries that has greatly improved the results of international PISA measurements within the OECD (compare Zimbardo, Coulombová, 2017, p. 164).

⁴ Apart from other things, modern concepts highlight an integrated constructivist experiential teaching approach in order to develop an integrated pupil's personality.

knowledge or skills (ibid, p. 90). The issue of the methodology of individual thematic areas of teaching⁵ is very inspiring and up-to-date (in light of the current concepts of L1 teaching); specifically the methodology of phonetics, word-formation, words (parts of speech), inflection, syntax, lexicon phraseology, as well as orthography and punctuation (ibid, pp. 141-252). The ideas about the meaningfulness of language teaching in the context of the developing of pupils' motivation towards the L1 were modern and stimulating. According to Jaworski, with regard to grammar teaching, the goal should not only be about the recognition and classification of individual sentence parts, but also their normative and stylistic function (ibid, p. 221).⁶ An explicit author's plea to appreciate the necessity of a pupil's engagement by the topic, the stimulation of his or her thinking by using problem-solving tasks and a plea to combine theory with practice can also be found there (ibid., p. 222). Having reminded ourselves of the older background information from Polish didactics and the didactics of L1 teaching, let us have a look at the new context and the new challenges of L1 teaching in today's changing Europe.

I have illustrated the progressive tendencies in L1 teaching in the context of the last half century in Polish didactics. In respect to the teaching of Slovak as an L1, the new publication by M. Ligoš should be mentioned called *Teaching Slovak Language as a Mother Tongue in the Past, Present and Future* (2019) and it highlights not only the progressive tradition of teaching Slovak in historical genesis, but also the innovative trends during the period of socialist dictatorship up to the year 1989 (see chapters 1, 2, and especially subchapter ad 2.5, pp. 117-159). Another contribution of Ligoš (2020) focuses on current trends in L1 teaching in the Central European educational area under the title *Present and Future of L1 Teaching in the Central European Educational Area (With regard to Slovak, Czech, German and Polish)*, in a Polish journal (*Współczesność i przyszłość nauczania języka ojczystego w środkowoeuropejskiej przestrzeni kształcenia (z uwzględnieniem języka słowackiego, czeskiego, niemieckiego i polskiego)*). In the context of the presented thematic framework, I will further look at the new progressive challenges and dimensions of L1 teaching in the changing Europe of today, following a line of continuity, integrity and perspective.

3. CURRENT NEW CHALLENGES IN CONTINUITY WITH A PROGRESSIVE TRADITION

While preserving the specificities and the rich diversity of cultures and education of the various linguistic communities in the European Union, integration tendencies with respect to the preparation and profiling of school graduates (their future in

⁵ At present, the concept of speech competences occurs on a scale from partial, through textual, communicative literary, to key competences (see Liptáková, 2012, pp. 33-64, Liptáková et al., 2015, pp. 228-312).

⁶ I recall the outdated structuralist and functionalistic approaches to language and the so-called communicative and pragmatic turnaround in linguistics in the world during the second half of the 20th century.

joining the labour market while preserving the dignity of their life as a citizen of Europe) in terms of the needs and prospects of the European Union are becoming ever more present. There are three basic levels of target educational dimensions. The most generic target level is made up of the strategic pillars of education which have become (on the basis of the EU membership consensus) the starting points for the elaboration of all the other basic pedagogical documents of the education systems of the countries of Europe. These are the four Delors Report pillars: *learning to be, learning to know, learning to live together and learning to do*. From these, the overlapping *competences and personality goals* are derived at the second level. On December 18, 2006 (2006/962/ES), the European Parliament and the Council of Europe recognized *eight key competences for lifelong learning*. The EU reference framework sets out the following *eight key competences*:

- 1) Communication competence (L1, L2).
- 2) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology.
- 3) Digital competence.
- 4) Competence to learn.
- 5) Social and civic competence.
- 6) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.
- 7) Cultural awareness and expression.
- 8) Transversal elements.

On the basis of the comparative study of key competences abroad, a significant Slovak scholar in the field of didactics, I. Turek, proposed to reduce their number to six, namely:

- 1) Information technologies competences.
- 2) Learning competences.
- 3) Cognitive competences.
- 4) Interpersonal (social) competences.
- 5) Communicative competences.
- 6) Personal competences (Turek, 2008, p. 211).

As expected, there is a noticeable intersection of personality goals and these competences. Curricular transformation in Slovakia is founded on M. Zelina's model (1995), which includes strategic formative processes aiming for: cognitivation, emotionalization, motivation, socialization, axiologization and pupil creativity.⁷ In essence, these are educational objectives within all areas of a comprehensively developing integrated personality of the pupil, in which a complex of factors and determinants of biogenic, sociogenic and autoregulatory character meets in a penetrating, cross-sectional way, while acknowledging a person as an original biological, psychosocial, spiritual and cultural being. In this context, the universal "code 3" is

⁷ The model is known in the Slovak Republic under the acronym KEMSAK, to which I have added another personality target dimension—spiritualization, which has the form of KEMSAKS (see Ligos, 2003, pp. 24-25).

interesting and stimulating, which can be recommended for use effectively in the future in L1 teaching too (see in more detail Ligoš, 2003 or newer 2019). These personality strategies represent the so-called creative humanistic model of education in Slovakia, as proposed in the project *Millennium* (2001). These target dimensions form foundations for *the supra-subject and subject competences*, which, in their mutual intersection, cover the basic education areas and teaching subjects in a school. In the case of L1 teaching it is mainly a matter of the principal *area of education—language and language communication*, the purpose of which is to enable the pupils to acquire communicative and cultural competences during the process of the integral and comprehensive development of their personalities. The supra-subject key competences are: cognitive, communicative, social, cultural and personal. By their further specification and application, we gradually come to basic subject-specific goals and strategies and ultimately to disciplinary competences of different levels (see section 3.3). This area of education also covers so-called cross-sectional topics, such as media, transport, environmental and regional education; parenting, project and teamwork; functional, financial, economic, political, textual literacy and e-literacy (see *State Educational Programmes*, MŠVVaŠ, ŠÚP Bratislava, 2015).⁸ As was indicated in the introduction, this paper does not deal with the literary component of the subject, nor the literary and cultural competence in L1 teaching.

I have reached the 4th level of the target dimensions of modern European education for the 21st century in the form of certain competences of the graduates. These competences are within individual subjects and fields of study further specified as basic components, principles, objectives, themes, diverse methods, forms, strategies, organization, diagnostics and learning outcomes. In the case of L1, it is mainly about the following basic components: *language and communication education, composition education (educating through art—literary education)*.⁹ As I have already indicated, the defined educational thematic issue is gradually concretized into partial outputs and competences in each of the components, with the intention of achieving wider target strategies within the integrated profile of the pupil's personality in the form of the above-mentioned Delors pillars of education (learn to know, to do, to be, to live together). In the present framework context, a clearer starting point, purpose and meaning of the core subject in the present school system can be noticed, which is most often referred to as mother tongue (the specific national language of instruction), or as language (for example, Slovak, Czech, Polish,

⁸ Available at: <http://www.minedu.sk/8387-en/statne-vzdelavacie-programy/>; <http://www.statpedu.sk/en/svp/innovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/>

⁹ Within the language of instruction and L1, components such as early reading and writing also participate. In higher grades the activities involving text and media, reading proficiency and culture, media education, aesthetic and literary education are used, while the school curriculum may also include for example rhetoric and speech culture, communication education and working with ICT. As can be seen, the L1 teaching is characterized by a comprehensive approach and is interconnected with the entire educational activity of the school.

German, English) and reading/literature. Referring to these framework terms and contexts, let us now consider the focus of this study, that is the new dimensions and challenges of L1 teaching in terms of its qualitative transformation of its influence over an integrated personality of a pupil, a school graduate for the 21st century.

4. NEW CHALLENGES, TRENDS AND PERSPECTIVES

The new challenges and perspectives of L1 teaching have been presented to academia in recent decades, especially after the milestone year of 1989,¹⁰ both at scientific conferences and in papers published at home and abroad. In these contributions, I have concentrated mainly on the following topics:

- L1 teacher training and further education;
- conceptual issues of L1 teaching;
- principles of teaching Slovak language and literature;
- a person as the centrepiece of the L1 and a starting point for a new approach to L1 teaching;
- L1 teaching in interdisciplinary and integrative transformation of the curriculum in the context of new methodological impulses and impulses of research in Slovak linguistics and literary criticism;
- research dealing with the motivation of pupils when learning L1;¹¹
- creation of new curriculum documents for teaching Slovak language and literature;
- educational standards for L1 teaching in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Germany and Austria.¹²

On the basis of these published outputs, we can now look at the basic areas of the new trends and dimensions of L1 teaching. I ordered them from the already outlined general frameworks towards a gradual concretization and the realization of the educational process in the pedagogical practice of education of the young generation in the current school system.

¹⁰ *The year 1989 is linked to the fall of communist regimes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the "Iron Curtain" formed between East and West after World War II. In 1989, socialist Czechoslovakia underwent a "velvet revolution" on the path of transformation to a democratic society.*

¹¹ *I have dealt with the issue of research into the learning motivation of students in L1 teaching for a long time. To this day, see two recent publications: Ligoš, M. et al. (2011). *Developing Students' Motivation when Teaching Slovak. Current Research Results and Perspectives*. Ružomberok: Verbum KU; Ligoš, M. (2016). *Aus der Forschung der Schülermotivation im Muttersprachenunterricht in dem letzten halben Jahrhundert (In Bezug auf Slowakisch als Muttersprache)*. *History of Education & Children's Literature*, 1(2), 549-562. <http://www.hecl.it/>*

¹² *See the bibliography, Ligoš 2014-2020.*

4.1 *The first dimension*

I believe that the first round of challenges relates to the success of the implementation of the reference frameworks into the national curriculum programs that the EU has set as the most important educational objective, that is the key competences. It is to be understood as a dynamic, multifunctional set of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and attitudes that every citizen of Europe should acquire in order to achieve their personal fulfilment and their integrated fully-fledged development and participation in society. These most important competences for 21st century education determine the status, aim and purpose of the teaching of L1 (and literature), that is the teaching of Slovak language, Czech language, Polish language, English language, German language, French language and Russian language and their literatures within different educational areas and how they contribute to a graduate obtaining these competences. This can be accomplished through the gradual concretization and application of key competences in the objectives, inputs, outputs, content, methods, forms and organization of the educational process according to the curriculum documents at the level of the centre, region, school and specific L1 teacher within the unique conditions of his/her everyday pedagogical practice. In summary, *the first postulate* of the new dimension of L1 teaching means that *we effectively implement the intentions of developing the key competences of the EU citizen for the 21st century in national curricula*. Naturally, only a cultured democratic society can fulfil this requirement by creating adequate framework conditions for the relevant place of education in the broad sense of the word on the basis of the expected state school policy and development of a modern education training system.¹³ From this postulate, the issue of the next pillar of the new dimension of L1 teaching in the context of the qualitative transformation and the prospects of society comes naturally to the forefront.

¹³ *In my opinion, after the completion of basic education at ISCED level 1 (national school, Grundschule, primary school, usually 1st - 3rd, 4th, 5th or 6th year of elementary school) an education system of a state/country needs to include the possibility of further differentiated education of pupils at ISCED level 2, according to the results achieved and predispositions shown (for example, as in Germany, where there are 3 types of schools after the Grundschule: Hauptschule/Gesamtschule, Realschule and Grammar School). In this study, however, I will not address this problem, I just want to point to the possibility for adequate approximation to the real learning outcomes of certain groups of pupils and their profiling. This problem has manifested significantly in the Czecho-Slovak educational provenance since February 1948 and basically persists to this day (see Šmejkalová, 2010, pp. 249-427). As I highlight in other places (see e. g. Ligoš, 2020), a 6-3-3 / 4 model of regional education school system proves to be relevant, in which a single primary school is followed by a transitional intermediate level of lower secondary education (ISCED 2).*

4.2 *The second dimension*

My almost half-century worth of direct authentic experience in pedagogical practice in Slovakia, my study and my own research in the field of didactics of L1 and in the education of Slovak teachers have led me to believe that the reform of the school system, thus also of the L1 teaching, can only be achieved with the highest quality of teacher training. In practice, this means that *the issue of selection, pre-gradual training and lifelong learning of the L1 teacher in the scope of his/her adequate and actual profiling* remains a new dimension and challenge from the point of view L1 teaching. The truth of the matter is that our teachers will never be so good that they could not be even better, more competent or more capable. Teaching is a vocation, a mission marked by a considerable degree of uncertainty and frankness. A vocation, in which it is necessary to continuously improve and develop in order to provide service for “thy neighbour” in the form of preparation of the younger generation for life. As I have lectured and published in several places, it is paramount that constant close attention be paid when selecting adepts for L1 teacher-training¹⁴, not only from the point of view of professional prerequisites but also with regard to their personality and character qualities essential for the field. My experience in this field tells us that we are lagging behind to a great extent, (at least) in the context of the Central European Educational Area and we owe the selection process an attitude that reflects the seriousness and weight of a teacher’s mission in society.¹⁵ It is vital that we have good L1 teachers at all levels of education,¹⁶ but especially in the early stages of pupils’ development, that is, especially at pre-school and early primary school age (top-class teachers in a comprehensive sense, with well-rounded personalities; human beings, true people, who are models of adult women and men, are necessary here!).

In line with the findings of other authors, I have confirmed in several research projects that pupils “primarily expect and particularly appreciate from a Slovak language teacher certain moral, personal, social and spiritual virtues and qualities, such as goodness, patience, love, kindness, fairness, generosity, understanding, conscientiousness, modesty, joy, empathy, attention, cordiality, amiability, friendliness, a sense of humour, etc., and only then professional pedagogical qualities, such as: he explains well, we understand what he means, he teaches us lots of things, he sets good tasks ...” (Ligoš, 2003, p. 23). Finally, in third place in the order of importance is the dimension of the knowledge of the subject. This leads us to conclude that

¹⁴ *They should be the best of the best candidates.*

¹⁵ *My attitude to L1 teachers is primarily based on experience in and theoretical knowledge about education in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and partly in Poland. Inspiration can be drawn from the Finnish education system where future teachers are selected from the top 10% of the best high school graduates, and where teachers have the same status in society as doctors or lawyers (see Ligoš, 2020).*

¹⁶ *Of course, apart from school, factors such as the family, the peers, the media and the wider socio/cultural context in particular play a major role in the development of each young individual in terms of cultural and communicative L1 competences.*

teacher-training university study programmes should receive the highest quality candidates who meet the requirements in particular from the point of view of personality/character predispositions and also with regard to the expected professional ethics and morality of teachers, especially L1 teachers. These requirements apply not only to the selection of the candidates, but also to the adequate profile of the teacher in the undergraduate training and his/her lifelong learning. The first and second levels of university education therefore require that the study programmes are effectively structured from the theoretical and practical point of view in order to obtain the expected graduate qualification, that is to become a beginner teacher. This requires constant innovation of the individual components of the study programme, from the general, pedagogical and psychological courses to special training in the methodology of teaching the subject, in close connection with theory and practice, to benefit the specialisation of the future L1 teacher. It is clear that the intended acquisition of the teaching competences cannot be realized without the cooperation and integration of the individual study disciplines with the school practice and with the overall socio-cultural and political-economic context of the given university, where a specialised department overseeing training-schools with certified teachers—and with a well-designed base for possibilities for scientific research, innovation, and meaningful pedagogical practice of teacher-trainees and further teacher education—could certainly function.

A graduate with a master's degree enters the pedagogical practice as a beginner/novice L1 teacher. As part of this career phase, I propose that, in line with an established tradition in Germany (and other countries), the novice teacher should only be given a definitive qualification after successful completion of this stage of practice, in addition to the completion of a master's degree program at university.¹⁷ This assumes that the definitive status of a teacher would only be acquired by a candidate after a successful start-up phase and by the completion of a final state examination of the teacher competences in the field studied. In our case, there would be therefore required a final state exam in the methodology of L1 teaching. Naturally, the start-up phase of teaching practice is followed by further pedagogical/professional stages; an independent teaching professional, a teaching professional with the 1st and 2nd supplementary qualifications. All these stages or phases are parts of lifelong learning which are realised as continuous or lifelong learning, adaptation learning, innovation learning, specialization learning, administration learning, etc.¹⁸ This

¹⁷ *This model was in place in Slovakia and in Bohemia during the inter-war period, even during the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire since year 1911 (see Šmejkalová, M. (2010). Čeština a škola—úryvky skrytých dějin, pp. 60-68).*

¹⁸ *In the Slovak Republic, these issues are laid down and specified in the relevant laws and decrees of the Ministry of Education, in particular with regard to the status of pedagogical/professional staff in education and lifelong learning. In the Slovak Republic, this is Act no. 317/2009, Statute Law of 24 June 2009 concerning teaching staff and professional staff and the amendment of certain laws. Also Act No. 568/2009, Statute Law on Lifelong Learning and*

problem is also related to the adequate social status of the teaching profession and its prestige in relation to the gravity and the importance of this profession. It is necessary not only to observe more closely the actual life journey of the L1 teacher in practice from a legal or professional point of view, but accordingly, to take competent political and legislative decisions impacting the functioning of the education system. The suggested dimension is well illustrated by some of the appellative reports in the current press.

To illustrate the problem, let us look at some ideas from an article by Slovak author, O. Kaščák, *"About Teachers with No Emotions"*, which was published recently, at the end of 2017, in the daily newspaper *SME*. In agreement with this author, I think that in Slovakia there is "one fundamental task—to ensure good teacher-training, the satisfaction of teachers with doing their profession and decent standards of living" (Kaščák, 2017, p. 9). This task also has another side, which is suggested in the subheading of the article: *"Successful solutions in education were results of a significant increase in teachers' wages and significant wage differentiation."* In respect to this, the article debates ideas such as 'like teacher, like pupil', 'first-rate and poor teacher in the context of pupil's success factors', 'an increase in teachers' wages tied to wage differentiation of teachers determined by "a regular and independent evaluation"'. The article also proposed that "the key task for the system administrators (in respect to what influence efficient and substandard teachers have on the success rate of the pupils [*comment by author*]) is to identify poor teachers and reduce their numbers in the education system" (ibid., p. 9). Because of the area covered in this contribution, I will end this dimension of new challenges by stating that reform of education must inevitably begin with a qualitative transformation of choices, training and a lifelong profiling of teachers in a comprehensive sense, by which I mean all teachers at different levels of education, and L1 teachers in particular. Here I also want to emphasise the fact that it is also relevant to consider a demand for a balanced representation of male and female L1 teachers in everyday practice to make available to pupils both feminine and masculine styles, patterns, values and so on.

4.3 The third dimension

In the next part (in 3.3 and 3.4) I will, at least briefly, mention two other basic new challenges to L1 teaching, which are tightly and organically tied to the two thematic

on Amendments to Certain Laws of 1.12.2009. Available at: <https://www.min-edu.sk/data/att/2918.pdf>;
<https://www.slovlex.sk/pravnepredpisy/SK/ZZ/2009/568/20150901>. These regulations were recently amended by Act no. 138/2019 Coll. and the Act on Pedagogical Employees and Professional Employees and on Amendments to Certain Acts (as amended by No. 209/2019 Coll., 310/2019 Coll.) Available at: <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/2918.pdf>; <https://www.slovlex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2009/568/20150901>.

areas of the above-mentioned subject matter. Thus, in the third dimension I will include *the creation of curriculum documents for L1 teaching at both central and local levels*. It is an important category for concretizing the new concept of this subject in relation to the overall realization of the educational programme. At state level (central level), a framework curriculum is typically processed.¹⁹ It defines the core of the given level of education, the principles of the new concept, a profile of a school graduate, the framework curriculum, the basic thematic areas of education, the characteristics of the subjects, the guidelines for working with pupils with special needs, and the manner and system of inspection. This document serves as the basis for educational standards of individual subjects at a particular level of education and specifies mandatory requirements pertaining to the target and content of the subject, which every regular (healthy) pupil is obliged to fulfil. It also specifies the instructions for working with pupils with special educational needs. At school level the L1 teachers' thematic curriculum is then designed and it serves as the basis for the preparation and daily realization of the educational process in a specific community of pupils. This is a widespread model of creating curricular documents and educational programs even outside the European educational area.

I have expressed my views on creating new curriculum documents in several places over the years. Let us mention at least some of them: an article *What to Teach in Slovak Language Lessons?* (Ligoš, 2006/07), studies *On the Transformation of the Slovak Language Teaching Content in the Context of the Latest Impulses in the Fields of Subject Didactics and Slovak Language and Literature Studies* (Ligoš, 2014, 2015), *Upgraded State Educational Programme of Slovak Language and Literature for Secondary Education*,²⁰ *Teaching Slovak Language as a Mother Tongue in the Context of New Challenges and Perspectives (From Theory and Practice of Teaching Slovak Language and Literature)* and *Few More Words About the New Challenges and Perspectives of Teaching Slovak Language as a Mother Tongue (On The proposal of the State and School Curriculum of Slovak language and Literature)*²¹ (Ligoš, 2016, 2017). In these research studies, I have been examining the creation of a new state educational programme and a standard for Slovak language teaching and comparing it with the latest curriculum documents for L1 teaching in the Czech Republic, Germany and Austria, which was presented in the latter study (Ligoš, 2017). The analytical comparison led us to the conclusion that it is necessary to change this central pedagogical document for teaching Slovak language so that it reflects the EU educational policy

¹⁹ In the EU, the international classification of individual levels of education is already applied, such as ISCED 0, 1, 2, etc.

²⁰ Available at: http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/nove_dokumenty/jazyk-a-literatura/cislo4.pdf; http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/jazyk-a-literatura/1_cislo2015.pdf; http://sausba.sk/pdf_casopis/web/casopisy/slovincinar7_casopisSAUS.pdf.

²¹ Available at: <http://www.statpedu.sk/files/en/publikacna-cinnost/jazyk-literatura-casopis/jazyk-literatura/jal-3>; http://www.statpedu.sk/files/sk/aktuality/1-2-jal-2017_doplnenie.pdf.

goals with regard to the acquisition of the expected competences. This means that the overall concept, content and structure of the framework curriculum and the L1 teaching standards need to be changed²². The decisive category is made up of the objectives of this core subject, which is part of general education, in the form of certain competences of different levels with regard to the comprehensive development of the pupil's personality. At this point, let us enumerate specific competence areas which are further specified and projected into the objectives, content and procedural aspects of L1 teaching. These are the core competence areas: *listening and speaking, conducting a dialogue, reading, writing, language reflection, language awareness and language use, spelling, text analysis, using information and media, literature and artistic text, basic knowledge of language, literature and culture, integrated learning, cognition and use of reception and text production methods.*

4.4 *The fourth dimension*

The fourth dimension, and an equally important one in L1 teaching, is the pupil. It is an old-age must that a pupil, as a unique being, become the centre, the purpose, the starting point and goal, the provision, the basic dynamic object and object factor, the participant and key, a decisive actor in the educational process in a comprehensive sense²³. It is necessary to recognize and accept his/her real educational dispositions and capabilities to diagnose and develop his/her initial, intermediate and final output parameters, and certain qualitative potential with regard to the given subject, the educational area and the overall profile of his/her personality in line with the profile of the school.

In the indicated context, it is then relevant to structure the curriculum and the content in general, as well as the process of teaching in close relationship to the world and the pupil's life. An integrated, cognitive, communicative, experiential, creative, humanistic, socio-cultural model of the educational process is optimally suited to this approach. It is known that pupils consider L1 as a subject to be important and

²² Here I do not take into account the UNESCO documents (*Prototype of a National Framework, 2017*), which outline a certain curricular framework in the components of the curriculum structure, objectives and content, while according to this baseline document, each specific (individual) country should take into account its specific educational context and on this basis the curriculum design should focus on the following thematic areas: curriculum vision, goals, values, principles, philosophy of teaching and learning, curriculum structure, competences, teaching methodology, teaching strategies, assessment, and testing (see in: UNESCO (2017). *Prototype of a national curriculum framework*. Switzerland: UNESCO, 2017. 77 pp. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260045/PDF/260045eng.pdf.multi>.

²³ I have published this demand in several places, even whenever possible during the deep socialist totalitarianism in the Eastern bloc, when communist propaganda proclaimed the ideal of a unified man with the absence of own originality and uniqueness as an autonomous being in the spirit of unified collectivism (see e.g. the article Ligoš, M. (1984). *The Purpose of the School is the Pupil. The Issue of Pupil Overload is Still Relevant*. *Učitel'ské noviny*, 34(11), 6).

demanding, though less popular. That is why the challenges of motivation, creativity and rigorous assessment of pupils are among the ever-present challenges. I have been long concerned with the issue of motivating pupils in the teaching of SLL, which has been presented to teachers and the wider professional public in different places. Let us mention at least three publications: a book, *Developing Pupils' Motivation in Classes of Slovak Language* (Ligoš et al., 2011) a study, *On Genesis of Research Tools for the Study of Pupils' Motivational Structure when Teaching Slovak Language as a Mother Tongue* (Ligoš & Holdoš, 2015) and *Aus der Forschung der Schülermotivation im Muttersprachenunterricht in dem letzten halben Jahrhundert* (Ligoš, 2016). According to our findings, the motivation changes in the L1 classes mainly in terms of the ontogenesis and gender of pupils. It gradually becomes differentiated, transformed and layered. While the positive motivation at the younger school age (7-12 years) is between 70% and 90%, there was recorded in the teenage years (pubescence and adolescence) about 50%-70% positive motivation. Naturally, motivation to learn depends on several factors in the pupil's life, especially the socio-cultural and economic background of the family, its lifestyle, value orientation, media influence, relationships with peers and friends, school or classroom climate, communication, etc., which was also taken into account when following a certain motivational program of L1 teaching (see also Ligoš, 1999, 2003, 2011, 2016).

With regard to pupil diagnostics, it must be restated that it is important to measure and evaluate not only his/her knowledge or skills, but also attitudes, values, habits, activities, interests and abilities of different levels, orientation and focus. Diagnostics is a broader concept than check-up or evaluation or grading.

As we know, the competences include all the categories of goals, content, processes and outcomes of the educational process, while the educational goals have a knowledge dimension, according to the revised Bloom Taxonomy (with the categories: factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive) and a cognitive dimension (with categories: remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating). This means an assessment of not only of the pupils' cognitive qualities (specifically including creativity), but also of affective (especially motivational) characteristics and social relations, teaching methods, techniques and skills—including self-diagnosis and self-evaluation of the pupil—and finally an assessment of his or her family and wider socio-cultural environment (see Gavora, 1999).²⁴ These dimensions must be taken into account specifically in L1 teaching within the entire education system of the school. In practice, this means that different level competences are assessed and developed, such as: communicative, cognitive, reading and spelling competence, parts-of-speech competence, receptive, productive, literary, textual, narrative, descriptive, rhetorical, axiological, and cultural competence. In the context of international and national assessments (PIRLS, PISA, in Slovakia—Testing 5 and 9, secondary school leaving examinations, etc.) it should be noted, that it is not enough to measure only reading, mathematical or natural sciences literacy (typically

²⁴ Clearly, this area is a relevant and complex challenge for the future.

as a result of teaching of L1 and literature, mathematics or natural sciences), but also “other kinds of literacy” within functional or comprehensive literacy in the development of the pupils’ entire personality (for example social, cultural, ethical, moral, financial, economic, environmental literacy, or literacy connected to values, health, sport, foreign language). It is about the school not being separated from life but responding to its challenges and needs. It is about life validating the results of the educational process. In this way, I want to emphasize the basic idea of focusing on the comprehensive assessment of the literacy and competence of a graduate of a given type and the level of the school, which will evaluate the effectiveness and contribution of each individual subject in different areas of education (such as languages, communication, working with text and information, mathematics, arts and technical subjects). In essence, this is the only way to justify the relevance and significance of different subjects in the curriculum of the school. On the basis of this information, the key competences and the four strategic pillars of education in the EU will be progressively achieved as could be seen in the introductory part of this study.²⁵

It is worth mentioning at this point at least some of the other topics that are organically intertwined with the discussed new challenges and dimensions of modern education. In the area of innovation in the Czech and in the Slovak educational space as well, I would like to highlight the issue of optimizing the management of the education system and schools (as discussed for example in the publication by Zelina & Zelinová, 1996), or the quality of education (e. g. Turek, 2009) and T. Feřtek’s popular-scientific publication *Co je nového ve vzdělávání* [What’s New in Education] (2015) sounds inspiring in these intentions.

5. CONCLUSION

The new dimensions and challenges of L1 teaching are seen in broader contexts, rooted in a complex background, which includes education policies, starting at the EU level, through regional and local, to school level and ultimately to teacher and pupil level, while being closely connected with the real learning opportunities and specific living conditions of each individual pupil. Therefore, I have included in this study the following four basic trends and dimensions of the selected problem which can be observed in the continuous interconnection of progressive tendencies of development, within a diachronic, a synchronic and an in-perspective point of view:

²⁵ Here I must emphasise the fact that quantifying the educational results in exact and technological/practical subjects (mathematics, physics, technical work, etc.) is entirely different from quantifying the educational results in humanities, social and educational subjects, where the pupils have a particular focus on acquiring certain competences. The issue of the use of measurement in various spheres of modern society, and particularly in education, is currently critically addressed by J. Z. Muller in the publication *Tyranny of Metrics* (2020), which fits well into new challenges for the progressive development of education in the world.

- 1) The intentions of the educational policies and the key competences of contemporary man.
- 2) The quality of training and lifelong profiling of the L1 teacher and an adequate evaluation of the results of his/her work.
- 3) The quality of educational programmes and standards for L1 teaching and adequate tools for measuring outcomes.
- 4) Comprehensive knowledge, diagnosis and development of pupil's personality in L1 teaching, closely interconnected with the influence of the entire educational system and the whole context of his/her life.

It is evident that at the heart of this section of society is a person, a teacher, a pupil, a family and a broader socio-cultural community. Schools peopled with pupils and high-quality teachers are at the core of any school system. In essence, my intentions echo the words of President Obama who, in March 2009, said of the changes in the American school system:²⁶ "I'm calling on our nation's governors and state education chiefs to develop standards and assessments that don't simply measure whether students can fill in a bubble on a test, but whether they possess 21st century skills like problem-solving and critical thinking and entrepreneurship and creativity" (Available at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/obamas-remarks-on-education/>). I believe that L1 teaching should also participate in its specific way in reaching this goal, as I have framed in this essay. At the same time, however, there is a need for the synergy of all the factors that lead to the integration of the pupil, so that education and training become a matter involving the whole of society, our European and world community.

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²⁶ Nagel, D. (2010). *National EdTech plan advocates radical reforms in schools. The Journal*, 5 March 2010. Cited in Smida, J. *Suggestions for radical transformation of US education. Učiteľské noviny*, 17(58), 17.5. 2010, 8.

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