



O1 - National report

LITHUANIA



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1. Introduction

This document, National Report is organized in the framework of the “IO1 FRAMEWORK & RESEARCH”, which represents the starting point of the project to develop innovative resources for seniors wishing to learn foreign languages. The first task of this IO focuses on the research on seniors’ language learning at the local, regional and national levels and on available methods and materials for seniors’ language teachers, the second task implements the Focus Groups, then the in-depth interviews.

The key outcomes of the IO1 activities are:

- To identify the tools, techniques and knowledge needed by seniors to study a language (and mostly English),
- To analyse the available support for language teachers in the area of teaching seniors in the partner countries,
- To research on needs within the language learning,
- To explore the new, innovative ideas in the area of language learning for seniors

In particular, MEANING partners will develop a methodology and ready-to-use cards for seniors’ language learning. To make sure that these resources are useful and adapted to seniors’ needs, the partners conducted a user-centered research including Focus Groups and Interviews to identify the real needs of teachers and seniors. This will help to create materials that address the target group in the most appropriate way and will multiply the impact on both senior learners and adult educators.

The National Report is a summary of all IO1 activities in each partner country. It will explore the challenges in language learning for seniors. This will help the partnership to identify existing gaps in training and improve the quality and accuracy of the recommendations and conclusions put forward and when developing the training materials of MEANING.



2. Lithuanian context analysis

Data given on October 16th, 2020 shows that there are 555 976 people aged 65 year and older living in Lithuania, which is 19,8% of the country's population. There were twice as many elderly women (66.4% of the total population aged 65 and over) as men. Over the decade, the average life expectancy of 65+ year has increased by one year¹. It is expected that by 2050 the population of the country's elderly will be 30%².

Employment of older people is increasing: in the third quarter of 2020 was 11.2% people aged 65 and over were employed, and their employment rate increased by 2.1 percentage points per year. In this area, men outnumber women: 16.8% older men and 8.3% older women worked³. In 2019, 386 elderly people emigrated from Lithuania, 349 people immigrated, including 106 emigrants and 58 immigrants over 80 years of age⁴. However, COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical situation (for ex. Brexit) will influence this data.

There are only 0,93% 65+ years persons who are involved in learning activities (the European average is 10,9%)² which shows that Lithuanian seniors do not tend to learn after retirement and the growth of this number during several past years is still very slow.

2.1. Characterisation of language learning for seniors

Non-formal adult education can be provided by all education providers located in Lithuania. Non-formal learning is provided by various types of organizations whose main activity is non-vocational adult education: adult language teaching / learning, personality development, artistic expression centers, multifunctional centers in rural areas, Third Age Universities (TAU), disabled people's organizations (associations), communities, non-governmental organizations, libraries, museums, cultural and educational centers, higher education institutions².

As Lithuania's seniors usually do not tend to learn new things in their retirement years, the surveys have shown that poor financial situation is the main factor of not giving a try for learning new skills². According to this, external financial support has a significant impact on the involvement of the population in educational activities. Financial support for educational activities also includes free events that allow residents to learn and improve without investing personal money. It is important



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for residents to be able to participate in educational activities free of charge or at a low cost.

Researchers provide evidence that learning foreign languages in old age is not only possible but also beneficial to health⁵. Usually the problem of older people is not their lack of knowledge, but the fact that no one has ever taught them the right education⁶.

The most popular language courses for elderly in Lithuania are provided by Third Age Universities. According to survey that has been carried out in Faculty of Foreign Languages at Medard Čobotas University of the Third Century (MČTAU)⁷, shows that seniors' motives for learning foreign languages are diverse: the desire to improve the language they studied at school and university, the desire to communicate better with children grandchildren and the desire to communicate with foreigners coming to Lithuania.

As there are no special textbooks for working with the elderly in Lithuania, the curricula are developed by teachers using universal textbooks for foreign language learning, adapted and adapted for seniors. Teachers work by applying andragogical methods, creating opportunities for course participants to communicate as much as possible in a group, to talk about issues relevant to them⁷.

When teaching older students, it is important to regulate the pace of their learning, give them the opportunity to express their opinions, and create a safe environment in which they feel happy. In order to improve the language learning of older people, it is necessary to create conditions for "immersion" in the language being studied, to use the mother tongue as little as possible, to listen to authentic recordings as much as possible, and to discuss material heard or read.

For example, the course "The English for Communication" at MČTAU is a serious challenge for elderly learners due to the complexity of using authentic online recordings for listening comprehension⁷. Learners who have tried modern learning often abandon innovation and return to regular, textbook-based study. However, it must be stated that there is not one universal teaching methodology for all. Mastering a foreign language will be able to motivate seniors who realize that the basis of communication is the ability to understand another language and an adequate response - speaking that is based on an understanding of a foreign culture. Success will accompany learners who will not be afraid to take advantage of current IT opportunities: listen to online recordings that will meet the needs of different levels of listeners in their diversity and subject matter. Also, feedback is important for the teacher – students' opinion about learning methods and their progress⁷.

The best practices and successful projects undertaken to improve language education for seniors In

Lithuania:

- Third Age Universities⁸. There are 49 TAUs in Lithuania, however activities vary in different branches. Also, not every branch of it has information about their activities. TAUs in bigger cities like Vilnius, Kaunas, Šiauliai have Faculties of Foreign Languages which are the most popular according to the number of attendees. The most popular language to learn is English. There are not only courses of languages, but also cultural events related to languages and their origin countries in the universities.
- NGO “Senior Hive”⁹ – various NGOs and non-profit organizations located over one roof. Organizations are providing assistance in activities for the elderly: employment (board games, music, handicrafts, etc.), education (learning languages, computer literacy, etc.), health activities (exercise, etc.). Now there are 4 groups of English learners in the organization.
- Kaunas Women's Employment Information Center¹⁰ is a nongovernmental organization, working with women and for women. Center seeks to improve the status of women in Lithuania, solving their employment, business creation and development problems, training women leaders, as well as influencing public opinion on equality issues. Among other training courses, organization provides English learning courses for active seniors focusing on spoken language development while working in small groups of women.





2.2. Main conclusions and research recommendations for adapting MEANING PROJECT

The analysis of Lithuanian seniors' learning allows to draw some conclusions about what principles and circumstances of English language learning could potentially increase the involvement of seniors in non-formal education activities. The most important of these is that English language courses must be easily accessible and free of charge for seniors. Institutions close to the people, such as community centers, libraries, and various employment centers, should provide English language classes tailored to the needs of seniors. It is believed that non-profit organizations could provide this type of training to seniors living in urban or township communities.

The analysis of the conducted research shows that the teaching of seniors in English requires textbooks adapted to their needs and possibilities, and other thematically relevant teaching materials must be prepared. It was found that it is important to regulate the pace of seniors learning, give them the opportunity to express their opinions, and create a safe environment in which they feel comfortably. In order to improve the language learning of older people, it is necessary to listen to authentic recordings as much as possible, and to discuss material heard or read. The IT skills and training of seniors are also important, as a significant part of the tasks and teaching materials can be provided online while learning English.

Within the framework of the MEANING project, it would be useful to consider the possibility of cooperating with Kaunas District Third Century University, as they do not currently offer English language training to their senior students, but see such a need. This partnership could serve to test the methods, products, pilot sessions developed during this project, and at the same time in future projects on a similar topic.



3. Focus group

This Focus group is significant in order to understand and clarify the features and components of the English language teaching/learning process for seniors. The challenges and difficulties encountered in the context of today's Lithuanian society are becoming especially important in order to overcome them and find appropriate solutions, thus ensuring the quality of teaching/learning results and the satisfaction of both parties in this process.

3.1. Main goals and purpose

The Focus Groups explored the challenges in language learning for seniors. The Focus Groups in each partner country include questions and themes addressed by the project, to enable accurate cross-country and cross-cultural comparisons. This will help the partnership to identify existing gaps in training.

The Focus Groups will seek to investigate discussion between participants, to allow the facilitators to identify areas of agreement or common understanding, in addition to areas of disagreement or opinions that are unique to the individual. This will improve the quality and accuracy of the recommendations and conclusions put forward and when developing the training materials of MEANING.

3.2. Overview

Those participants who had already been in contact before the implementation of this project were invited to participate in the Focus group discussion. Some of the participants were library partners in previous projects, others were active users of library services, and others were specialists working in the library. Participants were invited to participate using their existing contact details, i.e. by phone, e-mail, social networks.

The focus group discussion was attended by 6 people: 3 seniors, 1 English teacher, 2 adult educators (andragogues). It should be noted that another English teacher had to take part in the discussion, but



in the end did not join the discussion due to unforeseen circumstances. Brief information about the participants in the discussion is provided in the 1 Table.

1 Table. Information about Focus group participants

Name	Job category
SENIOR_1	
SENIOR_2	
SENIOR_3	
EN_TEACHER	English Teacher (experience working with seniors – more than 5 years)
ANDRAGOGUE_1	Andragogue (experience working with seniors – more than 5 years)
ANDRAGOGUE_2	Andragogue (experience working with seniors – more than 5 years)

The focus group discussion was conducted on 15th of February (in 2021) remotely on the ZOOM platform. During the discussion, the participants maintained their attention, were active and involved in the discussion of the issues discussed and the implementation of the planned tasks. During the discussion, the moderator listened to the all participants to whom the discussion questions were addressed. The atmosphere of the focus group was friendly; the participants were in a good mood and shared both personal experience and professional knowledge benevolently.

The discussion of the focus group was moderated by one person - a methodologist and researcher working at Kaunas County Public Library. The participants in the discussion willingly completed the tasks that were discussed. The moderator asked each member of the discussion to speak. The same principle was followed throughout the discussion, as there were not many participants and circumstances allowed it, despite repeated opinions or responses. The speaking of each member allowed to understand the opinion of both seniors and specialists and to compare the results obtained later.

During the focus group, a discussion started between the participants themselves – between seniors, English teacher and andragogues. Seniors were eager to ask about the most appropriate methods they could use to learn and practice English on their own. This formation of favourable contact with the participants allowed moderating and developing the discussion even more smoothly.

The structure of the discussion and the content of the issues that were discussed are set out in the Agenda below:



AGENDA

Focus Group

2021. 02.15, 10:00, Zoom

10:00 – login of the participants, greetings, introduction of the moderator, presentation and discussion of technical details of the discussion.

10:10 – a brief presentation of the project and the purpose of the discussion.

10:15 – introduction of participants (several sentences each: name, age, education, knowledge of English, experience of working with seniors / adults, current workplace).

10:25 – start of the discussion.

10:26 – **TASK 1:** Complete the sentence and write it down on a piece of paper - for seniors "The most important thing in the learning process for me ..." for English teachers and andragogues "When teaching seniors, the most important thing for me ...". Up to 3 things should be named; 1 minute is allocated for the task. Discussion of the answers.

Some discussion questions arising from the task:

a) English teachers and andragogues:

- What characterizes the senior who comes to study?
- What do you think are the main differences between working with seniors and working with young people?

b) for seniors:

- What motivates you to learn foreign languages the most (in general and in particular)?
- How do you think teachers or other adult educators contribute to maintaining that motivation?
- What difficulties or challenges do you face in learning something new or extending your knowledge?

10:50 – **TASK 2:** On the piece of paper, write down the numbers from 1 to 3 in a column. There are three statements that participants can agree with (marked with a "+") or disagree with (marked with a "-"). The statements are repeated 2 times. After the participants mark the answers, each statement is discussed.

Statement 1: "A specialist educating older people must have other qualities in addition to their qualifications."

Statement 2: "The tasks and methods that promote interpersonal communication are the most useful for seniors when learning English or another foreign language."

Statement 3: "A system of assessment of achievement is not important when teaching or learning English or another foreign language, more important what is learning content and quality of the process."

11:10 – **QUESTIONS FOR FINAL DISCUSSION:**

- What do you think should be or what should be an English textbook specifically for seniors? What is the range of topics, what kind of tasks, etc.? (for seniors, English teachers)
- What methods are the most suitable while teaching English for seniors? (for English teachers)
- What do English teachers lack the most when teaching seniors? (for English teachers)
- Is / why feedback important while teaching seniors? How best to produce it? (for everyone)

11:30 – end of the discussion, thanks to the participants, request to fill in the discussion evaluation questionnaire, invitation to contact us if they are interested in the project activities and results.



The Focus group was evaluated by 5 participants (out of 6) (Evaluation Form provided in 1 Appendixe). The evaluation survey found that the expectations of most participants were fully met by the discussion (4 out of 5). All participants agreed that the objectives of the discussion were clear to them (3 - very clear, 2 - clear), and most felt that the topic of the discussion was fully disclosed (4 out of 5).

Evaluation of the focus group implementation. All the criteria for conducting the discussion were very positively assessed by the participants. The duration of the discussion and the moderator received the most favourable evaluations: these criteria were assessed by all participants as "very appropriate". 4 out of 5 participants who evaluated the discussion gave the highest ratings to the composition of the discussion and other aspects (organization, environment, etc.).

Evaluation of the focus group discussion content. Participants willingly commented on and appreciated the tasks presented during the discussion. Commenting on the least liked tasks, one participant named both the first and the second, but stressed that they saw the benefits of these tasks for the results of the discussion and the project. Assessing the most interesting tasks of the discussion, the majority (2 out of 5) named the second task, one participant the first task. Also, some participants tended to rate all the tasks and issues discussed as "very interesting".

Participants' comments & suggestions. According to the discussion participants, they would not change the focus group execution environment and moderator. Some participants said that the discussion went smoothly and would not change anything: *"I think I would not change anything – the purpose of the discussion was clear, seniors' expectations were examined, accents were put together, every nuance was examined – the facilitators emphasized from their experiences what seems important or emerges as a shortcoming"*.

However, as the results of the survey showed, some participants in the discussion wanted more people to take part in it, and there was a lack of another English teacher. These shortcomings were identified by 2 participants in the discussion. Also, according to one participant, the seniors who participated in the discussion wanted to hear more about what they lack when learning English.

One participant made a suggestion about seniors' expectations of learning English and seemed to present one of the results that summed up the discussion: *"[...] at the beginning of the discussion, when it came to learning expectations, there was a wish from one of us: that the sessions should not be boring. Thus, when developing teaching methodologies for the elderly, I would highly suggest thinking about this nuance as well. Of course, it might be easier to think of some playful elements for a young audience. But for active seniors, I think, for e.g., a thematic activity in the city, say in the form*



of a mini-tour, would be quite interesting. Or, of course, all this can be provided with the help of the media.”

3.3. Main findings

This section of the report presents the main results of the focus group discussion, which is divided into several thematic blocks.

➤ Seniors and youth training comparison

The specialists who participated in the discussion have experience in teaching both seniors and youth, so for them it was not difficult to distinguish the differences between these two groups of learners. According to the andragogues, the fundamental difference is in the rhythm/tempo of learning: *“If you just have time to turn around with young people, because you give a hint and they do the task before you finish the sentence, shouting 'I've already done', then older people need more attention - we do [the task], talk, try it, test it, then I ask again if everything clear”.* (ANDRAGOGUE_1). Seniors also have better focus and maintain it for longer time. On the other hand, older people sometimes lack the determination and perseverance to learn.

The English language teacher also singled out the use of different methods in the teaching process for young people and seniors, the specifics of teaching the material and formulating tasks: *“If young people do those tasks quickly, seniors are a little slower. But that desire to do everything quickly can put a foot down and you get disobedient to the task itself, so you often have to repeat it. It is necessary to watch the rhythm and not only react to how the student wants to do everything quickly, but the teacher sometimes needs to slow down so that the information can be absorbed, especially if the training takes place in groups”* (EN_TEACHER).

➤ Seniors' motivation to learn

According to the seniors, their learning is mostly motivated by the need to know the English, be able to communicate and read in a foreign language, to be better oriented during trips abroad. They are also motivated to learn by the desire to fulfil their personal hobbies in more diverse ways (e.g., reading poetry, watching movies, sports competitions in English) and to improve: *“The desire to learn is my being. Always, as far as I can remember, I want to learn something all the time. Maybe I am an inconsistent student, so I would sit down and learn English that way. Yes, I bought some book. Yes, I asked for something. It is not systematic learning, but I want to learn something else again [...] The process itself is important to me”* (SENIOR_2).



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According to seniors, the role of the teacher is also significant in terms of maintaining motivation to learn. The teacher should be able to interest in a learning subject, apply not the most universal but the most appropriate methods for a specific audience, also, be able to take into account the different needs and learning goals of learners (e.g., learn to communicate more smoothly, learn to write better in a foreign language, etc.) and build trust.

➤ **Qualities of a specialist teaching seniors**

All participants in the discussion emphasized that, in addition to their qualifications, a specialist educating seniors must have other qualities. According to andragogues, a specialist in any field who teaches other people must have charisma, communicability, ability to adapt to different situations, be able to interest and take into account the age differences of learners. Also, a senior educator specialist should not be arrogant, on the contrary, he or she should be tending to improve and be interested in innovations (i.e. new methods and strategies) in the professional field.

The special feature of the specialist – empathy – is emphasized by the participants: *“If the specialist understands how the other person feels, he / she will be able to focus not only on the transmission of the material, but also on how the other person accepts it. I think this is very important. The lecturer must not only be the “sender” of some information, but also open for the people he/she works with.”* (ANDRAGOGUE_1). Another feature that is especially important these days is the ability to establish and maintain a connection with the learner: *“Without a connection, the learning process will not work well. Now a lot has changed in the learning system itself. The learning process is more personalized. When I was in school, for example, it was quite static teaching. Now we are trying more to find that connection”* (EN_TEACHER).

In addition, patience, adaptation to the pace and opportunities of seniors' learning, the ability to listen to them and communicate with them properly were the qualities of a teacher that were singled out by seniors during the discussion: *“As the saying goes, if you want to raise a child well, you have to become a child. It's the same with seniors – you have to do everything a little slower. It's no secret that we have a big cult of youth and a lot of pressure that “you're old, you don't understand anything”. You just need patience and love for your work”* (SENIOR_2).

➤ **Seniors training/learning methods**

During the discussion, it became clear that the most effective methods for teaching seniors in English are the use of visual material and various practical tasks. It is important that subtitles accompany the visual material or the listening task. In this way, learning a language has a double benefit - there is an audible word and at the same time you can see how it looks written, because in English pronunciation very often the differs from the written version of the word.



According to the specialist that participated in the discussion, the practical tasks should depend on the specific topic, which is often related to the travelling and the various situations that arise during the trips. During the practical tasks, before performing them, it is necessary to mention how this task is useful so that the senior learners understand the essence of the task and where they can use the information or skills obtained during the task. The most useful way to achieve good results is to combine practical tasks and visual material: *"Learning of words and grammar is most useful through visuals, through some descriptions of pictures"* (EN_TEACHER). Also, according to specialist, there are many varied methods when teaching seniors but their application also depends on what learning experiences they have had in the past: *"Some [note - students] come with good memories from school, others come with very bad memories. And some want more traditional training similar to what they got at school, others don't want it at all. Therefore, the teacher has to adapt and see what is most suitable in a particular case"* (EN_TEACHER).

Most of the participants agreed with the statement that the tasks and methods that promote interpersonal communication are the most useful for seniors when learning English or another foreign language: *"If we are learning a language, we want to communicate with it. Yes, we watch movies, read books, articles or something. But the biggest challenge is communication – composing the sentence and something like that. Maybe we can't practice the language so much in our environment, but when we go somewhere and meet people one way or another, we need to break in somehow. This is usually the biggest challenge for all students - breaking through communication and sentence formation. Therefore, during learning, that promotion of dialogues would be one of the most important aspects of language teaching"* (EN_TEACHER).

Andragogues also singled out the influence of other participants with whom they learn the language together: *"Communication when talking in a couple, with exactly the same [note - person] as you are, for me personally, is not very good. Ideally, there should be native speakers in the training and you have to talk to them. In this case, there is more motivation to try than talking to someone who is the same level as you"* (ANDRAGOUE_2).

During the discussion, it became clear that the individual characteristics of the learners are very important. It also determines the effectiveness of the methods used by teachers or other adult learners. This conclusion is accurately reflected in the opinion of the two seniors, which was expressed during the discussion: *"I am like a loner. I'm used to doing everything on my own, so when there are tasks related to communication, it's an extra challenge for me. Because if I'm alone, I do what I want, and if I communicate with others, then I already have to adapt to the other. And in*



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general, it is better for me to study alone” (SENIOR_3); “I know that if I get a task to talk to someone on some topic, then I’m trying to take a look, to think. And basically I’m not afraid to talk. If I know five words, I will add a smile, my arms, legs, and talk. I think it is easier to learn further by communicating with someone” (SENIOR_2).

During the discussion, participants agreed on the need to actively practice the language after class, as further language practice is necessary to strengthen and improve the skills acquired during the training: *“I have learned two foreign languages and one of them [note – Italian] is just very nice to me. For me, that country is very beautiful. I really wanted to study, I found courses that I really liked and everything was fine, I finished them. But what’s the point? I have nowhere to use that language, I don’t go to that country, and there aren’t very many movies in that language. And it’s a zero. I just satisfied a kind of my, perhaps, egocentric desire to learn that language. Without communication, without consumption and further support, language learning is worthless” (ANDRAGOGUE_2).*

➤ **English textbook - what should it be like?**

According to the seniors who took part in the discussion, the English textbook that seems most attractive and appropriate to them should have a visual or listening material with subtitles, also be not "overloaded" with not so useful information, but at the same time rich in various thematic tasks and situations.

Specialists differentiate textbooks or instructional materials depending on the level of English proficiency a senior has: *“For beginners, this is the way a textbook is good, it provides a structure for the learning process. But most of the time we know some of the English; wherever we go - we hear it and there is already some perception of the same words. I couldn’t single out one textbook because information changes every day. Different textbooks should be for young people studying at school and for seniors. After all, older people will not learn English for all twelve years and those English language learning needs are different, they differ in old age” (EN_TEACHER).*

According to experts, the most useful and ideal textbook for teaching seniors in English would be an electronic textbook that would be updated and constantly updated according to current issues: *“It would probably be more relevant for seniors to talk in dialogue about how much snow has fallen this winter, not about a research done on children’s uniforms. That information needs to be relevant to those specific people who are learning the language” (EN_TEACHER).*

➤ **Achievement Assessment**

Participants in the discussion had the same opinion that there is a lot of assessing achievement systems. In the case of seniors, it would be not obligatory to apply one system or another to teaching them English, although it is necessary in the case of youth learning. However, according to the



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experts involved in the discussion, not only standard assessment systems (i.e. testing, grading, achievement levelling, etc.) should be used, but also participants should be encouraged to self-assess to see what results have been achieved and what advantages the specific training has had:

"It can be tests, but there should be more detailed learning goals to be set. For example, my goal this month is to learn ten words or go to a cafe and order coffee in English [...] it would be necessary for the participant himself to ask the teacher "am I making progress or not?". It is important for the student to understand where he/she is and what he/she should do next" (EN_TEACHER).

According to the specialists who participated in the discussion, it is important to take into account what kind of English knowledge the senior already has when coming to the training and whether he/she has learning gaps: *"It is important to find gaps. Some of them may seem insignificant, but will fundamentally affect the further learning process. If we self-assess those gaps early on, it is much better to engage in further learning later"* (EN_TEACHER).

These opinions expressed by experts suggest that in the case of senior English language teaching/learning, special attention should be paid not only to standard achievement assessment systems, but also smaller, more detailed (but very important) objectives and their implementation should be emphasized. When these objectives are met, the satisfaction of the learning process and the results achieved is obtained, as well as personal learning perspectives are more favourable.

Seniors who participated in the discussion stated that standard assessment systems or their format do not seem very attractive. It would be more acceptable to assess their acquired knowledge and skills in various creative and playful forms (e.g. crossword puzzles, creative tasks, etc.). As professionals, seniors also stated that individual assessment of personal achievements is also very important in learning English.

➤ **The importance of feedback**

During learning process feedback could be understood and identified as a kind of "supportive" relationship, where the specialist systematically and consistently asks how the learning senior succeeds, does he/she understand everything, directs and encourages achieving the intended learning outcomes. According to experts, feedback should not be limited to the evaluation of achievements, on the contrary, it is more perceived as a continuous and complex process: *"The best way to provide feedback is to establish a connection in general. If you create an environment that is cozy, where person don't hesitate and think "well, if the teacher asks me a question and I do not answer, he will already think that I do not know or learn anything". When the good atmosphere is created, naturally that connection arises. We always ask students after the lesson what they would like to do in the next lesson; maybe they have some wishes, because if we just lay out the material, it*



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won't be as interesting and effective. In this way, feedback is naturally received as well"
(EN_TEACHER).

Senior participants also highlighted feedback as an important and significant element in the learning process. Though, seniors emphasized the creation of a supportive and empathetic atmosphere as the most important condition for providing feedback: *"It is important that you do not feel like a fool if you ask or do not understand something. Then there is the courage to continue communicating with each other"* (SENIOR_1).

➤ Other general ideas of participants about teaching seniors

Focus group discussion also focused on the difficulties and challenges faced by both seniors learning something new or deepening their knowledge, and English teachers teaching seniors.

According to the seniors, the biggest challenge in learning in old age is impaired memory, which requires systematic repetition of knowledge or practice of skills: *"Sometimes you pick up a text and all the words were once known but forgotten. And because of that, there is a motivation to constantly learn, to repeat, not to forget, because language is much forgotten"* (SENIOR_3). Another difficulty faced by seniors in communicating in another language when the hearing is impaired: *"I can say [note – something] and often people understand me, but I don't really hear what they say, the person should speak slowly"* (SENIOR_2).

According to the English teacher, when teaching seniors in Lithuania, it is lacking a textbook or prepared material for self-study of English as an extra tool: *"Yes, such self-study material can be found, but I would not say that it is very detailed. It should be more about the grammar, what is related to it and something like that. This would be a much needed additional learning tool to serving as a help, that you can open up without the help of a teacher. It should be intended for Lithuanians learning a foreign language"* (EN_TEACHER).

3.4. Main conclusions and recommendations for the development of the MEANING PROJECT

During the MEANING project, when developing guidelines for the English language teacher, it is important to highlight certain moments that emerged during the focus group discussion:

1) Educational material and teaching:

- the pace of teaching must be focused on the opportunities of the seniors – slower and more repetitive tasks, taking into account the impaired memory; this will ensure quality



learning not only for those seniors who have mastered the material, but also for those who have slowed down;

- during the practical tasks, before performing them, it is necessary to mention how this task is useful so that the senior learners understand the essence of the task and where they can use the information or skills obtained during the task;
- the English textbook that seems most attractive and appropriate to seniors should have a visual or listening material with subtitles, also be not "overloaded" with not so useful information, but at the same time rich in various thematic tasks and situations;
- the most useful textbook for teaching seniors in English would be an electronic textbook that would be updated and constantly updated according to current issues;
- it would be very useful to prepare material for self-study of English as an extra tool;

2) The role and characteristics of the teacher:

- qualified language teaching specialist with andragogue qualification;
- the main characteristics – empathy and the ability to establish (and maintain) a connection with the learner;
- also teacher must have charisma, communicability, patience, ability to adapt to different situations, be able to interest and take into account the age differences of learners, should be tending to improve and be interested in innovations in the professional field;
- should be able to interest in a learning subject, apply not the most universal but the most appropriate methods for a specific audience, also, be able to take into account the different needs and learning goals of learners and build trust;
- feedback should not be limited to the evaluation of achievements, on the contrary, it is more perceived as a continuous and complex process; during learning process feedback could be understood as a kind of "supportive" relationship, where the specialist systematically and consistently asks how the learning senior succeeds, does he/she understand everything, directs and encourages achieving the intended learning outcomes;

3) Methods and format of tasks:

- the most effective methods for teaching seniors in English are the use of visual material and various practical tasks;
- it is important that subtitles accompany the visual material or the listening task;
- the practical tasks should depend on the specific topic, which is often related to the travelling and the various situations that arise during the trips;



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- the most useful way to achieve good results is to combine practical tasks and visual material;
- there are many varied methods when teaching seniors but their application depends on what learning experiences senior have had in the past;
- the tasks and methods that promote interpersonal communication are the most useful;
- the individual characteristics of the learners are very important, it determines the effectiveness of the methods used by teachers;
- not only standard assessment systems (i.e. testing, grading, achievement levelling, etc.) should be used, but also seniors should be encouraged to self-assess to see what results have been achieved and what advantages the specific training has had;
- it would be more acceptable to assess seniors acquired knowledge and skills in various creative and playful forms.



4. In-depth interviews

Interviews with English teachers revealed that the success of English language courses or activities depends on several complex components:

- 1) good atmosphere and freedom during classes;
- 2) engaging teacher who is interested in topics relevant to seniors and able to maintain a balance between formal and informal communication;
- 3) thematically relevant training materials and practical useful tasks;
- 4) seniors' desire and motivation to learn.

It is believed that if all these conditions are met, successful English language courses for seniors can be expected. The report will then provide more detailed information and interview data that are important to identify both objective and subjective assumptions for English language learning and to identify possible practical solutions.

4.1. Main goals and purpose

Each project partner country conducted semi-structured interviews. With the help of this qualitative method, the aim is to gather ideas and find out effective English language teaching/ learning practice that is applied during the teaching/ learning process of older people or seniors. The information gathered during the interviews will help to have a better understanding of the teaching content, strategies and methodological tools teachers use when working with this age group. This method will also help project partners to identify the factors that teachers believe hinder seniors from engaging in English learning activities and the difficulties this age group faces during the learning process. Finally, the interviews will be used to find out what complex circumstances determine the ability and desire of seniors to learn English and good learning outcomes.

The questionnaire provided in prepared interview guidelines is universal and standard, so the partner country can expand it individually as needed, supplementing it with questions relevant to the project topic.



4.2. Overview

Participants were founded using the “snowball” method. Persons who participated in the focus group were contacted and asked to share English teacher contacts, who have experience working with seniors. Thus, one interview participant was found. As the participants in the focus group responded positively to both the project itself and its research activities, this participant did not hesitate to agree to participate in the interview. He was contacted by email. All details of the interview were agreed by e-mail.

Another interviewee was found looking for new contacts and opportunities for collaboration. One of the branches (elderships) of Kaunas District Third Century University, which has been actively operating for 10 years, was approached. The coordinator of this branch was contacted by phone. The person clarified that English language classes for seniors at both the branch and the university are not currently offered and run, but have been organized in the past. The coordinator identified an English teacher who had previously conducted English lessons for seniors and provided his contact telephone number. In this way, a second interviewee was found. This person was also interested in the MEANING project and willingly agreed to share his experience during the interview. Details of the interview were agreed by phone and e-mail.

It should be mentioned that it was still not easy to find English language teachers with senior teaching experience, so it took some time to organize the interviews. The on-line interviews were conducted on the 5th (Skype) and 9th (Google Meet) of March, in 2021.

Brief information about the interviewees is presented in the 2 Table. The Interview Questionnaire is provided in 2 Appendixe.

2 Table. Information about Interview participants

Name	Job category
TEACHER_1	English teacher in a language school, English-Norwegian Linguistics student; experience working as English teacher – 2 years, experience with seniors – 1 year
TEACHER_2	English teacher at school; experience working as English teacher – 37 years, experience with seniors: 2 years – group sessions, more than 2 years – individual training



Both interviews went smoothly, the participants felt relaxed and willing to share their experiences and answered the questions in detail. There was a difference of opinion between the interviewees on the same issues, which could be related to the different work experience and age.

During the interviews, there was a strong interest of the participants in the MEANING project and they actively asked about the current activities of the project and the guidelines for teachers, also about future methodological tools. Participants emphasized their personal desire and intensity to join project activities in the future.

4.3. Main findings

This section of the report presents the main results of the interviews, which is divided into several thematic blocks.

➤ **Factors that encourage and motivate seniors to learn English**

The factors that motivate seniors to learn English can be divided into objective and subjective. The interviewees singled out the following objective factors that determine the active involvement of seniors in the English language teaching / learning process:

- **Active activities of institutions providing non-formal adult education** (especially the University of the Third Age): *“They need to be presented, to show that here they can get knowledge of English. Advertising is needed. Especially in the countryside”* (TEACHER_2);
- **Use of smart devices and other information technologies**: *“They all started using computers, smartphones, and there was written “file”, “save” [...] the accelerating pace and smart technology made them look for where to learn at least a few basic English words”* (TEACHER_2);
- **Extensive use of English in the environment in a broad sense**: *“The global factor is very important, when English is used everywhere – both in the media and everywhere we go, everywhere in English”* (TEACHER_1).

Speaking about the subjective motivating factors for seniors, teachers named:

- **Relatives living abroad and communication with them**: *“They want to talk to relatives, grandchildren. They want to travel and gain knowledge of that practical language [...] that motivation radiates from the seniors themselves and they really don’t need a*



reminder. They themselves are actively involved in the learning process and sometimes ask for more tasks” (TEACHER_1);

- **Hobby to travel:** *“That desire to travel, see more, go to other countries freely, without fear that I will not be able to talk, buy a ticket at the airport or bus station” (TEACHER_1);*
- **The need for communication and social connection:** *“My students often say that it was not so much important for them to learn that language, but to put it down and communicate, to be in a group, to feel a part of that group” (TEACHER_2);*
- **The need for active mental activity:** *“They understand that they need it, that some Alzheimer’s will not attack and that they need to learn something new” (TEACHER_2).*

➤ **Factors that limit seniors’ opportunities to learn English**

Also, on the basis of the data collected during the interviews, the factors that hinder or create challenges for the successful involvement of seniors in the English language teaching / learning process should be singled out. In this case, a distinction should also be made between objective and subjective factors. The study data revealed that there are more than limiting objective limiting factors:

- **Lack of tradition of learning in old age:** *“The prevailing opinion “what I am going to study here now, how I will look like here” “ (TEACHER_2);*
- **Lack of English andragogues:** *“There is a lack of teachers themselves who have experience with seniors” (TEACHER_1);*
- **Too little information and publicity about English language classes for seniors:** *“Seniors themselves are not very aware that they have opportunities to go and participate in some activities” (TEACHER_1);*
- **Lack of organizations providing non-formal English education:** *“There are few organizations that would provide an opportunity to participate not only in all sorts of clubs, but also in language training, as the “Seniors’ Hive” does” (TEACHER_1).*

The following are subjective factors limiting seniors:

- **Poor digital literacy:** *“With young people, there are plenty of innovative programs for learning English: analyzing podcasts, radio or television shows. Seniors are not so friendly or positive about accepting those innovative learning methods” (TEACHER_1);*
- **Stereotypic self-esteem:** *“There is such a fear that I will not be able to do anything, there will be those superior to me [...] we have such a stereotype that “I am too old, I will not get anything, I will not be able to” “ (TEACHER_1).*



➤ **Difficulties faced by seniors in learning English**

During the interviews, English teachers highlighted three difficulties they believe seniors face when learn English:

- 1) Impaired memory and hearing: *“I often hear from seniors that “I forgot here, age and memory are no longer that” [...] if a senior is 80 years old, he often not hear what was said, it need to be repeated louder”* (TEACHER_1)
- 2) There are too high seniors expectations for themselves: *“They want to learn everything very quickly and very well. They need to be constantly reminded that we are going step by step. Because it seems to them after a few lessons that they don’t pay anything, they forgot everything. They need a reminder that there is a need to change the approach to learning at this point. It is necessary to be able to rejoice with them, that they have come to the classes and that it has come to have a good time in the first place”* (TEACHER_2);
- 3) Complicated English grammar: *“English belongs to a different type of language than Lithuanian. In most cases, older people are fluent in Russian or Polish in addition to Lithuanian, which are similar to Lithuanian. English, meanwhile, is a little different because the structure of the sentence is very important here, there is a very, very long time [...] they are challenged and they don’t understand why such complex grammar is needed [...] some take a long time to breaks through and realizes that in English the sentence needs to be arranged differently”* (TEACHER_1).

➤ **Application of teaching / learning strategies in practice**

During the research, several practical strategic and/or methodological features describing the process of teaching (learning) English to seniors were identified, which are successfully applied during the sessions with seniors. English teachers say that it is useful to combine and select teaching materials that are designed for both children in school and special textbooks for adults: *“Since most of the seniors who come to study are those who have no knowledge of English at all, I started teaching them from that “elementary” level. Therefore, the simplest constructions and words I used were those I teach children in the initial stage. I also went to the central library, picked up adult textbooks and took the main vocabulary and topics from them [...] what is relevant to them: work, family, relationships, family celebrations, travel, greetings, apologies, basic phrases on the bus, on the train , in the airport”* (TEACHER_2). Also, specialists believe that depending on the level of senior English, the constructs and vocabulary used should become more complex, but the topics and teaching methods should remain the same: *“For seniors with a higher level of English language skills,*



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we choose a more complex grammar, texts and vocabulary. But the teaching strategy or methods do not change [...] unless I single out the fact that we give lower level seniors such completely simple tasks as putting pictures and so on. With advanced seniors, we read more complex texts, watch shows” (TEACHER_1).

Speaking about the combination of theoretical and practical material in the session, teachers named that the theoretical part should take up no more than 30% of the total session time: *“This clearly depends on the topic as well. However, it would be best to devote one third of the lesson time to grammar, words, and all the other time to the application of that theoretical material in various practical tasks” (TEACHER_1).* It has been found that, in the opinion of experts, the most useful tasks for seniors are speaking and listening, slightly less attention should be paid to reading and writing: *“We talk mostly during lessons, because it all comes from the need to understand the practical use of language, when you just need to talk. That’s why we talk the most. Then we listen to the recordings, we watch the video material. We also read a lot, because when we read we develop our understanding of language, we put words into sentences, and we also analyze grammar while we read. And we pay the least attention to writing. Unless when doing grammatical tasks, some short essays about your hobbies or travels” (TEACHER_1).* Interviews found that it is effective to apply as many practical situations as possible during English sessions with seniors.

According to English teachers, it is useful to try distance learning and active integration of information technology and resources into the learning process: *“During the first quarantine, when I offered to conduct lessons on-line via Skype, I was very surprised that the seniors agreed and actively participated” (TEACHER_1); “It is possible to use all kinds of on-line work sheets with seniors, where it is quite easy to use and you just need to click or type something, put a tick and choose the right option” (TEACHER_2).*

Speaking in general about the technical aspects of conducting English language classes with seniors, teachers singled out that it is optimal, when classes with seniors takes place 2-3 times a week and the lesson lasts no longer than 45-60 minutes: *“Researchers have calculated that the best frequency of classes is 2-3 times a week, well and the lesson, I think, should not last longer than one hour. That would definitely suffice” (TEACHER_2).* According to teachers, when working with seniors, they noticed that homework should not be compulsory, but in other hand offering self-study at home is beneficial: *“As for homework, I keep saying “this is your contribution to learning progress and if you don’t see a goal in it, don’t want to and don’t like it, just don’t do it”. And there really is no coercion to do homework” (TEACHER_1); “Seniors for some reason don’t like homework very much. Most of them*



did not perform. While learning at home is actually useful and necessary for language learning” (TEACHER_2).

➤ **Application of teaching / learning strategies in practice**

Interviews with English language teachers focused on discussing the methods, techniques, and various methodological solutions used in practice that work with seniors. The obtained results are divided into several thematic blocks and the main conclusions that are related to a specific stage of the learning process are presented below.

a) Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships:

- It is important for the teacher to earn the trust of the students from the very beginning: *“It is important that you believe and trust you. If the stars are critical, it will be very difficult”* (TEACHER_2);
- In addition to creating a formal learning environment, it is important for the teacher to show interest in students' lives and to maintain informal communication: *“You need to take breaks, tell some joke. Also ask them. They have a lot of stories to tell how English helped or prevented them from communicating in one situation or another”* (TEACHER_2);
- Individual characteristics may make it more difficult to establish a relationship between a particular senior and a teacher, so other members of the training group (in the case of group training) should be involved and communicate through them: *“If it is more difficult for a teacher to communicate with a particular student, there will still be one or two people in the group who will find that common language with him. It might help. But situations where there is no way to find common ground with the student at all are particularly rare”* (TEACHER_1).

b) Improving the uptake of teaching materials:

- At the beginning of each session, repeat what was learned in the last one: *“It is helpful to repeat with seniors what we learned last time before each new activity”* (TEACHER_2);
- Presentation of material by visual means: *“Visual presentation of the material allows for better mastering and memorization of new teaching material [...] especially teaching English words it is useful to use as many visual means as possible: pictures, videos with subtitles”* (TEACHER_1);
- Working in pairs during classes: *“Seniors come with a desire to learn English and apply it precisely in practical, life situations. These are [...] dialogues, simulations of different situations. These are the main things that pay off in the teaching process”* (TEACHER_1);



“They like to work in pairs and perform “match” tasks - finding the right end of a sentence or phrase, typing a word, putting words together” (TEACHER_2);

- Integrating seniors’ favorite songs into the learning process: *“What else we were doing was singing songs from their youth like “Que Sera Sera”. We just read, learn the English text and then sing along. Such musical karaoke can be successfully applied” (TEACHER_2).*

c) Promoting learning objectives and outcomes:

- The teacher is the main motivator, whose role is the most important: *“They need to be supported, encouraged, inspired by the spirit” (TEACHER_2);*
- The teacher must remind what seniors have learned and keep them motivated and encouraged to move forward: *“They say, “Oh, we haven't learned anything here”. And I say, “How did you not learn this? You know both that and that. Look, how much you already know!”. They tend to self-underestimate” (TEACHER_2);*
- The most rewarding tasks are the translation of sentences, as both grammar and words are learned and repeated in this way: *“For them, usually just reading sentences is not as effective in learning because then they say that they don’t remember. It is the best to translate sentences by themselves” (TEACHER_1);*
- Simulations of practical situations and debates, when seniors raise relevant discussion questions by themselves: *“The methods can be varied, but the topics should be relevant and prompted by seniors themselves, for example, for a debate simulation” (TEACHER_1).*

d) Assessing the achievements:

- The most important thing is teacher encouragement and verbally evaluation: *“We have more an English language club. We are not an English language school and do not have accredited program, so that assessment system is not strictly applied either. At the end of the classes, a symbolic certificate is presented, which I think is quite important to them” (TEACHER_2);*
- Applying a rigorous assessment system to the training of seniors is not effective and useful (unless a diagnostic assessment is performed at the request of the seniors themselves to determine a specific English knowledge level): *“The senior comes to learn more for himself. I don’t use some kind of grading scale or even more writing marks [...] I create simulations of various practical situations for them and then observe how they master grammar, words, sentence structure. If I see that something is more difficult, then we go back to the teaching material again, repeat, analyze one more time” (TEACHER_1);*
“Testing or similarly working with seniors, I don’t personally apply, I just don’t see that



goal. If there were seniors who would say “we need, we want to know how much we are improving,” then I would change that method of assessment” (TEACHER_1); “So senior get in test 5, 8 or 10, and what’s the point? That internal self-esteem is more important here. I would say that writing marks or testing grades maybe isn’t necessary at all for teaching seniors” (TEACHER_2);

- Seniors self-assess and monitor their learning progress by themselves: *“I often hear seniors saying “I didn’t knew this and that when I came here. And now I know and I can” ” (TEACHER_1).*

e) Giving a feedback:

- During the first session it is necessary to determine the expectations and wishes for topics: *“Whenever a new group meets for the first time, it is important to determine the expectations and wishes of the participants, discuss learning topics, vocabulary, what is more relevant to them” (TEACHER_1);*
- Constant communication with seniors about teaching material, its’ relevance, complexity of tasks: *“It is always necessary to talk to the seniors after the session, what they think was good, what was wrong, what could have been different [...] if we talk about meeting the needs of the students, then I always leave this question open and say that “if you want to change something, add something, if you think you want to do something different, change methodology or topics, always say” ” (TEACHER_1); “We talk both before and after class, during all learning activities also. I keep asking if the topic is relevant or not too difficult, if it is too difficult, then we are changing something. We also talk about vocabulary. Since the senior groups are small, 8-10 people, we all sit together in a friendly way and talk. Some verbal comments are important, not some questionnaires” (TEACHER_2);*
- At the end of the session cycle, it is very important to discuss the full course content with the seniors in detail: *“At the end of the training course, I always initiate a detailed discussion with the students about what they liked, what could have been better or different” (TEACHER_1);*
- Seniors boldly express their opinion and wishes: *“This is the difference from young people. Seniors always boldly express their opinions, say and comment. I, as a teacher, really appreciate it [...] some don’t like to do homework and they say it boldly. Others don’t like writing tasks and also talk about it boldly” (TEACHER_1).*



4.4. Main conclusions and recommendations for the development of the MEANING PROJECT

The most relevant results for the successful implementation of the MEANING project are the results obtained during the interviews, which are related and can be used in the process of developing methodological tools. These data are considered to reflect and describe teaching strategies and methods, as well as the role of teachers in the learning process:

- Optimal, when classes with seniors takes place 2-3 times a week and the lesson lasts no longer than 45-60 minutes;
- Depending on the level of senior English, the constructs and vocabulary used should become more complex, but the topics and teaching methods should remain the same;
- It is useful to combine and select teaching materials that are designed for both children in school and special textbooks for adults;
- During the first session it is necessary to determine senior's expectations and wishes for topics;
- There should be used as many visual means as possible in the teaching material;
- 2/3 of the lesson time should be devoted to practical tasks;
- Topical tasks are related to speaking and listening;
- Working in pairs, dialogues, debates and simulations of various situations should play a major role in the practical tasks;
- Constant communication with seniors about teaching material, its' relevance, complexity of tasks are very important;
- Homework should not be compulsory, but offering self-study at home is beneficial;
- Distance learning and active integration of information technology and resources into the learning are possible;
- It is important for the teacher to earn the trust of the students from the very beginning and to show interest in students' lives and to maintain informal communications;
- The teacher must remind what seniors have learned and keep them motivated and encouraged to move forward;
- Applying a rigorous assessment system to the training of seniors is not effective and useful, and the most important thing is teacher encouragement and verbally evaluation;
- At the end of the session cycle, it is very important to discuss the full course content with the seniors in detail, mostly seniors boldly express their opinion and wishes.



5. Overall summary and conclusions

This Research is significant in order to understand and clarify the features and components of the English language teaching/learning process for seniors. The challenges and difficulties encountered in the context of today's Lithuanian society are becoming especially important in order to overcome them and find appropriate solutions, thus ensuring the quality of teaching/learning results and the satisfaction of both parties in this process.

The senior participants mentioned that the most important things for them are clear teaching materials, the quality and interest of the information provided, the desire to hear and memorize both theoretical and practical knowledge, and communication. It was found that the most important thing for professionals educating seniors is to select and maintain the right pace of teaching, to establish and maintain appropriate contact with learners, to be interested in the material taught, to be able to convey information in an understandable way, to encourage learners to ask questions and apply the acquired knowledge in practice.

According to specialists, a senior who comes to study (English or to acquire other knowledge and skills) has certain characteristics. Such a senior is highly motivated to learn. In the case of learning English, this motivation often stems from the desire to talk to grandchildren or relatives living abroad and longer speak Lithuanian. Also, in many cases, such a senior loves to travel, so the need for a foreign language is very important for her/him to achieve better communication with foreigners, both for entertainment and orientation in a foreign country, and for using the services of specialists (e.g. doctors). Such a senior is also active in social and community life, educated, curious, active, and inclined to communicate boldly, often with a strong desire to learn everything quickly.

Still, regardless of seniors motivation and desire, the circumstances and reasons that make English language classes inaccessible should be considered. The systematic adaptation of non-formal education institutions and the targeted elimination of these circumstances are likely to enable more seniors to learn English free of charge in various educational and cultural institutions.

Taking into account the results of this Research, the guidelines developed during the project for English teachers and andragogues will allow for even more targeted orientation and organization of English classes and will be an excellent tool that will comprehensively reflect the needs and opportunities of both seniors and English teachers in Lithuania.



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7. Appendix

7.1. Focus Group Evaluation form

With this questionnaire we want to know your opinion about the focus group. Your opinion will allow us to improve the quality of future activities.

Expectations about the Focus Group	Very satisfied	4
	Somewhat satisfied	3
	Somewhat dissatisfied	2
	Very dissatisfied	1
Clearness of the objectives of the Focus Group	Very satisfied	4
	Somewhat satisfied	3
	Somewhat dissatisfied	2
	Very dissatisfied	1
Contribution of the content for the subject	Very satisfied	4
	Somewhat satisfied	3
	Somewhat dissatisfied	2
	Very dissatisfied	1
Focus Group Composition	Very satisfied	4
	Somewhat satisfied	3
	Somewhat dissatisfied	2
	Very dissatisfied	1
Duration	Very satisfied	4
	Somewhat satisfied	3
	Somewhat dissatisfied	2
	Very dissatisfied	1
Moderator	Very satisfied	4
	Somewhat satisfied	3
	Somewhat dissatisfied	2
	Very dissatisfied	1
Other aspects (facilities, organization, ...)	Very satisfied	4
	Somewhat satisfied	3
	Somewhat dissatisfied	2
	Very dissatisfied	1

Suggestion of improvement

- 1.1. Content of the Focus Group that you consider to be the most interesting?
- 1.2. Content that should be added or further discussed?
- 1.3. Content of the Focus Group that you consider to be the least interesting?
- 1.4. What would you change in the Focus Group?
- 1.5. What would you not change in the Focus Group?
- 1.6. Other comments?



7.2. Interview Questionnaire

Hello,

Thanks for making some time for this interview. My name is Kamilė Kučinskienė and I work as a researcher for Kaunas County Public Library.

*This interview is part of the international Project „Creating a new meaning in language education for senior learners“ (in short - "MEANING"). The **main aim of the project** is to develop guidelines for English language teachers in order to better respond to the learning needs of senior students.*

*The **purpose of this interview** is to gain information about the English language teaching strategies and techniques, also about good practices and relevant challenges for senior learners.*

Based on this information, we will be able to develop learning resources fully adopted to seniors' needs. In particular, guidelines and ready-to-use cards for seniors' language learning will be developed by this project.

During this conversation, I would like to ask you some questions about your personal opinion and experience working as senior English language teacher.

This interview will be audiotaped and in the course of it I will take some notes.

You will not be identified by your name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

If you feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, you have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

The interview will last approximately 1 hour.

Do you have any questions before we start? Let's begin.

I. Socio-Demographic Questions

1. Where are you from?
2. How old are you?
3. What are your Educational Qualifications?
4. What is your current job where you work? What positions do you hold?



II. Andragogue work:

5. How long have you been working as an English teacher? How long do you teach seniors English?
6. How do you currently rate yourself as a professional? What score would you give yourself in the ten-point system when 1 - very bad, 10 - excellent? Why?
7. Are there any additional skills that should possess a language teacher working with seniors / adults?
8. What do you think, what is the difference in working with youth and seniors?

III. Seniors as a special group of learners:

A) Determinants of involvement:

9. What do you think are the most limiting factors for seniors to learn English? Which of them are objective, which are subjective?
10. What motivates seniors to come most to learn English?

B) Teacher-student relationship:

11. Do you find it important to feel connected to your learners? Why is that?
12. What methods do you use, or could use, to establish and improve a relationship with your senior learners?

C) Teaching / learning strategies¹ and techniques²:

13. What teaching strategy do you use to teach seniors in English?
14. What is the relationship between writing, reading, listening and speaking during the senior education process? Is such a relationship appropriate and effective? What needs to change?
15. What tools, techniques and methods do you use to teach seniors? Which ones are the most effective?

¹Teaching strategy is a set of methods, rules, processes, standards, approaches, norms of behaviour. For example, cognitive strategies (memory, deductive thinking, etc.), experiential learning (s), etc.

²Teaching technique – a method (visual, oral, creative, etc.), practical tool, etc.



16. Do you use different teaching strategies and methods when seniors have English language skills and when they do not? If so, what are those differences?
17. Perhaps you know and would like to apply new and innovative methods that you have not yet tried but heard about their effectiveness? What are they?
18. What tasks do seniors like most when learning languages?

D) Achievements:

19. What difficulties or challenges do seniors face in learning English?
20. In the case of seniors, how is the success of language learning compared to classroom work and work at home independently? Please rely on your personal experience.
21. How important is encouraging and assisting senior learners to accomplish their learning goals? Why?
22. What motivates senior learners in accomplishing tasks successfully?
23. How to assess senior learners? Which method is the best?
24. How to give feedback to senior learners?

IV. Learning perspectives

25. What do you think is the formula for successful English language training for seniors?
In other words, what determines that the training class will always be full of seniors and they will want to deepen their English language skills after completing one training session?

V. Closure Question

26. What other thoughts or ideas did you have during this interview that you would like to express?