THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN LEARNING A HOST COUNTRY LANGUAGE: "LIFE STORIES" OF UKRAINIAN LEARNERS

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PREFACE

Audrey Hepburn said: “As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands. One for helping yourself, the other for helping others.”

This monograph does not aspire to helping the whole world; it aims to partially contribute to making the process of integration of Ukrainian refugees after the Russian invasion of Ukraine easier. The publication is supported by the SGS Project (SGS06/PdF/2023) *Pomůže ti angličtina naučit se nový cizí jazyk? Příběhy dnešních ukrajinských žáků a studentů* [*The role of English in Learning a Local Foreign Language: "Life Stories" of Ukrainian Learners*] provided by the Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava. The main objective of the project is to introduce the theoretical background, research design, and research results that examine the potential contribution of the English language in the process of language acquisition in the host country, particularly communication, and consequently adaptation in the new environment and integration in the new society.

In the theoretical part, a concept of integration is introduced, defined as a dynamic system of mutual adaptation of both the migrants and host country inhabitants. Reflecting both the older and latest definitions (e.g., Esser, 2006; Haug, 2006; Geis-Thöne, 2019; Hajduković, 2021; Heath, Schneider, 2021), integration functions as an interactive process of learning a new culture, gaining new rights, approaches and positions, and creating new relations betweeen migrants and the host society. A special chapter is devoted to social integration and the role of language as a medium of communication and support in other fields, e.g., education, employment, and thus it contributes to the process of integration. The current state of solving this research problem in the European and Czech context is summarized in the final chapter of the theoretical part.

In the research part, a survey is described that monitors how selected Ukrainian learners learned and are learning foreign languages, mainly English, before and during the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and aims to discover whether their language knowledge can have an impact on the process of integration in the host country.

Three research questions structured into several sub-questions were set. Data were collected using several tools. The main one was the “life story“, i.e., the learner description of foreign language acquisition before and during the Russion invasion. which is a description by learners of their foreign language acquisition before and during the Russian invasionOther tools included interviews with teachers, mothers of learners, a questionnaire for the teacher assistant, and a description of the observations of English lessons from prospective teachers. Data were used to write two case studies of learners whose integration process was different. The research sample included almost 100 respondents: 55 learners of the primary, lower and upper secondary school, and university students, eight prospective teachers, and 25 other Ukrainian respondents. The results show that primary and secondary school learners were supported by parents, attended Czech and English language courses, and most of them improved quickly and substantially. Contrary to this, students of upper secondary school were not interested in the courses, although their knowledge of Czech was not good and would have made their

study easier for them and their teachers. The university students were very purposeful and hard-working and made a lot of effort to succeed.

This result confirms a widely accepted conclusion recommending migrants to acquire a host country language as soon as possible. Each of them must decide individually how much effort they are able/willing to devote to learning and which is their terminal host country.

ABSTRACT

The monograph introduces theoretical background and results of research that deals with the role of English language in the process of a host country language acquisition by Ukrainian learners after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24.2.2022. The main objective is to monitor how the probands learned/are learning foreign languages (mainly English) before and during the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and consider whether their language knowledge can have an impact on the process of integration in the host country. Responses to three research questions were collected from almost 100 respondents. Data were collected using various tools, mainly the "life story" – a learner description how foreign languages were learned, an interview, questionnaire, observation sheet. Data were processed by quantitative and qualitative methods and presented in case studies and cited responses of respondents. The results prove the necessity to make every effort to acquire the host country language as soon as possible, using formal or any other approaches. Support from the family in the pupils and inner motivation in university students are powerful incentive in this process.

KEY WORDS

Russian invasion of Ukraine, integration, refugee, immigrant, language learning, host country, Ukraine, English, Czech

PŘEDMLUVA

Audrey Hepburn kdysi řekla, že až „*s dospělostí zjistíme, že máme dvě ruce. Jednu, abychom pomáhali sobě, druhou, abychom pomohli světu*.“ Předkládaná monografie nemá tak vysoké ambice, aby pomáhala celému světu; chce pouze dílčím způsobem přispět k usnadnění procesu integrace ukrajinských uprchlíků po ruské invazi na Ukrajinu 24.2.2022. Publikace je výstupem projektu studentské grantové soutěže Pedagogické fakulty Ostravské univerzity (SGS06/PdF/2023) s názvem *Pomůže ti angličtina naučit se nový cizí jazyk? Příběhy dnešních ukrajinských žáků a studentů* [*The role of English in Learning a Local Foreign Language: "Life Stories" of Ukrainian Learners*]. Za hlavní cíl si stanovila představit teoretická východiska, průběh a výsledky výzkumu, který zkoumal možný přínos anglického jazyka při osvojování si jazyka hostitelské země, zvláště komunikace v novém jazyce, a tím I adaptace na nové prostředí a následně integrace do nové společnosti.

V teoretické části je představena koncepce integrace, definovaná jako dynamický systém vzájemné adaptace, kdy zodpovědnost za ni leží jak na migrantech, tak na hostitelské zemi. Podle starších i novějších definic (např. Esser, 2006; Haug, 2006; Geis-Thöne, 2019; Hajduković, 2021; Heath, Schneider, 2021) je integrace realizována jako interaktivní proces učení se nové kultuře, získávání nových práv, přístupů a pozic a vytváření vztahů mezi migranty a hostitelskou společností. Podrobněji je rozpracována kapitola o sociální integraci a roli jazyka v této oblasti, kdy jazyk plní úlohu komunikačního média a slouží jako podpora v jiných oblastech, např. ve vzdělávání, v zaměstnání a tím celkově přispívá k procesu integrace. Teoretickou část uzavírá přehled současného stavu zkoumané problematiky v mezinárodním, resp. evropském, a národním kontextu.

Ve výzkumné části je představeno šetření, jehož cílem je monitorovat, jak se vybraní ukrajinští žáci a studenti učili a učí cizí jazyk/y, většinou angličtinu, před a během ruské invaze na Ukrajinu v roce 2022 a odhalit, zda jejich jazykové znalosti mají vliv na proces integrace v hostitelské zemi.

Byly stanoveny tři výzkumné otázky strukturované do několika podotázek. Data byla sbírána několika nástroji. Hlavním zdrojem dat je nástroj „life story“, tj. popis cesty žáků a studentů při osvojování si cizího jazyka před a během ruské invaze na Ukrajinu. Dalšími nástroji byly rozhovory s učiteli a maminkami žáků, dotazník pro asistenta učitele a popis pozorování vyučovacích hodin anglického jazyka budoucími učiteli. Shromážděná data byla použita k vytvoření případových studií dvou žáků, jejichž integrace postupovala odlišným způsobem. Výzkumný vzorek tvořilo téměř 100 respondentů – kromě 55 žáků obou stupňů základní školy a studentů střední a vysoké školy se zapojilo i osm budoucích učitelů a dalších 25 ukrajinských respondentů. Výsledky ukázaly, že žáci základní školy byli podporováni rodinami, navštěvovali kurzy anglického a českého jazyka a dosáhli zlepšení v komunikačních dovednostech. U studentů středních škol zájem o kurzy nebyl, přestože deklarovali zájem o studium na střední škole, kde v době šetření studovali a zlepšení hlavně v českém jazyce by jim studium usnadnilo. Studenti vysokých škol byli

velmi cílevědomí, na studium se většinou dlouhodobě připravovali a vynakládali k dosažení úspěchu značné úsilí.

Tento výsledek potvrzuje obecně akceptovatelné doporučení migrantům zvládnout jazyk hostitelské země co nejdříve po příchodu do ní. Individuální otázkou zůstává míra úsilí, kterou je každý z nich ochoten/schopen věnovat učení a rozhodnutí, která země je pro něho terminální hostitelskou zemí.

ABSTRAKT

Monografie představuje teoretická východiska a výsledky výzkumu, který se zabývá rolí anglického jazyka při osvojování si jazyka hostitelské země ukrajinskými žáky a studenty po ruské invazi na Ukrajinu 24.2.2022. Hlavním cílem je zjistit, jak se probandi učili cizí jazyk/y, většinou angličtinu, před a během invaze a posoudit možný vliv jejich znalosti anglického jazyka na proces integrace v hostitelské zemi, zvláště socializace ve školní třídě. Odpovědi na tři výzkumné otázky byly získány od téměř 100 respondentů pomocí dat shromážděných několika nástroji, kterými byly „životní příběh“ výuky cizího jazyka, rozhovor, dotazník a pozorovací formulář. Odpovědi byly zpracovány kvantitativními I kvalitativními metodami, prezentovány v případových studiích a doloženy citacemi odpovědí respondentů. Výsledky potvrdily nezbytnost vynakládat zvýšené úsilí při osvojování si jazyka hostitelské země pro integraci, a to jakoukoli cestou. Podpora rodiny u žáků základní školy a vnitřní motivace u univerzitních studentů jsou v tomto procesu mocným činitelem.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Ruská invaze na Ukrajinu, integrace, uprchlík, imigrant, výuka jazyka, hostitelská země, Ukrajina, angličtina, čeština, anglický jazyk, český jazyk, ukrajinský jazyk

ПЕРЕДМОВА

Одрі Гепберн якось сказала, що тільки «коли ми виростаємо, ми розуміємо, що у нас є дві руки. Одна, щоб допомагати собі, інша, щоб допомагати світові». Ця монографія не має таких високих амбіцій допомогти всьому світу, вона лише хоче частково сприяти процесу інтеграції українських біженців після російського вторгнення в Україну 24 лютого 2022 року. Видання є результатом проекту студентського грантового конкурсу педагогічного факультету Остравського університету (SGS06/PdF/2023) під назвою «Чи може англійська мова допомогти вам вивчити нову іноземну мову?». [Роль англійської мови у вивченні місцевої іноземної мови: «життєві історії» українських студентів]. Основною метою було представити теоретичне підґрунтя, хід та результати дослідження, яке вивчало можливий внесок англійської мови в оволодіння мовою країни перебування, особливо спілкування новою мовою, а отже, адаптацію до нового середовища та подальшу інтеграцію в нове суспільство.

У теоретичній частині представлено поняття інтеграції, яке визначається як динамічна система взаємної адаптації, де відповідальність за неї лежить як на мігрантах, так і на приймаючій країні. Згідно зі старими та новішими визначеннями (Esser, 2006; Haug, 2006; Geis-Thöne, 2019; Hajduković, 2021; Heath, Schneider, 2021), інтеграція реалізується як інтерактивний процес засвоєння нової культури, набуття нових прав, поглядів і позицій, а також налагодження відносин між мігрантами та приймаючим суспільством. Більш детально розроблено розділ про соціальну інтеграцію та роль мови в цій сфері, де мова виступає засобом комунікації та слугує підтримкою в інших сферах, таких як освіта, працевлаштування, і таким чином сприяє загальному інтеграційному процесу. Теоретична частина завершується оглядом сучасного стану предмета в міжнародному, європейському та національному контексті.

У дослідницькій частині представлено дослідження, спрямоване на моніторинг того, як окремі українські учні та студенти вивчали та вивчають іноземну(і) мову(и), переважно англійську(і), до та під час російського вторгнення в Україну у 2022 році, а також на виявлення того, чи впливає їхнє володіння мовою на процес інтеграції в приймаючій країні.

Було поставлено три дослідницькі питання, структуровані на кілька підпитань. Збір даних здійснювався за допомогою декількох інструментів. Основним джерелом даних є інструмент «життєва історія», тобто опис шляху учнів та студентів у вивченні іноземної мови до та під час російського вторгнення в Україну. Іншими інструментами були інтерв'ю з учителями та матерями учнів, анкета для асистентів вчителів та опис спостережень за уроками англійської мови майбутніми вчителями. Зібрані дані були використані для створення кейсів двох учнів, чия інтеграція відбувалася по-різному. Вибірка дослідження складалася з майже 100 респондентів - окрім 55 учнів обох рівнів початкової школи та студентів середніх шкіл і університетів, було залучено вісім майбутніх учителів та ще 25 українських респондентів. Результати показали, що учні початкової школи отримували

підтримку від своїх родин, відвідували курси англійської та чеської мов і досягли покращення комунікативних навичок. Учні середньої школи не були зацікавлені у відвідуванні курсів, хоча вони заявили про свою зацікавленість у навчанні в середній школі, де вони навчалися на момент опитування, і що покращення, особливо в чеській мові, полегшило б їхнє навчання. Студенти університетів були дуже цілеспрямованими, здебільшого готувалися до навчання протягом тривалого часу і докладали значних зусиль для досягнення успіху.

Цей результат підтверджує загальноприйняту рекомендацію для мігрантів опановувати мову приймаючої країни якомога швидше після прибуття. Ступінь зусиль, які кожен мігрант хоче/може докласти до вивчення мови, а також рішення про те, яка країна є його/її кінцевою країною перебування, залишається індивідуальним питанням.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Монографія представляє теоретичні основи та результати дослідження, яке стосується ролі англійської мови у процесі оволодіння мовою країни, що приймає, українськими учнями після російського вторгнення в Україну 24.02.2022. Основна мета полягає у спостереженні за тим, як респонденти вивчали/вивчають іноземні мови (переважно англійську) до та під час російського вторгнення в Україну у 2022 році, та розгляді того, чи може їхнє знання мов вплинути на процес інтеграції у країні, що приймає. Відповіді на три дослідницькі питання були зібрані від майже 100 респондентів. Дані збиралися за допомогою різних інструментів, головним чином „“життєва історія“ – опис учнем того, як вивчалися іноземні мови, інтерв'ю, анкета, лист спостереження. Дані оброблялися кількісними та якісними методами та представлені у вигляді тематичних досліджень та цитованих відповідей респондентів. Результати доводять необхідність докладання всіх зусиль для якнайшвидшого оволодіння мовою країни, що приймає, використовуючи формальні або будь-які інші підходи. Підтримка з боку родини у школярів та внутрішня мотивація у студентів університетів є потужними стимулами у цьому процесі.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

Російське вторгнення в Україну, інтеграція, біженець, іммігрант, вивчення мови, приймаюча країна, Україна, англійська мова, чеська мова

INTRODUCTION

On 24 February 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine began. Life has changed. Millions of people were forced to leave their homes and seek refugee status in the European Union (EU) and neighbouring countries. In March 2022, the EU activated the temporary protection directive. Rights under the temporary protection scheme include a residence permit, access to the labour market and housing, medical assistance, and access to education for children. In December 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded 6,308,600 refugees from Ukraine globally; 5,905,000 were recorded in Europe (5 Dec 2023) (UNHCR, 2023); 575,915 of them applied for asylum, temporary protection, or similar national protection scheme in the Czech Republic (26 Nov 2023) (UNHCR, 2023). In the 2022/23 school year, Ukrainian children and learners became the largest group of foreigners within the Czech educational system; this information was still valid at the beginning of the 2023/24 school year. In September 2023 (30 Sept 2023), 1,860,705 children and learners attended kindergartens, primary, lower and upper secondary schools, preparatory classes and special preparatory classes, and conservatoires; 48,090 of them were Ukrainian asylants, i.e., in total 2.6 %; 1.6 % in kindergartens; 3.6 % in primary schools and 3.8 % in lower secondary schools; 1 % in upper secondary schools; 2.5 % in conservatoires. (MEYS, 2023 (a).

Ukrainian asylants became a prevailing group among all Ukrainian children and learners in the 2022/23 school year. Before that year, some Ukrainians were permanent residents of the Czech Republic, often working in large industrial centres, e.g., factories producing cars. Their children attended Ukrainian classes/schools at the place of residence (e.g. in Kolín). They are another special case within the Czech educational system, but not the focus of this work.

The main objective of this book is to contribute to solving problems related to education of Ukrainian refugee learners in the Czech Republic through the project ´The Role of English in Learning a Local Foreign Language: Life Stories of Ukrainian Learners´. The project deals with learning another foreign language, that is, a local language of the country in which the respondents currently reside, through the English language. The research design is described, the research results are presented, interpreted, and didactic recommendations for practice are proposed within the project so that the local language is learned easily, which opens the door to school attendance and integration into society.

1 THEORETICAL PART

1.1 Terminology

Refugees are persons forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of an armed conflict, violence, or a serious public disorder. Many refugees have been forced to leave their personal possessions, homes, and relatives behind. Most of them may have suffered human rights violations, they or their relatives have been injured or killed. (UNHCR, n.d.).

Migrants are persons, including refugees, who have recently arrived in Europe as well as those of non-European descent who are already settled in Europe, often have a European nationality but are still viewed as foreigners (Islam et al., 2019).

Asylants are foreigners trying to get a granted political asylum, applicants to international protection (Act N. 325/1999 Coll.), and persons using temporary protection (Act N. 221/2003 Coll., and Act N. 65/2022 Coll.) (MEYS, 2023 (b).

Immigrants, as understood in the global context, are a non-resident (both national or alien) arriving in a state with the intention to remain for a period exceeding a year. In the EU context, an immigrant is a person who establishes their usual residence in the territory of an EU member state for a period, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another EU member state or a third country (European Commission. n.d. (a).

Aliens, in the global context, are persons who are not a national (native or citizen) of a given state. In the EU context, an alien is a person who is not a national of an EU member state (European Commission. n.d. (b).

Within the immigration process, there is a distinction between the assimilation, integration, and inclusion of migrants and refugees (Hajduković, 2021).

Assimilation describes the process in which migrants and refugees are the only ones that need to adapt to existing norms, behaviours, values, and the culture of the host country and, therefore, become similar to the native majority (Islam et al., 2019).

Integration is defined as a two-way process, in which all members of society find common ground and make compromises (Islam et al., 2019).

Inclusion implies that all members of the society have the opportunity to participate in social, cultural, and political life and encourages a sense of togetherness (Islam et al., 2019).

The terms of a **local language, host country language, and national language** are used as synonyms.

1.2 Integration

1.2.1 The Concept of Integration

Migration to a country changes the size and composition of the society that receives migrants. Furthermore, the newcomers have to adapt to the indigenous population (and their institutions), and vice versa. Social science, in its study of this phenomenon, has coined different terms for it: absorption, adaptation, race relations cycle, assimilation, acculturation, inclusion, incorporation, and, of course, integration (Heckmann, 1992).

Integration as a concept may be defined as the stability of relations among parts within a system-like whole, the borders of which clearly separate it from its environment; in such a state, the system is said to be integrated.

Integration is identified as a dynamic process of mutual adaptation where both migrants and host societies bear some responsibilities in its fulfilment (Hajduković, 2021). In a sociological context, it refers to stable and cooperative relations within a clearly defined social system. It can also be viewed as a process of strengthening relationships within a social system and of introducing new actors and groups into the system. The integration of immigrants is primarily a process: if this process succeeds, the society is said to be integrated.

Islam et al. (2019) define integration as a dynamic and multi-faceted two-way process leading to full and equal membership in society. This includes the readiness of refugee communities to adapt to host societies without giving up cultural identity on one hand, and the readiness of receiving communities and institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population on the other hand. The process is complex and gradual, comprising legal, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. In other words, the term identifies a dynamic process of mutual adaptation where both migrants and host societies bear some responsibilities to achieve the integration (Hajduković, 2021). This both-side approach described by Islam et al. (2019) applies inclusive participation along with the lines of the definition used by the UNHCR with regard to the integration of refugees (UNHCR, 2005).

According to Heckmann and Bosswick (2006), the question of integrating immigrants into a country is framed primarily at the level of the nation state. They define integration as the process of including immigrants in the institutions and relationships of the host society. “Integration is a process of inclusion of immigrants in the core institutions, relations, and statuses of the receiving country“. They also clarify that the integration of immigrants is an interactive process of learning a new culture, an obtaining of rights, access to a position and status, and building of personal relations between immigrants and the receiving society. Immigrants are expected to integrate into the new society by adopting the dimensions of the host country, mainly the culture. In their theory, they distinguish four dimensions of social integration (structural, cultural, interactive, identification) and form its theoretical foundation. It helps to shed light on the various processes that integration comprises and thus creates an ideal starting point for analyzing the conditions necessary for social integration. The theory helps the topic come alive and

provides a bridge between theoretical understandings of social integration and more concrete perspectives, taken from people´s everyday life. Thus, Bosswick and Heckmann´s framework serves as a guideline on how the language plays a role in the social integration process and a point of reference when analyzing findings from interviews.

1.2.2 Social Integration

Following Lockwood (1964), the sociological theory of social systems has developed the concepts of system integration and social integration. System integration is the result of the anonymous functioning of institutions, organisations, and mechanisms – the state, the legal system, markets, corporate actors or finance. Social integration, on the contrary, refers to the inclusion of individuals in a system, the creation of relationships among individuals, and their attitudes towards the society. It is the result of the conscious and motivated interaction and cooperation of individuals and groups.

Esser (2006) proposes four basic forms of social integration: acculturation, placement, interaction, and identification. *Acculturation* (also termed socialisation) is the process by which an individual acquires the knowledge, cultural standards, and competencies needed to interact successfully in a society. *Placement* means an individual gaining a position in society – in the educational or economic systems, in the professions, or as a citizen. Placement also implies the acquisition of rights associated with particular positions and the opportunity to establish social relations and to win cultural, social, and economic capital. Acculturation is a precondition for placement. *Interaction* is the formation of relationships and networks by individuals who share a mutual orientation. These include friendships, romantic relationships, or marriages, or more general membership of social groups. *Identification* refers to an individual´s identification with a social system: the person sees himself as part of a collective body. Identification has both cognitive and emotional aspects (Heckmann, Bosswick, 2006). These four forms of social integration are relevant for the dimensions of immigrant integration, as examined by e.g., Heath and Schneider (2021) and defined e.g., by Council of Europe (Hajduković, 2021).

Different scholars use a wide range of indicators that describe immigrant integration (Ager, Strang, 2014), for example, a three-dimensional model includes structural, cultural, social dimensions; the political and civic dimensions are added in a five-dimensional model (Heath, Schneider, 2021). Strategies to achieve successful integration were summarized in a report submitted by Hajduković (2021) to the Council of Europe. The recommendations include the right to a residence permit and access to housing, education, the labour market, social welfare, medical care, banking services, and free movement within EU countries, among others. They are in accordance with the Czech approach proposed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports as presented below. EU Member States are asked to enhance the integration of migrants and refugees aiming at their full inclusion in host society using a great variety of methods and approaches, e.g.,

- To make a new social contract respectful of the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved in refugees´ and migrants´ integration. The acceptance of such a new social contract depends on the democratic processes in place that build social support.
- To organize mentoring programmes and integration guides that accompany and support migrants and refugees when they first arrive in the host countries, support them in their cultural and social orientation, practise the language of the host country with them, and support them with personal relationships and networking in the new community.
- To provide nationwide interpretation services so that to understand and actively participate in the different situations in the fields of health, justice, asylum, and issues in the municipalities.
- To lay emphasis on education so that to shift from language training to democratic citizenship and human rights education. Language training is crucial for being able to live in a new country, mainly in daily contacts, and for getting access to employment. The better the training, the higher the likelihood that the person will become less dependent on support services and more autonomous in their daily life.
- To improve recognition of qualifications and prior learning is of fundamental importance. Whether partial or full, recognition opens up further education or employment opportunities and allows refugees and migrants to make more efficient use of their knowledge, skills, and competences, and participate in social and pension security systems. They should be advised how to match their skills with job opportunities after receiving their residence permit.
- To consider the special needs of vulnerable groups (women, unaccompanied children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and others) in order to ensure a successful integration into the host country. To involve healthcare professionals with a migrant background can help improve the integration. Furthermore, certain psychological support may be needed for refugees, especially children, who fled high-intensity conflict areas. While the protection of the health of migrants and refugees has so far been solely related to the guarantee of basic physical care, it is essential to recognise that mental health and psychological support are equally essential. The documents by World Health Organization (WHO) place improving the mental health of refugees and migrants on the political agenda (WHO, 2016).
- To provide housing policies and financial settings: an affordable and decent accommodation is a prerequisite for a successful integration of migrants, a smooth access to the job market, and basic services, such as healthcare and education for their children.
- To develop effective communication strategies that will provide true facts to form the public´s impression of immigrants´ actual outcomes and minimize misleading information and unfavourable stereotypes. Thus, respect for the dignity of refugees and migrants in media will be built. The EU Member States should take steps to support this process. Specific programmes should be put in place

protecting refugeees and migrants from xenophobia, violence, and discrimination. Additionally, welcoming programmes and related communication campaigns have been conducted that emphasize diversity as an advantage Hajduković (2021).

1.2.3 The Role of Language in Social Integration

Language plays a crucial role in the integration of immigrants; therefore, it is important to be aware of the multiple functions of language (Esser, 2006).

First, language works as a medium of **communication**. It enables understanding between people within a society, that is, between migrants and the people of their host society. Thus, it is very helpful for them to speak the national (i.e., a host country) language in order to communicate effectively.

Second, language serves as a valuable resource that fosters access to other resources, mainly **education and occupational** opportunities.

Third, based on the feeling of relatedness or dissimilarity, language can enhance or hinder **integration,** and thus result in social stereotypes and discrimination (Esser, 2006).

The acquisition of the host country language as the immigrants´ second language (L2) is influenced by a range of factors. These mainly include conditions in the country of origin and the immigration country, individual/family living conditions, the specific circumstances of migration, age at migration, the duration of stay in the country of migration, age of parents at migration, their language skills and level of education. In contrast to these factors, the L2 acquisition process can be hindered due to significant linguistic distance between the first (L1) and second (L2) language, and/or a high level of global usability of the L1 (in particular English) can inhibit the L2 acquisition by immigrants (Esser, 2006, ii). The process of L2 acquisition is impacted by individual personal characteristics – motivation and experience, opportunities for learning, and basic neural capacity (Esser, 2006, 16). Extended duration of stay, low migration age, and good education have a positive effect on L2 acquisition (Esser, 2006, 23). The second language proficiency of immigrant parents benefits their children (Esser, 2006, 34).

The importance of language in social integration is reflected in three fields: educational success, occupational opportunities, and personal integration within the host society (i.e., social inclusion) (Beißert et al., 2022).

The language of the host country is typically the language of instruction. Therefore, the language skills of the host country are a key to integration in terms of the academic achievement and educational success of immigrants. As Esser (2006) states, immigrant and migrant young people often **lag behind their local peers in their academic achievement, and consequently, they can get lower educational levels.** Although there are many other factors that impact the educational process, language skills have played an important role since the childhood. Language skills are also necessary for understanding other non-language areas such as mathematics, science, and other subjects. Being of such immense significance throughout the entire educational career, language skills can be understood as the key to educational success (Esser, 2006).

Language is also the key to the successful integration of immigrants into the labour market (Auer, 2018; Esser, 2006; Geis-Thöne, 2019). It has been proven that people with an immigrant background have a higher risk of unemployment and lower incomes than local people, even if they have the same level of education. One reason for this is that migrants are often not employed according to their professional qualifications due to a lack of language skills (Geis-Thöne, 2019).

There are two main reasons why host country language skills are so important for occupations and professional careers. First, in many jobs, language skills are necessary, and a lack of language skills would lead to inefficiency. Second, without proficient language skills, the transferability of previously acquired qualifications and work experience obtained in the country of origin is limited. And although English has become a global language, in many fields host country language skills are still necessary for occupational opportunities. In addition, to enhance success on the labour market, proficiency in written language is also essential (Esser, 2006).

It is quite evident that host country language skills are crucial not only for educational and occupational success, but also for integration in terms of social inclusion, that is, personal integration in the host society, and participation in social life (Haug, 2006). A lack of language skills can lead to difficulties in social interactions and communication in formal and informal situations, and language barriers can result in the exclusion or marginalization of migrants. On one hand, language proficiency enhances migrants´ options for participation and social interactions, on the other hand, increased participation supports the competent acquisition of the local language. Interactions with peers are especially important for the acquisition of informal language (Haug, 2008). Therefore, language skills are a key factor in social inclusion.

In addition to being a means of communication and a resource, language is also an important social category (Kinzler, 2013). It serves as one of the key social categories that shape individuals´ perceptions of belonging in-group or out-group. Individuals can use language as a category for differentiating in-group members from out-group members based on the language proficiency that Esser (2006) calls relatedness or dissimilarity representing an obvious marker of group membership, as mentioned above.

Although there is a great deal of research on the role of language in educational and occupational success and communication, there are only a few studies on language as an intergroup factor. For example, Kintzler et al. (2009) have shown that children prefer friends who speak the same language as they do. It means that language represents a relevant factor for exclusion from a group. Speaking the same language creates similarity with others, and this perceived similarity can have a positive impact on the openness of members of the host society (Kinzler, 2013).

In practice, the crucial role of language skills has been highlighted as a resource and tool for educational and professional success, and as a necessary means of communication for social inclusion in terms of social relationships with members of the host society. Due to their dual function as means to facilitate communication and learning on the one hand, and as a symbol of relatedness and similarity on the other hand, host society language

skills can increase the openness of the host society and effectively promote integration. This is particularly important because **language skills can be modified much more easily than other aspects that might impede integration** (Geis-Thöne, 2019). Policy makers and educational institutions should establish conditions that give every immigrant the opportunity to attend language courses. It is important that even the youngest children are provided with opportunities to acquire the host society language, e.g., in parent-child playgroups. In addition, formal language acquisition programmes should be established in schools and day care facilities as early and as comprehensively as possible. Furthermore, an important way to allow families to engage informally with the host society language is to ensure that they have the opportunity to live in the same areas as native families. Thus, **language has a great potential to promote successful integration**, and societies should make use of this potential as extensively and comprehensively as possible.

1.2.4 State of Art in the International Context

In the international context, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) play an important role in the process of integration. In the Czech national context, benefit and support are expected from the work of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS); whereas research is conducted by recognized institutions, e.g., the National Institute for Research on Socioeconomic Impacts of Diseases and Systemic Risks (SYRI), or the Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava.

The Council of Europe (n.d.) does not have a policy regarding the linguistic integration of adult migrants; it has supported principles of single Member States. Member States must decide whether or not to attach language requirements to the immigration process, i.e., the granting of entry visas, residence permits, and citizenship. On one hand, it seems natural that migrants should learn the language of their host country. On the other hand, it is important to point out that it is possible to live in a country without speaking the language of the majority of the population; for example, citizens of EU member states can move freely to other member states without speaking their language.

The acquisition of the host country language is expected as it helps achieve an educational and occupational success, communication, and integration in general. According to this approach, migrants who have learned the language of their host country may be regarded as integrated. However, **language is an instrument in the integration process, not an indicator of how successful this process is** (Council of Europe, n.d.). There is no sufficient scientific evidence to show that a given level of linguistic competence can be used as a measure of integration. On one hand, migrants who have neither financial nor learning problems and meet all the requirements react very positively on all incentives. On the other hand, the others say that they do not need and do not use the language they were taught. There is little information about those who fail the language test, but studies show that the levels of proficiency required of migrants with little formal learning experience are usually too high to be achieved in the time allowed. Furthermore, there is

no simple answer to the question of what level of proficiency migrants need in the language of their host country.

In addition, the requirement of pre-entry language tests to prove a minimum level of proficiency and have demonstrated their commitment to linguistic integration before granting an entry visa or other documents is not realistic. Migrants are not always able to prepare adequately for such a test for various reasons (Council of Europe, n.d.).

For example, Pont-Grau et al. (2023) examined whether the intensity and duration of training increased integration in the labour market. They found that, for employed immigrants, a longer duration of training significantly increased their chances of having a formal-sector job and a permanent employment contract. They also found evidence that longer training hours result in expanding one´s social network during the programme. These effects are more pronounced among more educated immigrants, but disappear for refugees.

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Burima (2022) examined a group of Ukrainian refugees in Latvia. Contrary to the migrants from Africa or Asia to Europe, most people from Ukraine usually do not plan to stay for a long time in the first foreign country. At the same time, the length of their stay is unpredictable, because it refers to the uncertain future of the political conflict and reconstruction of their devastated country. Burima analyzed the language learning in terms of age, emotions, themes, collaborative and digital skills. Based on the findings, she made a proposal for the development of the educational content and methodological recommendations for the successful acquisition of the host country language for adaptation purposes for persons with posttraumatic syndrome in a situation of temporary stay (asylum).

OECD (2022) has established a methodology to support the integration of refugee learners from Ukraine in host countries. In the methodology, the needs of refugee learners and the factors that shape the prevalence of these needs are defined. Then, a holistic model of refugee integration in education is designed that links needs, factors, and policies enhancing the integration process.

The needs of refugee children include:

- Need to learn the host country language and develop the mother tongue;
- Need to overcome interrupted schooling or limited education;
- Need to adjust to a new education system;
- Need to communicate with others;
- Need to bond and feel a sense of belonging;
- Need to develop a strong personal identity;
- Need to feel safe.

Factors that shape the prevalence of needs cover:

- Individual factors, i.e., host country language proficiency, mother tongue proficiency, physical and mental health;
- Interpersonal factors, i.e., friendships (connections with peers), family support, and social networks;
- School-level factors, i.e., learning environment, school engagement, teacher/student interactions (need for protection, for credentials, assimilation is the goal of education), assessment at school-level, extra-curricular activities, parental involvement in school community.

Reflecting the above mentioned, the **holistic model for the educational integration of refugees** recognises the complexity of needs of refugee children, i.e., their learning, social, and emotional needs (Fig. 1). The model considers the relationships between needs, factors, policies, and educational integration. Refugee children and learners need to learn the host country language and develop their mother tongue, overcome interruptions in schooling or limited education, and adjust to a new education system. They also need to be able to communicate with others, feel a sense of belonging and bonding with the community, and develop a strong personal identity. Furthermore, refugee children need to feel safe, and be able to cope with loss, grief, as well as separation, and/or trauma. Different individual, interpersonal, and school-level (institutional) factors can shape the prevalence of their needs. Educational integration of refugee children can take place if all (or at least most of) their learning, social, and emotional needs are addressed. It is highly probable that each of the needs and factors within the holistic model carry a different weight or have a different priority depending on the personal and educational background. Therefore, in practice, a variety of targeted policies and practices are applied to enhance the process of integration (Arnot, Pinson, 2005; Sidhu, Taylor, 2009).

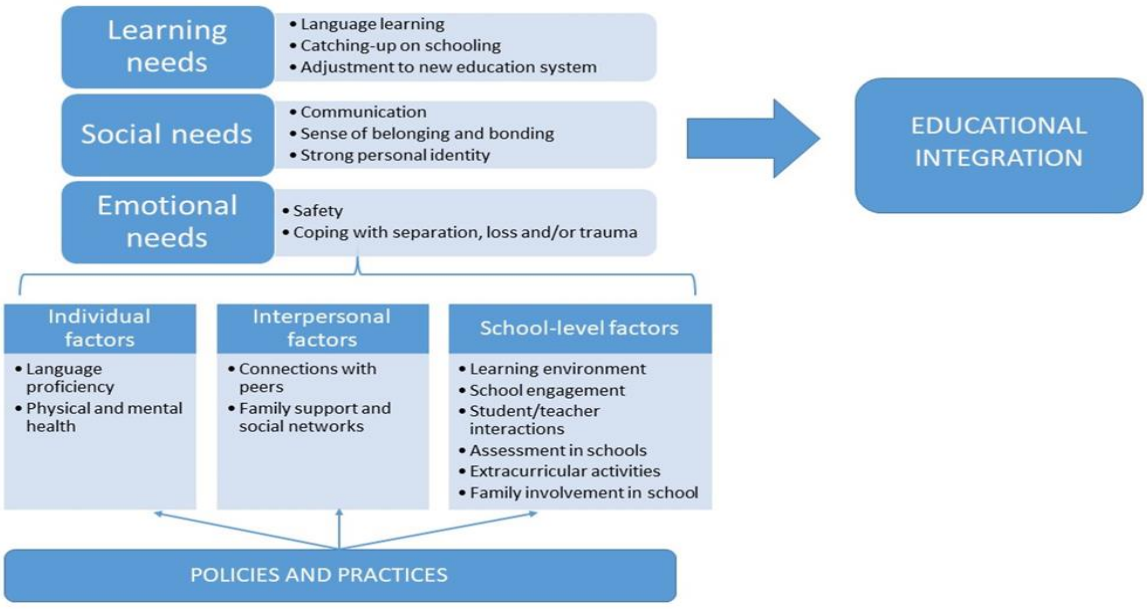

Figure 1. Holistic model for the educational integration of refugee children (Source: Černá, 2019).

1.2.5 State of Art in the Czech Context

In the Czech context, activities of three parties were considered: (1) the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS); (2) the National Institute for Research on Socioeconomic Impacts of Diseases and Systemic Risks (SYRI); (3) the Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava (FE OU).

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine or "in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine caused by the invasion of the Russian Federation troops", as stated in the document, Lex of Ukraine law package entered into force in March 2022 (European Commission, 2022). It included three main parts:

- the act on granting temporary protection, legal status of refugees, and access to health care;
- the act on measures in the field of employment and social security, with a special focus on labour market, humanitarian allowance, solidarity allowance for hosts, social services, and playgroups;
- the act on measures in the field of education, that

- opens a special enrolment period for refugees from Ukraine for kindergartens and primary schools from the school year 2022/23, from 1 June 2022 to 15 July 2022;
- enables partially or fully replace the educational content for the time necessary, regardless of compliance with the Framework Education Programme, depending on the needs of the child, pupil, or student. Thus, refugees can receive intensive Czech language courses or help with integration into society and psychological and social support;
- allows teaching staff from Ukraine to work without the need to know the Czech language in classes, groups, or departments where only refugees from Ukraine will be educated;
- establishes a system for placing children with compulsory school attendance in kindergartens and primary schools, taking into account their capacity, and directors of secondary schools, conservatories, and higher vocational schools can also accept and enrol foreigners in the current 1st year;
- simplifies the rules for admitting refugees to universities.

The fourth amendment, valid from 24 January 2023 to 31 March 2024, referred to as Lex Ukraine IV, includes a methodological interpretation of Lex Ukraine IV prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS, 2023 (c). The following are the key items:

(1) Teachers are recommended to emphasize the learning content that can be changed within the adaptation period, that is, during the first year of Czech school attendance; however, the school educational programme and the work load should be fixed. The requirements for the learner should be increased step-by-step so that they reach the

required level of knowledge and skills in accord with the Framework Educational Programmes.

(2) During the adaptation period, learners are provided free preparation in the host country language, i.e., 200 hours of Czech language lessons, regardless of the fact whether they attended them in kindergarten or not. Alternatively, the Czech language can be taught as a second (foreign) language (L2) or an optional subject at the lower secondary school level. Individual after-school lessons and tuition are also available.

(3) In each learner, the learning content and assessment in the subject of the Czech language and literature should be individually considered. In general, preference is given to verbal assessment that allows to take more factors into consideration.

(4) During the adaptation period, learner well-being has preference to new knowledge. After this period, if the process of adaptation continues successfully, the focus is laid step-by step on gaining new knowledge and skills.

Other methodological materials are available on educational portals, e.g., edu.cz, for Czech school management, teachers, and learners, and for Ukrainian learners and their parents; Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) prepared a material both in Czech and Ukrainian languages (CSI, 2022); National Pedagogical Institute (NPI) published materials for teaching various subjects, e.g., Foreign language, Czech language, History, Music, Arts, Civics (NPI, n.d.), etc.

Whereas MEYS published methodological materials providing didactic recommendations on how to act before and during the integration of Ukrainian learners into educational institutions (ranging from kindergartens to upper secondary schools and conservatoires), SYRI conducted a survey focusing on the adaptation of Ukrainian learners to education in Czech primary and lower secondary schools (Hlado et al., 2023). This survey was conducted in six urban schools, with data collected from October 2022 to February 2023. The results were presented as case studies from these schools. Neither the findings nor recommendations were suprising; they summarized what all parties (i.e., school management, teachers, Ukrainian and Czech learners, Ukrainian parents) had experienced in practice. The main findings indicate:

- A lack of methodological support and knowledge about the adaptation process hinders successful adaptation.
- Knowledge of the Czech language is considered a necessary prerequisite for the successful process of social and academic adaptation. Therefore, the emphasis should be placed on acquiring the Czech language. However, not all schools have experience in teaching Czech as a foreign language; teacher qualification and the number of lessons provided were different in each school.
- There was a tendency to prioritize social adaptation (i.e., psychological and social comfort) over academic achievements.
- Despite this approach, the level of integration of Ukrainian learners into Czech class groups and fellows was rather low; the groups are rather ethnically segregated.

- Schools perceived academic adaptation as more challenging than social adaptation. Teacher respondents expressed uncertainity about the academic requirements laid on Ukrainian learners, involvement into activities, curriculum adjustments, assessment practices, etc.
- Lower academic requirements led Ukrainian learners to perceive the Czech curriculum as easier. While Ukrainian parents appreciate the schools' efforts toward social adaptation, they also call for more focus on academic adaptation.
- School management, teachers, and parents understand entrance exams to upper secondary schools to be a critical point in the process of learning of the Ukrainian learners.

Reflecting the findings, the following recommendations were established to improve the socialization and academic adaptation of Ukrainian learners in Czech schools:

- Create opportunities for learners and participate in Ukrainian-Czech activities.
- Distribute Ukrainian learners evenly across classes, ensuring no more than 20 % of a class consists of Ukrainian learners.
- Encourage mixed group work in lessons to support both academic and social adaptation.
- Place greater emphasis on the academic adaptation of Ukrainian learners by setting appropriate educational objectives and focusing on entrance exams in higher grades of the lower secondary school.
- Strengthen the diagnostics of special educational needs of Ukrainian learners.
- Implement strategies for differentiatiated learning based on individual potentials and limitations.
- Cooperate with or employ qualified teachers specialized in teaching Czech as a foreign language.

Another research project was conducted by the Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava. The international team of five included three Czech and two Ukrainian members, consisting of three students and two academics. The project aimed to support the learning of another foreign language, that is, a local language of the country in which the respondents currently stay at (the host country language), through the English language. The main objective of the research was to design and verify didactic recommendations facilitating the easy acquisition of the host country language, thereby supporting school attendance and integration into society. The respondents, learners from Ukraine, provided data through their “life story“, i.e. a semi-structured written essay about the history of their learning English before the war and during the war, including both online distance education and face-to-face instruction. The project and findings are described in the research part.

2 RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Why, What, and Who – Previous Work and the Team

Research arises from the aforementioned project enhanced by SGS (Studentská grantová soutěž [Student Grant Competition]. The project reflects the current need to support Ukrainian learners in the Czech primary, secondary, and tertiary school environment. In particular, it aimed at developing the host country language (Czech) through a foreign language (English), and thus contributed to the integration of learners.

Three students play the main role in the project and in the research. Two students are from Ukraine. As bachelor students, they studied at the Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava one year before the invasion under the Erasmus+ programme. When the invasion started, they were invited to continue their studies in Ostrava. They enrolled in the follow-up master study programme Teaching in Lower Secondary Schools specializing in English Language Teaching and Information and Communication Technologies. The third team member is a Czech student who graduated from the specialization English language teaching, currently enrolled as a PhD student at the Department of Czech Language and Literature with Didactics. She teaches courses of Czech language for foreigners, mainly Ukrainians. The students are friends at school and out of school, so they warmly agreed to work on the project. Due to their knowledge of the Ukrainian, Russian, English, and Czech languages, their roles are replaceable to some extent. They participated in the formation of the research sample, were in contact with the respondents, and collected data from most of them. They also provided feedback during the piloting of the tools and did translations from/to Ukrainian language. The linguistic and methodological aspects of the research were ensured by two academics, the Head of the Department of English Language Teaching, and a member of the Department of Information Technologies, Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava.

The project works on the assumption that the development in knowledge of a host country language can be impacted not only by the environment and other factors but also that English as a foreign language known to both nations can work as a means, despite the level of knowledge being elementary. Most of Ukrainian learners attend the Czech school in the morning and have distance lessons at the Ukrainian school in the afternoon. They tend to graduate from the Ukrainian school they started attending before the invasion, thus expressing patriotism and learning efforts without the language barrier. In the host country, English can play the role of lingua franca.

The topic of Ukrainian learners in the Czech educational environment is rather new; a lack of data does not allow us to formulate precise conclusions. Therefore, the above-mentioned student project was worked out into a more detailed and broader investigation; the process and results are described below.

2.2 Research Objective, Questions

The **main objective** is to monitor how the respondents learned foreign language(s), mainly English, before and during the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and to consider the possible impact on the process of socialization in the host country. The main objective to be achieved, following research questions and subquestions were set.

Research question 1: How did the respondents learn English before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022?

1.1 At what age did they begin learning English?

1.2 Did they attend after-school lessons?

1.3 Did teachers and learners exploit digital technologies?

1.4 Did the learners travel abroad?

1.5 Did the learners sit for international exams?

1.6 Did the learners study other foreign languages?

Research question 2: What was/is the role of English (if any) in the process of respondents´ integration in the host country?

2.1 What was the role of English in communication during the process of administering documents, accommodation, and the first steps in the new country?

2.2 Did the respondents continue learning English and other foreign languages in the Czech Republic?

Research question 3: How did/do the respondents learn in Czech schools during the war?

3.1 Did they continue learning (school attendance), when the war started, or was there a period without lessons?

3.2 If there were/are lessons, were/are they held face-to-face or online?

3.3 If there were/are online lessons, what devices did/do the pupils use?

3.4 What subjects did/do they learn?

3.5 If English was/is taught, what skills did/do they practise? What aids, methods, and applications did/do they work with?

2.3 Research Methods, Tools, and Process

Two **methods** were applied.

First, the ex-post facto method was used as the basic approach to the history of respondents´ learning. The ex-post facto means “after the fact“ in literal terms. In Latin, it translates to “from a thing done afterward“. In the case of Ukrainian learners in Czech

(educational) environment, it can help us discover their situation, and the roots and causes of their performance and possible problems.

Second, a mini-case study method was applied to provide a deeper insight into the life of two Ukrainian learners with the aim to understand their situation and apply the gained knowledge when supporting the others.

Data were collected using several **tools.** In the main survey, the primary and lower secondary school learners expressed their opinions in individual "**life stories**". Teachers and a teacher assistant described their experience in the written form by answering open questions of the **questionnaire** or in the oral form, when they answered them in **a semi-structured interview**. Prospective teachers reflected their feedback in their **observations**. All tools were employed in **case studies of two learners**. In addition, a list of Czech words and expressions used in Ukrainian utterances was created by a group of pupils and adults.

The tools were designed by the project team at the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Education, University of Ostrava. They piloted the tools in a group of ten students and four teachers. Their comments were implemented in the final version that was used in the research.

A mixed methodology was applied using qualitative and quantitative approaches to consider the collected data. The open-coding method was applied to process the data collected through life stories. Each life story was analysed. Reflecting the frequency of occurrence of key words in the research questions, the data were structured into categories. The key words used in the categories reflect the research questions defined above. Selected parts of life stories are paraphrased or cited in the text. Data collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observations were used to provide a deeper insight into the findings discovered in life stories and thus make mini-case studies more consistent.

Life Story

The "Life Story" tool was designed to reflect the requirements set by Gavora (2000, 166) to achieve the research objectives described above. The tool is structured into three main parts (Appendix 1). At the end of the tool, a sample "life story" is provided so that respondents can avoid omitting some parts and express their opinions in all areas of our interest. Respondents can decide on the language of the life story: Ukrainian, English, Czech, or another. We also expect that lower secondary school learners will be able to write their life story, whereas younger learners (primary school pupils) will express themselves orally, speaking to a team member, e.g., Ukrainian prospective teachers or Czech teachers known to them from summer courses of Czech as a foreign language.

Part 1 focuses on learning foreign languages *before* the war started. In particular, respondents are expected to prove their opinion on the following questions:

- When did you start learning the first language (how old were you)?

- Did you learn the language at school only, or did you attend, for example, the language school, individual private lessons, language courses, etc.? Did you spend some time abroad – for example, when your parents worked there, on holidays – how long was it and did you speak a foreign language there? Could you communicate fluently or did you have any problems? Did you pass any international exams in foreign languages (e.g., First Certificate in English)?
- How did you learn the second foreign language? Describe it in a separate paragraph. Provide the same information as for the first foreign language.
- Do the same with the third language and other foreign languages if you have learned any.

Part 2 describes how school lessons were held *during* the war. Respondents provide information about teaching and learning all subjects, with special attention to English lessons. Answers to the following questions are expected:

- Did you continue learning when the war started, or was there any period without lessons?
- Did you have lessons in the school building?
- Did you have present (face-to-face) lessons with teachers in the classrooms as usual?
- Did you learn online? What period? (e.g., from April to June)
- Where did you learn online from? From your home (flat, house), cellar, bomb shelter, metro, other place?
- Who organized the online lessons? Teachers? Learners? Parents? Someone else?
- What devices did you have for online learning? PC, notebook, smartphone, tablet, iPad, other …?
- Did you always have a good internet connection (access)?
- How long were the lessons (how many minutes …)?
- What subjects did you learn online?
- What subjects did you NOT learn online?
- When learning *English* online:
- Did you practise vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening, speaking, and writing? Describe at least one activity in which you practised each of them.
- Did you work with printed textbooks as in the present lessons?
- Did you read texts about the war?
- Did you work in groups, pairs, or individually?
- Did you have homework?
- Did you work on projects, e.g., on anti-war topics?
- What was the main problem for you regarding online learning?

Part 3 is devoted to the *role* of English, specifically, whether/how it helped respondents learn a local host country language and consequently adapt to the life in the new country. They provide feedback on the following questions:

Did you stay in Ukraine or moved to another country?

– If you stayed, you can describe here everything that you did not mention above.
– If you moved abroad:

- Where did you go? Did you go with the whole family, or did part of the family go abroad and part stayed? What part were you in? Did you go alone or with a friend, friends?
- How long did you stay in the country? Did you and (or) your parents) get the necessary documents, job, accommodation?
- Did you attend language courses there to learn the language of that country?
- Did you attend courses in the English language there to improve your knowledge? Did you know about the courses?
- Did you move to another country? If so, provide the same information as above.
- What country are you in now?
- Do you attend school (basic school – grade? upper secondary school – specialization? university – study programme)?
- Do you attend language courses to learn the language of the country in which you are staying in?
- Do you attend courses in English language courses now? What type of courses, how often,...

Open-answer questions for questionnaire/semi-structured interview

The following questions were planned to be used in the written form as a questionnaire with open answers for teachers. Finally, as explained in Results, they were used as the structure for a semi-structured interview. The answers were collected from teachers who experienced (a) Ukrainian learner(s) in the class.

– What is **your** experience in teaching Ukrainian learners? In particular, what was **the first** problem you faced in teaching? What was/has been **the main** (most significant) problem you faced?
– What was **the first** problem from the point of view of **Ukrainian learners**? What was/has been **the main** problem from the point of view of Ukrainian learners?
– Consider the following factors from the point of view of Ukrainian learners: What do you think is (was) the main problem for Ukrainian learners?

- low level of knowledge of the Czech, English, and Russian language;
- war experience;
- unknown environment;
- incomplete family (part of the family is in danger in Ukraine);
- friends: missing Ukrainian friends, lack of new friends, new friends;
- financial conditions (problems) of the family;
- documents: problems with documents, …;
- accommodation: problems with accommodation, …;
- properties in Ukraine, lost toys, pets, …;
- learners' motivation, effort, family support for learning, etc.

- Has their language competency changed? In particular, do they currently understand Czech? What helps them the most? Is it sufficient? Do you think their knowledge got better or worse after the summer holidays, e.g., because they were not in the Czech speaking environment (Czech language camps or Ukrainian speaking families only)?
- What was the teacher-learner and learner-learner communication during lessons? Did the teacher speak more dilligently, frequently, in a different way compared to the Czech learners? How were Ukrainian learners accepted by their Czech classmates during lessons and breaks?
- What would you recommend for further language development and integration?

Extended observation sheet

Several items (questions) that focused on Ukrainian learners were added to the traditional observation sheet (Gadušová et al., 2021) that prospective teachers use in the first lessons of their practicum when they start to intentionally observe lessons led by experienced teachers. Prospective teachers were to focus on following areas:

- What language did the Ukrainian learners communicate?
- What language did the Czech teacher speak when communicating with the Czech learners and with the Ukrainian learners? Did the teacher speak slower and was the pronunciation more distinct when speaking to Ukrainian learners?
- Were the Ukrainian learners accepted by the classmates? Were they alone during breaks, did they join the others, or did they naturally work in pairs and groups in lessons?
- Did you notice anything unusual during the lessons?

The results of all observations were presented in a separate chapter. Furthermore, data collected through life stories and questionnaires/interviews were used in mini-case studies of two Ukrainian boys. In addition, interviews with their mothers were conducted to obtain more complex information. In one boy, the results of the observations were also implemented.

The **process of data collection** was conducted in several phases. First, data were collected from the learners of the primary and lower secondary schools and university students in spring 2023 using life stories. This process continued in autumn, from September to November 2023, in the upper secondary schools. At the same time (in autumn), interviews were held with teachers and mothers, and prospective teachers made their observations about English lessons attended by one of the Ukrainian learners. Furthermore, during this process, the team members participated in discussions in social networks on the education and integration of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic. Unintentionally, but naturally, the problem of blending Czech/Ukrainian vocabulary was brought out and became part of the investigation.

In total, more than 100 respondents participated in the research; 55 of them provided their feedback through life stories, others answered selected parts of life stories or expressed

their opinions and experience via interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The particular sample is described in the Results chapter.

3 RESULTS

Results are presented in five sub-chapters.

First, data collected through the life stories are introduced that reflect the opinions of primary and lower secondary school learners, upper secondary school learners, and university students.

Second, open answers from the interview with a teacher are included, and a written reflection of teacher assistent on the identical questions follows.

Third, two mini-case studies are included that provide a deeper insight into the life and school performance of two Ukrainian learners. The studies arise from the life stories of the learners and the interviews with their mothers. The opinions of a class teacher and an English teacher are included in one case study.

Fourth, **observations** by prospective teachers were made. They focus on the performance of one Ukrainian learner in English lessons.

Fifth, the usage of **Czech words** in the native language is monitored in selected Ukrainian speakers, both learners and adults.

In each sub-chapter, the research sample from which the data are collected is described in detail.

Research Sample

In the time of research project preparation, we expected to have a convenience sample increasing via a snowball method, starting from personal contacts of student members of the project team (two Ukrainian and one Czech master students). We expected to collect life stories from 30 primary and lower secondary school pupils, 30 upper secondary learners, and 30 university students, starting with personal contacts (friends, schoolmates – both from the Czech Republic and Ukraine, participants of courses of Czech as a foreign language, etc.). This approach was made impossible due to the requirement of written informed consent of all respondents or their parents.

As mentioned in connection with the main research objective, data were collected from different research samples in each part of the research. We collected the life stories of 40 primary and lower secondary school pupils, six upper secondary learners, and nine university students. Moreover, we received feedback in the form of semi-structured interviews from teachers, mothers of Ukrainian learners, written answers to a questionnaire from a teacher assistant, results of lesson observations from prospective teachers, and other data that were used to create mini-case studies of two learners. Also, comments on the Czech-Ukrainian vocabulary were collected. In total, we collected data from almost 55+ learners, three teachers, one teacher assistant, two mothers, eight prospective teachers, and 25 other anonymous non-teacher respondents.

To make the aforementioned changes resulting from the limits clear, the description of the research sample and results are presented together in each sub-chapter.

3.1 Results: Life Story

The research results are structured according to the tool and the school level in which the data were collected on, i.e., primary and lower secondary schools; upper secondary schools; universities. Regarding each level, research sample is described, then, results are displayed. The interpretation and discussion of the results and conclusions are presented in separate chapters.

3.1.1 Primary and Lower Secondary School

Sample

Data were collected from March to June 2023 from 40 learners (L), 23 of them girls. Thirty-nine learners left Ukraine for other countries after 24 February 2022 because of the Russian invasion, and one learner (L17 from the Luhansk region) arrived in autumn 2021. The age of the learners was from seven years (two learners) to 17 years (L18 was 17 years old; L11 was 16), most of them were 14 years old (nine learners), 15 years old (eight learners), and nine years old (six learners), 15 pupils were at the age of primary school (7-11 years, grades 1-5), 25 pupils of the lower secondary school age (12-15 years, grades 6-10). The detailed age structure of the research sample is shown in Fig. 2.

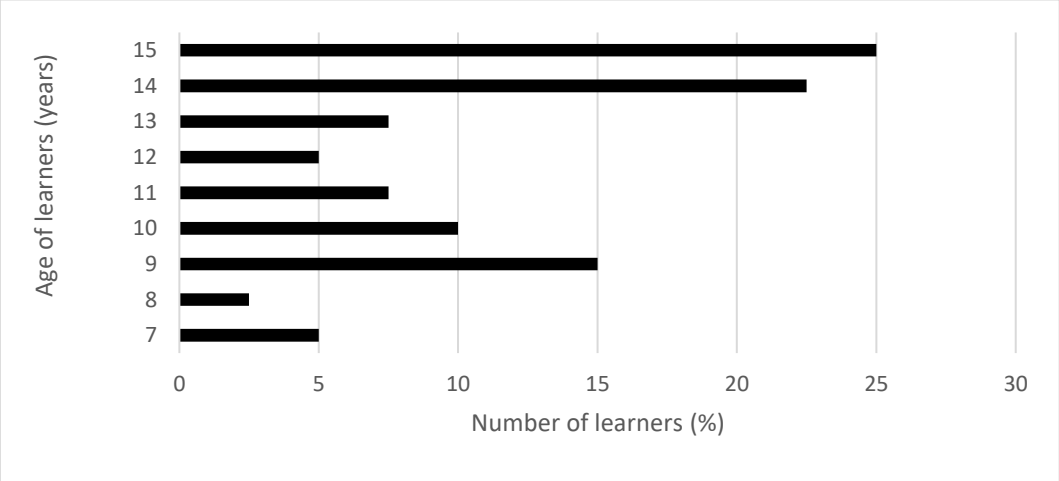

Figure 2. Research sample structure: age (Source: own).

The learners came from all over Ukraine:

- 27 learners were from the eastern part of the country where the fights are going on daily: Kharkiv region (eight learners), Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia regions (five learners each), Mariupol region (four learners), Poltava region (three learners), Donetsk and Luhansk regions (one learner each);
- Eight learners were from the central part: Kyiv region (six learners), Cherkasy and Pereyaslav regions (one learner each);

- Five learners were from the western part: Zakarpattia and Vinnytsia regions (two learners each) and Lviv (one learner);
- In total, 67 % of the respondents came from eastern parts that are most affected by the war, 20 % were from central regions, and 12.5 % from western parts of Ukraine.

The geographical structure of the research sample is shown in Fig. 3.

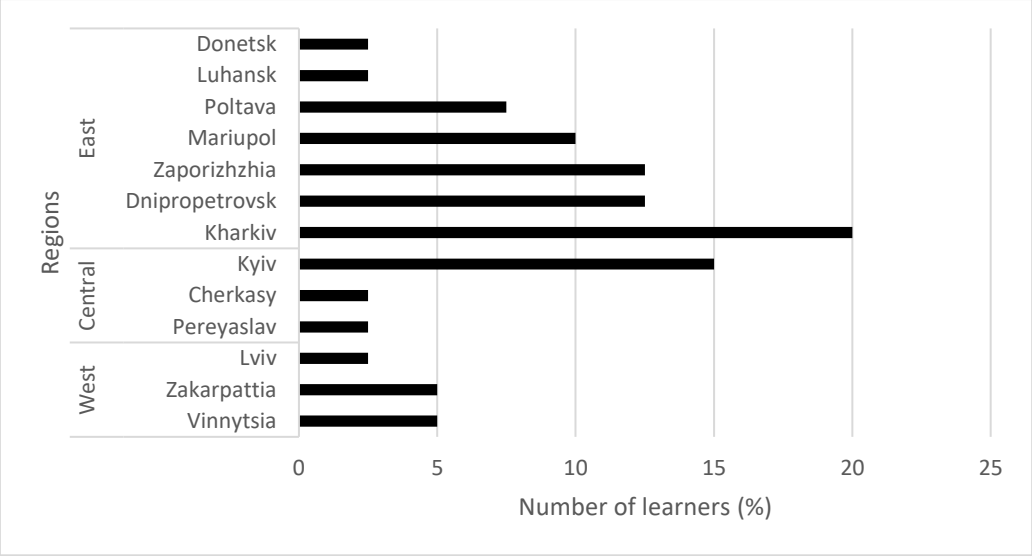

Figure 3. Research sample structure: regions (Source: own).

Results

The presentation of results follows the structure of Research Questions (RQ). The results are displayed according to the structure of the Research Questions. If the information is not provided in the answer, it means that it was not available in the life story.

Research question 1: How did the respondents learn English before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022?

The results related to Research Question 1 were structured into six categories (A-F), each expressed in a separated sub-question (RQ 1.1-RQ 1.6) as follows: (A) the beginning of learning English, (B) attendance to after-school lessons, (C) the exploitation of digital technologies, (D) travelling abroad, (E) international exams, (F) learning other foreign languages. Additional information is provided in cited parts of life stories.

(A) The beginning of learning English.

RQ 1.1 At what age did they begin learning English?

This category can be described from two points of view. Respondents either informed about the age, when they started learning English, or the school year. The latter view seems to be less precise because the age of the beginning of school attendance may differ individually and institutionally. Despite this, 11 respondents (28 %) had their first English lessons in pre-school age, mostly when they attended kindergarten, that is, at the age of

four or five years. The others started during their school attendance: 19 respondents (47 %) in the first grade, 5 (12 %) in the second grade, three respondents (8 %) started learning English in the fifth grade (their first foreign language was German), and two learners did not specify the grade or age.

(B) Attendance to after-school lessons.

RQ 1.2 Did they attend after-school lessons?

Within this category, we considered attendance to after-school courses and individual face-to-face lessons with a private tutor. In total 40 % of the respondents were active in this category: four of them (10 %) attended after-school face-to-face English courses, 12 learners (30 %) expressed that they had private lessons with a tutor. Both the courses and the lessons were paid for by the families, they required additional time and additional effort (and grit in general) from the learners, and the whole activity can be understood as a plan and an intention of the family to prepare children for their ´international´ future, for success in the international labour market where the knowledge of a foreign language (English) will be highly needed.

(C) Exploitation of digital technologies.

RQ 1.3 Did teachers and learners exploit digital technologies?

In addition to the above-mentioned after-school courses and private lessons, several respondents mentioned that they learned English using digital technologies. In particular, they learned through online courses, various applications, e.g. Duolinguo, dictionaries, translator, TED (Technology & Entertainment & Design) Talks, etc. They also mentioned that teachers used technologies in lessons and for homework. Four respondents (10 %) used a platform, for example, Zoom, for screen communication.

(D) Travelling abroad.

RQ 1.4 Did the learners travel abroad?

This is another way of practising communication in English. Eleven respondents (28%) travelled abroad, mainly to seaside resorts in Turkey, Italy, or France, but three other respondents (8 %) visited the Czech Republic before the Russian invasion, two of them (5 %) travelled to Poland. Four respondents (10 %) evaluated their practical use of English as fluent, another 10% group as needed, 5 % consider their communication competence low, and 5 % did not speak the language, were accompanied by another person who spoke.

(E) Passing international exams.

RQ 1.5 Did the learners sit for international exams?

None of the respondents passed international exams; 15 of them (38 %) declared it specifically.

(F) Learning other foreign languages.

RQ 1.6 Did the learners study other foreign languages?

The respondents learned a wide range of foreign languages. Two respondents (5 %) were from Russian speaking families who learned Ukrainian as the first foreign language, four (10 %) learned French as a second foreign language, other four (10 %) learned German, two (5 %) learned Polish, one respondent learned Japanese, Chinese or Belarussian; three (8 %) learned Czech language.

To provide a deeper inside, the following life stories work as selected samples. They introduce both the learners who attended additional lessons with private tutors and those who underwent school lessons only.

L17 (girl, 15 years old, Luhansk region): I started learning two languages in the first grade. I was 7 years old and I started learning Ukrainian and English. In the family, we spoke Russian among ourselves. I also studied English with my mother after school. Then my family started planning to move to the Czech Republic. My father, mother and sister studied Czech with me. We bought books (Czech step by step), as well as various online courses.

L1 (girl, 10 years old, Donetsk region): I started learning English when I was 4 or 5 years old. I learned it at school and I also attended English language courses. We went to visit my grandmother in France, where I spoke English fluently. I did not pass international tests. Also, I studied Polish, Belarusian, Kazakh, Slovak, and Japanese languages.

L 7 (girl, 14 years old, Dnipropetrovsk region): I learned English at school and with my mother. Eventually, I started using a translator to study. I did not pass international exams. I could speak English fluently with friends in Ukraine and also when I travelled to Italy. I corresponded with friends in a foreign language and watched videos. I learned the Italian language directly already in Italy.

L 5 (boy, 12 years old, Poltava region): I started learning English in the first grade in Ukraine. I also visited an English tutor. I did not pass international exams. I didn't travel.

I started studying German at a Czech school.

L 14 (boy, 9 years old, Lviv region): I started learning English in the first grade at a Ukrainian school. I did not visit tutors/courses. I have not been to other countries. I did not pass international exams.

To sum up, when considering all the criteria expressed in the form of categories, we can state that there are two groups of respondents. First, those who intentionally learned English (18 learners; 45 %). We define intentional learning as meeting three or more criteria out of six categories A-F, that is, whether they had a pre-school preparation, after-school courses or private lessons, travelled abroad to practise the language, passed international exams or learned any other foreign language(s). As a result, they were able to understand and communicate when leaving Ukraine after the Russian invasion, no matter what country they left for. On the other hand, there were respondents (22 learners; 55 %) who did not undergo any special preparation, that is, they did not start learning English before the obligatory school lessons, did not attend after-school courses or private

lessons, did not travel abroad to practise the language in the real environment, did not pass international exams, did not learn other foreign language(s) etc. However, they did not complain of problems with communication, document administration, or accommodation. The Czech staff was well trained and also digital technologies were exploited, e.g. translator, maps, etc., which was often the field of expertise of the learners, not their parents.

Research question 2: What was/is the role of English (if any) in the process of integration in the host country?

The data related to Research question 2 were structured into two categories (A-B), each expressed in a separated sub-question (RQ 2.1-RQ 2.2) focused on: (A) communication in English during the process of administering documents, accommodation, and first steps in the new country, (B) further learning English and other foreign languages in the Czech Republic.

(A) Communication in English.

RQ 2.1 What was the role of English in communication during the process of administering documents, accommodation, and the first steps in the new country?

The Czech Republic was not the first country which the respondents left for. None of them came alone; in some cases, they came with the whole family or with mother as minimum. Some of them came to us from Italy and Poland. At the time of investigation, all of them were settled in Ostrava and close surroundings and all of them attended a Czech school: 39 respondents were the basic school learners (i.e., primary and lower secondary level), one respondent studied at a grammar school (L18).

When they arrived in the Czech Republic, 24 respondents (60 %) were the person who communicated in English during the process of administering the documents, 20 respondents (50 %) used English when organizing the first accommodation; two respondents (5 %) used the translator for this communication; other 5 % were able to speak Czech a few words. The following life stories are the examples.

L35 (girl, 9 years old, Mariupol region): A few months later, the family moved to the Czech Republic, and in September I started attending school, learning Czech, and continuing with English.

L 23 (boy, 15 years old, Kyiv region): Two weeks after the start of the war, he came with his family to the Czech Republic. There were no problems with documentation and housing. At the beginning, he communicated in English, then he started attending Czech courses. He is currently studying English, Czech, and French at a Czech school and is studying German on his own.

L19 (girl, 11 years, Kharkiv region): I am now in the Czech Republic with my mother. We received documents and housing. I was accepted to a local school, so I am combining 2 schools. In Ukraine and the Czech Republic. In a Czech school, I study subjects in the Czech language, and after that I study topics and do lessons according to the Ukrainian curriculum. Now I am in the fifth grade. I attend integration courses in Czech and English.

(B) Further learning of English and other foreign languages in the Czech Republic.

RQ 2.2 Did they continue learning English and other foreign languages in the Czech Republic?

All respondents learned English following the school curriculum of the grade they attended. Furthermore, 12 of them (30 %) also attended after-school English language courses organized by the school. In addition, one learner had an online English course, and another one had private English lessons with a Ukrainian tutor. German courses held by the school were attended by five learners (13 %). French language was less popular; two respondents learned it before the Russian invasion; one of them continued in the Czech Republic. Czech language courses, that were organized by University of Ostrava immediately after the invasion and by other institutions including the schools, were frequently mentioned: 27 respondents (68 %) attended the courses and all of them were satisfied with this opportunity to learn the new, local language. Furthermore, eight respondents (25 %) emphasized the importance of communication with friends and classmates, which improves the knowledge gained in the course. Three respondents stated that living in the Czech speaking environment is more helpful for them than attending a course. Below, three life stories are cited.

L11 (boy, 16 years, Kyiv region): My mother and I came to the Czech Republic in mid-July. We encountered such problems as the Czech language and another system of obtaining documents different from the system in Ukraine. Therefore, at first, I communicated in English. Now I am studying at a school (Heyrovsky Upper Secondary School of Chemistry), I had a conversation in English with the head of this school about the possibility of studying there as a regular student. Then I attended Czech language courses. After two weeks, I could already speak Czech with my friends, but at the beginning of my arrival, we communicated in English, or they translated some information for me from Czech to English.

L20 (girl, 11 years old, Cherkasy region): I have been living in the Czech Republic since March, my father went to work here in early February, and we (me, mother, sister) came to him in March. My grandmother, great-grandmother, two uncles and other not so close relatives remained in Ukraine. In the Czech Republic, we were received very kindly, we lived together with a young family in their house for 3 weeks, in the village, then we decided to move to the city, because my father worked in the city, I needed school and my sister went to kindergarten, my mother also found a job a day later as arrived in the city. They found an apartment in advance. I am learning Czech online, my mother found me a lecturer twice a week, my mother also agreed with my Ukrainian English teacher for an English lesson once a week, in order to be aware of what the children are learning in Ukraine and to get closer to their already new level of knowledge of the language. English did not help me, the children at school know English at a low level, so I had to study Czech intensively. I go to fifth grade.

L17 (girl, 15 years old, Luhansk region): Yes, English helped me, because at the beginning of my communication in the Czech class, I knew the words and could make

sentences, but I was very shy to speak Czech. My classmates spoke to me in English. As I said earlier, I moved with my whole family, the teacher helped me a lot at school, they did extra lessons and assignments and gave me more time so that I could adapt faster. Thanks to the teachers, I adapted in three months. After that time, I became the best student in my class; even I had better grades and knowledge of Czech than the Czechs. Now I go to the 9th grade of primary school. In two months, I will sit for high school exams. Now I have been in Czechia for 1.5 years and I still attend language courses because we are lifelong learners. All the courses I attended helped me a lot.

To sum up, when considering both categories, we cannot find any crucial differences between the respondents. What we find important is that none of them complained about any problems related to their low level of English. On the contrary, they emphasized their ability to communicate in English and efforts to learn Czech. These are two ways to adapt to the society in the new local country.

Research question 3: How did/do the respondents learn at Czech schools during the war?

The data related to Research question 3 were structured into five categories (A-E), each expressed in a separated sub-question (RQ 3.1-RQ 3.5) focused on: (A) further learning since the beginning of the war, (B) face-to-face, online or no lessons, (C) Devices used by learners, (D) Subjects taught during the war time, (E) Emphasized language skills, teaching aids, methods, and applications used in lessons. The presented life stories introduce details that the respondents faced.

(A) Further learning since the beginning of the war.

RQ 3.1 Did they continue learning (school attendance), when the war started, or was there a period without lessons?

Data were collected from 98 % of the respondents (one learner had left Ukraine before the war started). When the war started on 24 February 2022, lessons were cancelled. In most schools, the period without lessons lasted two weeks (20 %), three weeks, or six weeks (3%) each. Then, online distance instruction (ODI) started. Some learners did not attend ODI for various reasons; for example, they left Ukraine immediately when the war started (12 %) or within the first week (10 %), they were on the road (6 %), moved to another place in Ukraine and did not find a new school yet (5 %), lived directly in the war areas where lessons were not held (8 %) or were too young (7-9 years) for autonomous learning within ODI (8 %). The extent and quality of ODI, mainly the use of didactic means that teachers could exploit, were limited by various factors from which the poor availability of Internet access and electric power threatened the possibility of conducting lessons but could not endanger human lives.

L20 (girl, 11 years old, Cherkasy region): When the war started, I didn't study, I started studying only on March 10. I studied online, via phone or laptop, the lessons were short, a maximum of 20 minutes, mathematics, Ukrainian language, Russian language, English. This time is not enough, online is not as effective as offline, I studied from workbooks, I had books with me, homework was done, teachers organized online, parents provided the

opportunity – phone, laptop. I am still in the Czech Republic, studying here at school. She graduated from an online Ukrainian school in June last year. It is difficult to study in two schools at the same time. But I have time to visit the figure skating club. Of course, the teacher talked about the war. It was difficult to study online because of the constant sounds of alarms and power outages.

(B) Face-to-face, online, or no lessons.

RQ 3.2 If there were/are lessons, were/are they face-to-face or online?

Data were collected from 100 % of the respondents. When talking about Ukraine, there were two respondents who remained in the country and attended school face-to-face: learners L30 in Kyiv and L37 whose family moved to another place in Ukraine first, and after a few months, they moved to the Czech Republic. L30 and L37 did not experience ODI in Ukraine; however, most of the other respondents (see above) were exposed to ODI there (58 %). The duration of the lessons was different – from 20 to 45 minutes, from three to six per day. If in danger, they were immediately cancelled. Regarding this fact, they emphasized positively their experience in ODI from the period of the covid-19 pandemic (11 %) and also how lucky they were that when they were in Ukraine, they could learn from their homes, because others were made to learn from basements (10 %) or bomb shelters (6 %). Despite the difficult conditions, 23 % of the respondents did not complain about the quality of the Internet access; however, 15 % of them reported some problems with Internet connection. They also call them ´technical problems´ (6 %), which could, instead of others, include problems with hardware or software. Furthermore, 13 % of the respondents suffered from a lack of electricity that caused them problems, both during distance online lessons and when doing homework.

L8 (girl, 13 years old, Pereyaslav region): Two weeks after the start of the war (2022), we began attending online lessons in Ukraine. I had no problems with the Internet. I joined the lessons while staying in my apartment. Among the online lessons was English, where we could listen to audio, watch videos, and read the text. The teacher did not explain the topic of war in these lessons.

L26 (girl, 15 years, Zaporizhzhia region): At the beginning of the war, distance education was carried out. There were online meetings with teachers. There were no such subjects as music and art. There were technical problems, problems with light and the Internet. I used a computer and my phone to study. Homework was assigned, everything was done individually, without group work.

L31 (girl, 15 years, Zaporizhzhia region): On February 24, I went to school, there was a school day, but not a full one, then we were released for 2 weeks remotely, without online meetings, the teachers sent the main material and tasks. All subjects were taught, homework was done. There were technical problems with light and the Internet. On February 27, I left for the Czech Republic, started studying Czech at school, and continued to study German and English. I graduated from the 8th grade of the Ukrainian school.

(C) Devices used by learners.

RQ 3.3 If there were/are online lessons, what devices did/do the pupils use?
Data were collected from 64 % of the respondents. Three types of devices were used for ODI. Identical groups (28 %) exploited smartphones and notebooks, 8 % learned using tablets, one learner mentioned a personal computer (L36). In total, 30 % of the respondents had only one device available for learning (smartphone 12 %; notebook 18 %), 15 % could make a choice out of two devices; one respondent had three devices available.

L21 (girl, 9 years old, Dnipro region): When the war started a couple of weeks later, we resumed online studies from March to May, being at home. I was in Transcarpathia. For this I used a laptop, a tablet. I had no problems with the Internet connection. During the day, we had three lessons (mathematics, Ukrainian language, and I explore the world) for 45 minutes each. We did not attend classes such as physical education, drawing, and labour training. I took extra English classes where I practised everything except writing in a group online class. I worked individually. We did not teach topics about the war in English lessons. Students received homework. Yes, I drew a picture on an anti-war theme. The main problem of online learning is lack of motivation.

(D) Subjects taught during the war time.

RQ 3.4 What subjects did/do they learn?
Data were collected from 80 % of the respondents. Regardless of the age of the learners, 15 % reported that in Ukraine, maths, Ukrainian, and English languages were taught online distance. Another group of 18 % of the respondents stated that all subjects were included in the schedule. However, as mentioned by 10 % of the learners, music, art, and physical education were not taught.

At the time, when data were collected (spring 2023), all respondents attended Czech schools where lessons were held in Czech language. They all were offered, and most of them attended, courses of Czech language for foreigners, they had English lessons within the obligatory school curriculum and could attend additional courses of English free of charge. Furthermore, they also attended online lessons at their school in Ukraine. As they were unable to be present in the lessons that were scheduled at the same times as in their Czech school, some of them (15 %) made an additional effort and did online homework for the Ukrainian school, 10% did this last year, when they finished the grade.

L11 (boy, 16 years, Kyiv region): After the outbreak of full-scale war (2022), online lessons resumed two weeks later. We did not study topics related to the war in English lessons. I am currently studying at a Czech school and remotely at a Ukrainian school. For example, now we already have an assignment in which we can write an essay on the topic of war. In Ukraine, during the war, I was in the basement. There was Internet, so there were no problems with the connection. We had an average of six lessons a day. There were no lessons such as physical education and choreography. In English lessons, we performed grammar exercises, learned and repeated new words, and communicated.

The teacher did not give us homework. There was only one problem during online lessons and that was the organization. Because some students were not able to answer the teacher's questions immediately, that is, they had problems with the connection or simply turned on online lessons and did their own business in other rooms.

L1 (girl, 10 years, Donetsk region): When the war (2022) started, there were no classes for a month and a half. There was no internet in the corridor due to alarms. I studied in a bomb shelter, using the phone, since I already had the experience of online learning during Covid-19. The duration of the lessons was as usual. We studied mathematics, Ukrainian language, and reading (this is like Ukrainaian literature). After moving, I don't study in a Ukrainian school, only in a Czech one.

(E) Emphasized language skills, teaching aids, methods, and applications used in lessons.

RQ 3.5 If English was/is taught, what skills did/do they practise? What aids, methods, and applications did/do they work with?

Data were collected from 96 % of the respondents on methods and from 88 % on language skills. Teachers applied a direct method to explain new learning content. They used a face-to-screen approach (40 %) when speaking to learners. There was only one learner who reported that the teacher neither used a screen nor explained topics but only distributed study materials and tasks (exercises) to their class by email. It was not clear from the ´life story´, how, for example, these learners submitted homework and received feedback from the teacher. The learners worked individually (30 %), 15 % emphasized that there was no team work or work on projects (10 %). Textbooks were used as usual (23 %), but some learners did not have any (10 %). They exploited online tests (30 %) and did homework after each lesson (45 %). These methods and tools are designed to develop traditional language skills: reading (25 %), often from the newspaper, on the latest news about the war; speaking (15 %), for example, about Ukrainian history and traditions; writing (8 %), for example, an essay about the war; listening (5 %); and also practising grammar and new vocabulary (20 %).

L18 (girl, 17 years, Zakarpattia region): When the war started, my educational institution switched to distance learning. It continued from the beginning of the war (February 24) and continues now. I studied mostly in the house, but if anxiety started, the lesson ended and everyone went to the basement. Distance learning was organized by the school principal. Everyone studied using a laptop (but there were also those who studied via phone). The Internet was always good. The duration of the lesson is 45 minutes, but if there is anxiety, it ends immediately. We studied all subjects online. The online English lesson was like a regular lesson. We read texts, performed various exercises, and went through grammar under the teacher's supervision. All this happened through a video call, for example: when we did grammar exercises, the teacher carefully watched so that we did not write things down. And if we needed to write a test, we gathered at school and wrote it in class. We had ordinary printed textbooks, but sometimes we read texts via the Internet. We did not read texts about the war; there were enough such texts in the news.

We each worked individually, there were no projects, homework was always checked by the teacher. In my opinion, there were no problems in education.

To sum up, we can see that school attendance, the form of lessons, the choice of devices, the subjects taught, and the skills and activities practised in English lessons differed mainly depending on the geographical region, that is, how much affected by the war the territory was. Lessons were held in many places during the first weeks and smartphones were available as the minimum equipment in most of the learners. Quality Internet access was a basic prerequisite for online learning; lessons were often held in the face-to-screen form; some educational applications were available, but not necessary. Moreover, the results are also limited by the fact that the respondents are from families that have a positive attitude to education, they mostly supported their children in learning foreign language(s), most of the respondents are younger siblings of those who attended courses of Czech language for the Ukrainians. However, the result can motivate others to learn English and, thus, make life in a new country easier. The data show that English helped the learners (and their families) with socializing (including school attendance) in a new country.

3.1.2 Upper Secondary School

Sample

Data were collected from six learners of the upper secondary school, three girls (G1, G2, G3) and three boys (B1, B2, B3). G1 and G2 are 15 years old; they attended the eighth grade of the Ukrainian school. G3 is 17 years old. They all attend a four-year study programme (hair stylist) finished with the school leaving exam (G1 and G2 are in the 1st year; G3 is in the 2nd year). Boys are 15, 16, and 17 years old and attend the same school, a four-year study programme (massage therapist, 1st year) finished with the school-leaving exam.

Results

Upper secondary school respondents answered identical research questions because data were collected through the life stories that follow the structure described above.

Respondents were not willing to write their life stories, but agreed with a semi-structured interview with their Czech teacher of English language. Girls G1 and G2 spoke in a pair, G3 answered the questions individually, all boys in a three. Their responses were brief. They rejected to add more to some questions, even on teacher request.

Furthermore, the sample of six respondents is small. As a result, it is not possible to structure the collected data under the sub-questions but they are summarized under three research questions (RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3) altogether. If information is not provided in the answer, it means it was not available in the life story.

Research question 1: How did the respondents learn English before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022?

Girl G1 started learning the first language (English) in the fifth grade; G2 already in the first grade, and she also learned Russian from the fourth grade. G1 attended an English course for a year when she was ten, G2 had private lessons for a year at the age of eight. Once she spent a holiday in the Czech Republic (her step-father worked there for two years when she was a little girl), but she did not speak neither Czech nor English. Neither girl passed international exams in foreign languages. G1 also learned German, but did not visit any German-speaking country to use the language.

Girl G3 started learning English in the third grade. The family lived in the region where Russian was a common (native) language; she spoke Russian since childhood and learned Russian as a foreign language from the first grade. She also spoke Russian, not English, during holidays. She considers it the mother tongue; they speak Russian in the family. She did not pass any international exams in foreign languages.

Boys B1, B2, B3 fled to the Czech Republic with mothers; two fathers worked there (B1, B2), one pair had been divorced, and the father remained in Ukraine, in the army (B3). After a short discussion among themselves, they decided not to name the region they are from and the date they arrived. They attended a school with extended foreign language learning. They learned English from the 1st grade, i.e., for 9-11 years, four lessons per week. Two of them had a private teacher for the last three years. This can explain why their level of English is better than that of other learners in the class.

Research question 2: What was/is the role of English (if any) in the process of integration in the host country?

Girls G1 and G2 left Ukraine early after the invasion; they lived in the Cherson region. They targeted the Czech Republic. G1 fled in a few days, G2 at the beginning of March 2022, both with mother and siblings; G2´s step-father had been working in the Czech Republic and organized their way, documents, accommodation, and work. In the first year, they both attended a Czech language course at school (4-5 lessons/week) that mainly focused on communication. They did not know about English courses for Ukrainian learners, so they did not attend any. Thus, it is not surprising that they have problems in English, and consequently in Czech language.

After the invasion, in March 2022, the girl G3 fled to the Czech Republic with her mother and siblings; father and grandmothers stayed in Ukraine. They got documents, and the mother found a job without problems. She attended a one-year course of Czech language for adult learners and private English lessons for one year. Currently, she is in the first year of the upper secondary school (four-year study programme, finished with a school-leaving exam). She was exempted from entrance exams (applying the direction that her stay in the Czech Republic was shorter than six months).

All girls speak English in English lessons only; however, they recognize that they have problems understanding both languages. Their English is not good enough; it does not help them at school or in common life. Despite this, they do not attend any language

courses, as mentioned above. Thus, they can hardly expect that English will help them learn the Czech language and consequently integrate into the life in the host country.

Boys B1, B2 did not speak English at the very beginning of the war – fathers organized getting documents, accommodation, job for mothers, school attendance for them. They all attended a one-year long Czech language course, but none of them attended an English language course. They all know from their families that "some other courses were held by Úřad práce", but they were not interested. They all used English for communication in common life. Now, they speak Czech in the Czech-speaking environment. They may often use Czech words in Ukrainian expressions, e.g., furt (i.e., all the time).

Research question 3: How did/do the respondents learn at Czech schools during the war?

Girl G1 had a short experience in learning in Ukrainian schools during the war – she finished the eighth grade online from the Czech Republic. G2 did not continue to attend the eighth grade during the war. On the day of invasion, some lessons were cancelled (G1) or did not start at all (G2). Then, after a two-week period, online lessons started. At that time, both girls were in the Czech Republic; G1 began online learning in the afternoons. She learned from home (flat), using the smartphone. The lessons of almost all theoretical subjects were taught and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The subjects that were not taught were Physical Education, Arts, Music, and Russian language. However, the invasion was not the topic at school. In English lessons, they used textbooks to practise all skills, did homework, individually or in pairs, and checked the results in the next lesson. She does not remember any problems with the Internet access or technical support. Face-to-face lessons in the Czech lower secondary school are described above.

In autumn 2023, they attended neither Czech nor English language courses. They prefer Czech to English for communication; G2 considers English stressful. When speaking Ukrainian, G1 admits that she can use a Czech word instead; G2 negates.

According to the observation of the English teacher, who interviewed the girls, neither girl has a good command of English (they both reach A1 in CEFR). Currently, the level of the Czech language is also low; however, due to the fact that they are in the Czech speaking environment on a daily basis, improvements can be expected soon. Originally, applying alphabetical order, they were assigned to different groups for English lessons. Finally, the English teachers decided to have them in one group so that they could help each other. The teacher speaks English and Czech in English lessons, and checks whether they understand her questions; they all use the translator, e-dictionary, etc. but it is rather difficult to support them during lessons with Czech students due to the low level of knowledge of both languages.

Immediately after arriving in the Czech Republic in March 2022, girl G3 started face-to-face attendance of the ninth grade in the Czech school in the morning and online learning in Ukrainian school in the afternoon from home. Lessons in the Czech lower secondary school are described above. The online lessons lasted 45 minutes. She used the smartphone without any problems with Internet access. They had maths, Ukrainian language, Biology, Ecology, Arts but no lessons of Physical Education and Russian. The

structure and content of the English lessons was as usual, all language skills were trained. They used textbooks, but topics about war were omitted. They worked in pairs or groups, did homework after lessons. It was not a problem for her to attend two schools at the same time.

In autumn 2023, she did not attend any language courses yet. She prefers to use the Czech language over English for communication. Sometimes she even says a Czech word instead of a Ukrainian one.

According to the observation of the English teacher, who interviewed the girls, she is rather passive in the lessons. She shares desk with a Czech girl who helps her understand and solve tasks. The teacher does not know whether they are friends in after-school time. She also suspects that the girl goes to the bathroom too often to minimize the time spent in lessons. The teacher makes special effort to engage the girl in learning activities. However, her level of English is low – she prefers communication in Czech and it is necessary to translate everything into Czech so that she was able to understand the task. Such a teacher focus on a learner having a low level of both languages works disruptively to the process of instruction on one hand but bears fruit on the other hand. Her performance is improving. Last year, her marks in general subjects were 3-4 (good-sufficient); this year, they seem to be better.

All girls are caught in a vicious circle – they are not good at the language(s) (English, Czech) so they do not want to speak it/them but they do not attend courses to improve, and thus their language skills do not improve...

During the war, boys B1, B2, B3 had online lessons only, identically as in covid-19 pandemic. They learned from home and worked as usual – they used textbooks, did English online grammar exercises and speaking practice. They all also had a private English tutor at that time. However, it was not clear from their answers where they stayed when learning online, whether in Ukraine or in the Czech Republic. However, it is not important; geographical freedom is one of the crucial characteristics of online learning. In autumn 2023, they did not attend any language courses and did not intend to do so.

In the upper secondary school, general subjects and specialized subjects related to the study programme are taught. The lessons were held face-to-face, in a large building in a central part of the city. General subjects were taught for the whole class, English and specialized subjects, mainly labs and practical lessons, were taught in groups. Furthermore, the practicum is held in a real workplace and environment one day a week so that students can apply theoretical knowledge in practice.

When summarizing all the above mentioned, we can state that all respondents, girls and boys, seem to be satisfied with the fact that they are students of the upper secondary school in a study programme according to their choice, and they wish to graduate successfully. Currently, they do not seem to make much effort to improve in the Czech language and/or in English so that both can help them in the process of integration in the host country. While the group of respondents from primary and secondary schools was motivated by their parents who created a school-friendly and education-friendly family

environment and improved the learning of their children, in this group of teens, the impact of the family environment was neither mentioned nor felt. The reason could be that the respondents intentionally introduced themselves as adult so that to hide their uncertainity in personal life and in the new environment. The results show that in all of them the level of English and Czech languages needs to be improved. The respondents may think that they are able to communicate in common life, but at school (i.e., in education) English for Specific Purposes is needed that applies rather different requirements on the user. Therefore, courses of Czech and/or English language for educational purposes would be very helpful for them to improve their knowledge of the language (s) and thus contribute to the integration of learners (and their families´) integration in the host country. They are needed ***now,*** but we understand that related problems like the learning content, methods, personnel, and financial support can be solved in the future or ***any time at all.***

From the statistic point of view, we are aware that the sample is small and convenient, we only presented selected life stories, and the results cannot be generalized. Such an important problem, as the process of integration after the Russian invasion of Ukraine is, cannot be solved within a student project that supported this research.

3.1.3 University

Sample

Nine university students aged 20 to 22 years from Ukraine who left for another country after the Russian invasion wrote their life stories. The research sample was formed by the snowball method, starting with a few participants of the Czech language course for the Ukrainians at the university; then; they contacted their friends in other places (countries) who joined and wrote their life stories. The list of respondents is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Research sample (Source: own).

N.	Gender, age	Region of Ukraine they came from	Country they currently stay at
S1	F, 22	Kyiv	Czech Republic
S2	F, 22	Kyiv	Greece
S3	F, 22	Sumy (East. Ukraine)	Czech Republic
S4	F, 21	Kyiv	Czech Republic
S5	F, 20	in the Czech Republic since 2021	Czech Republic
S6	F, 21	Ternopil (West. Ukraine)	Poland + Czech Republic
S7	F, 21	Kyiv	Ukraine (since 06/22)
S8	F, 22	Zaporizhzhia	Czech Republic
S9	F, N/A	Zaporizhzhia	Poland

F: female; S: student

Results

Data collected from university respondents answer identical research questions. However, in this case, the respondents reflected their state solely in the written form of

life stories, where they often described interrelations of various phenomena. Furthermore, the sample is not large. As a result, it was not possible to structure the collected data under separated sub-questions, but they are summarized under the appropriate research question (RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3) altogether. It means that six categories (A-F) related to each question (RQ 1.1-RQ 1.6) are included as described above, but not described separately. If information is not provided in the answer, it means it was not available in the life story. Respondents are marked as students (S), and their opinions are cited or paraphrased in the text.

Research question 1: How did the respondents learn English before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022?

The range in which the respondents began studying English was wide. Some of them started from kindergarten age (S1, S6) but generally started at the age of 6 (S8, S9), 7 (S2), 8 (S4) during the compulsory school lessons and continued throughout the school attendance. Similarly to the Czech Republic, the problem of frequent change of teachers appeared: *During the course of studying English, we had eight teachers change over 11 years of study*. (S1). In all respondents, English was their first foreign language; one respondent also studied German (S8), two respondents learned Czech (S5, S6).

S5 travelled a lot in childhood; therefore, she studied English. However, she was afraid of speaking and direct communication. Since the age of 15, she had a plan to study in the Czech Republic, so she started studying the language with a private tutor who also helped her with English communication. When she finished school at the age of 17, she went to the Czech Republic for a year and attended Czech language courses to learn the language. After a year, she successfully applied for a university and enrolled at the Faculty of Arts before the invasion started.

S6, in addition to English and Czech, also studied Polish and French. All languages were obligatory courses for her studies at a Polish university of philology. She devoted much effort to learning foreign language since childhood, had private lessons, communicated with native speakers, prepared, and successfully passed international exams (e.g., FCE B2). She started learning Czech through English on her own because she planned to study at a Czech university, a Czech language study programme for foreigners, where the A1-A2 level was a prerequisite. She successfully passed entrance oral exams and is currently studying in the first year at the Czech university; lessons are in the Czech language.

Some students had extra lessons in their leisure: *I also took extra English classes after lessons at schoo*l (S1), or they devoted time to learning English when they were older: *Now, I have been studying at the Faculty of Philology in Ostrava, studying the English language programme. It is taught in Czech, but all the courses are in English, and my level of English is quite good. But I still have a lot to strive for*. (S3).

The respondents did not have much experience travelling abroad before the invasion (with the exception of S5, some single trips S1, S8). Consequently, they did not have many opportunities to speak the language. To develop the speaking competency, they participated, for example, in a speaking club (S7), or found friends on the Internet, even

non-native speakers, to practise the direct communication with them. Then, they can succeed in international or national language exams, e.g., FCE – First Certificate in English (S6), EVI – Single Entrance Exam (S7).

Furthermore, the impact of Erasmus + programme was mentioned by two respondents (S1, S4). S4 summarized the impact and contribution of Erasmus+ to her study of the English and Czech languages as follows: *I was 19 years old in February 2022. At that time, I returned from the Czech Republic, where I studied under the Erasmus+ program for the winter semester. Until February 24, I lived a normal life for me, a student in the third year of the university. Like many other people, English was the first language I learned. … I was 7 or 8 years old, when I learned English with my mother and at school too. To be honest, it is true that my relationship with the language did not develop throughout my schooling. I was just not interested. The years of studying English coincide with my university studies. There was systematicity, I made little effort, but later the cumulative effect struck me. And after three months in the Czech Republic under the exchange programme, I began to feel free to speak and write. The more successes you had, the more you wanted to move on. And now there is no trace of that girl who was afraid to take the final exam in English. I have no experience in taking international tests, but at least I am calm about the prospect of passing English in Ukraine. Furthermore, the Czech language became interesting to me because in May 2022, my mother and I left Ukraine for the Czech Republic, and we have been staying in Ostrava since. I successfully study at the Faculty of Education in the Czech language study programme. The environment plays its role and I am also gradually learning new words and Czech grammatical constructions; the use of* ***se*** *or* ***si*** *is still a controversial topic for me. But the children's books that I get from the library help me and natural curiosity as well.* (S4).

Research question 2: What was/is the role of English (if any) in the process of integration in the host country?

The date of the Russian invasion was the starting point for all students in the sample to move. Two of them went abroad, to Poland (S6, S9), where they studied or had relatives who moved there long before the war, two travelled to the Czech Republic (S1, S4) alone or with a friend, without families, one moved to her relatives to a save place in Ukraine (S8), another returned after three months in the Czech Republic back home (S7), one went to work in a Greek school (S2). S5 was in the Czech Republic when the war started.

When the war started, I was in Brovary (part of Kyiv agglomeration; added by authors), and I didn't understand anything... At that time, evacuation trains were running, it was crowded and scary, but people were very united, it seemed that we all knew each other. My mother and I moved to the Rivne region (West Ukraine; added by authors) for 3 months and then went to the Czech Republic, my father, grandmother, uncle and stepfather stayed in Ukraine. English helped me in the first days in the Czech Republic. It was a rainy day and we were filling out the documents, of course, I didn't know Czech. And we had to talk and we didn't have the Internet that day. So, all the questions were formed in my head from the available knowledge, and my interlocutors understood what I was trying to convey to them. Therefore, it was even nice to implement my knowledge.

(S4). However, she was not the only student whose family or part of it was left in Ukraine; the same situation occurred in S5, S7, S8. S9 left with her mother and sister to join her father in Poland.

When administering documents in a new country, students were supported by friends or family members who had lived in the country or who used English regardless of the level they knew. They described the situations as follows:

Part of my family was already abroad long before the war, so we did not have problems receiving the necessary documents – they helped us. (S6).

Upon arrival, a Ukrainian friend and a Czech friend helped with documentation and housing. (S8).

On the second day after we arrived, we received one of the main documents without any problems. After some time, we managed to find an apartment that we are currently renting. At first, there was a language barrier problem with local residents. I had to communicate in English and sometimes Russian, but I was not always understood. (S9).

None of the respondents was able to speak the language of their new country (Czech or Polish) at the time they entered it. However, they all started to learn and/or improve the level of the local language and/or English. The process is described as follows:

I attended two levels of Czech language courses and received the relevant certificates. She did not have the opportunity to take English language courses. I continue my studies at the university. Currently, I do not attend English language courses. (S7).

As for learning the Czech language, I started attending courses, but it was very unsystematic, I had problems with time management again! But practice in kindergarten, communication with Czechs did give something. Later, I began taking regular courses in Czech and English, as well. The long winter vacation contributed to this, as I cannot be idle for a long time. Czech courses are the initial level A0 – A2, English A2 – B1. They take Czech twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday), and English on Wednesday. This was not enough for me, and I signed up for English courses offered by my university in preparation for a master's degree. And I also study Czech at teacher assistant courses held in Ostrava, from January to May, mainly for children with special educational needs. For Ukrainians, they are free and the teachers are pleasant and always ready to help. What I like most is that no one tests your knowledge. Everything I do is just for me and professional improvement. The Czechs also go there. Sometimes it is difficult to understand individual words, but the ideas are clear. (S4).

I started attending Czech language courses organized by the University of Ostrava, then I started studying at this university and continued to study Czech. During the study of reading, we read various texts and fairy tales, and then performed various tasks for the text. While listening, we listened to audio or watched videos and performed test tasks to understand the information received. We learned to speak in the form of dialogues or monologues. In writing, we had to write a text about ourselves or a letter to a friend. (S8).

In the city where I live now, they promised to open Polish courses for Ukrainians, but some problems arose and they did not take place. That is why I started looking for some courses myself. At first, I watched a video on YouTube, then I found a course on a social network, with all the rules, many words, and various exercises to consolidate knowledge. Due to the fact that I study online at a Ukrainian university, I do not attend any educational institutions in Poland. (S9).

We expected that we would be able to get more information about teaching methods, tools, and aids. However, since the respondents did not mention any special methods and approaches, we guess none of them were applied in the lessons; if there were any, the respondents would have mentioned them. Thus, the lessons were held in the communicative manner, demanding hardly any aids from the learners. Direct communication was used as the main method and tool.

Research question 3: How did/do the respondents learn at Czech schools during the war?

Immediately after the invasion, face-to-face lessons were cancelled for several days or weeks, depending on the geographical location. Usually, it was held from March to June 2022 in basic schools (S7). *When the war started, I was no longer at school,* states S6. Respondents who were in the final year of basic school (S1, S2, S3) were expected to do practical activities at school. If they were unable to attend school for safety reasons, face-to-face lessons were replaced by online distance instruction (S1, S2), similar to teaching during the covid-19 pandemic. It means that teachers and learners were sufficiently equipped with the necessary hardware and software, and had needed digital competences. Teachers shared the lectures through the screen, learners watched video-recordings, did various tasks, worked in teams, practised new knowledge, were tested, etc. Wherever the learners stayed at that moment, they could attend the lessons due to quality Internet access. If it was not available, the lessons were cancelled because conducting them in any other way would have been dangerous (if learners were still in the place) or impossible (if the learners moved to another safer place or abroad). Of course, online instruction was negatively influenced by technical problems (S2) and no one was there to help the learners solve them. In occupied territories or close to them, power supplies were often cut off.

S4 describes her life story when studying online in Ukraine and face-to-face in the Czech Republic: It was the holidays 2022, and since I was on more or less safe territory in Ukraine, I got bored. That is why she sometimes engaged in self-education. In May 2022, I and my mother went to the Czech Republic; at the same time, my studies at the university resumed, so I studied remotely. There were quite a lot of practical seminars and lectures, in particular in English as well. We also studied a lot on Saturdays so there would be a long winter vacation. There could be no talk of returning to the full-time face-to-face format of education. But sometimes I wanted to re-enter the spacious classrooms where our classes were held and have fun chatting with my girlfriend on the way to the subway. Dreams… The online training was varied and I don't think it lost in quality due to the distance format; we are talking about the period of time from March to December 2022, excluding the summer vacation. I did not notice how they passed. I had an internship in

kindergartens within Czech language courses in the Czech Republic, so I learned the Czech language very fast well. At least the names of clothes, days of the week, colors, months, numbers – I learned the vocabulary thanks to that experience. In general, the conditions of my studies were favorable, the lights were not turned off while I was in Ukraine, there were no military operations in our region. You can say that I am a happy person. The teachers also had their limitations, so they were loyal, for which I am infinitely grateful. In any case, I am responsible for the acquired knowledge. It is very good that I have a laptop; not everything can be done on the phone so quickly, qualitatively, and conveniently.

Specifically, the organization of instruction differs. Some respondents (S7, S8) describe the organization in lessons of 1 hour 20 minutes, which were held in the same way as during the covid-19 pandemic, that is, most frequently, learners were sent electronic documents/manuals/sources for studying new material. (S8). Regarding the preparation for the EVI test, *the learners practised grammar and all types of speech activities. We worked in a group and had homework at the end of each class. The main problem during online learning was the lack of light and the inability to see classmates.* (S7). Other learners describe that the classes were 30 minutes long (S4), during which tasks were outlined and independent work began. However, individual teachers demanded the presence of the entire couple and, accordingly, active work. When learning English, *we mainly practised speaking and writing, while listening and reading were a little lacking. In video conferences, we could speak on a certain topic, answer questions, do tasks in parallel with the conference, and then compare them, work with chat, make speeches, and show our presentations. We did not work with printed textbooks (if there were any, then only in electronic format). We listened to Boris Johnson's speech about the war and tried to understand his words, which he spoke in Ukrainian. This is more difficult than listening to English words and their meanings.* (S4).

Regarding online learning, I had no problems with online learning, as I had previous experience with covid-19. But there was a small difficulty, time management. Sometimes, it is difficult to organize your time in such a way that there is still time left for something other than studying. Sometimes I even ate in a hurry. (S4). S9 thinks that studying a foreign language online is not efficient. She studied vocabulary, grammar, spoke short sentences, but everything was quickly forgotten if not practised, as in her case. And she thinks that online learning is less interesting than face-to-face. Of course, if it is carried out under difficult war conditions, and only basic tools were used and the reading of lectures through the shared screen was the main method, there is hardly anything to attract the attention and interest of the learner. However, any way of teaching and learning is a courageous contribution under war conditions because, as S2 stated, the most difficult was to concentrate on the study because all thoughts were occupied by events in the country. (S2).

When considering all the data received, we can conclude that either the respondents had a special preparation in learning English during the basic school attendance or not, they all succeeded in using English in a host country where they moved after the Russian

invasion in 2022. First, for administering documents; second, for starting common life; third, for education – most of respondents applied for university study; those who succeeded are in the third semester now. In addition, for some of them, English was also the language through which they studied a local language. Most of them attended courses of Czech language for foreigners. Lessons were held in Czech, but if necessary, English was in the role of lingua franca because students of any nationality could attend the courses.

3.2 Results: Teacher and Teacher Assistant Feedback

To collect teacher experience from observation of Ukrainian learners, teachers participating in mentor training in autumn 2023 in Ostrava were addressed. They were willing to share their experience and opinion because they considered it helpful, but unfortunately rejected to complete the questionnaire and sign the informed consent; the reason was that they felt overwhelmed with administration, especially with forms. Therefore, we discussed the topics listed in the questionnaire non-formally during the coffee and lunch breaks. In total, approximately 30 teachers participated in the discussions. They had one or two Ukrainian learners in their classes. In summary, teachers came to an agreement that even a low level of English knowledge in Ukrainian learners can be the first step to acquiring the host country language a basis that enables them (and their families) to engage in the Czech society, making friends, achieve better results at school, getting a better job, etc. Of course, there are some limits in each learner, such as war experience, stress from the new environment, unknown to them, where they often stay without some close relatives, and individual personal characteristics. If there is one Ukrainian learner in a class, s/he feels lonely before acquiring Czech. As s/he does not speak the language, s/he does not make contacts with Czech learners. If there are two Ukrainian learners in a class, they usually do not feel the need to contact other Czech learners. Although Ukrainian learners can attend state-supported Czech language courses held by the state, if they are not in daily and natural contact with local people, their language skills do not develop much. Furthermore, most parents appreciate information about the Czech school system, mainly teaching methods, assessment, homework, etc. Some of them do not understand Czech, so knowledge of English, Russian, or Ukrainian is necessary, of course. The parents' approach to education differs. Some of them pay attention to school attendance, are in contact with the class teacher, and the others are not. Some Czech teachers commented that they had individual appointments with interested Ukrainian parents, which is rather time-consuming but efficient. Those who spent more than a year in the Czech school and environment improved in the Czech language, which has consequences in the process of their integration.

The experience and opinions of Czech teachers are almost identical to the feedback of a Ukrainian teacher who fled Ukraine shortly after the invasion and is working as a teacher assistant in the Czech Republic. She expressed herself within a discussion on Facebook and we think that she summarizes the reasons why Ukrainian learners may have problems in Czech schools. The reasons may work separately or all in one: war experience, close relatives and friends still staying in Ukraine, a change of the country/ies that can cause

potential geographical, administrative, cultural, educational problems connected with the low level of comprehension of the host country language/s, etc. After a year spent in the Czech Republic, in general, the children made more friends and better understood how the Czech system of education works; they improved in the Czech language.

Due to the method in which the feedback was received, the author of these words, a Ukrainian teacher working as a **teacher assistant** in the Czech school), did not sign the informed consent but she agreed (gave her consent to us) in the written form to publish her original words here. We appreciate her good will, pedagogical-psychological knowledge, and Czech language.

"Dobrý den.

Já si myslím že zaprvé problém byl ve změně prostředí.

Pak válečná zkušenost.

Taky velký problém je neznalost češtiny.

Nejvíc to týká žáků 2. stupně.

Vůbec jiná výuka školních předmětů.

Taky pro děti je problém že mají v Ukrajině rodiny, například babička a dědeček a tatínek zůstává tam.

Za rok to trochu jinak – děti zlepšily češtinu, mají nových kamarády a představu jak probíhá výuka.

Do budoucna doporučila bych nějakou podporu školy - setkání rodičů z Ukrajiny zvlášť a vysvětlení jak funguje škola online, mimoškolní aktivity atd.

Omlouvám se za můj český jazyk, vím že mám nějaké chyby ale ještě učím se."

3.3 Results: Mini-case Studies

Two mini-case studies were accomplished. They include data collected from semi-structured interviews that followed the content and structure of life stories, and questions about the personal and family life were added. Two boys (B4, B5) were separately interviewed by two prospective teachers from Ukraine (PT 7, 8; see below), students of the follow-up master study programme of English Language Teaching. The boys were very pleased to meet Ukrainian teachers, they were very open and willing to answer their questions. The prospective teachers had had a practicum (a few lessons) before the interview with the boys; the boys did not attend the same class. The interviewers also provided their feedback on the performance of the boys during the lessons they taught in the classes the boys attended. A few days later, Ukrainian prospective teachers conducted interviews with their mothers using the life story structure and semi-structured interview with a focus on family life in the Czech Republic. The results revealed that the boys differed in their school performance and their relations with Czech learners. Therefore, a brief opinion on boy B5 is added from the class teacher and English teacher. Six

prospective teachers also observed the performance of boy B5 during three English lessons. The results were considered by the observers within the Czech educational environment.

3.3.1 Boy B4

He learned English only at school. He did not have private lessons, did not study other foreign languages, travel abroad, or pass international exams. During the war, he did not learn online because he and his family were "on the road", from Poland to the Czech Republic. English did not help him at that time because his level of knowledge was low.

He fled from the Sumy region, from a town, where he lived in a flat with parents, 10 minutes on foot from school; he had his own room. In the Czech Republic, they stay in identical conditions, in a city, in a flat, situated a 10-minute walk from school, and he has a room for himself. None of his close relatives stayed in Ukraine, but they do not have any fiends or relatives in the Czech Republic.

In 2023/24, he attends the seventh grade. He is as tall and strong as other boys in the class, an extrovert, a team leader. Last year, he attended a different school that was located closer to their home. After they moved, he changed the school. His results were worse than they seem to be this year. He *feels* better at school. He has no problem learning or socialising. He appreciates the teaching methods and the approach of the teacher to the learners. He has friendly relations with all the classmates and has friends from all age groups. He starts contacting them and keeps the contacts; language is not the barrier, mainly if they are interested in the same things, mainly sports. Then there is nothing to prevent him from making new friends. He has a lot of Ukrainian friends in the Czech Republic – they are in face-to-face contact, and a lot of friends in Ukraine – they are in contact by phone; he is a gregarious person. He also has a social network account, but not for search for new friends.

He likes to play football. He used to play in Ukraine, and his open character enables him to make new acquitances and continue in his interest in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, in the household, he tidies up his room and takes care of the dogs, walks them after school.

He assesses his knowledge of the English language "not too good not too bad" (i.e., level 3 on the scale from *5 to 0 (5*=I understand everything; *0*=nothing) and the Czech language on level 2. After arrival to the Czech Republic, mother attended a basic course of Czech language (A1) but he did not. He understands that there is space to improve; on the other side, as (he thinks) he can communicate easily without substantial misunderstandings, his motivation is low.

3.3.2 Boy B5

He learned English from the third grade. He did not attend any private lessons, did not travel abroad, and had no language practice, and did not pass any international exams. He recognized that he did not know enough to speak English with foreigners, so he did not

use the language to communicate with the Czechs. Sometimes, he has trouble in English lessons understanding the task.

Two weeks after the invasion, they left Ukraine for Poland, and after another two weeks they arrived at the Czech Republic. They plan to return to Ukraine one day. The boy attended online lessons at Ukrainian school in spring 2022 and started face-to-face school attendance since September 2022 in the Czech Republic.

In 2023/24, he attends the seventh grade of the Czech school. He is as tall as most of the boys in the class; his weight is below average in comparison to other boys in the class. His personality is more introverted than extroverted.

In Ukraine, he lived with his mother in a town, in a flat in the Kyiv region, and attended a school a few minutes away on foot. In the Czech Republic, their living conditions are identical: in a town, in a flat, a school is located a few minutes on foot. He did not mention any relatives in Ukraine, but he lacks Ukrainian friends; he had 4-5 very good friends. He has one Ukrainian friend in the Czech Republic, but unfortunately, they do not have the opportunity to meet often, as they live far away from each other. He does not communicate with Ukrainian friends via social networks but is still in phone contact with them.

Last year, he attended another basic school. He changed school because he and his mother moved to another apartment closer to this school. This year, he has had problems mainly in (a) learning because the language of instruction at the school is Czech and he is not able to understand most of what the teacher and pupils say; (b) he lacks friends, he is lonely. In Ukraine, he had friends with whom he could spend time together. He would like to have friends in the Czech Republic as well but is ashamed of his level of knowledge of the Czech language, and the other Ukrainian children who attend this school are much younger than him.

Based on the observations of the mentor about his behaviour during English lessons in class, there are few schoolmates, for example, with whom he can work in a group during the lesson, but we do not know whether they are his friends to spend leisure time in the afternoons. In one lesson, they look like a well-coordinated team, each member of which tries to complete the task and help others. Although already in another English lesson, the teachers offered the students an exercise to do in pairs, and the boy and the girl were unfriendly to each other (the girl joined him but moved her chair away from the boy, during the pair work, he was not active, even after the teachers agreed to work with them individually). For example, during the "Pantomime" game, the boy, without being shy, went to the board and demonstrated the given word. The children perceived him positively and carefully waited for his movements. After completing the task, the children smiled, just like the boy himself.

During the break, waiting for the next lesson, the boy sat next to other boys. They were talking and smiling. We observed this every time after the lesson. But during the observation, it turned out that one day he was an active student, cheerful, able to smile, and the next day he was sad sitting alone at a desk. In our opinion, there may be several

reasons that prevent him from having more friends. He seems to have few friends because he is not familiar with other Ukrainian children and his language and shyness are a barrier to communication with Czech children.

Prospective teachers from Ukraine (PT7, 8; for numbering, see below) reported that in the lessons they taught in his class, he smiled, but he did not want to work independently or in a pair with a classmate. They tried to explain the task in English, Ukrainian, and Czech. He replied that he understands what needs to be done, but he does not know *why to do it*, what the point is. When they discussed this situation with the **class teacher**, she reported that all of his other teachers, regardless of the subject, were having this problem. Earlier, he told prospective teachers that he did not like Czech and English lessons because it was difficult for him to understand the teachers. He missed his English class on Monday because he had a special Czech lesson. A week ago, he did not attend school at all (the teacher did not specify the reason). His class teacher is going to discuss his lack of motivation and activity with his mother and advise her to turn to a specialist (psychologist), who may have helped to solve this problem.

His English teacher started at this position since September 2023 so she and all the learners, not only boy B5, are step by step getting used to her teaching methods and approaches. She states that all learners in the class are shy of speaking English, are passive, and the level of knowledge is rather low. Boy B5 sits quietly in the lessons, does not communicate, does not contact other classmates, and they do not contact him. In lessons, he often sits without doing anything, thinking about anything but the learning content, does not accept any incentives, and does not speak, read, or write. Another day, he enters the class smiling and is interested in as many activities as he is able to do. Each day is different, and you cannot anticipate it, which is rather frustrating. Even if the teacher tries to engage him in group work, it sometimes does not bring any effect. It may happen that he responds to a direct impulse. On other occasions, he is immersed in reading, but rejects to work in pairs. It proves that the problem is not in lack of knowledge. As the level of knowledge in this class is rather low in all subjects, there is no one in the class to motivate and encourage him to learn more. Furthermore, at his age (13 years), cooperation between boys and girls may be a problem. To sum up, the English teacher considers the language barrier to be the main problem. English could replace and/or support Czech if needed.

After lessons, he is willing to help mother with work household work, e.g., with cleaning, or he goes to the grocery store with her. In his leisure time, in Ukraine, he used to play football – in a team; now, he likes playing games on the mobile phone – alone. Is it a precondition or a consequence of the state?

The boy concludes that, in general, he does not like going to school. Important reasons are his low command of Czech (3 on the scale from *5*=I understand everything to *0*=nothing) and English (2 out of 5). However, he did not attend Czech and/or English language courses. As a result, he does not precisely understand what the teacher says, what their directions and explanations are, and he is stressed, shy, quiet, sad, non-communicative, and non-active in some lessons. However, we did not observe his

performance in other subjects. In English, the teacher devoted special attention to him and checked that he understood everything. His mother says that in other subjects, his behaviour is identical – he is active in some days, passive in the others. Although the Czech government and people are helpful, sometimes life is difficult even for the adults; children are concerned about their worries either parents wish or not, she concludes.

As we can see from the brief description above, the social conditions that the boys come from and live currently look rather similar. They also have an identical self-assessment of language knowledge on the scale (level 3). What they differ in is their personal characteristic that results in the fact whether/how they make friends in the in-class and out-of-class environment. Another criterium we did not get enough data is whether boy 5 has any relatives or persons close to him or his family who stayed on the territory of Ukraine, that is, under the threat of war, which may significantly stress him. Of course, there are many other harmful effects that can affect learners' behaviour. It is not within the scope of this study to discover them.

3.4 Results: Prospective Teachers Observation of Boy B5

During autumn 2023, eight prospective teachers (PT1-8) and their university mentor observed three lessons of the English language; six PTs were enrolled in the second year of the continuous master study programme of teaching in lower secondary schools, in specialization English language teaching and Civics, or Czech Language, or Fine Arts.

The observed lessons were held on 11 October, 25 October, and 22 November 2023 in the **7th grade of the lower secondary school attended by boy B5**. Lesson 1 was taught by an English teacher, lessons 2 and 3 were taught in tandem by a pair of prospective teachers each. Two observers (PT7-8), enrolled in the second year in English language teaching and IT, were from Ukraine. They taught in tandem lesson 4 which is not included in the observation because it did not fit in the project schedule.

The prospective teachers followed the criteria listed in the methodology chapter. The results of the observation are in accordance with the opinions and experience of the class teacher and the English teacher.

In lesson 1:

- He was engaged in the activity by the teacher – she asked him a question. He seemed eager and did the tasks. Teacher checked all learners in the class including him, she helped him. (PT1).
- He seemed quiet, sometimes sad. I think he does not feel good, he is not ´in his shoes´. It is difficult to say whether it is a common state or the impact of the environment in which he is staying due to the invasion. The ongoing war may contribute to his behaviour. We do not know what he has spent, how he feels about the situation, what his worries are. He sits alone at the desk. During pair and group work, he does not participate. I guess, the language barrier is the problem. (PT2).

- From the observation of English lessons, it is apparent that he is not actively engaged in the activities, and he is not actively involved by other pupils. Assessing the overall classroom atmosphere is challenging; nevertheless, during the English lessons, we observed that even Czech learners do not display much enthusiasm, and there is certain unwillingness among these learners to collaborate. I do not know how long he has been in the class, but it is possible that he needs more time to integrate and become part of the collective. (PT3).
- He was the only learner in the class sitting alone at the desk. He was quiet but followed the teacher´s directions and worked. In the group of three, two girls tried to communicate with him. He answered teacher´s questions but did not answer without being asked. (PT5).

In lesson 2:

- He was attentive, but the Czech learners did not notice him when working in groups. He was pushed aside and did not work. I did not see him speak to the others in the second observed lesson or during the breaks. However, during the first lesson, he was rather open and communicative. (PT1).
- After two English lessons, he seems to me rather shy and not very active. It can be caused by the situation. Unfortunately, I do not know whether he has found new friends here, which can have an impact on his activity. Or he needs more time to become part of the school team. Of course, this also depends on other schoolmates and their approach to him. It seems to me that his activity changes from day to day. In lesson 1, he tried to work hard; in lesson 2, he was passive again. (PT4).
- He sat quietly at the desk alone again. In group work, other pupils ignored him, they neither engaged him in activities nor communicated with him. We could see that he is aside from the class and does not have friends. It would be much better for him to have a friend from Ukraine in the class. (PT5).
- In lesson 1, he engaged in some activities, but in lesson 2, he was rather quiet and closed. We can clearly see that a limited knowledge of Czech and English results in lower self-confidence. These are the reasons why he does not like English lessons. I think that for a child of his age, the change in the environment and society is very radical. In Ukraine, I guess, he felt comfortable and certain, having friends and interests, culturally fitting in the society. In the Czech Republic, we can see the results of the contrasts and consequent effect on his behaviour. I conclude with the belief that Ukrainian children cannot be judged by identical criteria as Czech children. (PT6).

In lesson 3:

- He was smiling at the beginning of the lesson, engaged in activities, and enjoyed the work. During the lesson, he was smiling and laughing. Then, he was randomly assigned to form a pair with a girl who is passive in lessons, not hard-working, and does not like participating in learning activities, as we learned later. Therefore, he ignored the activity and resigned. He did not write a sentence and did not

communicate with her. His mood completely changed, and he became quiet, and did not say a word by the end of the lesson. (PT1).

- The Czech learners told us that he does not understand English very well. I do not know whether or how much he can understand Czech. When playing the "pantomime" game, he seemed interested. His role was to play CALL SOMEBODY. He did not understand the verb, so I changed the word to SLEEP; he was able to play this role successfully. When he was assigned to the pair with a non-active girl, he asked me whether he could work individually. I agreed but finally he did not start. I think he lacks a friend or friends. Such a friend who he can rely on and feel more confident in the class, and thus learn more. At the same time, I would individualize the teaching so that he could understand and work with what he knows and is really interested in. It would be helpful for him to have a dictionary, an online English-Czech-Ukrainian dictionary for quick translations. And I would print frequently used words and expressions for him that he can hear in lessons. He could have the list in front of him during the lessons and learn them step-by-step. (PT2).
- During the third lesson, the prospective teachers engaged the boy in the initial activity, which was the "pantomime". He played his role as he was supposed to. He appeared happy to see that the Ukrainian teachers (PT7, 8) are there. However, for the next activity that required pair work, he was matched with a girl, but unfortunately, their collaboration did not succeed. The girl seemed displeased about partnering with him, she even moved her chair away. They did not collaborate, communicate, or do any work despite encouragement from the tandem of prospective teachers. He requested to work alone, which the teachers allowed, but he still remained inactive. The task was to compose three sentences; the girl managed to write one sentence, but he did not write any. At the end of the activity, the girl remarked that the boy had not contributed at all. (PT3).
- In lesson 3, he was not active, I mean, he did not hold his hand up. On the other hand, in the "pantomime" game, he stood in front of the others without problems, hesitated a little on how to play the role, but finally managed it successfully. Probably, this is what he needs – to be more engaged and consequently accepted by the class and feel comfortable. However, in the following pair work, he did not start work even after three incentives from the teacher. To be fair, it should be said that his co-worker (a passive girl) did not work. She even tried to defame him and criticized his passiveness. The boy expressed this activitiy when asking the teacher whether he can work individually; however, although the teacher agreed, he did not start, did not speak, and did not raise his hand. I think he makes some effort but needs support from all sides to build self-confidence. (PT4).
- He sits alone at the desk again. I liked how the prospective teachers engaged him in the first activity, and suddenly he was part of the lesson. He seemed to enjoy it and stay active further on. Unfortunately, in pair work, he was paired with a girl who was passive and even did not want to share a desk with him. His enthusiasm immediately decreased. They did not speak a word and did not fulfil the task. When the activity

ended, the girl returned to her desk. He was sitting alone again, did not work. There was no change or development compared to the previous lessons. (PT5).

Observation of boy B5 **by an English teacher**:

"During one English lesson, the boy may smile and show some activity, but during another lesson, he can be very passive, lacking the desire to complete the task regardless of its content, form, or type of work (either in pairs or independently). He appears to be trying to restrain himself and control his emotions.

He has few friends with whom he can work in a group during English lessons. These friends seem to form a well-coordinated team, each of which strives to complete tasks and help others. However, in another English lesson, when prospective teachers offered the learners an exercise to do in pairs, he and a girl were unfriendly towards each other. Although the girl joined him, she moved her chair away from him during the pair work, and he was not active, even after the teacher agreed to work with them individually.

During a "pantomime" game, the boy, without being shy, went to the board and demonstrated the given word. The children reacted positively and eagerly awaited his movements. After completing the task, the children smiled, just as he did."

The positive environment of the learners and teachers in the same situation was also observed by the **university mentor of prospective teachers** who described the first lesson taught by the English teacher:

"The lesson started with pair work. The boy was in a pair with two girls. The teacher told him: „Take a chair. Sit next to them." He did not react, so the girls joined him; he refused to move. The girls looked friendly and smiled at him. He said a few words, and the girls briefly responded. His eyes circled the room. The teacher asked him a question, but he did not answer; one of the girls did. Later, he followed the teacher's directions (open your book, write, etc.). The teacher checked his work and corrected his results individually (he was the first learner whose results were checked in each task, although the teacher did not always do this aloud). Then they discussed their favourite films in the same group with two girls. He answered the question aloud (using one word) and the girls smiled at him showing their thumbs up. I think they were shy due to their age, which is quite natural. They did not know how to speak to him, but the environment was positive. At the end of the lesson, he was supposed to write the word *nicely* on the blackboard but he made a mistake when writing *nicly*. There was no reaction because the learners did not discover the mistake. The teacher explained the spelling to the whole class in Czech."

To sum up, all observers agree that in some lessons/activites they could see effort and interest in the boy's behaviour as well as opposite features. The Czech teachers (class teacher, English teacher) worked with the results of his psychological state. Based on the experience of his mother, there is hardly anyone capable of changing the boy´s mood of the day. Teachers can apply an individualized approach to make the personal and didactic situation easier for the boy. However, such an approach is very demanding for the teacher

preparation for lessons and performance in lessons if it is used over a long period in the class with several foreign learners.

3.5 Results: Czech Words Used in Ukrainian Spoken Language

In addition to the previous investigations, a list of Czech words and expressions used in Ukrainian utterances was created. The process was not intentional; it was the result of a daily practice. Data were collected from two groups of respondents: pupils (sample I) and adults (sample II). The respondents answered the question whether they use any Czech words and expressions when speaking the Ukrainian language. If so, they listed them.

Sample I and Results

First, three Ukrainian pupils, participants in a Czech language summer course for foreigners taught by a student member of the research team, provided their answers to the question. They attended the course for five days during the summer holidays (July, August) 2022 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. They learned Czech language in a real environment, went on trips, bought tickets, food or other things, did various sports activities, visited guided tours of castles and museums, etc. They did not deeply think about the words but named them immediately, without hesitation. The words are related to the following areas:

- Greetings: *ahoj, čao, čus, nazdar* (but not *dobrý den* [good morning, good afternoon]);
- Persons: *maminka, třídní učitelka* (but not *táta, otec, bratr, sestra, sourozenci, další příbuzní* [father, daddy, brother, sister, siblings, grand…, other relatives, …]);
- Food and shopping: *obchod, jídlo, sáček, taška, objednávka, balení, vepřové maso, borůvky, mléko, ovoce* [shop, food, paper/plastic bag, shopping bag, order, package/packaging, perk, bilberries/blueberries, milk, fruit];
- Activities: *jít ven, výlet* [go out, trip];
- Hodnocení: *určitě, úžasně, paráda, bezva, samozřejmě* [for/sure, certain/ly, definitely, amazingly, that´s great, awesome, cool, také for granted];
- Další slova: *záchod, chlupy, vlasy, prádlo* [toilet/bathroom/restroom, hairs, hair, linen/clothes/laundry/underwear …].

Other words and expressions related to the ´school´ topic were not mentioned, probably because the respondents were asked during the holidays.

Sample II and Results

Second, 25 adult respondents who spoke Ukrainian and Czech languages answered the identical question in a Facebook discussion group. They were informed and agreed with the purpose for which the data will be used. Unfortunately, there was no space for them to provide further detailed information about the place they came from or the length of their stay in the Czech Republic. Each of them listed several words and expressions according to their own choice, and two of them added further comments on the topic.

They listed short expressions in the following areas:

- Food: prošlé jídlo, mražené jídlo [food with expired date, frozen food];
- Computer: spořič obrazovky, nacpat telefon (probably meaning to charge), dobytý/dobitý telefon [screen saver, charge the phone];
- Various directions and statements, probably related with work: *tse maye smysl* (meaning ´sens´/сенс in Ukrainian), *pojďme dál* [let´s go on], *upozorním na to později* [I will point it out later], *pojď sem* [come here], *nejde to* [it does not work], *zvládnu to* [I will manage it], *ty musíš* [you must], *čekej prosím* (замість "почекай") [wait please], *je to tady celé nepořádek* [it´s a real mess here], *pro nic* [because of nothing], *co to* [what´s this]*?*

The respondents also named the following Czech words they used when they spoke Ukrainian. Table 2 shows the frequency of occurrence of a word. The words are displayed in the original spelling.

Table 2. Frequency of occurrence of Czech words in the speach of selected Ukrainian refugees (Source: own).

2x	2x	3x	4x	5x	5x	6x	8x
izdenka (jízdenka)	zmrzlina	lepší	dobrý den	nefunguje	hospoda	určitě	borůvka
nákup	svačina	zítra	jo	čočka	mazlit		cože
vilet (výlet)	pohotovost	fushka (fuška)	ahoj	myčka	miláček		počkejte
parky (párky)	družina	manželka	kamarádka	stavba	oslava		
shunka (šunka)	zápas	slyeva (sleva)		úklid	nevím		
omachka (omáčka)	nákup	nabiechka (nabíječka)		odejdi	půjdu		
nefunguje	ano	sakra		bastlení	proto		
zajímavé	ne	pardon		dřina	makat		
vím, ne vím	hledat	stravenka		odbory			
úřad práce	jedna			tarifní pásmo			
perlivá	aplikace			slib			
zdarma	síla			auto			
jasné*	vůbec			bombon*			

*to be continued in the next column

In additional comments, the following experience and opinions appeared:

Nedávno jsem byl na Ukrajině, přesto, že rok a půl šlo s češtinou vše v pořádku a myslel jsem, že doma vyletí česká slova, nestalo se tak, nevyslovil jsem ani slovo češtiny jazyk v mé rodné zemi, ačkoli jsem si byl jistý, že se tomu nelze vyhnout! Tak nějak. Hodně

štěstí všem. [Some time ago, I was back in Ukraine. After one and a half years of learning Czech, I expected that Czech words would appear in my Ukrainian, but it did not happen. I did not say a word in Czech in my native country, although I was sure I could not avoid this! Kinda … . Good luck to everybody.] (translated by the authors)

Jsem rusky mluvící Ukrajinec, když mluvím ukrajinsky, mám 50 % ukrajinských, 30 % ruských a 20 % českých slov. Moji přátelé mi rozumí a já rozumím jim. [I am a Russian speaking Ukrainian. When I speak Ukrainian, I use 50 % of Ukrainian, 30 % of Russian, and 20 % of Czech words. My friends understand what I say and I understand what they say.] (translated by the authors)

3.6 **Summary of Results, Interpretation, Discussion**

To achieve the main objective, we monitored how the respondents learned foreign language(s), mainly English, before and during the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and considered the possible impact on the process of socialization in the host country.

Data collected using the above described tools provided us with answers to three main research questions: How the respondents learned English before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022; What was/is the role of English (if any) in the process of integration of the respondents in the host country; How the respondents learned at Czech schools during the war.

Briefly summarized, findings discovered that English is part of the primary school curriculum in Ukraine, some learners also gain additional knowledge when attending private lessons, and/or travelling, communication via the Internet but they rarely sit for international exams. The increasing role of English as lingua franca is related to the level of knowledge and age of learners. Whereas it is of hardly any importance in young pupils (beginners), university students (inter-mediate, …) use its full potential. Consequently, this helps them integrate into the society of the host country and acquire the local language and culture, which is the target. All foreign learners in the Czech Republic have Czech and English language courses available free of charge under some conditions; it is expected that they are willing to invest their effort and time into learning. Most of Ukrainian families in the Czech Republic pay attention to the compulsory school attendance of their children, that is, primary and lower secondary school level. Many learners also attend distance lessons online offered by Ukrainian schools. Our findings show that after graduation from the Czech compulsory school at the age of 15 (9th grade), at the upper secondary school students loose interest in Czech and English language courses despite the fact that in some of them their reading and listening skills are not good, and writing and speaking are even worse. The university students in our sample proved the effort, willingness, ability, and other characteristics needed to achieve the target, which was studying at the university in their case. Therefore, the findings confirmed that *the role of English was important in the process of integration; it could have been more important if the level of knowledge of the respondents had been higher*.

From a cultural and historical point of view, there is no simple and direct advice on how people can live together without problems, irrespective of their cultural and historical

background. Yet, they are expected to try to do so. Acquiring a language from the host country may be a means that can prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. Language is a key to communication, and the communication works as a key aspect of the integration process (Škodová, Cvejnová, 2017). To *increase the level of language skills* and thus facilitate communication in the host country language *is the relatively easiest way how to eliminate obstructions* on the way towards successful integration, Geis-Thöne (2019) emphasizes. Furthermore, *language skills can be improved in a rather short period of time*, opening the door to educational and professional success and strengthening social relationships with members of the host society in general. The process of language integration has never been finished, neither in natives nor in foreign speakers; it may even go beyond one generation. As integration is a two-way process, the host country society (institutions, policy, inhabitants, etc.) is expected to support and motivate foreigners to acquire the language.

Ndofor-Tah et al. (2019) designed an integration framework that consists of ten domains, grouped under four themes: Means and markers, Social connection, Facilitators, and Foundation.

Means and markers include four domains, i.e., (1) Employment, (2) Housing, (3) Education, and (4) Health, that are key areas for the participation of refugees in the life and show evidence of achieving or accessing things that are valued within the community.

Social connections include (5) Social bridges, (6) Social bonds, and (7) Social links. They all serve to connect an individual or group to the wider community. Bonds within communities may be with people who share their own experience and values through ethnicity, religion, or country of origin. Connections to other groups are seen as bridges between communities. Connections that help to access services and be fully involved as a citizen are defined as links.

Facilitators include (8) Language & Cultural knowledge and (9) Safety & Stability. They are the key skills, knowledge, and circumstances that help people be active, engaged, and secure within communities.

Foundation, that includes (10) Rights & Citizenship, refers to the principles and rights that you can expect from the state and from other members of your communities and what is expected of you.

Ndofor-Tah et al. (2019) highlight differences between the domains. They consider dimensions under the Means and makers, that also include the *dimension of Education*, the critical factors of the integration process, while Facilitators that include the *dimension of Knowledge of language* are the key skills that enable migrants to actively engage in the society or make the process easier. They, as the well as European Commission (2005), think that the processes of language and cultural integration are running together. We add that language is the key that opens various fields of life, that is, all the dimensions listed above.

It may happen that a migrant who has acquired a host country language on the proficiency level has not integrated into the society and shared values. Contrary to this, an integrated migrant fully sharing the values of a host country, has not completely acquired the language. However, it is obvious that hardly any migrant can engage in a social life without minimum knowledge of the host country language; without the knowledge, they keep isolated Ndofor-Tah et al. (2019).

In accordance with the aforementioned, partical and limited findings discovered within our results, mainly those from the primary and lower secondary school pupils, show that under the conditions provided by the Czech government, if the learner (and the family) are motivated and interested in learning English and a host country language, they can do so. Consequently, social connections can be expected to be wider and deeper, as well as activities and success in other dimensions. The offer of courses provided by educational and state institutions free of charge in the field of education has been continuously updated; however, additional effort is expected from the learners. From the point of view of learning styles, in those who prefer practical life to school lessons, this approach is acceptable if their language skills are as good as those of their peers attending institutionalized education.

First or last, forever, there will also be an aspect in Ukrainian learners (and their families) that plays a crucial role and that we can hardly overcome: the war experience. For us, who have not experienced war, it is extremely difficult to understand and decide how to apply a wide range of theoretical didactic advice in practice. How to teach, how to motivate to learning a learner who had to leave his/her father, grandparents, friends, flat, room, toys, books, and flee to another country the language of which s/he does not know, attend the school, sometimes one in the class, where s/he does not understand the teacher and classmates, come home where mother worries about accommodation, finances, work, and think every day about those who stayed in Ukraine …?

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) (MEYS, 2008) could help to some extent in the lessons attended by Ukrainian learners. This approach is not new in the Czech educational system, teachers have been trained. However, it can successfully work on the Czech/English basis; we are not sure whether the Czech/Ukrainian language structure will be appreciated by pupils, their parents, and teachers are not qualified for the Ukrainian language, we reckon.

3.7 **Contribution and Limits of the Research**

The findings cannot be generalized, for several reasons. The research sample is not large, so the data present the situation in a certain part of Ukrainian refugees. Data were collected using non-standardized tools; subjective criteria were applied for data analysis. On one hand, the sample is convenient for researchers, which weakens the results. On the other hand, the sample is rather consistent because most of the respondents are pupils of the primary and lower secondary school whose parents paid attention to (1) their regular school attendance soon after their arrival in the Czech Republic, (2) preparation for lessons, and (3) learners attended, often with parents, courses of Czech and English

languages. Many pupils also had additional private lessons in foreign languages (English, German, French) or Maths. Thus, we can sum up that research proved the positive impact of home environment on education. It is an expected result; however, we can hardly find a control group with opposing characteristics.

The structure of the research sample is, on one hand, a strong feature of the research; on the other hand, it is a limit. Policymakers admit that currently not all Ukrainians staying in the area of the Czech Republic are registered in the system, which has an impact on the financial, social, and other resorts, and consequently large surveys conducted by the state are impacted. Thus, our local investigation is a contribution to the complex reflection of the current state of art.

3.8 **Conclusion and Future Research**

There is no doubt that acquiring the language is an important factor in integration in the host country. Whether it works as a precondition, consequence, or plays another role in learning, it is a topic of research, as mentioned above. What is needed in every situation is desire, motivation, effort, and the ability to learn. The same applies to teaching. There are a few teachers qualified in teaching Czech language to foreigners. As a result of Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, most of them faced the situation having (a) non-Czech speaking pupil(s) in their lessons. Applying the principle of individualization, they were able to help them with the first steps. However, a long-term individualized teaching and learning requires theoretical background and professional training. Optimistic approaches to multicultural education emphasize the need to learn other cultures, understand differences, and strengthen the sense of belonging. Together with these requirements, the teacher is expected to lead the learners towards building new knowledge. In learners, different cultures usually do not hinder learning, if there is suficient motivation, effort, and support.

Future investigations should be in accordance with didactic needs.

From the *didactic* point of view,

(1) New learners are coming from Ukraine and small children are attending kindergartens. They all need to learn Czech as soon as possible.

(2) Teachers should be trained in how efficiently individualize teaching of one or few Ukrainian (and/or foreign) learners in a class together with teaching most of Czech learners without decreasing the quality of the process, and keeping their own forces for the whole school year/s. The following variables will play a crucial role in the process of individualization:

- learner´s age;
- level of knowledge of the host country language;
- language/s of foreigner learners;
- number of foreigners in the class;

- subject taught (Czech language, English/foreign language, Maths, Biology, …), etc.

From the *research* point of view,

(1) Didactics of Czech language learning in small Ukrainian-speaking (foreign language-speaking) children (beginners) should be investigated.

(2) The long-term process of instruction of Czech learners and foreigners in one class, that is, one learner/few learners long-term individualization within whole-class teaching, should be under focus, including single variables (learner´s age; level of knowledge of the host country language; language/s of foreigner learners; number of foreigners in the class; subject taught, etc.). The size of the sample, the results of which could be generalized to the Czech population, would be appreciated.

Last but not least, student-teacher and Czech-Ukrainian dimensions within the research team were the big contribution in our team. They brought new approaches to the topic: experience of the Czech student working as a teacher in language courses for foreigners, experience of university students – prospective teachers, and Ukrainian students, currently staying in Ostrava and studying at the University of Ostrava, who provided another insight into the problem. The authors express thanks to them, as well as to all who shared their opinions on the research problem. We can recommend to internationalize the research teams; as minimum, it brings the national knowledge of the country and allows all team members to share a new view and experience.

SUMMARY

The main objective of the monograph is to contribute to the process of integration of Ukrainian refugees after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2024. In particular, it focuses on the role of English in acquiring the host country language. The theoretical part is structured into two chapters that define the terminology and introduce the concept of integration, mainly the social integration, the role of language in this process, and the current state of art in the Euroepan and Czech context. The latest project described in this chapter was carried out at the Faculty of Education of the University of Ostrava. It served as the first step in the research process, the design of which is presented in the experimental part. The main objective of the research was to discover whether knowledge of English had an impact on the process of integration of the host country language, if any. Data were collected using several tools; the main tool was the "life story", i.e., the description of the learner´s way of acquiring (a) foreign language(s) before and during the Russion invasion of Ukraine. Data were collected from pupils of the primary schools, lower secondary schools, students of upper secondary schools, and university students. Furthermore, questionnaires and interviews with teachers, a teacher assistant, and mothers of two pupils were conducted, followed by prospective teacher observations. All data were summarized in two case studies of pupils whose course of integration was different.

The results show that in the Czech environment, the Czech government and other educational institutions and organizations have created conditions to make the integration of Ukrainian refugees easier. On a daily basis, in schools, classes, lessons, each teacher devotes time and effort to each learner who needs an individual approach, because of a lower level of language knowledge or/and for any other reason. On the other hand, we have to be aware that this approach is very demanding for teachers; there have been no research results to answer questions such as how long it can be applied without limiting the other learners in the class, exhausting the teacher´s energy and enthusiasm, and/or resulting in their lower well-being or even, for example, the burnout effect or other problems.

Particular results prove that if the learners make an effort to learn and use offers to their own development, in this case Czech and English language courses provided free of charge, in the Czech educational environment, they have the possibility to learn the host country language and thus overcome barriers to integrate in the society. The English language played the role of lingua franca rather in administrative processes carried out by the adults; the level of knowledge in the pupils was mostly too low, and it helped for basic communication, if any.

Unintentionally, but naturally, the final chapter of the monograph deals with words and expressions that document the impact of the Czech spoken language on Ukrainian language in Ukrainians staying in the Czech-speaking environment for a long time.

SHRNUTÍ

Monografie je příspěvkem k řešení problematiky z oblasti integrace ukrajinských uprchlíků po ruské invazi 24.2.2022 na Ukrajinu. Konkrétně se zaměřuje na roli angličtiny při učení se jazyka hostitelské země. Teoretická část je strukturována do dvou kapitol, ve kterých je definována používaná terminologii a představen koncept integrace se zaměřením na sociální integraci, roli jazyka a současný stav řešené problematiky v mezinárodním a českém kontextu. Poslední projekt zmíněný v této podkapitole byl realizován na Pedagogické fakultě Ostravské univerzity a stal se impulsem pro další výzkumné aktivity, které v souhrnu tvořily výzkum, jemuž je věnována druhá část monografie. Jeho hlavním cílem bylo zjistit, zda (a případně jaký) měla znalost cizího jazyka (angličtiny) vliv na proces integrace v hostitelské zemi. Hlavním nástrojem pro sběr dat byl tzv. popis životního příběhu (life story), neboli soubor dat popisujících, jak se žák/student učil cizí jazyk/y před a během ruské invaze na Ukrajině a po opuštění Ukrajiny v hostitelské zemi. Data byla sbírána od žáků základních, středních i vysokých škol. Pohled byl doplněn dotazníkovým šetřením a rozhovorem s učiteli, asistentem učitele a maminkami dvou žáků. Dále byly zohledněny výsledky pozorování, které prováděli budoucí učitelé v hodinách anglického jazyka. Všechna data byla použita k vytvoření dvou případových studií žáků, jejichž integrace probíhala rozdílným způsobem.

Výsledky výzkumu ukázaly, že v kontextu opatření prováděných českou vládou a dalšími institucemi a organizacemi jsou vytvářeny podmínky, které usnadňují integraci ukrajinských uprchlíků před ruskou invazí na českém území. V každodenní praxi, ve školách, třídách, jednotlivých vyučovacích hodinách, je pro každého učitele na jednu stranu pedagogicky/didakticky přirozené věnovat individuální péči žákovi, který ji potřebuje, ať je to z důvodu nižší znalosti jazyka, nebo z jakékoli jiné příčiny. Na druhou stranu je to velmi náročný přístup pro učitele a je otázkou, zda je možné takto postupovat dlouhodobě, a jak dlouho, aniž by tím dříve či později byly omezeny možnosti výuky ostatních žáků a učitel nebyl přetěžován.

Konkrétní výsledky dokumentují, že pokud žák vyvíjí snahu se učit a využívá nabídek ke svému rozvoji, v tomto případě minimálně kurzů anglického a českého jazyka poskytovaných zdarma, má v kontextu české společnosti a českého školství možnost naučit se český jazyk a tím překonat výraznou překážku v integraci do společnosti. Anglický jazyk sehrál roli lingua franca spíše při administrativních kontaktech dospělých; úroveň znalosti jazyka u žáků byla většinou příliš nízká, než aby mohla sloužit k jiné než základní komunikaci, pokud vůbec.

Neplánovaně, ale přirozeně je monografie zakončena přehledem slov a výrazů, které dokumentují vliv mluveného českého jazyka na ukrajinský u Ukrajinců pobývajících delší dobu v česky mluvícím prostředí.

ВИСНОВОК

Основна мета монографії – сприяти процесу інтеграції українських біженців після російського вторгнення в Україну 24 лютого 2024 року. Зокрема, вона зосереджується на ролі англійської мови в опануванні мови країни перебування. Теоретична частина складається з двох розділів, які визначають термінологію та представляють концепцію інтеграції, головним чином соціальної інтеграції, роль мови в цьому процесі, а також сучасний стан справ у загальноєвропейському та чеському контексті. Останній проект, описаний у цьому розділі, був реалізований на педагогічному факультеті Остравського університету. Він став першим кроком у дослідницькому процесі, план і результати якого представлені в експериментальній частині. Основна мета дослідження полягала в тому, щоб з'ясувати, чи має знання англійської мови вплив на процес інтеграції мови країни перебування, якщо такий вплив є. Дані збиралися за допомогою декількох інструментів, основним з яких була «життєва історія», тобто опис того, як учень опановував іноземну(і) мову(и) до та під час російського вторгнення в Україну. Дані були зібрані від учнів початкових шкіл, молодших класів середньої школи, учнів старших класів середньої школи та студентів університетів. Крім того, були проведені анкетування та інтерв'ю з учителями, асистентом вчителя та матерями двох учнів, а також спостереження за майбутніми вчителями. Усі дані були узагальнені у двох тематичних дослідженнях учнів, чиї шляхи інтеграції відрізнялися.

Результати показують, що в чеському середовищі чеський уряд та інші освітні установи й організації створили умови для полегшення інтеграції українських біженців. Щодня в школах, класах, на уроках кожен вчитель приділяє час і зусилля кожному учневі, який потребує індивідуального підходу, через нижчий рівень знання мови або/та з будь-якої іншої причини. З іншого боку, ми повинні усвідомлювати, що такий підхід є дуже вимогливим до вчителів; **немає результатів досліджень, які б дали відповідь на питання, як довго його можна застосовувати, не обмежуючи інших учнів у класі, не виснажуючи енергію та ентузіазм вчителя та/або не погіршуючи його самопочуття чи навіть, наприклад, не викликаючи ефекту вигорання або інших проблем.**

Конкретні результати доводять, що якщо учні докладають зусиль до навчання і використовують пропозиції для власного розвитку, в даному випадку безкоштовні курси чеської та англійської мов у чеському освітньому середовищі, вони мають можливість вивчити мову країни перебування і таким чином подолати бар'єри на шляху до інтеграції в суспільство. Англійська мова відігравала роль лінгва франка радше в адміністративних процесах, які здійснювали дорослі; рівень знань учнів здебільшого був надто низьким, і вона допомагала для базового спілкування, якщо таке взагалі було.

Мимоволі, але закономірно, останній розділ монографії присвячений словам і виразам, які фіксують вплив чеської розмовної мови на українську мову в українців, які тривалий час перебували в чеськомовному середовищі.

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Figure 3. Research sample structure: regions

APPENDIX 1

Life Story

The role of English in Learning a Local Foreign Language: “life stories“ of Ukrainian learners

Hello girls and boys,

we are two students from the Ukraine. Since the beginning of the war, we have been living in the Czech Republic and studying English at the Faculty of Education in Ostrava, a city of 250, 000 inhabitants situated closely to Poland. We participate in a project that aims to help learners who left the Ukraine and are staying abroad for some time. We are interested whether and/or how a foreign language, mainly English, helped you in learning the language of the new country you moved to.

Please describe your “story“ using your own words, in full sentences or in bullets. Focus on three areas:

1. **Before the war: Learning foreign languages** Jak jste se učili cizí jazyk/y do začátku války
2. During the war: Learning all subjects, mainly English, and also describe online distance lessons if you had any Jak/zda jste se učili po zahájení války (nejen cizí jazyky, ale všechny předměty, a také online výuku)
3. During the war: Whether/how English helped you learn the language, and consequently the culture, and adapt to the life of the new country Jak vám angličtina pomohla/nepomohla při osvojování si jazyka a života v zemi, do které jste se odstěhovali po začátku války. If you stayed in the Ukraine and used English there, describe it. Jestliže jste zůstali na Ukrajině a využili jste angličtinu tam, popište tu situaci zde. Jestliže ne, nepište nic.

In your story, please answer the following questions:

In Part 1, write about learning foreign languages before the war started.

- When did you start learning the first language (how old were you)?
- Did you learn the language at school only, or did you attend, for example the language school, individual private lessons, language courses etc? Did you spend some time abroad – for example, when parents worked there, on holiday – how long was it and did you speak a foreign language there? Could you communicate fluently, or did you have any problems? Did you pass any international exams in foreign languages (e.g., First Certificate in English)?
- How did you learn the second foreign language. Describe it in a separate paragraph. Provide the same information as with the first foreign language.
- Do the same with the third and other foreign languages if you learned any.

In Part 2, describe, how school lessons were held during the war.Provide information about teaching and learning all subjects, and pay special attention to English lessons.

- Did you continue learning, when the war started, or was there any period without lessons?
- Did you have lessons in the school building?
- Did you have present (face-to-face) lessons with teachers in the classrooms as usual?
- Did you learn online? What period? (e.g., from April to June)
- Where did you learn online from? From your home (flat, house), cellar, bomb shelter, metro, other place?
- Who organized online lessons? Teachers? Learners? Parents? Someone else?
- What devices did you have for online learning? PC, notebook, smartphone, tablet, iPad, other …….?
- Did you always have a good Internet access and connection?
- How long were the lessons (how many minutes …)?
- What subjects did you learn online?
- What subjects did you NOT learn online?
- When learning **English** online:

- Did you practise vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening, speaking, and writing? Describe at least one activity how you practised each of them.
- Did you work with printed textbooks as in present lessons?
- Did you read texts about the war?
- Did you work in groups, in pairs, individually?
- Did you have homework?
- Did you work on projects, e.g., on anti-war topics?

- What was the main problem for you regarding online learning?

In Part 3, describe, whether/how English helped you in learning the language, and consequently the culture, and life in a new country you moved to during the war.

Did you stay in the Ukraine, or did you move to another country?

- If you stayed, you can describe here everything what you did not mention above.
- If you moved abroad:

- Where did you go? Did you go with the whole family, or part of the family went abroad and part stayed? Which part were you in? Did you go alone? With a friend, friends?
- How long did you stay in the country? Did you and (or) your parents) get necessary documents, job, accommodation?
- Did you attend language courses there to learn the **language of that country**?
- Did you attend **courses of English language** there to improve your knowledge? Did you know about the courses?
- Did you move to another country? If yes, provide the same information as above.

- Which country are you in now?
- Do you attend school (basic school – grade? upper secondary school – specialization? university – study programme)?
- Do you attend language courses to learn the **language of the country you stay in now?**
- Do you attend **courses of English language now**? What type of courses, how frequently, …

Thank you for you opinions. By writing your "story", you agree with your participation in the project dealing with the role of English in learning a local foreign language, as mentioned above.

Iryna, Nadia

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Date: ……..

State: …….

The sentences below may inspire but not limit you:

I am a girl/boy. In February 2022, when the war started, I was …years old. I attended the basic / upper secondary / school / university (what fields did you study?). I lived in a town / village of …. inhabitants which is situated in the North / South / West / East / North-East / North-West / South-East / South-West of the Ukraine, close to … (write the name of the town). My average grade in English (průměrná obvyklá známka) was … (pupils write the average grade from the secondary school, students from the high school).

I. Before the war: Learning foreign languages

My first foreign language is … (English???). I started learning English at school when I was … year old. We usually had two / three / four /five English lessons per week. Additionally to the school lessons, I attended the language schools where we had two???

lessons per week and I also had individual private lessons. In 2018-2019, my father worked in Spain, so the whole family lived there and I attended the English school there. When we returned to the Ukraine, I passed the international exam in English (e.g., First Certificate in English, FCE) in 2020.

My second language is German. I started learning German at school when I was … years old. We usually had two / three / four /five English lessons per week. Additionally to the school lessons, I attended the language schools where we had two??? lessons per week and I also had individual private lessons.

My third language is Spanish. I started learning it in 2018, few weeks before going to Spain with my father. I attended Spanish courses for foreign speakers there. We returned back in 2020, I had individual private lessons.

Other languages … ??? For example, I can also speak and understand **Russian** because my grandparents learned the language at school as the second language …

…

II. During the war: Learning in general, mainly English

A. I/we did not leave Ukraine:

My older sister with two children left for Germany (her husband has some relatives there) and the other sister (single) and her girlfriend travelled to Poland – they hoped to find job and place to stay. Men of the family became soldiers. My mother, younger sister (6 years old) and I stayed.

At the beginning, for approximately two weeks, we attended school and had lessons as usual. Then, there were frequent alarms and the danger of bombing increased, so we had lessons in shelter. Finally, the school building was pertly/completely destroyed. It was at the end of April. Approximately in the middle of May, I was contacted by my classroom teacher /subject teacher / schoolmate from the Ukraine, from abroad / someone else … with the information that there will be lessons held online distance. There was rather a good Internet connection, I had a notebook / I had the smart phone only, so there was no problem to participate /the screen of the smartphone was too small for some activities. We usually had three lessons per day, each 30 minutes long, and homework for the next lesson. We worked in groups, but not on the Internet but, for example, we met in the park and discussed the task … I expected that the online distance lessons would be taught until the holidays only, however, they were held during the whole summer. The main subjects were Maths, Ukrainian language and literature, English, …, but we did not have Music lessons and Physical education. In September, some families returned from abroad, some schools started teaching again, but some families moved to less dangerous districts, so now there are no online distance lessons in our town.

As for learning English, the lessons had „traditional“ structure, that is, there were as they used to be, that is new vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, speaking, writing, but the topics were different – we focused on texts about the war in newspapers published in

English, if available, listened to podcasts etc. The language school was closed and I did not have any private lesssons (my teacher was in the army).

B. I/we left for another country

Finally, at the end of September, my mother, younger sister and I decided to leave the Ukraine. The older sister promised to help us settle in Germany. First, we left for Poland. Altogether, we spent 25 days in the refugee centre but there were too many applicants and hardly any possibility to get a job and accommodation. Meanwhile, the second sister lived in the Czech Republic, so, we moved to the Czech Republic. She helped mother to get a job in the same company as she worked. There was a group of Ukrainian women with children. The women worked as babysitters for them.

In Poland, I did not attend school or any language courses because we expected to move to Germany soon. I took care of my younger sister when my mother was queing to get necessary documents.

In the Czech Republic, I started the school attendance in November. I am in the 9th grade of the secondary school. I hope I will be good in Czech in spring and pass the entrance exam for a Czech high school. First days, I did not understand Czech much, only a few words that I learned from my sister. As I was the only foreign learner in the class, I was forced to speak Czech. On first two days, some of the schoolmates were a little bit shy, as I was, then, they started to ask about my interests, life in the Ukraine, the war, they offered help, also the teachers were helpful. If I really did not understand, there were two Ukrainian learners in another class who were much better in the language and helped me … They recommended to attend Czech language courses at the university but I am not sure whether I can understand – they have been attending the courses since the summer …, they had two lessons four times per week, taught by Czech teacher.

I do not have any problems in English lessons, I am as fluent in speaking as the other learners are. The textbooks we use are different, but we also had the interactive board in some classrooms before the war and did similar exercises and activities. I have the smartphone with Czech SIM card so I can use it for homework activities. I do not have a notebook but I can use PC at school, teacher said. I have not had information about the language schools and private language lessons in the Czech Republic but I am afraid we will not have enough money left for such lessons. But, if I have the Internet access, I can find much to listen, or play games etc., to refresh my English.

….

III. During the war: Whether/how English helped you learn the language, culture, and adapt to living in a new country

Of course, Czech and Ukrainian language have some words similar (you can give some examples), but it is not enough for (good) understanding.

I must say that in common life, it was not English but the direct method of learning the language of the new country that helped me most. English was a means (medium) that

supported and made the learning efficient at the beginning. For the first steps, I do not prefer the direct method at the beginning of learning a new language if another means is available. It is too lengthy.

During the school attendance and learning, English helps me much more. It works as a means of instruction and also many sources are available in English that Czech students are to read in Czech. Thus, English can be considered an advantage as it opens the door to more materials to study from.

Title: THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN LEARNING A HOST COUNTRY LANGUAGE: "LIFE STORIES" OF UKRAINIAN LEARNERS

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