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## **Teaching English to Adults**

**Martyna Michalska**

Department of English Language, Poznan College of Modern Language,  
59 Św. Marcin Street, 61-806 Poznan, Poland

E-mail address: [martyna94@wp.pl](mailto:martyna94@wp.pl)

### **ABSTRACT**

This thesis deals with a complicated matter of teaching English language to adults. Teaching is highly challenging, intellectually demanding and emotionally rewarding. A teacher has in his hands welfare of his students and it is his responsibility to instill knowledge into them. Adult learners have characteristics that distinguish them from “traditional” school or college learners. They are considered to be very demanding students because they already have experiences on the educational and working field so the organized learning plan seems to be essential for them. Teachers choose suitable methods of teaching with deliberation taking into account adults' styles of learning because the right choice makes the teaching and learning process more effective.

**Keywords:** teaching English language, students, learning process more effective

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

**The first chapter** of this thesis deals with the definition of the term “teaching”. Teaching can be defined in different ways, depending on the author and the point of view. These various definitions are presented in the chapter. It also presents the overview of teaching methods divided into conventional and unconventional ones. Methods are shown with their most popular techniques, aims, and teacher roles.

**The second chapter** pertains to general characterization of adults and description of the adults as English language learners. The teacher becomes acquainted with characteristics of the adult learner in order to have the correct attitude to him and use appropriate teaching methods. High demands and high motivation to learn show how distinctive group of students are adults. In this chapter, the author also describes learning styles and strategies.

**The third chapter** is devoted to the most appropriate methods for teaching English to adults taking into account specific age and demands of the adult learners. This chapter also deals with the adults' styles of learning which are conducive to attaining success in English. It also describes the most fruitful learning strategies of adult learners.

## **2. TEACHING ENGLISH**

### **2. 1. Teaching - definition**

In “Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English”, various definitions of the verb to “teach” can be found. It may be defined as “to show someone how to do something” (Summers, 2003: 1701) but also as “to show or tell someone how they should behave or what they should think” (Summers, 2003: 1701). Walter (2005), the author of “Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary” claims that teaching is giving knowledge to someone or to instruct, train someone. This is an activity that occurs between two people: the giver and the receiver.

The giver is a more experienced and mature teacher and the receiver is a group or individual students. The teaching definition can’t be reduced to a simple formula of “telling and testing” because “it is the complex art of guiding pupils through a variety of selected experiences towards the attainment of a widening field of learning” (Agrawal, et al., 2008: 202). According to Agrawal, et al., (2008) teaching is an activity that is planned and systematic. Its aim is to change behaviours of other people. Good learning arouses motivation in students and evoke the desire to learn. The teaching process can diagnose students' weaknesses. The teacher gives suitable remedies, eliminates drawbacks and constantly helps the student develop his language skills. However, the meaning of this term is not so simple and unequivocal. Mangal (2009) in her “Essentials of Educational Technology” states that: It is a very complex, social, cultural and ethical process designed in a social or cultural concept”

By all means and in any shape, it is always designed within a social context and, therefore is related to the social structures, cultural environment values and ideas of the people, society and the government. All this factors stand for the flexibility and dynamism and, therefore the meaning and definitions of teaching have always in a state change depending on the need of time, place and society. (Mangal, 2009: 125)

Gage (1963) writes that teaching is a type of interpersonal influence and aims at changing

other people's behaviour. Whereas Smith (1961) defines it as a system of actions intended to evoke learning process. Morrison (1934) points out that teaching is a close contact between a more and less mature personality which is designed to educate. Overall, in simple words the term "teaching" can be defined as a planned activity taken in order to make somebody know something.

## **2. 2. Conventional methods of teaching**

Conventional methods are considered to be traditional methods. They can be found in the everyday practice of teaching and a lot of their content is borrowed by the newer and latest methods. Some basic conventional methods are:

According to Komorowska (2000) the **Direct Method** is one of the earliest methods of teaching that has been used since the time of Greek teachers in Rome. It is based on a natural teacher and student contact which is established during the time they spend together. This method, as the main aim of teaching suggests, recognizes the ability to hold a conversation. The basic way of teaching is enabling pupils to participate in natural conversations taking place in foreign language. One of the ways to achieve this goal is being a teacher, preferably a foreigner, the other is going abroad, to the country whose language we want to learn. Systematic learning of grammar, pronunciation or the vocabulary is not required here. There is no specified selection and gradation of learning content. The teacher uses the natural sentences in a natural pace and in natural situations. The only help in understanding what he is saying is the context and the situation in which the conversation takes place. Mistakes are hardly ever corrected during the conversation in order not to destroy the conversation flow. As it was noticed by Richards and Rodgers (1986), in the Direct Method, instructions are made only in the target language and only everyday expressions and sentences are taught. Oral communication skills are very important and conversations are organized in a form of question and answer exchanges between the teacher and a student. The teacher is introducing new teaching points only orally. Grammar is taught inductively and vocabulary is taught "through demonstration, objects, and pictures" (Richards -Rodgers, 1986: 12). Abstract vocabulary is taught "by association of ideas" (Richards -Rodgers, 1986: 12). This method is based on a strong belief in the role of a living language, the value of the situation and context as well as the importance of contact with the authentic, natural foreign language.

The **Grammar - Translation Method** "was probably the most commonly used way of learning languages for hundreds of years - and it is still practiced in many situations. Practitioners think that, by analysing the grammar and by finding equivalents between the students' language and the language to be studied, the students will learn how the foreign language is constructed" (Harmer, 1998: 30). As Komorowska (2000) writes the purpose of this method is to master the grammatical system and vocabulary of a foreign language which allows independent reading and understanding of texts. The way to achieve this goal is reading and translation of texts from the foreign language to the native language as well as an explanation, comment and analysis of grammatical forms that occur in them. In this method, simplified didactic texts written by the author of the textbook or adapted literary texts are used. Monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes are done by testing grammar or have the character of a written translation. "A concentration on grammar - translation stops the students from getting the kind of natural language input that will help them acquire language and it often fails to give them opportunities to activate their language knowledge. The danger with grammar -translation, in other words, is that it teaches people about the language and doesn't really help them to

learn the language itself" (Harmer, 1998: 30).

**Audio - Lingual Method** is the method in which the emphasis is laid on listening, then a student begins to speak, read and write. As Komorowska (2000) says the purpose of this method is to master four language skills starting from talking and listening ending with reading and writing. In this method, language proficiency is training adequate habits (sustainable connections between stimulus and response). Audio - lingual method is mostly used in these stages of lesson in which new lexical or grammatical material is introduced. Also, all the classes can be carried out by using this method. First, the student listens to recordings or lector speech and then repeats the heard speech as accurately and as quickly as possible. This method is based on the assumption that language is a fixed set of sentences and language structures that can be learned. The teacher is a model to follow watching over students' linguistic behaviour whose task is to play scenes and dialogues. The most important thing is to speak in English. Wrong habits are controlled by multiple repetition and role play dialogs. During the classes, the teacher talks only in English and there are no standard tests. As Harmer (1998) writes, classes during which audio - lingual method is used are concentrated on long - repetition drill stages which are intended to develop good language habits. "By rewarding correct production during these repetition phases, students could be conditioned into learning the language." (Harmer, 1998: 31). This method first introduced the concept of a planning language course and curriculum forming. Substantial amount of exercise techniques the so called language drills, was taken over by other teaching methods.

**Cognitive Method** is a modernized variant of the Grammar – Translation Method. It is based on the assumption that when we know the grammatical system of the English language, we will be able to create an infinite number of original sentences, similar to the case of the mother tongue. This method is mainly based on learning grammar and actually helps in its understanding, for example, by comparing the structures of mother tongue and a foreign language. Making mistakes while learning is considered to be normal as the process of language proficiency takes some time. Teaching is systematic, assessment of educational process is done currently. The revision is made after each part of the material and it is followed by a test. In this way, both student and the teacher know to which degree the knowledge and skills have been mastered. Komorowska (2000) noticed that in cognitive method, language use is not habitual but innovative and the ability to learn a language is inborn. The language proficiency is achieved through a contact with a foreign language in a real - life situation. It is noteworthy, that the meaning is fully understandable for a student. Students by trial and error creates their own way of forming sentences. This method first drew attention to the creative use of a foreign language as well as to the role of receptive skills - especially listening. It also discovered the value of the error as a necessary step in the learning process and restore faith in the wisdom of reflection, analysis, explanations and the teacher comments. It also stressed the validity of the situation when the student independently forms his own opinion and trains carrying on a natural conversation. These elements are the lasting values in teaching methodology.

### **2. 3. Unconventional methods of teaching**

Today, unconventional methods of teaching are gaining more and more popularity. They are based on the psychology of learning. The focus is put on the student, his interests, preferences and learning styles. According to Komorowska (2000), we can distinguish five unconventional methods of teaching English:

As Komorowska (2000) writes **Total Physical Response**, known also as TPR, was

elaborated in the 70's, in the United States by Asher. It is based on the assumption that learning and remembering of new linguistic material is easier when the student is demonstrating two types of behaviour - listening in silence and physical movement associated with the lesson content. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) write TPR is a method that involves game like movements that are reducing student's stress and creates a positive mood in learner which makes learning easier. That method is basing on the coordination of speech and action. The main activity in the TPR is giving commands in the imperative which students obey. In Total Physical Response Method, oral proficiency is taught at the beginning level and action - based drills are used. Teaching in this method consists of simple commands given by the teacher. These commands, firstly demonstrated by the teacher, help students understand them and are constructed so that students are able to follow them easily. In each case, however, physical movement and the work of the whole body is necessary. The aim is to run both the left hemisphere of the brain that is responsible for language and speech and the right hemisphere responsible for the physical movement. It is requisites which are used in this method not textbook. The plan of the course is organized around grammatical structures and vocabulary kits for each situation. This method is suitable especially for the early stages of teaching. Abstract vocabulary and complex sentences are introduced by using sheets which they are written on. TPR is very successful in courses for children. Its role as a technique for individual exercises carried out in the middle of class when students' attention is lowered is also significant. The teacher has to provide a bit of movement and relaxation for his students.

“**The Silent Way** is the name of a method of language teaching devised by Caleb Gategno. Gategno's name is well known for his revival of interest in the use of colored wooden sticks called cuisenaire rods and for his series *Words in Color*, an approach to the teaching of initial reading in which sounds are coded by specific colors.” (Richards - Rodgers, 2001: 99) As Richards and Rodgers (2001) noticed, in this method, the teacher is silent most of the time in the classroom and students are encouraged to produce as much language as possible. Learning hypotheses of Silent Way Method could be stated as follows:

- “1. Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned.
2. Learning is facilitated by accompanying (medicating) physical objects
3. Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned.” (Richards - Rodgers, 2001: 99).

As mentioned by Komorowska (2000), in this method, linguistic material is reduced to simple words and sentences that are easy to demonstrate and filled with vocabulary gradually expanding to about 800 words. Memorizing a new content takes place in complete silence after students hear new words and phrases. Instead of textbooks, rods and phonetic boards are used in the learning process. According to Komorowska (2000).

**Community Language Learning (CLL)** is a method developed by the professor of psychology Curran. “Community Language learning draws on the counseling metaphor to redefine the roles of the teacher (the counselor) and learners (the clients) in the language classroom. The basic procedures of CLL thus can be seen as derived from the counselor - client relationship.” (Richards - Rodgers, 2001: 113). This method is based on the assumption that

any use of the language as well as any attempts to learning it are an interpersonal (group) process associated with the interaction and communication. It is also based on the belief that communication between people takes place only within the matters which participants of interaction really want to talk about. Only those students who want to say something speak and they speak only about the things that they really want to communicate to the others (at the beginning, they can do it in their native language). Teacher - translator, standing outside the circle of the group gives an expression in a foreign language, records the outcome and saves it. Then the student says version in a foreign language without the help of the teacher. In this way, the common "textbook" is created. CLL method emphasizes students responsibility for their own learning, its aims, content and process.

As pointed out by Komorowska (2000), **The Natural Approach** was founded in the 70's in the USA by Terrell and Krashen. It is based on the assumption that the so called significant exposure is crucial to mastering the language. Learning is done by listening to speeches in foreign language whose general sense is understandable for the student. In this way, children learn their native language effectively. First attempts to speak are made when the student feels ready for that. In Natural Approach, the teacher uses a simple but natural language. He or she talks about what is happening here and now, uses a variety of facial expressions and gestures and repeats his or her statement in a number of ways . The teacher appreciates every sign of understanding. This method is also based on the belief that eliminating stress is the key for the success in learning. If exposure to the language is accompanied by positive emotions, sub conscious and spontaneous absorption of the language takes place. The main tasks of the teacher in this method are providing the maximum number of natural, sensible, simple statements and creating an atmosphere of safety and acceptance. This method highlighted the often underestimated role of security sense in the school.

**"Suggestopaedia** is a method developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist -educator Georgi Lozanov. Suggestopaedia is a specific set of learning recommendations derived from Suggestology (...). The most conspicuous characteristics of Suggestopaedia are the decoration, furniture, and arrangement of the classroom, the use of music, and the authoritative behaviour of the teacher." (Richards - Rodgers, 2001: 142). The most unique feature of this method is the use of Baroque music during the process of learning and teaching. Baroque music has a specific rhythm (60 beats per minute) and Lozanov believed that this music can put students in a state of relaxation and concentration and because of that large amounts of material can be absorbed and fixed . The aspect of this method is also the use of comfortable seats and dim lights which are also helpful to create the atmosphere of relaxation. Both infantilizing of the learners and providing complete control over the class to the teacher (authoritative role) are typical for Suggestopaedia. The presence of posters, grammar materials, decorations related with the foreign language is also very important. Dialogues which are translated to the students' mother tongue are very helpful in teaching and learning process. The main aim of this method is to get to the brainpower of students in order to accelerate the process thanks to which students learn to understand and use a foreign language to communicate.

### **3. ADULT LEARNERS**

#### **3. 1. Adult learners – description.**

It is known that there are major differences between children and adults. They think,

speak and behave differently. That is why the teachers' attitude towards adults is different and they themselves, are also treated differently. Usually, adults are defined as learners who are characterized by a complete intellectual and social maturity. These are the students who are aged 19 or over.

According to Harmer (1998), the biggest difference between adults and younger learners is that they come to the class with **great learning experience**. Usually, they have gone through many years of education and then may have studied at a higher level. Because of long history of good and bad learning experience adults have formed strong opinions about how process of learning and teaching should be carried out. Their previous schooling experience (their achievements) may also cause assumptions that they are going to fail or achieve success. "Adults are frequently more nervous of learning than younger pupils are. The potential for using face becomes greater the older you get ." (Harmer, 1998: 11). Harmer states that older students who are coming back to the classroom after long absence often have high level of anxiety about the learning process.

"Adults can be disruptive and exhausting too. They may do it not in same way as younger learners, but teachers of this age group will have experiences of students who spend the lesson talking to their neighbors when the teacher is trying to focus their at tension or who disagree vocally with much of what the teacher is saying. They arrive in class late and fail to do any homework." (Harmer, 1998: 11). As Komorowska (2000) writes, current communication plays an important role while teaching adults. This usually results from their situation at work and future plans. For example, if adults need language knowledge for tourism, they may wish lessons were focused only on the efficiencies of the everyday language. If they need knowledge to pursue the professional correspondence they may want to focus on the efficiencies of reading and writing. Their wishes are taken into account while planning a language course.

Teaching adults usually does not cause as many problems as teaching in the lower age groups. This is because adults generally are not forced to learn the language so they have a **strong motivation to learn**. This greatly facilitates the work of the teacher. Although the motivation of adults to learning is high, they rarely spend the right amount of effort on learning. This is because they **lack time to learn** on their own. Adults are people who work professionally and a part of that they have family and social responsibilities. Therefore, it is hard to expect from them individual learning at home and doing homework. An **irregular attendance** on classes is also a clear difficulty. It is caused by work career, family and organizational problems that are inevitable in the life of adults. We also keep in mind that adults who often work in the important positions in the companies and have to fulfil responsibilities can hardly bear the transition to the role of student who is corrected and reprimanded by the teacher. Those people are **afraid of ridicule and criticism from the other adults** as well.

"We are all products of our environment, our genes and our experiences; so are your students. Their ages, tastes, politics, attitudes, knowledge, experience, aptitude, ability and intelligence (and the list could go on) are all different. They may well be at very different stages in their lives. They will all have different needs and make different demands on you." (Corder, 2002: 10).

### **3. 2. Learning styles**

**Learning style** is the way in which a person learns, acquires knowledge or skills. It is a well-known fact that different people absorb information in very different ways. Some people

prefer to learn by listening, others by reading. Some prefer to work in a group, while others prefer to work alone. For decades, learning styles were sorted and categorized in many different ways. Sometimes, people use more than one style of learning. People can also change the way in which they learn depending on the situation which they are in. "The way we learn things in general and the way we attack the problem seem to hinge on a rather amorphous link between personality and cognition; this link is referred to as **cognitive style**. When cognitive styles are specifically related to an educational context, when affective and psychological factors are intermingled, they are usually more generally referred to as **learning styles**" (Brown, 2000: 113). Speaking about learning styles, Field Independence, Field Dependence, Left and Right Brain Dominance, Ambiguity Tolerance, Reflexivity and Impulsivity will be analysed next.

According to Braham (2000) **Field Independence** can be defined as an internal locus of orientation. On the other hand, **Field Dependence** is "the tendency to be "dependent" on the total field so that the parts embedded within the field are not easily perceived, though, that total field is perceived more clearly as an unified whole. Field dependence is synonymous with **Field Sensitivity**." (Brown, 2000: 115). Both FI and FD learning styles are important for foreign language learning and have advantages and disadvantages. The FI learner achieves higher degree of success in learning which involves attention to details, analysis, drills, mastering of exercises and other focused activities. By contrast, the FD learner, seems to find himself in tasks requiring communication skills and in everyday language situations beyond the constraints of the classroom.

It has to be mentioned that **Left and Right Brain Dominance** also influences learning styles. While looking at **learning styles**, it is very important to determine hemispheric dominance. Brain research confirms that both left and right side of the brain are involved in almost all human activities. The left side of the brain is more analytic and processes in a logical and sequential order. The right side is more creative, visual and processes holistically, randomly and intuitively.

A third learning style is **Ambiguity Tolerance**. As Chapelle and Roberts (1986) write, ambiguity tolerance is "a person's ability to function rationally and calmly in a situation in which interpretation of all stimuli is not clear." (Chapelle - Roberts, 1986: 30). The advantages and disadvantages of this style can be found in the following citation: The person who is tolerant of ambiguity is free to entertain a number of innovative and creative possibilities and not be cognitively and affectively disturbed by ambiguity and uncertainty. In second language learning a great amount of apparently contradictory information is encountered: words that differ from the native language, rules that not only differ but are internally inconsistent because of certain "exceptions" and sometimes the whole cultural system that is distant from that of the native culture (Brown 2000: 120).

On the one hand, these ambiguities have to be tolerated to learn a language successfully, on the other hand, with too much tolerance people can become „wishy-washy" which means accepting every proposition without subsuming necessary facts.

**Reflexivity and impulsivity** measures "a person's tendency to inhibit initial responses and to reflect on the accuracy of an answer rather than the tendency to respond impulsively" (Grabowski and Jonassen, 1993: 112). People who are considered "reflective" are slower than the average ones. These students need more time to do the task and more accurate work. "Impulsive" people are defined as faster than median and are likely to rush through the specified task missing the correct answers. We also have to remember that R/I have some important considerations for foreign language teaching and learning. "Teachers tend to judge mistakes

too harshly, especially in the case of a learner with an impulsive style who may be more willing than a reflective person to gamble at an answer. On the other hand, a reflective person may require patience from the teacher, who must allow more time for the student to struggle with responses.” (Brown, 2000: 122).

All the learners tend to show individual preference toward either **visual or auditory style**. “Visual learners tend to prefer reading and studying charts, drawings, and other graphic information, while auditory learners prefer listening to lectures and audiotapes. Of course, most successful learners utilize both visual and auditory input, but slight preferences one way or the other may distinguish one learner from another, an important factor for classroom instruction” (Brown, 2000: 122)

### **3. 3. Learning strategies**

“**Learning strategies** are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement which is essential for developing communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence” (Oxford, 1990: 1). Brown (2000) defines **strategies** as operation modes for achieving certain results, specific methods of approaching a task or problem, planned projects for manipulating and controlling particular information. When writing about foreign language acquisition, two strategy types can be distinguished: **learning** and **communication** strategies. The former are related to input - taking in messages from others and deal with storage, memory, recall and receptive domain. The latter pertain to output - how we express meaning.

**Metacognitive** „is a term used in information - processing theory to indicate an „executive“ function, strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one’s production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed” (Purpura, 1997: 289). As O’Malley and Chamot (1990) write metacognitive strategies can be divided into nine types: advance organisers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, advance preparation, self-monitoring, delayed production, self- evaluation and self - reinforcement.

As Brown (2000) writes, **cognitive strategies** are restricted to particular learning tasks and more direct manipulation of the learning material is involved. According to Chamot and O’Malley (1990), we recognize 16 types of cognitive strategies: repetition, resourcing, directed physical response, translation, grouping, note -taking, deduction recombination, imagery, auditory representation, keyword, contextualization elaboration, transfer, inferencing.

Brown (2000) pointed out that **socioaffective strategies** involve interacting with others and socialmediating activity. Brown also writes that socioaffective strategies are actually communication strategies. Two of these strategies can be distinguished:

- cooperation - “working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity” (Brown, 2000: 126)
- question for clarification - “asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation, and/or examples” (Brown, 2000: 126)

According to Brown (2000), 1970's early research has led to recent attention to

**communication strategies.** These strategies were defined as conscious plans for solving a problem in attaining a specific communicative goal. Two types of communication strategies are: **avoidance** and **compensatory** ones. Brown (2000) states that **avoidance** is considered to be a very common communication strategy. **Syntactic** or **lexical** avoidance is the most common type of avoidance strategy.

It appears when learner, not being able to come up with the correct word, avoids particular lexical item. **Phonological** avoidance occurs when a student has difficulties in producing the sounds or correct pronunciation. Learners frequently replace particular word with another because of the fear of pronouncing something incorrectly. In **topic** avoidance the whole topic of conversation may be avoided. Students manage to devise various methods of topic avoidance: changing the topic, pretending not to understand or even not responding. Brown (2000) pointed out that **compensatory** strategies are simply strategies that learners may need to use to compensate missing knowledge. There are ten types of compensatory strategies: circumlocution, approximation, use of all -purpose words, word coinage, prefabricated patterns, nonverbal signals, literal translation, foreignizing, code-switching and appeal for assistance.

**Prefabricated patterns** are memorized chunks of language that can be found in bi lingual phrase books. Learners usually use memorized phrases for “survival” purposes where morphological components are not known to them. **Code-switching** is using a native language term in a foreign language sentence without bothering to translate it. **Code -switching** is often used by learners in early stages of acquisition. **Appeal for assistance** is another common compensatory strategy. If learners stuck for a particular word or phrase, they directly ask the teacher for the right form. They may also give a possible answer and then ask for verification.

#### **4. TEACHING ENGLISH**

##### **4. 1. The most appropriate methods for teaching English to adults**

While deciding to be a teacher we should take into account the fact that there is an enormous amount of various teaching methods. Adults are relatively a difficult type of students who have their own specific requirements and needs. They come to class with a baggage of experience and thanks to many years of education in schools, they possess both bad and good experiences. On the one hand, they are characterized by high motivation, but on the other, it is more difficult for them to gain the knowledge. All these factors make choosing the best method of teaching adult students very important. Choosing the right method will allow to teach effectively and achieve the desired results in a short time. It will also make the process of learning enjoyable for the students themselves. From among of the methods described in Chapter One we are of the opinion, that.

**Community Language Learning (CLL)** and **Direct Method** are the most appropriate methods for teaching English to adults.

As we described in Chapter One, **Community Language Learning (CLL)** is a method assuming that students should be treated as "the clients" whose needs are to be addressed by the teacher who is in the role of "the counselor". We believe that adults will feel comfortable in this convention because it is supposed to remind them situations in which they find themselves everyday: at work, in a shop or while settling various matters. The fact that every question can be addressed to the teacher explaining the issue may be helpful for them and they might feel more confident in the classroom. This teaching model seems to reduce the stress caused by the

new situation of students and their fear of failure. In an interactive group of friendly learners of the new language, the learning process may run much better. In this method, adult learners are likely to perceive the teacher both as a friend who is giving the advice and as an assistant full of understanding for students' needs and concerns. What is more the teacher may not be seen as a threat or a heartless enemy. We are in the opinion that adults are often said to be afraid to return to school benches due to bad experiences they have pulled out of many years of education. Such a feeling would be reduced by means of the "client - counselor" system. Adults will feel good about the fact that they are not brought to the role of a student, that is sitting at the school bench and listening to the teacher who admonishes him or her and corrects his/her mistakes in front of the whole group. We are of the opinion that this method is suitable for adult s teaching because students are seen here as a "whole person" whose feelings, intellect, interpersonal relationships, defensive behaviour and willingness to learn are addressed and balanced. This method makes them feel important, understood and they are treated seriously. It is also appropriate for adult learners because it is based on the "reliance" on a teacher - counselor, independence and responsibility for their own progress. Adults who already have a baggage of experience certainly have all these characteristics and are decided and determined to learn the language.

From among of the methods described in chapter number one we are of the opinion, that **Direct Method** is the most suitable for teaching English to adults. This method reflects the way people acquire their mother tongue. Verbal communication, spontaneous use of language and the ability to "think" in a foreign language are skills that are desired by adult students and this method may help them to acquire this. This method has departed from the traditional techniques such as the use of the mother tongue as the language of instruction, memorizing grammar rules and translation between the two languages and, therefore, it is suitable for older students, who because of their work and family life, do not often have time to learn at home and want to learn language as fast as possible. According to Komorowska (2000), the main aim of **Direct Method** is the ability to hold a conversation. During the time, which teacher and student spend together natural contact is established. Learners are enabled by the teacher to take part in the natural foreign language conversations. We are of the opinion that because of these reasons above, it is a good method for teaching adults. Good contact between the student and the teacher can make the learner feel more comfortable and more relaxed and it may improve the learning results. Other reasons in favour of Direct Method are:

- a) The ability to hold a conversation for the students, who often decide to learn the language because they need it to make professional contacts in work,
- b) Going on holiday abroad where the ability to speak and sustain conversation is essential,
- c) The fact that , the teacher does not correct mistakes but tries to make a student find an error himself, which makes the student less stressed and eliminate fear of being criticized in front of the group.

#### **4. 2. The adults styles of learning conducive to attaining success in English**

We believe that by being aware of learning style in which they feel comfortable, students can improve their learning, become more motivated and get better results in the classroom. Out of the styles described in Chapter Two we contend that, **Field Independent (FI)** style is adult

style of learning conducive to attaining success in English because mature learners prefer to acquire knowledge through experience. While teaching adults willingly refer to real events, often in an intuitive way, they like the open problems, not fully explained and the style in which the abstract thoughts are dominant. As we described in Chapter Two field-independent learners have perceptual skill of "seeing the forest for the trees." Adults like to analyze and consider, so they will surely notice a hidden item in the picture or human face in 3 - D posters. Mature students can be considered as FI learners because they find themselves in classroom learning which involves mastering of exercises, analysis, attention on details, drills, and other focused activities. Adult students penetrate the essence of problems and situations while learning, analyze, consider and make up theories to understand their experience. That is why, we believe that Field Independent style is a typical style for learners. They like situations that are clear and definable. Mature learners are learning language through social and working relationships and these relationships are an essential part of their lives. FI learning style is characterized by a tendency to separate details from the surrounding context. We are of the opinion that adults are FI learners because they have no problem to concentrate while there is noise and confusion around. They also have high motivation for learning and external factors cannot distract them from learning English. Because the learners whom we describe like to concentrate on the details while learning a language, they are sometimes unable to concentrate on a whole, big picture. That can be problematic while teaching adults. FI students perform well in open-ended questions - this refers to adult learners who like to speak out in class because it gives them a sense that they fully participate in lesson and they are learning as effectively as possible, so that they do not have to spend their time on learning at home any longer. We believe that adults are characterized by Field Independent style because they have less difficulties with acquiring grammar, linguistic rules and are successful in common classroom exercises. They also tend to be more sensitive to external cues and easily accept symbolic representations. Strong correlation between sex and cognitive styles has been discovered. Women are more often field-dependent, while men are likely to be field-independent. Career tasks and job descriptions which are present in adults lives also have a great impact on the choice between these two styles. Researches showed that field-independent learners consistently achieve higher academic levels than learners characterized by different styles.

#### **4. 3. The most fruitful learning strategies**

Selection of the most fruitful learning strategy is the key to effective English language learning. Strategies are steps taken by students to improve their own learning. "Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence" (Oxford, 1990:1).

**Metacognition** can be defined as "thinking about thinking". As we described in chapter number two **metacognitive** strategies are: "strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed" (Purpura, 1997: 289).

From among of the strategies described in Chapter Two we are of the opinion that metacognitive strategies are the most fruitful learning strategies for adult learners because metacognition is fundamental component of skills that involve decision making, problem solving, reflective judgment and critical thinking. Older learners are very good in solving and analysing problems, but also in decisions making and critical thinking. Adults are also more

able to control their emotions, cope with conflicts and handle complexity. Although mature learners are characterized by metacognitive strategies, it is important to “flex cognitive muscles” and apply metacognitive knowledge to new situations. As adults we use knowledge in a strategic manner in order to meet a goal. It is getting to know how to do a task or set of tasks and then making sure that it is done correctly.

There are number of metacognition models and this strategy is the central component of several skills: critical thinking, reflective judgment, problem solving and decision making. Adults, who can be described as self- regulated learners, are aware of their advantages and disadvantages and realize whether they know some fact and possess some skill or not. We believe that metacognitive strategies are the most fruitful learning strategies for adult learners because they are highly motivated to learning and even when they encounter obstructions they are able to find a way to succeed. When they need information, they are determined to find and master it. For adult learners, it is clear that they must monitor their own progress and effectiveness of their learning strategies. Mature students are taking responsibility for their own learning and recognition of usefulness and meaning of information to be learned. They treat teaching as a systematic process than can and must be controlled. Adults can be treated as consumers who want to receive maximum benefit from their learning experiences. Mature learners also meet metacognition in their workplaces where importance of being responsible for and conscious of the consequences of one’s actions is emphasized. Adult students who are characterized by metacognitive strategies perform good in class and they are great problem - solvers, critical thinkers and decision makers. We believe that metacognitive training can increase sense of responsibility of adult learners' own progress and help them become more self – confident. Metacognitive training will also provide motivation for learning and make them feel empowered also in their work and family life. Knowledge is much better absorbed in real - word situations because students learn how the acquired knowledge can be used in solving everyday problems. That is why learning environment should contain the real world elements. Metacognitive skills are essential for English language learning, so adequately taught adult learners can achieve great results in learning this language.

We are of the opinion that teachers can help students to achieve better learning results by identifying which learning strategies characterize them and by appropriate approach. Teachers should abandon manners of “telling” rather than “teaching”. Adults who are characterized by metacognitive strategies should learn in the classroom environment which is fresh and challenging every time they meet. Good instructor should demonstrate the variety of behaviours and ways of teaching. The teacher should keep students interested in the material. He or she should also take into consideration that on the one hand students tend to remember information which they can associate themselves with and towards which they have emotional attitude. On the other hand, they forget information which they disagree with. Effective instructor should evoke motivation in students and make their learning experience satisfying. The teacher should show adult learners that he or she has experience by sharing their professional experiences and telling anecdotes. Due to that fact they will feel that their instructor is competent and will be motivated to learn.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The theme of this thesis is teaching adults which is very a responsible and challenging

issue. At the beginning, the definition of teaching was analysed, which is not as obvious as it sounds. What is more, each author gives its different versions. Subsequently, various methods of teaching English were presented. These methods can be divided into conventional and unconventional ones. Each of the described nine methods was characterized by different techniques and manners of teaching that suit diverse groups of students. It is not an easy task for the teacher to select appropriate teaching methods for specific students. This BA thesis proved that the Direct Method and Communicative Language Learning Method are the most appropriate methods for teaching adult learners. Thanks to these methods, students will feel relaxed and confident in the classroom and will also learn how to communicate in real - life situations.

Then, characteristics of adults were presented. Teaching of older learners has both bad and good features. On the one hand, these students are highly motivated and are taking responsibility for their learning, but on the other hand they often have a problem with a lack of time and low attendance at classes.

After examining the characteristics of the adults, the next important thing that has been broached here is the description of learning styles and strategies. The choice of the most fruitful and appropriate strategies was scrutinized as well. It turned out that Field Independent style was considered to be the adult style of learning conducive to attaining success in English. It can be concluded that the FI learners as well as adults like to penetrate the essence of problems and situations, analyse, consider and make up theories to understand their experience. Subsequently, metacognitive strategies have been identified as the most fruitful learning strategies. Metacognition is a fundamental component of skills that involve decision making, problem solving, reflective judgment and critical thinking. Older learners are very good in solving and analysing problems, but also in decisions making and critical thinking.

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