UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

SUPPORTING AND HINDERING FACTORS TO ADULTS IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING ENGLISH IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION
MA thesis

MARIO KALMUS
SUPERVISOR: *Lect.* **DJUDDAH ARTHUR JOOST LEIJEN**

TARTU
2021

ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning is considered to be of great importance in the whole world, including Estonia. Goals set in education in Estonia prioritise learning other languages as well as increasing the number of adults in lifelong learning generally. Although the number of adult learners in Estonia is increasing every year, more adults could be engaged in non-formal education. Thus, it is of high priority to enhance the quality of courses tailored to adults.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English. There are two research questions: 1. What factors support learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education? and 2. What factors hinder learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?.

The thesis consists of an *Introduction*, two core chapters and a *Conclusion*. The *Introduction* provides the aim of writing the MA thesis, focusing on the importance of understanding adult learners' needs in order to provide access to lifelong learning to a larger number of adults. Chapter 1 offers definitions on the concept of adult learner and discusses issues related to an adult learner and adult learning. Chapter 2 presents the methodology and outlines the results of the study, the results interpretation and the discussion of the results. The same chapter also highlights the importance of the thesis and discusses possible further research on the topic. To answer the two research questions, a qualitative study was conducted in one of the education centres providing non-formal education to adults in Estonia. The participants of this study were A-level adult learners of English who volunteered to participate in the study. Data were gathered by using semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed by using qualitative inductive thematic analysis method. As a result of the data analysis, four main themes related to factors supporting adult learning emerged: Learning Motivation, Learning Environment, Course Arrangement, and Social Life. Related to hindering factors influencing adults in learning English, six main themes were derived: COVID-19, Course Arrangement, Learning Environment, Social Life, Learning Skills, and Quality of Life. Some of the themes emerged both as supporting and hindering. The results of this study suggested that factors which support or hinder adults learning English in non-formal education are generally in line with the results demonstrated by earlier studies on adult learners and adult learning. The *Conclusion* summarises all parts of the thesis and presents the major findings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Adult learning is affected by demographics, the global economy and technology (Merriam and Caffarella 1999:22). Developments in global economy have created the situation where there is an increasing demand for lifelong learning (Coffman 2002:199). The world is changing demographically, and that is why the focus is on the concept of lifelong learning – learning that occurs throughout the whole life (Chao 2009:905) and includes formal education system and non-formal education (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium 2014:2). Formal education includes general education, vocational education and higher education (Erelt 2014) and is referred to as a structured system of education based on certain standards and formal educational curricula (Council of Europe n. d.). Non-formal education is defined as voluntary learning in different environments (Erelt 2014) with the aim to improve skills and competences outside formal educational curricula (Council of Europe 2000:1).

Due to growing globalisation every year more and more adults want to learn English because they have started their career abroad, they travel more or they just would like to make new friends (Cozma 2015:1209). Knowing and learning languages has become very important as international relations in every area of economic activity are growing, and people have become more mobile, both for professional as well as for personal reasons (Deth and Frost-Smith 1983:151).

Introduction of new technologies and changes in work places increase the importance of understanding adult learners (age 25 and older). So, in order to support adult learners, it is essential to realise, which factors support or hinder adult learning (Chao 2009:905–914).

Lifelong learning is considered to be of utmost importance in Estonia. The general goal set for lifelong learning in Estonia is to provide all people with learning opportunities

that are tailored to their capabilities and are in accordance with their needs (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium 2014:3). In order to improve adult learners' opportunities to participate in lifelong learning, a strategic document "Adult Education Programme 2020–2023" (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium n. d.b) has been drafted. This programme provides strategic measures and necessary activities to be taken in order to motivate adults to learn, to increase opportunities for adult learners to participate in lifelong learning, as well as to create study opportunities that are of a good quality, diverse in their selection, flexible and take the needs of the labour market into account (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium n. d.b:1–2). One of the key competences, the improvement of which among adults is considered to be very important, is the ability to know and speak other languages than the state language (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium n. d.c:1–2). One objective set to be reached in education in Estonia by the year 2035 is that all people in Estonia know at least two other languages except Estonian (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium n. d.a:16).

The number of adult learners in Estonia is growing. The participation rate in lifelong learning among adults has increased from 12.2% in 2015 to 20.1% in the year 2019 (Statistics Estonia n. d.b). However, the goal level of adults to be engaged in lifelong learning, set by the government of Estonia, is aimed to be reached 25% by the year 2035 (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium n. d.a:5). Also, there has been growth in the number of adults learning languages. The number of adults self-reporting of having the basic knowledge of at least one other language has increased from 29% in 2007 to 40.4% in 2016 (Eurostat n. d.). The total number of adults learning languages in non-formal education has increased from 9,488 learners in 2016 to 41,311 adult learners in 2018. The increase of adults learning English has been 61% during the academic years of 2017/2018–2019/2020 (HaridusSilm 2020).

The concordance of lifelong learning opportunities with the needs of the labour market is considered to be very important for increasing adult learners' access to study

opportunities in non-formal education and for involving more adults in lifelong learning generally (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium n. d.c:5). High standards and flexibility in adult non-formal education are the important key indicators to be taken into consideration when designing courses to adult learners. Activities foreseen to achieve this strategic measure include enhancing the quality of adult non-formal education training courses as well as providing flexible training. Non-formal education of a high quality is considered to be learner centred – i.e., the needs of adults are taken into account: courses tailored to adults are organised in a way that adult learners are able to attend classes, courses are motivating, relevant and flexible in organisation and take place in appropriate learning environment (Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium n. d.c:6–7).

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English.

Research questions, the thesis tries to answer, are the following:

1. What factors support learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?

2. What factors hinder learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?

Despite the fact that the number of adult learners in non-formal education in Estonia is increasing every year, there are no thorough studies carried out on adult learners in non-formal education. Earlier researchers' focus has been mostly on adult learners in formal higher education (Roosalu et al 2012; Vint 2017) and in formal vocational education focusing on adult learners' motives to learn, on factors influencing their studies (Tüür 2013), as well as on learning environment (Peterson 2016). The author of the thesis is aware of no research carried out in Estonia on factors which support or hinder adults in learning English in non-formal education. Thus, taking into consideration everything mentioned above – i.e., the official goals and objectives set to be reached in the area of education in Estonia and the

increasing number of adult learners in Estonia – it is important to find out, which factors adult learners of English in non-formal education report as supporting, and which factors they report as hindering in the learning process. Inferences made from the results of this thesis could be used in non-formal education when designing English courses that cater more for adult learners' needs by being more flexible and of a high quality.

This MA thesis includes two core chapters and the *Conclusion*. Chapter 1 focuses on literature on the topic, defining the concept of an adult learner and giving an overview of adult learning. Chapter 2 provides the methodology, the results of the study, the results interpretation and the discussion of the results. The same chapter also discusses the limitations and the significance of this thesis as well as possible research on the topic. The *Conclusion* summarises all sections of the thesis and presents the major findings.

1 ADULT LEARNER AND ADULT LEARNING

There are various definitions and descriptions for an adult learner. Different researchers point out different aspects when dealing with an adult learner.

Haidak (n. d.: para. 1) defines an adult learner as a person who has finished his or her general education, who continues his or her studies later, however, studying is not his or her main activity. According to Bowles (2010:51–58), an adult learner is a learner who is able to focus for a long time, who has got some life experience and who has several personal goals to achieve. Also, an adult learner is a learner who is willing to understand and discuss, who practises, learns and works independently and who is self-directed (Bowles 2010:51–58).

However, Chao (2009:905) and Mertesdorf (1990:4) think that it is more pragmatic to define an adult learner by age. Mertesdorf (1990:4) claims that an adult learner is a learner who is 25 years old or older and participates in studies full-time or part-time. In Estonia an adult learner is defined as a person whose age is between 25–64 years, and who has chosen higher education as the next step, or who participates in seminars and attends training courses or conferences (Haidak n. d.: para. 9).

Märja et al (2003:48) point out that it is not only the age of a learner that is important in defining the concept of being an adult. In fact, responsibility is the key factor in being an adult, i.e., being responsible for one's life, career, health, education and relations (Märja et al 2003:49). Adult learners have usually several responsibilities in their lives to cope with, e.g., being a parent, being a husband or a wife, being a colleague, an employee, a neighbour (Haidak n. d.: para. 1; Merriam and Caffarella 1999:390; Mertesdorf 1990:1; Schwarzer 2009:28). Socio-cultural roles are quite important since adults have to deal with such aspects as earning money, relationships, raising children, retiring, etc. (Coffman 2002:199). General

characteristics for an adult learner include the following aspects: 1) having started a family, 2) being a single parent, 3) working full-time, 4) having developed economic independence, 5) studying part-time, 6) having not completed secondary education (Ross-Gordon 2011:1).

According to McKay and Tom (1999:2) and Mertesdorf (1990:1), adult learners have different life- and work experiences. Adult learners are social, they have their own priorities and values which are influenced by life experiences, environment and personal preferences and priorities (Chao 2009:906). However, although adults have experienced different situations and have got life experience, they still may feel insecure about their role as a learner and their expectations for academic environment (Mertesdorf 1990:12).

Bowles (2010:7), Cozma (2015:1209), Lukianova (2016:223), Mertesdorf (1990:11) and Pawlak (2015:61) describe adults as highly motivated learners. Furthermore, characteristic features, which make adults successful in learning languages, include persistence, developed cognitive skills and being self-directed (Pawlak 2015:61).

Lukianova (2016:227–228) gives three types of adult learners: 1) adults focused on purpose – learning in order to achieve their goals, 2) adults focused on activities – learning in order to meet new people and make new friends, 3) adults focused on training – learning in order to get new skills and knowledge. Adult learners are reported as being independent and devoted to achieving their educational goals (Mertesdorf 1990:12; Rogers 2002:71). Also, adult language learners are described as being focused on achieving their goals, and being driven by their needs or demands. For instance, helping their children with homework, getting a better job, etc. (Smith and Strong 2009:1). Cozma (2015:1210) and Strevens (1973:153) claim that adults make good learners of languages because of the ability to remain focused for a long time and for not being disturbed by any disturbing factors, e.g., such as noise. Adults are voluntary learners and their participation is purposeful (Broughton

et al 1980:187; Rogers 2002:14–15). Adult learners have always certain intentions to learn, be it linked with their career or just for social reasons (Rogers 2002:75–78).

Learning is a combination of several processes throughout the person's whole life. These processes are very important as only through these various processes it is possible to experience social situations. The perceived content of these processes is then reprocessed emotionally, practically or cognitively, and, as a result, a person is more experienced and constantly changing (Jarvis 2009:25).

Adults' learning needs and aims are different compared to the needs and aims of traditional (age under 25 years) learners (Mertesdorf 1990:1). It is believed that adult learners' specific needs, skills and competences are linked with the learners' age (Cozma 2015:1210). There are certain variables that characterise adult learning. Among these variables there are the age of a learner, learner's educational aims, whether learning takes place on learner's own will, the level of proficiency attained earlier, the language of teaching (Strevens 1973:152). Learning is a complicated process because of the fact that individual learners, especially adult learners, are all different and complicated personalities (Chao 2009:906).

The need for lifelong learning derives from the happenings or circumstances in adult learners' personal lives or their careers (Mertesdorf 1990:1). Adults usually learn only in case there is a specific need for it. For example, improving one's qualification and skills needed for work increases security and stability on the labour market (Märja et al 2003:77). A very important factor in the process of adult learning is meaningfulness (Merriam and Caffarella 1999:397). It is assumed that for being a good learner, an adult learner needs to know why he learns. It is also claimed that adults learn through practice, and they learn better in case the outcome of learning is useful to them (Alhassan 2012:154; Schwarzer 2009:27). In fact, "motivation is the driver of adult learning" (Lukianova 2016:223). Cook (2016:156)

points out that high motivation causes success in learning, and, *vice versa*, successful learning causes high motivation.

Learning languages is a complex process involving areas, such as pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Learning languages is always different and depends on a learner as well as on what the learner's mother tongue is (Johnson 2008:14–15). In language learning six dimensions can be established: 1) learner's age, 2) free will (volunteer/non-volunteer), 3) perspective (individual/class), 4) educational aims (cultural/general education), 5) present proficiency, 6) language of instruction (Strevens 1973:155).

There are several reasons for adults to learn other languages. These reasons include, for example, marriage to a foreigner, new career opportunities, better interaction with colleagues as well as willingness to meet new people and do something different (Deth and Frost-Smith 1983:153–154; Schwarzer 2009:27). Knowing other languages improves adult's chances to widen one's horizon, to express political opinions as well as to communicate in a more efficient way when travelling abroad (Cook 2016:1).

Adult learners' knowledge, values, skills and abilities are different (Rogers 2002:82–83). Adult learners take their life experiences, professional skills and knowledge with them to the learning process (Cozma 2015:1213; Märja et al 2007:35; Rogers 2002:73–75; Schwarzer 2009:30). Furthermore, their learning habits are also there in the learning process with them (Märja et al 2007:35). In fact, the knowledge, learners bring to the classroom, is a valuable and rich resource to be used in their learning (McKay and Tom 1999:2–3). However, adult learners' prior life experience and knowledge may make acquiring new skills and knowledge complicated as well as difficult (Märja et al 2007:73–74). The background knowledge and past experience of an adult learner can become a factor that hinders adult learning and learning new things (Merriam and Caffarella 1999:390).

Adults have very high demands and expectations due to their previous experience in education (Cozma 2015:1211; McKay and Tom 1999:3; Rogers 2002:78–80). Sogunro (2015:23) has pointed out that all learners, including adult learners, get the best academic results only if they are motivated to learn. In fact, motivation is needed to make learners to achieve their goals in education (Sogunro 2015:23). In adult education motivation has an important role, especially in case an adult learner has not got enough skills, or his or her knowledge is insufficient. However, it does not work *vice versa,* i.e., a lot of knowledge and skills does not compensate the lack of or low motivation to learn (Lukianova 2016:225). Consequently, learner's motivation can be regarded as an essential supporting factor influencing adult language learning.

According to Strevens (1973:156–158), factors interacting to determine the success, i.e., factors that support adult learning, include: 1) quantity and intensity of instruction – sufficient but not too many hours per week, 2) make-up of the learner – intelligence, willingness to learn, 3) absence of impediments – e.g., no distraction, exam neurosis, 4) make-up of a teacher – proper teaching techniques, encouraging personality, high command of the language taught, 5) methods and materials – interesting and appropriate.

However, alongside with supporting factors there are also factors that hinder adult language learning. Factors, such as learners doing their homework, student boredom as well as learners' poor ability to retain knowledge may be considered as hindering factors (Fink 2003:24–25). Moreover, there are also physical and cognitive factors affecting adult learning. Biological aging may affect adult learning a lot. Due to adults' lower energy level and several responsibilities they are already a bit tired when they come to a language class. Furthermore, deterioration of sight as well as hearing may become factors hindering adult learning. Also, adult learners' memory and reaction time is sometimes slower. This, in fact, and adults' lack

of confidence may be considered as factors hindering adults learning English (Cozma 2015:1211–1213; Merriam and Caffarella 1999:115, 397–398).

Deggs (2011:1547) establishes three types of factors which hinder adult learning: 1) intrapersonal factors – these factors include money management, time management, fear of failure, family responsibilities, handling of emotions and physical matters, 2) career and job-related factors – this group of factors includes lack of support from workplace, meeting job expectations, 3) academic-related factors – this group includes factors, such as coping with technology, balancing academic loads, meeting the expectations as a student.

According to Mertesdorf (1990:49–50), factors hindering adult learning can be divided into three groups: 1) dispositional, 2) institutional and 3) situational. Dispositional factors are "psychological perceptions about oneself as a learner which cause difficulties for a student in his/her educational pursuits" (Mertesdorf 1990:49). For example, an opinion of being too old to learn, experiencing insecurity in one's abilities, tiredness or having not enough energy, just to name a few. Institutional factors are connected directly with practices and policies of educational institutions discouraging adult learners. These factors include issues, such as not having willingness to learn full time, time needed to finish studies, not having classes available at convenient times, getting academic or career advising. Situational factors are brought about by various situations related to learner's job, age, economic state or family. For example, costs related to studies (tuition fee, childcare cost), time deficiency, household chores, transportation problems, lack of family or/and friends' support (Mertesdorf 1990:49–50, 66).

To conclude, adult learning can be supported by different factors. Adult learners come to a classroom with "a mature personality, many years of educational training, a developed intelligence, a determination to get what they want, fairly clear aims, and above all strong motivation to make as rapid progress as possible" (Broughton et al 1980:187).

In order to help adult learners to learn, it is necessary to understand what motivates them to learn, what the supporting factors, influencing learning, are. Moreover, it is also important to know, what factors hinder adult learning (Chao 2009:914).

2 EMPIRICAL STUDY

This part of the MA thesis outlines the methodology and presents the results of the study followed by the interpretation of the results and discussion.

As the purpose of the thesis was to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English, a qualitative research approach was chosen. The starting point of any qualitative research is describing real life, and it is used to find out and reveal facts, not to prove existing statements (Hirsjärvi et al 2010:152). "Qualitative research /…/ is primarily concerned with representing in textual /.../ form an analysis of people's lived experiences in specific contexts as these are represented though their behaviour /…/" (Richards 2015:61), the focus is on participants in natural settings (Richards 2015:62).

To answer the research questions (1. What factors support learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education? and 2. What factors hinder learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?), a qualitative study was conducted in one non-formal education centre providing non-formal education to adult learners in Estonia. The specific research type used draws from case study research methods as in the study "generally constitutes a qualitative, interpretive approach to understanding the experiences, features, behaviors, and processes of a bounded /…/ unit" (Duff and Anderson 2015:112). Like a case study, which is described as an in-depth approach of characterizing an individual entity within its context (Duff and Anderson 2015:112), this qualitative small-scale study provides a thorough overview of factors supporting or hindering adults in learning English in non-formal education.

2.1 Sampling

The sampling method used was nonprobability sampling. In case of nonprobability sampling units are selected on the basis of availability, accessibility, or convenience without randomisation (Davis 2015:199). The participants of this study came from the non-formal education centre located in South-Estonia. To ensure the participants' confidentiality and anonymity, the name of the non-formal education centre was never mentioned in the thesis and was replaced by the letter 'X'. The participants of this study were A-level adult learners of English in the non-formal education centre X who were available, i.e., volunteered to participate in the study. The sampling strategy used was purposeful. English A-level adult learners were chosen keeping in mind the two research questions of this thesis about supporting and hindering factors influencing adults learning English. The assumption was that level A adult learners, i.e., beginners could be more sensitive to factors hindering their learning than more advanced adult learners, i.e., learners who have continued learning English for several years in the non-formal education centre X and reached from A-level to level B or level C, could be. It was assumed that level B and level C adult learners of English have not possibly experienced and do not experience factors hindering their learning as they have not stopped attending language courses in the non-formal education centre X.

Regarding the purpose of the thesis, which was to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English, sampling criteria were the following: 1) the age of a learner 25 and older, 2) learning in the non-formal education centre X, 3) attending level A English courses.

A qualitative research was carried out in the biggest and oldest education centres providing non-formal education to adult learners of all ages in South-Estonia. This non-formal education centre X has been providing different courses to adult learners already for 32 years. The total number of learners per year is 6000, and that of different courses offered

every year is 700. There are 70 different language courses on levels A1, A2, B1, B2 and C1 offered every year, i.e., every spring- and autumn semester. The number of adults learning languages in the non-formal education centre X has grown from 373 in 2016 to 1409 in 2019, which makes it the second biggest non-formal education centre in Estonia concerning adults learning languages. The non-formal education centre X was chosen due to its aim to implement the idea of lifelong learning, welcome adults of all ages as well as being ranked second among non-formal education institutions in Estonia regarding the number of adults learning languages.

Adult A-level learners of English in the non-formal education centre X were interviewed. The total number of adult learners interviewed was eight: seven women and one man. The respondents' background information is given in *Table 1* and in *Appendix 1*.

Table 1. Respondents' Background Information

Respondent	Age	Gender	Course level	Course fee payer	Place of living
A	49	Male	A1.2	Respondent	Tartu County
B	44	Female	A1.2	Respondent	Tartu City
C	72	Female	A2.	Respondent	Tartu City
D	51	Female	A1.2	Respondent	Otepää City
E	52	Female	A2.	Respondent	Tartu County
F	59	Female	A1.2	Respondent	Viljandi City
G	64	Female	A2.	Respondent	Tartu City
H	66	Female	A2.	Respondent	Tartu City

Every adult learner who was interviewed volunteered to participate in the study. The real names of the respondents were replaced by letters in the thesis (e.g., 'A') according to the order in which research interviews were conducted. The average age of the people interviewed was 57. Course fees were paid by the respondents themselves. The distance from the respondents' place of residence to the location of the non-formal education centre X

varied and was between 0 km (in case the place of residence and the location of the education centre X were in the same populated area) and 72 km.

2.2 Data Gathering

In qualitative research one of the most common methods of data gathering has been research interview (Hirsjärvi et al 2010:192). A research interview is defined as "an interactional event in which one party asks questions on topics relevant to the goal of the study and the other party answers these questions" (Kasper 2015:209). The format research interviews are conducted in qualitative research is flexible, and the order of questions asked and topics dealt with can be changed if necessary (Hirsjärvi et al 2010:192). A flexible format of interviews in qualitative research is due to the fact that the aim of these interviews is to gather data from participants' perspective (Kasper 2015:210). The research interview format used was a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews include pre-specified questions. However, the order in which questions are asked and the wording of questions can be changed (Hirsjärvi et al 2010:195).

Research interviews as a method of data gathering is the right choice in case questions about respondents' beliefs, opinions, experiences, attitudes or feelings need to be answered (Kasper 2015:213), or not much research has been conducted on the topic (Hirsjärvi et al 2010:192). Using this approach is considered a good approach for the reason that, as known to the author of this MA thesis, there is no research carried out in Estonia on finding out factors supporting and hindering adults learning English in non-formal education.

The instrument used for gathering data was an interview plan including pre-specified questions (see *Appendix 2*) that were drafted based on the purpose of the thesis, which was to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English. Before conducting research interviews, all of the

interview questions were reviewed by another researcher with the aim of providing relevant and clear interview questions in order to ensure the validity of the data gathering instrument. As suggested by the independent researcher, the wording of some interview questions was changed to ensure the clarity and understandability. No major changes were made in interview questions after conducting a pilot interview. The order of some interview questions was changed with the aim the interview to be more logical.

Empirical data were collected in February – March 2021. The participants of this study came from the biggest and oldest non-formal education centre X in South-Estonia offering English courses of different levels to adult learners. The *Institution Informed Consent Form* (see *Appendix 3*), including the information about the study, was sent to the management of the non-formal education centre X with request to forward the *Participant's Informed Consent Form* (see *Appendix 4*), including the information on the study, to level A adult learners of English. Eight A-level groups of adult learners of the three teachers who taught across levels A1.1, A1.2 and A2. were selected. The *Participant's Informed Consent Form* was sent to 83 adult learners. The number of adult learners who responded and agreed to participate in the study by returning the digitally signed *Participant's Informed Consent Form* was eight.

This qualitative research was carried out following the general ethical criteria in research: anonymity, honesty, confidentiality, privacy (Eetikaveeb n. d.). Adult learners who had provided their consent to take part in the study were informed about the research topic, the purpose of the research, the process of conducting interviews and the participants' right to withdraw from the project (see *Appendix 4)*. Every research participant was contacted individually via e-mail to agree upon the date, the time and the mode of conducting an interview. The available modes of interviews were *Telephone Interview*, *Skype Interview* and *Facebook Messenger Interview*. According to the participants' preferences, all of the

interviews were *Telephone Interviews*. Due to COVID-19 precaution measures there was no option of *Face-to-Face Interview*. The interviews were all conducted in the respondents' mother tongue (Estonian). Since all of the participants were beginners, level-A learners of English, having interviews in English might have resulted in misinterpretations of the interview questions as well as of the respondents' answers. Every participant received the interview questions via e-mail about one week before the scheduled interview time. The total number of research interviews conducted (incl. a pilot interview) was eight.

The data were documented by using audio recordings. With regard to protecting confidentiality, the gathered data, i.e., computer files, audio recordings and transcripts were kept in secure manner with no access of third parties. Before starting the interview, the research participants were asked for their consent to recording the interview. Every respondent gave his or her permission to record the interview. The participants were informed beforehand that their participation in the project was voluntary and anonymous. Every participant was also informed about the confidentiality of his or her participation in order to ensure the respondent's privacy, i.e., the data gathered through the interview would not be accessible to the third parties. The adult learners who had agreed to be involved in the study were informed that the data gathered would be analysed and the results reported in the MA thesis. At the end of the interview every respondent was thanked for his or her time and participation.

Every interview consisted of an introductory part and the main part. The introductory part focused on explaining the topic and the goal of the research as well as on the general ethical criteria applied in carrying out the research. The main part of the interview included two major themes: 1) factors supporting learning English and 2) factors hindering learning English. The main part of the interview included 11 open-ended questions. The inspiration for drafting the interview questions was found from earlier studies focusing on adult learners

and adult learning (Peterson 2016:37–38, Tüür 2013:60, Vint 2017:38–39). The respondents were also asked additional questions, if needed. The duration of every individual research interview was planned to be approximately 30 minutes. The average duration of the interviews was 26 minutes. The shortest interview lasted for 15 minutes, and the longest interview was 35 minutes long.

All interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. The transcribed interview texts were given in *Times New Roman* (point size 12), double spacing, paper format A4. The total number of pages of the transcribed texts was 67. The shortest transcribed interview was seven pages long, and the longest interview transcribed consisted of 12 pages. The average length of transcripts was eight pages. The dates and duration of interviews were recorded in interview transcripts.

2.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analyses as a method of analysing qualitative data is applied in case the researcher's aim is to find out about people's experiences, views, knowledge and opinions from a large qualitative dataset, e.g., interview transcripts (Caulfield 2019), and to identify shared experiences and meanings (Braun and Clarke 2012:2). As the purpose of this thesis was to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English, and that there is not much research carried out on the topic, a qualitative inductive (i.e., themes are driven from the content of the data) thematic analysis method was used.

Thematic analysis was done using thematic networks technique. Thematic networks are presented graphically, there is no hierarchy. There are three levels in thematic networks: 1) Basic Theme – the most basic or the lowest-order theme identified from textual data, 2) Organising Theme – a middle-order theme, which organises Basic Themes of similar issues

into one cluster, 3) Global Theme – a super-ordinate theme, a summary of Organising Themes (Attride-Stirling 2007:128–129).

All audio recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Textual data were coded by using the QCAmap programme. All transcripts were read from beginning to end with the aim to get familiarised with the data. After that, each transcript was read carefully once again word by word. While re-reading transcripts, phrases and sentences that seemed to describe factors related to and influencing adult learning were highlighted. Based on the highlighted parts of the texts, codes (keywords) describing the contents of the text segments were applied to the textual data. Phrases and words of close meaning in the texts were organised under specific codes. Once all of the interview transcripts were coded, themes were identified from the codes. Thematic networks were constructed as following: Step 1: deriving themes (codes), Step 2: arranging Basic Themes, Step 3: rearranging Basic Themes into Organising Themes, Step 4: formulating Global Themes.

In order to ensure the validity of the study, another researcher was involved in coding the textual data. The method used to analyse the data used by the intercoder was thematic analysis, and the textual data were coded manually. The agreement between the author of this MA thesis and the intercoder was strong: both coders shared the same understandings and agreed with each other on how codes were developed and themes identified.

As a result of the textual data analysis, 87 codes were derived on the basis of factors supporting learning English as reported by the adult learners in non-formal education centre X. These 87 codes were grouped into five clusters from which 16 Basic Themes were identified. These 16 Basic Themes were organised into eight Organising Themes, which were arranged into four Global Themes (see *Appendix 5*).

The number of codes derived on the basis of factors hindering learning English as reported by the adult learners in non-formal education centre X was 50. These 50 codes were

arranged into six clusters, from which 18 Basic Themes were identified. Basic Themes were grouped into 13 Organising Themes, and six Global Themes emerged (see *Appendix 6*).

2.4 Data Interpretation

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English. As a result of data analysis, four Global Themes, eight Organising Themes and 16 Basic Themes were identified on the basis of the first research question (What factors support learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?). Based on the second research question (What factors hinder learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?), six Global Themes, 13 Organising Themes and 18 Basic Themes were derived.

The results of the study are given separately for the two research questions using thematic networks. To move any notion of hierarchy, all thematic networks are presented graphically as web-like nets. All of the thematic networks are interpreted, and text segments from the original interview transcripts are presented to support the interpretation. The sign /…/ is used to notify that some text segments were left out as considered irrelevant for illustrating the certain aspects of the results. Text segments used to illustrate the study results are in *Italics* and given verbatim.

2.4.1 Supporting Factors

2.4.1.1 Global Theme: Learning Motivation

Global Theme "Learning Motivation" constitutes one thematic network comprising two Organising Themes and six Basic Themes (see *Figure 1*). This thematic network represents an exploration of the respondents' conceptualisations of learning motivation, and
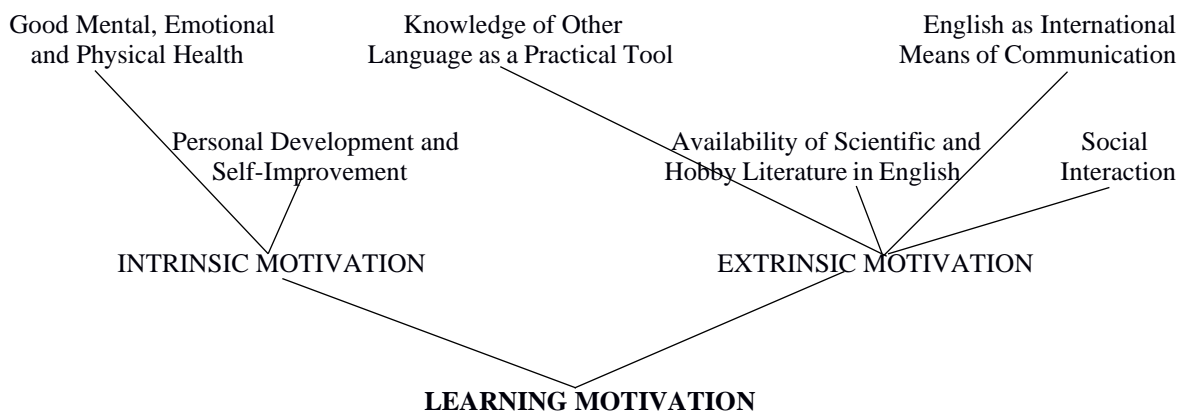
Good Mental, Emotional
and Physical Health

Knowledge of Other
Language as a Practical Tool

English as International
Means of Communication

Personal Development and
Self-Improvement

Availability of Scientific and
Hobby Literature in English

Social
Interaction

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

LEARNING MOTIVATION

Figure 1: Thematic Network for "Learning Motivation"

illustrates the key themes on which learning motivation was anchored: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation.

2.4.1.1.1 Organising Theme: Extrinsic Motivation

In this Organising Theme external rewards acting as supporting, motivating factors to adult learning are provided. Factors, such as the opportunity as well as the necessity to travel to other countries on various reasons, and to communicate in English were pointed out as external motivating factors by adult learners participating in the study. Also, the wide-spread use of English in everyday life, English used in the media, both written as well as non-written, was regarded as a supporting factor to adults learning English.

Kui võtame võõrkeelt, siis see võimaldab ju suhelda, ütleme, absoluutselt igal pool, /.../ kui reisile minna kuskile. See on nagu, /.../ ütleme täielik suhtlusvahend on. (A)

Mulle meeldib see, nagu see inglise keele õppimine selles mõttes, et terve see ümbruskond, kõik see meedia, ja hästi palju on nagu inglise keelt igal pool. (D)

According to this Organising Theme, the social aspect, connected with adults learning, was considered to be quite important. In fact, social interaction, the chance to

communicate with other adult learners and, moreover, the opportunity to actually leave home

and meet other people face to face was seen as change to daily routine, and even as fun.

> *See õppimas käimine on nagu veel üks niisugune tegevus, on ju. Ja see on nagu, toob su ellu nagu midagi muud ka peale selle, et käid tööl ja oled kodus.* (D)

> *Igasuguste õpingute juures ka see sotsiaalne pool. Et natuke nagu oma sellist igapäevaelu nagu muuta ja natukene värskemaks saada kõike seda pilti. See on see, et saad oma keskkonnast välja.* (F)

The importance of being able to read different kinds of literature in English was

pointed out as motivating by the adult learners. Moreover, the need to write scholarly articles

in English was thought to be motivating, thus a supporting factor in learning English. Also,

the knowledge of English was seen as an important and practical tool for coping effectively

in the society.

> *Ma tahaks oma huvialakirjandust paremini nagu lugeda, et ma sellest aru saaksin.* (F)

> */.../ nii kui mina tegelen väikselt teadusalaste artiklite asjadega.* (A)

> *Kuna see keel on igapäeva elu-oluga seotud, siis tundubki praktiline, siis motiveeriv. Et olla lihtsalt pädevam ühiskonnas. Et selline praktiline kasu.* (B)

2.4.1.1.2 Organising Theme: Intrinsic Motivation

This Organising Theme provides information on the respondents' behaviour driven

rewards acting as supporting, motivating factors to adults learning English. Personal

development and self-improvement were reported as very important supporting and

motivating factors by all adult learners of English participating in the study. Furthermore,

getting to know new things and learning new skills, were seen as supporting factors

necessary for adults to be engaged in learning. Also, adult learners' interest in English as

well as experiencing success were looked on as important factors in adults' learning
processes.

No ikka targaks saada. Mul on ikkagi eesmärk võetud. (D)

Muidu mandud ära, et igat asja juurde õppida, see on hea. (H)

Ma olen juba tundnud, et sellest on olnud kasu. Et kui tuleb näiteks inglisekeelne patsient, ma saan nagu palju paremini hakkama. (E)

Aga muidugi ma olen ise ka väga keelehuviline inimene terve elu olnud. Jaa, ja seega on muidugi huvi. (C)

According to this Organising Theme, good mental, emotional and physical health, as
the result of activities connected with learning, were considered to be supporting factors.

Ma olen enesekindlam ja õnnelikum. Enese võimekuse tunne, ehk siis, kui sa midagi omandad, ehk nagu päriselt õpid. Ma teadlikult lähen siis ka keeltekooli jalgsi, saan liikuda, sest muidu mul on väga istuv töö arvuti taga, et siis saan kõndida. (B)

No ma leian, et see minu õppimine, noh, soodustab ka minu aktiivset elu rohkem. (C)

The central themes in the thematic network "Learning Motivation" were the notions
related to doing something because of external rewards available, as well as doing something
without outside pressure or incentive.

2.4.1.2 Global Theme: Learning Environment

Global Theme "Learning Environment" constitutes one thematic network comprising
three Organising Themes and six Basic Themes (see *Figure 2*). This thematic network
provides the respondents' conceptualisations of learning environment, and presents the key
themes on which learning environment was anchored: intellectual and social environment of
the non-formal education centre, methods of studies and physical learning environment.
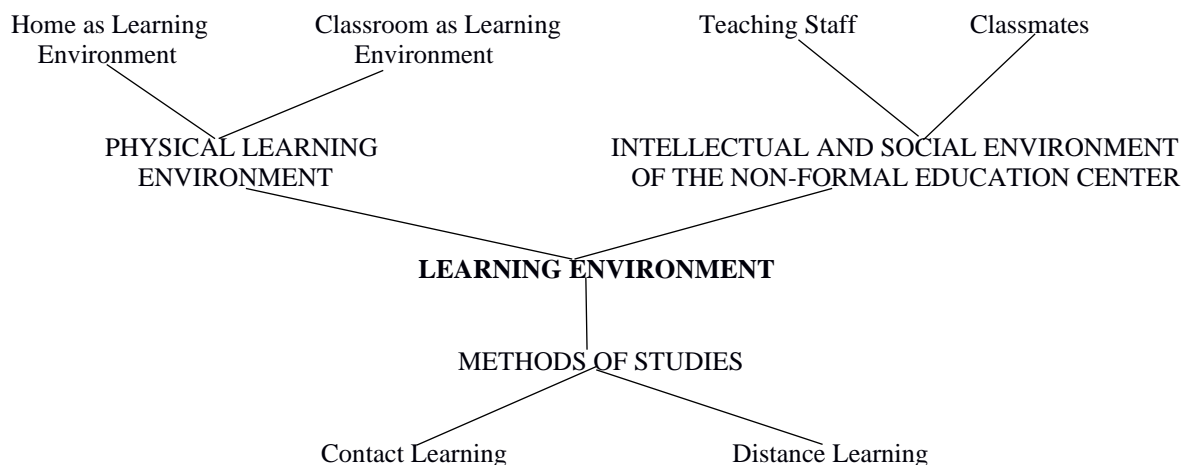
Home as Learning Environment   Classroom as Learning Environment   Teaching Staff   Classmates

PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT   INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION CENTER

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

METHODS OF STUDIES

Contact Learning   Distance Learning

Figure 2: Thematic Network for "Learning Environment"

2.4.1.2.1 Organising Theme: Intellectual and Social Environment of the Non-Formal Education Centre

This Organising Theme focuses on two aspects of intellectual and social environment of the non-formal education centre: on classmates and on teaching staff. Classmates were seen as friendly, helpful, supportive and motivating people who were eager to do teamwork. Moreover, classmates were thought to be people who really cared about other co-learners.

Hästi sõbralik õhkkond. (G)

Siis on niimoodi, et kui keegi midagi nagu natuke ei oska, keegi teine oskab, siis me jälle aitame niimoodi järele. Meil on niisugune väga-väga-väga positiivne suhtumine. Meil on meeldiv kollektiiv. Vastupidi, me muretseme, kui keegi puudub, ja et praegusel niisugusel tõsisel ajal, et et, kas tervis on korras. (C)

According to this Organising Theme, teachers were noted to be very supportive, friendly, helpful and with a wide range of knowledge in various aspects of life. Furthermore, the participants described teachers as highly qualified professionals who applied individual approach to adult learners and took adult learners' needs into account.

Õpetaja on selline hästi sõbralik ja ta nagu saab aru sinust ja alati sa võid küsida. (D)

Nii suure silmaringiga, ta nii palju reisinud. (A)

Kui ka kohe ei oska, siis ta aitab ja annab sellise kogemuse või tunde, et noh, sellest ma juba natuke oskan. Ta annab alati selliseid variante lisaülesannetel, kes tahab rohkem õppida, on see võimalus. Kes ei jõua, jaksa, võib vähem teha. (B)

2.4.1.2.2 Organising Theme: Methods of Studies

In this Organising Theme two methods of studies, distance learning and contact learning, were discussed. Although being different, the both methods were pointed out as supporting factors to adult learning. Web lessons and contact lessons were both seen as effective methods, depending on learners' personalities and preferences.

Nüüd on küll veebipõhiselt on need tunnid olnud viimasel ajal, aga, aga seda enam, et asi töötab väga hästi-hästi. (A)

Õppimist kindlasti see soodustab, et seal saab kohapeal õppimas käia. (E)

Klassiruumis on väga hea asi, et noh, kõik need paaris tööd, dialoogid. (F)

2.4.1.2.3 Organising Theme: Physical Learning Environment

According to this Organising Theme, physical learning environment, both at the non-formal education centre as well as at home, was pointed out by the respondents as a supporting factor regarding adult learning. Classrooms were looked on as well-equipped and comfortable, meeting all the adult learners' needs to learn. Also, learning environment at home was reported to support learning and provide all the necessary conditions to learn, e.g., peace and quiet as well as good hardware and software.

Klassiruum on meil väga-väga niisugune, noh, või väikse kolledži jaoks väga sobiv. Klassiruum on meil ju väga hea. (C)

Mul on seda vaikust ja rahu küllalt sellega tegelemiseks. Ja, ja noh muidugi korralik arvuti, et noh, et tehnika ka selline, et mis sind igal, iga kell toetab, kui seda vaja. (F)

Thematic network for "Learning Environment" focused on factors supporting adult learning, including aspects connected with physical learning environments both at the non-formal education centre and at home, as well as with distance and contact learning environments.

2.4.1.3 Global Theme: Course Arrangement

Global Theme "Course Arrangement" constitutes one thematic network comprising one Organising Theme and one Basic Theme (see *Figure 3*). This thematic network represents an exploration of the respondents' conceptualisations of course arrangement, and illustrates the key theme on which course arrangement was anchored: the organisation of studies.

Courses Start Times

ORGANISATION OF STUDIES

COURSE ARRANGEMENT

Figure 3: Thematic Network for "Course Arrangement"

2.4.1.3.1 Organising Theme: Organisation of Studies

According to this Organising Theme, the aspect of the flexibility of courses start times was discussed. The availability of different start times to attend courses was seen as a very important factor by the respondents. The possibility to choose courses start times according to adult learners' preferences by adult learners themselves was appreciated a lot.

Tundub, et see õppeasutus X pakutud kursuste ajad on päris noh, päris suured niimoodi. Et ma arvan, et kõik saavad sealt valida midagi sobivat: kes tahab hommikul, kas lõuna ja õhtupoole. Et ma arvan, et see toetab väga palju, kui inimene saab nagu valida seda sobivat aega. (E)

In the thematic network for "Course Arrangement" the notion of courses start times was regarded to be the central theme.

2.4.1.4 Global Theme: Social Life

Global Theme "Social Life" constitutes one thematic network comprising two Organising Themes and three Basic Themes (see *Figure 4*). This thematic network provides discussions on various aspects of the respondents' social life, and presents the key themes on which various life aspects were anchored: private life, career and work.
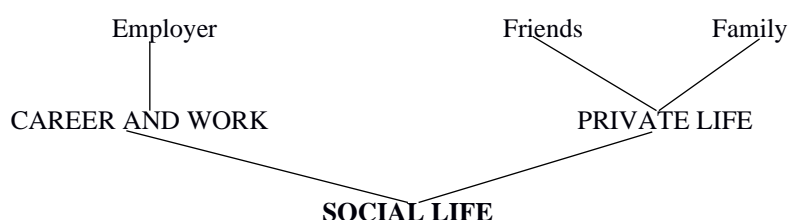
Figure 4: Thematic Network for "Social Life"

2.4.1.4.1 Organising Theme: Private Life

This Organising Theme summarises discussions on two aspects of the adult learners' private life: family and friends. Support from family members was regarded to be a very important factor. Family members were thought to be helpful, supportive and motivating, offering any kind of assistance and help needed, e.g., offering assistance in doing English homework, organising transportation to the location of the non-formal education centre.

Et selline positiivne hoiak, et: Oh, kui tore, et lapsevanem õpib. (B)

Saan elukaaslase auto. Ja ta tangib selle paagi täis ja ütleb, et mine. (D)

Mul on nagu 14 aastane poeg. Et ma tema käest olen isegi nõu küsinud, vahest, et selles mõttes ja ta toetab. (E)

Friends, similarly to family, were also seen as being encouraging, supportive and friendly. In fact, friends' approval and favourable attitudes towards adults learning English were thought of very highly.

Positiivse hoiaku ja suhtumisega, et: Oi, kui tore, et õpib. Vahepeal siis tehakse selliseid noh, kas küsimusi või märkusi, et noh, et: Mida sa ka täna õppisid? või või: Kas sa seda juba oskad öelda? Tunnevad huvi, on lihtsalt positiivsed. (B)

Sõbrad imestavad, et ma ikka viitsin ja tahan ja pingutan. Ja noh, vahepeal noh, kiidavad. (D)

2.4.1.4.2 Organising Theme: Career and Work

In this Organising Theme career- and work-related factors, supporting adult learning, were conceptualised as employers' financial aid to pay course fees, as employers' understanding and friendly attitudes towards adults learning English, and as employers' readiness to give days off and rearrange shift work hours.

Öeldakse, et kui on vaja õppida, tuleb õppida. Ja ka tehtud pakkumine maksta see, näiteks keelekursus kinni. (B)

*Noh, ma olen graafikute alusel töötav inimene, alati saan vabad päevad, kui mul on vaja.* (F)

The central themes in the thematic network for "Social Life" focused on employers' encouraging attitudes towards employees' learning as well as on employers' willingness to provide convenient work hours and financial support.

To conclude, factors supporting learning English, as reported by the adult learners in non-formal education, included factors, which were related to learning motivation, learning environment, course arrangement, and social life.

2.4.2 Hindering Factors

2.4.2.1 Global Theme: COVID-19

Global Theme "COVID-19" constitutes one thematic network comprising one Organising Theme and three Basic Themes (see *Figure 5*). This thematic network represents an exploration of the respondents' conceptualisations of the COVID-19 situation, and illustrates the key theme on which it was anchored: restrictions.

Lack of Language Practice   Wearing Protective Face Masks   Social Distancing

RESTRICTIONS
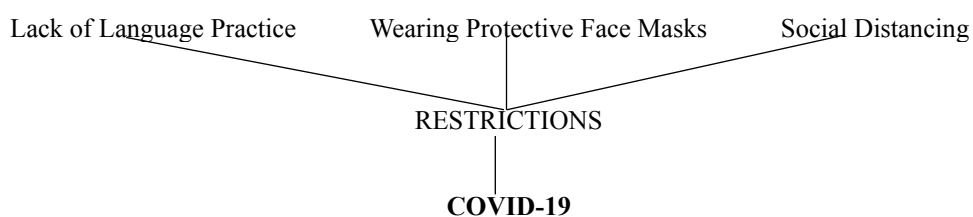
COVID-19

Figure 5: Thematic Network for "COVID-19"

2.4.2.1.1 Organising Theme: Restrictions

This Organising Theme provides the respondents' discussions on hindering factors, related to the restrictions of COVID-19 virus and influencing their learning. One of the factors mentioned was social distancing, which was seen as a hindering factor in a classroom. It was pointed out that keeping a safe space between other learners made having role plays and group work quite challenging. Moreover, the obligation to wear protective face masks in contact lessons was regarded to be rather inconvenient. Also, wearing face masks caused a lot of difficulties with English pronunciation generally and made understanding other

people's speech complicated. Moreover, lack of opportunities to really practise English due to restrictions and limitations on travelling was considered to be a hindering factor to adults learning the language.
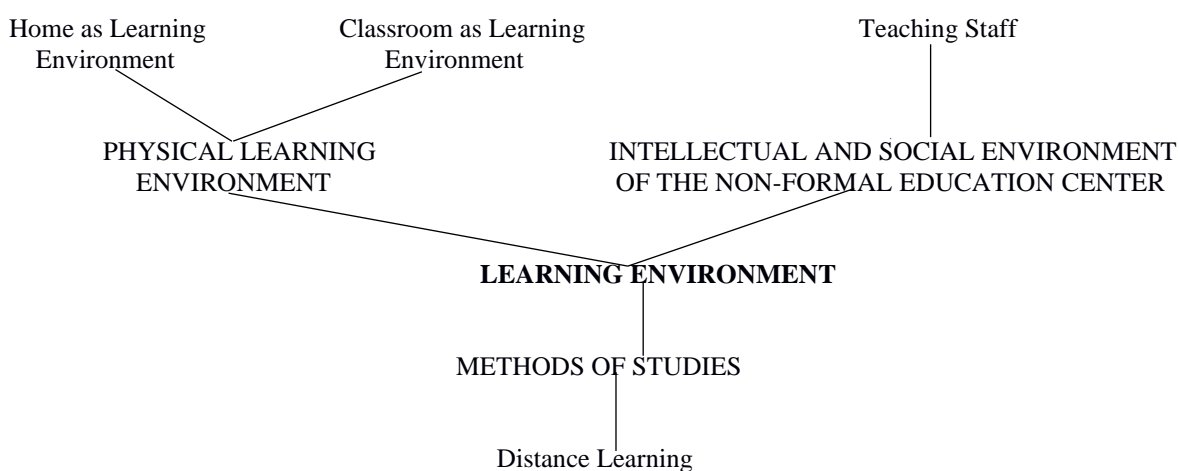
Koroonaga seoses on vaja siis distantsi. Ja on vaja võib-olla, noh, maskides olla ja siis võõrkeeleõppel hääldused on võib-olla raskendatud. (B)

Kogu situatsioon siin maailmas, mis toimub: ekskursioone, mis Inglismaal, et, et et seal on võimalus oma keelepraktikat arendada, et see on nagu, see oli väga super, mis on hea, aga kahjuks praegu, praegu on see nagu võimatu. (A)

In this thematic network various aspects of restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic situation in the country were looked on as the central themes.

2.4.2.2 Global Theme: Learning Environment

Global Theme "Learning Environment" constitutes one thematic network comprising three Organising Themes and four Basic Themes (see *Figure 6*). This thematic network

Home as Learning Environment   Classroom as Learning Environment   Teaching Staff

PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT   INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION CENTER

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

METHODS OF STUDIES

Distance Learning

Figure 6: Thematic Network for "Learning Environment"

provides the respondents' ideas concerning learning environment, and presents the key themes on which learning environment was anchored: intellectual and social environment of the non-formal education centre, methods of studies, and physical learning environment.

2.4.2.2.1 Organising Theme: Intellectual and Social Environment of the Non-Formal Education Centre

In this Organising Theme aspects connected with teaching staff were discussed. The teacher's voice was looked on as being not loud enough and was, therefore, thought to be a hindering factor. Also, the amount of practice exercises was seen as being not sufficient.

Võib-olla isegi kohati grammatika osas võiks vahest /…/ võib-olla rohkem harjutada, neid harjutusi. (E)

2.4.2.2.2 Organising Theme: Methods of Studies

According to this Organising Theme, distance learning was seen as not an efficient method for learning other language. Also, problems with the speed, quality and availability of the Internet connection were pointed out as factors making adult learning challenging. Furthermore, distance learning was looked on as very tiresome and exhausting by the respondents.

Mõnikord võib noh, internetiühendus katkeda. Siis tund võib poolikuks jääda. (A)

Me elame sellises maapiirkonnas, et meil on internet väga vilets. (E)

Mis on halb, on see, kui läheb internetti see keeleõpe. See on hoopis, tegelikult nagu maha visatud raha täiesti praegu. Zoomis õppimine – see küll takistab. Kohutavalt väsitab see arvutis õppimine. (E)

2.4.2.2.3 Organising Theme: Physical Learning Environment

In this Organising Theme hindering factors related to physical learning environment are conceptualised as physical learning environments at the non-formal education centre and at home. It was thought that there might be posters or some other kind of illustrative material, related to English, in the classroom. Regarding physical learning environment at home, hindering factors, such as family members making some noise, and not having proper work place, were reported by the adult learners participating in the study.
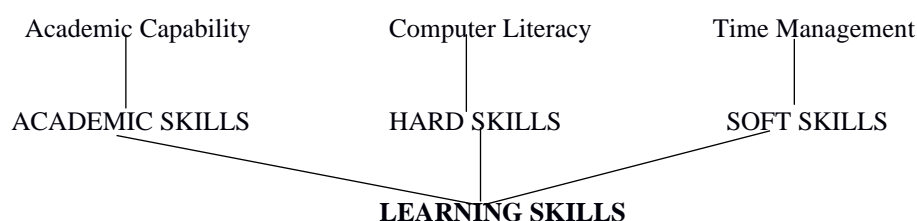
Ruum, kui selline seda otseselt ei toeta, sest seinad ei kõnele. Kui eeldada, võiks olla ka mingit abimaterjale, nagu tavaliselt koolis võib-olla. (B)

Kodu on kodu. Sul ei ole sellist klassi ja, ja, ja niisugust valgustust, nii head. Ja sellist, noh, töökohta. (E)

In the thematic network for "Learning Environment" the central themes discussed were related to various aspects of learning environments both at the non-formal education centre and at home.

2.4.2.3 Global Theme: Learning Skills

Global Theme "Learning Skills" constitutes one thematic network comprising three Organising Themes and three Basic Themes (see *Figure 7*). This thematic network represents information on the respondents' ideas about learning skills, and illustrates the key

Academic Capability   Computer Literacy   Time Management

ACADEMIC SKILLS   HARD SKILLS   SOFT SKILLS

LEARNING SKILLS

Figure 7: Thematic Network for "Learning Skills"

themes on which learning skills were anchored: soft skills, hard skills and academic skills.

2.4.2.3.1 Organising Theme: Soft Skills

According to this Organising Theme, different aspects of time management were seen as factors that hinder adult learning. Lack of time, difficulties in planning as well as balancing between studies and family duties were thought to be factors hindering adult learning. Also, factors, such as laziness, unwillingness to plan a day or study were reported as hindering factors to adult learning.

Täiskasvanud tööl käiva inimesena selle aja leidmine. (B)

Ma molutan niisama ka. Ega mul ei ole nii, et pole aega õppimiseks. Aga ega kogu aeg ei viitsi ka ju õppida. (H)

2.4.2.3.2 Organising Theme: Hard Skills

In this Organising Theme issues related to technology as well as the use of technology were discussed. The inability to use computers and technology efficiently was thought to be a hindering factor in case of distance learning. Adult learners' limited range of computer skills, i.e., absence of computer literacy was seen as a factor hindering adult learning.

Ma ei ole nii arvutiteadlik, et esimene kord sinna keskkonda sisse minek oli raskuseks. Ei saanud kohe hakkama selle arvutiga. (G)

2.4.2.3.3 Organising Theme: Academic Skills

This Organising Theme provides hindering factors to adult learning seen as issues related to academic capability. The respondents pointed out that learning independently, on one's own was something quite demanding and something that was difficult to accomplish.

Also, the feeling of being not so smart compared to other adult learners was perceived as a hindering factor by the adult learners.

Tegelikult, väga raske on järgi õppida. /.../ Et sa tunnis vaatad küll, et oh, kui kerge ja kõik, et õpetaja läheb ees ja kõik tulevad riburadapidi järgi. Kui, see üksinda peab seda niimoodi sealt läbi närima, siis on ikkagi päris keeruline. (E)

Ma tunnetan kohe, et ma olen nagu natukene maha jäänud. Ma ei saa aru /.../. (D)

In this the thematic network for "Learning Skills" soft skills, hard skills, and academic skills were seen as the central themes.

2.4.2.4 Global Theme: Quality of Life

Global Theme "Quality of Life" constitutes one thematic network comprising one Organising Theme and one Basic Theme (see *Figure 8*). This thematic network represents an exploration of the respondents' conceptualisations of the aspects of life quality, and illustrates the key theme on which it was anchored: health.

Physical Wellbeing

HEALTH
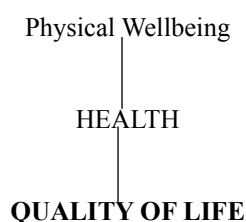
QUALITY OF LIFE

Figure 8: Thematic Network for "Quality of Life"
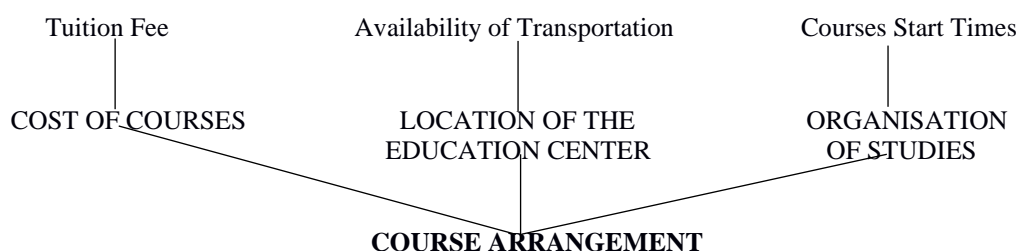
2.4.2.4.1 Organising Theme: Health

This Organising Theme pertains to a vital aspect in adult learning, as characterised by the respondents. In this context, physical wellbeing was perceived as something of great importance. In fact, poor physical health was noted as a factor hindering adult learning.

Ainuke takistus, mis mul on olnud, on olnud tervis. Kahjuks on mul väga kõrge vererõhk ja seetõttu olen pidanud mõned korrad puuduma. (C)

In this thematic network for "Quality of Life" the central theme was the notion of physical health.

2.4.2.5 Global Theme: Course Arrangement

Global Theme "Course Arrangement" constitutes one thematic network comprising three Organising Themes and three Basic Themes (see *Figure 9*). This thematic network represents information on the respondents' ideas about course arrangement, and illustrates the key themes on which course arrangement was anchored: organisation of studies, location of the non-formal education centre, and cost of courses.

Tuition Fee   Availability of Transportation   Courses Start Times

COST OF COURSES   LOCATION OF THE   ORGANISATION
                        EDUCATION CENTER   OF STUDIES

COURSE ARRANGEMENT

Figure 9: Thematic Network for "Course Arrangement"

2.4.2.5.1 Organising Theme: Organisation of Studies

In this Organising Theme factors related to courses start times were discussed. Hindering factors on adult learning were looked on as unavailability of different courses start times. Courses start times were not seen as being flexible, and, therefore, regarded as hindering to adult learning by the respondents.

Väga palju ei toeta, sest konkreetne kursus on väga õhtusel ajal kell üheksa, pool üheksa õhtul /.../ paindlik ei ole. Aeg on natukene hiline, võiks veidi varem olla. (B)

2.4.2.5.2 Organising Theme: Location of Non-Formal Education Centre

In this Organising Theme factors hindering adult learning, related to the location of the non-formal education centre, where language courses took place, were discussed. According to this Organising Theme, providing language courses only in bigger populated centres was seen as a hindering factor to adult learning. In fact, issues connected with finding transportation, both public and private, to attend courses, as well as issues related to bad traffic conditions in winter were looked on as factors that hinder adult learning.

Iseenesest võiks olla see keeleõpe nagu rohkem hajutatud võib-olla Eestis. Et tuua nagu inimestele lähemale, sest kõik ei saa nagu käia niimoodi. Nii kaugel elan, et ma pean, ma sõidan ikkagi 90 km maha, et käia, seal tunnis. /.../ talvel on nagu hästi raske sõita. /.../ ja siis on vaja selle jaoks nagu seda transpordivahendit leida /.../ Bussiga käimine oleks küll mõeldamatu. (D)

2.4.2.5.3 Organising Theme: Cost of Courses

This Organising Theme provides discussions on tuition-fee. According to this Organising Theme, the cost of training courses was seen as an important issue related to adult learning. In fact, courses were thought to be too expensive. Moreover, high cost of courses was looked on as a factor hindering adult learning generally as well as hindering learning more languages and, as a matter of fact, attending courses more often.

Kursused siiski on ka suhteliselt kallid. Nende eest tuleb päris normaalset kallist hinda maksta. /.../ Et kui oleks odavam, õpiks rohkem. (B)

In this thematic network for "Course Arrangement" the notion of high tuition fee was seen as the central theme.

2.4.2.6 Global Theme: Social Life

   Global Theme "Social Life" constitutes one thematic network comprising two Organising Themes and four Basic Themes (see *Figure 10*). This thematic network represents an exploration of the respondents' conceptualisations of different aspects of social life, and illustrates the key themes on which it was anchored: private life and career and work.

Colleagues   Employer   Friends   Family

CAREER AND WORK   PRIVATE LIFE
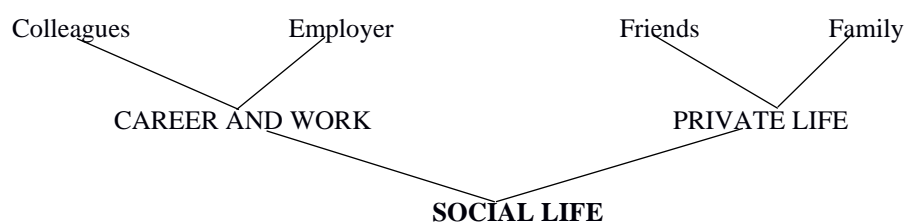
SOCIAL LIFE

Figure 10: Thematic Network for "Social Life"

2.4.2.6.1 Organising Theme: Private Life

   This Organising Theme conceptualises hindering factors to adult learning looked on as issues related to family members and friends by the respondents. Activities carried out by family members at home at the same time of an adult learner having a distance learning class were regarded as disturbing, hindering factors. Also, not having the opportunity to practise English with friends was thought to be a factor hindering adult learning.

   Kui mul mees kodus on, ta on hästi toimekas ja töökas. Ja siis ta vahel lihtsalt ei suuda seda aega ilma mingite tööriistadega kolistamata või midagi siin kuskil kõrvalruumis, et noh, lihtsalt häirib nagu selline kõrval melu. (F)

   Aga otseselt nagu noh, rääkida ma nendega (sõpradega) inglise keeles ei saaks. (E)

2.4.2.6.2 Organising Theme: Career and Work

In this Organising Theme factors related to career and work, looked on as hindering, are discussed. According to this Organising Theme, lack of employers' financial support in paying tuition fees as well as not being flexible when planning work shift hours were seen as hindering factors by the adult learners participating in the study. Also, colleagues' attitudes towards attending language courses were perceived as unfriendly by the respondents, thus, considered as a factor hindering adult learning.

Aga rahalises mõttes muidugi töökoht kui selline nagu ei toeta. (E)

Aga kui ma peaks nagu rohkem ära küsima, siis ma arvan, et mul oleks probleem. Noh, isegi töökaaslased, /.../ ei saa nagu aru sellest. Ja nad on tihtipeale mulle öelnud, /.../ et kuhu ta jälle läheb, et kuhu see Y nii vara läheb. Et mis mõttes, et käib kuskil koolis või. Aga, et noh, minu töökoht jääb nagu tühjaks ja keegi peaks nagu selle töö siis ära tegema. (D)

In this thematic network for "Social Life" issues related to private life, i.e., family and friends, and career and work, i.e., employers and colleagues, were seen as central themes.

In conclusion, it can be said that among factors, which hinder learning English, as reported by the adult learners in non-formal education, there were factors related to COVID-19, to learning environment, to learning skills, to quality of life, to course arrangement, and to social life.

2.5 Discussion

The purpose of this MA thesis was to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English. The results showed that some factors turned out to be both supporting and hindering to adult learners in learning

English in non-formal education. One of these factors is physical learning environment. On the one hand, home and a classroom, as physical learning environments, were both discussed to be supporting, and were described as well equipped, not too hot or too warm, meeting all requirements of an adult learner. This is in line with Roosalu et al (2012:108) and Sogunro (2015:32) who consider the aspect of learning environment to be of high importance regarding adults' motivation to learn. However, on the other hand, physical learning environment was thought to be a hindering factor to adult learning. In fact, learning environments at home as well as at the non-formal education centre X were described as being not well-equipped, thus, hindering adult learning.

Another factor, which was considered to be both supporting and hindering, is the intellectual and social environment of the non-formal education centre X. As a result of earlier research (Sogunro 2015:29), it has been found out that among factors supporting adult learning is also the quality of instruction. Teachers' high command of the language taught is thought to be of utmost importance by adults (Strevens 1973:157). Hence, the role of a teacher is seen as a highly important supporting, motivating factor. In fact, the study results revealed that the adult learners regarded a highly qualified, friendly and helpful teacher with the adequate command of English as a factor supporting their learning a lot. But, the lack of sufficient practice of language structures was seen as a hindering factor, and not supporting adult learners. This finding is supported by Cozma's (2015:1213) research, according to which adults "need to have a lot of controlled practice" (Cozma 2015:1213). Moreover, adult learners value the quality of tuition and teachers' competences and skills to teach adult learners (Sogunro 2015:29). Consequently, in order to support adults in their learning, it is suggested to provide more opportunities to teachers of adults to attend teachers' professional training courses of a high quality focusing on adult learners' needs.

Distance learning was seen both as supporting as well as hindering. On the one hand, it was regarded as a good method of learning languages adults could cope with. However, on the other hand, distance learning was looked on as a waste of money, absolutely an inefficient way of learning a language, and tiring. According to Deggs (2011:1547), adults see a lack of face-to-face communication as a hindering factor. In fact, the results of this study demonstrated that adult learners would like to communicate in a conventional way, i.e., face to face, rather than have virtual communication and the Internet-based learning. This finding could be related to the older age of the respondents. As being older generation and, perhaps, not used to modern technology so much, it could explain the obtained results.

Organisation of studies was one of the factors, which was also pointed out to be both supporting and hindering with regard to adult learning. The results showed that in case there were different courses start times available, and adult learners could make their own choices based on their preferences, it proved to support adult learning. Also, according to Sogunro (2015:31), in order to support adults and their learning, it is very important to let adult learners make their own choices concerning courses start times. But, in case there is no flexibility in organisation of studies, and the availability of suitable courses start times is limited, it could be a factor hindering adult learning (Mertesdorf 1990:50). The author of this thesis is of the opinion that adult learners should be offered a variety of flexible courses start times in order to support and encourage their learning.

Private life was thought to be among factors emerging both as supporting and hindering. Friends and family members were seen to be supportive and helpful, providing any kind of assistance they could. However, the lack of English speaking practice with friends was considered to be a factor which hinders learning the language. Furthermore, family members being at home and making some noise at the same time of a web lesson going on was perceived as a hindering factor. This finding appears to contradict statements

on adults' ability to stay focused for a long time and not to be disturbed, e.g., by noise (Cozma 2015:1210; Strevens 1973:153).

In addition, work life was reported to be among both supporting and hindering factors. On the one hand, employers were seen to be supportive, offering financial aid in paying course fees. On the other hand, the results showed that employers were seen as not being understanding and having negative attitudes towards employees' attending language courses. This is supported by earlier research, according to which lack of support from workplace can be thought to be a hindering factor by adult learners (Deggs 2011:1547).

The first research question, the thesis tried to answer, was "What factors support learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?". The results revealed that learning motivation was seen as one of the supporting factors to adults in learning English. Adults consider personal development and learning new things as something natural (Tüür 2013:34). Moreover, an adult learner "knows exactly *why* he is learning a language" (Strevens 1973:153). The results of this study demonstrated that factors, such as learning with the aim of getting new skills and learning something new, personal development, improvement of language skills as well as the necessity and opportunity to travel abroad and communicate in English were reported to be among supporting, motivating factors. Also, the widespread use of English in everyday life, and the availability of professional and hobby literature in English were seen as supporting factors. Furthermore, the practical aspect of knowing English as regards coping well in the society, e.g., getting a better job, was brought up as a supporting factor. In fact, these results are supported by earlier findings by Lukianova (2016:227–228), Smith and Strong (2009:1), Märja et al (2003:77). The need to be socially active and meet other people by having face-to-face interaction was reported to be a supporting factor related to adult learning. This finding is consistent with Deth and Frost-Smith (1983:153–154) and Schwarzer (2009:27). Also, good mental and

physical health, as a result of carrying out activities connected to learning, was mentioned to be a supporting, motivating factor.

Adults consider the influence and the role of their fellow adult learners to be very important (Peterson 2016:20). In fact, adult learners appreciate the support and help they get from their co-learners a lot (Tüür 2013:32). The results of the study demonstrated that adult learners' classmates were seen to be helpful, supportive, encouraging and teamwork oriented. Moreover, adult classmates were looked on almost as friends to go out and have fun with. The latter could also explain positioning contact learning among supporting factors by the adult learners participating in the study. Being able to attend a language course and meet other adult learners face to face as well as to have role plays, and work as a team was seen as an important supporting factor to adult learning.

The second research question was "What factors hinder learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?". One of the hindering factors, pointed out by the adult learners, was COVID-19. The study results revealed that various issues related to COVID-19 pandemic, such as social distancing and wearing protective face masks, were thought to be quite restrictive and, thus, seen as factors hindering adult language learning. Problems with pronunciation due to wearing protective face masks as well as difficulties in teamworking, while keeping safe space between learners, were looked on as not supporting adult learning. Also, restrictions on travelling, thus, not having enough opportunities to practise English, were pointed out to be hindering.

Another factor, looked on as a factor hindering adult learning, and demonstrated by the study results, was learning skills. Earlier studies have shown that adult learners value time and time management (Vint 2017:26). But, lack of time as well as issues related to time management have proved to be factors hindering adult learning (Deggs 2011:1547). The results presented in this thesis are in line with earlier studies. According to this study, lack

of time, experienced by the adult learners in non-formal education, was reported as a hindering factor to learning. Furthermore, time management was looked on as quite challenging in establishing balance between studies, family and work responsibilities. Also, technology-related skills could be among factors considered to be hindering regarding adult learning (Cozma 2015:1213; Deggs 2011:1548). In fact, the results of this study showed that the lack of computer-related skills was reported to be a factor hindering adult learning. The author of this thesis is of the opinion that not giving homework might be of practical value in order to ease adult learners' dilemmas, and support them in balancing between family, work and studies. Also, preparing adults to use technology by providing short introductory computer skills-related workshops before language courses starts, could prove to be useful in helping adult learners overcome their anxiety.

Factors which hinder adult learning include, among other factors, also inherent factors, e.g., intelligence, but also factors related to willingness to learn (Strevens 1973:157). As demonstrated by the results of this study, among hindering factors influencing adult learning there were ability- and personality-related factors. Difficulties in understanding and disability to learn independently were perceived as hindering factors to learning the language. Also, laziness was thought to be a hindering factor influencing adult learning.

Earlier research (Mertesdorf 1990:66) has revealed that hindering factors to adult learning include travel distance and cost of tuition. The results, presented in this thesis, demonstrated that among hindering factors to adult learning there are also factors related to travel distance to the non-formal education centre X, and the cost of tuition. Travel distance-related issues, such as availability of transportation to the non-formal education centre X as well as difficult road conditions in winter, were thought of as hindering factors to adult learners. Also, language courses were considered to be quite expensive. This, as reported by the respondents, could limit adults' participation in language courses, and make them have

second thoughts before enrolling at a course. Based on this finding, it can be assumed that in future, provided that the cost of tuition of language courses remains high, there is a slight possibility that the number of adults engaged in lifelong learning might decrease.

According to the results, presented in this thesis, the range of hindering factors to adult learning include factors related to physical wellbeing. In fact, health problems were reported as hindering factors to adult learning. This finding is in line with Merriam and Caffarella (1999:398), who state that adult learners may be affected by various health problems and, therefore, learning in adulthood could be quite challenging.

Among factors hindering adult learning there are also career and job-related factors (Deggs 2011:1547). The results of this study revealed that colleagues were perceived as discouraging. Colleagues' conduct and unfriendly attitudes were thought to be rather inconvenient and, thus, considered as factors hindering adult learning.

Several earlier studies (Cozma 2015:1213; Merriam and Caffarella 1999:390; Märja et al 2007:35, 73–74; Rogers 2002:73–75; Schwarzer 2009:30) have pointed out the importance of the influence (supporting or hindering) of adults' prior life experience and knowledge on their learning. As a matter of fact, the results of this study did not reveal the similar findings. Also, factors connected with biological aging, e.g., lack of energy, bad hearing or bad eyesight, have been brought up as factors hindering adult learning (Cozma 2015:1211–1213; Merriam and Caffarella 1999:115, 397–398). However, the results of this study did not reveal similar findings. The author of the thesis is of the opinion that issues related to biological aging were not reported as hindering factors to adults and adult learning because of the fact that adults are voluntary learners (Rogers 2002:14–15). So, since the respondents attended language courses of their own free will, it could be assumed that adults with any issues hindering adult learning and being related to biological-aging were probably not among these adult learners enrolled at this non-formal education centre X.

In conclusion, it can be said that supporting and hindering factors influencing adults learning English in non-formal education are generally similar to supporting and hindering factors influencing adults and their learning revealed by earlier studies on adult learners and adult learning. However, the results of this study demonstrated one new theme influencing adult learning: COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the limitations of this study could be the use of a single qualitative small-scale study, i.e., focusing on adult learners in only one non-formal education centre. Lack of time as well as lack of author's experience in doing research limited the use of a qualitative large-scale study. Therefore, the results obtained may lack generalisation. However, according to Hirjärvi et al (2010:169), in qualitative research results are not tried to be generalised. Moreover, the characteristic features of a single case/phenomenon, reported as the results of the research, can often also apply when carrying out a research on a broader scale (Hirsjärvi et al 2010:169). Although the participants of the research came from one non-formal education centre, it could be possible to make some generalisations so that the conclusions made are of bigger importance, and could be implemented in order to engage more adult learners in non-formal education, and tailor language courses which are flexible and of a high quality.

Another limitation could be the sampling method used. The representativeness on nonprobability sampling is regarded as limited since "there is no random selection from a population list" (Davis 2015:199), and major generalisations cannot be made (Davis 2015:199). Also, a small number of participants can be seen as a limitation.

Although there are some limitations regarding the present study, there are also some benefits to be pointed out. As stated by Duff and Anderson (2015:117), studies which make use of case study methods are „very powerful methodology for language researchers /.../ in language education". One of the benefits of a single case study research can be its ability to

thoroughly investigate phenomena involving only one research participant and one bounded phenomenon (Duff and Anderson 2015:116). In this qualitative research the only participant in a broad sense was the non-formal education centre X with its adult learners, and the bounded phenomenon was factors which supported or hindered learning English in non-formal education. It can be suggested that to further explore this study, a proper case-study should be employed.

As known to the author of this MA thesis, no research has been carried out on adult learners of English in non-formal education in Estonia. The investigation of factors supporting or hindering adults in learning English in non-formal education is the primary significance of this study. Although the number of adults participating in this study was small, the results provide some information on factors supporting or hindering adults in learning English in non-formal education. Based on the findings, demonstrated in this thesis, it can be suggested that non-formal education centres should offer more flexible courses start times in order to cater more for adult learners' needs. Also, it is recommended that non-formal education centres consider lowering cost of tuition for language courses so that more adults could afford learning languages. Taking the results of this thesis as well as the goals stated in the strategic documents on education in Estonia into consideration, it can be advised that non-formal education centres offer language courses also in smaller towns in addition to bigger populated centres in order to improve the accessibility of adults to training courses and to engage more adults in lifelong learning.

Further possible research might focus on teaching adults and investigate how adult learners' teachers report on hindering factors influencing adults learning English in non-formal education. Also, the influence of adult learners' prior knowledge and experience on adult learning could be an interesting topic to be researched.

CONCLUSION

The world today is changing demographically. Also, the number of adults has been on a constant rise. Moreover, rapid developments occur in global economy, new technologies have been introduced. All this has created a situation where there is a growing demand for lifelong learning. Knowing languages has also become an important issue.

Lifelong learning is of great importance in the whole world, including Estonia. The number of adult learners in Estonia is increasing every year. The knowledge of languages and learning languages are of high priority. Strategic documents have been drafted providing measures to be taken in order to engage more adults in lifelong learning in non-formal education.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English. The research questions, this MA thesis tried to answer, were: 1. What factors support learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education? and 2. What factors hinder learning English as reported by adult learners in non-formal education?.

This MA thesis includes an *Introduction*, two core chapters and a *Conclusion*. In the *Introduction* the necessity for understanding adult learners' needs as well as supporting or hindering factors to adult learning in order to provide access to more adults in lifelong learning is discussed.

Chapter 1 provides literature on the topic of an adult learner and adult learning. Adult learners can be defined in many different ways. Adult learners are generally considered to be 25 years old or older, and learning is their voluntary choice. Also, adult learners usually have many socio-cultural roles to cope with, e.g., being a parent, earning money, working full time. Due to the ability to stay focused for a long time, they make good learners of

languages. Every adult has his or her own values, knowledge, skills and experiences which come to the classroom with him or her. Adults are seen as highly motivated learners who know exactly why they learn. Motivation is looked on as a supporting factor influencing adult learning. Alongside with supporting factors to adult learning there are also hindering ones. Age-related, money-related as well as time management-related issues are among factors proved to be factors hindering adult learning.

Chapter 2 focuses on the methodology, the study results, the results interpretation and the discussion of the results. Chapter 2 also discusses the limitations and the importance of the thesis, and suggests possible further research topics. A qualitative research was carried out in the non-formal education centre X to investigate, which factors support or hinder adult learners enrolled at a non-formal education centre learning English.

Nonprobability purposeful sampling was used. Eight adult A-level learners of English in the non-formal education centre X were interviewed. Data were gathered by using semi-structured research interviews. Empirical data were collected in February – March 2021. Audio-recordings were used to document the data. All interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. The data were analysed by using inductive thematic analysis. As a result of data analysis, four main themes related to supporting factors were derived: Learning Motivation, Learning Environment, Course Arrangement, and Social life. Related to hindering factors influencing adults in learning English, six main themes emerged: COVID-19, Course Arrangement, Learning Environment, Social life, Learning Skills, and Quality of Life. The results of the study demonstrated that some of the themes appeared to be both supporting and hindering to adults learning English. Factors being both supporting and hindering included themes, such as Learning Environment, Course Arrangement, and Social Life. The results of this study suggested that supporting and hindering factors to adult learners in learning English in non-formal education are generally in line with the results of

earlier studies on adult learners and adult learning. However, one new theme reported by the adult learners and influencing adult learning was COVID-19.

Regarding the present MA thesis, there are some limitations, such as a small sample and the sampling method. However, the author of this thesis is not aware of any research carried out on adult learners of English in non-formal education in Estonia. Therefore, finding out supporting and hindering factors to adults in learning English in non-formal education was the primary significance of this study. Taking the results of this thesis as well as the goals stated in the strategic documents on education in Estonia into consideration, it can be suggested that the number of flexible courses start times be increased in order to cater for adult learners' needs in non-formal education. Also, it is advised to lower tuition fee for language courses so that more adults could afford attending courses and learning languages. Furthermore, in order to improve the accessibility of adults to training courses and to engage more adults in lifelong learning generally it is advisable that non-formal education centres provide language courses also in smaller towns in addition to bigger populated areas.

REFERENCES

Alhassan, Awal Mohammed. 2012. Factors affecting adult learning and their persistence: A theoretical approach. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 1: 6, 150–168.

Attride-Stirling, Jennifer. 2007. Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. In Alan Bryman (ed). *Qualitative Research 2*. Vol. IV, 125–147. London: Sage Publications.

Bowles, Chelcy L. 2010. Teachers of adult music learners: an assessment of characteristics and instructional practices, preparation, and needs. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 28: 2, 50–59.

Braun, Virginia and Victoria Clarke. 2012. Thematic analysis. In Harris Cooper, Paul Camic, Kenneth Sher, Abigail T. Panter, Debra Long and David Rindskopf (eds). *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology*. Vol II, 57–71. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Broughton, Geoffrey, Christopher Brumfit, Roger Flavell, Peter Hill and Anita Pincas. 1980. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language.* 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Caulfield, Jack. 2019. How to Do Thematic Analysis. Available at https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/, accessed February 7, 2021.

Chao Jr., Roger Y. 2009. Understanding the adult learners' motivation and barriers to learning. *European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. Inaugural Conference Proceedings*, 905–915. Thessaloniki: University of Macedonia.

Coffman, Don D. 2002. Adult education. In Richard Colwell and Carol Richardson (eds). *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning: A Project of the Music Educators National Conference*, 199–209. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cook, Vivian. 2016. *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. 5th ed. New York and London: Routledge.

Council of Europe. 2000. Recommendation 1437 on non-formal education. Available at http://semantic-pace.net/tools/pdf.aspx?doc=aHR0cDovL2Fzc2VtYmx5LmNvZS5pbnQvbncveG1sL1hSZWYvWDJILURXLWV4dHIuYXNwP2ZpbGVpZD0xNjc2MiZsYW5nPUVO&xsl=aHR0cDovL3NlbWFudGljcGFjZS5uZXQvWHNsdC9QZGYvWFJlZi1XRC1BVC1YRC1BVC1YTUwyUERGLnhzbA==&xsltparams=ZmlsZWlkPTE2NzYy, accessed May 15, 2021.

Council of Europe. n. d. Definitions. Available at https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/definitions, accessed May 15, 2021.

Cozma, Mihaela. 2015. The challenge of teaching English to adult learners in today's world. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 197: July, 1209–1214.

Davis, John McE.. 2015. Sampling and what it means. In James Dean Brown and Christine Coombe (eds). *The Cambridge Guide to Research in Language Teaching and Learning*, 198–205. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deth van, Jean-Pierre and Brian Frost-Smith. 1983. Foreign language teaching for adults. *European Journal of Education*, 18: 2, 151–157.

Deggs, David. 2011. Contextualizing the perceived barriers of adult learners in an accelerated undergraduate degree program. *The Qualitative Report*, 16: 6, 1540–1553.

Duff, Patricia A. and Tim Anderson. 2015. Case-study research. In James Dean Brown and Christine Coombe (eds). *The Cambridge Guide to Research in Language Teaching and Learning*, 112–118. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eetikaveeb n. d.. Teadustöö eetika [Ethics in Research]. Available at https://www.eetika.ee/et/teaduseetika/teadustoo, accessed January 2, 2021.

Erelt, Tiiu (ed). 2014. *Hariduse ja kasvatuse sõnaraamat* [Educational Dictionary]. Tallinn: Eesti Keele Sihtasutus. Available at http://www.eki.ee/dict/haridus/index.cgi, accessed April 14, 2021.

Eurostat. n. d. Distribution of the Level of Command of the Best-Known Foreign Language, 2007, 2011 and 2016. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Distribution_of_the_level_of_command_of_the_best-known_foreign_language,_2007,_2011_and_2016.png, accessed February 5, 2021.

Fink, L. Dee. 2003. *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Haidak, Terje. n. d. Millest räägime: kes on täiskasvanud õppija? [Who is an Adult Learner?]. Available at https://www.andras.ee/et/millest-r%C3%A4%C3%A4gimekes-t%C3%A4iskasvanud-%C3%B5ppija, accessed October 12, 2020.

Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium. 2014. Eesti elukestva õppe strateegia 2020 [The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020]. Available at https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/estonian_lifelong_strategy.pdf, accessed January 3, 2021.

Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium. n. d.a. Haridusvaldkonna arengukava 2021–2035 [Development Plan for the Area of Education 2021–2035]. Available at https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/eesti_haridusvaldkonna_arengukava_2035_seis uga_2020.03.27.pdf, accessed January 3, 2021.

Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium. n. d.b. Täiskasvanuhariduse programm 2020–2023 [Adult Education Programme 2020–2023]. Available at https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/7_taisk_progr_2020-23.pdf, accessed January 3, 2021.

Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium. n. d.c. Täiskasvanuhariudse programmi 2020–2023 seletuskiri [Explanatory Memorandum for the Adult Education Programme 2020–2023]. Available at https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/7_taisk_progr_2020-23_seletuskiri_dets19.docx.pdf, accessed January 3, 2021.

HaridusSilm. 2020. Täiskasvanute täiendkoolitus [Adult In-Service Training]. Available at https://www.haridussilm.ee/ee/taienduskoolitus, accessed March 6, 2021.

Jarvis, Peter. 2009. Learning to be a person in society: Learning to be me. In Knud Illeris (ed). *Contemporary Theories of Learning: Learning Theorists ... In Their Own Words*, 21–34. London and New York: Routledge.

Johnson, Keith. 2008. *An Introduction to Foreign Language Learning and Teaching*. 2nd ed. Harlow: Longman.

Kasper, Gabriele. 2015. Conducting interviews. In James Dean Brown and Christine Coombe (eds). *The Cambridge Guide to Research in Language Teaching and Learning*, 209–216. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lukianova, Larysa. 2016. Motivation factors of adult learning. *New Educational Review*, 44: 2, 223–229.

McKay, Heather and Abigail Tom. 1999. *Teaching Adult Second Language Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Merriam, Sharan B. and Rosemary S. Caffarella. 1999. *Learning in Adulthood. A Comprehensive Guide*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Mertesdorf, Jane C. 1990. *Learning Styles and Barriers to Learning Perceived by Adult Students on Campus*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Department of Professional Studies in Education, Iowa State University, Iowa, USA.

Märja, Talvi, Merle Lõhmus and Larissa Jõgi. 2003. *Andragoogika. Raamat õppimiseks ja õpetamiseks* [Andragogy. A Book for Learning and Teaching]. Tallinn: Ilo.

Pawlak, Miroslaw. 2015. Teaching foreign languages to adult learners: Issues, options, and opportunities. *Theoria et Historia Scientiarum*, 12, 45–65.

Peterson, Pille. 2016. *Mittetraditsioonilise kutsekoolis õppija õpikeskkonnad ja õppimist mõjutavad tegurid* [Non-Traditional Vocational School Learners' Learning Environments and Factors Affecting Learning]. Unpublished BA thesis. Institute of Education, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia.

Richards, Keith. 2015. Qualitative research. In James Dean Brown and Christine Coombe (eds). *The Cambridge Guide to Research in Language Teaching and Learning*, 61–67. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rogers, Alan. 2002. *Teaching Adults*. 3rd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Roosalu, Triin, Eve-Liis Roosmaa, Ellu Saar and Auni Tamm. 2012. *Mittetraditsiooniline tudeng kõrgkoolis*. [Non-Traditional Student in Higher Education]. Unpublished working paper. University of Tallinn, Tallinn, Estonia.

Schwarzer, David. 2009. Best practices for teaching the "whole" adult ESL learner. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2009: 121, 25–33.

Smith, Ann F. V. and Gregory Strong. 2009. Adult language learners: An overview. In Ann F. V. Smith and Gregory Strong (eds). *Adult Language Learners: Context and Innovation*, 1–6. Alexandria: TESOL Press.

Sogunro, Olusegun A. 2015. Motivating factors for adult learners in higher education. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 4: 1, 22–37.

Statistikaamet. n. d.a. Huvikoolides õppijad õppevaldkonna, vanuse ja soo järgi [Enrolment in Hobby Education by Field of Education, Age and Sex]. Available at https://andmed.stat.ee/en/stat/sotsiaalelu__haridus__huviharidus/HTH02, accessed March 6, 2021.

Statistikaamet. n. d.b. Kvaliteetne haridus [Quality Education]. Available at https://www.stat.ee/et/avasta-statistikat/valdkonnad/saastev-areng/4-kvaliteetne-haridus, accessed January 3, 2021.

Strevens, Peter. 1973. Second language learning. *Daedalus*, 102: 3, 149–160.

Tüür, Erle. 2013. *Mittetraditsioonilise õppija kutseõpingute valiku motiivid ja õpinguid mõjutavad tegurid* [Motivating Factors to Non-Traditional Learners to Enrol in Vocational Education, and Factors Influencing their Studies]. Unpublished MA thesis. Institute of Education, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia.

Vint, Jaanika. 2017. *Mittetraditsioonilise õppija õpioskused kõrgkoolis kutseõpetaja õppekaval õppimiseks* [Learning Skills of a Non-Traditional Learner Necessary for Studying on a Vocational Teacher Curriculum in Higher Education]. Unpublished BA thesis. Institute of Education, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Respondents' Background Information

Respondent	Reason(s) for taking a language course	Previous experience in taking a language course
A	To do research and read scholarly literature in English.	No
B	To be more competitive in the present world.	Yes, two years ago.
C	To travel and visit relatives abroad.	Yes, Italian and French.
D	Could not learn when at school, to be more competitive in the present world where it is impossible to do without knowing English.	Yes, twice, eight years ago.
E	To travel and communicate in English.	Yes, half a course in 2020.
F	To be able to communicate in English while travelling, and be able to read professional literature in English.	No
G	To improve the English language skills.	No
H	To refresh one's memory.	Yes, three years

Appendix 2

Interview Questions for Adult Learners

Intervjuuküsimused täiskasvanud õppijatele

Õppimist toetavad tegurid

1. Palun seletage, mis Teile meeldib keelekursusel õppimise juures?

2. Palun kirjeldage, mis on Teie jaoks kõige meeldivam/toredam keelekursuel osalemise juures?

3. Palun kirjeldage, kuidas leiate motivatsiooni õppimiseks?

4. Palun kirjeldage, millised tegurid ja kuidas soodustavad Teie õppimist?

1) kuidas toetab õppimist perekond? Tooge näiteid.

2) kuidas toetab õppimist õpikeskkond (kodu, klassiruum)? Tooge näiteid.

3) kuidas toetab õppimist töö (keele kasutamine tööl, juhtkonna toetus jms)? Täpsustage.

4) kuidas toetavad õppimist kaasõppijad? Täpsustage.

5) kuidas toetavad õppimist sõbrad? Selgitage.

6) kuidas toetab õppimist õpetaja? Selgitage.

7) kuidas toetab Teie õppimist kursuse toimumise aeg? Kui paindlik see on?

5. Kas on veel õppimist toetavaid faktoreid, mida sooviksite lisada? Täpsustage.

Õppimist takistavad tegurid

1. Palun selgitage, mis Teile ei meeldi keelekursusel osalemise juures? Miks?

2. Millised momendid on õppimise juures kõige raskemad? Miks?

3. Palun kirjeldage, millised tegurid ja kuidas on takistuseks Teie õppimisel?

1) kuidas takistab õppimist Teie perekond? Tooge näiteid.

2) kuidas takistab õppimist õpikeskkond? Tooge näiteid.

3) kuidas takistab õppimist Teie töö (keele kasutamine tööl, juhtkond jms)? Täpsustage.

4) kuidas takistavad õppimist kursusekaaslased? Täpsustage.

5) kuidas takistavad õppimist sõbrad? Selgitage.

6) kuidas takistab õppimist õpetaja? Selgitage.

7) kuidas takistab Teie õppimist kursuse toimumise aeg?

4. Kas on veel õppimist takistavaid faktoreid, mida sooviksite nimetada? Selgitage.

5. Kas õpingute ajal on Teil tekkinud mõte õpingud pooleli jätta? Kui jah, siis millega seoses tekkisid mõtted õpingud katkestada?

6. Kuidas saaks Teie õppimist toetada? Tooge näiteid.

Appendix 3

Institution Informed Consent Form

Uuringus osaleva haridusasutuse nõusolekuleht

Minu nimi on Mario Kalmus ja ma õpin Tartu Ülikoolis magistriõppes võõrkeeleõpetaja õppekaval teisel kursusel. Oma magistritööga seoses olen läbi viimas uuringut eesmärgiga selgitada välja mitteformaalses hariduses inglise keelt õppivate täiskasvanute (vanuses 25+) arusaamad õppimist toetavatest ja takistavatest teguritest inglise keele õppimisel. Saadud tulemused on olulised täiskasvanutele mõeldud kursuste paindlikumaks muutmisel ja kursuste kvaliteedi tõstmisel.

Seoses eelpool kirjeldatud uuringuga soovin läbi viia intervjuud inglise keelt õppivate täiskasvanud (vanuses 25+) õppuritega Teie asutuses. Intervjuud viiakse läbi individuaalselt vastavalt intervjueeritava eelistusele kas telefoni, FB *messengeri* või *Skype* vahendusel. Intervjuud salvestatakse. Kõik vastused on rangelt konfidentsiaalsed. Vastuseid eraldi ei kasutata ega levitata. Vastuseid intervjuuküsimustele ei saa seostada vastaja isikuandmetega. Analüüsi ei tehta üksikvastaja tasemel, vaid sihtgrupi lõikes. Andmeid esitatakse kodeeritult. Ühe intervjuu kestus on orienteeruvalt 30 minutit. Kõik uuringus osalevad täiskasvanud õppijad saavad enne intervjuud e-posti teel intervjuuküsimused, et nendega tutvuda. Uuringus osalemine on vabatahtlik. Oma nõusolekust palun täiskasvanud õppijaid mind informeerida e-posti teel tagastades mulle digitaalselt allkirjastatud uuringus osalemise nõusolekulehe. Seejärel võtan nendega ühendust, et kokku leppida intervjuude toimumise aeg ja viis.

Palun Teie abi Teie haridusasutuses inglise keelt tasemetel A1 - A2. õppivatele täiskasvanud (25+) õppijatele minu palve edastamisel õppijate listi e-posti teel (fail „Intervjueeritava „Informed Consent Form" lisatud manuses) uuringus osalemiseks. Antud fail palun edastada järgmistes gruppides õppivatele kõikidele täiskasvanud õppijatele (õpetajate grupid, kes õpetavad kõikidel nendel tasemetel - A, B, C, gruppide numbrid on esitatud nii, nagu nad Teie asutuse poolt minule saadetud tabelis on antud):

Tase A1.1. - grupid nr 1, 2, 3 ja 4

Tase A1.2. - grupid nr 2, 3, minigrupp ja *grammar*

Tase A2. - grupid nr 2 ja 4.

Juhul, kui olete nõus ülalkirjeldatud uuringuga, siis palun Teid sisestada Teie haridusasutust esindava isiku nimi allpool selleks ettenähtud kohta, seejärel allkirjastada digitaalselt antud dokument ja saata see minu e-posti aadressile.

Tänades,

Lugupidamisega,

Mario Kalmus

Tel.: +372 xxxxxxxx

E-post: xx.xxx@xxx.ee

Täidab haridusasutus

Mina, ... (nimi, ametikoht) kinnitan, et nõustun ülalnimetatud uuringu läbi viimisega haridusasutuse X täiskasvanud õppijate seas. Olen teadlik, et lisainformatsiooni uuringu kohta saab Mario Kalmus'e käest kas e-posti või telefoni teel.

Kuupäev

Allkiri

(allkirjastatakse digitaalselt)

Appendix 4

Respondent Informed Consent Form

Intervjueeritava nõusolekuleht

Olen Tartu Ülikooli võõrkeeleõpetaja õppekava magistrant Mario Kalmus. Täiskasvanuharidus ja elukestev õpe on Eestis haridusmaastikul väga olulised. Oma magistritööga seoses olen läbi viimas uuringut eesmärgiga selgitada välja mitteformaalses õppes (hariduses) inglise keelt õppivate täiskasvanute (vanuses 25+) arusaamad õppimist toetavatest ja takistavatest teguritest inglise keele õppimisele. Saadud tulemused on vajalikud täiskasvanutele pakutavate kursuste muutmisel paindlikumaks, kvaliteetsemaks ja täiskasvanud õppija vajadustega enam vastavuses olevateks. „Täiskasvanuhariduse programm 2020–2023" peab Eestis täiskasvanud õppijale pakutavate koolituste võtmesõnadeks paindlikkust ja kvaliteeti.

Seoses ülalnimetatud uuringuga soovin läbi viia intervjuud täiskasvanud (vanuses 25+) õppijatega, kes õpivad inglise keelt keeletasemetel A1. - A2. Intervjuud viiakse läbi individuaalselt vastavalt intervjueeritava eelistusele kas telefoni, FB *messengeri* või *Skype* vahendusel. Intervjuud salvestatakse. Kõik vastused on rangelt konfidentsiaalsed. Vastuseid eraldi ei kasutata ega levitata. Vastuseid intervjuuküsimustele ei saa seostada vastaja isikuandmetega. Analüüsi ei tehta üksikvastaja tasemel, vaid sihtgrupi lõikes. Andmeid esitatakse kodeeritult. Ühe intervjuu kestus on orienteeruvalt 30 minutit. Kõik uuringus osalevad täiskasvanud õppijad saavad enne intervjuud e-posti teel intervjuuküsimused, et nendega tutvuda ja intervjuuks valmistuda. Uuringus osalemine on vabatahtlik ja anonüümne.

Oma nõusolekuks osaleda antud uuringus palun Teid täita allpool olev nõusolekuvorm. Palun Teid vastata ka kuuele Teie tausta täpsustavale küsimusele, mis on toodud allpool. Palun Teid allkirjastada dokument digitaalselt ning saata see minu e-posti aadressile. Võtan Teiega ühendust, et leppida kokku intervjuu toimumise aeg ja vorm.
Tänades,

Mario Kalmus

Võõrkeeleõpetaja õppekava magistrant

Tel.: +372 xxxxxxxx

E-post: xx.xxx@xxx.ee

Täidab uuringus osaleja

Mind, ... (nimi) on informeeritud Mario Kalmus'e uuringust ja ma olen teadlik läbiviidava uurimistöö eesmärgist, uuringu metoodikast ning kinnitan oma nõusolekut selles osalemiseks oma allkirjaga. Tean, et uurimustöö käigus tekkivatele küsimustele saan mulle vajalikku täiendavat informatsiooni Mario Kalmus'e käest. Lisan vastused kuuele intervjuule eelnevale küsimusele:

1. Sugu?

2. Vanus?

3. Mis on põhjus Teie osalemiseks keelekursusel?

4. Kas olete varem õppinud keelekursustel? Täpsustage.

5. Kes tasub Teie õppemaksu?

6. Millises piirkonnas Te elate (näiteks: Tartu linn)?

Kuupäev

Allkiri

(allkirjastatakse digitaalselt)

Appendix 5

From Basic to Organising to Global Themes: Supporting Factors

Themes as Basic Themes	Organising Themes	Global Themes
1. Good mental, emotional and physical health	Intrinsic motivation	Learning motivation
2. Personal development and self-improvement		
3. Availability of scientific and hobby literature in English	Extrinsic motivation	
4. Knowledge of other language as a practical tool		
5. English as international means of communication		
6. Social interaction		
7. Home as learning environment	Physical learning environment	Learning environment
8. Classroom as learning environment		
9. Classmates	Intellectual and social environment of the non-formal education centre	
10. Teaching staff		
11. Distance learning	Methods of studies	
12. Contact learning		
13. Courses start times	Organisation of studies	Course arrangement
14. Family	Private life	Social life
15. Friends		
16. Employer	Career and work	

Appendix 6

From Basic to Organising to Global Themes: Hindering Factors

Themes as Basic Themes	Organising Themes	Global Themes
1. Social distancing	Restrictions	COVID-19
2. Wearing protective face masks		
3. Lack of language practice		
4. Home as learning environment	Physical learning environment	Learning environment
5. Classroom as learning environment		
6. Teaching staff	Intellectual and social environment of the no-formal education centre	
7. Distance learning	Methods of studies	
8. Academic capability	Academic skills	Learning skills
9. Computer literacy	Hard skills	
10. Time management	Soft skills	
11. Physical well-being	Health	Quality of life
12. Courses start times	Organisation of studies	Course arrangement
13. Availability of transportation	Location	
14. Tuition fee	The cost of courses	
15. Family	Private life	Social life
16. Friends		
17. Employer	Career and work	
18. Colleagues		

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Mario Kalmus
Supporting and Hindering Factors to Adults in the Process of Learning English in Non-Formal Education
Täiskasvanu õppimist toetavad ja takistavad tegurid inglise keele õppimise protsessis mitteformaalhariduses
Magistritöö
2021
Lehekülgede arv: 67

Annotatsioon:

Maailm meie ümber on pidevas muutumises, mistõttu on saanud tähtsaks keelte õppimine ja elukestev õpe. Eestis on haridusmaastikul prioriteetideks keelte õpe ning täiskasvanud õppijate arvu suurendamine mitteformaalses elukestvas õppes.

Magistritöö eesmärgiks oli välja selgitada, millised tegurid toetavad või takistavad täiskasvanud õppija inglise keele õppimist mitteformaalhariduses. Püstitati kaks uurimisküsimust: 1. Millised tegurid toetavad täiskasvanud õppija inglise keele õppimist mitteformaalhariduses? ja 2. Milliseid tegurid takistavad täiskasvanud õppija inglise keele õppimist mitteformaalhariduses?. Magistritöö koosneb *Sissejuhatusest*, kahest põhipeatükist ja *Kokkuvõttest*. Magistritöö *Sissejuhatus* annab ülevaate töö vajalikkusest. Töö esimeses peatükis arutletakse täiskasvanud õppija olemuse ja täiskasvanu õppimise üle. Teine peatükk keskendub metoodikale, uurimistulemuste analüüsile, uurimistulemuste interpretatsioonile ning arutelule. Magistritöö *Kokkuvõte* võtab sisutihedalt kokku kõik eelnevad töö osad.

Püstitatud uurimisküsimustele vastamiseks viidi läbi kvalitatiivne uurimus mitteformaalhariduses inglise keelt tasemel A õppivate täiskasvanute seas. Andmkogumismeetod oli poolstruktureeritud intervjuu. Andmete analüüsimisel kasutati induktiivset teemaanalüüsi. Andmeanalüüsi tulemusena moodustus õppimist toetavate teguritena neli põhiteemat: õpimotivatsioon, õpikeskkond, õppekorraldus, sotsiaalne suhtlus. Õppimist takistavate teguritena tuli välja kuus põhiteemat: COVID-19, õppekorraldus, õpikeskkond, sotsiaalne suhtlus, õpioskused, elukvaliteet. Mõned tegurid osutusid nii õppimist toetavateks kui ka takistavateks. Täiskasvanu õppimist takistava uue teemana tuli antud töö uurimistulemustest välja COVID-19 pandeemia ja sellega seonduv. Saadud tulemuste põhjal võib järeldada, et täiskasvanud õppija inglise keele õppimist toetavad ja takistavad tegurid mitteformaalhariduses on sarnased varasemate uurimistööde tulemustele, mis käsitlevad täiskasvanu õppimist toetavaid ja takistavaid tegureid üldiselt.

Märksõnad:
Täiskasvanud õppija, täiskasvanu õppimine, täiskasvanu õppimist toetavad tegurid, täiskasvanu õppimist takistavad tegurid, mitteformaalharidus, inglise keele õppimine.

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

Mina, Mario Kalmus,

1. Annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) minu loodud teose

Supporting and Hindering Factors to Adults in the Process of Learning English in Non-Formal Education,

mille juhendaja on Djuddah Arthur Joost Leijen

reprodutseerimiseks eesmärgiga seda säilitada, sealhulgas lisada digitaalarhiivi *DSpace* kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse lõppemiseni.

2. Annan Tartu Ülikoolile loa teha punktis 1 nimetatud teos üldsusele kättesaadavaks Tartu Ülikooli veebikeskkonna, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi *DSpace* kaudu *Creative Commons*'i litsentsiga CC BY NC ND 3.0, mis lubab autorile viidates teost reprodutseerida, levitada ja üldsusele suunata ning keelab luua tuletatud teost ja kasutada teost ärieesmärgil, kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse lõppemiseni.

3. Olen teadlik, et punktides 1 ja 2 nimetatud õigused jäävad alles ka autorile.

4. Kinnitan, et lihtlitsentsi andmisega ei riku ma teiste isikute intellektuaalomandi ega isikuandmete kaitse õigusaktidest tulenevaid õigusi.

Mario Kalmus

15.05.2021

Autorsuse kinnitus

Kinnitan, et olen koostanud käesoleva magistritöö ise ning toonud korrektselt välja teiste autorite panuse. Töö on koostatud lähtudes Tartu Ülikooli maailma keelte ja kultuuride kolledži anglistika osakonna magistritöö nõuetest ning on kooskõlas heade akadeemiliste tavadega.

Mario Kalmus

15.05.2021

Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele.

Djuddah Arthur Joost Leijen

15.05.2021