

The Language Education of Czech Seniors with a Focus on Motivational and Demotivational Factors

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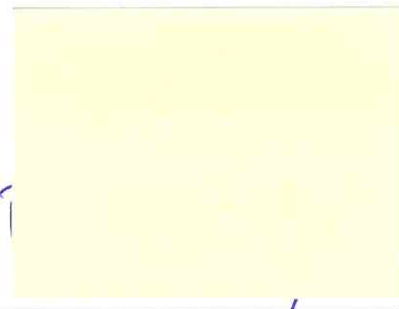
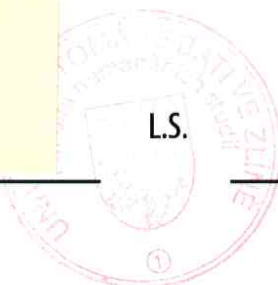
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá jazykovým vzděláváním českých seniorů se zaměřením na motivační a demotivační faktory. První kapitola vymezuje pojmy senior, stáří a stárnutí. Zvláštní pozornost je dále věnována předsudkům, se kterými se příslušníci této generace setkávají. V závěru první kapitoly jsou zmíněny konkrétní rady určené seniorům, týkající se aktivního stárnutí. Druhá kapitola obsahuje teorii motivace, její typy a vztah ke studiu jako takovému. V poslední kapitole je už podrobněji vysvětlen proces vzdělávání v seniorském věku, a také aspekty, které tento proces ovlivňují. Praktická část se zabývá analýzou zkoumaných dat získaných prostřednictvím polostrukturovaného rozhovoru. Cílem bylo zjistit, co studenty univerzity třetího věku motivuje ke studiu cizích jazyků, popřípadě, co je od studia odrazuje.

Klíčová slova: stárnutí, aktivní stárnutí, senioři, stereotypy, studium angličtiny, jazykové vzdělávání, univerzita třetího věku, motivace, motivační faktory, demotivační faktory

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with the language education of Czech seniors with a focus on motivational and demotivational factors. The first chapter defines the term senior, ageism, and it describes Czech seniors and organisations focused on working with seniors. It also addresses the issue of stereotypes concerning older generations and suggests what a senior should do for active ageing. The second chapter contains the theory of motivation, types of motivation and relationship to study as such. In the last chapter, the education process in senior age is explained in more detail and the aspects that influence this process. The practical part deals with analysing the researched data obtained through a semi-structured interview. The aim was to determine what motivates and demotivates students of the University of the third age to study languages.

Keywords: ageism, active ageing, older adults, seniors, stereotypes, English education, language learning, universities of the third age, motivation, motivational factors, demotivational factors

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to explore and define the factors that motivate or demotivate seniors to language education. This bachelor's thesis consists of a theoretical part, where concepts such as ageing, motivation are explained. The first chapter provides readers with an overview of ageing and ageism and possibilities for Czech seniors produced by organizations focusing on seniors. An increasing proportion of the population is in the later stages of life. But how do we define a senior? For the needs of this thesis, I chose the definition created by the World Health Organization. According to them, a senior is someone who has reached the age of 60 or 65 and above. The term ageism is associated with seniors and ageing. Ageism is closely connected to the social context of a senior. This social context includes stereotypes that appear on older generations. The most common stereotypes, that are mentioned in Chapter 1.3.1 are the prejudices of the younger generations. But what can one do to avoid these stereotypes? The Chapter 1.4 should answer this question. Active ageing is related to the improvement of the quality of life of seniors. It is essential to have enough information about one condition and choose the appropriate activities for spending free time to improve life quality. In order to achieve this, some organization in the Czech Republic focus on working with seniors. These organizations are mentioned in Chapter 1.4.1. Nevertheless, what is also crucial for active ageing is education. Escuder-Mollon and Cabelo (2013, 48) suggest that this kind of self-realization helps seniors become more socialized.

Chapter 2 is centred on the description of motivation as well as its types. Furthermore, the motivation for language learning is also explored. When studying, motivation plays an essential role. Motivation drives people forward. However, seniors are motivated by different factors than the younger students. At the same time, people can also become demotivated. That is why Chapter 2.5 is devoted to Demotivational Factors in English Learning at a Later Age. Chapter 3 is dedicated to language education in a senior age and contains concepts such as Non-formal education or Universities of the Third Age. Nevertheless, the influence of COVID-19 on language acquisition in a senior age is mentioned.

The practical part is composed of two chapters. Chapter 4 is devoted to research and question presentation. The research was conducted in the form of qualitative interviews. For purposes of this thesis, the interviews were carried with the students of the University of the Third Age in Zlín. The main goal was to determine the motivational and possible demotivation factors for studying at an older age. Obtained data are presented in Chapter 5 with links to concepts covered in the theoretical part of this thesis.

I. THEORY

1 THE EDUCATION OF SENIORS: AN INTRODUCTION

Let me start this introductory chapter with a question: How old is a senior citizen? Most people would almost certainly define a senior citizen as somebody who is older age. Others would refer to senior citizens as retirees, i.e. persons who have reached their retirement age. (Baksa, Munkacsi and Nerlich 2020) On the one hand, this indicates that almost everyone connects the term to the older members of our society. On the other hand, it also shows that there is little agreement as to how old senior citizens are.

For the purposes of my thesis, I use the following definition provided by the United Nations (UN) who describe senior citizens “as those aged 60 or 65 years or over.” (World Population Ageing 2019 2019, 1) I will now turn to discuss the increase in longevity as well as the need to increase senior citizens’ quality of life.

1.1 Seniors in the EU

This section of the population falls under a generation of Baby Boomers, born from 1946 to 1964, during post-World War II. period. The title “Baby Boomers” comes from America, where there was a considerable increase in newborns after World War II. However, the “boom” also refers to post-war economic growth in European, i.e. Britain. This numerous generation had a significant impact on today’s society, environment and economy, and this burden brings its negatives. Every age generation has its specifics, and for Baby Boomers, it seems to be apparent responsibility. Throughout the years were Baby Boomers criticized for being reckless about money regarding debt creation for the next generations. (Bristow 2015, 19)

People of working age are declining, while the number of seniors in the Europe is growing. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) is the rate of people aged 60 and over growing faster than any other age group. The most significant change took place in 2018 when persons aged 60 and above outnumbered children of five in the EU for the first time in the history. (WHO 2021)

1.2 Czech Seniors

The Czech Republic has about 10.5 million inhabitants. The Czech Republic is one of the developed countries. Thus the population is ageing here as well. This has been the case since the 1980s. The growth of the population can be attributed to several factors, for instance, social and economic development and higher quality of life. (CSO 2021)

Average life expectancy in the Czech Republic is currently around 78 years, 75 for men and 81 for women. In comparison with Eastern Europe, this seems to be quite a high number. For illustration, in Ireland or Luxembourg, the older population is around 14% of the total population. (Eurostat 2020) At the same time, the number is lower than in most Western European countries. The population is most ageing in Italy, Greece and Finland, where the percentage of older people reach almost 23% of its population. (Andel 2014) According to the Czech Statistical Office (CSO) forecast, the Czech Republic should have between 9.1 and 9.7 million inhabitants in 2030. (CSO 2021)

As I already mentioned in Chapter 1, the population is ageing, which means the proportion of senior citizens increases. With this ageing population come many challenges, such as meeting the senior citizens' needs and ensuring their well-being. I will discuss how well being is crucial in more details in the following chapters, which deal with the concept of ageism, ageing stereotypes and the concept of active ageism.

1.3 Ageism

What is Ageism? Pilar Escuder-Mollon and Salvador Cabelo (2013, 48) look at the term ageism as one of the challenges nowadays' society faces. As some authors mention, people might think that ageism is associated only with a biological process to which people force throughout their lives. But that is not the case. Ageism is closely connected to the social context of an individual. As a social context can be considered people's assumptions about older people. These assumptions may be about older peoples' beliefs or the way they behave in a concrete situation. (Escuder-Mollon and Cabelo 2013, 44-49)

Nelson (2002, 27-30) mentions that older people have different interests in terms of economics and social security if compared to younger generations. With the vision that older people differ in many aspects from the younger ones, younger individuals distance themselves.

Robert Butler (1969) holds the view that ageism is a "prejudice by one age group against another age group". Even though every age group could be affected by these stereotypes, the seniors seem to get the biggest attention. My question is, why? Why is the ageing process, which is bound to happen to all of us, so incomprehensible?

Reasons include, for example, that people see ageism as harmful. Younger generations expect a limited consumption of shared resources by older adults. Also, people might think that older people lost their social status in modern times and therefore their knowledge is

also considered obsolete. Another reason may be that people set aside older people because they no longer belong to the economically active population. (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer 2018, 73)

Interestingly, Snyder and Miene (1994, 63-82) proposed a theory; that stereotyping of older adults may serve as an ego protective function. When older people use the thread of reminding the younger generation of the transience, young people then protect themselves. Alternatively, a social function, that is an act that helps the younger to identify with a social group. At the same time, Escuder-Mollon and Cabelo (2013, 171) state that the stereotypical way of younger peoples' thinking about seniors is the reason why the term ageism came into being.

All in all, the word ageism has more negative connotations than positive ones. That is because people tend to think in general when it comes to perceptions about other people, in this case, the seniors. Stereotyping will be discussed more in detail in chapter 1.3.1 Ageing Stereotypes.

1.3.1 Ageing Stereotypes

As I mentioned, the attitude towards old age is mostly negative and can be generally characterized by negative stereotypes. People's perceptions tend to apply stereotyping information such as incompetence, seniors' beliefs, or attitude. In *Contemporary Perspective on Ageism*, Aylon uses Whitbourne and Sneed's theory of four central stereotypes. (1) Older people are moody and suffer from depression. (2) Older people are one group, and then, all characteristics apply to all of them. (3) Older people are not healthy anymore and therefore are dependent on others. (4) Older people have cognitive and psychological limitations. (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer 2018, 11-12)

In the book *Ageism stereotyping and prejudice against older persons*, Nelson (2002, 247-249) specifies these stereotypes as well. The first stereotype again concerns depression in older adults and, moreover, that older persons lack friends and family. The second stereotype discussed also agrees with the already mentioned issue and that all older adults are basically alike. Also, the third stereotype comments on older citizens' health and dependence. And thanks to the agreement, even in the last stereotype, when, according to some people, older people are cognitively and psychologically impaired, we can say that these four are among the most frequented. From this point of view, the older phase of life can be characterized as a phase of loss of social status and deterioration of life quality. (WHO 2021)

1.4 The Concept of Active Ageing

In order to avoid stereotyping, it is necessary to focus on the active life of the individual. Many people forget about the positive features brought by the later phase of life. Those are wisdom, prudence, and certainty are at odds with the values on which modern society stands: individualism, speed, and dynamism. WHO (2019, 22) holds the view that “active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age”.

The active life of seniors is becoming more popular these days. People tend to spend their time effectively, and in a way, they can improve the quality of the latest phase of life. As a result, there is a need to create and support possibilities and self-realization of seniors. Also, work on older peoples’ perception of becoming an active participant of a community and encouraging them to the possibility of education in older age seems to be a vital factor. Activities of daily living of an individual should include physical, cognitive, memory, attention, and problem-solving abilities, which brings us to the necessity of increasing and improving social programs for an ageing population. Evaluating one’s ability, functions, and participation can increase in a more advanced population, therefore a more advanced country. (Marshall 1990)

Moreover, the crucial factor for healthy and effective life is to have enough information about one’s condition. Asking questions and communicating the issue honestly and actively can have an impact on the goals and plans of the ageing population. (WHO 2019)

1.4.1 Active Ageing in the Czech Republic

The concept of active ageing is becoming a priority in the Czech Republic. Several institutions in the Czech Republic are interested in working with seniors. One of these organizations is Czech Gerontological and the Geriatric Society (CGGS), a professional society established by the Czech Medical Society of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in 1958. CGGS is an association of doctors, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals who provide assistance with ageing and improve the quality of life in older age. (ČGGS 2006)

Another organization working with seniors worth mentioning is called Seniors of the Czech Republic. Their goal is to provide humanitarian assistance to senior citizens and increase the quality of life through socio-cultural activities. Besides, they provide reliable discounts that make this cultural life more accessible to seniors. (Senioři České republiky 2018)

Moreover, it is crucial to consider the financing of the Czech health system. The Czech health and social care system for seniors is financed centrally through state and local budgets. The Czech Republic has a system of Statutory Health Insurance (SHI) based on compulsory membership in the health insurance fund. The SHI system is financed through contributions based on wage and through state contributions made on behalf of economically inactive people (i.e. the unemployed and the children). (Alexa, et al. 2015, 19)

All these organizations contribute to the seniors' quality of life. Nonetheless, self-realization in a later phase of life helps seniors become more socialized, and it is also a happiness factor. (Escuder-Mollon and Cabelo 2013, 26)

1.5 Summary

I began this chapter by determining at what age a person becomes a senior. I chose the definition from WHO, which uses the age of 60, to specify the senior age category. In Chapter 1.1, I stress the fact that today's seniors were part of the generation of Baby Boomers, which is why they belong to the most numerous age groups. In Chapter 1.2, I refer to the statistics, that show that the population is aging. This also applies to the Czech Republic. The term ageism, which I focus on Chapter 1.3, is also associated with senior age. It carries with it negative attitudes of people towards seniors. I conclude this introductory chapter by stating that active ageing requires awareness and contact with the environment. Therefore, there are organizations focused on working with seniors whose aim is to improve the quality of life of the country's citizens.

2 MOTIVATION

At first glance, the topic of motivation may seem simple. After all, we each have our own experience with it. But is this really the case? Psychologists have provided several different theories of motivation. This suggests that the concept of motivation is rather complex. There is not just one right answer to what motivation is, and the explanations may differ. In this chapter, I will deal with the concept of motivation and, in so doing, I will try to find a definition of motivation that suits the purpose of this thesis. Further on, I will mention the types of motivation and finally, I will take a closer look at the motivational and demotivational factors in English learning among older adults.

2.1 Theories of Motivation

Let me start by the a definition provided in the Cambridge Dictionary, which says that motivation is a need to do or achieve certain things. (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus 2021) Another interpretation of motivation is a theory developed by psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud who viewed motivation as an instinct that, according to them, can be divided into two parts. The first part is referred to as *the life instinct*, The life instinct, sometimes also referred to as *sexual instinct*, deals with basic survival, and reproduction, which is crucial for sustaining an individual's life. In other words, the life instinct is about an innate biological tendency to help individuals survive, not to learn or experience something new. This theory suggests that motivation is something biologically based. As the opposite, the second instinct called *the death instinct* is an unconscious tendency toward self-destruction explained by destructive behaviour. (Chambers 1999, 14)

Another theory that should be mentioned is *the humanistic theory* by Abraham Maslow. Maslow's theory deals with a biological or survival-oriented view and stresses man's potential for self-direction, freedom of choice, positive self-concept and ultimately self-enhancement. (Chambers 1999, 15) In other words, people have strong cognitive reasons to perform a variety of actions. This theory suggests that people want something, and whatever they want depends on what they already have.

Maslow's theory of motivation is also known as *the motivational hierarchy*, which contains five basic human needs. Those are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. This theory, however, has been criticized several times by the authors Robert Taormina and Jennifer Gao for being a controversial theory. The reason is that it is considered gender based or culture centred. (Taomina and Gao 2013, 155-

177) Another view of motivation is presented by Zhou (2012, 1318) who uses general characterization, claiming that motivation is “willingness or desire to be engaged in or commit effort to completing a task.” Every person is different; therefore the interpretation of motivation can vary. But there is a fact about motivation most of the authors have agreed on and thus the importance of language learning. In the next chapter, I will concentrate on a description of types of motivation.

2.2 Types of Motivation

Motivation is primarily separated into two categories. Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The first type of motivation I would like to describe is intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is closely connected to peoples’ preference when they think something is exciting or entertaining. Intrinsic motivation comes from the feeling of inner reward. In *Introduction to Psychology: Gateways to Mind and Behaviour*, the Coon and Mitterer (2010, 176) suggest this definition: “Intrinsic motivation occurs when we act without any obvious external rewards. We simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn, and actualize our potentials.”

The second type of motivation refers to external rewards when people are driven by an outside motif, i.e. money, grades or praise. (Alshenqeeti 2018, 2) This is called extrinsic motivation. It does consider peoples’ external behaviour when their decision is based on external rewards rather than individuals fulfilment. (Berges-Puyó 2018, 3)

When it comes to distinguishing motivational orientation types in language learning, Susan Gass and Alison Mackey (2012, 396-397) proposed a theory called an *integrative orientation* and *instrumental orientation*. In *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, the integrative orientation is described as “reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group”, while the instrumental orientation is “reflecting the practical value and advantages of learning a new language.” (Gass and Mackey 2012, 396-397) In the following chapters, I will focus on motivation in language learning in more depth.

2.3 Motivation and Language Learning

Motivation seems to be pivotal when it comes to learning, especially language learning. In Chapter 2, several factors were mentioned that contribute to creating the “model”, which Alshenqeeti (2018, 4) explains as follows. “Motivation is not simply dependent on one’s

competencies and performance-based achievement, but on much less tangible factors such as the ideology one attaches to the language and their perception of oneself as a speaker of that language.” This “model” unconsciously drives people forward, which also applies to learning a foreign language.

Language learning is a process that requires time and effort, and motivation can influence the process of education and the outcome as well. (Alqurashi 2018, 84) Every person is different, and there is no surprise that every person is motivated differently. This “model” could be used to recognize these differences and satisfy individual needs and identify the right approach for language learning. Subsequent chapters focus on intrinsic motivation and its influence on language learning.

2.3.1 The Influence of Intrinsic Motivation on Language Learning

Let me now get back to the intrinsic motivation that copes with an individual’s tendency to do something without any external reward. Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó (2018, 3-4) considers intrinsic motivation as a crucial aspect of language learning experience. Research has shown that language learners are highly motivated to improve their skills and abilities in another language. However, the relationship between students and teachers seem to be pivotal. After a study about the relationship between students and teachers, Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó (2018, 4-8) comments that a crucial aspect of motivation is a cooperation between the students and the teachers.

Also, teachers’ methods and the type of motivation they use should correlate with students’ attitude towards motivation in language learning in order to achieve better results. (Berges-Puyó 2018, 4-8) For comparison, the next chapter deals with extrinsic motivation and its influence on language learning.

2.3.2 The Influence of Extrinsic Motivation on Language Learning

People do not only learn for their personal needs or entertainment. They also want to gain an advantage in communicating and understanding today’s social issues and fitting into society. Extrinsic motivation in learning includes two basic principles. People want either rewards or they want to avoid a problem. In the first case, one seeks a reward, which can be, for example, some material reward or just recognition for good performance. In the second case, a person is motivated by the pressure that is exerted on him or her. (Samejon 2015, 4) Now that the types of motivation and its influence on language learning have been discussed,

the next chapter will focus directly on seniors and, more precisely, on what motivates older people to study the language.

2.4 Motivational Factors in English Learning at a Senior Age

The lives of senior citizens are enhanced through meaningful activities, such as language learning. Learning a language is one of the ways that help seniors to stay active and increase overall life expectancy. Among the major motivational factors is the feeling of inclusion. Also, seniors are motivated by the ability to understand, react and communicate. Also, what motivates older adults to study English is different from what motivates younger students. (Berges-Puyó 2018, 15-16)

When older people study, it is more about internal motivation and feeling of self-development. Simultaneously, for younger generations, the obligation to learn a language plays a significant role. (Berges-Puyó 2018, 16)

The study in Berlin dealt with the issue of motivation and its impact on success in language learning. As I mentioned in the previous chapters, motivation does help achieve better results. Students become motivated and achieve better results when teachers' methods are in balance with students' attitudes towards language learning. I would also add the idea that the right type of motivation must be chosen as well. Just as people are different, they have different preferences. Some may be motivated by more internal need, such as self-development as external rewards. For some people, it may be the other way round. (Határ and Grofčíková 2016, 113-114) So what is the factor that works for seniors as the best motivation? This question should be answered later in this work in the practical part. Let me now move to the decisive factors in language learning.

2.4.1 Decision-makers for Seniors in Language Learning

Some aspects somehow influence language learning no matter the student's age of a particular language is. However, for seniors, some may be more important than others. Decisive factor may be the need for someone to spend their time effectively. Education is a great example of how one can spend time effectively. At the same time, older people want to stay in contact with other people, which can also be the aspect that influences language learning. In other words, the quality of life is the main idea that drives a person to do more. (WHO 2021)

WHO (2021) has compiled a definition where it integrates current views, mainly subjectivity in the evaluation of one's life, cultural conditionality and the relationship to personal values and the way of their implementation. "The quality of life is how one perceives one's position in life in the context of the culture in which one lives and in relation to one's goals, expectations, lifestyle, and interests." The goal is to keep the meaningfulness of a senior's life and make space for self-realization and self-actualization. In order to that, older persons need to participate in social life events as well as to take the opportunity of lifelong learning. Just as one requires some self-realization, some factors discourage them from further development. These aspects will be described in the following chapter. (WHO 2021)

2.5 Demotivational Factors in English Learning at a Later Age

Just as every individual can have a motivating factor that drives him forward, some factors suppress this desire and thus prevent the individual from developing. It should be kept in mind that demotivation is not just the opposite of motivation. In order to create a certain demotivation, one had to be motivated to do something beforehand. (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011, 138-140) If students do not have a relationship with the chosen teaching literature, this can become a demotivation source. (Teranishi, Saito and Wales 2015, 13) Also, Weisman and Dunlap (2006, 94) point out that students should not be pressured to correct pronunciation in English. This can only cause anxiety in students. Students can also be demotivated if the right topic is not chosen, this is when students are exposed to topics that are not close to them or familiar to them during their studies. For instance, fictional phrases do not motivate students to develop the conversation in more depth. (James 2007, 102-103)

The last demotivating factor I would like to mention is the anxiety that can occur to older adults when communicating in a foreign language. Older people have much experience. They have already encountered many situations and are thus confident in communicating in their native language. However, this does not apply to a foreign language with which they no longer have such experience. It is, therefore, something new for them. (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986, 125)

2.6 Summary

Motivation is probably the most important factor when it comes to further education. In any case, it is not easy to unambiguously characterize it, so the second chapter mentions theories

from Freud and William, Maslow and Zhou. As an important part of motivation, most authors mention internal and external motivation and their impact on individuals. While the intrinsic motivation is characterized by one's desire, the extrinsic motivation carries the need for appreciation or, conversely, the burden of coercion. A significant reason for studying in a later age seems to be the feeling of inclusion and the effort to improve the later stage of quality of life. At the same time, the correct attitude of the teacher is essential. If the right approach is not chosen correctly, it can demotivate learners to study. Also, a person could be demotivated by inappropriately chosen field of study or unnecessarily increased attention to pronunciation. Taking the discussion in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 as a point of departure, I now turn to explore the specific features of English language learning in the elderly students.

3 THE STUDY OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN A SENIOR AGE

Not just seniors, but all Czech students are among the so-called EFL students. So let me start this chapter by explaining what EFL means. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the abbreviation EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language. Usually, this term refers to students whose first language is not English. (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2021) English is the most spread language from all languages worldwide, which results from the most native speakers. The ground for English increased in Britain and the United States during the nineteenth century.

There are no barriers to stop the spread of the English language. (Broughton, et al. 1980) Not only can be the current usage of the English language attributed to political or historical use, but also to the fact that many informative channels like televisions, radio stations, or even entertainment like British or American films or books are popular among people. Learning English is then one way to understand. The connection to the internet and, therefore, to the outside world makes it essential for people to understand the English language. (Teranishi, Saito and Wales 2015)

3.1 Andragogy

Andragogy is the concept of education. It is a scientific discipline focused on aspects of adult education and learning. The term andragogy was first mentioned in 1833 by Alexander Kapp. However, it was Malcolm Knowle who has become the founding father of andragogy. (Kapur 2015, 50-52) Andragogy takes advantage of the fact that older persons know what they want and tend to learn voluntarily and rely on older peoples' self-directing approach. (Knowles 1973, 43)

Andragogy differs from the concept of pedagogy in several aspects. Shikha Kapur (2015, 53) points out these differences in the Andragogy The Adult Learning Theory. While andragogy relies on the student for being independent, pedagogy counts on teacher guidance. This means that in pedagogy, the pupil is tested, and in andragogy, it is more about support and encouragement. In pedagogy, there is less choice. Students learn what is given. In andragogy, on the other hand, the point is to help older adults learn what they need. Last but not least is the factor of motivation when andragogy relies on the fact that older adults are motivated to learn by intrinsic factors, while younger students use both internal and external factors.

Furthermore, andragogy includes gerontology, which is a study dealing with all possible obstacles that an older person may encounter during ageing. For instance, pharmaceutical, psychological, cultural, economic or social issues. (Burstein 1946, 185)

In addition to teaching andragogy and gerontology, it deals with the problem of emerging institutions and rules. It also includes psychology in solving critical human situations and gradual human formation. (Veteška 2017, 259-260) The subsequent chapter deals with the subject of seniors learning in more depth and with the description of contrast in language learning with younger students.

3.2 Seniors as EFL Learners

To begin with, let me return to the study already discussed in Chapter 2.7., which was centred on motivational factors in English learning in senior age. Határ and Grofčíková (2016, 113) present a study about the specifics of seniors' education carried in Berlin. This study addressed specific aspects that should be kept in mind while teaching seniors. Let me now summarize a few of the main ideas of this study.

First, I would like to raise the insistence that it takes longer for older people to learn new things. (Határ and Grofčíková 2016, 113) Ruyun Hu (2016, 2165) specifically says that "Children's brains are more flexible than that of adults." He also compares the specifics of claiming that the language's early study is associated with pronunciation and better knowledge of a language. However, he claims that in older age, seniors learn faster than younger students, which is precisely the opposite of what the study mentioned in a Foreign Language Education of Seniors proposed.

Like several other authors, Hu Ruyun (2016, 2165) mentions this study and points out different opinions. Nevertheless, based on several controversial views, he concluded that older people learn faster and more effectively, while the younger generation tends to have better overall results in terms of language competence and accomplishment.

3.2.1 Czechoslovak Language Learning Opportunities

Turning a focus on Czech seniors, it is necessary to know the circumstances associated with foreign languages teaching while this generation attended school. Prior to the Velvet Revolution of 1989, Czechoslovak older adults did not have the chance to pierce into the English language fully. Today's seniors were born between the 1950s and 1960s. The year 1948

brought changes to the Czechoslovak education system. The Russian language became compulsory at that time, and other languages were the opportunity to study as a second, optional language. In the 1960s there was a slight change and short-term elevation of other languages. In any case, in the same year, Russian came to the fore again. (Ministerstvo školství 2013)

A fundamental change did not occur until 1989, when Russian's dominant position was interrupted, and there was more freedom in the choice of languages. At the same time, foreign language teaching was moving to lower levels of classes in primary schools. Therefore, for many seniors today, learning English was not a compulsory part of the study but only an option. Therefore, those who have not experienced English at a young age may be motivated by the need to learn something new and, conversely, those who have experience with the English language since school can be motivated to return and deepen their knowledge of this language. (Ministerstvo školství 2013)

3.3 Language Learning Practices

Older adults have different attitudes towards language learning and processing information in general than younger EFL students. Under no circumstances can seniors be educated in the same way as the young EFL learners. Each individual involved in this process has achieved a different level of education in the past. Senior age has its specifics that should be taken into account, it is not possible to choose one or another method unambiguously. (Petřková and Čornaničová 2004)

Knowles (1973, 78) mentioned the principles that should not be forgotten in language learning practices. These are the intrinsic motivation, involvement, older adults experience and relevance of the studied topic. Those chosen methods should be chosen to motivate seniors, encourage active participation, respect individuality and specific learning style, offer feedback and give an opportunity to use the acquired knowledge in practice. (Petřková and Čornaničová 2004)

3.4 Non-formal Education

Non-formal education is an organized form of adult education with experienced lecturers and teachers. Unlike formal education, it is not the student's obligation to complete education with a particular exam, such as a state exam at a university. The study is more adapted to the individual and is intended for personal development in the area of one's choice. (CZSO 2016,

24) The following chapter deals with the description of the universities of the third age as one of the possibilities of non-formal education.

3.4.1 The University of the Third Age

An effective means of a non-formal type of education for seniors are universities of the third age. The history of universities of the third age (U3A) dates back to 1968 when the French government insisted that schools arrange studies aimed at lifelong studies. Pierre Vellas was the first to embrace the idea of lifelong learning, organizing a summer program focused on teaching seniors. This idea caught on, and Vellas planned another one called the university of the third age. (Formosa 2019, 8-9) Each U3A has its specifics, which differ from country to country and their rapid and significant growth in the world points to the importance of the older generation. Many authors associate U3A with the term mentioned in Chapter 1.5, active ageing.

If we focus on the Czech Republic, there is an association of universities of the third age, which provide educational opportunities at the level of higher education for citizens in retirement. AU3A, as a non-profit organization, was established to create and support universities of the third age at universities in the Czech Republic. (Asociace univerzit třetího věku 2021) The list of members of the Association of Universities of the Third Age contains 48 members throughout the Czech Republic. These include universities in, for example, Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Olomouc and Zlín. (Asociace univerzit třetího věku 2021) It is essential to mention that studying at U3A is not free of charge. For example, at U3A in Zlín, this fee is in the amount of 1.000 to 2.000 CZK per year, depending on the type of study. (UTB 2021)

3.4.2 Language Courses

Language courses bring with them many options when it comes to choosing the method of study. Language schools offer instruction in both large groups and smaller ones, or even individual lessons. Besides, some language schools even offer teachers in the form of native speakers, thanks to which students listen to English. The disadvantage may be that these language courses, when compared to the U3A, are not affordable for everyone. There are many of these language schools in the Czech Republic. In Zlín we can find, for example, Wall Street English, Lingua, Only4, Enjoy English and many others. Nevertheless, the study has undergone an unexpected turnaround, and the learning has not been the same for more

than a year. In the next chapter, I will focus on the changes brought about by COVID-19 and the restrictions associated with this global pandemic.

3.5 COVID-19 and Its Influence on Language Learning in the Czech Republic

Last but not least, the COVID-19 and its effects on life and study should be mentioned. There is no doubt that the COVID-19 epidemic is considered to be the most serious one in the last century. More than a year has passed since the first case of COVID-19 infection in the Chinese city of Wuhan, and the end of this period seems to be out of sight. Unfortunately, despite promising beginnings, the Czech Republic has become one of the most infected countries. (Trojánek 2020, 8)

COVID-19 is associated with lockdown, which has a detrimental effect on an individual's mental health. Studies have shown that despite the protective nature of isolation, it causes stress in humans. (Torales, et al. 2020, 2-3) European Commission agrees with the authors of *The outbreak of COVID-19 Coronavirus and Its Impact on Global Mental Health* that isolation causes stress and anxiety in students. Authors compare these stress symptoms to the ones caused by natural disasters. (European Commission 2020, 9)

Lockdown school closures additionally reduce the time students spend studying. It is stated that students are more motivated and more effective while being present at school. Another distinction is the way students react and communicate with classmates. The online platform does not contain enough space for communication and information exchange between learners. Finally, it is worth considering that online teaching requires a good internet connection, which is not always a guarantee. (European Commission 2020, 9-10)

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, I focused on learning opportunities available to senior citizens. In Chapter 3.2, I emphasized the fact that seniors learn faster than the younger generation of students. The section also considers the conditions and possibilities of study when today's seniors studied in schools. As I mentioned, the Russian language became compulsory and other languages were the opportunity to study as an optional language. Lastly, Chapter 3.5 discusses the current COVID-19 situation, which is essential to acknowledge because of the barriers created to contemporary youth and seniors' study.

II. ANALYSIS

4 RESEARCH PRESENTATION

For the beginning, it is vital to briefly clarify the relevance and the purpose of a practical part. The practical part deals with the analysis that is a systematic activity created in order to interpret procedures and goals that serve as a stimulus for the reader to discuss. (Trnková 2010, 76) For the purposes of this thesis, I decided to collect data, which should answer the question of what actually motivates and, on the other hand, what discourages seniors from studying languages and their overall attitude to this problematics. The survey also focused on procedures used in language learning and the individual's teaching method preference. The main goal was to determine what actually motivates seniors to study languages and what may be the demotivational factors. The following chapter is devoted to the interpretation of the research method.

4.1 Research Method

When it comes to data analysis, the data collection process can be done by two methods: *the quantitative method* or *the qualitative method*. The difference between the two methods is the data collection process. The quantitative method uses questionnaires, while the qualitative method uses interviews. (Švaříček, et al. 2007, 13) For the needs of this bachelor's thesis, I chose the *qualitative interview method*, which aims to obtain detailed and comprehensive information on the issue of language learning in senior age. In the qualitative analysis it is possible to use a structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview.

A semi-structured interview aims to obtain detailed information about the studied phenomenon. It aims on finding semantic relations between the studied phenomena when the interviewer asks a pre-prepared set of questions, which are further expanded during the interview. A characteristic feature is a dialogue, where the researcher tries to understand the background of the researched subject and thus gradually understand the studied phenomenon. This is followed by the analysis and interpretation of obtained data. What is necessary to consider is that outputs based on qualitative research are subjective, i.e. they relate to the observed element and cannot be generalized. (Švaříček, et al. 2007, 17-21)

4.2 Preparation and Organization of Analysis

In order to find out the attitudes and opinions towards active ageing and, more precisely, the study of languages in senior age, I arranged interviews with students of universities of the third age (U3A). First, I had to contact PhDr. Jana Semotamová,

an English teacher of seniors attending the U3A in Zlín. After an email communication, the professor added me into two groups on the MS Teams platform. I spent an hour in one English lesson to find out how seniors are learning new languages. I then contacted volunteers, and we arranged an interview for a specific day and time together.

Due to the current situation with COVID-19, which does not allow us to leave the district and within the risk group's security, interviews were conducted online via MS Teams. Online interviews may bring inconveniences such as poor connection. Fortunately, this was not the case, and all interviews went smoothly. To ensure understanding and comprehension, I chose to hold the interview in the Czech language. Also, in order not to omit any detail needed to interpret the necessary findings. I then translated the participants' answers into the English language. Most interviews lasted for about 20 minutes, and one of them for almost an hour. It is essential to mention that all participants agreed to upload the recorded interview data.

The main goal was to determine what actually motivates seniors to study languages and what may be the demotivational factors for them. The information obtained during the interviews will be interpreted in the following chapters. The next chapter is focused on the most crucial aspect of this analysis, and that is the characteristics of participants.

4.3 Participants

As previously stated in the preceding chapter, it was vital to conduct interviews with students of universities of the third age. I got all the participants at the university Tomas Bata in Zlín (UTB). And how can a senior become a student at U3A? Depending on the study conditions, a senior can become a student at U3A if he achieved a retirement age or if he receives a disability pension. However, even those who do not meet these conditions can apply for admission. The admission decision depends on the admissions committee. (UTB 2021)

UTB offers language education and, for example, information and communication technologies, physical activities or study in creative fields. (UTB 2021) For the purposes of this bachelor's thesis the interviews were conducted with students studying English language at the Faculty of Humanities in Zlín. Under standard conditions, the seminars in the classroom last two hours every two weeks. Due to COVID-19 and online forms, seminars were reduced to one hour once a week. In the following chapter, I will focus on the description of individual participants

4.4 Description of Participants

Let me now introduce you to the students of U3A in Zlín. I have conducted interviews with five students of U3A. At this time, the students studying English at the U3A are only women. The age of the participants ranged between 60 and 80 years. The interviews took place with a total of six participants, and all of these interviews took place in a more informal and friendly form, almost in the form of narratives. All participants were promised their anonymity. Therefore, I will address them with names Amelia, Mary, Anna, Elena, Martha and Angela.

4.4.1 Amelia

Amelia is 72 years old woman. Amelia has never encountered the English language before studying at U3A. She studied Russian and German language. Besides English, she attended project Zlín and healthcare. In her free time, she likes to do creative works, for example, patchwork.

4.4.2 Mary

Mary is 80 years old woman. Same as Amelia, she has never been studying English before. The languages she studied were Russian, German, French and Latin. She attended a computer course, a digital photography course, communication for seniors and psychology. In order to be more active, she practices and goes for long walks every day.

4.4.3 Anna

Anna is 75 years old woman who has encountered the English language at U3A for the first time. She earlier studied Russian and German. She likes gardening and taking care of her grandchildren. Besides English, she tried 12 different courses at U3A. One of them was law and history.

4.4.4 Elena

Elena is 73 years old. Besides the Russian language, Elena studied English at high school. She has never tried any other course offered by U3A. She likes to do gardening and traveling, which helps her stay active.

4.4.5 Martha

Martha is 67 years old. She studied Russian and French. She attends two U3A at the same time. At U3A in Olomouc, she tried courses such as psychology, healthcare and philosophy. In her free time, she likes to go to the theatre or concerts. She also likes to do sport, for example, swimming, to stay active.

4.4.6 Angela

Angela is 66 years old woman who has never studied English before. The languages she studied were Russian and Italian. At the U3A, she attended anthropology and the history of art. Angela likes reading, going to the cinema, gardening and swimming.

4.5 Research Presentation

The questions were prepared in advance. I created a total of 12 independent questions, supported by several follow-up questions. The warm-up questions were designed to find out how active seniors are, regardless of studying at U3A. These questions are based on Chapter 1, which introduces ageism together with the stereotypes that society might have towards the seniors. Chapter 1.3 discusses the assumptions that younger generation has about older people. According to these assumptions, older persons have different interests than younger individuals, which establishes certain barriers between these age groups. (Nelson 2002, 247-249)

Other questions were created to obtain a general opinion on the benefits of language education. As previously stated, language learning is closely connected to the active life of an individual and a crucial aspect of today's society because the English language is the most frequently used one. (Broughton, et al. 1980) A high number of information can be found in English only. (Teranishi, Saito and Wales 2015) From this point of view, knowing the language seems to be pivotal.

Chapter 3.2.1 reflects on the history of the education of today's seniors. Therefore, the subsequent questions are focused on this topic. Questions were produced to find out more about individuals experience with languages and their attitude towards language education in their early studies.

Eventually, the critical question should answer the question of what motivates seniors to study language and precisely English. Questions were also concentrated on their current studies at the U3A. However, as I mentioned in Chapter 2.5, there may be some

demotivational factors in English education in the senior age. Some questions were then aimed to discover the possibility of demotivational factors in English learning at an older age.

4.5.1 Questions

The main research goal: Discover what motivates and, conversely, demotivates seniors to study languages.

Partial research objectives:

- Find out more about the activities of seniors and their attitude towards active ageing.
- Get to know the past of respondents in terms of language learning.
- Explore the benefits that seniors see when studying languages.
- How important the approach of teachers according to them is and what is their personal experience.
- What the specifics of seniors study are, how fast respondents learn the language and how much time they need to study.
- Obtain the opinion on the current restrictions of COVID-19, which caused the shift of seminars to an online form.

4.6 Summary

The first part of the practical part is devoted to defining concepts such as analysis and processes used in data collection. The intention was also aimed at preparing the data collection and its organization. The section contains a description of the participants and the presentation of a question to explain the choice of the questions. Last but not least, the part focuses on a specification of the central and partial objectives. The subsequent chapter will focus on analysing the data obtained during the interview with students of the U3A.

5 DATA ANALYSIS

As I have stated in the first chapter, seniors are the most numerous group of people, and the reason may be the fact that this was the so-called generation of baby boomers when there was a significant increase in birth after World War II. (Bristow 2015, 19) As also mentioned in the first chapter, this selected group of people is often associated with negative stereotypes. People tend to think in general and, for example, argue that learning in old age is unnecessary. But as we have learned, active ageing is really essential for seniors. (Escuder-Mollon and Cabelo 2013, 26) Based on these statements, I began interviewing questions focused on activities in old age. The next chapter is therefore focused on the question of what the participants like to do in their free time.

5.1 The Importance of Being Active at an Older Age

As I have already stated in Chapter 1, people tend to spend their time effectively, and in a way, they can improve the quality of the latest phase of life. I asked participants what they like to do to be more active. These activities in most answers included manual work, such as gardening. Other activities also combined patchwork and ordinary housework, including care of grandchildren or spouses. Four answers to this question were very similar, but two of them differed in some aspects, either positively or negatively.

For 5 participants, English was one of the favourite activities. However, one answer differed in the fact that learning English was not one of the preferred activities. Anna precisely said that: *“Learning English is a duty rather than a hobby.”* [my translation]

The answer that caught my attention the most was a response from Mary whose activities are diverse. As she said: *“Since I was 39 years old, I have been exercising every morning as soon as I get up. I practice for 35 to 45 minutes.”* [my translation] She even compared this activity to brushing her teeth. *“[...], it is like you automatically brush your teeth in the morning. I practice like this.”* [my translation]

In addition, Mary mentioned walking: *“I like walking. I walk about 6 to 17 kilometres a day. Around Zlín, it is usually about 8 to 10 kilometres. However, mountains have rugged terrains, so there it is less.”* [my translation] I was positively surprised by these answers. Moreover, this approach contradicts the stereotypical way of thinking of the younger generation, mentioned in Chapter 1.3.1 Ageing Stereotypes. That all older people are not healthy anymore and are therefore dependant on others. (Ayalon a Tesch-Römer 2018)

Despite the fact that one participant had a more negative attitude toward activities. As Anna said: *“I do what I have to do.”* [my translation] Whether with a more positive or negative attitude, all participants have many activities, thanks to which they are more active.

5.1.1 Key Factor of Ageing

Just as there are active seniors, there are those who do not live as actively as my participants do. I asked students of U3A if they know someone who is not that active as they are. The following question was asked to determine the importance of active ageing and possible differences in seniors' lives. Elena, Amelia and Anna answered that they do not know anybody who would live a sedentary life. Elena said: *“I prefer contact with younger people, and I try to avoid people who still complain. These negative thoughts can get passed on to others.”* [my translation]

However, some of them helped me to get even closer to this questionable topic. For example, Mary said: *“[...], it really depends on peoples' nature. Some people are active all their lives, and some live a relatively settled life.”* [my translation] This was meant that those who are used to doing something all their lives continue to do so in senior age and vice versa. Mary also mentioned that there are not many active seniors at her age. She told me about the anniversary of the Znojmo grammar school. She said that there were 28 of them in the class, but only six met at this event. *“[...], the others were in the Alzheimer's Centre, a retirement home, or immobile, thus could not arrive.”* [my translation]

I asked if active life could prevent these issues that she mentioned. She followed: *“I've learned all my life, and it contributes to good orientation. It provides a person is mentally fit, but in order to be physically fit, persons have to do something about it.”* [my translation] She said that it is important to have the energy and be able to handle it well. *“[...], what is it for when you are mentally fit if you lie in bed? And vice versa, if you move actively, but you are not able to know where you live. One is related to the other.”* [my translation]

Family is also one of the crucial factors that influences a person's approach to an older age. Suppose the parents are active or try to make their children active, physically and mentally. In that case, it can help a person to be more dynamic even in that senior age.

It reflects that active seniors rather spend time with equally active seniors with whom they share hobbies. Also, to be active in senior age, one must want and do something for it. Nevertheless, the background of the individual and his approach play a significant role.

5.2 Language Learning Experience

Part of the interview was about finding out whether students of U3A had encountered English before and what is their overall view of language learning. As I mentioned in Chapter 3.2.1 Czechoslovak Language Learning Opportunities, today's seniors did not have compulsory English, and the dominant was Russian. (Ministerstvo školství 2013) As I discovered during the interview, everyone has experience with language learning. Russian as the main language and then arbitrary languages, mostly German. As Mary stated: *“It was difficult to study languages, and the borders were closed, there was no reason to learn them.”* [my translation]

Later in high school, participants also encountered languages such as French, and only two participants studied English. Elena mentioned that she encountered the English language at school when she chose between Spanish and English. The other then interfered with the English language when computers came, and the programs were in English. Amelia said: *“I laboriously translated each word with a dictionary.”* [my translation] As was repeated several times during the interviews, for many participants, the first contact with English languages came with the advent of computers on the Czech market.

Amelia, Mary and Martha mentioned that it were computers that made them choose English. However, only translation was needed, not spoken English. Apart from computers, no one was in contact with English. Therefore the vast majority did not take other English courses during the productive age. Despite the fact that they have already encountered English, they are considered complete beginners.

Considering the importance of intrinsic motivation in language learning, I followed up by questioning whether the participants liked studying a language or if extrinsic motivation played a more crucial role. Four of six participants enjoyed language education at their early age. However, Martha and Mary admitted that they did not like language learning. Mary said: *“[...], you consider everything as a duty at that age.”* [my translation] Some of them followed by the comment about a teacher's importance. According to them, the teacher's approach is of the utmost importance. I will deal with the importance of the teacher's approach in more detail in Chapter 5.4. But before that, I will focus on the students and their beginnings at U3A.

5.2.1 Differences in L2 Learning in Young Learners Compared to That of Older Learners

According to the study on the specifics of seniors' education, it takes longer for seniors to learn new things. (Határ and Grofčíková 2016, 113) On the other hand, Hu (2016, 2165) claims that seniors study faster than younger students. Following these statements, I proposed a question of how fast participants learn new things compared to an earlier stage of their life. All of the participants (except Martha) replied that it takes them longer to learn something new at an older age. Amelia said: *"I study the vocabulary and remember it for the rest of the day. However, the other day I forget what I learned the previous day. My head just cannot handle it."* These findings are thus in agreement with the study in Berlin carried out by Határ and Grofčíková in 2016.

5.3 Continuous Learning as a Fundamental Part of Life

As previously mentioned in section 5.1.1. People who are used to do something all their lives continue to do so in senior age. This statement was thus followed by a question about when the participant started attending the U3A. All participants knew in advance that they wanted to stay active even after productive age. *"I wondered what to do with my free time."* Angela said. Martha also stated that: *"Already when I was working, I was looking forward to being able to start studying at U3A."* [my translations]

As I noticed, the participants were active throughout their lives. Therefore further education was a matter of course. As was confirmed by Mary: *"The fact that I switched to U3A right after work came to me as an obvious choice. I cannot even imagine being without it."* [my translation]

In addition, for most of them, English is not the first and only course they attended. Some of the participants attended even more courses at the same time. These courses mentioned were, for example, computer courses, anthropology, psychology, history or philosophy. Furthermore, Martha studies two U3A at the same time. Palacký University Olomouc and Tomas Bata University in Zlín. However, only UTB offers online seminars during COVID-19. The reason discussed during the interview is that the course in Olomouc is rather practical and cannot be done via computer.

A single one of the participants used only an English course at U3A. Another of the courses on offer did not interest her, but as Elena said: *"I worked as an economist. Therefore I participated in several courses and training focused in this direction."* [my translation]

Following these findings, in the next part of the interview, I focused on what motivates the participant to study English now in the senior age.

5.4 Motivational Factors for Seniors to Study English Language

Considering the importance of motivation in language learning, Berges-Puyó (2018, 16) claims that the motivation for seniors to learn languages is to be more active and increase life expectancy. At the same time, he claims that seniors are motivated more by internal factors. Consequently, I asked the interviewees what currently motivates them to study the English language. The most common answers included independence, travelling and communication. For independence, participants mentioned the importance of understanding the information without the need for someone's help. As Anna said: *“I found it humiliating to keep asking children to translate. I wanted to be independent.”* [my translation] Also, some of the participants have families abroad. As they said, they want to understand at least basic knowledge when visiting them.

This brings me to another factor which is travelling. Before the Coronavirus pandemic, most of the participants travelled. That is why they considered the knowledge of the English language essential. Mary said: *“Travelling played a massive part in my life. A person who always had the chance to travel would not understand. We lived behind the wires. After this, one appreciates the fact that he can travel. Furthermore, if you can travel, it is good to understand.”* [my translation] Last but not least is the factor of communication. According to participants, it is not only about communication in English but about contact with other people. As I mentioned in section 1.4.1, self-realization, in this case studying the English language in an older phase of life, supports seniors to become more socialized. Which afterwards helps to improve seniors quality of life. (Escuder-Mollon and Cabelo 2013, 26) After these factors contributed to motivating students to study English at U3A, the most influential factor seems to be the teacher's approach. The importance of a teacher while learning a language will be discussed in the following section.

5.4.1 The Character of the Teacher in the Main Role

As I previously stated, all participants have agreed that the approach of a teacher is the utmost concern while studying. Some of them stated that the teacher plays a key role in moti-

vating students to study. The most discussed element was that a student should not feel embarrassed if he does not know the answer to something. Furthermore, a friendly approach can motivate students to study at both younger and older ages.

Following Jorge Gabriel Berges-Puyó's statement that the teachers' approach should correlate with the students' approach, I asked the participants if the lessons suited them and if they learned what they liked. Based on this question, I found out that all these ladies study because of how their professor approaches them and manages the lessons. According to them, is a professor at U3A fantastic, which influence their attitude and motivation towards studying. Most of them said that: "*She is understanding, kind and helpful.*" [my translation] Also, the professor is not just following the book but adds something more to the lessons, which is what the students find interesting and that makes them look forward to every lesson. Subsequently, the following question focused on whether something can demotivate a person to study languages.

5.5 Demotivational Factors in English Language Learning

James (2007, 102-103) suggests that the wrong choice of topic can demotivate students. Therefore, I asked the students if they liked what they studied and could suggest what they would like to do in a lesson. Answers were once again almost the same. Students stated that the professor is lenient and that they do like the content of seminars. What participants consider as a demotivational factor is, for instance, one's inability to learn the language. Suppose one's language is not good, one feels bad during class and thus ends the studies. Angela and Anna even said that this was once the case in their classroom.

Another demotivational factor discussed is health. If one does not feel well, it would be hard to keep attention. Even more nowadays, when the seminars took place online. This brings me to the issue with distance lessons. Before COVID-19, more seniors were attending English at U3A. Since the lessons take place online, many of them have decided to put an end. The financial side of studying at an older age was also discussed during the interview. For some people, this could be one of the demotivational factors as well. This was, however, mentioned only by Mary. Overall, participants do not see many aspects that could demotivate someone. They rather suggest that it is more about one's attitude.

5.6 Attitudes and Opinions Related to COVID-19

Based on the finding associated with the demotivational factors, I discovered that restrictions related to COVID-19 made some of the older adults end the studies. I then asked the seniors what their opinion is and how do they approach this situation. Chapter 3.5 stated that the online platform does not contain enough space for communication and information exchange between learners. As Martha confirmed, there is less time for communication. She said: *“We can say more things, comment on more stuff in the class. During the online seminar, I usually do not ask because I do not want to restrain.”* [my translation]

Furthermore, all students at U3A have a more positive attitude towards this situation that caused distance learning. Some of them perceived these circumstances as a challenge. Even though they admit that physical presence is much better, students are happy to at least have this chance of studying. Few of them said that they pay more attention during the online seminar and that their concentration is higher than in a classroom.

Another advantage the students can see is a change of schedule. Before the pandemic, seminars were held for two hours every two weeks. According to participants, this was too long. Each of them holds the view that it is better to have a seminar every week. For example, the reasons for these opinions were that it forces students to study. However, when is the seminar once every two weeks, students think there is still time to practice, and they thus do not practice that much.

All in all, the current situation brought both advantages and disadvantages. Seniors see the advantage of online learning in the fact that they concentrate more while being online. The disadvantage is the lack of contact with other students, which is one of the motivating factors for studying in senior age.

5.7 Summary

To summarize this part, all participants do several activities to remain active. This is reflected in the way they spend time in older age. As active seniors, they try to meet equally active people. The way seniors approach the later phase of life depends on the way they lived their whole life. Besides, of the six participants, five had never learned English before. One of the reasons was the lack of opportunities to study English. Most came into contact with English with the arrival of computers. However, the spoken language was not necessary, and the

participants used only dictionaries to translate certain words. Part of the research was conducted to discover if the participants enjoyed language education in school. Moreover, most participants stated that it takes longer to learn new things at an older age.

Furthermore, many of the participants tried various courses before the opportunity to study English came, and some study more than one course. The motivation for studying at a senior age is communication, travelling and independence. At the same time, according to participants, few demotivational factors can influence language acquisition. These are, for instance, the inability to learn the language or technological difficulties when it comes to online learning. However, online lessons also bring a positive aspect: higher concentration and better timing for seminars. Instead of two hours every two weeks, the participants prefer to study English for one hour every week.

CONCLUSION

The thesis consists of two parts. The first part is a theoretical part, which contains a description of the ageing population and the stereotypes the senior citizens face during ageing. Also, several organizations aimed at working with seniors were mentioned, such as Czech Gerontological and the Geriatric Society and Seniors of the Czech Republic. The second chapter provided an overview of what motivation is as well as the impact of motivation on language learning. In Chapter 3, which is also the last chapter of the theoretical part of this thesis, I hoped to describe foreign language education of seniors and the influence of COVID-19 on their studies.

The practical part was formed by research, where I used the qualitative interview method to obtain the required data to determine what motivates or demotivates seniors to study languages. Firstly, I presented the methodology as well as the questions for the interview. I chose to interview the students of the University of the Third Age. Due to the restrictions connected to the pandemic, the process of acquiring the information took place online via MS Teams. Apart from motivation, the aim was to find out more about seniors' activities and their attitude towards active ageing. The research has shown that the seniors who had been active before they retired found it rather natural to remain active also after retirement. All participants mentioned several activities that help them staying mentally and physically fit. The crucial factor in achieving this is one's determination.

Moreover, the research has shown that seniors are motivated by four main elements: communication, independence, travelling, and the teachers' approach. Some of the participants mentioned embarrassment while asking for help with English. At the same time, most of them travel, and because English is a broadly used language, they consider knowing the language vital.

Furthermore, seniors attend the University of the Third Age to be in contact with other people. However, what encourages them to continue learning English is the teacher. Every participant is more than satisfied with their current teacher, and some of them even mentioned that she might be the reason to remain a student at U3A. The students noted that it could demotivate them if the teacher were not be helpful or understanding. Also, the group of students is smaller than it used to be before the pandemic took place. The distance learning demotivated some of the seniors to end their studies at U3A. Finally, the last demotivational factor is one's inability to learn the language and the feeling of humiliation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU3A	Association of Universities of the Third Age
CGGS	Czech Gerontological and the Geriatric Society
CSO	Czech Statistical Office
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L2	Second Language
SHI	Statutory Health Insurance
U3A	University of the Third Age
UN	United Nations
UTB	Tomas Bata University in Zlín
WHO	World Health Organization