

# CONTEXTS OF LANGUAGE EQUIPMENT IN PUBESCENTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

## [KONTEXTY JAZYKOVE VYBAVENOSTI PUBESCENTU V ČR]

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### Abstract

Language knowledge and skills in a globalized world is a practical necessity for future professional employment and the career development of school children. This paper examines this equipment with language knowledge and skills through school results of pupils in foreign language courses at the beginning of the lower secondary education (6th form of primary schools) in the Czech Republic. It draws our attention to drawbacks of using a five-point school classification system, both from the perspective of the teacher and that of the pupil. For its accessibility/affordability and simplicity, however, the final school classification in this research paper has made use of the dependent variable, the correlations of which are observed in relation to the following selected independent variables: territorial jurisdiction, the nature of the pupil's family, the education level of his/her parents, the natural aptitude of the pupil, the tendency of the pupil to a particular value type. To demonstrate the mutual relations, the authoress of this paper makes use of the Chi-square test at the 5% significance level and a polemic about the contexts of the discovered statistical significance. These relationships suggest that foreign language school achievements, behind which the level of language skills is hidden, is a broad-spectrum issue with numerous multiple effects.

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### Key words

Language literacy, school results in foreign language, drawbacks of a five-point classification system, statistically significant relations.

### Anotácia

Jazyková vybavenost predstavuje v globalizovaném světe praktickou nutnost pro budoucí profesní uplatnění školní mládeže. Příspěvek sleduje jazykovou vybavenost prostřednictvím školního prospěchu z cizího jazyka na počátku nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání (6. třída základních škol) v České republice. Upozorňuje na úskalí používané pětistupňové školní klasifikace, a to jak z pohledu učitele, tak z pohledu žáka. Pro svou dostupnost a jednoduchost je ale v příspěvku závěrečná školní klasifikace výzkumně využita jako závisle proměnná, jejíž souvislosti jsou sledovány ve vztahu k vybraným nezávisle proměnným: územní příslušnost, typ rodiny žáka, vzdělání jeho rodičů, fyzická dispozice žáka, příklon žáka k danému hodnotovému typu. Tyto vztahy jsou ověřovány pomocí pěti formulovaných hypotéz na vzorku 2706 žáků šestých tříd základních škol. Autorka využívá k tomu chí-kvadrát test na 5% hladině významnosti a polemizuje o kontextech zjištěných statisticky významných souvislostí. Ty naznačují, že školní prospěch z cizího jazyka, za nímž je skryta úroveň jazykové vybavenosti, je širokospektrální záležitostí s četnými multiplikačními efekty.

### Kľúčové slová

Jazyková gramotnosť, školný prospěch z cizího jazyka, úskalí pětistupňové klasifikace, statisticky významné souvislosti.

### **Level of the pupils' language equipment and school results**

Language literacy is one of the higher forms of basic literacy, which reflects the ability of pupils to communicate in a language other than their mother tongue, i.e. especially by reading and writing in a foreign language (CSI 2013). Language knowledge and particular skills to communicate in a foreign language are closely linked with the possibility of exploring different cultures, becoming familiar with the customs and traditions their cultures are associated with, understanding their social norms and rules. In the context of a globalized world, the knowledge of a foreign language is a practical necessity and is generally seen as the foundation of education for the future generations of pupils' professional jobs. The didactic significance of studying foreign languages bears especially upon the development of higher intellectual operations (Tollingerova, Malach 1973), e. g. it means for pupils to reinforce the processes of comparison, verification, evaluation, and the development of their performance skills, their ability to deduce, induction and the like. In the Czech Republic it is the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (NUV 2013a) that works with this aspect, in particular Section C of Chapter 5 of his Programme deals with the issue of language communication in another foreign language (MSMT 2016).

In spite of that, the Czech Republic has been lagging behind the European average (NUV 2013b) in language teaching in primary schools. According to OECD statistics, from 2009-2010, the Czech Republic is ranked as the sixth worst country in the number of languages taught at the primary school level, i.e. in lower secondary education. In the Czech Republic the average per pupil amounted to 1.3 languages, while the European average is 1.5. In countries such as Finland, pupils learn even an average of 2.7 languages. Within the European Commission, a project called the "European Indicator of Language Competence", which tested lower grades students of secondary schools from 15 countries in 2011, unfortunately, outside the Czech Republic, which is to improve the language skills discussed in the context of the abolition of the film dubbing (CEVRO 2013). In the category of reading in English, the most successful students came from Sweden, Malta and the Netherlands. In Sweden and Malta, more than 60 % of those tested students reached the level B2, in the Netherlands it was 60 % in the aggregate categories B1 + B2. Within the category of listening, the B2 level was reached by more than 70 % of students in Sweden, Malta and the Netherlands, in Slovenia it was almost 60 % of students (European Commission 2012a).

In the adult population, 27 % of Czechs assess – according to a Eurobarometer survey (European Commission 2012b) – their knowledge of the English language as adequate for conversation, while the EU average is 38 %. However subjective this opinion of the respondents can be, the results cannot be completely ignored. According to the European Eurobarometer survey, the Czechs have currently occupied the 19th place in the EU in terms of their knowledge of foreign languages (European Commission 2016).

The above-mentioned language levels of the school population, defined by the Common European Reference Framework, represent a fair medium level of the general school population, find themselves among the following six levels:

1. Language level A1- the language user can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of the needs of a concrete type. The language users can introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives,

- people they know and things they have. They can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
2. Language level A2 – The language user can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). He/she can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. They can describe in simple terms, some aspects relating to their background, immediate environment and matters for their immediate needs.
  3. Language level B1 – The language user can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. They can employ a simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. This language user can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
  4. Language level B2 – The language user can understand the main ideas of a complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialization. He/she can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. He/she can further produce a clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
  5. Language level C1 – the language user can understand a wide range of demanding, longer clauses, and recognize implicit meaning. He/she can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. He can further use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. The language user can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
  6. Language level C2 – the language user can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. He can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. This language user can express himself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

The Czech proverb – Those who know many languages live as many lives as the languages they know – is especially true for the language levels B1 through to C2. Although language literacy represents only one of many literacies (apart from, for instance, mathematical, natural science, computer, locomotive or financial literacy, etc.), with which school equips its pupils, it can be identified as basic literacy. Its level should correspond, at different levels of ISCED education (NUV 2015), with the awarded assessment, i.e. with the awarded grade/mark on the scale of 1 to 5 points in the Czech Republic. It is obvious here that the five-point numerical classification does not represent an ideal and it does not have to reflect the pupil's actual state of language knowledge and skills either. The pupil with excellent grades (top pupil) who knows brilliantly foreign language words, but when he meets a foreigner, he is unable to utter a word, can thus be an example of unsound schematics persistent in our schools (Helus 2015). Such schematics can be closely connected with the teaching methods used by teachers and a connection can be found among the current position of teachers in the Czech Republic. Very low financial evaluation (i. e. low salaries) of teachers in our educational system with overwhelming majority of women teachers

(Vomackova, Zambochova, Tislerova 2011) evokes the use of the simplest teaching methods from the perspective of teachers, which would take him/her the least possible time. Results from the school attainment level, thus do not have to express the scope of knowledge but only the placement of a pupil into a certain group of similar pupils (Capek 2008).

Furthermore, neither the numerical classification, nor the school results can be considered sufficiently objective, since it does not give the teacher a sufficiently wide/broad picture about the pupil and for the pupil on the other hand it is not sufficiently motivational or educational. Granting a “good” grade does not mean that the pupils have understood the nature of the studied phenomenon and its relations, or that they have overcome procedural shortcomings of his/her learning, or that he/she has already acquired the feeling of certainty and self-confidence resulting from his/her achievement of the desired objective, etc. The numerical classification is gradually becoming a subject for the pupil’s aspiration, rather than the internal understanding of the subject matter and its contextualization, rather than removing misconceptions, or active acquisition of knowledge rather than mere memorizing (Skoda, Doulik 2011).

In terms of the personality development of pupils and the strengthening of their positive attitude towards learning, the assessment making use of a scale of points or a percentage rating appears to be more efficient and just than the numerical classification. Both of them allow us to express the extent of the mastering of the subject matter, i.e. the degree of fulfilment of the target standards of education, or the boundary minimum that should be reached by every competent individual, or the threshold below which they should not get. This compliance/implementation rate should correspond with the possibilities for any further application of the graduates from primary schools in practice. The assessment by points in all subjects then additionally gives teachers the possibility of a more comprehensive insight into the pupil, who is, for instance, lagging behind in one subject – and gets a low score – but excels in the majority of all other subjects (Lanizbatova 2007). The aggregate score achieved gives the pupil a chance to compensate for his/her partial failure. School results in the form of numerical classification do not have this possibility and as a rule divide the class into groups – from top graders to pupils with bad marks, who thus define themselves according to one another. The essence of education – to master the learning material – may not even be fulfilled in groups of excellent pupils and very good ones, the division of which was undertaken by the school. These students strive for good grades and if they feel that they will not get them, they adopt escape strategies, such as visiting a doctor (Plhakova 2014). The strengthening of such strategies is undesirable from the point of view of both the pupil’s life philosophy and the fulfilment of the objectives of education (Skinner, Holland 1961). In addition, they contradict the concept of constructivist teaching, i.e. actively gaining knowledge, creating their individual mental constructs to understand the nature of the new phenomena and their contexts, etc. (Skoda, Doulik 2011).

The school should certainly assist its pupils in choosing the right paths, but not viable ones. Viable for the pupil is, for instance, to copy a “cheat sheet” and get a very good grade without any effort and without understanding the nature and context of the subject matter. On the contrary, it would be fair to get used to constantly looking for answers to unanswered questions until the pupil understands the content and all the key issues of the context have been clarified. Then the school numerical form of classification represents, in this sense of the word, only a viable solution rather than a correct solution targeted at the strengths and weaknesses of cognition, pupils’ psyche or his/her locomotive abilities. Feasibility and accuracy are two qualities that

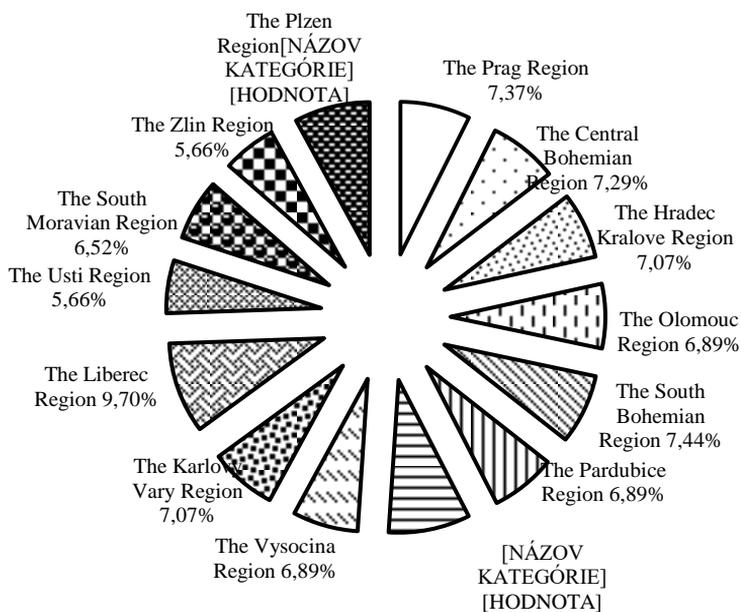
represent learning behaviour patterns in relation to the values and principles (Plamínek 2013) and that cannot be assessed only in relation to pupils, but also in relation to their parents and teachers. At the same time, the flaws of adults are usually the most common reason for the pupils' reluctance to do things correctly and properly and not to make it worth the slightest exertion or provoke the least resistance.

In the context of the above-mentioned issues, the problems of the school numerical classification of pupils – both on the part of the pupil and his parents, and on the part of teachers – are accompanied by a phenomenon of the Fundamental attribution error (Mares 2005). Its essence lies in the fact that provided that successes appear, people have an inclination to attribute them to themselves and to internal causes. In the case of failure, there is a tendency to look for causes elsewhere, not in themselves, blaming external factors. In the school environment, there are analogous situations during the course of which the teacher may subsequently transform, by applying erroneous causal attribution, pupils' auto attribution and thus change the conditions of the pupils' performance and therefore even the classification (Helus 2006).

As seen above, the school form of numerical classification is not a completely ideal form of assessment and as such it has, in terms of the efficiency of its functions, a lot of pitfalls and weaknesses. Generally, it can be concluded that it is particularly criticized for drawing pupils away from the essence of learning, replacing its intrinsic motivation with extrinsic motivation, for avoiding failure by various means, as well as for establishing the assumption of negative moral qualities and promoting social class differentiation (Valisova, Kasikova 2011). In spite of that we have used it for our research and observed this classification – for the lack of other adequate tools – in the context of selected variables using the example of the final classification of a foreign language in 6th form of elementary schools throughout the Czech Republic. The results of studies and their methodological design are given below.

### **Methodological context and character of the research investigation**

The contribution focuses on the wider context of school success expressed in the form of the final school classification of students attending the seventh forms of primary schools, making use of foreign language learning as an example. Its purpose is to broaden the view of school success as a dependent variable by other contexts of independent variables, for instance certain localities of the region in which the pupil attends his primary school, the type of the family from which the pupil comes, the highest educational attainment of his or her parents, the physical disposition of the student in the form of a body mass index (Finucane et al. 2011), as well as the pupil's inclination to the selected value type. In the context of the entire spectrum of the value types monitored by the research according to Sekera (1994), this paper demonstrates the section of the research concerning the Socrates and Promethean systems of values. All relations with respect to dependent and independent variables have been verified by means of the Chi-square test on the 5% significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This contribution also introduces the selected results of the research investigation, which was carried out on a sample of 2706 respondents from 126 primary school classes in the Czech Republic at the end of the year 2014 and the beginning of the year 2015. The regional structure is approached in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: The distribution of respondents according to regions**

The investigation was based on the assumption that the numerical classification – despite its obvious limitations – demonstrates, in the order of large numbers, the knowledge and skill of the students in a given subject, rather than the impact of other variables. All respondents answered the same questions through the paper version of the anonymous questionnaire, which consisted of 39 items. The first thirteen items were factual, the others were able to express, by means of a four-degree scale (Definitely Yes, Rather Yes, Definitely Not, Rather Not) the degree of inclination to the given opinion. In the context of chosen independent variables, it was examined whether the level of the school success in foreign language learning is statistically significantly related to them or not. For this purpose, the following five hypotheses have been formulated:

- H<sub>1</sub> – the school success rate of pupils in the foreign language does not show any major regional differences, which means that the distribution of classification of these pupils across all the regions of the Czech Republic is well-proportioned;
- H<sub>2</sub> – the school success rate of pupils in the foreign language does not show a link with the type of family from which the pupils come, i.e. their language knowledge and skills projected into the final classification do not affect, for instance, whether the family is complete or incomplete;
- H<sub>3</sub> – the school success of pupils in the foreign language does not show a correlation with the level of educational attainment of their parents, i.e. in terms of school results it is irrelevant what the highest level of education the pupils' parents have achieved;
- H<sub>4</sub> – the pupils' success in the foreign language does not show a link to their value of the body mass index (BMI), i.e. their lower or higher weight category (underweight, normal weight, overweight and obese pupils) is evenly distributed within the framework of the acquired school grading (classification);

H<sub>5</sub> – the pupils' success in the foreign language does not show any relation to the pupils' inclination to the Socratic and Promethean types of values, i.e. pupils' value orientation towards self-improvement and development, as well as their promotion of equality and justice, is not reflected in their school grading (classification) in the foreign language.

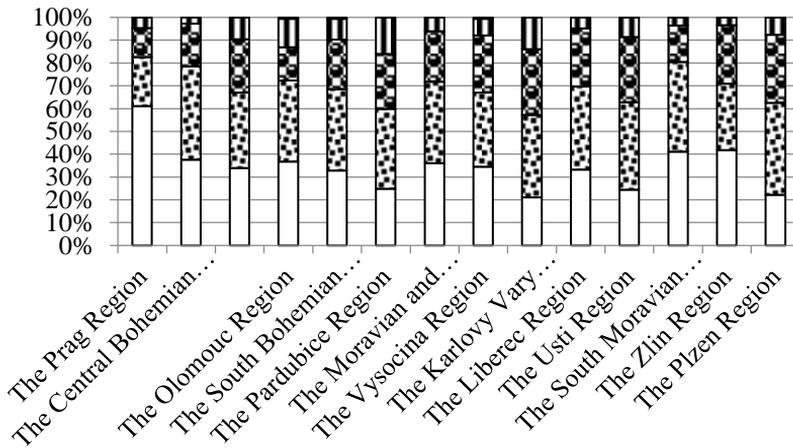
A subsequent validation of the given hypotheses has been carried out under theoretically simplified conditions, which are projected even into the interpretation of the ascertained findings. The theoretical abstraction is based for example on the assumption that all teachers classify the level of the knowledge and skills of the pupils in a foreign language in the Czech Republic, on an average, in a similar way, and that all teachers teach on average identically; and that all pupils have a similar interest in the selected/given foreign language (it was insignificant what foreign language our pupils were studying, but it was essential that it was a language other than the pupil's mother tongue), that all pupils have similar inclinations/dispositions to learning, etc. The research paper introduces the results of the verification of the defined research hypotheses under such simplified assumptions and opens the controversy to the causes of the ascertained statistically significant relations.

### **Research findings**

The survey was designed to test the hypotheses above, which were based on the assumption of a uniform distribution of the dependent variable, i.e. the classification of a foreign language on selected independent variables within a relatively small community, which the Czech Republic represents. (10 million inhabitants living in a relatively small area of 78,866 km<sup>2</sup>). The situation, which has occurred in the Czech Republic during the course of the last quarter of a century, significantly disrupted homogeneity and diversified its monolithic character, for instance in its social structure, in the lifestyle, in value preferences, the scope of activities, the concept of success, as well as the accepted patterns of expectations, the willingness to work on oneself, etc. In general, the effect of these changes is considered as centrifugal, with their tendency to associate like with the like (Piketty, 2015). Regionally taken, it means that in certain areas the bearers of certain characteristic features come together more frequently than in other areas. Therefore, this paper, in its sub-focus, monitors the regional distribution of pupils according to their classification in a foreign language.

The correlation between the region in which pupils live and their final classification in the foreign language has been examined within the structure of the fourteen regions of the Czech Republic. The assumed premise is expressed by the hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> - the academic success of pupils in their foreign language learning does not show any substantial regional differences, i.e. the distribution of the classification of these pupils across all regions of the CR is evenly distributed. Then pupils with both excellent and low foreign language knowledge and skills, which are projected into the numerical classification are heteronomously spread throughout the Czech Republic and do not accumulate more in certain areas than in others. On the monitored sample this hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>), however, has not been confirmed, since the value of the chi-square coefficient was reported at well below 5 % (Pearson Chi-square: 188.280, p = 0.000001) – see Figure 2.

□ Excellent   ■ Very good   ■ Good   ■ Sufficient   ■ Insufficient/Fail



**Figure 2: Regional distribution of final school classification in the studied foreign language (6th form) according to regions**

The results referred to in Chart 2 depict the position of regions according to the frequency of the final classification at the end of the sixth level, i.e.

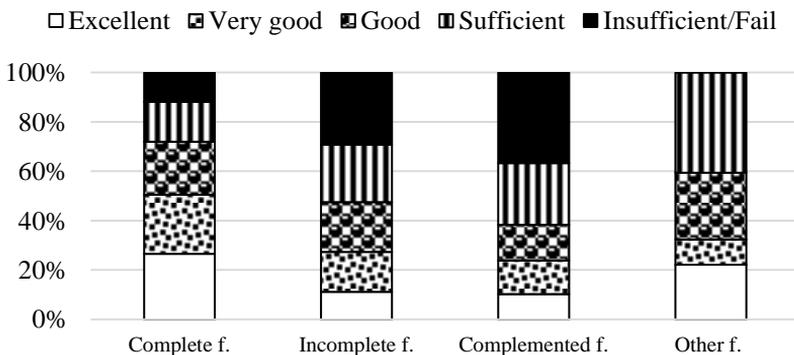
- The “excellent” grade dominates in the capital Prague (61 %), which is followed, with a great gap, by the Zlin Region (42 %) and the South Moravian Region (41 %),
- The “very good” grade achieves the highest frequency in the Central Bohemian Region (41 %), the Plzen Region (40 %), and the South Moravian Region (39 %).
- The “good” grade shows the highest frequencies in Plzen Region (30 %), the Karlovy Vary Region (29 %), and the Usti Region (28 %).
- The “sufficient” grade shows the highest frequencies in the Pardubice Region (16 %), the Karlovy Vary Region (14 %), and the Olomouc Region (12 %).
- The “insufficient” grade – only three regions have shown a non-zero value, i.e. the Vysocina Region (0.56 %), the Olomouc Region (0.54 %), and the South Bohemian Region (0.51 %).

The distribution of the pupils’ classification spectrum suggests a connection between the degree of attractiveness of individual locations in terms of foreign tourism, possibly with the proximity of foreign capitals. Assuming that the assessment by means of the pupils’ numerical classification reflects real language knowledge and skills (achieved by the majority of students), then the above-average foreign language pupils (those with an aggregate of “excellent” and “very good” grades) in highest frequencies accumulate just in the capital city of Prague (83 %) in the South Moravian Region (81 %) and in the Central Bohemian Region (79 %). On the contrary, their lowest representation was observed in the Karlovy Vary Region (57 %), in the Pardubice Region (60 %) and in the Plzen (63 %). As seen above, the representation of above-average level for language learners reached at least 57 % out of a maximum

of one hundred percent in all regions. On the contrary, the level of the below-average language learners (assessment expressed as an aggregate of total “sufficient” and “insufficient” grades) was in the minority in all regions, in only three regions it exceeded the ten percent limit: in the Pardubice Region (16 %), in the Karlovy Vary Region Karlovy Vary (14 %), and in the Olomouc Region (13 %).

On the basis of the above mentioned findings it was impossible to confirm hypothesis  $H_1$  and state that school success in foreign language learning, in terms of the fourteen regions of the Czech Republic, is evenly distributed. On the contrary, on the monitored sample of respondents it was confirmed that the classification of pupils shows regional links and signals the uneven distribution of different language skills on the part of pupils in the Czech Republic. This inequality is likely to contribute to the relatively poor performance exhibited by the Czechs in language literacy compared to other Europeans, which also reduces their functional literacy, i.e. the ability to actively participate in the world of information (Hyklova 2016).

During further steps of our research, we similarly and partially tested the correlation between the pupil’s family background, specifically the family type referred to in hypothesis  $H_2$ , and the parents’ highest educational attainment - see hypothesis  $H_3$ , and the final classification of 6th graders in a foreign language. The pupils’ school success is generally associated with the influence of the family (e.g. Mateju, Vecernik 1998; Telekova 2013; Vomackova, Cihlár 2013). The sample was monitored to verify the dependence of this success, in the form of pupils’ achievements in foreign language learning, on the two independent variables. The family type was observed in the structure of the following four types of families - complete, incomplete, supplemented and substitute/or other (Dunovsky 1986), especially in relation to the performance of its socio-psychological functions (Helus 2007). For the low representation of certain types of families, we had to make their summarization into the group designating “other families” (2 %) and this group was statistically evaluated together with complete families (66 %), or incomplete or one-parent families (19 %) and supplemented families (13 %). Not only visually and graphically, but also statistically, there is a noticeable difference in the distribution of the achieved classification according to the type of family (Pearson Chi-square: 101 955,  $p =$

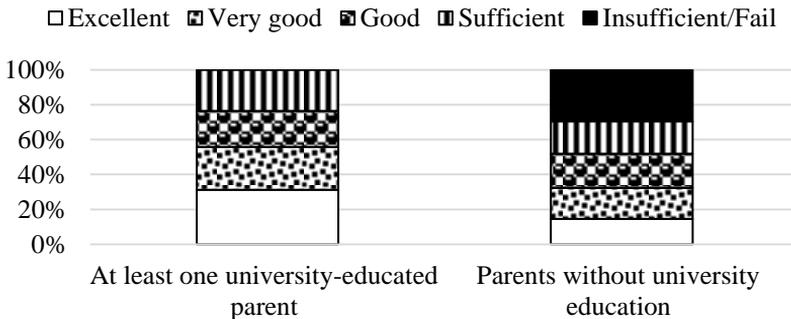


0.000000) – see in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: The correlation between the family type and school success in pupils from the 6th grades in a foreign language**

Figure 3 demonstrates that in terms of school success – namely in the classification of a foreign language – it really matters from what family background the pupil comes, i.e. there is a statistically confirmative correlation between the family type and school success in foreign language learning. Therefore, the  $H_2$  hypothesis cannot be confirmed at the 5% significance level. The presumption of family functionality in our sample is supported in complete families by the frequency of the awarded “excellent” grades and by the tendency towards the decline in worse grades (“sufficient” and “insufficient” ones). On the contrary, in the case of single-parent and complemented families, the classification with “excellent” grades is the least numerous and the representation of worse grades grows as far as the “insufficient” grade (the pupils of other families were not awarded with an “insufficient” grade in the 6th form). Although this finding is not completely unique, as it corresponds with the results of a number of similar studies (e.g. Sobotkova 2001; Jedlicka et al. 2004; Fischer, Skoda 2008; Blizkovsky 1997), these results are effectively reflected in Czech educational practice. Cooperation between school and parents and the pupil’s family is not always sufficient. This applies especially to the so-called forced cooperation, when parents refuse to cooperate with the school, or are even adverse to it.

Another observed independent variable in relation to the school classification of a pupil was the level of the highest educational achievements on the part of his parents. Two groups were created from the original six variants in the questionnaire when processing the results: the first, in which at least one parent had achieved university education (42 %), the second group had included pupils of the other parents who had not met the previous condition in either case (58 %). In the sample of 2.706 respondents monitored by our team was demonstrated a statistical correlation (Pearson Chi-square: 44.5034,  $p = 0.000000$ ), and we can say that in terms of foreign language school achievements, it does not matter either, how well educated the family the pupil comes from is – see in Figure 4.

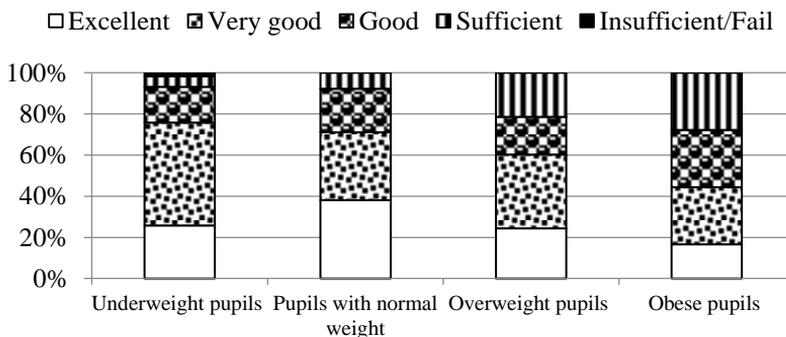


**Figure 4: Correlation between the parents’ education and pupils’ school success in 6th forms, in the foreign language**

As Figure 4 demonstrates, in families with at least one university-educated parent, we can observe the tendency towards a great degree of decline from excellent grades to sufficient grading (the ratio of a given classification level is shown here); the “sufficient” grading is then more frequent by three per cent points than “good” grading. In pupils from families which are not represented by university-educated parents, the opposite tendency is evident – that of an increase, up to the classification expressed by “insufficient” grades. From this perspective, therefore, the highest educational attainment on the part of the parents appears to be as a fundamental

prerequisite for the success of a given sample of respondents. The above mentioned facts lead to the rejection of hypothesis  $H_3$ , according to which the academic success of pupils in a foreign language does not reveal a correlation with the level of educational attainment of their parents. The opposite is true and the quality of family background corresponds to the level of educational attainment of parents. Examples are numerous studies (e.g. Mateju, Soukup, Basl 2007), which show that the development of a child is successfully stimulated by parents with higher education. For instance, pupils from families where parents never read to their children, cannot catch up on this handicap in school, which becomes even more intense with another language (Gabal, Vaclavikova-Helsusova 2003).

A link to the final classification in a foreign language at the end of sixth grade was investigated in relation to the physical disposition of pupils by means of BMI. The current trend of decline in pupils' physical fitness and their excess weight is associated with low physical activity, and poor eating habits, which are created by the family in the context of its lifestyle. Seemingly unrelated variables in the given sample of respondents showed a statistically conclusive correlation (Pearson Chi-square: 49.6774,  $p=0.000002$ ). Within the Czech Republic, the best results in studying a foreign language was achieved by pupils with normal weight (examined in the aggregate frequency of excellent, very good and good grades: 92 %) – see Figure 5. The results of our research investigation thus indirectly supported the fact of cohesion between the cognitive, the physical and psychological factor of personality in terms of the individual's functioning (e.g. Strakova, Vesely 2013; Mudrak, Slepicka, Houdova 2013).



**Figure 5: Correlation between the Body Mass Index and school success of pupils of the 6th forms in the foreign language**

As Figure 5 illustrates, a decreasing distribution of the classification spectrum from the excellent grade up to the insufficient grade is demonstrated on the part of pupils with normal weight (they acquired the greatest number of excellent grades and the least number of sufficient grades and no insufficient classification in this subject). The most “very good” grades from the whole monitored reference sample was acquired, surprisingly, by underweight pupils (50 %), who also acquired – as the only weight category – the insufficient classification (1.72 %). In obese pupils, on the contrary, the highest representation was evident in “good” and “sufficient” grades (in both the cases 28 %). If we divided the entire sample of respondents into a group of above-average pupils (with total frequency of “excellent” and “very good” grades) and that of below-average pupils (the sum of the “sufficient” and “insufficient” frequencies), the above-average pupils would be led by underweight pupils (76 %), followed by pupils with normal weight (71 %), overweight pupils (60 %) and obese pupils (44 %).

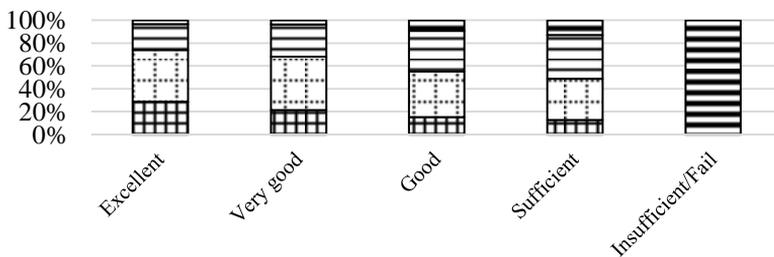
In the group of below-average pupils, we could observe the reverse order, i.e. the highest ratio was indicated by obese pupils (27 %) and the lowest ratio was exhibited by underweight pupils (7 %). On the basis of the given proportions it is possible to say that underweight and normal weight pupils is, in the observed sample, associated with a certain level of excellence in this subject, while the average and below-average performance is accomplished, according to the BMI Index, in particular by obese pupils. To answer the question as to why this is so, however, was not the goal of our investigation. But it is possible to deduce that there can be some links to the lifestyle of the monitored categories. The acquisition of language skills is associated a great number of obstacles and the overcoming of which is connected with the pupil's manifestation of will, dedication and bringing sacrifices in terms of the pupils readiness towards self-denial of comfort. Even the fourth hypothesis  $H_4$  in order – the pupils' school success in their foreign language learning shows no correlation with their BMI – the hypothesis thus has not been confirmed. From the monitored sample of respondents it was confirmed that apart from the influence of the region, in which the student attends school, and besides the family type and the parents' education, the pupil's BMI plays a critical role.

In search for possible correlations within the reported school results in foreign language learning, we have further tested the pupils' inclination to the selected value types. To be able to demonstrate the purposes of this paper we have selected two statements out of the originally monitored 14 in our research - for details see Vomackova, Cihlar (2015):

1. Socratic type of values: By demanding more of myself I differ from my peers.
2. Promethean type of values: I am glad when my work is done by somebody else.

Quite selectively we have tested one statement from the field of the Socratic type of values and one from the field of the Promethean type of values. In the first case with a focus on self-improvement, self-management and self-education, i.e. on the cultivation of the individual himself; while in the second case the focus was on the promotion of equality, justice and freedom within the community to which the pupil belongs. The relationship between the statement expressing the pupils' consent with the proposition testing the Socratic type of values (the aggregate of Definitely Yes and Rather Yes) or rejection of these values (Definitely Not, Rather Not) and the school classification of pupils learning a foreign language, demonstrate a direct correlation. The more frequent the consent of pupils with a proposition is, the better is their grade in a foreign language and vice versa (Pearson Chi-square: 79.8481,  $p = 0.000001$ ) – see Figure 6. Although the self-development of the pupil is expressed only through the pupil's self-reflection, in which a certain danger of distortion is concealed, it is impossible to overlook (thanks to the broad sample of 2.706 respondents) the proven statistically significant association.

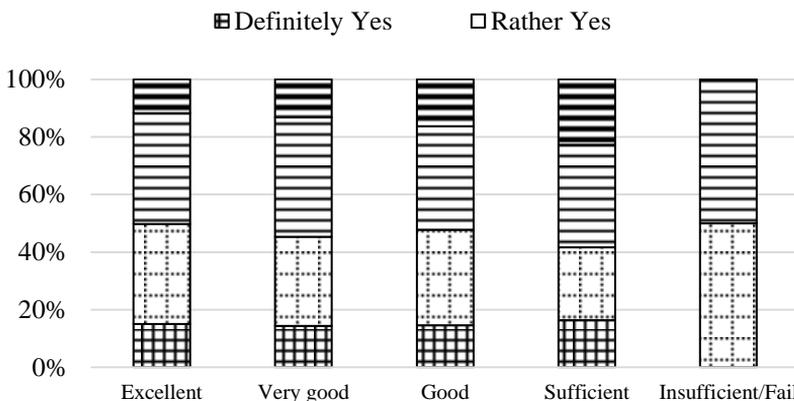
Definitely Yes  
  Rather Yes  
  Rather Not  
  Definitely Not



**Figure 6: The correlation of classification in the foreign language and the Socratic type of values**

In case of the given proposition, with the aggregate positive statement (Definitely Yes, Rather Yes) the ratio of pupils was gradually decreasing from the “excellent” grade (47 %) as far as the “sufficient” grade (28 %); the insufficient evaluation has not been registered with the aggregate positive statement. The mirrored pattern demonstrated a gradual increase of the pupils’ ratio in the case of the aggregate of the rejected proposition (Certainly Not, Rather Not) – from the “excellent” classification (53 %) to the “sufficient” classification (72 %); the “insufficient” evaluation has been acquired only by pupils who expressed a categorical disagreement (Definitely Not) with that statement.

The statement testing the inclination to the Promethean type of values – “I am glad when my work is done by somebody else” – has also been tested on a four-grade scale, which expressed the degree of the pupil’s self-reflection. Even in this case, using the chi-square test investigated the relationship between the proposition and the classification in the foreign language within the verification of hypothesis  $H_5$  – The school level of success on the part of pupils in their foreign language studies does not show any connection to their inclination to the type of values. Even in this case, however, the hypothesis has not been confirmed (Pearson Chi-square: 26.2190,  $p = 0.001883$ ) and this had to be rejected at the 5% significance level – see Figure 7.



**Figure 7: The correlation between classification in the foreign language and the Promethean type of values**

As seen in Figure 7, the positive statements of the respondents (the aggregate of Definitely Yes, Rather Yes) oscillate around 47 % and negative statements (the sum of Definitely Not and Rather Not) around the value of 53 %. It is interesting that deviations exceeding above these average values are demonstrated in pupils with the classification “excellent” and “good” (in case of the consent) and in case of disagreement in pupils with the classification “very good” and “sufficient”. Due to the Promethean values and the types of questions the negative answers in the above-given case are desirable ones, while positive answers can be assessed as undesirable ones. Thus it can be stated that the total ratio 53 (Not) : 47 (Yes) express that the majority of the respondents inclines to the Promethean values. However, if we look only at the categorical disagreement (Absolutely/Definitely Not), we can observe that the lowest is with pupils awarded by “excellent” grades (12 %) and it then continually

grows towards the “sufficient” classification (23 %). From this Promethean perspective it is possible to assess pupils who were awarded only by “sufficient” grades even more favourably than pupils who obtained “excellent” grades. With the categorical consent (Definitely Yes) practically all degrees of classification are – with the exception of “sufficient” grades – well balanced.

### **Conclusion**

The research paper selectively highlighted the wider context of school classification in a foreign language at the end of the sixth grade of primary schools in the country. Based on the assumption that although the school evaluation in the form of numerical classifications may reflect a variety of influences and factors, such as causal attribution, yet it primarily reflects the level of achievement of knowledge and skills on the part of pupils. These were followed by means of classification in connection with the localities in the region in which the pupils attended school, in relation to the type of family and the education level of their parents, in relation to their weight categories according to BMI and in connection with the tendency of students to the selected type of values. Statistically significant relations have been demonstrated in all cases. This confirms that the school success in a foreign language is a broad issue and it is necessary to count on the multiplication effect even in connection with apparently unrelated phenomena such as the pupil’s BMI pupil, or its regional jurisdiction. **Thus**, in terms of pedagogy, it is confirmed that education is not only a matter of the cognitive plane (i.e. handing over “ready-made” knowledge), but it is also, to a significant level, a matter of the psychomotor plane (learning techniques and methods for solving problems and conflicts) and the affective plane (cultivating love for language, learning self-discipline). Education in such a wide scope is not just a matter of teachers and pupils, as it is often stated in a simplified way, but it is even a matter of families and the rules set by the given society.

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