

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

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**ADULT NEWCOMERS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING  
LITHUANIAN: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY**

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## **Introduction**

### **Relevance of the research**

Rapid changes in our society require learning to be a lifelong process. This is particularly true of adults, whose transitional phases, such as a job change or a move to a new community, require them to engage in new learning experiences (Knox, 1986). Thus, many adults are now attending courses in an attempt to function successfully in society and in the workplace (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991). As a matter of fact, not only do individuals need to become members of a given society, they also need to maintain their membership (Jarvis, 1995).

Becoming a member and maintaining membership in a new country implies learning the local language, as this mediates newcomers' actions in all spheres. In that sense, foreign/second language studies undertaken by adults are on the rise, in countries such as Australia (Dymock, 2007), the USA (Moore, 2009), Canada – British Columbia (ReadNowBC – British Columbia's Literacy Action Plan<sup>1</sup>). By studying the local language, newcomers have the opportunity to update their language skills, becoming part of the new society.

In Lithuania, changes in politics and demographics have also triggered the demand for courses in the local language by non-native speakers, foreigners, and international students. For instance, the number of students taking Lithuanian language courses at the Department of Lithuanian Studies at Vilnius University was estimated at about 200 students per year (Ramonienė, 2006). Especially after Lithuania's integration into the European Union, the search for courses has been constant:

- 140 people enrolled for studies in the second half of 2005, of these, 50 enrolled at the one-year course;
- 130 people joined the course in 2007 (52 on the regular course, 57 as Erasmus students, and 21 attended evening courses). In the summer of the same year, 90 students attended courses during June-July. The same number joined as Erasmus students for the new academic year (2007-2008);
- 82 students enrolled in 2008 (17 in the winter; 65 in the summer);

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education. *ReadNowBC*, British Columbia, Canada. Retrieved December 17, 2009 from <http://www.readnowbc.ca/>

- 68 people attended the summer course in June-July of 2009<sup>2</sup> and the same number attended the summer course in the following year - June-July of 2010<sup>3</sup>. As can be seen, the demand for summer courses remained the same in the recent past.

It is important to highlight that not only do winter and summer courses<sup>4</sup> attract foreigners or individuals of Lithuanian descent, but also adults who live and work in the country that do not necessarily belong to a minority ethnic group.

Moreover, Lithuania has also opened its doors to asylum seekers – adults and children alike. According to Aivydas Keršulis<sup>5</sup>, director at the Care Institutions Provisions Centre, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, over 4.000 asylum seekers have arrived in Lithuania during a ten-year period of time. What is more, the successful integration of these refugees also contribute to building a more tolerant, open and mature society, as Mr. Keršulis noted. In this sense, Lithuanian language courses also function as a tool in such an inclusion process, as these newcomers are expected to be socially and professionally integrated into society.

Despite such a new audience attending courses, **previous research** conducted in the realm of Lithuanian language has mainly focused on the *grammar and contrastive analysis* of languages – ‘Structure of Verb Root in Standard Lithuanian’ (Kruopienė, 2000), ‘Linguistic Aspects of Dialogue’ (Vilkienė, 2000), ‘Causal Relations in Different Levels of Lithuanian Syntax’ (Našlėnaitė-Eberhard, 2002), ‘Expression of the Past in Italian and Lithuanian’ (Daugmaudytė, 2002), ‘Condensed Expression of Adverbial Modifiers in German and Lithuanian Economic Texts’ (Kontutytė, 2003), ‘The Lithuanian Dative and its English Counterparts: A Case-Study in Cognitive Grammar’ (Kerevičienė, 2008); ‘The Meaning of Lithuanian Past Tense and their

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<sup>2</sup> In 2009, students came originally from 27 countries: Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Czech Republic, Denmark, Great Britain, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Japan, United States of America, Canada, Latvia, Poland, Netherlands, France, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Hungary, and Germany, Uruguay, Cyprus, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Iceland. Data retrieved December 20, 2009 from <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/News/p19>

<sup>3</sup> In 2010, students came from 28 countries, including Lithuania: Brazil, England, Scotland, Denmark, Lithuania, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Japan, United States of America, Canada, Poland, Netherlands, France, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Hungary, Germany, Ukraine, Australia, Turkey, Norway, Israel, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Information retrieved March 1, 2011 from <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/Department-of-lithuanian-studies/p19/articlepage/1>.

<sup>4</sup> In 2005, the group attended in the summer by this author had a total number of 8 students, of these, 50% were living and/or working in Lithuania. Likewise, in the summer course of 2006, also attended by this author – 3 students were residents, that is, they were living and working in this country.

<sup>5</sup> Information retrieved March 01, 2011, from the UN Refugee Agency - [http://www.unhcr.no/en/Publications/uncommon\\_lives\\_lt\\_en.html](http://www.unhcr.no/en/Publications/uncommon_lives_lt_en.html)

Equivalent in English' (Petronienė, 2009); and 'Lithuanian and English Linguistic Politeness: Requests' (Hilbig, 2009).

In addition, previous studies at an MA level aimed at investigating socio-cultural problems related to *second language acquisition*: 'Socio-Cultural Competence and Teaching Lithuanian as a Foreign Language' (Pilipaitė, 2003); 'The Acquisition of Noun's Morphology of Lithuanian as a Second Language' (Zakarauskaitė, 2006).

Moreover, other research aimed at *Lithuanian language policy and reform, State language learning and testing*, mainly addressing the existing minority groups living in the country: 'Emerging Language and Education Policies in Lithuania' (Hogan-Brun and Ramonienė, 2003); 'Language and Education Orientations in Lithuania: A Cross-Baltic Perspective Post-EU Accession' (Bulajeva and Hogan-Brun, 2008), 'Language Education Policy Profile Country Report – Lithuania' (2006); 'Teaching Lithuanian as a second/foreign language: Current practices' (Ramonienė, 2006); and 'Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States – Europe, vol. 3 – the Baltic States, Ireland and Italy' (Hogan-Brun et al., 2008).

The levels of Lithuanian as a second language and their equivalence to the Common European Framework of Reference, at basic levels (A2) - *Lietuvių kalbos kaip svetimosios mokymo turinio aprašas (A2 lygis)* - were also an important outcome, with an impact on the organization of courses meeting the demands of Lithuanian language proficiency examinations (Ramonienė et al., 2006).

As can be clearly seen, most research conducted was in the realm of contrastive linguistics, second language acquisition, Lithuanian language teaching & testing, and Lithuanian language policy & reform, mainly by researchers from fields such as philology, applied linguistics, and education (i.e., laws, policies and regulations). However, adult learners' orientation to learning, interests, abilities, and needs were not taken into account. Not only should education in Lithuania assist individuals to lead an independent life, but also foster the development of these individuals also leading to the overall development of this society (Law on Education, 1991/2009). In addition, education targeted at adults should develop an individual's creative abilities and provide conditions for acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed in other spheres, facilitating their social and professional inclusion (Law on Non-Formal Adult Education, 1998).

Likewise, EU policies point to the need of organizing language education programmes reflecting learners' needs, interests, motivation and ability: such a competence will help them meet their communicative goals (Plurilingualism Education in Europe, 2006). This is particularly true of adult migrants: instruction in the target language should facilitate their inclusion in a new society (Action Plan on Adult Learning, 2007).

Given the particularities of the Lithuanian language, the new target audience comprised of adults may not have had the experience in case-based languages before; Lithuanian may also differ from their first or second languages. Therefore, it is expected that newcomers - temporary or permanent residents - face difficulties while learning this language in the host country.

Aiming to address this issue, **the research problem** was formulated in order to answer the following questions: What theoretical framework may be used to investigate adult newcomers' perceived difficulties learning Lithuanian in the host country? Are there any foreign/second language education approaches that are conducive to learning in adulthood? Do these approaches facilitate the development of communicative competence, facilitating their inclusion in the new society through the target language? Considering no previous research was conducted with a focus on the obstacles encountered by newcomers learning Lithuanian in adulthood, this research aims to fill this current gap.

Therefore, **the main aim of this research** is to investigate adult newcomers<sup>6</sup>, perceptions of their difficulties in learning Lithuanian in the host country. Having in mind **the object of study** – adult learners' perceived difficulties in Lithuanian language studies, in order to address the research question accordingly, the following **tasks** were carried out:

- *A thick description and analysis of the socio-cultural context:*
  - Macro-level: Lithuania – facts & figures, the State language and its level of complexity, and Lithuanian and European Union educational policies

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<sup>6</sup> In this work, the term 'newcomer' is used to refer to adult learners who do not belong to the existing minority groups/refugees living, working and/or studying in Lithuania. Given the high rates of mobility, it also entails temporary residents – Erasmus students – and non-residents – foreigners or non-native speakers who engaged in this language learning experience.

- Meso-level: Lithuanian language courses, target groups, and educational resources targeted at non-native speakers
- Micro-level: the Higher Education Institution, teaching and learning facilities, courses and study programmes, learning materials, Lithuanian language lessons, and participants
- *An investigation of adult learners' perceived difficulties:*
  - Generation of categories and data classification
  - Content analysis of Lithuanian language materials, activities and tasks, including their level of difficulty
- *Theoretical generalization of findings*

With regard to **research design, orientation and methodology**, this study was based on the *philosophical principles* of critical pedagogy put forward by Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire (1970, 1974, 1998) who contented that an investigation of learners' thinking could be best carried out in times of transition, when individuals have a right to exercise human agency by freely speaking and reflecting upon their own learning process. In that sense, researchers should investigate the 'limit-situations' – *the obstacles perceived by individuals*, within the socio-cultural context where learning occurs, by conducting a *survey of the area*, so that 'limit-acts' – actions allowing individuals to overcome those obstacles - can be implemented. This is particularly true *in contexts of language education*, considering that not only does the local language facilitate the inclusion of individuals in society, from a social and professional perspective, it also provides them with a linguistic tool to collaborate and co-participate in the (re)construction process of a new society.

Considering the lack of previous studies, this research was designed as a *single case study* (Yin, 2003), based on the principles of *ethnography* (Spradley, 1979, 1980), given the aiming to understand the perceptions in context, by obtaining an insider's view of the reality within educational contexts (Merriam, 1998; André, 2002).

Participant observation was *the main method*; the following *instruments* were used: local context analysis; content analysis of main texts, documents, policies, and learning materials; questionnaires; in-depth interviews; and audio-recorded lesson observations. As no previous research had been carried out, this single case study is expected to generate hypotheses for further scientific investigation. Ethnographic in

nature, this research searches for different theories to tentatively explain the phenomenon under investigation. Thus, the *validity of the study* is built upon the triangulation of data from theoretical and methodological perspectives.

In considering its *limitations* - being conducted by one single researcher – a non-native speaker of Lithuanian - this study has mainly focused on investigating the perceived difficulties of beginner adult students – newcomers and visitors - in learning Lithuanian in the host country. Thus, the investigation of teachers' perceived difficulties in teaching a new target audience was beyond the scope of this research.

As far as the **theoretical framework** is concerned, our socio-cultural context analysis has drawn on the previous contributions of important Lithuanian scholars and researchers, in the realm of *Lithuanian history, language, and society* (Paulauskienė and Valeika, 1994; Zinkevičius 1996; Subačius, 2002; Jucevičienė, 2005; Ramonienė and Pribušaukaitė, 2008) and those who investigated its *origins and development* (Schmalstieg, 1982 a/b/c, 1988; Joseph, 2009). Such a review played a crucial role in this investigation, as adults perceived Lithuanian as 'an old and difficult' language to learn.

Likewise, studies carried out by Hogan-Brun and Ramonienė (2003), Balčiūnienė (2004), Ramonienė (2006), Bulajeva and Hogan-Brun (2008), Hogan-Brun et al. (2008) have also contributed to our discussions in analysing the *local language education policies*, along with *local laws regulating general education* (Law on Education, 1991/2009; General Concept of Education in Lithuania, 1992; Law on Higher Education, 2000; and *adult education* (Law on Non-Formal Adult Education, 1998), and *Lithuanian as a State language* (Law on the Amendment of the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Status of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, 1993/2001; Law on the State Language, 1995/2002). This analysis provided us with an important understanding of the priority areas in this field.

*EU education policies focusing on adult learners* were also used as a means to build a solid basis for this study (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences of Lifelong Learning; Commission on Adult Learning, 2006; Communication of the European Communities, 2006; National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Final Report, 2010). Such a review was essential given the fact that Lithuania is now an EU Member State and as such, not only is the country expected

to face challenges, but it is also supposed to find solutions to address issues around the quality of services provided in the realm of adult education.

Furthermore, *EU language policies* were also reviewed, given the fact that language learning has been a priority in the Union for over 30 years (Eurydice in Brief, 2005). Therefore, Member-States have been facing the challenge to develop a plurilingual competence (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2001; Kelly et al., 2004; Beacco and Byram, 2003; Plurilingual Education in Europe, 2006). This is also an important issue in the realm of *less-widely used and taught languages*, such as Lithuanian. Considering growing numbers of temporary or permanent migrants in the Member-States, local authorities play a crucial role in the provision of educational resources (Piri, 2002). Finally, language learning in Europe is also an important tool in the integration process of adult migrants; it is vital to address their needs and interests in order to design courses accordingly (Beacco, 2008; Krumm and Plutzar, 2008; Little, 2010).

In conducting the investigation of adult learners' perceptions of Lithuanian language studies - our preliminary analysis was based on the principles of *grounded theory* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The generation of categories was done via contrastive and relational analysis of the language used by learners while expressing their viewpoints (Spradley, 1980). Next, the analysis and classification of the perceived difficulties were carried out in light of *attribution theory* (Heider, 1958) and *causal attribution* (Weiner, 1979, 1980, 1986, 1992; Rodrigues, 1996; Bempechat, 1999; Martini and Boruchovitch, 2004), applied to foreign/second language education (Williams and Burden, 1997; 1999; Tse, 2000; Williams et al., 2001, 2002, 2004).

In attempting to address the research question more accurately and to analyse the content of Lithuanian language materials and activities, taking into account the philosophical principles put forward by Dewey (1910, 1913, 1916, 1938), regarding the role materials and activities play in the education process, theoretical considerations in the realm of *adult education and learning* were made, having in mind implications for course, material and activity design (Knowles, 1973, 1983, 1984; Mezirow, 1975, 1978, 1990a/b, 1991, 1996, 2009; Knox, 1977, 1986; Lovell, 1980). Once more, such a theoretical framework allowed for a focused investigation of the role played by educational resources, especially when the target audience is

comprised of adults. This action was grounded on the high number of perceived difficulties attributed to the lack of or inappropriate educational resources.

Another important consideration was that of the role played by education institutions – instruction and activities - in terms of facilitating the inclusion of adults in the local *communities of practice*, facilitating their *participation in society* (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2006). Such a theoretical review was necessary considering the perceived difficulty of adults having little or no participation in society by speaking the local language. Such an obstacle was perceived by some adults as an impediment to their language learning process.

Issues around *memory and its implications on learning in adulthood*, concerning the \limitations of short-term memory and implications on remembering were also considered (Miller, 1956; Klatzy, 1975; Lovell, 1980; Knox, 1986; Radvansky et al. 2001; Kellogg, 2002; Ormrod, 2008; Radvansky, 2008; Blanchard and Thacker, 2010, among others). Without such a consideration, it would have not been possible to analyse the content of the Lithuanian language learning materials and their implementation at the classroom level, as adult learners formed perceptions concerning their *lack of ability to remember and understand information*.

Finally, the last search for a theory to provide us with additional support was that in the realm of *foreign & second language education, teaching and learning* (Kramsch, 1993; Nunan, 1998; Richard and Rodgers, 2001; Brown, 2006; Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011), with a focus on the application of *the task-based approach to language education* (Nunan, 1989, 2004; Skehan, 1996, 1998; Willis, 1996, 1998; Bygate et al, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Errey and Schollaert, 2003; Leaver and Willis, 2004; Van den Branden, 2006a/b/c; Van den Branden et. al, 2007). In addition to that, issues around *task difficulty* (Brindley, 1987; Skehan and Foster, 2001; Robinson, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Duran and Ramaut, 2006) were also discussed. This allowed us to further analyse the *Lithuanian language tasks design and their level of complexity*, as these were also raised as contributing to the perceived difficulties.

**Theoretical significance and novelty of the research.** This single case study aims to gather information about Lithuanian - a less-widely used and taught language, having a focus on the adult learner – non-native speakers, temporary and permanent residents, visitors - and their perceived difficulties learning this language in the host country. *Its findings are expected to be unique and serve a revelatory purpose*, at



local and international levels, as no previous research had been conducted with such an objective. Needless to say, the findings will be reported in English, an international language, thus, facilitating the dissemination of information while paving the way for future studies on this matter.

*Its novelty lies in the methodological choice, research design and theoretical framework:* an ethnographic case study, qualitative in nature, first of its kind, conducted by a non-native speaker of Lithuanian. This author, a Lithuanian citizen, moved to this country with a dual purpose: learn Lithuanian and conduct this investigation *in loco*. Unlike previous research, this study takes into account adult learners' nature, orientation to learning, interests, motivation and abilities, given the important role they play, as temporary or permanent residents, in the reconstruction of the Lithuanian society in transition times, not only by drawing on foreign/second language theories, but also on multiple theoretical constructs - critical pedagogy, social psychology, adult education and learning. This also contributes to this study being considered as a novelty, considering its socio-cultural context and the lack of previous research with such an objective.

**Practical significance of the research.** The findings are expected to provide researchers and teachers with unique information on adult learners' perceptions of their difficulties in learning Lithuanian, at a basic level of studies. Thus, future actions may be implemented as to facilitate Lithuanian language education, teaching and learning in the realms of curriculum planning, material design and teacher education. This in turn is expected to facilitate the social and professional inclusion of adults – European and Lithuanian citizens, non-native speakers, newcomers - who decide to settle down in this country for several reasons.

### **Structure of the dissertation**

The findings of this research are organized in two volumes: 1) *Volume I* - apart from the 'Introduction', 'Discussion of Results', 'Final Conclusions', 'Hypotheses', and 'Recommendations', this dissertation is comprised of 6 chapters, a list of references containing 237 items, and 155 extracts from interviews and questionnaires; 2) *Volume II – Qualitative Data* – is also organized in two parts: firstly, it contains the notes of 18 audio-recorded lesson observations; secondly, it entails the transcriptions of the 46 interviews conducted, as described in the first chapter of this volume.

## **Publications and dissemination of the research**

### **Articles**

- 1) ZYGMANTAS, J. 'Quality in University Teaching: Learner's Perceptions in Foreign Language Education'. In F. Bento and L.M. Hokstad (eds). *Perceptions of Quality in Higher Education, Rankings and Benchmarking. Proceedings of UNIQUAL 2009 – The 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Universities' Quality*. ISBN: 978-82-519-2714-7 Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2011.
- 2) ZYGMANTAS, J. 'Understanding Critical Pedagogy and Its Impact on the Construction of Knowledge'. *Acta Paedagogica Vilnensia*, 23, ISSN 1392-5016, Vilnius Universiteto Leidykla, 2009, p. 63-78.
- 3) ZYGMANTAS, J. Changing Requirements for Language Teachers and their Implications for Teacher Education. *Social Sciences/Socialiniai Mokslai*, 3:57, ISSN 1392-0758, Kaunas, Lithuania, 2007, p. 66-72.

### **Presentations at International Conferences**

- 1) 'Language tasks and their impact on knowledge (re)production in society: a descriptive model'. *The 4<sup>th</sup> LKPA International Conference: Multilingualism and Creativity: Theory and Practice of Language Education*. Co-organized by the Lithuanian Association of Language Teachers, Vytautas Magnus University and Kaunas University of Technology. Kaunas, Lithuania, May 2010.
- 2) 'Quality in University Teaching: Learner's Perceptions in Foreign Language Education'. *The 6th International Conference on Universities' Quality Development: Perceptions of Quality in Higher Education, Rankings and Benchmarking (UNIQUAL 2009)*. Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway, June 2009.
- 3) 'Changing Requirements for Language Teachers and their Implications for Teacher Education'. *The 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Universities' Quality Development: Changing University Culture (UNIQUAL 2007)*. Kaunas University of Technology, Institute of Educational Studies. Kaunas, Lithuania, October 2007.
- 4) 'A Pilot Investigation of Students' Needs, Wants and Views on Learning Lithuanian as a Foreign Language'. *Language Teaching and Learning in Multilingual Europe – International Conference – Vilnius University, Institute of Foreign Languages*. Vilnius, Lithuania, May 2007.

## 1. Research design, orientation and methodology

In the first part of this chapter, the philosophical principles underlying research in education, in contexts experiencing transition and social change, with a focus on language education, will be discussed. Based on such principles, the research design, nature of the study, theoretical framework and methodological approach will be described. Finally, the justification for such a theoretical approach and methodology will be stated, providing the reader with an overview of the main actions performed by this researcher.

### 1.1 Research in education during transition: philosophical principles

Since his seminal work on critical pedagogy in 1970, the ideas put forward by Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire<sup>7</sup> (1921-1997) have enriched the principles of lifelong learning courses, informing research conducted in adult education. In this sense, both students and teachers have a right to question previous assumptions and engage in reflective processes through dialogued discussions. This will foster individual and collective changes, allowing for a reconstruction of society as a whole. The process of investigation of man's thinking, identification of obstacles (i.e. limit-situations), followed by an implementation of actions (i.e., limit-acts), which allows individuals to overcome the obstacles that prevent their own development within a specific context, is called *conscientização*<sup>8</sup>.

Freire (1970, 1974, 1998) contended that man, as an unfinished human being, constantly engages in social relationships. Being different from animals, man is both *in* and *with* the world. By working on different challenges, man relates to the world in a critical way: he organizes himself, chooses the best response, tests and acts; man changes the world and, as a result, changes himself as well. And, most importantly, in the process of acting, creating and recreating, man also changes history.

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<sup>7</sup>Previous discussions can be found in *Understanding critical pedagogy and its impact on the construction of knowledge* (Zygmantas, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> There have been attempts to translate the Portuguese word **conscientização** into English equivalents, such as *conscientization* or *awareness-raising*. However, in Freire's terms, this goes beyond becoming aware of obstacles that hinder progress; it also implies reaching a higher level of consciousness, via problem-posing and solving, mediated by dialogue, as individuals have a right to be Subjects of their own learning process, taking responsibility for their own actions. This in turn will allow them to take an active role in the (re)construction of their own realities (Note: In Portuguese, the suffix *-ação* can be understood as process or action and the word *ação* means 'action').

Unfortunately, powerful social forces may work against man during this creation process – to a lesser or greater extent, the ‘ordinary’ man plays the passive role of a spectator, having his value and his own existence in the world diminished. Man loses a basic right, the most valuable possession he has, something that distinguishes him from other animals – the right to speak a language through his own words. When this happens, not only does man lose the right to exercise his existence through language, but also has his own identity ‘shattered’. Under domination and oppression, a *culture of silence* is established – man is deprived of his right to speak. At an unconscious level, for fear of being excluded, man adapts and succumbs to an imposed reality. Another type of imposition comes next - a *cultural invasion* which allows for *the preservation of oppression*. Certain characteristics can be identified:

a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one world view upon another. It implies the “superiority” of the invader and the “inferiority” of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them. (Freire, 1970: p. 160)

In this sense, those who are less powerful and play a passive role are faced with a *culture of silence* whereas those who are more powerful and play a leading role act through a *culture of invasion*. Freire contended that both cultures are rooted in socially organized structures, such as the home and schools that can function as agencies. *Reality is portrayed as static* – no changes are believed to happen in the world. So what teachers learned five, ten, twenty or thirty years ago are still suitable for instruction. What a student learned five, ten, twenty or thirty years ago still serves the purpose. In such an environment, where very few are allowed to speak, and the vast majority is to remain silent, *it is vital to maintain the status-quo*.

But Freire (1970, 1974, 1998) believed otherwise: **reality is dynamic and humans are unfinished beings**. The way humans experience themselves as cultural, historical and unfinished beings in the world is essential for a ‘permanent movement of search’. As the author further noted, “it is in our incompleteness, of which we are aware, that *education as a permanent process* is grounded” (1998: p. 58, emphasis added). What is more, such a lifelong learning process entailed, in Freire’s views, a multi-perspective dialogue: “ideally, educators, students, and prospective teachers should together be conversant with other forms of knowledge that are seldom part of the

curriculum” (1998: p. 58). The awareness of being unfinished along with the need to engage in a search for knowledge from several perspectives was seen as vital because our identities are “in the process of construction” (1998: p. 62).

In addition, every individual is “necessary to the reorganization of the new society”, given the constant changing world; everyone should be ‘trained’ to occupy several positions in the new society (Freire, 1970). Thus, **education is a form of intervention**: an open-minded approach will allow students to play the role of Subjects in the educational process. Through a problem-posing method, teachers and students are given the opportunity to speak, question, and attempt to find solutions to their problems, within their own environments. Such an intervention helps students “recognize themselves as architects of their own cognition process” (Freire, 1998: p. 112). As this knowledge will be later applied to society, the outcome is clear – radical changes in society and its ‘culture’, concerning economics and human relations, as far as a right to employment and education, among others (Freire, 1970).

Moreover, language plays a vital role, because man is inserted in language-mediated contexts. Therefore, *Freire’s primary contribution was in the realm of language education*, considering that individuals needed to learn the local language to function in their own societies. In this sense, **language learning is both emancipatory and instrumental**: students can develop their mental functions by learning a language, through dialogued discussions, having as a starting point their own contexts. In addition, language education provides people with a tool for social and professional inclusion, which in turn will foster the development of society.

With regard to methodological considerations, Freire (1970) contended that, first and foremost, **educators and researchers should investigate students’ thinking** – “thinking which occurs only in and among people together seeking out reality” (p. 108). The author added that the analysis of reality without fear is best accomplished **within a ‘climate of transition’**: democratic societies can “take advantage of that climate to attempt to rid [one’s] education of its wordiness, its lack of faith in the student and his power to discuss, to work, to create” (Freire, 1974: p. 33).

Having this in mind, such an investigation should also have another focus: **the identification of perceived difficulties** or obstacles considering these will allow for changing one’s reality. Drawing on the philosophical thought of philosophers, such as Jaspers (1951) and Pinto (1960), Freire (1970) argued that education should first and

foremost **provide learners with the opportunity to become conscious of the ‘limit-situations’**, that frequently impede action and development. In other words, humans should critically perceive the limits to their liberation - always embedded in situations – **and respond to them with ‘limit-acts’**, a concept put forward by Pinto (1960, v.II: p. 284). In Freire’s words:

As critical perception is embodied in action, a climate of hope and confidence develops which leads men to attempt to overcome the limit-situations. This objective can only be achieved only through action upon the concrete, historical reality in which limit-situations historically are found. As reality is transformed and these situations are superseded, new ones will appear, which in turn will evoke new limit-acts. (1970: p. 99-100)

Therefore, **it is vital to conduct investigations in loco**, as Freire (1970) noted: “observe certain moments of the life of the area – sometimes directly, sometimes by means of informal conversations with the inhabitants” along with noting every thing down, “including apparently unimportant items”. Also, the way people speak “their expressions, their vocabulary, and their syntax” is to be noted (p. 111). In this survey of the area, it is vital that investigators observe several circumstances, including the relations between people and the role they play in the social interactions (p. 112).

As Goulet (cited in Freire, 1974: viii) put it, Freire would facilitate the experiential involvement of adult learners by conducting **participant observation** and tuning into people’s own vocabulary, allowing them to express their own thinking in whatever language they are able to speak. This would in turn allow for a ‘cultural synthesis’: expert’s knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the word) would merge with an individual’s knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the world). The outcome would then be the starting point for education, as far as ‘curriculum design’ and activities are concerned, as strongly believed by Freire (1970, 1974, 1998).

Finally, in analysing Freire’s dialectical educational philosophy, Reitz (2000) noted three main areas of enquiry as far as any investigation from this perspective is concerned: 1) students’ identification of the most serious and disturbing obstacles or limit-situations; 2) their actual and possible actions in response to such obstacles; and, 3) an enquire “into the structures of society and institutional realities that require transformation in order to obviate these limit situations in the future” (p. 246).

As we can clearly see, the identification of those obstacles, followed by the implementation of specific 'remedial' actions, is not only beneficial to man but also the society in which he is inserted. This can be best accomplished during transition periods, when all human beings, students and teachers - are own Subjects of their learning process, having a right to speak, think and rethink, and finally, update their previous knowledge, and (re)construct their own worlds.

Given the instrumental and emancipatory role a language plays, this is particularly true in contexts of language education: the knowledge constructed in the classroom, through language, via pedagogical practice and learning materials will be applied to society, through language-mediated interactions. Not only will this contribute to individuals' inclusion in society, through the target language, but also to the reorganization and development of countries in times of transition.

Having said this, in considering this research design and its methodological approach, such an investigation can be best conducted by employing **qualitative research applied to educational contexts**. Such an approach has also its basis on ethnography in which the main action performed by the researcher is that of participant observation, as employed by Freire himself (1970, 1974, 1998).

## **1.2 Understanding the perceived reality in its natural setting**

A qualitative approach has been largely used since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as an alternative to the positivistic view, considering social scientists questioned whether or not such a view was still suitable for analysing social and human phenomena. In education, qualitative research has been conducted since the 1980s, both from a theoretical and methodological perspective (André, 2002).

As noted by Merriam (1998), five main characteristics can be identified within all forms of qualitative enquiry. Firstly, from a *philosophical perspective*, "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (p. 6). This is to say that **the key concern is to understand this reality from participants' perspectives**. Secondly, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, therefore, he or she is "responsive to the context" (p. 7). Thirdly, it involves *fieldwork*. This means that the researcher goes physically to the setting to observe behaviour in its natural setting, such as the school and the classroom. Fourthly, an inductive research strategy is primarily employed. This is to say that this type of

research *focuses on process, meaning and understanding*, therefore, “the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive” (p. 8). In other words, a comprehensive description of the context, the players involved and the activities, including data obtained from participants are presented when the findings are shown.

In addition, in conducting research which is qualitative in nature, the phenomenon is investigated in its natural setting, without any manipulation of pre-determined variables. A *holistic view* is adopted – all elements of a given situation as well as interactions between them are taken into account.

With regard to **validity**, several studies have stated that the use of *triangulation* – using multiple methods contributes to the accuracy of findings (e.g., Denzin, 1989, 2000, 2003; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Seale, 1999). In that sense, it is believed that qualitative research can be more credible’ if different data gathering *diverse techniques, methods, strategies, and theoretical perspectives* are employed during the period the scientific enquiry is conducted (Cho and Trent, 2006).

Moreover, in considering **qualitative research in education**, it is vital to note the influence of anthropology and its application to scientific inquiry through *ethnography* whenever there is a need to understand the human relations in society and its culture – beliefs, values, attitudes and types of behaviour (Merriam, 1998). Considering the qualitative nature of research, a *thick description of the culture and context* in which the phenomenon is investigated is necessary, as noted by Geertz (1973), based on studies carried out by British philosopher Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976).

This is particularly important when ethnography is applied to education, as noted by Andre (2002), given the fact that this type of research **is expected to produce knowledge of the world of pedagogical practice**. This author went on to single out the following characteristics in ethnographic studies. Firstly, researchers are the main instrument, considering they mediate data gathering, add participants or other instruments, and review the methodology while conducting the study, if needed. Secondly, the emphasis is on the process, not on the product or final results. Thirdly, the main aim is to apprehend the meanings participants make out of the situation in which they are involved. Fourthly, the researcher gets really close to the situation, the people, the events, during a certain period of time. Fifthly, the data will be generated from a great quantity of information - obtained from the situation itself, the people and their dialogues, which can be rewritten or presented as literal transcriptions.



Ultimately, **the main objective is to formulate concepts, theories or hypotheses and not to test them**, considering this type of research aims at discovering new meanings and constructing (new) understandings of reality.

Likewise, Genzuk (2003) noted that such a type of research should be carried out in natural settings which already exist independently of the research process. Considering human behaviour differs from other types of behaviour (i.e., animal behaviour), particular groups of people develop different worldviews. Their responses are not fixed; instead they are provided in reply to other people's utterances as well as considering the context in which they occur, as part of discourse. Therefore, it is important to obtain some understanding of the cultural perspectives on which human actions are based. Finally, *the research process is inductive and discovery-based*; that is, it is not limited to testing hypotheses, as already noted by Andre (2002).

When ethnography is applied to educational contexts, not only does it take us closer to the institution and to the dynamic interactions within that instructional setting, but it also enables us to see it as a social space where knowledge is (re)created within different levels of resistance and conflicting objectives. Therefore, *it is important to consider students' cognitive processes, background, the values and views and the inter-relations within the institution where knowledge is co-constructed*.

Finally, as already defended by other scholars, Andre (2002) concluded that, due to the complex nature of investigations carried out in educational settings, **different theoretical perspectives**, such as psychology, pedagogy, anthropology, philosophy, linguistics, among others, **are to be considered when the data is interpreted**. Especially at the end of the work, after all data has been gathered, the theory will support data interpretation and analysis.

### **1.2.1 Ethnographic case studies and their application to education**

A case study which has its focus on "the culture of a school, a group of students, or classroom behavior" can be labeled as an *ethnographic case study* (Merriam, 1998: p. 34). Case studies in education are more likely to be qualitative as opposed to quantitative in nature, considering that:

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. (Merriam, 1998: p.19)

Similarly, within educational contexts, **case studies** that can be referred as ethnographic-like, should not only **provide a thick description of a unit** (a school, a programme, an institution, a teacher, a student, or a classroom), but also understand its particularities. Findings will further inform educational policies and pedagogical practices (Andre, 2002).

The theory underlying case studies has been discussed by several authors in the past decades (Shaw, 1978; Stake, 1978, 1994, 1995; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Boggs, 1986; Wolcott, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Andre, 2002; Yin, 2003). Such studies share a common understanding of the main characteristics of a case study: it has a specific focus on a unit; therefore, it can be delimited; it entails descriptions which are often qualitative; this is to say that **findings are reported by means of literary techniques**, as opposed to exclusively relying on numerical data.

According to Yin (2003), case studies can be considered as a research strategy adopted to investigate the phenomenon in its real-life context. They can be designed as single or multiple case studies.

A **single case study** can be designed when it represents a unique or rare circumstance (i.e., being one of its kind), and can serve a revelatory purpose. In Yin's (2003) words, "this situation exists when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation" (p. 42). Moreover, the case study must be significant: it should be 'unusual' and of general public interest. Also, it should underlie issues which are nationally important in terms of theoretical or practical terms.

When a study contains more than one single case, it's normally labeled as a multiple-case study. Such a study can be used for establishing comparisons between the units under investigation. It can also require "extensive resources and time beyond the means of a single student or independent research investigator" (Yin, 2003: p. 47).

As a means of constructing **reliability** and **validity**, Yin (2003) stated that a good case study will employ multiple sources of evidence to collect data; followed by data analysis. When we conduct a case study, we are relying on analytical generalization rather than on statistical one, which normally happens in a survey study. By statistical generalization, it is meant that one has in mind a specific population and subsequently, a sample, which is considered for gathering empirical data. It relies on quantitative formulas which may be applicable to populations and samples, and it is,

by far, the most common way adopted if one is doing a survey study or analyzing data from archives (Yin, 2003). On the other hand, analytical generalization is to be understood as if one had to conduct a new experiment. In this sense, the investigator chooses a topic and searches a theory, which had been previously developed but can be further used as “a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study” (Yin, 2003: p. 32-33). This single-case study employs an analytical generalization as opposed to a statistical one, although quantitative data is used to guide the subsequent steps.

Furthermore, if two or more cases support the same theory, then, as Yin (2003) puts it, “replication can be claimed” (p. 33). So, what we are actually doing is generalizing the results obtained to some broader theory. That is the reason why the author firmly stated that cases studies “are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (Yin, 2003: p. 10). Therefore, a researcher’s aim would be, in Yin’s terms, to “generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)” (Yin, 2003: p. 10).

And most importantly, Yin (2003) argued that the “analogy to samples and universes is incorrect” (p. 37), as case studies do not represent a sample. The author stressed that cases are not “sampling units and should not be chosen for this reason” (p. 32). So, a researcher “should try to aim toward analytic generalization in doing case studies” while also avoiding “thinking in such confusing terms as ‘the samples of cases’ or the ‘small sample size of cases’” (p. 33).

To sum up, a case study is frequently employed as a research strategy. In contexts where no previous research was carried out, it is normally designed as a single-case study, being unique and having a revelatory purpose, of a national significance. Its validity will be supported by several sources of data collection and analysis, based on different theoretical perspectives. Reliability will be obtained through data analysis, which is carried out by analytical generalization – a theory is searched and used for comparing the empirical results. When applied to education, the main aim is to construct a new understanding of a particular phenomenon, and not to test hypotheses. The findings are expected to inform educational policies and pedagogical practices, and facilitate the process of change according to the new reality.

Having said so, **the reasons for conducting a single case study, focusing on perceived difficulties**, are grounded in the following facts. Firstly, this study was

conducted in a post-Soviet country which has undergone fundamental changes in its social, political and economical spheres since the restoration of its independence. In this sense, a transitional period was established impacting the reorganization of its social structures. Therefore, this research is fundamentally based on the theoretical constructs put forward by Freire (1970, 1974, 1998), given the fact that nowadays, individuals living, working and studying in Lithuania, as a free and independent country, are actively engaged in society, thus, playing an important role in the reconstruction of the social structures and of their own identities.

Furthermore, Lithuania has been an European Union Member-State since 2004; as a consequence, its doors were open and the country started to experience a different phenomenon: the mobility of European citizens, Lithuanian ‘non-native speaker’ (NNS) citizens, among other individuals, who not only want to visit the cities, but also study and/or work in the country, start a family and settle down in Lithuania. In this sense, these newcomers are also expected to take part in the reconstruction of the social structures. Such a reconstruction is mediated by language, which in turn is used as a tool for communication: if Lithuanian is to be maintained as the state language in all spheres not only should the new residents have the opportunity to learn it but also to be able to use it accordingly to function in this new society.

Moreover, from a ‘first-hand experience’ perspective, this author attended summer courses, at the Department of Lithuanian Studies/Faculty of Philology/Vilnius University, in 2005 and 2006, and noticed adults encountered some difficulties during the lessons. In 2006, an adult learner, in his thirties, married to a Lithuanian citizen, stated having attempted to learn the language for the third time, without having had much success. Apart from that, two visiting lecturers at the university informally stated having enrolled at the same course – beginner’s level - but did not manage to continue their Lithuanian language studies, due to the difficulties encountered. Nonetheless, since its integration into the Union, no previous research had been conducted having in mind adult learners – newcomers, temporary or permanent residents in the country - and their perceived difficulties in learning Lithuanian.

For the very same reasons, this research was designed as *a single case study*, as it had no previous research to serve as its basis. This is to say that this research was not conducted as part of any local programme or European Union project in which several researchers were engaged together, following a pre-determined theoretical-

methodological framework, and working towards achieving a common goal, as far as teaching-learning Lithuanian is concerned. Nevertheless, the doctoral study programme was based on an EU joint project between 2006 and 2008, entitled ‘National identity and globalization: the development of (post) doctoral studies in social sciences and humanities’ (Project code: BPD2004-ESF-2.5.0-03-05/0058).

Finally, it is vital to note that this study was independently conducted by a regular doctoral student, following a specific study programme and examination requirements established by the higher education institution, at the Faculties of Philology and Philosophy at Vilnius University.

With regard to **the choice for the Higher Education Institution - Vilnius University, Faculty of Philology, Department of Lithuanian Studies** - the following statements are expected to provide the main justification:

- The university is the oldest and the largest higher education institution in the country - founded in 1579 - situated in the capital city where its international airport is located. Both facts are believed to attract the greatest number of learners from Lithuania and abroad
- The Department of Lithuanian Studies, established in 1990, has been offering courses of Lithuanian language on a regular basis, at different levels (e.g., formal and non-formal education: regular, summer, winter, and evening courses), targeted at foreigners and non-native speakers. In addition, those who intend to pursue higher education studies at the local universities are instructed by the Ministry of Education and Science<sup>9</sup> to apply for Lithuanian language studies at the department, as it is officially authorized to award the required credits.
  - A Google<sup>10</sup> search conducted in February 2010 in the realm of Lithuanian language learning showed 10 results, being the first one the “Course for Foreigners” at the Department of Lithuanian Studies, at Vilnius University. From a learner perspective, this also contributes for choosing such an environment to study. From a research perspective, this also facilitates the investigation process, as this researcher – originally from Brazil – moved to this country only to conduct studies *in loco*

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<sup>9</sup> “Foreign students who intend to study at a Lithuanian academic institution may also need Lithuanian language credits, which are available through the University of Vilnius’ Department of Lithuanian Studies.” Information retrieved March 2010 and January 2011, from the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science <http://www.smm.lt/en/news/docs/090525.htm>

<sup>10</sup> One of the most frequently used search engines to date.

- Not only is the department offering such courses, but it is also involved in material design and teacher qualification & professional development<sup>11</sup>: local and international Lithuanian language teachers are trained to teach Lithuanian to native and non-native speakers, and foreigners or non-native speakers of Lithuanian descent in other countries as well. In short, the Department of Lithuanian Studies is an essential player in maintaining the Lithuanian language alive for current and future generations

Having said this, all these facts have contributed to gathering data where regular courses are offered, considering the period of time (and time-limit) during which this research was conducted. The findings are expected to contribute to the quality of studies offered at Vilnius University, and the leading position of the Department of Lithuanian Studies, in terms of course, material design and teacher training courses, as far as Lithuanian as a foreign/second language is concerned. Thus, in terms of research design, it is the view of this author that the correct choices were made.

### **1.2.2 Data collection and analysis: gathering multiple-sources of evidence**

In ethnographic studies, especially those applied to educational contexts, researchers are likely to become *participant observers* (Freire, 1970; Spradley, 1980; Nunan, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Andre, 2002; Genzuk, 2003).

As Spradley (1980) put it, being a participant observer means “participating in activities, asking questions, eating strange foods, learning a new language, watching ceremonies, taking fieldnotes (...) interviewing informants, and hundreds of other things” (p. 3). The author added that “in order to discover the hidden principles of another way of life, the researcher must “become a student” and “discover the insider’s view” (p. 4). There is always a **social situation** which can be primarily identified by three elements: *a place* – any physical setting that becomes the basis for a social activity; *actors* – people who play different roles in a given situation (i.e., a newcomer, a visitor); and *activities* – acts that can seem different but also be linked into larger patterns and become an event (p. 39-41).

The purpose of a participant observer to come to a social situation is two fold: firstly, “to engage in activities appropriate to the situation”, and secondly, “to observe

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<sup>11</sup> For example, the department organized a training course, from 27<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2009, targeted at teachers of Lithuanian who work at foreign universities. Information retrieved January 14, 2011 from the official website - <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/EN/p19>

the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation” (Spradley, 1980: p.54). In this sense, it is expected that *researchers engage in complete participation, having the highest level of involvement*: the researcher is already an ordinary participant in the social activity being investigated. Such an action is vital, considering the final product - the ethnographic report - “consists of field notes, tape recordings, pictures, artifacts, and anything else that documents that social situation”. This is supposed to provide a “record of events of a given society within a given period of time” (Spradley, 1980: p. 63).

Therefore, when a qualitative study is conducted in an educational setting, a **context analysis** is carried out (e.g., the place and objects in the classroom), as well as a **content analysis** of several documents: lesson plans, assignments, official grade reports, institutional files, advertisements, school records, informational brochures, websites, teaching materials, posters, among others (Merriam, 1998; Genzuck, 2003).

Besides, data collection can be obtained via instruments such as **questionnaires**, which are one of the most popular means of collecting data and are frequently used to assess students’ needs and views at different stages of a given course (Nunan, 1992). **Interviews** are another type of common instrument for gathering data. In this sense, Spradley (1979) provided a specific framework for asking questions in studies of an ethnographic nature. Firstly, it is important to *show genuine interest* in the informant, *provide ethnographic explanations*, in other words, tell the informant the reason why he or she is being interviewed, and *ask for consent*. In addition, it is relevant to *express cultural ignorance and be open to hear what the informant really wants to say*. Although, asking friendly questions is not part of an ethnographic question set, “it does provide information and helps relax the informant” (Spradley, 1979: p. 61).

**Ethnographic questions** can be grouped into three categories: descriptive questions, structural or explanation questions and contrast questions. *Descriptive questions are the basis of ethnographic interviewing*: they ask for description of places in which the focus is obtaining a picture or image or a real circumstance. In addition, *structural or explanation questions* aim at providing an explanation that may be needed as a complement to answers previously obtained, expanding and asking for an elaboration on what was just said, or on what was said at an earlier moment in the course of the interview. Finally, *contrast questions* aim at gathering information which provide the ethnographer with a greater possibility to discover

meaning behind the words used, as people may use different wording to express the same thing. The techniques employed can be the following: 1) *semantic relationship* - the discovery of meaning of words by the way words relate to each other; 2) *the use principle* - by asking for the use and not the meaning; 3) *the similarity principle* – by checking if the words share similar features; and 4) *the contrast principle* – by finding out what things are not, or how they can be different.

Ultimately, according to Andre (2002), in-depth interviews should aim at deepening the questions and clarifying problems raised before. In addition, Genzuk (2003) noted that interviews will always be unique considering the situation, the needs of the interviewee and the personal style of the interviewer. Madison (2005) added that interviewing is “part technique, part ethics, part theory, part method, part intuition, part collaboration, and part openness to deep vulnerability” (p. 35). The author noted that one does not absolutely require predesigned questions. Instead, what the researcher does need is “genuine curiosity, sincere interest, and the courage to be vulnerable to another at the risk of being the register of someone else’s power” (p. 36). Moreover, the informant plays a vital role: “the interviewee is not an object, but a subject with agency, history, and his or her own idiosyncratic command of a story. Interviewer and interviewee are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning and experience together” (Madison, 2005: p. 25).

As far as the **qualitative analysis** is concerned, Spradley (1979) suggested that we follow a relational theory which is based on the following premise “the meaning of any symbol is its relationship to other symbols” (p. 97). The *relational analysis* Spradley had in mind was based on the principles of Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) grounded theory. According to these authors, *comparative analysis* is a method as any other experimental and statistical methods. However, the analysis can be applied to social units of any size - large or small contexts - considering their own experience in gathering evidence from wards in hospitals or classes in a school (p. 21-22). In addition, they went on to elaborate on this discovery process:

one generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence; then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept. The evidence may not necessarily be accurate beyond a doubt (nor is it even in studies concerned only with accuracy), but the concept is undoubtedly a relevant theoretical abstraction about what is going on in the area studied. Furthermore, the concept itself will not change. (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: p. 23)



Likewise, Spradley (1979) categories are placed in a *domain* (Glaser and Strauss refer to it as a group): all the members in this domain have “at least one feature of meaning” (p. 100). The domain can have a cover term followed by included terms. Moreover, a term may be included in a certain domain or may be excluded given the semantic relationship. For instance, the cover term DRINK could have as included terms the following: *tequila and lime* and *beer and tomato juice* given the fact that they are *a kind of drink* (p. 105).

It is important, however, to note that **the list of categories can be delimited**: when the information gathered only adds bulk but no new aspect is brought about, the list of categories becomes theoretically saturated as *a saturation point is reached* and no more relevant information can be added (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Furthermore, Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized that the theory is a constant process of being generated, and at this stage should not be seen as a “perfected product” (p. 32). A clear view of the categories will only be reached with the coding and analysis of all data, along with the integration of the theory. In their own words: “A discovered, grounded theory, then, will tend to combine mostly *concepts and hypotheses that have emerged from the data* with some existing ones that are clearly useful” (p. 46, emphasis added).

As far as the data gathering, interpretation and analysis, all actions were performed as to address the research questions. The main method employed was *participant observation* - not only did this author act as a researcher, but also as a student, at the same department, attending summer and regular courses (~800 hours of study). This method entailed multiple sources of data gathering: a questionnaire, audio-recorded semi-structured interviews, audio-recorded lesson observations, context analysis, and content analysis of public information, existing theories and previous studies.

*A two-page questionnaire*<sup>12</sup> used in this study comprised both closed/semi-closed and open questions (18 in total), and mainly aimed at obtaining the learners profile, their motivation to learn Lithuanian in Lithuania, and previous experiences learning foreign languages. The open items were initially used to investigate learners’ general impressions and perceived difficulties. It was administered mostly at the end of their studies, before the final test, and used as a guide for asking further questions.

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<sup>12</sup> A copy has been attached hereto (see Appendix II).

*The interviews*<sup>13</sup> were conducted towards the end of the course of studies, after students had accepted me as a participant in their group. This was also a moment when items mentioned in the questionnaire were clarified. The main aspects under investigation were the following (not necessarily in this order and subject to participants' willingness and availability to speak): 1) motivation to learn Lithuanian in Lithuania; 2) previous language learning experiences; 3) general impressions and perceived difficulties of their current language experience; and, when applicable, 4) attempts to use the language outside the classroom. Ethnographic questions were asked, as follows:

#### EXAMPLES OF DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

##### EXTRACT 1

**Researcher:** *Ok, so first of all... I would like to ask you...about your foreign languages... you speak English... And how did you learn it?*

**Student11:** *Humm... I learnt a little bit back home in [student's country]...but I think I learned most of my speaking when I was in Chicago... I spent almost four...three years in Chicago...*

**Researcher:** *And... in [student's country]...how did you learn that?*

**Student11:** *At school...like we learn Lithuanian here...it is not so intense...just a few classes a week... and you normally...it doesn't... didn't require speaking a lot...you just had to read and take the test...so most about grammar...*

#### EXAMPLES OF STRUCTURAL OR EXPLANATION QUESTIONS

##### EXTRACT 2

**Researcher:** *And as far as your difficulties...for example...doing your homework...you said... "endings...starting questions" ...can you elaborate on that?*

**Student28:** *Just for Lithuanian...it's all the tenses and endings...I have difficulty with...you know... the genitives... the locatives...all the different...when it comes to the homework...I still don't...I have difficulty doing that...*

**Researcher:** *Yeah...I see...and then in the classroom...you've mentioned you have sometimes difficulty concentrating... [referring to the questionnaire question 18B]*

**Student28:** *Concentrating... yeah... hum... that's my problem... I...have difficulty...if it is not a subject I am really interested in...I have difficulty focusing...like paying attention...and listening...to everything teachers say...so sometimes all days are for a wonder in my eyes...I won't listen...just concentrating...if it's not ...if it's a boring subject or something (...) I am very good at schooling but do I tend to lose concentration very quickly...if I am not interested*

#### EXAMPLES OF CONTRASTIVE QUESTIONS

##### EXTRACT 3

**Researcher:** *OK...now...about your difficulties... So you mentioned here...that "learning by heart forms and vocabulary" [structural/explanation question]*

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<sup>13</sup> A full description of the interviews can be found in Volume II – Qualitative Data (Lesson Observation Notes and Interviews).

- Student36:** Yeah... I never liked learning by heart and I never ...I guess ... I never did it in my life...but this is a problem... I mean... If I can have my table ( ) with me...then I will get used to using it again and again ... I will learn it...if I use the vocabulary...the vocabulary I practise...and I learn it...but if I have to take this paper [a handout with grammar exercises] and learn ...I will not remember anything... it's no use... I somehow find practice when I have homework to do sometimes ... like go and speak with Lithuanians ... to do it
- Researcher:** Yes...*this is what I was gonna ask you...if you...you say you can't remember...so what could you do in order to remember?*
- Student36:** To remember? Just speak...speak with the people again and again... practising... I guess there is no miracle in the language...if you don't practise it... then you don't learn anything...I mean...if I go home and speak with my parents who speak only [student's first language]...if I stay there...If I don't go out...If I don't speak with anybody...after six months I will only speak [student's first language] and that's it...it's practising all the time...

The *qualitative analysis of the data* obtained from the questionnaire and interviews, allowed for the generation of categories based on grounded theory. The relational and comparative analysis of the language was conducted by making use of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This facilitated the organization of data into two domains: 'Environment factors' and 'Learner factors'. Moreover, the *quantitative analysis* (i.e., number of occurrences, percentages) has provided the basis for organizing the categories according to the most mentioned attribution or reason given. An example is provided next:

**Table 1 Relational and comparative analysis (MS Excel spreadsheet)**

DOMAIN (GROUP) : Learner Factors								
COVER TERM (CATEGORY): Cognitive Ability (lack of)								
INSERTED TERM (SUB-CATEGORY): Not remembering								
	Learner	Course	Country	Gender	Age	L1	L2	Extracts
1								Well it is <b>hard for me to memorize new words...</b>
2								<b>Hard to memorize</b> new vocabulary
3								I know which...which case I have to use... <b>it is hard to remember which is the ending</b>

- the information related to the participants was erased for confidentiality reasons

Furthermore, *eighteen lessons were observed* – totaling 36 academic hours:

*Non-formal education*

- Regular course: February – May 2007 (1 group)
- Summer course: July 2007 (group 1), July 2008 (group 2)

### *Formal-education*

- Erasmus group: October-November 2008 (1 group)

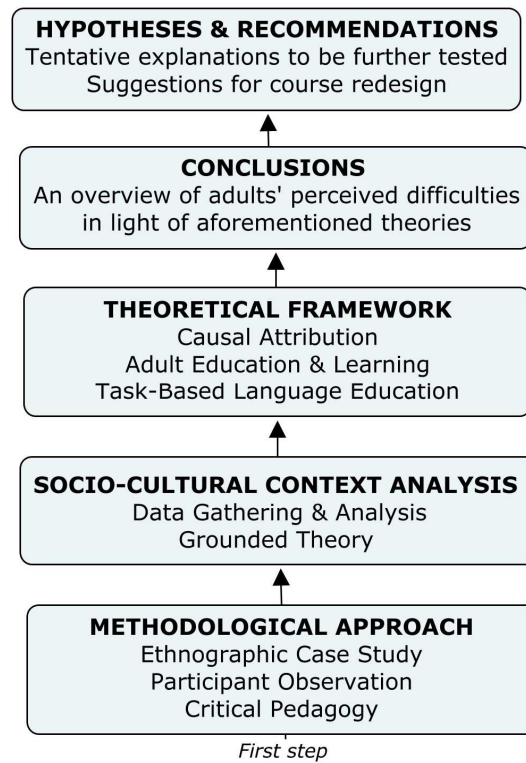
Of these, *thirteen lessons were audio-recorded* after students had given me full consent. Normally, the first lesson observed would not be recorded, as this was the time when learners were made aware of the reason for conducting the research and the importance of their participation. At first, the lesson observation notes were taken in as many details as possible, focusing on teacher's instructions and students' actions. The main purpose was to note down the type of activities, goals, and acts performed by learners during the social activity of learning Lithuanian in the classroom. After such a preliminary description, the notes were reorganized in the 'lesson observation sheet' (the most important notes taken and extracts from the audio recordings can be seen in Volume II of this work).

The *macro and micro socio-cultural context analysis* was carried out considering: 1) the country and its official language 2) Lithuanian language learning in Lithuania – policies, courses, target groups, and educational resources, 3) the higher education institution in Vilnius, the department, the study programme, classrooms, the learning material, and the lessons. This was supported by the *content analysis* of public and private information, obtained from official websites, laws, policies, regulations, previous research and studies mainly conducted by Lithuanian researchers and scholars, concerning the language and the laws regulating language education in the country. Given the fact that Lithuania has been a European Union Member-State since 2004, education policies that regulate adult learning and language learning were also reviewed. This was an essential measure in terms of solidifying the underlying principles the previous theories had laid down.

Having done this, *the interpretation of adult learners' perceived difficulties* were conducted considering their insertion in this cultural context. This action allowed us to arrive at the preliminary findings, which were then analysed *in light of causal attribution theory*.

Finally, further theory was reviewed, in *an attempt to critically analyse the perceptions around Lithuanian language materials and activities, having in mind the adult learner*, and the role language plays in their participation in society.

In this sense, the whole process of this investigation was thoroughly conducted to address the research questions, arrive at the main findings, formulate hypotheses and make recommendations. The main steps of this ethnographic case study are shown below:



**Figure 1 Ethnographic case study steps**

Considering its ethnographic nature, along with the fact that this was the first single-case study carried out locally, the hypotheses are to be further investigated. In other words, this single case study ‘paves the way’ for subsequent research, as it is beyond its scope to propose ready-to-use solutions due to the complexity of this phenomenon and lack of previous research. Only then will *conscientização* have been achieved. Nevertheless, recommendations for course redesign will also be made, based on the aforementioned theoretical framework.

On balance, this scientific investigation aimed at laying the foundations for foreign & second language education, meeting the needs of adults engaged in lifelong learning contexts, facilitating their inclusion in a new environment.

Having said so, in the next chapter, the preliminary findings obtained from the macro context analysis will be described and discussed.

## **2. A macro-analysis of the socio-cultural context: country, language, and educational policies**

Considering Lithuanian language education does not occur in a vacuum, but is historically and socially situated, the following descriptions will be made: the country – facts & figures, the evolution of the state language, including its particularities as a system, the educational policies concerning adult and language education in Lithuania and in the European Union.

### **2.1 The country: Facts & Figures**

LIETUVA - Lithuania, in English - is a relatively small country in Northeast Europe that, along with Latvia and Estonia, is normally referred as one of the Baltic States, considering its location by the Baltic Sea. Poland, Belarus and Russia (i.e., Kaliningrad) are also its neighbouring countries, thus, having a significant influence on the country. Its 3.4 million inhabitants are distributed over an area of 65,303 Km<sup>2</sup> and, not surprisingly, contributed to the formation of a multicultural and multilingual nation, due to Lithuania's geographical position, historical facts and events, as briefly described next.

Since the fall of the Soviet Empire and its integration into the European Union in 2004, Lithuania has undergone significant political, economic and social changes. Over a long period of time, its inhabitants experienced oppressive regimes, due to mergers with or occupations by other nations and states. Soon after the restoration of its independence, in the 1990s, the country became a member of important world organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and finally, in 2004, Lithuania was integrated into the European Union. Two years ago, Dalia Grybauskaitė<sup>14</sup> was the first woman president elected in the country - she had been previously working in Brussels as the EU Commissioner in charge of financial programming and budgeting. In 2013, Lithuania will run the Council of the European Union, along with Ireland, sharing important responsibilities within the Union. In short, not only has the country regained independence in the recent past, but also international recognition.

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<sup>14</sup> More information at

[http://www.president.lt/en/institution/president\\_dalia\\_grybauskaite\\_399/biography.html](http://www.president.lt/en/institution/president_dalia_grybauskaite_399/biography.html)

**Table 2 Lithuania: Historical highlights<sup>15</sup>**

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<b>LITHUANIA : A NORTHEASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY</b>			
<b>Population: ~ 3.4 million</b>			
<b>1009</b>	<b>LIETUVA</b> is mentioned for the first time	<b>Vilnius (Capital)</b>	~556.000
<b>1253</b>	The Lithuanian Kingdom is founded	Kaunas	~358.000
<b>1569</b>	Federal State formed by merging with Poland	Klaipėda	~186.000
<b>1795</b>	Incorporation into the Russian Empire	Šiauliai	~128.000
<b>1918</b>	Restoration of the Independent State (February 16)	Panevėžys	~115.000
<b>1940</b>	Occupation by the Soviet Union	<b>Official Language</b>	
<b>1939</b>	Occupation by the Nazi Germany (Klaipėda area)	Lithuanian	
<b>1944</b>	Renewed Soviet Occupation + Resistance	<b>Ethnic Groups</b>	
<b>1990</b>	Restoration of Independence (March 11)	Lithuanians	83,5%
<b>1991</b>	Member of United Nations	Polish	6,7%
<b>2001</b>	Member of World Trade Organization (WTO)	Russians	6,3%
<b>2004</b>	Member of NATO and the European Union*\	Others	3,5%
<b>2009</b>	First woman president: <i>Dalia Grybauskaitė</i>		
<b>2013</b>	Presidency of the Council of European Union		

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\* Not in Eurozone yet (3,4528 Litass = 1 €)

Nevertheless, it is important to note that past historical events, including World War I and II, have had significant consequences for the country. As Zinkevičius<sup>16</sup> (1996) noted, “material and cultural treasures” were lost forever: three quarters of Lithuania’s intelligentsia were withdrawn from the country. One of the cultural treasures that was affected the most was the Lithuanian language. However, before discussing the language as a system, it is important to understand its origins.

## 2.2 The evolution of the state language

Lithuanian is one of the Baltic languages<sup>17</sup>, which also include Latvian and Prussian, being the latter a dead language (Paulauskienė and Valeika, 1994). It originated from the Proto-Indo-European dialect region, and so did the Slavic and Germanic languages. Therefore, there are many similarities between the Baltic and the Slavic languages, especially in their grammatical structure, phonetics, and lexicon (Zinkevičius, 1996).

It is often said that Lithuanian is an old language and it has not undergone many changes. This could be related to the fact that the surviving Baltic languages –

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<sup>15</sup> I have drawn on the following source : Former ‘Lithuanian Development Agency’ – retrieved March 02, 2010 from <http://www.businesslithuania.com/en/BasicCountryData.html>

<sup>16</sup> Zigmass Zinkevičius is a leading Lithuanian linguist and historian, Professor at Vilnius University, and a member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>17</sup> See Schmalstieg (1982a) for further information on the Indo-European languages family tree.

Lithuanian and Latvian – developed from a region called the East Balts. Moreover, it is believed that the tribes that inhabited that region were separated, due to the influence of the Finns. As a result, the Latvian nation evolved from tribes who had already been fused, having had more contact with Semigallian, Selonian, Latgalian – now dead languages. However, the tribes who actually gave rise to the Lithuanian ‘peoples’ would not interact with other tribes; in other words, their language was only spoken within very closely related circles. Consequently, due to the lack of contact and influence from ‘foreigners’, Lithuanians have preserved the “ancient social structure and archaic model of their language” (Zinkevičius, 1996).

Needless to say, oppression combined with both World Wars had a significant impact on Lithuania, from historical, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. On the one hand, many ‘local residents’ departed, and with them, a great part of Lithuania’s legacy. On the other hand, new and different ethnic groups started to co-habit in the country. As a consequence, the local language was altered in many parts of the country, due to the development of bilingualism and/or trilingualism.

For instance, Slavic constructions were incorporated; names of people and places changed. Indeed, following the Polonization of the Lithuanian nobility, Lithuanian personal names would be Polonized; such a change would be even accomplished by ordinary Lithuanians, as an attempt to add a ‘noble’ *-ski*, which in turn would help them hide their lower origin (Schmalstieg, 1982c).

The Polish occupation in Vilnius and its surroundings had an important impact in the language: the Lithuanian press was persecuted; services in many parishes were to be held in Polish, for instance. On the other side of the country, in Klaipėda and its surroundings, some consonants were pronounced as German sounds, and some sentence structures followed the Germanic pattern. In East Prussia (Lithuanian Minor), the number of speakers declined considerably, as there had not been Lithuanian schools in the area for a long time (Zinkevičius, 1996).

As time passed by, after World War II, under the Soviet Empire, it was difficult to find opportunities in which Lithuanian could be spoken in many official establishments. Russian words were inserted in spoken language, Lithuanian words started to be used as if they were Russian words, in terms of sentence construction. For instance, the word *pagalba* [help] was inserted in sentences, following the Russian pattern - *derlių nuėmė kombaino pagalba* [the crop was harvested with the



combine's help] - as opposed to the Lithuanian original pattern - *derlių nuėmė kombainu* [the crop was harvest with a combine] - originally constructed with the instrumental case. In general, reflexive forms, prefixes, and cases were used as they had been used in Russian. Thus, Lithuanian sentence structure would often be changed from its original pattern. Finally, as a consequence, "this language was often hard to understand if one did not speak Russian" (Zinkevičius, 1996: 322).

Even after the restoration of independence, non-Lithuanian businesspeople would insist on doing the paper work in Russian, especially in cities, such as Vilnius and Klaipėda. At the end of 1992, some signs and notice boards would still have Russian characters, some people still had not learned the Lithuanian language well enough to give information, negotiate and communicate in the local language. The situation started to improve, thanks to the efforts of those interested in promoting the language, via associations, clubs, and the organization of festivals. Changes were also made in restructuring courses and studies in standard Lithuanian: the Institute of the Lithuanian Language<sup>18</sup> was reestablished in 1990, preparations of a dictionary were intensified, along with a detailed study on the existing dialects and their grammatical structure. Nonetheless, there was still a lot of work to be done, given the limited resources (i.e., human and financial capital) the country had back in those days. It is up to the new generations, born in an independent country, to keep the local language alive (Zinkevičius, 1996).

By the same token, in considering the important political changes, Jucevičienė<sup>19</sup> (2005) contended that one of the biggest challenges for the Baltic States would be to find appropriate instruments for the "effective construction of national identities" (p. 1). On the one hand, non-formal education provides communities and their networks with the right to express their needs, especially in the case of adults. On the other hand, the reconstruction of a national identity is determined by the existing "communities of practice", which in turn facilitate informal learning through a sense of "shared community, a shared culture and social ties" (p. 9).

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<sup>18</sup> The Institute of the Lithuanian Language is an organization where many scientific and academic activities are carried out, such as research into the grammatical structure of the language, its history and dialects, its use in society, and the preparation of important publications, like dictionaries and grammar compendia, among others. Information retrieved January 24, 2011, from [http://www.lki.lt/LKI\\_EN/](http://www.lki.lt/LKI_EN/)

<sup>19</sup> Palmira Jucevičienė is a Full Professor, Director of the Institute of Educational Studies, and the Head of the Department of Educational Systems at Kaunas University of Technology, situated in the second largest city of Lithuania – Kaunas, being the largest technical university in the Baltic States . Information retrieved February 20, 2011, from <http://www.education.ktu.lt/wordpress/?p=4189> .

As far as its survival until present times, not only is Lithuanian spoken in this country, but also by approximately 610,000 people living in other continents and countries (Paulauskienė and Valeika, 1994). For instance, in Brazil<sup>20</sup>, a country where 53.321 Lithuanians arrived between 1908 and 1936, the Lithuanian Union (*Brazilijos Lietuvių Sąjunga*), located in São Paulo, aims at promoting the Lithuanian language and culture, through the activities of its 300 members. Likewise, the Lithuanian-Brazilian Community (*Brazilijos Lietuvių Bendruomenė*), founded in the late 1940s, is actively engaged in keeping the culture alive, through its folk dance groups (e.g., *Rambynas*, *Nemunas*), the Lithuanian Scouts Association (*Lietuvių Skautų Sąjunga 'Palanga'*), by organizing the commemoration of historical and religious events, according to Lithuanian traditions (e.g., Independence Day, Easter); by offering Lithuanian language courses, mainly targeted at children, through cultural activities, and, finally, through its monthly magazine - *Mūsų Lietuva* (the first edition dates back to 1948), published both in Portuguese and Lithuanian, among others.

Apart from that, in countries such as the USA, more scientific studies are conducted, resulting in the publication<sup>21</sup> of books and periodicals in English and Lithuanian. Communities also play an important role, given the great number of émigrés, who also work together to maintain the language alive, through several events and celebrations. However, in all likelihood, due to the influence of local languages, the Lithuanian spoken in other countries somewhat differs from that currently spoken in Lithuania (Zinkevičius, 1996).

With regard to Lithuanian language learning, an important educational institution in Germany was founded after World War II, firstly established in 1950, catering for the education of children of Lithuanian refugees: *Lietuvių Vasario 16-osios Gimnazija*<sup>22</sup> (Lithuanian High School). Over a period of 50 years, over 2000 students have benefited from attending this school; it is the only full-time Lithuanian educational institution in Western Europe. Young students of Lithuanian descent can apply for studies, via the Lithuanian communities and associations in their countries. Their

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<sup>20</sup> Source: 'Lithuanians in Brazil'. Presentation made by this author at the *South American Cultural Festival*, held at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania, March 20, 2010 (this author is a member of the Lithuanian Community in Vila Zelina, São Paulo, Brazil).

<sup>21</sup> For instance, *Lituanus – Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences*, - is an English language journal dedicated to Lithuanian and Baltic art, history, language, literature, and culture, first issued published in 1954. For further info, visit the official website <http://www.lituanus.org/main.php?id=home>

<sup>22</sup> For more information, check the Lithuanian –German Association's website <http://www.bendruomene.de/lt/node/12> or the official school's website <http://gimnazija.de/>.

countries of origin are varied – in South America: Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Venezuela, Uruguay; in Australasia – Australia; in Europe: Belgium, England, France, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Italy; in North America: the USA and Canada; finally, in Central America: The Dominican Republic.

### **2.2.1 Lithuanian as a system**

In this section, the reader will be provided with a short description of Lithuanian spelling, pronunciation, intonation, accentuation and grammar, for informative purposes, from a non-native speaker's perspective.

Despite the fact that Lithuania is a small country, previous research has shown that the language has dialects and sub-dialects. Differences exist especially in terms of choice and use of words and in the way they are pronounced (Schmalstieg, 1982b). Currently, Lithuanian has two dialects: Lowland and Highland. The dialect for the Standard Lithuanian, selected in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, grew out of the speech of the rural speakers from the West High Lithuanian dialect from the southern section of the country. Nowadays, due to improved schooling facilities and the media – TV, radio, the press - more people are using Standard Lithuanian (Paulauskienė and Valeika, 1994).

Although Lithuanian and Latvian belong to the same language family, they differ to a great extent. According to Subačius<sup>23</sup> (2002), the sounds and endings of Latvian are similar to those in Lithuanian, however “a Lithuanian and a Latvian can only recognise a few words in each other's speech, and this is not enough to hold a conversation” (p. 3). The author went on to state that:

we can say that Lithuanian is a language which cannot be understood by a speaker of any other language who has not learnt it. More than that, even users of different Lithuanian dialects (such as Samogitians and Aukštaitians) cannot understand each other unless they communicate in standard Lithuanian, which they have to learn. (Subačius, 2002: p. 3)

In considering such differences, the Lithuanian alphabet has 32 symbols; in contrast, the English alphabet has 26 symbols. Although the Latin alphabet is used,

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<sup>23</sup> Giedrius Subačius is a Lithuanian linguist and a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, Vilnius. He is also a Professor and endowed Chair of Lithuanian Studies, in the US, at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Information retrieved February 20, 2011, from <http://tiger.uic.edu/~subacius/cv.asp>.

some changes in the **spelling** of words occur due to the way Lithuanian sounds are produced: a *dot* in the letter **ė**, a *check* above the letters **č - š - ž**; a *macron* above the letter **ū**; a *tail* in the letters **ą - ę - į - ū**. For illustrative purposes, the following table shows the main differences between Lithuanian and English, considering that English native-speakers were the majority of participants in this study, also facilitating the comprehension of a English-speaking reader:

LITHUANIAN	ENGLISH	LITHUANIAN	ENGLISH
<b>Aa</b>	<b>Aa</b>	<b>Li</b>	<b>Li</b>
<b>Ąą</b>	-	<b>Mm</b>	<b>Mm</b>
<b>Bb</b>	<b>Bb</b>	<b>Nn</b>	<b>Nn</b>
<b>Cc</b>	<b>Cc</b>	<b>Oo</b>	<b>Oo</b>
<b>Čč</b>	-	<b>Pp</b>	<b>Pp</b>
<b>Dd</b>	<b>Dd</b>	-	<b>Qq</b>
<b>Ee</b>	<b>Ee</b>	<b>Rr</b>	<b>Rr</b>
<b>Ęę</b>	-	<b>Ss</b>	<b>Ss</b>
<b>Ėė</b>	-	<b>Šš</b>	-
<b>Ff</b>	<b>Ff</b>	<b>Tt</b>	<b>Tt</b>
<b>Gg</b>	<b>Gg</b>	<b>Uu</b>	<b>Uu</b>
<b>Hh</b>	<b>Hh</b>	<b>Ūū</b>	-
<b>Ii</b>	<b>Ii</b>	<b>Ūū</b>	-
<b>Įį</b>	-	<b>Vv</b>	<b>Vv</b>
<b>Yy</b>	<b>Yy</b>	-	<b>Xx</b>
<b>Jj</b>	<b>Jj</b>	<b>Zz</b>	<b>Zz</b>
<b>Kk</b>	<b>Kk</b>	<b>Žž</b>	-

In comparing the main differences, *nine different symbols / letters* are used *in the Lithuanian alphabet* only (Ąą, Čč, Ęę, Ėė, Įį, Šš, Ūū, Ūū, Žž) as opposed to only *two different symbols* ( Qq, Xx) that are currently in use *in the English alphabet*. As already stated, the differences in spelling have also implications on the way a word is pronounced.

Generally speaking, **pronunciation** relates to the way words are spelt, despite deviations from phonetical principles (Paulauskienė and Valeika, 1994), and the great historical influence from the orthography and pronunciation of some sounds in Polish,

German and Czech (e.g., č, š, ž), for instance; yet, such changes do not seem to equate with the differences one finds in English or French, as Subačius (2002) put it:

Even native speakers believe that the pronunciation is almost entirely consistent with the spelling: that is, that the words are pronounced exactly as they are spelt. One letter usually corresponds to one sound. In this respect, Lithuanian is more modern than French or English, where the same letters do not always represent the same sound. (p. 6 – 7)

In addition, like other languages, such as English, the vowel sounds can be long, short, and this will normally be represented by specific letters. For instance, the word *mūsu* (our) has two long sounds represented by *ū* and *u*, as opposed to *butas* (flat = apartment), which has a short vowel represented by *u*. It also has diphthongs – two vowel sounds together, like *uo*, as in *šuo* (dog), and *au*, as in Kaunas (the second biggest city in Lithuania).

The consonant sounds may also have different representations, such as *s* and *š* – as in *seimas* (parliament), pronounced as an ordinary *s*, as in the word *sun*, in English, and *šeima* (family), pronounced as the *sh* in the English word *shower*. Still, when some sounds are put together, changes may occur due to processes of *elision* – two identical consonants may result in one sound only, such as the feminine form of the ‘cousin’ – *pusseserė*, that despite having two letters *s* only one sound is produced, and *assimilation* – neighbouring consonants change a given sound from voiceless (produced without the vibration of the vocal chords) into a voiced sound (produced with the vibration of the vocal chords), such as the word *kasdien* (i.e., *every day*) in which the sound *s*, normally a voiceless sound, as in *kas* will be produced as a *z*, with the vibration of the vocal chords. In this sense, as Paulaskienė and Valeika (1994) noted, “there is a discrepancy between the spelling of the words and the sounds themselves” (p. 469).

**Intonation** seems to follow a clear-cut pattern: speakers rise their voice when asking a question, and a fall can be identified at the end of affirmative and negative sentences. In this sense, it does not seem to cause many problems to a foreign learner. Yet, when intonation and accentuation are examined together, more complex features are identified. For example, Kurschat (1876) noted that the voice can rise gradually or sharply at the start of a syllable, and fall sharply or gradually, once it reaches the

end of the syllable. In his study, connections were made in relation to marking the vowels with a grave accent ( ` ), a circumflex accent ( ~ ) , or an acute accent ( ´ ). Still, as Joseph<sup>24</sup> (2009) stated, “these three accents were not distributed equally: the first occurred only on short vowels, and the second and third only on long vowels. But just how the circumflex and acute were distributed amongst the long vowels presented a puzzle” (p. 184). Therefore, some patterns are not so easily identified or explained even by specialists.

As a matter of illustration, the adjective **geras** (*good*, in English), among many others, can behave in such a manner, as far as stress shift<sup>25</sup> is concerned. As can be seen, there are no changes in the word, as far as orthography is concerned:

1. Turi dvi ger <b>AS</b> knygas. ACC.fem.pl He [ she, they] has/have two good books.	2. <b>GE</b> ras oras. NOM.masc.sg. Good weather.
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In addition, words in Lithuanian – at least in their standard form – are not spelt with a grave, acute or circumflex accent. These are just used to mark the characteristic of sounds accordingly, in grammar and pronunciation books, and dictionaries. Nevertheless, changes will occur as far as the production of sounds: in the first example, the word is inflected by the accusative case, in its feminine and plural forms, as an agreement to the noun *knygas* (books). It is vital to note that the verb *turėti* (to have) governs the case to be used (*turėti ką?*). In the second example, the word is used to qualify another word, in its masculine and singular forms – *oras* (weather). Finally, the stressed syllable in the first example is **AS**, by contrast, the syllable that is stressed in the second example is **GE**.

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<sup>25</sup> Stress shift is also common in other languages, but the words tend to belong to a different classification. For example, in English, the word *produce* can have its first syllables stressed, when it is a noun – such as *fresh PROduce* or *agricultural PROduce*; however, if the word is used as a verb, the stress falls on the second syllable : *to proDUce*. Conversely, Lithuanian words of the same classification – such as adjectives, and the same spelling, can have different stress shifts, when those words are inflected by case or gender, as in the example given above with the adjective GERAS.

Not surprisingly, **accentuation** in Lithuanian was a puzzle that some famous linguists tried to solve, such as *Ferdinand de Saussure* (1857 – 1913), also known as *the father of the 20<sup>th</sup> century linguistics*. As Joseph (2009) noted, “the only paper which Ferdinand de Saussure ever read before an international congress, and *the only two articles he published in linguistics journals* other than those of the Société de Linguistique de Paris, *were all on Lithuanian accentuation*” (p. 182, emphasis). Upon the completion of his doctorate at the University of Leipzig, in Germany, Saussure travelled to Lithuania in August, 1880, with the intention of spending two weeks in the country to conduct research on Lithuanian dialects. Nevertheless, due to finding such a rich language, it took him 14 years to finish his work. In the words of Joseph (2009): “on Saturday 8 September 1894, Saussure read his paper on ‘The Accentuation of the Lithuanian Language’ to the Congress. It went back to points raised in the paper he had read to the Société in 1889” (p. 190).

As far as **grammar** is concerned, *Lithuanian is a case-based language*. As Zinkevičius (1996) put it, “the Lithuanian language inherited a very complex declension system” (p. 107); despite some simplification in terms of unification, “case endings hardly changed” (p. 109).

In linguistics, a *case* can be defined as “a set of grammatical categories of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, marked by inflection in some languages, indicating the relation of the noun, adjective, or pronoun to other words in the sentence”<sup>26</sup>. This is to say that *the majority of words*, such as proper names, nouns, all types of pronouns (e.g., personal, possessive, demonstrative), and adjectives *will have different endings due to inflections by case* (i.e., nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental, locative, vocative), *gender* (i.e., feminine, masculine), and *number* (i.e., singular, plural).

Therefore, in this section, having in mind the ‘ordinary language learner’, who may not have a case-based language as their mother-tongue, *the aim will be to illustrate how the Lithuanian language works*, by looking at the concept of ‘case’ and its use; it is important to note that a full discussion, including all its particularities, at this point, is beyond the scope of this case study.

The description of the **seven cases** and their uses is quite complex; nevertheless, an attempt will be made to provide the reader with an understanding, based on previous

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<sup>26</sup> The Free Dictionary (online) - retrieved January 9, 2011, from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/case>

materials targeted at the foreign learner (Paulauskienė and Valeika, 1994; Ramonienė and Pribušaukaitė, 2008). In standard Lithuanian, six cases are used; they show the relationship of words within a sentence and help us answer a few questions. Another case is also used, *the vocative*, but no relations to other words are identified. With regard to their function, a case may refer to subjects or objects, describe quality, or indicate existence or circumstance.

**The nominative case** (Vardininkas) is used for labeling or naming people, things, and events. It can refer to the object, subject or a constant existence. Judging by the examples below, cited in Ramonienė and Pribušaukaitė (2008: p. 136-137), we can say that in replying to ‘what shines?’, ‘what was built a year ago?’ and ‘what someone is?’ (their profession), all words will be inflected by the nominative case:

- a. *Subject*: **Saulė** švėčia. (**the sun** shines)
- b. *Object*: **Namas** pastatytas prieš metus. (**The house** was built a year ago).
- c. *Existence*: Tu esi **mokytojas**. (you are **a teacher**).

**The genitive case** (Kilmininkas) can be used for expressing *limitation, definition, possession, and negation*. It can also be used after a great number of prepositions. Below, we can find some examples of such concepts and the application of the genitive to the words in the nominative case, as cited in Paulauskienė and Valeika (1994: p. 75):

a) *Limitation/Non-definition*: It can be used when referring to quantity. For instance, in the following example, the person does not specify how many flowers (s)he bought: Pirkau *gėlių*. - I (have) bought *some flowers* (Gėlės NOM.fem.pl → Gėlių GEN.fem.pl.)

b) *Definition*: In this example, the application of the genitive to the noun after the verb (*laukti*, to wait for) helps us understand that the person is waiting for someone in particular – ‘who someone waits for?’ (*laukia ko?*): Jis laukia *brolio*. - He’s waiting for *his brother* (Brolis NOM.masc.sg → Brolio GEN.masc.sg).

c) *Possession*: When referring to something or someone that belongs to something or something else, speakers resort to such a construction. Here, the question to be asked is ‘whose cap?’ (*kieno kepurė?*): *Brolio kepurė* – My brother’s cap (Brolis NOM.masc.sg → Brolio GEN.masc.sg).



d) *Negation*: Very frequently, the genitive case is used to express negation, especially in affirmative sentences in which the accusative case is used (Note: negation is expressed by adding ‘ne’ to the main verb): Jonas *nerašo laiško* – Jonas is not writing a letter (Laiškas NOM.masc.sg →Laiško GEN.masc.sg).

e) *Prepositions*: Nouns used after prepositions of place, time, and those expressing objective and purpose relations are inflected. The most common prepositions are: *ant* (on), *be* (without), *dėl* (for), *iki* (up to, until), *iš* (from), *nuo* (since, from, away), *po* (under, after), *prie* (near, close to, by). Two examples are now shown: time - *Iki pasimatymo!* – See you soon!<sup>27</sup> (Pasimatymas NOM.masc.sg →Pasimatymo GEN.masc.sg); and place - *Knyga guli ant stalo* – The book is on the table (Stalas NOM.masc.sg →Stalo GEN.masc.sg);

**The dative case** (Naudininkas) is often used for showing that an action is directed at a certain person or thing (i.e., a recipient), a phenomenon has an impact on someone or something, or, still, to emphasize the impact of the duration of time an action has on something. The question word often used is *kam?* (‘to whom?/to which?’). The following examples are used for illustrative purposes (Paulaskienė and Valeika, 1994: p. 101-102): 1) *Rašau broliui laišką* - I’m writing a letter *to my brother* (Brolis NOM.masc.sg → Broliui DAT.masc.sg); 2) *Tėvui sunku čia gyventi* – It is difficult *for the father* to live here (Tėvas NOM.masc.sg →Tėvui DAT.masc.sg); 3) *Ši puodynėlė sviestui laikyti* – This pot is [used] *for keeping butter* (Sviestas NOM.masc.sg →Sviestui DAT.masc.sg); *Parvažiavau visai vasarai* – I have come *for the whole summer* (Visa / Vasara NOM.fem.sg →Visai / Vasarai DAT.fem.sg);

After interpreting these sentences, some generalizations can be made – *all nouns that are inflected by the dative case are the main focus of the speaker in his or her utterance*, in terms of stating *towards whom or which an action is directed or has the most significant impact*. In the first example, *my brother* deserves more attention than my writing the letter. In the second example, *the impact of the living conditions on the father* is more important than the living conditions themselves. In the third example, *the butter* in the pot is more important than the pot itself. Finally, in the last sentence, the speaker wants to emphasize *the impact of staying the whole summer*, and not his travelling in the summertime.

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<sup>27</sup> Literal translation: Until the next meeting.

**The accusative case** (Galininkas) is used, generally speaking, to inflect nouns that function as direct objects of the verb in the sentence, having as a question word - *ką?* (what?). In addition, it is applied to nouns denoting time, duration and frequency. In this sense, the question words *kada?* (when?), *kaip ilgai?* (how long?), and *kaip dažnai?* (how often?), respectively, are frequently used. The following illustrations shall facilitate our understanding (Paulauskienė and Valeika, 1994: p. 124 -125): a) Vyr̃ai stato *namą* / The men are building *a house* (Namas NOM.masc.sg → Namą ACC.masc.sg); b) Parvažiuosiu *antradienį* / I will come back *on Tuesday* (Antradienis NOM.masc.sg → Antradienį ACC.masc.sg); c) *Visą gyvenimą* gero nematė - He (she, they) did not see anything good *in his (her, their) life* (Visas / Gyvenimas NOM.masc.sg → Visą / Gyvenimą ACC.masc.sg); d) Seminaras vyksta *kiekvieną mėnesį* - The seminar takes place *every month* (Kiekvienas, Mėnuo NOM.masc.sg → Kiekvieną / Mėnesį ACC.masc.sg).

As can be seen from these examples, the nouns inflected by the accusative case are those which show a) the final product or result of an action – *a house is the result of building*, b) the time – *Tuesday is the day when someone travels*; c) the duration of time – *all life is how long their bad feelings lasted*, and finally, d) the frequency - *every month is how often the seminar takes place*.

Finally, as noted by Paulauskienė and Valeika (1994: p. 125-126), the nouns followed by some prepositions are also inflected by the accusative case. The most common prepositions are these: *apie* (round, about, near, approximately, concerning), *aplink* (around, by), *į* (in, into, to), *pagal* (along, beside, according to), *pas* (at, at the home of), *paskui* (right after, close behind), *per* (through, over, across, during, thoughtout), *prieš* (before, in front of, ago, against), *pro* (by, past, through), and *po* (around, under here and there). Question words are also used and facilitate the interaction between speakers: *apie ką?* (about what?), *į kur?* (where to?), *pas ką?* (at whose place?, where?), *paskui ką?* (after whom?), *prieš ką?* (opposite whom?), *pro ką?* (past whom?), for example.

The following sentences are used to illustrate concepts expressed by the prepositions in conjunction with the nouns: 1) Gyvenu *pas senelę* / I live *at my grandmother's house* (Senelė NOM.fem.sg → Senelę ACC.fem.sg); 2) Jis stovėjo *prieš mane* – He stood *before me* (Aš NOM.1.sg → Mane ACC.1.sg);

**The instrumental case** (Įnagininkas) can be used with prepositions, adverbs and adjectives. Generally speaking, it is often applied to nouns in referring to tools or instruments, means of transport, and people with whom certain actions are carried out. The preposition *su* is often used (except for means of transport). A few examples follows, as cited in Ramonienė and Pribušauskaitė (2008: p. 138-140, 227, 236): 1) *Aš valgau šaukštu* / I eat *with a spoon* (Šaukštas – NOM.masc.sg → Šaukštu INSTR.masc.sg); 2) *Ji skrido lėktuvu* / She went (flew) *by plane* (Lėktuvas NOM.masc.sg → Lėktuvu INSTR.masc.sg); and 3) *Jis žaidžia su vaiku* / He plays/ is playing *with a child* (Vaikas NOM.masc.sing → Vaiku INSTR.masc.sg).

In addition, this case can be used to 1) express change: *Metus dirbau mokytoju* / I worked *as a teacher* for a year (Mokytoja NOM.fem.sg → Mokytoju INSTR.fem.sg); 2) describe (general) *frequency* : *Poilsiaujame sekmadieniais* / We rest *on Sundays* (Sėkmadienis NOM.masc.sg → Sekmadieniais INSTR.masc.sg); and to denote moments or periods of time: *Tai atsitiko 1999 metais* / That happened *in 1999* (Metai NOM.masc.pl → Metais INSTR.masc.pl)<sup>28</sup>, among other situations.

**The locative case** (Vietininkas) is used to express the location of something or someone, in Ramonienė and Pribušauskaitė's (2008) words, “a location inside something, with various shades of meaning” (p. 212). It is frequently used in conjunction with the question word ‘kur’ (where?). A few examples, cited by the same authors, follows: *Klaipėdoje* atidarytas naujas viešbutis / A new hotel was opened *in Klaipėda* (Klaipėda NOM.fem.sg → Klaipėdoje LOC.fem.sg); *Skalbiniai džiūsta saulėje* / The laundry is drying *in the sun* (Saulė NOM.fem.sg → Saulėje LOC.fem.sg); and, *Dalyvavo konferencijoje* (He, she, they) participated *in a conference* (Konferencija NOM.fem.sg → Konferencijoje LOC.fem.sg) (p. 212-213).

Moreover, the locative case can be used in the following situations (Ramonienė and Pribušauskaitė, 2008: p. 230-231):

- a) Words referring to *a part of the day*:

*Vakare* In the evening

Vakaras NOM.masc.sg → Vakare LOC.masc.sg

- b) Words referring to *a person's age or a period in history*:

*Jaunystėje* ji buvo graži She was beautiful *in her youth*

<sup>28</sup> The word ‘year’ in Lithuanian is only used in its plural form: *metai*.

Jaunystė NOM.fem.sg → Jaunystėje LOC.fem.sg

*Ateityje* viskas bus gerai Everything will be fine *in the future*

Ateitis NOM.masc.sg → Ateityje LOC.masc.sg

c) Words referring to *concepts of time*:

*XIX amžiuje* buvo sukurtas ne vienas gražus parkas

Many beautiful parks were created *in the 19th century*

Amžius NOM.masc.sg → Amžiuje LOC.masc.sg

d) Words referring to *actions or processes*:

*Žuvo mūšyje* (He, she, they) died *in a battle*

Mūšis NOM.masc.sg → Mūšyje LOC.masc.sg

**The vocative case** (Šauksmininkas) does not show word relations in a sentence; instead, it is used to address a person, animals, or things, as the following example shows, cited in Ramonienė and Pribušauskaitė (2008: p. 136):

*Jonai*, paduok knygą (John, give me the book)

Jonas NOM.masc.sg → Jonai VOC.masc.sg

As can be clearly seen, unlike many languages (e.g., English, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, French), proper nouns (i.e., first and last names) are also inflected, thus their endings also change, also impacting the accentuation:

<i>Vardininkas (Nominative)</i>	<i>Šauksmininkas (Vocative)</i>
Jonas (masculine)	Jonai
Marijus / Andrius (masculine)	Marijau / Andriau
Jurgis (masculine)	Jurgi
Dalia (feminine)	Dalia
Birutė (feminine)	Birute

In Lithuanian, **nouns** are *inflected by gender* (i.e., feminine, masculine), *number* (i.e., singular, plural); and *case* (seven declensional cases). The complexity of the cases, as well as their impact on nouns, is shown taking the noun house, in Lithuanian - NAMAS (NOM. masc.sg) - as an example<sup>29</sup>. This word has its final letters **-AS** changed into different endings (-O, -UI, -A, -U, -E), according to the speaker's

<sup>29</sup> See 'attachements' for a full description of Lithuanian language paradigms.

intention, subject to each case paradigm. If the word were used in its plural form – **NAMAI** (NOM.masc.pl), the endings would also be different (-Ū, -AMS, -US, -AIS, -UOSE, -AI). Another example is in *addressing and sending letters and parcels* inside the country. For instance, in *the official website of the Lithuanian Central Postal Office*<sup>30</sup>: *Customer Service – how postal items must be addressed*, it is made clear that, for correspondence within the country (in English), “all information on the postal item must be indicated clearly and legibly in the national language”. What is more, the grammatical cases are clearly stated as provided below:

INSTRUCTIONS	EXAMPLES
1. The first and the last name of the receiver or the name of the receiving institution are written <b>in the dative case</b>	Onai Kulikauskienei Prof. Algiui Jonaičiui Lietuvių kalbos institutui
2. If the postal item is addressed to the subdivision of a certain institution, first indicate the institution <b>in the genitive case</b> , the the subdivision <b>in the dative case</b>	Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Bibliotekos Užsienio literatūros komplektavimo skyriui
3. When the postal item is addressed to a certain official indicate his/her full position, the first name (or the initial) and the last name <b>in the dative case</b>	Sveikatos apsaugos ministerijos Farmacijos skyriaus viršininkui J. Jonaičiui
4. If the postal item is addressed to a certain official, but his/her position is not familiar to you, after his/her name indicate the institution <b>in the nominative case</b>	Kostui Mizariui UAB „Vingrės Statyba“
5. The sender name is written <b>in the nominative case</b>	Antanas Jonaitis Lietuvių kalbos institutas

In the first example, first and last names are inflected by the *dative case*, considering they are the people *to whom the letters or parcels are to be sent*. In this sense, **Ona** Kulikauskienė (NOM.fem.sg) is changed to **Onai** Kulikauskienei (DAT.fem.sg). Likewise, **Algis** Jonaitis (NOM.masc.sg) is changed to **Algiui** Jonaičiui

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<sup>30</sup> Information retrieved January 8, 2011, from the official website - *Lietuvos Paštas* - <http://www.post.lt/en/?id=271>

(DAT.masc.sg) – the endings of the last name follow a specific rule<sup>31</sup> – **TIS** turns into **ČIUI**. Finally, the words that name the institution are also changed from Lietuvių kalbos institutas (Institutas - NOM.masc.sg) to Lietuvių kalbos institutui (Institutui DAT.masc.sg).

In the second example, an institution and its department are mentioned. In order *to state that the institution possesses the department, the genitive case is used*. Thus, Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Biblioteka (Biblioteka NOM.fem.sg) - Lithuanian Academy of Sciences Library- is changed to Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Bibliotekos (Bibliotekos GEN.fem.sg). *The department to which the letter is sent, the recipient, is then written in the dative case, that is, Užsienio literatūros komplektavimo skyrius* -the department which gathers/collects foreign literature – approximate translation (Skyrius NOM.masc.sg) is changed to Užsienio literatūros komplektavimo skyriui (Skyriui DAT.masc.sg).

In the third example, the nouns will be inflected according to their function – the *genitive case* will be applied to the *institution* (Ministerija NON.fem.sg → Ministerijos GEN.masc.sg) *that possesses the department and the employee*, and the *dative case* is to be applied to *the department* (skyrius – NON.masc.sg → skyriui - DAT.masc.sg), and *the head of the department* (viršininkas NOM.masc.sg → viršininkui → DAT.masc.sg), and *the person* (Jonaitis NOM.masc.sg → Jonaičiui DAT.masc.sg) who is the head of the department, considering all of them are *the recipients* of the parcels.

In the fourth example, the same rule of using *the dative case* for *the recipient* of the letter is applied: **Kostas Mizaris** (NOM.masc.sg) is changed to **Kostui Mizariui** (DAT.masc.sg). However, due to lack of additional information regarding his position and department, the words used to spell the company's name are not inflected and remain the same: UAB Vingrės Statyba (Statyba NOM.fem.sg).

Finally, the one *who sends the parcel or letter*, **Antanas Jonaitis** (NOM.masc.sg), writes his name in *the nominative case*; so, no changes occur. The nouns used to label the institution he works for - "The Institute of the Lithuanian Language"- do not change either: Lietuvių kalbos institutas (institutas NOM.masc.sg).

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<sup>31</sup> I will not dwell into this matter considering such a discussion is beyond this study. It suffices to say that in oral speech, -ČIUI has a smoother combination of sounds than -TIUI. So, the phoneme *t* is changed to *č*, before the other phonemes, represented by the vowel sounds, are produced.

Having done such an analysis, once more we can state that *the use of cases* – the noun inflections – *are subject to the speaker’s intention and actions which are within a specific context in real-life situations*. In the aforementioned examples, the speaker has an intention of sending parcels or letters, this is situated in a physical place (i.e., the post office), and realized through specific acts, such as addressing people (i.e., *the final recipients*), who work for specific departments (i.e., *the initial recipients*), that belong to companies or institutions (i.e., *the owners*). All these meanings are expressed by language, through the dative and genitive cases, respectively, as opposed to having prepositions, such as TO and OF, which are used to express the same meanings in other languages, such as English.

Like other languages, with regard to **personal pronouns**<sup>32</sup>, Lithuanian follows the standard pattern of *three personal pronouns in the singular form*, and *three personal pronouns in the plural form*. It does not have a neutral pronoun, such as IT. Therefore, just like in French or Portuguese, the concept of gender is applied (i.e., masculine, feminine) and the respective personal pronouns are used (e.g., *jis* – he / *ji* – she). The spelling of the pronouns vary considerably according to the person and case in question. With regard to their use, the genitive forms are normally used for expressing possessions (i.e., possessive pronouns) - *Mūsų Lietuva/Our Lithuania* (Mes NOM.1.pl → Mūsų GEN.1.pl); the dative forms are used like objective pronouns in English, illustrating to whom something is done - *Rašyk man / Write [to] me* (Aš NOM.1.sg → Man DAT.1.sg; the accusative forms are used with some prepositions, such as *pas*<sup>33</sup> to show the place of a process - *Pas mus sninga dabar / where we are/live, it is snowing now* (Mes NOM.1.pl → Mus ACC.1.pl), and the direction of an action - *Ateik pas mane / come to [visit] me* ( Aš NOM.1.sg → Mane ACC.1.sg) ; the instrumental case shows the instrument – an object / a person - with which or whom something is done - *Važiousiu su jumis – I will travel with you* (Jūs NOM.2.pl → Jus ACC.2.pl) ; and finally, the locative forms, which are used to express the location or place where something happens - *Mumyse gyvena velnias / the devil lives in/ inside us* (Mes NOM.1.pl → Mumyse LOC.1.pl).

**Adjectives** also follow the same pattern of nouns, having their endings changed accordingly, but these words tend to be *more complex* given *they are inflected by*

<sup>32</sup> See ‘attachments’ for an illustrative description of the different paradigms of personal pronouns and adjectives in Lithuanian.

<sup>33</sup> In this sense, it is similar to the preposition CHEZ in French - *Chez moi, il neige maintenant* (Where I am/live, it is snowing now).

gender (i.e., feminine; masculine), and number (i.e., singular; plural); in 6 out of the 7 cases (ie., nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental, locative); being the vocative case an exception. For example, when such information is organized into tables, the adjective GERAS (NOM.masc.sg) - good, in English - has 24 slots, in which 19 distinct declensions are written (-A, -Ą, -AM, -AI, -AS,-AIS, -AME, -I, -IEMS, -O, -OS, - OMS, -OMIS, -OJE, -OSE, -U, -Ū, -US, -UOSE).

In producing a rich description of a house, for instance, the demonstrative pronoun *that* (tas NON.masc.sg) and all adjectives and the noun (geras, žalias, gražus, medinis, namas NON.masc.sg) are inflected by case. For instance, the phrase *that good green beautiful wooden house*, will have the following paradigms, according to Paulauskienė and Valeika (1994: p. 261):

<i>Nominative:</i>	Tas geras, žalias, gražus, medinis namas
<i>Genitive:</i>	To gero, žalio, gražaus, medinio namo
<i>Dative:</i>	Tam geram, žaliai, gražiam, mediniam namui
<i>Accusative:</i>	Tą gerą, žalią, gražų, medinį namą
<i>Instrumental:</i>	Tuo geru, žaliu, gražiu, mediniu namu
<i>Locative:</i>	Tame gerame, žaliame, gražiame, mediniame name

Considering the similarity in spelling and that *in Lithuanian a sound tends to relate to spelling*, chances are these endings will have very similar sounds. Therefore, *when a sentence is read aloud or silently, the person will hear similar endings, as part of a chain of sounds* . In addition, if these sentences were part of *situations* in which these phrases might be actually uttered by a speaker, understanding would be enhanced.

Having said this, we can come up with a certain rationale underlying those sentences – *the speaker expresses a wish or a need, makes a statement of what (s)he has done, asks for advice or suggestion, and so on. The choice of words, in turn, will fulfill the communicative function of the language*. If adjectives and nouns are presented in isolation, however, in all likelihood, a learner will not arrive at any understanding, given the absence of other words in the sentences. Learning, in this sense, will not be facilitated, as there will be many endings and different spellings to process at the same time, resulting in difficulties to remember these words.



As far as **verbs** are concerned, there are transitive and intransitive verbs, modal verbs, phrasal verbs, and reflexive verbs. Active and passive voices, (semi) participles, and gerunds are also present. In addition, verbs can have three moods – indicative, imperative, subjunctive. Therefore, no major differences are identified when making comparisons with other languages.

With regard to *tense*, as a matter of fact, Lithuanian has a relatively simple structure – Present tense (Simple present), Past tense (Simple past), Past frequentative tense (used for habits or repeated actions in the past, such as *used to* and *would*, in English), and Future tense (Future). *Verbs* are normally presented *in three forms*, or three types (A, I, O *tipas*).

As a matter of illustration, a dictionary, or grammar book/ handout will normally look like this:

	<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Present (3.sg, pl)</b>	<b>Past (3.sg,pl)</b>
TO LIVE	gyventi	gyvena	gyveno
TO HAVE	turėti	turi	turėjo
TO DO / MAKE	daryti	daro	darė

As can be seen, *verbs are organized by their infinitive forms, followed by the present tense in the 3rd person, followed by the past tense in the third 3rd person as well* (no changes in spelling for the 3rd person singular and plural = he, she, they). In the aforementioned examples, *gyventi* belongs to the *A tipas* group, because the present simple form ends in A; likewise, *turėti* belongs to the *I tipas* group, as the present simple form ends in I; and, *daryti* belongs to the *O tipas* group, considering its present form ends in O. During the lectures, reference is often made to verbs by using this terminology.

Although there is a good reason for organizing the verbs (and presenting them) in those three forms (i.e., other verb tenses and forms will originate from the third person as stated), in all likelihood, a non-native speaker of Lithuanian or a foreigner will experience difficulty when trying to make real sentences to engage in communicative encounters, as these mainly require the first person singular – I / *Aš* - the second person singular – You / *Tu* , or the second person plural You- *Jūs* (also used in formal situations when addressing a single person). This is to say that *the people engaged in a here-and-now discourse – I, you -* are not included in such a representation a learner is exposed via learning materials. Apart from the infinitive,

the three forms only show the other people in a *there-and-then* discourse: *he, she or they*. As a result, the learner - a complete beginner, newcomer to the Lithuanian society, may be at a loss for such words considering the conjugation for the first and second person – I, tu, we - needed to start a basic conversation, are not normally given or shown in the dictionaries or handouts.

With regard to *the conjugation of verbs*, unlike English, but like other languages, such as Spanish, French and Portuguese, verbs agree with the person (first, second, third/ singular/plural forms). An illustration follows, using the verb ‘to live’ - *gyventi*:

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
Aš	gyvenu	Mes	gyvename
Tu	gyveni	Jūs	gyvenate
Jis, Ji	gyvena	Jie, jos	gyvena

Moreover, the addition of prefixes to them seem to be frequent, and these will certainly be difficult to remember: there are, at least, *ten prefixes* : ap-, at-, į-, iš-, nu-, pa-, par-, per-, pra-, pri-, su- . These are used to express a change in meaning, *due to direction, movement, result, active action, momentary action, and so on*. In that sense, the meaning of the verb also changes. Below, some usual and frequent combinations are shown:

eiti	To go, to walk, to pass by - on foot
<b>A</b> Teiti	To come to a place
<b>NU</b> eiti	To go somewhere away from the point of speaking
<b>Į</b> eiti	To go into / inside
<b>IŠ</b> eiti	To go out of some place
<b>PRA</b> eiti	To walk by
<b>PRI</b> eiti	To walk up to something

As can be seen, the base form of the verb can have different prefixes added to it, which in turn will change the meaning of the sentence. In that sense, *the choice will be made by the speaker, according to his/her intention and communicative purpose*. However, if learners are firstly exposed to the base form of the verb only (e.g., eiti), then taught the meaning of prefixes separately – frequently required to make the combinations by themselves - this will result in great difficulty understanding the real

meaning of the words. In short, learners may not get their meaning across properly if they use only the base forms of the verbs or do not learn the prefixes already added to verbs, according to a specific situation.

In addition, *verbs are a special category of words because they govern cases* very frequently; in other words, in most cases a verb will signal which case is applied to the other words in a sentence. This is normally made clear by adding the question words - *kas, ko, ką, kam, kur, su kuo*, for instance. Therefore, we know that the verb 'to do/make' requires the accusative case – *daryti ką?*; likewise, the verb 'to want' requires the genitive case – *norėti ko?*; and so on, the verb 'to give' requires the accusative case for the direct object but the dative case for the indirect object – *duoti ką kam?* (*duoti knygą berniukiui* / give the book to the boy), and so forth.

Another important consideration is that **there are no definite or indefinite articles**, such as THE, A/AN (in English). The need to express definiteness or indefiniteness seem not to be noted by speakers. In that sense, very frequently, sentences such as *mažas berniukas miega* / little boy sleeps (is sleeping) will be produced. However, for speakers languages, such as English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, for instance, this construction will cause confusion, as it is not clear who the boy in the sentence is (Which boy? The boy that I see now? The one I saw some time ago?). However, if this concept is expressed by Lithuanian speakers, words such as demonstrative pronouns are used. So, the same sentence would be *tas mažas berniukas miega* / That small boy sleeps.

Moreover, as far as the concepts of definiteness or indefiniteness are concerned, in referring to things which are exclusive, such as bridges or houses, a different form of adjectives can be used. For instance, as noted by Subačius (2002: p. 7), **The** White House is *Baltieji Rūmai*, the word being formed from the adjective *baltas* (white, in English). Still, a non-native speaker will have to master the concept first to later be able to express such things without using an article.

Despite the fact that these rules are to a certain extent, easy to explain and grasp, they may be perceived as difficulties, especially if learners do not have gender separation (i.e., feminine/masculine) in their mother-tongues, such as English or Turkish speakers. Even for those who are familiar with such concepts and structures, the lack of articles in feminine or masculine forms may add a certain difficulty when trying to find out if a word is feminine or masculine, and then looking for a specific

adjective to match with that word, which is also inflected by gender in Lithuanian. If we take the same example, *tas mažas berniukas miega*, a learner needs to know that *berniukas* is a masculine noun in its singular form, that requires a demonstrative pronoun also in its masculine and singular forms (i.e. *tas/that*), and an adjective also in its masculine and singular forms (i.e., *mažas / small*). In short, if learners – who are absolute beginners and have not formed a memory yet for words in connected speech - are given just the words in the nominative case, they will have to resort to all these different rules in grammar books or handouts to apply the cases accordingly, as each and every word is inflected by gender. Thus, an exercise with very few sentences will take a considerable amount of time to be done and require a lot of attention.

Finally, in Lithuanian, **numerals** can be *ordinal* (used for showing a list or order) or *cardinal* (used for showing quantity, or counting), as in many other languages. However, in some typical and frequent situations, they are differently used. The following examples shall illustrate such differences:

ENGLISH (Portuguese, French, Spanish)	LITHUANIAN
<i>Cardinal numbers</i>	<i>Ordinal numbers</i>
<b>Bus 26</b>	<b>26 Autobusas</b>
Twenty-six	Dvidešimt šeštas (the twentieth-sixth bus)
<b>Room 84</b>	<b>Kambaris 84-tas</b>
Eighty-four	Aštuoniasdešimt ketvirtas (the eightieth-fourth room)
<b>14h00</b>	<b>14:00 val.</b>
(Two o'clock / 2 p.m)	(Antra valanda)

As shown above, *typical situations* like asking for information about a bus to catch, a room to go to when attending a lecture or staying at a hotel, will require learners to (re)conceptualize such a notion, after having had adequate exposure, considering they might approach things from a different perspective in their own mother-tongues.

For instance, a NNS learner would think of buses, rooms or hours in terms of *quantities*, and the numbers are actually used to *label* them : “there are 30 buses in the city, and I will catch one of them: bus 26 ; there are 84 rooms in this university

and I study in one of them: room 84; there are 24 hours in a day, and I have lunch at 2 p.m.”

By contrast, a Lithuanian speaker would think of *the order* of buses, rooms, and hours within a day; this will influence their choice for an ordinal number: “there are 30 buses in this city and I will catch the twentieth-sixth bus” (as if running on the streets – one after the other); “there are eighty-four rooms in this building and I study in the eightieth- fourth room” (this sounds more logical indeed, as rooms do follow a numerical sequence on a given floor inside buildings); and finally, there are twenty-four hours in a day, and one follows the other, so I have lunch at the second hour after midday”.

Moreover, it is important to note that when ordinal numbers are used, the words become longer and the sounds also change, as a result of elision, assimilation, nasalization, palatalization, and so on. However, the pronunciation of words in connected speech will also be more complex and perceived as a difficulty, in any other languages which do not follow such a pattern, like English and Portuguese<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, the choice for an ordinal number may not be a problem for learners of a Russian or Polish origin, considering they might have a similar structure in their mother-tongues, and must have acquired the correct sounds and structures in their childhood. Conversely, for an ordinary older learner, who is not a linguist and has not had a similar language learning experience, this aspect will certainly create difficulty not only in producing the sounds but also in understanding the concepts underlying the choice of words. In short, *some constructions used by a Lithuanian speaker may not have been formed by a non-native learner, so they cannot be quickly produced by mechanical repetitions: concepts will take longer to be interpreted or formed in the first place.*

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<sup>34</sup> Let us take this sentence in English as an example: *I study in room 100*. In Portuguese, cardinal numbers are also used: *Eu estudo na sala cem* (100 = cem). Now, if an ordinal number was used, a Portuguese speaker would say: *Eu estudo na centésima sala*. Immediately, the following differences can be noted: *sala cem* becomes *centésima sala*. Firstly, there is a change in word order. Secondly, the word used to express the number becomes longer – a monosyllable word (*cem*) becomes a four-syllable word (*cen-té-si-ma*). Sounds also change – the nasal sound produced when the letter *m* is uttered in *cem* is altered when the vowel *a* is added: *centésima*. In short, when a simple word used to label a number (100) in its cardinal form (*cem*), is changed to its ordinal form (*centésima*), the speaker is required to change the word order and produce different and longer sounds. In that sense, the level of complexity in Portuguese, and its perceived difficulty, would increase not only for a foreigner learner, but also for an ordinary Portuguese native speaker, who is not used to producing such sounds and word combinations as part of their daily routines.

Having said this, from a NNS perspective – an ordinary learner (i.e., not a linguist, a philosopher, or a translator), who may not have learned Greek or Latin, or any other case-based languages before, such as Polish or Russian - *Lithuanian does not seem to have many similarities* with languages such as English, French, Spanish, as far as the structure of its frequent words, phrases and sentences are concerned, even in typical situations in which this language is used: labelling a parcel at the post office, looking for a room in schools or institutions, catching a bus on the street, arranging to meet someone at a specific time, and so on. Therefore, if the language learning process – targeted at adult newcomers who have little or no previous background in case-based languages - is primarily focused on learning Lithuanian as a system, aiming for grammar accuracy, this author shares the same views of Subačius (2002), when he stated that:

Due to the old features of Lithuanian grammar, most foreign students find it a very difficult language to learn. It is frustrating to have to learn five declensions, each with seven cases, both in the singular and the plural. The very concept of an ending is difficult to grasp if a person speaks only English (p. 6)

## **2.3 Educational policies: adult and language education**

In this section, the laws, regulations and policies concerning both adult education and language education will be reviewed taking into consideration those stated by Lithuania and the European Union as well, considering the country has been a EU Member-State since 2004 and as such is supposed to conform to such recommendations.

### **2.3.1 Lithuanian laws and regulations**

As an independent country, education in Lithuania should assist individuals to lead an independent life; it “serves its purpose best when its advancement leads *the overall development of society*” (Law on Education, 1991/2009: p.1). In this sense, “the content of education programs is comprised of systemic knowledge, skills, abilities and values necessary to achieve the goals” (Law on Education, 1991/2009: p. 6). Thus, it can be clearly seen that individuals are supposed to learn concepts, facts or rules, but also how to use them appropriately, according to social norms and values.

With regard to **adult education**<sup>35</sup>, this should lead to the holistic development of the individual, as well as facilitate the process of beginning a new training at any level. In other words, education in Lithuania is competency-oriented; its outcomes should benefit not only the adult learner but also the Lithuanian society.

Furthermore, **non-formal adult education** – not leading to a State-recognized certificate - aims to 1) help individual satisfy self-education needs and to develop cultural interests; 2) develop an individual's creative capacities and abilities; 3) *help an individual become an active citizen of a democratic society*; and 4) create conditions for acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed for professional activities and upgrading qualifications. Courses target at adults may be provided by Lithuanian non-formal and formal education schools<sup>36</sup> (e.g., general, vocational, and higher schools) that are to “ensure quality of provided adult education programmes”; and “develop, up-grade, provide nonformal adult education programmes according to the wishes of participants, founders and supporters of nonformal adult education”, among others (Law on Non-Formal Adult Education, 1998: p. 2, 4).

Finally, programmes and curricula are to be suited the experience of the *adult learner* and are devised by “the lecturers of the adult education institutions” (General Concept of Education in Lithuania, 1992: p. 32; 36). Higher Education Institutions have their own autonomy in terms of self-governance and academic freedom. These institutions have a right to “establish their own procedure of studies”; “to formulate programmes conforming to the guidelines for a subject area”, and “to approve study programmes conforming to the guidelines for a subject area” (Law on Higher Education, 2000: p. 10-11). Ultimately, teachers have a right to offer “individual programs, to choose methods and forms of pedagogical activity” (Law on Education, 1991/2009: p. 36).

As far as **Lithuanian language education** is concerned, in official documents and studies, Lithuanian has been mentioned as *a state-language (mother-tongue)*, a *second-language targeted at minority groups*, and a *language of instruction in official educational settings*, such as language institutes, colleges, and universities. All Lithuanian residents have a right to attend courses in the State language, at different

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<sup>35</sup> According to the local educational policies, an adult is an individual of 18 years of age or older.

<sup>36</sup> Schools are institutions “whose main activity is formal and/or non-formal education” (Law on Education, 1991/2009: p. 2).

levels: mainstream, vocational, higher-post school and higher education (Law on the State Language, 1995/2002).

Soon after the restoration of independence, back in 1990, the Lithuanian language regained its official status in the country as the main language in all domains (e.g., education, public sector). The standard use of the Lithuanian language in dictionaries, textbooks, coursebooks and guidelines, and its condition within educational institutions is regulated by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language (Law on the Amendment of the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Status of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, 1993/2001).

The majority of people living in that time in the country, from a different ethnic group, were given the right to acquire Lithuanian citizenship through a process of naturalization called “zero option” (Hogan-Brun and Ramonienė; 2003, Language Education Policy Profile – Country Report: Lithuania, 2006; Ramonienė<sup>37</sup>, 2006; Bulajeva and Hogan-Brun, 2008; Hogan-Brun et al., 2008).

New social requirements pointed to the reform of teaching Lithuanian as a second language, especially in schools and adult teaching institutions, targeted at the minority groups (e.g., Russians, Poles, Belarusians), especially in Vilnius, Klaipėda and Visaginas (Hogan-Brun and Ramonienė, 2003).

Furthermore, these individuals needed to be integrated into society, according to new requirements. Therefore, educational authorities, teaching specialists and syllabus designers started rethinking the ways to teach Lithuanian, by devising new curricula, textbooks, and applying modern teaching methods and means of assessment. Since the 1990s, new methods, such as the communicative approach, have been introduced, so that these individuals learn the language quickly and in an effective way (Hogan-Brun and Ramonienė, 2003; Ramonienė, 2006).

Adults are also able to take an official examination, according to a system of adult testing “created and approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian language” (Ramonienė, 2006: p. 225). Most adult learners from such minority groups have already taken and passed the national exam, and awarded a certificate showing their

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<sup>37</sup> Meilutė Ramonienė is Associate Professor at the Department of Lithuanian Studies, Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University, Head of the same department from 1999 to 2010. A specialist in Lithuanian Language and Literature and Classical Philology, and co-author of grammar and language books targeted at non-native speakers of Lithuanian/ foreigners, such as *Po Truputį*, published in 1998. Information retrieved February 20, 2011 from <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/Darbuotojai/p21/workerpage/0/workerid/3>.



language proficiency levels, which is required, for instance, in the workplace (Ramonienė, 2006: p. 227).

As for secondary schools, minority children should be integrated into mainstream education, as later they are to enter higher education studies which are offered in the state language. After passing the national language state exam, those who are of non-Lithuanian origin “are able to use Lithuanian in all Lithuanian higher educational establishments, universities, all fields of study: humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, or technologies” (Ramonienė, 2006: p. 226).

Between the period of post-soviet independence in 1991 and post European Union accession, from 2004 to present times, *one of the main challenges of language education in Lithuania has been the development of bilingualism and multilingualism, mostly targeted at speakers of minority languages in the country*, such as Russians, Poles, and Belarusians. It is vital to provide instruction in their own language but to develop skills in the national language as well. This also includes the reform of the school-leaving exam in Lithuania, targeted both at native and non-native students (Bulajeva and Hogan-Brun, 2008).

In recent times, considering the fact that Lithuanian has been one of the official European languages since 2004, the country has also benefited from European Union funded projects. These have aimed, to a certain extent, at the promotion of less widely used and taught languages (LWUTL), especially in the context of adult education, considering the great mobility of these learners (Balciūnienė, 2004).

As we can see, despite the fact that Lithuania is a small country, it gets financial support to take part in projects such as *Euro-languages Net*, *Open to Every Citizen*, *Feel* and *ONENESS*. Likewise, in referring to the use of Information Technology in language education, and specifically the LINGUA 2 project – ONENESS (which includes Lithuanian, Estonian, Finnish, Polish and Portuguese), coordinated by the Department of Lithuanian Studies at the Faculty of Philology, at Vilnius University, Ramonienė (2004) stated that an online programme facilitates “a learner’s immersion in authentic language environment which incorporates text, sound and image” while fostering “learner’s motivation”, developing “learning strategies” and contributing to

“learning efficiency” (p. 151). Therefore, despite being a less-widely used and taught language, Lithuanian has recently been included in **EU funded projects**<sup>38</sup>:

**Table 3 Lithuanian ‘language, culture, teaching and learning’ EU funded projects**

PERIOD	PROJECT	SPONSOR	DESCRIPTION
2001-2004	Euro Languages Net Plus	LLP Socrates/Lingua	Internet resource of less widely used European languages - language for mobility, employment and social interaction
2003	ONENESS	LLP Socrates/Lingua2	Online less used and taught language courses - communicative approaches, different target groups (e.g., Erasmus, migrants, others)
2004-2006	FEEL	LLP Socrates/Lingua1	Funny, Easy and Effective Learning about Countries and Languages (Countries, Cultures and Languages).
2005-2006	UNIQUE	LLP Leonardo da Vinci	Lesser-used European languages standardization of teaching methods (entry level for Erasmus students and others/ workplace learning)

As far as European money is concerned, it is important to note that Lithuanian has also received the financial support in the realm of education as a whole. For instance, in 2008, the financial support<sup>39</sup> from the Departments of Education and Culture, and Education, Audiovisual, Culture Executive Agency amounted to 13.130.167,00 € and 2.519.664,21 €, respectively.

Having in mind the role played by the European Union in the construction of the new Lithuanian society, its laws and regulations related to adult education and foreign/second language education will now be discussed.

### 2.3.2 European Union laws and regulations

Human learning is a lifelong process that does not cease when one reaches adulthood. In this sense, *education is supposed to help adults keep growing*, as noted by Dewey (1916): “life means growth (...) Hence education means the enterprise of supplying the conditions which insure growth or adequacy of life, irrespective of age” (p. 51).

<sup>38</sup> Researchers from the Department of Lithuanian Studies at Vilnius University, have also taken part in the aforementioned projects. Information retrieved 03 March 2010, from the official website: <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/index.php/pageid/249>

<sup>39</sup> Information retrieved March 3, 2010, from [http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm).

Likewise, Lindeman<sup>40</sup> (1926) contended that the focus of education should be on an adult learner's needs and interests. Moreover, he strongly believed that **adult learner's needs and interests should guide curriculum design**. In his own words:

In conventional education the student is required to adjust himself to an established curriculum; in adult education the curriculum is built around the student's needs and interests. Every adult person finds himself in specific situations with respect to his work, his recreation, his family-life, his community-life, et cetera – situations which call for adjustments. Adult education begins at this point. (Lindeman, 1926: p. 8-9; cited in Knowles, 1984: p. 28-29).

Adult education and learning policies in Europe seem to share Dewey's and Lindeman's view – adults play a vital role in society, especially considering the high rates of mobility within EU Member-States. Indeed, current EU policies, such as those issued by the European Commission contend that, in such a rapidly changing environment, **globalised and knowledge-based economies also have a need to help adults develop and update their competences** - the knowledge, skills and attitudes - appropriate to the context in which these adults are inserted.

In this sense, **eight key competences** shall be addressed during lifelong learning<sup>41</sup>: 1) communication in the mother-tongue; *communication in foreign languages*, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competences; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and 8) cultural awareness and expression (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences of Lifelong Learning, 2006/962/EC, 394/13; emphasis added).

Moreover, in considering the Lisbon goals set for 2010, in their Commission on Adult Learning of 2006 and further Action Plan of 2007, the Union clearly stated that adult learning is an important issue. European Union acknowledges the fact that there are various **definitions of adult learning**, nevertheless, in current action plans and policies it has been defined as 'all forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training, however far this process may have gone (e.g.,

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<sup>40</sup> Eduard C. Lindeman (1885-1953) was an American educator whose contributions were especially made in the realm of adult education. His vast written work within a period of thirty years included topics, such as the sociology and the new needs of adult education. More information can be obtained from his online bio-data at <http://www-distance.syr.edu/eclvita.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Lifelong learning ranges from pre-school to post-retirement age, according to the Council Resolution of 27 June 2002, cited in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC).

including tertiary education)” (Commission on Adult Learning, 2006: p.2). This is to say that higher education institutions are also in charge of organizing courses according to an adult’s personal nature, interests and needs, along with those required for the development of the local society.

As such, **actions are a priority** in terms of 1) reducing labour shortages due to demographic changes; 2) offering a second chance for early school leavers who enter adulthood without any qualifications; 3) reducing poverty and social exclusion among marginalized groups while fostering active citizenship and personal autonomy; 4) *increasing the integration of migrants in society and labour market, offering tailor-made courses in language learning contributing to this integration process*, and 5) increasing participation in lifelong learning considering the average working age is rising in Europe as a whole.

In addition, the Union has acknowledged the fact that the **Member-States face the following challenges** (Communication of the European Communities, 2006):

- 1) *Ensure the quality of adult learning*, via information, guidance, needs analysis, relevant learning content matching actual needs and demands;
- 2) *Improve the quality of teaching methods and materials* by taking into account the specific needs and learning approaches of adults. Intended learning outcomes should be explicit, learning support resources available, and study skills developed;
- 3) *Ensure the quality of the staff* – the professional development of staff in adult learning is a vital determinant of *quality of adult learning*;
- 4) *Ensure the quality of service providers* – by establishing regulatory frameworks and setting quality standards and certifying adherence to them;
- 5) *Improve the delivery of adult learning* – increasing availability of learning sites, open and distance learning services, tailored programmes and flexible teaching arrangements while recognizing and valuing the learning outcomes, whether in formal, non-formal or informal education;
- 6) *Support the integration of migrants* in society and in the local economy.

In similar vein, results from a recent study in which data was gathered from January to December 2009 within EU Member-States showed that **adult learner numbers are on the increase**. As a consequence, *more learning materials and classroom*

*space are needed.* What is more, **a special challenge** faced by European countries is that of **teacher qualification**:

skilled teachers are a limited resource, and preparing new instructors for teaching in the adult learning sector may take some time. In some countries (...) many adult education instructors have little or no training in teaching adults; their training is in teaching children and young people. Appropriate styles of instruction for adults may differ significantly from those considered acceptable when teaching young people in compulsory schooling. (National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Final Report, 2010: p. 90-91)

As already discussed in the first part of this chapter, adults differ considerably from children and teenagers, as far as their personal nature and orientation to learning are concerned. The question that needs to be answered is the following: *to what extent are teachers trained and prepared to teach them according to those individual differences?*

Another issue that needs to be tackled within European countries lies in reaching an understanding in terms of **supply and demand of courses targeted at adults**:

how good the match is between the learning that is needed or wanted and the learning that is offered. The need could be that of society, of the country or community, of employers or of individuals. The offer is the range of learning that is supplied, the availability and the take-up. (National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Final Report, 2010: p. 91)

This is to say that an investigation of the courses offered should be conducted in order to find out whether or not they meet the real needs of a given society, community, employers and the adult learners themselves.

In brief, **adult education and learning in Europe is an important issue**. Member-States are advised to *facilitate the integration of adult migrants* in their societies, by *providing specific courses which cater for meeting adult learners' needs, age-groups and interests*. As part of the lifelong learning strategy, foreign language courses are also considered to play an important role in this integration processes. In this sense, the delivery of courses should be of quality in every aspect concerning educational resources (e.g., materials and instruction). Teachers who work with adults are also

expected to attend to adults' characteristics and needs. Learning objectives and intended outcomes are to be made clear; and study skills developed as required. Courses should be designed as to meet the demands of a given society, community, and individuals. Despite the challenge many EU Member-States currently face in this sense, **all measures are to facilitate the integration of the newcomer, who is an adult, to the Member-State.**

As far language policies are concerned, learning other languages helps Europe safeguard its cultural diversity and plurilingual heritage (Kelly et al., 2004); thus, it has been a priority for over 30 years in the Union (Eurydice in Brief, 2005). In that sense, the European Commission<sup>42</sup> considers **language learning as a key activity in Education & Training** and an essential element in Lifelong Learning Programmes, such as Erasmus<sup>43</sup>; not only does it allow students to learn another language in the host country, but also it increases students' employability all over Europe. This is an essential aspect, considering Europe is an aging continent, and some Member-States already face challenges due to changes in demographics.

Besides, *language learning provides citizens with the opportunity to satisfy their communicative goals also when visiting, living, working, and/or studying in other Member-States.* In this sense, a fundamental principle in language education is **plurilingualism** – a competence that can be understood as “the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experiences of several cultures” (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2001: p.168).

Furthermore, such a competence “can be acquired”; in other words, the learning of a given language (or more) in early childhood does not limit the learner to further enlarging his or her plurilingual repertoire, which, in most cases, is “a matter of need and motivation” (Beacco and Byram, 2003: p. 37). *European educational institutions play a vital part in such a learning process* by providing learners with the opportunity to become more autonomous:

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<sup>42</sup> Information retrieved December 19, 2009 from [http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/eu-programmes/doc191\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/eu-programmes/doc191_en.htm)

<sup>43</sup> Information retrieved June 25, 2010, from [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80_en.htm).

Language teaching should above all seek to make learners autonomous, i.e. teach them to learn languages by themselves by developing a reflective approach to how they learn, what they know and their needs: all language teaching should include the development of learning strategies and not be seen as an end in itself. (Beacco and Byram, 2003: p. 67)

Furthermore, the Council of Europe<sup>44</sup> (Plurilingual Education in Europe, 2006: p. 8) states that *a plurilingual person has*: 1) repertoire of languages and language varieties; and competences of different kinds and levels within the repertoire. Also, plurilingual education promotes: 1) *an awareness of why and how one learns the languages one has chosen*; 2) *a respect for plurilingualism of others and the value of languages and varieties irrespective of their perceived status in society*; 3) an ability to perceive and mediate the relationships which exist among languages and cultures; and finally, 4) a global integrated approach to language education in the curriculum. Besides, **learning a language is for the learner**; it should be based on worthwhile, realistic objectives **reflecting needs, interests, motivation and ability**.

Moreover, according to the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Programme in Europe (2007-2013), the need to develop *a plurilingual competence may also entail learning a language which is not necessarily widely used and taught*. In Europe, there are languages which fall in this category, such as Dutch and Lithuanian. European Union initiatives (e.g., *eEuroInclusion portal*<sup>45</sup>) state that **the need to communicate in a less-widely used and taught language is eminent** considering the free movement of European citizens, capital and services.

A reference study conducted by Piri (2002) highlighted the importance of learning a ‘small language’ as this is “a valuable addition to an individual’s and society’s language reserve and promotes appreciation and protection of the European cultural heritage” (p. 7). Moreover, as the author further noted, **the growing numbers of immigrants in Europe**, *either temporarily or permanently, have also contributed to the need of learning the language of the recipient country* and they also add to the “ethnic and linguistic wealth of European countries” (p. 9). This has also a local impact other spheres, considering “the extensive international trade and the globalised world economy”, which in turn means that the best language is that “spoken by the

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<sup>44</sup> Council of Europe Language Education Policies – retrieved December 19, 2009, from [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Division\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Division_EN.asp)

<sup>45</sup> For more information, visit <http://www.euroinclusion.org/index.php?menu=LA> (accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2010).

client” (p. 10). In other words, **adult learners** may have a *need to learn a less-widely used / less-widely taught language for social inclusion or personal and/or professional reasons*.

By the same token, Beacco and Byram (2003) noted that current democratic trends in Europe also point to **the need to rethink the way language teaching is organized**: the provision of language education for adult migrants, even if migration is temporarily, should provide these citizens with the opportunity to develop the necessary linguistic skills for social and/or professional reasons.

In similar vein, while referring to **educational resources** *in the context of less-widely used and taught languages*, Piri (2002) noted that “public authorities should support the production of the teaching materials needed for the purpose, because small language teaching is very significant in terms of cultural and educational policy” (p. 22). In this sense, **materials should be written by experienced professionals and adapted to learners’ ages and capabilities**.

Likewise, as far as *the development of plurilingualism* is concerned, Beacco and Byram (2003: p. 90-91) contended that it is important to give learners access to “*adequate technological and educational resources*”. This also requires an analysis of how the material can be selected, classified and accessed – *authentic material and other types* - paper, sound, CD-ROMs, video. The same is also true of presentational learning in which *the ways of teaching may be approached via different material and technical resources*, such as a library/ multimedia facilities, a language laboratory, a television set, DVDs, and rooms with internet access.

In addition, the evolution of foreign/second language education and learning has shown that changes in the way languages are taught, and consequently learned, have an impact on the level of motivation individuals have to engage in future language learning experiences, especially, when it comes to adult learners, who will only invest time if their perceived needs are met. In that sense, it is vital to consider that **traditional methods** - *focusing on grammar, having few opportunities to develop speaking skills* - are believed to contribute to the formation of perceptions of a language being too difficult to learn; learners may also think they lack ability as it is necessary to have a natural gift or be younger. Thus, such methods are not based on the same principles of current EU education policies. Indeed, *this methods do not lead to the development of a plurilingual competence* (Beacco and Byram, 2003).



Also, it is relevant to note that the development of a plurilingual competence “provides the necessary conditions for mobility for work and leisure purposes in multilingual Europe” while “ensuring participation in democratic processes in multilingual national and international contexts”. In that sense, plurilingualism is “crucial for social and political inclusion of all members of society, and for active shared democratic citizenship among Europeans” (Plurilingual Education in Europe, 2006: p. 17, emphasis added).

Similarly, according to **EU language policies**, there is a need for **integration of adult migrants**<sup>46</sup> in the Member-States in aspects such as status, employment, health, housing (Beacco, 2008). What is more, *knowledge of the language of the host country is viewed as an important tool in the successful integration of adults*. Also, “migrants are – given adequate conditions – usually very eager to learn the language of the receiving society, if the courses are adapted to their needs” (Krumm and Plutzar, 2008: p. 5-6). Nevertheless, despite the fact that research has shown that the best provision is that in which a careful diagnosis is carried out, with *a focus on the personal and professional communication areas* of these individuals, “many countries prescribe standardised courses with scarcely any differentiation” (Krumm and Plutzar, 2008: p. 6).

It is, therefore, vital to consider the individual differences of learners, especially when learning objectives are established, given the fact that:

new and established immigrants are likely to have everyday language needs that are both predictable and specific – managing daily life (shopping, travel, banking etc.), employment, relations with public services (local council, police, post office, health service etc.) or schools, and social relations (in the neighbourhood, district etc.) – but that vary according to the migrants’ social context and the nature and stage of their migration. (Little., 2010: p. 12)

In other words, *adults, newcomers to a society, will have to function in society by taking part in several social, personal and professional situations*; thus, in all likelihood, a language learning objective will address those needs, according to the

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<sup>46</sup> Beacco (2008) uses the term *migrant* to refer to “any person involved in a migration process, whatever its nature or stage (arrival, settlement, initial stay, long-term residence, permanent settlement, application for naturalisation and access to citizenship, return of parents or children to country of origin etc)”. Specific terms, such as *new immigrant* is to refer to “a migrant who is in the initial stages of the process (arrival) and *immigrant* or *resident migrant* for a migrant who has been settled for a long time and who is able to, or has already, become a citizen of the host country (through naturalisation)” (p. 6).

situations newcomers are likely to face as part of their daily routines. In that sense, an approach would be to “proceed directly to an analysis of the formal characteristics of the different discourse genres employed in the communicative situations adult migrants need to be able to deal with” ( Little, 2010: p. 13).

Hence the importance of designing courses and materials which facilitate language learning, according to the communicative events adults are expected to encounter in the new environment. This is especially true when considering *newcomers*: not only are the educational resources expected to facilitate the development of a plurilingual competence, but also enhance adult migrants’ integration in society. For this reason, it is vital to “ensure that suitable and competent staff are available to deliver the programme” (Little, 2010: p. 18).

## **2.4 Concluding remarks**

Lithuania – EU Member-State since 2004 - has undergone several social, political, economical changes. Such an international recognition has attracted many people to the country, apart from linguists and historians, who also started to learn Lithuanian as a foreign or second language, and eventually settled down in the country.

Lithuanian seems to have few similarities with ‘more international’ languages such as English, French, Spanish, given its archaic system and particularities - somewhat mobile word order, lack of articles, frequent use of ordinal numbers in typical situations. Thus, if adult learners, are required to understand all those differences and produce accurate Lithuanian language, at a beginner level of studies, chances are that ‘less language-experienced’ learners will find Lithuanian language learning a difficult experience. However, if the learning process is organized according to the similarities – functions used to achieve a communicative goal - chances are such difficulties will be minimized.

In Lithuania, education serves its purpose when it contributes to the development of the individual and that of the Lithuanian society. Since the restoration of independence, despite the limited human and financial resources, contributions were made in designing Lithuanian language courses and materials. However, language education policies have mainly favoured the development of biligualism and multilingualism, fostering the social inclusion of those who belong to the existing minority groups into this society – school children who need to take the official

language exams for study purposes, and adults, so that they can be inserted in the job market. Moreover, achieving a successful result in Lithuanian language official examinations is a precondition for citizenship requirements.

Adult learners can pursue both formal and non-formal education, in several educational institutions, such as universities, which have academic freedom to organize study programmes and courses; teachers are free to choose their methodological approaches and materials. Nevertheless, all of them are to comply with the nature and characteristics of the adult learner, by addressing their needs and interests, and facilitate their inclusion.

EU policies acknowledge the fact that learning migrants need to learn the language of the host country in order to satisfy their communicative needs, even if migration is temporary, as speaking the language is pre-condition for participation and social inclusion in society. Nevertheless, providing quality services in adult education, through teacher qualification and educational resources that cater for adult's personal nature, are challenges currently faced by Member-States. In this sense, Lithuanian language policies are still not aligned with those regulating language education in Europe, which point to the need to facilitate the personal, social, and professional inclusion of newcomers into the Member-States.

Finally, it is vital to ensure that competent professionals deliver language courses targeted at adults, as these require a different approach from that used in teaching school children. Indeed, the qualification of teachers delivering courses targeted at adult migrants is a major challenge faced by some of the EU Member-States. This is an important aspect to consider because traditional methods emphasizing grammar, through innumerable mechanical repetitions, combined with few opportunities to the development of speaking skills, are believed to contribute to the formation of perceptions of a language being too difficult to learn. In order to address such issues, our discussions will now be directed to the analysis of the socio-cultural context at a meso level.

### **3. A meso-analysis of the socio-cultural context: Lithuanian language courses, target groups and educational resources**

In this chapter, firstly, our discussions will be directed at current Lithuanian language courses and target groups in the country. Secondly, a discussion of the educational resources intended for non-native speakers will also entail Lithuanian language course books and supplementary materials, such as grammar books, pronunciation books, dictionaries and phrasebooks. Finally, a description of the current media and online resources identified in this case study will also be made. In concluding, implications for learning Lithuanian from a non-native speaker perspective will also be highlighted.

#### **3.1 Lithuanian language courses and target groups**

Individuals who learn Lithuanian belong to different groups: 1) students of ethnic minority groups 2) new immigrants/refugees and their children; and 3) foreigners from different countries. According to Ramonienė (2006), two main groups can be identified: first, those who are *citizens of Lithuania but cannot speak the language and need to reintegrate into society*; second, *foreigners* who have different reasons, such as professional, business, personal, and tourism purposes.

So far, Lithuanian language courses offered in the country have been organized to meet the linguistic needs of specific groups of non-native speakers, as follows:

*Non-native speakers and international students (permanent or temporary residents)*: Erasmus Intensive language courses<sup>47</sup> (EILC / 60hours) have been organized under the bilateral agreement among European universities participating in this lifelong learning programme. For instance, summer courses in 2010 in Lithuania were offered in three cities: Klaipėda (Klaipėda University, LCC International University), Vilnius (Vilnius Pedagogical University; International School of Law and Business), and Kaunas (Vytautas Magnus University). Winter courses in 2011 are scheduled to be offered in Vilnius (Vilnius University) and in Kaunas (Kaunas University of Technology). Furthermore, these exchange students can also apply for Lithuanian language courses, as part of their learning agreement/study plan, being awarded credits (from 4.5 to 6 ECTS, depending on the HEI), for one or two semesters.

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<sup>47</sup> Information retrieved August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from <http://www.smpf.lt/index.php?id=1562>

These courses are also offered to non-native speakers who study, live and/or work in the country, in HEI, such as LCC International University, Klaipėda University<sup>48</sup> and Vilnius University<sup>49</sup>, as well as language centres and institutes (subject to demand), such as the *Public Service Language Centre* (Valstybės institucijų kalbų centras)<sup>50</sup>, ‘Soros International House’<sup>51</sup>, and ‘Lingua Lituanica’<sup>52</sup>, in Vilnius.

**Refugees and asylum seekers:** Currently there have been some specific arrangements to teach refugees (adults and their children) the Lithuanian language. For instance, at the *Refugees Reception Centre* (Pabėgėlių Priėmimo Centras)<sup>53</sup>, in Rukla /Jonava’s region, adults follow a 190-hour language course; in 2004, computer-assisted Lithuanian language learning (i.e., CALL) was implemented. Such measures are to insure the integration of these individuals, *through language*, into the Lithuanian society.

**Repatriates:** Until recently, non-native speakers of Lithuania, especially speakers of Russian, could attend language courses – ‘Valstybinės kalbos mokymas’ - at the *Teacher Professional Development Center* (Pedagogų Profesinės Raidos Centras), which also included a 60h practice in oral Lithuanian (a suggestopedic course<sup>54</sup>).

### 3.2 Educational resources for non-native speakers

Having in mind *the education of non-native speakers*, including the minority groups living in the country, this section will be devoted to describing the main learning resources available to date (January, 2011), concerning course books, supplementary materials, media and online resources.

#### 3.2.1 Lithuanian language course books

With regard to course books, these have been devised for the purpose of teaching young learners and adults, as further discussed:

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<sup>48</sup> Information retrieved August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from <http://www.ku.lt/llc/index.php>

<sup>49</sup> Information retrieved August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/General-information/p154>

<sup>50</sup> Information retrieved August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from <http://www.vikc.lt/?p=courses&id=5>

<sup>51</sup> Information retrieved August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from [http://www.sih.lt/ll\\_courses](http://www.sih.lt/ll_courses)

<sup>52</sup> Information retrieved August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from <http://www.lingualit.lt/index.php?id=195>

<sup>53</sup> Information retrieved August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from <http://www.rppc.lt/9908/services/state-support-for-integration-for-fga-in-center/lithuanian-language-training-for-fga.html>

<sup>54</sup> This author took part of this course, designed and delivered by Prof. Sergejus Temčinas, as an observer, in 2007 and 2008 (Intensyvaus Kalbų mokymo metodikos teorija ir praktika – valstybinės lietuvių kalbos mokymo(si) kokybės tobulinimui). See the website for general information about the centre <http://www.pprc.lt/vkm/>.

**School children and teenagers:** Eight books were published between 2000 and 2009, as follows: *Labas!* (Prosniakova and Stumbrienė, 2009), for 7-8 y.o. school children, at foreign education Lithuanian institutions, *Mano ir Tavo šalis Lietuva* (Prosniakova and Stumbrienė, 2007), targeted at 11-14 y.o. school children; *Mokomės lietuvių kalbos* (Kutanovienė, 2005), for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades; *Žodžio paunksmėjė* (Bingelienė, 2002, 2003), for the 10th grade, *Perženk stenkstį* (Skripkienė et al., 2002), for secondary school children and teenagers; *Pasikartokime* (Bingelienė and Kutanovienė, 2001) also targeted at school children, *Atverk duris*, vol I/II (Kaladytė, 2000,2001), for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and, finally, *Žodžių tiltai* vol.I/II (Petrašūnienė, 1999, 2000), for the 6th grade.

**Adult learners:** Six books were published between 1994 and 2010. Of these, one addresses the minority groups living in Lithuania - *Lietuvių kalba visiems* (Čekmonienė and Čekmonas, 1999); two have been edited abroad, have a considerable high cost, and are not easily found at local bookshops. With regard to their target audience, the student is a foreign adult living outside Lithuania. The main information, instructions and explanations are provided in English: 1) *Teach yourself Lithuanian* – a self-study material from the ‘teach yourself complete languages’ series (Ramonienė and Stumbrienė, 2006), also released in 2010, as *Complete Lithuanian*<sup>55</sup>; and 2) *Colloquial Lithuanian - The Complete Course for Beginners*<sup>56</sup> (Ramonienė and Press, 1996, 2010). Finally, these books are normally not included in the study programme of Lithuanian language targeted at non-native speakers or foreigners studying in the country. Another book, published in Lithuania, seventeen years ago, also targeted ‘the foreigner’ interested in learning the local language: *Modern Lithuanian – A Textbook for Foreign Students* (Paulauskienė and Valeika, 1994), which provides a comprehensive perspective of the language – its grammar and phonetics – in a single volume (559 pages).

Two other books were also written and published in Lithuania. Firstly, *Po truputį* (Ramonienė and Vilkienė<sup>57</sup>, 1998), with a new edition only ten years later - in 2008 - compiled into a student book (181 pages) and an exercise book (172 pages). In its

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<sup>55</sup> The latest edition – *Complete Lithuanian* – can be purchased online at USD 46.00 or locally, at 175.00 Lt.

<sup>56</sup> The second edition was published and launched for online shopping in November, 2010, and available at USD 74.00 (180.00 Lt)

<sup>57</sup> Loreta Vilkienė is an Associate Professor and currently the Head of the Department of Lithuanian Studies, Vilnius University. Information retrieved February 20, 2011 from <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/Darbuotojai/p21/workerpage/0/workerid/6>.

fourth cover, it is clearly stated that the material was written according to a modern communicative method of teaching foreign languages. In that sense, learners are expected to learn grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation through everyday-life situations.

The second material - *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* (Stumbrienė<sup>58</sup> and Kaškelevičienė, 2001, 2004) - is compiled into a single book comprising 286 pages. This was *the main material available and used by the participants in this study*, who attended courses from October 2006 to November 2008.

The content analysis of *the main book used*, taking into account the target aims and audience, showed that this book *is targeted at young and adult learners, who preparing for the examinations of the state language*<sup>59</sup>, as these are required for obtaining the Lithuanian citizenship; that is, it is used to prepare residents belonging to minority groups, such as Poles, Russians, and Belarusians. The first paragraph of the English version states the following aims:

The handbook "Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos" (Not a single day without Lithuanian) is intended for young and adult learners of different professions who start learning the Lithuanian language. This handbook will assist in achieving the "Pusiaukelės" (Waystage) level of the language and help prepare for the examinations of the state language as part of Lithuanian citizenship requirements as well as for the first category qualification.

In considering both materials that are currently in use - *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* and *Po truputį*, the investigation in this study has shown that **these books are in use for the teaching of Lithuanian to different target- and age-groups**, as the main or a supplementary material, as follows:

***Refugees and Asylum seekers*** at the *Refugees Reception Centre* (Pabėgėlių Priėmimo Centras / Rukla)<sup>60</sup> - Lithuanian Language Training for FGA (Foreigners Granted-Asylum): ***Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos*** is used for the education of

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<sup>58</sup> Virginija Stumbrienė is a Lecturer at the Department of Lithuanian Studies, Vilnius University, and the (co)author of several books intended for non-native speakers, foreigners and minority groups learning Lithuanian as a foreign or second language. Information retrieved February 20, 2011 from <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/Darbuotojai/p21/workerpage/1/workerid/8>

<sup>59</sup> A content analysis of the official examination of the state language targeted at those aiming to apply for the Lithuanian citizenship is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>60</sup> Information retrieved January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, from <http://www.rppc.lt/9908/services/state-support-for-integration-for-fga-in-center/lithuanian-language-training-for-fga.html>.

*unaccompanied minors*, and **Po truputį** for the language education of *adult learners preparing for the first stage of the state language exam*.

**Exchange international students (formal education / higher education)** – taking part in bilateral agreements between European universities; courses are financially supported by the European Union / Lifelong learning programmes. In Lithuania, the book is included in the language learning programme at Vilnius University (Vilnius), Mikolas Romeris University (Vilnius), Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas), and LCC International University (Klaipėda), for instance.

**Adults / non-native speakers of Lithuanian (non-formal education)**, who are currently living, working or studying in Vilnius, for instance, or those who travel to Lithuania during their holidays. They normally attend courses in the capital city, at educational institutions such as Soros International House (language institute)<sup>61</sup> and Vilnius University (the participants in this study, for instance)

Finally, it is vital to note that *Po truputį* and *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* - currently in use in the country for the teaching-learning process of non-native speakers or foreigners - **are exclusively written in Lithuanian** - except for the foreword or blurb, which also are written in English- **no answer keys to the exercises are provided**, separately or at the end of the student or exercise book; **audioscripts are not included either**. In short, these materials are very likely to be difficult to follow, unless they are used under the guidance of a teacher. Self-study is not possible either given the adult learner will not be able to check answers or follow the dialogues, unless the teacher's book is bought; this would only add to the level difficulty, considering it is especially written for Lithuanian language teachers.

### 3.2.2 Lithuanian language supplementary materials

Three main grammar books, targeted at the non-native speaker, have been identified in this research:

**Practical Grammar of Lithuanian** (Ramonienė and Pribušauskaitė, 2008), translated from the original, in Lithuanian - *Praktinė lietuvių kalbos gramatika* – into English, in clear and plain language that can be understood by an ordinary learner. In this sense, it is a very useful and updated resource that can be used once one becomes more familiar with the Lithuanian language, as far as its grammar is concerned.

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<sup>61</sup> Author's own data from contacts with Lithuanian language teachers that previously worked at the language institute.



*365 Lietuvių Kalbos Veiksmazodžiai / 365 Lithuanian Verbs* (Stumbrienė et al., 2002, 2008) is targeted at English speakers; and another edition, targeted at Russian speakers - *365 Lietuvių kalbos veiksmazodžiai / 365 глаголов литовского языка* (Prosniakova et al, 2004). A material to be used as a reference book, as it is expected to help a learner conjugate the verbs in all persons of discourse. However, the verbs are all spelt in their accentuated forms and this might cause certain interference in the spelling acquisition process of a non-native speaker or foreigner. It is important to note that, between 2006 and 2007/2008, the English edition was not available in bookshops in Lithuania as it had been sold out.

*Lithuanian Grammar / Lietuvių kalbos gramatika* (Ambrazas, 1997, 2006) - provides a comprehensive description of Lithuanian syntax, phonology, and morphology, in 787 pages. An excellent guide, but mainly targeted at the linguistic community, such as language professionals and specialists - translators, and teachers – or very advanced learners, considering its level of complexity.

As far as study skills in **pronunciation** (including accentuation and intonation) are concerned, *only one book* was identified in the local bookshops: *Ištark – Taisyklingos tarties mokomoji knyga* (Kruopienė, 2004). It is written in Lithuanian language only; this is to say, no instructions or explanations are provided in an international language, such as English. Thus, judging by such a complexity, this material shall be a useful resource for more advanced learners, or those under the guidance of a teacher.

Another important learning resource was found through the content analysis of supplementary materials, such as **bilingual dictionaries**, including pocket and full-size dictionaries, and phrasebooks.

**Pocket dictionaries**, in different languages (e.g., Dutch, English, French, Italian, Spanish) can be easily found in the bookshops. Nevertheless, a content analysis of the main objectives stated in the first pages of these dictionaries has shown that they were *devised for a Lithuanian language speaker learning a given foreign language, and not a foreigner or non-native speaker who wants to learn Lithuanian*. A few illustrations are given below, extracted from the introductory pages (written in Lithuanian, all translations into English are mine):

**Dutch-Lithuanian-Dutch** (~20.000 words), by Mikalauskaitė (2009): “žodynas skiriamas besimokantiems olandų kalbos” (dictionary designed for those who want to learn Dutch).

**English-Lithuanian-English** (~24.000 words), by Piesarskas and Svecevičius (2006): “Šis žodynas bus geras pagalbininkas norintiems bendrauti anglų kalba” (This dictionary will be of good help to those who want to communicate in English).

**French-Lithuanian-French** (~25.000 words), by Balaišienė (2006): “Šis prancūzų-lietuvių ir lietuvių-prancūzų kalbų žodynas yra skirtas besimokantiems prancūzų kalbos” (this French-Lithuanian and Lithuanian-French dictionary is designed for those who want to learn French).

**Italian-Lithuanian-Italian** (~26.000 words), by Limantaitė (2009): “Šis italų-lietuvių ir lietuvių-italų kalbų žodynas yra skirtas besimokantiems italų kalbos” (this Italian-Lithuanian and Lithuanian-Italian dictionary is designed for those who want to learn Italian).

**Spanish-Lithuanian-Spanish** (~29.000 words), by Petrauskas (2008): “Šis žodynas skiriamas moksleiviams ir studentams, kurie studiuoja ar savarankiškai mokosi ispanų kalbos” (this dictionary is designed for pupils who are studying Spanish and students learning Spanish on a self-study basis).

Furthermore, the content analysis of the *English-Lithuanian-English pocket dictionary* showed that students are mainly provided with a literal translation into English, without any additional examples or phonetic transcriptions of the main word. Additional information is provided to facilitate the understanding of the concept, but it is also given in Lithuanian – the language with which a foreign student is not familiar yet. The following example shows the entry for the word ‘gyventi’ (Piesarskas and Svecevičius, 2006: p. 233):

Gyvent//i: 1) live; (laikinai) stay (at); 2) (turėti buveinę) reside; ~**ojas** inhabitant, dweller; ~**ojai** (šalies, miesto) populátion sg.

As a matter of fact, the words in English are written with the accents that are normally used to mark stress - reside - dweller – populátion. Such words are never spelt with these accents, according to the rules governing English orthography: reside - dweller - population. Additional words are provided in parentheses, but in Lithuanian as well, thus, not facilitating understanding of a non-native speaker or

foreigner who is actually learning Lithuanian. Therefore, this is also an indication that such a pocket-dictionary serves best the purpose of showing a Lithuanian speaker how to pronounce a word in English than a non-native speaker of Lithuanian or foreigner, who needs to learn the target language and already knows how to pronounce the words in English. In sum, *pocket-dictionaries are currently catering for the needs of a Lithuanian speaker who wants to learn a foreign language, and not otherwise.*

**Dictionaries in a full-size edition** can also be found, nevertheless, they are intended for language specialists (e.g., editors, translators), or advanced students, given the level of complexity and amount of information. The three illustrations follow (translations into English are mine):

***Lithuanian-Russian (vol I)***, by Lyberis (2008): “žodynas skiriamas ne tik lietuviams, besimokantiems rusų kalbos, bet ir nelietuviams kuri domisi lietuvių kalba ar nori jos pramokti.” (not only is this dictionary intended for Lithuanians who are learning Russian, but also to non-Lithuanians who are interested in Lithuanian and want to learn it).

***Italian- Lithuanian***, by Lanza (2010): “Naujasis žodynas bus geras pagalbininkas tiek kalbų specialistams bei vertėjams, tiek visiems kitiems susiduriantiems su italų kalba” (The new dictionary will be of great help to language specialists, translators and everyone else who is confronted with the Italian language).

***English-Lithuanian/Lithuanian-English*** (2 volumes), by Piesarkas (2004): “Dvitolmis anglų-lietuvių kalbų žodynas, kaip ir jo pirmtakas Didysis anglų-lietuvių kalbų žodynas, skirtas visiems, kam anglų kalbos prisireikia mokslinei ir praktinei veiklai” (this two-volume dictionary and its former big English-Lithuanian dictionary, is intended for everyone who needs English for research or practice).

In the aforementioned examples, with the exception of the first dictionary (Lithuanian-Russian), it is clearly stated at the very beginning that they are intended for those who need to practise or work with another foreign language, such as English, Italian or Russian, as opposed to catering for the needs of a foreigner learning Lithuanian.

**Phrasebooks** also follow the same pattern – they have been written having in mind a Lithuanian-native speaker who wants to travel abroad, and communicate in the foreign language, as the analysis of the first pages of Brough’s (2006) *Lietuviški-*

*angliški pokalbiai* shows: “Parankinė knyga vykstantiems į Didžiąją Britaniją ir į kitas angliškai kalbančias šalis” (the Bible for those travelling to Great Britain and other English language countries).

Finally, a **picture dictionary** is now also available: Lithuanian Language Picture Dictionary - *Lietuvių kalbos paveikslėlių žodynas*, by Baickienė and Bareikytė-Čižikienė, firstly edited in 1996, and the latest edition in 2009. The contents are divided into 14 topics, such as food, accommodation, time and natural phenomena, Lithuania (the country), sports, among others. Two additional units are attached – the terms used and Lithuanian grammar.

The findings obtained from the content analysis of this dictionary are summarized below:

LIST OF CONTENTS (Turynis/ p. 5)	Lithuanian and English
FOREWORD (Pratarmė/ p. 8-9)	Lithuanian and English
4 <sup>th</sup> COVER (blurb)	Lithuanian and English
UNIT – TITLES AND EXAMPLES	<i>Lithuanian only</i>
VISUAL SUPPORT	Mainly <b>black &amp; white sketches</b> , except for Lithuanian flags and coat of arms (p.19), and the list of colours (p. 27). Emphasis is given by formatting the words in <b>bold</b> or <i>italics</i> , and black and <b>red</b> font colours

With regard to its *target audience*, the dictionary is intended for *children and adults* (not including complete beginners) who want to learn Lithuanian, including topics according to their frequency and use, as this extract from the 4<sup>th</sup> cover shows (original in English):

„Lithuanian Language Picture Dictionary“ is for everyone who wants to learn Lithuanian. **Beginners, those who learned a little of Lithuanian earlier and would like to extend their knowledge**, children of various age and adults can use it. Pictures making up the base of the dictionary will help to avoid difficulties while explaining most of the words and their meanings. The dictionary is aimed at helping to learn lexical bases of Lithuanian. It’s made up of more than 2050 lexical units which are divided into separate topical groups. Words in the

dictionary are systematized according to the parts of speech; they were selected by taking into account their frequency of use and foreigner's teaching practice. (emphasis added).

Indeed, different topics are included; they can be applied to several situations. Nevertheless, **the visual support** is only provided through **black & white sketches** (except for the page related to colours and the Lithuanian flag / coat of arms). In short, no photo or picture is used to facilitate the visualization of a word or concept.

In addition, some *proverbs and sayings* are included in each unit, according to the topic, as a means *to facilitate the development of pronunciation skills* as well as contribute to the construction of meaning. In the words of Baickienė and Bareikytė-Čižikienė (2009):

some proverbs and sayings, which would help to develop phonetic hearing and pronunciation, are given at the end of word groups or word sub-groups in order to playfully strengthen the understanding of lexical units and *to teach learners concise and sonorous Lithuanian sentences* (p. 8, foreword, emphasis added)

For instance, in unit 4.6, on page 35, learners are presented with words related to *female clothes, shoe and jewelry*. There are also sayings printed in red colour as to draw learners' attention. However, proverbs and sayings tend to portray very typical situations within a given culture. In this case, in particular, they are written *exclusively in Lithuanian* (no English approximate translation is provided). An example from this unit is shown below, with a translation added for clarification purposes:

**Kepùrė ant galvõs – kepùrės íeško.**

The hat is on his head – He is looking for his hat

Like one of the grammar books analysed in this work, an interesting aspect that deserves our attention is the fact that *all the words (including those under the pictures), are spelt with accents* that indicate the stressed syllable, or another characteristic of a given sound (e.g., long, short, open or closed sounds). Below, we can see a comparison between the words in their accentuated form (as presented in this dictionary), and the usual spelling found in everyday life texts:

WORDS SPELT WITH ACCENT MARKS	WORDS USED IN STANDARD LITHUANIAN ORTHOGRAPHY
kepùrè	kepurè
galvõs	galvos
íeško	ieško

As can be clearly seen, **the words presented to learners are spelt in their accentuated forms**. For instance, in the first example - *kepùrè* - the vowel *u* has a *grave accent* ( ` ) to indicate that *the stressed syllable in word – pù*, as opposed to the last syllable – *rè*, in which *the dot* ( ´ ) on the vowel *e* is used to show that *the vowel sound is closed*. Likewise, the vowel *o* in *galvõs* has a *tilde* ( ~ ) to show a specific characteristic of this sound, *and finally, the word íeško* – from the verb *ieškoti* (to look for, in English), conjugated in the third person singular, has the letter *í* marked with an *acute accent* ( ´ ), so that the sound be produced accordingly, following the rules governing Lithuanian pronunciation and accentuation.

However, in current Standard Lithuanian, *these words are not spelt with those marks in any everyday life texts* printed in books, magazines and leaflets, unless they are produced from a linguistic perspective. This is to say that unless learners are familiar with such accentuation (e.g., the marks, the stressed syllables), they will have great difficulty in producing the sounds accordingly. They will need the guidance of a qualified person or teacher.

Finally, the words presented in their accentuated forms may actually cause confusion during the process of spelling acquisition by ordinary learners, who are complete beginners: they may think that the words are spelt with those accents and unconsciously create a visual memory for them. In short, this is an important resource that can be used by learners who have some knowledge of the language, especially its accentuation and pronunciation patterns, or by those under the guidance of a qualified instructor.

### 3.2.3 Media and online resources

As for media resources, five main materials were identified in this investigation:

*Lithuanian in just 1 hour / Lithuanian for beginners* (Strupienè, 2010): an audio CD booklet, containing essential information in English and Lithuanian on how to ask for things, how to order food, how to book a room in hotel, among others. The

information is firstly provided in English, and then translated into Lithuanian. Students are advised to listen to it and repeat the sentences in Lithuanian for 3 or 4 times. However, no dialogues in full are provided, just the essential information extracted from possible conversations, as the following examples show: *Asking for things*: White coffee, please – *Prašau kavos su pienu*; Tea, please – *prašau arbatos*. A very simple material, in audio format, providing essential phrases in 60 minutes – a very limited period of time to learn this somewhat different language.

***Eurotalk Interactive series***<sup>62</sup> (produced abroad as of 2000, with more titles as of 2005 ): this series is comprised of 5 CD ROMS, as follows: *Talk Now* - the essentials of Lithuanian, including games, also available for download (DL version) and in USB; *Talk More* – useful phrases for travelers; *Learn Lithuanian / Beginners* – targeted at adult learners; *Talk the Talk* – targeted at young learners under 18 years of age, including school exam practice, and *Vocabulary Builder* – mainly targeted at children, although adults are also encouraged to learn from this resource. A demo lesson is available on the official website: here the learner clicks on some pictures, reads the word or phrase in English, and listens to a person dubbing the same information in Lithuanian, which is also shown, such as yes – *taip*, please – *prašau*, where is the bank? – *kur yra bankas*, eight o'clock – *aštunta valanda*, among others. An interesting resource which combines images, words and sounds, but also targeted at a more international audience, sold at a considerable high cost; thus, not very accessible to the domestic market.

***Pimsleur language programmes***<sup>63</sup> - *Lithuanian world citizen* – a recorded book organized in 10 lessons, at a beginner's level, in which the learner can get acquainted with 'conversational Lithuanian', and work with grammar and vocabulary. Nevertheless, like the Eurotalk series, as this material was produced abroad, it is not easily found at the local shops, given its high cost.

***Po truputį*** (Ramonienė and Vilkienė, 2001) – an electronic version of the same book, produced for self-study purposes.

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<sup>62</sup> *Euro Talk – The Language Learning Specialists*, is based in London, UK. It offers media resources in 120 languages. With regard to the Lithuanian language series, each CD ROM can be purchased separately, at approximately £ 30 / 120 Lt, or the whole series at about £ 150 / 600 Lt. Information retrieved February 7, 2011, from <http://eurotalk.com/en/resources/learn/lithuanian> .

<sup>63</sup> Information retrieved May 9, 2011 from [http://www.pimsleur.co.uk/catalogue/title/lithuanian\\_world\\_citizen/1770](http://www.pimsleur.co.uk/catalogue/title/lithuanian_world_citizen/1770). According to the company in Britain, this is an American product whose copyright year is 1996.

*Anglonas*<sup>64</sup> – *English-Lithuanian computer dictionary*: an electronic version of Piesarskas's (2004) dictionary. A useful electronic resource that also seems to be mainly attending to Lithuanian speakers' needs. For instance, if a Lithuanian speaker teais looking for the equivalent word to *arbata*, or a non-native speaker of Lithuanian, or a foreigner, is running a query with the word *tea*, they will have the same results:

**Tea** [ti:]

**n.**

1. *bot.* arbata; arbatžolės;

**to make (the) tea** užplokinti/užpilti arbatžolių;

**tile tea** plytinė/presuota arbata;

**broken tea** silpna arbata;

**Russian tea** arbata su citrina (*patiekama stiklinėse*)

**2.**

**v.**

1. gerti arbatą

2. duoti arbatos

It is interesting to note that the word in English is provided with a phonemic transcription that helps an individual to pronounce the word in English accordingly. However, *no information regarding the pronunciation of the word in Lithuanian – arbata – is provided*. Next, the word as a noun is provided (here, only one example out of five is shown for illustrative purposes), followed by some typical phrases in Lithuanian, without any further explanation. Finally, the users can see *the word as a verb, stating the collocations used, only written in Lithuanian – gerti arbatą / duoti arbatos* (make tea, give tea). A foreign learner will have to look up the words *duoti arbatos* to understand what they mean. In that sense, due to its lack of explanations and additional examples in English, and the absence of information on how the word is pronounced in Lithuanian, *this electronic resource is mainly intended for a Lithuanian speaker learning English, rather than a non-native speaker or foreigner learning Lithuanian*.

Finally, a short description of the **online resources** are provided next:

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<sup>64</sup> The electronic version has to be used under the terms of a specific license. More information at (<http://www.fotonija.lt/lt/>)



**Oneness on-line language training courses**<sup>65</sup>: an EU funded project, with the participation of two Lithuanian universities – Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University, among others in Europe, with a focus on the less-used and less taught languages – Lithuanian, Estonian, Finnish, Portuguese, and Polish. The content is organized around topics (10 in total), such as at home, going out, and health. In addition, each unit has: a) a short introduction to grammar and vocabulary; b) a phrase set – pair of sentences - focusing on oral skills (learners can listen to the recording); 3) exercises for further practice, and 4) a short socio-cultural introduction to the country. Learners can also take part in forums and chats, through the internet cafe. An interesting learning resource to use at the very beginning of one's course of studies (ideally, the ONENESS' series should be further developed to cater for lower intermediate and more advanced learners).

**SLIC – Lithuanian Language Lessons**<sup>66</sup>, designed by members of the Australian Lithuanian Community in Sidney, Australia, with the support of the New South Wales Government (Community Relations). Twenty-four lessons are organized around different topics, such as *Kiek kainuoja bilietas* (How much does a ticket cost?), and *Su draugais* (with friends). An important contribution from this Australia attempting to help its citizens learn the language of their ancestors.

**Debeselis online Lithuanian school**<sup>67</sup> - The main aim of this online school is to provide information on basic Lithuanian grammar, as a preparation for those who are to attend a beginner's level course. Information on pronunciation is given, along with sounds recorded by native speakers. When taking part in the forum, members are invited to write their texts in Lithuanian, which will then be marked if mistakes are made. From July/2006 to January 2011, over 560 members had joined this online school, foreigners who are interested in Lithuanian being the majority, from several parts of the world (e.g., Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Ghana, India, Israel, New Zeland, Thailand, the USA). The administrator and moderators are students in their early 20s (e.g., Lithuanian students from Kaunas, among others), who are interested in disseminating their language to other people. In

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<sup>65</sup> As previously noted, this was coordinated by Vilnius University through its Department of Lithuanian Studies; researchers and teachers from Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania, also took part in this project. Information retrieved January 10, 2011 from <http://www.oneness.vu.lt/en/>.

<sup>66</sup> Information retrieved January 10, 2011, from [http://www.slic.org.au/Language/LLL\\_index.swf](http://www.slic.org.au/Language/LLL_index.swf).

<sup>67</sup> Information retrieved January 10, 2011 from <http://www.debeselis.net/index.php>.

that sense, we may state that this is an important initiative by young Lithuanian students, as a means to foster interest in Lithuanian. However, chances are more English will be used as the language for communication, given the great number of members from other countries, and few numbers of Lithuanian citizens.

### **3.3 Concluding remarks**

Despite the fact that Lithuania has been a Member of the European Union since 2004 - being eligible for the financial support provided by the European Commission - educational resources to learn the local language, targeted at NNS adults, who are complete beginners are scarce if non-existent. The two main course books in the domestic market were firstly designed before the country became an EU Member-State; they are used for the Lithuanian education of refugees, international students, such as Erasmus, NNS Lithuanian citizens, and other learners who settled down, to study and/or work in the country, among other reasons.

This may have a significant impact on the learning outcomes of adults, newcomers to this society, as most of the materials, especially course books, had been previously designed with a focus on school children, mainly belonging to the existing minority groups, and on older learners who need to meet the linguistic requirements in order to be granted the Lithuanian citizenship.

However, there are individuals in the new target audience who do not need to prepare for the language state exam, normally required of those who are willing to apply for the Lithuanian citizenship. In this sense, Lithuanian language education is not aligned with the EU directives regarding the provision of educational resources targeted at adults, newcomers to this society, in terms of meeting their needs, abilities, interests, and age-groups via provision of appropriate educational resources.

Therefore, having in mind the adult newcomer to Lithuania, the design of course books and supplementary materials targeted at adults, such as bilingual pocket dictionaries and pronunciation guides, intended for NNS at a beginner level of studies, seems to be an issue that deserves attention if these newcomers are to be socially and professionally integrated into the Lithuanian society. As the country prepares to run the presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2013, a greater number of people might be attracted to the country and engage in learning Lithuanian as a means to fulfill their communicative needs.

#### **4. A micro-analysis of the socio-cultural context: the institution, courses, learning materials, lessons, and participants**

In this section, our starting point will be a description of the main learning activity, regarding the education institution, the department where the course is delivered, the study programme, the learning materials and the educational resources used. Next, the audio-recorded lessons analysed will also be discussed. Finally, the participants in this study, along with previous language learning experiences and reasons for learning Lithuanian will be highlighted.

##### **4.1 The Higher Education Institution: Facts & Figures**

Vilnius University<sup>68</sup> - established in the capital city in the 16<sup>th</sup> century - has 12 faculties, 7 institutes, 4 study and research centers, the oldest library in Lithuania, 3 university hospitals, the Astronomical Observatory, the Botanical Garden, the Centre of Information Technology Development, among others. It is one of the oldest institutions in higher education both in Eastern and Central Europe, aiming to offer top-level research and education both to local and international students. It also offers services and consultancy to society, in several areas, such as medical, business and language fields (e.g., Lithuanian for foreigners). Currently, Vilnius University has about 22.000 students; of these, over 4000 are conducting research at graduate levels - Master's - and over 800 are carrying out research at doctoral levels. In other words, in 2011 about 5000 students are engaged in producing scientific knowledge, with the support of the Lithuanian government<sup>69</sup>.

The Lithuanian language course is designed and delivered by the **Department of Lithuanian Studies**<sup>70</sup>, founded in 1990, under the structure of the Faculty of Philology. The main aims of the department are to promote studies of Lithuanian language and culture, through several actions: the Master's programme in Applied Linguistics, teacher professional development programmes, targeted at local and international Lithuanian language teachers, Lithuanian language proficiency exams

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<sup>68</sup> Information retrieved 28 February 2010, from the official website: <http://www.vu.lt/en/> and [http://www.vu.lt/en/research/services\\_consultancy/](http://www.vu.lt/en/research/services_consultancy/).

<sup>69</sup> A full-time student conducting research at doctoral levels gets approximately 350 € / 1200 Lt per month as financial support from the Lithuanian government. In considering 800 full-time doctoral students, in 2011, the public money invested in research amounts to 280.000€ / 960.000 Lt per month (over 3.3 million € / 11.5 million Lt per year). Facts & figures retrieved February 16, 2011, from the official website [http://www.vu.lt/en/aboutus/facts\\_figures/](http://www.vu.lt/en/aboutus/facts_figures/).

<sup>70</sup> Information retrieved March 1, 2010, from the department website <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/News/p19>

and testing, and one-year language course for foreign students who plan to study at Lithuanian educational institutions and need Lithuanian language credits<sup>71</sup>, as advised by the Ministry of Education and Science. Researchers, who are lecturers and (assistant; associate) professors at the department, specialized in classical philology, linguistics, language didactics and testing, sociolinguistics and other language-related areas. They are involved in several academic engagements<sup>72</sup>, such as EU funded language projects as well as those supported by the Lithuanian government. Furthermore, teachers produce educational resources and learning materials, including the main books for teaching Lithuanian to non-native speakers or foreigners and grammar reference books, as previously described.

#### 4.2 The physical learning environment: description of facilities

The lessons observed were delivered in classrooms located in the main building of the Faculty of Philology; these would normally house a group of 10 to 14 students. The following figure is used to show the main classrooms, as a matter of illustration:

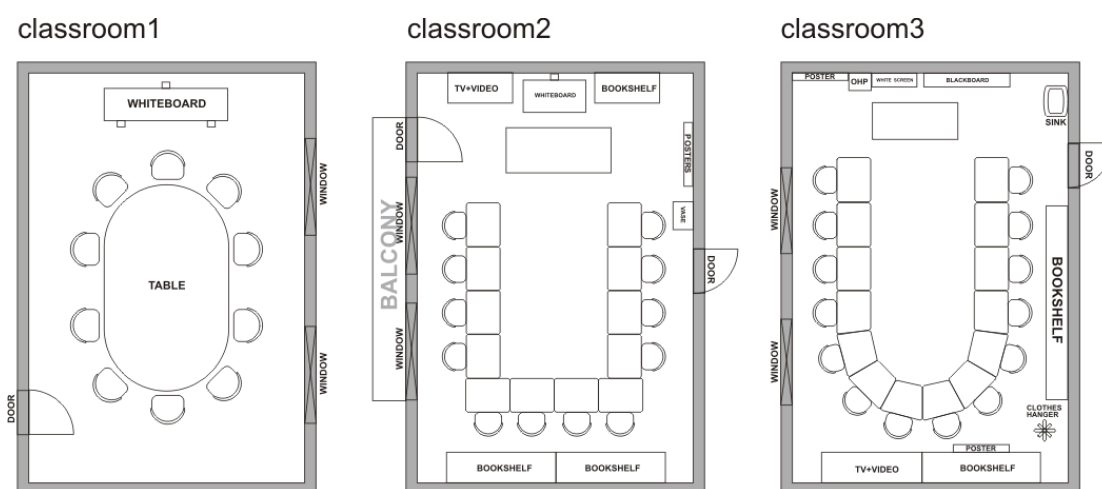


Figure 2 The language classrooms

As we can see, classroom 2 and classroom 3 were equipped with standard gadgets and had conventional furniture. Nevertheless, *no language or computer labs were used during the period the lessons were observed* (from October 2006 to December 2008), despite the fact that a computer room is available in the building.

<sup>71</sup>Information retrieved March 1, 2010, from the Ministry of Education and Science's official website: <http://www.smm.lt/en/news/docs/090525.htm>

<sup>72</sup>Information retrieved 1 March, 2010, from the department website <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/News/p19>

With regard to **facilities**, most of the rooms used to have a blackboard, but over time these were substituted for whiteboards. Moreover, two of them were equipped with a TV and video equipment; however, very few visual aids were normally displayed. Computers or datashow projectors were not available in the classrooms either, except for an overhead projector. A detailed description follows:

**Table 4 Teaching & Learning facilities**

	CLASSROOM 1	CLASSROOM 2	CLASSROOM 3
<i>Teaching facilities &amp; Learning resources</i>	- A board	- A board - Teacher's desk - TV , Video & CD/Radio equipment - Bookshelves, containing different books on language teaching theories, dictionaries, and course books. - 'Hand painted' posters showing some vocabulary items and images (fruit, vegetable, food, and drink).	- A board - Teacher's desk - TV & Video - Bookshelves, mainly containing dictionaries (Monolingual – only Lithuanian, Bilingual – Lithuanian/English, Lithuanian/Russian) - An OHP (Overhead projector) and a screen - A map of Lithuania's ethnographic regions (at the front) - A road map of Lithuania (at the back)
<i>Groups</i>	Regular and Erasmus	Regular and Erasmus	Regular, Erasmus and Summer

### 4.3 Lithuanian language courses & study programmes for non-native speakers

The courses<sup>73</sup> cater for different types of schedules and budgets. Learners are supposed to pay for the course<sup>74</sup>; alternatively, in some cases, they have financial support from the local government, or the European Union (e.g., 'Erasmus' students). The **content analysis of the study programmes** show that, at lower levels, the main target of this study, students are mostly exposed to the Lithuanian language with an emphasis on its grammar and vocabulary, as shown next:

<sup>73</sup> Information retrieved March 2, 2010 from the official website <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/General-information/p154>

<sup>74</sup> For the 2010-2011 academic year, the cost for one semester (330 academic hours) is 5000 Litass + 150 Litass for the registration fee, and for the 4-week summer course (100 academic hours) is 2300 Litass + 100 Litass for the registration fee. Information retrieved September 20, 2010, from <http://www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/Course-a/p158>.

**Table 5 Target courses in this case study**

	REGULAR COURSE	SUMMER COURSE	ERASMUS COURSE <sup>75</sup>
<i>Duration</i>	1 or 2 semesters	2 or 4 weeks	1 or 2 semesters
<i>Frequency</i>	every day	every day	3 times a week
<i>Nbr of hours</i>	330 / semester	50 or 100 / course	96 / semester
<i>Nbr of credits</i>	20	no credits awarded	3 (4.5 ECTS)
<i>Education mode</i>	non-formal	non-formal	formal
<i>Main course book</i>	<i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos</i> (Stumbrienė and Kaškelevičienė, 2001)	<i>Trumpas Lietuvių Kalbos Kursas Pradedantiesiems</i> (Based on <i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos</i> )	<i>Trumpas Lietuvių Kalbos Kursas Pradedantiesiems</i> (Based on <i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos</i> )

With regard to **the subjects**, starting from the second semester of the basic course – beginner’s level - *grammar and vocabulary are taught in isolation, as separate subjects*, and take the most number of hours : grammar 90 – 120 contact hours; vocabulary 60 contact hours. Language skills, such as *speaking and writing are taught as one subject and, together, amount to 60 hours*. As a matter of fact, learners are exposed to the subjects in this order: first, they attend grammar and vocabulary lessons, then the so-called language skills – Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing. At higher levels, starting at the second semester of the basic course, students are also exposed to Lithuanian history, Culture and Linguistics, through lectures delivered by several teachers and professors, who are not necessarily, linguists or language teachers.

A summary of the main findings is provided in the next page:

<sup>75</sup> This is not the Intensive Language Course offered in the mode of EILC. For more information, please check the official programme (retrieved March 3, 2010) <http://www.tris.vu.lt/courses/index.php?content=course&num=1859>

**Table 6 Regular (Sem 1) & Summer course programmes : subjects / contact hours**

	REGULAR			SUMMER - 2 WEEKS		SUMMER – 4 WEEKS		
Levels*	<i>B</i>			<i>B</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	
Subjects							<i>I</i>	<i>A</i>
General (Introductory)								
Lithuanian Language	330	40	40	40	90	80	80	
Lithuanian Culture & Society		10	10	10	10			
Review of Lithuanian History, Culture & Linguistics						20	20	
<b>Total nbr. Hours</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

\* B= Basic / I = Intermediate / A= Advanced

Students under a bilateral agreement also have the opportunity to enrol at *Lithuanian Language I* (semester 1), and/or *Lithuanian Language II* (semester 2). In *Lithuanian Language I*<sup>76</sup>, the main objective is to provide students with basic Lithuanian language and social cultural patterns, enabling them to minimally communicate in everyday situations. The following table shows the breakdown per subject, for the regular course:

**Table 7 Regular Course Programme : Subjects/Contact hours**

Subjects	Basic		Intermediate		Advanced	
	Sem 2	Sem 1	Sem 2	Sem 1	Sem 2	Sem 2
<b>Grammar</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>
Text Comprehension	60	60	60	60	60	60
<b>Written &amp; Oral Communication</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>
Lithuanian Culture (Introduction)	30					
Review of Ethnic Culture Lithuania Language Practice			30		30	
Lithuanian History				30		30
Review of Lithuanian Social and Political Life				30		30
<b>Total nbr. Hours</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>

<sup>76</sup> Information retrieved March 4, 2010 from the official website <http://www.tris.vu.lt/courses/index.php?content=course&num=1859>

Judging by the numbers, **many hours are devoted to** exposing learners to the **Lithuanian grammar (120 hours) and vocabulary (60 hours) taught as separate subjects**. It is important to stress that vocabulary in Lithuanian also requires the application of grammatical rules, due to inflection by case, number, and gender. Thus, it may be assumed that 180 hours are intended for learning grammar and vocabulary. The productive skills – **speaking and writing** are taught together, and seem to **have the least emphasis** of all: 60 hours for both skills. Thus, grammar and vocabulary are taught in isolation from reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Starting from the first semester of the Basic course, **several guided tours**<sup>77</sup> to different places, towns and cities are organized (minimum two per semester), with an attempt to provide the learner with some background historical information:

1) *Rumšiškės*, known for its open-air ethnographic museum, portraying the life of local people living in the 19<sup>th</sup> century;

2) *Druskininkai*, a town where many health spas are located considering its exclusive mineral water, currently used for treating health problems;

3) *Kaunas*, founded in 1361, a former temporary capital in times of oppression, currently the second largest city in the country and the place of the confluence of the two main rivers – Neris and Nemunas;

4) *Šiauliai*, founded in 1236, the fourth biggest city in the country, which had 65% of its buildings destroyed during World War I; and *the Hill of Crosses*, a place visited by the Pope John Paul II<sup>78</sup>, being labelled as a place of hope, peace, love and sacrifice;

5) *The KGB Museum / The Museum of the Genocide Victims*<sup>79</sup>, established in 1992, in Vilnius, currently, the capital city; and *Gruto Parkas / The Soviet Sculpture Open-air Museum*<sup>80</sup>, officially opened in 2001, where the several giant-size statues of leaders, such as Lenin and Stalin, were gathered.

The guided tours were frequently organized in English and Lithuanian; students who were regularly attending the course did not incur any additional costs. However, between 2005 and 2008, no guided tour to factories or breweries was organized to provide learners with information about Lithuanian products.

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<sup>77</sup> Based on this author's own experience as a summer student in 2005 and 2006, and as a full-time student in 2006/2007.

<sup>78</sup> Information retrieved January 9, 2011, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hill\\_of\\_Crosses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hill_of_Crosses).

<sup>79</sup> For more information, visit the official website: <http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/>.

<sup>80</sup> For more information, visit the official website: <http://www.grutoparkas.lt/istorija-en.htm>.



Furthermore, beginner students attending the summer course were also given the opportunity to attend several **lectures** delivered in English on the main topics around **language and culture**, such as the ones below, delivered by researchers, lecturers and professors from Lithuania and abroad<sup>81</sup>:

- 1) *Lithuanian Traditional Culture*, Lina Bugienė, Ph.D - a researcher at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore (Vilnius);
- 1) *Lithuanian History*, Algirdas Jakubčionis, Ph.D - Faculty of History, Vilnius University;
- 2) *The History of Standard Lithuanian*, Giedrius Subačius, Ph.D - Research Fellow at the Lithuanian Language Institute, in Vilnius, and a member of the Faculty, at the University of Illinois at Chicago, in the USA;
- 3) *A Review of Lithuanian Music*, Mindaugas Urbaitis, Ph.D. - Associate Professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and Vilnius Academy of Arts;
- 4) *Lithuanian Culture in the Context of World's Culture*, Inga Pilipaitė (now Inga Hilbig, Ph.D) - lecturer at the Department of Lithuanian Studies, Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University.

#### **4.4 Lithuanian language course books targeted at non-native speakers: *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos & Po truputį***

The main book used in the lessons was *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* (Stumbrienė and Kaškelevičienė, 2001, 2004), devised by the researchers working at the Department of Lithuanian Studies. This book was mainly used by regular students pursuing non-formal education. A *short version*<sup>82</sup> of the main material was devised in 2007 for teaching Lithuanian to students pursuing both formal and non-formal education; in other words, **the same material was used by undergraduate and graduate students pursuing formal and non-formal education**. In this study, in order to make a distinction between the materials, the short version is being referred to as *brochure*. A summary showing the main content is provided next:

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<sup>81</sup> The lectures were attended by this researcher, as a summer student in 2005.

<sup>82</sup> Hilbig, I., Stumbrienė, V. and Vaškevičienė, L (2007). „Trumpas Lietuvių Kalbos Kursas Pradedantiesiems“. Pagal V. Stumbrienės ir A. Kaškelevičienės vadovėlį *NĖ DIENOS BE LIETUVIŲ KALBOS*. Lituanistinių Studijų Katedra. Vilniaus Universitetas, Vilnius.

**Table 8 Organization of content in Lithuanian course books**

	MAIN COURSE BOOK		ALTERNATIVE COURSE BOOK	
	<i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos (Book)*</i>	<i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos (Brochure)**</i>	<i>Po truputį</i>	<i>Po truputį</i>
	2001, 2004	2007	1998, 2008	1998, 2008
<b>Types</b>	<b>Student book (1 volume)</b>	<b>Student book (1 volume)</b>	<b>Student book (1/2 volume)</b>	<b>Exercise book (2/2 volume)</b>
<b>Foreword (Pratarmė)</b>	Lithuanian, English, Russian, and Polish	Not included	Lithuanian only	Lithuanian only
<b>List of contents (Turinys)</b>	Lithuanian only (no titles or topics stated)	Lithuanian only	Lithuanian only (communicative functions, topics and grammar)	Lithuanian only
<b>Review</b>	Not included	Not included	Yes (every 5 <sup>th</sup> unit-3 review units)	Yes (every 5 <sup>th</sup> unit-3 review units)
<b>Audio cassettes or CDS</b>	To be purchased separately		Audio CD included	Not included
<b>Audioscripts</b>	Not included		Not included	Not included
<b>Answer key</b>	Not included		Not included	Not included

\* Used by regular students (non-formal education)

\*\* Used by summer students (non-formal education) & Erasmus students (formal-education)

It is important to stress that the latest edition of this book was only available sometime in 2008, after the end of the data gathering period in this study (2006 – 2008). Nevertheless, at the beginning of 2010, the main course book used for the language education of adult learners attending the basic course had not been changed<sup>83</sup>: *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* was mainly used in this sense.

With regard to the number of volumes, the contents of the main material were compiled in one volume only. By contrast, the alternative material also has an exercise book (e.g., a workbook) that has to be purchased separately.

Audio CDs or cassettes are included in the alternative material, but sold separately if the main course book is used. However, transcripts of the audio-recordings are provided in neither learning materials. Thus, an adult learner will not be able to follow the listening passages later, at home, when engaging in self-study.

<sup>83</sup> This author exchanged electronic messages with the Department of Lithuanian Studies on February 22, 2010 and was informed that no changes had been made as far as the materials targeted at beginners were concerned.

By the same token, answer keys to the exercises are found neither at the end of the book nor as a separate booklet, normally attached at the end, in other language learning materials. It is assumed that these are available in the teacher's book. Thus, an adult learner will not be able to check the answers to the exercises, unless when this is conducted in the classroom.

The main information and instructions to the exercises are written exclusively in Lithuanian, except for the foreword in the main course book *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos*, which is written in four languages (Lithuanian, English, Russian, and Polish). However, the short version used for summer and Erasmus students (i.e., the brochure) has no introductory pages at all. By contrast, the alternative book released in 2008 – *Po truputį* - has no information written in English, except for the main goals which are briefly explained in its fourth cover. Reading instructions are likely to be difficult, if a learner has not learned the key words before.

With regard to assessment and revision, the alternative material – *Po truputį* – provides the student with 3 review units. This is to say that every fifth lesson is devoted to revising previous knowledge and testing it. By contrast, the main course book - *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* - has no units exclusively dedicated to the revision of the information previously learned.

As for the **table of contents**, in the main coursebook and brochure – *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* - the units are stated as first, second, third, and so on. No titles or themes are provided, as the first part of the list shows:

	<b>Turinys</b>
<b>Pirmoji Pamoka</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Antroji Pamoka</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Trečioji Pamoka</b>	<b>47</b>

Conversely, the alternative material – *Po truputį* – has a different type of information displayed on page 5, as discussed next:

## TURINYS

	<b>Bendravimas</b>	<b>Žodynas</b>	<b>Gramatika</b>
<b>1 PAMOKA</b>	<b>Kaip</b>	Valstybės	<b>Daiktavardžių linksniai:</b>
<b>11p.</b>	- pasisveikinti;	Sostinės	Vienaskaitos, vardininkas,
	- atsisveikinti;	Gyventojai	kilmininkas, vietininkas.
	- susipažinti.		<b>Įvardžiai: asmeniniai;</b>

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**parodmieji:** šis, ši, tas, ta.

**Veiksmazodžiai:** su -ą, -ia,  
esamasis laikas; būti, nebūti.

**Prieveiksmiai** su -iškai.

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**Klausimai:** kas? Kaip? Koks,  
Kokia? Kur? Iš kur?, ar? Gal?

As can be clearly seen, a **description of contents** is clearly stated: the units are labelled as “lessons” (*Pamoka*); however, no titles are shown. Next, the information written in Lithuanian only shows that in a particular unit learners will develop some interaction skills (*bendravimas*), such as *how to introduce themselves*, and learn the vocabulary (*žodynas*) related to countries, cities, and nationalities. Finally, a description of the grammar (*gramatika*) is provided (the singular form of three cases, personal and demonstrative pronouns, verbs in present tenses, and others), along with some question words (*kas, kaip, koks*, etc). This feature certainly helps the reader understand what is to be learned in each unit.

However, as far as the statement of **goals and learning objectives**<sup>84</sup> are concerned, *they are not made clear to the adult learner, either in Lithuanian or English, in any of the materials*. In the main course book and brochure, the units are simply labelled as first, second, third, and so on. Within the units, a learner is required to go through all the contents and try to arrive at a possible learning objective. This is quite a demanding task given the fact that the material is written in Lithuanian only. Despite the fact that the alternative course book describes the content of the units (i.e., grammar, vocabulary and functions), it does not clearly state the educational objective; it only repeats the functions in Lithuanian, which are actually part of the target language content to be covered in the units.

For instance, in attempting to write *a clear learning objective* for the first unit of the alternative material, *a change of behaviour as a result of instruction should be stated*. In this sense, a possible objective for the first unit would be: “In this unit, you will learn how to introduce yourself and your colleagues in formal and informal situations”. In order to do that, learners will need to learn specific items from this content: vocabulary related to countries, languages, and nationalities; verbs in the

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<sup>84</sup> I will not go deeper into this issue due to the limitations of this study. Nevertheless, additional information can be obtained from recent studies conducted by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), and Marzano and Kendal (2007), among others.

present tense (to be, to live, to speak), question words (how, what, where, which), personal and demonstrative pronouns (I, my, you, your, this, that) and functions in Lithuanian – how to introduce yourself, how to greet someone. The statement of a learning object would help an adult learner understand the purpose of learning new information, and, most importantly, in which situations that specific chunk of language could be used outside the instructional setting. Thus, an essential element in the learning process is absent from both learning materials: although this may be clear to a teacher, *learners will have to guess* by trying to understand the content, which is solely written in Lithuanian.

Although both books have everyday life topics, like country, family, food and drinks, clothes, health, among others, **learners are mainly exposed to pedagogically designed texts lacking authenticity** as far as the local context is concerned – no Lithuanian names, products, local brands, artists or public figures are clearly seen or stated, except for personal names, addresses, and cities.

However, there seems to be an attempt to provide the learner with *local culture and traditions*, especially through the reading tasks. For instance, in considering the texts from *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos*, adult learners are exposed to a recipe of typical cake – *Obuolių pyrago receptas* (p. 95), and other typical food – *Cepelinai, šaltibarščiai ir šakotis* (p. 119); Lithuanian folk tales – *Gegužė* (p. 163), *Jūratė ir Kastytis* (p. 181); and other local events and celebrations – *Joninės, Užgavėnės, Margučiai, Kaziuko mugė, Kūčios ir Kalėdos* (p. 258-267); being most of these are part of study programme for the second semester of the basic course, given their level of complexity (e.g., legends, traditions, and folk tales).

Likewise, texts at the end of the units from the alternative course book – *Po truputį* – have as their content typical Lithuanian situations concerning food, clothes, cities, the countryside and history: *Ką valgo lietuviai* (p. 38); *Daivos tautiniai drabužiai* (p. 41); *Kviečiame į Trakus* (p. 72); *Ar žinote, kas yra Rumšiškės?* (p. 86), *Gražiausia XVI amžiaus moteris: Barbora Radvilaitė* (p. 100), among other texts.

It must be acknowledged that such texts are essential in providing the learner with cultural knowledge, however, **meaning is mainly negotiated via verbal language**, except for the black and white sketches, as they are pedagogically produced; in other words, the beginner adult learner will have to strive to understand not only the grammar and vocabulary, but also, the local culture, without the aid of other

audiovisuals, such as films, videos, photos or real pictures. In some units, these texts are gapped so that the learner can write the missing words; this task is likely to be very complex for a complete beginner, newcomer to this society, to accomplish given the lack of linguistic and cultural knowledge, at least, at the beginning of the learning process. The text turns out to be a pretext for teaching grammar and vocabulary, as opposed to provide the learner with cultural information; it also serves to test the previous knowledge a learner has of Lithuanian language and culture, something that newcomers and visitors are likely to lack at the beginning of studies.

Furthermore, **modern technologies**, such as the Internet, emails, mobile text messages, and virtual social networking, which are part of an individual's daily life, regardless of being a teenager or an adult, are not used or cited either. Exercises requiring learners to write an email or a text message in Lithuanian, are present neither in the main course book, firstly published in 2001, then reprinted in 2004 (and its brochure in 2007), nor in the alternative material, firstly published in 1998, with a new edition released in 2008. Such technological tools are part of an adult's daily routine, especially in the workplace. Therefore, a newcomer to Lithuania should also learn how to write an email, both in informal and formal situations (e.g., contacting a friend, applying for a job, sending a CV to an employer), send short text messages, as every other citizen normally does, and, most importantly, learn how to find the Lithuanian characters in the keyboard of a computer, as these letters are not clearly shown, especially on international laptops.

Although learners are exposed to some everyday life situations, such as greeting people and introducing themselves, students do not get acquainted with **the current Lithuanian identity**<sup>85</sup> outside the classroom. For instance, in one exercise taken from the alternative material<sup>86</sup>, edited in 2008, learners are required to read a newspaper ad with the aim of helping the owner of a grocer's shop find another store to supply the vegetables they had run out. However, the name of the newspaper is not stated; the possible suppliers are not mentioned, except for their telephone numbers. Learners are only provided with words in Lithuanian such as newspaper, classified ads, and those related to vegetables and fruit, and the first name of the shop owner.

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<sup>85</sup> Identity can be defined as “the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognizable or known” as well as “the set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group” (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/identity>).

<sup>86</sup> See Appendix V for a better visualization of these visuals.

In short, despite the fact that the exercise requires an understanding of the key words and provides students with target language practice, as far as the vocabulary is concerned, it does not provide them with authentic language in use; thus adult learners are not given the opportunity to make connections with real things and places (e.g., local newspapers, local shops, real people). It seems as though **the contemporary Lithuanian identity is not disseminated in the material** (what newspaper? what shop? colours?). If adults had such an exposure in the classroom, their learning process would be facilitated, a visual memory for such brands, items and people would be formed, the products would be identified outside the classroom: their social inclusion in the Lithuanian society would be enhanced.

Likewise, in unit 4 of the main course book – *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* - adult learners are exposed to typical dairy products, with very basic packaging, without any logos or colours which may help identify brandmarks or products in a supermarket. In the vocabulary input section, a difference is not made between *sviestas* and *varškė*, and both products have exactly the same packaging. Two other products are also displayed – *grietinė* and *grietinėlė*, without any logos or distinctions among them. Just by looking at the picture, depending on the cultural background of learners, chances are they will have great difficulty in guessing if a product is *margarine* or *butter*. It is also important to have an awareness of **cultural differences**: students may not be used to having cream in their tea or coffee; cottage cheese may not be part of their diet either. Therefore, just labelling the picture *Pienas, pieno produktai* (milk, dairy products) may not necessarily facilitate the reader's comprehension in terms of making the appropriate distinction, and creating an accurate visual memory for them.

In addition, as far as the lexicon is concerned, the words *sviestas* and *varškė* are not equivalent to the English words *butter* and *cottage cheese*, or the Portuguese words *manteiga* and *ricota*, for instance. Thus, a picture which is supposed to facilitate the understanding of basic products, consumed every morning, may actually cause confusion and contribute to the perception of difficulty. In all likelihood, it will be highly difficult for a learner, who is not familiar with the Lithuanian culture, especially in the case of newcomers to this society, to understand what these words mean, then create a memory for the packaging, and later identify the products in the supermarket, given the absence of real colours, names and original packages. Thus,

once more, **the contemporary Lithuanian identity is not present in this material either** (what dairy product? brand mark? package? logos?).

With regard to visual support<sup>87</sup>, as already seen above, both course books heavily rely on *well-designed black and white sketches*; nevertheless, most of the time they seem to *address a more juvenile target audience* other than an adult learner. For instance, in another exercise taken from the main course book – unit 4, page 93 - adult learners are exposed to four B&W sketches: a cat, a mouse, a fly, and a dog, and are required to write sentences stating what these animals like to eat and drink (original task in Lithuanian: *Pažiūrėkite į paveikslėlius. Parašykite, ką mėgsta šuo, katė, pelė ir musė*).

Similarly, **the alternative material** only has black and white sketches, even for the teaching of colours in Lithuanian, despite the launch of a new edition (or reprint?) in 2008. It must be recognized that the drawings are of good quality and have a nice impact on the reader; however, they tend to be rather repetitive in their style and colouring. Furthermore, the analysis of the wording in the exercise has shown an interesting fact: it seems that it was originally addressed to school children, given the fact that the student is asked to work with the teacher to write the appropriate colours – *Kartu su mokytoju surašykite, kas yra kokios spalvos*. In Lithuanian, the word *mokytojas* is often used to refer to a school teacher that works with children or teenagers; a more frequent word for university teachers working with adults is *dėstytojas*, but this word choice was not made. Likewise, the sketches seem to be addressing a younger audience, especially children or teens who are fond of animals and pets<sup>88</sup>, as shown in the previous example.

Ultimately, given the fact that learners bring their own knowledge and experiences to the language classroom, colours may differ from the perceived reality in Lithuania. For instance, in Brazil, a lemon can be yellow, green, or orange, depending on its type (e.g., a rangpur lime is orange); the same is true of tomatoes – they can be red (for

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<sup>87</sup> These visuals can be seen in Appendix V at the end of this work.

<sup>88</sup> As a matter of fact, pictures of animals seem to be recurrent in both materials. In the main course book – *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* – B&W sketches of birds are used to draw students' attention to items, and very frequently to express gender differences: the female gender is represented by a bird with a lace on its head; the male gender is represented by a bird wearing a hat. Another common drawing is that of a little mouse – especially when food is presented (as in the picture used for dairy products). In the alternative course book – *Po truputį*, unit 13 is dedicated to the teaching of animals, birds, and insects, among others. For example, in exercise 8 (page 160), learners are asked to reproduce the dialogues as if animals were having a conversation - a pig with a giraffe; a rabbit with an elephant, a snake with a hen, and so on (original task: *Parašykite, ką kalba šie gyvūnai*).



pasta sauces) or green (for salad); birds can have different colours and shades, especially the tropical ones (e.g., light blue, dark blue, navy blue). The same may be true in Argentina or Australia, for instance, considering the geographical position of these countries. In Lithuania, a country in northeastern Europe, however, vegetables, fruit, and animals - sizes and colours - are likely to differ.

In that sense, the absence of colours may have an important impact on the negotiation of meaning, due to cultural and geographical differences. What is more, the words tend not to be similar to other languages either, as far as their spelling is concerned, thus, guessing – a usual reading technique - may not be a good strategy in that sense either.

Another important analysis carried out in this study case was that of **the contents and main focus of the exercises** within the units, considering those that are normally used in the first semester of the basic course (the main target in this study); this is to say that units 1-6 from *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos*, all 8 units from its brochure, and units 1-7, except for unit 5 (review and test) from *Po truputį* were included in this analysis.

In analysing the figures, it is clearly seen that *the main focus of the main course book is on **grammar and vocabulary**: over 70% of exercises in the book and 80% of exercises in brochure, respectively*. On the other hand, *only a small percentage of the exercises was intended for the development of productive skills, such as speaking and writing - 3% and 6% respectively*.

Supposing *the alternative material* were used, these numbers would not change much: *over 31% of exercises in the student's book, and over 72% in the workbook are devised as **grammar and vocabulary** exercises, including audio-recorded drills. Exercises focusing on productive skills constitute a small percentage: speaking - 14% of the exercises in the student's book, and 3% of the exercises in the workbook; and writing - over 9% of exercises in the student's book, and less than 3% in the workbook*.

Another important aspect to consider is that of **the organization of the content within the exercises**. In the *main course book and brochure*, and in the *exercise book of the alternative material*, *over 50% of the information is presented in disconnected sentences*, that is, no storyline or situations are given. This aspect is only changed in

the student's book of the alternative material: over 70% of the information is inter-related or organized in situations, texts or paragraphs, as shown below:

**Table 9 Focus of exercises in Lithuanian language books**

	MAIN COURSE BOOK		ALTERNATIVE COURSE BOOK	
	<i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos (Book)* 2001, 2004</i>	<i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos (Brochure)** 2007</i>	<i>Po truputį Student's book 1998, 2008</i>	<i>Po truputį Workbook 1998, 2008</i>
	U 1-6	Units 1-8	Units 1,2,3,4,6,7	
<b>Nbr. of exercises</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>GRA &amp; VOC</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Audio- recorded drills</b>				11
<b>Reading</b>	18	8	30	7
<b>Speaking</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Listening</b>	11	8	8	8
<b>Writing</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Pronunciation</b>	0	0	2	11
<b>Problem-solving</b>	0	0	1	2
<b>Metacognitive strategies</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Content organization</b>				
<b>Words in isolation</b>	13	11	12	29
<b>Disconnected sentences</b>	100	64	10	95
<b>Situations (Texts)</b>	55	26	65	44

- Book used by regular students (non-formal education)
- Brochure used by summer & Erasmus students (non-formal & formal education)

Moreover, the content analysis of the aforementioned units showed that *no exercises require any strategic thinking or problem-solving techniques* on the part of the adult learner neither in the main course book nor brochure. By contrast, one

exercise out of 87 in the student's book (ex. 12, p. 85)<sup>89</sup> and 2 out of 168 in the work book (ex. 15, p.60; ex. 7, p. 69)<sup>90</sup>, of *the alternative material* have such a feature.

In similar vein, exercises aiming at *the development of study skills* - summarizing, paraphrasing, or *metacognitive strategies* – learning to learn, learning to remember new words, reflecting upon grammatical differences, *are not clearly stated*, judging by their content organization.

It is important to note that there are **different types of activities in the alternative material**. For instance, the content analysis of the *student's book* showed that the skill work is integrated, that is, *a reading task leads to a writing task*. In addition, more *pre-reading tasks*, such as questions or main vocabulary, *are used as a lead-in to reading tasks*. **Functions** in Lithuanian are clearly printed in red colour – how to introduce oneself, how to ask a question, and so on. Also, there are exercises focusing on **pronunciation, stress and spelling** of words; this could also be an indication of an intent to develop metacognitive strategies, despite the fact that their number is relatively small. *Grammar and vocabulary exercises in the student book* represent only 30% of the total exercises analysed; moreover, they tend to be related to the main reading and listening tasks. **Review units** are also present in this learning material, thus, facilitating the rehearsal process of new information.

With regard to **interaction patterns**, in both learning materials, *the exercises mostly require students to work on their own*, as opposed to cooperating or collaborating with their classmates via pair or group work.

Concerning the **roles** to be played, *students are not assigned any specific role in most of the exercises*, especially in the main course book: 163 exercises in 165, and 99 exercises in 101, in its short version. These numbers slightly change when the student's book of the alternative material is used, but still learners play no role in 65 exercises in 73, as shown next:

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<sup>89</sup> In this exercise from *Po truputį student's book*, learners are presented with several hotel ads and they have six different situations in which they have to choose the best option in considering families with little money but wanting to spend two nights in the capital city, or those who do not want to stay in busy areas, businessmen who want to organize international events, and so on.

<sup>90</sup> These exercises from *Po truputį workbook* also require the solution of problems: firstly, on page 60, a similar situation is presented: someone who wants to travel on holidays during a specific period of time and needs to choose the best package tour presented in the ads; secondly, on page 69, learners have to choose the best match within a supply-demand equation: ads present information on houses and flats on sale and additional ads show buyers looking for similar property. Learners should demonstrate an understanding of the vocabulary and choose the best options accordingly.

**Table 10 Interaction patterns and role-play in Lithuanian language course books**

	MAIN COURSE BOOK		ALTERNATIVE COURSE BOOK	
	<i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos (Book)* 2001, 2004</i>	<i>Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos (Brochure)** 2007</i>	<i>Po truputį Student's book 1998, 2008</i>	<i>Po truputį Workbook 1998, 2008</i>
	U 1-6	Units 1-8	Units 1,2,3,4,6,7	
<b>Nbr. of exercises</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>INTERACTION</b>				
<b>Individual Work</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Pair Work</b>	3	1	14	3
<b>ROLE-PLAY</b>				
<b>No role</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Friend/Classmate</b>	5	2	8	2
<b>Family member</b>	0	0	3	2
<b>Customer/Guest</b>	0	0	3	0
<b>Employee</b>	0	0	2	0
<b>Citizen</b>	0	0	2	0
<b>Seller</b>	0	0	1	0
<b>Other</b>	0	0	3	0

- Book used by regular students (non-formal education)
- Brochure used by summer & Erasmus students (non-formal & formal education)

In short, the most frequent **role played by adult learners**, newcomers to the Lithuanian society, is that of a friend or classmate, in both learning materials. This may also be an indication of the target being a less mature audience who is not inserted in the job market yet.

#### **4.5 The social learning environment: lesson delivery, content and actions**

As noted in the first chapter of this work – research design, orientation, and methodology – *eighteen lessons comprising 36 academic hours were observed*, in courses targeted at adults pursuing non-formal education – regular and summer courses, and those pursuing formal-education – undergraduate and graduate students participating in the EU lifelong learning programme “Erasmus”. The majority of

lessons were also audio-recorded transcribed, and the relevant extracts were included in the reorganization of the data in the lesson observation sheets<sup>91</sup>.

The content analysis of all lessons was organized having in mind the following: *the setting* – a classroom, a language lab, for instance; types of *materials* and *exposure to the target language*– coursebook, alternative materials; *focus of activities* – grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, writing, study skills, metacognitive strategies, problem-solving activities; *interaction patterns* – individual work, pairwork, groupwork; and *role-plays* – student, classmate, customer, among others.

In addition, an attempt was made to take notes on the *presentation of new information*; in other words, whenever possible, the steps taken both by teachers and students when a topic was firstly presented were also noted down in the lesson observation sheets.

With regard to **the learning setting**, of the 18 lessons observed, *seventeen were delivered in the university classrooms*, normally equipped with a TV/ video and CD player. *One lesson out of 18 was delivered in a square* nearby, by request of students attending the summer course.

In this particular lesson, everyone seemed to enjoy the activities, which were mainly improvised by the teacher and students alike. As soon as they stepped out of the classroom, students were required to follow directions in Lithuanian (e.g., turn right or left, go straight), do activities which required them to move, such as ‘miming games’ (e.g., singing, writing, reading), and other tasks appropriate to their level (e.g., simple questions & answers)<sup>92</sup>. Such an initiative from both students and teacher contributed to create a more relaxed learning atmosphere. Despite the fact that learners mainly produced bits of languages (e.g., verbs in the infinitive form, words in the nominative case, unfinished sentences), it was an opportunity for them to revise some previous topics (e.g., directions in Lithuanian, verb tenses in the past) and get to know each other better, thus, facilitating the development of social skills.

The **main course book or brochure** was used in 17 out of 18 lessons. Other frequent educational resources were teacher-generated examples, students’ data (e.g., birth dates), and handouts with additional grammar, vocabulary and reading tasks. Other activities frequently devised by teachers were grammar games and vocabulary

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<sup>91</sup> An example of the *lesson observation sheet* can be found in the appendices at the end of this work. In addition, all lesson observation sheets are included in Volume II of this dissertation (Qualitative Data – Lesson Observation Sheets and Interviews).

<sup>92</sup> A full description is available in Volume II (Qualitative data) – lesson observation 7.

worksheets (e.g., ball games, wordhunt, crosswords). However, *authentic materials* such as magazines, local newspapers, leaflets or flyers that normally circulate in Lithuania *were not observed in use*, except for one lesson, as noted next.

Concerning **visual input**, apart from the B&W sketches from the main course book, teachers would frequently draw pictures on the board and make gestures to explain actions and feelings. Pictures from magazines were used in 3 lessons out of 18; copy of an authentic material – an extract from a local newspaper showing the weather forecast for European cities – was used in only 1 out of 18. Moreover, students' and teacher's own objects, such as bags, ID cards, banknotes and coins were also used to facilitate understanding. Finally, a typical Lithuanian cake – baked by the teacher herself - and a national drink were brought to one of the lessons, after students having mentioned they had never seen or tried such a drink before. Other types of authentic materials, such as films<sup>93</sup>, cartoons, TV commercials, and local TV programmes were not used in the classroom to expose adult learners to the language used in Lithuanian real-life situations.

As far as **audio input** is concerned, the main course book audio CD was frequently used in the listening and reading tasks – these also were audio-recorded. In 1 lesson out of 18, the audio CD that resulted from the EU funded project ONENESS was used to provide learners with additional listening comprehension practice. Finally, in 1 lesson out of 18, a folk song from the main course book was played: "Atskrido paukšteliai". Despite its cultural element, judging by its content, it seems that this song was originally written for a younger target audience, who learn to perform actions by physically responding to commands (TPR - Total Physical Response<sup>94</sup>):

*Illustration 1*

11h37 **Teacher3** says that they will listen to Lithuanian Folk Music...goes on to translate the title "atskrido paukšteliai" . And says the song is very old so they won't understand everything. She chooses some sentences and translates them:

**Teacher3:** little birds are coming from .... thinking like us too ....

Students write down the translation....čiulbėjo...teacher says it is the way birds sing...

**Teacher 3:** kairė...dešinė...left and right... pirmyn... forward... atgal... backwards... aukštyn...žemyn...

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<sup>93</sup> In one of the lessons delivered at the summer course, the teacher said they would see a film the following class: *Skrydis per Lietuvą arba 510 sekundžių tylos* – an original short film directed by Arūnas Matelis which shows aeral views of Lithuanian cities (See note at the end of Lesson Observation 11, Volume II – Qualitative data).

<sup>94</sup> For additional information, visit the following webpage: <http://www.tpr-world.com/>

**Student28:** up and down...

**Teacher3:** teisingi...iš kur tu žinai?

**Teacher3** explains the flight of birds....that they sit on trees...and make the little nests out of feather...

11h41 a question rises:

**Student28:** what are we doing?

**Student30:** we are getting some culture

11h42 **Teacher3** plays the song – only voices singing – a few students join in a low voice....**Teacher3** asks them to sing along...**Teacher3** asks them to make the gestures...  
Students remain seated

(Notes from Lesson Observation 12)

Apart from this lesson, which was attended by students aged 15-50, no other songs or video clips, especially those performed by Lithuanian artists, or short extracts of interviews with Lithuanian famous people or celebrities (e.g., basketball players, writers), from the local TV channels or radio stations were used to provide adult learners with additional listening practice of real audio texts that one is used to listening outside the classroom.

As far as the focus of exercises were concerned, in considering all the lessons observed, the analysis has shown that *over 70% of the exercises had grammar and vocabulary as their focus*, including those occasionally assigned for homework. Reproductive skills, such as reading and listening, accounted for 12% and 6.5 % of the exercises, respectively. This is quite a small percentage, given the valuable input beginner students have from reading and listening activities, regardless of being authentic, adapted or pedagogically produced: these are supposed to provide learners with examples of language used in connected speech in real-life situations, the same ones they are to encounter outside the classroom.

Moreover, considering the particularities of Lithuanian as a system (e.g., cases, pronunciation, accentuation), when authentic texts are used, learners can start to form a memory for the combinations of words, different endings, and sounds, as they are naturally produced by speakers, even at an unconscious level. This is to say that a lot of *incidental learning*<sup>95</sup> takes place, from a holistic perspective, when learners are presented with real chunks of language organized in texts, regardless of teachers' conscious effort to present a given grammar or vocabulary item.

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<sup>95</sup> For more information on this concept applied to adult education and learning, see Marwick and Watkins (2001).

Despite the efforts of teachers to devise additional activities and invite learners to reproduce the dialogues, by reading them aloud, **productive skills - speaking and writing - were not frequently developed:** 6.5% and 1% of the total number of exercises, respectively.

The development of other skills was either little or non-existent: *only 2% of the exercises devised by a teacher targeted the pronunciation of sounds* - such as diphthongs - or endings of past tenses. This may pose a great challenge considering the level of complexity of Lithuanian accentuation, as previously discussed. Moreover, *no study skills* – information on how to organize new vocabulary or how to use a Lithuanian dictionary, given the particularities of its alphabet, or how to find the Lithuanian characters in the keyboard of a computer (especially an international laptop) were developed either. Finally, *no metacognitive strategies or problem-solving activities* were clearly developed or performed during the lessons observed in this study.

With regard to **classroom dynamics**, approximately *70% of the activities were conducted as group work*. This was an important strategy in helping learners follow the instructions and perform the activities accordingly, considering their little knowledge of Lithuanian. Despite the fact that the groups were heterogenous – multilingual and multicultural, at times belonging to different age-groups (16, 20, 30, 40, 50 year-old students in the same group) - learners seemed to enjoy the interaction with the teacher and their classmates. Even when no pairwork was assigned, some of them – mainly belonging to the same culture or ethnic group – would pair up and work together.

The analysis of exercises and the role played by students showed that **in over 90% of the activities no specific role was assigned;** this is to say that adult learners were simply to follow the instructions, and occasionally assume the role of a given character from the course book. In approximately 5% of the activities, owing to the additional work done by teachers in devising information gap exercises and other less-controlled practice tasks (i.e., producing a dialogue based on a model), learners would play some adult roles - a worker, a seller, a guest, and a host, for example.

With regard to data gathering, during note-taking, an attempt was also made in terms of recording any statements referring to *instructional goals* as well as those which indicated new information was to be presented. This was not an easy task to



accomplish, as no previous agreement had been made with teachers in the sense of providing me with a copy of their lesson plans; in other words, the lessons were observed in different days, not necessarily following a sequence, and teachers did not deliver a specific lesson because a researcher would collect data. This contributed to the ethnographic nature of this research– the data was collected in its natural setting, as opposed to controlling teachers’ or learners’ actions.

Despite the fact that no educational objectives are clearly stated in the main course book, in 12 lessons out of 18, instructional objectives were made clear to adult learners. The objectives, however, were *mainly stated* as 1) *functions in Lithuanian* - “Today we will learn how to ask for a price. How much it costs. Klausimas yra kiek kainuoja” (lesson observation 5); 2) *Lithuanian grammar* – as noted in lesson observation 9: the teacher says they will see a new topic (construction with the word SU and translates it into English (with), and writes on the board: SU + Instr. (Kuo?), 3) *Lithuanian vocabulary* - how to say the day and months (the date):” šiandien mes studijuojame kaip pasakyti datą lietuviškai... ketvirtadienis... kokia data? Konkreti mėnesio diena” (lesson observation 11); or 4) *new topics* – “teacher says they will speak about flats. She asks students what we can have at home (in houses/ flats). She starts by asking students ‘Kas gali būti bute/name?’” (lesson observation 17).

Therefore, although the content was made clear to students in the majority of the lessons, *the actions that they would be able to perform with the new knowledge were not frequently made clear* (e.g., by the end of the lesson/unit, what will learners be able to do with the construction Su + instrumental case?; what will learners be able to do with the objects in the house?). This is to say that the expected learning outcome and its application outside the classroom were not made clear to adult learners at this point.

Following the statement of instructional objectives, with regard to **presentation of new information**, learners would be exposed to *fragments of Lithuanian language*, starting with the list of words provided in the vocabulary or grammar section of the material (i.e., žodynas, gramatika), such as *words* related to a given topic, in their *nominative form*, verb tenses in their three forms, and the rules governing a specific case, as shown next, through extracts from the following illustrations:

*Illustration 2*

**Teacher3:** šiaudien mes studijuojame kaip pasakyti datą lietuviškai... ketvirtadienis... kokia data? Konkreti mėnesio diena

It starts to rain ...some students make comments. **Teacher3** starts reading out the words on the booklet. **Teacher3** says that the word month is in plural form (mėnesiai) and writes the singular form on the board "mėnuo".

**Teacher3:** mėnesiai....mėnesiai yra months...yra pluralis... singularis... mėnuo... mėnuo... month

**Student?:** masculine?

**Teacher3:** masculine... yra kaip vanduo... įdomus žodis

She adds that all of the months are related to nature. She starts reading them aloud and asks students to repeat after her:

Sausis: sausas (dry, no rain, as in January there is not lot of rain, dry month); vasaris: vasara; kovas: a bird [and writes the word on the board: paukštis].

**Student30:** so ... paukštis yra bird?

**Teacher3** tries to explain in English. She resorts to **Student34's** bilingual dictionary but can't find the exact equivalent in English. **Student30** adds that it could be a crow.

**Teacher3** goes on reading and explaining the meaning: balandis: pigeon; gegužė: cuckoo; birželis : beržas – birch tree; liepa: medis – tree; rugpjūtis: harvesting; rugsėjis - we sew rye; spalio – spalviai – linas – dust; lapkritis : falling leaves (uses hand gestures to illustrate) and finally, gruodis: gruodas – frozen earth.

(Notes from lesson observation 11)

As can be seen from the aforementioned extract, students are asked to look at the information they have on their brochure, about months, dates, and other time-related words (Unit 5, page 61). Firstly, the teacher provides them with some information about the words, as far as their number are concerned (e.g., singular, plural). Next, she reads the words aloud, in the nominative case, then asks the adult learners to repeat word by word, after her, and finally provides an explanation by translating it into English; gestures are also used to facilitate understanding. Students ask questions about gender (e.g., masculine, feminine) or further clarifications on meaning.

In the same lesson, adult learners are asked to orally transform the words into the genitive form, by applying the rule given, as the continuation of this extract shows:

*Illustration 3*

11h24 **Teacher3** says that we can say "kokia diena yra šiaudien" or "kelinta diena" / kelintas – kelinta, which one? In order.... and goes to the board and writes the word "kelinta" and says "when we count ... which day is it today"?

**Kelinta diena yra šiaudien?**

She adds that when talking about dates (orally only), we follow this rule:

**Mėnuo – genityvas**  
**Diena – nominatyvas**

And finally, she asks students to help her (elicit the months in the genitive case):

**Sausio pirma**

**Vasario**

**Kovo**

**Balandžio**

(students say **balandio** – nominative form is **balandis** – but **Teacher3** says “No, no, **balan-džio**)

**Student27** asks if the word is masculine. **Teacher3** says it is [masculine]

11h26 some students seem to be not following the information given on the board:

**Student28:** what are we doing?

**Student34:** I don't know what they mean

**Teacher3:** sorry?

**Student26, Student28** and **Student34** (together): we don't know what we are doing

**Student31:** genitive forms of the words

**Student26** and **Student 34:** Oh

**Teacher3** says that they are doing the list in the genitive case because month has to be in genitive. And carries on with the list, writing this on the board:

**d → dž before i + i, u, o, e**

**Student28:** you have to be a mathematician to do that!

**Teacher3:** don't try to learn that rule or anything just remember **balandžio** (and carries on with the other verbs)... **rugpjūčio pirma**... (writes the words and reads them aloud...)

**Student28:** are these written anywhere or are you writing them? (looks at page 61 – the words are in nominative form only)

**Student30:** just put them in genitive

**Student28:** (looks puzzled) where's the twelve months written down in the book?

**Student34:** 61 (page)

**Teacher3:** (asks if it is clear and adds) just go through that list of months, right?

(Notes from lesson observation 11)

In analysing the content of the aforementioned extract, we can see that **adult learners are presented with the words in the nominative case**, as they are normally written in the learning material. Next, the teacher makes a distinction between the words ‘day’ and ‘month’, regarding the different cases with which these words are inflected. She also asks adult learners to help her transform the nominative form of the months into genitive forms, by applying the case rules (normally presented in tables and given to students separately, if not part of the main course book). Finally, ‘some’ words in the genitive form are written on the board.

However, some adult learners do not seem to understand such an action and clearly state that they do not know what they are doing: *what are we doing? ; I don't know what they mean; we don't know what we are doing.* They are provided with the explanation and additional rules on the board, with regard to changes in the spelling of words (d → dž before i + i, u, o, e). Once more, students express difficulty in understanding the system, and one of them states *you have to be a mathematician to do that!*, given the application of such rules as if one had to follow mathematical formulae in order to produce Lithuanian language. Finally, the same student asks if those months are written in the genitive form in the material - *Are these written anywhere or are you writing them? ; Where's the twelve months written down in the book?*. As a matter of fact, the words are just written in the nominative case in the vocabulary section. It is up to the learner, along with the teacher, to inflect all nouns by case, as required, to arrive at the words normally used in speech. Therefore, given the lack of similarities with their own languages, learners perform repetitive tasks with the aid of tables; in other words, they *learn by rote*.

In the following lesson, observed in the same group, adult learners are exposed to verbs in a similar fashion:

*Illustration 4*

10h38 (after the break) Teacher3 reads the list of verbs – O TIPAS

**Teacher3** reads the three forms of the verbs aloud; students repeat after her:

**Atrodyti, atrodo, atrodė**

**Teacher3:** man atrodo... how do you say in English? Students remain silent.

**Teacher3:** it seems to me....

**Students:** to seem?

**Teacher3** says that if they want to compliment a girl, they could say: "Tu šiandien gražiai atrodai" (also written on board) = You look nice  
And continues: also, to look like, tai pat yra... and writes on the board:

**Tu šiandien gražiai atrodai**

And says again, "to seem and to look like". **Teacher33** continues to read the verbs:

**Bijoti, bijo, bijojo** –  
Students repeat

**Teacher3:** (gives an example in Lithuanian) mano mama nemėgsta skristi lėktuvu... ji bijo...  
to be afraid ... bijoti... aš bijau

(Notes from lesson observation 12)

Firstly, *adult learners are exposed to the verbs in their three forms*, which are written in a handout given to them, as part of the learning material. Next, they are asked to repeat the three forms. In addition, the teacher provides learners with a translation for that word or phrase in isolation - *Man atrodo. How do you say in English? It seems to me* - along with one sentence or two to clarify the concept - *Tu šiandien gražiai atrodai*. Other verbs are presented in similar fashion, and only one example is given to help learners construct meaning: *mano mama nemėgsta skristi lėktuvu. Ji bijo. To be afraid – bijoti... Aš bijau*.

The teacher continues the lesson by using the same ‘presentation method’: *words in isolation, repetition, translation into English, teacher-generated examples*. Students look at their material, look at the teacher, try to repeat the words in isolation as they listen to the explanations or translations; eventually, they ask a question or two. They also take notes on their own notepads and/or learning materials. In this example, in particular, many steps are taken within little time: 6 verbs are presented in the same way over a 3-minute time-span:

*Illustration 5*

**Klausyti, klauso, klausė**

Students repeat

**Teacher3:** muzikos, radijo

**Student32:** they answer phone saying... klausau

**Teacher3:** yes... yes... true...like pronto in Italian...alo...

And goes on with the list:

**Manyti, mano, manė**

Only few students repeat ...

**Teacher3:** aš manau kad...man atrodo...kad...

**Student33:** so I think?

**Teacher3:** yes...

10h41 - 3 minutes later, after 6 verbs, a student asks for clarification:

**Student28** writes down the translation into English on the margin.

**Student28:** humm...I actually wrote klauso...what does it mean?

**Teacher3:** kai tu...

**Student28:** for some reason I wrote RADIO...

**Teacher3:** what did you write?

**Student28:** RADIO

**Student?:** klauso radijo

**Student28:** oh did you say something about radio?

**Student27:** klausyti radijo

**Teacher3:** atsiprašau...aš paklausau...

**Student28:** I don't know why I wrote radio

**Teacher3:** taip...klausyti radijo klausyti muzikos...

**Student28:** to listen....oh that's why I wrote radio (looks confused)

(Notes from lesson observation 12)

In the aforementioned extract, it is clearly seen that one of the students gets confused and writes down a word but does not understand why: *for some reason I wrote RADIO ... did you say something about radio?*. The teacher and other students try to help and clarify the meanings of the words that could be used in conjunction with the word that was presented in isolation first: klausyti. Interestingly, when the teacher uses the word in a phrase to negotiate meaning, a preposition is added to the verb and says *aš paklausau*; however, at this point *students are only presented with base forms of the verbs, in isolation, and in their three forms (infinitive, third person present and past – he, she, they), which exclude the first and second persons of the discourse (I, you, we)*. Thus, in this particular case, it is not made clear if the correct collocation is *klausau radijo* or *paklausau radijo*, as part of connected speech.

Moreover, the conjugation of the verbs in the first person, which is essential in any communicative encounter, is only produced if the teacher orally provides adult learners with an example of her own. This can be clearly seen in the following extract, from the same lesson:

*Illustration 6*

**Valyti, valo, valė**

Students repeat

**Teacher3:** (teacher gives example) man atrodo savaitgalį **Student34** valo butą ar ne? valo...(then translates into English) to clean... (more examples) dabar aš valau lentą... čia yra lenta...aš valau lentą

**10h45** Emphasis is given only on 3 forms; a student asks how to conjugate the verb in the first person (Aš.....?)

**Student33:** do you say ... aš valyti?

**Teacher3:** (only orally) valau

**Student33:** (looks puzzled) aš valau???

**Teacher3:** taip

**Student33:** aš valau ... butą

**Teacher3:** aha...

**Valgyti, valgo, valgė**

Students repeat.

**Student?:** That one I know

**Teacher3:** valyti buvo...to clean .... now **tvarkyti** ....to put in order

(Notes from lesson observation 12)

In analysing the extract that has just been presented, the following steps are noted: firstly, once more, **the verbs are presented in their three forms and students are asked to repeat them**. Next, the teacher uses a student as an example to make a sentence: *Man atrodo savaitgalį Student34 valo butą are ne? Valo*. In this sense, the example only illustrates the third person - she/he/they. Next, another sentence is uttered: *Dabar aš valau lentą. Čia yra lenta... aš valau lentą*, and learners are orally exposed to the verb conjugated in the first person (aš, I). As this happens in a split second, an adult learner aged over 40 immediately raises a question - *Do you say ... aš valyti?*, and gets an oral answer from the teacher - *Valau*. The adult learner asks for reconfirmation - *Aš valau???* (the voice rises at the end and the student looks confused), and the teacher confirms it is correct, only in oral form. Finally, an example in the first person is actually produced by the student - *Aš valau ...butą* and the teacher moves on to read the other verbs in that list. In short, at the beginning of this lesson (10h38 – 10h47), adult learners are presented with 16 verbs, in their three forms, within a time-span of 9 minutes (approximately 2 verbs/minute), following the same ‘presentation pattern’; **meaning is negotiated via translation**, at word level.

A further analysis of the same lesson showed that more verbs, and their tenses, were to be learned on the same day, through the same method:

*Illustration 7*

10h48 -**Teacher3** asks students to open their brochures to page 63 ex. 2 (Grammar) – a short summary on the Past Tense

**Teacher3:** that has to be remembered ... that’s a thing that has to be learned ... it has to be memorized. Numeris 2. Būtais kartinis laikas.... Būtais kartinis laikas...past tense...the third form of every verb ends either in Ė like in laukė or O like norėjo taip... if you have a look at this list again (the previous list they worked on) the third form ... it is always either O or Ė in the end...that has to be remembered... right... that’s a thing that has to be learned... to be memorized

**Student?:** does that mean that there are only two types?

**Teacher3:** yeah...in the present we have three types ...trys tipai...in the past we have two types...two sets of endings...O tipas and Ė tipas...OK

**Teacher3** starts reading the material aloud:

**2. Būtais kartinis laikas**

**Laukti, laukia, laukė**

**Norėti, nori, norėjo**

**Teacher3:** aš laukiu vasaros (and then translates into English) I am waiting for summer. Students listen and take notes.

(Notes from lesson observation 12)

In this extract, an example of the presentation of verb tenses in the past is shown: adult learners belonging to different age-groups (i.e., 15-20, 21-30, 41-50 years of age) are given the two possible endings of verbs in the past *Ė* or *O*, and asked to memorize them: this is emphasized by the teacher a few times: *the third form... it is always either O or Ė in the end... That has to be remembered...right...that's a thing that has to be learned...to be memorized.* The verbs are presented in their three forms, the teacher provides students with an example; once more, adult learners look at their material, look at the teacher, listen and take notes.

In the next example, another teacher takes a similar approach, while providing adult learners with information of dates in Lithuanian:

*Illustration 8*

15h55 - **Teacher4** asks them how we can say the date. She asks them to look at the list on page 61 and says that in Lithuanian they use ordinal numbers to refer to the number of the bus, or the number of the room etc. She reads the question words and tells them we should say *kelintas / kelinta* (which). Then she refers to each student, in order, to say the word (the numbers) all the boys with – AS and the girls –A. She reads the list until the very end but when she gets to number 21, she explains:

2 1

**Dvidešimt (cardinal) + pirma (ordinal)**

Then asks students to open their brochure to page 63, and refers to grammar:

**Kelinta šiandien diena?**

Šiandien rugpjūčio septyniolikta diena.

**Kada tavo/jūsų gimtadienis?**

Mano gimtadienis liepos šeštą dieną.

And then gives an example both orally and in written form (on the board):

Šiandien yra **spalio** 29-a diena.

She says **spalio is genitivas because of OF**. Then she gives one more example, using the date of the exam:

Egzaminas yra spalio **29-ą** dieną.

And she says the day takes the **accusative form**.

**Teacher4** asks them if they have the same in their own language. They remain silent. She says “ it is very easy” .

(Notes from lesson observation 13)

As we can see, firstly, **the teacher asks students to look at the list of words** in their brochure, **and then presents the rule governing the use of cardinal and ordinal numbers in Lithuanian**. Secondly, the teacher writes down the rule on the



board, followed by additional sentences in which the differences between *kada* (when) and *kelinta* (which) are analysed. Then learners are provided with another example and an additional explanation of the rule (e.g., *spalio is genityvas because of OF but the day takes the accusative form*). Adults are asked if they have a similar situation in their language, that is, if they use cardinal and ordinal numbers to refer to dates, but they remain silent at this point. The teacher adds by saying that such an aspect is not difficult to master: *it is very easy*, despite the fact that learners come from different countries (e.g., France, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Venezuela) and not all of them are likely to have the same system in their mother-tongues or a conscious conceptualization of such a linguistic behaviour. Thus, such a particularity of Lithuanian as a system may not be easy to grasp or master especially when no context or situation is presented to learners, except for rules and teacher-generated examples. Hence the lack of comments from students: they remain silent.

In the next illustration, another teacher takes the same steps while presenting affirmative and negative sentences:

*Illustration 9*

15h15 **Teacher5** says they will speak about flats. She asks students what we can have at home (in houses/ flats). She starts by asking students ‘Kas gali būti bute/name?’ Students open their brochure to page 71/72 and start saying the words aloud. **Teacher5** writes the words on the board in columns, as follows:

<b>Veidrodis</b>	<b>spinta</b>	<b>kilimas</b>	<b>viryklė</b>
<b>Kilimėlis</b>	<b>siena</b>	<b>balkonas</b>	<b>virtuvė</b>
<b>Fotelis</b>	<b>lova</b>	<b>dušas</b>	<b>kėdė</b>
<b>Rankšluostis</b>	<b>vonija</b>	<b>paveikslas</b>	

**Teacher5** presents two more terms: svetainė / miegamasis and asks if students understand. They say they don’t, so she translates into English: living room / bedroom. Next, she asks if there are certain objects in the classroom:

**Teacher5:** Ar yra paveikslas?

**Students:** No

**Teacher5:** Paveikslo nėra

She writes the new ending (according to the genitive case, used for negatives) next to the words already written in the board. For example: **Paveikslas -o**

**Teacher5:** Ar yra veidrodis? Veidrodžio nėra...ar yra rankšluostis? Rankšluosčio nėra... ar yra miegamajame?

**Student41** asks what it means. **Student37** and **Student38** talk about the word in their first language. **Student38** writes ‘bathroom’ next to the word in Lithuanian in the learning material (it actually means bedroom).

(Notes from lesson observation 17)

As it is clearly shown, the teacher elicits some words from students, who immediately refer to their brochure for guidance (i.e., *Žodynas – Namais. Butas. Aplinka*, p. 70). **The words are written on the board, in their nominative forms, as they are printed in the learning material.** Next, the teacher introduces the concept of negative sentences, using the same words that were written before, including the addition of the correct ending in the genitive case (e.g., *paveikslas –o*). Additional changes are made following the same pedagogical action. This is carried out orally by the teacher, mainly in Lithuanian, without resorting to translations in English. In the meantime, two adult learners start to discuss the meaning of some words in their own language and write down a wrong equivalent in English – *bathroom* (the word in English for *miegamasis* is bedroom).

Next, in the same lesson, adult learners are introduced to additional grammar – *prepositions of place*, as shown below:

*Illustration 10*

**Teacher5** says they always use prepositions especially when talking about furniture and flats. She writes the endings of the words in the nominative case on the board, followed by the ending of the word in the case it should be, depending on the preposition:

<b>Prie + Gen</b>	
- as → o	<b>durys, pl, f → durų</b>
-is → io	
-ius → iaus	
-a → os	
-ė → ės	

**Teacher5:** (gives a few examples orally): *Mano namas prie mokyklos. Universitetas yra prie prezidentūros. Prezidentūra yra prie universiteto.*

**Student41** uses a dictionary and looks up some words, but remains silent.

15h45 **Teacher5** says they can use another preposition – she writes on the board: **ANT** and gives other examples orally:

**Teacher5:** *televizorius ant stalo. Ant mano staliuko yra laikraštis ... knyga... kur yra tavo kompiuterius?*

**Student37:** *ant stalo...mano lova yra ant grindzio [should be ant grindų]*

(Notes from lesson observation 17)

At this point, another rule is presented to students – *Prie + Gen* - followed by the endings of words in the nominative case and the endings in the genitive case, after the case is applied- fragments are written on the board (as → o; is → io; ius → iaus; a → os; ė → ės). Adult learners are then provided with ‘oral examples’ in which the preposition is used, by the teacher: *Mano namas prie mokyklos. Universitetas yra prie*

*prezidentūros. Prezidentūra yra prie universiteto.* At this point, a student starts to look up words in a dictionary. The teacher asks students another question, using the objects in the classroom to facilitate understanding and the negotiation of meaning. Overall, **six prepositions are presented in the same manner, within a time-span of 15 minutes (approximately 1 preposition every 2.5 min).**

Finally, in the following lesson and the last one observed in this study, learners are presented with the neutral form of adjectives in Lithuanian in similar fashion:

*Illustration 11*

16h13 **Teacher4** says she wants to speak a little bit about Grammar – adjectives

**Teacher4:** šalta...šilta...karšta...saulėta...taip we use neutral form adjectives... in English it is cold...it is warm...it is hot...

Then writes on the board:

**Jis šalta's (crosses the s out)**  
**Ji šalta**  
**Čia šalta**

**Teacher4:** šaltas universitetas...šaltas yra jis...feminine yra ji...šalta auditorija...čia...here...šalta...without S...neutral form...man šalta... when we want to say we feel cold – how we feel...When there is no subject...no jis... no aš...we use just the word – šalta ...it is cold... masculine without S

(Notes from lesson observation 18)

Firstly, students are told that it is possible to use formal forms of adjectives by making a comparison with the ones in English (it's cold, warm, hot). Next, an analysis of gender is made to show that the neutral form has its **s** crossed out (as the feminine forms of adjectives): *Šaltas universitetas... šaltas yra jis... feminine yra ji... šalta.* In the following extract, students are exposed to the neutral form of adjectives and are asked if they understand what it means:

*Illustration 12*

**Teacher4:** man įdomu... how do you understand?

**Student?:** interesting

**Teacher4:** taip...it is interesting for me... man įdomu ... what to do ...man įdomu studijuoti...man įdomu kalbėti su studentais...man įdomu... do something...OK...

Teacher presents the adjective and gives her own examples. **Student42** asks **Student44** if it means interesting. **Student44** says he does not know. **Teacher4** introduces one more adjective GERA and says: geras studentas...geras universitetas...gera knyga... good book ... gera....neutral form.

(Notes from lesson observation 18)

In this sense, **the meaning of the adjective is explained** to students and illustrated with only one example - *man įdomu kalbėti su studentais*. Two adult learners who are sitting next to me start to speak their own language (e.g., Spanish) and do not seem to follow the explanations. The teacher carries on and introduces the opposite word – *bloga* (not good, bad):

*Illustration 13*

**Teacher4:** man bloga...man gera... man įdomu

**Student44** seems confused. (S) he looks at **Student43** and asks if the word means ‘to feel’ (in Spanish – sentir):

**Student44:** gera... sentir? gera...sentir?

16h20 - In the meantime, another student seems to be in doubt as well:

**Student42:** atsiprašau...aš nesuprantu...kas yra man įdomu?

**Teacher4:** man įdomu?

**Student42:** (speaks Spanish) interesante...ne?

**Teacher4:** it is interesting for me...you are talking about yourself...man įdomu...bet galbūt man neįdomu...man įdomu istorija...o jums įdomu muzika

(Notes from lesson observation 18)

Seven minutes after the presentation of the first adjectives, some students still seem to be having difficulties. After the neutral form of the adjective is presented, two students start to enquire about the meaning; they seem to have misunderstood it as they use the Spanish verb ‘sentir’ which is equivalent to ‘feel’ in English, as opposed to an adjective: *Gera... sentir? Gera...sentir?*. A third student refers back to the beginning and shows that (s)he has not understood what the first expression meant: *Atsiprašau...aš nesuprantu...kas yra man įdomu?* The teacher patiently ‘explains’ the meaning again, in oral form, by providing additional examples of her own: *man įdomu...bet galbūt man neįdomu...man įdomu istorija...o jums įdomu muzika*. **No Lithuanian language in use, from a discourse perspective, through audio or written texts, is used to expose adults to the new grammar.**

After going through the grammar explanations, students are asked to do grammar exercises in which they see *12 disconnected sentences* and have to choose the correct form of the adjective (neutral, feminine or masculine)<sup>96</sup>:

<sup>96</sup> Brochure, ex. 1, page 82 – Instructions: Pasirinkite tinkamą formą. 1) Vilniaus senamiestis yra gražus graži gražu gražiai. 2) Čia labai gražus graži gražu gražiai. 3) Andrius dainuoja gražus graži gražu gražiai. 4) Diena yra karštas karštà káršta karštai. 5) Auditorijoje labai karštas karštà káršta karštai. 6) Ekskursija buvo įdomus įdomi įdomu įdomiai. 7) Filmą apie Lietuvą buvo įdomus įdomi įdomu įdomiai. 8) Profesorius kalbėjo labai įdomus įdomi įdomu įdomiai. 9)

*Illustration 14*

**5. Auditorijoje labai karštas karštà káršta karštai.**

**Student42:** Without accent? No... the other one ... there is no accent... karšta... auditorijoje labai karšta

**Teacher4:** Auditorijoje labai karšta...trečia forma

The teacher carries on reading the sentences. The students next to me are still having problems. **Student43** uses a bilingual dictionary. The other two speak to each other in Spanish, as follows:

**Student44:** Non entiendo (I don't understand)

**Student42:** Mi tampoco (Me neither)

(Notes from lesson observation 18)

As can be clearly seen, the same students seem to be having problems: *Student43* uses a pocket dictionary (Lithuanian-Spanish; Spanish-Lithuanian) to look up some words. In the meantime, two students that are sitting next to me, whose first language is Spanish, clearly state that they do not understand: *Student44* says *Non entiendo* and *Student42* replies *mi tampoco* (*I don't understand* and *me neither*, respectively).

It is crucial to note that **throughout the lesson**, and especially during the presentation of new information (e.g., a new topic or unit), **adult learners engage in multiple actions**, such as reading the information in their brochure, looking at the teacher, listening to the teacher, looking at additional information or drawings on the board, repeating the words aloud after the teacher, listening to the translation into English (occasionally into Russian), asking for clarification, looking up words in one or two pocket dictionaries (e.g., a student from Hungary would first use a Lithuanian-English dictionary, and then reconfirm the meaning by looking up the English word in an English-Hungarian dictionary, as no Lithuanian-Hungarian pocket dictionaries were locally available at that point), among other actions.

In considering the object of study in this research, it is important to note that in these lessons, *the following difficulties were observed and frequently expressed by adult learners* (thus, recorded and noted down): not understanding, not knowing, being confused, having difficulties with the pronunciation of words, not being able to produce chunks of language (real phrases or sentences uttered by Lithuanian speakers), not finding the target words in the pocket-dictionary, hesitating before

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Ačiū, buvo skanus skani skanu skaniai. 10) Močiutė verda skanus skani skanu skaniai. 11) Tortas su braškėmis yra labai skanus skani skanu skaniai 12) Bandėle su varške yra skanus skani skanu skaniai.

answering, and not remembering previous information. The following extract is used for illustrative purposes:

*Illustration 15*

**Student39** asks how we say butter in Lithuanian. **Teacher4** writes on the board: sviestas...margarinas

**Student39:** we didn't learn how to say butter and I need to buy butter...and I don't know how do you say it

**Teacher4:** ko tu norėjai?

**Student39:** butter

**Teacher4:** aš nesuprantu

**Student39:** I already bought something but I don't know what I bought

**Teacher4:** why...turi būti parašyta...yra sviestas

**Student39:** Oh...I think it was butter...and how is margarine?

**Teacher4:** margarinas...netikras...natūralus...sviestas geriau

(...) mes kalbėjome apie sviestą...reikia žiūrėti...skaityti..taip...kas yra...ant produkto

(Notes from lesson observation 16)

As can be clearly seen, at the end of the first semester of studies (lesson observation 16 was conducted in November), an adult learner, temporarily living in the country, and attending the course in Lithuania while pursuing formal education, states that they have not learned how to say a daily product that (s)he is in need but does not know how to say at the shops: *We didn't learn how to say butter and I need to buy butter... and I don't know do you say it.* And the student adds: *I already bought something but I don't know what I bought.* The teacher in turn says that it should be written on the package: *Why...turi būti parašyta...yra sviestas;* she adds that they had already been told about that before; the student needs to look and read the label: *mes kalbėjome apie sviestą... reikia žiūrėti... skaityti... taip... kas yra ... ant produkto.*

Indeed, in the middle of the course, they had been exposed to vocabulary related to food through some words in isolation, and black and white sketches of dairy products (the same picture shown in appendix V – a table full of 'blank packaging' of products carried by little mice – brochure unit 4, page 47). Butter is one of the products among other dairy products, written exclusively in Lithuanian, with no label or brand mark, drawn in a similar way, represented in black and white sketches. The absence of colours, real packaging, and a situation in which someone is having breakfast, or buying such products in a local supermarket in Lithuania, and the exposure via words in isolation, followed by translations and explanations either in Lithuanian or English, may have contributed to the perception of not having learned how to say butter in the classroom, thus, not facilitating the application of such knowledge outside the classroom when the adult learner had the real need to buy the product. In case the

learner had been absent, such a situation would also occur, as the learning material is not suitable for self-study, for the same aforementioned reasons.

In a subsequent lesson, the same learner raises another question, from an everyday life-real situation:

*Illustration 16*

**Student42** listens to **Teacher4** uses his dictionary, and writes at the same time, but all verbs in the infinitive form. Verbs are not conjugated:

Rytoj berniukas *gerți pienas* as opposed to Rytoj berniukas *gers pieną*.

**Student44** does not write anything down. A student raises a question:

**Student39:** What does it mean *balinta kava*?

**Teacher4:** *Su pienu*

**Student40:** What is the difference...*kava su pienu*?

**Teacher4:** *Nėra...for me...nėra...difference*

**Student39:** Why isn't it the same price?

**Teacher4:** *Aš neparduodu kavos...suprantate...aš nesu pardavėja  
Jeigu aš parduodu kavą...aš rašau...balta kava...very clear...juoda kava...*

**Student40:** What's the difference between *balta* and *balinta kava*?

**Teacher4:** *Nieko*

**Student40:** *Nieko*

(Notes from lesson observation 18)

In this extract, we see an example of homework correction. As the teacher proceeds with it, an adult learner (*Student39*) asks for clarification between the terms *balinta kava* and *kava su pienu* (in English: white coffee and coffee with milk, respectively). The teacher states there is no difference for her. The student further enquires why it does not cost the same (referring to the vending machine placed at the university premises). Once more, the teacher says she does not sell coffee, if this were the case, she would write the words clearly – white coffee or black coffee. *Student40* asks the same question - *what's the difference between balta and balinta kava*, but again is provided with the answer that there is no difference – *nieko*. It is important to note that this question was raised at the end of the semester (this was the last lesson observed), it may be assumed that students were not exposed to an everyday life situation, in a Lithuanian café or coffee shop, or a picture of a local vending machine, in which such distinction could have been made.

#### 4.6 The participants: adult learners / non-native speakers of Lithuanian

Coming from 22 countries, forty-five students<sup>97</sup>, including this researcher, took part in this study. The vast majority was aged between 21 and 30, being the youngest 16 years old and the oldest, over 60 years of age (e.g., both learners attended the course in the same group). Men outnumbered women, and the majority was comprised of permanent and temporary residents in the country, as shown below:

**Table 11 Learner profile**

ADULT LEARNERS (N=45)							
<b>Gender</b>	Male	28	62%	<b>Work / Study Fields</b>			
	Female	17	38%				
<b>Living Status</b>	Resident	28	62%		Architecture		
	Non-Resident	17	38%		Arts		
<b>Education Mode</b>	Non-formal	36	80%		Biotechnology		
	Formal	9	20%		Business (Consultancy)		
<b>Age-Groups</b>	15-20	6	13%		Construction		
	21-30	21	47%		Economics		
	31-40	4	9%		Engineering		
	41-50	4	9%		Finance		
	51-60	1	2%	Food and Beverage Management			
	60 over	1	2%	History			
<b>Time in Lithuania</b>	1-2 weeks	2	4%	Hospitality & Service Industry			
	3-4 weeks	14	31%	Information Technology			
	1-3 months	15	36%	International Relations			
	3-6 months	7	18%	Languages & Literature			
	Over 1 year	3	7%	Law			
	Over 2-3 years	2	4%	Linguistics			
<b>Countries of Origin *</b>	Over 11 years				2	4%	Music
	USA (6); England, Hungary, Poland (4); France, Spain (3), Canada, Russia, Turkey (2), Argentina, Brazil, Georgia, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovenia, Taiwan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (1)						Philosophy
						Psychology	
						Statistics	

\*Number of students per country shown in parentheses

Non-residents were learners mainly attending summer courses, considering their visit to the country was short. As for the time already spent in the country, most of the

<sup>97</sup> Nine students out of 45 (20%) reported having Lithuanian roots. Of these, one had been born in Lithuania and lived here until the age of 6. For unknown reasons, the child was then adopted and raised outside Lithuania. Another student reported having language learning difficulties (i.e., dyslexia). However, such condition did not interfere with his/her achieving an advanced degree (i.e., Ph.D).



participants had been staying or living here from 1 to 6 months. Eight participants had been living here longer – three over 1 year, two between 2 and 3 years, and two over 11 years (with intervals between the months/years).

It is important to note that permanent residents would also attend the summer course, as it was required to take time off work to attend lectures delivered during the day. Finally, it is crucial to state that learners had had a considerable number of lessons by the time they were interviewed, despite the little time in the country: regular students (over 300 hours), summer and Erasmus students (over 70 - 80 hours), as the interviews were conducted at the end of the course, before the exam session.

Two participants out of 45 continued their studies at higher levels and took part in the study for a second time, by answering the open questions of the questionnaire and being interviewed again (i.e., 2006/2008; 2007/2008). Having lived longer in the country, they could contribute to the longitudinal component in this study.

Ultimately, adult learners belonged to different ethnic groups and the majority of them had already finished their undergraduate or graduate studies: they were experienced in the job market. This is to say that, unlike children and teenagers, these learners had both theoretical and practical experience in fields, such as Psychology, Philosophy, Languages & Literature, and Linguistics, among others, and most importantly, some of them had experience in teaching foreign languages (e.g., English native speakers working as English language teachers), and organizing training and development programmes targeted at adults.

#### **4.6.1 Knowledge of languages**

As shown in the following table, English native speakers were the majority, followed by Spanish, Polish, and Hungarian citizens. With regard to second or foreign languages, fourteen students had learned only one additional language (i.e., L1 + F1). Of these, two learned it informally; foreign languages, such as English and French, ranked top on the list, 23 (51%) and 9 (20%), respectively. It is important to state that three students mentioned having had an introduction to Lithuanian: *Student17* and *Student18* attended language courses in their home universities, as part of studies in Applied Linguistics; *Student32* attended the short course “Survival Lithuanian” one year before taking the summer course, as an Erasmus student. *Student28* stated having acquired Lithuanian (and Russian) until the age of 6, as this

learner was born in Lithuania but later moved to another country. No one had learned Latvian that has a similar structure to that of Lithuanian. Finally, languages such as Greek, Icelandic, Latin, Old Slavic, and Swahili were mainly cited by philologists or philosophers.

**Table 12 Learners' knowledge of languages**

FIRST LANGUAGE			SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGES		
<b>English</b>	14	31%	L1 + F1	14	31%
<b>Spanish</b>	5	11%	L1 + F2	18	40%
<b>Polish</b>	4	9%	L1 + F3	4	9%
<b>Hungarian</b>	4	9%	L1 + F4	4	9%
<b>Russian</b>	3	7%	L1 + F5	2	4%
<b>French</b>	3	7%	L1 + F6	2	4%
Arabic	1	2%	L1 + F7	1	2%
Chinese	1	2%			
Dutch	1	2%	Croatian	Latin	
German	1	2%	Czech	<b>Lithuanian</b>	
Italian	1	2%	English	Old Slavic	
Malayalam	1	2%	Finnish	Polish	
Norwegian	1	2%	French	Portuguese	
Portuguese	1	2%	German	Russian	
Romanian	1	2%	Greek	Serbian	
Slovenian	1	2%	Icelandic	Spanish	
Turkish	1	2%	Irish	Swahili	
Uzbek	1	2%	Italian	Swedish	

When asked about their learning priorities, the development of *speaking skills* was the first option (about 70%), followed by *listening skills* (about 30%), considering their need to communicate with people, for work or social purposes, or even to start looking for a job. Reading was third priority, although some stated their willingness to improve this skill for work or study purposes, or simply to be able to share the Lithuanian culture with other family members in their own countries. Finally, writing was cited as a fourth priority by 20% of learners, as we can see below:

*Illustration 17*

[**Speaking and listening**] I am an architect and I will look for a job when I am able to speak and to understand people... perhaps in summer (...) the purpose is to understand people and make them understand myself (Student10 / 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 18*

I need to improve **speaking...and listening**...I live here...it is only fair that I try to understand and speak the language...I don't want to be a typical English and not bother and

it's up to me to try and be able to communicate with people in their language (Student33/ 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 19*

[**Speaking**] It's the most important thing...there's no point in...understanding what I read or write...but if I can't communicate with Lithuanians...that sucks (Student45/ 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 20*

[**Reading**] what for me is a far more useful source of information about how Lithuanian works are written texts....To look at literature and books...novels ... and see how the language is being used...how...the syntax works and how the grammar works and so on and so forth (...) speaking is probably my second priority because then....**speaking and listening**...and that's the kind of...the useful part of the language you know...it would also be nice to come to Lithuania and be able to talk to people ... it would be nice if you were able to do this [the interview] in Lithuanian rather than English (Student24/ 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 21*

I think that...**I would like to read**...to my nieces...nephews...and my children...so that they have an appreciation for ...other languages...cause we don't get much exposure in North America...besides French...maybe Spanish...I guess (Student34/ 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 22*

[**Reading**] I found a work in Italy...in an archive...that's quite modern archive...one congregation...religious congregation...and there are a lot of ... a lot of documents in Lithuanian (...) some documents need the confidential ... also I can't invite someone from outside...who... interpret me these documents (Student16/ 41-50 years old)

Thus, being able to speak Lithuanian and listen to local people was perceived as essential for personal, social and professional reasons. Ultimately, reading texts from authentic materials, such as books and newspapers was also considered an important way to see how the Lithuanian language was being used, as well as the way grammar and syntax work from a discourse perspective.

#### **4.6.2 Reasons for learning Lithuanian in the host country**

Changes in demographics due to the integration of Lithuania into the European Union, were the main reasons for adults to come to this country and learn Lithuanian. Nine in forty-five stated having Lithuanian roots or being a dual-citizen as one of the main reasons to learn this language:

*Illustration 24*

I am also Lithuanian because of my grandfather... he was born in Marijampolė but went to Brazil in 1927... by ship... with his mother and sisters... after his father died...He was twenty...the oldest of all in the family and the only man in the household... In Sao Paulo... he met my grandmother... who was born in Belshill ... Scotland ... She was also a dual-citizen like me... her parents were Lithuanian but for some unknown reason they had left the country and then also travelled to Brazil by ship... So...I grew up listening to Lithuanian in the house... as my grandparents would speak to my father in Lithuanian... Interestingly...despite the fact that my grandmother never set foot in Lithuania... when she grew older... and lost her memory...Lithuanian was the only language she could speak (Student1 / 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 25*

my both sisters... both sisters went to Vasario 16 gymnasium and knows the Lithuanian language... my father has ... his two parents... talking Lithuanian language... my grandmother...sometimes speaks in the phone ( ) but it is an old Lithuanian... and I use some words....I work with children...( ) I... participate in Čiurlionis... like an exhibition... and I read in Spanish the... the text of Čiurlionis... now I have the real texts of Čiurlionis ( ) we have a group of...of performers... of actors... that... actually will work ... the last two years with the Lithuanian community and we have a project to make a... Lithuanian theatre... so that is a dream (Student13/ 21-30 years old).

*Illustration 26*

My mum [is Lithuanian]... my parents were talking when I was growing up I mean.... she would use words and phrases that... I would pick up but I never ... learned the language... went to school (Student22/ 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 27*

my grandma was the head of the Lithuanian Community Board so...I've been to.... dance and music festivals and stuff...I've been exposed to the culture in the States...but never really the language...never had a chance ... and never had a chance to learn it ( ) my great aunt and uncle live here a year round ...and my grandma and grandpa...they live in the States by where I live... and they spend their summer here [in Lithuania] (Student30 / 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 28*

and I am half Lithuanian [the student's mother is Lithuanian] ... a lot of Lithuanian was spoken in the household because my great aunt and my grandmother lived with us...and there was always a lot of Lithuanians over on the weekends (Student34 / 41-50 years old)

As can be clearly seen, these students had been exposed to Lithuanian language and culture to a lesser or greater extent, by listening to their grandparents and parents, or taking part in the activities organized by the Lithuanian communities in their own countries. Despite the fact that Lithuanian citizens had left this country, they would keep the language alive, as noted by *Student1* (this author) - *I grew up listening to Lithuanian in the house and the great impact Lithuanian has had in one of the family members - despite the fact that my grandmother never set foot in Lithuania...when she lost her memory... Lithuanian was the only language she could speak.*

Similarly, the possibility of speaking to grandparents and having family members attend the Lithuanian High School in Germany, were facts that motivated *Student13* to learn this language: *both [of my] sisters went to Vasario 16 gymnasium and knows the Lithuanian language... my father has his two parents talking Lithuanian.* What is more, the initiative of the local community to start a Lithuanian theatre to provide children and other members with Lithuanian art and culture was also a motivation for this student to come over: *we have a project to make a Lithuanian theatre that is a dream.*

By the same token, *Student30* was given the chance to get in touch with Lithuanian culture, and apart from having Lithuanian relatives, a member of the family played

and important role in the local Lithuanian community: *my grandma was the head of the Lithuanian Community Board ... I've been exposed to the culture in the States.* Finally, *Student34* admits being half-Lithuanian and used to listen to Lithuanian spoken in the house: *there was always a lot of Lithuanians over on the weekends.*

It is also interesting to note that both *Student21* and *Student23* clearly stated that members of the family are Lithuanian, despite being born in Germany or by the Lithuanian-German border:

*Illustration 29*

My father...is Lithuanian... Well actually he was born in Germany – Lithuania ... In Germany ... you know... When my family left they first went to Germany... and then he became...he was born Lithuanian...in the border (they) didn't recognize the citizenship being born in Germany (Student21/ 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 30*

my family is Lithuanian...so I just wanted to learn it ... My mother... She was actually born in a refugee camp in Germany...yeah...but her first language is "lietuviškai" ... She used to read to me Lithuanian when I was little...and we used to speak a little bit...but we kind of stopped when I got older (Student23/ 15-20 years old)

Furthermore, these students descended from Lithuanians who played important roles in the country in the past: according to *Student30*, his greatgrandfather *was a baron* and, as *Student25* put it, his greatgrandparents were members of the Lithuanian Parliament (i.e., Seimas), one of them was actually a *Deputy Minister of Finance...and he coined the term for the currency ... litas*, as shown below:

*Illustration 31*

My grandma is from Kaunas...and my grandpa...he...his parents where from...the western part...the northwestern part...they were peasants...and then my grandma ... her dad was a baron (...) my great aunt and uncle who live with them ...all they speak is Lithuanian so if I have to communicate I have to speak Lithuanian (Student30 / 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 32*

my dad's side is Lithuanian... my grandfather is from Tauragė ...and my ... grandmother is from a village near Kėdainiai...both of them...both of them...actually...their ...their fathers were in Seimas before the communist took over...and actually...yeah...I think ... I think...my grandmother's father...he was a Deputy Minister of Finance...and he coined the term for the currency...litas (Student25/ 21-30 years old)

Finally, one of the young adults who took part in this study was, as a matter of fact, Lithuanian: having lived in the country up to 5 or 6 years of age but, for unknown reasons, being adopted: *my first language is Lithuanian ... second is Russian...third is English...and it is really the only language I am fluent at now.* Nonetheless, after thirteen years this 'Lithuanian' came back because it was the only opportunity to get in touch with his past:

*Illustration 33*

Hum.... [I was born in Lithuania] in a village in the ... northwestern region... I was adopted (...) so my first language is Lithuanian ...second is Russian...third is English...and it is really the only language I am fluent at now...[I used to speak Lithuanian] ...up until five or six years old (...) Well it's been thirteen years since I left this country... I am here...for...just for the summer (...) because this is the only opportunity in thirteen years that I really had to come here...that's why I am here...to sort of ...get in touch with my past (Student28 / 15-20 years old)

Having said this, there is no doubt that Lithuanian language played an important role in the life of these students of Lithuanian descent, some also being dual-citizens (i.e., *Student1* and *Student21*), or even born in the country (i.e., *Student28*)<sup>98</sup>. Their main motivation to come to Lithuania was also to learn the local language and to further promote it in their own countries, by engaging in social, religious and educative activities, as noted by *Student13*. In all likelihood, by learning this language in the present they will continue the Lithuanian legacy, as their parents and grandparents once did; this will also help to keep the language alive in the future.

Furthermore, five students (11%) stated their willingness to do some business in Lithuania. The following extracts are used to illustrate the aforementioned reasons:

*Illustration 34*

My graduation is basically in Hotel Management and I am doing Media... so I would like to do something in the service industry (Student2 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 35*

I had a company here but I sold it. At the moment I have my own machine building company in [own's country] but I do it from here (Student7 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 36*

[you'd like to study the country for business opportunities] agriculture for one...because...before the communist took over...my grandmother had a whole bunch of property...the village that she lived in ...it was actually her village...she owned...her family owned it (...) now we have half of that farm land back (...) we have people farming there now for blackcurrants...we were wondering if there is anything better that we could do (Student25 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 37*

if I see a property...to have a negotiation with the owner... [would like to increase my ability to] I don't have to be native-level but to be understood...to do that business basically (Student21 / 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 38*

There's a lot of potential... and that's why I came here... I plan just to buy houses that need renovating. (...) and then do some business (Student15 / 31-40 years old).

As can be seen, *Student2* – a permanent resident in the country, married to a Lithuanian, wished to start up a business in the service area; *Student7*, also a

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<sup>98</sup> It was not clearly stated if this learner had the right to keep the Lithuanian citizenship, once being adopted by an American family.

permanent resident, married to a Lithuanian, had already been doing business in the country and employing local citizens for some time until the company was finally established as a private limited company. Similarly, *Student25*, a non-resident in the country then but of Lithuanian descent, wanted to expand the family agricultural business. Finally, *Student21*, also a Lithuanian citizen, wanted to do some real estate business in the country, and *Student15* a non-Lithuanian citizen, decided to settle down in the country to start his own business in the construction area considering there was a lot of potential in the country in that sense. In sum, these newcomers were also to contribute to the flow of direct investments in the country, apart from creating jobs and being consumers of Lithuanian goods and services.

#### **4.7 Concluding remarks**

This research was carried out in the capital city, at Vilnius University; the lessons observed were devised and delivered by teachers at the Department of Lithuanian Studies, who are philologists specialized in language-related areas, including language didactics and testing. They are also involved in pedagogical actions, such as the MA in applied linguistics, teacher education, and material design, among others.

The content analysis of the study programme targeted at non-native speakers has shown that a great number of hours is devoted to grammar and vocabulary as separate subjects. Speaking and writing are taught together and have the least emphasis of all, in the basic course, at beginners' level.

The learning material used was *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* (Stumbrienė and Kaškelevičienė, 2001, 2004), and its short version (the brochure, devised in 2007), also designed by teachers at the same department, were used for non-native speakers pursuing formal and non-formal education. As far as their content, the analysis has shown a small number of speaking and writing skills and a great number of exercises requiring individual work. Thus, students seem to be required to play a less active role by mostly learning grammar and vocabulary in disconnected sentences.

Moreover, the lack of authentic texts in which Lithuanian is used, from a discourse perspective, may have an impact in the social integration of newcomers into this society: Lithuanian products, brands, places, public figures, TV channels, and radio stations, are not present in the materials, despite some folk tales and recipes of typical dishes. As a result, newcomers are likely to have difficulties identifying or

recognizing local people and products; they may face challenges while socially interacting with locals due to lack of knowledge required in real-life situations.

The visual support provided, mainly via black & white sketches throughout the material, tend to address a more juvenile target audience, especially through animal drawings. Considering the target audience and cultural differences, these may not be appealing to adults or facilitate understanding of atypical information.

Furthermore, regarding the development of skills, considering the units analysed in the main material, no exercises were clearly devised for the development of problem-solving, metacognitive strategies, or study skills (e.g., using a Lithuanian dictionary). Despite the different aspects of Lithuanian pronunciation and accentuation, such a practice was not part of the main learning material either.

Finally, given the extensive use of Lithuanian language to provide complete beginners with instructions to the exercises, along with the lack of an answer key and audioscripts, we may assume that both learning materials are not suitable for self-study; instead, they can only be used under guidance of a tutor.

In taking into account most of the lesson observations, learning objectives were mainly presented from their content perspective (e.g., grammar, functions in Lithuanian). What students would be able to do with the content was not often made clear to them at the presentation stage. It is vital to note that learning objectives or outcomes were not clearly stated in the main learning material either.

Regarding the 'presentation method' employed, adults were firstly exposed to fragments of Lithuanian language; meanings were negotiated by oral explanations and literal translations into English or Russian (at lower levels). Classroom objects and students' data were often used for clarification. Verb tenses were presented in their three forms; their conjugation in the first and second persons of the discourse tended to be excluded. In all likelihood, adult learners would have difficulty producing sentences and engaging in dialogues, considering they have not practised using the verbs in the first and second persons of the discourse.

Visuals were mainly provided via black & white sketches. Occasionally, teachers would bring pictures to elicit information previously presented. Gestures were also frequently used and teachers resorted to their own voice as an instrument in the classroom: oral explanations and teacher-generated examples were predominant. They seemed to be the main model to be followed, as far as Lithuanian discourse is



concerned, given the absence of media or moving images (e.g., TV programmes, films). Listening or reading comprehension practice were much smaller in number and tended to be done towards the end of a given unit: the mini-dialogues were normally used as reading or listening activities, focusing on grammar and vocabulary practice, not necessarily exposing learners to current Lithuanian language in use.

As far as practice, adult learners mainly applied rules to words in disconnected sentences, by doing repetitive tasks (application of rules in gap-filling exercises). Instruction and materials placed a great emphasis on learning by rote. Free practice, via 'speaking' activities, was mainly done towards the end of a unit, by reading the dialogues aloud, in pairs, or using the conversations as templates to construct similar dialogues. On a few occasions, adult learners would do information gap exercises which also involved social role-playing. Social life roles were very small in number: being a student, a classmate, or sometimes a friend were the most played roles by adult learners. Working on more challenging tasks requiring problem-solving was not part of their practice in the lessons observed in this study.

With regard to the participants, forty-five students took part in this study, including this author: coming from 22 countries, aged between 16 and 60+, and male outnumbered female students. Two participants took part twice allowing for a longitudinal component: this was an essential element in this research, as we will discuss later, in terms of identifying changes in the initial perceived difficulties.

Most of them were residents, permanently or temporarily living, working or studying in Lithuania, and had finished their undergraduate or graduate studies. A small number was still pursuing higher education. They had varied educational and/or professional backgrounds; a few students also had experience in teaching languages. Nine participants were of Lithuanian origin, including a student who had been born in the country, but was adopted and moved to America at the age of 6. Another participant stated being dyslexic; foreign languages had been informally acquired. Still, this student had achieved an advanced scientific degree in psychology.

Several foreign & second languages had been learned or acquired, but only three learners had been exposed to Lithuanian through an introductory course. In short, they were experienced language learners to a greater or lesser extent.

The main reasons for learning the language were changes in demographics. Having the wish to keep the language alive in their own countries, by sharing the information

with other family members was a significant reason. Five participants had the intent to set up a company, do business or boost ongoing family businesses, thus contributing to the flow of direct investments in Lithuania.

Having said this, it may be stated that, when this research was carried out (2006-2010), Lithuanian language courses targeted at non-native speakers / newcomers, were not aligned with the recommendations put forward by the European Union (same material for different target groups, not addressing adults' communicative needs, which aim at their social and professional inclusion in the new society).

Next, our discussions will be directed at critically analysing the perceived difficulties expressed by adult learners, in light of existing theoretical constructs.

## 5. An investigation of adults' perceived difficulties in learning Lithuanian

In this chapter, following the research design, general perceptions and those perceived as difficulties will be presented. Next, a review of the literature will be made, in light of attribution theory, as a means to explain the nature of perceptions and their impact on language studies. All things considered, the data will be classified and analysed, considering to the same underlying principles.

### 5.1 General perceptions of Lithuanian language studies

The adult learners who took part in this study also formed general perceptions of their language studies. *A nice experience with the Lithuanian language* was one of them:

*Illustration 39*

it's nice experience... with this language...very nice experience ... and I have to say that now ... I would like to ... learn this language...a little bit because... no one speak in ... in the society where I live... no one speaks this language (Student16 /41-50 years old)

*Illustration 40*

it's a good thing to know ... your country's language...it is ...useful... it is helpful... to say something at the border (Student21/ 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 41*

my interest in Lithuanian because...Lithuanian is so ... conservative language that...it is a very good language to know...if you want to find out about language history (Student 24/ 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 42*

I was on the plane...and I heard...what do you call it...the people working on the plane...what do you call.... Doing this and doing that...talking in Lithuanian...and I heard...wow that's a beautiful language ... [I am learning it] because it is the most beautiful language in the world (Student26/ 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 43*

The experience is really interesting...I am just getting amazed day by day...by Lithuanian language (Student 27/ 21-30 years old).

According to these summer students, belonging to different nationalities, *Lithuanian is the most beautiful language in the world, useful and helpful to learn because it is your country's language, a very good language to know*, given the fact it is 'so conservative', from a historical perspective, and *learning it is a very nice experience*. Finally, another student stated being *amazed by the local language*. It is important to note that only 1 student in 5 was of Lithuanian descent; nevertheless, this language played an important part in the learning process of all these students.

In the following examples, *the teachers* were important players in the formation of perceptions as well:

*Illustration 44*

I find the teachers are extremely good... all of them... they are very clear... and use very simple words... (Student7 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 45*

I make a lot of mistakes and I don't mind too much...but I feel grateful when they [the teachers] correct me (...) I think they do it quite well. (Student10 / 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 46*

I think that the teachers are very good...they are excellent...to say the truth...there are very good games in the lesson... (Student35 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 47*

our teacher is really good...so if we have a question we ask and she is really good at explaining that...(Student30 / 15-20 years old)

According to these learners, teachers were said to be good, especially in terms of making clear explanations, and organizing games in the classroom.

In addition, *the university and the classmates*, contributed to this student forming the perception of his learning being a 'good and nice experience':

*Illustration 48*

it has been very good...been nice...I like the teachers...I like the university...I like the kids [classmates]...very interesting...very cosmopolitan place (Student28 / 15-20 years old)

All in all, general perceptions were exclusively related to the learning environment: the language, the teachers and their actions, along with the nice atmosphere at the university and the interaction with other students.

## **5.2 Perceived difficulties in Lithuanian language studies**

The obstacles expressed by learners also emerged from the data, previously categorized, on the basis of grounded theory. The categories were there classified into two domains<sup>99</sup>: 1) the *learner*, and 2) the *environment*, as follows.

### **5.2.1 The learner domain: lack of ability, confidence & effort**

In this domain, *lack of cognitive ability* (305 occurrences) ranked first in learners' factors. Following the number of occurrences, such a category was then sub-divided into 1) not remembering (62 / 20%); 2) having a different learning style (62 / 20%); 3) not understanding (58 / 19%); 4) not knowing (44 / 14%); 5) not being able to speak or express oneself (32 / 10%); 5) not being able to pronounce (16 / 5%) ; 6) not being good at languages (16 / 5%) ; 7) not being able to spell (5 / 2%); and 8) having a different learning pace / being older (5 / 2%, each).

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<sup>99</sup> See Appendix VI for a breakdown of the categories.

The following extracts illustrate issues concerning learners' ability in terms of **not remembering**:

*Illustration 49*

It is more when I am speaking... I have to remember which ending I am using... I know which ... which case I have to use...but it is a little bit harder...it is hard to remember which is the ending ... (Student12 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 50*

the problem is you have to try and remember all these words...and that's my problem... I know what they really should be...but I don't remember the nominative...the spelling of the nominative...you know remembering actually how the word...is spelt...in order to change the ending (...) I can work out... the rules...if I could remember what the word was at the start...what we are working from...you know. (Student31 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 51*

it's confusing sometimes...I remember one case is ending almost always on 'u'...but not always...so when I do homework I have to always check ... cause I just don't remember it... (Student45 / 21-30 years old)

As we can see, learners perceived their own lack of cognitive ability as an obstacle to learning Lithuanian, in terms of *not remembering* the words or their endings, the cases to use, the spelling of the words in the nominative case, to further apply the rules according to the tables given and construct sentences. It is interesting to note that not remembering was a perception formed by adult males and females, aged from 21 to 50, from different ethnic groups.

Still, under this category, having *a different learning style* from those normally required in the classroom played an important part:

*Illustration 52*

I need to look it and I need to see it...and I can learn these words faster when I can see it...when I can imagine...and...the pictures...I prefer studying like this...or ...for example...I can draw with colours (...) because I can't remember these words only...word by word...and to repeat and repeat and repeat...and go around my room and repeat it...I can't...that's why...I draw...I see this picture...in a different way (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 53*

I'm a... how to call...I am the person who learns by looking...not listening...I have a map of vocabulary [on the wall] ... then there is food...there is names of the food...then I have months...weeks...not like... any vocabulary that I want to learn (...) this way...I am just grouping all the things...and this is the best way for me to learn (Student37 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 54*

when we are learning about food, I wish we would have come to *Morga* [local canteen] and order food in Lithuanian and when we are eating ...you know... like...how to share... "prašom paragauti" [please have a taste/try] we are just not learning in the classroom and...when we are learning about clothes...maybe we could go to a depart... a store...it may be a little bit more difficult but just I think it will be more fun...more practical...you know...not just sit there and look at the book and ...try to memorize (Student11 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 55*

The best thing is to listen...If I sit and try to memorize from books...I can't do it...I should listen...and listen...and... For example...yesterday I went to a movie...and it was Lithuanian (...) by this way...I think you can catch these endings...and if...for example if you use...if you have to use...an ending...you remember it from ...past hearings (...) I think ...if I sit...and try to memorize ... I can't (Student32 / 21-30 years old)

In these examples, adult learners between 21 and 30 years of age stated that, instead of trying to memorize word by word given in the materials, *they learned best by* 1) *seeing visuals and colours*; 2) *seeing the words grouped into categories*; 3) *listening to authentic language*, such as films or other audio texts; 4) *by literally carrying out an activity*, like eating at the local canteen, or going shopping. In short, these learners expressed being visual, auditory and kinesthetic, as far as their learning styles.

As the preliminary findings have shown, learners were mainly exposed to black and white sketches throughout the learning materials, long vocabulary lists under a specific topic, but not necessarily sub-organized in categories, and pedagogically produced texts (both oral and written texts). Authentic materials – films, video clips, and contemporary songs, for instance, were non-existent. Finally, the main type of exercise done by learners was that which required the repetition of patterns, through mechanical drills and filling-the gap exercises: these were believed to cater for a different learning style other than their own.

Next, adults also noted they did not know or understand something or someone; in other words, *not understanding* and *not knowing* were also significant reasons:

*Illustration 56*

I still don't understand people talking Lithuanian...all I know... feel is that I know a lot of words but I don't understand them... I don't understand my wife [Lithuanian] when she speaks Lithuanian... and I don't understand my daughter [born and educated in Lithuania] and after so many months of studying I am a bit frustrated about that... I thought I would make faster progress in understanding Lithuanian (Student7 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 57*

But I am trying to read... you know... everything in Lithuanian...even I don't understand...just to my time to get used to this longer word...trying to make practice to myself...Well I can read ... you know... fifty minutes...I can read...I don't understand anything...but it...for me...it is like practice...because the alphabet is so close to Turkish alphabet (...) if I cannot understand... you know...I ask my wife (Student14 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 58*

we are just beginning... so...sometimes... the form of the word I can't even look it up...so it makes it more difficult to understand...like 'what I am looking at?' But if the form is off... you can't even look it up that way...you have to...figure out what the heck you are looking at... it's just off... *look up the base word*...if you don't know what the base word is ... you can't look it up... and there are a lot of words like that (Student 21/ 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 59*

I usually don't understand what they [teacher and students] are talking about...they have to say the things for me...once...twice...to understand the words (Student29 / 21-30 years old).

*Illustration 60*

I don't understand ...why should I know so many and so special words? (...) we learned different birds and different sounds of these birds (...) I am not going to use these different sounds for birds in Lithuanian ... I don't use it in [student's mother-tongue] (...) and when I ask why I should know so many new words...and our teacher said...told us...I only give you...and you can remember at home or if you can't...you can remember part of these words...but why ....why...to give us these words if we shouldn't remember them?...I don't understand really (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

By reading the aforementioned extracts, we can see that adults aged between 21 and 50 mentioned **not understanding or knowing** *people speaking Lithuanian* – family members, people on the streets, the teacher and classmates; they also had the impression of *knowing a lot of words but not understanding* what they meant. In addition, *not understanding the need to learn so many words* (e.g., birds and the sounds they make) that are normally used outside the classroom, according to learners' daily routines, was a question raised by one of the adult learners. Moreover, *not knowing how to look up a word in dictionary*, considering the spelling changed a lot from its base form, which was also unknown to beginner students, contributed to the difficulty of not understanding the words. Although some students found similarities between their own languages and the target language, concerning the alphabet, the difficulty in understanding the words remained. For those who had Lithuanian spouses, this problem was easier to overcome as they could ask for help.

As the content analysis of the learning materials has shown, a lot of Lithuanian identity was erased from the learning experience – adults were not exposed to contemporary names, brands, local products or people, either through reading activities, or listening comprehension texts. In addition, the lack of video, films, Lithuanian TV commercials or situations in which ordinary people use the Lithuanian language in real-life situations may also have contributed to such a perception. Finally, the presentation of many words in isolation, despite belonging to an umbrella term (e.g., transport), and further grammar or vocabulary practice mostly by filling gaps in disconnected sentences, may also have played an important part in terms of 'knowing too many words but not understanding what they mean'.

**Not being able to speak** Lithuanian also played an important part, especially when it came down to expressing one's opinions and engaging in conversations:

*Illustration 61*

it's very important to listen and repeat...listen and repeat...and ask for...what do you do...where do you go.... Ask... ask... ask (...) Personal questions...about profession... about activities of persons (...) for the students...what do you do...where do you go...hum...have you something (...) It is very important... sometimes I have the problems to say where...what do you do...it's strange (Student4 / 51-60 years old)

*Illustration 62*

when a professor asks *where did you go over the weekend*...and I ...I can only say the name of the place or...you know ... you just...you can't fully express...how...what I was doing there...and was it fun...just because of...expression ...like... how I feel...not enough for me to express... fully... what I did...over the weekend (Student11 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 63*

I...mainly know at the moment the vocabulary we use... during the class... yeah...it is...vocabulary of everyday situation...but...it is not a big range of vocabulary...and sometimes I need more...when I need more (...) For example to explain this [the student's main difficulty] in Lithuanian I won't be able... yeah... I know how to order something ... how to... to...name...clothes but I... for example...for explaining feelings...it is very difficult (Student12 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 64*

I can't get very far in a conversation in Lithuanian anyway (...) If I hear a question...I will understand it...like that...but what I don't have time to think is... Right...I have to say - aš and then... turėti-turi-turėjo...aš turiu dvi... it's - du...brolis"... and going through the whole sort of process...that kind of thinking through all the paradigms...it is very hard to do when you are talking (Student24 / 15-20 years old).

*Illustration 65*

when I try to explain my opinion...at first...I need to think...how it will be in [my first language] and after it...I have to think...how I can translate it from [my first language] into Lithuanian...do you understand what I mean...that's why I think it is difficult for me (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

*Not being able to speak about oneself in Lithuanian when engaging in conversations* by only producing fragments of the language, having to go through the paradigms – the inflection of words by case, gender and number, as normally required, and having to translate from Lithuanian into one's language first, in order to understand what the word meant - were the main causes stated by adult learners. It is interesting to note that despite the fact that many hours of study were allotted for learning grammar and vocabulary, in isolation, this did not seem to help learners engage in conversations, probably because they lacked knowledge on how to use verb tenses or cases, for example, or did not have the right words to use to express a view, feeling, or opinion, that is, *they were not familiar with functions in Lithuanian*.

Interestingly, during the lessons, an adult learner seemed to be facing more difficulties, given the constant demand for grammar accuracy, on the part of teachers. Moreover, *having little time to speak and having to speak very fast, because the teacher had a lot to do and present to them*, was also a perception, as *Student6* noted:



*Illustration 66*

can't say it is so difficult for me to speak Lithuanian...but difficult when I speak at our university... because every time I am thinking about... how it will be....verbs...how it will be correct endings and so on... (...) I will prefer to be silent...yeah...and for example...during our communication lessons...we need to speak very fast...very quickly...because our teacher would like to make so much...do so much...during our lesson...and we have so many exercises...and that's why...and she would like to ask everybody to tell something...and you can say only a few sentences...and very fast...and every time I think that they [teachers] are waiting... when I finish [my speech] (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

In this sense, it appears that these adult learners were reproducing the same pattern they had in the classroom, as our previous analyses have shown: they were conditioned to translate the Lithuanian word into a language, followed by repetitive exercises that required word agreements, according to case, gender and number. Thus, this adult learner did not take a more active part, and could not be the *subject* of his / her own discourse.

Still under the category of ability, **not being able to pronounce** the words was also clearly stated:

*Illustration 67*

The few times I tried Lithuanian in the beginning... I learnt... first of all... a bit my myself... that's almost impossible... you don't get the intonation right... you mispronounce every single word (Student7 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 68*

then pronunciation is getting harder for me as well...so...you make more mistakes... we cannot pronounce very well (Student 14 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 69*

I think that the most difficult thing in Lithuanian is the pronunciation there's no question... (Student17 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 70*

Well...to start...I can't pronounce my R's ...which I am sure you noticed it...and it just makes a lot of the words (Student19 / 21-30 years old)

According to *Student7*, who had attempted to learn the language on a self-study basis, not only was the pronunciation of every word difficult, but also the intonation. Interestingly, as time went by, the pronunciation of words seemed to get more difficult for *Student14*, a permanent resident in the country, married to a Lithuanian citizen. In addition, as noted by *Student 17* – a doctoral student in applied linguistics – there was no doubt that *the most difficult thing in Lithuanian was the pronunciation*. Finally, *Student 19*, an English native speaker doing linguistics, made it clear that the letter R is used in the spelling of many words, and that sound was very hard to produce from the perspective of a British English speaker.

As a matter of fact, intonation and accentuation are not so easy to master in a very short period of time, due to words being inflected by cases, which in turn 'alter' the quality of sounds, in terms of their accent marks and stressed syllables, as already noted. Moreover, no exercises in the main course book were exclusively devised for pronunciation practice; on few occasions such an emphasis was placed in the classroom. As far as the setting and educational resources were concerned, no language labs were in use in the premises and only one book on Lithuanian pronunciation was published in 2004, as a supplementary material to be used by more advanced learners. It may be assumed that such a skill is not seen as essential to be developed at lower levels, despite its high degree of complexity.

Other important perceived difficulties attributed to ability were those of **not being a good language learner, being too old to learn a language, and having a different learning pace:**

*Illustration 71*

you are not a natural linguist... he [a classmate from the same country] is not a natural linguist either...he is a person ...who is like myself... who is not used to... what the hell does nominative mean...what does genitive mean...what does that mean...and to learn a language...without another basis of another language...and not a natural gift...he is not a linguist... (Student21 / 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 72*

I am just finding it difficult...perhaps because...I can only put it down to my age and being English ...I think...and a lot of our classes...let's say...younger students...and I think...European students...not counting English... and they do more languages at school...so...I think that's why... and I think that Student31 is finding it quite difficult as well...probably...we are a bit older and from England...this is something that says more... (Student33 / 41-50 years old)

As can be clearly seen, not having a natural gift for languages or not being a natural linguist were important reasons given for the perceived difficulty in learning Lithuanian. Needless to say, these perceptions were mainly formed by English native speakers (i.e., English, Irish, Americans, and Canadians) as well as those who learned English as their first or second language (i.e., Indians). Likewise, being old to learn a language was perceived by adults ranging from 21 to 50 years of age – in their majority, English native speakers:

*Illustration 73*

I didn't have to learn any language in school through grammar... so... at this age... learning the first language... with grammar... equally side by side... I find it a little difficult (Student2 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 74*

I don't want to be a typical English and not bother and it's up to me to try and be able to communicate with people in their language...I believe so...I am just finding it difficult...perhaps because...I can only put it down to my age (Student33 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 75*

maybe because we are older or something...and we have to go back...after not studying anywhere...but when you are sitting down and you need more time to look up at the tables...and look at the forms of the verbs... and then think it through (Student 31/ 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 76*

( ) the time I am doing question number one and trying to work out some logic out of it...the others have almost finished...so you don't want to keep a lot of people back ... in the sense that ...they get bored (Student31 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 77*

sometimes when I do not understand something in the class and I don't want to interrupt because many people want to ask something I just sit and try to make it up...I am always finding the solution...and if I don't I go to the teacher and ask *what's going on? Why this is here and not here...I don't understand it* ...then...all of the cases...until now...I have found out by myself...sometimes it takes time...but anyway...I know how to do it (Student37 / 21-30 years old)

Interestingly, *having a different learning pace* – being slower or wanting to have more time to look for information and arrive at an understanding of how the Lithuanian language works, was noted by adult learners aged 21 -50; in other words, younger students (i.e., *Student31*) also seemed to have formed such a perception.

In considering the way that new information is presented in the classroom - many items of information, usually presented in isolation, in a considerable limited period of time (e.g., 16 verbs within a time-span of 9 minutes; the neutral form of adjectives and 6 prepositions of place, both in about 15 minutes) - chances are that these adult learners have really experienced great difficulty in following the information.

Despite being relatively small in number, perceptions of **being unable to spell the words** were also formed:

*Illustration 78*

[I have difficulty] spelling the words and writing as well...a lot of nuances...points...I think it is not so easy to write (...) for example šiandien ...today I couldn't write didelis... I forgot... I "ilga or trumpa" [short or long vowel]... So it's difficult (Student5 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 79*

For example...if I listen others speaking...Lithuanian speaking... it is difficult for me ...because I don't know which letter...but it's difficult...for example...ačiū...I don't know writing [the spelling] (Student41 / 15-20 years old)

As we can see from these illustrations, *Student5* – a permanent resident aged 21-30 - stated having difficulties spelling Lithuanian words having particular letters that normally represent short or long vowels. Likewise, *Student41* – a temporary resident aged 15-20 – also mentioned having difficulties to find typical words in a dictionary (e.g., *ačiū* / thanks) as its spelling was unknown.

Two main facts may have contributed to such a perception: firstly, the lack of exercises focusing on spelling acquisition especially in the main course book; and, secondly, the frequent method employed to negotiate meaning via oral explanations of concepts and definitions of words in the classroom. As a result, adult learners did not ‘visualize’ the words; even when the words were spelt, the many steps taken (e.g., writing things down, looking up other words in a dictionary, among others) may have had an impact on the spelling acquisition process. Therefore, in case there was a need to write these words down, learners had difficulty in producing an accurate written form of the word. On top of that, no lessons were used to develop study skills, such as using a Lithuanian dictionary. Hence the difficulty in looking up these words.

Finally, under *the learner domain*, few perceptions were formed in terms of a learner **not having confidence** or **not making an effort**, as shown below:

*Illustration 80*

when I am speaking I don't have a lot of time to...to remember what kind of word is this ...what is the ending...what case I might use...how to say this...it is too much embarrassing (Student10 / 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 81*

I didn't do it at first because I was kind of shy about it (...) you know...sometimes they don't always understand me (Student22 / 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 82*

I kind wished I learned more than I have...I think it is probably my fault...not applying myself a little more (Student23 / 15-20 years old)

As the above mentioned extracts show, not having confidence to speak Lithuanian was mainly perceived by students between 15 and 40 years of age, for fear of people not understanding them, as mentioned by *Student22*, or not having enough time to remember the endings or cases to use, as noted by *Student10*. On the other hand, not making an effort was the reason for not having learned more than *Student23* – aged 15-20 - had expected. Such characteristics of a personal nature were difficult to observe and measure; nevertheless, once more, the few opportunities to speak Lithuanian during the lessons, from a discourse perspective, may have also contributed to this perception when learners attempted to speak outside the classroom.

### 5.2.2 The *environment* domain: lack of appropriate educational resources, task difficulty, Lithuanian as a system & non-participation in society

Of all reasons stated by adult learners under this domain (522), lack of (or inappropriate) educational resources ranked first (274/52%), followed by particularities of the Lithuanian language system (139/27%), and lack of participation (or opportunity to practice) in society (109/21%), as we now move on to discuss.

In analysing the perceived difficulties related to the **lack of educational resources**, these were firstly classified into *classroom activities* (186/68%), which were also subdivided into *task complexity & difficulty* (95/51%), and *design & implementation* (91/49%) at classroom level.

With regard to **task difficulty**, the main perception was that of having *too many grammar-focused exercises* (37/39%), followed by *a presentation of too many words at a time* (15/16%), which in turn required *too many steps*, were *time-consuming*, and *placed high demands on memory* (14/15%). Along with those, *complex instructions or use of jargon*, mainly in Lithuanian (11/12%), and the *extensive use of translation* into English or Russian, especially at lower levels (10/11%), were also important perceptions that contributed to difficulty in learning Lithuanian. Finally, although very small in number, *too-demanding exam tasks* (8/7%) in comparison to those performed in the classroom, were also perceived as a difficulty by a more advanced learner who had reached the highest level of studies.

The following illustrations are intended to provide the reader with a detailed description, in terms of having many **grammar- focused lessons**:

#### *Illustration 83*

Lectures are very useful to get acquaintance how Lithuanian grammar is “organized” !!!  
(Student3 / 60+ years old, emphasis in the original text)

#### *Illustration 84*

grammar... it's a part...a little part of the lesson (...) because we normally we have not speak about academia ...we speak normally to go in a café ... restaurants... to go to cinema... to go to theatre... we have to learn standard language... but also ... also normal ... popular language (Student4 / 51-60 years old)

#### *Illustration 85*

so the problem like we have...we are focusing too much on the grammar...but I am not trying actually to remember the actual words ... we need the words obviously ... to apply the grammar to (Student31 / 41-50 years old)

In the aforementioned examples, adult learners aged 41 – 60+ clearly mentioned that the main focus of the lectures were on *how Lithuanian grammar is organized*, as noted by *Student3*; instead, ‘more popular’ language should be learned, via

situations, such as going to a café, restaurant or the cinema, given the fact that *grammar is supposed to be a little part of the lesson*, as mentioned by *Student4*, and further emphasized by *Student31* who stated that *we are focusing too much on the grammar*, as opposed to enhancing memory processes which are required to remember the words later.

By the same token, adults aged between 21 and 30 mentioned that at that level of studies, the emphasis was on learning all the combinations of words, such as verbs, and their prefixes, in a mechanical fashion, without necessarily understanding what the words meant, as the following illustrations show:

*Illustration 86*

this level...of learning language [beginner's] you have to learn **nuvalgyti... suvalgyti... pavalgyti...** papapapa... that's ... you know just ... we eat (Student13 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 87*

when I have to write some words or do this...studijuoji... studijuoame... studijuoate... stud... it's a lot of information for me...you know (Student42 / 21-30 years old)

Having in mind the complexity of this language, *Student7* – aged between 41-50 – that in order to attend the regular course would take time off from work, contended that Lithuanian is very complex from a grammatical perspective; so, if they were first required to work with the bits and pieces and try to put them together later, not only would this be **time-consuming**, but also place **high demands on cognition**. This student added that such an action *takes a lot of brain capacity and a lot of time*:

*Illustration 88*

Lithuanian has a tremendously complicated grammar ...and if you construct your sentences with grammar...you need like when you work with a mathematical formula...and you have to think of ten things... grammatical rules to make one piece of sentence... and if I concentrate really hard I get eighty per cent right...but that means that every sentence is wrong (...) and that takes a lot of brain capacity and a lot of time (...) and now I have to construct like mathematically with the grammar... every single word (Student7 / 41-50 years old)

Similarly, another regular student- *Student14*, aged 21-30 - attending the course in a different group and year - perceived the same difficulty, considering the need to match each and every word given, accordingly, to produce *even one small sentence*:

*Illustration 89*

for us now you know constructing sentences is really hard...especially for me... because you have to match everything...you know...according the endings... you know...so it is very hard for me...so it takes for me a long time to construct even one small sentence (Student14 / 21-30 years old)

Having taking these statements into consideration, it is vital to note that the content analysis carried out in this study has shown that a great number of hours was intended

for teaching *grammar* and *vocabulary* as separate subjects, especially from the second semester of the basic course onwards. In addition, *grammar* and *vocabulary* were also the main focus of the exercises in the learning material, and the majority of exercises done by learners during the lessons observed in this study. Thus, it can be assumed that learners' perceptions in this sense are a reflection of the way the course and materials were designed, and, finally, the way the lessons were delivered.

Despite the great emphasis on grammar and vocabulary given in the classroom, which is supposed to be *a window to Lithuania through which learners are connected to the real world*, as *Student13* put it, it appears that adult learners were not able to apply the linguistic knowledge outside the classroom, whenever there was a real need. For instance, situations in which adult learners were required to buy a stamp or an envelope at the post office, read the words aloud on a menu, when ordering food at a local restaurant, or take part in the local events in which the main vocabulary could be used – were not part of the study programme:

*Illustration 90*

I came here with the newspaper... you know... last day we were talking about birds... and I found today... on the newspaper I have...that yesterday was the... the day of the birds here...in Lithuania and... they have all these activities...and we don't know... we didn't know ... and I get angry... you know... because... sometimes the class is a way to... it's a... a window to Lithuania ... and you have to be connected to the real... we are not in a bubble you know (Student13 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 91*

I would like to practise those everyday phrases... everyday language situations more (...) In shop... or in restaurants... post offices... because I still don't know how to say a stamp... an envelope...something like that (Student38 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 92*

I don't know a lot of vocabulary...I'd like to know more... more food...I mean...we learned the basics...you know...but more dishes and stuff...I'd like to go to restaurants and be able to pronounce the food on the menu (...) more specific...it's just very general we are learning... because my relatives are very specific (Student30 / 15-20 years old)

Apart from the lack of real life activities and a great focus on grammar, adults clearly expressed their **dissatisfaction with having to memorize rules or learning by heart**, mainly *without understanding*:

*Illustration 93*

I am not a language person...and I've told you before...like...I didn't have to learn any language in school through grammar... so... at this age... learning the first language... with grammar... equally side by side... I find it a little difficult (Student2 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 94*

you cannot be all the time...conscious...about this...you have to systematize...you have to make it part of you...that's the point ... I know that IŠ PLUS KO? and...tėvo...namo...I know...but take it out ... namo ... tėvo...ir gyvenimo...that's labai paprastas [very common] but when you want to speak fluently...and when you want to make sentences of three hundred

kilometers...like Lithuanians are used to do it...to be fluent...it is impossible...or to make metaphor...you have to read a lot...or you have to memorize systems...sentences and then repeat it...I don't know...I don't get the language (Student13 / 21 – 30)

*Illustration 95*

not having any background...not fresh out of school (...) *What does nominative mean?... What does genitive mean exactly? We don't understand... Switch to genitive* [teacher's command]... OK...*what the heck she's even asking? ... what does that mean?* (...) I am not a [linguist] I mean.... rote learning will only take you to parts ... for the linguists...it really doesn't matter...they are so good ...they can learn...they can sit there with the book...and knock it out and go (Student21/ 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 96*

I haven't taken the time to think up of strategies...I only try to memorize as much as possible and learn by heart...but it is very difficult...it is so unusual (...) maybe it is more difficult...because you also have to understand why...*why does this word take this case in this situation...and in this sentence...why...and...* I think it is very difficult to find the rules for when to use ... that case... and ...that case so you get very confused and...that's the bad part (Student26 / 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 97*

[I would like to understand endings and put together sentences] because I am a Science person...and a Math person...so I am into structure...and understanding this structure so that I can use it...that's just the way I am...it's not so...much...I don't like to just wing it ...I like to really understand everything...so that's just the way I am...it takes me longer...to learn things that way...but it is just a personal preference (Student34 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 98*

I never liked learning by heart and I never ...I guess ... I never did it in my life...but this is a problem... I mean... if I can have my table with me...then I will get used to using it again and again ... I will learn it...if I use the vocabulary...the vocabulary I practise...and I learn it...but if I have to take this paper [shows me a handout used in the lessons] and learn ...I will not remember anything....it's no use (Student36 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 99*

I just am not satisfied with learning by heart this ending is here...and this is here...you have to learn it and that's OK...I want to know why it is here and why another case is not here...this is my philological way of thinking...I want to understand...I just don't like learning only by heart...I need to understand...why it's here...why it's not here (Student37 / 21-30 years old).

Regardless of their age-groups (i.e., 15-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50), gender (i.e., female or male), or countries of origin, these learners expressed concern with the approach that was normally required of them. As noted by *Student21*, who had an educational background in psychology, *rote learning will only take you to parts*; in other words, it will not allow you to negotiate full meaning and construct a clear picture of how Lithuanian language works. This view seemed to be shared by *Student37*, who had background knowledge in linguistics, by clearly stating not being *satisfied with learning by heart this ending is here...and this is here...you have to learn it and that's OK*. Younger students also seemed to have difficulties: although *Student26* tried to learn the words by heart, there was a need to understand the



reasons for using a specific case - *why does this word take this case in this situation...and in this sentence.*

Older students also seemed very puzzled over such an approach, such as *Student2* who was not used to *learning language and grammar equally side by side*, and *Student13*, who seemed to have learned a few rules, such as *iš + ko* (genitive case), and clearly remembered a few simple words, but had problems remembering other words, and strongly believed there should be a different approach, as it seemed really impossible to learn Lithuanian and function in society as Lithuanians do, despite having spent 1,5 years in the country if such a methodology were employed. *Student 36*, also aged 21-30, clearly noted that learning by heart had never been a preferred technique; thus, it would not work at that time either, considering taking a handout and filling gaps with specific prepositions or verb tenses would not help this adult learner remember the language. Instead, using and practising the vocabulary, mostly by engaging in conversations, would help this learner remember the words. Finally, *Student34*, aged 40+, mentioned not being happy with just going over things superficially and applying rules – as *a Science person*, it would be necessary to take longer to understand how things worked before attempting to use this language.

Furthermore, **complex instructions**, including the use of specific linguistic terms in Lithuanian, along with the **presentation of too many words at a time**, the **extensive use of translation of words** into English or Russian, especially at the beginning of the course, were clearly mentioned by some participants:

*Illustration 100*

sometimes it's not clear what they want that I do (...) the instruction is not clear (...) it would be better if there was also in English ... a short explanation of what they expect (Student 3 / 60+ years old)

*Illustration 101*

Thursday...took me about...a good two hours...cause...to read a person who's telling ...describing ... it was quite a long dialogue ... I had to go back to my book and translate nearly every word before really I could get to the answers (Student15 / 31-40 years old)

*Illustration 102*

I think it is not very useful introduce many... many verbs... many... many words... a page... it's impossible to remember...to remember too many verbs... it is important to repeat ... to use the verbs.... or example... dabar....dabar...now...now we are doing (...) it's important to say...in the morning... I get up ...I wash my....situation to explain ... to speak in situation... (Student4/ 51-60 years old)

*Illustration 103*

there is a lot of verbs that belongs to a very specific plants...or specific...I don't know... weather changes...or weather cases...that are very close to Lithuania...and for me there isn't even in my own language...and it's for me it was like impossible to get it... the idea (...) for

example...gyvūnai... animals... let's go to the botanic or to the zoo... to see what is this animal... not in a lesson... without any picture... without nothing... just telling in Lithuanian what is this animal...you know....for me it is like crazy (Student13/ 21-30 years old)

As can be seen, *unclear instructions*, mainly written in Lithuanian, were believed to contribute to the perceived difficulty expressed by *Student3* – aged 60+. In similar vein, *Student15*, stated having to spend about 2 hours just to translate the words of a long text before being able to do the reading comprehension questions.

Furthermore, the presentation of many words, verbs, and nouns, in isolation was not a useful approach in terms of facilitating memory processes, according to *Student4* – aged 51-60. An alternative would be their presentation in everyday-life situations, as noted by this adult learner, who had also been involved in teacher professional development contexts, as far as foreign languages were concerned.

Likewise, *Student13* clearly noted that the vocabulary entailed learning different words that were not part of his/her culture or reality; explanations in Lithuanian without any pictures were difficult to follow: *let's go to the botanic or to the zoo to see what is this animal... not in a lesson without any picture... just telling in Lithuanian what is this animal*. In short, these students seemed not to understand why they needed to know so many words that were very specific to Lithuanian fauna and flora, considering they would not use them while performing daily tasks.

As a matter of fact, one or two pages of the learning material were dedicated to learning vocabulary, normally presented under a theme; nevertheless, all words – nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs - were not listed under any categories or groups. Moreover, the presentation of new information had its starting point the vocabulary list: the words were read aloud, and then translated into English (at times, into Russian), especially at lower levels. Negotiation of meaning was mainly attained by translation of words or phrases, followed by teacher-generated examples. Visuals were scarce: black and white sketches of the materials for some of the words; classroom objects or those belonging to the participants were also used as visual aids. On few occasions, teachers would use pictures from magazines, but mainly to provide learners with extra practice and not to expose them to the topic or situation.

An important aspect to note is that the learning material is written exclusively in Lithuanian language (no alternative language was used for writing the instructions to the exercises). This could also have contributed to the formation of perceived difficulties, in terms of having specific terms in the classroom. Thus, in this sense,

once more, learners' perceptions and the findings obtained from the content analysis of materials and lesson observations seem to be equivalent.

In the following extracts, adult learners noted the **use of literal translation** as not contributing to their general comprehension:

*Illustration 104*

In each languages there are some words that we cannot translate in exactly way and we can use them only in this situation....you know... you shouldn't translate ... and we should use them in sentences sometimes... when I see a new word... I make sentences (...) It is easier to remember (Student5 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 105*

You know that language can play on words...So for example for us [two English native speakers] in that class...some of the expressions are everything ...this is rude...or impolite ... or in double meaning or something...some of the lines...which are in a direct translation from Lithuanian... it's like... so funny....so [we] ...just look at each other... because you can't translate (...) I like the Lithuanian *swimming by boat*... (Student31 / 41-50)

*Illustration 106*

so perhaps I shouldn't translate...I should just try to understand what is being said... and use the appropriate [forms] as opposed to translating each word...it is something I need to try...I am trying to do it now...because of something that I have found very earlier on here...I shouldn't try to translate at all...because it doesn't make sense...in English sense (Student33/ 41-50)

In the first extract, *Student5*, who is a Russian native speaker, made it clear that the **words should be used in sentences**, as opposed to being translated, because *it is easier to remember*. Moreover, two English native speakers, adult learners, aged 41-50 shared the same view. As *Student31* noted, some of the literal translations had double meaning or did not sound appropriate, such as *swimming by boat*. Likewise, *Student33* believed another approach should be taken, considering **the translations at word or phrase level did not make sense to an English native speaker**; in this student's words: *I should just try to understand what is being said and use the appropriate [forms] as opposed to translate each word*.

Still, the design of activities were also an issue, in terms of **lack of speaking tasks**, which in turn were labeled as **non-motivating** or **non-challenging tasks**. In this category, the non-use of media resources was also clearly noted by learners. Below, as a matter of illustration, three students stated their perceived *lack of speaking tasks*:

*Illustration 107*

right now you spend more time listening to too many people and I think unless you start talking... you won't learn...much listening is...when you live in Lithuania... you don't need to listen from anybody else... you can just go out and you do the same thing... you don't come to a class to listen... you just go into the market or supermarket (Student2 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 108*

I think only in the classroom ... I would like to speak more and more ... I think that it is not enough ... not enough that we don't...talk...speak...talk enough I think...we write....we do many exercises but we do not repeat enough... don't speak enough about the same structure... grammar structure [in] dialogue (Student4 / 51-60 years old)

*Illustration 109*

you know that we can speak...during our lesson...only during communication lesson yeah...only this lesson...and in my group we have about...ten...twelve students...can you imagine...how much can I say during our lessons?... one lesson and ten or twelve students... and our teacher asks everybody...student by student...to say something...a little bit...and you can say a few... sentences and that's all...it's not communication... and that's why...if we have only two lessons per week...you won't be able to speak...and to remember these words (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

As noted by *Student2*, a permanent resident in the country, the lack of speaking tasks had an impact on the communication process, considering much listening [to the teacher or other students] was not very useful, especially *when you live in Lithuania you don't need to listen from anybody else... you can just go out and you do the same*. Moreover, *Student4* stated that although many exercises were done, little was devoted to speaking using the grammar structures in conversations or dialogues - *we don't talk...speak...talk enough I think*. In similar vein, *Student6*- who was attending the last level of studies when the interview was conducted noted that the only lesson they could speak was "communication" (twice a week). Still, given the fact that there were over 10 students in the classroom, little time was given to them to speak, and this would have an impact on remembering the new words: *our teacher asks everybody...student by student...to say something...a little bit...and you can say a few... sentences and that's all...it's not communication*.

In this sense, as the analysis of the study programme has shown, only 60 hours per semester were allotted for speaking and writing *together*, as opposed to 120 hours for grammar and 60 hours for vocabulary, which were taught in isolation, starting from the second semester of the basic course. Likewise, very few activities were devised with a focus on speaking, as far as the learning material is concerned. Similarly, despite the individual efforts of teachers in providing students with the opportunity to speak, by devising some information gap exercises, most of the time was devoted to learning grammar and vocabulary (e.g., verb tenses, cases, prepositions, adjectives).

Another important perception formed by adult learners was that of working on *non-challenging* and *non-motivating tasks*:

*Illustration 110*

there is some short themes...short dialogues...while the lessons...for example...the activities with dialogues [in the course book] are very... very... very limited... not very important (Student4 / 51-60 years old)

*Illustration 111*

during our leksika [vocabulary lesson]...we have new words about animals...after it...we have ...writing and communication...and we have the same topic...about animals...and for example... what we have to do...at home...for example...to *write some letter...about your animals to your friends*...for example...and now it is only writing...and you have to do it...if you would like to pass exams...you have to do it...but you know...not very ... so interesting topic I mean (...) but I think we have democracy...and that's why...we should have several topics from which you can choose.... (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 112*

[we need different types of lessons] everyday...when I go...for example...to tekstų supratimas... I know what we are going to do...every time the same...we need to read...we need to understand...and reply the questions...and the same construction in the lesson ... the same construction...topic ... after it a question...or for example...you need to answer to this question...or you need to write true or false (...) during this lesson ... we sometimes...listen...sometimes we only read the text...after the text we need to reply ...questions...It's so similar to these text (that we get)...to this conversation...*you shouldn't think...do you know what I mean...do you see what I mean...you need to be very observant ir viskas ...and that's all* (...) but if you don't know some words...you can't reply (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 113*

OK I have cards and... I have one card...and my the pavadinimas [name] is kiškis [rabbit] and you have another...it is pardavėjas [shop assistant]... so you have to tell me... what is the word...you have... and I have to... [explain] and another thing... *I have to describe what you wear...it is so boring for me*... it is so boring ... to describe what you wear... *it is so boring to*... a lot of classes we have a striukė... šalikas... you know... sometimes the language lessons became boring...and...people...eh...flew away... (Student13 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 114*

for example...lesson from leksika [vocabulary lesson]...it is a lot of (information)...and sometimes ...very...useful information...*it is not interesting...it is not a motivation* (...) one lesson was gyvūnai ...animals...I don't have animals at home...I don't have (...) to write advice...or for example...*give advice to some friends to look after a pet*... I didn't know (...) I didn't have pets in my whole life...no dogs...no tortoise...no birds...so it's like...it is not joined to my life (Student13 / 21-30 years old).

*Illustration 115*

[in the classroom] *write a letter to a friend who wants to spend a holiday in Lithuania* ... choose internet...you know...search by yourself...it is not a real situation...it is not my real situation (Student13 / 21-30 years old).

By analysing the choice of words adult learners used to express their views, it is clearly stated that the mini-dialogues were *very limited* and not *very important*, as noted by *Student4*, aged 51-60. Moreover, some of the activities devised by teachers, such as explaining what words in some flash cards meant, like 'rabbit' or 'assistant', while working in pairs, or having to describe what other adults were wearing, did not seem to be very interesting, in the words of *Student13* - *I have to describe what you*

*wear... it is so boring for me.* Finally, at higher levels, writing activities which required asking for advice on how to look after a pet, or having to describe domestic animals to friends were not perceived as interesting either, as stated by *Student6*, *you have to do it...but you know... not very interesting topic.* It is interesting to note, however, that both students who took part twice in this study, formed a similar perception, despite belonging to different levels: *Student13* was also required to write a letter to friends about pets or domestic animals; such a task was perceived as not joined to this adult learner's life, as previously stated.

Perhaps, if adults had been asked to work on a real-life problem, such a perception would have not been formed. For instance, when learning vocabulary about clothes, they could have role-played a situation in which someone had gone missing and there was a need to provide a physical description at the police station, firstly by phone, and then, perhaps, locally by talking to an officer. When learning about pets, adults could engage in more 'strategic thinking', listing the pros and cons of having a specific pet (e.g., a dog, a cat, a bird, a horse, an iguana), by taking into account the type of accommodation (big or small, city or countryside), specific family members (e.g., elderly people, business people, children, newborn babies), among others.

Another important perception was that stated by *Student6*, who achieved the highest levels of study (i.e., advanced group). According to this adult, the same pattern of lesson delivery and exercise was employed: questions would require the exact recognition of a few words extracted from a reading or listening passage: *you shouldn't think... you need to be very observant.* Such a pedagogical approach was said to not contribute to sustain the motivation to attend that lesson in particular.

With regard to the learning material, most of the texts were pedagogically devised. This is to say that authentic materials were not used except for one occasion on which learners learned about the weather and saw a forecast in the local newspaper. Furthermore, dialogues were indeed short and not necessarily connected, despite being related to the main topic of the unit. Moreover, black and white sketches of animals were often used as illustrations, even if the topic was not related to the local fauna and flora. Thus, judging by the age groups of the students attending the courses, the lack of authenticity and frequent drawings of animals may have contributed to the perceived lack of interesting tasks. On top of that, activities having a problem to solve were non-existent; the main social role played, when assigned, was that of a student,

classmate or friend. This could also have had a great impact on the formation of these perceptions, from an adult perspective.

Another significant perception formed by adults was related to the **non-use of media resources**:

*Illustration 116*

[we should] listen...listen...hear...it's important to hear... radio... television... audiovisual documents... documentary...short films...it exists...I think you can ... you can record television... just ten minutes (Student4 / 51-60 years old)

*Illustration 117*

one day let's see a movie ... in Lithuanian language ... we could do it... why not? ... in the classroom... why not? we have four hours here (Student13 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 118*

I believe there should be more on listening and drill phase in the lesson... for example in a language lab (...) Constructing a sentence in Lithuanian is so complicated because extensive grammar... it would be easier if you can remember certain sentences structures (Student7 / 41-50 years old)

According to *Student4*, the local radio, short films, documentaries and other audiovisual texts could have been used in the classroom - *it exists... I think you can record television... just ten minutes*. Similarly, *Student13* stated that they should have seen a film in Lithuanian, considering the great number of hours they used to spend in the classroom every day: *we have four hours here... we could do it*. Finally, *Student7* believed there should have been an alternative way to learning the grammar, rather than working on fragments and trying to build sentences: *a listening and drill phase in the lesson ...for example in a language lab*, as this would have helped them *remember certain sentence structures*.

Despite the fact that the classrooms were equipped with a TV set, video equipment, and a CD player, the media stated herein by these adults were not observed in use. In one of the lessons, the teacher mentioned having brought a video for students to see. However, such a video would only expose learners to images of places and cities in Lithuania – no dialogues had been recorded. Thus, that day, learners would not be exposed to Lithuanian language in use, from a discourse perspective. Finally, a language lab was not part of the course design – learners would not work there individually or with the support of a teacher.

Ultimately, as far as *classroom tasks* are concerned, in the following examples, we can see the perceptions of the students who took part in this study twice, thus, contributing to **the longitudinal component** in this research:

*Illustration 119*

**Student6 / 21-30 years old**

**2006 (at the end of the first semester /basic course)**

*Questionnaire:* I would like to be more active, that's why we have already known many new words and rules. But it's very difficult to have in mind all grammar and words without regular practice. It will be better if we have different tasks such as writing and composition of stories in the various spheres, talking about many subjects. And I would like to have more practical homework

*Interview:* I think... it will better... it will be useful for us that we choose any sphere ... different spheres...culture...national culture and history...the sphere...that all students a little bit know about it...and they can write and after it we can communicate....and discuss these themes ... it will be better... I think, because we will (have) chance to communicate

**2008 (at the end of the advanced course)**

*Questionnaire:* we need different types of lessons

*Interview:* In our lessons... I have to read and to speak about nature... villages... about flowers... about animals... about rivers...and so on...but usually I read text about economy policy...so it is very different (...) but for me it is really very difficult because I don't know these so special topics...the words from special topics...and they don't have pictures...during our leksika lesson...but I have visual memory...and for me it is easier to remember these words... for example... about animals... about rivers... about nature because... last time for example...we had leksika...lesson about nature...but sorry...I don't use so many new words in my native language (Student 6 / 21-30 years old).

Upon analysis, it can be seen that *Student6* clearly stated 'the wish to be more active by doing other tasks with a focus on communication', rather than focusing on vocabulary and grammar, after almost having completed the first semester of studies, at the beginner's course. After reaching the end of the advanced course, the perception remained the same: *we need different types of lessons*, consider these would normally focus on animals, nature, and villages rather than topics related to this adult learner's needs and wants. Apart from that, it is clearly noted that this student was a visual learner and the lessons were delivered in such a way that did not address this particular learning style (i.e., lack of visuals and colours).

Similarly, the content analysis of the data obtained from the interviews carried out with the second adult learner showed a similar stance:

*Illustration 120*

**Student13 / 21-30 years old**

**2007 (at the end of the first semester – basic course)**

we came from another ... very different cultures... and so it is very nice... every day or every week ... to present...to talk about you and your world... because...that's why sometimes it is difficult ... to speak... the text... in the books are very good... but sometimes...they speak about another person... another lives... and you have to pass all this information to ...your own world... so the class... must be...this space where you ... at home... you make... you know... this big presentation (...) and you bring to the class and you share with your partners



**2008 (at the end of the second semester of the basic course)**

I always have to attend the class...sit and study how... two thousand types of flowers even there isn't in my country...that's the point... even I didn't smell... I didn't see it...it is like virtual...virtual knowledge (...) *I don't wanna repeat anymore this... labas aš esu [student's name] iš [student's country]...man labai įdomu gyventi čia... stop... it was like one year repeating this... stop .... I want to express to my own ideas (...) not just vocabulary (...) I came here to live like a Lithuanian... that's the point... you have to think... the language built you.... build your thought... in some ways...I need to think like Lithuanians...that's the point (Student13 / 21-30 years old)*

At the end of the first semester of studies *Student13* noted that it would be interesting if students could share their own views and talk about themselves, as opposed to using the information from the book only, considering the nature of the texts: *they speak about another person... another lives... and you have to pass all this information to your own world.* At the end of the second semester (after ~ 600 hours of study), this student's perceptions also remained unchanged, given the type of activities performed: *one year repeating this... stop .... I want to express to my own ideas.* In addition, this adult learner also stated having to learn many words related to fauna and flora that were not indigenous to his/her country of origin, without any pictures or having a first-hand experience, despite living in Lithuania. Thus, sitting for 4 hours in a classroom would eventually result in *virtual knowledge*. Such an approach – reproduction - was not seen as satisfactory, considering this learner, of Lithuanian descent, came to this country not only to learn vocabulary but also *to live like a Lithuanian* and go back and help form a Lithuanian theatre at the local community, situated in another continent.

When comparing both perceptions, some similarities can be found: at the end of the first semester of studies, both students believed that they should have taken a more active role by doing other types of social activities: as classmates belonged to different cultures, they could have contributed by sharing their views on different topics. Thus, both of them believed there should have been a focus on production of knowledge and real communication, given the emphasis on topics such as Lithuanian fauna and flora, which differed considerably from their own countries, presented without any visual aids, mainly by literal explanations in Lithuanian (both were attending higher levels in 2008). It is vital to state that, despite being of the same gender and age-group, these learners did not attend the course at the same time – *Student6* in 2006, and *Student13* in 2007; also, they belonged to different countries and hemispheres (i.e., *Student6* – Eastern hemisphere; *Student13* – Western hemisphere). Thus, considering both claimed having different learning styles, such a

pedagogical approach did not address learners' individual differences, thus, contributing to their perceived difficulties in this sense. Moreover, such an approach did not seem to facilitate Lithuanian language learning in adulthood.

Still, under the learning environment domain, **lack of supplementary materials**, such as *dictionaries, computer programmes, interactive educational resources*, and *alternative course books*, were clearly noted by adults who took part in this study.

In these extracts, we can clearly see learners' perceptions of **dictionaries**:

*Illustration 121*

what there is a great lack of is...materials to learn Lithuanian in English...for example...my dictionary... I have a big absolutely... sort of thick dictionary...and bilingual...and it doesn't write the accents... so you can't tell the intonation...you can't tell how things are pronounced... where the stress is...and it is important that you say....you know... ĭ benDRAbutĭ...and not ĭ BENDrabutĭ...especially because that for me... is more natural... when I first saw the word I said BENDrabutis... because that's how it seemed... and I still have trouble remembering to say BenDRAbutis... it is a dictionary that got a grammar written by a professor of Slavonic languages in London...but it is very...I mean...you know... I am a linguist and I find it very hard to understand...and it wouldn't be very helpful to... many learners...you know...it is a very densely... very scientifically written...not the most useful (Student24 / 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 122*

because I was fed up with this small dictionary ...because every time I was in the lecture and I wanted to find a sentence and as you have probably seen during these lectures I never want to use what we learnt ... I want to make more complicated sentences... to learn more words...I get used to searching more words and usually...I am searching a word...during five minutes...and then I ask the teacher how do you say... because I don't find it in here (Student36 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 123*

Lithuanian-English...English-Lithuanian... it's not so good... because too small... and not clear... because in Russian...for example...in English...in big dictionaries...in one word...all grammar...and tenses... here only translation... for example... gyventi [to live] in the dictionary they only give gyventi... and I have no other two forms gyvena...gyveno... like this...because this problem... it should be gyventi... all the forms ...future...and past...it would be very nice...if it were like this...it is also so useful...it makes you to improve your skills very fast...immediately (Student41 / 15-20 years old)

Full-size dictionaries were said to be too dense, complex and difficult to understand, as noted by *Student24: I am a linguist and I find it very hard to understand...and it wouldn't be very helpful to many learners...it is a very densely... very scientifically written...not the most useful*. Similarly, pocket-dictionaries did not seem to cater for the needs of learners either, considering the limited number of words, as stated by *Student36 - I am searching a word...during five minutes...and then I ask the teacher how do you say... because I don't find it in here*. In case the word was found, it would normally be followed by its literal translation, without any further information, as noted by *Student41: here only translation...for example...gyventi [to live] in the dictionary they only give gyventi*.

As a matter of fact, the content analysis of dictionaries has produced similar results: full-size dictionaries are complex and intended for more advanced learners (or language professionals); pocket dictionaries lack examples and information on how the words are pronounced in Lithuanian. Finally, the pocket-dictionaries were clearly devised for Lithuanian speakers learning a foreign language, and not a non-native speaker, or foreigner, learning Lithuanian.

Furthermore, the **lack of media resources** was also perceived as a difficulty that did not facilitate learning:

*Illustration 124*

of course we are beginners so I can't just go home and listen to the radio because it won't help me too much...there should be more basic texts for us...and I got some CDs from one of the teachers working here ... so I am trying to listen... (Student17 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 125*

for example...there's not a lot like... visuals... there was almost none...zero... almost zero... you know ...when you learn English there is a lot of this stuff that you can do that...the stuff that you can hear...and you go back...and some incredibly neat new programs that are really good like the Rosetta Stone<sup>100</sup> have you seen that? (...) there is a visual...they speak to you... you see your back...that's the kind of stuff that I can see images...and these kinds things repeat...repeat... repeat with image... picture...image...picture...that can be useful...but unfortunately...this kind of stuff doesn't exist in Lithuanian... at this point...students...like yourself... can get together with these institutes and come up with some...better materials...because...like I said...they're basic (Student21 / 31-40 years old)

The difficulty in finding alternative materials, such as interactive CD ROMS and other types of media resources was also mentioned by beginner students, as noted by *Student17*, as a beginner student: *I can't just go home and listen to the radio (...)* *there should be more basic texts for us.* This was also perceived by an older learner – *Student21* - who clearly noted the absence of visuals - *there was almost none... almost zero*, as well as the lack of interactive materials - *there is a visual...they speak to you... you see your back...that's the kind of stuff that I can see images...and these kinds things repeat... repeat... repeat with image... picture... image... picture... that can be useful... but unfortunately... this kind of stuff doesn't exist in Lithuanian.*

Such a perception goes along with the analysis conducted by this author: until 2009, only one CD ROM was available – a version of *Po Truputj*, released in 2001, and the electronic version of *Anglonas* – an electronic bilingual dictionary. An audio CD with basic conversation was launched in 2010, in which a learner is exposed the sentences in about 60 minutes. Apart from that, interactive media resources, such as the *Eurotalk Interactive Series* and the *Pimsleur recorded books*, are produced abroad,

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<sup>100</sup> Language learning software programme - <http://www.rosettastone.com/> accessed on April 14, 2010.

mostly available in other countries, targeted at an international audience, and sold online at a high cost (never used in the courses observed in this study or suggested to adults as supplementary materials).

In short, when learners took part in this study, the only source available to them at the local shops was the 2001 edition of *Po Truputį*; in that sense, such perceptions were indeed a reflection of our reality then. Even nowadays, newcomers attending courses locally may not be able to use the latest educational software produced abroad, given its cost, and non-availability at the local shops.

Still under this category, the overall impression of **lack of good alternative books**, especially targeted at English speakers (the majority of participants, in this study), was also perceived as an issue, as shown next:

*Illustration 126*

in Lithuanian there is very little... good material... very little... practically almost no worthwhile material... like German or Spanish ...lots of neat...fun stuff ( ) this book is the first in colour [*Mano ir Tavo Šalis Lietuva*] ...that looks like... kind of neat...so ( ) I bought it ...it helps me out just a little bit...and I know (...) this new book...it has a CD...the CD that comes along with it...is a higher speed...conversation that I can find no link to in the book (Student21/ 31-40 years old)

In the aforementioned extract, an adult learner aged over 30 stated having bought the following book - *Mano ir Tavo Šalis Lietuva* (Prosniakova and Stumbrienė, 2007), which indeed has several pictures and colours, considering it is intended for 11-14 year school children, mainly residing and studying in Lithuania. Therefore, all the instructions and basic information are written in Lithuanian. Apart from the fact that the student bought the CD, no link in the book could be found; in all likelihood, no audioscript was available (this seems to be a regular pattern in the books).

Moreover, this adult learner, who followed a non-formal education mode and paid for the studies, clearly expressed the wish to state the knowledge of Lithuanian in a job interview in the near future. Therefore, the student was also inclined to do some self-studying with the aid of supplementary materials:

*Illustration 127*

I have no pressure about the results... cause I have nothing to get more than the knowledge (...) I am not searching for any diploma...I will not get any diploma at the end...I am paying for my studies... I spent all my savings just for staying this semester... but what will I get at the end is only what I will have learned... and then I know that is something that still remains (...) I don't want to lie if I go to an interview and people ask me *what was the use?*... I want to say that I learned something...I want to say I have something more now (...) So it is useless to learn something...to lose it later...that's why I will buy the books and practise Lithuanian (...) like if I want to buy something...then I can buy the other book I guess [*Po truputį*]...and I would say that's it (Student36/ 21-30 years old)

Likewise, this student who had been an Erasmus in Lithuania a year before, and had just finished doing the summer course, stated the willingness to do some self-study, for fear of ‘losing the knowledge’. The problem, however, was that there were no upper-intermediate books available:

*Illustration 128*

I would like to buy the other upper-level books and study myself...and now I will find a job and work...and I can study in my free time...in Turkey...because...if I am studying...and if I will forget...it's bad...you know...why I am studying if I will forget...I should keep it alive (Student32 / 21-30 years old)

It is interesting to note that, despite belonging to different cultures and attending different courses, both learners used the same material - the brochure - and formed the same perception: *it is useless to learn something ... to lose it later* (Student36), and *if I am studying... and if I will forget...it's bad...why I am studying if I will forget?* (Student32). In that sense, both of them formed the perceived need to buy other materials to continue their studies upon returning to their countries of residence.

Having said this, it is important to note that the main course books in use locally are: *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos*, firstly released in 2001, with a possible reprint in 2004, being its short version produced in 2007, and *Po truputį*, firstly published in 1998, with a new edition launched in 2008. As previously discussed, both materials are written exclusively in Lithuanian, answer keys to exercises or recordings of the listening tasks are not provided. Therefore, it may be assumed that those books are not suitable for self-study use, especially by those who do not live in this country. Only recently have updated versions of self-study books been released, intended for a more international audience, living abroad: *Complete Lithuanian* – from the *Teach yourself series*, and *Colloquial Lithuanian*. Both materials were also published abroad, can be purchased online, at considerable high costs; hence the non-inclusion of such books in the study programmes of local courses.

Finally, the data was also sub-divided into two categories, under the same domain: inappropriate **course design** and **instruction**:

*Illustration 129*

Group has to be no more than 10 persons !!! (Student3 / 60+ years old, emphasis in the original text)

*Illustration 130*

right now I feel the group is a little big...once the group is smaller and each person gets more time to talk... if it's like six people instead of thirteen... immediately your time is doubled to talk...so immediately your course...what you get for like a month... or three months now is equally to like a six month course (Student2 / 21-30 years old)

As can be clearly seen from these extracts, the number of students seemed to be an issue. As noted by *Student3* aged 60+, there should not be more than 10 people in the same group. Similarly, according to *Student2*, having fewer people in the group would have an impact on the perceived cost/benefit ratio: *immediately your time is doubled to talk... so immediately your course... what you get for like a month... or three months now is equally to like a six month course*. It is vital to state that both students paid for the course; that is, they did not receive any financial support from the Lithuanian authorities.

Indeed, over 10 students would be placed in the groups, except for one of the regular groups. Nevertheless, this seems to be a common number for students attending a language course<sup>101</sup>. In this sense, an alternative would be to increase the number of speaking tasks rather than decrease the number of students, as they all seemed to enjoy each other's company and were willing to help each other as well.

Another issue raised by participants was that of having linguists (or students who had learned many languages) attend the course with non-linguists (or students who had not learned many languages). As shown below, both *Student17* – a doctoral student in Applied Linguistics – and *Student6* – a non-linguist – clearly stated that this resulted in teachers using specific linguistic terms when talking to the 'linguists' and taking too long to explain things to 'non-linguists':

*Illustration 131*

I think it is really bad for those who didn't [learn languages] ... to be with us [students of Linguistics/Philology] ...because we understand for example grammar a lot faster than they do... and I think it is bad for them ...and then for us...because...we would like to be faster...and we would like to have more talking...and they need someone who explains them the grammar in a very.... simple way so that they understand it... if I would like to run a good summer school...and I would like to teach people Lithuanian then I would divide it differently (Student17 /21-30 years old)

*Illustration 132*

now I am studying with philologists...but I think it is not correct because...they should divide...these groups...for example...I am studying with Polish students...sorry they are learning Lithuanian language for three years...four years...and only after that...they are going to ...come here (...) for practice (...) that's why I can't have... good feelings... from these lessons (...) and that's why I have so many difficulties...I don't feel that I am improving my language (...) maybe if I hadn't been in ...the group with philologists... I wouldn't have had so many problems...because I think that...foreign languages... for example... for speakers and philologists...it is very different...very different things...and for example...they use so special terms...during the lessons...I don't understand (...) I am not a philologist and... that's why... I think... it shouldn't be like that...we need primitive explanation...because we need only to speak...to read...to understand this language...we are not going to be teachers (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

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<sup>101</sup> Judging by this author's own experience as a language learner and language teacher, in other countries, such as Brazil, England, and Belgium, the number of students can range from 10 to 20.

As *Student6* pointed out, we [non-linguists] *need primitive explanation...because we need only to speak...to read...to understand this language*, but not use the language for pedagogical purposes. Similarly, *Student17* clearly noted that *they* [non-linguists] *need someone who explains them the grammar in a very... simple way so that they understand it*. It is interesting to note that, once more, both learners attended the course in different groups and years; yet, they formed a similar perception.

Indeed, there were occasions on which linguists or more language experienced learners attended the lecture with non-linguists or those who had not learned many languages before. Nevertheless, student placement in this sense would be subject to the number of students attending the course for administrative reasons as well. In that sense, *an adjustment in classroom discourse*, on the part of teachers, could perhaps contribute to a change in such a perception. For instance, specific explanations and analyses of how Lithuanian works could occur after learners had had considerable exposure to and practice of authentic Lithuanian in use.

Moreover, as far as course design is concerned, students attending other levels rather than the first semester of the basic course stated that *lecture-type lectures* were not very useful in providing them with the opportunity to speak:

*Illustration 133*

we have Lithuanian History...and...topic about social and political situation in Lithuanian... this teacher from Institute of International Relations...and Political Science...he is a good guy...everything so interesting but...he speaks very quickly for us [third year]...and we have this lesson and History...together with second group [second year] for them ... it is very fast... It's lesson presentation...every time there is computer and power point...and we don't speak...only this guy...it's like lecture (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 134*

during the course... here is this extra course...from history and politics spheres of Lithuanian...for me it was impossible to follow the teachers...because they speak very quickly...and they have this boring structure that you are sitting (Student13 / 21-30 years old)

As we can see, both learners mentioned that listening to the same teacher for about two academic hours was difficulty for them. Not only would the teacher speak fast, but also lecture on topics that required some background knowledge. Although such an issue is beyond the scope of this study, perhaps this question could be asked: to what extent does such a course (or subject) facilitate adult learning, as far as Lithuanian language is concerned, from the perspective of a newcomer and their social and professional inclusion in this society?

Lastly, although very small in number, perceptions related to **instruction** were also noted:

*Illustration 135*

it's tough too because...the teacher is very soft spoken and there is a lot of noise in the classroom (Student25 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 136*

I am one and a half year [here]...I don't get to reinforce the declensions...and the teachers don't say to me... OK ... let's one week ... just the declensions... because you have to reinforce the declensions...you speak with nominative every time... and you know...the teachers don't stop and say ... let's reinforce this ...because you cannot continue without this ...and they let you continue (Student13/ 21-30 years old)

In the first example, voice projection was probably the main problem raised by *Student25*, who kindly stated: *the teacher is very soft spoken*; this, sometimes, seemed to impact lesson delivery. In reality, despite the fact that the rooms were not so big, they were not equipped with a microphone. Another thing to be considered, which in fact has more serious implications, is that teachers were the main media used to provide learners with language exposure, considering audio-recorded listening tasks were very small in number and films or videos were practically non-existent. On top of that, learners would attend daily lectures that used to last from 3 to 6 academic hours. In short, the lack of alternative media to expose learners to the language would require the teacher to do most of the talking, and this could have well contributed to voice strain and hoarseness at some point.

As for the second example, *Student13* noted that teachers would not intervene by correcting the mistakes or provide this learner with some remedial work, as far as the declensions in Lithuanian are concerned: *I am one and a half year [here]...I don't get to reinforce the declensions*. As the preliminary analysis has shown, no other materials were available for learners to work on a self-study basis, designed in a way that they could clearly understand the instructions and check their own performance, due to absence of answer keys. Thus, once more, the teacher was the sole model and the main resource in the classroom; teachers in turn would have to address linguistic interference (also known as first language transfer) in a multicultural group: 5 to 8 different nationalities and languages/group).

Finally, within *the learning environment* domain, two other categories emerged, namely, **Lithuanian as a system** (139 / 27%), and **lack of participation / opportunity to practise** (109 / 21%), as further discussed.

With regard to *the particularities of the target language*, the main perceptions were related to the few similarities or no similarities to learners' first, second or third



languages, the complex grammatical system, which in turn contributed to Lithuanian being labeled as an old and difficult language:

*Illustration 137*

all these... genitives... datives always ... kuo... ką... kam ... that makes it very difficult (Student3 / 60+ years of age)

*Illustration 138*

I have to say that for me it is quite a difficult language...with the vocabulary...in another languages I could find similarities between the words... here I find some similarities...these modern words...like (...) Programa... kompiuteris...bananas... but these words is not so important...to make a phrase... I think... this important words... sounds for me a little bit strange (Student16 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 139*

what is hard...I mean...for example...let's take English and German... hot... heiß cold... kälte... in German... house... hause... but let's take Lithuanian... hot... karštas...cold... šaltas... house... namas...it is less obvious... initially... I think the basic vocabulary in Lithuanian ... a lot of the time... doesn't look intuitively obvious (Student24 / 15-20 years old)

*Illustration 140*

The most difficult thing is the ... different endings...and some exceptions...some words are...doesn't fit in the rules we learn and we have to memorize them separately...it is not enough to learn a rule...and use it with every word... each word has a different ending for each situation...and each person...you know...for a girl...for a boy... for everything...and in Turkish there's no such things (Student32 / 21-30 years old)

In this category, the following perceived difficulties can be singled out:

1) Complex grammar - different cases, endings and the number of grammatical rules to be memorized, as noted by *Student3*, who attended the regular course: *genitives... datives always ... kuo... ką... kam ... that makes it very difficult*. Another learner – *Student32* - attending the summer course had the same perception: *some words are... doesn't fit in the rules we learn and each word has a different ending for each situation*;

2) No or few similarities with L1/L2/L3, such as gender separation, which seemed to be a problem for some learners, like *Student32*, who clearly noted that in Lithuanian there is a word for *each person... for a girl... for a boy... for everything and in Turkish there's no such things*. Interestingly, unfamiliar vocabulary was noted by experienced language learners, such as *Student16*, who had studied many languages, apart from his/her mother-tongue: Polish, Russian, German, French, English, Czech, Italian, and *Student24*, an undergraduate student in Linguistics, who also had knowledge of several languages, such as French, German, Latin and Greek, apart from English.

As a matter of fact, due to its origins and lack of contact with other languages, Lithuanian retained its archaic system, which in turn has had an impact on the organization of its vocabulary and grammar. Furthermore, as previously noted, a great number of hours was clearly devoted to studying grammar and vocabulary, in isolation from other skills – reading, listening, speaking and writing. In that sense, it can be assumed that if grammar and vocabulary had been integrated into these communicative skills, from a functional perspective, the perceived difficulties could have been different, or at least smaller in number.

As for the *lack of participation or opportunity to practise*, such a category was then sub-divided into the following: 1) in Lithuania (86/79%) – on the streets, at the student's hall of residence, or at the university; and 2) outside Lithuania (23/21%):

*Illustration 141*

... the few times I tried and was like a big stare and you know... total ....they switched into another language... so... that I found very frustrating...and I still find it frustrating cause Lithuanians have somehow... my impression... cause they are not used to somebody learning their language and they have very little tolerance of mistakes in the language (Student7 / 41-50 years old)

*Illustration 142*

I do my best [to speak Lithuanian outside the classroom] certainly...but a lot of the time people do switch to English...just...I think because they think they must be doing me a favour... their English is so much better than my Lithuanian ...it makes sense to use...at least... as a common language (Student 19 / 21-30 years old)

In analysing the above mentioned extracts, we can clearly see that learners would have to switch to another language in attempting to speak Lithuanian, on the streets, as the locals would not continue the conversation in Lithuanian with them. According to *Student7* – a permanent resident who attended the course in 2006 – such an action was frustrating, and the impression was that *Lithuanians have very little tolerance of mistakes in the language*; from a learning perspective, this was very frustrating given the complexity of this language. When *Student19* – a summer student in 2007 – tried to speak Lithuanian on the streets, locals would switch to English as well, as this learner put it, *I think because they think they must be doing me a favour... their English is so much better than my Lithuanian*.

In similar vein, an adult learner – of Lithuanian descent – expressed the effort made in terms of trying to become a member in some local communities – weekly dance group – also by taking part in a yearly event – European Day of Culture / Music Days. Nevertheless, *the participation was not allowed as this learner did not belong to the European Union*. The perception formed, in this sense, was that *you are a*

*foreigner ... you are not from us*, despite having been raised in a Lithuanian family abroad. In this student's own words:

*Illustration 143*

I constantly want to dance in this ... there's lots of groups...the only group...the only opportunity was...there is every Thursday...there is some kind...of open šokių grupė [dance group]OK... you go there... you dance... like... OK... let's go...and ... *if someone invites you...you dance...we dance together...* it is very crazy (...) For example...I want to participate in muzikos dienos....this Kultūros Europos Dienos [European Day of Culture/Music Days] *it's not interesting because you belong to a country that it's not in the European Union ... and?...I don't belong from [to] another country ... I belong from [to] Lithuania... I grow up in another country (...) and there is no really group...and if you are not...I have a very bad experience too...if you are not Lithuanian...if you are not Lithuanian...this feeling that... you are a foreigner...you are not from us...and this is the first wall I have here...I grow up in a family that we eat cepelinai (Student13 / 21-30 years old)*

In addition, the lack of support from locals as far as learning the language, also seemed to have played an impact, given the questions that were constantly asked: *why are you studying Lithuanian? For what? Do you think it is interesting?* Such an aspect has made the learner think about the real usefulness of learning this language. Finally, after having stayed in the country for about 1,5 years, the fact of non-belonging to a community in this society has contributed to the formation of another important perception: not having learnt the language due to lack of communication with locals who, in turn, did not seem to be very interested in their own language:

*Illustration 144*

I don't want to generalise...because there are some people who work...and study in the other...countries and have an open mind...but generally...no... and the question *why are you studying Lithuanian ...why? for what?...do you think it is interesting?...*and I started to ask myself *do you think it is interesting?* but it's...that's the things...very well...and I know why...I don't want to do the homework...why I don't get the declensions...and that's why ( ) knocking the doors...it was disappointing for me... that's why the language...wasn't very good...very well improved...and for me.... it is very important...the reason (...) (Student13/ 21-30 years old)

By the same token, *Student28* – a summer student in 2008, who was born in Lithuania, raised in America, thus, having a typical American accent, clearly noted that people would switch to English on the streets. According to this learner, such a situation was 'upsetting', because there was an intention to learn this language, however, the perception formed was that people working in restaurants would have the following reaction - *we don't wanna deal with this* – thus, showing the lack of patience towards 'foreigners' or 'non-native speakers':

*Illustration 145*

usually when I go to a restaurant and I start speaking *they immediately realize I am not Lithuanian* and they speak to me in English...which is kind of upsetting because...I try... I am trying to learn ...but then they go...*we don't wanna deal with this...*then they just start speaking to you in English (Student28 / 15-20 years old)

Furthermore, *Student6*, who was not of Lithuanian descent, also believed that the Lithuanian learning process would have been enhanced if there had been more chances to interact with Lithuanians, by staying at the same hall of residence or attending lectures together, for instance. According to this learner, despite living in Vilnius, and due to the lack of communication with locals, it took two years to reach a good level of Lithuanian:

*Illustration 146*

I think it must be different...I need to live with Lithuanians...and I am sure...if...for example ... If I lived with Lithuanians I would speak very well after one year...after one semester... not only after two years... like me now [after having finished the advanced course] I have friends from Lithuania...but usually...they try to speak with me only in Russian....for example...friends in Klaipėda...they speak very well in Russian and in Lithuanian...and usually they speak in Russian (...) I think [I have friends] only with Russian roots...but not Lithuanians...no...Lithuanians...I don't know why really... maybe because we don't live with Lithuanians... we don't communicate with Lithuanians... and that's all...we don't have lessons... we don't have some connections with Lithuanians... nothing (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

Ultimately, this adult learner - not of Lithuanian descent – had a strong internal motivation to learn Lithuanian: the wish to speak to the local people in their own language. By doing so, it was believed that *Student36* could also assume the local identity and be part of the Lithuanian culture:

*Illustration 147*

I came by car here (...) it took me 5 days to come ...but I drove to here...and just because I wanted to speak to the people in their language (...) about learning Lithuanian...in the way that Lithuanian is traditional...the language is old...the country is old...the people...here in Europe who are most proud of its identity ...and its tradition...and ... by learning the language you learn part of the culture...but you learn part of the mentality of getting this origin...somehow...*it's not only about language...it's a culture...*and you know ... by the way the people talk...and *it's more important for me the approach that people have of their own language* ... and when you speak with the people ...you learn about the mentality of the people than by reading books about how people do...just you learn from the people by learning the language...and you will speak more and you will learn more from the people if you firstly speak with them in their language (Student36/ 21-30 years old)

Yet, difficulties were faced when trying to speak to people in shops or restaurants – possibly due to cultural differences, as people seemed to be disturbed when a question was asked or an order was placed:

*Illustration 148*

In Lithuania...the service...in shops or in restaurants it is really bad (...) if you ask something to people ... it is like... *Why do you want to ask me? Why do you disturb me?* ... it is really like this...people are not welcoming you if they don't know you ...it's my impression here (Student36 / 21-30 years old)

Furthermore, the first-hand experience of this learner contributed to the formation of the following perception: *local people had a very bad opinion of their country*,

considering locals seemed not to encourage studies in the language, because *learning the language was difficult and useless*:

*Illustration 149*

[some Lithuanians] told me it is the hardest language (...) people told me I am not able to do it ... *you will see...it is really hard...I think as it is useless you will never manage it ...* People here have a very bad opinion of their country (Student36 / 21-30 years old)

Finally, this student contended *that lack of practice with locals*, while interacting at home with non-Lithuanians, *would not facilitate remembering and learning this language*. In other words, for this adult, learning Lithuanian emerged from practising with locals; speaking other languages at home, although one was living in the country, without having genuine participation, would not facilitate such a process:

*Illustration 150*

[you need practice by speaking to people to remember] I guess there is no miracle in the language...if you don't practise it... then you don't learn anything...I mean...if I go home and speak with my parents who speak only [student's mother tongue]...if I stay there...If I don't go out...If I don't speak with anybody...after six months I will only speak [student's mother tongue]...and that's it...it's practising all the time (Student36 / 21-30 years old)

Although such an investigation was beyond the scope of this study at this point due to lack of theoretical support, and no shadowing<sup>102</sup> was employed as a research technique, it has been this author's own experience having people switch to another language and thus, not facilitating her own inclusion in the discourse:

*Illustration 151*

I once attended an official event at Seimas [the Parliament] in which Lithuanians are awarded for their contributions to the country...during the coffee break I joined a group who was speaking Lithuanian ... I was with a friend of mine who is Lithuanian... I did my best to speak the language and discuss the topics... as part of the group...all of a sudden... a man ... smartly dressed ... looked at me and said in English...*you don't speak like we do...you don't dress like the others do...where are you from?* From then on only English was spoken to me despite my saying I was a dual-citizen (Student1 / 31- 40 years old).

The exclusion from discourse is clearly seen in the above mentioned extract, perhaps because this author made a wrong choice of words or mispronounced them. In that sense, the participation in the group by speaking the local language was not re-established even after an explanation was given. It is vital to note that such a situation occurred in a 'prestigious communicative event' - at the Lithuanian Parliament, located in the capital city.

The lack of opportunity to practise was also perceived by learners living at the students' hall of residence and those attending lectures at the university. According to

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<sup>102</sup> Shadowing is a research technique in which the researcher follows the participants when they go to different places, and records the content of conversations. See McDonald (2005) for additional information.

*Student6*, who spent about two years in the country, living with foreigners was not so good, because *due to the lack of practice in Lithuanian*. Similarly, *Student41*, believed that *it was difficult to improve*, given the lack opportunity to speak:

*Illustration 152*

No...it's a pity...it's a bad idea that I am learning Lithuanian here but I have to live with foreigners who can't speak Lithuanian...and...that's why in my dorm we only speak in English...and it is not so good...because I can't have practice in Lithuanian... (Student6 / 21-30 years old)

*Illustration 153*

No...it's difficult...because in lecture...we should be quiet...our teacher doesn't like...so it's difficult for me to improve...but if I want...I should speak with my mentor...in Lithuanian... (Student41 / 15-20 years old)

Outside the country, students also faced difficulties for several reasons, such as lack of courses or learning materials. In the following extract, we can notice the lack of opportunity for a student living far from the Lithuanian community, where it was possible to engage in social activities:

*Illustration 154*

No...no real opportunity...the community is in Seattle but I live about one hour and a half away...so for me...not really...we came to major functions...but... we don't have anything...like classes or school (Student20 / 15-20 years old)

Finally, for this student, it was also difficult to engage in interactions with Lithuanians who were abroad, also taking part in bilateral programmes, such as Erasmus. As he put it, *I was almost never speaking to them... I wanted but...they were like... staying isolated...just by themselves*:

*Illustration 155*

when I was in Sweden... there were 11 Lithuanians... in the dormitory... I was with a Lithuanian girl so I was speaking with her and her best friend quite often but with the others I was almost never speaking to them... even... I wanted but... they were like... staying isolated... just by themselves... and we saw it... when we made parties was never Lithuanians there (Student36 / 21-30 years old)

In short, the perception of lack of participation in society, especially in Lithuania, may have had serious implications on learners' development of more productive skills, such as speaking - the number one priority - considering the small number of speaking tasks learners performed in the classroom. For a newcomer, such a skill is essential, considering the communicative events in which an individual is supposed to participate in order to function in this society. Having said so, our discussions will now be around the underlying principles of a theory which is commonly used to explain causes attributed to behaviour, with a focus on academic performance and language learning contexts.

### 5.3 Attribution theory: explaining the perceived difficulties in language learning

In the 1950s, the social psychologist Fritz Heider (1896 – 1988) conducted investigations to find out how social perceptions influence people in their attribution of causes to explain behaviour. According to Heider (1958), the most important thing in the attribution process is whether or not the individual decides if the behaviour is internally or externally caused. This has important implications considering that *internal factors of a personal nature* - ability and personality traits, such as confidence and effort - may not be clearly visible. Therefore, an investigation of *external factors – the environment* in which the individual is inserted – allows for arriving at a better comprehension of the perceived causes.

As a matter of illustration, Hogg and Vaughan (2008) provide us with the following example: “it might be useful to know whether someone you meet at a party, who seems aloof and distant is an aloof and distant person or is acting in that way because she is not enjoying that particular party” (p. 81). This is to say that if the person had gone to a different party and interacted with different people, chances are he or she would behave in a different way, and would not look so distant from others. In sum, perceived causes for a specific behaviour are situated within a specific environment; in other words, *perceptions are context-bound*.

This theory was firstly applied in the context of sport psychology (Biddle, 1993), in which quantitative methods of data gathering were employed under strict laboratory conditions. Only later did other scholars further expand the theory, using more qualitative methods. They also found that attribution can be used to explain what people think about other people’s behaviour and their own behaviour (Lippa, 1990).

As far as the instructional setting is concerned, an important contribution came from Bernard Weiner (1979, 1980, 1986), whose theoretical framework attempted to understand the reasons people attribute to “their perceived successes or failures in academic and other achievement situations” (Williams and Burden, 1997: p. 104). Weiner focused his theory on achieving *success* or *failure*. In doing so, he identified four main factors: *ability*, *effort*, *task difficulty* and *luck*.

Apart from the dimension of *locus*, Weiner added the dimension of *stability* and that of *controllability*. A stable cause is permanent and enduring, such as physical characteristics and the level of ability or intelligence (according to conventional psychology). An unstable cause, on the other hand, is temporary, such as effort,

mood, and physical states (Lippa, 1990). As for controllability, it is possible to distinguish the factors which people feel being within or outside their scope of control, like the amount of effort one puts into a task (Franzoi, 2000).

Such considerations have also interested psychologists and educationalists elsewhere: studies in Germany, in the United States and in Brazil (Barker and Graham, 1987; Weinert and Schneider, 1993; Martini and Boruchovitch, 1999; respectively). These studies, however, mainly targeted school children who tended to attribute the causes for their school poor performance to internal factors, such as ability and effort. In addition, previous studies also showed that children who are younger than 8 tend to confuse concepts such as ability/intelligence and effort. When they grow older, like adults, they make a distinction and tend to view ability as more important than effort, considering ability can positively or negatively influence their performance not only in school but also in society (Martini and Boruchovitch, 2004).

It is important to state that attributions of such nature play a part in the development of an individual. According to Rodrigues (1996) and Bempechat (1999), the attribution of a given behaviour to an internal cause has serious implications.

Conventionally, causes of an internal dimension, such as lack of ability, are believed to be less or out of one's control; that is, learners cannot exercise much control over them. On the other hand, lack of effort may be controllable, as learners can be advised to make more effort in order to improve their performance.

However, *causes of external dimension, such as task difficulty, are uncontrollable*; in other words, they are believed to be beyond learner's control. Therefore, learners cannot be asked to make more effort when the tasks which are designed exceed the level of difficulty: teachers and/or book writers are the ones who devise the classroom: changes in this sense are beyond a learner's scope of action.

Moreover, *causes of an internal dimension require attention*. As Rodrigues (1996) noted, teachers should be aware of the consequences of a student attributing his or her failure to an internal cause. For instance, when a student fails a course and attributes the causes of failure to lack of ability, it is very likely that this student will carry on being unsuccessful; this can also lead to a decrease in self-esteem, and contribute to solidify the belief that nothing else can be done. Finally, this psychologist stated that "it is the teacher's responsibility to avoid situations in which students make attributions that may lead to really unpleasant consequences in the future" (p. 112).



Similarly, in discussing the role contexts play in learning, Martini and Boruchovitch (2004) contended that traditionally the whole educational system reproduces conceptions and practices that reinforce the attribution of failure to ability, especially when low performance in exams is attributed to lack of ability. The authors added that “psychologists and educationalists cannot contribute to the formation and maintenance of such prejudices”; after all, “education is, in its essence, a social practice and the school is a privileged space where a set of social interactions with educational aims take place” (p. 67, translation is mine). Therefore, as Martini and Boruchovitch (2004) noted, the question of ability should also be viewed from other perspectives, such as the philosophical basis of education, opportunities for teacher professional development, and finally, the policies that regulate education, teaching and learning in educational institutions.

In considering the important role language education and learning plays in society, Williams and Burden (1997), provided specific examples of attributions made by learners in the context of foreign/second language learning. For instance, “*I am not good at learning languages*” (i.e., lack of ability) and “I didn’t try” (i.e., lack of effort) are considered as an *internal dimension*. Conversely, attributions such as “*It was too difficult*” (i.e., task difficulty) and “I was out of luck” (i.e., luck) are said to be of an *external dimension* (p. 104). Those attributions, in turn, will have a direct impact on one’s motivation to learning.

An important contribution coming from educational psychologists is that perceptions of task difficulty seem to go hand in hand with those causal attributions to lack of ability or effort, as Williams and Burden (1997) stated:

If I consider that the tasks I am set by my language teacher are usually too difficult and above my current achievement level, the effort I am prepared to make may depend upon whether I see myself capable of breaking those tasks into more manageable subtasks (p. 106)

Moreover, performing a specific task is a given beyond learners’ scope of action: they are normally required to do the tasks by a ‘teacher’; if learners do not believe they are capable to do the task, they will not make an effort either. As a matter of fact, depending on the level of complexity, learners may not be able to break the task into less complex exercises, and this will also contribute to the perception of difficulty and lack of ability. In extreme cases, depending on task design and its level

of complexity, learners may see their lack of ability as a permanent cause and withdraw from a course, and not sustain the initial motivation to learn a language.

In this sense, Williams and Burden (1997), who consider both motivation and ability as variables amenable to change, contended that teachers should enable students to make suitable decisions which might not only help them sustain the motivation to learn but also keep them interested in pursuing their initial goals. They also noted that motivation is highly influenced by the context and the situation where learning occurs. In this sense, “motivation is very much context bound” (p. 94)

Moreover, in a further study, Williams and Burden (1999) noted that the attributions made by learners are formed by an interaction of internal and external factors - self-concept, feelings, the learning context and culture. Thus, external influences are believed to shape attributions of an internal nature, as these are part of the surrounding environment where the learner is inserted, and, consequently, where the learning process takes place.

Furthermore, like Rodrigues (1996) and Bempechat (1999), Williams and Burden (1999) believe that teachers play a vital role in the formation of perceptions of an external nature: their actions, aims and beliefs around language learning will influence the formation of perceptions on the part of students. However, teachers are not placed in a vacuum: the school environment and the way the curriculum is organized are also believed to have an impact on teachers' behaviour.

In the context of language education, additional research was conducted to date based on the underlying principles of causal attribution theory (McQuillan, 2000; Tse, 2000; Williams et al. 2001, 2002, 2004; Zygmantas, 2011), but only two studies have targeted the adult learner and their perceptions: Tse (2000) and Zygmantas (2011), being the latter part of this research.

Tse (2000) focused on the perceptions of undergraduate and graduate adult learners (N=51/ 37 female and 14 male), aged between 21 and 60, studying at an American university. By gathering data through the method of autobiography, the findings were compiled into three main categories: 1) *opinions about teacher interactions and methodology*; 2) *evaluation of their own level of success*; and 3) *attribution for the proficiency obtained in their language studies*. The results showed that students tended to attribute their failure to 1) *teaching* – the instruction focused too little on oral communication; and 2) *lack of effort* - and they didn't make the appropriate effort

in their studies. As a result, they “reported low estimations of their level of proficiency” (p. 69).

A more recent study was conducted by Williams et al. (2004), targeting 285 students (167 girls/ 118 boys) aged between 11 and 16, learning French, German and Spanish in five secondary schools in the UK. The data was collected through a questionnaire, via open-ended statements – *When I don't do well at French, the main reasons are (1) (2) (3) (4)*, and a personal evaluation of the respondents' level of success (*I usually do well, I sometimes do well, I don't often do well, and I never do well*). It is interesting to note that attributions of lack of ability tended to be made by learners of French and not by those studying German or Spanish. Thus, the language also seemed to have had an influence on learner's perceived difficulties.

After conducting this study, Williams et al. (2004) reached the following conclusions: 1) the perceptions of success or failure are inevitably context-specific; in other words, *different contexts and cultural settings may yield different causes*; therefore, caution is needed when making generalizations; and 2) different methodological approaches will produce different results.

Thus, the use of more qualitative methods to interpret and analyse data have contributed to gathering different results, when compared with previous studies, especially those which relied on quantitative methods to gather data (e.g., McQuillan, 2000). This strengthened the authors' belief “in the value of such studies as compared with more statistically based methods”, given they provide teachers and researchers with important information that can be used to improve the teaching-learning process (Williams et. al, 2004: p. 27).

Finally, previous research showed that “attributions tend to be situation-specific rather than global” (Williams and Burderns, 1997: p. 106). What is more, the use of attribution theory to investigate learners' perceptions in language studies plays an important part, from an educational and a psychological perspective, as students may not sustain their initial motivation to learn a particular language (Williams and Bruderns, 1997). Likewise, Dörnyei (2005) stated that “because of the generally high frequency of language learning failure worldwide, attributional processes are likely to play an important motivational role in language studies” (p. 79).

On balance, attributions for not doing well in language studies have an important consequence: learners may not have the necessary motivation to continue their studies

or engage in new ones in the future. Hence, the relevance of such studies, whose findings can be used to inform pedagogical practices, and facilitate the implementation of changes in the foreign/second language curriculum.

### 5.3.1 Data classification & Preliminary analysis

Given the importance of causal attributions of perceived difficulties in language studies, an attempt will now be made to classify learners' perceived difficulties in Lithuanian studies, according to the theoretical framework discussed herein. The following figure is used for illustrative purposes:



**Figure 3 An overview of perceptions from internal and external perspectives**

First and foremost, it can be clearly seen that the both domains are interrelated. On the one hand, *the adult learner is inserted in the environment*; that is, learners and their individual differences represent the internal factors that can be seen either as stable (e.g., ability) or less stable (e.g., effort). On the other hand, *the environment represents the external dimension over which these learners exert no control*; in other words, they cannot change any of the 'variables' as these are beyond their scope of action: the language, the educational resources, and the citizens and residents living in that particular society. Nevertheless, both dimensions need to be analysed together: if separated, it is very likely that a superficial picture will be formed, as only the 'tip of the iceberg' will be mostly apparent, being 'hidden forces' laid down at the bottom.

Considering perceptions are context-based, the perceived difficulties are expected to be unique and specific to this particular culture: a different country will have different citizens and speakers, who in turn speak a different language, that may be regulated by different rules and laws, and learned via different courses, study programmes and materials; teachers may have had dissimilar opportunities to engage in professional & development programmes, for instance. Likewise, learners may belong to different cultures, ethnic and age-groups, apart from having different educational and professional backgrounds, knowledge of languages, and, most importantly, different reasons for learning the target language in the country they have chosen to visit or settle down.

Having said this, an attempt now will be to analyse the perceptions, taking into account their interrelatedness. For instance, in comparing the historical data obtained from the analysis of the socio-cultural context and learners' perceptions, with regard to Lithuanian as a system, the findings have shown the following:

## THE ENVIRONMENT DOMAIN

### LITHUANIAN AS A SYSTEM

#### Socio-cultural context analysis

In ancient times, due to lack of contact with other cultures, Lithuanian has retained its archaic system. In more recent times, due to domination of other cultures, its orthography, grammar, pronunciation, intonation and accentuation have undergone important changes, being different from more international languages, such as English.



#### Adult learners' perceptions

Lithuanian has no or few similarities with first, second or third languages; as far as vocabulary and grammar are concerned. Its grammar is complex (i.e., number of cases, declensions and rules). On balance, this language is *old and difficult to learn*.

As can be clearly seen, the context analysis and the findings obtained from learners' perceived difficulties are similar, considering Lithuanian as a system. It is vital to stress that the vast majority of students had not learned Lithuanian before and were not language experts – linguists or translators. Most of them had had their first contact with this language for the first time in Lithuania and for a short period of time (e.g., from 1 to 6 months) at the time they were interviewed.

Another important perceived difficulty was that related to learners' *non-participation in society*. This certainly has had an impact on newcomers' inclusion in society through language. In that sense, Lithuanian language education (teaching and

learning) plays an important role: it is supposed to facilitate the social (and professional) inclusion of these learners.

Given the fact that this research was designed as a single case study, this analysis will only consider the perceptions formed in Lithuania, mainly *in the capital city – Vilnius* - as shown next:

#### NON- PARTICIPATION IN THE LITHUANIAN SOCIETY

##### Socio-Cultural Context analysis

Lithuanian has evolved from Balt tribes that would not mix with other tribes (no contact with ‘foreigners’). After the restoration of independence, Russian was still used especially in business and administrative centres, as locals would be afraid of making mistakes or incurring financial loss.



##### Adult learners’ perceptions

Lithuanians are not tolerant of mistakes in their language, have a low concept of their language & country. On the streets, locals immediately switch to another language. At university, foreigners and newcomers normally attend lectures with other ‘foreigners. At the halls of residence, foreign students are often accommodated on different floors. Lithuanians do not mix with them

Despite the fact that newcomers attempted to make connections and interact with locals on the streets of Vilnius by speaking the target language, local people would switch to another language. On the one hand, adult learners may have lacked the right knowledge of Lithuanian pronunciation, accentuation and intonation, and this could have led to misunderstandings. On the other hand, given the socio-cultural context, such a phenomenon could be also related to the fear of not making a profit, especially at commercial and business centres.

Furthermore, in comparing the context analysis with learners’ perceived difficulties in relation to *educational resources*, similarities are also clearly noted. Firstly, an attempt will be made to contrast the information under the category of *supplementary materials & course books*:

#### COURSE BOOKS & SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

##### Socio-cultural context analysis

Only two books are used for the education of international students, non-native speakers, foreigners, refugees and asylum seekers: *Po truputį* (1998, 2008) and *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* (2001, 2004). Both are written in Lithuanian, no answer keys or audioscripts are provided, black & white sketches are the main visuals. A picture dictionary - released in 1996, updated in 2009) - has similar layout. A book focusing on pronunciation (released in 2004), in Lithuanian only, and two recent grammar books, are the only local resources.



##### Adult learners’ perceptions

There is a general lack of alternative ‘good’ materials - with visuals, colours, answer key to exercises, and transcripts of audio-recordings.

Pocket-dictionaries available in many languages, but intended for Lithuanian speakers. Hence the lack of examples and information on pronunciation. Full-sized dictionaries are comprehensive and also designed for Lithuanian speakers or advanced learners.



Bilingual dictionaries are either too complex or too small (incomplete), lacking words or information on how to pronounce (no accent marks). Unavailable in some languages.

Apart from the electronic version of *Po truputį* (2001), *Lithuanian in just 1 hour* – an audio CD was released in 2010. *Eurotalk* interactive series – produced abroad since 2000 – and the *Pimsleur recorded books* are available at a high cost, mainly via online-shopping. ONENESS – an online course, designed by Lithuanian researchers, *Debesėlis* – an online school started by Lithuanian students, and *SLIC* designed by the Lithuanian community in Australia are the only resources to date.



There is a great lack of media resources, such as CD ROMS, educational software, and online courses to learn Lithuanian, especially at basic levels, targeted at beginners (adults / non-native speakers / foreigners).

It must be acknowledged that the comparison between learners' perceptions and the findings obtained by the content analysis of the materials seem to coincide to a great extent: education resources targeted at complete beginners are still scarce, especially those commercialized and used in the domestic market, as the *Eurotalk series* and the *Pimsleur recorded books* were never observed in use during the lessons or said to be potential learning resources by Lithuanian language teachers.

Still in this domain, and under the same category, attributions were made in connection with *course design & instruction*:

## COURSE DESIGN & INSTRUCTION

### Socio-cultural context analysis

Learners of different educational backgrounds & knowledge of languages placed in the same group. Groups comprised of 5 to 14 students, of different age and ethnic groups. One teacher is in charge of the whole group. Teacher's voice the main media used in all phases (presentation, practice and production). Lectures on Lithuanian History, Culture, and Politics delivered by professors specialized in those fields (starting at the second semester of the basic course).



### Adult learners' perceptions

Inappropriate student placement: linguists & non-linguists in the same group. Many students are placed in one group. Lack of intervention from teachers, who at times speak in a low voice, sometimes too quickly. Lecture-type lessons – sitting for 2 hours without much opportunity to engage in speaking tasks.

As can be seen from these descriptions, learners would be placed in the same group, despite their ages and previous background knowledge; up to fourteen students were once observed on the first semester of the basic course. Despite such a rich level of multiculturalism, only one teacher was in charge of classroom management & lesson

delivery, being her voice the main instrument for transmission of information and negotiation of meaning. There were few occasions on which learners would make mistakes – especially in written form, such as writing a wrong definition or combination of words, and this would go unnoticed, for the reasons already mentioned (e.g., lack of visibility / classroom management).

Lectures on other topics, such as History, were indeed part of the programme, but not observed in this study, although this author had attended a few of them, as a student of Lithuanian before: at times, students in the group would state their difficulty in understanding the content due to its level of complexity, especially when the speech was delivered solely in Lithuanian by experts in the field, in the format of a monologue (questions would be asked only if a student attempted to interrupt and state his/her views).

Apart from that, as far as classroom work is concerned, most of the attributions were related to *classroom activities* – task performance, as discussed next:

### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES –TASK PERFORMANCE INAPPROPRIATE DESIGN / IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Socio-cultural context analysis**

Speaking and writing skills were the smallest in number and the least practised despite some information-gap exercises, grammar games or word search games devised by teachers. A folk song was played once; contemporary songs were not played. Current work or data of Lithuanian artists not used as input. Learning objectives not clearly stated (focus on content not on actions); strategic thinking or problem-solving almost non-existent; being a ‘student’ or a ‘classmate’ were the main roles played; other social life roles were small in number.

Study skills or metacognitive strategies were not observed, except for the practice of specific sounds. A focus on pronunciation, intonation, stress and spelling only placed in the alternative material (not observed in use).

CD ROMS, videos, films, Lithuanian TV channels or radio stations not observed in use - except for the ONENESS audio CD. A language lab or computer rooms were not available either.



#### **Adult learners’ perceptions**

Lack of productive skills: speaking tasks - the main priority, according to adults’ perceived needs and wants) - and writing tasks, noted by a few students. Lack of input via listening tasks (incl. songs), games, and participation via role-plays. Overall, tasks were labeled as ‘non-motivating’ and/or ‘non-challenging’.

Lack of exam or pronunciation practice

Non-use of media resources in the classroom



As already discussed in the previous chapter, speaking and writing – were relatively small in number. The same is true of games, and role-plays – a student or classmate were the main identities adults would assume when engaging in role play. Other skills and activities involving problem-solving were not observed. Educational resources were limited to the main course book, board and teachers (own voice, own generated examples).

Finally, within the external dimension, *task difficulty* was an important reason. Considering the relationship between *task difficulty* and *lack of ability and effort*, the latter is also included in the analysis that follows:

### TASK DIFFICULTY

#### Socio-cultural context analysis

#### Adult learners' perceptions

PRESENTATION

##### TEACHER

Presents nouns in nominative and verbs mostly in third person (he, she, they), first person (I, you, we) often 'suppressed'. Generates examples in Lithuanian, using students' data. Negotiates meaning via translation (English, Russian), mainly at word level. Does not resort to audiovisuals.

##### TEACHER

Presents many words at a time (usually in isolation). Resorts to literal translation (English or Russian), negatively impacting understanding, as it does not make sense to English native speakers. Pictures or visuals are scarce (mainly the black & white sketches from the book).



##### ADULT LEARNERS

Look at the material, the teacher, the board, repeat the words, listen for translation and examples, write them down, use one or two bilingual dictionaries, that are mainly intended for a Lithuanian speaker (thus, unsuitable for them), ask for clarification on grammar and vocabulary.

##### ADULT LEARNERS

Listen to or read complex instructions and explanations in Lithuanian, containing specific unknown terms which are not always clear to the mind of non-linguist or less-experienced language learners (e.g., *What does genitive mean? What does accusative mean?*)



PRACTICE

Focus on grammar & vocabulary exercises, mainly presented in disconnected sentences. Reproduction of patterns. Little focus on speaking, listening, reading & writing. Activities based on texts in which the current Lithuanian identity is often absent.



Too many steps are taken resulting in time-consuming tasks, which in turn place high demands on memory and cognition, as if working with mathematical formulae. Too much focus on grammar and less time to work on ways to remember the new words.

**IMPACTS ON THE FORMATION OF PERCEPTIONS OF AN  
INTERNAL DIMENSION: THE LEARNER DOMAIN**



**LACK OF ABILITY**

*(perceived as somewhat 'stable')*

Not remembering, understanding or knowing; not being able to speak, pronounce, spell; having a different learning style (visual, auditory, kinesthetic); having a different learning pace; being too old; not good at languages (an English native speaker).

**LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND EFFORT**

*(perceived as 'unstable')*

Being shy or embarrassed to speak (for fear of being misunderstood).  
Not making the right effort (irregular attendance, not doing the homework).

As can be clearly seen, adult learners' perceptions were similar to the results obtained from the socio-cultural context analysis, conducted by this author, via participant observation – exposure to fragments, meaning negotiated via translation, few examples generated, rules explained simultaneously, extensive grammar and vocabulary practice, often in disconnected sentences.

#### **5.4 Concluding remarks**

The analysis of adult learners' perceived difficulties learning Lithuanian in conjunction with the findings of the previous socio-cultural context analysis, at macro-, meso-, and micro-levels, have shown that in all probability, the lack of educational resources, along with material and task design, and its implementation into the classroom, may have played an important role in the formation of such perceptions, by non-native speakers. This may also have impacted their participation in society, when they attempted to interact with residents in the local language.

Considering that materials and tasks are of an external nature – beyond a learners' scope of action - but have a significant impact on perceptions of an internal nature – lack of ability - in order to better address the research question, our scientific enquiry will be carried out in order to understand the role materials, activities and tasks play in foreign & second language education, having in mind the adult learner, a 'newcomer' to a different society.

## **6. A critical analysis of adults' perceived difficulties related to Lithuanian language materials, activities and tasks**

In this chapter, firstly, the role played by materials and activities in learning contexts targeted at adults<sup>103</sup> will be discussed; in other words, the link between educational resources and facilitating learning in adulthood<sup>104</sup> will be highlighted. Furthermore, given the perceived lack of cognitive ability in terms of not remembering and not understanding the information, among others, topics related to memory and aging, and the organization of information in learning materials will also be reviewed. In addition, considering the perceived difficulty of non-participation in the Lithuanian society, the role of activities in terms of bridging the gap between the classroom and the real world will also be discussed. Finally, in considering issues around language education, a review of the evolution of foreign & second education will be made. This will include a discussion on the concept of task, its current applications, and the relation between task design and the formation of perceived task difficulty.

### **6.1 The role of materials and activities in adult education & learning**

Over a hundred years ago, American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952) made considerable contributions in the context of education which in turn guided the education reform in the United States. According to him, if we are to allow **for the continued development of adults, activities should have a difficulty or a challenge to overcome**. He clearly stated that only such tasks can be considered as 'educative', given the fact that they supply a 'stimulus to thinking' and to 'reflective enquire' (Dewey, 1913; quoted in Samuda and Bygate, 2008: p. 1). It is vital to note, however, that *the development of cognitive capacities can only be developed during social interactions* or, in Dewey's (1916) own words, "under the stimulus of associating with others" (p. 302). This is to say learners are to socially engage in situations which require the solution to problems; by doing so, they can work towards their own development.

Dewey (1910) also noted that materials frequently contain information that does not relate to learners' own experience. As a result, students "are taught to live in two

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<sup>103</sup> An *adult* is a fully-grown person, or one who is considered to be legally responsible for their actions (Longman Exams Dictionary).

<sup>104</sup> *Adulthood* is the state (and responsibilities) of a person who has attained maturity (The Free Dictionary – available online at [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com)).

separate worlds, one the world of out-of-school experience, the other the world of books and lessons” (p. 200). Finally, this philosopher pointed out **the importance of selecting and organizing the learning material according to learners’ experiences in a real world**. Traditionally, the selection and arrangement of the subject-matter was carried out in terms of its possible usefulness for the students in the future, without considering present-life experiences. The main drawback of such actions was the fact that such material “had to do with the past” and “proved to be useful to men in past ages” (Dewey, 1938: p. 76-77). In short, materials and activities designed with a focus on the past do not help learners establish a link between learning in the classroom and applying the knowledge to real-life situations in the present.

Nowadays, adults are often engaged in learning new knowledge, competences and skills, through formal, informal or non-formal education. In this sense, *a thorough understanding of the nature of individuals*, including the differences in personality, needs, and interests, *as they grow older* is required, if we are to arrive at an adequate way to design courses targeted at the adult learner. Important considerations were made, in this sense, by American educator Malcolm Knowles (1913-1997), in his ‘andragogical theory’ (1973: p. 51-61; 1984: p. 9-12):

- 1) The need to have *clear learning objectives*: adults need to know why they need to learn something before they engage in the learning experience; otherwise, they will not invest time and energy in the learning activity;
- 2) *Self-directedness to meet perceived needs*: adults take responsibility for their own learning, and normally do not wait for a teacher to do a task; they do it;
- 3) *Shared responsibility*: adults bring a lot of experiences, goals and interests to the classroom and wish to have their own experiences as resources;
- 4) *Orientation to learning*: adults are life-centered, task-centered and problem-centered. This is to say that the content they learn is supposed to be related to their daily routines, which often require them to perform tasks, working towards the solution to problems. In brief, adult learners want to immediately apply what they learn through daily tasks, as they do in real-life situations;
- 5) *Internal motivators to learn*: the learning process and materials should enable adult learners to achieve goals, such as the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life.

Furthermore, according to Knox (1977), first and foremost, **it is essential to establish connections between the transition phases in human development and the activities performed by adult learners.** These changes can be related to choices or necessities experienced by individual adults; they reflect transition in **social roles**, like “starting the first full-time job, getting married, having the first child, moving to a new community, experiencing the death of a spouse, and retiring” (p. 6).

By the same token, Lovell (1980) highlighted the *developmental phases* and social life roles adults are required to play in society: the first change is that *from being a teenager to a young adult*: “the age group 16 to 20 years marks the transition from the juvenile to the adult phase. As he progresses through these years, the individual takes on an adult role in more and more ways” (p. 15). In addition, *early adulthood* may be classified between 20 to 25 years, when most people have completed their “preparation for their adult occupational roles” (p.15). *Middle adulthood* can be considered between 25 and 40; but, “there are no clear-cut landmarks and these ages are arbitrary ones, appropriate to some individuals but by no means all” (p.16). Finally, *late adulthood* is the period between 40 to 60, followed by pre-retirement and retirement, when “the effects of ageing become more apparent” (p.17).

Although such changes vary across the population, Knox (1977) contended that these ‘generalizations’ may help instructors in designing educational activities; in his own words, “an understanding of adult development can enable practitioners to help adults become more open to opportunities for growth and more effective in their learning activities” (p. 13). In this sense, the knowledge of such developmental changes also helps us “establish the connection between specific learning activities and the area of performance to which the new knowledge is to be applied” (p. 408).

Therefore, the educational activities should help adult learners function in society, through performing real-life tasks, which vary according to their age-groups, personal and career advancement. This is an essential aspect in adult education and learning, given the fact that **adults will only cooperate and be motivated to perform a given activity if the tasks are meaningful and of interest to them.** It is important to note, however, that the tasks performed by learners are normally devised and compiled into a specific course material. In this sense, educational materials also deserve appropriate attention as far as their selection is concerned. The following table shows the main educational activities that cater for transitions in adult development phases:

**Table 13 An overview of developmental phases, tasks and educational activities in adulthood**

DEVELOPMENTAL PHASE	REAL-LIFE TASKS	EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES
<i>Late teens – early twenties</i> (15-20 y.o.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- achieve emotional independence</li> <li>- develop an ethical system</li> <li>- prepare for marriage and family life</li> <li>- choose and prepare for an occupation</li> </ul>	- related to work, career planning and preparation, assertiveness, personal development, consumer education, and human relations
<i>Twenties – early thirties</i> (21-30 y.o.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- start a family</li> <li>- start an occupation</li> <li>- manage a home</li> <li>- assume civic responsibilities</li> </ul>	- related to occupational advancement and specialization, marriage and parenting, managing home finance, and volunteer leadership of youth groups
<i>Middle – late Adulthood</i> (31- 59 y.o.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- revise career plans</li> <li>- maintain or develop a career</li> <li>- redefine family relationships</li> <li>- adjust to biological change</li> </ul>	- related to career advancement, supervision, midcareer changes, parenting teenagers, aging parents, marriage enrichment, dealing with divorce, stress management, and preparing for retirement
<i>Retirement and Beyond</i> (60+ y.o.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adjust to retirement</li> <li>- change living arrangements</li> <li>- acknowledge declining health and loss of loved ones</li> </ul>	- related to finances, health, values and leisure

Based on Knox (1986: p. 27-28)

Educational materials can be either developed or purchased; nevertheless, the **selection criteria for adult learning materials** have important implications as the materials should “serve the group’s educational purposes” and “pertain to the learner backgrounds and interests” (Knox, 1977, preface, p. xiv). Moreover, **educational objectives** should “include both the subject matter content to be learned and what participants should be able to do with that content” (Knox, 1977: p. 79). Not only does the appropriate selection of materials help learners visualize the information but it also facilitates the application of knowledge in the real world (Knox, 1986). By looking at the material, *the adult learner should be able to answer the following questions*: 1) what will I learn in this particular unit? 2) what will I be able to do with this new information? and 3) where can I use this knowledge outside the classroom?

In addition, as previously noted by Dewey (1913, 1916) and Knowles (1973), Knox (1977) made it clear that, in selecting materials or devising activities, it is vital to understand that “adults tend to evolve from unquestioning conformity to recognition of multiple viewpoints” (p. 22). Therefore, as the author further

highlighted, “*effective materials* serve as tools or resources to *enable active questioning or problem solving during and after the program*”; thus, a question needs to be asked and answered: “*Do the materials foster an active dialogue with the learners?*” (p. 110; emphasis added). In short, adults become more aware of their own self; they are more critical, ask more questions, and engage in dialogic discussions. When choosing the most appropriate learning material, one should consider if it allows for dialogic discussions, questioning and problem-solving.

As for the **types of educational materials** that can be used in helping adults learn, a few examples grouped by the senses were noted by Knox (1986 : p.10): 1) *print* - all sorts of publications (e.g.; magazines, books, pamphlets, newspapers); 2) *audio* – mass and personal audio media (e.g.; radio, audiotapes); 3) *visual and audiovisual* - all types of electronic ways including still or moving images (e.g.; slides, filmstrips, projected pictures, charts, diagrams, chalkboards, printed images, drawings, maps, posters, photographs). As for audiovisual, *a combination of visual and sound* can be used (e.g.; films, television, computer software, plays); 4) *simulations* – any sort that might include tasks involving a case study, discussion guides, role playing, decision-making games, including computer simulations; and 5) *examples* – found or fabricated objects, such as collections, equipment demonstrations, models and mock-ups (Knox, 1986: p. 10). In this sense, in selecting (and devising) educational resources targeted at adults, appropriate learning materials will be made up of varied print, audio, visual, audiovisual, and multimedia resources.

Furthermore, in **sequencing activities**, based on previous studies<sup>105</sup>, among others, it is also crucial to provide learners with opportunities for progression of cognitive processes, or in Knox’s (1986) own words, to provide “help for participants to progress toward higher levels of understanding” (p. 9). Such understanding can be considered and increased by two main stages: lower and higher levels, as follows:

At lower levels of understanding and problem solving, learners process information in fragmentary ways without organizing concepts or themes. At a somewhat higher level, they deal with central concepts but without relation to supporting facts and details. At a still higher level, they understand relations among concepts and facts. A more inclusive level of understanding occurs when learners use deep processing of integrating themes to go beyond the context of information presented to provide reasons for similarities and differences and to explore alternative views. (Knox, 1986: p. 9)

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<sup>105</sup> See Bloom et al (1956) and the reviewed work of Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) on the interface between educational objectives, learning tasks, the development of cognition and types of knowledge.

Likewise, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) noted that authentic activities require the coordinated use of cognitive processes combined with several types of knowledge. According to them, learning activities should not only facilitate the construction of *declarative knowledge* through facts or items in isolation – such as the alphabet, words, numerals, vocabulary items - or concepts – the organized structure of the items in isolation, but also *procedural knowledge* - a series or sequence of steps indicating the knowledge of how to do something – such as the application of grammatical rules, and finally, *metacognitive knowledge* – strategic knowledge, including general study skills and elaboration techniques, such as summarizing, paraphrasing, selecting the main ideas from texts, setting goals for reading, and organizational strategies (e.g., drawing cognitive maps, note-taking). In addition, the authors noted that, apart from being aware of their *weaknesses and strengths*, learners 1) should be aware of their own *motivation*, 2) should be conscious of their own *goals for performing a task*, their *personal interest* in a task and, finally, 3) should have knowledge of their own “judgements about the relative utility value of a task” (p. 60).

With regard to the learning process itself, it is crucial to take into account adult learners’ prior knowledge and experiences. This is crucial because adults have gone through many other learning experiences and have accumulated a lot of knowledge. Therefore, **every adult has a unique cognitive structure that needs transformation for learning to be effective:**

The person’s current understanding of the topic or problem is typically organized around his or her previous encounters with it. This results in a cognitive structure (...) an adult’s understanding of and ability to get around in a strange city is affected by first impressions when approaching the city and by related information from maps and directions provided by others. From this the individual forms a cognitive map (...) When these cognitive structures are inadequate they can interfere with effective learning. (Knox, 1977: p. 428 - 429)

Such as transformation of cognitive structures in adult learning has been the major focus of interest of another scholar, namely, Jack Mezirow<sup>106</sup>. As a matter of fact, according to this author, **the key to learning in adulthood lies in the**

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<sup>106</sup> Jack Mezirow is an Emeritus Professor of Adult and Continuing Education, at the Teachers College, Columbia University, and Former Chairman, at the Department of Higher and Adult Education, and Director for Adult Education. Since his retirement, Prof. Mezirow has delivered presentations and led seminars on transformative learning at many universities in the U.S. and abroad - Spain, Finland, Canada, Thailand, Puerto Rico, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. Information retrieved January 19, 2011, from <http://nlu.nl.edu/academics/cas/ace/resources/JackMezirow.cfm>



**transformation of cognitive structures**<sup>107</sup> (Mezirow, 1975, 1978, 1990, 1991, 1996, 2009). This is essential considering that our cognitive structures form our ‘meaning schemes’ - *knowledge, beliefs, and value judgements*; in turn, they form our ‘frames of reference’ – the *meaning perspectives* we have, which are *created by learning styles and ideologies*. When engaged in new learning experiences, those frames “selectively shape and delimit our perception, cognition and feelings”. Therefore, as the author put it, “we have a strong tendency to reject ideas that fail to fit our preconceptions” (Mezirow, 2009: p. 92). In other words, our frames of reference may be an obstacle to new knowledge that does not fit our existing mental frames.

What is more, the transformation of an adult’s cognitive structure should occur during the learning process which is viewed “as an activity resulting from social interaction that involves goals, actions and conditions under which goal-directed actions must be carried out” (Mezirow, 1990a: p.13). This means that transformative learning is fostered by doing activities which require achieving a clear goal.

Furthermore, Mezirow contended that such a transformation is subject to other processes. Based on the ideas of Freire (1970), and along with those defended by Knox (1977, 1986); Mezirow (1990a) argues that **the most important aspect in the transformation of cognitive structures is the reflective process** an adult goes through during learning. In his words, the vital aspect in effective learning in adulthood is “the process of reflecting back on prior learning to determine whether what we learned is justified under present circumstances” (p. 5). This is to say that reflection is one of the essential elements in learning if our cognitive structures are to be transformed at all. In this sense, Mezirow (1991) highlighted *three forms of reflection*<sup>108</sup> as vital in one’s learning experience: 1) *the content* or description of a problem 2) *the process*– the strategies and procedures used to solve a problem, and 3) *the premises* or presuppositions – this type of reflection “involves awareness and critique of the reasons why we have done so” (p. 106). As the author further put it, it is “through content and process reflection we can change (elaborate, create, negate, confirm, problematize, transform) our meaning schemes; through premise reflection

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<sup>107</sup> Mezirow’s transformative learning is also based on the underlying principles of the modern schema theory as put forward by Rumelhart and Norman (1978) and Rumelhart (1980). See Merriam and Caffarella (1991) for a more detailed description.

<sup>108</sup> Mezirow (1990) acknowledges the fact that other authors used ‘reflection’ as a central item in their theories. For instance, psychologists emphasize the role metacognition plays “but almost never explicitly they refer to premise reflection” (p. 112).

we can transform our meaning perspectives” (Mezirow: 1991: p. 117). Thus, according to Mezirow (2009), the key elements of transformative learning are critical (self) reflection and a free and full participation “in dialectical discourse” (p. 94).

Likewise, Merriam and Caffarella (1991) noted that educators “are well aware that most learning in adulthood goes far beyond the simple memorization of facts” (p. 171). Thus, in light of schema theory and the importance of transforming existing concepts and ideas in adult education, two main cognitive processes align with tuning and restructuring knowledge, namely, critical thinking and problem-solving.

Another important aspect to take into consideration is that *we draw on our memory to retrieve previously learned information and interpret new knowledge*. According to Mezirow (1991), memory “is ultimately related to perception and learning, which involve the integration of novel information with past experience (...) the relation of new information to past experience allows the learner to go beyond the information given” (p. 10). In sum, prior knowledge is retrieved via memory processes; this knowledge must undergo a transformative process as well, considering new knowledge will be reintegrated into it or built upon it.

This leads us to another important consideration: the relationship between the organization of information in the materials and its presentation, given their significant impact on the formation of perceived lack of ability.

### **6.1.1 Organization and presentation of information: impacts on perceived lack of ability**

Psychologists tend to agree on the fact that **learning and memory** are related processes. What is more, *older adults are said to have more difficulty remembering information than younger people*. Nevertheless, “the mechanisms of memory (...) operate for all human learners whether they are in the juvenile or adult phase of their life” (Lovell, 1980: p. 27). Also, ‘memory loss is a normal result of aging’ (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991: p.160). Yet, “learning is closely tied to memory; whatever is learned must be retained if it is to be useful” (Blanchard and Thacker, 2010: p. 73).

In addition, regardless of age, it is important to consider **the limited capacity of short-term memory** to hold information and is easily overloaded (Miller, 1956; Klatzy, 1975, Knox, 1977, Lovell, 1980; Merriam and Caffarella, 1991, Kellogg, 2002; Ormrod, 2008). This has serious implications on learning in adulthood

considering the *decay in memory of older learners*. According to Knox (1977), “when individuals try to respond to and store new information at the same time that they are trying to recall stored information, there is a memory deficit” (p. 435). Considering that immediate memory decays “more rapidly”, the author stated that “if the rate is too fast or too slow there is increasingly more forgetting for adult learners (p. 437).

Although learners vary greatly concerning their **learning pace**, Knox (1977) contended that “adults of any age, but especially older adults, learn most effectively when they set their own pace, take a break periodically” (p. 440). Likewise, Lovell (1980) contended that short-term memory tends to become more liable to breakdown due to overloading of information and “a very slight interruption or distraction to attention while information is being received will cause the adult learner to forget immediately” (p. 28). Thus, *an adult’s memory is highly affected by overloading information*, especially if interpretation of instructions is required.

Finally, Kellogg (2002) stated the vital role **attention** plays: we select “certain stimuli from among many” and we focus our “cognitive resources on those selected” (p. 89). The author went on to say that “attention allows us to focus on what is important at the moment and ignore the rest (...) When attention fails, we are left scatterbrained and unable to function” (p. 89). So, *it is essential to focus our attention while performing a given task* if learning is to be effective.

Another important implication is that of the type learning that results from performing tasks and its implications on memory. Knox (1986) noted that the learning ability in adults change gradually throughout life: **rote learning<sup>109</sup> will steadily decline “from young adulthood into old age”** (p. 22; emphasis added). Conversely, tasks in which learners can benefit from their “accumulated experience, such as those that entail vocabulary, general information, and fluency in dealing ‘with ideas’, continues to improve during most of adulthood” (p. 21).

By the same token, Ormrod (2008) noted that **the mere repetition of items**, in isolation, **leading to rote learning has a negative impact on memory**. Considering there is little or no attempt to understand the new information using one’s background

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<sup>109</sup> According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) ROTE LEARNING happens when learners memorize key facts so they possess some relevant knowledge, but “cannot use this knowledge to solve problems” or are not able to “transfer this knowledge to a new situation”. This is to say that learners attended to ‘relevant information’ but they have not understood it, “therefore cannot use it” (p. 64). The authors added that ROTE LEARNING is based on a “view of learning as acquisition” in which learners simply “add new information to their memories” (p. 65).

knowledge, via meaningful learning, “if such information is restored in long-term memory at all, it is stored in relative isolation from other information”; finally, she added that “it becomes difficult to retrieve” (p. 202).

Likewise, Novak and Cañas (2008), contended that there are three **negative consequences in rote learning**: the information “tends to be quickly forgotten”, and most importantly, 2) “the knowledge structure or cognitive structure of the learner is not enhanced or modified to clear up faulty ideas”; this in turn will result in 3) “knowledge learned [that] has little or no potential for use in further learning and/or problem solving” (p. 6-7). In other words, *when learning by rote, learners have difficulty remembering information, their cognitive structures are not transformed, and the knowledge cannot be applied to problem-solving activities.*

When it comes to **learning new information**, Blanchard and Thacker (2010) added that prior to symbolic coding (i.e., encoding), **it is necessary to activate learners’ memory**: “relevant prior knowledge must be stimulated, so connections between the new information and the old can be established”. As they further noted, “once the appropriate prior learning is recalled”, the learner is “ready to encode the new information”. This can be done by devising activities in learners to draw “on related experience”. In this way, they can “recall information supporting the new learning, providing a context for the new learning to occur” (p. 180). This is to say that *new knowledge is built upon existing knowledge which is activated via memory processes during a given activity, drawing on learners’ previous experiences.*

After that it is crucial to present the information in such a way that it will facilitate memory processes. For instance, in their taxonomy of learning objectives, Bloom et al. (1956) noted that the organization of information and its presentation to learners will have an important impact on memory and learning. That is, **information presented in isolation will be difficult to remember**. As the authors put it:

(...) knowledge which is organized and related is better learned and retained than knowledge which is specific and isolated. By this we mean that learning a large number of isolated specifics is quite difficult simply because of the multiplicity of items to be remembered. Thus one hundred nonsense syllables would be more difficult to learn than an equal number of syllables in a meaningful poem. (p.35)

In this sense, Estes (1976, cited in Joyce et al., 1997), stated that **learning words and definitions is a major task especially in initial foreign & second language studies**, as the learner will have to deal with unfamiliar words. Therefore, *the way those words are organized plays a crucial part in terms of retention of information*; in her words, “the material on which a particular teacher chooses to focus will affect what information the students retain” (p. 7). Likewise, Knox (1977) stated that *memorable encounters and materials are also supposed to help learners remember what they have learned*.

Based on previous studies (e.g., Anderson: 1974, 1976, 1990), Ormrod (2008) noted that **long lists of single-proposition sentences** require learners to draw on multiple associations, and this **can lead to interference and subsequent forgetting**. As she put it, such a phenomenon is best described as a ‘theory of confusion’: “An individual has learned numerous responses and gets them mixed up” (p. 295). As a result, although information is stored, it may never be remembered or, in all likelihood, the learner will need more time to remember something that has been memorized via multiple ways. She went on to add that “troublesome material” consisting of “long lists of items, unfamiliar vocabulary words in a foreign language, or particular rules of grammar” is unlikely to help learners organize information, at a mental level, “in any logical way” (p. 366-367).

However, there are certain measures that can be taken, as far as the design and layout of information are concerned. For instance, **in considering adult learners**, Ausubel and Robinson (1969) noted that **visuals and examples** play a vital role: “illustrations and examples also facilitate understanding and remembering, especially when presenting unfamiliar or atypical information” (p. 322). These will help learners focus their attention on the important information that needs processing.

In the same line, Ormrod (2008) noted that the way one draws attention to specific information will impact how information is stored: **types and forms** facilitate attentional processes. For instance, *moving objects* are more likely to capture attention than stationery ones. People tend to draw their attention to *larger objects* (e.g. size of letters), *bright colours*, *loud noises and novelty* (i.e., things that stand out for being novel or unusual). So, the author draws our attention to **materials and textbooks**, by asking if:

Do they have characteristics that are likely to catch a student's eye? Do important words and concepts stand out, perhaps because they are larger or **more intense** or *unusual*? Are certain topics likely to grab a student's interest because they are interesting and relevant to the age group? If your answer to these questions is "no", then students may very well have difficulty attending to and learning from those materials. (p. 173)

In addition, Ormrod (2008) contended that it is essential to include **variation in topics and presentation styles**, as the repetition of same topics and procedures can lead to boredom and reduced attention. Furthermore, considering the limited capacity of the short-term memory, the amount of information presented at a time will have a tremendous impact on memory: "educators must remember this point in pacing their lectures and in choosing instructional materials. When too much information is presented too fast, students will simply not be able to remember it at all" (p. 192).

By the same token, Blanchard and Thacker (2010) stated that "the learning process begins with the learner's attention becoming focused on particular objects and events in the environment" (p. 77). What is more, "the things that we pay attention to are those that stand out for some reason (loud, bright, unusual, etc) or those that we learn are important" (p. 77). The implications for improving learning is that we need to make key learning points stand out and eliminate other things that may distract learners' attention away.

Another important aspect is that of **memory for texts**. Studies have shown that adults process written language in a different way than children do. This also has a great impact when one is learning another language. In the words of Lovell (1980):

A small child learning to spell will hold individual letters in the short-term memory and will commit one letter to long-term storage every five seconds or so; the adolescent learning foreign vocabulary will hold individual words in short-term memory and attempt to get a new word of many letters into long-term memory every five seconds. An experienced adult, reading at a rate well in excess of two hundred words a minute, will hold the meaning of the passage in his short-term memory rather than the individual words and will commit the gist of the passage to long-term memory. (p. 27)

In this sense, a study carried out by Radvansky et al. (2001) compared the extent to which younger and older people had a memory for texts. The results showed that **older people** who had poorer memory actually **did as well as or even better than**

**younger people when asked to construct the situations embedded in the texts**, as opposed to the real wording presented in them. The use of prior knowledge in order to draw inferences and combine it with the new incoming information seems to facilitate such a process. This is to say that memory processes are facilitated when adults work with information presented via ‘texts’ which in turn portray situations as opposed to fragments of information.

In the same vein, Biggs (2003) contended that ‘when we learn something, each system is involved; we learn what we did, where it was and how to describe what it was...Actions are easiest to remember...and semantics, what was actually said, are hardest... [however] recalling the context or the actions can often bring back the semantics’ (p. 81). Hence, *the importance of drawing on situations and events while engaging in new language learning experiences in adulthood*.

In a further study, Radvansky (2008) stated that while working with texts we engage three **different levels of mental representation**. *The first level*, the surface form, is *the precise memory for words and syntax used*. This type of memory is *generally forgotten within a few minutes or seconds* given it is very fragile, considering “verbatim memory is generally very poor” (p. 229, emphasis added). *The second level*, the propositional textbase, has its focus on representing the ideas conveyed rather than the words themselves. For instance, although word order is different in “the girl hit the boy” from “the boy was hit by the girl”, meaning remains the same (p. 229). Despite the fact that this level is remembered longer than the first one, the information is also forgotten ‘at a fairly rapid rate’ (p. 230). Finally, *the third level*, known as **the situational mode**, can be understood as “a mental simulation of the event being described” (p. 230). Such a memory is more durable considering that the situation is part of spatial-temporal framework and includes a number of tokens (people, animals, objects etc.) and some mental or emotional properties that can be both external and internal. In addition, the objects and subjects are interrelated and this **contributes to a long-lasting memory**.

Ultimately, as Radvansky (2008) put it, ‘we care about the events, not the words, and so our memory is oriented around remembering the described circumstances rather than the language used’ (p. 231). Finally, the author stated that “memory should be more situation-based rather than language-based. That is, people should

make memory judgements based on whether the information matches the described situation, not based on linguistic correspondences” (p. 232).

In short, the way the information is presented will definitely impact memory process and contribute to the perceived lack of ability of not remembering, not understanding and not knowing. A thorough understanding of how memory works, the way older learners process and retain information is essential when designing materials and activities and delivering a language lesson intended for adult learners.

Having considered such aspects, another important issue is that which occurs outside participation in a given society. This is particularly true in the case of newcomers – like the majority of participants in this study. As lack of participation or practice in society was also perceived as causing difficulty to adults’ learning Lithuanian, considerations in this sense will now be made.

### **6.1.2 Classroom activities: a bridge to participation in society**

In recent times, important considerations were made considering learning and the social role played by people involved in activities, within specific contexts, engaged towards achieving the same goal. In this sense, Lave and Wenger (1991) developed a theory with methodological implications, firstly by observing how *newcomers become legitimate participants in a given community of practice*.

The key aspect in their studies is the organization of opportunities to learn through participation in communities, by having people engage in a specific activity. Thus, newcomers will eventually become apprentices, and in due time, old-timers. In such social practices, the skills are learned during the interaction process as part of a community of practice, by engaging in legitimate peripheral participation as opposed to first learning the body of knowledge in more formal settings, and later looking for an opportunity to apply this knowledge to real situations. Therefore, **learning is situated in forms of social co-participation**; understanding is ‘facilitated’ through situated learning in real social structures as opposed to being solely accomplished within a learner’s mind. In Lave and Wenger’s own words: “learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community” (p. 29). This is to say that *learning results from a legitimate peripheral participation*.



Furthermore, learners are seen as people in the world engaged in social interactions within communities of practice that “are realized in the live-in world of engagement in everyday activity”. Learning, in that sense, “concerns the whole person acting in the world” (Lave and Wenger, 1991: p. 47, 49)

Furthermore, it is in the historical development of a given activity that learning, cognition, and communication take place; **a constant negotiation and renegotiation of meanings through language is necessary**, considering that “persons, actions, and the world are implicated in all thought, speech, knowing and learning” (Lave and Wenger, 1991: p. 52) .

As we can clearly see, our understanding of **the social nature of a given activity is essential**; this in turn will also facilitate our understanding of the social aspect involved in learning. As Lave and Wenger (1991) put it:

Activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons. (p. 53).

Therefore, *effective learning results from having a legitimate access and engaging in real communities of practice*. Through social relations, learners have a direct involvement in the activities; these facilitate understanding and the development of skills. Thus, **becoming members of the community is really beneficial to learners**, from a motivational perspective, as they are also given the opportunity to become ‘old-timers’, apart from *becoming real agents with a role to play in society*:

The person has been correspondingly transformed into a practitioner, a newcomer becoming an old-timer, whose changing knowledge, skill, and discourse are part of a developing identity – in short, a member of a community of practice. This idea of identity/membership is strongly tied to a conception of motivation. If the person is both member of a community and agent of activity, the concept of the person closely links meaning and action in the world. (Lave and Wenger, 1991: p. 122).

In that sense, **learning also results from a change in identity**, which in turn is triggered by social relations between people engaged towards a common goal, within

a specific practice, which also is subject “to the social organization and political economy of communities of practice” ( Lave and Wenger, 1991: p. 122).

In short, *groups of people within social structures share a goal, a concern, a passion for something that they do; they learn together and interact regularly*, so as to do it better. The combination of *three elements* are essential for a community of practice to effectively exist in society: 1) *a strong sense of identity* / shared domain of interest, through which learners value their collective competence and learn from each other; 2) *a strong sense of community* – group members share information, through ongoing activities and discussions, and build strong relationships; and 3) *ongoing shared practice* – their stories, experiences, and ways to address and find solutions to problems, together, results in learning; but this is subject to sustained interaction and spending time together (Wenger, 2006).

As far as the application of such concepts to real life situations, communities of practice can be identified and organized in educational institutions: **a lot of learning emerges from interactions within social spheres**. For instance, *within educational contexts*, initial applications were in *teacher professional development* and other professionals who are normally working in isolation, so that they can have more access to other colleagues, engage in activities, and learn from each other (i.e., in-service training). Some of the questioning that may emerge from such a community of practice is the following (Wenger, 2006):

**How to connect the experience of students to actual practice through peripheral forms of participation in broader communities beyond the walls of the school?**

**How to serve the lifelong learning needs of students by organizing communities of practice focused on topics of continuing interest to students beyond the initial schooling period?**

Such questions are essential in facilitating our understanding that **the instructional setting** is not only a place where learners acquire knowledge to be later applied in society. Rather, it **has to be seen from a broader perspective as part of a ‘learning system’**; as Wenger (2006) put it, “ Schools, classrooms, and training sessions still have a role to play in this vision, but *they have to be in the service of the learning that happens in the world*” (emphasis added). Therefore, the social activities in which

learners engage can be pedagogically created in the classroom, but it must be acknowledged that they already exist beyond the walls of the classroom.

In sum, when newcomers engage in social activities, not only are they exposed to new information but also can learn from actively interacting with other people. And most importantly, this type of learning emerges during the exchange of thoughts via negotiation of meanings through language. Such a consideration is essential inside the classroom, where most of the language learning activities are carried out: these are the bridges newcomers cross in their attempt to legitimately participate in the new society into which they are inserted.

## **6.2 The role of materials and tasks in foreign & second language education**

In this section, our literature review will include the recent trends in foreign/second language education, with a focus on the task-based approach and its application in different countries, including the impact of the language education reform in the Flemish society when such an approach was employed. Moreover, the key elements underlying the concept of ‘task’ will be highlighted, along with considerations concerning the level of complexity of tasks and impact on the formation of perceived task difficulty. Finally, our attention will be drawn to the analysis of Lithuanian language activities and tasks based on all the literature reviewed in this chapter.

### **6.2.1 The evolution of foreign & second language education**

Researchers tend to agree that learning a new language is different from learning other subjects, especially because of its social nature. Moreover, it also implies changes in the self; in other words, *when individuals learn another language they also learn to assume another identity apart from their own* (Kramsch, 1993; Williams and Burdens, 1997; Norton, 2000; Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2009; among others).

As Kramsch (1993) argued, identities can be built around language and national citizenship or ethnicity and race. Nevertheless, **language plays a vital part in our identification with a national identity**: this is expressed through a created standard language, which in turn is disseminated through official grammars and dictionaries “and can be taught through the national educational system” (p. 75). The author further stated that “language is *the* most sensitive indicator of the relationship between an individual and a given social group” (p. 77); that is, our membership in a

social group is subject to the extent we are able to engage in discourse by using a ‘common language’ (e.g., target language = foreign/second language).

Indeed, language and **culture also impose on learners forms of socialization** – etiquette, expressions of politeness, social *Do’s* and *Don’ts*; these are expected to shape our behaviour according to cultural conventions. For instance, “what is appropriate to write to whom in what circumstances” by adopting **appropriate text genres** (application forms, business letters, political pamphlet). As Kramsch (1993) further noted, “these ways with language, or norms of interaction and interpretation, form part of the invisible ritual imposed by culture on language users” (p. 6). In that sense, a learner is supposed to use language accordingly as part of a **discourse community**, or in the author’s own words, “the common ways in which members of a social group use language to meet their social needs” (p. 6 -7). The identification of self with other members of a discourse community is often subject to the accent, the vocabulary, and the discourse patterns used by individuals who belong to a social group. (p. 65). In short, a learner - foreigner, immigrant, newcomer – is supposed to use the language patterns, vocabulary required by a specific genre, in order to meet their communicative needs when participating in a social group.

In similar vein, Williams and Burden (1997) contended that **language is part of one’s identity**; it is also used to convey this identity to other individuals. On the other hand, *learning a foreign language requires more than “simply learning a skill or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being”* (p. 115, emphasis added). Thus, learning another language requires assuming a new identity through which one learns to behave differently while using the words and applying the grammar rules accordingly.

By the same token, in discussing the role language learning plays when individuals settle down in another country, Norton (2000) contended that **identities are constantly changing across time and space**, given the fact that “when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world”. From this viewpoint, “*a language is more than words and sentences*” (Norton, 2000: p. 10-11, 13; emphasis added). Indeed, a learner will have to know how to use the words and sentences appropriately in order to be accepted in a

given society; thus, a different sociolinguistic behaviour will be required if they are to be successful in their social interactions with native speakers and local residents.

This is particularly true nowadays, as noted by Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009), considering *individuals are more likely to transit several worlds*, due to the advent of globalization, the fall of communism and the European reconfiguration, political and economic migration, among other social and political changes. Therefore, **individuals are more likely to engage in language learning processes worldwide, and assume new identities other than their own**, as this will facilitate the interactions with people in diverse societies, having also an impact on their motivation to learn.

Thus, language learning implies a change in the self: not only will foreign learners have to develop and adopt certain linguistic codes – grammar, vocabulary, discourse genre – they will also have to undergo a process of reconstruction of identities by means of cultural appropriation in order to function in society accordingly. This is to say that second/foreign language learning entails more than learning words or grammar rules, and being able to spell those words or writing well-constructed sentences. Learners should be able to ‘assume’ a different social pattern of behaviour, which is expressed through language; this in turn will facilitate their membership in a given social group (i.e., discourse community).

Interestingly, recent studies in foreign/second education, teaching and learning have acknowledged that **social interactions** and the **functional/communicative purpose** play **a crucial role in learning and acquisition** (e.g., Nunan, 1998; Richard and Rodgers, 2001; Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011).

Nevertheless, as far as foreign/second language education is concerned, the ‘learn by doing’ and ‘learn by thinking’ dichotomy still have a great impact on pedagogical practices, considering that language can be viewed as a ‘skill’ or ‘content’. Because of such a dichotomy, “many teachers still believe that students should learn to use the language in communication only *after* they have learned to master its structures in drills and other mechanical exercises” (Kramsch, 1993: p. 5).

In this regard, cognitive psychologists made considerable contributions that were applied to the design and implementation of activities, tasks and exercises used to provide learners with practice in the target language. According to previous studies, “rote practice” on “surface forms”, through the repetitions of specific items, usually in isolation, “are not highly important in learning an item”. **What really matters is**

**the construction and negotiation of meaning in specific situations:** “contextualized, appropriate, meaningful communication in the second language seems to be the best possible practice the second language learner could engage in” (Brown, 2006: p. 73).

As a matter of fact, there has been a shift in the way language learning is viewed. In more *traditional methods*, it is believed that students “need to overlearn the target language, to learn to use it automatically without stopping to think”, and this is achieved by “forming new habits in the target language and overcoming the old habits in their native language”. Students are expected to form a habit by doing a large number of repetition and substitution drills – they repeat the same information given, are required to produce right answers out of cues given, and may transform affirmative sentences into negative sentences; eventually, they arrive at the right answer by looking at cues given (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011: p. 46-47).

However, as previously noted by Brown (2006), recent findings have shown that such an approach is not conducive to learning. Therefore, the way language learning is viewed in non-traditional methods and *current approaches* differs considerably. Students are believed to learn best when they engage in real communication and construct meaning from social interactions, by arriving at an understanding of the speaker’s (or writer’s) intentions and communicative purposes, normally expressed by language and its functions. At the classroom level, this is accomplished by 1) working on the four skills – reading, listening, speaking and writing - from the very beginning, considering learners will be exposed to language as it is used via oral and written texts ; 2) using authentic language materials (or ‘genuine’ language materials) that portray real-language in use outside the classroom, by the way a learner is expected to interact in everyday-life situations, even when produced for pedagogical purposes; 3) communicative language or picture strip games that involve the exchange of information between participants; and, 4) role-plays, which provide learners with the opportunity to practice in real social contexts (e.g., *real life roles* within specific social situations). These elements are essential in achieving a communicative competence in a foreign & second language (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011).

In contrast with more traditional methods, in current approaches there has been *a change in teachers’ role*: instead of being the only model to be followed, thus,

playing a very active part, teachers become counsellors and/or facilitators in the teaching-learning process. By the same token, instead of being exposed to the model provided by the teacher or that in the pedagogically produced material, *learners are exposed to authentic language in use*, in real-life situations, through several educational resources (e.g., the use of technology and media, newspapers, magazines and others); students play a more active role, and become more autonomous in their own learning process (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011).

In short, the method or approach used by teachers should help students learn a language. It is vital to note that teachers' thoughts, views, beliefs and actions are linked when a method (or an approach) is employed: *teachers should be aware of their own thoughts about the subject matter – what language is and what culture is – and the personal nature of their own learners – who learners are and how they learn best*. Such an understanding is essential if teachers are to facilitate the language learning process (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011).

The **task-based teaching and learning** approach (TBTL, for short) *applied to language education*, teaching and learning *follows the recent trends in language education*. Not only does it provide the theoretical construct that underlies pedagogical actions, it is also used as the basis for material and task design, and 'teaching professional development' programmes. What is more, it has been **an effective tool in the social inclusion of newcomers into a given society**. Therefore, it has been widely defended by applied linguists and language educationalists, such as David Nunan<sup>110</sup>, Jane Willis<sup>111</sup>, Kris Van den Branden<sup>112</sup>, Peter Skehan<sup>113</sup>, and Rod Ellis<sup>114</sup>, just to name but a few, for the teaching of several foreign/second languages

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<sup>110</sup> Linguist, past TESOL President, Emeritus Professor of Applied Linguistics, currently Vice-President of Academic Affairs at Anaheim University. Information retrieved January 20, 2011 from <http://www.davidnunan.com/>

<sup>111</sup> English teacher, teacher trainer, consultant, and writer, having been awarded prizes for books written on the concept of task and its application to language teaching and learning. Information retrieved January 20, 2011 from <http://www.willis-elt.co.uk/aboutus.html>.

<sup>112</sup> Professor of Linguistics (Language policy, Language education, Language teacher training) and Director of the Centre for Language and Education, at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, which hosted the first International Conference on Task-based Language Teaching in 2005. Information retrieved January 20, 2011, from [http://cteno.be/kris\\_vandenbranden.htm](http://cteno.be/kris_vandenbranden.htm)

<sup>113</sup> Professor at the Department of English, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, having as research interests: second language acquisition, individual differences in language learning, and psycholinguistics, among others. Information retrieved January 20, 2011, from <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/eng/staff/pskehan/index.html>

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in countries, such as Belgium, Brazil, Hong Kong, and the United States. Its underlying principles and applications to language studies will now be discussed.

### **6.2.2 The underlying principles of ‘task’**

The concept of ‘task’ and its application to language education, teaching and learning has evolved considerably. The following works illustrate the main terminology used over the last 20 years: ‘language learning tasks’ (Candlin and Murphy, 1987), ‘task-based pedagogy’ (Kumaravadivelu, 1993), ‘task-based instruction’ (Skehan, 1996, 1998), ‘task-based learning’ (Willis, 1996), ‘task-based language learning and teaching’ (Ellis, 2003), task-based language learning (Errey and Schollaert, 2003), ‘task-based language teaching’ (Nunan, 2004), ‘task-based instruction in foreign language education’ (Leaver and Willis, 2004), and ‘task-based language education’ (Van den Branden, 2006a, Van den Branden et. al, 2007).

Initial contributions came from applied linguistics, firstly as “an aspect of research methodology used in studies of second language acquisition (SLA)” and then as “a concept used in second language curriculum design from the middle of the 1980s” (Crookes and Gass, 1993: p. 1) further incorporated by other scholars (Candlin, 2001; Nunan, 1993, 2004; Van den Branden 2006a). In this sense, Nunan (2004) contended that “task is more than a methodological device for classroom action”; he added that “it is a central curriculum planning tool” (p. 113).

According to Willis (2004), the task-based approach “does not constitute one single methodology”; therefore, it “can be creatively applied with different syllabus types and for different purposes”. However, worldwide programmes “share the same basic philosophy” (p. 3). Likewise, in his presentation at the Asian EFL Conference, Ellis (2006b) noted that such an approach can also be used with ‘more traditional methods’ and does not have to be the ‘sole’ method in use. Still, the same underlying principles are to be shared. According to Van den Branden (2006c), different partners should potentially act as supportive agents for school teams while operating “along agreed principles, and have the means and the competence to intensively coach and train the school teams that are involved” (p. 248).

As an attempt to reach a definition of ‘task’, there has been a considerable discussion to date. Several authors have provided a comprehensive list of previous

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others. Information retrieved January 20, 2011, from <http://www.artsfaculty.auckland.ac.nz/staff/?UPI=rell035&Name=Rod%20Ellis>



research around this theme (Crookes and Gass, 1993; Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Bygate et al, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Leaver and Willis, 2004; Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden, 2006b, for instance). Nevertheless, **language tasks** in instructional settings can be viewed as: 1) *a piece of work* (Crooks, 1986; Nunan, 1989); 2) a (range of) work plan(s) (Breen, 1987; Lee, 2000), *involving sub-tasks* that can be divided into steps during execution in order *to make up the whole* (Murphy, 1993); and, as most scholars have agreed upon, it can be 3) *an activity* (Richards, Platt and Webber, 1985; Prabhu, 1987; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Lee, 2000; Bygate et al, 2001; Van den Branden, 2006b; Van den Branden et. al, 2007). Finally, according to Dörnyei (2002), tasks play a vital role in language learning and, they “*constitute the interface between educational goals, teacher and students*” ( p. 139, emphasis added).

At the classroom level, **learners carry out a specific activity in order to achieve particular goals or outcomes** (Breen, 1987; Prabhu, 1987; Murphy, 1993; Willis, 1996, 2004; Williams, 1998; Bygate et al, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Van den Branden, 2006b). As Willis (1996) put it, “tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome” (p. 23). According to this author, if an activity lacks an outcome, it has no communicative goals; instead it is only an exercise that requires learners to practise a specific grammatical form. This is not the main goal to accomplish considering the role communication in foreign languages play in our society nowadays.

What is more, it is the **challenge of achieving the outcome** that makes all the difference and *contributes to having higher levels of motivation* in the classroom (Willis, 1996). For illustrative purposes, the author provided an example of turning an exercise into a more challenging activity. A teacher shows students a picture and gives the following instructions: ‘Write four sentences describing the picture. Say them to your partner’. Alternatively, the teacher could show students a picture briefly and give the following instructions: ‘From memory, write four true things and two false things about the picture. Read them out to see if other pairs remember which are true’ (p. 24). In this way, not only will students perform the task, but also focus on meaning while 1) engaging in cognitive processing and 2) having the challenge to check if the other pairs did the same and can retrieve the information from their memory. In this sense, they focus their attention to meaning first, as opposed to the required form (e.g., vocabulary or grammar).

Firstly, participants direct their attention to meaning as opposed to grammatical rules; in other words, **focus on meaning is primary** (Nunan, 1989, 2004; Willis, 1996, 1998; Skehan, 1998; Lee, 2000; Bygate et al, 2001; Errey & Schollaert, 2003). However, as Ellis (2003) put it, “while a task requires a learner to act primarily as a language user and give focal attention to message conveyance, it allows for peripheral attention to be paid to deciding what forms to use” (p. 5). Errey and Schollaert (2003) also agreed that learners are to focus on meaning during their interactions. However, they said, “by discovering the regularity in patterns and by linking this to a particular meaning, learners acquire an understanding of the way the target language works” (p. 16). In other words, by looking at the whole chunk of language, in its real-life context, learners can understand how each word relates to the others, from a functional and communicative perspective, and start to make sense out of it.

With regard to grammar, Nunan (2004) noted that, in early versions, there was a tendency to focus on form at the very beginning; in this way, there was very little difference from the traditional approach that the task-based approach was actually trying to replace. Also, as the author put it, some adopt a ‘strong’ interpretation by saying that “communicative interaction in the language is necessary and sufficient for language acquisition, and that a focus on form is unnecessary”. What is more, the same proponents of the strong interpretation believe that learners can complete the tasks successfully using “whatever linguistic means they can muster” (p. 93). Finally, after taking into account such different viewpoints, the author contended that **a focus on grammar should come towards the end of task accomplishment, before the production phase.**

Therefore, task-based activities, as Van den Branden (2006b) put it, “invite the learner to act primarily as a language user, and not as a language learner”. And he went on to say that “tasks are supposed to elicit the kinds of communicative behaviour (such as the negotiation for meaning) that naturally arises from performing real-life language tasks, because these are believed to foster language acquisition” (p. 8-9, emphasis added). In sum, *one learns a language by using it first, as opposed to firstly learning its grammar and particularities*, considering that such a degree of complexity is believed to hinder the language learning process.

By the same token, as far as the learning process is concerned, Errey and Schollaert (2003) stated that “knowledge is not ‘out there’ waiting to be ‘learned’, but rather that

knowledge is a personal and social construction of meaning (...) learning is therefore an active and interactive process of knowledge construction” (p. 18). This process happens when “the new knowledge is integrated in the learner’s existing mental picture of how things work (schema), which if successful will result in restructuring and stretching the learner’s emerging language through trial and error” (p. 16). This is to say that, from a task-based perspective, **new knowledge is built upon existing knowledge via transformation of one’s mental frames.**

Another important aspect to consider is that *language learning tasks* are intended to have a ‘problem-posing’ component (Candlin and Murphy, 1987); so, the task should allow for the generation of problems as well, followed by an approach to solving them. This is the reason why **tasks should have a challenge** (Willis, 1996) or a **problem-solving feature** (Skehan, 1998, Willis; 1996, 1998).

In order to work upon the solution to problems and challenges, **learners engage in different cognitive processes** (Nunan, 1989; 1999, 2004; Willis, 1996, 1998, 2004; Ellis, 2003; Duran and Ramaut, 2006; among others). These *mental processes* can be comprehending and understanding in order to produce and communicate in the target language (Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 2003); sorting, classifying, comparing, and matching, among others (Willis, 1998). It is important to note, however, that these cognitive processes should be employed in conjunction with problem-solving or within project work. For example, in considering the topic ‘animals’, such as a cat, a ‘listing task’ could be: ‘list three reasons why people think cats make good pets’. In addition, a ‘comparing task’ could be: ‘compare dogs and cats as pets’ As for ‘problem-solving’, a task could state the following: ‘think of three low budget situations to the problem of looking after a cat when the family is absent’ (Willis, 1998).

Language exposure or input is vital throughout the task cycle. What is more, **language learning tasks need to correspond to real-world activities** (Long, 1985), or be somehow related to the real world (Skehan, 1996, 1998). Moris and Stewart-Dore (1984) and Hover (1986), cited in Nunan (2004: p. 48) noted that learners can have **input from different sources of information** while performing a task. Apart from the oral, written and visual information provided by the teacher or textbook, the following *authentic materials* can be utilized: letters, newspapers, shopping lists, maps, menus, recipes, weather forecasts, bus timetables, notice board items, film scripts, radio and television documentaries, brochures and posters, among others.

**Authenticity** is an essential aspect in second/foreign language learning, as Ellis (2003) stated, tasks could be “situationally authentic and/or seek to achieve interactional authenticity” (p. 6), given the fact that “a task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world” (p. 16). Such an authenticity should be considered in terms of ‘optimal learning opportunities’, considering *learners should be able to establish connections and cope with the language outside the classroom* (Nunan, 2004). In other words, learners are to be exposed to authentic language via authentic materials or those pedagogically produced that portray authentic use of language (i.e., as it is really used, spoken, written outside the classroom), otherwise they will not be able to identify what they read, hear, or see in use in the environment they are inserted.

Similarly, regarding **educational resources that facilitate exposure to real-world language**, Willis (1996: p. 16) believes the following sources can be used:

- *Spoken language*
  - *Face-to-face* – in class: teacher, students and visitors; outside the class: projects, interviews, visits;
  - *Recorded* – broadcast: TV and radio; recorded: film/video, songs, language teaching materials (audio, videos, and CD ROMS);
- *Written language*
  - *Published* - books, magazines, newspapers, brochures, adverts, language teaching materials, computer programmes;
  - *Unpublished* – personal emails and letters, work/study – reports, notices, the Internet.

Such a variety of learning materials and resources are expected to provide learners, *especially beginner students*, with extensive exposure to the target language as it is used outside the instructional setting. It is important to note that these learners should not be forced to produce the language in written or spoken forms immediately, unless they feel comfortable, and have had adequate exposure to the target language (Willis, 1996). Likewise, Nunan (2004) stated that “at the beginning of the learning process, learners should not be expected to produce language that has not been introduced either explicitly or implicitly” (p. 35). Nevertheless, **there should be a shift from ‘reproductive tasks’** – the ones in which learners only reproduce what the teacher/textbook says, and are designed to give them practice on form, meaning and

function – **to more ‘creative tasks’**. The latter entails using the new knowledge that is in the process of construction within different and new ways. In other words, language learning tasks should allow from a transition from lower to higher levels of mental action and cognitive development.

By the same token, Ellis (2006b) contended that, at the very beginning of their studies, **complete beginners should be mainly doing ‘input-based’ tasks** (e.g., reading and listening) **having a lot of support from pictures and actions**, so that they can build some knowledge before being asked to ‘produce’ the language in oral or written texts. This is to say that the task-based approach can be used for beginners on the condition that these learners are extensively exposed to the language in use, through real-world situations, via different sources of materials (e.g., authentic or pedagogically produced), even if they take a more passive role at the beginning. In short, at first, beginners may only reproduce what they see, hear, or experience. However, as they progress, beginner students are expected to be able to produce language in everyday life-situations as well.

Another vital aspect to be taken into account is that of **interactional patterns** in the classroom, during task performance, which should be varied, as pointed out by Willis (1996: p. 46-47):

- *Individual students:*
  - Working on their own;
  - Working on their own + exchanging information in pairs;
  - Circulating together, at the same level, or one leading.
- *Pair work:*
  - Working together, at the same level, or one leading.
- *Group work:*
  - With or without a chairperson/ ambassador who makes sure everyone has a chance to express their views
- *Teacher + group or pair work / Teacher + whole class:*
  - Teacher focuses on groups or pairs and monitors the activity; teacher works with students as a whole group.

Such a consideration is vital, considering that activities should foster the social interactions with teachers and students alike, given the fact that, as social beings, **language acquisition & learning is enhanced by the interaction with others**. They

are supposed to play real-life roles while performing language tasks. In the words of Van den Branden (2006c), “it is not the task in itself, but the interaction and mental activity developed by the students and the teacher that will eventually determine how much, and what language, will be learnt” (p. 239). Therefore, the task-based approach is based on a *social-constructivist view on learning* (Van den Branden, 2006b), considering learners are to invest intensive mental energy in task performance: learning is enhanced by the interaction with others (e.g., teacher and learners).

As a matter of illustration, *an example of task-based lesson*, cited in Nunan (2004: p. 31-35) is now provided. The *final task* learners have to perform is *to rent appropriate accommodation*. Towards the end of the task cycle, learners are supposed to assume the following real-life roles *a tenant* and *a Real-Estate broker*:

STEP 1: The topic is introduced and the context is set. Some of the key vocabulary and expressions are introduced. Students are given different newspaper ads in which houses and flats are offered to let / rent and a list of key words related to the topic. They are also able to read a text in which people are looking for accommodation. Students are then asked to match the key words and people to the most suitable advertisement.

STEP 2: Students have an example of a brief conversation between two people accommodation (related to the ads presented in step 1). They can listen and read the dialogue, and practise it in pairs. By doing this early in the instructional cycle, they can see and hear the target language in use; alternatively, they could practise some variations of the same model using other advertisements (as noted in step 1). Finally, they can cover the main model and try and “reproduce” it. Although they are not producing anything new yet, “learners have been introduced to the language within a communicative context” (Nunan, 2004: p. 32).

STEP 3: More language input is provided, through real-life situations. Students listen to a variety of texts in which people talk about accommodation options; they can match the conversations with the ads they had been exposed to in step 1 (the conversations can be of an authentic or ‘simulated’ nature).

STEP 4: Students work on a sequence of exercises that focus on the linguistic elements. However, “before analyzing elements of the linguistic system, they have seen, heard, and spoken the target language within a communicative context” (Nunan, 2004: p.32). In this step, students can listen to the dialogues again and focus on the different types of questions as well as the language used (i.e. comparatives and superlatives) related to the topic (e.g., *Which house is closer to public transport? The two-bedroom apartment is cheaper than the three-bedroom apartment*). Therefore, the language analysis draws on the texts students had been exposed to in the first place.

STEP 5: So far students have been only reproducing the language supplied by the teacher and the materials. Therefore, now they can work in pairs and take part in an information gap exercise in which one takes *the role of a potential tenant* and the other plays *the part of a rental agent*. They draw on the previous ads in order to negotiate the best type of accommodation to choose. Some students will still “stick to the script” and follow the model while others may try and innovate.

STEP 6: In this final step, students work in small groups and *their final task* is “to study a set of newspaper advertisements and decide on the most suitable place to rent” (Nunan, 2004: p.33). After having worked through all the sequence, when they arrive at this step, they “find that they are able to complete the task more or less successfully” (Nunan, 2004: p. 33).

As can be clearly seen, from the very beginning, learners know what goals they are trying to accomplish: rent accommodation. In that sense, the following steps will be taken in order to fulfill that goal. This is to say that no additional grammar or vocabulary is taught, except for the essential information needed to rent a specific house or flat. They are exposed to essential vocabulary in isolation, but also through dialogues and newspaper advertisements (authentic materials pertaining to the situation: discourse genre). Next, they listen to the same or similar dialogues, in which people are renting and letting property and are asked to role-play the activity. They can do more activities which facilitate understanding, such as matching and recognizing essential information, and so on. Learners focus all their attention on specific information that will help them accomplish their task. However, it is important to note that they are still working within a reproduction phase.

After having had relevant language input, according to the situation and the final task, students are ready to work on the linguistic aspects and analyse the forms (verb tenses, word order, adjectives etc.). However, such an analysis is done by using extracts from the previous listening and reading materials, as to facilitate comprehension. This is to say that only after having negotiated meaning, do learners focus their attention on form.

Finally, learners are led towards the end of the cycle: firstly, they do an information-gap exercise, in which one has some information that the other needs, thus, assuming their roles – a tenant, and a Real-Estate broker. In other words, they are ready to assume the new identity required by that specific culture. After that, they are given the ‘final’ or real ‘task’: the conditions (price, location, and so on) and more newspaper ads. They are asked to work together, subject to the conditions given to them (e.g., price, location) and finally produce their own dialogue, using the linguistic resources they have built up to that moment.

In short, by having gone through the whole cycle (reading the newspaper ads, listening to and reading the language in use by local people, playing the same social roles to accomplish the same task, using pertinent vocabulary – necessary to task

accomplishment), along with practising the language to a great extent, learners feel more confident to take an active role and produce their own dialogue.

Another important consideration was that made by Errey and Schollaert (2003): **learners need to understand how things work**. In this sense, *metacognition plays a vital role* - learners can be “given opportunities to explain what they think is happening in their learning, and how they see new knowledge fitting into their new frame of reference” (p. 17). As a matter of fact, the authors contended that both teachers and students are to engage in a reflective process, by asking themselves the following questions, for example (p. 92, 100):

#### TEACHERS

*Does the task ensure learners: have opportunities to reflect on and reconstruct their language knowledge and their strategic learning behaviour?  
Is there an opportunity to reflect on which activities need more guidance, more independence for the next learning cycle?*

#### STUDENTS

*What else do I need to do to realize my objectives?  
Are there any better techniques?  
Is there better language I can use?  
What do I still need to know?  
What do I need more practice in?  
Where do we go from here?*

In similar vein, Nunan (2004) noted that there should be **opportunities for learners to reflect on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of their actions**: they will be asking ‘*Why are we doing this?*’ This can be in practice when there is a shift from ‘language content’ to ‘learning process’; the reflective learner takes part in learner training considering that ‘research suggests that learners who are aware of the strategies driving their learning will be better learners’ (p. 38). In short, by reflecting upon their own learning in the present, learners will maximize their chances of success in the future, as far as their own development and future language learning experiences are concerned.

Having said this, examples coming from different parts of world will be used to illustrate the application of the task-based approach to foreign & second language education, teaching and learning. Firstly, a look will be taken at this application in Europe – via EU funded projects and programmes in which Member-States, such as Lithuania, have a right to participate.



### 6.2.3 Recent applications to foreign & second language education

In Europe, some projects have benefited from the underlying principles of the task-based approach. For instance, *The POOLS*<sup>115</sup> project were winners of the European Award for Innovation and Creativity in Lifelong Learning 2009, as one of the LEONARDO DA VINCI Multilateral Projects - 'Transfer of Innovation' in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET). The original consortium – *Pools Grass Roots* (2005-2007)- was comprised by the following members: SMO – Sabhal Mor Ostaig (UK), EFVET (Belgium), Odense Tekniske Skole (Denmark), CEBANC-CDEA (Spain), ITE – CECE Instituto de Tecnicas Educativas de la CECE (Spain), Horizon College (the Netherlands), Colegiul Universitar de Instructori Pitesti (Romania), and **Kaunas College** (Lithuania)<sup>116</sup>.

Since December 2009, a new sub-project - the *Pools-M project*- has been focusing on language learning and teaching methods and approaches, including the TBLT. Five international educational institutions are actively involved: SDE College in Denmark (one of the largest technical colleges comprising a vocational school, a senior high school and an academy of higher education), EFVET (European Forum for Technical and Vocational Education and Training – under the Dutch and Belgian laws) in Belgium, CSCS Servizi Cultura Sviluppo Srl (Research Centre for Cultural Development) in Italy, **Marijampolės Profesinio Rengimo Centras (Marijampolė VET Centre)**<sup>117</sup> which is the biggest and the only vocational institution in the south of Lithuania, and finally, OZEL Marmara Anadolu Meslek Lisesi (Marmara Private Anatolian Vocational High School) in Istanbul, Turkey.

Another European Union Project was called TABASCO<sup>118</sup>: a Task-Based School Organisation for the Acquisition of Languages in Europe (2001-2003): a COMENIUS project that since 2000 involved six different countries and educational institutions, with a focus on secondary schools. It was jointly structured through cooperative work between the following educational institutions, from six different countries: 1)

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<sup>115</sup> More information at <http://www.languages.dk/index.html> .

<sup>116</sup> KAUNAS COLLEGE was a participant from 1 October 2005 to 30 September 2007. As an active member, Lithuanian researchers at the college developed digital videos, targeted at Erasmus students attending summer courses in Lithuanian as a Foreign Language, with the main goal of developing their listening comprehension skills. The videos were developed according to different levels of proficiency (A1/A2/B1) and organized in 23 topics. Information retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2010, from <http://www.languages.dk/digital/#Lithuanian>

<sup>117</sup> Information retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2010, from [http://www.languages.dk/membership/pools-m.html#Marijampolės\\_profesinio\\_rengimo\\_centras](http://www.languages.dk/membership/pools-m.html#Marijampolės_profesinio_rengimo_centras)

<sup>118</sup> More information at <http://www.taskbasedapproach.eu/>

VSKO, vzw Nascholing in het Katholiek Onderwijs (Belgium); 2) Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain); 3) Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier 3 (France); 4) Centro Servizi Amministrativi di Bergamo (Italy); 5) Universiteit van Amsterdam (The Netherlands); and 6) Oxford Brookes University (UK). Professor Peter Skehan played the role of an external evaluator. It aimed for a mutual conceptual framework, focusing on learner autonomy, and fostered the design of task-based materials, including guidelines for the implementation of this methodology.

In the context of **a less-widely taught and used language**, in considering *Dutch as a second language* (DSL) in **Flanders**<sup>119</sup>, the need for (re) designing courses for non-native speakers increased mainly for two reasons: 1) from an economical and social value placed on learning languages all over Europe, due to greater mobility, exchange of workforce, as a result of European unification, and 2) due to immigration from countries, such as Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, especially after World War II. The growing numbers of immigrants and political refugees in Flanders have generated the need of native speakers to communicate with non-native speakers (hereafter referred as NNS), as well as integrate their children into the Flemish society. As a result, in 1993, the Centre for Language and Education<sup>120</sup>, at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, set out to conduct empirical research subsidized by the Flemish Ministry of Education in which the language learning needs of adults were investigated (Van Avermaet and Gysen, 2006).

The findings showed a strong emphasis on “functionality” in communicative adequacy as opposed to linguistic correctness. Finally, Van Avermaet and Gysen (2006) stated that the research “supported a functional basis of DSL courses, involving the need for curriculum design to match the societal needs and emphasizing task performance rather than linguistic knowledge” (p. 24). Thus, the researchers clearly stressed **the importance of combining theoretical training, language learning materials design and in-service training / coaching of teachers**, considering that only theoretical training “fails to change the teaching methods of

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<sup>119</sup> The northern Dutch-speaking part of Belgium within the Flemish region, which comprises the following cities and towns: Aalst, Antwerp, Brugge, Genk, Gent, Hasselt, Kortrijk, Leuven, Mechelen, Oostende, Sint-Niklas, and Roeselare.

<sup>120</sup> The centre – directed by Prof. Kris Van den Branden - has a multidisciplinary team within the fields of Linguistics, Sociology and Educational Sciences (<http://cteno.be/nav=7.1>). Not only do they work on developing theoretical constructs, but also on devising materials and organizing teacher professional development programmes, with a focus on the TBTL implementation into the classroom. . The centre hosted the first international conference on Task-Based Language Teaching on 21-23 September 2005. More information available from <http://www.tbtl.org/>

individual teachers”. So, “task-based principles are also applied to the staff development of the teachers involved”. Their cooperation with over 600 schools seems to “indicate that an approach which combines theory and practice as described above, is the key to successful educational innovation and reform”<sup>121</sup>

In **the United States**, such an approach is part of 1) *US government Slavic language programmes* both at the Defense Language Institute (i.e., Czech, Ukrainian) and at the Foreign Service Institute (i.e., Russian), among others (Leaver and Kaplan, 2004), and 2) Language programmes at American universities: the Japanese language programme at the California State University, Monterey Bay (Saito-Abbott, 2004); Spanish for special purposes (SSP) designed for professional language learners at the American Global Studies Institute, Hartnell College, California (Macías, 2004); and French for engineering students and other professionals at the Pennsylvania State University (Hager and Lyman-Hager, 2004).

In **Hong Kong**, Programmes issued by the Curriculum Development Institute and Council of Hong Kong in 1999, for the teaching of English, also point to the adoption of a task-based approach (Candlin, 2001; Leaver and Willis, 2004).

Finally, in some private language institutes in **Brazil**, as part of the English language curriculum (Lopes, 2004), general English courses are also organized following the underlying principles of such an approach to language education, teaching and learning.

Having conducted such a review and identified the significance of applying the task-based approach to foreign & second language education, the next literature review will be concerned with the way tasks are designed and their effect on the formation of perceptions related to task difficulty.

### **6.3 The relation between task design & perceptions of task difficulty**

There seem to be different elements that contribute to tasks being labeled as difficult and “this will vary from person to person and from one situation to another” (Williams and Burden, 1997: p. 171). For instance, Brindley (1987), cited in Nunan (2004, p: 85-86), noted that functional difficulty can be determined by analysing three intersecting factors, namely *learner factors*, *task factors* and *text or input factors*, as shown below:

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<sup>121</sup> Information retrieved 23 February, 2010, from <http://cteno.be/doc=354&nav=7,8> , “Training Programmes”.

**Table 14 Factors contributing to the degree of task difficulty**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Easier</b>	<b>More difficult</b>
<i>Learner</i>	Confident and motivated to carry out the task; Has necessary priory learning experiences and language skills, and relevant cultural knowledge; Can learn at the pace required.	Not confident and not motivated; Has no prior learning experiences or language skills, does not have relevant cultural knowledge Cannot learn at the pace required.
<i>Task</i>	Low cognitive complexity Has few steps Plenty of context provided and help available Does not require grammatical accuracy Has as much time as necessary	Cognitively complex Has many steps No context or help available Requires grammatical accuracy Has little time
<i>Text/Input</i>	Is short, not dense (few facts) Presentation is clear Plenty of contextual clues Familiar, everyday content	Is long and dense (many facts) Presentation is not clear Few contextual clues Unfamiliar content

Source: Brindley (1987, cited in Nunan, 2004: p. 85-86)

On the one hand, *learners' factors* are also to be taken into account – lack of confidence or prior knowledge (both linguistic and cultural) and learning pace are said to contribute to the perception of difficulty. On the other hand, *task design* plays a role as well: many steps to take, no context or help available, unfamiliar content, long texts lacking a clear presentation, and a focus on grammar accuracy are all said to contribute to task difficulty.

Skehan and Foster (2001) stated that perceived difficulty may also be related to the “limited information processing capacity” humans have:

if a task demands a lot of attention to its content (because it is complex or puzzling, or someone else possess information that you don't have), there will be less attention devoted to its language. This is not much of a problem for native speakers, whose knowledge of their own language forms is procedural (...) and can be executed automatically without requiring much, if anything, in the way of attentional resources. It can, however, be a considerable problem for language learners. (p. 189)

As can be clearly seen, when learners are overloaded with information that is complex and requires a lot of processing, there will be less attention devoted to learning the language itself, considering their attention will be mainly focused at the

difficulty they perceive. Native speakers do this very often, as they know how to do things, in other words, they have procedural knowledge. Conversely, students learning a language lack procedural knowledge and will need to have a lot of language exposure – through audio and visual texts – so that they can see how language works. Otherwise, in all likelihood, their memory will be overloaded and less space for learning the target language will be available.

Robinson (2001) made a distinction between *task difficulty* – “learner’s perceptions of the demands of the task” (p. 295), also determined by other factors such as motivation and ability, and *task complexity* - related to the design features of tasks. The dimensions of complexity, especially at the design level and further implementation in the classroom, can be manipulated accordingly so as to increase or lessen the cognitive demands tasks make on the learner during task performance. In his own words, “when the learner performs tasks with little planning time, without sufficient readily accessible background knowledge, or is forced to divide attention when performing one or two secondary tasks simultaneously with the main task” (p. 32), the dimension of complexity is maximized. Finally, the author pointed out that “complex tasks are less likely to be successfully completed; take longer than simple counterparts; are rated by learners as more difficult; have physiological consequences (e.g. pupillary dilation, increased heart rate); and are more susceptible to interference from competing tasks” (p.306).

Likewise, Ellis (2003) made a distinction between *task difficulty* and *task complexity*. The former is related to learner’s perceptions, and, in Ellis’s (2003) words, it can be defined as “the extent to which a particular learner finds a task easy or difficult. Individual difference factors, such as intelligence, language aptitude, learning style, memory capacity, and motivation are responsible for task difficulty”. The latter, however, can be understood as “the extent to which a particular task is inherently easy or difficult” (p.351). Based on previous research (Brown et al., 1984; Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Skehan, 2001; among others), Ellis (2003: p. 222-225) listed some **factors that minimize the perception of task complexity**, and consequently impact on perceptions of difficulty:

- *Information that is visually supported is generally easier to process* than information without any visual aids, such as photographs, drawings, tables, and graphs. These allow for a better understanding of textual information. In addition, context-free input (i.e., *there-and- then* as opposed to *here-and-now*) tends to contribute to a higher degree of complexity
- *A clear structure of events* (i.e., a story where the time sequence is readily identifiable) *may be easier to process* than information that has ‘loose structure’, as learners can rely on their previous knowledge (i.e., ready-made schemata)
- *The theme of the task in relation to learners’ world knowledge and personal experiences will play a part both in task complexity and level of difficulty.* Asking learners to communicate about a topic they are not familiar with can lead be inherently stressful

With regard to complexity, following educational policies<sup>122</sup> in Flanders for the development of Dutch by “newcomers” at secondary schools, at a beginner’s level of instruction, Duran and Ramaut (2006) designed a complexity scale that primarily applies to listening and reading skills in Dutch. In such a scale, we can see the following categories of parameters (from 1 – simple – to 3 – complex):

- the world represented in the task
- cognitive processing demands
- text/input features

In referring to the levels of complexity, however, the authors noted that learners should move towards more complex activities especially when they reach the end of the ‘reception year’, as these will also facilitate the language learning process, resulting, in their inclusion in the society. Highlights of this scale are shown, as follows:

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<sup>122</sup> During one year, newcomers (12-18 years old) to Flemish society attend language ‘reception classes’ focusing mainly on listening and reading skills in Dutch, designed to prepare them to join mainstream education in the subsequent years. However, as Duran and Ramaut (2006) put it, “all the non-native speakers of Dutch who were born in Flanders are integrated in mainstream classes from kindergarten onwards” (p. 49).

**Table 15 Complexity scale for task-based language learning at beginner's level**

<b>Categories and Questions</b>	<b>(1) Simple</b>	<b>(2) Less Simple / More Complex</b>	<b>(3) Complex</b>
<i>WORLD</i> <i>Concrete or abstract approach to topic?</i>	Concrete descriptions (here-and-now)	Other time/space reference (there-and-then)	Abstract descriptions
<i>Is visual support provided? Does it support task performance?</i>	Plenty of visual support	Little visual support	No visual support
<i>Is linguistic context available? Does it support learners accomplish tasks?</i>	High level of redundancy; low information density	Little redundancy, medium information density	High density of information, low level of redundancy
<i>TASK</i> <i>Cognitive processing</i>	Understand the information presented – at descriptive level	Reorganize the information – at restructuring level	Compare different sources – at evaluative level
<i>What should learners do and at what level?</i>		Little verbal production (writing/speaking at copying level – reproducing previous info)	Verbal production (writing and speaking at descriptive level)
<i>How learners provide their responses?</i>	Non-verbal production (just reading/listening)		
<i>INPUT OF INFORMATION</i>			
<i>Is the vocabulary frequently used by native speakers?</i>	Highly frequent words	Less frequent words	No frequent words
<i>Is sentence structure simple or complex?</i>	Short and simple sentences	Reasonably long sentences with juxtaposition	Long and embedded sentences
<i>Are texts clearly structured? (story line, paragraphs etc)</i>	Clear and explicit story	Partly explicit structure	Implicit or unclear structure
<i>Are texts short or long?</i>	Short	Not so short but not too long	Long

Adapted from Duran and Ramaut (2006: p. 52-53).

On the whole, it can be clearly seen that tasks and the actions accomplished by learners are believed to contribute to the perceived level of difficulty. Tasks in which the information is not clearly organized with little visual support, having unfamiliar topics, lacking local context, requiring many steps to be accomplished, with a great focus on grammar accuracy, are said to contribute to the formation of task difficulty.

## 6.4 Data analysis: Lithuanian language materials, activities and tasks

Our analysis will also draw on the theoretical constructs stated in educational policies in Lithuania and those put forward by the European Union. In doing so, the findings obtained from the preliminary analysis will be presented as one, considering that adult learners' perceptions in this study reflected the learning environment to a great extent. The first considerations will be made in terms of material and course design:

### MATERIAL & COURSE DESIGN

#### Theoretical framework

Materials should target learners' personal nature, needs, wants, and age-groups. They should address the demands in terms of social and professional inclusion of newcomers. Adults are self-directed and take responsibility for their own learning: material should be user-friendly. Supplementary materials should be available for self-study.

Materials to be designed and courses delivered by teachers qualified in adult learning, catering for the personal nature of adults' needs, wants, and needs, facilitating their inclusion in society and in the labour market. A thorough understanding of the relation between memory and learning is necessary, as this will guide material design, lesson delivery, and impact learning outcomes.



#### Socio-cultural context analysis & Adults' perceptions

The same material is used for the language education of international students, foreigners, refugees and asylum seekers of different age-groups. Course books lack answer key to exercises and audio scripts (unsuitable for self-study). Supplementary materials, media & online resources targeted at newcomers are scarce.



Materials designed by teachers and researchers working at the Department of Lithuanian Studies, at Vilnius University, who are specialized in philology, classical philology, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, language testing and didactics, for instance.

Firstly, it can be clearly seen that *material and course design* were not organized in such a way as to meet the individual differences of adult learners, especially considering the newcomers to this country - as of 2004 - who did not belong to the existing minority groups but attempted to learn the local language. The existing materials, especially the ones used as main learning resources, lack answer keys to exercises and audio-scripts. This does not meet the self-directedness of adult learners who may have to be absent due to professional reasons. Moreover, the lack of supplementary materials targeted at complete beginners also may have played an important role in the formation of perceptions as far as inappropriate educational resources are concerned. This expressed by adults between 21 and 30 years of age, such as *Student32* and *Student 36* (Interview notes), who clearly stated the wish to buy alternative materials to carry on studies in their own countries, for fear of forgetting the information learned during the course attended at the Lithuanian university.



Next, our attention will be drawn to understanding *the organization of information in the materials*:

### ORGANIZATION OF INFORMATION IN MATERIALS

#### Theoretical framework

#### Socio-cultural context analysis & Adults' perceptions

Learning objects should state the content and what learners will be able to do with it. These should be written according to the social, professional, and personal language needs, which in turn emerge from real-life situations and social discourse from the local communities.



Learning objectives are not stated in the main course book, except for the alternative course book which includes a description of the content to be learned in Lithuanian only. On many occasions, teachers stated the main content of the lesson in terms of grammar & functions.

Language exposure should be varied; activities should resemble the real world, according to learners' needs & wants. Technology should be used as this facilitates the use of language outside the classroom and minimizes the perceived lack of ability to understand the language in use.



Language exposure via pedagogically texts lacking authenticity. Current Lithuanian identity often absent (lack of real products, brands, local media or people). Non use of media resources / lack of moving images (Radio, TV, films etc.).

The lack of visuals and examples do not facilitate learning complex knowledge or negotiation of meaning. It increases the perception of task difficulty. The same presentation style or pattern leads to boredom, reduces attention, and does not enhance memory processes.



Texts written only in Lithuanian, including the instructions to the exercises. Few examples. Lack of visuals and colours - mainly B&W sketches, often related to Lithuanian fauna & flora. Tasks perceived as not so interesting (non-motivating).

Language activities are to facilitate the development of competences required by the social roles played by adults in society. This also contributes to the perceived relevance of the task.



Social life roles were small in number. Being a student or classmate were the most played roles by adults in this study.

Secondly, when it came to *the organization of information* in the learning materials, *and its subsequent presentation* at classroom levels, adult learners were not frequently provided with a learning or instructional objective; at times they were made familiar with the content, but not necessarily with what they would be able to do with that content outside the classroom. This is an essential aspect in adult learning, as adults will only attend a language course in instructional settings if there is a perception of relevance; in other words, they will only be present if tasks are designed to meet their perceived needs and wants according to their daily duties. Likewise, from a task-based perspective, learners are expected to work towards achieving a specific goal or outcome. This should be made explicit to them at the very beginning of a unit

Moreover, if learning objectives were not clearly stated, adults may not have understood the reason why they were learning specific vocabulary or topic (= *not understanding/ lack of ability*). This could be the reason for an adult learner not

understanding the reason for being exposed to so many words about birds and the sounds they make, as these were not normally used in everyday life situations, from an adult's perspective (*Student 6* – Interview notes). It may also have impacted the motivation to attend the lectures more regularly (*Student13* – Interview notes).

Another important finding in this case study, which is not only unique, but also is expected to be 'revelatory', given the absence of previous research, is the fact that the *current Lithuanian identity seemed to be frequently erased from materials and tasks* (e.g., products, brands, places, media, social events). As a result, adults could well have had difficulty making connections with the Lithuanian society, products, places and people in general. As previously discussed, *Student39* clearly stated the need to know how to say butter to be able to buy this product; despite having had linguistic exposure, followed by a B&W sketch of plain unbranded packets, no real memory had been formed. Thus, a perceived difficulty in identifying things outside the classroom may have contributed to adults making attributions in this sense (= *not knowing, not understanding / lack of ability*).

Furthermore, the use of B&W sketches, along with the absence of colours, and stationary images, as opposed to moving ones, did not help learners focus their attention: as a result, they did not form a memory (= *not remembering / lack of ability*). Moreover, the learning processes of visual learners would have been enhanced if materials catered for this learning preference; hence the attributions made in that sense (= *having a different learning style/ lack of ability*). Indeed, *Student11* – who also had a different learning style – reported the wish to have gone to the local canteen, as a group, to learn about the food and drinks, or the possibility to go to the local shops to identify the items of clothing they had learned. Perhaps, if the course had been organized in a video-format, portraying typical daily situations, such perceptions would have been to a great extent minimized.

Likewise, the lack of visuals did not facilitate understanding instructions or new information while using the Lithuanian language materials (= *not understanding, not knowing / lack of ability*), as noted by *Student3* and *Student15* (Interview notes), who had encountered difficulties doing the homework.

From a social perspective, *seldom were adult learners required to play life roles* during task performance; the main roles played were: a 'friend', 'student' or 'classmate'. This, aligned with *the topics and type of tasks*, also may have contributed

to the perception of *non-motivating tasks*, as stated by adult learners who were required to write letters to friends about their own pets, or asking for advice on how to look after a pet (*Student6 and Student13*, Interview notes).

Although most of the rooms were equipped with a TV & video equipment, and radio & CD player, the *non-use of media resources* provided the adult learner with no opportunity to make connections with the real world, and use the language in real-life situations. These could also have contributed to the perception of difficulty (=not understanding, not knowing = lack of ability), especially when an attempt to use the language outside the classroom was made. Hence the request made by adults, such as *Student4* (aged 51 - 60), who wished to have more audiovisual texts, like TV documentaries in the classroom, so as to learn the ‘tongue of people’ and their ‘popular language’, as opposed to ‘the language spoken by the academia’, considering they would have to face situations in a café, restaurant, cinema and interact with locals who spoke ‘colloquial Lithuanian’.

In this sense, the lack of language input played a significant role in the formation of these perceptions. Therefore, if adult learners had been exposed to situations in which Lithuanian speakers often take part, perhaps, by looking at videos and other programmes, it is very likely that they would have had such a need met, and, perhaps, a different group of categories would have been generated in this study. In short, the lack of exposure to Lithuanian language as discourse seems to have played a crucial part in the formation of these perceptions.

In addition, *task difficulty* ranked first in the sub-category of *classroom activities – design and implementation at classroom levels*, as noted next:

#### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & TASK DIFFICULTY**

##### **Theoretical framework**

Long lists of vocabulary presented in fragments are instantly forgotten, due to the limited capacity of short-term memory. The pieces may never be retrieved; in short, learners will not remember the information. By contrast, presentation through texts and situations, in logical sequence of events, result in more long-lasting memory.

The memory of adult learners will be easily overloaded if their attention is unfocused. In other words, when adults are required to pay attention to several pieces of information they are likely to

##### **Socio-cultural context analysis & Adults’ perceptions**

Presentation via fragments (nouns in nominative case, verbs mainly in third person, lists of vocabulary / words in isolation) followed by literal translation, and teacher-generated examples. Lack of situations.

Adult learners engage in multiple-steps: read notes, look at the board, at the teacher, repeat words aloud and translate them, use a dictionary, tables and verb lists. Attention



experience memory breakdowns resulting in forgetting. If words are presented in disconnected sentences, memory will last a little longer, but still be lost very quickly. Moreover, less 'space' will be left for understanding how the language is used in real-life contexts.

Adult learners are less effective in learning by rote; information tends not to be transferred to long-term memory. Even when it is transferred, new information tends to be 'forgotten' and cannot be applied to new activities requiring problem-solving. In short, primary focus should be on meaning rather than form.

Educative language tasks always have a challenge or problem to solve. The opportunity to reflect upon task performance is essential in language learning. Likewise, problem-solving is a crucial element in adult learning and normally required in social & professional contexts. Adults will only transform their mental frames by questioning, reflecting upon task performance and their own performance, while rethinking the ways to improve in a future situation.

There should be a shift from reproductive to productive language tasks, allowing for the development of higher mental processes. Adults are to play an active part and not just repeat the information from textbooks. This is essential as adults are decision-makers and take responsibility for their own learning.

is unfocused. Exercises are mainly presented in disconnected sentences. Learners take many steps in doing them (nouns to be inflected by up to 7 cases, 2 genders, and 2 numbers). All this requires a lot of brain capacity.

Grammar-focused exercises, requiring the constant repetition of patterns – oral or written drills – (focusing on prepositions, verb tenses, cases in isolation), leading to rote learning.

Strategic thinking or problem-solving almost non-existent (i.e., 'non-challenging tasks'). Metacognitive knowledge – opportunities to reflect upon one's learning process or task achievement, not constructed either.

Little focus on skills development – speaking, writing, listening, reading (speaking & listening were perceived needs and priorities). First person of discourse normally suppressed (focus on the three forms of verbs – third person of discourse), difficulty in expressing oneself.

Firstly, as can be clearly seen, the memory formed for fragments and words in isolation is instantly lost; thus, such an approach at the very beginning of the unit did not allow for the formation of memory, resulting in forgetting (= *not remembering / lack of ability*). Despite the fact that one or two examples were generated by the teacher, sentences did not form a storyline or were embedded in situations. As a result, the information might have been quickly forgotten, and learners might have constructed sparse meanings (= *not understanding, not knowing = lack of ability*).

Furthermore, given the fact that adult learners' attention was unfocused due to competing tasks - noun inflections according to case, number, and gender, mostly in disconnected sentences<sup>123</sup> – their memory was more susceptible to breakdowns. This

<sup>123</sup> For instance, in Unit 4 – page 83/ ex 1 - of the main course book, learners have to do transformation drills, in which 5 words are inflected by case, number, and gender. Thus, firstly the learner will have to find out which case is governed by the main verb (nori + ko; mėgsta+ ką; patinka + kas) After that, each and every word given will have to be inflected (= 7 steps to write one sentence) with the aid of tables showing all endings: Instructions: *Parašykite pagal pavyzdį: Man patinka duona, žuvis, sūris, medus, uogienė. Aš noriu duonos, \_\_\_\_\_ . Aš mėgstu*

is to say that new information was quickly forgotten because of overloading (= *too many steps/ high demands on memory and cognition = lack of ability*). This could be the reason why an adult learner had the impression of working with *a mathematical formula*; according to this student, exercises used to take *a lot of brain capacity* (Student 7 – Interviews notes).

On top of that, after being exposed to fragments and grammatical rules, adult learners were asked to do additional exercises that required the extensive repetition of patterns, mainly in disconnected sentences (similar to the one presented in the previous footnote); in other words, it appeared that learning by rote would help them internalize all the cases and endings accordingly. However, as previously discussed, unlike children, adults do not respond to rote learning in an effective manner; moreover, this approach is not conducive to learning in adulthood as it does not facilitate the integration of new knowledge into existing knowledge; that is, words, adults' frames of reference and meaning schemes are not transformed (= there is no change = no learning). This could also be a reason for some learners to think they were too old to learn a language (= *rote learning is not conducive to learning in adulthood / too old to learn a language / lack of ability*).

It is also interesting to note that several adults – aged between 15 and 50 – pursuing formal and non-formal education, belonging to different countries, cultural backgrounds, appeared to be conscious of their own nature: they clearly stated their *dissatisfaction with having to memorize rules or learning by heart without understanding*, as previously shown, when students' perceived difficulties were analysed and discussed in detail. Needless to say, rote learning has serious consequences, as previous research has shown: apart from forgetting, 'new' knowledge cannot be used in real-life situations especially when engaging in problem-solving. Such actions are essential for adults to maintain their membership in the communities of practice in a given society, as they are required to apply knowledge to solve everyday problems.

What is more, as the analysis has shown, *little opportunity was given to learners to overcome a challenge*, according to their social roles and age-groups. And this is an essential element in adult learning. Moreover, tasks lacking such a challenge are not considered 'educative', in Dewey's terms. As far as language learning is concerned,

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\_\_\_\_\_. Mums patinka pomidorai, salotos, obuoliai, vyšnios, bulvės. Mes norime \_\_\_\_\_. Mes mėgstame \_\_\_\_\_.

students should also have a challenge to overcome, as this is an essential step in their own development and learning process. As a result, in this case-study, some *tasks* were labeled as ‘*non-challenging*’, because they frequently had *the same pattern* (true or false reading comprehension texts), which *did not require much thinking*, or were *not realistic* - writing a letter to a friend describing a country to a friend who wants to visit it as opposed to using the Internet to find timely information- or still writing a letter to a friend describing a pet or asking for advice on how to look after a pet, as *Student6* and *Student13* have stated at the time they were interviewed for the second time, that is, in 2008, after attending the course for over 1 or 2 years.

In addition, opportunities to reflect upon one’s learning or develop study skills (i.e., metacognitive knowledge/ critical reflection) – how to remember words, how to use a dictionary, and raise an awareness of one’s weaknesses and strengths, for instance – were identified neither in the materials nor in the classroom. As research has shown, problem-solving and critical reflection are essential items both in adult learning and language learning: these mental actions are believed to trigger the transformation of one’s cognitive structures. This could also explain the perceived difficulty of *not knowing* (= *lack of ability*).

Apart from that, adults were expected to move from a reproduction to a production phase, in which they would also employ higher mental processes – this would have allowed them to take a more active role, firstly, in the classroom, and then in society. This is also relevant, considering that these learners were inserted in a new democratic state (i.e., Lithuania after the restoration of its independence). As already noted, *very few opportunities were given for the development of productive skills* – writing and speaking (being the latter priority number 1, according to the participants). This also explains the reasons for a great number of attributions of lack of speaking tasks.

Ultimately, *students’ voices were frequently suppressed* by focusing on the three forms of verbs which required them to reproduce the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of discourse only (he, she, they); this did not seem to facilitate the expression of their own ideas, views, and actions. Also, they were frequently asked to ‘reproduce’ the voices from the textbook (= *not being able to speak / lack of ability*). This could be a reason for adults such as *Student4* and *Student11* having stated their problems in describing things they had done during the week or over the weekend, as it was hard to form a sentence in

Lithuanian. *Student6* also noted having to ‘think’ in the first language and only then being able to translate the same information into Lithuanian, even after almost 2 years attending the course. Moreover, this was believed to slow down the whole communication process. When asked to say something in the class, this student had the impression that the teacher was always checking for accuracy and wanted a ‘fast answer’. As a consequence, this student started to ‘go silent’ in the classroom as well. *Student 13*, who also continued the studies for one additional semester, expressed the dissatisfaction of having to repeat words or texts from the book as opposed to expressing personal viewpoints.

In this sense, these adult learners clearly noted their difficulties in terms of not being able to clearly use their voice by using the first person singular pronoun *I*, assuming responsibility for their own actions, as *subjects* in a discourse, as one would normally do in a real-life situation in democratic societies. Current language learning theories also point to learners having an active role in society. Thus, language tasks should enable them to accomplish such a mission.

Finally, an important perception was formed in terms of **non-participation or practice in society**. In that sense, the following analysis will only take into consideration the socio-cultural context in which learning was organized, that is, the perceptions formed in Lithuania only. The analysis of the opportunity to practise or learn Lithuanian in other countries was beyond the scope of this study.

Next, we present the main summary of our analysis of theories, policies and adult learners’ perceptions in this regard:

#### PARTICIPATION IN THE LITHUANIAN SOCIETY

##### Theoretical Framework

##### Socio-cultural context analysis & Adults’ perceptions

Learning emerges from socially interacting in society: a newcomer gradually becomes an apprentice and, eventually becomes an old-timer. During the social interactions, the members of a community of practice engage in discourse, negotiate meanings and express their feelings and ideas through language.



Local people are not patient to listen to ‘foreigners’ speaking Lithuanian; no opportunity to speak Lithuanian on the streets, or public places, such as banks, restaurants, as locals would frequently switch to more international languages, like English.

In this sense, language is viewed as a tool which helps newcomers meet their communicative needs, while living, working and/or studying in a different country, on temporary or permanent basis.



No participation in social activities by speaking the Lithuanian language with locals either. Lithuanians have a low concept of their country and their language.

Educational institutions play a crucial role in terms of organizing courses to address these needs, as they are inserted in bigger social structures. The activities performed in the classroom serve as a bridge that learners cross in order to be included in society. Learning that emerges in the classroom should also facilitate the integration of a newcomer in the real communities of practice outside the walls of the school.



Not staying at the same hall of residence that Lithuanian students used to stay, and not attending the same course (as an Erasmus student, or a language learner) a Lithuanian student would attend were also believed to contribute to the lack of participation in society.

Firstly, it is vital to note that a community of practice in which a newcomer can have legitimate participation can only exist if there is a strong sense of identity and community – sharing the same goals - and if they are constantly engaged in practice. All this is mediated by language, which in turn is used to negotiate meanings, arrive at a mutual understanding, while expressing one's feelings and views. Learning results from such a social practice. In that sense, Lithuanian language learning is *also* expected to emerge from participation in communities of practice in the Lithuanian society: newcomers – the majority of participants in this study – should be able to establish connections, express views, feelings, play an active part by speaking Lithuanian outside the walls of the classroom.

Nevertheless, schools and classrooms are not placed in a vacuum – the activities performed should also facilitate the participation of students and newcomers in society, in places such as banks, post offices, restaurants, where adults are expected to speak in order to solve their problems, and satisfy their communicative needs. If speaking the language is pre-condition for participation, this means that speaking tasks having the real world and the language required to successfully function in it should be a target to reach. As we have already discussed, the so-called productive skills, such as speaking and writing, were extremely small in number in the materials analysed and the lessons observed in this study.

However, some participants in this study – from different courses (summer, regular, Erasmus), nationalities and age-groups - formed a similar perception: *lack of participation or opportunity to practise by speaking Lithuanian*, in several situations – on the streets, at the students' hall of residence, or at the university, while attending lectures. As previously noted, such a lack of participation was perceived as negatively impacting their own learning, especially because they were inserted in this society; in other words, Lithuanian language learning was situated in specific social, political and educational structures. Yet, communication with locals was not easily established



and when it did happen, a different language would be used for the negotiation of meanings. In extreme situations, adults would be refrained from participating in a given cultural event (*Student13* clearly noted the difficulty in taking part in music festivals, for being perceived as a foreigner despite being of Lithuanian descent).

It is vital to note that these **perceptions were formed mainly by adults living, studying and/or working in Vilnius** – the capital city, and to a small extent, by interacting with locals in Klaipėda: two big cities that also played an important part in the history of the country. Both cities had the most influence of dominant groups and people would at times not speak Lithuanian for several reasons, such as the fear of incurring losses when doing business.

Given the essential role played by communities of practice - as previously discussed in the second chapter of this work, regarding the transformation of the national identity in this country (Jucevičienė, 2005), an investigation in this sense was beyond the scope of this study. However, if Lithuanian is to be spoken by locals and newcomers alike, and, most importantly passed on to future generations, there should be more spaces for adult newcomers and their children to engage in social interactions. But first they need to learn to conform to the linguistic conventions adopted by the discourse communities / communities of practice in this society.

## **6.5 Concluding remarks**

In this chapter, it was made clear that the materials, activities and tasks designed for a target audience comprised of adult learners should consider their nature, interests, and orientation to learning, in terms of task-centeredness, problem-centeredness, and self-directedness. Also, task design will definitely impact memory processes and learning outcomes, as learners may not be able to retrieve information to use in real situations.

All in all, Lithuanian language materials, activities and tasks are not aligned with the theoretical constructs and methodological approaches analysed herein, as previously noted. If limit-acts are not implemented in the near future, many newcomers may become permanent residents, but are likely to show a ‘shattered identity’ due to a clear lack of knowledge of Lithuanian and, most importantly, they will not comply with the linguistic codes and social rules required by the local discourse communities, which in turn may result in their social and professional exclusion in contexts where Lithuanian is the language to be spoken.

## **Discussion of results**

From an external perspective - the environment (beyond a learner's scope of action), the following attributions of perceived difficulties were made by adult newcomers:

*Lack of or inappropriate educational resources.* Adults' perceptions equate to our analyses of Lithuanian language tasks, and their implementation: presentation of fragmented knowledge – long lists of words in the nominative case, or verbs in their three forms, not forming a storyline, meaning being negotiated mainly through the same pattern: literal translation into English (and Russian, if needed) along with a few sentences and examples generated by the teacher. Occasionally, learners would also refer to the B&W sketches available in the course book. Multiple-steps were taken by adult learners: all words had to be changed according to the rules given, while doing grammar and vocabulary exercises, mainly in disconnected sentences. The following task sequence seemed to be frequently employed: grammar & vocabulary, reading & listening, and finally speaking & writing. The latter accounted for the least number of exercises done by students.

Learners were not exposed to authentic language in use, from a discourse perspective; they were solely exposed to Lithuanian language through pedagogically devised texts lacking authenticity. Although students are normally exposed to texts portraying real-life situations at higher levels – according to this author's own experience as a learner at the same institution - at a beginner's level, there was no reference to contemporary Lithuanian products, media, the press, artists, writers, for instance.

A few design features may have contributed to tasks being labeled as non-motivating or non-challenging: the main course book, published before Lithuania became an EU State-Member, is also used for the language education of unaccompanied minors at the Refugee Reception Centre; the main visual support - black & white sketches, frequently addressing a more juvenile audience; the absence of learning objectives from an outcome perspective; the lack of adult role plays and problem-solving activities; the few speaking tasks, which were actually mentioned as number one priority by the majority of participants, and the non-use of media resources.

Finally, regarding task performance, it is vital to note that the perceptions formed by two participants who took part in this study twice (the longitudinal component)

had not changed after reaching higher levels of study: both of them stated the wish to have had different tasks, in which they could have taken a more active role, by producing Lithuanian language, through oral and written texts, as opposed to ‘reproducing the information in the materials’.

Apart from the grammar books, supplementary materials targeted at the newcomers, English-language speakers are few. Pocket-dictionaries were designed to aid a Lithuanian speaker who needs to communicate in another language; that is the reason for the few examples given and the lack of information on how Lithuanian words are pronounced. In addition to media resources produced abroad, at a high cost, mainly purchased via online shopping, only one audio CD produced in 2010, and a CD ROM, launched in 2001, were locally produced and available in the domestic market.

Indeed, groups would be comprised of more and less-experienced language learners, including linguists. Up to 14 students were observed attending the first semester of the basic course. Nevertheless, in countries such as Belgium and England, groups can be made up to 20 students, but a different methodology is employed. As far as teachers are concerned, they would draw on their own voices as the main tool to expose learners to the language. This could explain the perception of low voice and lack of intervention. Considering the multicultural new target audience, ‘on-the-spot’ corrections, at an individual level, would be hard to implement.

*Lithuanian as a system.* In considering ancient times, the lack of contact with other cultures resulted in an archaic system, sometimes equated to Sanskrit or Latin. In more recent times, given the influence of other languages, Lithuanian orthography, grammar, pronunciation, intonation and accentuation have undergone important changes. Furthermore, Lithuanian is a case-based language: almost every word in a sentence is inflected by case, number, and gender, producing innumerable endings. Even simple sentences requiring the use of numerals are mostly produced in a different manner in comparison with other languages, such as English – ordinal numbers are frequently used. Therefore, Lithuanian speakers approach everyday tasks with a different mental representation from speakers of other languages. Not only are such constructions difficult to be uttered and spelt, they also require a non-native speaker to reconceptualize the way they approach ordinary things and events: this will trigger a different choice for word order, normally comprising longer words, which are, as a result, ‘more difficult’ to pronounce. In this sense, from ‘foreigners’

and non-native speakers standpoint, who do not have previous knowledge, Lithuanian language learning requires a change in how one sees reality and the world around them: a change in perspective is needed. However, if grammar accuracy was often emphasized through materials and tasks, in all likelihood, these learners would have formed such a perception, stating the Lithuanian language as a system as one of their main difficulties.

Nevertheless, Lithuanian is a natural language spoken by people who have needs, wants and feelings. Lithuanian native speakers' use of language is intentional, functional, and situated: they use Lithuanian to fulfill a communicative function. Other people also use language to function in society within specific social events. Thus, this author contends that this similarity can be the starting point for organizing Lithuanian language courses, especially targeted at newcomers to this society, who may not necessarily be linguists, historians, or translators.

*Non-participation in the Lithuanian society.* On the one hand, after the restoration of independence, individuals in big centres, such as Vilnius and Klaipėda, would resort to other languages for fear of misunderstandings and incurring financial losses. Nowadays, considering the services and goods are also consumed by the new target audience, the same situation could have occurred, especially in these commercial areas. On the other hand, it may be assumed that when newcomers and visitors attempted to engage in social interactions and negotiate meaning within a discourse community in the Lithuanian society, they lacked the 'cultural appropriateness' often required by the local members. What is more, they lacked practice in spoken Lithuanian, given speaking and pronunciation tasks were relatively few. Due to the lack of texts portraying everyday life situations and the contemporary Lithuanian identity, there was no visualization of products, situations and social rules in action. Thus, newcomers' membership in Lithuanian communities of practice was partially or totally 'denied' as newcomers did not conform to the local linguistic and social conventions. Therefore, if we are to facilitate adult newcomers' social inclusion through language and their participation in the existing communities of practice in Lithuania, there is no choice but redesign the course targeted at these individuals.

In short, it may be acknowledged that adult newcomer's restricted or non-participation in this society is a consequence of the lack of educational resources

targeted at adult newcomers and the traditional method used to expose adults to Lithuanian language in use, as illustrated below:

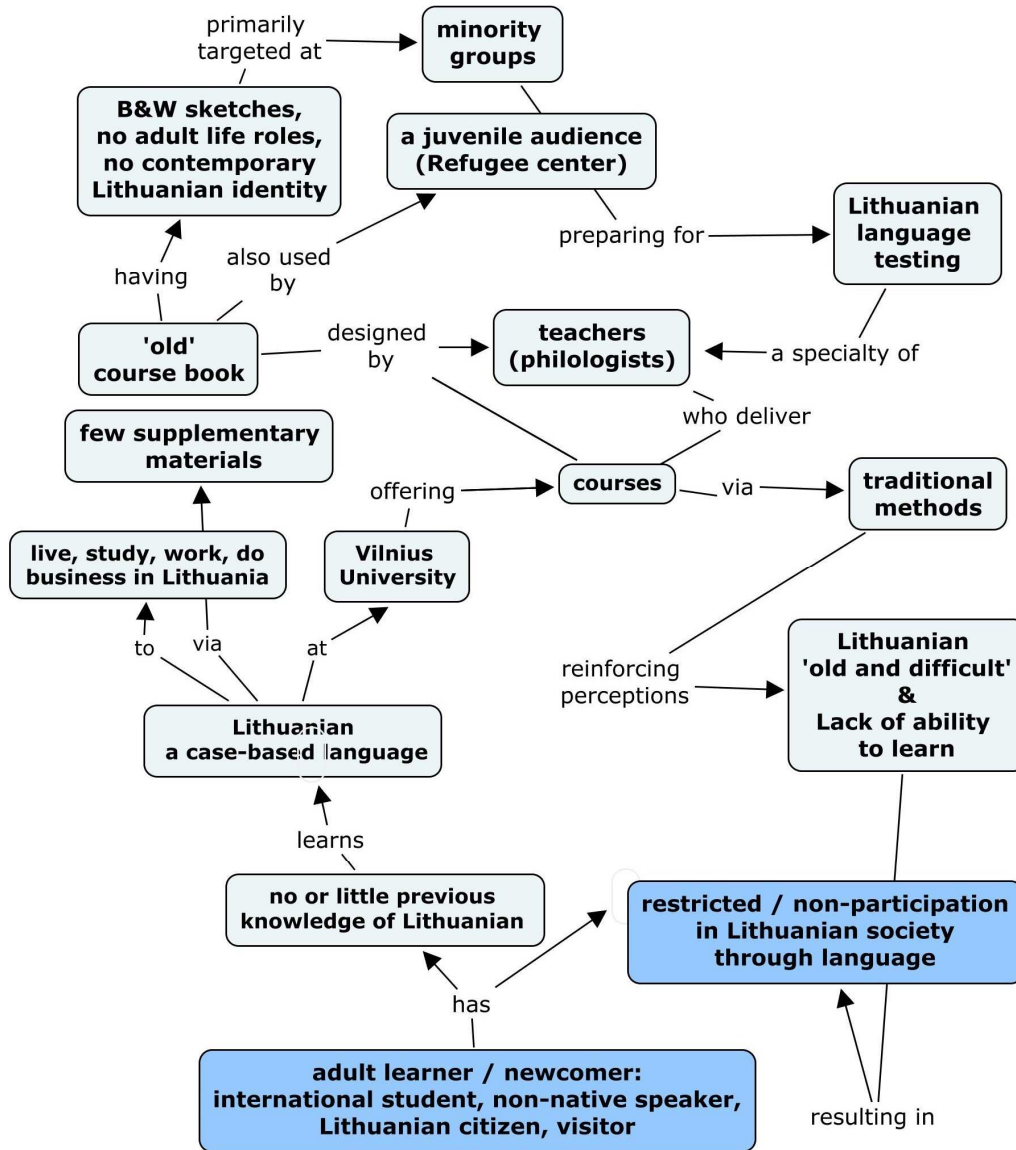


Figure 4 Adult newcomers' difficulties in learning Lithuanian – A causal loop diagram

Moreover, from an internal perspective, adult learners stated they lacked the ability to learn Lithuanian, in terms of not remembering, understanding or knowing, being unable to speak and spell, too old to learn, and having a different learning style and pace. As our analyses have shown, Lithuanian task design and its level of complexity are likely to have contributed to the formation of these perceptions to a great extent:

presentation of long lists of words, in isolation or in fragments, lack of visuals or moving images, meanings negotiated via literal translation, a great focus on grammar, leading to the development of rote-learning strategies, an approach normally adopted for the education of young learners. According to the empirical research carried out, there were many occasions on which learners clearly expressed their lack of understanding; not remembering information was also frequent, along with the great difficulty pronouncing the words.

Finally, it is important to stress that traditional methods having a lot of emphasis on grammar, with extensive use of translation, and few speaking tasks are likely to contribute to the formation of misconceptions, such as “I am too old to learn a language”, “one must be gifted to learn languages”, “language learning is difficult”: these are considered as real threats to the development of a plurilingual competence. It can be clearly seen that these perceptions are very similar to the ones formed by the adult newcomers learning Lithuanian language, at a basic level of studies.

Therefore, actions are to be taken in the near future, if we are to allow for the development of a plurilingual / communicative competence, while providing newcomers – temporary and permanent residents - with an opportunity to be included in this society. Such an intervention is essential, considering the Lithuanian presidency of the Council of the EU in 2013, drawing more attention to the local culture and language, which in turn may result in a greater number of newcomers attempting to learn Lithuanian while living, studying, working, and doing business in this country.

## Final conclusions

1. According to critical pedagogy, language education has a vital goal in transition countries: it should investigate adult learners' thinking, by identifying perceived obstacles (i.e., limit-situations), and implement actions (i.e., limit-acts) to help learners overcome such obstacles. This is crucial because learning the local language is instrumental and emancipatory: it increases adult newcomers' chances of inclusion and contributes to the development of society. Thus, through a *conscientização*-oriented approach, Lithuanian language education will attain its goal.

2. The analysis of the socio-cultural context has shown the following results:

*At a macro-level:* Lithuanian language course and materials have been addressing the needs of minority groups who need to sit official Lithuanian language examinations, for study or work purposes, and to obtain the Lithuanian citizenship. Nevertheless, according to EU language policies, adult newcomers to the Member-States also need to have their needs met by courses and materials, considering that learning the local language is a pre-condition for their participation in society. A new challenge is yet to be overcome: these resources should be designed and implemented by teachers who are also qualified in adult education & learning.

*At a meso-level:* There is a great lack of materials targeted at non-native speaker (NNS) adult newcomers, at a basic level of studies, used for the development of reading, listening and speaking skills, and pronunciation practice. Bilingual pocket-dictionaries were mainly produced to address the needs of Lithuanian speakers learning other languages; hence the lack of examples or information on Lithuanian pronunciation. The two main course books were firstly designed *before* Lithuania's integration into the EU; however, they are still used for the Lithuanian language education at several educational institutions targeted at a varied audience of different age-groups, needs and interests. So far there has been no analysis to address the communicative needs of the new multicultural target audience and design materials catering for those specific needs.

*At a micro-level:* Forty-five adults - aged between 16 and 60+ - took part in this study, being the majority permanent and temporary residents learning Lithuanian for personal, work and/or study purposes. Changes in demographics and the willingness to do business in the country were the main reasons to learn this language. However, neither of the participants noted the need to learn Lithuanian for citizenship purposes

- many were European citizens and a small number was also of Lithuanian descent. Despite such a target audience, the book currently in use for the language education of unaccompanied minors at the Refugee Reception Centre was also intended for the education of these adult learners. The analysis has shown that it lacks authenticity and contemporary identity – no reference to Lithuanian media, artists, and products is made; the main visual aids (B&W sketches) address the interests of a juvenile audience. Essential features are absent: clear learning objectives, answer key to exercises, audioscripts, adult roles, problem-solving activities, and metacognitive strategies. The main focus is on linguistic accuracy as opposed to communicative fluency, through repetitive grammar and vocabulary exercises.

**3.** The investigation of perceived difficulties in light of causal attribution theory has shown that perceptions are context and culturally-bound. Causal attributions of an external nature are beyond learners' scope of action: course, materials and tasks are often designed in advance by book authors and teachers. Causal attributions of an internal nature – lack of ability and effort – are often connected with the perception of task difficulty. Thus, if an adult believes the tasks are beyond their level, they will not make an effort to improve their academic performance. Furthermore, if tasks do not meet their needs and interests, they may withdraw from a course and not sustain their initial motivation to learn, impacting the development of a communicative / plurilingual competence. In this study, from an external perspective, most of the perceived difficulties were related to the lack of appropriate educational resources (course, materials and tasks) to learn Lithuanian language at a basic level of studies in the host country. Next, learners believed that Lithuanian was too old and difficult to learn, given the lack of similarities to other languages. Finally, they stated their non-participation in this society, through language, as an important reason for their difficulties. From an internal perspective, adult learners believed they lacked a cognitive ability - not remembering, understading or knowing, having a different learning style or pace, being too old or not being a good language learner. As the content analysis of EU language policies has shown, these perceptions are threats to the development of a communicative / plurilingual competence. Thus, this issue deserves attention from Lithuanian educationalists, psychologists and teachers.

**4.** The final critical analysis of the Lithuanian language courses, materials and tasks in light of adult education & learning, and foreign/second language education,



targeted at NNS, newcomers to Lithuania, who have little or no background knowledge of case-based languages, has shown that adults' nature, orientation to learning, needs and abilities were not met. Instruction seemed to follow a traditional approach to language teaching: a great emphasis on grammar and vocabulary via formation of habits through repetitive tasks, and little focus on developing a communicative competence. This could explain the attribution of difficulty to 'Lithuanian as a system'. The situational, intentional, and functional view of language as a tool for social inclusion of newcomers was not emphasized. Therefore, it may be stated that adult newcomers' restricted or non-participation in the Lithuanian society is a consequence of the following: lack of supplementary materials, pedagogical actions based on traditional methods, and old course books designed to address the needs of another target audience.

## Hypotheses

1. Lithuanian language courses still seem to address linguists, historians, and translators, who need to understand how the language works from a linguistic perspective so that they can perform their academic or professional tasks. Hence the great number of grammar and vocabulary exercises, mainly in isolation, aiming for accuracy as opposed to fluency. This could also explain the lack of speaking activities and little pronunciation practice, the use of ‘linguistics terminology’ and translation, being the latter a widely-used technique employed by language professionals. Furthermore, judging by the topics and illustrations of Lithuanian fauna, flora, and landscape, and considering that the material also aimed at preparing students for the official state language examinations, also fulfilling the Lithuanian citizenship requirements, it may be assumed that the material used by adult learners was primarily intended for a more juvenile audience, belonging to the minority groups, pursuing mainstream education, who had to have their Lithuanian language skills officially tested upon completion of studies.

**If Lithuanian language courses, materials and tasks had been (re)designed according to adult newcomer’s orientation to learning, interests and needs, in all probability, fewer perceived difficulties would have been formed.**

2. Teachers are highly qualified professionals in language-related areas, such as (classical) philology, (socio) linguistics, discourse analysis, Lithuanian language policies, testing & official examinations. Lately, they have also been involved in pedagogical practices targeted at adult learners, including training & development of local and international Lithuanian language teachers. In considering the main method - presentation of fragments, development of rote learning strategies, lack of adult role-plays, problem-solving activities, metacognitive strategies - it may be stated that these professionals have not undergone training in adult education and learning, or engaged in discussions on language learning as a tool that facilitates the inclusion of newcomers in the discourse communities in the Lithuanian society.

**If Lithuanian language teachers had undergone training in adult education and learning, a different approach would have been used to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes in the target language, facilitating the development of communicative competence, which in turn would have contributed to adult newcomers’ inclusion in this society.**

## Recommendations

Having reached the end of this scientific investigation, the following suggestions are made:

**Researchers in teacher education:** *Meso perspective:* an examination of pre-service and in-service training of Lithuanian language teachers, concerning the opportunity to discuss issues around adult education and learning, and their role as facilitators in the inclusion of newcomers into communities of practice. *Micro perspective:* an investigation of Lithuanian language teachers' perceived difficulties in teaching a multicultural target audience comprised of young and more experienced adult newcomers in the same group.

**Lithuanian language course (re)designers:** Lithuanian language courses targeted at adult learners – newcomers to this society – may be redesigned according to the principles of task-based approach in language education: it meets adult learners' nature, orientation to learning and needs; it can be used in formal and non-formal education; it has been used in teaching adults and newcomers other languages, other than English, such as Dutch – a less-widely used and taught language in Europe, facilitating their social and professional inclusion in the Flemish society.

Considering the current socio-cultural context, these recommendations can be implemented, as follows:

*Human resources:* a multidisciplinary task force comprised of teachers and researchers, MA and doctoral students, from different faculties and institutes – philology, philosophy, communication, mathematics and informatics - considering the need to design several materials and media resources at a beginner's level.

*Financial resources:* in addition to the scholarships awarded by the Lithuanian government and Vilnius University, a percentage from the current financial support from the European Commission could be used for developments in Lithuanian language materials and teacher education. More opportunities within lifelong learning programmes, such as Erasmus, should be given to Lithuanian language teachers, so that they could engage in closer interactions with other researchers, especially those working with less-widely used and taught languages in Europe.

In conclusion, by implementing these limit-acts, through a process of *conscientização*, Lithuanian language education will be better able to attain its main goal: the individual and collective development of this society as a whole.

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## **APPENDIX I: List of abbreviations**

1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
B&W	Black and White
ACC	Accusative case
CFRL	Common European framework of reference for languages
DAT	Dative case
DSL	Dutch as a second language
EU	European Union
Fem	Feminine
GEN	Genitive case
HEI	Higher Education Institution
INSTR	Instrumental case
LOC	Locative case
LWUTL	Less widely-used and taught language
Masc	Masculine
NNS	Non-native speaker
NOM	Nominative case
Pl	Plural
Sg	Singular
TBLT	Task-based language teaching

## APPENDIX II: The questionnaire

### *Research on Learning Lithuanian as a Foreign/Second Language*

1. Where do you come from?	2. What's your first language?	3. What's your gender? ( ) Male ( ) Female
4. Circle your age-group	a. 15-20 b. 21-30 c. 31-40 d. 41-50 e. 51-60 f. 60+	
5. What's your job or occupation?	<input type="checkbox"/> student <input type="checkbox"/> lawyer <input type="checkbox"/> IT specialist <input type="checkbox"/> accountant <input type="checkbox"/> businessperson – field: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> engineer – field: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> teacher/lecturer: subject: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	
6. Tick <b>the foreign languages</b> you can speak or have studied before:	<input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Russian <input type="checkbox"/> Polish <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Italian <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
7. Have you ever studied Lithuanian before?	<input type="checkbox"/> No, it's the first time. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. <input type="checkbox"/> at a language school – <i>how long?</i> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> with a private teacher – <i>how long?</i> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> by myself (alone) – <i>how long?</i> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> with my family.	
8. How long have you been in Lithuania now?	<input type="checkbox"/> just arrived <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 months <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 months <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> over a year <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	
9. Why are you taking this course?	A. <input type="checkbox"/> For study purposes: <i>Course/degree:</i> _____ Are you studying in Lithuania now? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no  B. <input type="checkbox"/> For work purposes – <i>Field:</i> _____ Are you working in Lithuania now? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no  C. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
10. Which of the following would you most like to improve?	Rank the following from 1 to 4 in order of priority: <b>1 – first priority / 2 – second priority / 3 – third priority / 4 – fourth priority</b> <input type="checkbox"/> reading <input type="checkbox"/> listening <input type="checkbox"/> speaking <input type="checkbox"/> writing	

11. How did you learn your first foreign language (e.g. English, Russian)? **Choose A, B, C or D**

- A. Mostly by translating words or texts into my own language
- B. Mostly by doing grammar exercises (focusing on verb tenses, adjectives, etc.)
- C. Mostly by interacting with other students to order food, drinks, ask for information etc.
- D. Mostly by communicating with people who spoke the foreign language

12. In the classroom, how do you learn best? **For each activity, circle ONE of the numbers, as follows:**  
 1= STRONGLY DISAGREE / 2= DISAGREE / 3= NEUTRAL 4= AGREE / 5= STRONGLY AGREE

- A. I learn best if I listen and repeat the lines of a dialogue several times 1 2 3 4 5
- B. I learn best when I change one type of sentence into another, like an affirmative sentence into a negative one. 1 2 3 4 5
- C. I learn best if I can use the grammatical structures and the vocabulary to make requests, order drinks, book a room etc. 1 2 3 4 5
- D. I learn best when I interact with the teacher and classmates to find the answers 1 2 3 4 5

13. If you make a mistake in the classroom (e.g. : grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation), how do you feel? **Choose A, B, C or D:**

- A. Very bad – I shouldn't make mistakes
- B. I don't like to make mistakes, and if I do, the teacher should always correct me
- C. I don't mind making mistakes, both the teacher and my classmates can correct me
- D. I don't mind making mistakes because I know I am still learning the language

14. In the classroom, how do you like to learn? **Choose A, B, C or D**

- A. Most of the time I only like to interact with the teacher
- B. Most of the time I like to interact with the teacher and work in pairs
- C. Most of the time I like to interact with the teacher and work in small groups
- D. Most of the time I like working with the whole class (teacher and classmates)

15. As a learner of a foreign language, how do you find the following activities?

**For each activity, circle ONE of the numbers, as follows:**

**1= NOT USEFULL AT ALL / 2= OK / 3= USEFUL/ 4= VERY USEFUL / 5= EXTREMELY USEFUL**

- A. Filling gaps with appropriate prepositions, verb tenses and adjectives **1 2 3 4 5**
- B. Making negative or interrogative sentences **1 2 3 4 5**
- C. Using appropriate verbs and vocabulary to give my opinion on a topic **1 2 3 4 5**
- D. Role-playing a conversation between a customer and a waiter or shop assistant **1 2 3 4 5**

16. As a learner of Lithuanian as a foreign language, how do you rate the following tasks?

**For each task, circle ONE of the numbers, as follows:**

**1= NOT HELPFUL AT ALL / 2= OK / 3= HELPFUL/ 4= VERY HELPFUL / 5= EXTREMELY HELPFUL**

- A. Working on different endings (cases) with the help of the tables in the book **1 2 3 4 5**
- B. Filling gaps with correct grammar words (verb tenses, prepositions, pronouns) **1 2 3 4 5**
- C. Writing words together to order food or drinks, ask for directions on the streets **1 2 3 4 5**
- D. Talking to a classmate to arrange to meet (day/time/where to go/what to do) **1 2 3 4 5**

17. When do you feel that your Lithuanian is improving? **Choose A, B, C or D:**

- A. When I am able to use correct verb tenses and write the correct endings of words
- B. When I am able to order food or drinks, ask for directions or information in general
- C. When the people I talk to on the streets understand me and answer back in Lithuanian
- D. Other

18. Use the spaces below to write down your general views on learning the Lithuanian language so far:

<p><i>A. I still have some difficulties doing my homework:</i></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p><i>B. I still have some difficulties in the classroom:</i></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>
<p><i>C. What I would like to learn / do next:</i></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	
<p><i>D. Comments:</i></p>	

*Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this questionnaire!  
Good luck with your studies!*

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### APPENDIX III: The lesson observation sheet

DATE	GROUP	TEACHER	SETTING
	( ) Erasmus ( ) Regular ( ) Summer		( ) Classroom ( ) Other: _____
ACTIVITY, INTERACTION PATTERN, ROLE-PLAY	NOTES & ILLUSTRATIONS		

**REMARKS**

**SUMMARY**

**Materials & learning resources**

( ) Coursebook ( ) Handouts ( ) Authentic texts / leaflets ( ) TV / Video/Radio ( ) Board  
( ) Overhead Projector ( ) Computer/Datashow ( ) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Main focus of tasks/exercises & type of skills:**

( ) Grammar ( ) Vocabulary ( ) Pronunciation ( ) Reading ( ) Listening ( ) Speaking  
( ) Writing



## APPENDIX IV: Lithuanian language paradigms – a few examples

### LITHUANIAN NOUN INFLECTIONS BY CASE (E.G., NAMAS)

CASE	QUESTION	LITHUANIAN	ENGLISH
1. Nominative (Vardininkas)	<i>Kas?</i> <i>What? Who?</i>	Namas yra mūrinis.	<u>This house</u> is made of bricks.
2. Genitive (Kilmininkas)	<i>Ko? Iš ko? Kieno?</i> <i>Whose? Of what?</i>	Namo gyventojai yra draugiški. Jis neturi namo.	The inhabitants <u>of the house</u> are friendly. He has <u>no house</u> .
3. Dative (Naudininkas)	<i>Kam?</i> <i>To/for whom?</i> <i>To/for what?</i>	Namui reikia naujo stogo.	<u>The house</u> needs a new roof.
4. Accusative (Galininkas)	<i>Ką?</i> <i>What? Whom?</i>	Namą reikia remontuoti.	<u>The house</u> needs <u>putting into repair</u> .
5. Instrumental (Inagininkas)	<i>Kuo? Suo Kuo?</i> <i>With whom?</i> <i>With what?</i>	Ką daryti su namu?	What should I do <u>with the house?</u>
6. Locative (Vietininkas)	<i>Kame? Kur?</i> <i>In what?</i> <i>Where?</i>	Name nėra vandens.	There is no running water <u>in the house</u> .
7. Vocative (Šauksmininkas)	<i>(used for addressing, calling out)</i>	Name!	House!

Adapted from Paulauskienė and Valeika (1994: p. 50)

### PERSONAL PRONOUNS

CASE	SINGULAR				PLURAL			
	1st per	2nd per	3rd per masc	3rd per fem	1st per	2nd per	3rd per masc	3rd pers fem
<i>Nominative</i>	Aš	Tu	Jis	Ji	Mes	Jūs	Jie	Jos
<i>Genitive</i>	Manęs	Tavęs	Jo	Jos	Mūsų	Jūsų	Jų	Jų
<i>Dative</i>	Man	Tau	Jam	Jai	Mums	Jums	Jiems	Joms
<i>Accusative</i>	Mane	Tave	Jį	Ją	Mus	Jus	Juos	Jas
<i>Instrumental</i>	Manimi	Tavimi	Juo	Ja	Mumis	Jumis	Jais	Jomis
<i>Locative</i>	Manyje	Tavyje	Jame	Joje	Mumyse	Jumyse	Juose	Jose

### ADJECTIVES

CASE	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
1. Nominative	geras	gera	geri	geros
2. Genitive	gero	geros	gerų	gerų
3. Dative	geram	gerai	geriems	geroms
4. Accusative	gerą	gerą	gerus	geras
5. Instrumental	geru	gera	gerais	geromis
6. Locative	gerame	geroje	geruose	gerose

Adapted from the original table in Stumbrienė and Kaškelevičienė (2001: p. 274, 276)

## APPENDIX V – Visual aids in Lithuanian language materials

**6 užduotis.** Jūratės parduotuvėje baigėsi daržovės.  
 Perskaitykite skelbimus ir pasakykite, kuris įdomus Jūratei.  
 Kokių daržovių ji gali nusipirkti? Kokius produktus parduoda kitos firmos?



Source: *Po truputį* (Ramonienė and Vilkienė, 2008: p. 37)

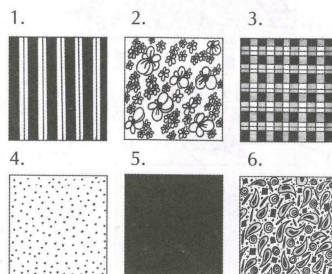
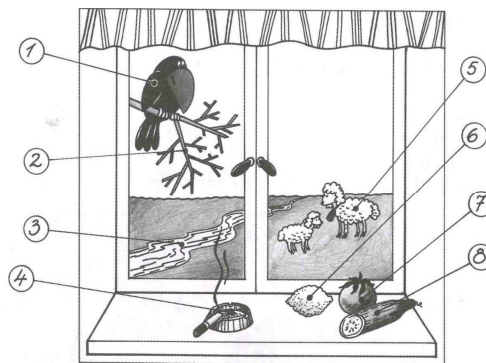
### Spalvos

Kartu su mokytoju surašykite, kas yra kokios spalvos.

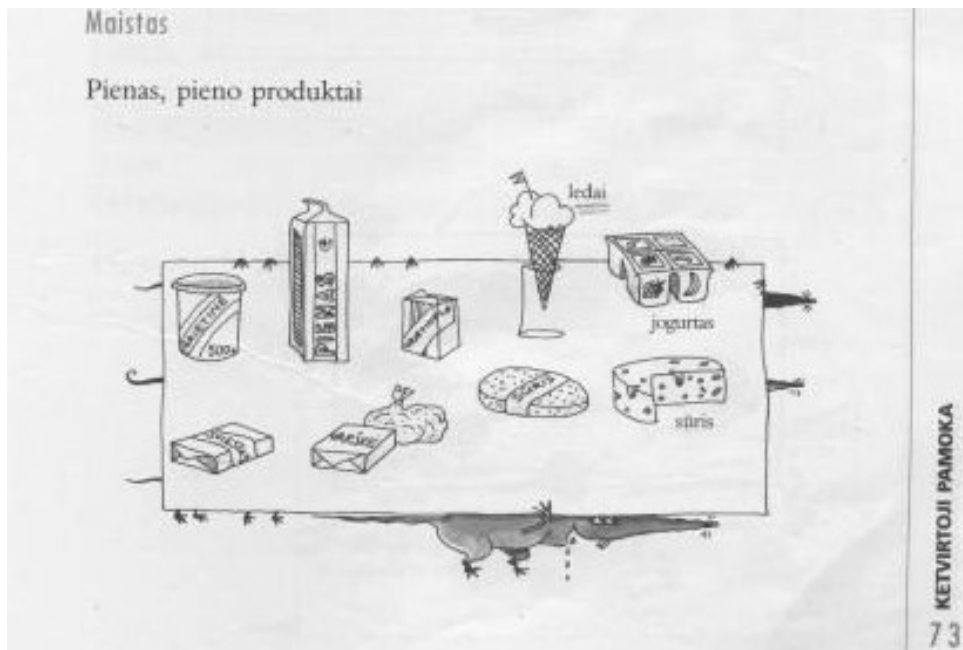
baltas ...  
 geltonas ...  
 raudonas ...  
 rudas ...  
 žalias ...  
 mėlynas ...  
 pilkas ...  
 juodas ...

Pažymėkite, prie kokio paveiksluko tinka koks žodis.

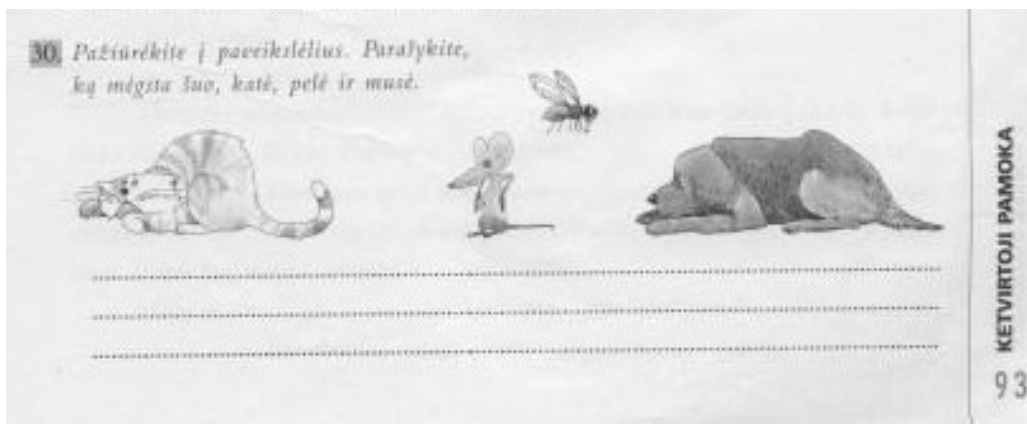
Margas ...  
 Vienspalvis ...  
 Gėlėtas ...  
 Dryžuotas ...  
 Languotas ...  
 Taškuotas ...



Source: *Po truputį* (Ramonienė and Vilkienė, 2008: p. 46)



Source: *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* (Stumbrienė and Kaškelevičienė, 2001: p. 73)



Source: *Nė dienos be lietuvių kalbos* (Stumbrienė and Kaškelevičienė, 2001: p. 93)

## APPENDIX VI - Adults' perceived difficulties in learning Lithuanian in the host country: a breakdown of categories

	<b>840</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>EXTERNAL DIMENSION: THE ENVIRONMENT DOMAIN</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>62%</b>
<i>Lack of or Inappropriate Educational Resources (classroom activities and tasks, supplementary materials, course design, instruction)</i>	274	52%
<i>Lithuanian as a system</i>	139	27%
<i>Non-participation in society (lack of practice)</i>	109	21%
<b>INTERNAL DIMENSION : THE LEARNER DOMAIN</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>38%</b>
<i>Lack of Cognitive Ability</i>	305	96%
<i>Lack of Confidence or Effort</i>	13	4%

### BREAKDOWN OF CATEGORIES

<b>EXTERNAL DIMENSION: THE ENVIRONMENT DOMAIN</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>62%</b>
<i>Lack of or Inappropriate Educational Resources (Classroom Activities and Tasks, Supplementary Materials, Course Design, Instruction)</i>	274	52%
<b>A. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>1.1 Task complexity (contributing to task difficulty)</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>51%</b>
Grammar-focused ( <i>many grammatical rules to follow</i> )	37	39%
( <i>Presentation of</i> ) many words at a time, usually in isolation	15	16%
Too many steps, placing high demands on memory, time-consuming tasks	14	15%
Complex instructions or explanations - use of linguistics terminology / in Lithuanian only - at higher levels	11	12%
Extensive use of (literal) translation in the classroom ( <i>English/Russian – at lower levels</i> )	10	11%
Too demanding exam-tasks (lack of exam practice)	8	7%
<b>1.2 Task performance (implementation into the classroom)</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>49%</b>
Lack of speaking tasks	31	34%
Lack of motivating/ challenging tasks	29	32%
Lack of listening tasks ( <i>incl. songs</i> )	13	15%
Non-use of media resources ( <i>Radio, TV - films, documentaries</i> )	6	7%
Lack of writing tasks	4	4%
Lack of exam strategies and pronunciation skills	4	4%
Lack of role-plays and games	4	4%
<b>B. SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>1.1 Bilingual dictionaries</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50%</b>
- Too small or incomplete	21	84%
- Too thick and complex	4	16%
<b>1.2 Lack of bilingual dictionaries</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>2. Alternative materials</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30%</b>
Lack of "good" or alternative materials ( <i>no photos, colours, or instructions in English, absence of answer key to exercises &amp; audio-scripts</i> )		
<b>3. Media resources</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8%</b>
Lack of CD ROMS/Audio materials/Educational software		

<b>C. COURSE</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>1.1 Course design</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>70%</b>
Student placement ( <i>linguists and non-linguists in the same group</i> )	9	47%
Number of students ( <i>too many people in one group</i> )	6	32%
Lecture-type lessons ( <i>just sitting and listening for 2 hours</i> )	4	21%
<b>1.2 Extra-mural activities</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30%</b>
Lack of guided outings ( <i>theatre, cinema, gallery, zoo, etc.</i> ) / non-use of Lithuanian language during excursions		
<b>D. INSTRUCTION</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4%</b>
Lesson delivery ( <i>low voice, fast speech</i> )	6	55%
Lack of intervention ( <i>no error correction or remedial work</i> )	5	45%
<b><i>Lithuanian as a System</i></b>	<b>139</b>	<b>27%</b>
No or few similarities with L1/L2/L3 ( <i>grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation</i> )	70	50%
Complex grammar	54	39%
'Old and difficult' language	15	11%
<b><i>Non-Participation in Society (lack of practice)</i></b>	<b>109</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>1.1 In Lithuania</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>79%</b>
On the streets ( <i>lack of tolerance, patience and support</i> )	53	62%
At the students' hall of residence ( <i>living with foreign students</i> )	25	29%
At University ( <i>not attending lectures with locals</i> )	8	9%
<b>1.2 Outside Lithuania</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21%</b>
In one's country ( <i>lack of courses, people to speak with</i> )	20	87%
In other countries ( <i>lack of interaction with Lithuanians who are abroad</i> )	3	13%
<b>INTERNAL DIMENSION : THE LEARNER DOMAIN</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>1.1 Lack of cognitive ability</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>96%</b>
Not remembering ( <i>the words, the endings, the cases</i> )	62	20%
Having a different learning style from the one required ( <i>visual, auditory, kinesthetic, analytical</i> )	62	20%
Not understanding ( <i>the people, teacher, tasks, vocabulary</i> )	58	19%
Not knowing ( <i>the vocabulary, which cases to use</i> )	44	14%
Not being able to speak ( <i>to express one's views and feelings / engage in discussions</i> )	32	11%
Not being able to pronounce ( <i>to produce the sounds/the stressed syllables</i> )	16	5%
Not being good at languages ( <i>mostly English native speakers</i> )	16	5%
Being older ( <i>not fresh out of school</i> )	5	2%
Not being able to spell ( <i>to write the words down</i> )	5	2%
Having a different learning pace ( <i>being slower than others</i> )	5	2%
<b>1.2 Lack of Confidence and Effort</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4%</b>