



POSUDEK VEDOUCÍHO BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **Understanding motivation of Czech high school and university students to learn the English and French languages**

Autorka práce: **Marie Csevárová**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Helena Lohrová, Ph.D.**

Oponentka bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Alena Prošková, Ph.D.**

Short characteristics of the thesis:

This bachelor thesis examines the role of motivation in second language learning. Specifically, it aims at understanding motivation of Czech high school and university students to learn the English and French languages. Since motivation has been regarded for more than four decades as central to language learning and has engaged researchers from the fields of applied linguistics, psychology and pedagogy, it is certainly a domain of importance and interest. Recently, rather than the formulation of new theories, research has invited localised studies of motivation. These have the capacity to assist either in improving student's study potential or results, or may guide educators in directing, managing and tailoring language education to align both with the changing motivational trends as well as with the current needs of the labour market. The study undertaken by the author contributes more to the latter of these orientations.

Stemming from her own interest in the topic, the author has designed, piloted, revised and subsequently administered two types of questionnaires: one to Czech high school students of French and students of English, and the other to Czech university students of these two languages. The design pursued the identification of selected motivational variables that were identified across a number of SLA motivation theories. These are discussed as part of the literature review and include: Gardner's socio-educational model (2005), Self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000 and Noels, 2015), Directed Motivational Currents (Dörnyei, Ibrahim, and Muir, 2015; Dörnyei, Davydenko, and Henry, 2015), research on the influence of teachers on the motivation of students and research on the parental influence on the motivation of students. In each case, an attempt is made to develop a link to the questionnaire so that the individual survey questions elicited responses that would enable the forming of students' L2 motivation profile at the respective stages of their studies.

The text of the thesis comprises 76 pages with 53 figures inserted as part of the analysis. The Appendices include an overview of the questionnaire items together with figures obtained from the pilot survey.

Overall assessment:

The thesis has achieved its objective: as a practice-based project, the author has conducted her analysis on a body of authentic data that she collected on her own initiative. The thesis structure is clear, the literature review is undertaken in a cultivated manner, the overall length and depth of the material are appropriate to an undergraduate dissertation.



While I do have some reservations about the overall contribution of this thesis, there are a few achievements that must be noted and appreciated:

1. Marie has managed to target a considerably large and to the study appropriate base of respondents both at high school and university levels. Obtaining responses from approximately 300 research participants in each of the two cohorts (600 altogether) is certainly a mark of success and is also a reflection of respectable research effort.
2. The questionnaire was designed in an electronic form and was disseminated by exploiting modern media, which these days is becoming possibly the only method deemed for success.
3. The study allocated time to administer a pilot questionnaire the results of which were reviewed, and some of the questionnaire items were redesigned before the final questionnaires were administered. Indispensable as a research step, a pilot was also a valuable learning lesson as part of this particular research project.

The key shortcoming of this thesis I would summarise as follows:

While the language of the survey questions is casual and potentially engaging to the student cohorts targeted, the questionnaire is not constructed well and more planning would have been required. Firstly, the questionnaire was produced in two language mutations – in Czech for the students of French and in English for the students of English. This imposes a level of incongruence. A number of the questions may be described as loaded and in addition they are not asked in a neutral voice and in a logical order, as may be illustrated through the sequence of these two questions: I felt pressure from my parents to learn languages (scale) and Did parents influence your choice of a language? (Open question). Statistically, it may also be confusing to design Yes/No questions as open. A few questions also fall into the category of double-barrelled (e.g., Which one do you focus on? which one is your major, which is your favorite...) , which makes them problematic as they touch upon more than one issue yet allow only for one answer.

The subsequent interpretation of the data reflects the limitations of the elicited responses. The findings, although they are presented in an organised manner, are of a very general nature providing limited scope for a more in-depth analysis. Instead, several key findings are repeated as statements when it would be intriguing to learn more.

Still, the contribution made, I believe, confirms a number of general, yet highly relevant paradigms, which should inspire pedagogies at the respective educational levels as well as recruitment of language-oriented high school students to university. Firstly, students at all levels understand the importance of learning languages for the benefit of their future success in life. At high school this awareness is defined more along the need to succeed in the overall study portfolio with languages underpinning crucially whichever pathway the students will pursue in the future. In contrast, for university students whose studies centre on L2, seeing and understanding the link between their study specialisation and future career is of paramount importance and a key motivator. Interestingly, according to the study, English majors compared to French majors have a vague idea about how they will apply themselves professionally. Secondly, Marie's study taps into the highly influential yet often-unexploited source of motivational support – the role of family background and of parents specifically in supporting students in their choices of L2 and study attitudes. Finally, also the other external motives that are identified in addition to the discussion of integrativeness and instrumentality, provide an arena for the influencing of student motivation and perception of L2.



Filozofická
fakulta
Faculty
of Arts

Jihočeská univerzita
v Českých Budějovicích
University of South Bohemia
in České Budějovice

As Marie's supervisor, I can say that Marie worked very much independently on her research project and sought minimal help mainly at the completion stage of her thesis. I would like to appreciate Marie's motivation for the topic, her autonomy, responsiveness to my comments and an also amiable demeanour throughout.

Práci **doporučuji** k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **velmi dobře**

23. srpna 2020

Datum

Podpis