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Thesis

**CZECH TEEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD AND VIEWS
OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval/a samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

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ABSTRACT

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Language attitudes are crucial in language learning and teaching. They are influenced by many factors. The thesis examines attitudes of 9th-grade and 6th-grade students toward English language and English language learning and explores whether there are differences between the attitudes of these two age groups. It also explores the variables which may influence these language attitudes. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with thirty students from an elementary school in Pilsen. The study has shown that both groups of students (6th and 9th-grade learners) had positive attitude towards the English language. No significant difference between the language attitudes of the two groups of learners was found. The majority of the students enjoy learning English and perceive it important for their future studies and careers. English was also found important for traveling purposes. The parents of the students showed support to their children's English language learning and most of them considered it important. The participants from both groups were generally satisfied with the way English was taught in their school.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	2
The Status of the English Language.....	2
English Today	2
English in The Czech Republic.....	4
Attitudes in language learning.....	4
Types of Attitudes.....	6
The Role of Attitudes in Language Learning and Teaching.....	7
What Affects Attitudes	8
<i>Personality in Second Language Acquisition</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Personal Attitude Towards the L2 Community</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Social and Educational Factors</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Past Successes and Failures.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Other Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward English</i>	<i>12</i>
Motivation in Language Learning.....	13
Motivation	13
The Relationship Between Attitudes and Motivation.....	14
Current Studies on Attitudes Towards English Language	14
Summary	18
III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	20
The Aim of the Study.....	20
Respondent Groups	20
Research method.....	21
Data Collection Procedure	22
Data Analysis Procedure	22
IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES	23
6th Grade Students.....	23
I. Student's relationship and attitude toward English.....	23
Commentary	26
II. Primary factors influencing student's attitudes toward English and English language learning.....	26
Commentary	27
III. English as a school subject	28

Commentary	30
IV. Other factors influencing the attitudes toward English and English language learning	31
Commentary	32
V. Student's English - fundamental information	32
Commentary	34
9th Grade Students	34
I. Student's Relationships and attitude toward English	34
Commentary	37
II. Primary factors influencing student's attitudes toward English and English language learning	38
Commentary	39
III. English as a school subject	40
Commentary	42
IV. Other factors influencing the attitudes toward English and English language learning	43
Commentary	44
V. Student's English - fundamental information	45
Commentary	47
Data Comparison	48
I. Student's Relationships and attitude toward English	48
II. Primary factors influencing student's attitudes toward English and English language learning	51
III. English as a school subject	52
IV. Other factors influencing the attitudes toward English and English language learning	53
V. Student's English - fundamental information	55
V. IMPLICATIONS	57
Pedagogical Implications	57
Limitations of the Research	57
Suggestions for Further Research	57
VI. CONCLUSIONS	59
REFERENCES	60
APPENDICES	62
Appendix A - Semi-structured interview in English	62
Appendix B - Semi-structured interview in Czech	66
SUMMARY IN CZECH	70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.....	23
Table 2.....	25
Table 3.....	27
Table 4.....	29
Table 5.....	35
Table 6.....	36
Table 7.....	39
Table 8.....	42
Table 9.....	48
Table 10.....	49
Table 11.....	50
Table 12.....	51
Table 13.....	52
Table 14, 15.....	54

I. INTRODUCTION

Language attitudes play a very important role in the learning process and they can be affected by different social, educational, and other factors. First, the theoretical part of the thesis explores the status of the English language, then the topic of attitudes, different attitude classifications, and their essential role in learning. Next variables that may shape these attitudes are discussed, Then the chapter discusses motivation and its relationship with attitudes. Finally, a few current studies on English language attitudes are presented.

The practical part includes a chapter Research Methodology where the aim of the study, the description of the participant groups, and the research method used in the study are described. For the purposes of this study, thirty students from the 26th elementary school in Pilsen were interviewed to understand their stances toward English language and English language learning. After that in the chapter Results and Commentaries of the thesis, the data gathered during the research process are presented along with the author's commentaries. The next chapter Implications deals with some pedagogical implications drawn from the study. The final part of the thesis is the Conclusion where the main points of the whole paper are displayed.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter presents the theoretical background on learners' attitudes and motivation toward English. Firstly, it explores current English language learning, its status, and the role of the language in the Czech Republic. Secondly, it explains what attitudes toward a language are, the types, and the influences placed upon the students' learning which may arise from the inside or outside the student's field of action.

The Status of the English Language

English has undergone many changes and has been through many stages throughout its history. Old English was followed by Middle English and then Modern English. These days we talk about another period in the history of English, the phase of 'Global English' (Graddol, 2006). When speaking about the global characteristic of English it is also relevant to mention ELF (English as a Lingua Franca). Lingua franca typically served as a mutual means of communication among speakers from different linguistic backgrounds. English as Lingua Franca has become the world's primary lingua franca.

English Today

English as a global means of communication exists in many different forms and varieties and presents a linguistic commonality in all parts of the world. For many learners, it is a foreign language but it is "...international in its significance" (Getie, 2020, p. 2). With English, there is "an extraordinary diversity in how English is taught and learned around the world" (Graddol, 2006, p. 82). Crystal (2003) declares when learning English, you may "be strongly motivated to learn it because you know it will put you in touch with more people than any other language" (Crystal, 2003, p. 2).

Jenkins (2014) elaborates on various explanations which define standard English. One of the definitions introduces standard English as a kind of English learned by all native speakers while most of them do not use it in spoken form. Jenkins (2014) implies that standard language is presupposed to be a norm when referring to it as a language variety. With that being said, "It is the variety held up as the optimum for educational purposes and used as a yardstick against which other varieties of the language are measured" (Jenkins, 2014, p. 21). Strevens (1981) addresses that even though Standard English is approved as the education target it does not signify that it is the 'best' choice in a general sense. However Standard English offers a sense

of unification as it represents grammatical and lexical attributes for language teaching and creates a firmer ground for the diversity of the English language (Strevens, 1981).

Jenkins (2014) describes three types of English using Kachru's three-circle model - three types of World English. Kachru's model suggests there is an Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle includes native speakers, the Outer Circle makes up of second or additional language speakers and the Expanding Circle comprises all EFL. This model has certain limitations as it is based on geography and history without focusing on how English speakers use and perceive the language these days.

Jenkins (2003) presents a division of English according to the use of the language which has also been debated and brought up by various scholars. This traditional categorization presents us with ENL (English as a native language), ESL (English as a second language, and EFL (English as a foreign language). The world's largest English language user group is now speakers of ELF (English as a Lingua Franca). English of ENL is also called English as a mother tongue as it consists of speakers who were born and raised in any of the countries where English was spoken as the first language historically. Such countries include the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. ESL refers to English spoken in countries such as India, Nigeria, Bangladesh, or Singapore which used to be colonized by the English. Countries of EFL were not colonized by English and its speakers would acquire the language for communication purposes with natives from the UK and the US (Jenkins, 2014).

Graddol (2006) remarks that 'English as a Foreign Language' has been a dominant approach to learning and teaching English around the world. This model places the learner in the position of an outsider and the target language is viewed as somebody else's mother tongue. 'English as a Second Language' and EFL are two traditions formed by the change and development of pedagogic practices and represent the foundations of the new present-day models of English. Ellis (1994) acknowledges the difference between second and foreign language acquisition: "In the case of second language acquisition, the language plays an institutional and social role in the community" (Ellis, 1994, p. 11-12). Foreign language learning takes place primarily in a classroom and does not represent an essential role in the community (Ellis, 1994).

English in The Czech Republic

Currently, English doesn't have the status of the first foreign language; however, it is widely taught. English is taught as a foreign language and similarly to its international status in the world, it plays a significant role in the area of our focus.

English being a global language is used as a lingua franca among European countries including the Czech Republic. Czech linguists agree which suggests that "English is currently the most influential foreign language for Czech out of all languages whose influence can be observed" (Kaderka and Prošek, 2014, p. 182).

The English language is present in a lot of areas of communication but its omnipresence cannot be supported by enough evidence. Despite that English places a significant influence on the language situation in the Czech Republic as Kaderka and Prošek implies: "English in the CR has the prestige of being the primary language for international communication" (Kaderka and Prošek, 2014, p. 195). Within the Czech educational system, one of the roles English represents is the role of a school subject. In regards to this matter English language is offered already in preschool grades (Kaderka and Prošek, 2014, p. 182).

A study of the educational environment based on the attitudes towards English as a subject at schools conducted by Pavelková and Škaloudová (2011) suggests that Czech students consider English a very important and relevant subject. On top of that, they find it fairly enjoyable and not very difficult regarding its acquisition.

Attitudes in language learning

In this section definitions of attitudes are presented along with various types of attitudes, attitudes in language learning, and influences of different variables affecting them.

From the social-psychological perspective, attitudes are "defined as a set of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions towards different language varieties" (Chengchen & Wei, 2022, p. 2). According to another definition proposed by Delić (2020), attitudes stand for "beliefs or opinions about a certain issue" which in our case is the language itself. They also stand for reactions to objects and factors related to genetics which can be assessed in the learning process (Delić, 2020). Attitudes are situational concepts that are taught and learned. Attitudes can therefore be shaped and changed (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). Gardner (1985) implies that

attitude is a kind of evaluative reaction to a certain attitudinal object which is deduced based on the learner's set of beliefs and opinions about that object. Roos (1990) proposes that language attitudes mean much more than sole attitudes do because the attitude toward a language encompasses the perception of the target language group. Bratož (2019) expresses that "Language attitudes play a vital role in the way individuals and societies perceive, and communicate with other cultures..." (Bratož, 2019, p. 1). Attitudes arise in a specific ideological, cultural, and political context and they shift frequently during periods thus many scholars study the language attitudes of groups of different age and cultural backgrounds (Bratož, 2019).

Attitudes toward language learning possess a key role in the learning process itself. If we view attitude as a concept directed toward a certain object we can perceive attitude to language as an entity that can be viewed as favorable or unfavorable. In reality, attitudes toward language refer to many more aspects including dialects, speakers, language learning, language use, and others (Ianos et al, 2017). Learners may develop attitudes to a language at all its levels such as its spelling, grammar, punctuation, accent, pronunciation, dialects, and languages (Garrett, 2010)

Zainol Abidin (2012) interprets Wenden's (1991) comprehensive definition of the attitudinal concept. According to him, attitude can be divided into three interconnected components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitude. The cognitive aspect refers to beliefs, thoughts, and opinions about the object of the attitude. The affective component represents the learner's feelings and emotions toward the object. It is believed that the inner emotions and feelings of second language learners influence and change their attitudes toward the target language. And the behavioral one: "involves the tendency to adopt particular learning behaviors" (Zainol Abidin, 2012, p. 121). Zainol Abidin (2012) furthermore suggests that achievement is reliant on the learners' attitudes towards learning the language. Therefore, language acquisition should be perceived not only as an academic phenomenon but also as a social and psychological one. Additionally, language attitudes may be perceived in terms of input and output therefore attitudes toward a language "would be expected not only to influence our reactions to other language users around us but also to help us anticipate others' responses to our language use and so influence the language choices that we make as we communicate" (Garrett, 2010, p. 21).

Types of Attitudes

One's attitude and also the process of language learning can be influenced by the teacher, the nature of the language, or factors that include attitudes toward the group of people who speak the language. According to Gardner (1985) from the social point of view, two types of attitudes exist - attitudes toward learning the language and attitudes toward the other-language community. The first type is more achievement-oriented whereas the second one is based on relationship variables.

Delić (2020) implies that attitudes towards language learning “represent reactions to objects and environmental factors in the learning process that can be evaluated, can be positive and negative” (Delić, 2020, p. 70). Positive or negative attitudes toward language present one of the basic classifications of this phenomenon. Learning is enhanced by a positive attitude, negative attitudes can decelerate the learning acquisition as the learner can find himself unmotivated, not interested, or have other issues with language learning (Delić, 2020).

Attitudes can be classified according to their specificity and generality. Attitudes towards learning a certain language are more specific as it describes a particular activity and a particular perspective of the learner. When talking about ‘an interest in a certain language’ the dimension in which we find ourselves is much more general than the attitude toward learning the language. What Gardner (1985) is suggesting is that this fairly specific concept shows the multi-dimensional aspect of the phenomenon.

Naturally, some attitudes are more relevant for second language acquisition than others. This relevance lies in the relationship between attitude and the different achievement factors. Gardner (1985) describes another possible way to classify attitudes regarding this relevance to second language achievement. An individual can hold a positive or negative attitude toward learning a language. In this situation, achievement correlates with attitudes. Learners with positive attitudes are more likely to “be more attentive in the learning situation, would take assessments more seriously, would find it more rewarding to simply experience the language, and thus achieve more” (Gardner, 1985, p. 41).

Educational versus social attitudes present the last attitude division which is also connected to the aspect of relevance but includes other implications. Academic perspectives comprise all the different educational factors a language learner comes across in the learning process: attitude towards the teacher, the course, and the language acquisitional attitudes refer to the cultural

implications of second language learning. Personal views and opinions of the native social group can shape language acquisition (Gardner, 1985).

The Role of Attitudes in Language Learning and Teaching

It is important to understand the difference between an attitude and a language attitude as they do not present us with the same focus point. Roos (1990) differentiates attitudes and language attitudes. In general attitudes from the social-psychological point of view are considered a learned disposition that regulates one's thoughts, emotions, and actions towards a subject or a person. These attitudes, as mentioned in the previous chapter consist of affective, cognitive, and behavioral components. When talking about language attitudes we have to bear in mind that these types of attitudes signify more than an attitude toward the language, it includes an attitude toward the target cultural group or community. Language being an inseparable part of cultural identity proposes the fact that language learning is an acculturation process (Roos, 1990)

Attitudes in language are an important part of L2 learning and they affect and influence the process of learning in a significant way. Chengchen (2022) argues that successful language learning does not occur when the speaker does not possess a positive attitude toward the language. Attitudes are therefore considered crucial in both teaching and learning a language.

The concept of language attitudes is complex and is influenced by many factors including the learner's upbringing, and differences in gender or age. The differences and situations including attitudes toward learning a second language are related to achievement in that language (Gardner, 1985).

Students' attitudes are an inseparable part of their learning process and thus they should be considered and acted upon in the field of second or foreign language learning pedagogy. Understanding attitudes helps not only the students themselves but also the teacher who can then better attend to the student's needs and difficulties (Getie, 2020).

Getie (2020) remarks that attitudes influence behavior, individual mood, success, and achievement. All these factors then affect and are reflected in learning. Moreover, attitudes are grouped with other factors such as empathy, self-esteem, anxiety, imitation, and others which constitute a so-called 'affective' or emotional side of human behavior that influences second language acquisition (Brown, 2007).

What Affects Attitudes

Second language acquisition comes with plenty of obstacles that learners face and need to overcome. These obstacles can affect and influence the learning process greatly, whether that be positively or negatively. This section aims to explain what aspects affect attitudes and why they are significant when it comes to language learning.

Attitudes are formed by many different factors. Social factors belong here as well as personality factors of the individuals who learn English as a second language and many more (Getie, 2020). The main theme of Gardner's social and psychological model of second language acquisition is the fact that second language learning happens within a certain cultural context. The beliefs of the community which encompasses the importance of learning a second language or the expectations of skill development might become influential in the acquiring of a second language (Gardner, 1985).

Personality in Second Language Acquisition

Chengchen & Wei (2022) describe a four-step process in which students develop a language learning attitude. The first part is the cognitive process where students create a basic understanding of the language and its language class. After that comes the affective process, which consists of developing feelings such as excitement, boredom, frustration, happiness, confidence, adequacy, and inadequacy...as a response to their perception of the language. As a next step, students assess these feelings. Lastly, these assessments transform into certain behaviors.

Brown (2007) indicates the most significant variables which play a role in affecting the success of the learner in SLA. These factors include intellect capacities, abilities, strengths and weaknesses, life experiences, and overall personality composition. Gardner (1985) interprets four main individual variables which are transferred into the second language acquisition contexts: intelligence, language aptitude, motivation, and situational anxiety.

Zhang (2008) voices an interesting connection between extroversion and introversion with SLA. The difficulty of language acquisition may vary due to certain social factors. Studies concerning this have been realized and they have shown that extroverts learn a second language more effortlessly and easily than introverted learners. Shy students are more likely to not speak up and use L2 to not embarrass themselves while extroverted speakers do not find it difficult to

speak L2 even with the uncertainty of succeeding. A possible attitudinal difference can be found concerning introversion: “Introversion has the greatest chance of negatively affecting SLA” (Zhang, 2008, p. 1).

Personality variables such as empathy, cognitive styles, anxiety, and age can indicate different attitudes toward a second language (Gardner, 1985). Teachers present a valuable information source as many of them can see links between how the personalities of their students influence their learning and how they are linked to second language achievement (Gardner, 1985).

Getie (2020) raises an interesting idea concerning the learner’s personal profile. The factor of risk-taking has been researched in the past as it is linked with achievement and success in second language learning. Individuals who appear to be sensitive to rejection may not participate in the classroom as much as the ones who are more confident and are not afraid of failure or disapproval. Age plays a crucial role in this problem. During adolescence fear, embarrassment, performing in front of the class, and judgment are all intensified which can discourage risk-taking which may create negative attitudes.

Personal Attitude Towards the L2 Community

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), it is a learner's attitude toward the target language that impacts language acquisition and achievement the most. Attitudes toward the language highly correlate with the target language and its speakers. Gardner (1985) mentions a study that demonstrates that teachers or the didactic material used in class might contribute to the student’s ideas of the language community. It has been suggested that when being exposed to and learning a second language one experiences and gains certain cultural information which leads to more positive attitudes toward the community. Language acquisition as well as language subjects presume acquiring skills and behaviors which are typical of the target community. (Gardner, 1985).

Social and Educational Factors

Parents’ Role

Parents represent one of the most influential factors when it comes to their children’s attitudes and perceptions of any school-led subject.

In the area of social context, one important influencing aspect of language acquisition is the learners' parents. The stances toward language learning are shaped by the parents' types of education, religion, socioeconomic position, culture, and even the knowledge of the second language. Getie (2020) echoes Larsen and Long's (1991) investigations which illustrate the reflection of an almost similarity of the student's attitudes toward the target language with the ones of their parents. Parents introduce a special variable: "Attitudes can be learned in similar processes. Parents have a special and strong influence on their children's attitudes." (Getie, 2020, p. 12)

Getie (2020) explains C. R. Gardner and Lambert's idea (1972) of active and passive role distinction. When parents actively encourage their children to acquire the language they present an active involvement and an active role in bettering the children's learning performance. Gardner (1985) echoes that parents can affect their children's attitudes toward the language unfavorably if they: "express negative opinions about the other language community, thus developing similar attitudes in their children" (Gardner, 1985, p. 110). Learning a foreign language does not involve only intrinsic motivation but also the attitudinal variables of the learner's parents.

Teachers' Role

Teachers present a crucial figure in the formation and development of motivation and attitudes toward English as a language and the English taught in classrooms as a school subject. Teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions in teaching English are reflected in the students' views of that language. Teachers' role in SLA is closely related to the educational context where the acquisition takes place. Getie (2020) mentions Coteh's (2002, p.193) factors influencing learners' attitudes, they include the overall atmosphere of learning, the interaction between students and between students and the teacher, the dynamics of the classroom, and how the teacher is dedicated to the student's learning. Dornyei (2001) contends that similar expectations, attitudes, and beliefs of the language that the teacher introduces are taken over by the students.

Naturally, positive interactions, favorable feelings, as well as experiences between the teacher and learners, create positive attitudes toward second language acquisition. Among other variables influencing attitudes toward SLA directly belong to the teacher's personality, knowledge of the language, classroom management skills, and professionalism (Getie, 2020). Teachers who forcibly make students speak English, place punishments, or react negatively to

students cause the learners to create negative attitudes toward the language. These unfavorable attitudes have then a harmful effect on motivation as well (Delić, 2020).

Hinkel (2016) deals with teachers' role in the classroom and their way of interpreting the sociological aspects of their work because a second language classroom is a place with a great mixture of languages and language varieties. Teachers should attend to these noticeable diversities because the way they get presented to the students shapes their attitudes toward the language itself. Hinkel (2016) goes on to argue that even unfavorable and badly informed views of teachers can impede successful, efficient, and stimulating communication in the classroom. Teachers' influences on young learners are very prominent which is why they should be provided with the most current well-informed facts and figures about the language they teach. Delić (2020) exclaims that students may develop negative attitudes toward second language learning due to the teacher providing insufficient and unstimulating, non-authentic materials and tasks. Inappropriate class materials might contribute to unfavorable learning environments and are a very valuable predictor of students' attitudes.

Ahmed (2015) acknowledges that a teacher or an instructor is a very essential part of a student's learning process and positive attitude development. He also remarks that the teacher's task is to excite the learners' interest and involve them in the topic and the subject. The choice of tasks, and linguistic content creates a space for an effective and successful learning environment. Teachers impact their students: "It is by their attitude to class participation, their conscientiousness, their humour, and their seriousness that they may influence their students" (Ahmed, 2015, p. 15).

Past Successes and Failures

According to Gardner (1985), a combination of knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation with communicative competence makes up for what is called achievement in second language acquisition (Gardner, 1985). There seems to exist a correlation between past successes and failures and attitudes which is often experienced by English language learners. This fact is not necessarily linked only with attitudes toward acquiring English but with learning in general. Ahmed (2015) declares that success and failure poses an essential role in students' motivation. He goes on to add that 'complete success' and 'complete failure' may be discouraging. The achievement of students in class is directly connected to the role and

competence of the teacher: “It will be the teacher’s job to set goals and tasks at which most of his or her students can be successful” (Ahmed, 2015, p. 15).

Other Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward English

Oroujlou & Vahedi (2011) concedes a fairly abundant list of factors that may influence the attitudes of an individual which: “include references to family socialization, peer group influence, specific events in the individual’s past, sources of anxiety, basic strivings, mechanisms of defense, education, income, occupation, mass media, class affiliation, residence, religion, and host of personal variables including intelligence, age, sex, interests, and aptitude” (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011, p. 997).

Roos (1990) explains the idea of stereotypes influencing language attitudes. Stereotypes are a part of the cognitive aspect of attitudes and are: “formed by personal experience, one’s own emotional needs, and by what one is told by others” (Roos, 1990, p. 26). Because stereotypes are a part of attitudes they may generate certain barriers to language learning as people usually gravitate toward the categorization of others based on their accent or pronunciation.

Attitudes start developing in early childhood and they are formed by getting in contact with people and other affective factors. Getie (2020) encourages the suggestion of learners’ peer groups being another influential factor in language attitude formation. He declares that there is a great influence coming from the learner's peer group when it comes to attitudes toward learning a second language. These influences may be even more strong than the ones of parental figures. Getie (2020) points out that: “The learners’ age is one of the characteristics which determine the way in which an individual approaches second language learning” (Getie, 2020, p. 14). The role of age has been under discussion by many researchers and sociolinguists. Some suggest that adult learners possess a better rate of learning grammar whereas young second language learners are supposed to do better than adults because of the link to the critical period hypothesis during which language learning can happen naturally and without any particular effort (Getie, 2020). Attitudes towards learning a second language are believed to also relate to differences in gender. Female learners showed to have considerably more positive attitudes than male learners do and: “sex differences in achievement are eliminated once adjustments are made to take into account such attitudinal differences” (Gardner, 1985, p. 43).

Among the so-called internal factors which can influence the attitudes of a learner Le, X. M., & Le, T. T. (2022) categorize students' self-confidence. It plays a vital role in the learners' motivation and teachers are to encourage students' self-efficacy otherwise they might lose interest or desire to learn the language. If students have feelings of anxiety, it might affect their activity in classes and hence they may not be exposed to practicing the language enough to acquire it efficiently. Anxiety is linked with the next variable which is the willingness to take risks as it also influences their participation in class, their learning, and their attitudes towards that process (Le, X. M., & Le, T. T., 2022).

Motivation in Language Learning

The next section explains the meaning of motivation, approaches to motivation, and the relationship between attitudes and motivation.

Motivation

Behind every student's language learning process, there is an attitudinal as well as a motivational dimension which will be commented on further in the theoretical part of the thesis.

Hinkel (2016) points out Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 426) who claim motivation is presumably the second most relevant factor and predictor for learning a language. Motivation in learning as well as attitude is connected with achievement in second language learning. Learners evince a certain effort and submit themselves to goal-directed activity. Gardner acknowledges: "Moreover, questioning the person would show a desire or 'want' for the goal in question and favorable attitudes toward the activity of learning the language." (Gardner, 1985, p. 50) Motivation involves four dimensions: a goal, behavior led by effort and wanting to attain the goal, and positive attitudes to the activity (Gardner, 1985).

Students may be motivated to learn English for many reasons. They may have a favorable attitude toward the English culture or the pedagogical figure teaching them. Motivation and attitudes are two different concepts, however. "An attitude is a set of beliefs and motivation is a reason for doing something" (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). To maintain motivation in class, students need interaction, input, opportunities for output, and quality instruction. Language teachers need to understand the tenets of motivation and what effect it places on learning (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). The concept of motivation is usually presented along with various

aspects like personality or emotion, called 'affective' factors. These may be involved in the acquisition of a second language (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991).

Many different approaches to motivation have been dealt with. The traditional one has been associated with a social-psychological limitation: "Motivation has been consistently linked with attitudes towards the community of speakers of the target language, with interest in interacting with such speakers, and with some degree of self-identification with the target language community" (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p. 471). Gardner and Lambert's approach introduced the classification between integrative and instrumental motivation for the first time which placed a good influence on issues in this area. Integrative motivation represents positive attitudes toward the target language and the possibility of integration or interest in the native group of people of the target language. More practical and function-oriented reasons such as the want of being involved in better employment, getting a promotion, or fulfilling the required criteria to pass an examination have been linked to instrumental motivation (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991).

The Relationship Between Attitudes and Motivation

Getie (2020) comments on the relationship between motivation and attitudes. Attitude is a complex issue that affects and influences motivation and hence the learning process and the successful learners can accomplish.

Both motivation and attitudes arrange for the first incentive to start second language acquisition, however, the aspects of attitude and motivation differ. Attitudes can be understood as: "a set of beliefs and motivation is a reason for doing something. This can be confusing because a set of beliefs can be a reason for doing it. So you may be motivated to learn English because of your attitude towards English culture, or your teacher" (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011, p. 997).

Current Studies on Attitudes Towards English Language

Numerous studies have been conducted on the topic of attitudes toward learning English. In this part several fairly recent studies on this topic are mentioned and their outcomes and findings are discussed.

Research on motivation and attitudes in ESL, based on Gardner's AMTB Attitude/Motivation Test Battery was executed by Ghazvini & Khajepour (2011). The research went on to

investigate Iranian high school students' attitudes and motivation toward English language acquisition. A questionnaire was the method administered to obtain the required information. The main purpose of the research was to conclude whether or not there is a difference between girls' and boys' types of motivation and positive and negative attitudes. Data from this survey showed results that exhibit a slight difference between girls' and boys' motivation - girls seemed to be more inclined towards studying English than boys and possessed motivation that was more instrumental than integrative. There was no significant difference between the girls and boys regarding negative or positive attitudes. In general respondents from the researched high school had a positive attitude to learning English as a second language (Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011).

Zainol Abidin (2012) investigated attitudes toward learning English in regard to the three attitudinal concepts: behavioral, cognitive, and affective aspects. His research was carried out on different regional Libyan secondary school students and one of the goals was to understand if there was any relevant difference in the attitudes when it came to gender, the field of study, or the year of study. Data was acquired via a questionnaire that aimed to explore students' attitudes and the possible differences between these attitudes. The survey revealed that students possessed a rather negative attitude toward learning English to which the researcher ascribes the possibility of the unfavorable impact of traditional instructional methods and other teaching techniques used by the teachers. The author emphasizes the importance of teachers encouraging students to participate and collaborate during activities in class so they can acquire the language effectively because the students scored very low on the cognitive and emotional aspect scale in the research. Significant differences in attitudes were discovered related to gender and field of study. Female students proved a slightly higher attitude toward English than male students did (Zainol Abidin, 2012).

A qualitative study by Ahmed (2015) researched the attitudes of over two hundred undergraduate EFL students from Malaysia. For the study, the researcher used a questionnaire that focused on and went on to investigate three variables: the attitudes of the students towards the use of English in various areas, possible influences on the way students learn the language, and opinions of English learning among students with non-English majors. According to the data obtained in this study, attitudes towards the status of English turned out to be on the positive side immensely. Data also showed that these students understand the importance of the

language and know what they need to achieve and are therefore very much interested in learning English (Ahmed, 2015).

In a more recent study, Herwiana & Laili (2019) looked into students' attitudes from four public elementary schools in Jombang, Indonesia. The mentality of people in Indonesia indicates the importance of English language subjects at schools, and English language acquisition as it contributes to the quality of life. The method used to collect data for this particular study was a questionnaire analyzed quantitatively. The main aim was to understand whether the students manifest positive or negative attitudes towards English as a school subject, towards the language teaching and teacher performance, the didactic methods implemented by teachers, and other variables from the educational context. The outcomes of this research demonstrated that attitudes towards the English language in the four schools are positive, students expressed a favorable perspective on English subjects and on top of that concluded they feel engagement, happiness, and self-confidence in learning the tongue (Herwiana & Laili).

One of the many rather recent studies conducted is that of factors influencing the attitudes toward second language learning. Getie (2020) researches attitudes of high school students from the Debre Markos government Comprehensive High school in Ethiopia via questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The researcher suggests that to have a positive attitude toward learning a foreign language, students ought to believe in the importance of the target language and value it. Not seeing the value nor the importance of the language would stand for a negative attitude. The three research questions included the following points: whether the students have attitudinal problems toward learning English, what are the variables that affect their attitudes and if positively or negatively, and how much these variables influence the students' English language attitudes. The study came to the conclusion that the students do not have any attitudinal problems and they possess mainly positive attitudes toward English language learning because they realize and understand the relevance and role of the language. Findings indicate that social variables such as English native speakers, students' peer groups, and students' parents have a favorable and positive impact on their attitudes. However, the educational context affects the attitudes negatively. The study has concluded that English language teachers in this school have shown to be lacking the use of good examples and tasks when teaching and failed to encourage the learners to use the language inside and outside the institution. Another unfavorable factor affecting the students' perceptions of English that arose

during the research was that the physical environment and equipment of the schools' classrooms are rather poor (Getie, 2020).

Another large-scale study focused on the attitudinal and motivational aspects of learning English was conducted by Imsa-ard (2020). The focus group was secondary school students in Thailand. The method used for collecting data was a motivational survey adapted from Gardner's AMTB (Attitude/Motivation Test Battery). The author claims that motivation and attitudes ought to be investigated because of their mutual interconnection and their important role in the learning process. This survey has shown that students are positively and intrinsically motivated - they believe English is an important language, and that it allows them to broaden their travel opportunities. The data has proved some anxiety present when speaking to foreigners and during English classes. These findings have established a strong impact on the student's motivation and attitudes. Teachers were one of the key factors which students said influenced their motivation and attitudes toward learning the English language. Parents' role indicated to contribute to the learners' motivation and dedication towards language learning. The majority of the respondents expressed that their parents view English as very important and thus want their children to know it well. This part of the study proved the links between parents' and students' attitudes. Overall students from this survey demonstrated a high motivation and a genuine interest in learning English and improving their language skills. The crucial part of the student's attitudes and motivation lies in the fact that the teachers and the classes do not meet their English language needs which impedes them to better themselves. Imsa-ard (2020) concludes the survey addressing: "Students' motivation and attitude are two of the most significant factors that have a profound impact on language learning; therefore, teachers should understand the relationship between motivation and its effects on language learning to find effective ways to foster English language proficiency and boost their students' actual performance" (Imsa-ard, 2020, p. 158).

Le, X. M., & Le, T. T. (2022) conducted a study using qualitative methods that examined different factors which influence Vietnamese students' attitudes toward the English language. Structured interviews were used to retrieve data from over sixty learners. The research was conducted to obtain intuitive information about both internal and external variables influencing the students' attitudes. The first and the most mentioned factor shaping the attitudes of the students was their interest in learning the language and the findings pointed out that: "The lack of interest in particular English skills led to the students' pressure and negative attitudes towards

English learning” (Le, X. M., & Le, T. T., 2022, p. 172). On top of that students showed a higher interest in learning and practicing speaking and communication skills than reading and writing skills. In regards to the internal factors, students demonstrated a positive attitude toward the language skill which could be found in the scope of their interest. This study found students’ self-confidence and students’ knowledge of lexis to be important factors in this problem. Some of the learners confided that if they do not possess the required vocabulary to fulfill a task their attitude and desire to learn decreases. The lack of language knowledge is related to another factor influencing the students’ attitudes and that is anxiety. When students feel anxious in class, their performance gets affected, hindering their attitudes towards English. Other factors such as students’ risk-taking willingness, curiosity, and students’ awareness of the importance of the English language proved to affect their attitudes. Dealing with external factors, this research brought up the following variables. Badly chosen or defective materials meant some students did not enjoy the classes. The educational aspect played a very important and positive role in this research. Many of the respondents referenced their teachers in connection to their perspectives of English. A lot of them hinted at the amicable and resourceful approaches of their teacher figures which had a positive impact on their learning process. Whether the teacher-student interaction was found positive or negative it signified a shift in the students’ attitudes or motivation. The study came to the conclusion that both internal and external factors have a considerable impact on students’ attitudes when learning English (Le, X. M., & Le, T. T. (2022).

The findings from the previously mentioned researchers concluded that students seem to cultivate an overall positive attitude toward learning the English language. What seems significant is the social and educational aspect of attitude and motivation influence. The teacher role plays a vital role in this problem as teachers should implement such methods and didactic techniques that support students’ learning, encourage and meet their learning needs, and help them improve their motivation. Parental involvement and attitudes are crucial too as students usually model the attitudes which are then adopted by their children.

Summary

English plays a significant role in the area of international communication and it is widely taught in the Czech Republic. The theoretical part also comments on the attitudes in language learning, it provides definitions and different types of attitudes. Because attitudes are situational they can be shaped by various factors. Language attitudes are crucial as they play a role in the learning process. While positive attitudes lead to better achievement, negative ones have the

opposite effect. Attitudes are influenced by many factors, such as personality factors, personal attitude toward the target language community, language aptitude, motivation, anxiety, risk-taking, and others that can affect learning. Social and educational factors such as parental role and the role of the teachers can play a significant role in attitudinal forming. Motivation can be intrinsic and extrinsic and it is an important factor in language learning as well. It can also be influenced by various elements. The last thing the theoretical background discusses is a few studies conducted on attitudes toward learning English. The findings from the studies prove that the learners' attitudes are mostly positive and they point out that it is important for teachers to encourage their students to cooperate and learn effectively. The researchers suggest that it is essential that the students perceive and understand the importance and values of the language they learn.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The theoretical part of this thesis shows that attitudes play a crucial role in language acquisition and certain social, educational, and personal factors influence and impact these attitudes. For this study's part the set of following research questions have been formulated:

- What are the attitudes of 6th and 9th-grade students toward learning the English language?
- What are the variables that affect 6th and 9th-grade attitudes towards learning the English language?
- What is the difference between 6th and 9th-grade students' attitudes toward learning English?

This chapter describes the research methodology which was used to answer the research questions. Firstly, it explains the purpose of the research and secondly it presents the background information on the participants. After that it assesses the methodical tool for data collection and finally, it concludes with the data collection process and data analysis procedure.

The Aim of the Study

The theoretical part discussed the issues concerning students' attitudes toward English, and the main focus of the practical part was to collect relevant data. The research aimed to identify the attitudes of 6th-grade and 9th-grade students toward the English language as well as their attitudes toward learning it. Secondly, the study aimed to collect information and assess the possible differences between the attitudes of the two sample groups. The last objective was to gain insights into factors which may affect the students' attitudes and to understand what variables may influence English language attitudes.

Respondent Groups

The students involved in this research were a group of thirty students from 26 ZS in Plzen. The participants formed two groups of fifteen students who attended English classes with the same English language teacher. The first included fifteen 6th-grade students and the second group comprised fifteen 9th-grade students. The age difference between the two studied groups is between four and five years. The students of the sixth grade were either eleven or twelve years of age and the ninth-grade pupils were fourteen or fifteen. Both groups of students had three English language classes per week, one of them being an English lesson realized on computers.

The genders of the students varied. Out of the thirty respondents, 15 of the students were females and the other half were males.

Research method

The qualitative method which was employed for this research was a semi-structured interview because there was a necessity to cover a wide range of questions and to better understand the students' opinions, thoughts, and overall attitudes on the designated topic. The interview allowed a face-to-face interaction with the participants resulting in prevalingly unbiased individual answers. The interviews were conducted in the student's mother tongue, the Czech language, so that they were able to understand the questions and express their opinions well. Both student groups that participated in the research were given the same interview questions.

The interview consisted of five parts. At the beginning of every interview, two pieces of information were collected: students' age and the grade they attend, along with their gender. The first part, student's relationship and attitude toward English aimed to answer questions about the degree to which the students like the language, how they view it, why they learn it, why and for what it is important to them, and on what occasion did they come across the English language outside the school classroom. The second section of the interview, primary factors influencing student attitudes toward English and English language learning, focused on the immediate factors affecting English language attitudes. The factors included in this part were the role of parents and their influence on students' learning and the perception of English and the way students' parents support and help their children with English. In the third part of the interview, another important factor was dealt with - the teacher and English as the school subject. This part called *English as a School Subject* looked into the students' perception and relationship toward the subject, the student's feelings and confidence level when using the language in class, and their views on the way English lessons are carried out. The end of this part was directed at the student's viewpoint of their English language skills and the motivation for their learning. The fourth section, *Other Factors Influencing the Attitudes toward English and English Language Learning*, engaged with the personal variables coming from the students' characteristics which may influence the attitudes such as risk-taking tendencies, extroverted or introverted personality traits, negative past experiences, and peer group pressure influence. The last part of the interview asked additional questions about the students' English and their beliefs, for example, it investigated how long the students have been learning the language, how much they enjoy learning it, what they would like to study after compulsory

education, whether they attend any extracurricular language classes, what part of the process of learning English is the most challenging for them. The types of questions used in the interview were mainly open-ended questions, some close-ended ones, and statements where the respondents were to express their level of agreement or importance, finishing a sentence or expressing the level of certain truth on a scale from 1-5 or 1-10. The questions used in the interview were inspired by or adapted from the instrument method of Golčáková (2022). The interviews were recorded to not miss any important information which might have gotten overlooked during the interviews (see Appendix A, B)

Data Collection Procedure

As mentioned previously the interviews were conducted at 26 ZS in February 2023. For the interviews to be accurate and unbiased it was necessary to conduct them in a quiet environment without any distractions and any other students or teachers present. The majority of the interviews took place in the teacher's office and some of them were done in empty classrooms.

After an agreement with the student's teacher, students were interviewed one by one. The teacher offered to explain the research briefly so that the students had an understanding of what they were going to be a part of. Then the structure and procedure of the interview were explained to them and then they were asked if they agreed to be interviewed and recorded. It was clarified that their names nor any other personal information would not appear in the thesis and that they would remain anonymous.

Data Analysis Procedure

The answers from the interviews were read individually and their findings are further described and commented on in the next few chapters. First, there is a description of the group of 6th-grade students, then the group of 9th-grade learners which is followed by a data comparison of both groups.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

This chapter describes the collected data, analyzes them and comments on them in regard to both interviewed groups individually following the structure of the interview (see Appendix A, B). It also compares the data from the two groups of students. First, the younger group of 6th grade students is analyzed then the 9th grade students and then there is a comparison of the two groups.

6th Grade Students

I. Student's relationship and attitude toward English

This part of the interview aimed to understand the students' stance toward the English language and toward learning it and to uncover the relationship toward the language in general.

The first question asked the students to express their degree of agreement (on a scale of 1 - 5) with the statement *I like the English language*. It can be said that the attitudes toward the English language were predominantly positive. Eight students absolutely agreed with the statement, five respondents chose rather agree, one chose the neutral/don't know option and there was one more student who rather disagreed. It is necessary to state that the two students who chose neutral on the scale stated to like the English language but showed a more neutral attitude towards the language than the respondents who rather agreed.

Table 1

Answers to the statement "I like the English language"

'I LIKE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE'	
Absolutely agree	8
Rather agree	5
Neutral/Don't know	1
Rather disagree	1
Absolutely disagree	-

In the next task, the students were to finish the statement *I like the English language because*. Eleven students remarked that they like the language because they enjoy learning it. Out of

these eleven participants, two of them added that if the language teacher is good and suits them then they enjoy it even more. Two of the eleven students then said that they like it mainly because they like to study or work with didactic school textbooks. Two other pupils from the eleven students said that they like English because they can easily communicate with people from different countries. One student revealed she used to live in Britain when she was younger so she has been surrounded by the language since then. Other two of the eleven students said that they like English because it is an easy language and the last student expressed that the reason why he likes it is because he wants to move to Great Britain in the future. Only one student said that she does not like the language because she is not good at it.

The next statement the students were to finish was *When I say English I think of*. Many of the respondents (5) mentioned things associated with one of the English-speaking countries - either London, Great Britain, or both of these terms. Six other participants thought of concepts related to the school environment and stated that they think of 'fun' or 'good times' (3 learners), the English language textbook they work with (2 learners), and one student mentioned their language teacher. The last statements (from 5 students) were the ones referring to the status of English in the world. The students either said that they think of a language used in foreign countries, an international language, or the language they use on holidays.

The question *I learn the English language because*, brought some interesting answers. The one student who showed a negative stance toward the tongue answered she was learning it because she had to. Other than that, the answers to this question were rather homogeneous, eleven students declared they learn the language because they wanted to be able to understand people from different states or to travel. One student said that he learned it because he believed that it was important.

Then the participants were asked to express how important it is for them to speak English on a scale from 1 - 10 while ten being the number representing the highest importance. Five students chose number 10, seven chose number 9, two students claimed the number 8 (including the student who said she did not like the language) and one student chose number 5 explaining it is because her area of focus is mathematics hence English is not that relevant to her.

In the next part, the student's task was to express their degree of agreement with statements: *English is important for my future studies*, *English is important for my future job*, *English is important because I want to travel*, and *English is important for life in the Czech Republic*.

Nine respondents answered a combination of absolutely agree or rather agree and said English is important for their future jobs, studies, and traveling. Five students chose a combination of rather agree, neutral, and rather disagree with the first three statements. Three of these chose rather to disagree with English being important for their future job as they did not know what they wanted to do but chose rather to agree with the statement English is important for my future studies. Two of these did not find English important for their future studies (neutral) but did believe English will be important for their future jobs (rather agree). The statement *English is important for life in the Czech Republic* brought up fairly diverse answers. Four students chose to absolutely agree. Five students chose neutral/don't know, another five rather disagreed with the statement and one student rather agreed with it.

Table 2

The degree of agreement with the statement “English is important for my future studies, my future job, traveling, for life in the Czech Republic.”

ENGLISH IS IMPORTANT FOR:	my future studies	my future job	traveling	life in the Czech Republic
Absolutely agree	7	5	8	4
Rather agree	4	5	6	1
Neutral/Don't know	4	3	-	5
Rather disagree	-	1	1	5
Absolutely disagree	-	1	-	-

The students were to state why knowing English was important to them. Seven of them said they needed to speak English because they wanted to communicate with foreigners, five said because they wanted to travel, two because they wanted to learn a new language and one student did not answer.

Then the respondents were asked to say in what countries English is spoken. Almost all learners (13) mentioned both the United States and Great Britain while the rest mentioned countries where English is not spoken as the first language (France, India, and Africa).

The next question asked the learners to state in what situation they came across English or in which situation they used it in practice. The majority of the students (13) used English when

traveling, or on holidays where they spoke to a foreigner. The remaining two students used English during leisure time activities at home.

Commentary

The findings showed that the attitudes are closely connected to the level of enjoyment of English language learning. If the students believed to be good at English, they seemed to be keen on it and enjoy learning it. On the other hand, there was one student who possessed a negative stance toward English and stated she was not good at English, she did not like the language and thus did not enjoy learning it. It was not surprising that the students understood the importance of English and the students who stated they did not like English did not cease to understand that English will be important for their future. I expected the student to associate the word English with some English-speaking countries and their characteristics which is what occurred. Naturally, many of the respondents could not properly talk about their English use in the future because many of them did not know what they wanted to study after elementary school nor did they know what job they wanted to pursue. Still, more of them assumed (9) English was important for their traveling, studies, and jobs. The majority of the students stated they liked English because they wanted to communicate with people from foreign countries and one student with a negative attitude towards English declared she learned English because she had to. Extrinsic motivation could be connected to the one student who struggled with learning English. Whereas the students who learned the language because they wanted to and enjoyed it seemed to be more intrinsically motivated. As expected almost all of the participants (13) said they used English while traveling or visiting foreign countries. What was out of common for me was that only one student mentioned that he uses English when playing computer games but that might be because of the fairly young age of this group of learners.

II. Primary factors influencing student's attitudes toward English and English language learning

The second part of the interview focused on the role that parents play in language attitude forming. The respondents were to express the degree of agreement with the following statements: *My parents support me in learning English.*, *My parents want me to speak English.*, *According to my parents, it is important to speak English.* Twelve learners expressed their parents support them in English language learning and their answers were a combination of absolutely agree or rather agree (absolutely agree was dominant in these cases). Six students' answers consisted of only 'absolutely agree'. One student chose neutral, rather disagree and

rather agree because her parents cannot speak English but wanted their daughter to speak it. The other answer combinations were all rather agree, neutral, rather agree and rather agree, absolutely agree, rather agree and neutral, and neutral rather disagree and rather agree.

Table 3

The degree of agreement with the statements “My parents support me in learning English, My parents want me to speak English, According to my parents, it is important to speak English.”

PARENTAL SUPPORT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING	<i>My parents support me in learning English</i>	<i>My parents want me to speak English</i>	<i>According to my parents, it is important to speak English</i>
Absolutely agree	8	11	9
Rather agree	5	3	5
Neutral/Don't know	2	-	1
Rather disagree	-	1	-
Absolutely disagree	-	-	-

The next question asked participants how their parents help them with learning English. A lot of respondents (8) stated that their parents helped them with homework and their support consisted of preparation at home for English classes. Five students stated their parents practiced the use of the language with them - pronunciation or speaking in general. One student said that his parents provided for his extracurricular language classes which he attended twice a week. One student said that he did not require much help with English but when he needed his parents to help, it was not a problem.

Commentary

The data arising from the three previously mentioned statements collected rather similar answers and it was evident that the student's parents support their children's English language learning probably because they are aware of the status of English these days. I asked some of the students if their parents spoke English and in many cases, they said yes, or explained one of their parents did or knew at least the basics of the language. There was one student whose parents did not speak English at all but according to her wanted their child to speak it. The answers of this learner however did not exactly match her opinions and descriptions given. She

chose neutral, rather disagree and rather agree but stated her parents wanted her to speak English. This case may point to the possible influence on attitudes that parents may have over their children. In one case parents of a student did not find English that important and the learner chose absolutely agree, neutral, and rather agree, but it could be due to her parents believing and viewing the German language as more important than English.

III. English as a school subject

This part of the interview aimed to understand the students' perception of English as a school subject. Students were to choose one statement that would best suit their stance toward English classes: *It is a subject I look forward to, It is a subject like any other, I do not look forward to this subject.* Eleven students chose English as a subject they looked forward to mainly because they enjoyed learning it and they felt they were good at it. Four students said English was a subject like any other. There was one student who stated English lessons were not her favorite ones because she did not like English and took a rather negative stance on it.

The participants were to answer the questions: *What do you like about English? What don't you like about English? Is there something that you would change about English lessons? What would you change? How do you feel about English lessons? Why?* A lot of the learners' answers ranked among the teacher's competence and the playful methods used in class. Two students said they liked English classes thanks to their language teacher, five of them said they liked it because of the activities employed during class, and five other students stated that they enjoyed practicing one of the receptive skills: speaking or learning new vocabulary. One student added he liked classes on computers and two others said they liked working with English exercise books and textbooks. Eight students then stated there was nothing they would not like about English classes, two said they did not enjoy listening exercises mainly because they were hard to understand, one student said that she did not like memorizing vocabulary, one claimed she did not like speaking in front of the class and one said he did not like practicing pronunciation. One student claimed she did not like writing and the last learner said she did not like English classes when she found herself temporarily not performing well in the language. The majority of students (13) would not change anything about English classes. One student said he wanted to have fewer exams and other students said they would like to work more with the interactive board. When asked about the way the learners felt in class thirteen of the students said they felt well, four of them added it was because they were good at English, three of them added that they felt good thanks to their teacher and their classmates and one added that she would feel worse when she had to go to the board. One of the students also stated that he felt good because

English was taught in small groups. The two last students claimed they felt normal and neutral and that it also depended on the current mood they found themselves in.

The students were then asked to express their degree of agreement with the statements: *When I speak English I feel confident, I am able to use English to communicate in class, I am motivated to learn English during class in school, I am motivated to learn English outside school.* Eight students chose absolutely agree, three chose rather agree, another three students chose neutral, and one student absolutely disagreed with the first statement. For the next statement, four respondents chose absolutely agree, seven chose rather agree, two chose neutral and two rather disagreed. The next statement brought eight respondents to absolutely agree, four to rather agree, and three to state neutral. In the next statement, eight students absolutely agreed, four rather agreed, and three chose neutral. The last statement brought almost the same answers as the previous one only there was one student that chose neutral and two students who rather disagreed and the majority (12) students absolutely agreed to learn English outside school.

Table 4

The degree of agreement with the statements: “When I speak English I feel confident, I am able to use English to communicate in class, I am motivated to learn English during class in school, I am motivated to learn English outside school.”

ENGLISH AS A SUBJECT	<i>When I speak English I feel confident</i>	<i>I am able to use English to communicate in class</i>	<i>I am motivated to learn English during class in school</i>	<i>I am motivated to learn English outside school</i>
Absolutely agree	8	4	8	12
Rather agree	3	7	4	-
Neutral/Don't know	3	2	3	1
Rather disagree	-	2	-	2
Absolutely disagree	1	-	-	-

Then learners were to state what grade they had at the end of last year. Eight students had the best grade possible - a mark of 1 (excellent), six had the second highest - a mark of 2 (very good), and one student had a mark 3 (good).

After that learners were to choose one statement which would express their level or knowledge of English: *I speak English well, I know English well but I know there is space for improvement, I don't know English very well but I am trying to improve, I don't know English very well but I am not trying to improve, I know English well enough to get a good grade.* Twelve participants said they knew English well but that there is space to improve, two others said that they know English well and one student said she knows English enough to get a good grade.

Then the respondents were asked to grade their English knowledge on a scale from 1 - 5, five being the highest level of knowledge. Three respondents chose number 5 but added they know they could still improve and learn more, eight students chose number 4, two stated they would choose 4 or 3 or something between and one student chose number 3.

Commentary

In this part of the interview, I was curious to understand how the students view the language in terms of the school environment and as a school subject. Many of the students stated that English was a subject they look forward to which was a pleasant surprise and also an indicator of a positive stance toward English. Some students saw English as any other subject and one student did not look forward to it which was expected as she had already proved to have a negative attitude toward English in the first two parts of the interview. An interesting part was that a lot of learners said they like the way their teacher teaches English and that they most enjoyed using the language in practice while speaking. What I found interesting was that two students said they liked working with English textbooks and exercise books which may be because in primary grades teachers usually work with these didactic materials more than in lower-secondary grades. Not much was said about changing the English classes, which indicated that learners were satisfied with the way English is taught. It was no surprise, then, that the majority of students felt good (some felt normal or neutral) during English classes, and one student pointed out the advantage of being separated into two parts and having English taught in smaller groups of pupils. It was nice to get to know that a lot of the students felt confident when speaking English, except for two students who stated they could not use English in class effectively. Although two students rather disagreed to be motivated to learn English outside school, others were motivated to learn it both inside and outside school. Some interesting answers were collected in the next sections of this part of the interview. The students were to tell me their grade in English which they got last year. The answers were rather good as only one student got a mark of 3 (good) and when they were asked to grade their English

knowledge themselves they did not give themselves a worse grade than 3 (good) and the ones who chose the highest number possible said they know they can still improve, a lot of the students gave themselves the second highest grade and only one gave herself a mark 3. So it seemed like even though she did not like English and said she was not good at it she did not assess her knowledge as being as bad as her attitude suggested.

IV. Other factors influencing the attitudes toward English and English language learning

In this fourth part of the interview the participants were asked to express their degree of agreement with the seven following statements: *I am someone who likes to take risks and I don't mind when I don't know the answer to a question beforehand, I am scared of making a mistake in English, and being judged by others, I am an extrovert - I am not nervous when talking in front of the class in English, I am an introvert - I am nervous when talking in front of the class in English, When something doesn't go as planned in class I am not motivated to improve or try again, Negative experiences from the past impact my English learning, I am influenced by my classmates. When they say something is useless I don't do it or learn it.* Four respondents absolutely agreed with being someone who takes risks and does not mind not knowing an answer to a question beforehand. Six students rather agreed, four were neutral in their answer and there was one student who rather disagreed. In the next statement one student absolutely agreed with the statement *I am scared of making a mistake in English and being judged by others*, five students said they rather agree, two chose the neutral answer, one rather disagreed and the rest of the students (6) absolutely disagreed with it. Two learners absolutely agreed with being an extrovert, six students rather agreed, two of them did not know how to answer and chose neutral and five of them absolutely disagreed and stated they were very nervous when speaking in front of the class. Three pupils then absolutely agreed with the statement *I am an introvert - I am nervous when talking in front of the class in English*, three other students chose to be neutral in the answer, four rather disagreed and the rest (5 students) absolutely disagreed with it. One student rather agreed to not be motivated to try again or improve when something does not turn out well, four respondents chose to be neutral, another four students rather disagreed and six respondents absolutely disagreed and claimed they are always motivated to try again. Negative past experiences proved to influence only one student who absolutely agreed with the statement. Three students then rather agreed, and one chose neutral. Four students rather disagreed and six students absolutely disagreed to be influenced by any negative experiences from their past. Five students absolutely disagreed with being

influenced by their classmates, six rather disagreed, three chose a neutral stance and one rather agreed.

Commentary

In this section, I was interested in some personal characteristics of the students which may affect the language learning. The findings did not suggest that the students would be influenced by their characteristics in any significant manner. More than half of the students (10) stated that they did not mind taking risks when learning English. From what I gathered the students seemed like a solid group and I did not think they would be scared to be judged by others when making mistakes in class. Six students disagreed completely and only five students rather agreed with that statement. In regards to the influence of the students being extroverted or introverted the data proved that the students were mainly extroverted and the nervousness was a result of natural mood changes which did not seem to influence the learning process. Negative experiences from the past did not prove to influence the majority of the students, only one of them absolutely agreed with that statement. In this part of the interview, I did not come to any particularly interesting conclusions. The findings suggested that students' personal attributes did not pose a negative impact on their learning. One factor that seemed to be influencing a few students' attitudes was the role of the language teacher. That influence proved to be positive. At least two respondents mentioned when the teacher is good and chooses effective teaching methods and thanks to that they liked it more and found the English classes more enjoyable. The participants' statements also suggested a possible influence of the change of the language teacher which happened with the shift to lower-secondary grade (from the fifth to the sixth grade). The answers did not indicate the learners were influenced by their classmates; one student stated it depended on the situation or the mood and another student said he verified other opinions every time he made a decision.

V. Student's English - fundamental information

This last part of the interview focused on the learners' fundamental information and other questions concerning language attitudes. In the first question, students had to answer when they have been learning English. Twelve students started learning the language in the 3rd grade in elementary school. Three students started learning before that: one student attended language school courses starting in the 2nd grade and two students started learning in their kindergarten. Then the participants were asked to express their level of enjoyment of learning English on a scale from 1-10 (ten was the highest number). Three students chose the number 10, four chose

the number 9, one student chose the number 8, and another one number 7. Two felt like choosing number 6 and the last two students chose number 2. The students were asked to say what they would like to study after elementary school. Five students did not know what they wanted to study yet. Two students said they want to study in a pedagogical field, two students wanted to be a pilot, one aspired for a conservatoire school, other for a soldier, or orthodontist, two wanted to be a lawyer and one student said he would like to be a mechanic. None of the respondents had any native speakers in their family, one student used to live in England and another one had an uncle who lived in Australia. The students were to answer a question: *Do you attend any extra English classes outside school?* Nine learners did not attend any extra classes, three declared they used to attend some classes, and three of the respondents did attend extracurricular English classes, two of which were provided by the school. When asked what they pictured under the statement: *English is an international language* eleven respondents answered that it was true and that one could use English to communicate with people almost anywhere, some added that everyone should be able to speak the language. One student considered English essential for life, another one thought of traveling and another student said that English was spoken in many countries. The last student could not formulate an answer.

The next question asked: *What do you think means when someone speaks English very well?* Four students said that a person who can speak English well can understand the language and communicate with people from different countries. Six learners said that such a person speaks fluently and is good at it. Some added that such a person does not make many mistakes, can write well, or knows English grammar well. Two students pictured a person who speaks English well as someone who speaks similarly to a native speaker. One student said that it is someone who can communicate in English but it is not a native speaker. One student said that it is someone who wants to speak a language well and wants to improve. The last student said that it is someone who can speak English as well as himself.

The last question of this interview part consisted of a question: *What do you find the most difficult when learning English?* Seven students out of the fifteen declared that grammar was the one thing that is difficult for them, two of these added that English listening activities were hard as well, one added that reading was difficult and one said that pronunciation was challenging. Four students claimed pronunciation to be the most difficult to acquire. One student said that learning vocabulary was difficult, another said that speaking was rather hard,

another said that writing in English was challenging and the last one said that new topics were not easy.

Commentary

This section gathered some background information about the students' relationship with English. It is customary for students to start learning English in the 3rd grade in primary school. This group of students was no exception; twelve of them started learning in the 3rd grade (around 8 years of age) and the three others started with the fundamentals of English in kindergarten. I was expecting to gather mostly and predominantly high numbers when I asked the students about their degree of enjoyment of English learning but the answers were rather diverse. I was surprised that two students chose number six and the student who did not like English chose number 2 which did not have to be surprising but it still seemed like a very low number. Most of the students did not attend any other English classes and only three other students did say they attend extracurricular lessons out of necessity, to not fall behind and remain at the same level as their classmates. It was interesting to learn that the students perceive the language in a very practical way because they all agreed that English is an international language and many of them commented that it is crucial for life and communication with people in it. Some students viewed a good English speaker as someone who can speak fluently. It was interesting that some added that such a speaker should know grammar and spelling well. I would say this may come from the way the students are taught in schools (especially from the third to the fifth grades) - grammar rules and spelling is something that is usually dwelled on. On that note, seven students then claimed grammar is the most difficult part of learning English but apart from that there were no other unusual answers.

9th Grade Students

I. Student's Relationships and attitude toward English

In this part of the interview, the aim was to understand the attitude and the relationship the respondents had toward the English language and toward learning it. This included asking the students about their approach to the English language, the degree to which they like the language and its learning, and the extent to which this language is important to them and their future. When the participants were asked to express their degree of agreement with the statement *I like the English language*, nine of the students absolutely agreed to that, and six of them rather agreed.

Table 5*Answers to the statement “I like the English language”*

‘I LIKE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE’	
Absolutely agree	9
Rather agree	6
Neutral/Don’t know	-
Rather disagree	-
Absolutely disagree	-

Then the participants had to finish the following sentence: *I like the English language because*. The answers proved that the students realized the practicality which the English language represents. Over half of the interviewees (8 students) either liked the language, enjoyed learning it or both, and many of these believed they were good at it. Four learners said that they liked learning languages or that English was different from Czech and they liked that. Two students suggested English was important for them because of its usefulness. One of the students said that he liked English because it was an easy language. Another respondent stated that English will be necessary for his job in the future.

The next sentence to finish was: *When I say English I think of*. Eight students said they think of Great Britain or London or some English-speaking country. Four learners stated they think of a language that can be found almost everywhere or a well-known language that many people can speak. Two students associated English with their language teacher and one student thought of his classroom and classmates.

The statement *I learn the English language because* brought the following answers. Seven students said they wanted to travel and be able to speak with anyone, four of them viewed English as an important language, another four students said they will need it in their future (for studies or jobs) and there was one student who declared he needed English for his free time activities. Another learner said that she learned it because it was the first language they learned at school.

The next question inquired the respondents about how important it was for them to speak English. They were to express that on a scale from 1 - 10. Nine out of the fifteen students chose the number 10 and declared English as a very important language to them. In this group, one

student chose number 10 although English was not his favorite school subject. Four students chose number 9 still perceiving English as an important language to speak. One of the students also chose number 9 even though he liked the German language more, English was still important for him. There was one student who chose number 7 and claimed English was important for his future job. None of the students perceived English as that important in the Czech Republic and chose neutral, rather than disagree or completely disagree claiming the majority of Czechs do not need English in their country.

In the next part, students were asked to state how important or unimportant was English for their future job, studies, traveling, and their life in the Czech Republic. Thirteen students stated that English was crucial for their studies, nine of them chose to absolutely agree, four to rather agree. Two participants did not find English that important for their studies and rather disagreed. Eight students rather agreed English was important for their future jobs, four absolutely agreed, two chose neutral and one rather disagreed. Eleven students then stated that English was crucial for them because they wanted to travel, three rather agreed and one student was neutral in his answer. Nine students were neutral when asked whether English was important for life in the Czech Republic, four rather agreed with the statement and two rather disagreed.

Table 6

The degree of agreement with the statement “English is important for my future studies, my future job, traveling, for life in the Czech Republic.”

ENGLISH IS IMPORTANT FOR:	<i>my future studies</i>	<i>my future job</i>	<i>traveling</i>	<i>life in the Czech Republic</i>
Absolutely agree	9	4	11	-
Rather agree	4	8	3	4
Neutral/Don't know	-	2	1	9
Rather disagree	2	1	-	2
Absolutely disagree	-	-	-	-

The learners were asked to answer the question of why English was important to them (*Knowing the English language is important for me because*). Answers from nine students were oriented toward the future and their careers. They declared English as important for them because they wanted to travel in the future, three of them added it was important because of their jobs, and

two added it will be necessary for their studies. Five other students said that they find English important so they can communicate with people in foreign countries or with people who do not speak their language. One student said that English was important for him because he wants to learn it and personally grow.

After that, the participants were asked to state in what countries English is spoken. All of the students (15) mentioned the United States and Great Britain, some of them (5) mentioned Australia, Ireland, and Canada and one student mentioned two countries where English is not the first language: France and Germany.

The next question was: *On what occasion did you use English or where did you use it?* Eleven students said they came across English when traveling or while in foreign countries or interacting with foreigners. One student out of the eleven said her mother had a friend from England and she sometimes visits them. One student said his uncle's partner is from America and they sometimes interact. Two learners illustrated how they use English in their free time: reading English books and playing computer games.

Commentary

I was interested to uncover the way the students of the 9th grade perceive the language. Almost all of the learners absolutely agreed that they liked English and for four other students, English was not their favorite subject although they rather agreed to like English. These answers did not surprise me much but the fact that they proclaimed they liked English (rather agreed with the statement) despite claiming to have other favorite subjects did surprise me. The reasons behind most of the students' interest in English were formulated with a strong emphasis on its use in practice. The students' motivation to learn the language was because they liked it and enjoyed learning it. What was interesting was that a lot of the students told me that they liked and enjoyed English classes because they knew they were good at it. I believe the confidence in the language comes from the way they are surrounded by English almost everywhere and are used to coming into contact with it daily. It did not surprise me that the vast majority thought of either Great Britain, the United States, or other English-speaking countries when asked what they pictured under the word 'English'. Two students associated the word with the school and their English teacher which gave me the impression that they did enjoy their classes. The statement *I learn the English language* showed that the learners realized that the language was important for them for communication and use in the present and even more in the future. Some of them wanted to be able to communicate with people who do not speak their language, or

because English was essential for their future studies, jobs, and traveling. Or they wanted to learn for their personal growth. I was amazed at how the students saw the status of English in the world and its role in the Czech Republic. Everyone thought speaking the language was very important but none of the students agreed with the fact that English was important in the Czech Republic. All of them agreed that English was essential for their future. This older group of students did have a clearer understanding of how important English is for their future. The vast majority of the respondents (13) stated English was important for their future careers, studies, or traveling. The reason why this group of students was learning the tongue was because of its use in the future - many of the answers were very future-oriented which I found rather interesting. I was surprised by the students' answers to the question of in what countries is English spoken. It was maybe because I did not specify whether I wanted them to answer the countries where English is spoken as the first language. A few students mentioned Germany, France, or India as a 'country where English is spoken'. Many of the participants used English when traveling or interacting with foreigners which were answers that were nothing out of the ordinary.

II. Primary factors influencing student's attitudes toward English and English language learning

This section of the interview focused on one specific primary factor influencing language attitudes: the parental role. In this section, the respondents were to express the degree of agreement with the following statements: *My parents support me in learning English, My parents want me to speak English, According to my parents it is important to speak English.* The data showed that the vast majority of respondents' parents believed that the English language is important and they wanted their children to learn it and they helped and supported that learning. Nine out of the fifteen respondents' absolutely agreed with all three statements. The rest of the interviewee's answers (6 students) presented a combination of absolutely agree, rather agree and neutral/don't know and none of the respondents answered rather disagree or absolutely disagree. There was one respondent whose parents did not necessarily see the English language as that important because they believed the German language was more valuable in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, they continued to support their children's learning.

Table 7

The degree of agreement with the statements “My parents support me in learning English, My parents want me to speak English, According to my parents, it is important to speak English.”

PARENTAL SUPPORT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING	<i>My parents support me in learning English</i>	<i>My parents want me to speak English</i>	<i>According to my parents, it is important to speak English</i>
Absolutely agree	13	10	13
Rather agree	1	3	1
Neutral/Don't know	1	2	1
Rather disagree	-	-	-
Absolutely disagree	-	-	-

The other question in this part of the interview was how parents help and support their children in learning English. All of the respondents asserted that their parents (in two cases siblings or other relatives) helped and supported their English language learning. That support coming from the parents consisted in helping and preparing the respondents for school lessons, learning with them, practicing speaking in foreign countries, and providing for their English language courses (whether that be some extracurricular classes or a need of tutoring when the parents did not speak English themselves). Two of the respondents claimed they learned English by themselves and they did not need any parental help. Parents of two other learners could not speak English well enough to help their children but they did still support them. It was clear that parents of the interviewed students supported and encouraged the English language learning of their children.

Commentary

From the previously described findings, it is clear that parents of the interviewed students supported and encouraged the English language learning of their children. It was not that surprising that the answers from the respondents were very positive and I learned that the majority of the students' answers agreed with the fact that their parents supported them in their learning. It was interesting to learn that none of the respondents disagreed with the statement which I would say showed a supportive home environment that encouraged learning and the attitudes toward the subject and the language in general. What emerged during the interviews

and the data analysis was that not all of the parents knew the English language. Some participants stated their parents did not speak it at all and that some of them spoke other languages, some knew the basics of English and some could speak very well. Despite these differences, the students' answers pointed out that their parents seemed to want their children to speak English well, and if there was a need to, they helped their children. One student declared his parents believed the German language was more important for their son in the country and I was not taken aback by this opinion. Almost all of the students (13) said they asked for help with learning English, and only two students claimed they did not need any extra help because they were able to prepare and learn by themselves. Some of the students (2) stated their parents could not help them with preparation for their English lessons because they could not speak the language and since they were not able to do so someone else helped them with it. In the two cases, other relatives or members of the close family represented the learning support. The most common answer to the question of how the parents supported their children's English learning was to help with home preparation for classes. The second most common answer consisted in the parents financially supporting their children. A lot of the parents paid for various extracurricular English classes. I found that very favorable and I was surprised when many of the students stated that they liked attending these extracurricular activities and were glad to have that opportunity.

III. English as a school subject

In this part of the interview questions concerning the students' relationship and attitude toward English as a school subject were asked. Fourteen respondents remarked that they looked forward to English language classes. When asked why, they elaborated on the question in the following manner: one student responded that English was an easy subject for him and therefore he enjoyed it. Another claimed the English language was a subject they knew well and that is why they looked forward to it. Five of the respondents contended that they looked forward to English classes because English was a subject they simply enjoyed and other students said that they looked forward to English classes because they realized the importance of knowing the language. The reason behind four other students' responses was that they appreciate how their language teacher led their English classes. Another student commented that he looked forward to English classes because he did not have to prepare much beforehand as he knew English well. One of the students illustrated that the English language used to be a subject he did not look forward to but as he got better at English his stance changed and he started to enjoy the

classes and looked forward to them. Only one student said that English classes did not rank among his favorite subjects and maintained that for him English was a subject like any other.

When asked what they liked about English classes 10 respondents stated they like using English in practice: speaking and interacting with it in the class. Two said they liked activities in class, two others liked the way the teacher taught the subject and one student said he liked learning new words. Next the participants were to state what they did not like about English classes. Seven learners said there was nothing they did not like and they were satisfied. Three students said they did not like speaking in front of the class, two did not like learning grammar, one did not like individual work and tasks in the textbook and one did not like English listening exercises. The last student claimed to not like writing down new vocabulary she found unnecessary. When asked if they would change something about English classes seven learners said there was nothing they would change, three said they did not enjoy speaking in front of the class, one wanted more group-like activities, one would like more activities lead only in English, one would appreciate a slower pace of the lessons, one claimed she did not like learning grammar and one student wanted to write fewer tests and do not learn new vocabulary she already knew. The last question concerned the way students felt during English classes. Thirteen students said they felt good, four of them added it was thanks to their teacher, two added that it was thanks to the group of their classmates and five added it was because they knew English and they enjoyed learning it. One student said he felt nervous especially when he had to present in front of the class. And one student did not exactly express how he felt but said that he is taken as the less skilled student in his class.

In the next segment, pupils had to express their level of agreement with the statements: *When I speak English I feel confident, I am able to use English to communicate in class, I am motivated to learn English during class in school, I am motivated to learn English outside school.* Five students stated they felt confident when speaking English and absolutely agreed. Seven students rather agreed with that statement. Three students chose neutral and added it depended on various factors. Six respondents absolutely agreed with the second statement, seven rather agreed and two chose neutral. Thirteen students absolutely agreed to be motivated to learn English in class and two respondents rather agreed. Six pupils then absolutely agreed to be motivated to learn the language outside school. Eight students rather agreed. One student chose neutral as he believed he did not need to learn much outside school.

Table 8

The degree of agreement with the statements: “When I speak English I feel confident, I am able to use English to communicate in class, I am motivated to learn English during class in school, I am motivated to learn English outside school.”

ENGLISH AS A SUBJECT	<i>When I speak English I feel confident</i>	<i>I am able to use English to communicate in class</i>	<i>I am motivated to learn English during class in school</i>	<i>I am motivated to learn English outside school</i>
Absolutely agree	5	6	13	6
Rather agree	7	7	2	8
Neutral/Don't know	3	2	-	1
Rather disagree	-	-	-	-
Absolutely disagree	-	-	-	-

The students were to say what grade they had last year in English. Almost all of the learners (13) had the best mark possible 1 (excellent) and the rest had the mark 2 (very good). The question: *How do you think you master English?* brought quite a heterogeneous answer. Twelve students chose the option of *I know English well but I know there is space for improvement*. Two students stated they knew English well and one of the students chose the answer: *I don't know English very well but I am not trying to improve*.

Then the participants were to grade their English knowledge and skill on a scale from 1 - 5 (5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest knowledge and skill). One student chose number 5, three chose a number between 4 and 5, and eight participants chose number 4 as they knew English but there was still more information to learn. Three learners chose number 3 as they somewhat knew English but were not sure about many things.

Commentary

I was very keen on getting to understand the perspectives of the nine grade students toward English. I gathered a very positive set of answers which indicated favorable attitudes toward the language and its learning. Some students (4) said that they enjoyed the classes thanks to their teacher, and some because they realized English was important for them and their future. These answers were surprising because the students claimed to enjoy the language but because

of such answers one could label their motivation as more extrinsic, which is something the interviews did not exactly determine. What was very interesting was an answer from one of the learners. The student described that he did not use to like English and did not look forward to it but with time he improved his English skills and then started to like English as a subject. This situation showed the way language attitudes are linked with the way one enjoys the language which is connected to the skill or knowledge of the tongue. It may not be a breakthrough finding but I do still find it very intriguing. One student then commented that English was not his favorite subject which is more than natural as not every single student finds English enjoyable. Another interesting finding was that the majority of the learners liked using the language in practice the most. Many of them said they liked activities that employed different speaking tasks and interaction between the students. Because of that, I felt like the students understood that English as a language needs to be learned but most importantly practiced. There were not many pupils who would change the way English classes are implemented, they pointed out that they would like more group tasks that meet the previously mentioned statements. Except for some expected comments of wanting fewer exams, not liking speaking in front of the class, or grammar learning there were no signs students would not be generally satisfied with English language classes. In most cases, students said they felt good in classes which was more than expected but there was a comment given by one student who did not describe how he felt but acknowledged the way others feel about him and his performance in class. The way students feel when using English in class was mostly positive, few students (3) explained it depends on their mood or other factors. The majority of the respondents stated that they like English and they enjoy learning and dedicating their time to it both inside and outside school. Outside school respondents usually watch English movies or series and read English books. The grades the students got last year somewhat correlated with the grades they gave themselves when asked to grade their English knowledge and skills. Almost all of the pupils had the mark 1 (excellent) and many of them graded themselves with a 4 or a 5 which represented excellent and very good marks. Only a few of them chose mark 3 stating they are aware that they lack some information that they can learn in the future or that they still felt unsure about certain grammar rules and word uses etc.

IV. Other factors influencing the attitudes toward English and English language learning

This part of the interview looked into some factors coming from the person's personality traits which may influence the attitudes toward a language. The students had to express their degree

of agreement with the following statements: *I am someone who likes to take risks and I don't mind when I don't know the answer to a question beforehand, I am scared of making a mistake in English, and being judged by others, I am an extrovert - I am not nervous when talking in front of the class in English, I am an introvert - I am nervous when talking in front of the class in English, When something doesn't go as planned in class I am not motivated to improve or try again, Negative experiences from the past impact my English learning, I am influenced by my classmates. When they say something is useless I don't do it or learn it.*

Two students absolutely agreed with being someone who takes risks and does not mind not knowing an answer to a question beforehand, eight students rather agreed, four participants chose neutral and one rather disagreed. One student absolutely agreed with being afraid of making a mistake and being judged by others, one student rather agreed, five students chose neutral, two rather disagreed and six of them absolutely disagreed. Four students absolutely agreed with being an extrovert and five of them rather agreed. Three chose neutral, one rather disagreed and two absolutely disagreed with being an extrovert. One student absolutely agreed to be an introvert and two rather agreed with the statement. Five respondents were neutral in their answer, three rather disagreed and four absolutely disagreed. Nine students rather disagreed with not being motivated to improve when something does not go the way they expected and six pupils absolutely disagreed with such a statement. One student absolutely agreed that negative experiences from the past influenced his learning, two students took a neutral stance, five rather disagreed and seven absolutely agreed. Two of the fifteen students rather agreed to be influenced by their classmates, three students chose to be neutral in their answer, four rather disagreed and six learners did not feel to be influenced by their classmates and chose to absolutely disagree.

Commentary

This part of the interview sought to explore the possible influence of personal characteristics on the respondents' language learning and attitudes. The first question reflected that the interviewees were not afraid of taking risks without knowing an answer to a question beforehand. Only one student firmly believed he did not incline toward risk-taking when it came to English learning. The next question did not prove the students would be afraid of making mistakes in class because only one agreed to have some reservations concerning this topic. These findings showed a friendly environment within this group of students. More students were inclined toward being extroverted and only one student said he was an introvert. These types of answers could be connected to nervousness and hesitation when speaking in front of

the class. That however did not mean it impeded or influenced the learning and the language attitude. Respondents' answers reflected their motivation to get better and try again in situations where they made a mistake. Taking into account the answers from the previous parts of the interview, the motivation of these students gave an impression that it was more intrinsic and shaped by the students' aims and wants. The majority of pupils (13) did not introduce themselves as being easily influenced by their classmates, two remaining students said they were most likely to give in to their classmates' opinions but added it depended on their current state of mind and the circumstances of the situation.

V. Student's English - fundamental information

The last section of the interview focused on some basic information concerning the students' English experience and background connected with English language attitudes. One of the questions included this one: *Express how much you enjoy learning English on a scale from 1-10 (10 - I enjoy completely, 1 - I don't enjoy at all)*. There were six students who selected the number 10, five of the respondents chose the number 9, and four of them number 8. In the case of one of the selected numbers 8, one student labeled a different subject to be his favorite one in school. None of the learners had any English native speakers in their immediate family, and only one respondent communicated that his uncle's partner was from the United States and they sometimes interacted.

The question: *What subject of study do you want to follow after primary school?* gathered diverse answers among them being answers regarding studies at grammar schools, two schools of economics, one business college, four electrical engineering studies, two medical schools, and one social studies aims.

Four respondents attended an English kindergarten or a preschool where some English courses were taught. The rest of the students (11) have been learning English since their third grade in elementary school. The question: *Do you attend any extra English classes outside school?* brought three different types of answers. Eight out of the fifteen students did not attend any English classes or courses. Three attended extra English classes in the form of weekly lessons or summer camps and four respondents used to attend extracurricular English lessons.

The last part of the interview brought up a lot of interesting answers to the question *What do you picture under the statement: English is an international language?* The opinions given by

the participants during the interviews can be divided into two groups of similar answers. The first group was composed of ten respondents who answered something along the lines of English being spoken in a lot of countries, so they could understand and communicate with it in different places. The other group consisting of the last five interviewees declared to agree with the statement that English is an international language and added that everyone ought to know at least the language's basics and that was why they agreed with the question.

The next question asked the learners what they thought it meant when 'someone speaks English very well'. The answers were diverse but certain similarities linked them together. The higher number of similar answers (7) included answers such as 'a good English speaker can speak English and understand others', another participant stated that 'such a person can speak and read English well', another said that 'such a speaker can communicate what he or she wants but that does not entail he or she has good grades at school. Another answer included an interesting opinion claiming that 'a good English speaker can communicate whenever he or she needs to but is not an expert in the language'. In another answer, one interviewee uttered that it 'is a person who is able to make himself/herself understood and converse'. Two answers from the respondents agreed that 'a good English speaker means to speak fluently and without any major pauses but that it does not signify that English is used without any mistakes in it or speech errors'. Two other participants described someone who can speak English well as 'a person who can engage in conversation on various topics'. Two respondents' answers were focused more on the linguistic side of language use as they acknowledged for a person to be considered a good English speaker it is necessary for that person to possess a good English vocabulary and good pronunciation. One respondent said that someone who speaks English well is quick-witted in their answers and the last student asserted that someone who speaks without mistakes is a good speaker. From the answers, it appeared that the students believed that a good English speaker is not a native speaker but someone who can use English for various purposes in various settings and most importantly it is someone who can understand and communicate with it.

The very last question from this part of the interview aimed to understand the most difficult part of learning English. The answers included problems concerning both productive and receptive language skills. Four out of the fifteen students proposed that the biggest issue they came across in learning was grammar acquisition. Out of these four, two found English listening exercises in school challenging because of the British accent on the audios, and the other two defined English pronunciation as their biggest learning roadblock. Four students considered

pronunciation and speaking as a challenge and one of them reasoned that it was because pronunciation was hard to practice. Five other respondents insisted that English listening tasks are difficult for them and one learner expressed trouble with pronunciation and speaking as well. There was one participant who said that reading is rather complicated and one student's area of difficulty lies in repeatedly making mistakes in English.

Commentary

This part of the interview presented me with some background information that could help me understand respondents' language attitudes better. It was interesting to learn that almost all of them said to completely enjoy English or enjoy learning it, only four of them chose number 8 because English was not their favorite subject, however, that did not seem to spoil their motivation to continue learning it. The numbers collected from this question were rather high which signifies an overall high score and a positive attitude toward the language. I was glad to hear that all of the students aspire to continue to study. At the time of the interviews, many of them had already gotten into some high schools and seemed content when talking about it. Out of the fifteen students, thirteen of them started learning English in the 3rd grade of elementary school and four of them encountered English learning already during their kindergarten attendance. Three students stated that they attended extra English classes and four others used to attend some extracurriculars. The others declared that they do not and the main reason behind this is that they are in their last year of elementary school and they are preparing for their high school admission tests therefore they did not have much spare time. As expected, the statement asking the students what they pictured under the statement English as the international language, brought answers such as 'it is true', 'everyone should speak it', and 'one can communicate easily with others'. These answers proved the students' realization of English is a contact language that is widely used. An interesting factor that was brought up during the interviews is how the learners viewed and answered the question *What does it mean when someone speaks English well?* The majority of the answers presented a speaker who is not necessarily a native speaker but a person who can communicate in the language, is not afraid to use it, and can hold a conversation on various topics. The way the respondents view someone who speaks English well is in a non-native, practical way. The level of English, and knowledge of English in a school environment or formal setting does not seem to be relevant from the respondents' perspective. The study came up with another interesting finding that a lot of the learners find English listening exercises in class hard as they are usually recorded using British English speakers or the challenge they face is that the recordings are sometimes of bad quality

and hard to understand. According to the respondents' statements, the biggest problem in learning English seemed to occur in the area of learning grammar, pronunciation, and listening. Four students said they found it hard to acquire certain grammatical rules or patterns, others claimed pronunciation is hard for them to practice. A few students voiced that they had problems with using English to communicate in class and voiced certain problems with the language output.

Data Comparison

This section compares the findings from the two groups of students that were previously commented on separately.

I. Student's Relationships and attitude toward English

Table 9

Comparison of 6th grade and 9th grade student answers to the statement "I like English language"

I like the English language	THE 6th GRADE	THE 9th GRADE
Absolutely agree	8	9
Rather agree	5	6
Neutral/Don't know	1	-
Rather disagree	1	-
Absolutely disagree	-	-

From the table, it is clear that both groups of students proved to like English and not one student absolutely disagreed with the statement *I like the English language*. In the group of 6th-grade students, eight students absolutely agreed to like the English language, then one student chose to be neutral with the answer, and one bluntly stated she did not like English and learning English at all. This respondent can be considered as having a negative attitude towards English. In the group of 9th-grade students, all of the students can be found in the top part of the table showing a positive attitude while more than half of the students (9) absolutely agreed to like the English language. The attitudes towards English can be regarded as favorable.

Both of the groups answered similarly when asked why they liked the English language. More 9th-grade learners stated to like and enjoy learning the language than the students in the sixth grade. The majority of sixth graders thought of English-speaking countries as well as the ninth-grade students. Sixth-grade respondents stated they learned the language to understand people from different countries, which are answers correlating with the ones from the 9th-grade pupils who declared they learned it so they could travel and communicate with foreigners. Their answers, however, were more future-oriented as they talked about how they would use English in the future.

Table 10

Comparison of 6th grade and 9th grade students answers to the question How important is it for you to speak English?

How important is it for you to speak English (scale from 1-10)	THE 6th GRADE	THE 9th GRADE
1	-	-
2	-	-
3	-	-
4	-	-
5	1	-
6	-	-
7	-	1
8	2	-
9	7	5
10	5	9

The answers to the question ‘How important is it for you to speak English on a scale from 1 - 10?’ brought the sixth-grade students to choose the numbers 10, 9, or 8, while 9 being the most chosen number (by 7 students) and 10 being chosen 5 times. Only one student chose number 5 as she did not like English and did not find it as important as her classmates. The ninth-grade students’ answers did not choose a lower number than number 7. The majority of them chose

number 10 (9 students), five number 9 and only one student chose number 7. It can be said that the two groups considered speaking English as fairly important to them.

Table 11

Comparison of 6th grade and 9th grade student answers to the statements from the table

Express the degree of agreement with the statements	<i>English is important for my future studies</i>		<i>English is important for my future job</i>		<i>English is important because I want to travel</i>		<i>English is important for life in the Czech Republic</i>	
	THE 6th / 9th GRADE		THE 6th / 9th GRADE		THE 6th / 9th GRADE		THE 6th / 9th GRADE	
Absolutely agree	7	9	5	4	8	11	4	-
Rather agree	4	4	5	8	6	3	1	4
Neutral/Don't know	4	-	3	2	-	1	5	9
Rather disagree	-	2	1	1	1	-	5	2
Absolutely disagree	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

The next part of the interviews asked the students whether they found English important for their future. The sixth-grade students found English rather important for their future studies. While the ninth-grade students seemed to have a better understanding of what they wanted to study and whether English was important for that. The data proved English was important for their studies. Similar answers arose with the second statement where ten 6th-grade students absolutely agreed, three did not know whether English was important for their future jobs and two students did not find it important. As opposed to the 9th-grade students where only one student did not find English important for a future job and two students did not know. Still, the majority (12) believed English was essential for their careers. Almost all of the sixth grade students (14) declared English to be important for their traveling, apart from one student who rather disagreed. The 9th-grade students' answers were very similar. English proved to be important for the students' traveling needs. Five learners of the 6th grade believed English was important for life in the Czech Republic, some of them were not sure and five of them rather disagreed that English was essential in that case. As opposed to the answers of the 9th-grade

students whose answers were more on the side of disagreeing (2) or not being certain about it (9). It can be said that the opinions of both groups of the students were rather ambivalent.

The answers to why English was important for the nine graders were very future-oriented and career-oriented and also focused on the use of the language in practice. The sixth-grade students thought it was important because of traveling too and also for communication purposes. Their answers were more present-oriented. Both groups stated English is spoken in the USA, and Britain so their answers were very similar. Both groups showed to have used the language when traveling - in foreign countries.

II. Primary factors influencing student's attitudes toward English and English language learning

Table 12

Comparison of 6th grade and 9th grade student answers concerning the students' parents' involvement in their English learning

Express the degree of agreement with the statements	<i>My parents support me in learning English</i>		<i>My parents want me to speak English</i>		<i>According to my parents it is important to speak English</i>	
	THE 6th / 9th GRADE		THE 6th / 9th GRADE		THE 6th / 9th GRADE	
Absolutely agree	8	13	11	10	9	13
Rather agree	5	1	3	3	5	1
Neutral/Don't know	2	1	-	2	1	1
Rather disagree	-	-	1	-	-	-
Absolutely disagree	-	-	-	-	-	-

The data from the table above show that the majority of both student groups agreed that their parents support them in learning English and in most cases want the respondents to speak it. The majority of participants also stated that their parents did find speaking English important except for one student in the sixth grade and a few students (7) from both of the groups who were neutral with this statement.

Parents of both groups of students supported and helped their children if they could. It was usually in the form of home preparation for school or in the form of extracurricular English lessons. The ninth-grade students showed to be more independent in their studies and more of them said to not necessarily need their parents to help them.

III. English as a school subject

For the sixth-grade students, the majority looked forward to English classes and the minority showed a more neutral stance toward it. The ninth graders shared similar answers. Fourteen students looked forward to English lessons at school and only one student found English as any other subject.

In this case, more sixth graders (two out of the fifteen) mentioned liking English thanks to their teacher and they also mentioned not liking listening exercises and memorizing new words. Some participants in both groups stated they enjoyed practicing speaking and learning new vocabulary and it can be said both of the participants were satisfied with the way English classes were taught and would not change anything. Overall the participants from both groups were fairly satisfied with the way English is taught.

Table 13

Comparison of 6th grade and 9th grade student answers concerning the students' relationship toward English language

Express the degree of agreement with the statements	<i>When I speak English I feel confident</i>		<i>I am able to use English to communicate in class</i>		<i>I am motivated to learn English during class in school</i>		<i>I am motivated to learn English outside school</i>	
	THE 6 th / 9 th GRADE		THE 6 th / 9 th GRADE		THE 6 th / 9 th GRADE		THE 6 th / 9 th GRADE	
Absolutely agree	8	5	4	6	8	13	12	6
Rather agree	3	7	7	7	4	2	-	8
Neutral/Don't know	3	3	2	2	3	-	1	1
Rather disagree	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-
Absolutely disagree	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The first statement collected somewhat similar answers from both of the interviewed groups. Both of them proved to feel confident when speaking English. In both groups, three students did not know how to answer, and in the sixth grade one student absolutely disagreed with the first statement. In the second statement, the figures show that the ninth graders stated to be able to communicate in English in class more than the sixth graders did as there were not any students who would absolutely disagree with such a statement. In both groups, the majority of the participants proved to be motivated to learn both inside and outside school only the sixth-grade students were hesitant in their answers as three of them were neutral when asked whether they were motivated to learn in school and two students rather disagreed to be motivated to learn outside school. In the case of the ninth-grade students, the answers were more positive.

The grades in English the students got were very good in both of the groups. Only more of the ninth-grade students (13) were given a mark of 1 (excellent) while the majority of the sixth-grade learners (8) got a mark of 1 as well. One student in the sixth grade got a mark of 3 (good) which means the results were better in the 9th grade but both of the groups presented very good outcomes.

Both groups had twelve students who selected the statement expressing that they knew English well but that there was still room for improvement. Two participants in both texts claimed to know English well, and one participant in each text stated they knew English well enough to get a good grade. It can be concluded that the group of sixth-grade students have a lower level of English proficiency only because of one student who chose the option of not trying to improve, which was not mentioned in the group of 9th-grade students.

Three ninth-grade students chose to give themselves the highest grade possible and in the sixth grade, only one student chose that. None of the students chose a lower number than the number 3. The ratings of both groups are fairly favorable.

IV. Other factors influencing the attitudes toward English and English language learning

Table 14 and 15

Comparison of 6th grade and 9th grade student answers concerning the students' characteristics influencing their language attitudes

Express the degree of agreement with the statements	<i>I am someone who likes to take risks and I don't mind when I don't know the answer to a question beforehand</i>	<i>I am scared of making a mistake in English, and being judged by others</i>	<i>I am an extrovert – I am not nervous when talking in front of the class in English</i>	<i>I am an introvert – I am nervous when talking in front of the class in English</i>	<i>When something doesn't go as planned in class I am not motivated to improve or try again</i>	<i>Negative experiences from the past impact my English learning</i>	<i>I am influenced by my classmates. When they say something is useless I don't do/learn it.</i>
	THE 6 th GRADE						
Absolutely agree	4	1	2	3	-	1	-
Rather agree	6	5	6	-	1	-	1
Neutral/Don't know	4	2	2	3	4	4	3
Rather disagree	1	1	-	4	4	4	6
Absolutely disagree	-	6	5	5	6	6	5

Express the degree of agreement with the statements	<i>I am someone who likes to take risks and I don't mind when I don't know the answer to a question beforehand</i>	<i>I am scared of making a mistake in English, and being judged by others</i>	<i>I am an extrovert – I am not nervous when talking in front of the class in English</i>	<i>I am an introvert – I am nervous when talking in front of the class in English</i>	<i>When something doesn't go as planned in class I am not motivated to improve or try again</i>	<i>Negative experiences from the past impact my English learning</i>	<i>I am influenced by my classmates. When they say something is useless I don't do/learn it.</i>
	THE 9 th GRADE						
Absolutely agree	2	1	4	1	-	1	-
Rather agree	8	1	5	2	-	-	2
Neutral/Don't know	4	5	3	5	-	2	3
Rather disagree	1	2	1	3	9	5	4
Absolutely disagree	-	6	2	4	6	7	6

The two tables above show the answers to the seven statements concerning the students' personal characteristics. When focusing on the first statement in the table it is evident that the answers collected are very similar, almost the same in both groups and they both proved to be prevailingly at peace with risking and not knowing an answer to a question beforehand. In both groups, 6 students disagreed with being afraid of being judged by others when making a mistake but in the group of ninth-grade students, fewer learners stated to be afraid to be judged by others whilst one-third of the 6th-grade students rather agreed with the statement. The majority (8) of the 6th-grade students were more on the extroverted side and their data shows that only three students absolutely agreed with being an introvert. In the case of the 9th graders, there were also more extroverts (9) and not even a third of them said they were more introverted. One student from the sixth grade rather agreed to not be motivated to try to improve in English but

other than that other sixth grade students (10) said they are motivated but almost one-third of the students (4) were neutral in their answers. Those conclusions are in contrast with the answers of the ninth-grade pupils who proved to be rather highly motivated to improve their English. Ten students from the sixth grade and twelve from the ninth grade declared to not be influenced by negative experiences from the past. Each group had a few students (4 in the case of 6th grade, 2 in the case of 9th grade) who responded neutrally. One student from each group was affected by a negative experience from the past. The answers to the last statement in the table brought fairly similar results in both groups and that is that the students were predominantly not influenced by their classmates. It could be said that the 9th graders were slightly more influenced by their classmates because two students rather agreed and in the 6th grade only one learner rather agreed but what is important is that the majority of both student groups more or less disagreed.

V. Student's English - fundamental information

Naturally, there was not a significant difference between the two groups when it came to the question of when they had been learning the language as the majority of them started in the third grade. When the students were to rate their enjoyment of English on a scale from 1 - 10, the ninth-grade students showed a slightly higher level of enjoyment than the 6th-grade learners. In the group of sixth graders, two learners chose a low number (2), and one number 6 in the ninth grade; none of the students chose a lower number than the number 8. Naturally, the careers the students wanted to pursue were very different even among the individual groups, the only difference was that more sixth-grade students were less certain about this question. The majority of the students said they did not attend extracurricular English classes. The participants generally agreed that English was an international language and that they could use it to communicate with people from different parts of the world. Language was seen as essential for life, associated with traveling, and its use in various settings. Additionally, the participants' answers indicated that there was a widespread belief that everyone should know at least the basics of the English language. Most students agreed that a good English speaker can understand and communicate in English easily, speak fluently and without many mistakes was pointed out as a characteristic of a good English speaker. Being a native speaker was not claimed as a necessity for a competent English speaker. Some 6th-grade students mentioned that a good English speaker can speak like a native speaker which is something that was not mentioned in the group of nine graders. The 9th-grade learners emphasized the importance of vocabulary, pronunciation, and the ability to converse on various topics. Both student groups

suggested that grammar and pronunciation were the most difficult aspects of learning English. Listening and speaking skills were also claimed to be challenging for some students.

V. IMPLICATIONS

First this section of the thesis provides a look into the possible implications for language teaching and language education that the findings from the research have brought. Secondly, this chapter investigates the limitations of the research and suggestions for potential further studies.

Pedagogical Implications

The research has shown that the majority of the respondents realize that English is an international means of communication and the majority of the respondents perceive English as a contact language. They also believe learning English is important for their future and they are very much aware of the importance of English in our world. Another important finding suggests that the students enjoy and like learning the language and hence they do not overall find it that difficult to acquire it and they are motivated to get better, grow and evolve in the language. Only a few students had a neutral stance toward English or a more negative attitude. Teachers can easily build on positive attitudes and keep the students motivated and enthusiastic about learning English. In regards to the neutral or unsure learners, it may be helpful for the teachers to understand their uncertainties and help their students to see the value of the language. Educators can also emphasize the importance of the language by providing the students with real life materials and tasks which are practical and authentic and where the students can learn to use English in a meaningful way.

Limitations of the Research

Even though the research has brought some interesting conclusions there are certain limitations to it and its findings cannot be generalized. The number of participants was not high enough to come to a highly objective conclusion but at the same time, the number of participants was not too low as to not present us with some engaging results. Although all of the interviewees had the same English teacher which could have spoiled their answers, the interviewees and their answers were rather sincere, came across as genuine, and did not seem to be influenced much by any external factors. On top of that the data gathered from the interviews were not analyzed with a qualitative data software but by the author of the thesis.

Suggestions for Further Research

The research focused on language attitudes and the variables which may influence these. The relationship between the students' attitudes and their language proficiency could be examined

as it could be interesting to see whether students with more positive attitudes towards learning English would tend to perform better in the language. Another suggestion for further research could be to investigate the relationship between the teacher and the students to understand the nature of the attitudes and understand what is needed for a stimulating and helpful environment that contributes to the motivation and favorable attitudes of the students. Furthermore, the effectiveness of different teaching methods on students' attitudes toward learning English could be investigated. And finally, with the increasing use of technology in education it could be valuable to explore the impact of technology on the students' attitudes toward learning the English language.

In this chapter pedagogical implications were mentioned along with the limitations of the study and eventually suggestions for further research were examined and proposed.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapters, the data collected from the interviews were summarized and subsequently compared. The findings suggest that the majority of the students possess a positive attitude toward English and English language learning. The data also showed that the language attitudes of the respondents were mainly shaped by the personal relationship of and the attitude toward the language. The personal view of the language was linked with the ability to speak English, the knowledge of the language, and the enjoyment and success that the students experience while using the language in practice. The students' realization of the role of English in the world, the positive attitude toward the language teacher and the school classes, and finally the parental help and support facilitate their positive outlooks on the English language. Although all of the respondents proved to believe that English was an essential language in the world and that it was crucial for their future, it appeared that they perceived it as a contact language that will be important in the future but only a few of them talked about it in the terms of here and now. Other variables connected to the characteristics of the students' personalities were not found to negatively influence the attitudes or impede the learning process in a significant manner.

The comparison of the two groups in the study showed that both groups of students were found to have a positive attitude toward learning the language. The majority of both groups of students agreed that English was important for their future studies, traveling, and communication, while the minority of students were unsure or held a more neutral stance toward it. Both groups showed a favorable stance toward English classes, with some students mentioning their teachers as a reason for liking the subject. Parents of both groups of students were found to be supportive and involved in their children's learning of English. Overall, the results suggested that students in both groups are satisfied with the way English is taught, and they found it important for their future. The 6th-grade pupils already considered English an important language. The group of 9th graders also believed that English and learning English was crucial and they seemed to possess a slightly broader idea of what it means for their future job opportunities and their careers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Semi-structured interview in English

Fundamental/demographic information about the student

age:

gender:

class:

I. Student's relationship and attitude toward English

- **Express your degree of agreement with the following statement:**

(1 - absolutely agree, 2 - rather agree, 3 - neutral/don't know, 4 - rather disagree, 5 - absolutely disagree)

I like the English language.

- **Finish the following sentence:**

I like the English language because:

When I say English, I think of:

I learn the English language because:

- **How important is it for you to know English on the scale from 1-10?**

(1 - extremely important, 10 - very unimportant)

- **Express your degree of agreement with the following statement:**

(1 - absolutely agree, 2 - rather agree, 3 - neutral/don't know, 4 - rather disagree, 5 - absolutely disagree)

English is important for my future studies

English is important for my future job

English is important because I want to travel

English is important for life in the Czech Republic

- **Finish the following sentence:**

Knowing the English language is important for me because:

- **Answer the following questions:**

In which countries is English spoken?

On what occasion did you use English or where did you use it?

II. Primary factors influencing student's attitudes toward English and English language learning

- **Express your degree of agreement with the following statement:**

(1 - absolutely agree, 2 - rather agree, 3 - neutral/don't know, 4 - rather disagree, 5 - absolutely disagree)

My parents support me in learning English.

My parents want me to speak English.

According to my parents it is important to speak English.

- **In what way do your parents support you or help you when learning English? State at least two examples.**

III. English as a school subject

- **Choose one of the following statements that corresponds the most with your relationships toward English as a subject:**

It is a subject I look forward to.

It is a subject like any other.

I do not look forward to this subject.

(Explain shortly your choice)

- **Answer the following questions:**

What do you like about English? State at least two matters.

What don't you like about English? State at least two matters.

Is there something that you would change about English lessons? What would you change?

How do you feel in English lessons? Why?

- **Express your degree of agreement with the following statement:**

(1 - absolutely agree, 2 - rather agree, 3 - neutral/don't know, 4 - rather disagree, 5 - absolutely disagree)

When I speak English I feel confident.

I am able to use English to communicate in class.

I am motivated to learn English during class in school.

I am motivated to learn English outside school.

- **What grade did you have last year from English?**
- **How do you think you master English? Choose one of the following statements that expresses the best your situation:**

I speak English well.

I know English well but I know there is space for improvement.

I don't know English very well but I am trying to improve.

I don't know English very well but I am not trying to improve.

I know English well enough to get a good grade.

- **Grade your English knowledge and skill on a scale from 1-5 (5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest knowledge and skill)**

(explain why)

IV. Other factors influencing the attitudes toward English and English language learning

- **Express your degree of agreement with the following statement:**

(1 - absolutely agree, 2 - rather agree, 3 - neutral/don't know, 4 - rather disagree, 5 - absolutely disagree)

I am someone who likes to take risks and I don't mind when I don't know the answer to a question beforehand.

I am scared of making a mistake in English and being judged by others.

I am an extrovert - I am not nervous when talking in front of the class in English.

I am an introvert - I am nervous when talking in front of the class in English.

When something doesn't go as planned in class I am not motivated to improve or try again.

Negative experiences from the past impact my English learning.

I am influenced by my classmates. When they say something is useless I don't do it or learn it.

V. Student's English - fundamental information

- **Since when have you been learning English?**
- **Express how much do you enjoy learning English on a scale from 1-10:**

(10 - I enjoy completely, 1 - I don't enjoy at all)

- **What subject of study do you want to follow after primary school?**

- **Is there anyone in your close or extended family who speaks English as their first language?**
- **Do you attend any extra English classes outside school?**
- **What do you picture under the statement: English is an international language?**
- **What do you think means when someone speaks English very well?**
- **What do you find the most difficult when learning English? (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening...)**

Appendix B - Semi-structured interview in Czech

Základní informace o studentovi

věk:

pohlaví:

třída:

I. Student a jeho vztah a postoj k anglickému jazyku

- **Vyjádři svou míru souhlasu s následujícím výrokem:**

(1 – naprosto souhlasím, 2 - spíše souhlasím, 3 – neutrální/nevím, 4 – spíše nesouhlasím, 5 – naprosto nesouhlasím)

Mám rád anglický jazyk.

- **Dokonči následující věty:**

Anglický jazyk mám rád, protože:

Když se řekne angličtina, vybavím/představím si:

Učím se anglicky protože:

- **Jak moc je pro tebe důležité umět anglicky na škále od 1-10?**

(10 – naprosto důležité, 1 – velmi nedůležité)

- **Vyjádři svou míru souhlasu s následujícím výrokem:**

(1 – naprosto souhlasím, 2 - spíše souhlasím, 3 – neutrální/nevím, 4 – spíše nesouhlasím, 5 – naprosto nesouhlasím)

Pro moje budoucí studium je angličtina důležitá.

Pro moji budoucí práci je moje angličtina důležitá.

Angličtina je důležitá, protože chci cestovat.

Angličtina je důležitá pro život v české republice.

- **Dokonči následující větu:**

Umět anglický jazyk je pro mne důležité, protože:

- **Odpověz na následující otázky:**

V jakých zemích se mluví anglicky?

Při jaké příležitosti si se setkal s angličtinou - kdy jsi ji použil?

II. Základní faktory ovlivňující studentovy postoje k angličtině

● **Vyjádři svou míru souhlasu s následujícím výrokem:**

(1 – naprosto souhlasím, 2 - spíše souhlasím, 3 – neutrální/nevím, 4 – spíše nesouhlasím, 5 – naprosto nesouhlasím)

Rodiče mne podporují při učení se angličtiny.

Rodiče chtějí, abych uměl anglicky.

Podle mých rodičů je důležité umět anglicky.

- **Jakým způsobem tě rodiče podporují/pomáhají, když se učíš angličtinu? Uveď alespoň jeden příklad.**

III. Angličtina jako školní předmět

- **Vyber jedno tvrzení, které nejvíce odpovídá tvému vztahu k předmětu anglického jazyka:**

Jedná se o předmět, na který se těším.

Je to předmět jako každý jiný.

Na hodiny angličtiny se netěším.

(Krátce objasni/vysvětli svůj výběr.)

- **Odpověz na následující otázky:**

Co máš rád na hodinách angličtiny? Uveď alespoň 2 věci.

Co nemáš rád na hodinách angličtiny? Uveď alespoň 2 věci.

Je něco, co by si na hodinách angličtiny změnil? Co?

Jak se v hodinách angličtiny cítíš? Proč?

- **Vyjádři svou míru souhlasu s následujícím výrokem:**

(1 – naprosto souhlasím, 2 - spíše souhlasím, 3 – neutrální/nevím, 4 – spíše nesouhlasím, 5 – naprosto nesouhlasím)

Při mluvení v angličtině se cítím jistě/sebevědomě.

Daří se mi používat angličtinu v komunikaci ve třídě.

Jsem motivovaný k tomu se učit anglicky ve škole při hodinách.

Jsem motivovaný k tomu se učit anglicky i mimo školu.

- **Jakou známku z angličtiny jsi měl na konci minulého školního roku?**
- **Jak si myslíš, že ovládáš anglický jazyk? Vyber jedno z následujících tvrzení, které co nejlépe vystihují tvoji situaci:**

Anglicky umím dobře.

Anglicky umím, ale vím, že je jak se zlepšovat.

Anglicky moc neumím, ale snažím se zlepšovat.

Anglicky moc neumím a nesnažím se zlepšovat.

Anglicky umím dostatečně na to, abych dostal dobrou známku.

- **Oznámkuj svoji dovednost a znalost anglického jazyka na stupnici od 1-5 (5 jako nejvyšší stupeň znalosti a dovednosti a 1 jako nejnižší 5) (vysvětli proč)**

IV. Další faktory ovlivňující postoje k anglickému jazyku

- **Vyjádři svou míru souhlasu s následujícím výrokem:**

(1 – naprosto souhlasím, 2 - spíše souhlasím, 3 – neutrální/nevím, 4 – spíše nesouhlasím, 5 – naprosto nesouhlasím)

Jsem někdo, kdo rád riskuje a nevadí mi, když předem neznám odpověď na otázku.

Mám strach z toho, že když udělám v angličtině chybu, budu souzen druhými.

Jsem extrovert - nejsem nervózní, když musím mluvit před třídou anglicky.

Jsem introvert - jsem nervózní, když musím mluvit před třídou anglicky.

Když se mi ve třídě něco nepovede, nemám motivaci k tomu se zlepšit/zkusit to znovu.

Negativní zkušenosti z minulosti ovlivňují mé učení angličtiny.

Dám na své spolužáky, když řeknou, že je něco zbytečné, nedělám to/neučím se to.

V. Student a anglický jazyk - základní informace

- **Od kdy se učíš angličtinu?**
- **Na škále od 1-10 vyjádři, jak moc tě baví učit se anglicky:**
(10 – baví naprosto, 1 – nebaví vůbec)
- **Jaký obor chceš studovat po základní škole?**
- **Máš ve své blízké nebo rozšířené rodině někoho, pro koho je angličtina mateřský jazyk?**
- **Docházíš na nějaké hodiny angličtiny mimo školu?**
- **Co si představíš pod tvrzením: Angličtina je světový jazyk?**

- **Co podle tebe znamená, když se řekne, že někdo umí dobře anglicky?**
- **Co ti dělá největší problém v učení se angličtiny? (gramatika, slovíčka, výslovnost, mluvení, poslech...)**

SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá postoji a přístupy českých teenagerů k Anglickému jazyku a jeho učení. Jazykové postoje jsou klíčové pro výuku jazyků. V teoretické části práce je věnována pozornost vysvětlení pojmů jako jsou postoje a motivace, dále jsou v ní představeny různé klasifikace postojů. Popsány jsou v práci i faktory, které mohou ovlivňovat postoje k učení se jazykům a dále je v práci zmíněna i role vlivu postojů při učení se jazykům. Průzkum zkoumá postoje studentů 6. a 9. ročníku k anglickému jazyku a výuce angličtiny a dává si za cíl zjistit, jaké jsou rozdíly mezi postoji těchto dvou žákovských skupin. Data byla shromážděna prostřednictvím polostrukturovaných rozhovorů s třiceti studenty základní školy v Plzni. Zjištění byla zpracována a popsána v rámci skupiny šesté a deváté třídy samostatně, následně byla data obou ročníků porovnána. Výzkum ukázal, že obě skupiny studentů měly pozitivní postoj k anglickému jazyku. Většina z nich vnímala tento jazyk jako důležitý pro svoji budoucnost a uplatnění. Navíc respondenti obecně prokázali spokojenost s tím, jak je anglický jazyk u nich na škole vyučován. Ukázalo se, že rodiče dotazovaných žáků podporují učení svých dětí. Nebyly zjištěny významné rozdíly mezi postoji studentů šestého a devátého ročníku.