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Demotivation among English Language Students and How to Face it

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Prohlášení

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V Praze dne ……………………

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Bc.Hana Macasová

Abstrakt

Cílem práce je vytvořit povědomí o existenci demotivace ve výuce anglického jazyka a jejích možných příčinách. Hlavní pojmy spojené s motivací a demotivací jsou objasněny, spolu s hlavními demotivačními faktory ve škole, jako učitel, osobnost studenta, strach či neadekvátní využívání odměn a trestů. Cílem výzkumu v podobě dotazníku, který byl uskutečněn na základní a střední škole, bylo popsat míru demotivace na těchto školách a zjistit její důvody. Bylo zjištěno, že míra demotivace je poměrně vysoká, převládající u chlapců, spíše než u dívek. Hlavními demotivujícími faktory se zdají být učitel, učebnice a lenost studentů. Dále byla potvrzena také motivační síla pochvaly. Bylo zjištěno, že demotivace je závažný problém, který je třeba řešit, a proto jsou v práci uvedené některé návrhy, jak nemotivované žáky motivovat.

Klíčová slova

motivace, demotivace, nuda, strach, učitel, žáci, anglický jazyk

Abstract

The aim of the thesis is to develop the awareness about the existence of demotivation at English lessons and its possible reasons. Major concepts connected with motivation and demotivation are clarified, along with main demotivating factors at school such as a teacher, student's personality, fear or inadequate use of prize and punishment. The research in the form of a questionnaire realised at a primary and a secondary school was done to describe the degree of demotivation at those schools and to find the reasons for it. It was found out that the degree of demotivation is relatively high, prevalent in boys rather than girls. The main demotivating factors seem to be a teacher, a course book and students' laziness. Also the motivating power of praise was confirmed. It was indicated that demotivation is a serious problem that should be solved and therefore some suggestions how to motivate demotivated pupils are introduced.

Key words

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1. Introduction

As English is an international language, Czech students at primary and secondary schools are required to learn it compulsorily. Despite the apparent significance of English and a high number of lessons the students have to attend, many of them still fail to learn it, keep trying to find techniques how to avoid it, or how to pass the exams with minimum effort. There may be many reasons causing this reluctance to learn one of the most important world-wide used languages. According to the author's experience from teaching practice, demotivation is believed to be one of the most obvious ones.

Many authors have written publications about school motivation and how to enhance it, such as Zoltán Dornyei, Robert C. Gardner or Jere Brophy and in the Czech Republic above all Isabella Pavelková, Vladimír Hrabal and Jan Čáp, but fewer books are aimed primarily at demotivation. This diploma thesis has been written to fill in this empty place.

It is obvious that motivation is one of the most important factors influencing student's success at school. On the other hand, demotivation affects educational process as well and it should not be underestimated.

Today's school system has encountered several changes, technical amenities are often used to make lessons enjoyable and much more attention is paid to students and their needs. With all these alterations the issue of demotivation should not be avoided anymore.

Future teachers are taught how to motivate their students, present teachers also apply diverse motivational techniques, but

there are still many students who do not pay attention or do not want to learn something more than what they are forced to. This may be caused by several factors. School attendance is compulsory, teachers have to meet given demands and there is not much place to do something which would be more interesting for students or which could be, in their opinion, more useful. On the other hand, language groups have become bigger and it is not rare that English teachers are sometimes forced to teach classes of 20 students or even more, which obviously brings problems with organization. Those teachers are then unable to meet each student's needs and work with them individually, some of the learners get bored, some of them feel frustrated, or they could also be demotivated. Therefore the issue of demotivation is topical nowadays.

Even though this diploma thesis should be primarily aimed at demotivation, it is also important to mention some basic facts about motivation, because those two phenomena will always influence each other and when talking about one, it is impossible to avoid the other.

The aim of the thesis is to describe and investigate the issues of demotivation in English lessons and to suggest some ideas of how to deal with it.

This diploma thesis is divided into two parts.

In the theoretical part motivation and demotivation are defined. Also what is mentioned are some important issues that are connected with demotivation, such as boredom, prize and punishment or the role of a teacher and the personality of a student.

In the practical part, the aim and the results of the research which has been carried out at two schools in the Czech Republic are described. The research method used for this was a questionnaire survey done with students of the English language at higher grades of a primary school and lower and higher grades of a secondary school. The practical part is concluded by some suggestions about what should be done to improve the present state in those schools concerning learner's demotivation in English lessons.

2. Theoretical part

2.1 Motivation at school

Motivation is a broad concept, very hard to define in a straightforward way. Because of this fact, many authors avoid to introduce a simple definition. On the other hand, some of them have tried to describe it. Jere Brophy defines motivation as a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behaviour, especially goal-directed behavior, and adds that motives are hypothetical constructs used to explain why people do what they do (3). Dörnyei contributes that motivation "has a very important role in determining success or failure in any learning situation" ("Motivational Strategies", 2).

On the grounds of the Czech Republic, Vladimír Hrabal has described motivation as "a totality of factors that stimulate, direct and maintain people's behaviour" (translated by H.M., 16). De facto, motivation explains not only why people decide to do something, but also how long and how hard they try.

It is obvious that motivation is very important for learning in general, including English language learning. It affects the way and the depth in which students learn it, how much effort they make to learn it and subsequently not to forget it, or whether they also keep learning it voluntarily out of the school environment.

When focusing on reasons why people act in certain ways, there are different kinds of these reasons. Sometimes the act of doing something itself is enjoyable, sometimes the activity may help in obtaining something else.

According to Pavelková, Lokša or Brophy, there are two main types of motivation, namely extrinsic and intrinsic.

2.1.1 Intrinsic motivation

When the reason for doing something depends on the activity itself, motivation is likely to be intrinsic. In the classroom context, according to Pavelková, intrinsically motivated students learn with interest, they learn for their own satisfaction, they prefer new and flexible activities (17-18). Jere Brophy points out that intrinsically motivated people experience the activity as freely chosen and not done under pressure from some internal need or external force (6).

As far as a school environment is concerned, intrinsic motivation may positively affect student's school success and the quality of learning. Pavelková states that in this case students are more engaged and feel satisfaction with their school work. What is more, it has a positive impact on their concentration and understanding. Intrinsic motivation may be supported by the teacher who gives a possibility of choice, lowers supervision, appreciates students and provides information needed for their own decisions.

In a broader context, there is a specific kind of intrinsic motivation. Pavelková, as well as Brophy, call it flow motivation. This kind of motivation is connected with keen interest and satisfaction with the performed activity (Pavelková, 17-19). Brophy asserts that people experience flow motivation when

they become absorbed in doing something challenging, concentrating on the activity itself, not thinking about success or failure, reward or punish (7). If English teachers are able to come up with such an activity in their lessons, motivation of their students is likely to rise.

2.1.2 Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation is determined mainly by the fact that a student does not do the activity in harmony with his or her own will, but wants to reach other goals, primarily not dependent on the given activity. According to Pavelková, extrinsically motivated pupils want to get good marks, want to satisfy their parents or teachers, prefer easy activities (20-22). On the other hand, as Lokša adds, students who are extrinsically motivated are more anxious, have problems with adaptation, have lower self-consciousness and are not likely to face the lack of success easily (15). What is more, Zoltán Dörnyei (1994) states that "extrinsic motivation has traditionally been seen as something that can undermine intrinsic motivation; several studies have confirmed that students will lose their natural intrinsic interest in an activity if they have to do it to meet some extrinsic requirement" (276).

This shows that teachers' knowledge of the existence of motivation in a classroom is important, as well as the kind of motivation that prevails in the students, because only then is the teacher able to take advantage of it.

Apart from this general division, Robert C. Gardner (1985) has specified two kinds of motivation that are specific for the

English language learning, namely the language learning motivation and the classroom learning motivation (7-10). It is obvious that it is not possible to strictly distinguish between those two types of motivation, because they influence each other, yet this division may help to understand how motivation works.

2.1.3 Language learning motivation

Language learning motivation could be specified as the general form of motivation in second language learning context. This kind of motivation applies to any opportunity to learn foreign languages (Gardner 7-10).

2.1.4 Classroom learning motivation

Classroom learning motivation is the kind of motivation, placed in the classroom situation. It is influenced by the teacher, other students, personal characteristics of the specific student, content, atmosphere, and above all, also by the language learning motivation (Gardner 7-10).

The reasons for language learning motivation and classroom learning motivation might be based on intrinsic, as well as extrinsic motivation. English language teachers should be aware of the interrelatedness of all these kinds of motivation and try to develop all of them.

2.2 Demotivation at school

If motivation is one of the most important factors that influence school success, demotivation, as its counterpart, should not be underestimated or overlooked.

As has been mentioned above, demotivation, as well as motivation, is a concept hard to define. Many authors avoid defining it themselves and rather use a definition introduced by Zoltán Dörnyei. He describes demotivation as "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action" ("Teaching and Researching", 143). In fact, demotivation is not a problem, but a category of various problems. The important point is that demotivation does not mean that there has never been any motivation, but that there has been some, which has been lost for some reason. A question may arise, whether only external forces, as Dörnyei asserts, have an influence on demotivation. Tran Thi Thu Trang did research which showed that also internal forces like attitudes towards English, experiences of failure or lack of success or students' self-esteem affect it to a great extent. Specifically 36% of all demotivating forces that were mentioned were internal (90-92). According to this, it could be stated that not only external, but also internal forces influence demotivation and its degree.

Pavelková refers to a similar topic, calling it *amotivation* and specifying it as an absence of motivation. The reasons for this, according to her, are above all: distrust in personal abilities or a persuasion that the activity will bring no results, or that it is too demanding. This may lead to an impression that the effort has no impact on the achievement of the required results (144). Nevertheless, Dörnyei interprets the difference between those

two concepts as follows: "amotivation is related to general outcome expectations that are unrealistic for some reason, whereas demotivation is related to specific external causes" ("Teaching and Researching", 143).

Another concept, connected with demotivation, which could also be wrongly used as its synonym, is *negative motivation.* According to Hrabal et al., the main source of negative motivation is mainly the frustration of student's needs. A slight frustration may lead to enforcing the activity, but a strong frustration usually leads to effects that are not compatible with student's activity. Those may be above all boredom (as the frustration of cognitive and activity needs) and fear (as the consequence of the sense of danger) (30).

When dealing with demotivation, it is also necessary to mention the term *demotive,* which is a negative part of a *motive,* causing a decrease of an action tendency. Some of the most common demotives could be: dissatisfaction with grading, dislike of the subject, the teaching material and last but not least, the teacher (Dörnyei, "Teaching and Researching", 142-145).

As all the terms have been made clear, some researches interested in demotivation and common demotives should be stated. According to the research done by Gohram and Christophel with college students, there were specified some common demotives, namely: the teacher being boring or confused, the dissatisfaction with grading and assignments, the organization and materials, the teacher's attitude toward students, the dislike and perceived lack of relevance of the subject. As the research further showed, the most demotivating force is supposed to be teacher's behaviour (247). The same

was shown by the research which was carried out in a Finnish comprehensive school. Out of 91 ninth-graders, 65 stated that their teacher has a negative effect to their motivation to learn the English language, especially his or her personality and competence and the methods they use. Apart from this, the second most significant demotivating factor which was specified by this research was learning material, especially exercise books (Muhohen, 45-51).

Nevertheless, this is good news, because the methods, as well as the learning material, are to some extent possible to be influenced by the teacher and adjusted to students.

Tran Thi Thu Trang tried to find an answer to the question, whether demotivation is really as a large problem as it is believed to be. Research among one hundred second-year EFL students from a University of Economics in central Vietnam which was supposed to find out about the extent of demotivation in English lessons was carried out. "Out of the sample of 100 students, 88 indicated they had been demotivated to a greater or lesser extent, most on several occasions. Many students found demotivation to be an unavoidable phenomenon, in other words, they did not seem to be surprised about or reluctant to acknowledge its existence" (89). What is more, 21 of the 88 students have admitted that they have overcome their demotivation for some period of time, but not absolutely.

A question may arise whether there are some reasons for trying to overcome demotivation. The answer is again provided by Tran Thi Thu Trang. Most of the reasons that helped students to overcome their demotivation were, surprisingly enough, internal, rather than external. The often mentioned reasons among others were an awareness of the importance of English,

personal reasons, self-improvement, self-determination and positive attitudes towards English (97).

Very important is also Dörnyei's point that "without sufficient motivation, also students with remarkable abilities are not able to accomplish long-term goals, and what is more, neither are good teaching and appropriate curricula enough to ensure student success" (2009, 117).

These findings are crucial for a teacher to know, because teacher's sole behavior may not be enough to repeatedly motivate demotivated students. On the other hand, when teachers provide enough evidence of how important English is, the pupils may come to a conclusion that they should be more interested and try themselves to overcome demotivation.

2.3 Factors influencing students' motivation

There are many factors that may influence students' motivation positively, as well as negatively, if used in a wrong way. From the existing amount of factors, only those that seem to be relevant in the context of a primary and a secondary school were chosen. At the first place, there is the personality of a teacher and students, followed by some techniques that could be used in the classroom, as prize and punishment or giving homework and last but not least, some conditions that may influence demotivation and have a negative effect on learners' performance, namely boredom and fear.

2.3.1 Teacher

It is obvious that skills to motivate students are, among others, crucial for English teachers. It is important to realize that

teachers are able to influence classroom conditions. Penny Ur points out that teachers have the responsibility not only to provide opportunities for learning, but they should also make their students realize their full potential and make maximum progress. Probably the most effective way to do this is, as she says, the enhancement of motivation (273).

Teachers are able to influence their students' motivation positively, as well as negatively, which may lead to an aversion to the subject. Hrabal et al. claims that this process may take place unintentionally, using a specific type of interaction with students (28).

Hrabal et al. assert that a teacher is able to affect student's motivation with his or her expectations. Teachers express their expectations with the help of their behaviour towards different students. The student interprets this conduct as beneficial or not beneficial for him or her and this leads to motivation or demotivation of the student (138). The author adds that teachers, although they do not want to, project their opinion in their acting towards certain students.

There are several types of behaviour that are perceived as negative by students, although the teacher considered them as positive.

As Hrabal et al. assert, some of those may be:
- expression of fellow feeling after a failure,
- excessive praise of success and inadequate critics after failure in an easy task,
- over-help when solving a task, especially when the student does not await it.

There are also some types of behaviour that are perceived to be signalizing a good opinion about student's abilities, although the teacher did not want it to be understood like that:
- insufficient praise and excessive dispraise after an easy task,
- relative neglecting of help,
- expression of anger after a lack of success (139).
Of course, this is true for English lessons as well.

If teachers are interested in the topic of the lesson and love English, it is a half way to their success. Teachers should show their enthusiasm, because it may help them very much. As Dörnyei points out, "such a commitment towards the subject matter then becomes infectious" ("Motivational Strategies", 32). On the other hand, as Dörnyei asserts, students are very sensitive towards teacher's indifference (34). What is more, Harmer adds to this that a teacher has the ability to create motivation also in students with no initial motivation. However, as Harmer points out, motivating learners is not the teacher's sole responsibility. The students too need to play their part to build and nurture their motivation (100).

It is difficult to specify the characteristics of a teacher which are necessary for him or her to be able to motivate students; however, some authors have tried to do it. According to Penny Ur and her research where her trainees recalled the characteristics of a good teacher, it is possible to sum up as following:

Good secondary school teachers were specified as demanding, strict, giving frequent and possibly stressful tests. On the other hand, in spite of this strictness, they succeeded in conveying to their students faith in their abilities.

Good primary school teachers were described as caring, made the lessons interesting, were enthusiastic, eager and interested in their students.

According to Ur, it is not necessarily true that the teacher´s intentional motivating behavior implies increasing pleasure or enjoyment on the side of the students. As has been mentioned above, if teachers are excited about English and love teaching, they communicate unintentionally their own motivation to their students (284).

Teachers should also have high expectations towards their students. Dörnyei refers to some researches that have been done by Rosenthal and Jacobson which have shown that the level of teacher's expectations influenced learner's results, either positively or negatively, depending on how high they were ("Motivational Strategies", 35). If a teacher expects more from the students, they feel it and try not to disappoint him or her.

From everything that has been written above it is obvious that teachers are one of the most important driving forces in influencing their students' motivation. If they are aware of this, it may help them to make English lessons useful and motivating for their students.

2.3.2 Student

There are different kinds of students, regarding their age, level, objectives in learning, learning styles, kind of motivation and many other. With the growing number of students in a classroom, the possibility of teaching totally different learners is rising. It is obvious that teachers should adjust their teaching

style to their students, but here comes the question of how to do it if each learner needs a different approach.

First of all, it is important to be aware of some common characteristics typical for different age of learners. According to Jeremy Harmer, the most relevant features of young learners (about ten years old) are above all: hard understanding of abstract concepts such as grammar, limited attention span, need of individual approach, their understanding is not connected with explanations only, but also with what they hear, see or touch.

On the other hand, adolescents often understand the need of learning and if good goals are set, they may be excited and responsible. They have an acute need for approval, either from a teacher, or from peers, which means that they should be given tasks they are able to respond to. Last but not least, they start to understand abstract concepts (Harmer, 82-84), which is important to know for learning English grammar.

As Lenka Krejčová reports, several kinds of students may be mentioned, regarding their learning styles, namely the ways how they process information from the environment and which sort of presentation is favourable for them. There are individuals that do not prefer a distinctive type of recognition, but also those, who clearly prefer a specific form of getting a specific piece of information (85).

Conventionally, as the author states, the cognitive styles may be divided into four groups. On one hand there stands a sequential versus holistic style of processing information, on the other hand there stands a tendency to verbalization versus visualization of information (translated H.M. 86).

Students preferring the sequential style need structured, comprehensible and clear tasks. They usually remember lists where everything is captured in a specific sequence.

Students preferring the holistic style need to know a broad context from where they extract details they need. They like stories and practical examples.

Verbalizing students apply intensively their vocabulary, they need to discuss problems and name details. They learn with the help of listening to others.

Visualizing students prefer tables, pictures, graphs. They intensively apply those pictograms and when they need to verbalize them, it may take longer (86-87).

As the author emphasizes, it is not important to know whatever style their students prefer, but to use different approaches of presenting the subject matter while teaching (88), English language not being an exception. This enables all the students to easily understand and remember. Teachers should try to learn as much as possible about their students. This helps them to accommodate the syllabus to their needs. If teachers try to learn something about the targets their students have set, they can profit from this. As long as students' wishes are in line with the demands of the school, they are more motivated. Dvořák points out that if students see that teachers take into consideration their own goals, they more easily accept the targets that the teacher has set (71).

It is not always important if a student is gifted in languages or not. Dörnyei reports that "in the vast majority of cases learners with sufficient motivation can achieve a working knowledge of a L2 regardless of their language aptitude or other cognitive characteristics. Without sufficient motivation even the

brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language" ("Motivational Strategies", 5).

A question might arise, what a demotivated student looks like. The same question was stated by Garry Chambers when asking seven teachers while his research in four Leeds schools. The characteristics, according to his research, are as follows: poor concentration, lack of believe in own capabilities, no effort made to learn, negative or nil response to praise, lethargy, lack of cooperation, distracts other pupils, produces little or no homework (13). The author further distinguishes between less able pupils and demotivated students. The less able pupils will express a desire to learn, are keen to learn and the help given to them is very productive. The demotivated pupils show a lack of interest in whatever is placed before them, they do not respond to the extra help well and what is more, they will try to disrupt other pupils (13). The behavior of demotivated students shows the seriousness of the whole problem and the need for teacher's interference.

2.3.3 Prize and punishment

Teachers may affect motivation among students using prize and punishment. As Pavelková reports, there are many situations that may be considered as a prize (a smile, active listening to the student, appreciation, interest in the result), or as a punishment (impatience, oversight of student's effort to improve something, sarcasm).

Using a prize, the teacher supposes that the specific behaviour will be confirmed and that its future occurrence will be enhanced. On the contrary, using punishments will decrease the

presence of certain unwanted manners. The application of this is not easy. There are different rules that apply to different contexts (55-57). In the school environment, the use of praise and rebuke is the most common. Sometimes, a motivational paradox may occur. It was closer specified in chapter 2.3.1.

Hrabal et al. adds that it depends mainly on the form, intensity and frequency of prize and punishment (29). When prize and punishment are concerned, it is vital to understand their effects on learners' motivation. As Lokša reports, a positive feedback supports autonomy and competence, which strengthens intrinsic motivation. Contrarily, if a student is praised for something he or she was forced to do by order of the teacher, extrinsic motivation is being reinforced (21). Dvořák adds that it is more useful to assess the process, for example the advantages of the procedure the students have chosen, rather than results. This helps them to see the progress they have made and makes them think positively about their performance (60).

Some crucial remarks of David Fontana could be added to this. Some children experience only failures instead of successes. It is vital to provide an opportunity to be successful for all the learners on as low level of their performance as important. This feeling of success helps weaker students to build their self-esteem and to set slowly higher goals (154). The author also asserts that it is crucial to be aware of some risks when using punishments. An inappropriately chosen punishment may harm the child's relationship to the teacher and what is more, the learners may develop certain strategies to avoid the punishment (354).

If English teachers are aware of all the possible impacts of prizes and punishments and use them sensitively, it may increase their students' motivation.

2.3.4 Homework

Along with prize and punishment, homework is used at school for specific reasons that could have motivating, as well as demotivating effects. Lesley Painter shows the phenomenon of motivation on a specific example, namely his own students writing their homework. When it was boring or not innovative, the students remained in not doing it or copying it from their classmates. When the author changed his attitude to homework as something that should be motivating and started to give homework such as watching films, rating them and writing summaries, the students started to do it. He lists several features that should be fulfilled to make the students motivated, e.g.(7):

- students should feel that the homework task is useful, interesting and varied,
- the tasks should focus on all skills,
- the tasks should be varied for different students,
- language should be liberated from the classroom; students should be allowed to contribute ideas by designing their own tasks.

The author adds that the time factor is important. The homework may be motivating and enjoyable, but if it is not manageable in the terms of time, also this task may "become a lengthy chore"(11). What is more, paradoxically, giving right homework may motivate students to learn more than they are

expected to, just because they are interested, which strengthens their intrinsic motivation. This idea is easy to apply in English lessons and the profit may be huge.

2.3.5 Boredom

Boredom is a specific feature that may occur even in an English lesson and which should make the teacher aware of the fact that something is wrong. Lokša defines boredom as subjectively felt monotony of the lesson and subjectively understood uselessness of the subject (175). If there is boredom in the class, there is a lack of motivation and teachers should do something with that.

Hrabal et al. informs that boredom results from a frustration of cognitive needs. It could appear as obvious that only students whose abilities are higher than expected get bored. However, it seems that among these bored students are also some with average results or even whose results are below average. The reason for this is that it does not depend on the number of stimuli, but on their incentive value (175).

Interesting is the fact mentioned by Hrabal et al. that boredom is, as well as enthusiasm, infectious. If a teacher is bored, his or her boredom is automatically transmitted to students (176-177).

In his essay Lars Fr. H. Svendsen reports that boredom is a typical phenomenon of the modern age (13). According to the author, some studies concerning boredom have shown that men are more bored than women and what is more, the rate of boredom is inversely proportional to the age of the respondents (17).

This author added that, besides the bad impact on the society, boredom also badly influences the individuals, because it is connected with the loss of meaning. Svendsen mentions very important fact that boredom comes in case when a person may not do what he or she wants, or must do what he or she does not want (20). This fact is really important for teachers to be aware of, because they should find in English something, which would be interesting also for those students, who would have been bored, such as adapting activities to students' needs. Finally, as Dörnyei explains, "boring but systematic teaching can be effective in getting short-term results, but rarely does it inspire a life-long commitment to the subject matter" ("Motivational Strategies", 75). If the teachers are willing to make their students interested and motivated in learning English for the whole life, the teaching should not be boring.

2.3.6 Fear

Another important factor influencing negatively school motivation is fear. It could be defined as an "emotive reaction on the frustration of the safety need" (Hrabal et al., 184. Translated by H.M.). The author further specifies this phenomenon as something which results from stress situations, unstructured demands for anxious students or missing possibility of preparation (181-182).

According to Lokša, it is vital to be aware of the fact that there is a great difference between students naturally anxious and those who perceive the feelings of fear in accordance with factors in progress like testing or demanding tasks (20). This is closely connected with the motivating force of fear. As Hrabal et

al. explain, when the level of fear is relatively low, it may increase the performance. Contrarily, high level of fear decreases students' results (177).

However, if teachers use fear as a motivating factor, it should be applied really sensitively, because every student is different and there might be some anxious students who could perceive this as highly stressful.

To conclude this subchapter, as Dvořák reports, students make a conviction about a subject, either positive, or negative. However, as soon as the persuasion has been made, no matter if favourable or unfavourable, it is very difficult to change it (58). This confirms the idea that it is always easier to increase motivation among already motivated English language students and maintain it than trying to motivate those who happen to be demotivated.

2.4 Strategies for motivating demotivated students

Many publications have been written about motivational strategies in the English language classroom, trying to enhance motivation, but there were not found many, which would be focused directly on already demotivated students.

This topic is connected with developmental psychology. As Lokša points out, student´s personality changes and develops and so does the system of motivational factors (9). There are different motivational strategies for different age levels. However, if teachers know their students, they know how to modify the techniques to fit to the specific class.

First of all, it is important to realize that the following strategies are rather suggestions that may work in different groups differently and are not applicable in all situations. Nevertheless, it is believed that every English language teacher will find in these some that could be applicable for his or her class. This could be confirmed by Dörnyei's assertion that "almost any influence a person is exposed to might potentially affect his/her behaviour" ("Motivational Strategies" 28).

This selection of strategies is a brief assemblage based mostly on the reading of Zoltán Dörnyei (1994, 2001, 2010) which are believed to be aimed at demotivated students or could be applicable to them.

1. Get to know the students

Students are different and the curriculum, as well as the text book, usually chosen by the school and written by adults, may not fully correspond to their needs, they may be bored and the rest is clear. If teachers know their students, they are able to adapt teaching materials to their needs and make the lessons more enjoyable and from their students' view more useful.

This may be done by different discussions, essays, questionnaires. A really useful tool for getting to know about students' language needs is a prepared needs analysis. As Dörnyei points out, needs analyses of this sort provide a rich complex of data which could be then further discussed. In such needs analyses should teachers, according to Dörnyei, focus on questions such as: what contacts in English they have, which language skills are the most important for them or how would they use English if they could speak it ("Motivational Strategies", 66). It is also useful to ask the students for a feedback. If there

is a good atmosphere in the class, the students themselves may not be afraid to be critical or provide some good ideas of how to improve the English lessons.

If teachers know their students' needs and their interests, also a boring lesson with a boring text book could be made interesting and useful and finally also motivating.

2. Make learning enjoyable

There is an increasing pressure on teachers to prepare their students for exams. Under this pressure, as Dörnyei points out, teachers pay attention to results, rather than to process. This makes learning fast and boring, because many teachers think that what is enjoyable cannot simultaneously be hard work, as serious learning is supposed to be ("Motivational Strategies", 72).

A monotonous lesson does not motivate learners at all, but if there sometimes occurs something new, unexpected and enjoyable, even the bored learners start paying attention.

It is obvious that there is not much time in a lesson to do something extra, when there are some requirements of the course book and the syllabus, but also some exercises within the bounds of the book may be modified, substituted or done with the help of an interactive board.

To make the exercises enjoyable, Dörnyei suggests that they should be: challenging, interesting, personal, competitive and humorous, expecting a tangible product ("Motivational Strategies", 77).

If the lessons are fun, the students are most likely to be looking forward to every following lesson.

3.   Set goals

Setting goals is another method how to motivate English learners. They may have different experience from their former study and think that there is no progress in their learning. If there are some clear goals set and then, when completed, also evaluated, students then see their own progress and may be willing to continue in learning and accomplishing higher and higher goals.

Oxford and Shearin stress that in order to work as efficient motivators, goals should be accepted by the learners, specific, hard but achievable and last but not least, accompanied by the feedback about progress. As the authors notify, "goal setting can have exceptional importance in stimulating L2 learning motivation, and it is therefore shocking that so little time and energy are spent in the L2 classroom on goal setting" (19).

4.   Present in a motivating way

Clear definitions, exercises, drills, long explanations, all these are used to introduce some new subject matter. However, if learners do not see the point why they should do something, their attention may decrease. More motivating way how to present new grammar or vocabulary is to show the students how useful it is to know it. Practical exercises will push the abstract grammar rules closer to practical life and if the students see the point why they are learning something, they are more willing to do so.

This is also connected with the Tran Thi Thu Trang´s finding mentioned above which has shown that students themselves may be made to overcome their demotivation just because they see the importance and usefulness of English.

5. Give feedback and encourage

As has been mentioned in the chapter about prize and punishment, using those two sensitively may help a lot. This is connected with students' self confidence and the way how they perceive their results. As students' feedback is important for teachers, also teacher's feedback is important for students. Only marks do not tell everything and without clear explanation they may do harm. If teachers explain, even though they had given a bad mark, that they believe in student's abilities and hope that future results would be better, the student will try more. If the teacher also suggests how to improve the results and provides help, the students may see the point that it is not only their own problem, but that the teacher is willing to help.

It is obvious that every teacher may use his or her own techniques to motivate the pupils, however, it is important to use some. Using the above mentioned techniques, as well as any other, might decrease demotivation, or increase motivation, which may cause the fact that pupils learn more.

6. Increase students' self-confidence

This technique, although it is stated here at the final position, is one of the most important ones. Teachers could use all the strategies listed above, but as long as the students have problems with their own self-confidence, there is no use. As Dörnyei mentions, people with a low sense of self-efficacy lose faith in their abilities and are likely to give up ("Motivational Strategies", 87). To repel students' doubts about their abilities, the author provides following suggestions. Teachers should: provide experience of success, encourage and reduce language anxiety (89-94). According to Penny Ur, success is "the single

most important feature in raising extrinsic motivation" (278). If students are successful once, they are most likely to expect that they will be successful also in future. One of the most important ways of increasing student's self-confidence is also an appropriate kind or praise.

The above mentioned strategies are believed to be easily applicable at English lessons and might be helpful for all English teachers. It is important to realize that if demotivation in English lessons is lowered, the pupils are likely to learn more and there is also a possibility that their motivation will rise.

3. Practical part

3.1 Research design

There can be found a huge amount of literature aimed at researching motivation. Demotivation, on the other hand, gets very little attention. In spite of the fact that those two concepts are closely related, it is believed that research aimed primarily at demotivation and its causes may bring some new and interesting findings that might not be inferred from the findings based on motivation only. However, it is vital to realize that there may appear some problems caused by the nature of demotivation.

Demotivation, being an unobservable construct, is impossible to measure. What is more, the results, no matter how extensive the research sample is, are not always possible to be generalized, because demotivation is a highly individual matter and depends on many different factors perceived subjectively. These facts led to a decision that the research should not be aimed at an overall distribution of English learning demotivation, but should be done to help particular schools to investigate demotivation in English lessons. However, even though the research findings are substantive mainly for the schools that participated in the research, it is believed that some general piece of knowledge inferred from the research could be applied in every school.

Several schools had been asked whether they were interested to participate in researching demotivation in their

English lessons. Two of them were curious about the results and at the same time provided an interesting research sample.

It was needed to restrict the data collection to examining pupils of different age at a particular point in time to find out about the present state of their demotivation and introduce some ideas about potential solving of the problem. A cross-sectional research using a questionnaire with primarily closed items was chosen as the most suitable one. Although, as Dörnyei points out, a qualitative research focusing on the participants' rather than researcher's interpretations would be more appropriate for researching motivation, which could be applied to demotivation as well, the research was interested in an overall distribution of some demotivating factors, for which a quantitative research using a questionnaire is highly convenient ("Teaching and Researching", 193). Another reason for choosing an anonymous questionnaire as a research method was the fact that some of the teachers, teaching in the participating classes, were known to the researcher, which might have influenced the result interpretation of some other kinds of research methods.

3.1.1 Aim of the research

The main goal of the research is to determine the existence of demotivation in two different schools. As has been mentioned above, the degree of demotivation, as an individual matter, is impossible to assess. However, it is believed that if there exists some kind of demotivation among English language students, there is a possibility to ascertain some reasons for it and to find out about some interdependencies between demotivation and

the complements such as boredom, fear or the amount of praise, usually connected with it.

Ideally, the research findings are expected to come up with the most common reasons that cause demotivation, as it is believed by the research participants. What is more, some suggestions on how to lower demotivation experienced by the respondents will be inferred from the answers and provided to the schools that participated in the research.

In addition, judging from the research sample, it is expected that the results might be informative not only for the participating schools. Furthermore, the questionnaire, quite easy to evaluate, might be used by any teacher or a school director to find out about the situation in given English lessons.

The research results are expected to be in line with the facts that were found in the specialized literature and mentioned in the theoretical part.

3.1.2 Hypotheses

As far as the aim of the research and the content of the theoretical part are concerned, there are three hypotheses which should be confirmed.

Based on the findings described in the theoretical part, obtained from the books that have been read, a hypothesis based on the causes of demotivation should be stated.

1. *One of the main demotivating factors in an English classroom is the teacher.*

Much has been written about the prize and punishment used in an English lesson. One of the aims of the research is to find out, whether there is any interrelationship between motivation and the subjectively perceived amount of praise. On account of this, the following hypothesis, which is supposed to be confirmed, sounds as follows.

2. Insufficient praise affects negatively students' motivation.

Although the research is primarily aimed at demotivation, a hypothesis based on motivation and its effects on developing English skills also in free time should be introduced, because this may be the main goal of many teachers. Moreover, if the students are used to spend their free time developing their English language skills, it is believed that they are likely to do so also after leaving the school.

3. If English language students are motivated, they develop their skills also in their free time.

Whether the hypotheses were fulfilled or not is to be found in chapter 3.2.

3.1.3 Description of the examined sample

As has been mentioned above, several schools in Litoměřice were asked, whether they were interested in participating in the research. One primary and one secondary grammar school provided an interesting research sample,

together with reasons why they were interested in researching given classes.

The primary school U Stadionu in Litoměřice is a selective school with a long tradition in teaching foreign languages since the first class. Furthermore, a native speaker is present in some English lessons. Since the sixth class, there are three different language groups having diverse number of English lessons with diverse approaches.

There is a group of pupils who learn English since the first class, where they have two English lessons per a week, one of them being lead by a native speaker. Since the third class the number of the lessons rises to three and since the fifth class they have four English lessons per a week. These pupils should be the most skilled in English. For simple orientation, this group will be called *Eng 1* for the rest of the thesis.

The pupils of the other group learn German as the first language and start learning English since the fifth class, where they have two English lessons per a week. Since the sixth class they have three lessons per a week, but there is no English taught by an English native speaker. This group will be called *Eng 2.*

Last but not least, there is a mathematical group mixed of pupils who come to this school to the sixth class from different schools and of those from this school, who are interested in mathematics. This group exists since the sixth class and paradoxically, they have the highest number of English lessons of all the groups. In the sixth class they have three lessons, but since the seventh class they have three English lessons with a Czech teacher, one lesson with a native speaker and one lesson

called Mathematics in English, which is a kind of mathematic lesson, but taught in English. This group will be referred to as *Eng M.*

The school management was in this case interested, whether there were any differences in motivation between those three kinds of language groups. To gain more accurate results, the research was done within those three groups in the seventh and in the ninth class.

The secondary grammar school, Gymnázium Josefa Jungmanna, is the only public secondary grammar school in Litoměřice. Pupils are allowed to study at this school after finishing the fifth class at a primary school (the eight-year study programme) or after finishing the whole primary school (the four-year study programme).

The teachers guessed that demotivation in English lessons, especially in the classes of the four-year programme was very high and they wanted to find out, what the reasons were. The school management facilitated the research by putting the research groups of the same age together in one lesson, which was easier for the whole organization of the research, but made it impossible to strictly distinguish the results between different groups. Since the research was anonymous, it also was not possible to match the groups to their teachers. However, the general results specifying the present state of demotivation at the school were acquired, which was the aim.

At this school there are different English groups, put together of the pupils from all the classes of the same grade,

based on their language level, which was determined with the help of a classification test at the beginning of the first class.

In the first grade, there are four language groups. The subjects of the research were two of them. All the pupils of the first grade have three English lessons per a week.

In the fourth grade there are six language groups put together of three fourth classes. Two of the groups were asked to fill in the questionnaire. All of these students have four English lessons per a week plus they can choose out of several subjects whether they want to attend two voluntary conversation lessons with a native speaker.

To infer a general outcome, the classes of the eight-year programme at the level of the seventh and the ninth class were the subject of the research as well, because the sample from the primary school, restricted to the environment of the school, was believed to be too small to be perceived as conclusive.

The number, age and length of English study of the participants are to be seen in Table 1 Research sample at the end of this subchapter. Another important notion is the teacher, who may affect the final demotivation very much. For this reason, it is important not to leave this information out. To keep the research anonymous, diverse teachers in the classes are indicated by different letters.

Table 1 Research sample

	Number of participants	Age of participants	Length of English study	Eng. lessons in a week	Teacher
U Stadionu					
7 Eng 1	7	13	7	4	A
7 Eng 2	6	13	3	4	B
7 Eng M	8	13	3-7	4+1	B
9 Eng 1	8	15	9	4	C
9 Eng 2	9	15	5	4	B
9 Eng M	7	15	5-9	4+1	B
J.Jungmanna					
7.	19	13	3-7	4	G+I
9.	11	15	4-9	3	D
1.	22	16	7-10	3	E+F
4.	17	19	8-13	4 (+2)	G+H
Both schools					
Age 13	40				
Age 15	35				
Age 16	22				
Age 19	17				
In total	114	girls: 46	boys: 68		

3.1.4 Research procedure

First of all, it was important to decide which aspects of demotivation would be focused on. The body of the questionnaire was based on the findings gained from the literature written on this topic and mentioned in the theoretical part.

A sample questionnaire was designed and introduced to pupils who were not the subject of the research. This testing

sample consisted of students of the sixth class of one of the examined schools. Those pupils were requested to ask questions about the parts of the questionnaire that were not understandable for them and to come up with some ideas concerning possible answers that should be added.

On the basis of this pilotage, the questionnaire was simplified and the number of multiple alternative answers to single questions increased.

Each teacher was provided a cover letter introducing the aim of the research and the procedure and was asked whether they agreed with the research being done in some of the classes they taught.

The questionnaire was distributed at the beginning of an English lesson and the time given was not restricted. The respondents were asked to give answers that are truthful and fitting for them. They were also reassured that the questionnaire was anonymous and that their teacher would not be informed about single answers of individual students.

The researcher was present for the whole time and was ready to answer every question.

To provide the opportunity to express themselves fully, keep them comfortable and to prevent any misunderstanding, the language of the questionnaire was chosen to be the mother tongue of the participants, the Czech language.

The compiled research findings and the proposed solutions that were deduced from the research were then handed over to single teachers who were interested. It is important to state that some of the teachers of both schools did not want to know the results of the questionnaires distributed in their classes.

3. 1. 5 Description of the questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of eleven questions. Most of the questions are based on a kind of Likert scales, as referred to by Dörnyei ("Teaching and Researching", 200), consisting of statements related to a particular target, where respondents are asked to choose one of the answers, ranging around a scale, which is the most appropriate for them. However, there are also half-closed questions demanding a choice of one or more given answers. This was done to come up with a questionnaire which provides clear answers that are then easy to process and evaluate. Nevertheless, in this case the respondents were provided also an empty space to fill in any other answer, if they did not happen to find any offered answer which would be fitting for them. This brought some unexpected but interesting ideas.

The sequence of the questions is made in order not to discourage the respondents, starting with easier and more general questions, ending with questions that could be perceived as more personal.

The first of the questions is supposed to find out about the kind of motivation that prevails among English language students. The respondents are required to tick one or more reasons for their learning English, representing purely intrinsic (I enjoy it) or extrinsic (the rest of the answers) motivation. Apart from that, this question also provides an overview of the reasons that lead contemporary students to learn English, which then helps to adjust the lesson to their needs.

The purpose of the second question is to find out, whether the pupils like English at school. Every lesson may be affected by many factors that make it enjoyable or boring, useful or

seemingly useless; however, the overall impression might tell the teachers to what extent they should change their approach. The respondents are offered four possible answers of a scale; they should choose one of them. It was believed that a strict division between the answers *Yes* and *No* would not be perceived positively at the beginning of the questionnaire, that is why also the answers *Rather yes* and *Rather no* were added.

The following part of the questionnaire is supposed to discover whether there is any relationship between students' motivation and the involvement of English in their free time activities. Furthermore, the knowledge of the particular kind of activities the English students are involved in may tell the teachers what kind of activities might be interesting for their students. There was a number of possible answers given, from which they could choose one or more that were fitting for them. In case there was some, for them important activity, missing, there was again a free space to write what they were missing among the given answers. The number of the mentioned possibilities rose after the pilotage.

The answer number five is expected to detect the overall attitude towards the language among English language students. This is not aimed primarily at school motivation or demotivation, but it determines general feelings about English, which is then possible to further work with.

As the respondents proceed, the questions focused on motivation at school follow. Pupils are asked to determine, whether they are, in their opinion, motivated by the teacher and whether it is enough. Sometimes, the same activity may have different motivating effects on diverse people, so it is believed that knowing the overall result might be helpful for the teachers.

This question could be specified as a kind of controlling question, as referred to by Kreislerova, showing the truthfulness or in this case the understanding of the question (18).

One of the most important questions concerning demotivation is question seven. The respondents were asked to choose the factors they would like to change at their English lessons. The given answers are believed to be possible reasons that may cause demotivation or at least a probable disfavour towards English. A teacher, believed to be one of the most demotivating factors in a classroom, should not be omitted. Problem is that there are many reasons regarding a teacher that may cause demotivation. That is why there are more given answers concerning teachers and their behaviour to gain more detailed results and to determine, whether the teachers themselves cause possible demotivation, or only some of their qualities or practices. Apart from this, there are also possibilities concerning the classroom, the classmates or the organization of the lesson. The answers were devised on the basis of the demotivating factors mentioned in the practical part. Although it was explained to all the respondents what the terms motivation and demotivation stand for, it could have happened that some of them did not fully understand. For that reason, this important question was reformulated, asking about what they would change at English lessons, to ensure that all the respondents understand the question.

According to Kreislerova, the following question is a kind of so called filtering question (18). The respondents are required to decide, whether they are motivated or not. If they are, they are asked to answer a subquestion a), if they are not, they are supposed to answer subquestions b) and c). This kind of

question was chosen to gain appropriate answers from the motivated, as well as demotivated students.

As far as the subquestions are concerned, among the motivated pupils it was important to find out what techniques, usually used by English teachers, are the most motivating for them. Conversely, the demotivated students were requested to choose the reasons that affect their demotivation, now focused on their personality rather than outer conditions, which were determined previously in the questionnaire. However, the possibility to choose the teacher as a demotivating factor was repeatedly given, to prove the findings from question seven and in case that the respondents would not think that they have any personal share on their demotivation. Additionally, it seemed helpful to find out whether the demotivated students try to overcome their demotivation by doing something, or whether they are not interested at all and let it as it is, doing nothing to overcome it. In this case they were not given any answers to choose from but were asked to provide their own answer. In this case it was believed that not providing them with any possible answer will make them think and come up with some techniques that would not have been anticipated.

Another counterpart of motivation, namely praise, is important to be determined. It is believed that a prize, as well as a punishment, affects final motivation to a great extent. Anyway, praise, having a highly positive effect on motivation, when the phenomenon of prize and punishment is concerned, was chosen to be a subject of the research. It is believed that praise is closely related to motivation and the students who are praised sufficiently are more likely to be motivated. The respondents were given a scale including the answers *Yes, Rather yes,*

Rather no, No, More than I deserve. Especially the final one is important, because it is a testament to the demotivating force of praise, which was discussed in chapter 2.3.3.

The penultimate question is believed to be the most personal one, asking about the fear which the pupils experience during their English lessons. It is obvious that the level of motivating or demotivating force of fear is not possible to determine, however, it is believed that the overall results from one class may show whether there are only some anxious students, or whether the notion of fear used by the teacher affects the whole class and if so, whether it has any effect on possible demotivation. Naturally, the respondents are allowed to choose more answers, one of them being that they are not afraid of anything in their English lessons.

Last but not least, there is a question investigating boredom and its reasons. It is expected that the respondents indicate how often they get bored during their English lessons and if they do, they are invited to state the reasons for the boredom. In this case, no possible answers were given and it was reckoned that they will come up with some interesting reasons that would not be anticipated by the researcher.

The respondents were also asked to fill in the information about their age and about the number of years they have been studying English. This was reasonable especially for the secondary grammar school, to see whether there are some big differences between the length of study of the pupils from the same class, which may affect possible boredom or demotivation, as well as motivation.

Another distinguishing factor might be the sex of the respondents, which may bring some interesting results concerning gender characteristics.

3.2 Research findings and their interpretation

The research was primarily done to estimate the level of demotivation at two different schools. However, it is believed that the results could be used to infer some general conclusion that might be applicable universally. For that reason, this chapter is divided into two parts, where the findings will be interpreted separately. The first part is based on the results important for each of the two schools that were the object of the research. The second part will try to interpret the overall results in order to find some general outcome that could be useful for every English teacher at any school.

Furthermore, this subchapter is going to have one more part, believed to be a kind of summary about the demotivating factors that may affect demotivation in English lessons. This division was done to ensure clarity and better orientation in the research findings.

3.2.1 Scope of the demotivation problem at selected schools

The teachers from the primary school in Litoměřice were interested, whether there are any differences between different English language groups. The research was done in three diverse groups of the seventh and the ninth class. It was intended that the results between the groups and also between the classes would be compared.

First of all, it is important to state that there have not been found any significant differences between the groups concerning demotivation, based on the type of the group. This might be affected by the fact that the number of respondents was very limited.

But some overall results should be mentioned. Generally, the pupils at this school like English lessons. They usually devote themselves to English in their free time several times a week, mostly when talking to their friends in English, playing computer games in English and listening to English songs. As far as the opinion about English is concerned, two notions occur comparably, namely that English is fun and English is important. Again, no obvious tendencies were found among the groups or classes.

Nevertheless, when the teacher is taken into consideration, there are some visible inclinations. Groups *7Eng2, 7EngM, 9Eng2* and *9EngM* are taught by the same teacher and if they are compared with the remaining two, although they are taught by two different teachers, the demotivating factors are clear. In all the four groups, the pupils would like to change the teaching style of the teacher, her personality and competence and the contents of the book. Conversely, group *7Eng1* would like to change the contents of the book and the majority of the respondents from group *9Eng1* would not change anything.

Interesting results were gained in group *9Eng2.* Although they are taught by the same teacher as three other groups and although they determined the teacher as the phenomenon they would like to change, they seem to be motivated, unlike the other three groups. Only two of nine pupils confessed that they were demotivated. Surprising is also the fact that five of them

think they are often bored during English lessons. The only possible explanation to this could be the fact that the pupils learn English as the second language and that they are still interested in it and see the benefits. This opinion could be confirmed by the fact that the majority of them think that English is important and they learn it because they want to understand English films and songs. On the contrary, the same kind of the group in the seventh class does not follow similar characteristics.

Group *9Eng1* is an example of a fully motivated class. Except one pupil, all of them like English at school and often devote themselves to it in their free time. English is for them enjoyable and they do not get bored during English lessons. Interesting results brought the question about things they would like to change at English lessons. No one mentioned any of the teacher-related features or the course book, which turned out to be one of the most demotivating factors in other groups. What is more, five out of eight respondents chose the answer *Other* and wrote that they did not want to change anything. When the results are compared with other groups, it comes out that the teacher at this group, much more than teachers in other groups, tells the pupils how important English is and uses diverse motivational techniques like games, songs, interesting texts or praise.

Furthermore, the results gained in the seventh and the ninth class at this school were compared to the results gained at lower levels of the secondary school. It showed up that the results are relatively similar, only with a few differences that are connected with the nature of the schools. In the seventh classes there was a variation in the way how they spend their free time.

While the pupils at the primary school mostly listen to English songs and play computer games, the same old children at the secondary school read English books and attend a language course. However, this trend does not last till the ninth class. Here, the pupils from both schools are mostly interested in English films. Last but not least, there was one more contrast in the factors they would like to change in the English lessons. The primary school respondents would like to change the content of the book and the competence of their teacher. On the other hand, the secondary school pupils are not satisfied with a diverse language level of their classmates, which is caused by the fact that these students were put together from different primary schools. However, it seems that in the ninth class of the secondary school the level becomes similar.

The secondary grammar school had a different problem. The teachers wanted to find out about seemingly high English language demotivation among their students, which was not understandable because the most of the students were supposed to pass the maturita exam in English (a final exam at the end of studies at a secondary school, usually from four subjects, one of them being a foreign language). For this reason the data gained in the fourth class were interpreted and also compared with the data gained in the first class, to see whether there are any significant differences. Unfortunately, it is not possible to match certain results with teachers, who teach in the groups, yet some tendencies are still evident.

The fourth class was labeled by the teachers as the most demotivated one. Eleven out of sixteen respondents also feel that they are demotivated. Eight of them answered that their

teacher does not motivate them at all, four more are motivated inadequately. Nine of the respondents do not like English at school; ten of them get often bored during English lessons.

As far as the reasons why they learn English are concerned, they want to travel, get a good job, understand English films and make themselves understood. Twelve of the respondents devote themselves to English more times a week; they watch films, read books, read interesting articles at the internet. Thirteen of them are confident that English is important. The majority of them are not afraid of anything in the English lessons. Yet they seem to be demotivated.

Possible reasons for this can be inferred from question eight. It seems that the only motivating technique the teachers in these classes use is negative motivation in the form of bad marks or, as some of the respondents stated, fives for not coming in the lesson. The teachers are not active and the preparation for the final exam is usually in the form of a self-study during the lesson. When it comes to the reasons for their demotivation, they unanimously blame the teacher, not themselves, which is common in the other classes.

When it is compared to the first class at the same school, these pupils also seem not to like English at school, but more of them are motivated. In contrast with the fourth class, they would like to change above all the content of the course book, which is not any problem in the fourth class. On the other hand, the teacher seems not to be a significant demotivating factor. For clarity, the demotivating factors in those two classes were put together in a graph.

Graph 1 Demotivating factors at the secondary school
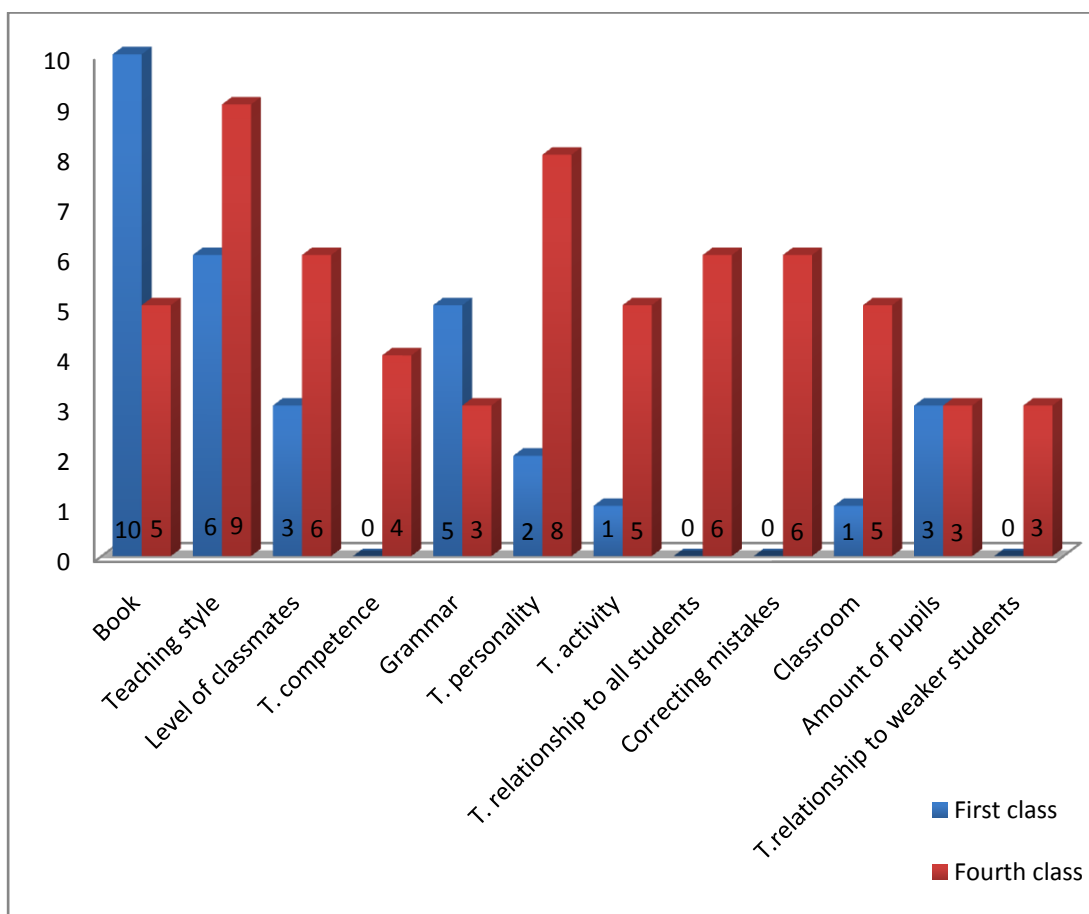
The evidence for a teacher being the main demotivating force in the fourth class could be the fact, that in the first class the pupils admit that their laziness and the fact that they rather do something else are the main reasons for their demotivation.

In the first class another motivational techniques than only bad marks are used, like showing the importance of the language, discussions, interactive board, which may affect final motivation in a positive way.

Based on the questionnaire results, it is suggested that the teachers in the fourth class should make the lessons more enjoyable. It is self-evident that pupils need to be prepared for

the final exam, but it is possible to do it in more motivating way by different presentations or by doing interesting homework, rather than the self-study during English lessons.

3.2.2 General outcome

As more determinative could be seen the results gained in all the classes from both schools that were put together to find out about the tendencies. It is believed that the findings, put together in this way, are able to portray the general situation in English lessons. However, it is important to always bear in mind that demotivation is highly subjective and depends on many factors that may differ at diverse schools.

First of all, the hypotheses should be dealt with and then some interesting facts that were discovered after processing the questionnaires will be stated.

1. One of the main demotivating factors in an English classroom is the teacher.

This hypothesis was meant to be proved by question seven: What would you change at your English lessons? It was anticipated that a question stated like this would be understandable and although it does not ask directly what the demotivating factors are, it is believed that the results might be interpreted like that.

The respondents were allowed to choose more possibilities. For clarity, the results were put in a graph. The teacher-related points are displayed in red.

Graph 2 Demotivating factors
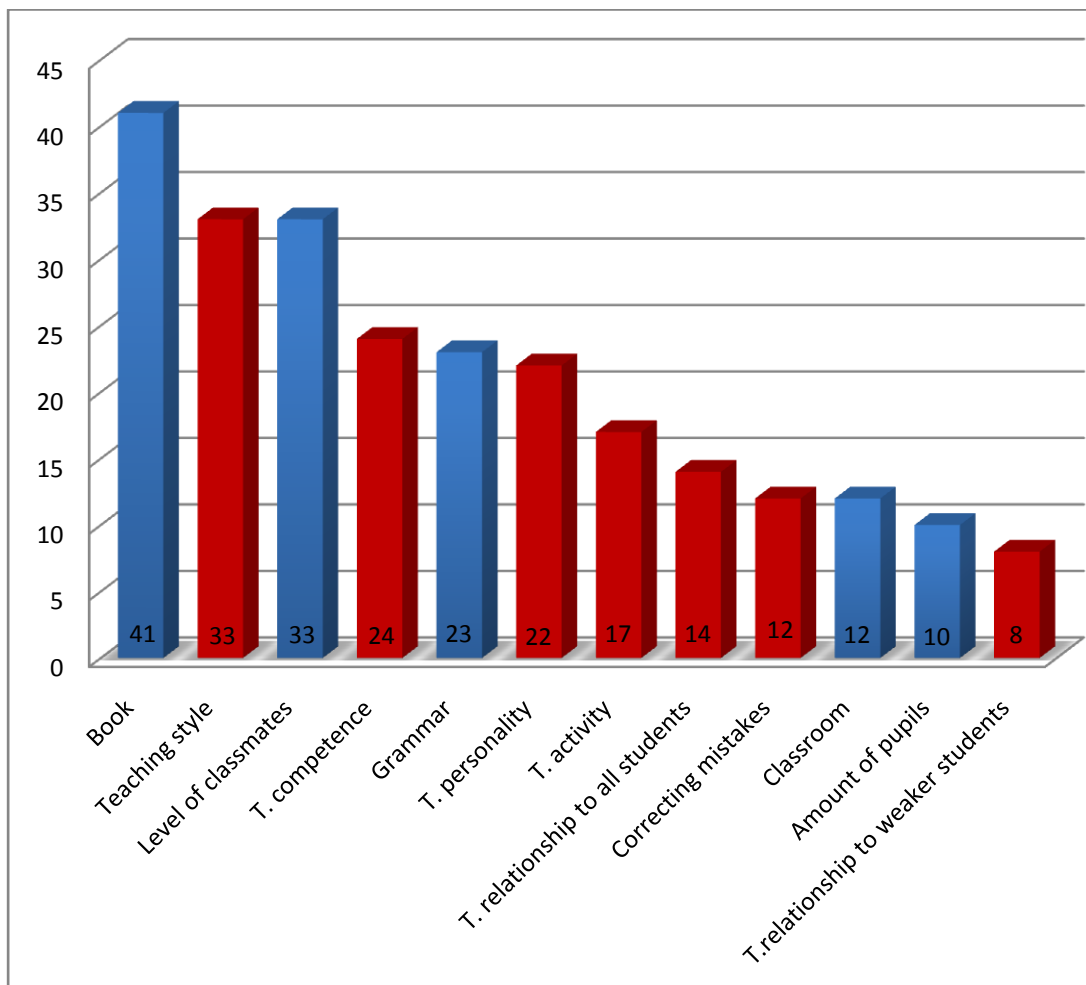
The gained data show that the most demotivating factor in an English lesson is the course book. However, the classes, where the course book was chosen as the thing they would like to change, did not indicate a high level of demotivation. On the other hand, the classes, where the teaching style, together with other teacher-related factors, was chosen, show a high degree of demotivation. The different level of classmates, which was indicated only in the classes that were put together of students that study English for diverse amount of years, is believed to be a significant demotivating factor, but not at primary schools.

When all these facts are taken into consideration, it is believed that the first hypothesis was definitely fulfilled.

*2. Insufficient praise affects negatively students' motivation.*

In order to prove this hypothesis, the interrelation between motivation and the amount of praise was studied. It was investigated whether the motivated respondents feel that they are praised enough or whether there is a discrepancy. This was done with the demotivated pupils as well.

The results are clear. Out of 114 respondents, 59 feel they are motivated and praised sufficiently. Moreover, there are 35 pupils whose demotivation is in line with the inadequate praise. Only 20 respondents show a discrepancy between their motivation and the amount of praise. According to this, it could be stated that the second hypothesis was fulfilled.

3. If English language students are motivated, they develop their skills also in their free time.

It was studied, how much time the motivated and the demotivated pupils spend over English in their free time. A graph was made to show the level of dependency.

Graph 3 Devotion to English in free time
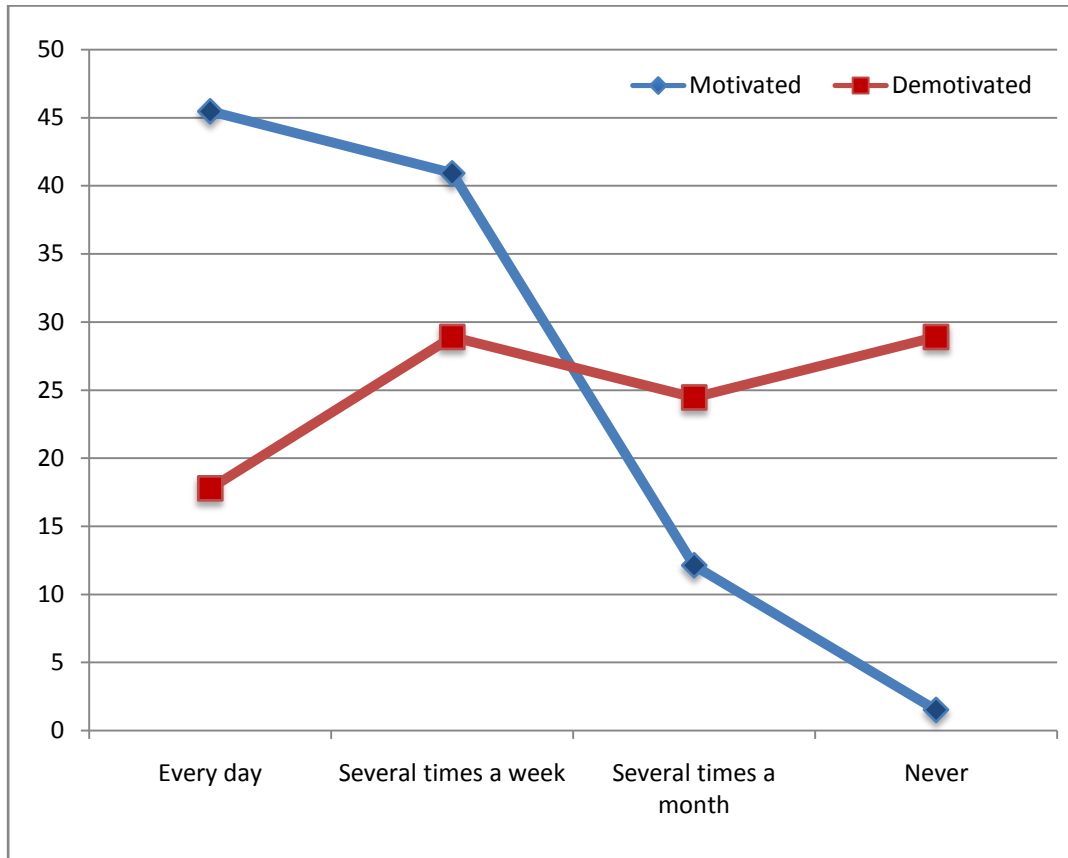
From the graph it is obvious that there is a relationship between motivation and the amount of time. It is possible to say that motivated pupils spend more time over English than the demotivated ones. Only one motivated respondent confessed that he does no English in his free time. Conversely, it is not possible to say that demotivated students do not devote themselves to English in their free time. However, as far as the motivated pupils are concerned, the hypotheses came up to be true.

Apart from the hypotheses, another important feature was found. From the research results it is obvious that there exists a relationship between the gender and the sufficiency of teacher motivation and praise perceived by diverse respondents.

From the graph below, it is obvious that girls, much more than boys, feel that they are motivated and praised adequately by the teacher. On the other hand, more boys feel that they are motivated, as well as praised, inadequately or never.

Graph 4 Amount of teacher motivation
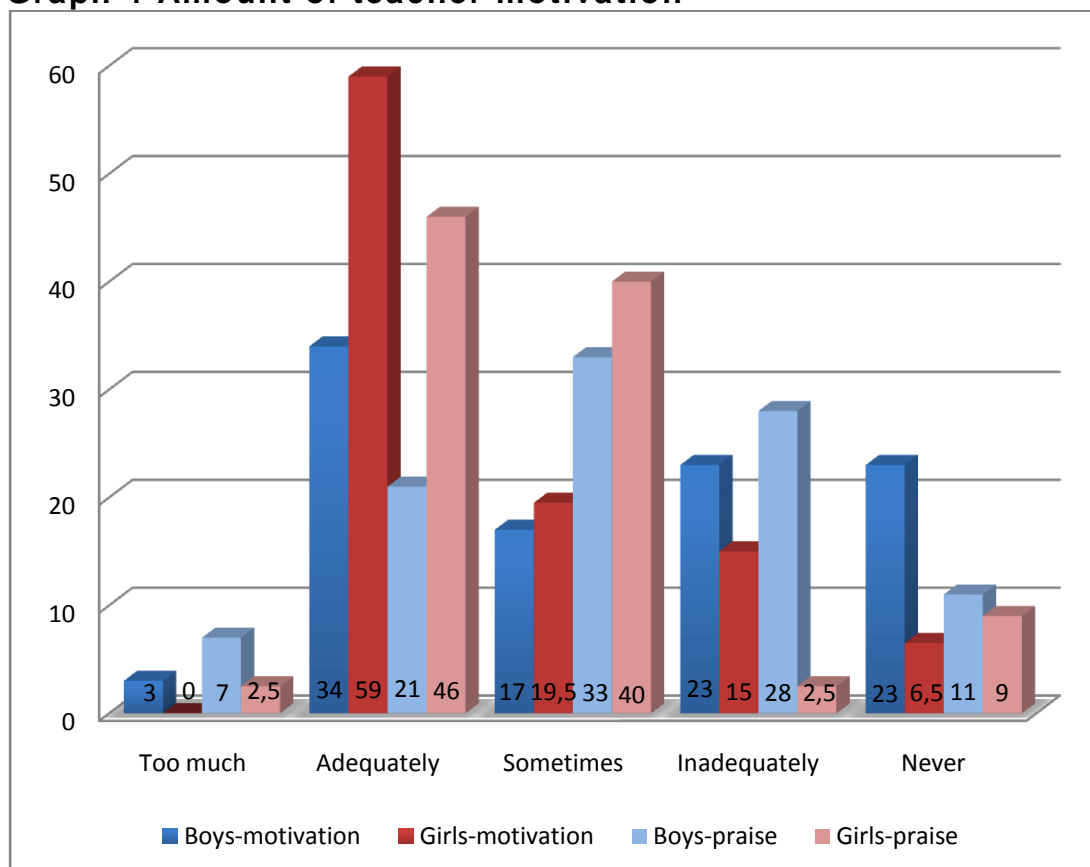
This finding is thought to be very helpful. It might be understood in two different ways. Either that girls are usually praised and motivated more than boys, or that boys need a

higher amount of praise or motivation than girls. Finding out which of these is true would need a long-time observation, anyway, it is possible to come to the conclusion that boys need to be praised and motivated more than they are. On the other hand, it is also important to assess the right amount of these, because it may easily lead to exaggeration, which would not have the estimated motivating effect.

3.2.3 Other demotivating factors experienced by pupils

In this subchapter several factors, believed to be connected with demotivation, like fear, boredom or pupil's personal characteristics, along with some suggestions, are going to be discussed.

The research has shown that almost a half of all the respondents are bored always or often. The pupils say that they are bored when they are doing something they already know, when the teacher is occupied with those who do not know or do not want to know, when they do not understand the teacher or when the English lesson is the last lesson of the day.

As far as fear is concerned, a half of the respondents are not afraid of anything. The rest of them are usually afraid of tests, mistakes or speaking. Only seven of all the respondents are afraid of their English teacher. For this reason it would be helpful to correct possible mistakes in an inoffensive and unobtrusive way.

Pupils' personal characteristics may affect their attention as well. Out of 46 respondents, 27 have answered that they were attracted by another activities. Other reasons are above all that they are lazy or that it is beyond them. Apart from their personal

characteristics, 20 respondents think that a teacher stands behind their demotivation. The research was also supposed to find out about the techniques the demotivated pupils use to be motivated again. Sadly, the majority of them admitted that they did nothing to change the state; the rest invented some techniques like trying to find something interesting about English, thinking in English, trying to learn although they see that they are not good at it, because they know how important this language is.

3.3 Suggestions on how to overcome demotivation

In the theoretical part some motivating techniques that were gathered from various sources have been mentioned. However, some additional ideas, based on the research, will be stated in this subchapter.

1. **Use additional materials based on what the pupils want and need**

As has been mentioned above, the content of the course-book is something which the majority of pupils are not satisfied with. For this reason it is important to use some additional materials that may cover the deficiency of the book. As the following graph shows, only 33 respondents are intrinsically motivated. The rest of them stated various reasons for their learning English. If the activities are based on those reasons, it is highly probable that the English lessons will become interesting and perceived as useful.

The respondents also lacked enough opportunities to practice the everyday language in dialogues. If they see the

usefulness of English in practice, they might be motivated to learn more and be better in it.

It emerged that a relatively high motivating force have above all games, songs, projects and the teacher showing the importance of English.

The following graph shows the reasons why pupils usually learn English. The answer *I like it,* showing purely intrinsic motivation, is coloured in red. Knowing the reasons why the pupils learn English might help teachers to adjust the lessons to their wants and needs.

Graph 5 Reasons for learning English
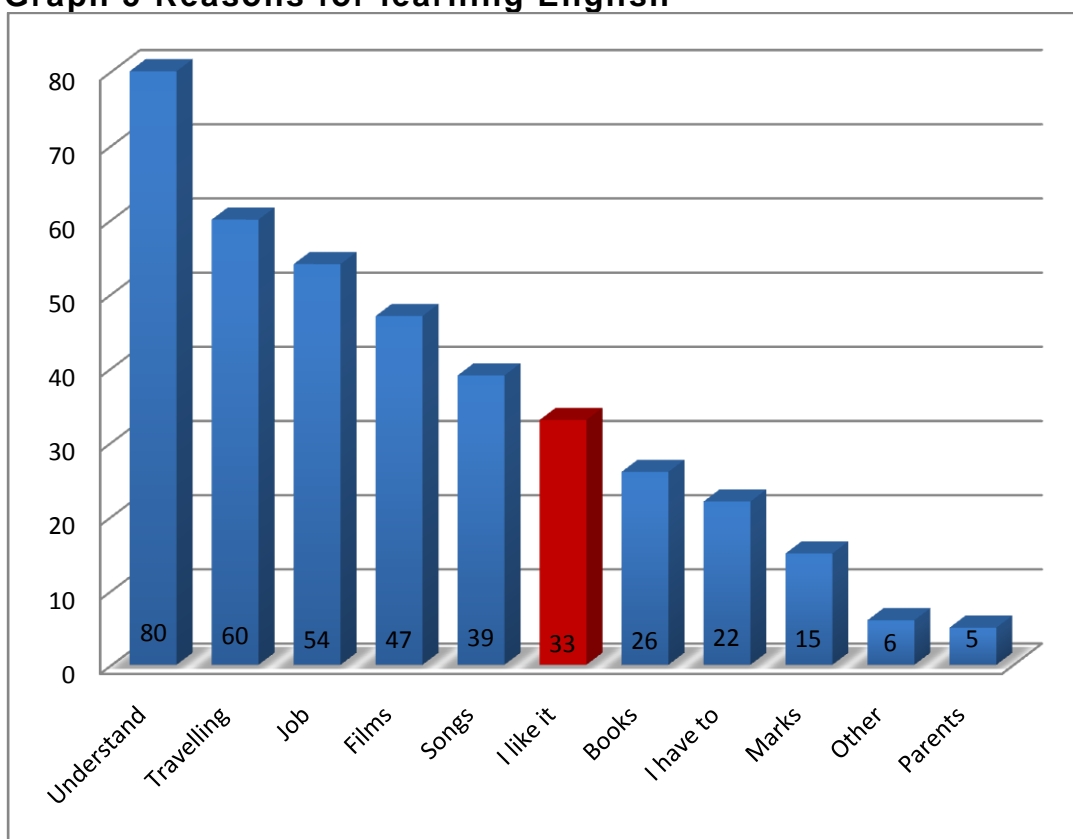
2. Praise pupils

The phenomenon of praise was mentioned many times in this thesis, but it appears to be so important that it is worth mentioning again in this subchapter.

The motivating force of praise has shown up to be immense and so it should be used in every English lesson.

In the connection with fear, praise might reduce the anxiety joined with making a mistake or the concern about speaking. However, it is important to carefully consider the way and amount of praise. It has shown up that boys need more praise than girls but they also perceive when they are praised more than they deserve.

3. Try to prevent boredom

Knowing the reasons why pupils are usually bored, some suggestions are going to be stated. Although it might be difficult for organization, teachers should always be ready to provide some extra activities for those pupils who are ready, while they are occupied with those who need more time to understand. This will help the pupils who are talented in English to develop their knowledge rather than keeping them bored while waiting for the rest of the class.

If the last lesson of the day is the English lesson, if it is possible, it should be organized in a different way. There should be more games and other activities that will not make the pupils bored. The lesson should be based more on revision than introduction of a new subject matter. Naturally, it is not possible to apply this every time, but if teachers are aware of the fact that their pupils are more likely to be bored during last lessons, they may at least a bit adapt the content of the lesson

4. Ask pupils to give you feedback

Any kind of feedback, either positive or negative, should be very useful for English teachers. Although they are doing their best, there might be some pupils that do not find the lesson suitable for them. It is obvious that some of the pupils might be afraid to sincerely say what they think because of the consequences that might follow, but if the relationship between the teacher and the students is like this, there are some ways to do it anonymously. Teachers may produce a kind of a questionnaire with closed questions where pupils circle the appropriate answers. Probably more useful might be a feedback written on a computer, in order not to guess the author according to the handwriting. This could be set as homework.

Teachers should be interested whether their pupils are bored, whether they are praised enough and what they like and dislike about the English lessons, along with some possible suggestions how to improve them.

4. Conclusion

English lessons at school might be adversely affected by several factors, demotivation being one of the most serious ones. However, it is possible to prevent it or, if it occurs, to reduce or fully eliminate it.

In the theoretical part the most important findings about motivation and demotivation were stated, along with some suggestions how possible demotivation should be faced, based on the books that were written on this topic. Several researches showed that a teacher, fear, the use of a prize and a punishment or student's personality might affect final motivation to a great extent. These demotivating factors were further elaborated in the theoretical part.

In the practical part some of the findings analyzed in the theoretical part were examined, along with some other questions connected with this topic. The aim of the research was to find out about the level of demotivation and its reasons at particular schools and to infer from the results some general information and suggestions that might be helpful to every English teacher.

As far as the level of demotivation of the respondents, as it is perceived by them, is concerned, it always depends on the whole class, on the teacher and on the pupil's personality. However, the overall results have shown that demotivation should not be underestimated. Although 60 percent of the respondents stated that they were motivated, the remaining 40 percent confessed that they were demotivated, which is surprising considering the fact that there is a great emphasis put on English at the primary school. The secondary school, with

regard to the final exams from English, is not an exception. The average level of demotivation at these two schools is the same.

It was proved that a teacher might be one of the most demotivating forces in an English classroom. The immense force of praise was also examined and confirmed and last but not least, it has been found out that motivated learners devote themselves to English in their free time much more than the demotivated ones. The three hypotheses, based on those three assumptions, were confirmed.

Apart from these findings, some other interesting pieces of information were gained. Primarily, it has shown up that boys perceive the way how a teacher motivates and praises them as more insufficient than girls do.

Secondly, one more factor has shown up to have a high demotivating force, namely the course book. However, it is believed that if teachers use any course book innovatively and in a right way and use additional materials, demotivation caused by this might be lowered easily.

Additionally, it is vital to state that motivation is not teachers' sole responsibility and the pupils should want to play their part and make use of the help the teacher provides. Only then the energy, invested to motivating the pupils by the teacher, will be of benefit to them.

The practical part was concluded by some additional suggestions how to improve motivation in English lessons, based primarily on the research findings and ideas provided by the respondents.

All in all, it is obvious that demotivation should not be underestimated or hidden behind much more researched motivation, because its impact may be huge and might affect not

only English lessons at school, but also the whole life relationship to English.

It is strongly believed that this diploma thesis will help the teachers at researched classes, as well as English teachers generally, to improve their English lessons and to lower demotivation among English language learners to minimum.

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6. Appendix

APPENDIX A: The questionnaire (Czech version)

Dotazník: MOTIVACE, DEMOTIVACE

Milí žáci,
jmenuji se Hana Macasová a jsem studentkou posledního ročníku studia na Univerzitě Karlově, pedagogické fakultě. K dokončení studia píši diplomovou práci na téma *Demotivace studentů anglického jazyka*, jejíž součástí je přiložený dotazník.
Cílem dotazníku je zjistit úroveň demotivace u studentů anglického jazyka v různých ročnících základní a střední školy a její možné příčiny.
Předpokládaná doba vyplňování dotazníku činí patnáct minut. Dotazník je anonymní a učiteli budou sděleny pouze souhrnné výsledky, nikoli odpovědi v jednotlivých dotaznících. U vybraných otázek je možno zvolit více odpovědí, podle toho, co se nejvíce slučuje s Vaším názorem.
Pravdivým a pokud možno co nejpodrobnějším vyplněním tohoto dotazníku mi pomůžete k napsání závěrečné práce, za což Vám velmi děkuji.

chlapec - dívka
věk:………
Kolik let se učíš anglicky?……..

1) Proč se učíš anglicky? *(Můžeš zatrhnout víc důvodů)*
o Prostě mě to baví.
o Kvůli rodičům.
o Kvůli známkám.
o Chci cestovat.
o Hodí se to do práce.
o Chci rozumět anglicky psaným knížkám.
o Chci rozumět anglickým filmům.
o Chci rozumět anglickým písničkám.
o Musím, je to předmět ve škole.
o Chci se umět dorozumět.
o Jiné: (dopiš jiné důvody)…………………………………..

2) Máš rád angličtinu ve škole?   ANO - SPÍŠE ANO - SPÍŠE NE – NE

3) Jak často se věnuješ angličtině ve svém volném čase?
(když se nejedná o domácí úkoly či přípravu do školy)
KAŽDÝ DEN – NĚKOLIKRÁT ZA TÝDEN – NĚKOLIKRÁT DO MĚSÍCE - VŮBEC

4) <u>Jak se jí věnuješ?</u>
o Poslouchám anglické písničky.
o Čtu anglické knížky.
o Hledám si ve slovníku zajímavá slova.
o Koukám na anglické filmy bez titulků.
o Bavím se/píši si s kamarády anglicky.
o Učím se slovíčka z počítačových her.
o Chodím do kroužku angličtiny.
o Jiné: ………………………………………………

5) <u>Označ jeden názor, který k tobě sedí nejvíce.</u>
o Angličtina je zábava.
o Angličtina je nuda.
o Angličtina je moc těžká.
o Angličtina je k ničemu.
o Angličtina je důležitá.
o Jiné: ………………………………………………………

6) <u>Můj učitel mě motivuje:</u>
   PŘEHNANĚ MOC – DOSTATEČNĚ – NĚKDY HODNĚ, NĚKDY MÁLO - NEDOSTATEČNĚ – VŮBEC

7) <u>Co bys změnil/a na hodinách anglického jazyka?</u>
   (Můžeš zatrhnout více důvodů)
o Jiný obsah učebnice.
o Schopnějšího učitele.
o Sjednotit úroveň žáků ve třídě.
o Učitelovo chování k horším žákům.
o Aktivita učitele.
o Vzhled třídy.
o Učitelovy osobní vlastnosti.
o Snížit počet žáků ve třídě.
o Učitelův vztah ke všem žákům.
o Méně gramatiky.
o To, jak učitel opravuje chyby.
o Styl, jakým učitel učí.
o Jiné: ………………………………………………………

8) <u>Myslíš, že jsi dostatečně motivovaný v hodinách angličtiny?</u>
   (motivovaný znamená, že tě angličtina baví, učíš se jí rád a víš proč)
   Pokud **ANO**, odpověz na otázku **8a**
   Pokud **NE**, odpověz na otázku **8b, 8c**

8a) Čím tě tvůj učitel nejvíc motivuje? *(Můžeš vybrat víc důvodů)*
- o Hrajeme hry
- o Vysvětluje nám, jak je angličtina důležitá
- o Posloucháme písničky
- o Čteme zajímavé anglické texty
- o Chválí mě, když se mi něco povede
- o Používáme anglický časopis
- o Děláme různé projekty
- o Pracujeme s interaktivní tabulí
- o Když se nenaučím, dostanu špatnou známku
- o Jiné: …………………………………………………

8b) Co má vliv na tvou nemotivovanost? *(Můžeš vybrat víc důvodů)*
- o Mám pocit, že na to nemám.
- o Učení nepřinese žádné výsledky, ať se snažím, jak chci.
- o Je to namáhavé.
- o Přitahují mě jiné činnosti.
- o Doma mi říkají, že je to k ničemu.
- o Angličtina je nuda.
- o Nebudu angličtinu nikdy potřebovat.
- o Jsem líný/á.
- o Učitel.
- o To, jak se mí spolužáci nesnaží.
- o Jiné: …………………………………........................

8c) Co děláš pro to, abys byl/a opět motitovaný/á?...

9) Jsi za své výkony dostatečně chválen?
ANO - SPÍŠE ANO - SPÍŠE NE – NE – JSEM CHVÁLEN VÍC, NEŽ SI ZASLOUŽÍM

10) V hodinách angličtiny mívám strach:
- o Z ničeho.
- o Z testů.
- o Z učitele.
- o Že udělám chybu.
- o Z poslechů.
- o Jiné: …………………………………………………

11) Nudíš se v hodinách angličtiny? **POŘÁD – ČASTO – SKORO VŮBEC – VŮBEC**
Pokud ano, proč myslíš, že se nudíš?
……………………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX B: The questionnaire (English translation)

Questionnaire: MOTIVATION, DEMOTIVATION

Dear pupils,
My name is Hana Macasová and I am a student of the last year of my studies at Charles University, Pedagogical faculty. To finish my studies, I have to write a diploma thesis called *Demotivation among English Language Students and How to Face it,* part of which is the attached questionnaire.
The aim of the questionnaire is to find out about the level of demotivation among English language students at different classes of a primary and a secondary school and its possible causes.
Anticipated length of filling in the questionnaire is fifteen minutes. The questionnaire is anonymous and your teacher will be told only the overall results, not the answers from single questionnaires. It is possible to choose more answers in some questions, if they match your opinion.
Your filling in the questionnaire truly and thoroughly will help me to complete my thesis. I thank you a lot for this.

boy – girl
age:……..
How long have you been learning English?……….

1) Why are you learning English? (you can choose more answers)
   o I simply enjoy it.
   o Because of my parents.
   o Because of the marks.
   o I want to travel.
   o It is good for work.
   o I want to understand English books.
   o I want to understand English films.
   o I want to understand English songs.
   o I have to, it is a subject at school.
   o I want to make myself understood.
   o Other: (write other reasons)…………………………

2) Do you like English at school? **YES – RATHER YES – RATHER NO – NO**

3) How much time do you devote yourself to English in your free time?
   EVERY DAY – A FEW TIMES A WEEK – A FEW TIMES A MONTH – NEVER

4) How ?
   o I listen to English songs.
   o I read English books.
   o I look up some interesting words in a dictionary.
   o I watch English films in English.
   o I talk to/write to my friends in English.
   o I learn vocabulary from computer games.
   o I attend an English course.
   o Other:…………………………………..

5) Tick one opinion that fits you best.
   o English is fun.
   o English is boring.
   o English is difficult.
   o English is for nothing.
   o English is important.
   o Other:………………

6) My teacher motivates me:
   TOO MUCH – ADEQUATELY – SOMETIMES MORE, SOMETIMES LESS - INADEQUATELY – NOT AT ALL

7) What would you change at your English lessons?
   o The contents of the course book.
   o More capable teacher.
   o Unify the level of the classmates.
   o Teacher's behavior towards weaker pupils.
   o The activity of the teacher.
   o The appearance of the classroom.
   o Teacher's personal characteristics.
   o Lower the number of pupils in the class.
   o Teacher's relationship towards all pupils.
   o Less grammar.
   o The way how my teacher corrects mistakes.
   o The teaching style of the teacher.

8) Are you sufficiently motivated?
   If yes, answer question **8a**
   If not, answer question **8b, 8c**

8a) How does your teacher motivate you to be willing to learn English?
- o We play games.
- o The teacher tells us how important English is.
- o We listen to songs.
- o We read interesting texts.
- o The teacher praises me when I succeed.
- o We use an English magazine.
- o We participate in different projects.
- o We use the interactive board.
- o When I get a bad mark.

8b) What affects your demotivation?
- o I think that it is beyond me.
- o There are no results, however I try.
- o It is too demanding.
- o I am attracted by other activities.
- o My parents keep telling me that it is for nothing.
- o English is boring.
- o I will never need English.
- o I am lazy.
- o The teacher.
- o My classmates are not interested.
- o Other:…………………………………………….

8c) What do you do to be motivated again?

9) Are you praised sufficiently for your performance?
YES – RATHER YES – RATHER NO – NO – MORE THAT I DESERVE

10) In the English lessons I am afraid of:
- o Nothing.
- o Tests.
- o Teacher.
- o That I make a mistake.
- o Listening.
- o Other:……………………….

11) Do you get bored during your English lessons?
ALWAYS – OFTEN – BARELY – NEVER

If you are bored, what is the reason?...