

Filozofická fakulta

Univerzity Karlovy v Praze

Ústav anglického jazyka a didaktiky



Diplomová práce

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Teaching bilingual adolescents for whom English is a heritage language or who have lived in an Anglophone country, and who are studying in Czech secondary school English classrooms: the students' perspective

Výuka angličtiny na českých středních školách z pohledu bilingvních žáků, kteří mají anglofonního rodiče či žili v anglofonní zemi

Praha, 2015

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Poděkování

Chtěla bych poděkovat vedoucímu práce, PhDr. Tomáši Gráfovi, za řadu podnětů, cenné rady a trpělivost. Dále bych chtěla poděkovat účastníkům výzkumu za jejich ochotu a otevřenost. V neposlední řadě patří dík mé rodině a přátelům za jejich podporu.

Prohlášení

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V Praze, dne 19. ledna 2015

..... Anna Jirásková

Abstract (in English)

The present thesis explores the issue of teaching heritage language learners and returnee students in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes in Czech secondary schools. The aim of the thesis is to examine the experiences of heritage language learners and returnees in the EFL classroom, their strengths and weaknesses in English, their attitude towards English language learning in terms of potential anxiety and motivation, as well as heritage language learners' wishes in relation to language instruction. These issues are investigated from the perspective of the students themselves. The theoretical part reviews the relevant literature on heritage language acquisition and teaching, and on the effects of experience abroad on language acquisition. Moreover, it is complemented by discussions of differentiated instruction and language education for the gifted, two areas which can prove helpful in terms of finding suitable solutions to the problems encountered by the target population in foreign language classes. The empirical part is qualitative and consists of the analysis of in-depth semi-structured interviews with three participants, *gymnázium* students from Prague. Insights are provided about the interconnectedness of the students' life experiences, their general beliefs about language learning, and their opinions on what constitutes effective language instruction.

Abstrakt (v češtině)

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá otázkami spojenými s výukou angličtiny na českých středních školách v případě studentů s anglofonním rodičem a studentů, kteří pobývali v anglofonní zemi. Cílem práce je prozkoumat zkušenosti a pocity těchto studentů z výuky angličtiny jako cizího jazyka, jejich silné stránky a slabiny v angličtině, jejich postoje ke studiu angličtiny z hlediska motivace a případných obav, jakož i jejich přání ohledně jazykové výuky. Zmíněné otázky jsou zkoumány z pohledu samotných studentů. Teoretická část podává přehled literatury o jazykové výuce dětí rodilých mluvčích a důsledcích zkušenosti s pobytem v zahraničí pro učení. Je také doplněna o diskusi diferencované výuky a výuky jazyků pro mimořádně nadané, což jsou dvě oblasti, které mohou být užitečné při řešení problémů spojených s jazykovou výukou cílové skupiny. Empirická část je kvalitativní a spočívá v analýze podrobných polostrukturovaných rozhovorů se třemi účastníky, studenty pražského gymnázia. Jsou osvětleny souvislosti mezi životními zkušenostmi studentů, jejich obecnými představami o učení jazyků a jejich názory na to, jak má vypadat efektivní jazyková výuka.

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List of abbreviations

ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

BICS = basic interpersonal communication skills

CAE = Certificate in Advanced English

CALP = cognitive academic language proficiency

CLIL = content and language integrated learning

CPE = Certificate of Proficiency in English

D2 = second dialect

EFL = English as a foreign language

FIPSE = Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

FL = foreign language

FLCAS = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

FLL = foreign language learner

HL = heritage language

HLL = heritage language learner

ICM = Integrated Curriculum Model

JHL = Japanese heritage language

L1 = first language

L2 = second language

R2 = second register

SLA = second language acquisition

UCLA = University of California at Los Angeles

WTC = willingness to communicate

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the world has become gradually more globalized, and people's mobility has increased greatly. As a consequence, large numbers of children and teenagers across the world temporarily reside abroad. Among other possible scenarios, some parents opt to move to a different country for work (Kanno, 2000, p. 4), while others want to provide their children with an early study abroad experience (Song, 2011, p. 749). A growing number of young people also decide to leave, independently of their families, for shorter study abroad stays (Anderson, 2007, pp. 1–2). When these individuals (henceforward “returnees”) come back to schools in their home countries, they often find themselves attending foreign language classes of a language in which they have gained a certain proficiency and to which they have developed a personal connection during their stay abroad.

Among elementary, secondary and post-secondary school students, there is also an increasing number of so-called heritage language learners (HLLs). These are students whose descent connects them to a language which is being taught as a minority or foreign language within a particular culture. Typically, one or both of these students' parents are native speakers of the target language, and the children have been exposed to it at home (Valdés, 1999, p. 2). Heritage language learners may have reached a certain level of proficiency in their heritage language, yet they need support to progress further (Valdés, 1995, p. 307).

Both returnee and heritage students constitute very specific types of language learners in the foreign language classroom. They often identify with remote cultural groups or see themselves as members of a transnational community (Song, 2011, pp. 750–751). Their sense of identity is intertwined with the target language to a greater extent than is the case with their classmates, and their language learning paths in and out of school have likely been substantially different as well. For these reasons, these students have distinct needs in the language classroom, and educators who have been trained as foreign language teachers might be at a loss concerning how best to integrate them into their classes (Kagan & Dillon, 2009, p. 157; Kanno, 2000, p. 15; Song, 2011, p. 753). In recent years, the above-mentioned phenomena have received increased attention, as evidenced for instance by the establishment of scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Language, Identity and Education* (2002) and the *Heritage Language Journal* (2002).

This thesis seeks to explore the issue of teaching returnee and heritage language learners in the context of Czech secondary schools, focusing specifically on teenagers who have lived abroad and learned English among native speakers, or who have an Anglophone parent. As a result of the opening up of the country following the fall of communism, global trends in migration and mobility are also visible in the Czech Republic. Children and teenagers whose personal history has led them to become highly proficient in English are faced with the choice of either attending an international school, or of enrolling in a school where the language of instruction is Czech, and where English is taught as a foreign language. Although there are a number of Czech student theses about bilingual education in the family (Richterová, 2011; Tošovská, 2013), and bilingual education of preschool children (Jirsová, 2007), the topic of integrating these young people into English as a foreign language classrooms seems to remain unexplored in the Czech context.

The official documents of the Czech School Inspectorate contain the assertion that talented students should receive special support in secondary schools (2014, p. 7). In the latest report focusing specifically on language instruction, it is also mentioned that such support is still lacking (2010, p. 11). However, there is no mention of students who have special needs not because of talent per se, but because they have been raised as bilingual. Although the Czech School Inspectorate provides numbers concerning how many students at the *gymnázium* level have a language proficiency certificate (2010, p. 14), no such numbers are available with regards to students for whom English is a home language or who have lived in an Anglophone country. Thus, we do not know how many students are in such a situation, nor do we know if they have access to the kind of instruction that they deserve. Although it might seem that these students are at an advantage in terms of English proficiency compared to their peers, and that they do not need any extra help, they are in fact facing a number of specific challenges, such as the risk of some of their language skills staying underdeveloped, or of their English undergoing attrition (Valdés, 1995, p. 307). Moreover, even the most advanced students have the right to be guided and scaffolded by their teachers in ways which can help them reach their full potential (see e.g., Bain, 2007, pp. 452–453; Hébert & Neumeister, 2000, pp. 122–123). Finally, when the needs of the most advanced students are being met, the whole school community can benefit (Welch, 1987, p. 25).

The main aim of this thesis is to gain an insight into the perspective and needs of heritage and returnee students in Czech secondary school classrooms of English as a foreign language, with the ultimate goal of offering tentative suggestions to educators who are faced with the task of teaching these students. The theoretical part focuses on the literature which can help identify the needs of the target population, as well as provide insights into possible ways to successfully teach these students. The first two sections treat the linguistic and affective challenges connected respectively to being a heritage and a returnee language learner. The following section focuses on works which can help address these issues in the mainstream English as a foreign language classroom. First, heritage language teaching in general is discussed. Then, two broader areas of interest are explored, namely the fields of differentiated instruction and gifted education, recommended as useful sources of help for educators dealing with HLLs and returnees.

The empirical part consists of a set of case studies, conducted in the form of in-depth semi-structured interviews with three participants: two heritage language learners and one returnee student. The aim of the practical part is to examine how these learners perceive the ways in which they have been taught in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom and their current English proficiency in terms of strengths, weaknesses and needs. It also seeks to explore the wishes the participants have with respect to English instruction, looking at how their views are shaped by their personal experience and their beliefs about language learning. First, the methodology is described. Next, the results of the case studies are presented. Finally, the issues raised in the case studies are discussed in terms of how they relate to the existing literature, reviewed in the theoretical part. Finally, a number of concluding remarks are made. Although further research is needed and “universal” guidelines for teachers cannot at this point be established, the insights provided by the thesis could hopefully prove useful in drawing attention to the specific needs of the target population.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Identifying the needs of the target population

2.1.1. The case of heritage language learners

2.1.1.1. Definitions

The field of heritage language learning and teaching is a relatively new area of interest for researchers (Valdés, 2005, p. 411), which offers a number of promising insights into the challenge of teaching mixed-level classrooms with some students who have a home background in the target language. There are different ways of understanding what makes someone a heritage language learner. Valdés explains that in the field of foreign language education, “the term [is used] to refer to a language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English” (Valdés, 2001, p. 2). Other definitions of the term also usually operate with the idea of the heritage language as “non-English”¹. However, as explained by Kelleher, a heritage language can be any language “other than the dominant language [...] in a given social context” (2010, p. 1). Most of the literature on heritage language teaching has so far been produced in North America, where English represents that dominant language. Nevertheless, there seems to be no significant reason why the term could not be used in a context where the situation is reversed and another language is spoken at home by the majority population. English, being taught as a foreign language, can thus be labeled as the heritage language of individuals who reside in the Czech Republic and have Anglophone parents.

However, there are some limits to the transferability of the findings of heritage language research into the Czech context. The main limitation is connected to the difference in the relative status of the languages in question and in the societal perceptions of their prestige. While heritage language speakers in America might feel discouraged to maintain a close connection to their language of origin, in the Czech context the usefulness of English, a language of prime international importance, will hardly be questioned.

As pointed out by Draper and Hicks, the designation of heritage language

¹ For a range of different definitions of the term, see Carreira (2004), Fishman (2001), Wiley (2001), Van Deusen-Scholl (2003), and Scalera (2003).

learner “most often refers to someone with a home background in the language, but may refer to anyone who has had in-depth exposure to another language [outside of school]” (2000, p. 19). According to that point of view, students who have lived abroad could theoretically also be labeled as heritage language learners, even if their parents are Czech. However, heritage language research overwhelmingly studies individuals who have achieved a certain proficiency in the target language thanks to their family origin. While the experiences of returnee and of heritage language students might present many similarities, for the purposes of the present study a distinction is maintained and only individuals with at least one parent of Anglophone origin are referred to as heritage language learners.²

In this thesis, my intention is to limit the discussion to articles and publications dealing with heritage language learners in the foreign language classroom, or with papers aiming to provide help for educators trained as foreign language teachers who are asked to teach heritage language learners. Due to the scarcity of empirical studies dealing specifically with mixed classes where both heritage and non-heritage students are enrolled, when appropriate I will mention studies focusing on separate classes only for heritage learners. It is also important to note that a great number of heritage language research focuses on the case of native minority languages (such as various aboriginal languages in Canada), a large portion of which are on the brink of dying out. The teaching, learning and maintenance of these languages present challenges which differ from those concerning the Czech target population to the extent of being irrelevant to this thesis, and for this reason they will not be addressed here.

2.1.1.2. The needs of heritage language learners on the linguistic level

Heritage language learners represent an exceptionally diverse population, making it challenging to formulate any generalizations about their linguistic skills. On the example of Hispanic students enrolled in classes of Spanish for native speakers in the United States, Valdés offers a broad classification of HLLs based on factors such as length of residency in the U.S., schooling history, English language skills, and characteristics of the students’ Spanish language proficiency (1995, p. 306). Although

² It is also important to note that both heritage language learners and returnees can be referred to as “bilingual”. However, as explained by Bialystok (2003, pp. 4–6), the term has rather blurred edges and encompasses a broad variety of possible types of speakers. To remain precise and to keep a distinction between the two kinds of learners discussed in this thesis, the terms “heritage language learner” and “returnee” are preferred.

such a classification is useful in providing an overview of how vastly the life experiences, as well as the language and academic skills, of individual HLLs can differ, it remains rather superficial, as noted by Valdés herself in a subsequent article (2005, p. 416).

Valdés further stresses that HLLs who study their heritage language as an academic subject form a group of learners with needs distinct from those of traditional foreign language learners. As an example, she points out that some HLLs can speak more fluently than their language teachers (if those are non-native speakers of the target language), but that they often lack a formal awareness of grammatical rules and terminology, which makes them prone to confusion and frustration when subjected to traditional language instruction, to the point that they can underperform compared to their non-HLL classmates. Moreover, heritage language learners are often speakers of stigmatized language varieties, which further complicates their position in the foreign language classroom (1995, pp. 304–305).

Valdés proposes four main areas for investigation in the field of heritage language acquisition, namely “language maintenance”, “acquisition of a prestige variety”, “expansion of bilingual range” and “transfer of literacy skills” (1995, p. 309). The insights brought by research examining these issues should help shed light on the processes of language acquisition in general, while also being of practical significance in the domain of language education (1995, p. 321).

A decade later, Valdés revisits the same issues, stressing that the field of heritage language acquisition is still in great need of solid theoretical foundations, integrated with other linguistic disciplines, and grounded in empirical data (2005, p. 422). She points out the shortcomings of the common classifications of HLLs, including her own (Valdés, 1995, p. 306), and calls for finer, more nuanced categorizations, which would accommodate for the vast differences among HLLs, while also adequately distinguishing HLLs from traditional language learners. As a first step in that direction, she lists five possible processes which might be at work during heritage language development:

- (a) acquisition of incompletely acquired features of the L1 [first language] as a “second” language,
- (b) first language (re-)acquisition involving the acquisition of features that have undergone attrition,
- (c) acquisition of a second dialect (D2 acquisition),
- (d) development of discourse skills in the written and oral language including the acquisition of formal registers and styles (R2 acquisition) and literacy, and
- (e) expansion of receptive proficiencies into productive grammars (2005, p. 417).

Valdés points out that these processes, although clearly distinct, are often hard to identify. For instance, some features typical of attrition, including “use of analytic vs. synthetic structures, use of lexical borrowings, convergence of syntactic form, cognate transfer, literal translation” (2005, p. 418) can also signal incomplete acquisition or full acquisition of a contact variety (i.e., of a new dialect which has emerged among heritage speakers who are also users of the majority language). Further research should be guided by questions of how to distinguish between these processes, how the processes of language, dialect or register (re)acquisition differ in each of the given cases and, perhaps most importantly, of what we can do in terms of instruction to facilitate heritage language development in all its aspects (Valdés, 2005, p. 419).

Finally, referring to Cook (2002) Valdés argues that linguists and language educators working with HLLs should strive to abandon the monolingual native speaker norm, as it neither realistically reflects the linguistic competences of this particular group of individuals, nor those of the majority of the world’s population, which is bi- or multilingual (2005, p. 422). Unfortunately, while the idea sounds appealing, there seem to be thus far no specific guidelines or sets of standards which would offer teachers and learners clear reference points concerning possible goals for the language development of multilingual learners. Although comparing the linguistic proficiency of multilingual speakers in one given language to speakers who are monolingual in that language might be unfair, the norms used in the assessment of bi- or multilingual students should by no means constitute a mere lowering of expectations.

The issues highlighted by Valdés have been acknowledged by the American National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages in a position paper on heritage language learners (Wang & García, 2002). The text states that the language skills of heritage learners are often “unevenly developed” (2002, p. 3) in a whole range of different ways, and it highlights the HLLs’ need to “increase the total range of linguistic resources available to them [and to] upgrade their language proficiency from that of a child in a social situation to an age-appropriate academic level” (2002, p. 5). The text also mentions the possibility for these students to progress faster at school (2002, p. 5).

Some researchers have focused specifically on the differences between traditional foreign language learners (FLLs) and heritage language learners.

Unfortunately, the insights they bring are rather limited, as they do not take into account the vast range of HLLs. For instance, Campbell and Rosenthal (2000) offer a comparison of traditional foreign language learners “who have completed 2 years of instruction in university foreign language programs” and between “typical” HLLs who end up enrolled in the same classes (quoted in Schwartz, 2001, p. 323). Schwartz compiled their findings into a succinct table (2001, p. 233). While the comparison offers some insights, it only captures one possible situation among many dramatically different scenarios. For instance, the table states that HLLs, as opposed to FLLs, “have not developed literacy skills beyond elementary levels” (2001, p. 233). While this might be true of some heritage language learners, there are countless cases in which such a statement does not apply.

Like Valdés, Lynch (2003) calls for more empirical studies investigating the order and stages of acquisition of different linguistic features among HLLs. He points out that “[p]honological and lexical variation corresponding to style or register shifts is [...] late acquired, and we find that HL learners generally have trouble realizing such shifts linguistically” (2003, p. 4). In his comparison of second and heritage language acquisition, he highlights that some of the features of learner language such as overgeneralization, simplification, lexical extension, syntactic calquing and word order transfer seem to be characteristic of both second and heritage language learners, but that more investigation in the area of heritage language instruction is needed (2003, pp. 4–7).

Borrowing his terminology from Cummins (1984), Lynch argues that heritage language learners have an advantage over foreign language learners in terms of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) but not in terms of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Lynch, 2003, p. 11). On a quotation by Krashen (2000), Lynch explains why HLLs can develop high levels of language anxiety if they are grouped with FLLs in the language classroom:

Often, classes focus on conscious learning of grammatical rules that are late acquired. Some HL speakers may not have learned or acquired these items. Non-speakers of the HL who are good at grammar sometimes outperform HL speakers on grammar tests and get higher grades in the language class, even though the non-speaker of the HL may be incapable of communicating the simplest idea in the language while the HL speaker may be quite competent in everyday conversation. Such events could be psychologically devastating, a message to the HL speaker that he or she does not know his or her own language, while an outsider does (Krashen, 2000, p. 441, quoted in Lynch, 2003, pp. 11–12).

Lynch concludes that due to the discrepancy between the HLLs' BICS and their CALP, as well as in order to prevent affective struggles, a separation of HLLs and FLLs into different language tracks is advisable (2003, p. 12).

Using a mixed-methods design, Triantafyllidou and Hedgecock (2007) examined the differences between 26 first- and second-generation Greek learners of Modern Greek living in the U.S., and 16 learners of Modern Greek who were not of Greek origin. They found that the heritage learners were characterized by a “heavy reliance on intuitions and recall knowledge” (2007, p. 14), that they focused on speaking fluently rather than accurately, and that they took advantage of various circumlocution tactics. Moreover, they observed among the HLLs a tendency toward “exaggerated self-appraisal of L2 knowledge, skills and proficiency” (2007, p. 14). On the other hand, the foreign language learners relied more on their explicit knowledge, were more preoccupied by accuracy than fluency, and had a more realistic view of their own L2 skills (2007, p. 14).³

2.1.1.3. Affective struggles of heritage language learners

The affective aspect of language learning in general, and of the heritage language learning experience in particular, is one of the most often cited arguments for a separation of HLLs and FLLs into different language tracks (Lynch, 2003; Webb & Miller, 2000). While striving to master the language of their ancestors, HLLs frequently struggle with complex identity issues (see Webb & Miller, 2000). The traditional foreign language classroom often fails to accommodate for their specific motivations and language learning goals (Berardi-Wiltshire, 2013b; Kondo-Brown, 2001; Webb & Miller, 2000). Moreover, the paradoxical nature of the heritage language learners' situation in the classroom can lead to heightened anxiety levels, especially if heritage learners constitute a minority among a majority of foreign language learners. As explained by Krashen: “Heritage language speakers are in a no-

³ In recent years, a number of empirical studies looking into the details of the differences in specific linguistic skills and grammatical knowledge between native speakers in the traditional sense of the term, heritage language learners, and foreign language learners have been conducted. However, as these examine languages other than English, mainly Spanish (e.g., Montrul et al., 2008, Bowles, 2011, Montrul et al., 2013) and Japanese (e.g., Matsunaga, 2003, Kondo-Brown, 2005), a detailed overview of these would be beyond the scope of the present thesis. These studies still maintain a rather broad distinction between the different types of learners. For instance, Kondo-Brown (2005) distinguishes between Japanese HL Identity learners (with Japanese grandparents) and between JHL Competent learners (with Japanese speaking parents). Based on the results of her 2005 study, Kondo-Brown argues that JHL Identity learners are much closer in their skills and needs to Japanese as a foreign language learners than to JHL Competent learners (2005, pp. 573–574).

win situation in foreign language classes. If they do well, it is expected. If HL speakers do not do well in foreign language classes, the experience is especially painful” (2000, p. 441).

Furthermore, in the case of minority languages such as Spanish in the United States, linguistic questions are deeply intertwined with issues concerning social status, prestige and political power. For instance, some learners can reject the heritage language for fear that speaking it would position them as members of a stigmatized community. They might also have internalized the idea that their linguistic background makes them less capable learners to the extent that they become almost conditioned to fail in any academic subject (e.g., Mercado, 2000, p. 213). Although these questions represent arguably the most pressing issues in heritage language education, they will not be discussed here further, as they hardly apply to the population targeted in this study. As mentioned earlier, English has become a language of prime international importance, and it would be misplaced to claim that individuals with Anglophone ancestry residing in the Czech Republic are at a risk of being a priori labeled as underachieving students. The affective struggles of this population will thus differ significantly from those of students from “traditional” minority populations. Nevertheless, some insights can be gained from several studies conducted with heritage learners of various (traditionally stigmatized or non-stigmatized) languages in “mainstream” language classrooms. The two aspects of the learning process which will be discussed here are motivation and anxiety.

2.1.1.3.1. Motivation

As part of a wider study, Kondo (1999) examined the language learning motivation of 4 bilingual and 2 semi-bilingual second generation heritage students of Japanese at an American university (p. 79), looking at motivation through the lens of valence theory, self-efficacy theory, causal attributions theory, and goal-setting theory (p. 79, see Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). She concluded that the participants were lacking specific, short-term goals. Moreover, the general feeling among the participants was that their linguistic needs were not being met in the classroom: instead of increasing their everyday communicative abilities, the focus was on highly formal, academic language. As a result, their motivation to attend further Japanese classes was decreasing. Kondo argues that the perspective of these students should be taken into account, and that the content of the classes should either be adapted, or the

teachers should put more effort into persuading the heritage learners of the value of formal, academic Japanese (p. 84). Finally, she argues for pedagogical approaches which put an increased value on student awareness and autonomy (p. 86).

Berardi-Wiltshire (2013a, 2013b) conducted a set of longitudinal case studies with five adult Italian HLLs attending Italian FL courses in New Zealand. Adopting a social constructivist perspective, Berardi-Wiltshire observed that shifts in motivation were closely linked to students' roles in the classroom (2013b, pp. 4–5). For instance, one student's motivation dropped when she realized she was being positioned as a future tourist (2013b, p. 6); another felt his self-esteem suffered because he was encountering more difficulties than expected (2013b, p. 7); and yet another, who was a dialect speaker, felt discouraged because she thought she was making too many mistakes and disappointing the teacher, who expected more of her (2013b, pp. 8–9). The participants also placed a prime value on authentic contact with native speakers of Italian outside the classroom (2013a, p. 82). Based on her findings, Berardi-Wiltshire advocates for more differentiation and for student autonomy in the foreign language classroom (2013b, pp. 11–12). She also points out that teachers should strive to validate their students' experiences with the target language (even with its nonstandard forms), and that they can build upon these during discussions of topics such as language variation, instead of only considering the standard language as worthy of mention (2013b, p. 12). Berardi-Wiltshire's studies highlight the deeply personal aspect of heritage language learning: making any generalizations can be misleading, and it seems imperative to examine the students' motivations on an individual level.⁴

2.1.1.3.2. Anxiety

Tallon (2009; 2003) conducted two quantitative studies with university-level Spanish learners. First, he examined the anxiety scores on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS, Horwitz, 1989) of 44 Spanish HLLs and 57 FLLs enrolled in an elementary Spanish course (2003, p. 76). He found that the mean anxiety score of HLLs was significantly lower than that of FLLs, yet still “somewhat high” (2003, p. 78). Subsequently, he carried out a similar study with 209 HLLs and 204 FLLs, enrolled in first, second, third and fourth semester Spanish (2009, pp. 118–119). The study brought comparable results (FLLs experienced higher levels of

⁴ For a further discussion of how heritage identity is closely intertwined with learning experience and motivation, even in the case of low-proficiency HLLs, see e.g. Weger-Guntharp (2006).

anxiety than HLLs), yet a notable finding was that the anxiety scores of the heritage learners were higher in the second and third semester than in the first. Moreover, some HLLs experienced higher levels of anxiety than FLLs. These facts could suggest that while heritage learners feel fairly confident when taking beginner-level courses, they experience a drop in self-confidence once the courses start dealing with more advanced grammatical points, in which phase they might find out that they have unexpected knowledge gaps (2009, pp. 123–124).

Adopting a mixed-methods design, Alghotani (2010) conducted a similar study with 22 intermediate Arabic learners, calculating their FLCAS scores and looking in more depth at the experiences of 5 learners (3 FLLs and 2 HLLs). She concluded that language anxiety was skill specific, that it played a role in the learning of both the heritage and foreign language participants, and that some HLLs, due to their home experience with Arabic, had anxiety levels so low that it led to a lack of motivation to make a sustained effort to progress. Alghotani concludes that additional attention should not only be paid to the debilitating role of anxiety, but also to its facilitating role (2010, pp. 234–237).

Xiao and Wong (2014) conducted a quantitative study with 87 heritage learners of Chinese, enrolled in Chinese for heritage learners university-level courses at four different American universities, and with 89 non-heritage learners taking Chinese FL classes (2014, pp. 594–595). They calculated the participants' scores on the FLCAS for each of the four language skills, and found, similarly to Tallon, that although the HLLs had lower anxiety scores than the FLLs, they still experienced relatively high levels of anxiety, especially when writing was involved (2014, p. 604).

2.1.1.3.3. Conclusion

The above studies call for a further exploration of the construct of “Heritage Language Anxiety” (Tallon, 2009, p. 128; Tallon, 2003, p. 78; Xiao & Wong, 2014, p. 609). They also highlight the importance of examining language anxiety in relation to the individual language skills. This is presumably especially important in the case of HLLs, where speaking, listening, writing and reading might be particularly unevenly developed. Unfortunately, these studies do not provide enough information about the relationship between anxiety and language proficiency. They were conducted with participants attending relatively low-level classes. It would be valuable to examine in more detail what changes once the heritage learners reach

advanced foreign language classes and are confronted with the fact that a subject in which they have felt to be “experts” is full of unexpected intricacies. Moreover, the above studies examined learners of different languages, some of which use non-Latin scripts. This fact might be particularly intimidating for learners who only know the language orally, creating a gap between written language anxiety and spoken language anxiety, which might not be present in the case of other languages.

It would also be useful to conduct further studies, examining both anxiety and motivation, with students at the secondary school level, as opposed to university students. Furthermore, some of the participants in the above studies were attending a separate heritage language track, while others were mixed with traditional FL learners. The classroom dynamics in these two scenarios can vastly differ, and it would be useful to investigate how the presence of FLLs or other HLLs is intertwined with language anxiety and motivation.

The population of the present study will presumably experience some problems similar to those of the participants of the above studies. In terms of anxiety, the learners’ position as “experts” in the classroom can put them under increased pressure to perform well, and even small mistakes may be perceived, by the students themselves or by their teachers, as inadequate. Such a situation can theoretically lead to a reduced participation in the classroom. Another possible scenario is for the learner to lack a sense of challenge and to fail to experience any facilitating anxiety, which can lead to a drop in motivation. Such a lack of motivation might be exacerbated if the students do not perceive the goals of the language classroom as aligned with their personal linguistic goals.⁵

2.1.2. The case of returnees

2.1.2.1. Effects of experience abroad on language acquisition

A number of studies have examined the linguistic effects of shorter study abroad stays. The participants of each study spent an amount of time ranging from several weeks to several months taking language courses in a location where the target language is spoken. Such a context should combine the benefits of learning a language in an instructional setting with those of being exposed to it naturalistically.

⁵ Similar struggles are described in detail in Webb and Miller (2000).

Some studies (e.g., Llanes & Muñoz, 2013; Sasaki, 2011; Serrano, Llanes, & Tragant, 2011) have compared the linguistic benefits of different study abroad models for various age groups, and compared those to intensive or semi-intensive foreign language courses in the home country. The results seem to confirm that generally speaking even relatively short study abroad stays lead to greater progress than courses in the home country. However, these findings become problematized when progress is compared across the different language skills (see e.g. Serrano et al., 2011). Moreover, careful analyses of qualitative data (Anderson, 2007; Yang & Kim, 2011) reveal that the attitudes and personalities of the students, their L2 goals, beliefs about learning, as well as the context of their interactions with native speakers of the target language play a crucial role, and that significant linguistic progress is by no means guaranteed for every study abroad student.

Beside the issue of immediate linguistic gains, the question of whether or not shorter study abroad stays have significant long-term effects has been addressed. Unfortunately, so far the conclusions have been rather contradictory. As summed up in Llanes (2012, p. 181), among the few studies which have employed a delayed post-test design, Regan (2005) and Llanes (2012) have observed some long-term linguistic gains, while Howard's (2009) and Pérez-Vidal and Juan-Garau's (2009) results were less encouraging.

Slightly less attention has been paid to the linguistic development of children who have lived abroad with their parents and have been schooled in the target language for a period of several years, before returning to their home country. Making any generalizable conclusions about the language proficiency of these learners is an extremely tricky endeavor, as they represent a particularly heterogeneous population in terms of age, length of stay abroad, schooling experience, motivation, and aptitude, among other variables. From the point of view of this thesis, the most relevant studies are those which address the challenge of integrating or reintegrating these students into the traditional foreign language classroom in the home country. Unfortunately, studies focusing specifically on this issue have been scarce (Kanno, 2003, quoted in Song, 2011, p. 752) which is why the present discussion of the topic will be complemented by references to papers with a slightly different focus, which nonetheless offer valuable insights.

2.1.2.2. Linguistic and affective struggles of returnees in the foreign language classroom

The influence a new language and the process of its acquisition have on individuals' perceptions of themselves represents an important aspect of living abroad.⁶ As part of a wider study, Kanno explored the interplay between bilingualism and identity on the cases of 4 Japanese teenagers who spent several years in Anglophone countries with their families, and subsequently returned to Japan (2000, p. 5). Kanno observed an interesting reversal: in English speaking countries, the participants felt deeply insecure about their English skills and they never felt fully integrated in the Anglophone community. However, upon their return to Japan, English became "their" language (2000, p. 11). On the other hand, they developed a sense of distance from the Japanese community, with which they strongly identified in North America. The participants thus always saw themselves as members of a removed community, which accentuated their own uniqueness within the present context (2000, p. 13). At the same time, they were eager to integrate into the local community, but were unable to reach a full sense of belonging. Connected to these factors was a feeling of insecurity about both their Japanese and their English skills, neither of which they perceived as fully developed (2000, p. 12).

Moreover, in the English classroom in Japan these teenagers were struggling with the attitudes of their teachers who felt intimidated by the returnees' proficiency and hesitated to encourage them to get actively involved in the lessons (2000, p. 11). At the same time, some of the participants felt a great discrepancy between being assumed to be fully bilingual by their peers, and between their self-perceived knowledge gaps. One participant in particular reported feeling strongly pressured to avoid making any mistakes in English (2000, p. 12). On top of remaining relatively passive in the classroom, the returnee teenagers had no opportunities to communicate in English in any authentic context, let alone with native speakers. Instead of a useful tool, for these teenagers English was increasingly turning into a symbol of their specific life path (2000, p. 12). They were aware that their English skills were probably undergoing attrition, but they received no help to combat it (2000, p. 15).

⁶ For a discussion of how the experience of living abroad influences young people's processes of identity construction, also focusing on factors independent of language, see Grimshaw and Sears (2008).

Similarly, Choi (2003, 2007, quoted in Song, 2011), examining the experiences of Korean returnee children who had learnt English abroad, found that upon their return to Korea, these children felt ignored by their English teachers. Ultimately some of the participants, who initially felt that their English classes lacked any challenge, ended up encountering academic difficulties not only in classes conducted in Korean (with which they had less experience than their peers), but also in their English classes (Choi, 2003, 2007, quoted in Song, 2011, pp. 752-).

Like Kanno, Song (2012) highlights the risk of first language attrition and of young bilinguals feeling “behind” in both languages. Song explored a context in which language learning is closely linked to people’s desires to reshape their identity. The parents who participated in her qualitative study of two Korean families temporarily residing in the U.S. decided to provide their children with an early long-term study abroad experience to help them gain a more prestigious position in an imagined transnational community⁷ (2012, p. 510). The parents based their language policy at home on their limited understanding of second language acquisition (SLA) processes. One family almost blindly believed in the superior value of English over Korean, not paying attention to the threat of Korean language attrition (2012, pp. 512–517). The other family had a subtler attitude, but ultimately their child seemed to struggle in both languages (2012, pp. 517–521).

The issue of returnees’ second language loss is directly addressed in a volume edited by Hansen (1999), who report on several studies they conducted with Japanese returnee children. What has emerged out of their observations as the greatest threat to these children’s English is the risk of an early “reduction in the overall ability to coordinate linguistic subskills spontaneously and communicatively in real time” (Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige, 1999, p. 12), which occurred even before the individual language skills underwent attrition, and which seemed to go relatively unnoticed by the participants’ teachers. As reported by Yoshitomi, the tasks returnee children and teenagers in Japan have traditionally been asked to perform in their English language maintenance classes, such as vocabulary or grammar exercises, usually involve discrete subskills and do not push the participants to use their language skills more holistically and under realistic time constraints (Yoshitomi, 1992, quoted in Hansen &

⁷ The notion of “imagined communities” is used to “refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination” (Norton & McKinney, 2001, p. 76). Imagined communities are closely intertwined with learners’ identities and with the ways in which the learners envision their futures (Norton & McKinney, 2001, p. 76).

Reetz-Kurashige, 1999, pp. 16–17). Yoshitomi observes that often, the returnees are the first to notice that their linguistic competence is undergoing attrition. They still perform well when assessed in the different language skills, but they tend to lose confidence and become frustrated and less willing to participate in class, which in turn contributes to a further erosion of their skills (1999, p. 95). Together with a decreased confidence comes a sense that the language they are producing is becoming inauthentic and that they are performing instead of engaging in real communication. This leads to the returnees becoming reluctant to produce certain linguistic features typical for English native speakers, such as affective fillers, the use of which would make the returnee students feel even more inauthentic (Tomiyama, 1999, p. 77).

The researchers contributing to Hansen (1999) suggest teachers move “beyond the four skills” (Reetz-Kurashige, 1999, p. 42) and adopt more global assessment measures, so that they can become aware of attrition as soon as it starts taking place. Moreover, they assert that teachers should provide the students with opportunities to use the language holistically and as authentically as possible; they should “maximize contextualized speaking practice, and ‘real’ discourse in the classroom should have some time pressure” (Reetz-Kurashige, 1999, p. 43). They also stress the importance of pushing students to produce complex language: “exercises that require explanations, comparisons and complicated descriptions will challenge returnees to produce clauses rather than phrases and complex rather than simple sentences” (Reetz-Kurashige, 1999, p. 43). Furthermore, they suggest that teachers explore the instructional options offered by the fact that the returnees’ receptive skills are much less eroded than their productive skills (Hansen & Reetz-Kurashige, 1999, p. 16). Exposing the learners to linguistic input at a sufficiently high level seems vital in this context (Reetz-Kurashige, 1999, p. 42). Finally, Hansen and Reetz-Kurashige highlight the importance of raising the returnees’ awareness of different strategies that would help them become “good language keepers” (1999, p. 17). However this is an area which needs to be further researched.

Although the risks of attrition can seem discouraging, returnee students have a strong potential to be good language learners. It has been suggested that even after a short study abroad experience, students’ beliefs in learner independence and autonomy increase, while their beliefs in the role of the teacher decrease (Amuzie & Winke, 2009, p. 374). If such an attitude does not result in antagonistic feelings between teachers and students, it can yield positive results in that the returnees, while

receiving an appropriate amount of guidance from their teacher, can become relatively autonomous, and the teacher can still attend to the needs of the rest of the class.

Furthermore, Kang has suggested that an increased awareness of the importance of learner autonomy after study abroad might result in an increase in the students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in the L2. As could be expected, WTC also seems to be helped by an increase in speaking abilities, and it in turn contributes to improving the students' spoken skills (2014, p. 325). It is likely that after longer stays abroad, the students' WTC will also be substantial.

These factors constitute beneficial assets for the returnee students. It is of prime importance that upon their return these students remain motivated to take their learning process into their own hands and that they maintain a willingness to make the most out of opportunities to communicate in the L2. In this regard, Kang suggests that teachers help the students develop a sense of belonging to their new imagined communities, so that their motivation in the classroom does not fade (2014, p. 330).

Song (2011) advocates for teachers overcoming their fear of returnee students and paying closer attention to them. She stresses that teachers should strive to identify the returnees' strengths and weaknesses. They should attempt to validate the returnees' experience as members of Anglophone communities by utilizing their strengths as a resource in the classroom, while simultaneously providing them with opportunities to work on their weaker areas. For instance, if similarly to the case of many heritage learners the child has been in contact with a variety of English different from that studied in the foreign language classroom, the teacher can use that fact as a starting point to discuss varieties of English around the world. In such a scenario, the returnees' feelings of inadequacy can be diminished as they enjoy the position of "experts". Simultaneously, the teacher can lead them, in a non-threatening way, to notice the differences between the variety of English they are familiar with and the variety expected in the classroom. A similar discussion can also be enriching for the other students, provided they are not made to feel inferior due to their lack of experience with English speaking countries (2011, pp. 754–756).

2.1.2.3. Summary and conclusion

In conclusion, studies have pointed out that although returnee students have a linguistic advantage in English over those of their peers who have only learnt English

in the classroom as a foreign language, both their self-perceived and their actual proficiency are likely to be lower than what is assumed by their teachers and their peers. Returnee teenagers are at a risk of plateauing (due to a lack of appropriate challenge in the classroom) or even experiencing language attrition. The high linguistic expectations which are placed upon them by others, at odds with the returnees' experience with the first stages of language attrition, can trigger a decrease in these students' self-esteem in the classroom. Combined with a feeling of inauthenticity when suddenly put in a position where instead of using the L2 for communicative purposes with native speakers, they have to perform and be judged on various tasks in the foreign language in front of teachers and peers who share their L1, these factors can lead to a decrease in the returnees' willingness to communicate in the classroom, which in turn fuels further language attrition.

Returnee teenagers cannot automatically be expected to perform well in a traditional classroom setting. Unlike in the case of students who have participated in shorter study abroad stays, returnee students may have only learnt the L2 in a school context where it was the majority language, and might have never had traditional English as a foreign language classes. Beside the new risk of L2 loss, they might also have undergone L1 attrition while living in the L2 environment, which can make traditional foreign language tasks such as translation exercises feel particularly difficult and unnatural to them. It appears that they are both at a risk of not being challenged enough and of feeling under too much pressure to excel.

It seems of prime importance that the returnees' life experience and their linguistic knowledge be validated. In order for their investment⁸ in the language classroom to be preserved, they must be acknowledged as old-timers of an Anglophone imagined community. At the same time, the teachers should make it clear that the returnee students are in no way expected to have a perfect knowledge of English grammar or vocabulary, especially not in all language registers and varieties.

While heritage language learners usually have the opportunity to regularly interact in English with their family members, returnee learners might not be that lucky. Compared to HLLs, most returnees can also be assumed to have the

⁸ The term "investment" is closely connected to the notion of motivation. It represents the level of motivation manifested by a learner in a given context, and the amount of energy the learner is willing to expend in that context in order to progress. Investment is closely connected to the learners' perceptions of their own identity, and to their projected futures. The term helps capture why learners can behave in seemingly contradictory ways: they can be motivated to learn a language, but lack investment in a particular context (see Norton Peirce, 1995).

disadvantage of a later start in their English learning. On the other hand, returnees who were old enough to go to school while they were living abroad have the advantage of an experience with formal schooling in the target language, not only during language classes, but also in other academic subjects. This means that their language skills might be better developed in some academic areas than those of HLLs who were born and raised in an environment where their heritage language was not spoken by the majority population outside the foreign language classroom.

Further studies investigating the experiences of returnee students could help teachers anticipate some of the problems their students are likely to encounter and offer some clues as to how to best integrate these learners into the foreign language classroom. Due to the number of variables which enter into play and which can hardly be controlled for in an experiment, as well as to the deeply personal nature of the returnees' experience, a qualitative approach seems most appropriate.

2.2. How to address these issues in the mainstream English as a foreign language classroom

2.2.1. Heritage language teaching in a foreign language classroom context

Teaching heritage language learners is notoriously difficult for foreign language teachers (Draper & Hicks, 2000, p. 16), who lack time, resources, support and practical know-how. In this section, I will provide a brief overview of the literature treating the topic of heritage language teaching and aiming to provide some general directions for educators, applicable regardless of the target language.

2.2.1.1. Requisite teacher knowledge and shift in teacher attitudes

Kondo-Brown examined the results of several hundred heritage and non-heritage students on a university Japanese language placement test. While the number of years the foreign language learners had studied Japanese in high school was positively correlated to their results on the placement test, Kondo-Brown found no such relationship in the case of the heritage language learners (Kondo-Brown, 2001, pp. 172–173). Such findings suggest that without proper attention, heritage language students do not benefit from high school instruction as much as they should.

Kagan and Dillon explain that an essential step toward better heritage language education consists in teachers overcoming various negative attitudes, such as the feeling that heritage language learners “already [know] the language and

therefore [have] no place in their classes” (2009, pp. 155–156). Kagan and Dillon also point out the importance of teachers getting acquainted with the available research on heritage language learners and with current methodological recommendations, as these are “sometimes counterintuitive” (2009, p. 157) for teachers who are used to foreign language learners.

In addition to an understanding of how to approach HLLs, experts agree that teachers also need a sufficient knowledge base from diverse areas, including “linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics and psychology” (Schwartz, 2001, p. 235). According to Gutiérrez (1997, p. n/a) particular attention during teacher training programs needs to be paid to sociolinguistics, so that teachers become more sensitive to diverse issues associated with language variation. Based on her work with university undergraduates at a U.S. university, Potowski notes that besides a deeper understanding of dialectal variation, future teachers would also benefit from advice concerning “concrete techniques for giving sensitive and useful feedback” (2001, p. 14) when dealing with learners who produce language forms which are widely used in certain areas, yet generally considered as nonstandard. Kagan and Dillon, highlighting similar issues, add that teachers could greatly benefit from lists of typical HLL linguistic strengths and weaknesses “that are the result of incomplete acquisition” (2009, p. 164), compiled specifically for individual heritage languages by experts, and based on existing research.

Of the projects aimed at training future teachers of HLLs, the effort of the ACTFL/Hunter College FIPSE Project Development Team has been unprecedented in its scope. The team worked over three years “to conceptualize and design a program to prepare teachers of foreign languages [...] to work more effectively with heritage language learners” (Webb & Miller, 2000, p. iv). As a final product, they published a volume entitled *Teaching Heritage Language Learners: Voices from the Classroom* (Webb & Miller, 2000). Its chapters, written by different project contributors, contain numerous personal insights into the struggles of individual teachers and students, as well as various tools which can help teachers create a more HLL-friendly classroom environment. Romero (2000a, 2000b) and Sylvan (2000) report on the findings of a set of case studies conducted as part of the project with three teachers who were identified as particularly successful. They note that these teachers were, on a daily basis, highly reflective in their practices:

The three teachers in this study perceived teaching as a dynamic process and the teacher as a reflective practitioner, one who re-invents teaching with each new group. [...] Of necessity, their approach to teaching was responsive rather than purely prescriptive (Romero, 2000b, p. 151).⁹

It may thus seem paradoxical that these same teachers, while able and willing to enter into in-depth discussions concerning their beliefs about language learning and teaching, were not able to clearly describe the instructional strategies that they were employing. This led the researchers to conclude that successful teacher training should primarily address teacher beliefs and philosophies, rather than specific teaching techniques (Sylvan, 2000, p. 168).

In their “Statement of Shared Goals and Fundamental Beliefs”, Webb and Miller sum up the finding of the ACTFL/Hunter College Team concerning the elements which lead to a favorable learning environment and which should be present in a good heritage language curriculum (2000, pp. 83–85). The team’s suggestions will be referred to throughout this section.¹⁰

2.2.1.2. Focus on the learner as an individual

Experts agree that classes containing HLLs need to be strongly learner-centered (Kondo-Brown, 2010, p. 33). In her overview of the available literature on heritage language teaching, Schwartz suggests that even though it is important to have a “structured and systematic” (2001, p. 237) curriculum, teachers should do their best to get as much information about their learners as they can, and to use that information when planning their lessons. Schwartz mentions various expert suggestions, for instance “using authentic language data such as student-conducted interviews [...] individual writing logs in which students record comments or reflections on topics of special interest [or] dialogue journals with the teacher” (Schwartz, 2001, pp. 237–238). Similarly, Kagan and Dillon emphasize the importance of teachers being able to perform needs analysis and error analysis (2009, p. 164).

The ACTFL-Hunter College Team proposes a complex framework, consisting of various lists of questions which the teachers should be able to answer about their heritage language students in order to know them sufficiently well to be able to plan lessons which actually respond to these students’ needs. These questions are grouped

⁹ See also Scalera (2000, pp. 76–82) for a discussion of different models of reflective practice and how they can be used by teachers of HLLs.

¹⁰ A free online workshop for teachers, developed by the National Heritage Language Resource Center at the UCLA International Institute and covering some of the topics discussed in this section, can be found at: http://startalk.nhlrc.ucla.edu/default_startalk.aspx

around the broader topics of “linguistic proficiency”, “motivation”, “academic preparedness”, “cultural connectedness”, “emotional factors”, and “societal factors” (Webb & Miller, 2000, pp. 47–54).

Hand in hand with an increased focus on the learners as individuals comes the necessity to provide the students with instruction which takes their individual needs and differences into account. Kagan and Dillon explain that although it would be ideal to group HLLs into separate classes, this is seldom possible. They assert that if teachers have mixed classes, a challenging yet necessary solution is to provide differentiated instruction (2009, p. 168). Schwartz claims that even in special heritage language classes, “heterogeneity is generally the norm” (2001, p. 237), which leads to the need for “small-group and individualized instruction” (Schwartz, 2001, p. 238).

Bernstein et al. conducted a study with teachers who had some HLLs in their classes, with the aim of finding out whether they acknowledged the need to modify instruction for these students, and whether they were actually providing such instruction (2010, p. 68). The researchers found that the teachers did perceive a need for differentiating instruction, but were generally not doing so (2010, p. 71). Bernstein et al. propose to view HLLs’ proficiency as “a special talent” (2010, p. 67) and to follow the advice of expert in the fields of differentiated instruction for gifted students (2010, pp. 70–71).

In order to fully address these areas of prime importance for teachers of both heritage and returnee students, I will discuss differentiated instruction in general, and instruction for gifted and advanced students specifically, in two separate sections.

2.2.1.3. Relationships in the classroom

With a change in the approach to the learner also comes a shift in the relationship between the teacher and the students, which should be characterized by a high degree of mutuality (Webb & Miller, 2000). The ACTFL-Hunter College Team points out that non-native speaker teachers are often afraid of HLLs, as they fear that they are less proficient than those learners or that they may not understand the speech produced by some HLLs speaking a dialect different from what the teachers are familiar with (Webb & Miller, 2000, pp. 23, 71, 136). Often teachers, with good intentions, try to correct every mistake of the HLLs that they come across, hoping that in that way their classes might be at least somewhat useful for these students. What they are not aware of is that an emphasis on errors can have a very negative impact on

HLLs' self-esteem (Potowski, 2001, p. 3; Webb & Miller, 2000, p. 23). The ACTFL-Hunter College Team stresses the importance of letting the heritage students sometimes act as “experts” who can provide the whole class, including the teacher, with their unique insights into the target language, culture, or other areas of interest (Webb & Miller, 2000).

The attitude of the students is of course an essential component of the learning environment. In a highly heterogeneous, differentiated classroom with a focus on the learner, the teachers need to help the students develop an autonomous and reflective attitude to learning (e.g., Webb & Miller, 2000, p. 84). Moreover, the students should be strongly encouraged to find ways to remain in contact with the language outside of the classroom in a variety of different authentic contexts (Kagan & Dillon, 2009, p. 168; Webb & Miller, 2000, p. 147).

It is also crucial to pay close attention to the relationships among the students. Lynch argues that heritage language learners should be encouraged to work cooperatively (2003, p. 12). The ACTFL-Hunter College Project Team provides many examples of how the atmosphere in the classroom improves when the students have the opportunity to teach each other about their different areas of expertise and interest, be it linguistic or other (Webb & Miller, 2000).¹¹

2.2.1.4. Shift in content

In terms of content of instruction, experts stress the need to make sure the learners perceive what they are made to study as relevant to them on a personal level (Kagan & Dillon, 2009, pp. 164–165). They also seem to agree that so-called “macro-approaches” (Kagan & Dillon, 2009, p. 168) are particularly well suited for heritage language learners. Kagan and Dillon recommend task-based, content-based and project-based instruction, as well as an inclusion of experiential learning, taking place outside of the classroom (2009, pp. 167–168). They also suggest that study abroad could have a great effect on these students' learning process, although more research is needed to confirm this assumption (2009, p. 169). Both Kondo-Brown and the ACTFL-Hunter College Project Team also agree with the notion that top-down, project- or content-based approaches are more likely to suit and engage the heritage learners than more traditional approaches involving syllabi centered on discrete grammar points (Kondo-Brown, 2010, pp. 33–34; Webb & Miller, 2000). It seems

¹¹ For a discussion of student grouping, see 2.2.2.4.

that HLLs could greatly benefit from content and language integrated learning (CLIL). However, even in contexts where such classes are not provided, foreign language teachers can ground their lessons in meaningful and authentic content, about which the students learn through the target language. The ACTFL-Hunter College Team recommends to “include literature, history, geography, social sciences, and cultural activities related to the students’ countries”, as well as “language experiences across the curriculum to ensure the development and use of language skills and concepts necessary to all subject areas” (Webb & Miller, 2000, p. 85).

2.2.1.5. Knowledge of the language system

It is of course also essential to focus on the HLLs linguistic competence per se. Kagan and Dillon, pointing out that HLLs “typically do not have a repertoire of lexical items for many domains, and their lexical retrieval is slow” (2009, p. 164), argue that extra attention should be paid to vocabulary, and that the students should be exposed to extensive reading passages (2009, pp. 164–165). The ACTFL-Hunter College Team, as well as Lynch, suggest that teachers pay great attention to advanced literacy development, adapting materials developed for language arts classes (that is, for language classes for native speakers, as they are taught in the target countries) and making sure the students are not “ask[ed] to approach their native language as if it were a foreign language” (Lynch, 2003, p. 12; Scalera, 2000, p. 75 ; Webb & Miller, 2000, pp. 111–127).

In a similar vein, heritage language teaching experts stress that teachers must focus on dialect and register differences (e.g., Webb and Miller, 2000), and show the students what kind of language is appropriate in which context. In doing so, they should be careful to present their endeavor as an “expansion of the linguistic registers available to the heritage language learners,” rather than as an attempt to “denigrate” the ways in which the HLLs are used to speak and write (Webb & Miller, 2000, p. 27). A language domain in which HLLs are particularly likely to need help is that of academic language (Lynch, 2003, p. 11), which is why Schwartz recommends providing plenty of “written and oral activities that model the high-level registers of authentic academic contexts” (2001, pp. 237–238).

2.2.1.6. Assessment

An area which needs to be researched further is that of heritage language assessment (Kondo-Brown, 2010, p. 33; Potowski, 2001, p. 14; Schwartz, 2001, p.

242). In light of the necessity to provide differentiated instruction, alternative methods of assessment are recommended. Schwartz provides the following list of possible ways to assess HLLs' language progress:

portfolios, contextualized individual performance tasks, peer and self-assessments, rubrics, assessment of the products of real-life activities, debriefings of what has been learned, portfolio conferences, personal narratives, self-reports, and self-ratings (2001, p. 243).

However, as pointed out by Kagan and Dillon, heritage language teachers are still in need of more specific instructions concerning how best to use these assessment strategies, especially when it comes to the issue of grading (2009, pp. 168–169). In the meanwhile, the ACFTL-Hunter College Team urges teachers to focus on a wide variety of aspects of the language learning process:

Emerging assessment practices of teachers of heritage language learners give priority to monitoring changes in students' (1) attitudes and dispositions that may impede learning; (2) strategies that support language learning; (3) growth in knowledge of the written language through an analysis of language usage over time; and (4) monitoring the opportunity to practice and use the heritage language in non-school contexts (Mercado, 2000, p. 228).

2.2.2. Mixed-level classrooms and differentiated instruction

2.2.2.1. Definition

Differentiated instruction is described by Tomlinson as “a ‘user-friendly’ environment, one in which [the teachers] flexibly adapt pacing, approaches to learning, and channels for expressing learning in response to their students’ differing needs” (2001, p. viii). It is rooted in the notion that learners in a given classroom are always individuals, who differ, among other factors, in their abilities, learning styles or interests. Differentiated instruction takes these differences into account and does not try to fit all the students in a given classroom into one mold (2001, pp. 8–10). Tomlinson stresses that differentiated instruction is not, however, completely individualized, in the sense that it does not require for the teacher to have separate lesson plans or syllabi for each individual student (2001, p. 2). Classrooms can operate on various degrees of differentiation, and teachers can choose from countless specific differentiating techniques and strategies, of which this section will only provide a very brief overview.

2.2.2.2. Rationale for differentiating instruction

As explained by Subban, the rationale behind differentiated instruction is

linked to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning and to his notion of the zone of proximal development (Subban, 2006, pp. 936–937), to the research focusing on learning styles and multiple intelligences, and to recent findings concerning the workings of the human brain (Subban, 2006, p. 939). Experts point out that there are a number of risks connected to dismissing the needs of the most advanced students. Tomlinson lists these as the dangers of these students becoming “mentally lazy” (2001, p. 11), “hooked on success” (2001, p. 11), “perfectionists” (2001, p. 11), as well as “not developing a sense of self-efficacy” (2001, p. 12) and failing to develop “study and coping skills” (2001, p. 12). Manning et al. also stress the risk of these students developing an “imposter syndrome,” which “may cloud intellectually gifted students’ thinking to such a degree that they come to doubt their intellectual abilities” (2010, p. 146). It is also important to note that advanced students need instruction which suits them not only in terms of quantity, but mainly in its depth and quality. For this reason, providing these students with “more of the same” would be misguided (Jones, 2000, p. 104).

All of these issues could theoretically apply to the target population of the present study. Moreover, as explained earlier, heritage language learners and returnees are likely to have different strengths and weaknesses than their classmates, and returnees might also, from their experience abroad, be used to a different type of instruction. For these reasons, they would benefit from differentiated instruction, which also has the advantage of aiming to improve the learning experience of all students within a group, and would not be detrimental to their non-heritage, non-returnee peers.

2.2.2.3. How to differentiate instruction

As explained by Tomlinson, instruction can be differentiated in terms of content (2001, pp. 72–79), of the process through which the students are guided to learn (2001, pp. 79–85), and of the products that they are asked to create (2001, pp. 85–93). The criteria on which differentiation can be based include student readiness (Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 45–52), student interest (2001, pp. 52–60), and learning profile (2001, pp. 60–72). One of the most important principles of differentiated instruction is that it has to be varied not only at the level of the whole group, but also for each student, and that all students should be exposed to a wide range of different task types and grouping arrangements (2001, pp. 4–5).

There are many specific pathways to differentiation, and a detailed overview would unfortunately be beyond the scope of this thesis. In terms of basic differentiation strategies, Tomlinson provides the following list: “compacting”, “independent projects”, “interest groups”, “tiered assignments”, “flexible grouping”, “learning centers”, “varying questions”, “mentorships”, “learning contracts” (2001, pp. 98–106). A different but similar list is given by Johnsen et al: “acceleration”, “curriculum compacting”, “enrichment”, “learning centers”, “creative problem solving”, “independent study”, “interdisciplinary curricula”, “problem-based curricula”, “instructional style preferences.” (2002, p. 45).¹²

The task of choosing appropriate differentiation methods can seem quite daunting. An approach suggested by Kanevsky is to “relieve teachers of sole responsibility for the process” (2011, p. 280) by practicing so-called deferential differentiation, where the students are asked to express their own learning preferences, and the differentiation choices which are most popular among the students are then prioritized by the teacher. Kanevsky conducted a quantitative study with several hundred children identified as gifted and non-gifted, asking them to give their opinions of numerous differentiation techniques (2011, pp. 283–284). She found out that the gifted and non-gifted groups preferred the same type of activities and differed mainly in the degree to which they liked some of them (2011, p. 295), leading her to the following conclusion:

The substantial commonalities found in the preferences of the 600+ participants enables the options for differentiation to be prioritized by popularity and reduced to a manageable few, making this endeavor much more feasible and attractive (2011, p. 296).

However, Kanevsky also asserts that instead of following the preferences of her sample of students, which included “a desire to control the pace of their learning, the topics, methods and choice of workmates” (2011, p. 295), teachers should have their own students fill in similar questionnaires (2011, p. 296).¹³

¹² A description of these strategies, along with numerous suggestions for variations, specific techniques and activities is given e.g. in a support package provided by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (“Policy and implementation strategies for the education of gifted and talented students. Support package: Curriculum differentiation,” 2004). A strategy which is of particular importance for advanced learners, and which will be referred to in the section on gifted education, is that of curriculum compacting, through which “the regular curriculum is modified by eliminating portions of previously mastered content, and alternative work is substituted” (VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007, p. 346). Detailed instructions for the compacting procedure are provided in Renzulli et al. (1982).

¹³ Kanevsky’s “Possibilities for Learning” questionnaire can be found at: <http://www.sfu.ca/~kanevsky/GAFG/PFL.pdf>

2.2.2.4. Grouping in mixed-level classrooms

The issue of grouping represents a recurring theme in the literature on differentiated instruction, as well as in the literature on gifted education. Some teachers might be tempted to let the most advanced students work alone on independent tasks. However, as Jones stresses, individual study only constitutes “part of a solution, one of a range of strategies to be employed” (2000, p. 103). Another popular approach is to have the most able students help their less advanced peers. Collaborative language learning is seen as having many benefits, with the students scaffolding each other to a better performance (Fox, 2004; Swain, Brooks & Tocalli-Beller, 2002). However, as noted by Manning et al., if a student is systematically on the giving end of such help, his or her potential to progress further might be thwarted (2010, p. 146). Ramsay and Richards conducted a quantitative study with 28 classes of children among which some were and some were not identified as gifted, and they found that gifted children had much less positive attitudes towards collaborative learning than their peers, and often became impatient or bored when asked to work together with their classmates (1997, p. 166).

The effects of mixed-level pairing have been quite extensively researched specifically in the field of second and foreign language acquisition. It seems that such a grouping arrangement can be beneficial to both partners, but that it also presents certain risks. From the point of view of the higher-level student, an apparent drawback is that the more advanced learner participates in fewer so-called “language related episodes” (for a definition, see Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p. 378) and experiences more frustration than when paired with someone at the same proficiency level (Iwashita, 2001; Kowal & Swain, 1997). On the other hand, when pushed to give explanations and scaffold their peers, they can gain a deeper understanding of certain linguistics features and get a chance to practice a wider range of communicative functions (Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Yule & Macdonald, 1990).

From the perspective of the lower-proficiency learners, a mixed-level pairing can be detrimental to learning if the student feels embarrassed or if the proficiency difference is too substantial and the input from the more advanced peers is outside of the lower-level learners’ Zone of Proximal Development (Leeser, 2004). At the same time, in a mixed-level group, the lower-proficiency learners get to witness more resolved language related episodes and can benefit from being scaffolded by their peers (Kim & McDonough, 2008; Watanabe & Swain, 2007). It has been suggested

that such pairing is beneficial when the task aims to promote accuracy, but that it can hinder fluency development (Storch & Aldosari, 2013). For these reasons, it is advisable for learners to be exposed to a variety of grouping scenarios, and the most advanced students should only be asked to work with lower-level peers some of the time, not continually.

Certain conditions seem to promote successful collaboration in the language classroom. First, it must be ensured that the less proficient partners have a role within the task that requires them to be active, so that the more proficient partners cannot carry out the full task on their own (Yule & Macdonald, 1990). Moreover, a successful pattern of dyadic interaction should be established. The different interactional patterns which can arise out of collaboration between two learners have been studied and described by Storch (2002, p. 127). It seems that when the pattern is dialogic in nature, whether “collaborative” (high level of equality and mutuality) or “expert/novice” (low equality, but high mutuality), both partners can benefit from the interaction, regardless of their respective proficiency levels. On the other hand, if the pattern becomes “dominant/passive” (low equality and low mutuality) or “dominant/dominant” (high equality, low mutuality), the learners should either be regrouped or trained to work more collaboratively (Storch & Aldosari, 2013; Storch, 2001; Watanabe & Swain, 2007).

2.2.2.5. Limitations

Although there are many theoretical arguments for differentiating instruction, one clear drawback of this approach to education is that it requires a great amount of time, energy, and resources. Johnsen et al., who took part in a project aiming to implement differentiated instruction into general education classrooms, conducted a study in several American schools and found that under the right guidance, teachers were indeed able to successfully differentiate instruction (2002, p. 45). However, these teachers had the advantage of “strong leadership, professional development, follow-up support, collaboration, mentoring, resources, and time to implement [differentiated instruction]” (2002, p. 46). Without such support, any large-scale change seems difficult to conceive. Moreover, as Johnsen et al. point out, the personal investment of individual teachers is crucial: “The nature of change is not only highly complex, but highly personal. If the teacher is not involved in the process, no change will be effective or long lasting” (2002, p. 62).

Even smaller-scale change on the level of individual, motivated teachers constitutes a long and challenging process. Tomlinson urges teachers to start differentiating step by step, and she estimates that a realistic time frame for a single teacher to achieve a high level of differentiation in his or her lessons is four to five years (2001, p. 33).

2.2.3. Insights from the field of gifted education, with a focus on language arts and foreign language classes

2.2.3.1. Applicability to the target population

As mentioned in the previous sections (see Bernstein et al., 2010), one of the recommendations for language teachers working with heritage learners or returnees is to search for inspiration in the field of gifted education, and to follow the suggestions for teaching foreign languages or even language arts to gifted students. An important notion to keep in mind is that neither heritage learners nor returnees necessarily possess a higher language learning aptitude than their peers. However, there are a number of reasons why following some of the recommendations for teaching gifted students is likely to be beneficial to these learners. As mentioned by Jones, when teaching advanced, able students within a mixed-level classroom, what matters is not as much whether these students owe their abilities to nature or to nurture, but rather that they have access to instruction which will help them maximize their own potential (2000, p. 98).¹⁴ Three main characteristics of gifted students often referred to in the literature are those listed by Renzulli: “above-average ability, task commitment, creativity” (2011, p. 83). Thanks to their greater exposure to the language and to their personal connection to it, the target students are likely to not only be at a more advanced level than their peers, but also to possess a better ability to think in English and to creatively manipulate the language. They are also likely to be able to tackle long, complex tasks conducted in English. Moreover, the focus of this thesis is specifically on the context of schools of the *gymnázium* type, which by definition

¹⁴ Jones also provides several lists of characteristics of able students (in the context of foreign language learning), and a number of those characteristics correspond to those often cited in relation to the linguistic strengths of both heritage and returnee language learners (2000, pp. 99-101).

cater to students who, while not necessarily “gifted” in the technical sense of the term¹⁵, have an above-average academic aptitude.

As explained by Robinson, a number of the theoretical recommendations for teaching language arts to gifted students are valid for a wide range of levels and abilities, while at the same time not being solely “examples of good teaching ideas for everybody” (1986, p. 179). Rather, they suggest directions in which the classroom might be oriented to the benefit of all the students, and where differentiation must occur at the level of the feedback and guidance that the teacher provides to the students (1986, p. 179), with the teacher ensuring the gifted students have ample space for “high level interaction” and that the most advanced students are encouraged to create “special products and performances” (1986, p. 179).

2.2.3.2. Models of gifted education

Van Tassel-Baska and Brown (2007) provide an overview of the different models of education for the gifted which have been subjected to empirical research. The two most established frameworks involve the principle of curriculum acceleration, which is based on the possibility for selected groups of students to progress through a given curriculum at a faster pace (Stanley, quoted in Van Tassel-Baska & Brown, 2007, p. 345) and of curriculum compacting, combined with so-called enrichment (based on Renzulli’s model, quoted in VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007, p. 346). A difference is sometimes made between “enrichment”, which is the provision of breadth in the curriculum at the same level of challenge for the student and “extension”, “the provision of opportunities at a greater level of challenge to the student” (“Policy and implementation strategies for the education of gifted and talented students. Support package: Curriculum differentiation.” 2004, p. 22). By allowing some students to advance beyond the regular curriculum, while at the same time participating in a number of whole-class activities or tasks together with their less advanced peers, the procedures of curriculum compacting, enrichment and extension seem particularly suitable for mixed-level classrooms.¹⁶

¹⁵ See “Policy and implementation strategies for the education of gifted and talented students. Support package: Curriculum differentiation.” (2004, p. 7).

¹⁶ For a full overview and specific language arts examples, see Van Tassel-Baska (2007) and “Policy and implementation strategies for the education of gifted and talented students” (2004).

2.2.3.3. Common principles

A number of principles and priorities seem to be common to most curricular models for gifted students. These include a sequencing of materials and tasks in ways which promote higher levels of thinking and critical approaches to problems (Primven, 2010, p. 320; Robinson, 1986, p. 179; Shaunessy, 2007, p. 119; VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007, p. 351), an emphasis on task commitment through work on extended projects (Primven, 2010; Robinson, 1986; VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007), encouragement of student creativity (Jones, 2000, pp. 99–103; “Policy and implementation strategies for the education of gifted and talented students. Support package: Curriculum differentiation,” 2004; Robinson, 1986, pp. 179–180; VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007), and careful guidance of the students toward autonomy and reflective learning (Jones, 2000, p. 107; Robinson, 1986, p. 179; VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007).¹⁷

A specific model which has been extensively tested in language arts classrooms is Van Tassel-Baska’s Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM 1986), which is centered around three key components: “a) advanced content, b) high-level process and product work, and c) intra- and interdisciplinary concept development and understanding” (VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2007, p. 350). Beside creating the model, Van Tassel-Baska’s team has developed specific language arts units constructed within the ICM framework (2007, p. 350. See also Van Tassel-Baska, Johnson, Hughes, & Boyce, 1996; VanTassel-Baska, Zuo, Avery, & Little, 2002).¹⁸

An essential component of language arts curricula in general is the development of advanced reading skills. Van Tassel-Baska et al. emphasize the importance of teaching gifted students to approach “highly challenging reading materials” (1996, p. 463) pertaining to a broad variety of genres in a critical fashion and through “close, active reading” strategies (1996, p. 462). Robinson argues for individualized reading where the choice of material is up to the students (who are likely to naturally choose readings which are at their level) and where the students get

¹⁷ Although student autonomy is desirable, experts stress the importance of teacher guidance and thoughtful feedback for gifted students (Jones, 2000, p. 103; Robinson, 1986, p. 179). Teachers should be trained in the art of asking challenging, thought-provoking questions, but also make sure to “[take] the opportunity to model thoughtful responses that illustrated how educated people think and find answers to questions that require reflection” (Ratcliff et al., 2012, p. 406).

¹⁸ For additional examples of language arts units for the gifted, see e.g. “Policy and implementation strategies for the education of gifted and talented students,” which describes language arts units developed around Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of learning (“Policy and implementation strategies for the education of gifted and talented students. Support package: Curriculum differentiation.” 2004).

the opportunity to work on guided independent research projects, and are encouraged to read books or other publications in their entirety (1986, p. 179). Reis et al. provide a useful overview of articles and studies, grouped according to different subtopics, dealing with teaching advanced reading skills to talented students (2004, p. 320).

In the field of foreign language teaching, Jones suggests establishing reading, listening or viewing corners and to consider the “development of research and reference skills” (2000, p. 98) and the “provision of rich and varied texts for pupil exploration and exploitation” (2000, p. 106) as important priorities when teaching high-ability students.

In terms of writing, Van Tassel-Baska et al. suggest different models of teaching persuasive writing skills to gifted students within the ICM framework (2002). Similarly, Robinson advocates for using creative writing (in a variety of different genres), technical writing (i.e., teaching students how to write research proposals and other similar text types) and “discovery writing”, which is writing produced “in order to increase [your] understanding of [a] topic” (1986, p. 180). Jones also emphasizes the importance of focusing on the process of writing and rewriting, and not just on the final product (2000, p. 105). In addition to these suggestions, Armstrong provides some evidence that the use of dialogue journals and interactive writing between gifted students and their teachers is beneficial to the learning process and helps establish “mutuality” and collaboration in the learning process, as long as the teachers are sufficiently instructed concerning what types of discourse to use in such journals (1994, p. 143).

Helping the students develop a complex knowledge of the language system and reach a high level of metalinguistic awareness should also constitute one of the priorities of the language classroom, both in the case of language arts and of foreign language classes. Jones stresses the importance of “transparency of reference to grammatical patterns and rules” (2000, p. 207) when teaching foreign languages to able students. Similarly, Primven, who conducted a study with gifted bilingual children attending school in a monolingual environment, proposes to develop the gifted abilities of bilingual children by encouraging a critical, rather than mechanical, approach to translation: “Students can investigate what cultural forces, power structures, and linguistic inequalities are behind their inability to translate certain words from their [home language] to English or vice versa” (2010, p. 320). He also advocates for a reflective approach to phenomena such as code-mixing and code-

switching, and to how these are perceived by monolingual speakers (2010, p. 321).

Other instructional options researched in the field of gifted education include the use of technology (Ng & Nicholas, 2010; Shaunessy, 2007), the possibility of developing integrative, cross-disciplinary curricula, which “unify subject matter from a variety of disciplines around a series of generalizations” (Kersh, Nielsen & Subotnik, 1987, p. 56) or the option of providing high-ability students with adult mentors (Hébert & Neumeister, 2000).

2.2.3.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, using teaching materials which have a language arts orientation, as well as procedures based on the above-mentioned principles of gifted education, could be beneficial to HLLs and returnee students for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the emphasis on advanced reading and writing skills is well suited for these students, who presumably have fewer problems with speaking and everyday-type listening. Moreover, a focus on extensive reading and work through longer projects involving an authentic and integrated use of all the language skills corresponds to the recommendations mentioned by Hansen et al. (1999) as helping combat language attrition. Furthermore, the fact that they would be working with materials designed for highly able native speakers of English could serve as a good motivational tool to make the target students feel validated and challenged in the classroom, and not to feel like they are forced to regress intellectually by participating in activities for foreign language learners. Moreover, the emphasis on student autonomy and reflectiveness is appropriate for mixed-level classes, where it is imperative that the students take an active and responsible part in their learning process. Finally, using units from various curricula of English language arts for the gifted or adaptations thereof as resources in the classroom is well-suited to the framework of Czech *gymnázium* curricula, with their recent emphasis on so-called *průřezová témata* (cross-curricular subjects) and critical thinking.

3. EMPIRICAL PART

3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. Aims

The main aim of the empirical part of the present thesis is to explore the experiences of heritage language learners and returnee students, in the context of Czech secondary education, from the perspective of the learners themselves. Initially, I wanted to interview several teachers who had such learners in their classes, and to explore how they approached the challenge of teaching these specific students. However, after some informal discussions with several such teachers, I was struck by the fact that they seemed to consider the needs of this population as rather marginal. The teachers told me that such students were at an advantage compared to their classmates, and that taking their specific needs into account would represent something “extra”, for which there was no time or energy. Although these opinions were not necessarily representative, I decided to focus on the point of view of the students, and examine how they perceive their own needs, how they have so far been taught, and what type of instruction they think would best fit them. As explained in Webb and Miller (2000), understanding the complex factors which shape the students’ views of themselves as learners is essential if we wish to successfully adapt our instruction to these learners’ needs. Moreover, as discussed by Kanevsky (2011), becoming aware of students’ instructional preferences can significantly simplify the teachers’ task to plan suitable lessons.

3.1.2. Research questions

The following questions were established as the main research questions, with several subtopics related to each question emerging throughout the research process.

- 1) How have the participants been taught in the EFL classroom?
- 2) What are the participants’ current feelings towards learning English in terms of anxiety and motivation?
- 3) How do the participants perceive their current English proficiency level?
- 4) What are the participants’ wishes in terms of English instruction?

3.1.3. Research design

As I wanted to reach a complex picture of many interrelated factors shaping individual HLL and returnee students' views, with a goal of "particularizing" rather than "universalizing" (see Duff, 2011, p. 96), I decided to opt for a multiple case study design, each "case" being represented by one participant. As explained by Duff, the general philosophy underlying case study research is that much can be learned by looking both holistically and in close detail at the behaviors, performance, knowledge, or perspectives of just a few rather than many research subjects at one time. The cases can reveal important developmental patterns or perspectives that might be lost or obscured in a larger-scale study of populations or in larger sample sizes. (2011, p. 98)

The information provided by the participants reflects their own subjective views, memories and feelings, and was treated accordingly. Moreover, their accounts were shaped through a dialogue with the interviewer, and were further interpreted in the subsequent research phases. It could thus be said that the practical part of this thesis fits, in very broad terms, under the constructivist paradigm, according to which "[a]ctors are individuals with biographies, acting in particular circumstances at particular times and constructing meanings from events and interactions" (Richards, 2003, p. 38).

3.1.4. Data Collection

The participants were recruited through so-called snowball sampling (see Duff, 2011, p. 106). To enable a complex look at their experiences, only three participants were selected, of which one is a returnee and the other two are heritage language learners. These participants are all students of the same *gymnázium* in Prague.¹⁹ The data used for subsequent analysis were collected by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with the participants. The questions which I asked the participants were centered around different aspects of the main research questions. Moreover, several introductory questions were asked with the intention of providing me with some background information necessary for a deeper understanding of the participants' responses.

I conducted a pilot interview with the participant nicknamed Liz in the summer of 2013. Subsequently, I researched and wrote the theoretical part of the thesis, refined my questions and conducted interviews with the other two participants

¹⁹ A type of secondary school roughly equivalent to British grammar schools. The students of these institutions are generally expected to pursue university studies after their graduation.

in the fall of 2014. Upon reflection, I decided to include the pilot interview in the analysis, as the issues raised in it correspond with the topics covered by the other interviews.

I had never met any of the participants prior to interviewing them. However, during the interviews I adopted an informal tone in order to put the participants at ease. I asked the participants in which language they felt more comfortable being interviewed, and they all chose Czech. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed by me. For reasons of anonymity, all the names in the interviews were changed. All three participants signed informed consent forms, expressing their agreement with the procedure (see appendix, 7.4.). Table 1 presents some basic information about the participants.

Table 1: Basic information about the participants

Pseudonym	Heritage language learner or returnee?	Age at the time of the interview
Liz	returnee	17
Eva	HLL	17
David	HLL	18

3.1.5. Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed using the transcription conventions presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Transcription conventions

Sign	Meaning
[]	Overlap
–	False start
...	Pause of more than 1 second
<>	Information changed to preserve anonymity
(())	Extralinguistic information (e.g., laughter)
//	Phonetic transcription
<i>(italics)</i>	Remarks added during the transcription
A	Anna (the interviewer)
L, E, D	Liz, Eva, David

The speech was captured in its unedited form, including hesitations, backchanneling, etc. However, in order to make the transcriptions easier to follow for

readers, punctuation marks, including commas, were inserted where it seemed appropriate. The transcribed interviews are included in the appendix. Due to their personal nature, they are enclosed on a CD. Table 3 shows the basic interview metadata.

Table 3: Interview metadata

Participant	Length of the recording	Transcription length
Liz	72 minutes	10 492 words
Eva	23 minutes	6 254 words
David	32 minutes	6 282 words

After having transcribed the interviews, I coded them employing the method of open coding, grouping the codes under categories following the description of the procedure of thematic coding provided by Švaříček, Šed'ová et al. (2007, pp. 229-230).²⁰ As the interviews were in Czech, and in order to enable a smoother coding process, I also wrote an English summary of each turn in the interviews. The results are presented in the next section, and excerpts from the coded interviews are included in the appendix. In order to enable a clearer comparison between the individual participants for the different subtopics, each main research question is treated separately, with the exception of questions 1 and 2, where it seemed logical to provide each participant's response to the two questions side by side. An overview of the main results that emerged from the coding phase is also shown in separate tables (4–13) in the appendix (see 7.1.). In some instances, only the most salient aspects of the participants' responses are discussed in section 3.2, and Tables 4 to 13 can provide additional insights. On the other hand, where a certain element from the participants' responses, grouped under one code, had several important facets, these are elaborated in the main text of the thesis. In section 3.2., short quotations from the interviews are provided in Czech, in order to preserve the original “flavor” of the responses.

²⁰ Initially, I wanted to use a qualitative data analysis software, but ended up using the options offered by Microsoft Word tables, as advised by LaPelle (2004).

3.2. The case studies

3.2.1. Profiles of the participants²¹

3.2.1.1. *Context of English acquisition*

The life stories of these three young people can serve as an illustration of the fact that the contexts of acquisition of the target language, the schooling history, the exposure to and use of the language at home and in the everyday lives of individual heritage language learners and returnees can differ significantly, as can their perceptions of their identity as bilinguals.

One of the participants, Liz, is a Czech returnee who spent about 6 years in the United States, before resettling with her family in the Czech Republic. The other two participants, David and Eva, are both heritage language learners with one Czech and one Anglophone parent. While Eva has so far always lived in the Czech Republic, David was born in the United States and lived there until the age of 6.

Although all three participants acquired English in what could be considered naturalistic settings, the contexts in which they were first exposed to the language present some important differences. David and Eva both grew up in bilingual households, with David however having access to additional exposure to English outside the home. David also first developed literacy skills in English, before moving to the Czech Republic to start his formal schooling. On the other hand, as a child Eva spoke English at home only. Nevertheless, until she started going to school her English was more developed than her Czech, as she had been spending most of her time with her mother. Both David's and Eva's experience with English classes has only taken place in the context of EFL lessons, which they have both been taking as part of the Czech school curriculum since Grade 3. Liz, on the other hand, started learning English at an older age, when she was six, after she had finished Grade 1 of primary school in the Czech Republic. She is the only participant to have attended school in an Anglophone country, and to have experienced both primary and middle school English language arts classes in the United States. After her return to the Czech Republic, she had to make the transition between English language arts and English as a foreign language classes.

²¹ See Table 4 in section 7.1.

3.2.1.2. *The participants' use of English at home*

The participants have also had differing experiences in terms of language use at home. The language of Liz's family is Czech. Liz has an older brother, whom she perceives as very proficient in English. Together, they are trying to teach, or perhaps rather planning on teaching, English to their younger brother, who is technically American, but was too young to learn the language while still in the United States. Although she occasionally gets to interact in English at home while serving as an "expert" to her younger brother, Liz reports not using English every day, and having a lack of exposure to the language.

The two participants with Anglophone parents have differing experiences with English at home. David's father does not speak Czech, which pushes David to solely use English when interacting with him. Moreover, David's father tries to develop his son's vocabulary by deliberately using uncommon words when talking to David. The family also regularly vacations in the United States, where they spend time with relatives whom David describes as educated and above-average in their use of English compared to other native speakers.

Eva's mother, on the other hand, is proficient in Czech. Whenever Eva cannot think of a word or expression in English, she can code-switch and express her thought in Czech. Eva herself mentions this fact as a cause of some of her problems with English (see 3.2.3.3.3). Moreover, Eva complains about the lack of variety in the kind of language that she has access to at home: with her mother, they discuss domestic, household-related topics, and in general do not have much time to talk:

protože přece jenom doma jako nevedeme každé večer dvouhodinový rozhovory vo světě, ale... bavíme se vo tom, prostě jo támhle you do the dishwasher and bring your dirty washing a tak... Takže v tomhle [jsem docela] omezená.

She also mentions that her mother is very talkative and does not really let Eva produce much language herself. Although Eva's family visits relatives in Britain every summer, Eva says that all her relatives always ask her the same questions, which enables her to practice answering these questions in a very fluent way, but does not help much beyond that.

3.2.1.3. The participants' use of English in their free time

All three participants report using English in their free time, to varying extents. Liz reads and watches films and television shows in English. She also exchanges messages with her friends in America. However, she does not have any friends in Prague with whom she could talk in English (her Czech friends are too shy to speak in English in front of her). Liz claims that she would like to do more to improve her English, but that she does not know how she can achieve that in Prague. She would like to become friends with Americans living in Prague, but fears that the “buddy” or language tandem exchange system is too artificial. Moreover, she does not feel secure enough about her abilities to become a private English tutor. Her main plan involving English is to go back to America and study there for a year. However, at the time of the interview, she has serious doubts about whether she will be selected to participate in the study abroad program for which she has applied.²² If she is not selected, she is planning on spending the next summer in America, as she really misses the country.

David, on the other hand, does not report a lack of English input or practice. He reads in English (although he would like to read more), and makes use of his biliteracy for the purposes of other school subjects by researching different topics on websites written in English. He has also recently started tutoring and giving private English conversation lessons. Being in the role of an “expert” who has to explain how the language works to various “novices” feeds his motivation to improve his explicit knowledge of the English language system (3.2.2.1.2.). He also occasionally translates texts for his friends and reports making a lot of effort to produce the best possible translation. Moreover, he tries to play an active role in improving his English by employing strategies such as consciously using newly encountered words in his everyday life. David has several very specific goals for the near future: he is planning on taking the CPE examination and also wants to apply to university abroad, to a program which will be taught in English.

Eva also reads in English, but less than she thinks she should, and she does not find it enjoyable (see 3.2.3.3.). She does not watch films or television shows in English. Although she has bilingual English-speaking friends in Prague, she feels shy and afraid of making mistakes in front of them. Eva helps her Czech friends with their

²² She ended up being able to go. Unfortunately, interviewing her again after her return would have been outside of the scope of the present paper.

English homework, but in a way which would in Storch's (2002) terminology be described as characterized by low mutuality, and she reports not putting much effort into it. Eva participates in different activities which show an interest in using English in a holistic and extensive fashion in different relatively authentic contexts. She has participated in a Model United Nations conference, and has taken part in various student exchanges organized by her school. Although Eva would like to become a more balanced bilingual, she does not report having any specific goals involving English. She mentions possibly wanting to study abroad in the future. She also mentions not being interested in getting an English proficiency certificate, believing that it would be of no use to her, as she can rely on her native speaker status.

3.2.1.4. Bilingual identities

Finally, the ways in which the participants reflect on their bilingual identities are worthy of attention. Liz reports having a very different sense of self in Czech and in English:

Jsem úplně jinej člověk. Jako tady jsem Líza ... a tu nemám tak ráda. A v Americe jsem Liz. A já zbožňuju Liz hrozně moc.

She also stresses that she likes her English self more, and currently feels that she is gradually losing the "American" side of her personality, about which she expresses regret. In class, due to the fact that the context lacks in authenticity, she feels like her Czech self, even when interacting in English.

David, on the other hand, has a very similar sense of self in Czech and in English. He mentions behaving differently when he uses English for an extended period of time, but he believes it happens for extralinguistic reasons connected to the context and the environment.

As for Eva, her experience is similar to David's: due to the extralinguistic context, she behaves differently when she is interacting in English. Eva calls her behavior when communicating in English a performance during which she is enacting the identity of an exemplary young lady, parading in front of her relatives and repeating the same lines about her life in Prague. Although such a description has connotations of inauthenticity, Eva reports finding these situations quite enjoyable.

3.2.2. Research questions 1 and 2: the participants' experience with EFL classes and their feelings in terms of anxiety and motivation

3.2.2.1. Primary school and middle school²³

3.2.2.1.1. Liz's experience

As mentioned above, Liz is the only participant who has experienced English classes in an Anglophone country. She remembers English language arts classes in the United States as being entertaining, allowing space for creativity, and focusing on broad, general literacy skills, including various reading and writing strategies. In retrospect, she appreciates the opportunity to develop her language skills through content of interest, as opposed to an emphasis on the language system.

Upon her return to the Czech Republic, Liz attended Grades 8 and 9 at a Czech primary school. Her description of her integration in the lessons reminds of the procedure of curriculum compacting. Sometimes she participated in whole-class activities, but she was also given a lot of individual work, which consisted mainly of CAE practice. She enjoyed being able to exert her own agency while working alone. However, she was less enthusiastic about working with the rest of the class, mainly because the students were asked to use Czech quite extensively. At that time Liz was struggling with her Czech language skills (see 3.2.3.1.) and did not appreciate that her deficiencies in Czech were pointed out during English lessons.

3.2.2.1.2. David's experience

David's first experience with English classes was rather negative. He describes the teacher as having a low proficiency, and the lessons as useless. David was not provided with any form of differentiation and was spending the lessons "just sitting there" or trying to pass the time by playing unrelated games.

After Grade 5 David started attending the eight-year program at his current *gymnázium*. For the first four years, the students were divided into two proficiency levels. David describes the lessons as traditional EFL classes, which he does not remember well, except for an overall feeling of boredom. Sometimes David was acting as an "expert" and helping his classmates.

Around that time, David was also confronted and displeased with certain aspects of learning English as a foreign language. The students were asked to learn to

²³ The term "middle school", borrowed from the American terminology employed by Liz, is meant here to encompass the lower grades of the eight-year *gymnázium* program, as well as the higher grades of what in the Czech Republic is still referred to as *základní škola* ("primary school").

transcribe English words phonetically, based on the British English pronunciation. As a heritage language learner, David found the phonetic alphabet useless, since he “knew” how to pronounce everything. Moreover, he did not appreciate being asked to follow a British English variety. After some negotiations with the teacher, he became the only student in the group allowed to base his transcriptions on the American pronunciation, and was thus recognized as an “old-timer” in an imagined English speaking community.

3.2.2.1.3. Eva’s experience

In primary school, Eva was in a similar situation as David, but her feelings differed vastly. Eva explains that when she was starting school, her Czech was less developed than her English, and that the English lessons were providing a nice counterbalance to her feelings of struggle in the other subjects. She enjoyed being praised for her proficiency and the English lessons became to her a source of confidence, an occasion to feel validated in her role as “expert” and occasional helper of her classmates:

No... já jsem si připadala jako borec, že umím něco [...] jako rozhodně mi to zvýšilo to sebevědomí, což jsem potřebovala, když jsem naopak bojovala s tou češtinou trošičku ještě.

Although the lessons were not differentiated, she had access to some individualized instruction thanks to her mother, who started giving her extra activities to complete in class.

Later Eva attended an eight-year *gymnázium* (other than her current school), where she experienced two teachers and two very different scenarios. With the first teacher, Eva was confronted with her own lack of explicit knowledge of grammatical theory. She was displeased with the feeling of pressure resulting from her teacher’s unrealistic expectations of her as a bilingual student. In contrast, the second teacher seemed not to have conducted any needs analysis and never found out that Eva had a British parent. Eva describes the lessons with that teacher as extremely boring, and herself in the lessons as inactive and resigned to the situation.

Eva’s experience provides an illustration of various problems frequently encountered by heritage language learners. Similarly to the cases of many HLLs attested in the literature (e.g. Webb and Miller, 2000), she struggled with the majority society language, and her English expertise helped her with her self-esteem. Later

however, the expectations which were placed on her as a heritage language learner became a source of anxiety. Finally, the lessons with her third English teacher not presenting any kind of challenge, she lacked both in facilitating anxiety and in investment in the classes, which became a possible cause of certain subsequent difficulties with her English learning (see 3.2.2.1.3.).

3.2.2.2. Experience at the participants' current gymnázium²⁴

3.2.2.2.1. Liz's case

3.2.2.2.1.1. Experience with EFL instruction

At her current school, Liz's teacher is Mr. Horák, whom she describes as highly proficient for a non-native speaker, yet having low pedagogical skills. Liz claims that there is little variety in the activities conducted in class. According to Liz, the focus of the lessons is always on vocabulary and on translations. The students are usually asked to read an article chosen by the teacher, and subsequently answer the teacher's questions about it, these being mainly targeted at the students' understanding of individual vocabulary items. In terms of translations, the teacher usually dictates isolated sentences to the students, and asks them to translate these from Czech into English. The L1 is used frequently in class.

Liz also reports that the lessons usually take on the form of whole-class activities, and that only extremely rarely are the students asked to work in smaller groups. The instruction is not generally differentiated, but sometimes the class uses an e-learning tool, with which the students work individually, presumably at least to some extent at their own pace. Liz's group also has one lesson per week with a native English-speaking teacher, Ms. Smith. Liz does not provide much information about Ms. Smith, stating that she does not see much of a difference between Mr. Horák's and Ms. Smith's lessons.

Although Liz reports liking English as a language better than Czech, she says that English is one of her least favorite school subjects, and describes Mr. Horák's lessons as terrible, boring and useless, while also being a source of anxiety. Her assessment of Ms Smith's lessons, while less harsh, remains similar. Liz's main criticism of the lessons seems to be connected to their status as foreign language

²⁴ See tables 5-9 in section 7.1.

classes. She finds the idea of classes targeted primarily at learning a language rather odd. For Liz, lessons focused mainly on the language system lack in substance:

[To] je hrozný, že jako se učim angličtinu a jako jenom angličtinu... Mně to připadá fakt bizarní... Jako mít prostě hodinu... angličtiny. Jako mně to připadá víceméně o ničem [...].

Liz thinks that focusing on the language system is detrimental to the learning process. She also has strongly negative feelings about being asked to translate between the two languages. To Liz, the task of translating seems unnatural, and she strongly prefers to speak in one language or the other at a given time, instead of switching back and forth between the two languages. Moreover, she does not appreciate the teacher's insistence on precise answers:

A jako hlavně jak děláme vždycky ty překlady, to je mi tak nepříjemný, prostě to je fakt strašný. [...] protože jako mně připadá, že tu jednu českou větu... že se to dá říct spoustu způsoby. [...] Takže já vždycky něco řeknu a on jako „to není přesně ono“. A jako mě to někdy nenapadá úplně přesně. [...] No a já to nechci překládat jako Czenglish, že jo... Protože to taky nemá rád. Takže to vždycky řeknu tak zhruba... A nemá to rád...

Even when the teacher explains why he considers another version of the translation better, Liz does not find such feedback useful. Moreover, Liz is in principle opposed to the use of Czech in the classroom.

Liz also reports being uncomfortable with the language variety used in class. Both Mr. Horák and Ms. Smith use British English, which represents an almost insurmountable problem in Liz's eyes. Mr. Horák allows for some differentiation of product by letting Liz use American English forms, and differences between British and American English are sometimes discussed in class. However, Liz firmly believes that the two language varieties (which she refers to as separate languages) are very different and that being exposed to a new variety is confusing and can have a negative impact on her language development:

A jako jsou tak blízko sebe, ty dva jazyky, že to je fakt nebezpečný je míchat.

Furthermore, the teacher's choice of topics does not particularly appeal to Liz, and she does not seem interested in learning the new vocabulary associated with these topics.

Liz also criticizes the atmosphere in class. In her opinion, Mr. Horák is too strict and not open enough to negotiations. According to Liz, both the choice of topics

and type of activities leads to lessons which are not engaging, making the entire group of students dissatisfied and inactive. On the other hand, Liz is quite enthusiastic about the times spent working with the e-learning tool. She likes that the activities on the computer are more enjoyable, and that she can work alone, with no stressful factors.

3.2.2.2.1.2. Anxiety and motivation

Liz's attitude in class sounds somewhat paradoxical. She reports being bored and not finding the lessons challenging enough, yet she also claims experiencing relatively high levels of anxiety. In the context of her experience, these statements are understandable. Liz is aware of her own weaknesses in English and feels that her language skills are undergoing attrition (see 3.2.3.1.). She thinks that her classmates and Mr. Horák have unrealistic expectations of her English level. Liz says that speaking English with people who share her L1, in a context where she is led to focus on the language system, makes it difficult for her to fully "switch" into English. She is afraid of making mistakes or not having a proper accent. Moreover, Liz feels nervous when asked to speak in front of a larger group of people, such as the entire class. These factors all contribute to Liz's feelings of anxiety in class. She feels more comfortable speaking English outside of school for authentic purposes with people who do not share her L1.

Although Liz finds some of the aspects of the lessons difficult, she says that she tries to do as little as possible in class. Her attitude is connected with the fact that she does not perceive the goals of the instruction as meaningful or as aligned with her needs (see 3.2.2.2.1.1.). Although Liz seems motivated to improve in English (and is enthusiastic about the idea of study abroad), she says that school demotivates her, and she feels no investment in the lessons. Liz's lack of investment can be connected to her feelings of anxiety, combined with her opinion that the lessons are useless, and with her beliefs about language acquisition, formed as a result of her specific learning path.

3.2.2.2.2. David's case

3.2.2.2.2.1. Experience with EFL instruction

David, being Liz's classmate, also used to have Mr. Horák as his English teacher. However, at the time of the interview, the group had a new teacher, Mr. Prokop. Nevertheless, because David had been taught by Mr. Horák for 3 years, he

talked quite extensively both about Mr. Horák, and Mr. Prokop. He also described his experience with Ms. Smith.

David reports initially having a similar opinion of Mr. Horák's lessons as Liz, finding the activities dry and boring. However, after some confrontations, David reevaluated his views, and he now describes Mr. Horák as an excellent teacher, and his lessons as very beneficial. According to David, what made him change his mind about the lessons was the simultaneous realization that there were a lot of areas in English that David should work on, and that Mr. Horák had a vast knowledge of the English language and could truly help David progress. Moreover, David's words show an implicit identification with the view that explicit grammar knowledge is useful, as are translation skills and an understanding of nuances between different words. David also comments on the lessons with Ms. Smith, whom he praises for her expertise. He particularly appreciates that Ms. Smith was teaching the students relevant and challenging vocabulary:

[J]ako že tam nám vždycky třeba když si vzpomenu tak nám dala cvičení, kde já jsem jako znal třeba necelou půlku těch slov. [...] To prostě jako vona fakt jako měla hodně dobrou znalost toho, a právě jako ve všech těch ohledech, že třeba jednou jsme dělali nějaký jako fakt jako překlady takovejch typicky českých věcí, třeba "utopenci" a takhle a jako najednou to byly věci, co člověk nezná a i jsme s ní dělali odbornější slovíčka, i třeba z latiny přejatý a tak, což se zrovna do té akademický sféry dost jako hodí.

At the time of the interview, David's group had been taught by Mr. Prokop for about 2 to 3 months. David describes Mr. Prokop as less proficient than Mr. Horák, but also as very likeable as a person. According to David, the lessons are now more communicative and more entertaining than Mr. Horák's lessons. Mr. Prokop chooses topics inspired by current issues discussed in the media, and designs reading, speaking or writing activities around these topics. Mr. Prokop likes to ask the students to do role plays, and the group is planning on dedicating some lessons to rehearsing a theatre play. The instruction is not differentiated, but David and the teacher have agreed on an anchor activity when David does not find the lessons stimulating enough.

David says that although the lessons with Mr. Prokop are more entertaining than those with Mr. Horák, he is also learning less at the moment, as the lessons are less challenging. He also considers Mr. Horák a greater expert with more to offer "as

a person”. Nevertheless, David appreciates the good rapport the students have with Mr. Prokop, as well as the collaborative atmosphere and high motivation among the students. David also considers the fact that the students are divided into 8 proficiency levels crucial to the success of the lessons, as the group is very advanced and quite homogeneous.

3.2.2.2.2. *Anxiety and motivation*

Unlike Liz, David is confident about his English skills, and he does not feel any debilitating anxiety during the lessons. However, he is not unaware of his own weaknesses. In fact, he explains that the lessons remind him of areas in which he can still improve, which increases his motivation and investment. Over time, David has come to value learning in the classroom over feeling entertained, and his investment in class remains high (at least from his self-report), although he sometimes feels bored and unchallenged. David says that he is one of the most active students in class, and he also displays a certain awareness of the importance of student autonomy:

[V]lastně skrz to, že jsem vlastně začal poznávat oblasti tý angličtiny, který ještě dejme tomu nemám tak pod palcem, tak to i jako zvýšilo moji motivaci třeba se nějak sám jako zlepšovat [...].

3.2.2.2.3. **Eva’s case**

3.2.2.2.3.1. *Experience with EFL instruction*

Eva’s teacher is Mr. Horn. Eva describes Mr. Horn as less proficient than the students, and also as really unlikeable. Among the activities carried out in class she mentions translation exercises, grammar exercises, reading activities, activities focusing on vocabulary, role plays and short presentations. The instruction is not differentiated. Eva repeatedly calls the lessons useless. Her main criticism seems to be that the teacher is not proficient enough to be able to make the lessons truly challenging. Moreover, similarly to Liz, Eva is displeased with the amount of translation exercises, which she calls unnatural and robotic, and she finds the way vocabulary is taught inauthentic and inefficient. From Eva’s description, it also seems that the rapport between the teacher and the students is rather problematic, and that the students are dissatisfied, resigned to the current situation, and act disrespectfully towards the teacher.

Eva's group also used to have Ms. Smith, but like Liz, Eva did not consider the lessons with her particularly helpful. She claims that the lessons consisted of a great amount of whole-class speaking and were better suited for students with more assertive personalities. The students in Eva's group are paired up with American university student "buddies", whom they meet outside of school. Eva enjoys the buddy program and finds it meaningful.

3.2.2.2.3.2. Anxiety and motivation

Eva's feelings in class are quite similar to those experienced by Liz. The other students in her English group are highly proficient, and Eva says that she is ashamed of her own level compared to them, as she feels that having a British mother, she should be much more advanced. Like Liz, she feels pressured to perform well due to the high, possibly unrealistic expectations of her classmates and teacher. She says that her level of confidence when speaking English varies based on context, and that she is most confident when interacting with less proficient interlocutors. She reports feeling less anxious when speaking English outside of school, but also being nervous when talking to native speakers of English, as she cannot "hide" her mistakes behind her native-like accent.

In terms of motivation and investment, Eva explains that she never developed good study habits in relation to learning English (which represents one of the risks connected to being an advanced student described by Tomlinson, 2001), as the expectations of others made her internalize the idea that she does not need to actively study the language, being half-British. Even though at the moment she feels deeply insecure about her English skills and thinks that she should improve, she is still not invested in the lessons. The anxiety felt by Eva in the lessons is not facilitating, and she does not think that she can benefit from the lessons. On the other hand, as mentioned above, she demonstrates a certain investment outside of school, for instance by taking part in some extracurricular activities related to English.

3.2.3. Research question 3: Current English proficiency level²⁵

3.2.3.1. Liz's case

When Liz was going to school in the United States, her literacy skills were more developed in English than in Czech. She feels that she missed some important

²⁵ See Tables 10-12 in section 7.1.

steps in her Czech language development when in America, and that her Czech underwent some attrition. At one point, Liz felt that her English was as good as her Czech, and in some aspects even better. However, she thinks that her English plateaued after her return to the Czech Republic, as she did not get the chance to develop her skills beyond the level of a middle school student. Moreover, she feels that her English is currently getting worse (although her teacher and her classmates do not seem to have noticed, which reminds of the scenario described in Hansen, 1999). At the same time, her Czech still carries traces of incomplete L1 acquisition, especially in terms of vocabulary, and Liz now feels insecure about her skills in both languages.

Liz estimates that her spoken Czech is currently more fluent than her English, but she is aware of her Czech spoken production presenting many signs of negative transfer from English (for instance, she uses expressions which are direct calques from English and sound unnatural in Czech). She believes that she has a more native-like linguistic intuition in English than in Czech, and that she has a wider vocabulary in English. Moreover, she enjoys reading in English more, and reports being faster at reading in English, while also finding reading in English less demanding in terms of need to focus. She is also satisfied with her practical ability to use English grammar.

However, Liz also reports having several weaker areas in English. First of all, her ability to use English is highly context-dependent, and she claims that her English is better when currently activated through practice or when she is able to use it in an authentic setting, as opposed to the classroom. Moreover, although she feels that she can tell what “sounds good” in English, she says that her knowledge of the theory of English grammar is rather limited. Furthermore, she has not had the opportunity to progress in terms of advanced writing skills. Finally, she is confused about the differences between British and American English.

Liz thinks that her main needs in the English language classroom are the following: progressing beyond a middle school level in terms of writing and vocabulary, and fighting against language attrition through extensive speaking practice with a focus on fluency. As seen in the previous section, she does not feel that the lessons help her meet those needs. School does not compensate for the lack of English input in Liz’s life, and the lessons also fail in providing her with new vocabulary which she would find relevant. Liz says that the lessons at school

contribute to her language attrition, and her recent feelings about her language skills are characterized by a loss of confidence in her own proficiency.

3.2.3.2. David's case

David feels much more confident about his English proficiency level than Liz. He is the only participant who thinks that he is steadily improving (although not necessarily at a fast pace) and who feels that the English lessons are meeting most of his needs. David says that although his Czech is dominant and he could potentially become a more balanced bilingual, he feels that his English is as good as that of an average American, although slightly lower than that of an educated American. Unlike Liz (and Eva, as discussed below), David thinks that his ability to speak English is relatively stable across contexts and that he has good translation skills.

David feels that he has improved in the past years. He is now more confident in his use of grammar, has gained knowledge about more formal language registers, and has a wider vocabulary. He says that his main strengths include his ability to communicate with no difficulties, his use of grammar, his reading skills (he states that he might be able to read faster in English than in Czech), and his native-like pronunciation. In terms of weaknesses, David reports sometimes not being able to remember the right word and having to use circumlocution tactics. Moreover, he sometimes does not know all the words in texts that he is reading. Furthermore, David encounters some difficulties when being asked to explain certain grammatical features, for instance while tutoring. He thinks that his metalinguistic knowledge could be more developed. He is also more familiar with spoken, informal language than with more formal ways to express ideas. In terms of writing, David says that he has all the knowledge that he needs (he knows the language and has developed an understanding of the writing process in his Czech language arts lessons). However, he lacks relevant writing practice in English.

The elements which David perceives as his main needs in the language classroom are closely connected to his above-mentioned feelings. David would like to practice writing. Moreover, he says that he needs to broaden his vocabulary knowledge (he believes that everyone can always improve in terms of vocabulary). In particular, he would like to work on specialized terms denoting concepts which need to be referred to by a specific expression. He would also like to focus on various synonyms, in order to be able to express himself in a richer way:

[N]ebo třeba ty synonyma, že žejó zrovna v tý angličtině to je jako hodně specifická tím, že každý to slovo má jako iks dalších slov, který vlastně znamenaj to stejný, a potom ten text se hned čte líp, když je takovej barvitější, tak ... tak v tomhle no, že třeba bych se naučil používat takovej jako květnatější jazyk trochu.

In terms of needs not being met, David again mentions a lack of advanced writing practice which would be relevant to the students' needs outside of school. Otherwise David seems quite content with the lessons and finds them beneficial. Specifically, he reports that the lessons have helped him understand various linguistic nuances, have helped him build more explicit grammar knowledge and a wider vocabulary (in particular, he praises Ms. Smith's choice of highly relevant, useful and advanced vocabulary, belonging also to a more academic register), that they constitute good practice in terms of grammar and preparation for the CPE examination, and that they increase his motivation by making him more aware of his own weaknesses. Moreover, David saw Mr. Horák as an expert able to provide help and answer various complicated questions about the workings of the language:

[A]le už to bylo fakt jako, že já jsem– mě to spíš zajímalo, a že von jakoby vodpověděl a já už jsem mu prostě věřil, protože jsem věděl, že to má jako v malíku, no.

3.2.3.3. Eva's case

Although Eva also has an Anglophone parent, her feelings about her own English proficiency differ from David's. She says that her English is good, but that she does not speak as well as native speakers usually do. English was her dominant language when she was a child. However, after she started going to school (in Prague), her Czech skills became more developed. As mentioned in section 3.2.1.2., Eva explains that when she speaks English with her mother, she can freely code-switch into Czech and intersperse her speech with Czech words. She sees a strong link between this fact and her under-developed English vocabulary. Eva also explains that she has never developed the habit of actively studying English, and now she feels embarrassed that her classmates have reached the same, or even a higher level of proficiency. Some of Eva's classmates have taken the opportunity to leave for various study abroad stays arranged by Eva's school. Eva also thinks that her classmates have been studying more and watching more television shows and films in English.

Eva says that her English language development has been characterized by different fluctuations (she speaks better when currently in closer contact with the language through reading, when visiting Britain, etc.). Overall, she thinks that she is stagnating. Although Eva shows practically no investment in class, she stresses that she thinks she could and should improve.

Among her strengths in English, Eva counts her language intuition, her ability to use grammar correctly, and her pronunciation. On the other hand, unlike Liz and David, she perceives her reading skills in English as less developed than in Czech. Moreover, Eva says that her vocabulary knowledge is relatively limited. In terms of writing, she has not had much practice. Eva thinks her main needs include extensive writing and speaking practice. She does not think that her needs are being met, and she also complains about a lack of English input.

3.2.4. Research question 4: the participants' wishes in terms of English instruction²⁶

3.2.4.1. Liz's case

Liz sounds fundamentally dissatisfied with the English instruction provided at her *gymnázium*, and she would like the teacher to adopt a different approach. Liz thinks that such a change would be realistically feasible and beneficial for the whole group. Firstly, she would like the instruction to be much closer to the language arts approach with which she is familiar from her time in the United States. Specifically, she would like the lessons to focus on more extensive reading (such as entire books) and to shift the focus from isolated vocabulary items to a global understanding and in-depth analyses of the literary works treated in class. Moreover, she would like the lessons to focus on process writing, an aspect of instruction which she deems neglected even in Czech language arts classes. In general terms, she would like to move the focus away from the language system and towards content of interest. She believes that subconscious acquisition is more efficient than conscious learning. A focus away from the language system also fits with her motivation to develop her fluency as opposed to her accuracy. She has noticed that even her American friends make grammatical mistakes, and she believes that American English is much more

²⁶ See Table 13 in section 7.1.

lenient in terms of grammar. She also seems quite content with an approximate knowledge of the meaning of some vocabulary items.

Furthermore, Liz would like the lessons to be conducted in English only. Again, her wish corresponds to her belief that a language is best acquired in an authentic context, through content of interest, and when used for authentic purposes, as opposed to approaches which are closer to the traditional grammar-translation method.

Liz also believes that a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom is essential to learning. For that reason, she would like the teacher to become less of an authority figure, and she would prefer to be able to work in pairs or small groups, as she finds such grouping arrangements less anxiety-inducing. Other motivating factors would include space for creativity, more “fun” activities such as games, watching films, and discussing topics which are of more interest to the students.

Moreover, Liz would appreciate a higher level of differentiation. She likes the idea of being put in the role of an “expert” and being asked to help her classmates. She thinks that having to come up with different ways to explain the same idea in order to be understood by a less proficient classmate would motivate her. She would also like to work independently on individualized assignments, although these would have to be combined with more communicative activities. Liz also mentions that another group from the same school is regularly visited by native speakers who come to the classes to talk with the students. Liz would like to have the same opportunity to interact with native speakers. Finally, Liz feels very strongly about that fact that she would benefit more from lessons where American English would be used. However, she understands that other students might prefer to be taught British English.

Altogether, it seems Liz would like to have access to more extensive English input, and to be able to focus on holistic language use, rather than breaking the language down into discrete subskills. She seems convinced that only such practice would help her in her fight against language attrition.

3.2.4.2. David's case

David, on the other hand, is quite satisfied with how the lessons are currently conducted, and his wishes are much smaller in scale. He would appreciate more writing practice, especially in challenging and relevant genres. Similarly to Liz, David

would enjoy having external native speakers come to the lessons as visitors. David enjoys being part of a relatively homogeneous group, and although he is sometimes bored in class, he thinks that as a heritage language learner he cannot expect to be challenged at all times. When asked if he would like to work on longer projects, David is not sure. He thinks extensive projects could be useful for language development, but only if there was a guarantee that the students would actually use English while working together. When asked about the possibility of using English language arts materials, David is similarly skeptical. He has heard that language arts classes in America are not really challenging and fears the activities would be too easy.

Many of Liz's wishes do not apply to David. David thinks that differentiated instruction would be too difficult to achieve. He feels that his classmates are too advanced for it to make sense for him help them in an "expert" role. Moreover, he is already happy with the atmosphere in class, does not mind the use of British English (unlike Liz he states that the two language varieties are very similar). Moreover, he does not mind explicit grammar instruction. He perceives certain spoken language features, with which he is more familiar, as incorrect, and feels motivated to improve in a more formal register. He also feels the need to be able to explain different grammatical features to his pupils while tutoring. Similarly, he does not mind explicit vocabulary instruction focusing on precise definitions and subtle nuances. He believes that people can always improve in the field of vocabulary, and that the more synonyms he will learn, the better.

3.2.4.3. *Eva's case*

Eva shows a similar general dissatisfaction with the lessons as Liz. However, unlike Liz, she has never experienced English lessons that she would consider good, and she seems quite resigned to the idea that EFL lessons will simply not help her progress. She is unsure as to what could motivate her in the classroom, given the current situation. However, she has several general wishes. In order to fight against her feeling of fluctuations in her ability to use English, she would like to keep her English skills activated through extensive, holistic practice, and with the help of quality language input. Eva's view of what constitutes the most efficient path to language development is similar to Liz's. She seems to think for instance that conscious memorizing of vocabulary from a list has a much more limited long-term

effect than acquisition through contextualized language use combined with quality input. Similarly to Liz, Eva would like the lessons to be conducted in English only, and would like the use of English in the classroom to be as close to authentic communication as possible. She would like to be able to extensively practice speaking in pairs, which would reduce her level of anxiety, about topics which she does not have the opportunity to discuss at home. However, she does not believe the teacher could let the students “just talk” for the entirety of a lesson. Like the other two participants, she also wants more writing practice.

When asked about the option of working on longer-term tasks, Eva says that she would welcome the opportunity to work on projects that would enable her to use English actively for more authentic purposes, ideally also involving communication with people from outside the classroom. She would also like the instruction to be more content-based, and to be exposed to longer stretches of discourse in English. Unlike Liz, she believes that she does not need individualized instruction, as she does not consider herself to be more proficient than her classmates.

4. DISCUSSION

Although only three students have been interviewed for the purposes of this thesis, their testimonies can serve as an illustration of the notion that heritage language learners and returnees hardly represent a homogeneous population in terms of experiences, language proficiency, needs and wishes in the EFL classroom (see Schwartz, 2001). It is noticeable that Liz and Eva, although the former is a returnee learner and the latter a HLL, seem to present more similarities in some aspects of their experience than David and Eva, who, from their basic biographical information, would be expected to have more in common. At the same time, a number of shared observations emerge from the three interviews, and many facets of these particular learners' experiences seem to correspond to what has been described in the literature.

4.1. Linguistic aspects of the HLL and returnee experience

The participants' descriptions of their strengths and weaknesses in English present several common points. All three participants perceive a need to progress further. It could be said, borrowing Wang and García's words, that they need to "upgrade their linguistic proficiency [...] to an age-appropriate academic level" (2002, p. 5). Language development is an ongoing process which does not end during childhood. Liz, Eva and David, as well as other heritage language learners and returnees (see e.g., Webb & Miller, 2000), need help with the aspects of language development which are the focus of language arts classes in the countries where the target language is spoken, and which are not generally acquired at home through interactions with family members. The participants report a need to focus on advanced literacy skills, and it seems that writing has been the most neglected aspect of their language development. This finding is consistent with many accounts of heritage language learners' needs (see e.g., Webb & Miller, 2000; Valdés, 2005).

The participants also share a desire to work on advanced vocabulary development, on items which are also acquired late by native speakers residing in the target countries. It seems that the participants could all benefit from working on more formal, academic registers, both in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Looking at the distinction between BICS and CALP (Cummins, 1984, quoted in Lynch, 2003), it can be said that the two HLL participants have space for progress in terms of CALP, as Lynch (2003) would predict. Moreover, the returnee participant, although having been

assisted with her CALP during language arts lessons in the United States, feels a need to progress beyond the academic level of a middle school student. In terms of BICS, the participants seem more confident, yet Eva reports feeling insecure in some contexts of everyday communication.

The participants, including the returnee Liz, also share some of the characteristics of HLLs outlined by Triantafyllidou and Hedgecock (2007): their ability to use the language is based on intuition and recall, rather than on explicit knowledge. Moreover, Liz and Eva both seem more preoccupied by fluency (or their lack thereof) rather than accuracy, and the focus put on accuracy in the school context seems to destabilize them in their ability to communicate fluently. David, who is most secure in his communicative skills, and whose goals include passing the CPE examination, seems to value accuracy more than Liz and Eva. All three participants also report having a native-like pronunciation (see Campbell & Rosenthal, 2000, quoted in Schwartz, 2001).

Nevertheless, even from a very small participant sample, it can be seen that making generalizations about HLLs and returnees is rather tricky (see e.g., Valdés, 1995, 2005). In terms of receptive skills, all three participants say that they have a much wider passive than active vocabulary knowledge, yet only Liz and David consider reading one of their strong areas. For Eva, reading is a weakness. In terms of speaking, Eva and Liz seem caught in the same vicious circle of feeling insecure about their lack of fluency, becoming less willing to communicate and thus having less speaking practice. On the other hand, David sees speaking as one of his strengths.

Of the three participants, Eva seems closest to Campbell and Rosenthal's description of "typical" heritage language learners. Her literacy skills are least developed, and from her account, she seems to have the most childlike linguistic repertoire (2000, quoted in Schwartz, 2001). On the other hand, David and Liz had to deal with the often described HLL challenge of becoming familiar with a new dialect (see Valdés, 2005). While David seems to have handled the task with no major difficulties, it has been a source of struggle for Liz.

Liz's case shows that the returnee experience can present many similarities to that of heritage language learners. Moreover, Liz's story exemplifies some issues specific to learners who used to live in countries where the target language is spoken. During Liz's time abroad, her L1 underwent some attrition, as attested also in the case of the participants in Kanno's (2000) and Song's (2012) studies. Moreover, Liz feels

that since her return, her Czech has undergone attrition, a scenario widely described in the literature (see e.g., Hansen, 1999). Finally, Liz's situation illustrates how stressful and frustrating the process of transitioning between English language arts and EFL classes can be (see Kanno, 2000; Choi, 2003, 2007, quoted in Song, 2011).

Of the participants, David seems to have been the most successful in his school language learning path. Even though he reports having some linguistic weaknesses typical of heritage language learners, he feels that he has been able to progress and develop a more formal, age-appropriate linguistic repertoire.

4.2. Affective aspects of the HLL and returnee experience

Both Eva and Liz report dealing with relatively high levels of anxiety in the EFL classroom. Eva's case seems to illustrate the possibility hinted at in Tallon (2003, 2009) that heritage language learners can become anxious after they reach a more advanced EFL class and are confronted with the fact that their knowledge is far from perfect. Moreover, she feels the "shame compared to outsiders" described by Krashen (2000). Eva and Liz both report feeling somewhat paralyzed by the pressure they are under because of the perceived expectations of others, and because of their fear of making mistakes (see Kanno, 2000). As a result, they are passive in class. David, on the other hand, seems to have very low levels of anxiety in the classroom, similarly to most participants in Tallon's (2003, 2009) and Alghotani's (2010) studies.

Eva and Liz also present similarities in terms of motivation and investment. Their lack of investment in the classroom can be linked to the fact that the instruction is carried out in ways which conflict with their views of how language development is achieved. Both Liz and Eva believe in the superiority of subconscious acquisition as opposed to conscious learning.²⁷ Their opinions seem derived from the manner in which they personally have first encountered English. They do not believe that the lessons, in their current form, can lead to efficient acquisition. Moreover, although they report being motivated, they seem to lack in specific, short-term goals, which, as described in the theoretical part, is considered a negative factor by Kondo (1999).²⁸

²⁷ The distinction has been described by Krashen (1977).

²⁸ Especially Eva seems to lack in goals. Liz's only specific plan is to return to the United States for a year. She says that she would like to do something about her English in Prague, but that she has no idea how to proceed. Clearly, she has not been taught to be a "good language keeper" (see Hansen et al., 1999).

Furthermore, as in some cases reported by Kondo (1999) and Berardi-Wiltshire (2013a, 2013b), the classroom goals (with their focus on explicit knowledge, accuracy and translation skills) do not seem to be aligned with Eva's and Liz's general goals (which would include a focus on communicative skills and fluency). These notions, together with the fact that they feel anxiety in the classroom, seem to explain their low investment in the lessons.

As opposed to Eva and Liz, David is both motivated and invested in the classroom. He has a few well-defined, quite specific goals (pass the CPE test, succeed in his university application in English, improve his tutoring skills). Moreover, he seems to have a high level of intrinsic motivation and to value knowledge in itself. Finally, unlike Liz and Eva, he seems to have accepted the view that a more traditional language instruction, relying on translations and explicit discussions of grammar, can be valuable and yield good results. Moreover, the participants' personalities and language aptitudes, not taken into account in this thesis, certainly play a role.

4.3. School experience in the Czech Republic

The participants' accounts provide a general idea of the type of activities and instruction they have encountered in their EFL classes. The participants might not be fully aware of some aspects of the instruction, and they may have forgotten to mention some types of activities carried out in class. Nevertheless, the interviews reveal which facets of the instruction the participants perceive as most prominent and typical of the EFL lessons they have attended. Some aspects of the instruction listed by the participants correspond to the recommendations discussed in the theoretical part of this thesis.²⁹ These include:

(a) the division of the students who are in the same grade into 8 groups based on proficiency level, which raises the homogeneity of the groups;

(b) the fact that the students have been in contact with an English native-speaking teacher, exposing them to an advanced academic register (although only David showed appreciation of that fact);

(c) the option to leave the school for study abroad stays, to participate in student exchanges or take part in activities mirroring authentic communicative

²⁹ However, these are not necessarily noticed or welcomed by all three participants.

contexts, such as model United Nations conferences (although the students have to actively take initiative in order to participate);

(d) the provision of elective courses taught through English, such as a practical theatre seminar (however, the students perceive these courses as too easy and are quite skeptical about them);

(e) the possibility to engage in authentic communication with American “buddies” (however, the option is limited to certain groups and of the participants, only Eva has been able to benefit from it);

(f) the use of an e-learning tool, enabling the students to work at their own pace (limited to one teacher);

(g) a basic validation of the students’ experiences through allowing them to use American English forms, and occasionally having them act as “experts” (limited due to the high proficiency of the classmates);

(h) some attempts to learn about the students’ wishes in terms of instruction (limited to Mr. Prokop);

(i) a critical approach to translation (in the case of Mr. Horák and Mr. Horn, and only appreciated by David).

On the other hand, from the accounts of the participants, it seems that the following approaches, advocated for by experts, have not been used in the language classes attended by Liz, Eva and David:

(a) the teachers do not seem to demonstrate an awareness of these students’ specific needs, connected to their language learning path, and it remains questionable whether the teachers have conducted a suitable needs analysis (however, David asserts that Mr. Horák was better aware of David’s needs than David himself);

(b) in the cases of Eva and Liz, the teachers have failed at making it clear that they are not expected to have a perfect linguistic knowledge;

(c) as far as can be told, the lessons seem teacher-centered rather than learner-centered, the strengths of the participants do not seem to be taken as a starting point and built upon;

(d) the instruction presents almost no signs of differentiation;

(e) learner autonomy and awareness does not seem to be emphasized;

(f) the participants do not consider the content of the instruction as particularly relevant to their projected future needs;

- (g) there seems to be a lack of “macro”, top-down approaches, of task-based instruction and content-based instruction, as well as of interdisciplinary links;
- (h) there seems to be a lack of advanced literacy skills development reminiscent of language arts classes, and the participants have had a distinct lack of writing practice, especially in terms of process writing;
- (i) Liz reports a lack of opportunities for holistic language use;
- (j) Eva and Liz report lacking advanced, extensive English input;
- (k) there seems to be little space for student creativity.

4.4. The participants’ wishes

The participants’ wishes in terms of English instruction seem clearly connected both to their past language learning path and to their general beliefs about language acquisition, derived from their personal experiences. As mentioned, Liz and Eva believe that language instruction should strive to mimic naturalistic acquisition. Both Liz and Eva would like to have access to content-based, English-only instruction, which would enable them to practice their communication skills in an authentic and holistic manner. David, on the other hand, does not mind explicit, more academically oriented learning. David’s views have been influenced by the personality and expertise of one of his teachers.

The interviews show certain limitations of the idea of asking the students to give their opinions of various instructional options. The participants’ views seem clearly connected to the types of instruction that they have so far encountered. Liz has had the most varied experiences in terms of English instruction, as she started learning English in a language arts context. As a result, she considers a wider array of instructional options as realistic and desirable. Eva, although sharing similar ideas of learning as Liz, seems more limited in her imagination and resigned to the current situation. As for David, he is highly skeptical of language arts approaches, based on the second-hand account of a friend who spent some time in an American high school. It is clearly difficult for the participants to offer relevant opinions of techniques and activities which they have never experienced.³⁰ At the same time, as seen in the case of Liz and Eva, when the instruction provided is too remote from the students’

³⁰ For that reason, my discussions of differentiated instruction remained very short with David and Eva, David stating that achieving differentiation is unrealistic and Eva not perceiving any need for it.

wishes, it can lead to a complete loss of investment in the classroom. This fact in itself constitutes a sufficient reason to devote some attention to the students' personal views.

As stressed in Webb and Miller (2000), with each new heritage language learner (and by extension each returnee student) should begin a new discovery of the learner's personal needs. Such a discovery can be strongly aided by the teacher's preexisting awareness of the fact that HLLs' and returnees' beliefs and wishes are likely to differ from those of typical foreign language learners. Even in situations where the teachers might be unable to modify their instruction in any significant way, they can at least strive to promote learner awareness, motivation and autonomy.

4.5. Limitations

Although the interviews with Liz, David and Eva revealed some important insights about the experiences of some of the HLLs and returnees in one *gymnázium* in Prague, the present investigation is distinctly small-scale in nature. Besides only counting three participants, the data were collected from one type of source only (interviews with students) and were not triangulated for instance through classroom observations or proficiency tests. Such procedures would have been outside the scope of this thesis. The analysis of the participants' views and experiences relies on their personal accounts, which might have been biased for various reasons, or subject to deficiencies in the participants' memories.³¹ I took the subjective nature of the information provided into account, yet it could have been helpful to conduct follow-up interviews with the participants, both in order to clarify certain elements and to reduce the risk of the participants' testimonies being overly affected by factors such as their current mood. Nevertheless, as I interviewed the participants face to face, I was able to see that they approached the questions in a thoughtful way and showed no signs of being disingenuous.

Another potential issue is connected to the fact that I adopted a slightly different interviewing style during the sessions with David and Eva than I had with

³¹ For instance, there is a factual inconsistency between Liz's and David's versions of the events. Liz asserts that at the time of the interview (i.e., after their second year with Mr. Horák), David is still unhappy about the lessons. However, David, who was interviewed in his final year of *gymnázium* studies, states that he changed his view of Mr. Horák's lessons after about a year. Whatever the cause of the inconsistency, it is clear that the participants' statements need to be seen as their own subjective accounts. At the same time, there seems to be no reason to doubt that David's feelings about the lessons did in fact evolve in the direction that he describes. However, it might have happened later than he remembers (or Liz might not have been aware of the shift in his attitude).

Liz. With Liz, I gave some information about my own life story and my views of some aspects of the returnee experience, which seemed to help make her more prone to offer additional insights. However, with David and Eva, I tried to remain as neutral as possible in order to prevent them from trying to “please” me with their answers. I took these facts into account while analyzing the interviews and believe that the description of Liz’s experience and feelings provided in the previous sections reflects her own views. However, it is important to keep in mind that during similar interviews, the final reflection of reality is to a certain extent co-constructed by both sides (see Richards, 2003, p. 38)

Moreover, as mentioned in section 3.1.4., the interviews were conducted at different times. David and Liz are classmates, yet David spoke from the perspective of an older (and thus perhaps “wiser”) student. It is possible that had the participants been interviewed at different times, in a different order, their testimonies would not have been the same. For instance, it would have been interesting to find out what Liz thinks of Mr. Prokop’s lessons, as his teaching style seems to better correspond to her wishes than Mr. Horák’s. However, even if her views have evolved, it remains valuable that the interview captures a specific stage in her life story, along with feelings and problems which might be encountered by other students in similar situations.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of the present thesis was to explore the experiences of heritage language learners and returnee students in foreign language classrooms. Heritage language learners and returnees only relatively recently started receiving wider attention in the fields of language acquisition and language education, and further research is needed in order to reach a more precise understanding of the factors which contribute to successful language development in these learners. Although no official statistics are available, it is likely that the numbers of HLLs and returnee students in the Czech Republic will keep growing in the near future, and that the question of how to integrate them into foreign language lessons and how to help them in their language development is going to become quite pressing. While it may be tempting to dismiss the needs of these students in the language classroom due to a lack of time or resources, HLLs and returnees are at a risk of failing to reach their linguistic potential and deserve appropriate assistance in their language development, as discussed both in the theoretical and in the practical part of this thesis.

The present thesis examines the issue in a context where it has not been discussed much so far, focusing on EFL classes in school of the *gymnázium* type in the Czech Republic. It seeks to investigate the problem from the perspective of the students, to give them voice, in order to potentially offer insights to teachers or anyone interested in the learners' perceptions of language learning.

The accounts of the participants reveal many similarities in their experiences and feelings. However, many differences even between the two heritage language learners can be observed (it seems that one of them, Eva, is closer in some aspects to the returnee Liz). The practical part of the thesis seems to confirm a notion that has been discussed in the theoretical part, namely that formulating specific teaching guidelines for such a heterogeneous population is highly problematic. Nevertheless, both the theoretical and the empirical part highlight the need to raise foreign language teachers' awareness of the different possible patterns in HLL and returnee students' language development, and of the range of potential specific linguistic and affective needs of these students. Moreover, it seems important for foreign language teachers to be acquainted with the variety of instructional options recommended in the fields of heritage language education, differentiated instruction, gifted education and language arts.

Furthermore, in order to ensure that the students' needs are met, it seems vital for the teachers to conduct an in-depth needs analysis, as well as to probe into the beliefs about language learning of the specific students in their classrooms. As can be seen in the empirical part of the thesis, when there is a wide discrepancy between the instruction and the learners' beliefs about how languages are learnt, their investment in the classroom can be drastically reduced. Although this is true of all learners, the views of HLLs and returnees are likely to be strongly influenced by their experience with naturalistic (second) language acquisition. The apparent discrepancies between the students' beliefs and the beliefs implicitly present in the instruction touch upon wider questions in the field of second language education, such as what role should be given to explicit grammar instruction, to the L1, to the skill of translating, or to bottom-up versus top-down approaches. These questions are still being debated and do not have definitive answers. It is thus not necessarily advisable for the teachers to change their own views, especially since the students' understanding of language acquisition processes might be limited or relatively superficial. However, foreign language teachers should be informed and reflective in their practice, able to justify their stand, and willing to engage in meaningful dialogue with their students.

In terms of possibilities for further research, it could be useful to compare the points of view of the students with those of teachers, or possibly also of school administrators and parents. It would also be helpful to bring in additional sources of data complementing the students' views, for instance in the form of proficiency tests, classroom observations, or journals kept by the participants. Moreover, conducting longitudinal research with HLLs and returnees in the Czech context by meeting with a certain number of participants repeatedly over an extended period of time could help shed further light on the various issues touched upon in the present thesis. It could also prove useful to adopt a more quantitative approach and visit various schools in Prague, as well as in the rest of the Czech Republic, in order to try and find out how many students are in a similar position and how different schools respond to their needs. Finally, English language teachers with HLL or returnee students in their classes could conduct action research and try to implement some changes into their classrooms, documenting the whole process.³²

³² Action research in the field of heritage language education is recommended by Webb and Miller (2000).

Résumé (v češtině)

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá problematikou výuky angličtiny na českých gymnáziích z pohledu žáků, kteří mají anglofonní rodiče nebo žili v anglofonní zemi. V dnešním globalizovaném světě se výrazně zvyšuje mobilita obyvatelstva a stále více dětí a dospívajících dočasně pobývá v zahraničí, ať už v rámci přesídlení celé rodiny za prací, nebo samostatně na studijních pobytech. Po návratu do vlasti se tito mladí lidé často ocitnou zpět v běžné škole a výuku cizího jazyka, který v zahraničí poměrně dobře ovládli, absolvují spolu s ostatními spolužáky. Mají však jiné jazykové dovednosti a jiný vztah k tomuto jazyku, což vyžaduje poněkud odlišný přístup k jejich výuce, mají-li být jejich dovednosti optimálním způsobem upevnovány a rozvíjeny. Učitelé cizího jazyka někdy podceňují potřeby těchto žáků a nerozumějí jim. Podobné, byť ne vždy zcela stejné problémy mohou vznikat v případě dětí, jejichž rodiče (nebo aspoň jeden z nich) jsou rodilí mluvčí v jazyce, který je v české škole vyučován jako cizí.

V zahraniční literatuře i školní praxi se zvláštním potřebám uvedených typů žáků věnuje v posledních letech čím dál větší pozornost. V České republice zatím tato problematika nebyla dostatečně prozkoumána a je bohužel často podceňována. Cílem této diplomové práce je shrnout nejdůležitější teoretické poznatky ze světové literatury a ukázat na případových studiích z českého prostředí, jak některé typické problémy vnímají sami žáci, jaké jsou jejich potřeby, jak vnímají výuku a co si přejí změnit či zlepšit. Uvažovaným cizím jazykem je zde výhradně angličtina.

Práce je rozdělena do pěti kapitol a obsahuje teoretickou i empirickou část. Teoretická část přináší přehled poznatků z literatury a zaměřuje se na dva základní okruhy otázek: jak identifikovat potřeby cílové skupiny žáků a jak je úspěšně učit v rámci běžné české třídy. Empirická část nejprve popisuje použitou metodologii a poté rozebírá získané výsledky. Z nich jsou pak vyvozeny příslušné závěry a naznačena možná doporučení.

V úvodní kapitole je stručně vysvětlen význam zvoleného tématu a vymezen předmět zkoumání. Jsou zde definovány dva základní typy studentů, jejichž potřebami se tato práce zabývá. Prvním typem jsou tzv. navrátilci (*returnees*), tedy ti, kdo sice mají české rodiče, ale pobývali určitou dobu v anglofonní zemi a poté se vrátili či nastoupili do běžné české školy. Druhý typ zahrnuje děti s aspoň jedním anglofonním rodičem a je v originále označován jako *heritage language learners*

(*HLL*). V české odborné literatuře se sice naleznou práce o bilingvní výchově v rodině, ale zapojení těchto dětí do výuky angličtiny jako cizího jazyka zatím zkoumáno nebylo. Podobně dokumenty České školní inspekce věnují pozornost výuce nadaných dětí, avšak už ne specifickým aspektům výuky dětí, které se od vrstevníků neliší ani tak jazykovým talentem, jako spíš předchozí zkušeností s cizím jazykem.

Teoretické základy, představené ve druhé kapitole, jsou rozděleny do dvou oddílů. První z nich se zabývá odbornou literaturou věnovanou specifickým potřebám uvažované cílové skupiny. Nejprve se v pododdílu 2.1.2. probírá případ *HLL*, tedy děti s rodičem, který je rodilým mluvčím cizího jazyka. Ve světové literatuře je ovšem "domácím" jazykem často angličtina a cizím jiný jazyk, někdy i poměrně málo rozšířený ve srovnání s domácím. Z toho pak vyplývají určité odlišnosti oproti námi uvažovanému případu češtiny jako domácího jazyka a angličtiny jako cizího. Například v Severní Americe může být španělština (zejména její latinskoamerická varianta) vnímána jako jazyk nižších sociálních vrstev, což může děti s hispánskými kořeny odrazovat od jejího hlubšího studia. Ne všechny zkušenosti jsou tedy přímo přenositelné do našich podmínek. Nicméně základní poznatky o rozdílech mezi *HLL* a běžnými studenty cizího jazyka jsou jistě cenné. Řada výzkumných prací ukázala, že jazykové dovednosti *HLL* jsou často nerovnoměrně rozvinuty a některé z nich ustrnou na "dětské" úrovni. Obecně *HLL* spoléhají více na intuici a mohou tak být například v gramatice předstížení akademicky orientovanými studenty, kteří se cizí jazyk učí systematicky od základů. Totéž se týká i pokročilé slovní zásoby, preciznosti vyjadřování a psaného projevu. V literatuře jsou popsány případy, kdy se *HLL* dostanou při hodinách "svého" jazyka do stresové situace, protože se od nich očekává (nebo oni sami předpokládají, že se očekává) bezchybné vyjadřování, kterého nejsou schopni.

V pododdílu 2.1.3. se pozornost přesouvá na druhou část cílové skupiny, tedy na navrátilce. Shrnují se zde výsledky studií zaměřených na přínos krátkodobého pobytu v zahraničí k rozvoji jazykových dovedností, které nevedly k jednoznačnému závěru. Mimo jiné jsou popsány případy japonských a korejských dětí, které strávily jistou dobu s rodiči v USA a po návratu do vlasti se jim nepodařilo dále rozvíjet svou angličtinu, přičemž zároveň pokulhávaly za vrstevníky i v mateřštině. Zdůrazňuje se významná role učitele při integraci takových dětí a zároveň volba správné strategie při péči o udržení jazyka. Důležitá je zde zejména dostatečná míra autonomie studenta a

jeho ochota komunikovat, podpořená pomocí učitele při začlenění do nového imaginárního společenství. Učitel by měl dát jasně najevo, že se od studenta neočekává dokonalá znalost všech nuancí daného jazyka.

Druhý oddíl druhé kapitoly je zaměřen na metody, které lze využít k úspěšné výuce cílové skupiny v rámci běžných školních hodin cizího jazyka. Zdůrazňuje se zde význam citlivého přístupu učitele, který by měl vycházet ze znalosti konkrétního žáka a jeho specifík. Doporučuje se nejprve podrobně zmapovat různé aspekty žákovy jazykové výbavy a tomu přizpůsobit individualizované studijní postupy. Učitel by měl v každém případě respektovat specifický přízvuk či dialekt, který si žák při předchozím pobytu v cizině osvojil. Měl by také podporovat a povzbuzovat další žákův kontakt s autentickým jazykovým materiálem. Důležitý je rozvoj širšího kulturního kontextu, např. znalostí literatury, dějin, místopisu a společenských a kulturních aktivit příslušné země či regionu. Vhodné je využití podobných studijních podkladů, se kterými se v této zemi běžně pracuje na hodinách mateřského jazyka.

Pozornost je dále věnována možnostem diferencované výuky, která spočívá ve vytvoření přátelského prostředí, v němž učitel pružně přizpůsobuje tempo, přístup a učební metody rozdílným potřebám jednotlivých studentů. Jednou z možností je zapojit přímo studenty do výběru vhodných postupů. Zmiňují se úskalí spojená s prací studentů ve skupinkách, zejména pokud se spolupráce týká studentů rozdílné úrovně. V takovém případě je podstatné dosáhnout jednoho z příznivých typů interakce, označovaných v literatuře jako kolaborativní vzorec, nebo vzorec "expert–začátečník".

V závěru teoretické části se poukazuje na možnosti hledat inspiraci v oblasti metod, které byly původně vyvinuty pro práci s nadanými studenty. Zdůrazňuje se, že studenti cílové skupiny (tedy *HLL* nebo navrátilci) se sice obecně nevyznačují vyšším nadáním na jazyky než jejich průměrní spolužáci, ale podobně jako při práci s mimořádně nadanými je třeba hledat cesty, jak nejlépe využít jejich potenciálu. V této souvislosti není podstatné, zda je vysoký potenciál dán přirozeným nadáním, nebo předchozí intenzivní jazykovou zkušeností. Dvěma základními rámci pro práci s nadanými studenty jsou (i) urychlení, (ii) zhuštění v kombinaci s obohacením či rozšířením. Druhý z těchto rámců umožňuje nadaným studentům náležitě rozvíjet schopnosti a přitom zůstat členy stejného třídního společenství a podílet se na některých jeho aktivitách, což je obzvláště příhodné pro třídy smíšené úrovně. Specifický učební model byl vyvinut týmem Van Tassel-Baska pod názvem

Integrated Curriculum Model a našel široké uplatnění při výuce angličtiny jako mateřského jazyka. Jeho základní prvky lze využít i při práci se zde uvažovanou cílovou skupinou.

Empirické části diplomové práce je věnována třetí kapitola. Nejprve je popsána použitá metodika. Zdůvodňuje se, proč byl jako základní postup zvolen kvalitativní výzkum formou rozhovoru s vybranými studenty odpovídajícími cílové skupině této práce. Předběžné neformální rozhovory s několika učiteli angličtiny totiž ukázaly, že specifickým potřebám takových studentů nepřikládají velký význam – považují je za zvýhodněné a nevyžadující zvláštní péči. Proto se empirická část práce soustředí na pohled studentů, jejich vnímání vlastních potřeb, pocitů z dosavadní výuky a přání, jak by měla ideálně vypadat. V zájmu dosažení uceleného pohledu a pochopení složitých souvislostí byla metodika založena na třech případových studiích. Každá z nich představuje komplexní profil jednoho studenta, získaný provedením a vyhodnocením polostrukturovaného rozhovoru, který se týkal následujících základních otázek:

- 1) Jak vnímá účastník svou dosavadní výuku v předmětu angličtina jako cizí jazyk?
- 2) Jak vnímá účastník studium angličtiny z hlediska pocitů úzkosti a motivace?
- 3) Jak vnímá účastník svou současnou úroveň angličtiny?
- 4) Co by si účastník přál v souvislosti se studiem angličtiny?

Rozhovory byly provedeny se třemi studenty jednoho pražského gymnázia. Dva z nich patří mezi *HLL* a třetí mezi navrátilce. V zájmu zachování anonymity jsou pro potřeby této práce označeni jako David, Eva a Liz. V době rozhovorů jim bylo 17-18 let. Z rozhovorů byl se souhlasem účastníků pořízen zvukový záznam a byly přepsány v originální podobě, jen s doplněním interpunkce. Kompletní přepisy jsou k dispozici na kompaktním disku v příloze této práce a krátké úryvky jsou použity k dokreslení rozboru výsledků. Po přepsání byly rozhovory zpracovány metodou otevřeného a následně tematického kódování.

Provedené případové studie jsou prezentovány v oddílu 3.2. a jejich výsledky jsou pak podrobně diskutovány a porovnány. Nejprve jsou představeni jednotliví účastníci:

David má českou matku a amerického otce, narodil se v USA a žil tam do svých 6 let. Poté zahájil školní docházku v ČR. Jeho otec nemluví česky, takže s ním David hovoří výhradně anglicky.

Eva má britskou matku a českého otce a žije s nimi od narození v ČR. V předškolních letech byla její angličtina rozvinutější než čeština, protože trávila většinu času s matkou. To se však změnilo během školní docházky. Její matka se navíc naučila česky a Eva tak může v hovoru s ní používat česká slova, pokud nenachází anglická.

Liz má oba rodiče české, ale po 1. třídě základní školy s nimi odjela na 6 let do USA, kde chodila do americké školy. Po návratu pokračovala od 8. třídy v české škole. V rodině mluví česky, anglicky jen příležitostně, když se snaží učit mladšího bratra.

V oddílu 3.2. jsou dále shrnuty odpovědi účastníků na jednotlivé otázky. Ukazuje se, že jejich přístup k používání angličtiny, jejímu studiu a školní výuce se v mnoha ohledech liší, ale je možné rozpoznat určité jevy, které byly v obecné rovině popsány v teoretické části práce. Analýze těchto jevů a diskusi výsledků je věnována čtvrtá kapitola. Konstatuje se zde, že přestože David a Eva patří mezi *HLL*, zatímco "navrátilce" Liz nikoli, najde se více společných rysů mezi Evou a Liz než mezi Evou a Davidem. Obě dívky mají poměrně kritický postoj ke školnímu stylu výuky angličtiny a zdá se, že do značné míry rezignovaly na snahu smysluplně využít školních hodin ke zdokonalení svých jazykových dovedností, jejichž neúplnost si přitom uvědomují. David je spolužák Liz a má stejné učitele, nicméně jeho postoj prodělal pozoruhodný vývoj. Přes počáteční výhrady k jistému učiteli v době rozhovoru uznává jeho mimořádné znalosti a akceptuje způsob výuky založený na nácviu slovní zásoby k jednotlivým tématům a snaze o přesné překlady z češtiny do angličtiny. Naproti tomu Liz, která jediná zažila výuku angličtiny jako "mateřského" jazyka v americké škole, je nespokojená s nutností během hodin neustále přepínat mezi dvěma jazyky a dala by přednost plnému ponoření do angličtiny a práci s autentickým materiálem. Podobné pocity má i Eva, která je ovšem ve třídě s jiným učitelem, podle jejího názoru nedostatečně kompetentním.

V práci je proveden podrobný rozbor a srovnání mnoha dalších aspektů provedených případových studií. Porovnávají se např. způsoby, jakými si jednotliví účastníci osvojili angličtinu a jak ji používají v rodině a v mimoškolním životě, jejich bilingvní identity, školní zkušenosti, pocity úzkosti, motivace, cíle, vnímání současných znalostí a přání týkající se způsobů výuky. Diskuse se týká lingvistických a emocionálních aspektů jejich životních osudů a zařazení do kontextu jazykové výuky v českých školách. Jsou zde také rozebrána některá omezení provedené studie.

V poslední páté kapitole jsou vyvozeny závěry ohledně specifických potřeb žáků, kteří mají anglofonní rodiče nebo žili v anglofonní zemi. Znovu se zde zdůrazňuje, že jednotlivé případy se liší nejen v důsledku rozdílných vnějších okolností, ale i v závislosti na osobnostních rysech konkrétního žáka. Je proto nezbytné, aby se učitelé dostatečně podrobně seznámili se svým žákem a provedli analýzu jeho potřeb. Zároveň by měli mít přehled o pestré nabídce různých pedagogických metod a nástrojů, které mohou sloužit jako inspirace pro volbu vhodného postupu při individualizované péči o optimální rozvoj jazykových dovedností svěřeného žáka. Lze očekávat, že v moderní společnosti se bude zmíněná problematika týkat stále většího počtu osob, a bylo by dobré na takovou výzvu odpovídajícím způsobem reagovat.

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7. APPENDIX

7.1. Tables

Table 4: Profiles of the participants

	David	Eva	Liz
Age	18	17	17
Family background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual family • Language most spoken at home: Czech • Language of the whole family: English • American father • Czech mother • Monolingual Anglophone parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual family • British mother • Czech father • Anglophone parent speaks Czech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language of the family: Czech • Parents: late age of acquisition • Brother proficient in English
Context of English acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English acquisition in naturalistic, English L1 setting • Participant in the USA between ages 0 and 6 • Early literacy skills developed in English • English in educational setting since Grade 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early English acquisition at home • Participant never lived in an English L1 environment • English in educational setting since Grade 3 • Language knowledge acquired “naturally”, not learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English acquisition in naturalistic, English L1 setting • Participant in the USA between ages 6 and 12 • Schooling in the USA until middle school

Table 5: Experience with English classes in the Czech Republic: current school – part I

	David		Eva		Liz	
Characteristics of the teachers	<u>Mr. Horák</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly proficient non-native teacher • Teacher excellent • Teacher as trustworthy expert who sometimes knows better than the participant 	<u>Mr. Horn</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-native speaker, less proficient than students • Teacher “unlikeable” 	<u>Mr. Horák</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly proficient non-native teacher • Teacher speaks British English (seen as problem) • Teacher has low pedagogical skills
	<u>Ms. Smith</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native speaker with great expertise • Taught challenging vocabulary • Able to use Czech as a last resort (seen as positive) 	<u>Ms. Smith</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Nothing special” • Lessons better suited for more active, less shy students 	<u>Ms. Smith</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native speaker, uses British English (again, seen as problem) • Native and non-native teacher have similar styles • Conversation lessons: not helpful, boring • Has asked the students to write essays
	<u>Mr. Prokop</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non native speaker, not particularly proficient • Teacher likeable • Teacher sometimes knows better than the students and sometimes is wrong 				

Table 6: Experience with English classes in the Czech Republic: current school – part II

		David	Eva	Liz
Atmosphere in class and rapport with the teacher	Mr. Horák	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially conflicts with teacher, bad rapport with teacher • Negotiations with teacher • Change in atmosphere • Later good atmosphere • Teacher aware of participant's individual needs 	Mr. Horn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad rapport with teacher • Disrespect towards teacher • Students dissatisfied, not invested • Students correct teacher's mistakes • Students negotiate with teacher • No personal negotiation with teacher • Teacher respects students and seems satisfied, making effort, convinced of own truth • Homogeneous, advanced group, not much left to learn; their needs are individual 	Mr. Horák <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher demanding, too strict, authority figure • Teacher acknowledges participant's level and returnee status (overestimates her?) • Teacher focusing on other students, not on participant's needs • Students dissatisfied, inactive (heritage/returnee students most dissatisfied) • Negotiations with teacher (no outcome)
	Mr. Prokop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good rapport with teacher • Teacher asked for suggestions • High intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the group • Relaxed atmosphere, fun • Collaborative atmosphere • Small conflicts with teacher about language use: not a problem • Teacher not (yet) fully familiar with student's individual needs 		

Table 7: Experience with English classes in the Czech Republic: current school – part III

		David	Eva	Liz
Activities carried out in class	<u>Mr. Horák</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities planned around reading articles, no extensive reading • No textbook, materials designed or adapted by teacher • E-learning tool • Some discussions of language variation • 1 adult native speaker visitor • No extensive reading 	<u>Mr. Horn</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First year textbook, now materials brought by teacher • Translation exercises • Grammar exercises • Reading activities: articles • Role plays • Vocabulary: different topics, not academic • Some discussions of language varieties: vocabulary, grammar • No extensive writing practice • Students asked for IELTS practice • Short presentations • No longer projects • Participation in a buddy program with American students, meetings outside of school 	<u>Mr. Horák</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities planned around reading articles: focus on translations and vocabulary • Students asked to translate and define specific words • No textbook, materials designed or adapted by teacher • Whole-class speaking • E-learning tool: independent work • Occasional listening activities • Some discussion of language varieties • No extensive writing, no essays • No presentations • Participate unaware of the structure of the syllabus <u>Experience with Czech language arts classes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges of being a returnee taken into account • Writing: focus on product, not process • Writing: unclear instructions, stressful
	<u>Mr. Prokop</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets of lessons around same topic • Role plays • CAE, CPE practice • Short essays • Student requests: speaking, exam preparation • Theatre show (plan) • Discussions of informal versus formal English • No more e-learning • No longer projects • Participant unaware of the structure of the syllabus; teacher finds inspiration in current events 		
Characteristics of the instruction	<u>Mr. Horák</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differentiation, but participant allowed to use American English forms 	<u>Mr. Horn</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differentiation 	<u>Mr. Horák</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Czech in the classroom • No differentiation, no individual needs analysis, but participant allowed to use American English forms • Whole-class activities, time constraints • Group work extremely rare
	<u>Mr. Prokop</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons communicative • No differentiation, except anchor activity for participant • Pair work 		

Table 8: Experience with English classes in the Czech Republic: current school – part IV

	David	Eva	Liz
The participant's involvement and feelings in class	<p><u>With Mr. Horák</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant feeling bored • Participant as disruptive element • Change of attitude of the participant (“got used” to the teacher’s style) <p><u>With Mr. Prokop</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in class • Sometimes bored • Participant as disruptive element • Participant as “expert” • Use of learning strategies 	<p><u>With Mr. Horn</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant inactive • Participant bored • Participant resigned to current situation • Participant feeling shy 	<p><u>With Mr. Horák</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant inactive (does not want to participate) • Participant bored • Participant nervous • Participant not fully “switched” into English
The participants' assessment of different aspects of the lessons	<p><u>Mr. Horák's lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially: lessons repetitive • Initially: lessons not enjoyable • In the end: lessons beneficial • E-learning tool: great, challenging, useful (+ allowed for unrelated activities) <p><u>Mr. Prokop's lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons entertaining • Activities interesting • Overall not enough challenge (but CPE practice challenging) • Lessons repetitive • Writing activities not relevant to future needs • Grouping based on 8 proficiency levels: great 	<p><u>Mr. Horn's lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation tasks: unnatural, “robotic” • Vocabulary teaching not efficient • Buddy program: meaningful 	<p><u>Mr. Horák's lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons boring, repetitive, stressful • English as a foreign language classes: have no substance, strange • Focus on language system: terrible • Use of the L1: terrible • Translation tasks: unnatural, feedback too strict • Materials: not interesting, useless vocabulary • Listening: better than reading texts • E-learning tool: best lessons, enjoyable, no stress • Different varieties: confusing • Feedback not very useful • Student assessed on their global language skills: positive
The participants' overall assessment of the lessons	<p><u>Horák's lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most useful English lessons <p><u>Mr. Prokop's lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good • Teacher “as a person” teaches the participant less 	<p><u>Mr. Horn's lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons useless • Lessons not challenging 	<p><u>Mr. Horák's lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons useless, terrible • Not challenging enough • Some classmates might benefit from the lessons • Lessons do not successfully help fight attrition

Table 9: Affective factors

	David	Eva	Liz
Current attitude towards English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitude towards English as a language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitude towards English as a language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitude towards English as a language • Likes the English language better than Czech (more “fun”)
Sources of anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No debilitating anxiety • Confident about his English skills • Potential source of anxiety: insecure about metalinguistic knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence varies based on context • Bothered by unrealistic expectations of “everyone” • Nervous in front of classmates; ashamed of own level • Nervous when talking to native speakers (they notice her mistakes) • More confident with less proficient interlocutors (non-native speakers) • More confident after speaking for a longer time • Less anxiety outside of school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant aware of own weaknesses • Expectations of others • Expectations of teacher • Fear of making mistakes • Bad memory • Participant feels “stupid” • Speaking in front of large group • Switching between languages • Being asked about specific words • Less anxiety outside of school
Motivation/investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of weakness leads to increased motivation • High intrinsic and extrinsic motivation • Autonomous efforts, learning strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Took her English proficiency for granted; has internalized the idea that she does not need to study • Has not developed good study habits, “lazy” • No facilitating anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech school context not authentic; a priori low expectations • EFL classes confusing, would rather not have them; English least favorite subject • School demotivates the participant • Does not want to learn theory, no motivation to remember details • Enthusiastic about study abroad, misses America

Table 10: Current English proficiency level – part I

	David	Eva	Liz
Current level of English in general terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of English very good • Relatively stable performance across contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of English quite good • Limited linguistic repertoire • Performance highly context-dependent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to say • Her English has some gaps • Performance highly context-dependent
Current level of English compared to Czech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech dominant • Good translation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech dominant • Used to have problems with Czech • English used to be dominant • Finds translating between the two languages unnatural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall about the same, English perhaps better (intuition, reading) • Czech language attrition during life abroad (now negative transfer from English, although more fluent in Czech) • Finds translating between the two languages unnatural
Current level compared to native speakers of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost native-like level • Slightly lower level than educated Americans • Same as average American 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower level than native speakers • More proficient than some bilingual friends, less proficient than others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her English did not progress beyond middle-school level • Has a better awareness of grammar than native speakers
Current English level compared to classmates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classmates very proficient • Participant’s English better but not by much • Has some returnee classmates • No need to modify his speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classmates very proficient • Classmates at the same level or even better • Participant ashamed of own level compared to classmates • Has some returnee classmates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant unsure of level of classmates • Has some HLL classmates
Current level of English compared to teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current teacher less proficient • Past: only 1 Czech teacher more proficient than the participant • Past: 1 native teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current teacher not sufficiently proficient • Had 1 native teacher in the past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current teacher highly proficient • Has a native teacher for conversation classes
Current level compared to past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has been somewhat improving (grammar, vocabulary, formal register) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluctuations • Overall stagnation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past: English native-like • Plateau after Grade 7 • Now attrition
Current level compared to their own potential for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for more balanced bilingualism • Could improve in some areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for more balanced bilingualism • Could and should improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for more balanced bilingualism • Wants to improve • Would improve in authentic setting

Table 11: Current English proficiency level – part II

	David	Eva	Liz
Strengths in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking: ability to communicate and express any thought • Pronunciation • Practical use of grammar • Reading • Able to consciously modify his speech when giving lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native-like intuition • Practical use of grammar • Wide passive vocabulary • Pronunciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native-like intuition • Practical use of grammar • Wide passive vocabulary • Reading • Pronunciation (when able to practice)
Weaknesses in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active use of advanced vocabulary • Theoretical knowledge of grammar • Writing (?): has all the necessary knowledge, but almost no practice • Is more familiar with informal language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary (especially active use) • Lack of fluency when not allowed to code-switch • Theoretical knowledge of grammar • Writing (?): lack of practice • Reading • Difficulties translating specific words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical knowledge of grammar • Difficulties translating • Gradually losing native-like pronunciation • Writing (?): not confident • Some vocabulary knowledge too vague • Confused about language varieties

Table 12: Current English proficiency level – part III

	David	Eva	Liz
Needs in the language classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced vocabulary and terminology (words which cannot be circumlocuted) Writing practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing practice Extensive speaking practice (topics not discussed at home) Become a more balanced bilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced vocabulary Extensive speaking practice (focus on fluency) Improve beyond middle school level
Needs not being met in the EFL classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of suitable writing practice Lack of connection between real world needs and lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient advanced English input Vocabulary learning at school not efficient Lack of speaking practice Lack of suitable writing practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EFL lessons: inauthentic context Lack of speaking practice No extensive writing practice, no process writing Insufficient English input Lack of advanced vocabulary Lack of connection between real world needs and lessons
Needs being met in the EFL classroom: present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons help understand linguistic nuances Lessons help make grammar knowledge more explicit Lessons help build vocabulary Lessons increase motivation Good practice (CPE, grammar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buddy program (authentic use of English, contact with different culture) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons “useless”
Needs met in the EFL classroom: past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher able to answer advanced questions (T1) Native teacher (T3) with great expertise, helped with vocabulary: advanced, academic, relevant, useful Instruction raised the participant’s awareness of own weaknesses; served as motivating factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None mentioned explicitly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some differentiation provided by primary school teacher

Table 13: The participants' wishes in terms of English instruction

	David	Eva	Liz
Unprompted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful writing practice • Participant would like native speaker visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive speaking practice in pairs • English-only instruction • Immersion in Anglophone environment • Topics not discussed at home • Writing practice • Unsure of what could serve as motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English-only instruction, English immersion • Content-based instruction • Language arts approach, process writing • Learning new skills through English • Different approach: more input for classmates, students more active • Independent work: fun, motivating • Speaking: pair work • Native speaker visits • Teacher: not an authority figure • American English • CPE practice • No translations, no presentations
Prompted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language arts materials: unsure – too easy? • Longer projects: unsure • Differentiation: not realistic • Expert role: not needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer projects: active and authentic use of English outside the classroom • Content-based instruction: yes • English-only instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLL/returnee group/class: yes • Unsure if English lessons could help develop her Czech • Other subjects in English • Participant as “expert”: yes • English for authentic purposes • Combining individual work acting as “expert” and regular class participation