

## *Educational Needs of Senior Learners in Learning Foreign Languages*

### ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with the general issues of ageing, learning and focusing on foreign language education for the elderly. Firstly, it examines demographic changes and their consequences. Secondly, it focuses on the phenomenon of “active ageing” and “long-time learning” concept. Furthermore, it studies the more specific issues of why, how and what seniors want to learn when starting or continuing to learn foreign languages. In the paper, the role of an educator is emphasised as well as logistic solutions that institutions providing for seniors adapt.

*KEYWORDS: senior age; active ageing; educator; senior education.*

### INTRODUCTION

Analogously to other European societies, Polish society is getting older and the ageing trend has been accelerating for two decades. Various prognoses indicate that throughout the nearest decades

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the world population of people reaching senior age will have increased threefold.

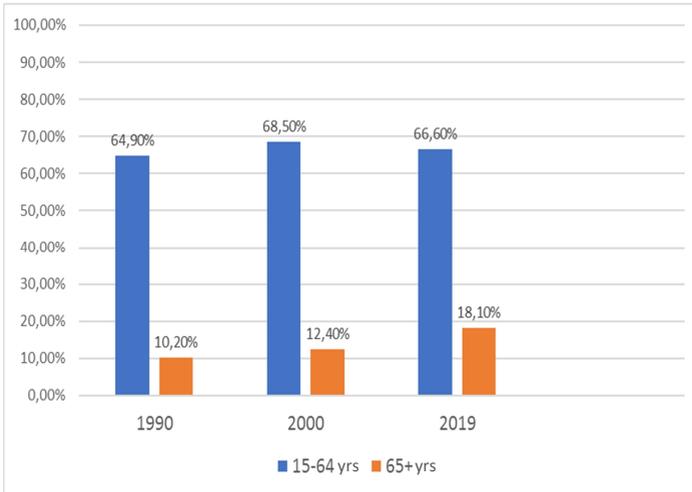
A number of sources define “senior age” differently. Encyclopaedia Britannica (2002) provides the following definition:

Old age, also called senescence, in human beings, the final stage of the normal life span. Definitions of old age are not consistent from the standpoints of biology, demography (conditions of mortality and morbidity), employment and retirement, and sociology. For statistical and public administrative purposes, however, old age is frequently defined as 60 or 65 years of age or older.

The United Nations defines senior age thus:

Traditionally, the United Nations and most researchers have used measures and indicators of population ageing that are mostly or entirely based on people’s chronological age, defining older persons as those aged 60 or 65 years or over. This provides a simple, clear and easily replicable way to measure and track various indicators of population ageing (UN, 2019, introduction).

The Polish Main Statistical Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny/GUS) defined senior citizens in May 2017 as those “who have reached 65 years of age.” The graph below provides an overview of the population in Poland in selected years, according to age groups. The biological age groups are given in percentages as of 31 December 2018. As indicated, older adults are the fastest growing segment of Polish society.

Figure 1. *Population Growth in Age Groups*

Note: Based on GUS (2019).

Today, demography needs to be at the heart of all major contemporary societal issues in Poland as for the socio-economic areas these trends are irreversible. That is why the focus has been shifted to the oldest group of the society – seniors. A great deal of discussion is being devoted to so-called “active ageing”. In 2002, the WHO provided the following definition for active ageing: “Active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (WHO, 2002). The aim of active ageing is to increase seniors’ quality of life. It does not only relate to seniors’ professional activity or physical condition, but also to other spheres of life such as; social, economic, cultural, spiritual or civic (WHO, 2007). The active ageing approach has the potential to address many challenges facing the ageing population, for example: health, labour market, employment, education and social policies support active ageing. More people participate actively

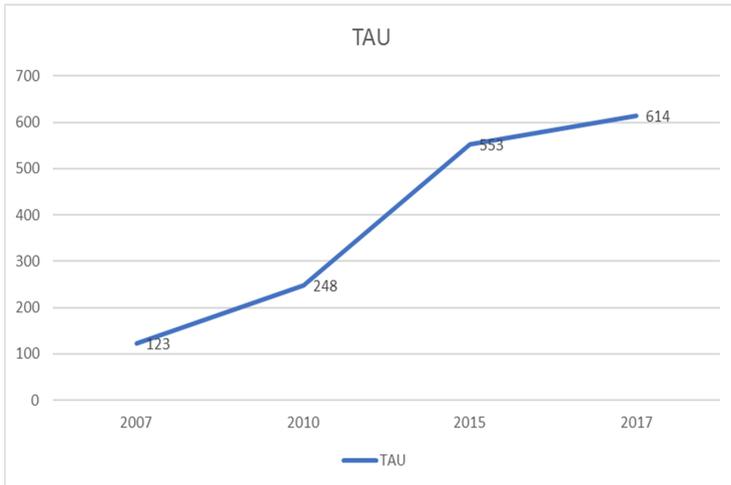
as they age in the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of society, in paid and unpaid roles and in domestic, family and community life.

In the analysis of social activity of Polish seniors as provided by the Analysis, Documentation, and Correspondence Office (Senat RP, 2019) – the Active Ageing Index consists of 22 individual indexes and it is obtained by combining score results taking into consideration four areas: employment, participation in social life, health condition and life security that fosters conditions for active ageing. In 2014, the index for Poland was 28.1 points, assuming that 100 points constitute an ideal situation. Overall, among EU members, Poland ranked 27th. The average index for the whole EU was 33.9. In 2018, Poland received 30.9 points, which placed Poland in the 24th position in the EU.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned aspects – demographic changes and active ageing – the purpose of this article is to show mature adult participation in educational activities, focusing on foreign language learning – in particular, why they learn, how they acquire knowledge, what the role of the teacher and various institutions is in the process of providing foreign language learning services.

As far as Polish seniors' participation in education is concerned, in comparison to Western European countries, the figure is still modest. The Learning for Sustainability research demonstrates that 4.7% of seniors (aged 55–74) took part in informal education in the EU, whereas in Poland merely 1.6%. However, the trend is on the increase. In Poland, educational activity of seniors is centered around Third Age Universities – the flagship institutions that provide culture and learning to seniors (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Increasing Number of Third Age Universities Across One Decade



Note: Based on [zdrowy-senior.org](http://zdrowy-senior.org).

It needs to be taken into account, though, that even in the most dynamic expansion phase of these institutions (in 2018, according to Central Statistical Office), the number of Third Age Universities in Poland reached 640. More than 100,000 seniors participated in TAU classes, with 12% below 60 years of age. Meanwhile, in Poland the number of seniors aged above 61 amounts to approximately 9 million.

Embracing change is a natural part of aging, and, as far as lifestyle is concerned, it is more about the start of a new phase than it is the end of something. Today's Polish elderly want to be active, to continue taking part in social life and to be of significance for others. To enable them to continue playing a meaningful role in society, it is vital to enable them to develop new skills and different attitudes to life.

## LEARNING IN MATURE AGE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR AN INDIVIDUAL?

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young” – Henry Ford.

The principal objectives in relation to senior education that should be met are the following:

preparing for one's old age	taking responsibility for one's future by taking advantage of one's potential
envisaging future situations	random and accidental ones – by means of learning one's objective and subjective limitations
helping others	learning how to adequately offer support to people with limitations
preparing how to make and maintain new acquaintances	showing empathy and help (offering a helping hand to those in need)

The above-mentioned objectives can be fulfilled by exercising education model proposed by Borowska (2003). In its assumptions the model refers to the notion of *homo construens*, i.e. the concept of a self-building man.

As Skibińska (2007) notices, the level of education of the elderly has been on the increase, the health condition has markedly improved which, in consequence, results in improving average life expectancy. The elderly have more time at their disposal, which they can devote to pursuing their passions. A question that arises at this point concerns seniors' intellectual capacity. Is their age (60 plus) a facilitator or a burden in the learning process?

Konieczna-Woźniak (2013) observes that it is crucial to be conscious of cognitive changes taking place in old age as they can be the key issues in the learning process. The changes that

may hinder the learning process are hearing, eyesight or motor skills impairment even though students are competent learners. Skibińska, however, emphasises the major role of one's memory in the cognitive process. In the case of seniors, semantic memory, which is also referred to as *facts and occurrences storage* does not deteriorate with age. Klimova (2018) writes that the brain retains a considerable plasticity in old age; she quotes Cheng et al. (2015) who maintain that a short and long-term period of foreign language learning might lead to the changes in the brain structure that can consequently contribute to the resilience to the neuro-pathological damage of the brain. As Klimova further quotes Lee and Tzeng (2016) foreign language learning results in effective structural and functional connectivity in the brain which enhances the capacity for language processing and, thus, has a positive impact on white and grey matter structures.

The development of the "life-long learning" concept coincided with the promotion of integration processes in Europe. Socio-cultural changes, technological progress and ageing process of societies have given rise to a seniors' greater participation in social and cultural life, their greater professional activity and, consequently, the need to implement changes in education. Retirement brings the opportunity to spend time pursuing activities that an average working person has no time for. Foreign language education is among the most common activities chosen by OAPs. Educational market in Poland has been trying to respond to the demands of this age group. According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS, 2018), 22% of those aged 45–49 took part in educational activities, but only 5% of those aged 65–69. As for learning foreign languages, 24.9% of all respondents who continued their education attended foreign language classes. In 2019, more than 19 thousand seniors participated in foreign language classes in Culture Centres or Seniors' Clubs (MRiPS, 2019).

In recent decades one has noticed a considerable progress in a number of spheres of life, at the same time emphasis has

been put on the need for education in mature age. As Szymański (2009) indicates, educating seniors is not merely about passing on knowledge, but above all, enabling seniors to efficiently function in the changing surroundings. Education is becoming a greater determinant of quality of life in the area of active ageing as well as consumption. Czerniawska (2009) claims that education in later life is “first and foremost meditation about life itself. It is an effort that people make in order to remain young and to be updated.” Czerniawska states that focusing attention on oneself – on condition that it does not render oneself egocentric – is one of the crucial human needs and obligations. In addition, she points out that neither great transformation nor dazzling development happen in one’s mature age. Learning fulfils a different function: “learning for one’s own”. Such an attitude is crucial not only for an elderly individual, but for the group of peers who constitute a high percentage of the society. Thus, education in later age becomes an important activity. Not only is it an intellectual exercise but also a pleasure, adventure, a means of rediscovering a sense of learning, thus assigning life a new significance. Czerniawska observes that learning in mature age “provides models of positive ageing and contributes to creating a lifestyle which advocates learning as incalculable value.”

Seniors constitute a diverse group of learners. Factors contributing to this feature are: age differences within the group (55–90), personality traits, professional experience, overall education level, and a foreign language learning experience. It is vital that seniors actively participate in the learning process as it allows them to remain independent in mature age.

Timmerman (2002) distinguished four types of learning that help OAPs maintain self-reliance.

- **Acquiring skills and knowledge in order to improve one’s financial condition.** The first type of education enables seniors to subsidize their income by means of acquiring and upgrading necessary skills to, for example, seek employment.

- **Learning new skills that facilitate life.** The second type of education allows seniors to overcome everyday obstacles relating to their health condition in later life. Owing to gaining particular knowledge, OAPs learn how to solve their problems and adjust to new situations.
- **Acquiring skills to help others.** This type of education allows to emphasize the role of seniors as educators. It gives them vigour to work for a society.
- **Receiving education with the aim to attain the height of humanity i.e. overall growth.** The fourth type of education constitutes an individual approach to one's learning that can benefit a person to a great extent (Timmerman, 2002).

According to Malcolm Knowles and colleagues (2009) a high degree of motivation for learning in mature age is for an individual to be convinced that one can succeed. Resuming learning in mature age allows one to go back to a life rhythm that previously was connected with one's professional activity. Once again, it renders everyday life more systematic and, thus, meaningful – which can be the source of overall life contentment. The lack of established daily rhythm and activities may make one's life devoid of any purpose, heading towards an unknown direction. The educational process grounded on treating the elderly with respect will allow them to pass through the last stage of their life with the sense of fulfilment and satisfaction that arises from it.

#### CHOOSING TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

On the one hand, starting a foreign language education in mature age may seem more complex. Activities that require mental effort are often conditioned by emotional factors and prior experiences. A number of research suggests that motivation and self-confidence play a crucial role in learning foreign languages (Beisgen et al., 2003). On the other hand, Skibińska (2007) rightly

notices that seniors display a more objective approach when it comes to self-evaluation of their knowledge, which is defined as metaknowledge. She writes that in the case of seniors assessing their own metaknowledge, it accurately corresponds with its status quo. This means that they are capable of providing truthful information as to how much they know, which is of great benefit for a teacher when planning classes.

Elderly people voluntarily choose to learn foreign languages. Among the most common reasons are: retaining intellectual agility, sustaining and making new acquaintances, following one's intellectual passions, spending leisure in a useful manner, wishing to travel abroad in a more independent way, being fascinated by the target language and the culture it originates from. Wawrzyniak and Świdorska (2011) specify three types of language learning motivation:

- **social motivation:** the need to communicate with spouses of their children and with their grandchildren who do not speak Polish; the need to communicate in a foreign language while travelling; their willingness to make acquaintances with foreigners;
- **practical motivation:** the need to become proficient in a foreign language in order to find employment abroad, for example as an old-peoples' carer in Germany; be able to communicate with foreign clients; the need to do literature reviews for research purposes;
- **intellectual motivation:** the need to stimulate one's brain activity and memory; maintain active interest in learning foreign languages; pursue interests in other cultures; the desire to resume foreign language learning after a considerable amount of time.

In addition to the above-mentioned motivations for learning foreign languages, one can add reasons that have emerged in recent two decades; the desire to find employment abroad and

the need to communicate with younger generations, i.e. their grandchildren who were born and have lived abroad.

#### LEARNER, EDUCATOR AND INSTITUTION

Education is the process of facilitating learning, and it takes place under the guidance of educators. It has a complex structure in which teachers, learners and institutions are involved. Each of them adopts a different role, however, a common denominator among these groups is to make the process of acquiring knowledge by the seniors effective, gratifying and secure.

#### HOW SENIORS LEARN

When planning classes for the elderly a teacher should establish a simple and coherent structure. Firstly, the teaching/learning material ought to be divided into smaller units to facilitate memorizing. Secondly, the presented content should not only be memorized but also understood. Furthermore, a teacher ought to refrain from using complicated language when presenting material or providing explanations. Moreover, when teaching specific issues a teacher should avoid introducing abstract elements. Finally, it is advisable for the teacher to abstain from giving too much detailed information. Skibińska (2007) writes that seniors concentrate on basic elements of events that they experience, similarly, when working on a text they focus on the main idea rather than details.

The research done by Bialystok (1997) shows that the age in second language acquisition is not as significant a factor as the length of exposure to the target language. In fact, on the one hand, it might take older people longer to learn a foreign language because of their difficulty in distinguishing new sounds and re-

trieving novel words, but on the other hand, senior students are more relaxed and motivated to learn. Although the elderly may need to make greater effort to learn new words, they are able to retain these new words easily if they are provided in the context. Interestingly, Kurdziel et al. (2017) revealed that newly learned words were stored in hippocampus during encoding and then integrated into lexicon in the course of sleeping. Nevertheless, the quality of sleeping is often negatively affected in the old age and therefore seniors are not able to retain as many words as younger people whose sleep is better quality and unbroken.

#### ROLE OF AN EDUCATOR

Teachers play an important role in educating old people. They are the ones who plan classes, provide support, give feedback and assessment. In cooperation with various institutions they organize the whole learning process. When teaching the elderly, educators encounter a number of challenges. Mature age is one of the most individualized periods of life. As Zych (2009) puts it, in order that old age is neither “fruitless or pointless”, “the time of solitude or emptiness”, “the time of exclusion or disappointment” – education in later years of life is indispensable. Educators ought to know that in the process of teaching they must relate to the needs, interests, possibilities, aims and life plans of individuals, i.e. to the aspects that make our life worthy, so that a human would be able to transcend themselves and become “somebody more than he/she is” – a person who is free and takes responsibility for their own life.

Commonly, when teaching mature learners, the teacher may be considerably younger than his/her students. From my own experience and the experience of my colleagues I can observe that the age gap between the teacher and the students does not pose an obstacle. Elderly students, though, expect the educator

to display not only language competences but also share their knowledge about foreign cultures. Another important role of an educator is not only to teach but also give advice on how to learn. It is important especially when teaching foreign languages. A teacher may act as an advisor on how to memorise new vocabulary and phrases, how to make notes or how to revise what has been covered.

#### SPECIFICATION OF TEACHING THE ELDERLY

In order to assure the effectiveness of teaching the elderly, an educator should be aware of a number of aspects that are characteristic for a mature age group. It is necessary for a teacher to know about physical, psychological, social or spiritual aspects of life that will allow to accurately assess their actual capabilities and needs. Also, differences between individuals that manifest themselves at the levels of: intelligence, the ability to memorise, the length of concentration span, reaction time and strategies of acquiring and analysing information. In addition, a group of senior learners may be accustomed to their own learning habits. They might display negative patterns of behaviour connected with a learning process, adverse attitude to changes, deep-rooted stereotypes and bias. According to Konieczna-Woźniak (2013) the main advantage that the elderly have over younger generations is that they have a tendency to ask a lot more questions than younger people, particularly about the sense and aim of the learning content. Their involvement in the learning process derives from their specific existential needs. Some elderly language learners may even make a greater progress than younger ones, as they have ample time for revising material in greater detail and they are not placed under time pressure.

The aforementioned aspects are of general nature and vary among the individuals within this age group. Having this knowl-

edge, an educator will be able to adjust a model of teaching to a given group. According to Knowles adult learners are autonomous and “self-steering” individuals. Their actions are voluntary; it is up to them to decide what they want to learn and how. They contribute to the educational process by means of sharing their own experiences and cooperating with the educator in designing the course content. There are a number of affective factors that contribute to success or failure in learning a foreign language. Arnold (1999) provides two reasons for researching these factors. The first one relates to increasing effectiveness of learning. Negative emotions such as anxiety, stress or fear slow down the process of learning; in contrast, positive emotions, such as self-confidence, empathy or motivation, accelerate the process. Understanding negative emotions and their sources, finding effective means to deal with negative emotions and at the same time creating adequate circumstances to generate positive energy may positively influence the learning process.

As Kawula et al. (1997) emphasize, it is the teacher’s role to develop and fulfil elderly people’s educational needs by “activating the potential of individuals or a group”. In order to accomplish this, an educator should:

- discern the elderly students’ life conditions;
- take advantage of the knowledge they possess and their communicative skills;
- rely on their acceptance of others;
- appreciate their active participation in educational activities;
- trust them and respect their privacy;
- avoid personal preferences or prejudices towards the group members.

When it comes to teaching foreign languages, according to Escuder-Mollon (2012), the teacher’s social and communicative skills are considered as the most critical factor when teaching seniors. It is interesting to notice that although knowledge and competence in the subject is important, they become a secondary

requirement for any trainer. The teacher is responsible for creating a good, serene class atmosphere to motivate students to learn and for providing additional support. They are expected to teach more than content, but transmit passion and the joy of learning. Other necessary skills are empathy, respect and understanding (Escuder-Mollon, 2012). They are crucial to display when trying to teach contents, skills or competences because senior learners are a very heterogeneous group, with very different life experiences, knowledge and capacities, which may cause the teacher certain problems when pitching the teaching level.

#### PLANNING CLASSES/CONTENT

It is worth emphasising that when teaching seniors there occurs a phenomenon called “peer tutoring” which consists in exchanging experiences, knowledge and skills. As Sienkiewicz-Wilowska (2013) writes: “Educational classes allow one to further develop one’s abilities to fulfil social roles. It is connected with returning to a position of a pupil often through peer tutoring.” Even the most thoroughly adapted teaching content will not warrant success if it is not introduced adequately. As stated by Skibińska (2007), among four groups of teaching methods that based on word, observation, practical approach and problem-solving approach, the method based on word proves the most effective. Skibińska provides an explanation that the generation of contemporary seniors has been educated primarily on using “word”, they relied on written and spoken word – unlike present-day pupils and students who rely on “picture”. It is, therefore, crucial for the educator to relate to these experiences.

Each educational process is accompanied by selecting teaching materials by the educator. One needs to remember that there is a decrease in auditory and visual perception. It is, thus, necessary to manage the technical aspect of the teaching materials. The

most popular means of teaching aids is multimedia presentation. Owing to impaired vision, the educator needs to remember that the font type, size and colour; the colour of the background ought to be adjusted.

According to Kilian (2015), planning classes for the elderly can be divided into two stages. The first stage is planning done by the teacher, and the second one requires participants' engagement in making decisions as to their own education that renders them partially responsible for their learning effects.

From the teacher's perspective the key to good planning is getting to know the course participants – the aims and teaching methods should be based on awareness of participants' limitations, abilities and interests. Kilian points out that the choice of educational materials and the type of activities ought not to be random or chaotic. It is imperative that educators set aims, select teaching methods and establish methods of recording progress. Good class-planning is essential. The educator needs to plan how to implement tasks in one lesson unit in such a way that the participants are given ample time to read, write or prepare the tasks designed by the teacher. Kilian emphasises that fast pace of teaching does not bring seniors a good advantage. One should not put time pressure on the participants, rather advocate learning at their own pace. It is necessary to devote a sufficient amount of time to various activities respectively, allow time for questions and discussions as well as assuring that the learners take breaks at regular intervals. Having frequent breaks allows participants not only to rest but, above all, it is a chance for them to enter social interactions.

Developing language skills should not only be limited to learning a language. Senior students ought to be given opportunities to explore foreign cultures by going on trips abroad, though, if it is not possible – through the use of new technologies that enable them to come into contact with the target language users. Educators should plan their language classes in such a way that

the students can approach a foreign language by creating language scenarios akin to real situations, for instance, by arranging roleplays while teaching language functions. Another practical approach that might be applied in language teaching is translation. Senior learners are avid translators, they frequently demand exercises where they would be asked to translate “everyday situations dialogues, for example: at the doctor’s or a travel agent’s”.

From my own experience as a foreign language educator, when introducing a new topic, say, at an intermediate level, it is good to ask students what they already know about the subject. It often turns out that they already possess a good amount of knowledge on a grammar unit or vocabulary topic; and that boosts their confidence.

In conclusion, educating seniors involves many elements related to the students’ own characteristics, social context, conditions under which the learning progresses, teaching methods and strategies used in the teaching–learning process. There is no ideal teaching methodology; but that it is the student’s own characteristics, his or her immediate setting and the learning context that ultimately determine the suitability of the applied method. Presenting teaching materials or doing a number of exercises should not be an aim in itself – it is rather how much stimulus various activities provide in relation to course participants. The fact that senior learners, together with their educator, create the course content, makes them more eager to accomplish their objectives.

#### ASSESSMENT

Methods and criteria of assessing progress of senior course participants differ markedly from the ones used when teaching younger generations. They appear more diverse resulting from different levels of intellectual potential. The educator should ask herself: whether and how to assess progress? As Ewa Skibińska writes,

some institutions award certificates, which is a merely formal procedure to confirm participation in classes and active engagement. Following her line of thinking, resigning from any form of assessment on the teacher's part may be understood as disregard for their intellectual endeavours and confirming a stereotypical view that education serves the elderly as a "filler" in the abundance of free time they have. Systematic and comprehensive assessment contributes to strengthening their educational motivation and, in consequence, boosting their self-confidence. Kilian (2015) states that formal progress assessment that consists in getting grades or awarding certificates does not come into play when teaching mature age. Such practices may only discourage course participants from attending classes. It is important, however that a learner is given an opportunity to self-assess his or her progress. This can be done by means of conducting a survey, peer assessment or feedback done by the teacher.

In conclusion, it is a teacher's role to offer seniors support in their endeavours to open to new experiences; to have tolerance towards their age; to aspire to change life and oneself. Thanks to an educator, an elderly person may become more uninhibited about the current, surrounding reality, and the things to come.

## INSTITUTIONS

As Zych (2019) emphasizes, education in old age is a vital task for contemporary pedagogy. Senior education may be initiated by mass media, third age universities, seniors' clubs or local institutions. As Szarota (2005) mentions, institutions catering for older demographic began their activity in the 1960s in Poland. Their main role was to plan cultural, physical and social activities for seniors. Kilian notices that time and location where classes for seniors take place are very crucial. Considering the safety of the participants, morning classes seem a better option, one should

also take into account factors such as the time of taking medicines that may cause undesirable side effects like fatigue or dizziness.

When planning classes for seniors, the choice of a venue is one of key issues as it may be a decisive element when deciding whether to join a course in the first place. One should consider the following factors:

- easy access, i.e. availability of a parking lot, accessibility to public transport and the distance to the nearest bus stop,
- the venue and its vicinity,
- adequate light conditions in the surrounding area, especially when classes take place in the evenings,
- access for the disabled.

Also, the interior ought to meet the conditions necessary for senior students, such as:

- facilities for the disabled,
- the floor where classes take place,
- the presence of a lift and the number of stairs to ascend,
- proximity of toilets,
- non-slip floor surface.

The classroom should be spacious and furnished with secure and durable desks and chairs, allowing the teacher to easily change the layout of the room. One should make sure that the lighting is adequate, preferably daylight lightening. Suitable room temperature and good ventilation should be ensured as well as good acoustics and reduction of the amount of outdoor noise. Skibińska (2007) notices that the level of noise coming from the outside should be entirely eliminated. One ought to avoid having classes in a classroom overlooking a busy street or next to a room where music rehearsals take place. Institution and teacher's role is to guarantee the comfort of learning. This will translate into greater and more willing participation in classes.

## CONCLUSION

Various actions undertaken in the field of senior education result from concern about older generations, which is the consequence of the changing demographic trend. Since the end of the 20th century, various educational opportunities have been emerging regardless of the age bracket. Although, in comparison to other European Union countries senior social and educational activity in Poland is still low, one can observe constant increase of Polish seniors' participation in social life. The number of OAPs joining foreign language courses is on the rise. It is the role of the educator to recognise the specification of educating the elderly and conforming to its rules in order to warrant effectiveness of the teaching/learning process. The final outcome of undertaking the efforts of learning often surpasses the aims established above. Participants do not only acquire knowledge but also gain experiences in handling everyday tasks. Learning in mature age allows one to adjust to the constantly changing reality. Also, above all, it has a significant influence on one's mental and physical health and leads to obtaining life fulfilment. It is the teacher's role as well as the role of the educational institution to maximise the benefits of old age education.

Education of seniors benefits not only the seniors themselves but also the whole of the society. Observing and experiencing rapid civilization changes, due to participating in continuous learning process, the elderly are able to adapt to the changes and maintain their independence. Education that is aimed at seniors reduces the distance between younger and older generations. It contributes to the rise of social awareness of the need to forge and strengthen intergeneration bonds.

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