UNIVERZITA HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ

Pedagogická fakulta

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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Univerzita Hradec Králové

Pedagogická fakulta

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Efektivní metody ve výuce anglického jazyka

Diplomová práce

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Studijní program:	
Studijní obor:	Učitelství pro 2. stupeň – anglický jazyk a literatura
	Učitelství pro 2. stupeň – německý jazyk a literatura
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Hradec Králové   2019

University of Hradec Králové

Faculty of Education

Department of English Language and Literature

Effective methods in teaching English

Diplomová práce

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Study Programme:	Učitelství pro 2. stupeň
Field of study:	Učitelství pro 2. stupeň – anglický jazyk a literatura
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Hradec Králové   2019

Univerzita Hradec Králové

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Zadání diplomové práce

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Studijní program: Učitelství pro 2. stupeň ZŠ

Studijní obor: Učitelství pro 2. stupeň ZŠ – anglický jazyk a literatura

Učitelství pro 2. stupeň ZŠ – německý jazyk a literatura

Název závěrečné práce: Efektivní metody ve výuce anglického jazyka

Název závěrečné práce AJ: Effective methods in teaching English

Cíl, metody, literatura, předpoklady: Práce se zaměří na výuku angličtiny v kurzech pro dospělé. Na základě výzkumného šetření (dotazník) zmapuje práce problematiku výuky angličtiny u této věkové kategorie studentů a její možné nedostatky. Teoretická část pak bude obrazem praktických zjištění a v ní se práce zaměří na problémové oblasti a jejich charakteristiku. V praktické části navrhne doporučení pro praxi.

Garantující pracoviště: katedra anglického jazyka a literatury, Pedagogická fakulta

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Datum zadání závěrečné práce: 30. 11. 2017

Datum odevzdání závěrečné práce: 6. 12. 2019

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala (pod vedením vedoucí diplomové práce) samostatně a uvedla jsem všechny použité prameny a literaturu.

V Hradci Králové dne 6. 12. 2019

Poděkování

Děkuji Mgr. Olze Vraštilové, M. A., Ph.D. za vedení mé diplomové práce, za podnětné připomínky a trpělivost při konzultacích.

Anotace

Práce se zaměří na výuku angličtiny v kurzech pro dospělé. Teoretická část se bude zabývat základními složkami vzdělávání společně s výukovými metodami, které se zaměřují na problematické části zjištěné z praktické části. Ta prostřednictvím výzkumného šetření mapuje současnou situaci v probíhajících kurzech. Na základě teoretických poznatků a praktických zjištění bude vyvozeno doporučení pro praxi společně s aktivitami vhodnými pro daný okruh studentů a jejich krátkou analýzou.

Klíčová slova: anglický jazyk, výuka, metody, student, učitel

Annotation

The work will aim at teaching English in adult courses. Theoretical part will deal with three main educational parts together with teaching methods that focus on problematical parts found of practical part. The practical part will investigate the situation in current courses. Finally the work will provide you with future recommendations based on both theoretical and practical knowledge suitable for future teaching together with appropriate activities and their short analysis.

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že diplomová práce je uložena v souladu s rektorským výnosem č.
13/2017 (Řád pro nakládání s bakalářskými, diplomovými, rigorózními, dizertačními a
habilitačními pracemi na UHK).

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

During my studies I learnt a lot about dealing with secondary class students that I found interesting and useful, but in the course of the time I became more interested in teaching adults. I started working in a language school and after some time I became a freelance-teacher in companies or in private. My teaching experience at a secondary school seems very different from what I experienced with adults. This is the reason why I decided to look at teaching this age group more in detail.

What I find as essential in the process of making lessons more effective is to learn more about three main parts of learning process: Students, a teacher and content (Plamínek, p. 25) The biggest emphasis will be put on students because I have little knowledge about adult learners and therefore it seems to me necessary to find out more information about this age group in general. I am mainly interested in their thinking and motivation, but there might be other aspects that influence effectiveness of the lesson.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to deal with all didactics in one thesis; therefore I have decided to aim it only at one aspect of language that seems problematic to most students I teach. This will be investigated in practical part with a help of research. I suppose that it might be grammar because it has always seemed quite challenging to me and I would like to find out if there is a way how to make this language part more interesting and effective at the same time.

The research will help me not only with investigating the problematic language part, but it will serve as a feedback which seems to me essential in making teaching more effective. I want the respondents to think about their reasons for studying the language, evaluate their lessons and give comments for improvement.

Based on the knowledge from both the theory and the research, I would like to show in practical part how certain methodological aspects might be used in activities during teaching this age group together with their analysis and make recommendations for my future teaching.

The aim of this thesis is to make my current classes more effective thanks to theoretical knowledge about three main components of learning process (teacher, students and contents, Plamínek, 2014, p. 25), various methodological aspects and feedback from my current students. Finding the most effective way of teaching seems impossible to me and I suppose that with teaching adults I will have to choose several features from different methods to make the lesson effective. I hope that work on this thesis will bring me a new view on teaching adults and that I will gain valuable knowledge that might be put into practice.

Before the actual beginning, it is necessary to note that with *she* is always meant a teacher in a course and a student is marked as *he*. If there is written *we* or other forms, I mean *us* as teachers because I count myself among them and I suppose that the readers will be also interested or participated in this job.

1. TEACHING ADULTS

This thesis will deal with adult learners in my private courses. The aim of this thesis is to improve my current teaching in those specific lessons through widening my knowledge from both theoretical and practical views. It should not bring a benefit only to me but also to other teachers who would like to deal with adult learners in language schools or their private teaching.

According to my experience, teaching adults is very different from teaching young learners, especially when you teach individual classes or small groups (around 4 learners maximum). It is not my goal to compare these two groups, but I just think it is important to point out that we cannot work with every methodological recommendations and methods advantages from specific literatures because many books are intended especially for younger learners. What may be considered an advantage of a method in a young-learner orientated book may be a disadvantage in an adult course. Yet I am going to work with those books because they provide us also with general information that might be suitable for both age categories.

It is known from the didactic classes at the university that there are four main skills such as reading, writing, speaking, listening and meanings – vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. I think that all these aspects of a language are an inseparable part of a language and we cannot say that one is more important than the other one. However, as you see later in the research (see pp. 55-57), the biggest problem is grammar and therefore I would like to dedicate this thesis mainly to this problematic. I want to find a method or a combination of them that shows me an interesting presentation and effective practising.

Various methods of teaching foreign languages will make another part of the thesis. As I mentioned earlier, I do not believe that there is one perfect method that can make teaching most effective. Because of that, I am going to deal with more methods. Then I will try to find only some aspects that can be used in my further teaching.

Even though we narrowed the thesis to the adult teaching with the aim at grammar, it still seems very general without knowing who we are going to teach. Every adult student in my course is seen as an individual – they differ in motivation, experience, knowledge, age etc. I think that most teachers who teach privately would say the same about their adult learners. It will be therefore essential to have a deeper look at those aspects. They might have an impact the whole process of learning and it will make it easier for us to understand why certain methods or approaches could be more appropriate or effective than other ones.

Not only learners and methods important but also the teacher and content play very dominant roles in the whole learning process. One cannot work successfully without the other (Plamínek, 2014, p. 25). Therefore I would like to have a look at what should the teacher be like according to some literature and compare it with the opinions of the research respondents. Then I will think about appropriate content for the students.
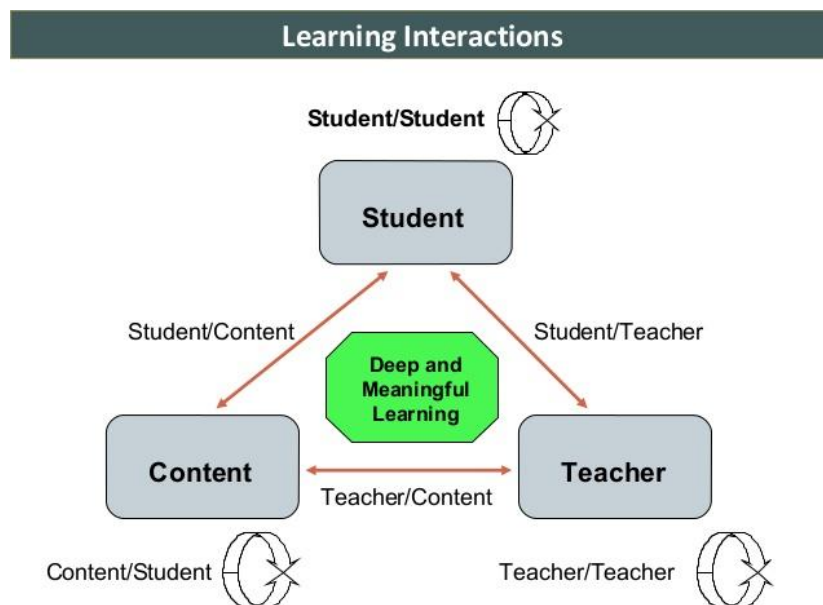
2. ADULT LEARNERS

I think that it is important to get to know our adult students better before we start a lesson with them. Gender and age can influence their learning process, knowing their motivation may help us to adjust the content and if we know more about how adults' memory works, we can take advantage of it and use some knowledge to make the lesson more effective. In this chapter I am going to have a look at all mentioned aspects and see how (or if) they may affect the learning process.

2.1. Gender and age in learning

This part should tell us if gender or age have any impact on students' learning process. I feel that lessons with men are different from lessons with women and a fifty-year old learns differently than a twenty-year old. The question is, if we can somehow use the differences for my purposes.

Unfortunately, as for gender, I did not find any information that would significantly help me. Medina says that there were a lot of researchers who tried to make conclusions that might have helped to make more effective teaching at school but with no significant result. (2012, pp. 233-249). Other authors (e.g. Nakonečný, 2009, pp. 482-486) make various differences between men and women, but I did not see any way how I could use them to make my lessons more effective.

Medina tries to deal with a gender impact during teaching in general. He says that there are certain prejudices about men and women and according to some previous studies is not easy to remove them. However, we should not stick to them so much and try to be more neutral with our attitudes (2012, pp. 233-249).This lead me to a point that it is does not have to be important if we teach a man or a woman, but we should focus more on their interests and needs (see also p. 29)

Although this little knowledge does not tell us anything specific about how different genders learn, it made me realize that it does not have to be essential to make differences between males and females in order to get better results. What seems to me more important is to respect genders and try to understand each person individually, no matter if it is a man or a woman.

On the other hand, age might play a certain role in learning process. Švancara divides adults into three groups (1981, p. 187):

- *young adulthood – 20-30/32 years*
- *middle adulthood – 30/32-46/48*
- *old adulthood – 46/48-65 years*

Young adulthood

'It is a dynamic period full of activity and vitality, period of integration and personality stabilising. This period is marked as energetic life start. People look for working and social status; choose their job and family roles.' (Novotná, 2012, p. 59)

Although there are several signs of aging, the brain gets brighter. Intellectual operations get faster (mainly memory, fantasy and learning) and they are able to pay more attention. They have more certain and dynamic thinking, but their intelligence level does not get higher. (Novotná, 2012, p. 59)

According to researches, their memory is worse in comparison with puberty children ad it does not improve. On the other hand, W.James says that 25 is the age where the a student is at the top of his thinking. Then his learning ability decreases 1% every year especially if he wants to memorise something mechanically. Important aspects for effective learning are mastering techniques and methods of their learning, higher activity and stronger motivation. (Novotná, 2012, p. 60)

Middle adulthood

Through this period aging of organism is being recognised, on the other hand there are also progressive changes. Work makes a big part of their life and they mostly live in families. (Novotná, 2012, p. 62-64)

Their intelligence is positively evolved until they reach 35 – after 45 it starts to decrease. Learning abilities get slightly worse (up to 1/5 in comparison with the previous period) and are depended on their previous experience, gained learning strategies and relationships between the things they are supposed to learn. (Novotná, 2012, p. 63)

Old adulthood

People in old adulthood go through physical and psychical changes. For example, their body gets shorter, weight bigger and they react slower to visual stimuli. (Novotná, 2012, pp. 65-66)

There are fewer brain cells and the learning process decreases by 20% in comparison with younger adults as for mechanical learning (Novotná, 2012, pp. 65-66). Šimíčková-Čížková also claims that in the period of old adulthood your memory gets worse. The time needed for remembering is then getting shorter, new information is harder to keep in mind and a higher repetition frequency is needed. (2010)

2.2. Memory and language learning

Facts about memory are both interesting and helpful. If we know them, we can work with them and use them in favor of making teaching more effective. Because memory decreases with the age (see above), it seems to me quite important to deal with it. We should know how peoples' memory work and try to take advantage of it. According to Ebbinghaus (1885), 'memory is the ability to take, keep and revive past perceptions.' (Hartl & Hartlová, 2015, p. 390)

Forgetting and recalling

Ebbinghaus revealed a depressive fact: People usually forget 90% of everything they learnt during 30 days. A big part of the forgetting process happens during first hours after a lecture. If students want to keep something in their memory, they should repeat it. The optimum frequency is not described, but it should be as much as possible. However, the process of storing something to long-term memory can take years. Even though the teacher or the student will repeat the issue repeatedly, it does not have to be stored forever (Medina, 2015, p. 105-108).
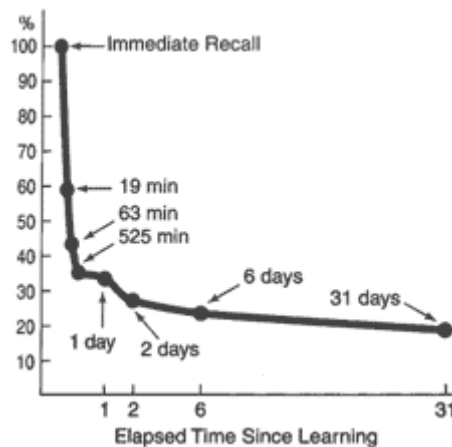
Another theory about language learning does not stick only to repetition and they say that it is not possible to gain language skills based on pure repetition of the information, but more important is to understand the problematic. Medina says: 'If you try to put some information into other peoples' minds, make sure that you understand that they know what the information means.' (Medina, 2015, p. 111)

To remember and recall a particular situation it is important how the information is coded. At the beginning, we should make an attractive introduction that has influence on later recall. When explaining something new, we should make certain connections between the staff we teach and the learner himself. It is recommended to use a lot of examples from a real world. Many researches prove that the more examples, the higher is the chance to store a certain information in their memory. (Medina, 2015, p. 105-113) For a language teacher it can mean that a student will remember a sentence pattern or dialogue better if we connect it with his life or a situation that can really occur to him.

Last but not least, to strengthen the remembering process, the problematic should be discussed right after the lesson with somebody else (Medina, 2015, p. 211). Adult learners might for example speak about their lesson with their children or classmates if possible.

Memory and senses

We already know that repeating and understanding the problematic is very essential when learning anything. Other facts are connected with students' senses. Medina claims that learners should stimulate as many senses as possible during learning. It arises from other researchers and examinations mentioned in the book. For example, if we combine touch and sight, it raises recalling process about almost 30% in comparison with only touch. Usage of more senses makes the learning process more complex, therefore more effective. He also refers to Richard Mayer who dealt with memory. Mayer made several statements that might help us during teaching (2015, pp. 198-201).

- *'students learn better from words and pictures than from words only*
- *students learn better if we delete material not related to the activity prepared*
- *students learn better with animations and stories'*

Therefore only text and oral presentation of anything became less effective. It is important to add pictures or animations. If we compare the differences, they are significant. People remember 10% from spoken word, while with a help of a picture it rises up to 65%. This seems remarkable to me and I will definitely consider this fact in my future teaching. (Medina, 2015, pp. 223-229).

Based on this knowledge, everything what we say should be supported with a visual or audio-visual aid. The more visual it gets, the bigger is the chance that the student remembers it (Medina, 2015, pp. 223-229).

2.3. Motivation

The reason why I am going to deal with motivation when speaking about adult students is that is seems to me as the most important aspect when teaching this age group. It influences content of the lesson and might change the teacher's attitude to the learner.

Firstly, I would like to clarify the term motivation. There are many definitions in different literature (see e.g. Hartl & Hartlová, 2015, p. 256, Průcha, Walterová, Mareš, 2004, p. 252), Tureckiová says that it is 'an inner subjective process which leads to gaining set goals and results'. (2004, p. 55) This definition I get as something that is individual – everybody has a different motivation for different things and that we want to achieve some set goals or get a specific result.

Motivation is usually divided into extrinsic and intrinsic (e.g. Hartl & Harlová, 2015, p. 256; Brodský, 2014, pp. 66-67). With the extrinsic motivation, the person does it only because of a reward that is the only reason why the person does the particular activity. On the other hand, the intrinsic motivation is defined as following: *'the person does what he wants and the result itself is for him a reward.'* (Brodský, 2014, p. 66)

Let me make an example of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in a language course. A student starts with studying English only because his boss promised him a promotion and higher salary. The learner does not have any other reason and sees only the award (in this case a higher salary). If there were not the reward, he would not care about the language at all. A typical example of intrinsic motivation might be that a student starts a language school because he likes speaking the foreign language with other people; he likes the sound of a language and is interested in new vocabulary and grammar.

Motivation and attention

According to Medina is highly important to pay attention during the learning process. The higher the attention level is the better results will the students get (2015, pp.73-74)

Another thing that is essential and connected with attention is students' interest. Medina refers to marketing experts who claim that interest wakes up our attention and that it can also work vice versa. (2015, pp. 75-76) It means that if a student finds certain aspects more interesting than others do, he pays more attention to them.

Medina claims that our attention span is lost within first 10 minutes from the beginning of a lesson if we do not change the activity (2015, pp.73-74). On the other hand, Harmer says, that when teaching adults it is not necessary to involve funny games to catch the students' attention. Adults are usually disciplined and they have a clear vision of why they are learning and what they want to achieve thanks to their course (1991, pp. 38-39). Yet it is important to use a lot of indirect learning. They are able to listen to -the teacher

even though they are bored or they might find learning difficult. (Harmer, 1991, pp. 38-39) This may be caused mainly because they are motivated to learning. However, even though they might be motivated and prepared to struggle with boredom, it still does not seem effective to me to do whole lesson only one activity.

Based on these findings we can say that adult learners are likely to pay attention during the lesson thanks to their motivation which means that they have a good chance to be successful learners. On the other hand, we should not count on it. Even though the learners have all requirements, it does not have to mean that they are going to have good results. There are also other factors that influence their learning process, such as their age and memory connected to it

3. TEACHER

A teacher is a person who influences the learners and the content (see picture p. 14). It is somebody who leads the lesson and can make it effective. Important aspects that can each teacher affect are preparation and abilities. Teacher's personality plays also a key role and therefore is necessary to look at it as well.

3.1. Preparation

Plamínek claims that a good preparation is a sign of a good teacher (2014, p. 22). In addition, Harmer has the same opinion: '*The best teachers are those who think carefully about what they are going to do in their classes and who plan how they are going to organise the teaching and learning'.* (1991, p. 256) Than he adds that the time devoted to lesson preparation depends on teacher's knowledge and experience. Even an experienced teacher should always prepare (e.g. go through the vocabulary she is going to teach) because every group or student is different and not everything she had prepared before has to be relevant to others. If you are interested what a lesson planning should look like, you can study further Harmer (1991, pp. 256-275).

As for aspects that we should consider before an activity is planned, see pages 28-29.

3.2. Abilities

Abilities are something that can be learnt. This is the reason why are following teaching aspects included into abilities. They can be improved and every teacher can influence them. They are divided into knowledge and skills where knowledge is theoretical and skills are practical abilities (Plamínek, 2015, p. 22).

3.2.1. Knowledge

What Plamínek mentions and I see it as the basic requirement for any teaching is to have knowledge about the subject. He says that a teacher should have at least one level wider knowledge than the learners. She should perfectly understand what she speaks about and be able to explain it. (Plamínek, 2014, p. 52) For language teaching it might mean that if you want to teach students who are at B1 level (according to CEFR), your knowledge should be at least on B2 level. I think that this is really necessary and essential for teaching any language in any age group. Nothing might undermine the teacher's professionalism more than not knowing the subject. On the other hand, Plamínek also claims that it is not necessary to know answers to all questions, but you should be able to find it out and know where. Still this should not happen very often. (2014, p. 222)

3.2.2. Skills

Teaching skills and habits are an essential aspect of successful teaching adults. An essential skill is to be interested in students and be prepared to help them. It is related with empathy which is the ability to think and try to feel as the student, predict what they might like or when they get tired. (Plamínek, 2014, p. 289). Medina presents a frequent mistake during teaching if you are not empathic. He says that most experts are so proficient in their field that they often forget about that the people in front of them are freshmen who may know nothing about presented problematic and they need some time to process it. Those teachers may tend to overload the students with too much information and rules because they see it as clear and simple (Medina, 2015, p. 87).

A teacher is supposed to say things that help learners. It is not our task to show how deep knowledge and good experience we have, but to say something that brings benefits to the learners. If the message we say benefits only us, we should not say it at all. (Plamínek, 2014, p. 55)

After each lesson is over, the teacher should be able to self-reflect and assess her lesson. Williams and Burden call it critical reflection. The reflection should evaluate all aspects of the lesson including the teacher herself and think about possible improvements. (Williams & Burden, 1997, pp. 49-51). Plamínek also mentions that another way of improving the lessons might be feedback from the learners themselves. (2014, p. 221)

3.3. Personal characters

Although professionalism might seem as a necessary requirement for teaching adults, teacher's personality plays more crucial role in language teaching according to Broughton. He even says that *'In all teaching, the teacher's personality has the most important influence in English. A teacher's good humour and sympathetic understanding of his problems have stopped many students from withdrawing from a course when faced, as many are, with the pressures of a full-time job and English classes several times a week'*. (Broughton, 1978, p. 193)

Various books deal with the right personal characters that should each teacher have (e.g. Williams & Burdens, 1997, pp. 47-48). From my point of view it is not possible to follow those lists in detail and behave as a 'perfect teacher'. As I already mentioned, every student is individual and their visions of a good teacher might be very different. Therefore I decided to find out this information directly from the students I teach and make my own theory that might be suitable for this specific group (see pp. 49-52).

4. CONTENT

4.1. Content and materials

With the right preparation is also connected relevant content. Students should be firstly interested in what the teacher tells the students. (Plamínek, 2014, p. 33) This leads me back to students' motivation because the content should correspond with their motivation and goal of their decision for the education (for motivation see pp. 20-21).

When choosing the right and relevant content, we may come across a struggle in which literature we should work with and if it is at all possible to teach according to one course book. There are certainly several advantages for using one course book for both teacher and students. The students can clearly see what was done and can revise with series of additional exercises at home. The teacher does not have to think about original materials for every class, which is very timesaving. (Harmer, 1991, pp. 257-258)

However, Harmer says that is does not have to be right to work only according to one course book lesson by lesson, because it can get boring for both the teacher and the students. In addition, most course books are written for general purposes so the order of lessons or grammatical structures taught in the particular lesson do not have to correspond with the students' needs. The last but not least, the course books are not intended to be strictly followed; they should only help both sides. (1991, pp. 257-258).

5. TEACHING GRAMMAR

Grammar seemed to me always as one of the most difficult language aspects. It is usually the least enjoyable part about the language and as you can see later from the research, it is the most problematic part for my students.

5.1. Presenting grammar

The way of presenting grammar is sometimes quite challenging. There are many facts that we have to consider before a grammatical phenomenon is presented. Those are for example the people that we present it to and their previous knowledge of other structures and vocabulary of the language (Thornbury, 1991, p. 27). Then we should think about the language used during the presentation – if it is better to use the mother tongue or the language we teach (I am going to deal with this later in methods) There are two main approaches to grammar presenting that are necessary to know.

Deductive and inductive teaching

Thornbury says that there are two main ways of how to present grammar. They are called deductive and inductive teaching. The deductive teaching is a method where the teacher presents rules and provides students with an explanation after that the learners are supposed to practise. When using the inductive teaching method, we hide the rules from the students. They are usually involved in an activity where the grammar is used (such ach reading an article, or seeing one example on the board). Students' task is to find out the rules by themselves which should be more effective (1991, p. 29).

However, each method has its pros and cons. Deductive teaching might be timesaving because we do not have to wait until the learners guess the right meaning, we simply reveal the rules. On the other hand, if the rules are not understood, it might take much

more time in the future. The students may have difficulties to memorize the rules that are just told them. Inductive method enables them to modify their own definitions and therefore better memorizing. (Thornbury, 1991, p. 30).

Basic presentation principles

Thornbury mentions certain factors that we should consider when a grammar structure. I would like to deal with those I see most important and might make our teaching more effective. One of the factors we should consider before we start the presentation is efficiency. It means that we are supposed to think about time, energy and a material we need for it and consider if it is worth it. (1991, pp. 25-26) It is important to think about it because effective teaching is according to me not only in giving clear instruction and in make the learning process effective itself. It is also about effort the teacher makes when preparing certain activities.

When presenting a grammatical issue Thornbury has a clear rule: *'the shorter the better.'* (1991, p. 26) The rules should be explained shortly and briefly, no long and boring explanations. I completely agree because if the explanation takes too long, our attention deceases (see p. 21).

Finally Thornbury claims that all of those conditions are useless if there is no motivation. It is possible to support it by activities that are involving and relevant to students' needs and also by challenging and supporting them. (1991, p. 26)

Other factors that we should take into account before we make any activity (either presenting or practising) should be:

- *'The age of the students*
- *The level of their language*
- *The size of the group*

- *The materials that are available*

- *Their interests*

- *Their needs – e.g. if they need to pass an exam*

- *Previous learning experience of the learners*

- *The educational context – if we teach at a private school, at home etc.*

- *The constitution of the group (monolingual or multilingual)'*

If we do not consider these facts, the activity does not have to work (1991, p. 27).

5.2. Methods

I do not believe that there is one single method that is perfectly suitable for everybody. Each method has definitely its advantages and disadvantages. My goal is to deal with grammar teaching in my adult courses (mostly individuals, see research p.), which is very specific. Therefore I am going to focus on possible advantages that might be practically used for this purpose. Even though the target group is determined enough, there are still many factors that must be considered before every method is used. (see above).

The descriptions involve only the basic information to have a brief overview of the main streams that I encountered during my university studies. After a short analysis from a grammatical point of view I would like to try to suggest possible recommendations for teaching grammar in adult courses.

5.2.1. Grammar-Translation

This method has been used for many years. Janíková, Píšová and Hanušová say that this method was used to the 80s of the 19th century. Earlier it was called Classical Method because it was used for classical languages such as Latin and Greek. The main purpose of this method was to help students to read and appreciate foreign language literature

and use it as a tool to learn the target language. The form is more important than the message of the communication (2015, p.17).

The lesson usually starts with reading a literary text from the target language. Then the students try to translate what they read. This is an important goal for students because if they are able to do that, they are considered successful language learners. The teacher is an authority there and helps them to translate unknown vocabulary. It is not important to give instructions in the target language, so the teacher says all comments in their mother tongue. After that the learners answer questions related to the text. It is usually done individually in a written form because the main skills that the students need to gain and develop are reading and writing. Speaking and listening are not very important and the last place has pronunciation which is almost not practised. Vocabulary work is also connected with the text and translated in the students' mother tongue. They can try to find words that look the same in both languages (e.g. banana – in Czech banán) and synonyms, antonyms. The vocabulary is memorized (TEFL, © 1998, or Larsen & Freeman, p. 32-43). Errors are immediately corrected by the teacher or other student, fluency is not important (Janíková, Píšová, Hanušová, 2015, p. 172).

Grammar in Grammar-Translation

Grammar has in this method great importance. It is more important to know the right and accurate form than produce the language in real situations. The presentation is done deductively (see p. 27) in the students' mother tongue. This language is also used for all other comments and comparisons with the target language. One of the goals is to find similarities in both languages. Practising is made through translations of texts – it can be a dictation from the mother tongue to the target language or vice versa and making mainly written exercises.

5.2.2. Direct Method

DM is based on (as its name suggests) a direct communication between the student and the teacher. That means that almost all lesson time concentrates on speaking. There is a specific book that both teacher and student use, but usually only the teacher uses it. She reads or says exactly the sentences from the book and pushes students to say the exact answer that is also written in the book in full sentences. The students open it only for reading and grammar exercises. The only acceptable language for any kind of communication is the target language (EMPIRE, 2015).

Reading is included in every lesson and the texts are always sentences from the book. Vocabulary is presented by demonstrating or pantomiming the expression because learner's mother tongue is forbidden. After a few lessons, the students write a dictation that is based on the vocabulary and grammar they learned that is the only situation when students get the chance to write something (EMPIRE, 2015).

The teacher's task during the lesson is mainly asking questions and listening to their responses. She also elicits errors from their speech right after they are made and pushes them immediately in the right answer. If the student hesitates to answer, the teacher does not wait, but she gives him a hint and lets the student repeat a whole correct sentence (EMPIRE, 2015).

From a psychological point of view, it is not possible to acquire a foreign language in a practical way just by repetition of sentence structures (Arťomov, 1964). Therefore this method does not seem as an effective one. However, there still might be some features that might be used during my lessons (see pp. 60-64)

DM and grammar

DM explains grammar in very small steps only in the target language. Those steps are repeated at least four times – every time with a new piece of information. The rule is usually presented with one sentence or writing one example on the board from which the students can suggest the usage. The teacher does not waste time by a deep explanation and does not try the student to fully understand it because straight after the presentation there are questions related to the grammatical issue that should help to understand the right usage. The learners are not supposed to do any grammar exercises until it is written in the lesson plan. For practising through exercises there are specific lessons where is allowed to speak in the students' mother tongue and explain the rules more deeply. This part comes always after about 10 lessons from the first time of presenting the grammatical phenomena. All grammar errors ought to be corrected straight after they were made. There is also no homework that would enable the students to practise the grammar in any way because the method relies on its effectiveness without any home preparation (EMPIRE, 2015).

5.2.3. Audiolingualism

This method is here involved more because of influence on Communicative Language Teaching. I would like you to better understand what CLT reacted to.

Lighbown & Spada say that audio-lingual method was created as a reaction to the previous approach (2013, p. 155). Richards and Rogers then describe a typical Audiolingual lesson. Firstly, students listen to a dialogue that contains key structures for the lesson. They have to repeat and memorize everything by practising it individually or altogether. The teacher pays attention to pronunciation, intonation and fluency. She corrects all mistakes directly and immediately. Then they practise the dialogues that one student read one's speaker's part and the other responds according to the text. After this

phase they can vary the dialogue based on their personal preferences or situation (e.g. in a question '*Where is your classroom?*' They can respond '*On the 2nd floor*' instead of 'on *the ground floor*' because their situation is different). Some phrases are then used as a basis for next pattern drills which are practised also individually or together with the teacher. (1987, p. 44)

Audiolingualism and grammar

Grammar is presented in a way of a dialogue. The students memorize the constructions and after some time they should keep them and produce in a conversation automatically. This is a similar process as in Direct Method. The rules may be explained, but only as little as possible. After this stage there are some follow-up activities such as reading, writing and vocabulary activities. Everything is based on the dialogue (Richards & Rogers, 1987 p.45).

Richards and Rogers say that Audiolingualism was often found as ineffective – the students were unable to transfer skills to real communication. Although this approach has fallen out of fashion and is usually not used in standard English lessons (1987, p. 65), some aspects were transferred and improved in Communicative language teaching which is the next method I am going to deal with.

5.2.4. Communicative language teaching (CLT)

According to Richards & Rogers started this type of teaching around 1960 (1999, p. 64). It is not actually a method but an approach where the focus is on gaining communicative competence. This competence is described by them further in detail, but I would like to highlight only the main thought. It means that the learner should be able to give needed information to the person or people who he communicates with and understand their message. The communication consists of four main skills which include speaking, listening, reading and writing. Grammar, vocabulary and

pronunciation are an inseparable part of every skill, but they are only meanings to gaining these four skills (Littlewood, 1990, pp. 2-7).

This approach also focuses more on the message than on the form of the language. It tries to simulate communicative situations in which the communication may appear (e.g. asking directions in a town) and make it as realistic as possible. (Richards & Rodgers, 1999, pp. 64-70) This seems as a big advantage in comparison with other approaches which are focused more on accuracy and correctness. According to my experience, the more natural the student feels during the lesson, the higher is his motivation.

Typical activities involved during the lesson are role-plays, picture descriptions and dialogues where the teacher is not supposed to be the main participant. Learners are usually organized in pairs or groups. Their teacher is a person who helps and tries to motivate the students. She should use the target language when giving instructions and use the mother tongue only if really necessary. Errors and mistakes are not corrected if it does not interfere with the message of the communication (Littlewood, 1990, pp. 16-64).

It was mentioned in the previous method that dialogues were the main teaching and learning tool in Audiolingualism Now we get to the point of how it influenced CLT. Dialogues in the form of memorizing all sentences fell out of fashion. CLT tries to make the questions and answers more variable and open. Students do not have to follow the pattern word by word; they can create their own answers or formulate a question with the same intention (Littlewood, 1990, pp. 16-64).

CLT and grammar

Grammar is still the basic requirement that is needed to achieve during the learning process, it just happened a part of the student's communicative tasks. According to Littlewood it is important to involve grammar with a topic close to the learner. It means that if a student learns about present simple with the usage of travelling vocabulary, it will be more effective in case that the student is motivated by travelling (Littlewood, 1990, p.77). The presentation should not be about presenting grammar rules, but let the learners think about the right usage by themselves (inductive teaching, p. 27)

Errors are usually not corrected if the task is fluency-oriented. The teacher should only make notes and say major mistakes after the end of an activity. Some dialogues can be balanced – the focus might be both on usage of certain form and involve it in a communicative situation. In this case the mistakes can be corrected during the dialogue. Before any grammar is being presented, the teacher should consider how important the phenomena is for communication (e.g. can + infinitive can be used in many real situations and therefore it might be useful to learn an accurate usage of it) (Littlewood, 1990, p. 83).

Plamínek says that there is no single suitable teaching style. This may exist only for a single person in individual class (2014, p. 31)' It means that we should choose individual style to each person and if we teach groups, we should switch different methods.

THEORETICAL PART – SUMMARY

Adult learners are motivated and therefore they are likely to have good results, on the other hand we should not count on it because there are more factors that have an impact on the whole learning process as for example age. The older they are the worse gets their memory and they need more repetition.

Inductive grammar presentations and demonstrating with the help of pictures appears very effective in terms of keeping the forms in the students' memory. A grammar presentation should be short and clear with a usage of either the target language or mother tongue. The student should be provided with many examples that are ideally related to his life.

The teacher should always check right after the presentation, if the students really got what had been said. She should definitely have deeper knowledge than the students, but it is not her task to overload the learners with too much information at once. Her approach with adults should be friendly but professional at once. A proper teacher should evaluate the lesson from different points of view in order to improve her teaching.

Activities in the lesson should be involving and oriented on students' needs and interests. Although the students are usually motivated, they do not have to enjoy too long activities and therefore there should be certain diversity. With a relevant activity should be chosen also appropriate materials used during the course. The teacher should not stick only to the book; she should adjust it to the learners and combine various sources.

During next lessons it is important to come back to previous issues and repeat them because it is a crucial aspect of learning and transferring knowledge to our long-term memory. The grammatical phenomena must be understood and ideally used in situations that might really happen.

As for methods, we cannot say that there is one single method that is the most effective for grammar teaching or teaching in general, especially in case of adult learners. As we learnt in previous chapters, every adult learner may have different expectations or motivation. It is essential to know this before starting the course. Every approach or method had its advantages and disadvantages and it is only up to the teacher which combination of methods he uses to make her teaching effective.

6. PRACTICAL PART

6.1. Research information

As we read in theory, it is important to find out as much relevant information as possible before the course starts (see e.g. pp. 28-29). It is also important to know certain information after the course has already started (see p about feedback) and it is certainly helpful also in case that the course is over. I decided to collect data from current courses that will deal with all kind of this information – they will try to look back and think about why they chose their course, evaluate the current one and also think about themselves; what they could improve and how.

The goal of this research is to get valuable information needed for choosing the best method (or a combination of more of them) and content. I would like to know more about the respondents and find out what they see as important when studying. It will also be very helpful to know whether my current work is seen as a positive one or if there is a need of a change (e.g. in the number of people in one group, more grammar exercises or homework). The respondents' answers should enrich the theory about an ideal teacher because as I wrote earlier, it is very individual and therefore it will be better to find out their own ideas. There are probably always some skills that the students master more and that they might struggle with. I would like to find out if grammar is really the biggest problem of the respondents and look for reasons why they might have difficulties with the particular issue and what might possibly be done with it. The research information will serve as a source of data for further recommendations as well.

The research was carried out with a questionnaire as a research tool. It consisted of 21 questions, where some of them were closed with provided answers and somewhere the respondents had to use their own words. It was responded by 19 people, all of them were students from my lessons.

6.2. Research questions

Question 1 – What is your gender?

Firstly I wanted to separate the respondents by gender. I found out that 58% of them were men and 42% were women. When I carried out this research I thought that gender might have had certain impact on choosing the right method, but according to the conclusion that I came to in theory (see pp. 15-16), it will not play any significant role in my future teaching. Yet it was not useless to deal with this problematic because I realized that making some prejudice about both gender groups might also make teaching less effective.

Vyplňte pohlaví

42,1 %

57,9 %

● Muž ● Žena

Question 2 – What is your age?

Most of the students (68%) were in category between 30 to 50 years, then 16% are from 18 to 30 and the same amount of respondents are older than 50. None of the respondents is younger than 18. If we know the age division, it can help us to adjust the lesson. In comparison with the theory, the youngest group is almost identical with young adulthood, the middle refers to middle adulthood and the oldest group of people belong to old adulthood. I adjusted a little bit the division than is in the theory, but in my opinion it does not make any significant difference (see pp. 16-17).

V jaké jste věkové kategorii?

15,8 %   15,8 %

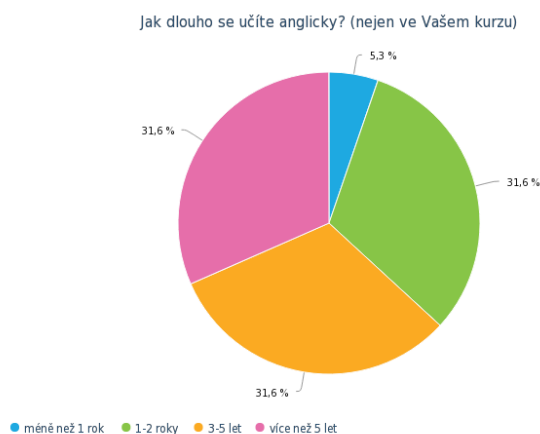68,4 %

● 0-17 ● 18-29 ● 30-50 ● více než 50
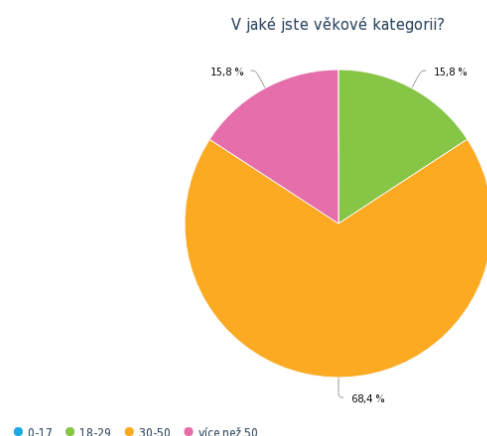
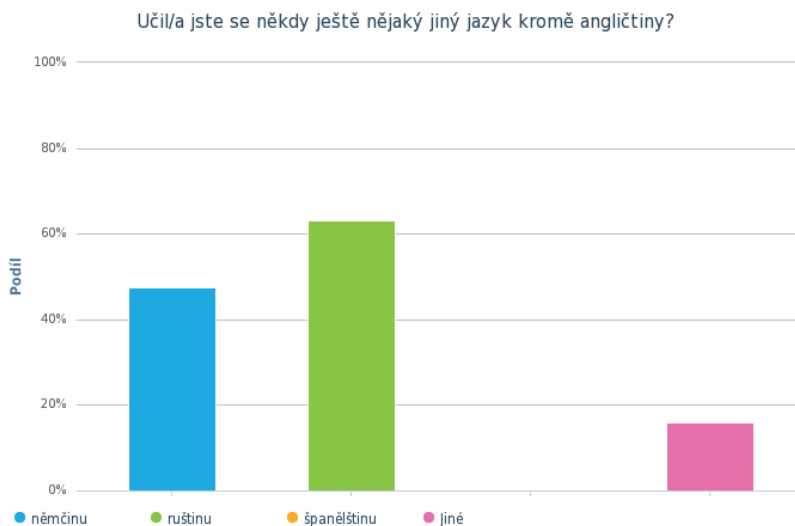**Question 3 – How long have you been learning English (not only in your current course)?**

The possible answers are shown underneath this paragraph. There is only 5% of respondents who have been learning English for less than one year, then 16% of them have been learning for 1 to 2 years (these students usually started with me), also 16% of respondents between 3 to 5 years and the rest which is the same amount of as in previous two groups has been learning English more than 5 years.

In fact, this question did not really provide me with any valuable data because the question was not asked in the right way. I should have asked more which level they thought they had. It does not mean that if they learn longer they have more language skills and knowledge.
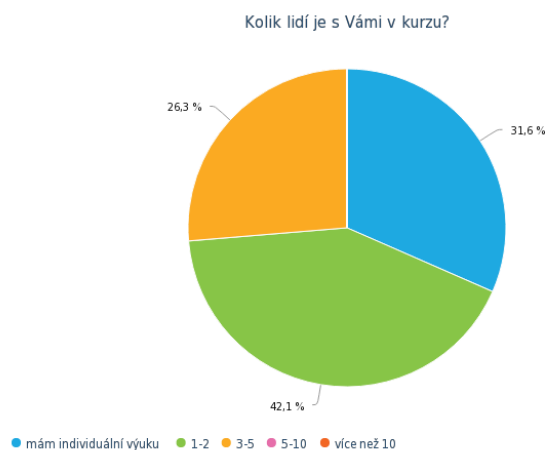

Jak dlouho se učíte anglicky? (nejen ve Vašem kurzu)

5,3 %

31,6 %   31,6 %

31,6 %

● méně než 1 rok ● 1-2 roky ● 3-5 let ● více než 5 let

40

Question 4 – Have you ever studied other languages except from English?

This question offers more than one answer. More than 60% of respondents learnt Russian, 9 of them had German and 3 respondents had a different language which they did not specify. I included Spanish in the answers, but none of them had learned this language before. When I made this question I thought I would deal also with influences of another language, but finally there was not enough space for writing about it and I also did not find much relevant information, so I do not know many facts that would somehow support the respondents who have different language knowledge.


Učil/a jste se někdy ještě nějaký jiný jazyk kromě angličtiny?

● němčinu   ● ruštinu   ● španělštinu   ● Jiné

Question 6 – How many people are with you in the course?

Six respondents (31, 6%) answered that they had an individual class, 8 people are with one or 42% students in a group and 26% of respondents are in one 5-member group. There are no bigger groups. That means, that most of my lessons are individuals, and then there are about 4 pairs and one group with 5 students. This division was important to me because I needed to know what kind of social forms would be possible to think about (pair-work, individual work, work in a group or circle).

Kolik lidí je s Vámi v kurzu?

26,3 %

31,6 %

42,1 %

● mám individuální výuku ● 1-2 ● 3-5 ● 5-10 ● více než 10

Question 7 – How satisfied are you with the number of the people in your group?

95% of all respondents are totally satisfied with the number of students in their group. Only one respondent gave 4 stars out of 5 which meant he or she was still very satisfied. I am glad for this result because there is no need of thinking about reorganizing them in any way.

Hvězdičkové hodnocení: 4.9

0   0.5   1   1.5   2   2.5   3   3.5   4   4.5   5
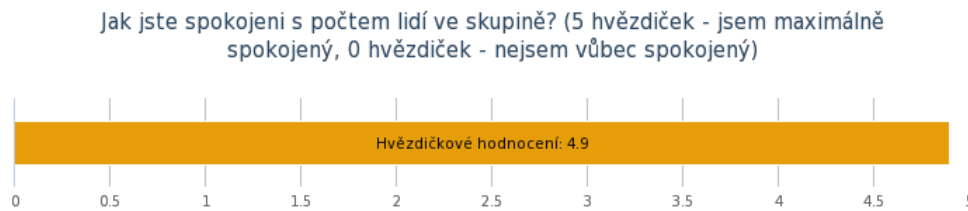
Question 8 – Why are you (not) satisfied with the number of the people in your group?

In question number 8 the respondents had the possibility to express their feelings about advantages or disadvantages of being alone/in a group. I got comments from 11 respondents which provided me with useful information because both individuals and group learners saw advantages in their learning.

As for an individual class, they appreciated an individual approach or having a whole lesson for them, they had to concentrate all the time. One respondent claimed that with other people the quality of the lesson got worse.

The other 5 answers were from respondents from a pair or a group course. They also mentioned only advantages of learning in the group. In their opinion they had enough time for them and they could also communicate with somebody else apart from their teacher. They usually compared it with even bigger groups where they had not got a chance to talk so much. In my point of view it is ideal to have maximum of 3 students in a group. If there are more learners, it might lose the effectiveness because the students usually want to speak a lot during the lesson and in the group of 5 people they do not get the chance so much. However, I understand that there is still a significant difference in comparison with larger groups of for example 20 students.

According to Medina are small groups better. It is a benefit not only for the students but also for the teacher. He claims that this can help the teacher to understand better the students' feelings and the teacher has a better overview of the learners' skills and weaknesses. (2015, p. 67-68) I also agree with this opinion. As for language lessons, the teacher can prepare an individual plan, the learner has to pay attention etc. On the other hand I think that learning in pairs or bigger groups can be more fun and from didactical point of view it can make the lesson more realistic which is also very important (e.g. in CLT method see p.) Even if I said that one is better than another, it is still up to learners which course they want to attend. The teacher usually does not influence it so much. I think that important is to know the number of the students in advance and be able to adjust the activities according to it.

Question 9 – Which lesson frequency do you have?

Most of the students (90%) attend their lesson once a week. Only 5% of respondents twice a week and (5%) had a different frequency. In comparison with the standard frequency of English lessons at elementary or high schools (which is usually three times a week) is this very little. If we have a look at notes about memory of adult learners, we can say that it is not possible to remember anything from one lesson once a week because we forget a lot during a few hours (see p.18). On the other hand, with proper home preparation it can have totally different result.

Jakou frekvenci výuky máte?

5,3 %
5,3 %
89,5 %

● jednou týdně ● 2x týdně ● Jiná
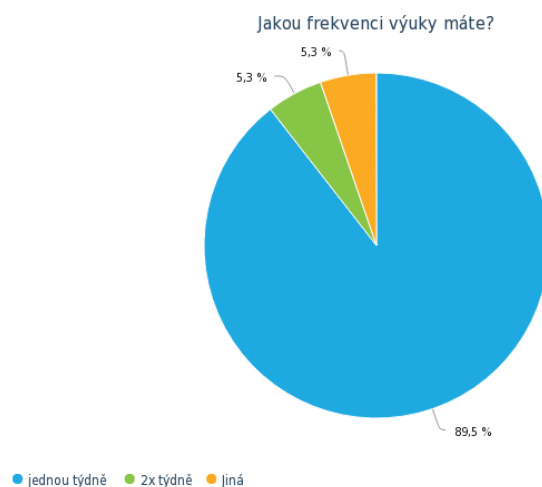
Question 10 – Are you satisfied with the frequency? Why not/yes?

More than three quarters of the respondents (about 80%) are satisfied with the frequency they have. They did not have any comments to the current situation anyhow so I suppose that they do not wish any changes. However, three people expressed themselves to their lesson frequency. One of them would like to have more language lessons and another one seems to have the same opinion, but the reason why they do not have more lessons is little free time. The last comment was that he was satisfied with the frequency because the lesson had two hours and he could manage a lot of things in the lesson. To be honest, I expected more dissatisfaction with the frequency. Even though the students are mostly fine with the frequency, I would like to push them to do some extra work, especially if they are still not very fluent in the target language.
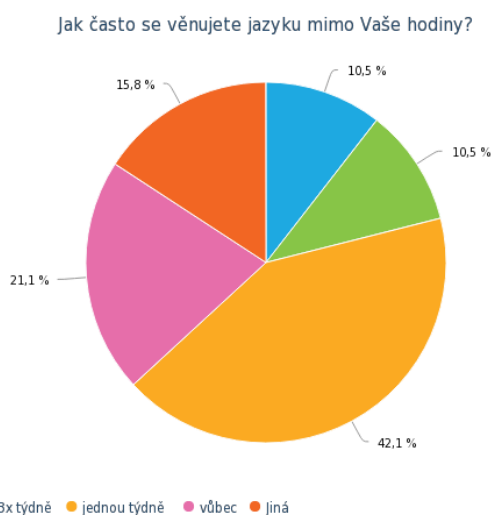
Vyhovuje Vám tato frekvence?

15,8 %

5,3 %

78,9 %

ano   ne   Sem můžete doplnit proč ano/ne:
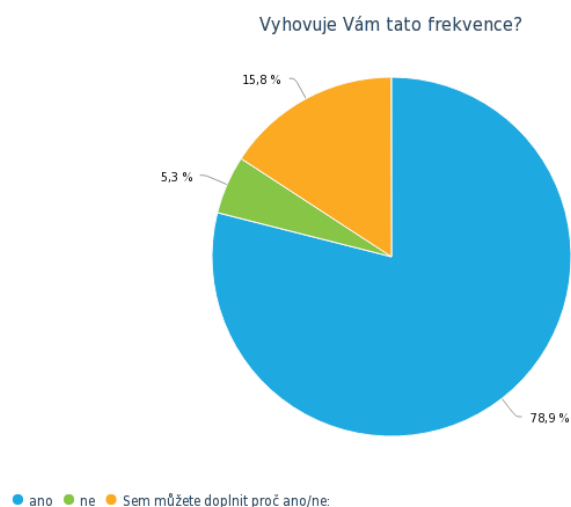
Question 11 – How much time do you spend by learning except for the lessons?

The answers were quite diverse at this question. The biggest part of respondents 42% answered that they study the target language once a week, 21% of respondents do not learn at all, 11% practise twice a week, also 11% are involved in the language every day and 16% of all respondents put a different frequency and they wrote a comment to it.

One of them claims that he practises sometimes with a member of the family, another one tries to read BBC articles and the last one belongs also to the group who practises every day because he repeats vocabulary and grammar from the lesson all the time. Both kinds of practising are according to theory very effective, (see. p. 19) and I am very pleased that they do things like that at home.

These results were very surprising for me because I thought that most of the students do not prepare at all, but I found out that only four people out of 19 come to the lesson without any extra work. This made me think about preparing more additional activities

or recommendations what the students may do at home. I usually did not give them any homework because I thought they did not have any time for learning at home.

Jak často se věnujete jazyku mimo Vaše hodiny?

- 10,5 %
- 10,5 %
- 42,1 %
- 21,1 %
- 15,8 %

● každý den ● 3x týdně ● jednou týdně ● vůbec ● Jiná

Question 12 – What do you like most in your lessons?

This question was open. Everybody answered; some of the answers were repeated. Half of the respondents mentioned speaking in the lessons as their favourite lesson activity. Five people said they liked their teacher, her creativity or the form of her teaching. The rest liked all activities in the lesson.

The result of this question is not surprising. I expected that speaking might have been the most enjoyable part of our lesson. Still it is useful for me to see that my expectations were right because I can continue on planning my lessons in a communicative way.

I was very pleased by comments from other respondents about my creativity and methods used during the lesson. It means for me that my attitude is taken as an appropriate one and I can keep on doing similar activities as I am doing right now, but with some improved elements that are being found out during writing this thesis.

Question 13 – What would you change?

Most respondents answered that they would not change anything, but some answers were interesting for me and made me think about some changes in my way of teaching.

Two people stated that they would like to have a book that they could work with. I understand it and I think for the beginners it might be very useful to have something that could support their studies. I work with more books during the lessons, therefore I do not say to my students to buy one. It is not possible to tell them that we were doing the lesson number 2 and all grammar and vocabulary related to it. Yet it might be a good idea to recommend a book that is used most during the lesson and refer to it whenever possible (see also p. 26)

Another two people wrote that they wished to have homework and I think it is definitely a good idea. I was not used to giving my students any homework because I thought they would not do it. However, after I know how students' memory works, it would be ineffective to not support their home preparation. If I gave them a task to do to the next lesson, I could support their learning process.

Question 15 – Order these factors when you chose your language course

Possible answers were: price, professionalism, reviews from other students and distance from their home. As the most important aspect seems professionalism, very similar were the aspects of price and reviews from other students and the least important was the distance from their home. The fact that professionalism is the most important when choosing the language course helped me to support the idea that the basic part of effective teaching makes the teacher herself. She can influence not only if the student chooses your particular course, but mainly students' motivation and interest which is connected with better results (see p. 25)

Question 16 – Why did you choose your course?

This question was opened and responded by all students. Most answers were that their employer chose the course (in total 8 answers) which does not tell me any valuable information. On the other hand, I found out other helpful information, sometimes from the same respondents. For example, altogether 7 respondents commented somehow their current teacher. They either heard good reviews from other students or they tried out a few lessons and are satisfied with the teacher's skills, characters or behaviour. This did not answer my original question, but I think that I can be satisfied with the result because it confirmed again that teacher plays for very important role for language learners. The rest of the comments did not bring me any additional value and therefore I am not going to analyse them.

Question 17 – What should a perfect teacher look like?

As we saw in the question number 15, the teacher (her professionalism) plays the most important role when choosing a language course. I dealt with teacher's behaviour, character, knowledge and skills in the theoretical part. The aim of this question was to see how the aspects mentioned in theory correspond with respondent's answers. Also I would like to find out certain characters that should a right teacher have, because as I mentioned in the theoretical part it is very individual and every student has his own ideas of a perfect teacher. It will be very helpful as a feedback which is always useful for improvement (see pp. 23-25).

This question was open because I wanted the respondents to really think individually without any influence of my ideas. I supposed that this question would not be about quantity, but more about variety of ideas that each respondent had had. For a better overview and possible comparison was this question divided according to theory: Knowledge, professionalism, characters and skills.

Knowledge

Three people mentioned that an ideal teacher should have her own experience with the language (this might be for example from a longer stay abroad where the target language is used among native speakers). One respondent also wrote that language knowledge seemed important to him. I think that others did not write this because they may take it for granted that the teacher knows the subject and therefore there was no need to highlight it.

Professionalism

Comments about professionalism and lesson organisation had altogether 5 respondents.

The lesson should have high quality and the lesson should have a system. One respondent also writes that the lesson should not be monotonous. I think that each answer has its point and all aspects seem to me fully relevant. These comments correspond with theory. Monoticity can be related to our attention span. We know from theory that people can generally pay attention to what the teacher says around 10 minutes if the activity does not change sometimes (see p. 21-22). Of course, it might be influenced by students' motivation when the students are able to struggle boredom. As teachers we should not rely on the motivation only, but try to make the lesson more active and change the activities. I am glad that the respondents also mentioned that a lesson should have system because it also confirms the part about lesson organization and clear planning (see p. 23).

Skills

Another important aspect of an ideal teacher should be her skills. This is the main opinion from 4 respondents.

For example one of the respondents mentions ability of cheering the students up which I understand as to motivate them. Motivation is highly important for both the teacher and the student. A motivated student is prone to have better results and he makes teacher's job easier and more effective.

Next respondent says that the ideal teacher should be able to give advice which seems very general, but it might be understood as advice about learning strategies that might the teacher give her students.

Flexibility seems to me also relevant (written by one respondent). He meant that the teacher should be flexible with the students' knowledge. She should probably adjust her speech and vocabulary to the learner. I had not mentioned this point anywhere in my thesis, but I think it definitely belongs there, too.

The last answer was to make each student his individual plan. This is also related with teacher's professionalism, but I put it in this section because it seems to me very difficult and I consider it more as a skill.

Personality and behaviour
The most frequent answers were about teacher's personality and behaviour (12 respondents).

Five students mentioned patience in their answers. I agree with this point because it seems to me very important to be able (especially when teaching grammar) to explain something more than once and keep calm.

Some respondents (other 5) stated that they wanted the teacher to be friendly or nice. In adult courses might be *this* an essential aspect of successful and effective teaching. I think it is important to have a good relationship with the students and behave more as a friend than the authority who only questions them and controls the correctness of the learners' sentences. On the other hand, the teacher should be respected by the students (according to one student), which seems also relevant to me. In my opinion should be these two aspects balanced which means not to be too friendly or try to be too authoritative. It does not seem appropriate to use authoritative methods of teaching as DME or Grammar Translation (see pp. 29-32). However, every method has its pros and

cons. Therefore we cannot say that only because these two approaches are authoritative, we should not use them at all.

An interesting finding was that four people wrote about teacher's appearance. I have never thought about that it could be somehow important when teaching, but when I thought about it, there are perhaps certain things that might be added. According to me a teacher should not wear any extravagant clothes such as a deep V-neck or sweatpants. She should look representatively; otherwise it might give a bad impression and undermine the professionalism of the lesson.

Two respondents stated that a teacher should be communicative. The ability of proper communication in teaching is not about teacher's talking all lessons. It is more to be able to support the discussion that often arises from certain topics with relevant questions and lead the dialogues or conversation in bigger groups. A good teacher should know where to stop speaking and give space her learners .

Although empathy was mentioned by only one student, I see is as a very relevant character and it definitely should not be omitted. I have already written about empathy earlier

Other two respondents wrote that the teacher should draw the students' attention in general; another one claimed that she should not be arrogant. Of course both of these aspects have its place here but for me hard to imagine what they exactly might have meant by this.
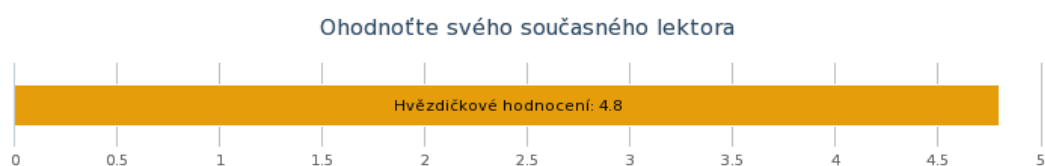
Last but not least is mentioned by one respondent that there is no perfect teacher. In my opinion this is true, but thanks to this research I know opinions from my students and that can help me to imagine what they see as important and try to evaluate later if I fulfil those thoughts.

To highlight the main points, according to the respondents, a perfect teacher should be somebody who has enough patience. She should be willing to explain things and help the students with their learning. The teacher should be respected and able to draw the learners' attention by interesting lessons, but more importantly, she should be nice and friendly. It is also important to be a professional teacher who knows the language well and has some experience with the target language abroad.

Question 18 – Evaluate your current teacher

The evaluation should give me a feedback to see if I correspond to their imaginations as a good teacher. They should evaluate me with starts where 5 was the maximum. I am very pleased that 79% of students put five starts which meant they were absolutely satisfied with my lessons. The others (4 – 21%) put 4 stars which is also a very good feedback for me.

Out of the answers of vast majority of respondents I can make a conclusion that I meet the respondents' requirements and accomplish the ideas of a good teacher. Even though I might be a good teacher as for knowledge, characters and skills, there is always some space for improvement.

Ohodnoťte svého současného lektora

Hvězdičkové hodnocení: 4.8

| 0 | 0.5 | 1 | 1.5 | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 3.5 | 4 | 4.5 | 5 |

Question 19 – What motivates you to studying?

The aim of this question was to find out the student's motivation and think about possible ways how to work with it. According to theory this will help us to work more effectively (see pg.) Possible answers were: *school, travelling, work, I do it for myself, others.* More than one answer was possible.

Most of the respondents (16 which are 84%) answered that they did it for themselves. According to the theoretical background (p.20) we can state that this is the case of the

intrinsic motivation which is pushed with our personal desires. I assumed this result, so I am not surprised with it.

Travelling was the answer of 68% respondents which seems as a big part to me. I would say that travelling might be both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation; it only depends on the point of view. Without further context it is not possible to say what kind of motivation it is, but let us suppose that the main reason is that travelling brings them personal satisfaction and therefore we can indicate it as the intrinsic one. Even though we may not be one hundred percent sure about what kind of motivation we deal with, it is still useful to know the fact that travelling motivates more than a half of the respondents. It helps me to understand the impulse of a majority of students who learn languages in adult classes and it also helps me with choosing the right methodology. During travelling there are a lot of situational dialogues that might be practised in a role-play such as asking for directions, ordering food or shopping for souvenirs. Role-play is a typical activity in CLT (see p. 34) so there might be a way how to involve it in the grammar-speaking activities.

Another motivation impulse was work. It motivates almost half of the respondents (47%) which seemed quite a lot to me and I did not expect this result.

Almost none of the respondents answered that he was motivated by school. Considering the age division (see question number 2), this was expected because only three people were in the age usual for university studies.

I am very pleased that most of the respondents do their course for themselves. However it seems that a lot of them have more reasons to study which means that they might be motivated extrinsically and intrinsically at once which is according to the theory ideal for their successful learning. The most important fact is for me that both travelling and job are further reasons for their studying because I can organise the topics of the lessons with the aim at these two spheres.

I was wondering is which motivation was better to have as a student. After all findings and information that were processed during writing this thesis I came to a conclusion both kinds of motivation are very important. In ideal case, the student is motivated extrinsically and intrinsically at once. The more reasons he has for studying, the better results is he going to have (because he is more interested, pays more attention, see p.). For me as a teacher I see students' motivation as the most important fact about them because this is the reason why they started to study and it has an impact on the whole content of the lesson

Co Vás motivuje ke studiu? (možné zaškrtnout více možností)
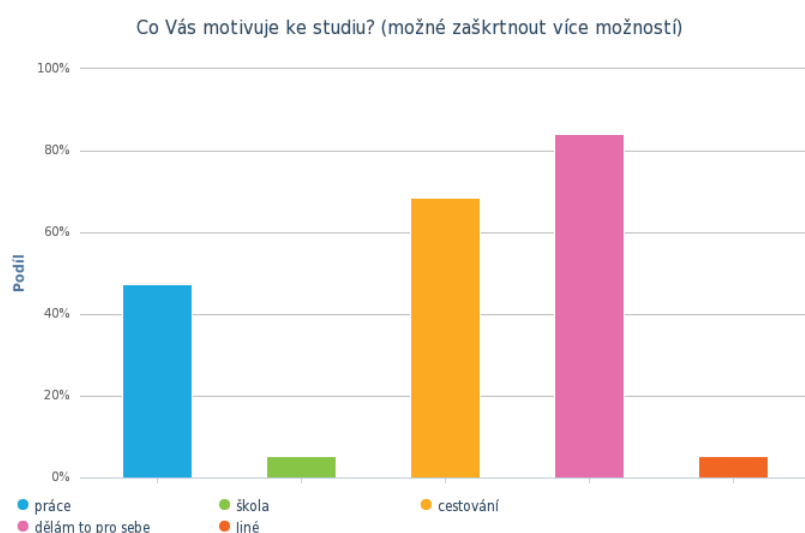
Question 20 – Order these parts of a language from the most difficult to the easiest for you

Students should order following parts according to the difficulty. Then each part got a different average level of importance (from 1 which had the least importance – the least difficult – to the highest importance 5 – the most important/difficult).

According to the answers, grammar is definitely the most difficult thing during learning English for most of the respondents. It got an importance of 4.4, which is higher than

any other parts. This may be caused by paying more attention to speaking and listening than to grammar during the lesson. I think it is good to speak with the students as much as possible because it makes the lesson more fun and the students mainly want to speak in the target language. On the other hand, in my opinion grammar is an inseparable part of a language and it is also not possible to communicate effectively without it. Without grammar knowledge might be very difficult to understand each other.

Writing got the second highest importance (4.1). I am not surprised with this result because I do not give such a big importance to writing in the lessons. I do it on purpose and I considered it the least essential part for my students. As you could see in question 19, a lot of the respondents are motivated by travelling and therefore I did not think that they would use so much writing. However, writing might be a useful tool for reading skills because if the learners know just the pronunciation, they can misunderstand the written text. This is probably not the problem of my students because reading is almost the least problematic skill for them (see below). Therefore it might be a good idea to improve the writing skills by practising grammar and this way strengthen both of these students' weaknesses.

The third most difficult skill was listening with the importance of 3.9. It means that it is not too demanding but also not too easy. Therefore it should still be included in the lessons enough.

Speaking seems a bit less problematic (3.7). However, the difficulty level is still quite high so I assume it may be problematic as well. I suppose that this part is best to practise in the lesson because the students usually do not have much opportunity to use this skill in their every-day life (if they do not work with it). This is one of the reasons why the activities further are aimed at speaking. Also now if we know that the most difficult part of the language is grammar, it seems as a good idea to focus the activities on the most problematic part together with the most enjoyable one .

Reading got a very low level of importance (2.5) which is understandable. Even though is this part not practised a lot during the lessons, I suppose that the students usually do not have big difficulties with it.

The easiest part of a language for the respondents was vocabulary (the importance of 2.4). This number is almost identical with the reading skill so we can consider these two parts as the strongest among the learners. It does not mean that I will not give any importance to vocabulary anymore, but I do not have to deal with it as a problematic meaning.

Seeing the results of the research question I realized that focusing more on speaking can be effective (and I will pay most attention to it also in my future teaching), but I should not forget about other skills and meanings as well and try to involve it more to the lessons or make it a part of their home preparation even though they might not find it that attractive. All skills and meanings are inseparable part of language learning and we should not omit any of these. It also confirmed my expectation that grammar seems the most problematic for the respondents. Grammar teaching is therefore more described in theory (pp. 27-35).

Question 21 – How do you think you can make it better?

This question was also opened because I wanted the respondents to think on their own about a way of being better at their problematic part of the language. I am not going to evaluate every answer because almost all were the same. Eighteen out of 19 would like to improve it by a better home preparation and learning. One also mentions to actually go somewhere where the possibility is to speak and some of the respondents also mention to watch videos or listen to something in English (3). Of course learning is necessary to remember new things learnt on the lesson, but the practical usage seems more important to me. I understand that not all respondents have the chance to practise so much, but I can at least recommend them some websites, videos and prepare

homework for them to give them as many opportunities to study in their free time as possible.

Question 22 – Why does it cause you problems?

The last question was also opened out of the same reason as the previous question. Five respondents claim that they do not have enough time for learning and two mention that they are lazy to do something for it. The other respondents comment for example that they do not have the opportunity to use the language so much or that they have problem with different sentence structure.

I know that my students do not have much free time, but as we saw in question 11, they try to work with the language also in their free time. It could be helpful to motivate them to learn or use the language also outside the class and support it with homework that I already mentioned.

6.3.   Research conclusion

Most of the respondents are motivated out of their own interests, which seems to me very positive. It is important to know that their main reason for studying is travelling or work because it helps me to specify which activities I am mainly supposed to prepare.

The most interesting finding was for me that even though the respondents do not have much free time, they are willing to work with the language outside the class. It is probably caused by their motivation which is mainly intrinsic. These facts lead me to a thought that homework might be more included in the lessons because it will definitely support their learning process and make my lessons more effective. I also realized that for students it is important to have a book they can learn with so I am going to focus on one that will be crucial in their learning and enrich it with additional exercises and activities.

I found out much information about teacher's abilities and personality. A good teacher seems highly important when choosing the course; she deepens students' motivation and makes the lesson more effective. According to the respondents the right teacher should be patient, friendly but respected and be provided with enough knowledge.

The respondents confirmed that grammar was the most problematic meaning for the respondents, but it does not mean that I will focus only on grammar in my future teaching because it is not possible and not effective. On the other hand, speaking is the thing that the respondents enjoy the most during the lesson and I can follow on from this during making activities for the lesson. Still all skills and meanings are connected and one does not work without another and we should not omit any of them.

Even though not all questions were fully relevant and brought needed information, I consider it a useful and successful. It helped me to see what might be changed or improved and what I should keep doing. The students could think about all three aspects of the learning process – teacher, student and content. Their thoughts are valuable feedback and can make my future teaching more effective which might finally make both sides more satisfied.

6.4. Future recommendations

Based on all information that was gained from both theoretical and practical part, I would like to make several recommendations for my future teaching. They do not have to be dedicated only to my lessons, but to each teacher who deals with the same or similar group of adult learners.

6.4.1. Before the lesson

Before starting our lesson, we should have certain knowledge. First knowledge should have perfect about the subject we are going to teach. I also think that it is essential to know about the people that attend our course. Make sure that you know all relevant information about your students. We should know for example their motivation, previous language experience and their course expectations. These things will help us to make the lesson more effective.

It seems more effective to work with a book than without one. As for grammar teaching, it can help a lot because the content is organised and they can see the grammatical overview mostly with explanation. Most books seem nowadays created under the influence of CLT and they provide the students with appropriate vocabulary and communicative activities. On the other hand, we should teach things that are interesting for our students teach and be flexible with provided materials, alternatively combine more books. All of this can be enriched with our own ideas and activities.

6.4.2. During the lesson

During the course seems important to say only things that help students and not overload them with too much information at once. No matter if we teach grammar or anything else, but we should always be professional but friendly at once because teacher's personality plays the most important role – it arises not only from theory but also from respondents.

Grammar presentation

In my opinion is inductive presentation more effective than deductive. It takes longer time than the students figure out the rules, but I think it is worth it. However, we should consider that adult learners were born in times when Grammar-Translation ruled in our country and therefore it might be sometimes challenging to teach them to learn inductively.

No matter if we teach inductively or deductively, I think that any grammar presentation should be clear and understood by the students. It seems useful to use pictures or video during presenting because the students can use more sences at once which helps their learning process and makes the lesson more enjoyable. We should include also a lot of examples ideally with vocabulary related to students' lives.

Let me have a look at language used during the presentation. While Direct Method does not allow almost any other language except for the target one, Grammar-Translation is extremely open to the students' mother language. CLT offers us something between. The teacher should use the target language if possible, but it is not a problem to use the mother tongue in order to make herself clear especially during grammar explaining. Because this thesis deals mainly with grammar, I would not choose DM for this purpose, only if the rule was very easy and I would be sure that the students would understand. What I like about Grammar-Translation is that they compare the grammar

with their mother tongue. It seems very helpful especially if the grammar is identical. I would add that it does not have to be only the mother tongue that might be compared.

Grammar practising

I appreciate the idea of teaching for communicative purposes in CLT. The tasks and activities should be set in as real context as possible and it should come out of the students' needs. On the other hand, this method does not deal with grammar so much and the activities done in the lesson are mainly student to student or in groups where the teacher plays a role of an observer. My courses are more individual and therefore it is not possible to apply it in the 'pure' form.

There are still certain ways how we can use CLT in a modified form for grammar practising. The teacher might play the other student in role-plays and other pair-activities. It seems as a suitable solution, but the activity might lose its authenticity. On the other hand is in my opinion still better to do the role-plays and other pair-works somehow than not at all and I think that a good teacher can master these activities in a natural way (he should try to sound naturally and be really interested in what the other person says, react as if she spoke with a real stranger).

Not only CLT, but also other elements of others methods might be useful in grammar practising. For example, translations from the students' mother tongue to English seem to me also helpful in form of homework or it might be done in the lesson from time to time. As I already mentioned, most adults grew up on Grammar-Translation. Therefore might be sometimes hard to teach adult learners to think in the target language because they learned languages only on the base of their mother tongue. If we adjusted the drilling method from DM a little, it would be possible to make some activities based on this method as well.

Direct Method could be used sometimes for practising. For example if we need to train certain grammatical structure orally, the drilling method could help to fix the structure

better. This method is also based on repeating a lot which I like and as we learnt it is a very important aspect of successful learning. On the other hand, the sentences are very general and sometimes they seem as not useful in real life. Therefore might be better to adjust the drilling method in a different form where the sentences would be more suitable for the particular learner.

Practising should be done with a help of communicative exercises during the lesson. I recommend combining mainly speaking which is in my opinion the most useful language skill for my students and according to their answers it is also the most enjoyable one. On the other hand, other skills and meanings should not be omitted. Grammar exercises in written form should be mainly left as homework because it is something that they are able to do on their own.

Mistakes have also different points of view. While most old-fashioned methods were not tolerant to mistakes at all, CLT became more open with them. They allow them during fluency-oriented tasks. If the teacher wants to correct her learners, she should do it after they finish speaking. In my point of view is depends on the activity that is done. As I mentioned above, accuracy seems to me important when presenting any grammatical phenomena. On the other hand, if the task is oriented more on speaking, then I would have the same approach as in CLT.

6.4.3. After the lesson

Students should have homework after each lesson and make them until another one starts. The students can make faster progress and they can keep it easier in their memory. Also it might make next lessons more effective.

After the course seems useful to make reflections not only of the lesson but also of the performance we made. She should ask herself what was done well and what should be

done differently next time. Also she should think about possible improvements and ways of making her teaching more effective.

Feedback from students can help to improve the lesson as well. This can be done either orally after each lesson (the teacher can ask what the learners enjoyed and what might be done differently), with the help of a questionnaire (after a lesson or after the end of the course), or nowadays can students evaluate their teachers online if the teacher has a website.

6.5. Grammar activities

This part contains suggestions of grammar activities that might be used in the lesson. They are based on knowledge from all previous chapters. The goal is only to show how can be aspects of different methods and knowledge used in an activity.

6.5.1. Imperatives

Presentation

As I mentioned before, inductive teaching seems more effective to me and therefore I would like to use this presentation style also with imperatives. I chose New English File fourth edition – Elementary for this purpose because they have a nice video. The presentation should be done with all class and we should be sure that the students understand the vocabulary in advance. It takes more time because it involves two activities at once. The first one is a video that the class watches (10mins) and the other is the presentation itself (10mins).

1. Teacher gives the students a worksheet (see Attachment).
2. She makes sure that students understand everything written on the paper.

3. She tells them that they are going to watch a video with travelling tips.

4. She tells them that there are gaps that they should fill in with a word they hear.

5. She plays the video and the students listen to it twice, they fill in the blank spaces in the sentences.

6. Teacher checks if they managed to fill something. If not, she plays it once more.

7. After the first or second listening students check their answers with their teacher and try to guess the Czech meaning of the missing words.

8. Then the teacher tells them that this is how English imperative is done and she writes one sentence from the worksheet on the board.

9. Then she asks them if they could say the rule in Czech. She helps them to make the definition clear. I think that it does not have to be too theoretical, my explanation would be: 'Rozkaz děláme tak, že použijeme pouze základní tvar slovesa bez osoby. Což znamená, že sloveso, které chceme dát do rozkazu nijak neměníme a osobu vynecháme.' At this point I would provide them with some examples from their life which is individual (therefore is good to know the students' motivation etc., to make the examples realistic and they will be memorized better).

10. The teacher makes sure if all students understood by asking them to make their own examples. If they do not understand, she should make more examples or try to explain it differently.

11. After the grammar is clear, the teacher encourages the students to figure out the negative form. She writes the correct version on the board (from the sentence on the board) and then asks them about the rule. Then she helps to make one clear Czech rule, e.g. 'Pokud chceme udělat zápor, přidáme don't před základní formu daného slovesa.' Then she makes the same things as in the step number 9 where she gives examples and then the learners try to make their own.

12. During this presenting stage I suggest that teacher corrects all wrong sentences directly after they had been said (as in DM or Grammar-Translating).

Analysis

As you can see, I tried to use aspects of more methods in one presenting activity.

I find video watching as a very attractive way of grammar presenting. As we read earlier, it is important to make it attractive because then the students will remember it better. During the presentation was used a visual aid that also increases the students' memorizing. They make the rules by themselves and are pushed into making their own sentences from their life.

As for language, I did not write explicitly which one is the teacher supposed to use, I left it up to the teacher. From my point of view seemed relevant to use the target language when giving instructions during the first part with the video and checking the answers. When it came to making rules, I used only Czech language which gives me the impression that it is timesaving and it makes the presentation more clear. Also it does not seem to me necessary to learn the grammatical words in the target language because the students will probably not use them in real life. During the presentation is also included a translation of the sentences to the student's mother tongue. I would say that the presentation used some elements from Grammar-Translation such as using the students' mother tongue and translating. On the other hand, it also corresponds with CLT where the method is open, but forces the teacher to use the target language as much as possible (which I tried except for the part where the rules were made).

I would correct mistakes right after they would be made which corresponds with DM or Grammar-Translation which seems now more relevant to me than let the students say it wrong. During presentation seems to me appropriate to aim more at accuracy.

Practising

CLT might be used for practising imperatives which seems to me as important grammatical phenomena for all adult learners. This activity is from everyday life where we need to stop somebody from doing something. It is intended for elementary students

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who have little experience with the language. I recommend making it in pairs, but it can be also used in individual courses where the teacher plays the other student. Before this activity is done, the teacher should be sure that the students know how to make imperatives (positive and negative ones).

1. Teacher tells students to take a piece of paper and write six positive imperatives in first person singular (e.g. close the window, call the doctor, smoke a cigarette, and open your book).
2. Teacher checks if they are correct (he can do it orally or go around the class).
3. Teacher encourages students to change their ideas with another classmate (if they are two, they keep it).
4. Students make pairs and read what they have on the paper but do not say it aloud. They follow sentence by sentence and do exactly what is written there (if there is: 'open the window', they go and open the window). The other student wants to stop his classmate doing it (he reacts to the action) and says: 'don't open the window/close the window!).
5. After they go through all sentences written on the paper, they switch their roles.

Analysis

The activity is based on CLT that means that it involves a situation and phrases from the real life. It seems to me natural to follow some commands that are written on paper (e.g. in a manual) and do them. The structures are not strictly given, the students can make their own examples that seem relevant to them and the reactions are optional (they can be either positive or negative depending on the situation). This activity has a communicative purpose that is the main aim of CLT teaching. The students practise speaking, writing, reading and listening so it seems as a good way how to develop all skills during one activity.

Recommendations and adjustments

We can adjust this activity for weaker learners by providing them with a list of instructions that the teacher prepares in advance. It can be timesaving, but it may lose its originality. She should be sure that it contains appropriate vocabulary that the students understand. On the other hand, stronger students could enrich the situation with more sentences, e.g. somebody is opening the window and the other says: 'What are you doing? Don't open the window/close the window! I'm cold (or I'm ill).' If the teacher wants to practise more the negative structures, she can say that the answer must be always with using the negatives.

It is possible to do this activity just the teacher to learner. The teacher just plays a role of one student.

I tried to do this activity in a group of four people (I did the first not-adjusted version) and it worked well. The students had fun and they did not have any problems with writing their ideas.

CONCLUSION

We saw a method overview in certain time horizon. I highlighted several aspects that might be used in future recommendations because I realised that there was no perfect teaching method that could be used for everybody. The recommendations reflect the ideal way how I would imagine teaching in the future. To show you the possibilities I included the activities where you could see which aspects that I mentioned before were used during which stage (presentation or practising).

Teacher, student and content create inseparable parts of the learning process and they really influence each other a lot. Even with the best teaching methods, professional knowledge and relevant content seems the lesson ineffective if the teacher behaves badly. This is valid also vice versa – the teacher can be perfect, her methods optimal, but with irrelevant content it loses its effectiveness anyway. Therefore was important to get more information about all three aspects of the learning process (teacher, student, contents).

An important finding from the research was that students saw grammar as the most problematical part of the language. Due to this fact I aimed the theoretical part at grammar teaching which brought me new information and gave me ideas for improving my current teaching.

This thesis provided me with much new knowledge about adult learners. I found out more about their motivation, memory and we dealt with other aspects that might influence the learning process. Even though I did not find answers to everything I wanted, it brought me a new way of thinking about methods and other parts of teaching that belong together.

Based on the both the theoretical background and research findings I was able to give some future recommendations that highlight the main points of the whole thesis.

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