Charles University

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BACHELOR THESIS

Integration of Ukrainian Pupils into English Classes
in Czech Primary Schools
Integrace ukrajinských žáků do hodin angličtiny
na českých základních školách

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Odevzdáním této bakalářské práce na téma Integrace ukrajinských žáků do hodin angličtiny na českých základních školách (Integration of Ukrainian Pupils into English Classes in Czech Primary Schools) potvrzuji, že jsem ji vypracoval pod vedením vedoucí práce samostatně za použití v práci uvedených pramenů a literatury. Dále potvrzuji, že tato práce nebyla využita k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

Veselí nad Lužnicí, 7. červenec, 2024

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**ABSTRAKT**

Tato práce se zabývá procesem integrace ukrajinských žáků do hodin angličtiny na českých základních školách, kteří do České republiky přišli po začátku ruské invaze Ukrajiny po únoru roku 2022. Kromě výsledků a průběhu akademické a sociální integrace také sleduje duševní zdraví žáků jakožto jeden z aspektů ovlivňujících tento proces. Cílem práce je na základě kvalitativní analýzy dat získaných z polostrukturovaných rozhovorů s učiteli angličtiny popsat výsledky, průběh a překážky integrace z perspektivy pedagoga. Mezi zjištění této práce patří korelace mezi počtem ukrajinských žáků ve skupině a úspěchem jejich akademické a sociální integrace, kdy ve skupinách s vyšším počtem žáků je integrace kvůli jejich tendenci se od skupiny segregovat složitější. Na základě tohoto zjištění z práce vyplynulo, že se učitelé z menších měst setkávají s méně překážkami než jejich kolegové v hlavním městě. Mezi další zjištění patří, že průměrná úroveň angličtiny ukrajinských žáků je nižší než průměrná úroveň českých žáků a tento rozdíl byl respondenty odhadnut na rozdíl 2-3 ročníků výuky anglického jazyka na české základní škole. Z výzkumu vychází, že se učitelé angličtiny ve skupinách setkávají u žáků s příznaky deprese, posttraumatické stresové poruchy a dalších možných projevů mentálních poruch.

**KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

Integrace ukrajinských žáků, migrace, výzvy integrace, výuka anglického jazyka, duševní zdraví žáků

**ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the process of integration of Ukrainian pupils into English classes in Czech primary schools who arrived in the Czech Republic after the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. In addition to examining the results and the process of academic and social integration, it also considers the impact of pupils' mental health in this process. The aim of this thesis is to describe the outcomes, progress and barriers of integration from the perspective of teachers of English, based on qualitative analysis of data obtained by the means of semi-structured interviews. The thesis concluded that the number of Ukrainian students in a group is correlated with their success in academic and social integration, with higher numbers of students leading to more difficulties in the process due to their tendency to segregate themselves from the rest of the group. The thesis thus concluded that teachers from smaller towns encounter fewer obstacles than their colleagues in the capital. Other findings include that the average level of English of Ukrainian pupils is lower than the average level of Czech pupils, with respondents estimating the gap to be between 2 to 3 years of English language education at Czech primary schools. The research found that English teachers encounter pupils exhibiting symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other possible signs of mental health problems.

**KEYWORDS**

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**Introduction**

According to the UN Refugee Agency, nearly 6.5 million Ukrainians have left Ukraine since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war on 24 February 2022 (UNHCR, 2024a). The majority of the war refugees have sought refuge in other European countries, with the total number reaching 4.3 million in the countries of the European Union. The Czech Republic is one of the main hosting countries, admitting around 9% of the amount, having the highest number of refugees per capita as of March 2024 (Eurostat, 2024). A third of all refugees from Ukraine who have fled to the EU are children (Eurostat, 2024).

Children often accompanied only by their mothers and siblings were forced to move to another country out of fear for their safety. This entailed leaving behind their homes, work, schools and often their family members, friends and other close people. Separated from everything they had known up to then, shell-shocked, they had to adapt to a foreign country without knowing its language, coming with only the most important things that they could carry. After this very trying experience, the children's mental health was very often severely affected, leading to depression, PTSD[1], and other mental health problems (Catani et al., 2023).

The need to integrate the newly arrived children back into the school system emerged, presenting a new challenge for the EU, the governments, the educational institutions and ultimately and foremost for the children and their new teachers. As of April 2024, there were 37 099 refugee children from Ukraine attending Czech primary schools (MŠMT, 2024). Foreign language teachers in the Czech Republic had to and still must face quite a specific situation, where pupils apart from having to learn the primary language of the educational system must also via it learn another foreign language, in this work's case the English language.

The goal of this thesis is to evaluate and describe the process of integration of Ukrainian refugee pupils into classes of English in Czech primary schools and to describe the factors that have either positively or negatively affected the process. To achieve this goal, qualitative research will be conducted through semi-structured interviews with teachers of

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[1] Post-traumatic stress disorder

English. The thesis will primarily focus on social and academic integration as well as the wellbeing of the students, who might suffer from mental health problems caused by various factors, which will also be a topic of the semi-structured interviews.

The first chapter will define the key terms used throughout the thesis. The second chapter will compare the Czech and the Ukrainian education systems in regard to English in order to ascertain their similarity or differentness. The third chapter will describe some of the problems caused by various factors that might occur during the process of integration of Ukrainian pupils. The fourth chapter describes the supportive measures taken in the Czech Republic to support the continuing process of integration, it will describe some of the legislative changes that adjust some of the rules concerning school admission, curriculum and other related subjects. The fifth chapter will describe the conducted research, the process and its results. The last chapter will conclude on the thesis and mention some of the possible implications for the problematics.

# 1 Key terms definition

## 1.1 Social integration

The American Psychological Association defines social integration as:

> *"The process by which separate groups are combined into a unified society, especially when this is pursued as a deliberate policy. It implies a coming together based on individual acceptance of the members of other groups"* (American Psychological Association, 2018a, para. 1).

Another definition given by the same dictionary defines social integration as *"the process by which an individual is assimilated into a group."* (American Psychological Association, 2018a, para. 2). The group in the context of this thesis is the group in which the pupils have their English lessons.

## 1.2 Academic integration

Abul- Rahaman in his work concerning academic integration in higher education quotes a definition by Tinto, defining academic integration *"as academic progress, cognitive growth, and having positive learning experiences"* (Abul- Rahaman, 2022, p.9).

In the context of academic integration into English lessons of primary education this will therefore above all mean the progress of the pupil in terms of their learning outcomes, engagement and their progress in English.

## 1.3 Stress

A definition of the American Psychological Association understands stress as:

> *"The physiological or psychological response to internal or external stressors. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave"* (American Psychological Association, 2018b, para. 1).

A stressor can be *"any event, force, or condition that results in physical or emotional stress"* (American Psychological Association, 2018c, para. 1). Some of the stressors which are mentioned and relevant to the scope of the thesis are the experience of war, family separation and forced displacement.

## 1.4 Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

The American Psychiatric Association defines PTSD as *"a psychiatric disorder that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event, series of events or set of circumstances"* (American Psychiatric Association, 2022, para. 1). Some of the symptoms include intrusive thoughts and flashbacks of the experienced trauma, distorted thoughts and alterations in cognition, mood and reactivity (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Children suffering from PTSD might have trouble paying attention, feel numb, have angry outbursts and lack positive emotions (CDC, 2023).

## 1.5 Refugee

The UN Refugee Agency defines refugees as *"people who have fled their countries to escape conflict, violence, or persecution and have sought safety in another country"* (UNHCR, 2024b, para 1.).

In the context of this thesis, these are those Ukrainians and more specifically Ukrainian children, who have fled Ukraine after 24 February 2022 and sought safety in the Czech Republic.

## 2   English in General secondary schools in Ukraine

One of the many factors determining the difficulty of the process of integration into English classes is the compatibility of the Czech and the Ukrainian school systems and the role of English education in them. In this chapter a brief description of the educational stages in the Ukrainian education system will be given. This chapter will focus on the stages of compulsory education covered by Czech primary schools (Základní školy) and their corresponding Ukrainian counterparts, general secondary schools (Середні загальноосвітні школи).

Czech primary schools' programmes are based on the guidelines given by Framework Education Programme (Rámcový vzdělávací program) which was last updated in 2023. This document describes the skills pupils should acquire during their education. The document with the same purpose in the Ukrainian system is called the State Standard of Basic Secondary Education (Державний стандарт базової середньої освіти). The specific plan of achieving the goals set by the state standard is called Educational programme (Освітня програма), which is planned and approved by a general secondary school's pedagogical council (MON[2], 2023). The Ukrainian Ministry of Education publishes typical educational programmes for each stage of general secondary education, which will be taken as the basis for the comparison of the Czech and Ukrainian systems. There are separate plans designed for the national minorities living in Ukraine, which will not be taken into consideration, given the purpose and focus of this thesis.

Since 2016, a foreign language has been taught in all 11 years of Ukrainian general secondary education (Luís et al., 2023). The choice of the language depends on the possibilities of the school, but in most cases, English is predominantly chosen (MŠMT, 2022a). This chapter will describe the information provided by the school educational programmes published by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education on their official website. For comparison and contrast, information from the document with the same purpose produced by the primary school in Soběslav (Základní škola Soběslav. tř. Dr. Edvarda Beneše 50) will be given in each of the following subchapters.

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[2] Ministerstvo osvity i nauky Ukrainy - Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

It will compare years 2, 4, 6 and 9, which have been chosen in order to cover as much of both curriculums as possible. Comparing years 2 will show how great the initial difference is, caused by the fact that pupils in Ukraine start with English sooner. Year 4 is the last year of primary education in Ukraine, whereas year 6 is the first year of lower-secondary education in Czechia. Year 9 is both the last year of secondary education in Ukraine as well as the last year of the 9 year long obligatory education in Czech primary schools.

## 2.1  Primary education (Початкова загальна освіта)

Children in Ukraine usually enter primary education at the age of 6, if not contradicted by any health or psychological problems (MŠMT, 2022a). The length of this stage is from year 1 to year 4 and is concluded by an exam, which needs to be passed in order to move to the next stage (MŠMT, 2022a). This roughly corresponds to the Czech primary stage in primary schools, which encompasses years 1-5. As already mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, children already start learning a foreign language in the first year. In comparison with the Czech system, teaching a foreign language becomes mandatory for schools from the third year (MŠMT, 2023d). The number of lessons of the first foreign language per week in Ukraine is 2 in year 1, and 3 in years 2,3 and 4 (Savchenko, 2022a; Savchenko 2022b). In the Czech Republic there are 3 lessons of a foreign language in years 3 and 4 and none in the first two years (MŠMT, 2023d).

### 2.1.1  Year 2

By the end of the second year, pupils in Ukraine should reach a pre-A1 level, which among others should encompass the ability to understand short statements and questions, given that they are spoken clearly and slowly or accompanied by visual support if necessary (Savchenko, 2022a). The pupils should recognize familiar everyday words in contexts and should be able to understand simple instructions for action such as to close the door etc., they should be able to recognize familiar words accompanied by pictures, for example in menus (Savchenko, 2022a). Given that these competencies should be achieved by a Ukrainian pupil by the end of year 2, while the Czech pupil has not yet begun learning a foreign language, could give a significant head start to Ukrainian pupils.

### 2.1.2 Year 4

If we then compare the plans for year 4 by Savchenko and that of ZŠ Dr. Edvarda Beneše in Soběslav, the plan in the Czech Republic is on a noticeably lower level when it comes to the expected output proficiency.

To exemplify, the grammatical topics for year 4 in Ukraine include comparative and superlative forms of adjectives, present continuous, future simple and adverbs and adverbials of frequency and movement (Savchenko, 2022b). The programme in Soběslav among other topics lists plural forms of nouns, indefinite article and possessive forms of nouns (ZŠ Soběslav, n.d. a).

The difference is not apparent only in the grammatical part. Whereas pupils in Ukraine should already discuss more advanced topics such as hygiene, health or the environment, pupils in Soběslav deal with topics like my family, free time, home, clothing, seasons of the year, animals, nature and holidays (Savchenko, 2022b; ZŠ Soběslav, n.d a). Taking this into consideration, there is a noticeable gap between the expected level of fourth graders in the Ukrainian and the Czech programme, where Ukrainian students are expected to deal with more advanced topics. The two-year head start of the Ukrainian programme is especially evident in this year.

## 2.2 Basic secondary education (Базова загальна середня освіта)

By the end of year 9, pupils in Ukraine are expected to reach A2+ in their first foreign language, in Czechia the level should be A2 (MON, 2017; MŠMT 2023d). Both in Ukraine and Czechia the number of lessons remains at 3 per week (Ibid).

### 2.2.1 Year 6

Grammatical topics differ in this year with the only common one being quantifiers with uncountable and countable nouns (MON, 2017; ZŠ Soběslav, n.d. b). Overall, the topics in Ukraine are again of a higher level and among others include modal verbs for intention and desire, adverbs of manner, comparatives and possessive pronouns as complement (MON, 2017). Some of the topics listed in the Czech programme include demonstrative pronouns, ordinal numbers and prepositions of space and time (ZŠ Soběslav, n.d. b).

### 2.2.2 Year 9

Both programmes are quite brief when it comes to grammatical topics for year 9. The only grammatical topic the programmes share in that year are relative clauses (MON, 2017; ZŠ Soběslav, n.d b). The Ukrainian programme mentions the first conditional, which is already planned for year 8 in Soběslav. Year 9 in Soběslav includes the present perfect tense, a topic that is not included in this stage of education in Ukraine (Ibid.) The Czech programme might be a bit more advanced in this year, but the difference is not as significant as that in year 4, where the Ukrainian one is on a noticeably more advanced level.

The Czech programme seems to be progressing to the level of the Ukrainian one in the last year and the initial difference present especially during the first years gradually disappears. The level of English of ninth graders both in Ukraine and Czechia should therefore be comparable. A comparison of the two programmes indicates that in this aspect, academic integration of Ukrainians especially from lower classes should be less problematic, given that a higher level of proficiency is expected of them than that of their Czech peers.

# 3 Possible obstacles in integrating Ukrainian pupils

The integration of foreign pupils, and Ukrainians in particular, into primary schools is not new to the Czech Republic and it has been occurring since before the war. In the school year of 2019/2020, A total of 28% of all foreign pupils in Czech kindergartens, primary and secondary schools combined were Ukrainians, representing the largest group of foreign pupils in the Czech Republic (Jiroutová, 2022). The number of foreign pupils in Czech primary schools had been increasing steadily prior to 2020, with nearly twice as many foreigners enrolled in 2020 than in 2013 (Jiroutová, 2022). The estimated number of Ukrainian refugee children who attend a Czech primary school between January to November 2023 was between 88–96% of the total number, which is significantly higher than it was in June 2022, when it was 56% (Šafářová et al., 2023). Of this number, 29% attended both Czech and Ukrainian lessons, with less than 2% of all pupils attending solely Ukrainian lessons (Šafářová et al., 2023).

According to Cerna, there are three main needs of a refugee child that need to be met in order for them to be able to successfully integrate (UNICEF, 2023). The first area encompasses learning needs, which includes the academic integration into the new education system, as well as learning the language of the host country (UNICEF, 2023). The second area are social needs, encompassing the need for communication, identity and the sense of belonging (UNICEF, 2023). The last area are emotional needs that include coping with trauma that the refugee child might have experienced and other stress factors such as family separation, loss and others (UNICEF, 2023). These three areas are influenced by several factors, which Cerna classifies as individual, interpersonal and school-level factors (UNICEF, 2023). In a report published by Eurydice it is mentioned that in most of the European education systems, native-born pupils outperform migrant students (EACEA[3], 2019).

According to a poll conducted by The National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic, 69% of the total of 700 polled schools answered that they managed to integrate

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[3] European Education and Culture Executive Agency

Ukrainian students and no problems now occur during their education (Beková et Hruška, 2023).

This chapter will describe the problems related to the integration of foreign pupils in general, but it will also describe problems linked specifically to the situation that arose shortly after the start of the war, when a large number of children had to be integrated into the school system in a relatively short period of time, which in its scale is unprecedented in Czech history. Ukrainians are war refugees and problems related to this specific situation will also be described. Issues described in this chapter directly or indirectly influenced integration into English classes.

## 3.1  Insufficient school capacities

In a poll conducted by the Czech School Inspection (Česká školní inspekce), 45% of Czech primary schools viewed insufficient capacity as a problem in relation to integrating Ukrainian pupils (Novosák et al., 2022). Insufficient number of classrooms, lack of qualified teachers and other personnel were among the most frequent issues at the beginning of the war (Novosák et al., 2022).

Another problem linked to the lack of capacities was an insufficient number of psychologists and pedagogical assistants, who, as mentioned in the introductory part of this thesis, were and still are required to help children overcome the stress caused by displacement and other stressful experiences they might have had in Ukraine (Novosák et al., 2022). A possible solution quoted in the report of the CSI[4] is changing the legal requirements for hiring pedagogical assistants, who would ideally speak both Ukrainian and Czech, which would lead to an improvement of the situation (Novosák et al., 2022). By March 2023, the highest relative number of Ukrainian school employees with temporary protection visas was in the Central Bohemian Region (Středočeský kraj), representing 2% of all employees, 37% of which were teachers. (Kapacity, 2023). As of September 2023, 3.7% of all primary school students are Ukrainians, 66% of which are refugees and 13.2% have permanent residence in the Czech Republic (Hlaďo et al., 2023).

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[4] Czech School Inspection

Due to the limited capacities of schools, some children were denied enrolment and their parents had to look for an alternative school that was not always in the vicinity of their residence (Dombinskaya, 2023). Increasing school capacities, providing new classroom equipment, courses for teachers and school assistants, and lunches for more than 10 000 pupils were among the ways UNICEF has helped mitigate this issue in the Czech Republic (Beková et Hruška, 2023). Based on the reports of Czech primary schools, a total number of 119 944 pupils could be accepted into the system in case it was needed (MŠMT, 2023e). This shows that the acute problem with capacity which occurred immediately after the start of the war has allowed the schools to better prepare for similar situations.

## 3.2  Knowledge of the Czech language

In April 2022, the Czech Ministry of Education allocated 150 million CZK for intensive Czech language courses for children aged 14-18 to prevent Ukrainian pupils leaving schools due to the language barrier (MŠMT, 2022c). These courses were also meant to help children adapt to the new environment and integrate among their new peers (MŠMT, 2022c). A further 1.25 billion CZK was allocated for adaptation groups for children aged 3-15, aimed at helping the children in the process of adapting to their new environment, improving their language skills, socialising them and generally supporting their well-being (MŠMT, 2022c).

Knowledge of the Czech language is one of the primary prerequisites for a successful integration into the Czech school system. As of November 2023, 64% of Ukrainian children aged 6-14 and 72% aged 15-17 could communicate in the Czech language in everyday situations (Hlas Listopad, 2023). This percentage was achieved almost a year and a half after the start of the war; initially, the problem was much more immediate.

In June 2022, 18% of Ukrainian parents reported that they had not registered their child in a Czech primary school due to their lack of knowledge of the Czech language (Kavanová et al., 2023b). Upon comparison of the trend between June 2022, November 2022 and November 2023, a general improvement of language knowledge in all age categories can be observed (Kavanová et al., 2023b). Children who take part in free-time activities have generally better knowledge of Czech and as of November 2023 54% of children were reported to take part in them (Šafářová et al., 2023).

However, whereas in June 2023 only 32% of Ukrainian children did not attend any lessons of Czech as a second language (CSL), as of November 2023 this number had increased to 53% (Šafářová et al., 2023). In June 2023 40% of Ukrainian pupils aged 6-17 visited CSL lessons, which is about 21% fewer than in the previous year, showing a long-time decreasing trend (Šafářová et al., 2023). 31% of the children who do not attend any Czech language lessons have a declared level of the Czech language A2 or less, which shows that CSL lessons are still needed and should be further supported (Šafářová et al., 2023). Among the most common reasons for children not attending CSL lessons, parents reported that they do not know about the possibilities of language lessons (39%), they are not interested in them (20%) or that they are not offered to them (18%) (Kavanová et. al, 2023a). Intensive courses of the Czech language are highly recommended, with data showing that children who visit them are consequently generally more successful in integrating (Titěrová, 2023).

Based on empirical data, younger children who attend preparatory courses prior to their attendance of primary school are much easier to integrate, sometimes achieving similar levels of Czech language proficiency as their Czech peers (Kostelecká, 2013). The higher difficulty of the curriculum in higher years and the need to understand more advanced academic Czech make it generally more difficult for older students to integrate (Titěrová, 2023). However, given the scope of this thesis, the situation might be different in this aspect based on the preferred language used during English lessons, which varies from teacher to teacher, where not being proficient in the Czech language could be a less significant problem in classes where English is preferred as the primary language of instruction.

## 3.3   Peer relationship and social integration

Sense of belonging is an important component and one of the conditions of a successful integration into both the academic and social structures of the school (EACEA, 2019). In a report released by Eurydice it was established that pupils who do not speak the language of instruction at home reported lower sense of belonging and on average experience more bullying than those who do (EACEA, 2019).

Lintner lists 3 main obstacles that make it difficult for Ukrainian pupils to integrate (Lintner et al.,2023). The first one is that ethnic minority pupils generally tend to be excluded from the rest of the class and form social bonds among each other instead (Lintner et al., 2023). In relation to that Lintner mentions the fact that the Czech educational system was rather homogenous prior to the migration crisis and might not be as supportive and acceptant to ethnic minorities as might be the case in more diverse countries (Lintner et al., 2023). The second obstacle Lintner names is the lack of proficiency in Czech and the third one is the stress caused by relocation and war (Lintner et al., 2023).

In June 2022 41% of Ukrainian pupils were reported to have no Czech friends (Šafářová et al., 2023). This has significantly improved and by November 2023 the percentage has shrunk to 22%. However, as of November 2023 only 51% feel that their child was integrated into the community of Czech children (Šafářová et al., 2023). The proficiency in the Czech language seems to be the most important factor, as 77% children who are fluent in it were reported by their parents to be well integrated, contrasted with only 20% of children with poor knowledge of the language (Šafářová et al., 2023). Age does not seem to play any significant role in social integration, with no major differences between the age groups of 4-5, 6-14 and 15-17 (Šafářová et al., 2023).

A study conducted by SYRI (National Institute for Socio-Economic Research on the Impact of Diseases and Systemic Risks) between October 2022 and February 2023 showed that schools put more emphasis on social integration rather than on the academical one (Hlaďo et al., 2023). Despite this, SYRI reports that social integration is rather low with ethnic segregation in classes where there are multiple Ukrainian pupils (Hlaďo et al., 2023). Ukrainian pupils tend to exclusively socialise among themselves, which can hinder the process of integration into the class's social structure and also the process of learning the Czech language, because they no longer feel the need to do so (Hlaďo et al., 2023). A study conducted by Lintner proves that there is a correlation between the percentage of Ukrainian pupils in a classroom and the level of their social integration, with higher percentage linked to worse integration (Lintner et al., 2023).

As of September 2022, 39.7% of classes in primary schools had 1 to 5 Ukrainian pupils with a refugee visa, only 1% of all classes had more than five such pupils (MŠMT, 2022d).

Another factor influencing social integration at school is the place where the child's family lives, with children living in a rented flat being reported to be more integrated (53% reported to be well integrated) as opposed to living in an accommodation facility (38%) (Šafářová et al., 2023). Children who apart from attending a Czech primary school also attend online lessons of a Ukrainian school are reported to be less integrated as opposed to children who attend solely Czech primary schools (Šafářová et al., 2023).

## 3.4   Mental health of pupils

According to a study conducted at the Bitefeld University in Germany, 45% of the 42 scanned Ukrainian adolescents, who had fled for Germany, had clinically significant levels of PTSD, with more mental health problems observed in girls (Catani et al., 2023).  In a study conducted in the Czech Republic by PAQ Research and the National Institute of Mental Health it was found that signs of mental disorders are very common in refugees, with prevalence of problems corresponding to at least moderate depression being four times higher than in the Czech population (Kavanová et al., 2022a).

Ukrainian children who have fled the war experience stress caused by displacement and by losing contact with their friends, families, and home (Kavanová et al., 2022b). Children who attend lessons both in the Czech Republic and online lessons of their Ukrainian school are put under more pressure, caused by more work and less free time (Sdružení pro integraci a migraci, 2023). Another significant factor is the mental state of parents, which also influences the mental state of their children (Srdužení pro integraci a migraci, 2023). As of Autumn 2022, almost a half of adult Ukrainian refugees (45%) who came to the Czech Republic after February 2022 showed symptoms of  at least moderate depression (Kavanová et al., 2022b).  One of the things that generally positively influences the mental wellbeing of pupils are good social ties that are even proved to have a good impact on children suffering from PTSD, again showing the need to further support class integration (Verelst et al., 2022).

Children aged 6-12 who were exposed to stress caused by war may face various problems. They can have problems with concentration, which leads to difficulties when working on tasks at school, and as a result of this, disruptive behaviour in the classroom can be observed (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). Anxiety and anxious behaviour, characterized by fidgeting or stuttering, eating disorders, and psychosomatic symptoms are also common in this age group (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). Rapid changes in behaviour such as excess aggressivity or apathy can lead to the child's social isolation (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). Regression and sleeping problems may also appear (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). Adolescents aged 13-16 may exhibit self-destructive and high-risk behaviour such as drug consumption, participation in illegal activities (e.g. stealing) and general revolt against authorities (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022).

Common symptoms of stress may over time, if not handled correctly, grow into severe problems, which then need to be treated by a specialist (pedopsychiatrist, psychologist or special educator) (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). The most common reasons for a refugee child to be taken into specialist's care are major depression, hyperactivity, PTSD, and drug addiction (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022).

A child suffering from major depression does not play with other children and does not smile, they cry a lot and are sad over a long period of time (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). The child does not eat and therefore loses weight, they are tired but have problems falling asleep at night (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). Depressed children rarely participate in any activities, they lose interest in meeting new people and trying new things (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). Thoughts of suicide are also among the symptoms (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022).

Hyperactivity is characterized by inability to concentrate even in shorter periods of time, often daydreaming, having problems sitting still (Kavanová et al., 2022a). The child's behaviour is impulsive, they often perform dangerous activities, can get easily frustrated and have signs of other learning disorders (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022).

Children suffering from PTSD relive a stressful event they have experienced in various forms, for example by everyday nightmares or by constant thoughts about it (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). They develop a distance between themselves and parents or friends and do

not exhibit interest in activities (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022). Anxiety and overreaction to everyday impulses are also signs of PTSD (Štáfková et Ježková, 2022).

## 3.5 Communication between school and parents

Due to various factors, the communication between the school and the child's parents may not always be sufficient. In a study conducted by Dombinskaya (2023) one of the most important factors hindering communication as described by parents was the insufficient knowledge of the Czech language, which is described as a stressor and a serious barrier (Dombinskaya, 2023).

Parents often work more than they did in Ukraine, resulting in a limited amount of time they can spend with their children (Dombinskaya, 2023). Due to the language barrier, parents are also not able to help children with their homework as much as they did back in Ukraine and they feel like they are not informed enough about how the education system in the Czech Republic works, leading to further possible barriers (Dombinskaya, 2023).

# 4  Supportive measures taken to aid integration

In order to mitigate the process of integration of Ukrainian migrants, several steps were taken by the government and other actors aimed at supporting and helping Ukrainians and Ukrainian children overcome various issues. This chapter will describe some of the legislative changes that have been implemented to improve and facilitate integration of children into the Czech school system.

## 4.1  Lex Ukrajina

On March 21st, 2022, a legislative regulation called Lex Ukrajina came into force, aimed at improving and adjusting the conditions for refugees who came from Ukraine due to the war, among others it allowed for Ukrainian children to be accepted into the Czech educational system under similar conditions as Czech children. As of January 2024, there were six additional revisions of the original regulation (META, 2024). This chapter will list some of the areas that were modified and adjusted by this regulation.

### 4.1.1  Admission

A child is required to start attending obligatory primary education in 90 days after receiving temporary protection (META, 2024). After assessing the child's level of education and their educational needs, the principal assigns the pupil to a class, which should correspond to their age and should not differ by more than one year (MŠMT, 2023b). Schools are required to admit Ukrainian pupils with the only exception being full capacity, which can be increased for this purpose without the obligation to meet the hygiene requirements for the premises of the classroom (MŠMT, 2023b).

### 4.1.2  Adaptation phase

In order to better adapt pupils, principals of primary schools have the option to partly or completely replace their curriculum with different contents that do not need to adhere to the Framework Education Programme (META, 2024). The end goal of these adjustments is to prepare the pupil to be then later educated according to the FEP after the adaption phase is concluded (META, 2024). This exception is possible during the first 12 months after the child is taken under temporary protection, afterwards the plan must follow the state guidelines (META, 2024). However, the number of taught lessons cannot be modified, and

the pupil must attend the school accordingly (META, 2024). The principal can choose subjects that will be more focused on, or which will be omitted, based on the situation and individual needs of the pupils (META, 2024).

### 4.1.3 Evaluation

Given the differences between the Ukrainian and the Czech grading systems, pupils must become accustomed to it first and therefore it is recommended that teachers use descriptive assessment as opposed to classic grading (MŠMT, 2023b). Teachers should consider the pupil's knowledge of Czech when evaluating, which is a factor that negatively influences their overall performance but should not negatively influence their assessment (MŠMT, 2022b). In the adaptation phase, apart from academic progress, the pupil's progress in the area of integration and adaptation to their new environment, their will to cooperate with their new classmates and with the teacher should also be considered during their assessment (MŠMT, 2022b).

### 4.1.4 Czech language lessons

During the first 12 months of their stay in the Czech Republic, pupils attending primary schools are entitled to the total of 200 hours of free Czech language lessons (Ptáčková et al., 2024). The Czech language can also be offered as an alternative option to the second foreign language taught in the second stage of primary education (Ptáčková et al., 2024). The MŠMT advises schools to offer Czech language lessons as a voluntary subject with groups of at least 7 pupils who can be from various years (Ptáčková et al., 2024).

### 4.1.5 Ukrainian teaching assistants

Primary schools may hire Ukrainian teaching assistants who are only required to be proficient in the Czech language on the lowest necessary level that is needed for performing their work (Ptáčková et al., 2024). This level is evaluated in an interview conducted by the school's management (Ptáčková et al., 2024). These assistants need to speak Ukrainian on a native speaker's level (Ptáčková et al., 2024).

The required qualification does not change and remains the same as for other teaching assistants (MŠMT, 2022f). The main goal and purpose of this position is to improve and ease the integration of Ukrainian pupils into a class (MŠMT, 2022f).

## 4.2    Adaptation groups

In April 2022 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT) announced it would subsidise 1 250 000 000 CZK to organisers of adaptation groups which are meant to facilitate the process of integration, mitigate the stress caused by war, improve overall wellbeing of children as well as help them prepare for education at Czech schools (MŠMT, 2022e). Organisers of these groups can be schools, cities, non-governmental organisations and some other actors (MŠMT, 2022e). MŠMT mentions 3 activities conducted in the groups (MŠMT, 2022e).

Activity A is meant for children aged 3 to 6 and should be conducted in groups of 12 to 24, meant especially for children who attend neither a primary school nor kindergarten in Czechia, however during summer holidays even children who attend these institutions may participate in the groups (MŠMT, 2022e). These activities should last at least 20 hours over the span of 5 consecutive working days, children need to be provided food and drinks and the improvement of their language skills should be one of the main goals (MŠMT, 2022e).

Activity B is aimed at children aged 6 to 15, should have the same span as activity A and a group should have at least 15 members (MŠMT, 2022e). At least 10 hours need to be spent on improving children's Czech language skills (MŠMT, 2022e). Activity C is meant for children aged 3 to 15 in groups of 8 to 12 members and the goals remain the same as in the other two (MŠMT, 2022e).

## 4.3    Mental health support

As already mentioned in chapter 3.4, mental health is a significant issue when it comes to refugee children. There is a multitude of institutions that helped and still help Ukrainians in this matter, providing psychological support in Ukrainian and Russian.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NUDZ) published materials which are meant for teachers and other pedagogical personnel, dedicated to informing them about psychological problems that teachers might observe in children and adolescents, mental hygiene and other topics related to mental health both in Czech and Ukrainian (NUDZ, 2023).

# 5 Research

The empirical part of this thesis is a qualitative inquiry that is meant to acquire data to assess situations in various English classes and to compare them.

## 5.1 Research goals

The research is meant to evaluate both the academic and social integration of Ukrainian pupils in various groups of English classes at primary schools in the Czech Republic, while looking closely at the factors that played a role in the outcome and the problems that appeared or still appear during this process. It will describe the situation at the beginning of the migrant crisis but more importantly the overall ongoing process.

The research will look at how the pupils integrated into their English group, whether they cooperate with other pupils and with their teacher. It will also look for signs of possible pathological behaviour and mental health problems, which were reported to be much more frequent in refugee children who escaped war conflicts. The research part will investigate the situations of different classes and describe the obstacles that the teachers of English experienced and experience during their lessons while teaching pupils from Ukraine who came to the Czech Republic after February 2022.

As the research data is gathered by the means of semi-structured interviews with English teachers, a great emphasis will be put on their role in the whole process and their ways of coping with the situation. The methodologies employed by them to address specific issues will be evaluated and compared to other classes to look for patterns of working procedures that led to better results in integration.

## 5.2 Methodology

This part will describe the process of gathering and assessing the data needed to reach the goals of the thesis in more detail. All respondents have agreed to the conditions of the research and signed a form that will be attached to the thesis in Appendix 1.

### 5.2.1 Respondents

A total of 8 respondents were interviewed, all of whom are teachers of English. In the following chapters, respondents will be referred to with the abbreviation "R" and their assigned number 1-8.

R1-R4 are teachers from outside of Prague, more specifically from smaller towns in the South Bohemian Region, whereas R5-R8 teach in Prague. At the beginning of each interview, respondents were asked to provide some basic information about themselves. All respondents taught English in primary schools at the time of the interview.

Table 1 - Respondents

| Respondent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How long have you been teaching ? | 22 years | 30+ years | 9 years | 38 years | 8 years | 1 year | 2 years | 10 years |
| Have you taught foreign pupils prior to February 2022? | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| Do you speak Ukrainian or Russian ? | No | Russian | Little Russian | Russian | Russian | Very little Russian | No | Very little Russian |
| School | A | A | B | B | C | C | D | E |

Given the goals of the research, no further information was deemed relevant enough to be included in the thesis, as the primary goal is to assess the situation in the classes.

R1 and R2, R3 and R4 as well as R5 and R6 teach in the same schools. Schools are labelled A to E in the table above.

### 5.2.2 Interview questions and the interview

Interviews were conducted either in person or online, depending on the preference of the interviewee. All interviews were conducted in Czech and were recorded using either a phone recorder or a computer programme. All interviewees read the conditions of the interview beforehand, agreeing that the recording will be transcribed and subsequently used for evaluation.

All interviewees shall remain anonymous and no information that might lead to their identification will be shared. The length of the interviews varied, with the shortest one being 20 minutes long and the longest one 90 minutes.

The prepared interview questions were divided into 6 main categories and incorporated various topics to cover the problematics as much as possible. The respondents were allowed to speak freely, and the interview evolved differently each time based on their answers. A transcription of a part of an interview shall be attached to the thesis as Appendix 3.

**Questions**

The first set of questions was meant to gather information about the respondents for Table 1 and to acquire information about the English groups that the respondents has taught in. Based on the answers in this part the order of questions could be modified, or some could be omitted completely, for example if the respondent had not taught during the first months after the start of the conflict.

The second set of questions concerns the situation during the first months after February 2022, with the aim to evaluate how single schools managed to adapt to this unprecedented situation. Among other things, teachers were asked about the system of distribution of newly arrived children into English classes, whether it was based solely on the capacities or if other factors such as English proficiency were taken into consideration. Great attention was also given to the language barrier present at the beginning and how it was handled by the teachers.

The third set was aimed at the possible mental health problems of Ukrainian children caused by relocation, possible direct war zone experience and other problems as described above. Teachers were also asked about the way they were informed about this issue and if they saw it as sufficient, or if they researched the issue on their own.

The fourth set of questions is one of the core ones and deals directly with academic integration. Teachers were asked to compare the level of English proficiency of Ukrainian migrant pupils and that of the rest of the class, they were asked to evaluate how the newly arrived pupils cooperate, how well they learn, etc.

The respondents were asked to describe what methods they used to teach Ukrainian children, what they had changed in their lessons to adjust it to them, etc. Teachers were also asked to identify specific mistakes and problems in English that they found to be common in Ukrainian pupils.

The fifth set deals with social integration and concerns the way the newly arrived pupils had integrated into the social structures in the English group. Teachers were asked to describe how the pupils behave during group activities and how they interact with other children. They were also asked about tendencies they might have observed in classes with more than one Ukrainian pupil.

The last set dealt with the school the teacher had taught in, the respondents were asked about the personnel teaching at their school, if there are any Ukrainian pedagogical workers present, if a psychologist is available at their school, if Czech lessons for Ukrainians are taught there and if extra English lessons are taught for Ukrainian pupils.

The full set of prepared questions shall be attached to the thesis as Appendix 2.

### 5.2.3   Evaluation of data

After all interviews had been recorded, they were converted into MP3 files and transcribed using AI powered Google Cloud. An output SRT file was then converted into a standard DOCX file that was then used for evaluation. In the transcriptions, single areas relevant to the research were codified to make orientation easier. As described in the previous chapter, there was a prepared set of questions, which was not always followed, but in most of the cases the sets correspond to the order in the transcriptions. No name or other data that would allow identification of the respondent were attached to the file apart from the respondent's attached number (1-8).

After marking the areas which were relevant to the thesis, a complex description of the issue of integration in concrete classes as well as identification of generally applicable trends were possible. Cited parts in chapter 5.3 were translated into English using machine translation with subsequent correction. The wording might have been slightly modified but the meaning remains the same.

## 5.3 Results

### 5.3.1 First months of the migrant crisis

First pupils started attending schools at a different time, with new pupils arriving and some of them leaving gradually. Some of the respondents who taught during that time reported that the first students started arriving as early as of spring of 2022. This part will describe the issues and topics that respondents mentioned occurring during the first weeks and months after the first pupils started arriving at their school.

**The initial language barrier**

Almost all respondents with few pupils as exceptions reported that at the beginning, Ukrainian pupils' English was not sufficient for them to be able to communicate during the lessons. R4 was among the respondents who could almost entirely rely on English in the beginning, having only one pupil from Ukraine in a group of 6<sup>th</sup> class learners. None of the respondents speaks Ukrainian, the official and the most spoken language in Ukraine. Russian is the second most spoken language in Ukraine, spoken especially in the eastern part of the country.

To overcome this barrier teachers mentioned different methods. Some teachers like R1, R3, R8 mentioned using translators on their phone to communicate with the students. R2, who apart from teaching English teaches Russian, praised the way Russian helped them bridge the initial language gap. This is how they answered the question about the use of Russian for communication with Ukrainian students:

> *"It was such a helpful crutch when the student simply didn't understand Czech, especially at the beginning when they came. I tried to help them in Russian and it worked quite well, so it was more Russian than English (for instructions). They didn't even understand basic instructions in English, like read and write, so they were confused, so I would help them translate that and then they gradually caught up without problems."*

R3 and R8 expressed worries about how students might react if they used Russian to communicate with them, given the political situation and the fact that it might cause them stress. R8 mentioned that some of the students did not wish to speak Russian and that

Ukrainian pedagogical personnel that works at the school was helpful in this regard and helped bridge the initial language barrier.

**Distribution into English classes**

R1 and R2's as well as R5 and R6's school divided pupils based on capacity, so apart from age there was no other factor playing a role in the distribution into English lesson groups. R3 and R4 reported that their school might have purposely put more pupils into a group to allow them to be among their compatriots who came before them to make the new environment less stressful and more familiar.

R7's school, where English is taught since year 1, divides pupils based on their academic results, which are evaluated by the headteacher. R7 also spoke of an interesting example of division, where there is an English group consisting of 14 second year students, of which 8 are Ukrainians, some of whom were born here.

R8's school had established a separate ninth class where there were Ukrainians only, with 15 to 25 pupils. R8 said that the number of students varied, with pupils leaving and arriving gradually over time. This class was not further divided, and English was taught for the whole class. When subsidising a lesson of English in the class, R8 expressed that the students were not cooperative and that teaching in the group was difficult. There is no such class at the school anymore.

Some of the respondents mentioned that the size of English groups at their school has increased because of the migrant crisis.

**Low level of English upon arrival**

Most of the teachers reported that they observed a considerably lower level of proficiency in most of the Ukrainian pupils compared to their Czech peers, ranging from insufficient vocabulary and grammar foundations to problems with writing. This might be surprising as according to the Ukrainian Education programme, a Ukrainian student's level of English should be higher than that of a Czech student of the same age.

To this general trend there were exceptions that teachers noticed, where some children surpassed the class average and sometimes were even at the top of the class. An example of this is R4, who was able to use English for communication upon their pupil's arrival

into the group. When asked whether the teacher has noticed that Ukrainian pupils start with English earlier, they replied:

> *"I think so. I think that was the reason that he engaged so well, that he didn't have problems, but it's not a general fact because really some kids come in with such a poor grasp of English that there's basically nothing to build on."*

R3 noticed a possible correlation between English proficiency and the place of origin, with children from larger cities speaking better than children from villages. This is R3's reply to the same question, whether they had noticed that Ukrainian children start with English earlier than pupils at their school:

> *"I thought it depended on the school, that maybe some village schools don't teach (English) and don't have as capable students. We noticed here at the school, that whenever there was someone from a bigger city, they were usually smarter than those from some unknown places."*

When asked about the specific areas in which R2 perceived the initial gap by their student, their reply was:

> *"I would say, in general, it was at a lower level. He told me that he wasn't used to them talking at all in class, so that's the biggest problem maybe."*

R2 believes that in English Czech students are 3 years ahead of Ukrainian students, R7 and R5 speak of a difference of two years. This was described as one of the main barriers when it comes to academic integration.

### 5.3.2 Factors influencing integration

Apart from the individual factors that influence each student differently, such as their motivation, language learning aptitude, socioeconomic background, mental well-being and others, there are other factors directly or indirectly influenced by the teachers, the school's management or other actors, which can positively or negatively affect the pupil's performance in the process of both their social and academic integration. Many respondents emphasised the importance of individual differences among the students that either positively or negatively influence the pupil's integration. However, this chapter will deal with general trends that could be observed.

**Number of Ukrainian students in a class**

One of the crucial factors when it comes to academic but especially social integration is the number of Ukrainian pupils in a class. Most teachers agreed that integration becomes more difficult if there are two and more pupils as opposed to a single student in a class. Pupils tend to talk among each other in their native language and do not seek interaction with Czech children as much. R1 believes that interaction with Czech classmates is the most important driving factor for learning Czech.

To contrast this, we can compare the situation in groups of R2 and R4, both with one Ukrainian pupil, and groups of other teachers. R2 reported that their student was reacting positively to their guidance, doing homework and showing progress quickly and even when his initial level was lower than that of the rest of his group, he managed to reach the group's average in approximately 6 months. R2 also reported that the student found friends and integrated into the group without any problems. The same applies for R4, who reports that their student learned Czech quickly, has no problems with English and has friends in the group, integrating easily both into the lessons and the class's social structures. Both students started attending sixth class in Czechia.

In comparison to these examples, classes where there are more pupils from Ukraine seem to be more problematic. R7 states that in classes where there are more Ukrainian students, there tends to be less discipline:

> *"They speak Ukrainian in class, they just talk to each other. They have phones, even though it's forbidden. Even if we say that the phones will be handed in or put in the backpack, they do not do so."*

R1 describes that integrating one pupil is easier and that they did not observe exclusion, whereas with multiple students, they observed a tendency of the group to separate itself from the rest of the class:

> *"The advantage was that when one Ukrainian child came there, the children took them under their wing, integrated them and they had no chance to be a soloist. But now that there's three in that seventh class, one of them left, those girls are kind of on the sidelines. They don't really want anybody in there with them."*

R5 describes the way the Ukrainian pupils tend to separate themselves from the rest of the group if there are more of them in a class, not cooperating and not showing incentive for integration because their social needs are already fulfilled in their Ukrainian group:

> *"Well, they formed a little gang over there, pretending they don't understand and so on. It's just that once they have their own group it's much harder to integrate them."*

R6 on the other hand sees it as a benefit to have more than one student in a class, because it helps the students to open up and be more active:

> *"I see it more positively considering how very difficult it is to get them to interact and make them speak either Czech or English, as I see them as fragile, affected by the situation, so I find it better to have them there together."*

R6 compared the situation to another class, where they had a substitute lesson, where only one Ukrainian student was present and did not interact much with the rest of the class :

> *"When I was substituting there, she sat alone and when it came to English she just sat alone at the desk and kept away."*

**Knowledge of the Czech language**

While most of the teachers reported using English as the primary language of instruction during the lessons, knowledge of the Czech language is perceived as one of the key aspects for a successful academic but especially social integration. R1, who is also a Czech teacher, said that their students became proficient in Czech over time and does not perceive problems in this regard. Most respondents also reported that they see a correlation between the level of the Czech language and the academic success in English classes.

R7 mentions the fact that the pupils are expected to learn a foreign language via another foreign language, which they see as a problem especially when it comes to explaining grammar:

> *"It's a big problem especially when explaining the grammar, where the language, Czech, should serve as a kind of a starting point for that. It's a problem, it's often*

*difficult to understand the grammatical structures (of English) even in the Czech language (for natives), but for them it's still a foreign language."*

R6 mentions that their pupil's language proficiency is sometimes insufficient to understand the instructions given in Czech during the lessons, leading to more time that has to be dedicated to explaining what the teacher expects from the students. They also mention that this also limits the possibilities of testing the students, with some translation exercises being hard to implement. Some of the other respondents mentioned this issue as well.

The respondents also reported that they feel as if their students sometimes pretended not to know Czech to avoid answering a question in the class. Few of the respondents mentioned still using translators to overcome the language barrier when necessary.

**Ukrainian pedagogical personnel at the school**

R1 and R2's, R5 and R6's and R8's school have or had educators from Ukraine working at their school and they praised their work as helpful in the process of integration in various aspects. R1 speaks of a Ukrainian educator who was present at the school during the first months after the start of the migrant crisis and helped children learn the Czech language. They see their work positively and observed positive results in children.

R5 praises the role of the Ukrainian educator in communication with children and in helping them overcome the language barrier, also in communication with parents when needed:

> *"I think it helped quite a lot. You have a person who will help you with the language barrier, she speaks very good Czech, great, I can't praise it enough, it really is a huge plus."*

R8 spoke of Ukrainian teachers who taught at the school even before February 2022 and appreciated their role in bridging the cultural and language gap:

> *"They know the environment, they know the mentality, but most importantly they know the language and we who don't know the language so well for us it was very difficult to talk to those kids or to their parents or to the people who came here with them, uncles, aunts, grandparents…"*

**Communication between teachers and parents**

R7 reported that communication between their school and the Ukrainian parents' is not sufficient and that a more frequent contact between the two would benefit the child and their integration at the school. R7 identified the language barrier as a significant obstacle to effective communication, which is also shared by other respondents. R7 believes that a Ukrainian educator in the role of a mediator between teachers and parents could prove beneficial in this regard.

R1 mentioned language barrier in the context of communicating with parents, but in general does not face serious problems in this aspect, with parents showing interest in their children's school performance.

R8's experience with parents-school communication is negative and they believe that in order to improve the pupils' integration and to solve some of the present problems, such as high absenteeism and low engagement, a functioning trilogue between the parents, the school and the government needs to be established.

### 5.3.3 Academic integration

As mentioned in chapter 5.3.1, an average Ukrainian pupil's proficiency in English was perceived as noticeably lower than that of their Czech peers upon arrival. The respondents report that even now there is a considerable difference between an average Ukrainian and a Czech pupil, with Ukrainians on average performing poorer in English than their Czech peers. It was reported that some pupils made great progress, while others progressed slowly.

**Proficiency in English and academic results**

R1 says that the gap between Czech and Ukrainian pupils has been steadily decreasing over time, but they still believe that most of the Ukrainian pupils have not yet reached the level of the group. They (R1) praise the motivation and the effort of their students, who they feel have done a great job at improving their English and participating well in the lessons.

R2 speaks of the same situation, with their student improving steadily, participating in the lessons and now being on the level of the group's average. R3, who has three students in

their English group, says that all of them progress at a different pace, with one student showing ambition and progressing quicker than the two of her classmates. R4 perceived no problems during the student's integration, praising both his initial level of English as well as his academic results in the group.

R8 mentions that they need to explain what they want from the students in Czech because their Ukrainian students' English is not sufficient to comprehend even some of the basic instructions :

> *"I have to speak to them in Czech and they don't know much Czech either, so I just use the demonstrative method. Open your textbook, so I'll take the textbook and open it."*

**Problematic areas in English**

None of the respondents was able to give specific grammar areas that their Ukrainian pupils would have more problems with than their Czech peers. None of the respondents could notice examples of Ukrainian-English interference and could not exemplify any Ukrainian-specific grammar mistakes in English.

Respondents mentioned pronunciation as an area of English where they observe a major difference between Czech and Ukrainian students. Given that Ukrainian and Czech differ in their phonemic inventory, the speakers' accents in English differ as well.

Another area where teachers observed problems was writing in the English (Latin-script) alphabet, where pupils sometimes do not know how to write a letter, or their handwriting is more difficult to read.

**Low motivation and engagement**

Among the three main problems that R6 perceives when it comes to integration and learning, they mention low motivation as one of them, which influences the process negatively in some of the students:

> *"And the third thing I perceive very strongly is the limited motivation of at least some of these children to be educated here in our system."*

R6 also mentions that they feel as if most of the pupils did not view their stay in Czechia as permanent, lowering their motivation to learn Czech as well as to participate in the lesson and interact with their Czech classmates:

> *"My personal conviction is that most of the children I meet do not plan to stay in the Czech Republic in the long term, or at least I see it that way. Their motivation to learn the language (Czech) is therefore limited."*

R7 mentioned the same problem and when asked about the potential causes for this they mentioned that the home environment might not be ideal, with many parents working, resulting in little time left to be spent with the children. R8, who substituted in an all-Ukrainian class that was established at their school, described the situation as a *"complete anarchy"*, with students ignoring the teacher and using their phones instead. When asked a question, they usually simply replied they did not understand and carried on. R8 believes that the majority of their Ukrainian students do not wish to participate in the lessons, with some exceptions who integrate without major problems.

R5 mentions their attempts to positively motivate their students to engage in the lessons, for example by involving them in the marking process. They also mentioned the need to create a friendly environment in the class in order to motivate their students to like English, seeing it as one of the key factors that affects both the Czech and Ukrainian students.

**Lower attendance**

Some of the respondents reported that their Ukrainian students do not attend their lessons as much as their Czech peers. R8 mentions that they observed overall lower attendance in Ukrainian students. When asked about the class of 25, consisting solely of Ukrainian pupils, they said:

> *"There was terrible absenteeism, so there were usually about ten of them, they just didn't come to school at all. When we happened to have 15 of them here it was considered a success."*

Some factors, such as dual education both in Czechia and distant lessons from Ukraine, might have influenced this. Some students could not attend English lessons because they had Czech language lessons during that time.

R8 also says that many of the absences have not been properly excused, and mentioned a situation where a student would not attend the school for two weeks, which was then not excused. After parents were called to school because of this, they mentioned that they had been busy because of work, unable to control whether the child went to school or not.

**Topics with positive reaction**

R1 mentioned that their students reacted positively and were more engaged when they could speak or present information about Ukraine, such as recipes, literature, and other parts of Ukrainian culture.

R6 observed the same and mentions that they have particularly positive experience with implementing Ukraine as a topic and allowing their students to work on it, for example in the form of a presentation. R6 said that their students work much more intensively on such topics, even those who are otherwise passive.

### 5.3.4 Social integration

A key factor in this aspect is the knowledge of the Czech language, which has been agreed upon by most of the respondents. R1 sees time and the group as one of the many important factors that lead to a successful integration, with Czech classmates being one of the best sources of the Czech language for Ukrainian children:

> *"So the integration into the group was going well. I really didn't see a single case where they were looked down at as strange, where they were mocked. The Czech children really helped. And I think that they contributed a lot to the Czech language of those children, because they taught them the most."*

Groups with only one Ukrainian pupil seem to be noticeably more successful in integrating them into their social structures. R1, R2 and R4 described that their students found Czech friends in the group and cooperate with other students without any problems.

Contrasted with groups where there are more Ukrainian students, as that of R7 and R8, the situation seems to be diametrically different. R8 says that they feel like Ukrainian pupils started forming closed groups and do not wish to interact with their Czech classmates much:

*"But yeah, there are classes where almost half of the children are Ukrainian or Russian-speaking. We're already starting to have social groups (of Ukrainians) that won't let anyone in. So there's this animosity between them."*

**Dynamics of group work during lessons**

All respondents described that they observe a tendency of the Ukrainian students to form groups among themselves. R3 observed that when they separate a pair of two Ukrainian pupils, one of whom is more problematic and generally does not fulfil his duties much, the other pupil interacts with his Czech classmates without any problems and is thus more productive. The more problematic student does not cooperate with his classmates no matter their nationalities. There are 3 Ukrainian pupils in that group.

R5 tried separating such groups when they felt that the pupils were not cooperating with the goal of achieving their better integration and better in-class engagement. R7 mentions similar practice, especially with younger children. R7 also mentions a situation where a newly arrived student sat together with a Ukrainian girl born in Czechia, which they saw as beneficial in the beginning, but overtime the children spoke solely Ukrainian, and their separation was believed to promote both Czech and English learning.

R1 describes that their Ukrainian students tend to sit together, but does not see it as a problem, since they work as they should and do the assigned tasks. R2, with only one student in their group, says that their student has no problems interacting with his Czech classmates and gets along well with them.

R1, R2, R3 mentioned gender as another driving factor during group forming, where boys prefer to be in groups with boys, especially in the pubertal age, which sometimes seems to be a stronger factor than their nationality. R1 describes the situation as following:

*"And then there's one boy, and he doesn't want to be with girls because they're at that puberty age, right. So, he's among the Czech boys and he gets along fine with them."*

### 5.3.5 Sings of mental health problems and pathological behaviour

Most of the teachers reported that they were not sufficiently informed about possible mental health problems that might occur in Ukrainian pupils, some of them sought

information on their own. R7 mentions that they can share their concern with the educational advisor or special education teacher, but they were not told directly how to address issues such as mental health problems and feel that this area has been neglected. R1 expressed the same concern. When asked whether they (R7) feel the need for a school psychologist at their school, they said they do, for both their Ukrainian and Czech students.

R1 said that an official way of delivering information about the topic by the Ministry of Education would have been appreciated at the beginning. They saw the educational counsellor as the most helpful in this regard, who provided them with advice on how to manage various situations and how to work with Ukrainian pupils.

R4 and R3's school has no school psychologist. When asked whether they would have seen it as beneficial at the beginning to have one at the school to help with children's integration in the regard to mental wellbeing, R4 replied:

> *"I think it would have been because it must have been traumatic for them to first leave their homeland and then to come to an environment where they didn't know anybody, everything was new to them, I think it would be welcome to have somebody to lend a hand (during the process of integration)."*

R5 praised a Ukrainian educator who taught Czech at the school and in case they needed, she was available to children in this area as well because she could communicate with them in the language they would understand.

**Signs of PTSD**

Two respondents mentioned situations they observed in their classes that might be classified as PTSD symptoms. R8 described a situation that happened in their class during a siren test that takes place every month:

> *"When the siren test started here on the first Wednesday of the month, the children from those (war touched) areas just crawled under the school desks, had hysterical fits, started crying hysterically, they were inconsolable, we had an ambulance here, the psychiatry was called."*

R8 also mentioned self-harm in Ukrainian students, which was in their opinion induced by the great stress caused by cultural differences, the stress of the need to integrate,

displacement and family separation. This situation improved gradually, while being most intense in the children who arrived in the first wave of migrants.

R3 spoke of a student, who did not pay much attention during their class, had difficulties keeping eye contact, and sometimes would "*point out an imaginary gun out of the window and would shoot it*". R3 said that the situation has improved since then, with no further signs observed and that at the beginning he looked as if he had seen something terrible and might have been seeing images of war in his head.

**Timidness**

R6 reported that they observe shyness and passiveness in Ukrainian students, who usually do not engage in the lessons as much as their Czech counterparts:

> *"I'd say (the Ukrainian pupils) are on average about 20 decibels quieter. During breaks or in class, whether in Czech or English, the typical Ukrainian kid I meet gives me dispirited, almost imploded impression"*

R6 says it is more difficult to make Ukrainian pupils speak, mentioning that their self-confidence is lower than that of their Czech peers.

R1 describes the same issue, which was most intensive during the first waves of refugees:

> *"So with all the kids I met at school in the beginning, they were complete introverts, they just didn't want to talk at all, it was very hard for them to gain trust in someone."*

R1 says that this has improved over time, with children finding Czech friends and gradually integrating into the group.

**Problematic or undisciplined behaviour**

R8, R7, R6, R5 and R3 spoke of problematic behaviour they observed in some Ukrainian pupils. R3 spoke of a group of Ukrainian pupils that had assembled in the first months of the crisis. This group would disobey the school's rules and move between floors during the breaks, not paying attention to the teachers' instructions:

> *"They moved between floors and all over the floors and (the group) got bigger until it became something like a gang. They ignored all the other kids*

*and ignored the bans that were in place at school about going from floor to floor and stuff like that."*

R7 perceives that some of the Ukrainian students do not respect the authority of the teacher and tend to disobey instructions, do not cooperate, and disrespect the school rules. They mentioned a particular situation where a student threatened that they would wait for the respondent after school after having been disciplined by them. The student was in the 9th class and this situation was then dealt with together with the school's administration.

They also mentioned that they feel that discipline in classes with more Ukrainian pupils is usually harder to maintain, with teachers sometimes having to retreat from enforcing rules.

R8 says that they perceive worse discipline among Ukrainian pupils, using the word *"anarchy"* to describe the situation in some of the groups, where pupils do not react to the teacher's instructions and do not participate in the lesson. They also mentioned that they perceive an overall deterioration in this regard, with discipline being harder to maintain even in the rest of the group.

This is a problem especially in schools with a larger number of Ukrainian pupils, with respondents who had fewer or just one student in a class not mentioning such behaviour. This appears to be another proof that it is beneficial for the integration if there is a smaller number of Ukrainian students in a class.

## 5.4   Discussion

As the results have shown, the success of the integration process varies from group to group and from pupil to pupil. The correlation between the number of Ukrainian students in a group and the difficulty to integrate them seems to be the strongest. This confirms the founding of a research conducted by SYRI (Hlaďo et al., 2023), showing that ethnic segregation occurs in classes with multiple Ukrainian pupils, which hinders both the social and academic integration. Given that the schools of the respondents from Prague had accepted more Ukrainian students, which consequently lead to more students in English classes, the respondents from the South Bohemian region seem to face less obstacles in the process overall, resulting in a smoother integration.

Even though the Ukrainian education programme lists more advanced topics, Ukrainian students were reported to be on average less proficient in English than their Czech peers. The initial presumption was therefore not fulfilled, with no apparent reasons causing this gap.

Some of the Ukrainian pupils were reported to exhibit symptoms of mental health problems, such as panic attacks, anxiousness, self-harm and unsociability. This founding further supports the results of a research on Ukrainian refugees' mental health (Kavanová et. al, 2022a), which found that the prevalence of such conditions is higher in refugees than in the rest of the population. Not all respondents have psychologists present at their school, who might be helpful in mitigating this issue, helping teachers to better approach such topics as well as helping students with overcoming them. Self-harm and revolt against authorities, which were described as possible ways of manifesting stress by Štáfková and Ježková (2022), have been observed in adolescents by some of the respondents.

Even though Czech is not the primary language of instruction for most of the respondents, they still perceive it as a particularly important factor in the process of integration, even when it comes to learning English. The role of the Czech language in social integration is seen as the most important factor, confirming the strong correlation as reported by Šafářová et al. (2023).

The Czech language remains a problem for some of the students, showing that there is still a need for lessons of Czech as a second language. This supports the report of Šafářová et al. (2024) which found that there are still pupils who attend no Czech language lessons whose proficiency is not yet on a sufficient level. Šafářová emphasises the need for further support of Czech language lessons, which is in accordance with the findings of the thesis.

Some of the problems identified by Dombinskaya (2023) in her research on parent-school communication, such as the language barrier and limited parents' time, were also perceived by some of the respondents, confirming that communication between the two is often insufficient.

Respondents with Ukrainian pedagogical personnel at their school perceived their work positively and praised their positive impact on the student's integration. This speaks in

favour of further support of implementing Ukrainian teachers and pedagogical assistants in primary schools, as described by MŠMT (2022f).

### 5.4.1 Limits

One of the things that might limit the results of the thesis is the number of respondents. Given the broad scope of the thesis that focuses on integration into English lessons in Czech primary schools in general, more respondents and thus more data would allow for the results to be more exact, and more generally applicable trends might be observed. Instead of semi-constructed interviews, an alternative method of data collection, such as questionnaires, could have been employed to gather data from a larger sample of respondents.

The results are also influenced by the fact that half of the respondents teach in Prague and the rest in smaller towns in the South Bohemian Region. The results have shown that there is a noticeable difference between those two and a more diverse sample might allow for a more precise assessment of the situation in Czechia and not only in two of the fourteen regions.

## Conclusion

The thesis has dealt with the topic of integration of Ukrainian pupils into English classes in Czech primary schools, which is a topical issue not only in the Czech Republic, but also in many other European countries that face migration from Ukraine, which has been caused by the ongoing conflict.

In order to provide sufficient theoretical background and context for the topic, the Ukrainian educational system with emphasis on English education was described, and the similarities and differences between it and the Czech system were drawn. Another chapter described some of the common problems that Ukrainian pupils and their teachers face when it comes to integration, using the data provided by the Czech Ministry of Education, which keeps publishing reports on the subject, showing the gradual development. The fourth chapter deals with the supportive measures taken to aid Ukrainian children in their integration in schools, primarily focusing on the important legislative change Lex Ukrajina.

Research has shown that teachers have different experiences when it comes to integrating students from Ukraine. Classes with only one Ukrainian pupil appear to be much more successful in the process, integrating the student into the social structures of the group without any major problems. These students are also reported to make good academic progress, comparable to that of their Czech peers. In classes where there are more students from Ukraine the situation appears to be more problematic, with children fulfilling their need for socialisation among themselves, resulting in low motivation for learning Czech and for participating in the lesson. Schools, given that they have the needed capacities, might consider that when they divide students into groups.

Some of the respondents mentioned areas where they felt like the support from the Ministry was not sufficient. They reported not being informed enough on the issues like possible mental health problems of the newly arrived students, the curriculum related to teaching English in Ukraine and other related topics. If more information was provided to the teachers, more informed and effective approaches could be developed, resulting in a smoother process of integration.

The issue of financing Czech language lessons was also raised, with some respondents feeling like more money for example for extra tutoring might benefit the students, marking possible areas that might be improved in regard to the problems faced by students.

English teachers are in a unique position in this whole situation, where their students learn a foreign language via another foreign language, which makes it more difficult for both the students and their teachers. This thesis did not have enough data to deal with the topic of language interference, where possibly both Ukrainian and Czech might influence the student's speech in English. This topic could be researched further, which could provide implications for improving academic integration.

The need to integrate children from Ukraine that already are in the Czech Republic as well as those who will arrive in the future remains an important issue. Apart from the factors that cannot be influenced by them, teachers play an important role not only when it comes to integrating the child into the school's social and academic structures but also subsequently into the Czech society, making them one of the most important actors in helping integrate foreign pupils.

In conclusion, while some of the teachers feel like their students have successfully integrated into their classes and do not face any major problems, there are still teachers who face obstacles that hinder the process. This shows that the issue of Ukrainian students' integration needs to be addressed further in order to better understand the causes of present problems and to possibly propose solutions and changes needed to achieve positive and active involvement of Ukrainian students not only in the lessons of English, but in the Czech education system as a whole.

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1 – Informovaný souhlas

**Informovaný souhlas s poskytnutím rozhovoru a jeho následným využitím pro účely bakalářské práce Integrace ukrajinských žáků do hodin angličtiny na českých základních školách (Integration of Ukrainian Pupils into English Classes in Czech Primary Schools)**

Podpisem vyjadřuji souhlas s následujícími body:

Byl/a jsem informována o účelu rozhovoru, kterým je sběr dat pro potřeby výzkumu bakalářské práce Marka Čečky s názvem Integrace ukrajinských žáků do hodin angličtiny na českých základních školách (Integration of Ukrainian Pupils into English Classes in Czech Primary Schools).

Bylo mi sděleno, jaký bude mít rozhovor průběh. Jsem seznámen/a s právem odmítnout odpověď na jakoukoli otázku.

Souhlasím s nahráváním následujícího rozhovoru a jeho následným zpracováním. Zvukový záznam rozhovoru nebude poskytnut třetím stranám a po přepsání bude vymazán. Transkripce bude přístupná pouze komisi u obhajoby práce, jinak nikomu, až na části citované v textu práce, který bude volně přístupný online.

Byl/a jsem obeznámen/a s tím, jak bude s rozhovory nakládáno a jakým způsobem bude zajištěna anonymita i po skončení rozhovorů, která znemožní identifikaci mé osoby. Nikde nebude uvedeno mé jméno či jiné osobní údaje, díky kterým bych mohl/a být identifikován/a.

Dávám své svolení k tomu, aby výzkumník použil rozhovor pro potřeby své bakalářské práce a některé části v ní může citovat a přeložit do jazyka práce, angličtiny. Zvuková nahrávka a transkripce rozhovoru však bude po ukončení výzkumu smazána.

Datum:

Podpis respondenta (zákonného zástupce):

# Appendix 2 – Připravená struktura rozhovoru

## Integrace

| Sekce | Otázka | Podotázka | Podotázka | Podotázka |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **❶ Obecné** | Jak dlouho učíte ? | | | |
| | Jaké předměty kromě AJ vyučujete ? | Ovládáte ukrajinštinu či ruštinu ? | | |
| | (P1) Měla jste před začátkem války na Ukrajině zkušenosti s žáky cizinci ve třídě ? | Odkud žáci byly ? | | |
| | | S kolika ? | | |
| | | Jak probíhala integrace tam ? | | |
| **❷ Situace akutně po začátku války** | Přibližně kdy k vám na angličtinu přišli první žáci | Jaké problémy se v té době především objevovaly | | |
| | Měla vaše škola problém s rozdělováním žáku do tříd AJ ? | Rozdělovali se žáci podle nějakého systému? | | |
| | | Měla škola dostatečné kapacity? | | |
| | Jazyková bariéra | (P1) Používáte ve třídě spíše angličtinu či češtinu ? | | |
| | | Jak u jednotlivých žáků hodnotíte znalost češtiny? | Vidíte spojitost mezi studijními výsledky v AJ a úrovni češtiny? | |
| | | Když ukrajinští žáci na začátku nemluvili česky, komunikovala jste s nimi v angličtině ? | | |
| | | Při vysvětlování v češtině, brala jste na žáky s UK ohled ? | | |
| | UK + ČR lekce | (P1) Setkala jste se s žáky kteří ve stejný čas studovali angličtinu u Vás a zároveň online z UK? | Jak se to projevovalo ? | Jaké byly jejich studijní výsledky ? |
| | | | | Jaká byla jejich docházka ? |
| | Jak probíhala komunikace mezi vámi a rodiči ? | | | |
| **❸ Mentální zdraví žáků** | Sledovala jste u žáků příznaky mentálních problémů ? | (P1) V rámci angličtiny se mluví o různých tématech, musela jste někdy s ohledem na situaci přizpůsobovat obsah? | Pokud ano, jak jste to dělala ? | |
| | | Jak se projevovaly ? | | |
| | | Mělo některé z dětí stanovenou diagnózu od psychologa/psychiatra ? | | |
| | Funguje u vás na škole školní psycholog ? | Byl v tomto nápomocný ? | | |
| | Byla jste informována či jste se sama informovala o možných psychických problémech u UK dětí ? | | | |
| **❹ Akademická integrace** | Byla znalost žáků na vyšší či nižší úrovni oproti českým | Vnímala jste rozdílnost kurikul českého a ukrajinského vzdělávacího systému? | | |
| | | (P1) Byly komptence (mluvení,čtení,psaní) ve kterých byly mezi českými a ukrajinkými žáky znatelné rozdíly ? | | |
| | | V jaké třídě jste UK žáky učil ? | ve které věkové skupině byla integrace méně problémová? | |
| | | (P1) V Ukrajině začínají žáci s angličtinou dříve, bylo to znát ? | Jestli ano, ve které věkové skupině byl tento rozdíl nejmarkantnější ? | |
| | Hodnocení | Při hodnocení testů Ukrajinských žáků, dělala jste něco jinak než u českých žáků ? | | |
| | | Jak jsou na tom ukrajinští studenti s angličtinou známkově v porovnání s českými ? | | |
| | (P1) Je v některé ze tříd přítomen asistent ? | Jak hodnotíte přínos asistentů v integraci UK žáků do hodin AJ? | | |
| | | Pokud ne, uvítala byste ve třídě asistenta ? | | |
| | Ukrajinští žáci mají odlišný mateřský jazyk od většiny třídy, liší se charakter chyb či jsou vesměs stejné? | Měla jste kvůli rozdílným jazykům a nemožnosti se plně spolehnout na češtinu problémy s vysvětlováním ? | | |
| | | Je kvůli odlišnému jazyku těžší pochopit příčinu chyb (jazyková interference)? | | |
| | | Jsou kompetence, které považujete jako problémové? | | |
| **❺ Sociální integrace** | (P2) Skupinové aktivity (inkluze x exkluze) | (P1) Můžete prosím popsat, jak se žáci z Ukrajiny chovají při skupinových aktivitách ? | | |
| | | Pokud jsou ve třídě 2 a více UK žáků, sledujete u nich nějaké tendence ? | | |
| | Můžete srovnat docházku českých a ukrajinských žáků ? | | | |
| | Jak hodnotíte integraci UK žáků do kolektivu ve vaší skupině AJ ? | | | |
| | Jak hodnotíte aktivnost UK žáků oproti českým, hlásí se častěji, stejně, či méně ? | | | |
| **❻ Škola** | Jaké kroky podniklo vedení vaší školy pro usnadnění integrace UK žáků s ohledem na výuku angličtiny? | Bylo žákům poskytunto v rámci školy doučování angličtiny ? | | |
| | | Navštěvují na vaší škole žáci výuku češtiny ? | Hodnotíte to jako pozitivum i pro AJ ? | |
| | Učí se u vás na škole angličtina dříve než ve 3. třídě? | | | |
| | Upravoval se žákům co se týče angličtiny studijní plán ? | Pracovali/ pracují na škole pedagogičtí zaměstnanci z Ukrajiny? | | |

Já bych se Vás rád na začátku zeptal, jestli souhlasíte s těmi podmínkami, které jsem Vám předložil, které jste podepsala, jestli je tohle všechno v pořádku.

Ano, samozřejmě.

Dobře, tak můžeme začít teda. Já bych se vás na začátku rád zeptal, jak dlouho učíte. Kolik let?

Přes 30 let.

A kromě angličtiny, které předměty to jsou?

Ruština, ruský jazyk, občanská výchova, ale to je minimálně. Takže angličtinu 30 let, tak nějak přibližně

Ovládáte ukrajinštinu nebo ruštinu, jeden z těchhle těch dvou jazyků?

Ruský jazyk.

A mě by zajímalo, jestli jste ho někdy využila v komunikaci se studenty během hodin angličtiny

Určitě, byla to taková pomocná berlička, kdy prostě ten student nerozuměl, co v češtině, hlavně ze začátku, když přišli. Tak jsem se snažila jim pomoct tou ruštinou a docela to fungovalo. Mhm. Takže spíš ta ruština než ta angličtina, že to bylo jednodušší. Ze začátku, když oni nerozuměli, protože oni ani nerozuměli dobře anglicky, třeba základním pokynům jako read and write, tak byli zmatený, takže to jsem jim třeba jako pomohla přeložit a pak už se postupně chytali jako bez problémů.

Jo. Hm. Eh, před začátkem války, před začátkem války v roce 2022 v únoru, měla jste nějaké zkušenosti s žáky cizinci v hodinách angličtiny?

Ne, vůbec.

Mhm. A na vaší škole, jak velké jsou obvykle ty skupiny angličtiny. Kolik žáků tak přibližně máte ve skupině?

V současné době už jsou mnohem větší, než bývaly a to tak 16, 17, mám i skupinu 20 dětí. Loni jsem měla 22 ve skupině.. Takže jsou neúnosně veliké..

A v té v té velké, v té největší, byl tam nějaký ukrajinský žák nebo
ve kterých třídách, eh, ve kterých ročnících jste učila ukrajinské žáky?

Takže je to vlastně letos osmá třída a loni ten XXX byl v šestce, přišel do šestky. Šestka a letos v sedmičce ten zůstal.

To byli ti první, kteří k vám do skupin angličtiny přišli po začátku té války. Kdy to tak bylo?.

Ten XXX, já mám pocit, že od začátku v září, že jo, začal chodit. No no.

Jaký byly zpočátku ty problémy v hodinách angličtiny, jaký jste tam největší překážky vnímala? Vy jste tedy řekla jazyková bariéra.

Jazyková bariéra, hlavně zpočátku. S dětmi si myslím, že se docela seznámili, ale ze začátku tam byl ještě jeden chlapec z té šesté třídi. Já už si ani nevzpomenu, jak se jmenoval, a ten byl hodně takovej uzavřený. Vývučí ostatním měl opravdu mizerný znalosti, že na tom byl hodně špatně. Mně přišlo, že nerozumí ani číslovky do dvaceti a ještě navíc chodil sporadicky do školy. Nebyl nebo měl nějakou výuku češtiny zrovna, když my jsme měli jazyk. Takže s ním to bylo hodně složitý. Ten XXX se zapojoval, začleňoval jako snadněji. A já jsem si všimla, že on je docela chytrej. Hodně byl chytrej, takže já jsem mu i poradila, jak třeba se může učit slovíčka, že třeba dostal seznam, že jo, tak jsem mu říkala, zkus si vzít tyhle slovíčka, tady to máš anglicky, česky, tak si třeba na internetu vyhledej, co to je v tom tvým jazyce, jo? Takže on si to tam fakt jsem viděla, že příští hodinu přišel se seznamem a měl to tam dopsaný.. Vlastně takhle postupně se jako do toho dostával a během půl roku byl schopnej vlastně fungovat s naší výukou jako úplně.

Dostal se teda na tu úroveň těch ostatních žáků?

Dostal se a on byl hlavně hodně pilný na začátku. fakt jako bylo vidět že maká a všechno si pamatoval, co jsme dělali ve škole. On si to všechno pamatoval. Takže mu to šlo rychle. Ten proces jako u něj byl hodně rychlej.

To je teda šestá třída, se bavíme o šestce.

Ten byl v šestce, no.

A ten rozdíl mezi tou úrovní toho žáka a zbytku té třídy, v čem se to nejvíc projevovalo? Byla tam nějaká třeba gramatika nebo slovní zásoba, nebo to bylo obecně?

Prostě na nižší úrovni. Já bych řekla, obecně to bylo na nižší úrovni. On mi říkal, že nebyl zvyklej, že vůbec nemluvili při hodinách, takže největší problém je možná do dneška mu dělá jakoby ten mluvený projev, když se ho člověk na něco zeptá, tak je vidět, že prostě mu to nejde, ale když to srovnám, tak jako na úrovni třeba dítěte s trojkou. Jo. Jo, průměrného dítěte. Ale samozřejmě je to mnohem lepší, ze začátku to bylo takový, že se úplně zadrhl a vůbec nevěděl. A tak já jsem ho povzbuzovala, ať zkusí říct slova třeba jenom, který by chtěl odpovědět a to a postupně se takhle do toho dostával, no.

U vás ty hodiny probíhají většinou spíš v angličtině nebo v češtině, jakej jazyk používáte během hodin? Jakej je ten hlavní jazyk?

No já, já spíš angličtinu teda, no. Mhm. Ale pak byl problém, že jo, že jsem mu, protože on ani v té angličtině nevládnul, tak jsem mu musela dovysvětlovat některý věci. Ale třída zase můžu říct, že třída byla trpělivá. Že byli fajn. Vstřícní k tomu.