Dorota Werbińska

DEVELOPING INTO AN EFFECTIVE POLISH TEACHER OF ENGLISH

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Akademia Pomorska w Słupsku

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Recenzent prof. dr hab. Maria Wysocka

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ul. K. Arciszewskiego 22a, 76-200 Słupsk
tel. 59 84 05 378, 59 84 05 375; faks 59 84 05 378
www.wydawnictwo.apsl.edu.pl e-mail: wydaw@apsl.edu.pl

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This book is a new publication on a topic I dealt with almost ten years ago. However, this is an independent publication which does not require the knowledge of my first book on English teachers, *Skuteczny nauczyciel języka angielskiego,* written in Polish and published by *Fraszka Edukacyjna* in Warsaw. Those readers familiar with the previous book, may now obtain a fuller insight into the profile of a successful English teacher because this study involves one of the same teachers who was investigated at that time. The earlier book has been well received (two reprints) and hopefully a number of readers have found the book useful. But there are a few other reasons why I have decided to go for an English continuation. Firstly, having the book available only in Polish considerably limits the number of potential readers; those interested in foreign language teaching in Poland with no reading knowledge of Polish are deprived of access to it. Secondly, teaching languages, just like teaching any other subject, reflects the environment in which a teacher functions. This means that the concept of teacher effectiveness may change in different times and contexts. Therefore, continuing monitoring of teacher's work seems necessary. Moreover, since the turn of the century when the Polish version of the book was written, a lot of publications on language teachers have appeared, which have served as resources in this new edition. The most important reason, however, was the last one -- mere curiosity to see how the teacher deemed successful[1] a decade ago has changed in her views, attitudes or beliefs.

Unfortunately, it has been impossible to contact all but one of the nine profiled previously: Four of them have retired, two have changed jobs, and two could not be tracked down. In practical terms it meant that not all the stages of the previous study could be replicated, that is, interviewing school directors, observing lessons or questioning their pupils. But it hardly turned out necessary,

[1] Although sometimes a distinction is made between 'successful' standing for those teachers who maintain high levels of student involvement and low levels of student disruption and 'effective' defining those teachers whose students gain high scores on achievement (Tsui 2003:34), both terms are used in this work interchangeably.

because the principal purpose was gaining access to teachers' personal theories with a view to seeing how changeable or unchangeable the system of thinking has been. As a result, only one teacher was contacted; the practical part of this book is based on studying her anew and creating a profile of an effective language teacher over the course of a decade, which will in turn provide a framework for proposing some recommendations concerning educational policy choices and expectations held of a language teacher of 2010s.

Chapter 1 shows how the notion of the effective teacher has changed. Different approaches to language teaching are briefly presented, with an emphasis on teacher effectiveness as understood in a particular approach. The chapter is also concerned with various studies investigating good teacher characteristics.

Chapter 2 outlines the most important competencies of the language teacher and presents the author's classification of the constituents of each competency. The competencies shared to a greater or lesser degree by all teachers of a foreign language, will serve as a reference point for the practical chapter.

Chapter 3 is concerned with language teachers' beliefs. The areas of teachers' personal theories, together with their components, are specified. Types of teacher competences, supposed to be unique to a particular foreign language teacher, will be also referred to in the empirical part.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses a study conducted on the teacher of English in Poland who was considered effective in her professional environment almost ten years ago. As noted above, her present personal theories are examined again and correlated with language teacher's competences and systems of beliefs, as specified in *Chapters 2* and *3*. In this way, an updated profile of an effective English language teacher in Poland is obtained.

Finally, the conclusion highlights the objectives and findings, and offers some recommendations for those who aim at optimising the professional effectiveness of foreign language teachers in Poland.

CHAPTER 1

A REVIEW OF STUDIES ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Introduction

Central to the process of language teaching are concepts and definitions of 'effective teaching' and 'the effective teacher'. Over the years, the question why some language teachers succeed in their efforts while others do not, in seemingly identical conditions, has occupied the thoughts of many teachers and professional researchers.

This chapter surveys in chronological order what came to be known as 'effective teacher studies', which resulted in a number of inventories of successful teachers' performances. Starting with the concepts of 'good practice' and 'successful teaching', it presents major changes in language pedagogy with regard to effective teaching. Some of the most important studies in effective teaching, followed by research and projects on successful language teachers, are described. Finally, the chapter deals briefly with so-called 'poor' language teachers.

1.1. The beginnings: the concept of good practice

The concept of good practice with regard to teaching foreign languages has been in existence for several centuries now. William of Kingsmill, a teacher of French in the 15th century in Oxford, provided the first set of guidelines on how to teach modern languages. His idea of good practice was based on teaching "*natural dialogues* appealing to the learners' *everyday experience* and related to their *practical needs*" (Komorowska 1999: 3). In conducting the lesson, the teacher's role was limited to prompting learners with ques-

tions in order to 'hear' the lesson and making learners memorise the material (cf. Howatt 1991: 5).

The first foreign language textbooks were published by Caxton in the form of 'double manuals', that is bilingual course books (Howatt 1991: 6). They were very practical and contained everyday situational dialogues, with no linguistic information about either French or English. The series stressed the learner's *intellectual security* (Komorowska 1999: 3) for which a text in the native language provided a supportive point of reference.

The first comments on modern language teaching in Central and Eastern Europe come from the seventeenth century (ibid.). Good practice of the time was presented in the writings of Comenius, whose perception of the classroom teacher was revolutionary. He rejected the traditional role of the teacher as a supervisor who handed out self-study tasks that could be tested ('heard') later. Instead, having the children grouped around him, he believed in *explaining things gradually*. Only when he was satisfied that the children really understood what the matter was about, did he move on to learning the new language of the texts. According to Comenius, the simplest elements should go first, followed by the more difficult ones. This is why one should start with the things that are "short, simple, general, close, regular", and only then followed by what is "longer, complex, detailed, more remote and irregular" (cf. Cieśla 1974: 72-3).

In *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (literally *The World of the Senses in Pictures*) the purpose of pictures is "not to 'illustrate' the meanings of the words but to represent the real world" (Howatt 1991: 46), from which, in Comenius' philosophy, everything originates. The good teacher should talk about the picture, and the children should talk about their ideas and feelings connected with the picture. Comenius suggested that they should even try and draw the objects for themselves, as only "when the experience was thoroughly absorbed should it be associated with the language" (ibid.). Thus, children's motivation is enhanced by their active participation in the teaching process (cf. Cieśla 1974: 76-7) and the visual stimulus of pictures is rightly recognised as an important source of child interest in the light of what is known about effective teaching of children nowadays (cf. Wright and Haleem 1991; Gerngross and Puchta 1992; Ur 1996; Szpotowicz and Szulc-Kurpaska 2009).

In *Didactica analytica* (1648, in Kelly 1969: 277) Comenius also specified the following requirements for a good teacher:

XVII. A teacher should be competent to teach. [...]

XVII. A teacher should be skilful in teaching. [...]

XVIII. A teacher should be zealous in teaching. [...]

Thus, a teacher who was capable, skilful, and enthusiastic had the best chance of becoming a good teacher in Comenius' understanding.

Still, until the end of the Renaissance any educated man was regarded as a capable teacher: "Teaching ability was an honoured part of scholarship, passing on knowledge to others being considered an essential duty of scholars" (Kelly 1969: 277), rather than a separate profession.

In short, little is known about the concept of the effective teacher in those times. Good practice was basically understood as *testing students on the memorised material* learned from the double manuals, and being *an expert on the language, dedicated to teaching the young.*

1.2. The concept of successful teaching

Although most publications on language teaching methods include the Grammar Translation Method and the Direct Method which flourished in language classrooms up to 1940s[2], the concept of successful teaching was born after World War II (Komorowska 1999: 4). This change in orientation was propelled by a widespread need to master foreign languages, a demand for interaction and communication at the international level, and the appearance of new technologies to promote and share information (ibid.). Since then, successful teaching has undergone several considerable modifications referred to as progress in modern language teaching (ibid.). The present section is, thus, an attempt to illustrate how the concept of successful teaching has evolved over the last 50 years, focusing on the four main linguistic orientations as well as contemporary approaches.

1.2.1. The behaviourist approach

The notion of successful teaching started with the predominance of the behaviourist approach and its offshoot, the Audiolingual Method, in the early fifties. The method had proved to be effective in the United States during the Second World War, and that was why it was modified and introduced into schools after the war. It adopts "a sentence-based approach to the teaching of grammar" and emphasises "practice as essential for progress" (Howatt

[2] The Direct Method was more successfully implemented in private language schools. For a detailed discussion of these and other language teaching methods, see Larsen-Freeman (2000), Richards and Rodgers (1986).

1991: 268). Structuralists understand grammar as basic sentence patterns, and point to differences in grammatical structures between the languages as the main reason for difficulty when learning an L2. Learning a language is therefore seen as overcoming those difficulties through acquiring a set of appropriate mechanical habits, and errors are frowned upon as reinforcing 'bad habits'.

The Audiolingual Method seems to be an easy language teaching method for the teacher. As there is no room for interaction and negotiation of meanings, and the steps involved in the approach are presentation, practice, repetition and drills, teachers can follow the steps in a mechanical way. Moreover, teachers who lack professional training can feel secure following this model of instruction as the audiolingual techniques make the lesson predictable. Finally, an audiolingual methodology can be successfully used with teachers whose own knowledge of the target language is limited, because oral practice in the method does not require conversational fluency from the teacher.

It can be concluded that within the behaviourist orientation, successful teaching is defined as *developing good language habits in learners through teaching them discrete items of the language*, mainly by pattern drills, memorisation of dialogues or choral repetition of structural patterns. Hence, the teacher's success is associated with *a measurable linguistic product* (Komorowska 1999: 4).

1.2.2. The cognitive approach

The audiolingual paradigm, embracing pattern practice, drilling and memorisation, was called into question in the sixties when Chomsky rejected the behaviourist theory of language learning and the structuralist approach to language description. His ideas revolutionised the perception of language, which consequently influenced the conception of language teaching, although Chomsky himself never made any references to the latter. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to present some fundamental Chomskyan assumptions and relate them to the notion of the teacher's success.

Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar holds that the basic properties of language derive from innate aspects of the mind and from how humans process experience through language. Thus, language is not a set of structures to be mastered automatically, but rather a finite set of rules from which an infinite number of sentences can be formed. Likewise, language learning cannot be regarded as a reproductive process of habit formation, but a creative process of rule generation. Cognitive psychology focuses on students' mental powers and their ability to transfer theoretical knowledge (Chomsky's 'competence') to practical language use (Chomsky's 'performance'). Hence, pupils are

allowed full contribution to and active engagement in their language study. Rather than correcting every single erroneous sentence, teachers accept errors through encouraging students "to emit spontaneous utterances from the repertoire of linguistic items they have stored in their memories" (Finocchiaro 1982: 5). Therefore, pupils are supposed to be creative language users, constantly involved in the process of forming and testing hypotheses.

To conclude, the cognitive approach never produced a real language teaching method emerging from the generative-transformational theory (cf. Finocchiaro 1982: 4; Richards and Rodgers 1986: 60). Yet the idea that what matters is the internalisation of rules which allow for creative performance is the first theory to recognise the significance of the learner in the process of language teaching. Therefore, successful teaching can now be defined as a *conscious focus on grammar* while allowing for *meaningful learner practice of language.*

1.2.3. The communicative approach

The late sixties and early seventies brought about a remarkable shift in the approach to the nature of successful language teaching. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) advocates object to the assumed superiority of grammatical knowledge in conversation and the negligence of other elements contributing to communicative effectiveness. A knowledge of how language is used appropriately and how it is organised as discourse distinguishes a successful language user now.

The concept of communicative competence suggested by Hymes was further elaborated by Canale and Swain (1980), who distinguished four kinds of elements or skills within it. According to them, communicative competence comprises grammatical competence (the knowledge of grammatical rules corresponding to Chomsky's competence), discourse competence (making the interpretation and production of coherent utterances possible), sociolinguistic competence (concerned with the social rules of language use including the roles of participants, shared information, and the function of interaction), and strategic competence (consisting of various techniques used in cases of misunderstanding or inadequate knowledge of other competence types).

Along with the propagation of communicative postulates such as meaningfulness, authenticity or students' output, three additional factors were pointed to in CLT: a good class atmosphere, good student-teacher rapport, and the learners' acceptance of their teacher (Komorowska 1999: 4). The teacher's role is perceived as planning instruction that appeals to students' needs and inter-

ests, and thus motivating learners by allowing them to express their ideas and opinions, which will help learners "to integrate the foreign language with their own personality" (Littlewood 1983: 94). Other roles that teachers assume in CLT include those of participant, counsellor and group process manager (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 77). Therefore, successful teaching in CLT is *a combination of linguistic and communicative effectiveness together with the teacher's interpersonal skills* (Komorowska 1999: 4).

1.2.4. The humanistic approach

Language pedagogy in the seventies and early eighties was dominated by Maslow's hierarchy of human needs and Rogers' concept of a teacher as a *facilitator.* Drawing on Maslow's theory of basic needs, proponents of humanism argue that only after students' lower level, or *deficiency*, needs (physiological, security, identity, and self-esteem needs) are satisfied, can learners be encouraged to develop their *being* needs (cognitive, aesthetic and self--actualisation needs). Together with the development of their *being* needs, learners "develop as individuals in their own right and thereby achieve self--actualisation" (Williams and Burden 1997: 34-5). It is believed, therefore, that if pupils are treated as *whole* persons, that is physical, cognitive and affective beings, they are capable of learning anything.

In a similar vein, Rogers (1983: 18) proposes a shift in education from teaching to learning, and from the teacher to the *facilitator.* He writes:

> The primary task of the teacher is to *permit* the student to learn, to feed his or her curiosity.[...] Thus, the teacher's task is delicate, demanding, and a truly exalted calling. In true teaching there is no place for the authoritarian, nor the person who is on an 'ego trip'.

Rogers also identifies the essential qualities of a facilitating teacher such as *genuineness, acceptance,* and *empathic understanding. Genuineness* involves being yourself and not playing a role in front of learners – "When the facilitator is a real person, being what she is, entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a facade, she is much more likely to be effective..." (Rogers 1983: 121-2). *Acceptance* involves regarding every pupil as a human being of worth – "It is an acceptance of this other individual as a separate person, having worth in her own right. It is a basic trust – a belief that this other person is somehow fundamentally trustworthy... Such a teacher can accept the student's occasional apathy, her erratic desires to explore byroads of knowledge, as well as her disciplined efforts to

achieve major goals..." (ibid.: 124). *Empathic understanding* means understanding the student's reactions from "the inside", that is "standing in the other's shoes, ... viewing the world through the student's eyes" which has "a tremendously releasing effect when it occurs" (ibid.: 125). All in all, Rogers finds that when these conditions are met, the learning and teaching experience is more effective for every party involved.

Humanistic approaches had a considerable influence on the emergence of language teaching methods popular in the eighties, the main ones being the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning and Total Physical Response. These teaching methods share a number of characteristic features. First, except for the Silent Way, they all draw more on psychology than linguistics. Second, they are all more concerned with the learner's affective rather than cognitive aspects. Third, they all emphasise the importance of the learner as a whole person. Fourth, they point to the detrimental effects of learners' anxiety, and stress the importance of personal security (Williams and Burden 1997: 37).

In conclusion, the essence of successful teaching from the humanistic perspective is understood as *helping the learner establish a strong sense of personal worth*, and thereby positively contributing to language learning.

1.2.5. Current concepts of successful teaching

Contemporary language teaching is oftentimes referred to as *eclectic.* This means that no one single method or one set of teaching techniques is dominant, and syllabus designers, course book writers and practising teachers alike resort to what they find beneficial in all methods and approaches. Yet, under the spell of Schön's concept of a teacher as a reflective practitioner, the teacher's *self-reflection* is very much emphasised today. Moreover, Communicative Language Teaching methodologies and humanistic approaches brought about the necessity of catering for students' needs and perception of learners as whole persons, which in turn led to *learner-centredness* and the so called *strategy-based approach.* It is these three approaches to which most of today's attention is devoted.

The reflective approach

Schön's (1983: 49) idea of the teacher being *a reflective practitioner* implies that the teacher should subject everyday professional practice to ongoing

critical examination. He introduces the division of reflection into reflection--*in*-action and reflection-*on*-action. When teachers make spontaneous decisions about the way they act, that is reflect-in-action, they give rise to the application of 'theories-in-action'. These theories, in turn, account for every professional's unique way of teaching, and by reflecting *on* action, they are made explicit and modified, if need be. Farrell (2007: 6) also distinguishes reflection-*for*-action which, in opposition to the others, is pro-active in orientation. It means that when teachers reflect they are not only aware of the past (reflection-*on*-action) or the present moment (reflection-*in*-action), but their reflection prepares them for future actions. Personally fulfilling for teachers, reflective teaching should contribute to the quality of education provided for learners because it is data – based and refers to aims, values and social consequences of teacher decisions.

The learner-centred approach

The *learner-centred* approach to language teaching takes account of the learning goals, subjective needs and culturally-based expectations which learners bring with them to the language classroom. Hence, learner-centredness presupposes that if learners participate in the selection of goals and if they are consulted in the choice of teaching methodology, they will learn better and the teaching process will be more effective (Tudor 1993: 23). Allwright and Hanks (2009) give five propositions, according to which learners are: 1) unique individuals who learn and develop best in their own idiosyncratic ways; 2) social beings who learn and develop best in a mutually supportive environment; 3) capable of taking learning seriously; 4) capable of independent decision-making; 5) capable of developing as practitioners of learning. It can be concluded that learner-centred teaching expects learners to know about the way language is learnt, about individual learner differences and learning style preferences. Viewed from this perspective, the learner-centred approach may provide justification for a learner-strategy-based approach.

The strategic approach

According to the strategic approach, providing students with strategy training (for example, familiarising learners with learning techniques that contribute to learning) may constitute an important source of support for both

learners and teachers (Cohen 1998: 2). Learners are expected to think of their reasons for and experience of learning, as well as the strategies they apply to receive, store and retrieve new information. This renders them more autonomous and, therefore, more motivated and responsible for what they learn. Teachers, on the other hand, have to support learners in their attempts to use strategies. They will be required to give up their traditional role of teacher as an instructor and "take on a new role, namely that of teaching learners how to take charge of their own learning" (Droździał-Szelest 1997: 145).

In conclusion, current approaches to successful language teaching presuppose an altered role for the teacher. Today more attention is paid to learner needs, learner autonomy, cognitive styles, personality traits and learning strategies. Seen in this light, *teaching is defined as successful when "it triggers learning processes and provides a learning to learn component"* (Komorowska 1999: 5), which is achieved *with the support of a reflective teacher.*

In summary, the concept of successful teaching has changed in the last sixty years. More specifically, understanding of the teacher's success has evolved and expanded and become modified. Along with being a competent language user, a contemporary teacher should be communicatively competent, that is use the language appropriately in various linguistic contexts, should possess a sound knowledge of psychology so as to be able to appreciate multiple cognitive and personality factors and diagnose students' needs, and should adopt a reflective approach to teaching which is to trigger learning processes supported by the application of learning strategies. All in all, a successful teacher is one who adopts the characteristics of all successful teachers in the past and recent times, and in practical terms this is a person *"whose learners attain high levels of proficiency and whose learners at the same time accept, like and respect him"* (ibid.).

1.3. Major studies of effective teachers

Although successful teaching is a complex, constantly evolving concept, it is usually possible for the people investigating the problem to enumerate the qualities of an outstanding teacher. In studies of this kind, attention is often focussed on desired aspects of teachers' personalities or explicit classroom behaviours, in the hope that copying apparently effective personal or behavioural procedures is likely to bring about the desired results (e.g. good exam scores). The authors who are in favour of listing good

teacher characteristics claim that specifying the qualities of effective teachers can be used to select people likely to become good teachers, as well as to help prospective and practising teachers improve their professional skills (Anderson and Burns 1989: 6). The following section presents the results of the most important studies carried out, first, on effective teaching in general, and then, on effective language teaching.

1.3.1. Highet's qualities of a good teacher

Among the desirable qualities of a good teacher Highet (1950: 12-64) lists *knowledge of the subject* which consists of what needs to be taught as well as knowledge of "the upper regions", that is, the constant development of the teacher's knowledge. A good teacher must also be *enthusiastic* about teaching the subject because the teacher's zest will produce enthusiastic students. Besides being knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject, a good teacher must *know the world and its affairs*. Then, the gap between the school world and the outside world can be bridged and students are able to perceive the relevance of the subject better. Moreover, a good teacher should *like her pupils*, that is "must enjoy their company in groups". Then she should try and *get to know the pupils* better, their names and faces, their thoughts and emotions. Finally, the author enumerates four personality traits that are essential for effective teaching: *a sense of humour* to keep students animated, *a good memory* to remember the subject, individual students, etc., *will-power* to set students a good example and *kindness* to make the subject and herself likeable by pupils.

To conclude, Highet's perception of a good teacher stresses her subject matter competencies followed by the teacher's personality. It seems that both of these areas should be taken care of because negligence in either may produce detrimental effects on the learners' acceptance of their teacher.

1.3.2. Good teachers' characteristics in Okoń's articles on teacher personality

In a collection of articles on teacher personality (Okoń 1962), a number of authors discuss the indispensable characteristics of teachers. For Dawid (1912), the essence of teacher effectiveness are those characteristics that refer to 'teacher soul'. The most important among them is *love of souls*, that is loving and taking care of others, leading to internal harmony. Also, Dawid

enumerates a *need for perfection, a sense of duty and responsibility, internal authenticity* and *moral values.* All these noble characteristics indicate that the true value of a teacher lies in her soul.

Considering the issue of pedagogical talent, Mysłakowski (1925) stresses teacher *contactability* which allows the teacher to establish pedagogical contact with students and react properly in a given situation. Contactability is supported by other teacher characteristics, among which the most important are: *vivid imagination* to help understand other people's emotional states, *parental instinct,* the ability to *express feelings,* as well as *openness to the outside world.* Both Dawid and Mysłakowski assume that teacher effectiveness lies in her inborn psychophysical features.

Szuman (1939) points to two fundamental features in the personality of a perfect teacher: first, *maturity of character* combined with *extensive knowledge*; second, the ability to *influence others* through a rich personality. The two elements do not amount to pedagogical talent if they exist separately, whereas harmonious coexistence of both of them can condition the development of the teacher's effectiveness.

According to Kreutz (1947), there exist three characteristics that are a prerequisite for successful teaching. These are: *love of people*, ability to *influence others* and *suggestive powers. Love of people* and *ability to influence others* are, however, not sufficient to achieve teaching success. Their simultaneous appearance with the third one, that is *power of suggestion,* can influence other people's views, their feelings and will. This last quality, an inborn ability shaped in the early period of the social development, also calls for other teacher traits, such as *confidence, calmness,* and *an uncompromising attitude in achieving aims.*

The last author in Okoń's collection, Baley (1958) claims that the most essential quality of a good teacher is her *educational suitability*, which comprises such characteristics as *a positive attitude to students, understanding students, spiritual relationship with children, patience, pedagogical tact, enthusiasm,* and *artistic abilities.* The teacher who possesses all the desirable qualities to an above-average degree is called an "integral" teacher.

In brief, it can be said that it is the personality of the teacher determining her teaching effectiveness that is fundamental for the five authors cited above. It can be reduced to two basic components: *a positive attitude to learners* and *willingness and ability to influence them* according to some *moral principles.* These two features were characteristic of many outstanding Polish educators of the past (cf. Okoń 2000), although at present, in the times of the authority crisis (cf. Miluska 2001), their appearance among teachers seems to be decreasing.

1.3.3. Taylor's study

A large-scale investigation of a good teacher was conducted by Taylor (1962). In his study primary and secondary school pupils (1379 children in total) were asked to write two short essays portraying the qualities of a good and a poor teacher. The pieces of students' writing were then assigned to one of four categories which included: Discipline (D), Teaching (T), Personal Qualities (P), and Organisation (O). The items that were given the highest prominence in the three major areas are the following:

A good teacher is *fair* and *just about punishment* and has *no favourites* (D).
A good teacher *explains the work* you have to do and *helps* you with it (T).
A good teacher is *patient, understanding, kind*, and *sympathetic* (P).
A good teacher is *cheerful, friendly, good-tempered*, and has *a sense of humour* (P)
A good teacher is *firm* and *keeps order* in the classroom (D).
A good teacher *encourages you to work hard* on your schoolwork (T) (Taylor 1962: 259-60).

It appears, therefore, that in the respondents' opinions the major areas of teacher effectiveness are to do with maintaining discipline (D), conveying knowledge (T) and teacher personal qualities (P). A good organisation of lessons (O) received less prominence than the other categories, probably because the awareness of its influence upon teaching effectiveness is lower among young learners.

1.3.4. Teacher qualities identified by Ryan

Ryan (1960, in Perrot 1990) carried out a series of teacher observations in order to highlight a number of qualities correlating positively with effective teaching. His research drew attention to three major factors which can be either positive or negative. According to him, a teacher can be:

- *warm* and *understanding* versus cold and aloof,
- *organised* and *businesslike* versus unplanned and slipshod,
- *stimulating* and *imaginative* versus dull and routine (ibid.: 1).

Thus, the teacher whose behaviours are closer to those regarded here as positive is said to be more effective than one whose behaviours are labelled as negative. Interestingly, among Ryan's positive characteristics of good teachers there is no mention of subject matter competence.

Probably a warm, well-organised and imaginative teacher can be regarded as a successful one even if her subject matter expertise is slightly less impressive.

1.3.5. Flanders' styles

Another study of effective teachers was carried out by Flanders et al. (1960, in ibid. 1990). Flanders' Interaction Analysis, designed to observe and supervise practice teachers[3], helped to distinguish two dichotomous teacher styles: *direct* and *indirect* (in ibid.: 2). In direct teaching the teacher *makes use of lecturing, criticism*, often *resorts to authority* and *gives directions*. By contrast, in the indirect teaching the teacher caters more for the emotional sphere of learning. He *accepts students' feelings, praises correct answers* and, above all, *asks* a greater number of *questions*. Although Flanders himself claims that the effective teacher, depending on the context, uses both direct and indirect teacher styles, his research suggests that the application of the indirect style correlates more positively with students' attitudes to learning, and consequently with better scores.

In a word, those teachers who pay attention to a good class atmosphere and ask students questions are considered more effective than teachers relying on more directive teaching styles.

1.3.6. Bohucki's study of teacher personality

A large-scale study of teacher personality was conducted by Bohucki (1965). In the study, involving 1200 pupils and university students, the author discerns three main categories of teacher personal characteristics: *mind* (related to teacher knowledge as well as her crystallised outlook on life), *morals* (shown in adhering to social norms in behaviour), and *social humanism* (associated with respecting others and helping them develop). Among the features in the first category, most respondents include such teacher qualities as *general and subject matter knowledge, orientation and organisation skills, autonomy, scientific outlook on life, self-criticism,* and *self-development.* In the second category, the majority of respondents enumerate *self-control* and *calmness.* Other dominant characteristics include being

[3] For a presentation of Flanders' Interaction Analysis see Allwright and Bailey (1991: 202-3).

hard-working, dutiful, systematic as well as being *truthful* and *keeping promises*. The third category is a mixture of knowledge and morals in which the teacher uses her knowledge and personal values to influence and inspire pupils. Thus, the qualities given by the respondents in this group, such as being *nice, fair, understanding* but *demanding*, reflect the relationship between the teacher and her students.

Moreover, the data compiled in the survey enabled Bohucki to identify certain teacher types characterised by specific dominant features. Among good teachers, the author identifies two types: a *model teacher* and a *zealous teacher*. The former possesses such qualities as *wide general knowledge, good teaching techniques, a neat appearance,* being *energetic, demanding, understanding, cheerful* to name the most important ones. The latter, on the other hand, takes any opportunity to 'work on' the young. This teacher type involves, among others, such features as being *thorough, conscientious, demanding, caring, hard-working* and *systematic*. Thus a *zealous* teacher is on the whole a good teacher, but possesses one quality (her zeal) which stigmatises teacher school behaviour a little.

1.3.7. Rosenshine and Furst's correlates of effective teaching

Yet another study of effective teachers was conducted by Rosenshine and Furst (1973, in Perrot 1990: 2). The research was based on observing different aspects of teacher behaviours in the classroom and giving tests to students of the researched teachers several times a year. This study helped to identify five teacher characteristics correlating with effective practice. According to Rosenshine and Furst, the following qualities are directly connected with students' 'achievement gain':

1. Teacher *is enthusiastic*.
2. Teacher is *businesslike* and *task oriented*.
3. Teacher is *clear* when presenting instructional content.
4. Teacher *uses a variety of instructional materials* and procedures.
5. Teacher *provides opportunities for pupils to learn* the instructional content (1973, in ibid.: 3).

Basically, the first three of Rosenshine and Furst's characteristics resemble those of Ryan's research but the following two shed a new light on effective teacher classroom behaviour. A variety of techniques (feature 4) points to the importance of the teaching method, but it is the creation of real learning opportunities (feature 5) that seems to be congruent with the present postulates of effective teaching.

1.3.8. Pupils' expectations of teachers – Nash's study

An interesting investigation of good teachers' characteristics was also undertaken by Nash (1976, in Janowski 1998: 82). In the study he investigated 12-year-old pupils' expectations of their teachers, which enabled him to compile a list of six characteristics by which children understand teacher behaviours. The positive and negative poles of these factors are as follows:

1. *keeps discipline* – does not keep discipline,
2. *teaches* – does not teach,
3. *explains difficult things* – does not explain difficult things,
4. *conducts interesting classes* – does not conduct interesting classes,
5. is *fair (honest*) – is unfair (dishonest),
6. is *friendly* – is unfriendly.

In this study, teachers rated nearer the positive poles of each factor are considered 'more effective' than teachers rated nearer the negative poles. So, children expect teachers to be honest and reasonable, but also to exert resolute leadership. Their expectations are more concerned with what teachers have to do rather than what they should be like. Viewed from this perspective, children themselves are passive whereas the teacher, executing discipline, teaching pupils, explaining things and organising interesting classes, adopts a more active role. The study shows that the learners in the study do not need more liberty but rather expect a traditional image of good teacher who is fair, firm and knows what to do.

1.3.9. Achievement of objectives by effective teachers

According to some researchers, an effective teacher is one who *achieves her teaching objectives*. In this understanding, the two key elements of effective teaching are teacher objectives and the achievement of these objectives. This implies that a teacher's classroom procedures should always be planned, or students' achievements will not be brought about. Likewise, reviewing a series of studies of effective teaching, Rosenshine and Berliner (1978, in Perrot 1990: 4) concluded that the measure of an effective teacher is the allocation of time devoted to students' learning, the so-called *academic engaged time*. This is the time students spend on reading, writing or other forms of studying leading to absorbing the assigned material. This understanding of effective teaching was confirmed by a number of researchers advocating learner-centred approaches to language teaching several years later.

1.3.10. Bloom's list of effective teachers' classroom practices

Another study of so-called effective teachers' behaviours was carried out by Bloom (1984, in Nunan and Lamb 1996: 117) who came up with the following list of classroom practices typical of good teaching practice:

1. Instruction is guided by a *pre-planned curriculum*.
2. There are *high expectations* for student learning.
3. Students are carefully *oriented to lessons.*
4. Instruction is *clear* and *focused*.
5. Learner *progress is monitored* closely.
6. When students do not understand, they are *retaught*.
7. Class *time is used for learning*.
8. There are *smooth*, efficient *classroom routines.*
9. Instructional groups formed in the classroom fit *instructional needs*.
10. Standards for classroom behaviour are *high*.
11. Personal interactions between teachers and students are *positive.*
12. Incentives and rewards for students are used to *promote excellence*.

Although Bloom's list can be seen as a specification of general behaviours of effective teachers, the features enumerated in his study relate to specific aspects of the teaching process. Some of them concern *time management* (for example, 3, 4, 7, 8) whereas the others have more to do with *monitoring the learning process*. Seen in this light, these two major areas of teacher activity may be the most significant for effective teachers.

1.3.11. Ericksen's essence of good teaching

Ericksen's study, described in his book *The Essence of Good Teaching* (1984), provides us with the views of learners and administrators about successful teachers. In their opinion, an outstanding teacher should assume three fundamental roles: an *inspiring instructor* who is concerned about students, an *active scholar* who is respected by peers, and an *efficient, well-organised professional* who is accessible to students and colleagues.

To conclude, all of the studies cited above have been designed to seek for correlation between good teachers and their classroom performances. Such studies generally compile lists of characteristics that describe positive ways of behaving or desirable teaching modes. Although most of the sources cited above are relatively old, the teacher characteristics that the authors stress are still important, albeit not always observed, today.

1.4. Effective language teacher studies

The 'effective' teaching movement, based on producing lists of various forms of teacher behaviours and connected with measurable learning outcomes, could also be observed in studies carried out among language teachers. Their principal aim was usually to identify the factors that contribute to effective language teaching. Additionally, they often focused on comparing two or more curriculum, approach or course book solutions.

1.4.1. Moskowitz's analysis of outstanding teachers' behaviours

One of the most comprehensive diagnostic studies of teaching behaviours was an illuminating analysis offered by Moscowitz (1968, in Komorowska 1978: 142-3) who concentrated on the performance of successful teachers whose students fared well in linguistic and communicative competencies. Moscowitz applied Flanders' Interaction Analysis to identify teachers' characteristic classroom behaviours, and then the obtained results were compared with typical behaviours of good, average and poor teachers. Generally, Moscowitz's recommendations drawn up from the research can be classified into three groups: pedagogical issues, didactic issues and linguistic issues (ibid.).

With reference to pedagogical issues such as classroom atmosphere, student-teacher rapport or the use of punishment, effects are said to be more beneficial if the teacher:

- *conveys warmth* verbally and non-verbally,
- responds to all students' utterances in a *lively* way,
- uses *more rewards* than punishments,
- uses *non-verbal signals* as feedback,
- is the focus of attention thanks to *enthusiasm* and *liveliness*.

As regards the didactic group, the likelihood of remarkable effects is greater for teachers whose lessons:

- have a lot of *different activities* and tasks for the learners,
- are conducted at a *higher speed*, especially with large classes,
- are dominated by the teacher who *controls* the class and student activities,
- encourage the use of *delayed correction*,
- encourage students to *help the teacher in making teaching aids*.

As far as the linguistic category is concerned, it has been observed that better effects stem from:

- conducting most of the lesson in the *target language*,

- *making students ask questions* in the target language,
- having *student speaking time proportionally longer* than teacher speaking time,
- being *tolerant towards student problems*, explaining them right away or organising remedial classes (Moscowitz 1968, in ibid.: 143).

It may be inferred from Moscowitz's study that such teacher characteristics as *liveliness* and the use of many *paralinguistic elements* in the communication with students, *managing* and *organising* skills, as well as *exposing students to the language*, strongly correlate with effective teaching. Interestingly, outstanding teachers *praise* more frequently than either average or poor teachers (ibid.). It seems, therefore, that *using rewards*, being *understanding* and perhaps more *tolerant* are issues of paramount importance. Given the fact that less successful teachers also exhibited these behaviours, albeit on a less frequent basis, it can be deduced that the frequency of certain behaviours is something that counts more than the fact of their presence.

1.4.2. A good teacher's qualities as perceived by young adolescents

A study of the so-called good language teacher was carried out by Girard (1970, in Harmer 1991) who asked a thousand adolescents to make a list of teacher 'characteristics' they considered important. As a result, the children came up with the following priorities arranged in order of preference:

1. He makes his *course interesting*.
2. He teaches *good pronunciation*.
3. He *explains clearly*.
4. He *speaks good English*.
5. He shows *the same interest in all* his students.
7. He *makes all the students participate*.
8. He shows great *patience*.
9. He insists on *the spoken language*.
10. He *makes his pupils work*.
11. He uses *an audio-lingual method* (Girard 1970, in ibid.: 5-6).

Although the main objective of the study was to determine the popularity of the audio-lingual method (ibid.: 6), students put it in the last, tenth place. It can be inferred that the students were on the whole more concerned with the teacher and interesting classes than with the application of the method. Interestingly enough, three of the top ten characteristics (5, 6, 7) do not refer to the specificity of the subject matter but to the relationship between the teacher and students.

Among additional important qualities the students were asked to list in the same study (ibid.) were the following:

- he *shows sympathy* for his students,
- he is *fair* to all his students (no matter whether they are good or bad at English),
- he *inspires confidence*.

These characteristics provide further support for the claim that the teacher's rapport with the students is of high importance to learners, whatever subject matter the teacher happens to teach.

1.4.3. Politzer and Weiss's research

Politzer and Weiss's (1971, in Komorowska 1978: 144) project was another example of studies aimed at identifying statistical differences between successful and not-so-successful language teachers. Their research again helped to identify descriptors of effective language teaching, the most important of which seem to be:

- *methodological preparation* of the teacher, i.e. a lot of activities used within one lesson period, a fast pace of the lesson, using extra teaching aids, passing from structured exercises such as repetitions, substitutions, transformations to free speaking,
- a teacher's *young age*,
- the teacher's *linguistic proficiency* in the language she teaches.

It may sound surprising that the methodological perfection of the teacher seems to be so much emphasised. The high correlation of good methodology with the teacher's young age, and, therefore, short teaching experience is also unexpected. The low correlation between the teacher's linguistic preparation and successful learning of the language by her students, however positively influencing learners' motivational attitudes, seems to be equally remarkable. The teacher's extreme routine may probably affect students' results adversely whereas methodologically well-prepared teachers may make up for their linguistic deficiencies (cf. ibid.: 144-5).

1.4.4. Komorowska's research on factors conditioning success and failure

An important contribution to a better understanding of factors conditioning success and failure in learning English among Polish secondary school pu-

pils comes from Komorowska (1978). One of the objects of her investigation was the Polish teacher of English and her teaching method. The study was conducted among secondary school graduates and teachers of English in the Warsaw region. A careful analysis of the students' responses leaves us with the following conclusions.

1. The most motivating feature for students is the teacher's *good command of the target language*. The linguistic category seems to enhance students' motivation and generate a positive attitude to the language taught.
2. The second important feature is the teacher's *interpersonal skills* that account for the way pupils are treated and generally help to develop good teacher-student rapport.
3. It is worth noting that a considerable number of pupils prefer teachers who are said to be *intelligent* and *knowledgeable* in cultural and social issues, alongside with being *fair* and *good-humoured* (ibid.: 147-8).

Komorowska's study was the first large-scale attempt to shed some light on the English teaching profession in Poland. It can be inferred from her study that an English teacher whose aim is to be successful in the Polish context has to be *proficient, communicative, intelligent, fair* and *good-humoured.*

1.4.5. Sanderson's project on good language teachers

An interesting insight into good language teachers' classroom behaviours was undertaken by a research team at the University of York, England. The object of the investigation was to highlight the areas of high, low and uneven emphasis in the behaviours exhibited by outstanding professionals. On the recommendation of national and local inspectors, the researchers had identified nine foreign language teachers who were held in high regard. The nine teachers were observed for sixteen lessons, and the following teacher behaviours received high emphasis for all, high emphasis for most, quite high emphasis for most, low emphasis for most and uneven emphasis for all researched teachers respectively:

- High emphasis for all teachers: *involves the whole group, skilled with equipment*, in full *control of the class*, conveys *enthusiasm for the subject*, projects *confidence*, shows *empathy* with pupils.
- High emphasis for most teachers*: explains tasks clearly*, provides *a variety of language activity*, engages in intensive *oral exploitation of material*, conveys *warmth through facial expression.*

- Quite high emphasis for most teachers: uses *the foreign language predominantly,* promotes *use of the foreign language by the pupils*, conveys *warmth in the delivery of the message.*
- Low emphasis for most teachers*:* uses *learner errors to make correct answers clearer*, promotes *understanding by non-verbal cues*, relates the foreign language to *the target culture*, is *flexible concerning objectives*, uses the *foreign language for classroom instruction*.
- Uneven emphasis: *praises correct responses*, is *sympathetic/positive about the wrong response*, is *vigilant about pronunciation, intonation and stress*, uses *the foreign language for the teaching/learning message*, is *varied with regard to materials* (Sanderson 1982: 135-6).

In brief, the York Study documented how excellent modern language teachers operate within a multitude of areas of foreign language practice. The investigation showed that not all areas receive equally high emphasis but, nonetheless, there exist areas which appear to be rich in effective teaching practice.

1.4.6. The need for change – Hawley et al.'s research on the effective teacher

The year 1986 was a crucial point for the American educational system. Two reports on teacher education (*Carnegie Forum* 1986; *Tomorrow's Teachers* 1986) pointed out the decline in the system of education in the United States, attributing full blame to schools, teachers and teacher educators (1990, in Lange 1990: 245). In a word, it was generally accepted that quick recommendations would follow from those concerned with the issue, in order to bring about the renewal of teaching.

A number of suggestions were offered to improve American educational deficiencies but the conclusions from the 1984 Hawley et al.'s research were used by Lange (ibid.: 246-7) to formulate a set of useful teacher strategies applicable in any educational setting, including foreign language teaching. Thus, effective teachers use five categories of behaviour that direct student attention to learning.

1. *Effective teachers engage students with academic learning time.*
2. *Effective teachers credit student learning that meets desired outcomes.*
3. *Effective teachers engage students interactively.*
4. *Effective teachers maintain and communicate high expectations for student performance.*
5. *Effective teachers maximise learning time by the use of instructional settings appropriate to the tasks being pursued* (ibid.).

From these data, it would seem that truly effective teachers adhere more fully to the *interaction of different teaching and learning approaches* rather

than any one single method and, in addition, they seem to make a *valuable use of student learning time*.

1.4.7. Some contemporary studies of good language teachers

In the last two decades, under the influence of learner-centred orthodoxy, more work was devoted to the-so-called good language learner studies, more specifically to learner reflectivity, learner autonomy, learning strategies, learning styles and self-assessment. However, the demands on the teacher are, paradoxically enough, greater than in conventional 'teacher-centred' approaches. Finding the skills that are required of a teacher to promote good language learning seems oftentimes to be a driving force for the most recent studies.

Prodromou's good language teacher

A frequently quoted study in the field of English language teaching is a survey carried out by Prodromou (1991) on students' views of good teaching. The

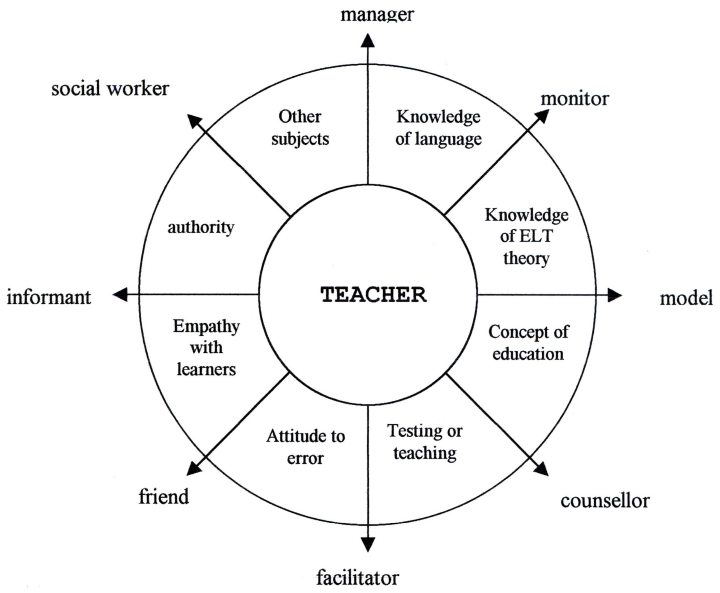

Figure 1: Teacher roles (Prodromou 1991: 21)

survey took the form of interviews and written assignments in which Greek students were asked to recall characteristics of their favourite teachers. The whole list has forty-one different, and at times contradictory, qualities but Prodromou (ibid.: 20) argues that this multitude and variety seems to be advantageous: "To be prescriptive about what makes a good teacher would assume we know more about the subject than we do, and it would limit the options available to us". Still, the most salient patterns appearing in the students' comments are presented in the diagram in which "certain constraints" (*the inner circle* in ibid.: 21) trigger a wider range of teacher roles (cf. *Figure 1*).

Scrivener's list of effective teachers

The issue of 'rapport' between teachers and students seems to be important for Scrivener (1994: 7). According to him, the establishing of 'personal' atmosphere is possible in the language classroom once the effective teacher:

- *really* listens to his students;
- shows respect;
- gives clear, positive feedback;
- has a good sense of humour;
- is patient;
- knows his subject;
- inspires confidence;
- trusts people;
- empathises with students' problems;
- is well-organised;
- paces lessons well;
- does not complicate things unnecessarily;
- is enthusiastic and inspires enthusiasm;
- can be authoritative without being distant;
- is honest;
- is approachable.

From the above list, it can be seen that Scrivener's characteristics of the effective teacher concern affective aspects above all. In this understanding, Scrivener's core teacher characteristics resemble Rogers' teacher where *respect*, *empathy* and *authenticity* prove indispensable in helping to create an effective learning environment. A good teacher is above all a sensitive teacher, endowed with remarkable psychological competencies.

What makes a good teacher ? – Harmer's research

In order to find out what makes a good language teacher, Harmer (1998: 1) asked the question to English teachers, teacher trainers and methodologists from several European countries, students of various nationalities studying English at language schools in Britain and some secondary school students from Cambridge. The respondents' answers helped him devise the following list of good teacher qualities:

- They should make their lessons interesting so you don't fall asleep in them.
- A teacher must love her job. If she really enjoys her job that'll make the lessons more interesting.
- I like the teacher who has his own personality and doesn't hide from the students so that he is not only a teacher but a person as well - and it comes through the lessons.
- I like a teacher who has lots of knowledge, not only of his subject.
- A good teacher is an entertainer and I mean that in a positive sense, not a negative sense.
- It's important that you can talk to the teacher when you have problems and you don't get along with the subject.
- A good teacher is... someone who has an affinity with the students that they're teaching.
- A good teacher should try and draw out the quiet ones and control the more talkative ones.
- He should be able to correct people without offending them.
- A good teacher is... someone who helps rather than shouts.
- A good teacher is... someone who knows our names.

Generally, Harmer also concludes that good language teachers *care about students' affective sphere*. They seem to be genuinely interested in learners, available and approachable to them when needed, and totally preoccupied with developing friendly teacher-student rapport (ibid.: 2-3).

Tsui's case studies of expert teachers

While searching for the clarification of expertise in language teaching, Tsui (2003) examined four case studies of English teachers. One of them was deemed an expert teacher who distinguished herself by:

- integrating different aspects of teacher knowledge, for example instructional objectives and classroom management,

- relating to specific contexts – 'situated possibilities';
- theorising practical knowledge and 'practicalising' theoretical knowledge;
- experimenting;
- problematising the 'unproblematic';
- responding to and looking for challenges.

From the above attributes, we can see that teacher cognition is important, whether and how they problematise what seems to be obvious, how much effort they put into their teaching. Tsui (ibid.) clearly stresses that automatic and effortless performance is not a sole mark of expertise. What also matters is their desire to improve themselves because "once they lose the characteristics outlined in the development of expertise, they cease to perform at an expert level; they cease to be an expert" (ibid.: 279).

Thompson's study of a 'good teacher'

In her 50 teachers and trainees study focused on what it means to be a 'good EFL teacher', Thompson (2008) discovered that the 'top – ten' characteristics of 'good teachers' were:

1. being able to build rapport with learners,
2. having patience,
3. being respectful of others,
4. being well-planned and organised,
5. being creative,
6. being knowledgeable about methods and language,
7. giving good instructions,
8. providing appropriate error correction and feedback,
9. monitoring,
10. pacing and maintaining students' interest.

Although conducted not so long ago, compared with other studies quoted here, Thompson's research may serve as yet another confirmation that that there exist few differences in opinion, despite a considerable lapse of time.

1.4.8. Effective language teacher studies – a summary

As indicated above, the majority of the effective language teacher studies stress *learning atmosphere* in the classroom as an answer to why some teachers are better and more successful than others. These teachers can be

distinguished by their attitude to students and their intentions of teaching rather than the methodology they may ascribe to. “In order to improve the quality of our own relationship in the classroom we do not need to learn new techniques; we need to look closely at what we *really* want for our students, how we really feel about them” (Scrivener 1994: 8).

Other studies of good language teachers provide us with more or less similar information about effective language teacher characteristics. They focus on effective language teachers’ personalities, their character traits or teacher-student rapport. They point out that *empathy* assumes a key role in fostering student motivation, and that *incentives* and *rewards*, both verbal and non-verbal, are an important contributor to success. They emphasise that effective teachers are *lively* and *enthusiastic about their subject*, *explain tasks clearly* and *provide a variety of activities*. Recent studies provide evidence that effective language teachers *engage students with learning time*, where learning time is the time when students work on tasks associated with desired outcomes (Lange 1990: 246). There is also significant evidence showing that *teacher expectations for student learning* correlate highly with student success. Last but not least, *a good knowledge of the subject matter* taught by a teacher provides support to the claim that successful language teachers must also be good language models. It is important to note that the studies point to the need to sensitise language teachers to a wide variety of qualities expected of those held in high regard.

1.5. Studies of poor language teachers

In contrast with good language teacher studies, there have been very few research projects on a poor language teacher. It is suggested that one general list of undesirable teacher behaviours would be counterproductive as there is not one single formula for good teaching, either (Prodromou 1991: 21). However, a few researchers have focused their attention on poor language teachers while examining their successful counterparts more thoroughly. In Komorowska’s (1978) study, unpopular language teachers, as indicated by learners, *lack methodological preparation* (50% of responses) and tend to *treat students unkindly*. This stands in a clear opposition to what favourite teachers do. Sanderson’s (1982) teacher behaviours characteristic of less successful teachers would include: *building on pupil error, promoting understanding by non-verbal cues, relating the foreign language to the target culture, flexibility concerning objectives, using the foreign language for classroom instruction.* In Prodromou’s (1991) survey on a bad language

teacher, such qualities as *very strict, gave marks all the time, gave us a lot of tests, forced us to do things* are listed among the top ten ones by his teenage respondents[4]. Yet, some of these characteristics emerge as of doubtful validity because some other researchers point to these same qualities as featuring strongly in some effective teacher behaviours. A very interesting classification of language teachers' incompetence has been suggested by Wysocka (2003: 26-7) in which she enumerates teacher's primary incompetence, secondary incompetence, educational incompetence, and excessive incompetence. The first kind of teacher incompetence originates from incidental events, such as missing classes, failing to clarify doubts or remedy ignorance and, consequently bringing about a teacher's individual gaps, already at the start of her professional career. Another kind of incompetence, called secondary incompetence, deals with the failure to use certain teaching procedures. It produces in turn the experience of discouragement and a general sense of a lack of success at the very thought of using these procedures. As a result, teachers cannot apply the techniques despite the fact that they were previously familiar with them. The third kind of incompetence, called educational incompetence, is the consequence of the previous two. Not prepared to perform the teaching profession well, teachers, may not be aware of certain didactic behaviours or fail to understand their principles. The last kind of incompetence can be characteristic of any language teacher, who tends to develop only her most favourite activities at the expense of those less favoured by her. As a consequence, the same classroom activities become routine practice, the teacher is labelled 'a bore', and her expertise in conducting once favourite activities is questioned because restricting oneself to one's areas of competences becomes incompetence.

In view of this statement it follows that unless a teacher's quality implies really negative connotations (for instance, being unfair, poor linguistic competence, etc.), it is hardly possible to generalise about ineffective language teaching. In Bennet's (1976, in Williams and Burden 1997: 48) original study of effective teachers, one of the most highly rated teachers showed very few of the descriptors generally expected of good teachers. Likewise, Prodromou (1991: 21) states that his "own experience of observing teachers at work for many years suggests that both introverts and extroverts, soft-spoken and out-spoken people, theatrical and non-theatrical types can hold the attention of a class and make learning enjoyable and effective". Thus, the teaching profession can be characterised by a variety and lack of clarity concerning the characteristics of a good teacher.

[4] A complete list of bad language teacher's qualities can be found in Prodromou (1991: 21).

1.6. Concluding remarks

Research into effective teaching, effective teacher qualities and teacher classroom behaviours has proved to be useful in helping to understand what constitutes good teaching. It has not only resulted in a number of descriptors typical of highly rated teachers, but also led to greater awareness of the complexity of the issue. Although far from conclusive, it has provided researchers and teachers alike with some important insights into the foreign language teaching/learning process. It has drawn attention to a variety of factors contributing to success in language teaching, and demonstrated that there is a whole range of ways which can lead to a teacher's success.

Unfortunately, some attempts to translate these findings into practical guidelines for teachers have not proved helpful (Perrot 1990). One reason can be found in the elusiveness of the so-called 'effective' characteristics (e.g. how to measure 'enthusiasm' or 'high expectations for student learning'), which might lead to a variety of interpretations. Another problem seems to be connected to the sheer complexity, or even impossibility, of transforming all of the obtained results into a set of simple procedures to follow because, as Allwright (1983: 199) puts it, "the ultimate aim is still to end up with something helpful to say to teachers and their trainers". Moreover, many of the qualities are unlikely to co-exist with others (cf. Protherough and Atkinson 1991: 22).

On the other hand, there are researchers who claim that even though each outstanding teacher has distinct sets of behaviours or personality traits, overlapping of features from one good teacher to another is possible: "If you want to be an excellent teacher, model excellent teachers. Look at what they do, how they act, what sort of relationship they have with their students and colleagues. Ask them how they feel about the way they do. What are their beliefs?" (Revell and Norman 1997: 131). Besides, projects on qualities of *excellent* (cf. Owen 1999: 42-4), *special* (cf. Bress 2000: 43-4) or *good* (Thompson 2008: 5-14) language teachers, with a view to showing how to be a better teacher, are still being conducted today in a positivist paradigm. Therefore, to understand effective teaching better, being familiar with effective teacher studies, often referred to as process-product ones, seems to be invaluable.

CHAPTER 2

A PROFILE OF A LANGUAGE TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES[5]

Introduction

In the previous chapter the focus was primarily on the teaching behaviours of so-called 'good language teachers'. The behaviours of such teachers have been studied quite extensively by numerous researchers with the hope that once identified and described, they could be taught to less successful pre--and in-service teachers and help them deal better with the task of teaching another language.

This chapter will focus on a language teacher profile in general. Since a teacher is the most important subject influencing the quality of teaching and a strategic performer in the functioning of the national educational system, the aspects that constitute the core language teacher's professional competence will be discussed here.

Although teacher competences are undoubtedly one of fundamental issues in teacher education, there is no general consensus as to what they consist of. The reasons for this can be twofold: firstly, the conceptual foundation of teacher knowledge is very complex because it intermingles so much with the individual teacher's identity; secondly, it is so complex because it draws heavily on a number of related disciplines, such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, psychology and pedagogy, to name but a few.

In attempting to conceptualise the 'commonly accepted foundation', the main areas of a language teacher's work, that is the core competencies, are

[5] Since I agree (cf. Zawadzka 2004: 102; Gajek 2008: 105-10; Targońska 2009: 12-3) that the term 'competence' is wider than the term 'knowledge' used in the original taxonomy (Werbińska 2004), 'competence' is used here.

specified. They, in turn, give rise to a theoretical profile of the essential competences of an ideal second language teacher.

2.1. Linguistic competence

At the core of any teacher's job are the specialist competencies, that is knowledge and skills relating to the subject taught. In the case of a foreign language teacher, specialist knowledge amounts to linguistic competence, which relates to two areas. Firstly, a high level of proficiency in the language to be taught is indispensable. Secondly, linguistic competence comprises subject matter knowledge which, in contrast to the knowledge of language, would not be shared with teachers of other subjects, or with non-teachers. These two aspects of teacher linguistic knowledge are presented in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2: Linguistic competence

So, let us have a look at the main components of linguistic competence in detail.

2.1.1. Language proficiency

The level of language proficiency is a language teacher's basic quality. To be able to teach a language effectively, a teacher needs to attain linguistic mastery. It is interesting to note that no language teacher can be considered successful without good language competence. Expressed as competence, proficiency is not directly accessible and can only be observed through manifestations in the form of behaviour or output. Only through inferences from such behaviour or output can the components of the discourse used by foreign language teachers become known. Different dimensions of the proficiency construct are discussed now.

Proficiency as classroom language

In one of the books addressing this issue, Heaton (1981) points out that classroom discourse for language teaching has to contain a specific set of speech acts and functions. The fluency of non-native speaking teachers in these functions renders them successful. Among the functions enumerated by Heaton the most essential are:

- requesting, ordering, and giving rules,
- establishing attention,
- questioning,
- repeating and reporting what has been said,
- giving instructions,
- giving and refusing permission,
- warning and giving advice,
- giving reasons and explaining (ibid.).

Inability to perform these functions fluently in the language taught can lead to a lack of clarity in giving directions and instructions, and even to the need of resorting to the mother tongue if the teacher teaches a linguistically homogenous class (Richards 1998). The effective use of classroom language is also emphasised by Willis (1981) and Winn-Smith (2001) who provide extensive examples of linguistic expressions and routines that English language teachers can use in different stages of a lesson. Likewise, Spratt (1994: 1) claims that her book is "a language improvement course for [foreign language] teachers" and, according to Gardner and Gardner, their book was written "to help teachers choose the right words and phrases when they want to use English to give instructions, ask questions, make comments in the classroom" as well as "encourage their learners to respond in English" (Gardner and Gardner 2000: 1). Thus, the nature of English teacher's classroom English is considered to be as valid a source of learning and practice as any other one.

In order to answer the question of what classroom English a teacher needs, Mokrzycka and Polok (1995: 8-9) enumerate the basic abilities a language teacher should possess. They divide them into three categories: items considered to be essential, items considered to be important and items considered to be useful. Among essential items within classroom language, they identify the *ability to speak the language simply and clearly*, preferably using *short* rather than long and complicated *sentences*. The rationale for this is that students have to understand their teacher speaking, otherwise they might get frustrated and the learning process might suffer. For the same reason, the teacher should be able to *give clear instructions*. This condition is based on the premise that unless students know what is expected of them,

they will not perform the assigned task. This is why, as Mokrzycka and Polok's study suggests, simplicity and clarity on the part of the language teacher cannot be dismissed as invalid.

The issue of teacher proficiency as classroom language can be related to the notion of the so-called 'modified input', or more specifically, *teacher talk*. In his comprehensive study of teacher talk, Chaudron (1988) finds that teachers modify their language when addressing language learners in the classroom in a number of ways, of which repetitions, expansions, rephrased questions and comprehension checks seem to be the most frequently observed. Although Chaudron does not regard teacher talk sufficiently distinct to be called a sociolinguistic register, for Winn-Smith (2001: 15) the instructive and supportive use of classroom language is a specialist skill which "does not come naturally, even to native speakers".

In short, linguistic proficiency as teacher-generated classroom language implies how well the teacher can capitalise on the ways English is used in the classroom to establish routines, give instructions and evaluate performance. Although little is known about what constitutes optimal teacher talk (Ellis 1994: 583), teachers' classroom language increases the amount of language students hear and, therefore, coupled with the regularity of repetitions, has a potential effect on learners' aural comprehension.

Proficiency as skills and systems

In the model of proficiency as the mastery of skills (Stern 1992: 75-7), listening, speaking, reading and writing come to the fore. If one adds language sub-systems to it, the model is enriched with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation[6]. Although this concept of proficiency was particularly popular in the 1960s, the 'four skills' continue to be important categories in language pedagogy now. Similarly, teaching a language through lists of vocabulary items and presentations of grammatical problems still occupies a central place in many a contemporary classroom. As skills and language systems are useful expressions of proficiency, some contemporary second language teachers focus on the sequence of introducing them. Therefore, their own

[6] Some authors refer to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling as 'language' (Doff 1988: 258). Other common divisions in ELT literature are: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions or grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, discourse. Yet Brumfit (2001) claims that more effective categories with regard to language learning than the original four are: conversation/discussion, comprehension, extended writing and extended speeach as an optional one.

readiness to engage in different contacts with the 'four skills' and language systems improves their own language proficiency.

The linguistic skills of a successful language user can also be analysed in terms of other divisions. The traditional dichotomy embraces receptive skills (reading and listening comprehension) and productive skills (speaking and writing). At present, more and more attention is being devoted to interaction skills, for example, the combination of listening and speaking in teaching conversation or reading and writing in teaching corresponding, as well as mediation skills, for example, transforming a formal letter into an informal one or relating a written text in an oral form (Komorowska 2005: 11). In general, a successful language user is proficient in different linguistic skills when they appear separately but is also able to integrate them properly.

Language teachers' *readiness* to use language skills and systems is also the basic quality distinguishing good teachers from less effective ones. Good teachers as users of a foreign language read, listen and watch much more in the L2 than their less proficient colleagues. They also write more frequently in the target language, and are usually better at striking up foreign language conversations when compared to linguistically less successful teachers. Moreover, their ability to comprehend various language registers proves to be the best indicator of the knowledge of the language they teach (Komorowska 1993: 14).

The concept of the teacher's language proficiency as a good knowledge of language skills and systems corresponds to Mokrzycka and Polok's (1995: 9) study of the working language of a successful Polish teacher of English. Among items considered important, they emphasise the ability *to paraphrase words, sentences and idioms*, as well as *spell well and write clearly*. As a teacher acts as a language model, they also stress the necessity of keeping one's *utterances grammatically correct*. Among other items considered important for the teacher's English, the authors include *good phonetics when speaking and reading aloud*. Among items considered useful, however, there are abilities to *adjust the language used in the classroom to the students' level of English* and also to *produce and adapt various texts for classroom use.* Other useful aspects of the teacher's English are to *be able to read and listen to non-teaching materials with ease, to be a good writer* to correct students' written assignments, *to have a wide range of vocabulary, including idioms, synonyms, proverbs,* etc. and *use the language fluently.* Undoubtedly, the abilities identified here as important and useful require a prior high level of the mastery of the four skills and systems by the teacher.

Unfortunately, the latest research on the English teacher's linguistic abilities are far from optimistic. Polok's (2010) study on Polish teachers of English presents a rather gloomy picture in which, among others, they are characterised by:

- a wide discrepancy between the knowledge of their native language and the desirable competence of being a *near-native* (Braine 1999; Medgyes 2003; Llurda 2006; Braine 2010),
- limited active vocabulary and high concentration on textbook phrases,
- limited mediation abilities,
- frequent using of Polish,
- slow but noticeable second language attrition.

Despite learners' expectations of language teacher being a language model, teachers with low linguistic abilities can hardly fulfil such a role if they themselves have problems with language using. Andrews (2007: ix) adds that the level of linguistic proficiency shapes the language teacher's social image because learners and their parents often perceive the teacher's effectiveness through her language proficiency.

Proficiency as language behaviour

The teacher's language proficiency can also imply language behaviour, that is the activities, uses, or functions that are carried out during the course. The specific wishes of learners who identify their own language needs make teachers recognise these needs and teach accordingly. Very often particular aspects of a new language are called upon, for instance, when teaching specific professional groups. Where the addressees' needs are clearly defined, it is feasible for the teacher to draw up detailed inventories of expected language use. In this understanding, proficiency is often closely defined in behavioural or performance terms and can be offered in the form of lists of ordered language items. Compared to the concept of proficiency as skills and systems, proficiency as language behaviour is more concrete. However, the degree of specificity of some inventories can preclude the possibility of their direct translation into all teaching procedures.

Proficiency as cultural competence

When knowledge about culture and society has been recognised as a legitimate aspect of language teaching, cultural competence as part of the teacher's language proficiency also deserves attention. According to Stern (1992: 83), cultural competence implies implicit mastery of norms, values and orientations that create the cultural fabric of a society as well as the ability to recognise culturally significant facts, and a knowledge of the parameters within

which conduct is acceptable or unacceptable. Pfeiffer (2001: 197), on the other hand, claims that the teacher's cultural competence, although presented analogously to the linguistic one, should include all that is needed for effective intercultural communication to take place. In view of this, cultural competence is not distinct from communicative competence. What is commonly referred to as communicative competence also merges into knowledge of many aspects of society and culture: forms of address, register uses, social and regional varieties of language, as well as the social values attached to these differences. Many lexical items have cultural references characteristic of a given cultural group. Thus, it has been generally recognised that language proficiency is bound to include certain aspects of sociocultural information (Komorowska 1993: 14; Stern 1992: 83, Polok 2006).

To conclude, it can be stated that the construct of the teacher's language proficiency is multifaceted. It embraces classroom language, the mastery of language skills and systems, the knowledge of language behaviour and high cultural competence, as presented in *Figure 3*. This dimension of proficiency has a profound influence on students' perception of the teacher (Komorowska 1999; Medgyes 2003). Moreover, it can be a significant factor that affects other aspects of teaching expertise, including teaching skills (Heaton 1981). This being the case, it has to be acknowledged that there is a strong relationship between the second language teacher's linguistic proficiency and her pedagogical success.

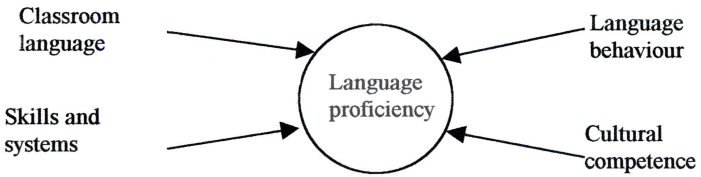

Figure 2: Language proficiency

2.1.2. Subject matter knowledge

Subject matter knowledge refers to what language teachers need to know about their subject: the specialised concepts, theories and disciplinary knowledge that constitute the theoretical basis for the field of second lan-

guage teaching. This kind of linguistic competence is usually obtained in formal situations, oftentimes in pre-service and in-service programmes which reflect views as to what constitutes the essential subject matter knowledge of the field of second language teaching. Some of the typical modules required by second language teachers are as follows:

- phonetics and phonology,
- English syntax,
- second language acquisition,
- curriculum and syllabus design,
- discourse analysis,
- sociolinguistics,
- analysis of TESOL methods,
- testing and evaluation (cf. Richards 1998: 8).

A major aspect of subject matter competence is the special discourse or professional register that language teachers use to talk about their discipline (cf. Woodward 1996). The existence of professional jargon fulfils two important purposes. One function of the discourse is to make second language teachers one identifiable group. The other one is to make them acknowledge aspects of their own teaching as well as help organise and develop their own conceptions of teaching (Freeman and Cazden 1991, in Richards 1998: 9). These social/referential and cognitive functions of the teacher's discourse make the language teaching profession more distinct, prestigious and less accessible for representatives of other communities.

An important dimension related to both language proficiency and subject matter knowledge is a constant need to enrich and modify one's specialist competence. What seems to be sufficient at the start of a teacher's professional career may prove to be too little to teach effectively in later years. The times of information explosion being experienced now seem to make this problem even more acute. Continuous commitment to reaching higher and better standards of performance can therefore guarantee professionalism of the language teacher (Ur 1996; Wragg 1999) and take the teacher beyond the training path and onto the development route[7]. Moreover, an occasional lapse in the teacher's knowledge will be accepted by the learners provided the teacher develops that knowledge on a continuous basis. On the other hand, frequent acknowledgement of ignorance results in the teacher's loss of credibility (Wragg 1999: 57).

All in all, linguistic competence consisting of language proficiency and subject matter mastery as outlined in *Figure 2* occupies a dominant place in

[7] For diferences between training and development see Woodward (1991: 146-7) or Edwards (2011: 69).

the second language teacher's professional competence. As they are subject to constant change, both language proficiency and the subject matter knowledge have to be improved and revised regularly. As Wenzel (2001: 178) puts it "There is no possibility of standing. The language teacher either develops linguistically, or deteriorates". Moreover, the traditional perception of the teacher's incompetence has been modified. In the light of the expansion of knowledge, an incompetent teacher is not one who occasionally admits her ignorance of something but the one who "does not know what she does not know, does not want to ask someone who knows, is afraid to ask someone who knows, is convinced that she knows everything and has no doubts, or does not want to develop" (Hamer 1994: 26). The negation of gaps in one's education may lead to the teacher's apparent self-satisfaction. In the long run, however, the self-satisfaction may stunt the teacher's professional alertness, which consequently leads to professional regression. This is mainly why second language teachers have to take care of the constant development of their specialist competence.

2.2. Methodological competence

Methodological competence can be defined as the teaching skills specific to a particular subject matter. At the core of this kind of teacher knowledge is a choice of the theory of teaching that the teacher develops in the teaching programme. Theories of teaching are generally formulated by educational researchers, and there are numerous dimensions of teaching in the educational literature. Each view, however, implies a different understanding of a classroom situation. For example, a *didactic view* of teaching holds that teaching is transmission of knowledge through providing clear presentations, explanations, or demonstrations. A *discovery view*, on the other hand, is based on the belief that "students can develop knowledge themselves through active investigation and discovery" (Richards 1998: 2). An *interactionist view,* by contrast, is based on the belief that a necessary interaction between "students' own ideas, empirical observations, and the curriculum content" (ibid.) must occur if the teaching/learning process is to be effective. Consequently, each of these theories embodies a slightly different understanding of the essential knowledge that the teacher needs.

Apart from theories of teaching, methodological competence on the part of the teacher includes second language teaching skills. These have received key attention in more and more performance - and competency-based language teacher assessments. The following skills can be included among second language teaching skills:

- writing lesson plans,
- presenting language,
- controlled practice,
- checking,
- eliciting dialogues and narratives,
- using dialogues,
- using texts,
- setting up communication activities (cf. Gower and Walters 2005).

The methodological competence of a modern language teacher is expected to imply media knowledge as well (Pfeiffer 2001). This knowledge comprises the teacher's familiarity with *multiple uses of the media* (the computer, the Internet, e-mail) in the process of teaching a foreign language. The employment of technology is undoubtedly a sign of the contemporary times, and therefore, the teacher's unwillingness to use it is bound to bring about student suspicion of teacher ineffectiveness.

As far as methodological competence is concerned, there exist differences between good language teachers and those perceived as not so successful. According to Komorowska (1993: 15), the second language teaching skills of good teachers include: *careful preparation* for the lesson that can even make up for lack of teaching experience, providing students with an intensive contact with the foreign language through using *extra teaching materials*, stimulating student participation in the lesson through *eliciting individual student utterances in pair and group working*, using *a variety of teaching aids* and *varying teaching methods and techniques*. Interestingly enough, there are methodologically-based behaviours that good teachers never use: they never withdraw from presentation-reinforcement-testing based lessons, they never fail to check students' oral language at the expense of infrequent written tests, and they never forget that getting to know their students better guarantees more effective pedagogical results (ibid.).

The description of methodological competence with respect to second language teaching is not devoid of problems. The major one concerns the language teacher's higher-level cognition and decision-making. The use of teaching techniques at the level of executing them does not seem to be sufficient. Knowing which technique to use, at which stage of the lesson, and why a particular technique proves more suitable than others at a particular moment, involves a high level of thinking and decision making. Moreover, different theories of teaching prioritise teaching skills differently. A communicative teacher uses a different set of teaching skills from an audiolingual one. Thus, the description of teaching in terms of the teacher's methodological skills does not seem to be an easy task.

Notwithstanding the limitations of methodological competence, it can be hypothesised that teacher education will become more and more methodology-based, as the current move toward performance-based certification in teaching qualifications suggests. Hence, the development of the methodological knowledge of second language teachers deserves important consideration.

2.3. Psychological competence

Psychological competence, sometimes referred to as emotional competence (Head and Taylor 1997) is often considered the essence of being a good teacher. It can be defined as the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students. The way of communicating with students and being partially a psychologist or a counsellor, makes an educator 'a born teacher' in the popular jargon. Commenting on this aspect of teacher education, Cooper (1993, in Richards 1998: 6) claims:

> Although many variables affect classroom learning, it is generally agreed that the paramount variable is communication. The essence of the teaching-learning process is effective communication, for without communication, teaching and learning would be impossible. Thus, one of the core components of teacher education should be speech communication.

At the core of the teacher's psychological competence is a *positive feeling* towards learners (Komorowska 1993: 12; Hamer 1994: 36). This friendly attitude involving *teacher authenticity, respect for others, optimism and praising* may, in turn, develop the following teacher abilities:

- the ability to avoid causes of communication breakdowns,
- the ability to communicate with people, in particular with learners,
- the ability to motivate students to learn,
- the ability to build good teams out of random groups of students,
- the ability to adjust one's style of leadership to students' maturity,
- the ability to control stress (ibid.: 37).

According to Komorowska (1993: 12-3), the manner of communicating with students, the key aspect of psychological skills, is characteristic of the most successful teachers. To the most desirable forms of teacher behaviour within this group belong:

- praising expressed in different forms,
- responding to student utterances non-verbally,
- setting clear rules and respecting them,
- being fair to all students.

In short, psychological competence determines what kind of person a second language teacher seems to be. A positive, friendly attitude on the part of the teacher plays an invaluable role in establishing good student--teacher rapport, which, in turn, is conducive to the formation of affective goals, one of key teaching objectives (Stern 1992: 85-6).

The importance of psychological competence can also be discussed in the context of Underhill's (1999: 125) understanding of three teacher roles. The first role is that of the *Lecturer*, who possesses a knowledge of the topic only, but without any familiarity with procedures for teaching it. The second role is the *Teacher*, who has a knowledge of the topic as well as special skill and interest in the techniques and methodology of teaching it. The highest qualification of the language teacher as understood by Underhill is that of the *Facilitator*, who understands the topic, is skilled in the use of current teaching methods and techniques and, in addition, generates a psychological atmosphere conducive to high-quality learning. Thus, the *Teacher* adds to the *Lecturer's* repertoire the methodological skills and, likewise, the *Facilitator* adds to the *Teacher's* repertoire the skills for creating the psychological learning climate. The *Facilitator*, therefore, has qualifications in three areas: the topic, the method, and the inner processes.

The three roles of the teacher as distinguished by Underhill correlate well with the kinds of language teacher competences that have been discussed so far.

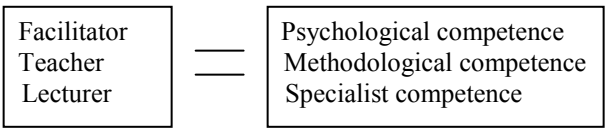

Figure 4: Underhill's Facilitative Approach vs. three kinds of teacher knowledge

Figure 4 presents how they can be matched with reference to what they signify. Hence, the *Lecturer's* area of expertise is the *specialist competence*, the *Teacher's* expertise consists of the *specialist competence* and the *methodological competence*, whereas the *Facilitator's* domain comprises the two and the *psychological competence*.

Apart from these three competences, there exist other kinds of foreign language teacher's competencies that deserve close attention. These are discussed below.

2.4. Pedagogical competence

Pedagogical competence pertains to those dimensions of teaching regarded as essential in the repertoire of any teacher, regardless of the subject matter. This competence is theoretically obtained in teacher education studies or on professional in-service courses. Sometimes called *instruction* (Shulman 1987: 17), or *didactic competences* (Hamer 1994: 27-36), or *teaching skills* (Richards 1998: 4), pedagogical knowledge includes the most crucial aspects of pedagogy, for example:

- planning lessons,
- building particular lesson units,
- formulating objectives,
- selecting and presenting learning activities,
- asking questions,
- checking students' understanding,
- monitoring students' learning,
- giving feedback on student learning.

Analysing pedagogical competence, Pfeiffer (2001) adds two more teacher subcompetences: ability to work in teams with other teachers, and ability to work in teams with students. He stresses the particular importance of the latter because it influences teacher-student relations as well as teacher organisational skills for group work supervision, which are the basis for developing teacher *collective* competence[8].

Pedagogical competence based only on the theoretical information studied and not incorporated by the teacher into her daily practice is not a competency (Hamer 1994: 33). Although all teachers follow pedagogical courses while studying, there are differences in pedagogical skills as performed by more and less successful teachers. According to Komorowska, good teachers use a *greater variety of activities* than their less effective colleagues. Their lessons also have a *quicker pace*. Moreover, they are *directors of classroom* events but *never dominate* students. Finally, they *support students' participation* in the lesson, but *never interrupt* students in mid-sentence or embarrass them with their comments (Komorowska 1993: 13-4).

Although it overlaps at a number of points with methodological competence, pedagogical competence is the sphere of the teacher's knowledge that enables her to organise learning, whatever the subject matter, in an effective way.

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[8] This term is used by Pfeiffer (2001: 198).

2.5. Normative competence

The term 'normative knowledge', as used by Pearson (1994: 110-3), refers to the teacher's convictions and beliefs that she brings into the teaching situation and acts in accordance with. As the teacher believes in them, they assume the form of values in her teaching/learning process. The values become objectives to be fulfilled and create norms for particular teaching situations. Thus, teacher normative competence echoes Pennycook's (1989: 613) view of the teacher as a 'transformative intellectual', in which teaching "embodies a vision of a better and more humane life". Likewise, Brown (1994 b: 441) states that teaching can be viewed as a "political act" in which the ultimate goal of the teacher is to advocate change in a world which is "in desperate need of change". In the same vein, Birch (2009) uses convincing arguments to show how English language teachers can contribute to peace locally and globally – using their "classrooms as important focal points for change" in conflict transformation and reconciliation. Normative competence, therefore, provides teachers with an important mission within which they can introduce their particular "values, philosophies and beliefs in TESOL" (Crookes 2009) or moralities to their students.

Normative competence can have two kinds of sources (Pearson 1994: 111). On the one hand, the teacher can decide on her own what objectives are to be pursued in the course she offers. Then, she bases her decisions on her views on the subject, students' qualities or the properties of the school where the teaching/learning process takes place. Instead of deciding herself the teacher can, on the other hand, rely on external sources, such as course books, teaching guidelines, ministerial decisions, etc. These organise teacher activities as if they were formulated by the teacher herself and amount to a set of norms to adhere to. In brief, in contemporary educational science there is not one single catalogue prescribing a set of normative principles obligatory for all teachers. Every teacher can implement a different system of principles provided they are communicative for everybody and widely accepted by teachers, learners and their parents[9].

Normative competence can embrace two other dimensions: *interactive knowledge* and *causal knowledge* (see *Figure 5*), which are discussed below.

[9] Examples of norms concerning school education in Poland can be found in Śliwerski (2001: 98-106).

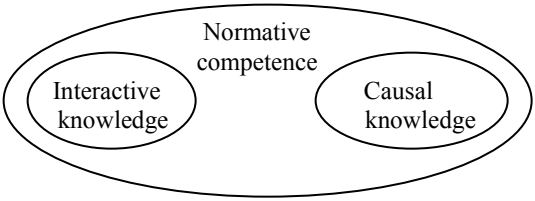

Figure 5: Normative competence

2.5.1. Interactive knowledge

The teacher's *interactive knowledge,* which Freeman (1996: 99) calls *seasonal* refers to the nature of decisions that teachers make while they teach. As teaching is a process characterised by constant change, teachers have to make decisions that are appropriate to the specific dynamics of the lesson they are teaching, to the moment-to-moment complexity of the classroom[10]. These kinds of decisions are referred to as *interactive decisions*. An interactive decision consists of the following components:

- monitoring one's teaching and evaluating what is happening at a particular point in the lesson,
- recognising that a number of different courses of action are possible,
- selecting a particular course of action,
- evaluating the consequences of the choice (cf. Richards 1998: 11).

The underlying component of all decisions taken by the teacher in teaching situations, however, is her normative knowledge. Because teaching situations are goal-directed, they have objectives to be achieved. Although teachers may not concentrate their direct attention on norms, the decisions they make always result from their own views on the teaching/learning process. Teaching practice, therefore, is determined by established norms.

2.5.2. Causal knowledge

Another issue to be discussed within the concept of normative competence is the so-called *causal knowledge* of the teacher. This is the kind of knowl-

[10] Exploring teachers' on-line decision making, Bailey (1996) claims that while lesson planning is an important teaching skill, language teachers must also know when to depart from their lesson plans, to make the best use of class time and learning opportunities. Reasons underlying teachers' decision making for lesson plan departures are identified.

edge that is responsible for bringing about student learning. In other words, these are teacher actions and classroom decisions that are consciously made to cause the desired learning effects.

Wenzel's (2001: 183-5) definition of the teacher's talent understood as an "inherent and innate capacity for causing mental development of a student, and an immediate urge to see whether the intended changes really took place" correlates well with the notion of causal knowledge here. However, a mere cause of changes in the student's cognitive structure is hardly sufficient to produce effective teaching. Equally important is the teacher's observation of whether the intended changes actually occur, this being the other constituent of the teacher's talent. Therefore, the causing and simultaneous observation of changes in the student's cognitive structure distinguishes between talented and untalented teachers.

Pearson (1994: 81-9) draws attention to other problems that might arise unless this kind of competency is well attended to. These are: teacher ignorance, teacher irrationality and the existence of unconscious teacher intentions.

Teacher ignorance is said to be apparent when the purpose of teacher actions is difficult for students to recognise. If this is the case, the teacher believes that the execution of classroom activities is sufficient to justify her intentions. Students, however, may understand the teaching event differently and, consequently, fail to perceive it the way the teacher wishes them to do.

Teacher irrationality is an even more insurmountable problem. In this case, the teacher not only assumes that her intentions will be carried out, but fails to notice an error when the error is pointed out to her. This feature enables the teacher to provide incorrect information that may, in consequence, turn out to be undesirable for students[11]. Of course, in the eyes of her students, the irrational teacher is perceived as a rational one because teachers, in principle, are believed to have the authority in school, and the information provided by them is usually considered true and unquestionable.

The unconscious intentions of the teacher can also create a teaching situation fraught with problems. This occurs when the teacher claims one thing and acts as if other issues were more important for her. In practice, however, students usually decipher the teacher's true intentions and comply with the imposed hidden curriculum, irrespective of what is said officially. Because of the lack of congruence between the teacher's words and actions, students fail to enter into a goal-directed teaching situation with her.

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[11] Generally, errors of this kind are referred to as errors due to the context of learning (Brown 1994a: 215).

All these problems concern obstacles for teaching produced by the teacher. If goal-directed teaching has no place, there is, in turn, no room for learning. If, on the other hand, the teacher's proclaimed aims match teacher behaviours, students do not have to waste time working out the teacher's true intentions and they can concentrate more on learning.

This kind ofcompetence correlates well with the specifications of good teachers' behaviours in the process-product studies discussed in *Chapter 1*. All these behaviours, however, are fuelled by the teacher's convictions about their pedagogical effectiveness.

It can be concluded that normative competence, or its two variants: interactive knowledge and causal knowledge, are based on the cause-effect relationship between the teacher's norm-propelled actions and the process of learning. The teacher's understanding of her own values and, consequently, decisions, assumes a pivotal role here. She must be able to assess them, understand their nature, modify and select accordingly. Only then will her decisions be apt and her norms serve a proper purpose.

2.6. Experiential competence

A considerable part of the teacher's knowledge results from her professional experience. Yet, pedagogical literature devoted to the teacher's professional experience seems to be relatively scant[12]. It can hardly be denied, however, that the vital part of the teaching process is a consequence of the accumulation of professional experience on the part of the teacher, including the experience that the teacher received when she was a student herself. Lortie (1975) finds that teaching is one of the few professions where the practitioner has been in the client (student) role for an extended period of time before switching to the professional role. Therefore, prior experiences with their own teachers affect the ways teachers think and act about teaching – the so-called "apprenticeship of observation" phenomenon. On the other hand, it is the experience that the teacher acquires during her professional teaching career. These two kinds of experience are complementary and create the core of the teacher's experiential competence[13].

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[12] A noteworthy exception is the publication by Senior (2006) whose book is about, as she says, what it is like to be a language teacher today.

[13] This dimension of experiential competence resembles normative value-based competence. The reason for including it here is its origin. This knowledge derives from experience and not from values which can but do not have to be part of experience.

Because this competence appears in spontaneous classroom situations and resists being put in words, the *reflection in doing* is based on experience (Pearson 1994: 114).

Influenced by Schön, Wallace (1991) puts forward his understanding of 'experiential knowledge'. Composed of the two phenomena applicable to teacher practitioners, that is "knowing-in-action" and "reflection", experiential knowledge can be exploited when the teacher develops knowledge-in-action by practising her profession, and has the opportunity to reflect on that knowledge-in-action. Thus, Wallace's reflective model gives due recognition to teacher experience and highlights its ongoing character in professional development.

In investigating professional development, it is important to remember that although every experienced teacher has access to experience-based knowledge, mere length of years in the teaching job does not guarantee the effective use of experience in the professional career (cf. Jagieła 1996: 20-1; Muszyńska 2001: 22). In order to make optimal use of teaching events accumulated over the years, the teacher's participation in teaching activities has to be active (to involve the teacher), direct (to result from the teacher's personal experience) and structured (devoid of chaos, superficiality or simplicity). In addition, to fulfil a beneficial purpose, a person has to experience something in order to reflect upon it, because both emotional and rational factors are significant here. In other words, experiencing a pedagogical event, be it as a former student or as a qualified teacher, is only a starting point. Only when experience is subjected to reflection in the form of analyses, comparisons, classifications, generalisations, etc., can teaching mastery be improved. Without reflection, professional experience remains a set of standardised and routine teaching behaviours rather than the teacher's, however intuitive, informed choices.

The weakness of experiential competence can be the fact that it is difficult to categorise (cf. Pearson 1994: 115). The teacher's experience is usually so varied that gathering all knowledge and sub-dividing it is not feasible. Its abstraction further complicates the matter. Moreover, taking the uniqueness of each fragment of experience into account, this knowledge differs from teacher to teacher. Hence, its wide scope, abstraction and uniqueness make it resistant to easy categorisation.

Overall, experience-based competence can be extremely valuable in the teacher's repertoire. Although difficult to categorise, experiential competence should be regularly reflected upon by the teacher. Only then can its application in teaching practice lead to pedagogical mastery rather than impromptu choices.

2.7. Contextual competence

An important component of a language teacher's knowledge is an understanding of the contextual variables within which the process of teaching a language takes place, or so-called *situated possibilities* (Tsui 2003: 253). According to Posner, a principal factor in understanding any teaching situation is the social and physical context formed by the "rules, facilities, values, expectations, and personal backgrounds, which act as resources, constraints, and direct influences on teaching and learning" (Posner 1985: 2). Contextual factors to be considered within this competence include:

- language policies,
- language teaching policies,
- political factors,
- sociocultural factors,
- type of school or institution,
- administrative practices,
- school programme,
- level of class,
- age of learners,
- learning factors,
- teaching resources,
- testing factors (cf. Richards 1998: 12).

The acknowledgement of these factors seems to be indispensable if the teaching/learning process is to be relevant and effective. Likewise, teachers who are unresponsive to these contextual aspects may unintentionally produce potential areas of mismatch between their expectations and those of parents. Discussing the kinds of knowledge that language teachers possess, Freeman (1996) argues that accounting for the context-dependent factors makes teaching "knowing what to do". This kind of teachers' knowledge, more sophisticated than "teaching as doing things" and "teaching as thinking and doing" is highly interpretative, and through context-bound appropriate decisions teachers demonstrate their professional expertise.

A significant part of the teacher's contextual competence in the Polish situation can be the teacher's new role. The socialist heritage in the sphere of collectivist psychology conflicts with the market economy and the requirements of democracy. Passivity, avoidance of responsibility, conformity and opportunism still exist in human consciousness and habits. Therefore, any teacher in Poland should identify these issues in her pedagogical work and feel responsible for an effective execution of new educational tasks (Jończyk 1996; Kowal 1999; Mizerek 1999; Janowski 2000: 170-5). The present

teacher's role will call upon other dimensions of the teaching profession, out of which *autonomy* and *reflectivity* occupy a central position.

In the concept of teacher *autonomy* two perspectives can be distinguished: autonomy as self-directed professional development, and autonomy as freedom from control by others (McGrath 2000). The former assumes a teacher professional identity in which the construction of her own objectives and the conditions of their achievement come to the fore. The latter implies a sense of professional courage. In the face of increasingly formalised systems of accountability, top-down assessment and curricula schemes, many teachers may feel powerless[14]. Yet those who prove innovative, creative and open-minded can work self-directedly and gradually assume the qualities indispensable for a new performance of the teacher's job in the rapidly changing reality.

The other cardinal quality of a successful contemporary Polish teacher is *reflectivity* (Sipińska 1996; Taraszkiewicz 1999; Elsner 2000). The teacher as a *reflective practitioner* can interpret the educational reality herself, which in turn involves practising her own way of teaching. Such a teacher is never afraid of risks, her teaching decisions are intended and give rise to new reflections on actions. In a word, a reflective practitioner is not a fount of knowledge but rather an autonomous explorer of knowledge who performs this job with joy.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the teaching profession is very much affected by broader social, political and economic policies which amount to a contextual dimension. The changes in these policies have to be acknowledged in models of teaching if the teaching/learning process is to be effective. The contemporary Polish teacher's tasks, for example, cannot be limited to the role of the traditional provider of knowledge. The need for new skills emphasises a new dimension of the teacher's profession where responsible, autonomous and reflective practitioners delimit a new teacher professionalism.

2.8. General competence

The general competence of the teacher can be defined as *the knowledge of the world* possessed by people in general. It includes the information and abilities acquired by the teacher that enable her to live as a competent and well-informed person. It is also a body of information that is not restricted to

[14] Language teachers' dilemmas also referring to these issues are described in Werbińska (2009).

any person's particular role or function, but the knowledge expected to be shared by others (Pearson 1994).

Why should a teacher be expected to have wide general competence? There seem to be three main reasons.

Wide general competence is a prerequisite for smooth communication among people. Because the teacher initiates the process of passing on knowledge, she is to decide what kind of knowledge guarantees good communication with students. What this competence consists of in a given teaching context depends very much on the learner's age. Thus, teachers working with children require less general competence than teachers working with secondary school students who are more responsive and simultaneously more critical towards the teacher's messages. It can also depend on the subject taught. For example, language teachers will require more general competence than teachers of mathematics because teaching a foreign language, elementary though it may be, involves treating different disciplines and demands more cross-curricular information than teaching mathematics. As a teaching situation is an interpersonal situation between the teacher and students, any factors facilitating their relations are important.

In addition, a teacher's extensive general knowledge may increase students' general knowledge (ibid.). The teacher's job is a social one whose basic task is to equip students with certain competencies necessary for them to function in society. If teachers manage to increase students' general knowledge, students' competencies will simultaneously improve. They will have access to information and the teacher's competencies, the necessary elements to make them members of the community at large.

There is a final aspect of the problem to be discussed here which, actually, is an issue involving the philosophy of education. The school is a place where the concepts of a norm and an ideal should be upheld. The teacher's general competence lends itself very well here. It may signify cultivating a respect for knowledge, raising the level of the learner's aspirations and even encouraging the learner to strive for mastery. Undoubtedly, the teacher's general knowledge adds to her vast prestige in the school context. Interpreted like this, it can be a significant contributor to the teacher's professional success.

A general competence is not a competence reserved exclusively for teachers. If possessed by the language teacher, however, it can play a number of significant roles. The more general competence a language teacher has, the better contact with students there is because, just like general education, it can contribute to better communication, a sense of community, or provide a pattern for behaviour. Therefore, it should not be dismissed as unimportant, because it may add to the teacher's professionalism.

2.9. Teacher knowledge – a summary

The foregoing analysis has described eight dimensions of teacher competences in order to map out the content domain of second language teaching. All these language teacher competences seem to be indispensable in the formation of the teacher's professional expertise. A key issue to be addressed now is to examine their interdependence. Are all kinds of knowledge equally important for the teacher? Do some of them condition the appearance of others? Do they appear independently or as an integrated cluster?

The starting point in providing an answer to these questions is the interrelationship of these different dimensions of knowledge (see *Figure 6*). Inadequate linguistic knowledge may lead to the inadequate development of methodological competence, such as inability to set up communication activities or to provide good explanations. A mastery of methodological skills would seem indispensable in acquiring a reflective and personal philosophy of teaching. Such a teacher's personal philosophy, however, develops and is developed by her pedagogical and psychological skills. Pedagogical competence enables the analysis of pedagogical problems and the development of alternative strategies for teaching. Psychological competence, on the other hand, facilitates effective communication with students, which is a basis for teaching. In addition, it is enriched with normative and experiential reflections that can help the teacher to recognise the quality of decisions employed in teaching. Last but not least, contextual competence will shape the final form and adapt her teaching style according to contextual variables, whereas general competence will significantly contribute to the teacher's general prestige.

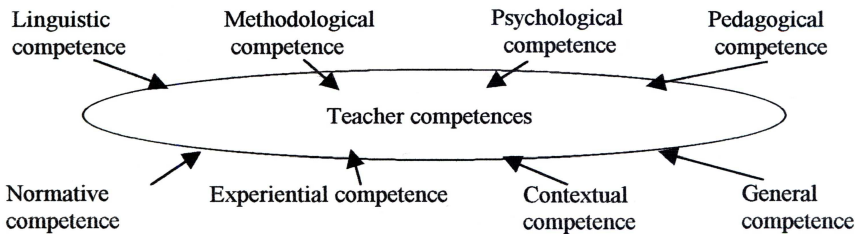

Figure 6: Eight kinds of teacher competences

An important aspect of the construct discussed is its lack of linearity. Therefore, linguistic proficiency can but does not have to be the starting point of the construct. The relationship between different dimensions of

competence assumes a cyclic character where certain aspects are emphasised more, then disappear to highlight others, only to reappear again, but this time in the strengthened form. As a result, the cyclicity seems to make none of them first or superior to the others. All eight kinds of competences have their place in the general construct of teacher knowledge and this is why the development of all of them seems to be crucial for the development of teacher professional competence. This multidimensional understanding of language teacher competence is similar to Wallace's (1991: 58) definition of "professional competence" which, in opposition to "initial competence" is not gained once a teacher education course has been completed, but amounts to "a moving target, or a horizon towards which professionals travel all their professional life" and whose variables include "society's expectations; the nature of the subject; the examination system; the school curriculum; methodology; the teacher's own interests; the teacher's changing and deepening insights into the nature of the profession; changes in responsibility, etc.".

2.10. Teacher competences vs. human wisdom

In order to acquire a thorough grasp of teacher competences, their relationship to human wisdom in general is worth examining. According to Pietrasiński (1975), knowledge in the educational perspective is primarily composed of practical knowledge, that is practical skills, and experience of life. It might be deduced that the relationship between these two components is bi-directional. Practical knowledge arises as a result of the gaining of experience, whereas the acquisition of more practical skills modifies one's previous experience and initiates a fresh perception of a problem. Both are conditioned by contacts with people, active participation in different situations and solving practical problems. These aspects, in turn, produce human wisdom, which includes:

- the ability to predict accurately,
- the ability to think and act independently,
- the ability to assess (value) and solve practical problems (Sawiński 1996: 16).

It seems that of these three abilities, independence of thinking occupies a central position. An independent-thinking person is usually capable of predicting, then assessing and, finally, finding solutions to problems. Discussing the independence of thinking, Okoń (1978) stressed that it is fundamental for a knowledgeable contemporary person to have an independent opinion, a personal way of looking at things and a rich spiritual life. Prerequisites for these attributes, however, are the following: a perfectly-developed ability to observe, a powerful imagination, and independence of thinking and acting

(Sawiński 1996: 16). Taking into consideration these different dimensions of human wisdom, Sawiński produced his own construct (*Figure 7*), which serves as a reference point for further discussions here.

Examining *Figure 7*, it might be interesting to ask whether a second language teacher is a knowledgeable person in terms of the issues presented above. Do aspects of the two constructs correlate well? Is independence of thinking equally important in teacher competence? These are the questions that will be addressed closely now.

In *Figure 7*, the most important aspects attracting attention are the first level components of human wisdom deriving directly from the 'human wisdom' component. These include: first, vast practical knowledge; second, ability

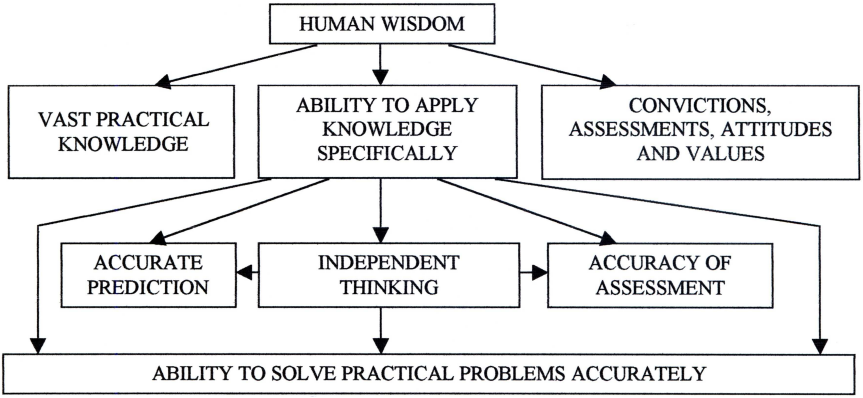

Figure 7: The main components of wisdom as an educational value (Sawiński 1996: 14)

to apply knowledge specifically; and third, convictions, assessments, attitudes and values. Of these three, the central place is occupied by ability to apply knowledge specifically, which is conditioned by accurate prediction, independent thinking and accuracy of assessment. It seems that only if all these aspects are present, can one solve practical problems accurately.

Our dimensions of teacher competence (see *Figure 8*) seem to correlate well with abilities in *Figure 7* on the first level. Although Pietrasiński (1975) acknowledged experience as an aspect alongside practical knowledge, extensive practical knowledge can denote a number of issues in the popular jargon. Thus, it can mean second language teaching skills equalling the methodological competence, or the experiential competence, alongside the teacher's linguistic proficiency. Likewise, convictions, assessments, attitudes and values in Sawiński's framework coincide closely

with normative competence in our construct. The central position ascribed to the ability to apply one's knowledge specifically is a notion where all the remaining types of competence cross: pedagogical competence, psychological competence, contextual competence, and general competence. All of them foster accurate prediction and assessment of teaching problems but can hardly function unless the teacher is able to think independently. Moreover, thanks to them the teacher is capable of applying her knowledge specifically and solving practical problems accurately.
Teacher independence of thinking also occupies an important place in our construct of competences as eight dimensions. After all, teacher thinking initiates the appearance of all eight kinds of competences and guarantees their

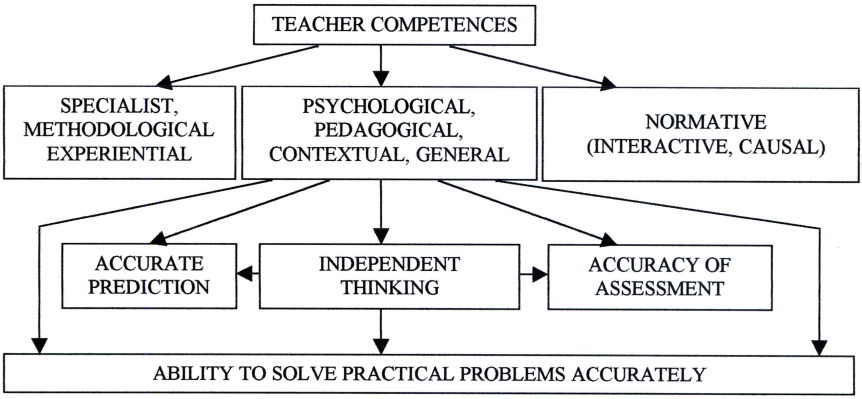

Figure 8: Teacher competences vs. human wisdom

optimal utilisation. Last but not least, independent thinking gives rise to the formation of teacher professional theorising, and on this account it seems to be indispensable.

The relationship between independent thinking and other teacher dimensions is, again, not unidirectional. As has been said, thinking fosters knowledge but the more one knows, the more independent in arriving at decisions one can be. All the dimensions of knowledge, in other words, can contribute to teacher thinking processes and, as a result of thinking, teacher competences composed of eight dimensions become more profound.

All in all, a teacher's competence as a composite of eight dimensions correlates well with a person's knowledge as presented in the educational perspective. Independence of thinking, a primary value in the knowledge of a person as presented in *Figure 7*, is also indispensable for the formation of

the eight dimensions of competences possessed by a language teacher, as presented in *Figure 8.* Hence, a language teacher endowed with specialist competence, methodological competence, psychological competence, pedagogical competence, normative competence, experiential competence, contextual competence and general competence is bound to be a wise person in the understanding of wisdom as an educational value.

2.11. Concluding remarks

This chapter has attempted to define the core competencies basis of second language teachers. Eight domains of content have been identified as responsible for the creation of these competences: specialist competence composed of language proficiency and subject matter knowledge, methodological competence, psychological competence, pedagogical competence, normative competence, experiential competence, contextual competence and general competence. The construct of competences as eight dimensions suggests that teacher competence is a multifaceted yet integrated construct. The composite elements are interrelated with one another and, as one framework, correlate positively with a construct of human wisdom as an educational value. Independent thinking, a value prioritised in both constructs, also gives rise to the creation of teacher personal theories which constitute the core content of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

TEACHERS' PERSONAL THEORIES

Introduction

The purpose of the previous chapter was to examine the nature of the foreign language teacher's competences. As a result, eight fundamental kinds of teacher competences were distinguished which, when treated together, amount to teacher *formal knowledge* which can be accessed and described. On the other hand, different dimensions of teacher knowledge may give rise to the emergence of teacher subjective theories standing for teacher *practical knowledge,* created by teachers as a result of their pedagogical work and reflections on it[15].

It has been assumed that a familiarity with teacher personal theories is indispensable for understanding the work of an effective teacher. Only when the way teachers perceive themselves, their situation and experiences is known, and only when teacher beliefs and views on certain professional issues are understood, can the idea of teacher professionalism be fully grasped. Therefore, this chapter will focus on what these individual theories are, how they originate and how they can be best examined.

3.1. Fundamental concepts and approaches

A good starting point for understanding teachers' personal theories is to provide the main theoretical currents whose influences have affected the way in which we perceive personal theories. These views embrace: a trans-

[15] This distinction is based on Fenstermacher (1994, in Kawecki 2000: 198).

mission approach, a constructivist approach and teacher development approaches.

3.1.1. A transmission approach

Most approaches to the teaching/learning process are based on transferring a predetermined and pre-selected body of knowledge from one person, the expert, to another, the novice. This is essentially a top-down approach in which "the theorist produces knowledge" and "the teacher consumes knowledge" (Kumaravadivelu 1999: 33). Therefore, the relation between the theorist and the teacher, or the theory and the practice, is unidirectional and knowledge is something that can be transmitted in a linear fashion, or, as Williams (1999: 12) calls it, "parcelled".

The transmission understanding of knowledge has been fraught with problems. The division of labour between the master and the pupil has led to the creation of a privileged class of theorists and an underprivileged class of practitioners. Consequently, academic discourse in which practitioners do not originate their own behaviour and remain the pawns of theorists "becomes a medium of communication that expresses and reproduces pedagogical power" (Bourdieu, Passeron and Martin 1996, in Kumaravadivelu 1999: 33).

3.1.2. A constructivist approach

A different view of the teaching/learning process is a constructivist one. Different theorists have approached constructivism differently. Piaget's focus of interest was, for example, the child's natural and spontaneous cognitive activity resulting from a meaningful exploration of environment. Kelly, on the other hand, provided a personal construct theory. To a constructivist, people are basically individuals who bring with them a different set of knowledge and experiences and process the information they encounter in ways that are personal to them. Thus, from a constructivist viewpoint, pre-selected knowledge is not imparted according to some uniform standard. Rather, it is meant to be understood in ways that are personal so that it can have personal significance. As a result, teachers teach something different, as there is no such concept as absolute knowledge or truth. Knowledge is represented and organised in an individual's mind and the way it is reshaped, that is, the way new information is integrated and new connections are made, depends on this individual (cf. Williams 1999).

3.1.3. Teacher Development Approaches

Recent movements in teacher education have emphasised teacher development approaches as a way in which teachers can improve their teaching. Over the past ten years, reflection has become widely accepted, and the seminal publication of Wallace's (1991) *Training Foreign Language Teachers* has become one of the signposts for the 'reflective movement' in TEFL. Subsequently, a number of terms such as 'reflective practice', 'reflective practitioner', 'reflection-in-practice', 'reflection-on-practice' and 'critical reflection' have been suggested, all convincingly arguing that reflection is a desirable aim. Through focusing on critical teaching events (e.g. by analysis of case studies, doing role plays), doing project work (e.g. action research, materials development), observing (e.g. peer observation, use of video protocols), experiencing teaching (e.g. practice teaching, microteaching, internships), reflection is fostered, which helps develop teachers' knowledge about second language teaching and the relevant skills[16].

Alongside reflection, many pleas in the educational literature have concerned exploratory approaches. Jersild in his classic *When Teachers Face Themselves* claims that many teachers feel a need to "examine the significance of the life they are living and the meaning of the work they are doing" (Jersild 1975: 4). What is needed is a personal kind of searching, which enables the teacher to identify their own concerns because "A teacher cannot make much headway in understanding others or in helping others to understand themselves unless he is endeavouring to understand himself" (ibid.: 13).

"Exploratory teaching" is a concept advocated by Allwright and Bailey (1991). They emphasise the role of the teacher who can improve her effectiveness through conducting classroom research. Exploring classroom ideas, both new and "tried and trusted" ones, is a matter of finding out what makes them successful, because in the long run "we need to know why and how they [the ideas] work. Until we can throw more light on those issues, successful teaching will remain a mystery" (ibid.: 197). Thus, exploratory practice encourages teachers to carry out their own systematic studies of what really happens in their classrooms, something that has largely been the province of academics.

A further understanding of an exploratory approach to teacher development has been proposed by Gebhard and Oprandy (1999). Unlike one of the goals of reflection, namely teaching improvement, their aim of teacher exploration is to

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[16] For information on critical classroom events, their identification and analysis, as well as the development of personal judgements to draw conclusions for future critical incidents in teaching, see Tripp (1993).

become aware of one's beliefs and practices, and "using the knowledge and awareness that result from this process to make informed decisions about one's own teaching". The authors claim that their approach is innovative in the sense that it goes beyond the concept of effective teaching because the goal of exploration is "simply to gain awareness of teaching" (ibid.: xiv). Notwithstanding this feature, exploring one's awareness through paying attention to the use of language and behaviour, making connections between personal and teaching lives, trying out new processes and starting with "a beginner's mind" is developing oneself as a teacher although development is not its primary objective.

A more recent account of exploratory practice is offered by Allwright and Hanks (2009) who provide a range of practical suggestions from around the world to encourage teachers to carry out their own research. They argue against standardisation which "implies a 'universalistic view' of learners, seeing them as an 'undifferentiated mass' " (ibid.: 9). Successful teachers, in their understanding, should work to the best standards they are able to, but still treat their learners as unique individuals, rather than "the mass expected to act like each other" (ibid.).

In a word, it can be said that a constructivist approach to teaching, as well as emphases on reflection and exploration, account for the teacher's uniqueness. In other words, they account for the ways in which teachers make their own subjective accounts of teaching. At the same time, once subjective conceptions of eight kinds of knowledge are learnt (cf. *Chapter 2*), personal theories of teaching are accessed better.

3.2. Definition of personal theories

Before we discuss various definitions of personal theories, let us briefly focus on the terminology.

3.2.1. The term

Etymologically the word 'theory' comes from Greek *theasthai*, signifying "to look upon" or "to contemplate" (Trappes-Lomax and McGrath 1999: 2). This same derivation is shared with the word 'theatre', a place for viewing. If these meanings are combined, what is received is an image of a place for looking upon and contemplating, possibly the classroom, in which theory for action is formed by reflection on teaching events.

The word 'personal' meaning 'individual' and 'human' adds to the phrase an element of uniqueness and originality. Thus, etymologically, teacher 'per-

sonal theories' can signify unique observations and reflections made by the teacher on the teacher's theatre, the language classroom.

3.2.2. Definitions of the term

In a constructivist view of knowledge, personal theories represent an opposition to knowledge as understood in the transmission model. The transmission view of learning regards knowledge as 'ready-made recipes', something that can simply be acquired through practising experts, as in the "craft model" (Wallace 1991: 6), or getting familiarised with 'scientific knowledge', as in the "applied science model" (ibid.: 9). In addition to the aforementioned argument presented against recipe knowledge, it has been severely criticised on other grounds. A key argument against a ready-made corpus of knowledge is the fact that "recipe knowledge restricts options for action by limiting the choices available" (Trappes-Lomax and McGrath 1999: 4). Rather than obtaining an insight into the "good practice" model, practitioners need "a thorough familiarity with a range of theoretical underpinnings in order to evaluate their usefulness in particular contexts of use" (ibid.). Since "good practice" implies "context-invariance which is difficult to sustain", like "recipe knowledge", it proves to be counterproductive for language teachers. Hence, "good practice" can in effect amount to a public or official theory of what works best and its "context-invariance" amounts to the "antithesis of teacher-constructed, or personal, theories" (ibid.).

It has been assumed, therefore, that these teacher-constructed theories of teaching provide an orientation to teaching and a framework for practice. Their various aspects are dealt with now.

Rules of practice vs. principles of practice

An important contribution to a better understanding of the notion of teacher personal theory comes from Elbaz (1981). He distinguishes between "rules of practice" and "rules for practice", the latter referred to as "principles of practice". According to his dichotomy:

> [. . .] rules of practice are brief, clearly formulated statements prescribing how to behave in frequently encountered teaching situations. Implementation of a rule of practice is a simple matter of recognising a situation and remembering the rule.

> In contrast a principle of practice is a more general construct than a rule of practice, derived from personal experience, and embodying purpose in a deliberate and reflective way, which can be drawn upon to guide a teacher's actions and explain the reasons for those actions (Clark and Peterson 1986: 290).

Viewed in this light, therefore, *principles of practice* are more sophisticated than *rules of practice* and, because they draw on teacher personal experience, more difficult to acquire. The employment of *principles* can equally signify the teacher's growth as a professional.

Practical theories

A useful dimension for considering the nature of teacher personal theories is the definition of *practical theories* provided by Sanders and McCutcheon (1986: 54-5). According to this definition:

> Practical theories of teaching are the conceptual structures and visions that provide teachers with reasons for acting as they do, and for choosing the teaching activities and curriculum materials they choose in order to be effective. They are principles or propositions that undergird and guide teachers' appreciations, decisions, and actions.

The definition is important in the sense that it focuses on the direct link between such theories and their practical consequences – "acting as they do", "the teaching activities", "curriculum materials". On the other hand, however, such terms as "principles" or "propositions" are problematic because they are unobservable and therefore impossible to measure.

Handal and Louvas (1987: 9) offer a definition of "practical theory" which attempts to address these difficulties:

> [It is] a person's private, integrated but ever-changing system of knowledge, experience and values which is relevant to teaching practice at any particular time . . . it is indeed a practical theory, primarily functioning as a basis or background against which action must be seen, and not as a theoretical and "logical" construct aimed at the scientific purposes of explanation, understanding or prediction.

Hence, "practical theories", in Handal and Louvas's understanding, are again closely related to the "teaching practice". This time, however, they do not serve as "principles" or "propositions", but provide the basis against which one teaches, resulting from the teacher's understanding of knowledge, experience and values (cf. Perry 2000: 119).

Public/professional vs. private/personal theories

Another light is shed on teacher personal theories in the dichotomy between *professional theories* and *personal theories.* O'Hanlon (1993: 245-6) sums up the distinction in the following way:

> A professional theory is a theory which is created and perpetuated within the professional culture. It is a theory which is widely known and understood like the developmental stages of Piaget. Professional theories are generally transmitted via teacher/professional training in colleges, polytechnics and universities. Professional theories form the basis of a shared knowledge and understanding about the "culture" of teaching and provide the opportunity to develop discourse on the implicit and explicit educational issues raised by these theoretical perspectives [. . .]
>
> A personal theory, on the other hand, is an individual theory unique to each person, which is individually developed through the experience of putting professional theories to the test in the practical situation. How each person interprets and adapts their previous learning particularly their reading, understanding and identification of professional theories while they are on the job is potentially their own personal theory.

This distinction is similar to the one drawn by Eraut (1994), who differentiates between *public theories* and *private theories.* Eraut states that public theories are "systems of ideas published in books, discussed in classes and accompanied by a critical literature that expands, interprets, and challenges their meaning and validity". Private theories, on the other hand, are "ideas in people's minds which they use to interpret or explain their experience" (ibid.: 70).

To elucidate this matter further, Williams (1994, in Williams 1999: 14), proposes a model in which different relationships between these concepts are presented (*Figure 9*).

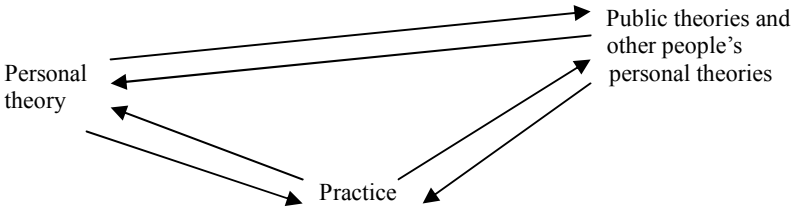

Figure 9: Relationships between public and private theories (Williams 1999: 14)

In this model, all relationships between the concepts are bi-directional. Personal theories affect practice whereas reflection on practice enables

personal theories to be developed. Also, personal theories can be made public whereas public theories can turn into personal theories by being reconstructed. What is more, public theories can be put to practice whereas practice can become public through communication. What is important, therefore, is "to use personal theories in practice, to infer personal theories from practice, to use and reconstruct public theories, to generate personal theories from public ones, and to generate public theories from personal ones" (Williams 1999: 14). Thus, the ability to relate theory to practice in a number of ways is considered essential in this model.

Teachers' maxims

Talking about teacher personal theories, Richards (1998: 53-4) introduced yet another term. On the basis of his conversations with teachers and observations of their lessons, he concludes that:

> [. . .] teachers' belief systems lead to the development of rational principles that serve as a source of how teachers interpret their responsibilities and implement their plans, and that motivate their interactive decisions during a lesson. These principles function like rules for best behaviour in that they guide the teachers' selection of choices from among a range of alternatives. Hence they function as *maxims* that guide the teachers' actions. These maxims are reflected both in how they conduct their teaching as well as in the language they use to talk about it.

Teachers' maxims thus can be viewed as personal working principles that reflect individual philosophies of teaching. This notion of teaching *maxims* corresponds to Elbaz's *principles of practice.* Yet Richards brings to our attention the fact that these philosophies do not only determine what the teacher does in the classroom but can also influence the way the teacher talks about teaching.

Scientific theories vs. subjective theories

Another distinction within teacher theories is drawn between *scientific theories* and *subjective theories*. According to Kallenbach (1999, in Wolski 2000: 55), the following differences can be specified between the two.

First, scientific theories, based on scientific knowledge, are reflective, unnatural, non-spontaneous, characterised by scientific thinking and perceiving. By contrast, subjective theories, fed on common knowledge, are natural, spontaneous, devoid of reflection, pertaining to original thinking and experiencing. Second, scientific theories lend themselves to better understanding, are formal, logical, uniform and coherent, not identified with values, highlighting cause and effect, and open to falsification. On the other hand, subjective theories can be characterised by such categories as generality vs. specificity, certainty vs. uncertainty, greater vs. lesser awareness and greater vs. lesser emotional connotation. Although a number of features are put forward to emphasise the dichotomy, it is worth noticing that the boundary between scientific theories and subjective theories can be very fluid.

Individual theories

Reviewing teacher personal theories, Polak (2000) uses the term *individual theories*, which are divided in terms of structure, content and functions[17]. With reference to individual theories, an interesting aspect stressed by Polak (ibid.: 162-3) is their duality. On the one hand, they are a reflection of reality. On the other hand, however, they determine the way this reality is received. This is why they stand for an instrument thanks to which the teacher adapts to external conditions and which, simultaneously, reshapes the conditions into a system understandable for the teacher. Thus, individual theories amount to an important element in the relations between reality experienced by the teacher and herself.

Pedagogical ideologies

In addition to the characteristics presented above, Dylak (2000) finds that teacher personal theories, called by him *teacher pedagogical ideologies*, are usually subordinated to one, easily identifiable idea that delimits teachers'

[17] In terms of structure, individual theories are divided into theories of aims, justifications and plans of actions vs. theories of educational processes. In terms of content, educational theories are divided into romantic theories, culture-transmission theories, progressive theories, and anti-pedagogical theories. In terms of functions, individual theories are divided into descriptive theories and evaluative theories. For details, see Kruszewski (2000 b: 164-70).

pedagogical personalities[18]. These convictions are not necessarily confirmed empirically. Yet in accordance with the principle of self-fulfilling prophecies fuelled by teacher "magical" and "mythical" thinking[19], they influence teacher interpretations of the events. Hence they act as stable directives resistant to changes or modifications.

3.2.3. Teachers' personal theories: an overview

It is clear from the discussion above that researchers differ in their understanding of the notion of teacher personal theory. Moreover, there is little consensus about conceptual and terminological aspects[20]. Consequently, in the subject matter literature, teacher personal theories have been referred to as *principles of practice, practical theories, private theories, teaching maxims, subjective theories, individual theories, pedagogical ideologies, etc.*

To better understand the issues involved in arriving at an agreement concerning the notion of a teacher personal theory, let us now look at some attempts to define teacher personal theories, presented in chronological order in Table 1.

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[18] Dylak (2000: 179-84) presents several examples of teacher pedagogical ideologies grouped under one heading. These are: "It doesn't concern me" (the teacher does not realise the need to change herself). "Leon's effect" (the teacher belittles the differences and glorifies the similarities between new ideas and her practice), "ideology of only one proper method" (the teacher is convinced that there are ready-made answers to everything), "the teacher knows better" (the conviction that the teacher should know everything), "complex of a signpost" and "Socrates' moral intellectualism" (the teacher knows what to do but she does not put it into practice), "Horace's dilemmas" (the teacher is convinced athat therte exists a gap between theory and practice), "thinking about teaching in terms of quantity" (the teacher promotes factual knowledge and memory rather than understanding procedures).

[19] "Magical thinking" is based on causes linking phenomena which cannot be explained rationally. This thinking is illogical. A good example of magical thinking can be encouraging teachers to work more effectively by resorting to messianistic categories rather than paying them more (Dylak 2000: 178). By contrast, in "mythical thinking" the two phenomena are logically connected, yet this connection is only apparent. An example of this thinking can be a conviction that pedagogical talent (rather than hard work) is the sole cause of teacher effectiveness (ibid.: 179).

[20] An exhaustive number of labels appearing in the literature on language teacher cognition is listed in Borg (2006: 47-9).

Table1: Personal theory definitions – an overview

Source	Definition
Elbaz (1981)	"... a principle of practice is a ...general construct..., derived from personal experience, and embodying purpose in a deliberate and reflective way, which can be drawn upon to guide a teacher's actions and explain the reasons for these actions".
Sanders and McCutcheon (1986: 54-5)	"Practical theories of teaching are the conceptual structures and visions that provide teachers with reasons for acting as they do, and for choosing the teaching activities and curriculum materials they choose...principles or propositions that undergird and guide teachers' appreciations, decisions and actions".
Clandinin and Connelly (1986, in Woods 1996: 192-3)	"personal practical knowledge" or "images" which have "strong affective connotations, and are associated with powerful beliefs and feelings about what are 'right' ways of teaching, rooted in the past life experiences".
Handal and Louvas (1987: 9)	"... a person's private, integrated but ever-changing system of knowledge, experience and values which is relevant to teaching practice at any particular time... primarily functioning as a basis or background against which action must be seen...".
Shulman (1987: 11)	"The final source or the knowledge base [of teaching]... the least codified at all. It is the wisdom of practice itself, the maxims that guide (or provide reflective rationalisation for) the practice of able teachers".
O'Hanlon (1993: 245-6)	"... an individual theory unique to each person, which is individually developed through the experience of putting professional theories to the test in the practical situation. How each person interprets and adapts their previous learning particularly their reading, understanding and identification of professional theories while they are on the job...".
Lamb (1994, in Adamska 2000: 15)	"... a mix of vaguely perceived ideas and relationships, a primitive conceptual framework".
Eraut (1994: 70)	"... ideas in people's minds which they use to interpret or explain their experience".

Source	Definition
Richards (1998: 53-4)	"... rational principles that serve as a source of how teachers interpret their responsibilities and implement their plans... rules for best behaviour in that they guide the teacher's selection of choices from among a range of alternatives... reflected in how [teachers] conduct their teaching as well as in the language they use to talk about it...".
Wolski (2000:57)	Complex constructs of knowledge, built on personal experience which combine subjectively received, relevant aspects in an individual use. They are formed through explication of certain experiences onto other fields of cognition.
Polak (2000:162)	"... an instrument of adaptation to the conditions in which a teacher acts"
Dylak (2000:178)	"... certain sets of convictions, not always systematised, but subordinated to one identifiable idea..."

3.2.4. Teachers' personal theories characteristics

The definitions quoted above reveal some problems about the nature of teacher personal theories. The researchers seem to disagree as to whether the status of theories should be acknowledged, whether they are "wisdom of practice" (Shulman 1987: 11) or "a mix of vaguely perceived ideas, ... a primitive conceptual framework" (Lamb 1994: 140, in Adamska 2000: 15). On the other hand, researchers seem to agree about the practical and personal nature of theories in so far as they determine teacher actions and are unique to an individual. Careful analysis of these definitions leaves us with the following specification of features that seem to be characteristic of teacher personal theories:

1. Personal theories are derived from teacher experience and values.
2. Personal theories serve as a point of reference for teacher appreciation and actions.
3. Personal theories determine the way teachers talk about teaching
4. Personal theories are unique to each teacher.
5. Personal theories are changing over time as new experience is gained.
6. Personal theories are context-based.

7. Personal theories are difficult to codify and therefore to measure.
8. Personal theories result from explicating experiences onto other areas of cognition.
9. Personal theories help the teacher adapt to external conditions.
10. Personal theories are subordinated to one identifiable idea.

3.3. Sources of teachers' personal theories

Teacher personal theories built out of different kinds of knowledge generally provide the background to much of the teachers' decision-making and action, and thus constitute what Prahbu (1990) terms a teacher's "sense of plausibility", or what Richards and Lockhart (1994: 30) refer to as the "culture of teaching".

Research into teachers' belief systems suggests that teacher personal theories usually originate from teachers' experiences as language learners, personality factors, teaching principles derived from research, established practice or convictions of what works best. These sources of teacher personal theories as well as the research endeavours to which they have led are discussed below.

3.3.1. Teachers' own experience as language learners

It appears that some aspects of teaching are influenced by the experience of having once been a student. In this understanding, teacher beliefs about teaching are frequently a reflection of how they themselves were once taught.

Many researchers have reported the power held by early authority figures, such as teachers, in a future teacher's concept of teaching and their subsequent decision to enter the field. Lortie (1975) refers to this phenomenon as the "apprenticeship of observation". He finds that teaching is one of the few professions where the practitioner has been in the client (student) role for an extended period before switching to the professional role. Likewise, Kennedy (1990: 17, in Bailey *et al*. 1996: 11) notes that "Teachers acquire seemingly indelible imprints from their own experiences as students and these imprints are tremendously difficult to shake". What is more, Freeman (1992: 3-4, in ibid.), in his study of teachers' language learning experiences, comments that "the memories of instruction... function as de facto guides for teachers as they approach what they do in the

classroom" and that "the urge to change and the pull to do what is familiar create a central tension in teachers' thinking about their practice". It comes as no surprise, therefore, that prior experiences with their own teachers affect and will continue to influence the ways teachers think and act about teaching.

3.3.2. Personality factors

Some teachers have personal preferences for certain teaching patterns, arrangements, or activities because they match their personalities. An interesting study into teachers' personalities was undertaken as early as the 1950s by Dobrowolski (1959). His project concentrated on examining types of teacher minds on the basis of analyses of a series of lessons (both lesson plans and lesson observations) as well as lengthy interviews with those teachers. Investigating 351 teachers, Dobrowolski distinguished six types of 'mind' characterised by the following features:

- *the rational*, characterised by a tendency towards reflection, usually accompanied by concentrated attention and logical thinking; rational teachers are more interested in the content of instruction, and the pupil is often perceived as the object of mind training;
- *the intuitive*, characterised by a direct approach to reality, a friend of pupils, taking care of educational atmosphere, preparing pupils for the needs of life;
- *the organisational*, fond of purposeful work, characterised by respect for hierarchy and ability to divide their attention, stressing the development of pupils' character and the quality of their work;
- *the systematic*, prone to subordination with a tendency to simplification, following accepted patterns, stressing the accuracy of pupils' work;
- *the imaginative*, inclined towards the arts, in need of impressions and emotions, subjective, lively and descriptive, not very demanding although good at creating interest;
- *the expressive*, full of suggestiveness and emotional expressiveness, fond of sophistication and prevalence of form over idea, instrumental in enlivening the class, sometimes introducing aesthetic elements.

It is obvious that Dobrowolski's types of teacher minds, although proposed almost half a century ago, can be applied to contemporary language teachers as well. Seen in this light, different teacher preferences for particular teaching events may not result from these teachers' pedagogical talents but different properties of their mental structures.

3.3.3. Research-based teaching principles

Some teachers may draw on their understanding of teaching principles from research on the psychology of learning, second language acquisition, or education. They believe that teaching principles validated by scientific research and supported by experimentation and empirical investigation are worth applying in the classroom. Zahorik (1986, in Richards 1998) refers to *operationalising learning principles, following a tested model,* and *doing what effective teachers do* as examples of research-based teaching principles.

Operationalising learning principles implies developing teaching principles from research in psychology, particularly memory, motivation, and other factors considered to be important in language learning. In the field of second language education, multiple-intelligence approaches to language teaching or learner training can serve as examples of applications of learning research to language teaching.

Following a tested model of teaching involves applying conceptions of good teaching as drawn from experimental research on classroom teaching. Zahorik (1986, in ibid.: 37) claims that "a view of good teaching . . . is defined in terms of specific acts". An example of an approach of this kind was Long's research on teachers' question patterns and *wait-time.* Long (1984, in Chaudron 1988) argues that teachers' use of more *referential questions* (genuine questions in which the answer cannot be predicted) contributes more to the quality of interaction than *display questions* (questions asked to elicit a particular structure and for which answers can be predicted). Consequently, the provision of longer wait-time after questions is advocated[21]. Thus, by identifying specific teaching behaviours, such as question patterns and wait--time, a conception of good teaching is built.

Doing what effective teachers do implies deriving teaching principles from studies of the practices of the so called 'good' teachers. This process involves identifying exemplary schools where certain teachers excel other teachers in performing their job. Since the most important research on this issue has already been discussed (see *Chapter 1*), it can be inferred that *active teaching*, as this approach is labelled in general education, or *modelling,* as it is referred to in Neuro-Linguistic Programming, can be a cogent reason for the incorporation of teaching principles by some teachers.

To sum up, the three approaches derived from research-based theory of teaching can be considered as important criteria for the origin of teacher be-

[21] Fisher (1999) proposes a 3-second 'wait time', Holley and King (1971, in Chaudron 1988) argue for at least a 5-second wait.

liefs about language teaching. They represent a view of teaching as a type of scientific activity, or at least one that is informed and validated by empirical investigation.

3.3.4. Principles derived from an approach or method

Teachers may believe in the effectiveness of a particular method or approach to teaching. If this is the case, they consistently try to implement this method or approach, or some parts of it, into their own teaching. Communicative Language Teaching is an example of a teaching conception based around the theory of communicative competence (cf. *Chapter 1*). Initiated as the opposition to grammar-oriented approaches, Communicative Language Teaching was not propelled by a body of empirical research that sought to demonstrate its effectiveness over grammar-based programmes. Rather, it quickly became the new orthodoxy which was rapidly implemented worldwide (Richards 1998: 40). Hence, teaching conceptions derived from a particular method or approach are justified on logical, philosophical, moral, or other grounds. In contrast to research-based principles, their truth is not based on *a posteriori* established facts but "on what ought to work" (Zahorik 1986, in Richards 1998: 38-9).

3.3.5. Established practice

Teaching principles derived from established practice within a school or an institution may also influence language teachers' systems of beliefs. Preference for certain teaching styles and practices is seen to be educationally or ideologically desirable, whereas others, incompatible with them, can be ethically or politically unsupportable.

Values or ideologically-based approaches in teaching English as a second or foreign language are not difficult to identify. Incorporating the 'culture of English-speaking countries' component within the school curriculum is a good case in point. For example, it must be agreed upon what culture is[22], which culture to teach, what issues within it and why, whose culture to teach with reference to a number of English speaking countries, and how to teach it so that students can fully understand or appreciate it without the risk of

[22] A common division exists between culture with big *C* (literature, history, fine arts) vs. culture with small *c* (people's lifestyles and values).

simplifying it. It is obvious that such approaches appeal to cultural, educational, or social value systems in justifying their proposals.

Viewed in this light, teaching is believed to encompass a moral or ideological dimension. Teaching conceptions derived from "established practice", therefore, are data-free theories that are based on "what is morally right" (ibid.).

3.3.6. Experience of what works best

Richards and Lockhart (1994: 31) claim that for many teachers teaching experience can provide information influencing their system of beliefs about teaching. A teacher may have found that some teaching strategies work well whereas others do not. Therefore, the beliefs the teacher holds are propelled by what the teacher has found effective in her own practice. The beliefs derived from teaching experience amount to the *experiential knowledge* discussed in *Chapter 2*.

3.3.7. Origins of language teacher beliefs – a summary

It can be concluded that a number of sources influence language teachers' belief systems and consequently lead to the emergence of individual teacher personal theories. All the sources aforementioned are presented together in *Figure 10*.

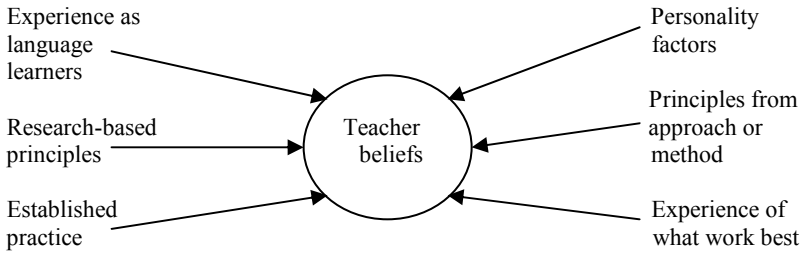

Figure 10: Origins of language teacher beliefs

They are founded on the goals, values, and assumptions teachers claim in relation to the content and process of teaching, as well as their understanding of the systems in which they work and their roles within it.

3.4. Language teacher beliefs

Teacher beliefs make up the content of teachers' personal theories. With reference to second or foreign language teachers, the most important teacher assumptions concern beliefs about the language taught, the curriculum, learning, teaching and the language teaching profession.

3.4.1. Beliefs about language

Teacher beliefs about the language taught have an important function in a language course, where language is the means by which the subject matter is taught, the feature that it shares with other courses, as well as the subject matter itself. The variations of teacher beliefs in this respect may, for example, refer to what language is or what 'proper' language is, and these assumptions are usually deeply held. They may not even be consciously formulated but only implicit in the concepts employed to talk about languages.

Language may represent different things to different people. For some people it primarily means communicating, for example doing business transactions. For others it is the language of English literature. Some people associate it with the language of the English-speaking world. Others see it as the language of colonialism. People's views of a language are influenced by contacts they have had with the language and its speakers. In the case of English, these contacts vary significantly from one individual to another.

In addition to 'folk' conception of the definition of language, language teachers have been influenced by theoretical claims acquired while studying the language at university or college. For example, they were exposed to the arguments that language is a system of relationships or a structure of mutually supporting parts, arranged in a hierarchical order. In this sense, language is regarded as a set of structures whose constituent elements can be selected and planned to be taught through imitation, memorisation, mechanical drills, and practice of sentence patterns as separate items. Other teachers may have been more influenced by Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar which recognises language as 'rule-governed', and stresses its productivity and creativity. For those teachers a language does not equal a store of a large number of ready-made sentences; but the rules for creating and understanding these sentences (cf. Diller 1978: 25). In addition, some teachers may contrast 'linguistic', 'grammatical', 'structural' or 'formal' approaches to language teaching with 'comunicative' or 'functional' approaches which, in opposition to the former, view L2 in a specified social context.

Henceforth, uses of language are applied to social settings, in the hope that language pedagogy would become more relevant to language learners' needs. Moreover, some teachers may have heard that language is a system consisting of phonology, syntax, lexicon and discourse or a single underlying ability composed of four discrete abilities ('the four skills') and a number of microskills. Thus, the assumptions internalised by individual language teachers about the nature of language may be affected by theoretical literature on what language is, what it consists of and how it works.

Considering the range of differences concerning the nature of language, the examination of underlying beliefs teachers hold about English and the way they influence teacher attitudes toward teaching seems to be very instructive. Although teachers' beliefs about English may sometimes prove stereotypical, "these beliefs do nevertheless express realities which may influence classroom practices" (Richards and Lockhart 1994: 33).

3.4.2. Beliefs about curriculum

Another important area of teachers' beliefs is related to the way teachers interpret a curriculum. The understanding of a curriculum is based here on a definition provided by Woods (1996: 216) which "involves issues concerning the goals of the course, the content to be taught as well as the ways in which the teaching is to be carried out". Information about the curriculum can be accessed through procedures advocated by "the institution, the supervisor, the materials, or particular combinations of these, depending on the spoken and unspoken traditions of the institution". The way different teachers interpret these curricular procedures has an important impact on the teaching that takes place. In other words, in addition to the ways of thinking valued in the institution (the culture of the institution), any language teaching programme also reflects the beliefs of individual teachers.

Teachers' views on such aspects of the programme as lesson planning, the use of lesson objectives, and assessment may lead to different classroom practices. Using the course book can divide language teachers, as well. Some teachers make significant use of published textbooks and 'teach to the book', making the textbook responsible for many of their classroom decisions[23]. Still others may regard textbooks as an obstacle to their creativity and prefer to make more use of authentic or teacher-generated materials.

[23] Richards (1998: 132) warns against the "deskilling" which may occur if teachers allow textbooks to decide for them.

Teachers may also have very specific beliefs about problems with the programmes they work in. Richards and Lockhart (1994: 39) note that in their study teachers' major problems concerned such worries as teachers' isolation, lack of understanding of the teaching programme philosophy, improper placement of students into classes as well as too few teachers' meetings or ignorance of the communicative approach in the assessment instruments. Last but not least, teachers' perception of a language classroom can act as spectacles enabling to see teachers' concerns more clearly.

In general, it can be said that teachers' beliefs concerning the curriculum are as diverse as the programmes they happen to function in seem to be. Nevertheless, they reflect teacher classroom practices and this is why they deserve to be reckoned with.

3.4.3. Beliefs about learning

It is impossible to speculate about teaching without references to learning. The question of what makes an effective teacher must ultimately be concerned with what and how much learners learn and what learning is considered to be. Williams and Burden (1997: 60) point out that "We can only be really effective teachers if we are clear in our minds what we mean by learning because only then can we know what kinds of learning outcomes we want our learners to achieve".

Teachers' assumptions about learning may have been influenced by psychological learning theories studied at university or teaching colleges. These theoretical claims generally represent either mechanistic or rationalistic influences. According to Skinner's Operant Conditioning, it is consequences of learners' behaviours that increase or decrease the likelihood of a recurrence of their responses. Skinner's learning theory has had a lasting impact on learning foreign languages, with heavy reliance on the controlled practice of verbal operants and reinforcement. On the other hand, the cognitive theory of learning as put forward by Ausubel is founded on relating new material to relevant established entities in cognitive structure, thereby rejecting conditioning models based on repetition and rote practice in language teaching. Instead, Ausubel's Meaningful Learning theory assumes that teachers make use of definitions, rules, paradigms so as to facilitate the subsumption of items into a more inclusive conceptual system. Quite a departure from Skinnerian learning theory and even from Ausubel's cognitive theory seems to be Rogers' humanism. It has important implications for learning because the focus is away from 'teaching' and toward 'learning'. Rogers' learning assumes an altered role of the

teacher, who is now a facilitator of learning thanks to establishing interpersonal relationships with the learner (cf. *Chapter 1*).

As a result of their comprehensive review of the literature on approaches to learning, Gow and Kember (1993, in Willliams and Burden 1997) suggest that most conceptions of learning can be represented by the following headings:

- a quantitative increase in knowledge,
- memorisation,
- the acquisition of facts, procedures etc. which can be retained and/or used in practice,
- the abstraction of meaning,
- an interpretative process aimed at the understanding of reality,
- some form of personal change (in ibid.: 61).

Williams and Burden (ibid.) claim that the first three conceptions of learning can be referred to as *reproductive,* whereas the subsequent three are *meaning-based.* The reproductive category draws on transmission of knowledge and absorption of knowledge through the learning "of procedures which can be used in practice". The meaning-based group, on the other hand, relies more on the issue of purposefulness where meaning is extracted, interpreted and personally relevant to the learner. Both headings are not mutually exclusive because most methods in language teaching belong to overlapping categories, and most teachers' views on conceptions of learning contain a combination of the two.

It is important, however, that teachers' views on learning coincide with the assumptions learners hold about learning. If this is not the case, accommodating classroom practices to match them more closely to students' expectations and clarifying to learners the justification for teachers' classroom practices seems indispensable. The consequences of failing to do so are likely to result in misunderstanding and mistrust on the part of both teachers and learners.

3.4.4. Beliefs about teaching

As important as their views about language, learning and curriculum are language teachers' beliefs about teaching. Teaching is a very personal activity, and it is not surprising that individual teachers bring to teaching very different beliefs and assumptions about what constitutes effective teaching. These views imply the preference for a particular teaching style or a teaching strategy they deem to be the most effective in the language classroom.

Teaching styles

There exist certain coherent styles of teaching. They consist of definite viewpoints on the teacher, teaching, the learner, learning, course materials and objectives. In other words, they represent a teacher's understanding of what teaching is and what it ought to be. Katz (1996: 61) points out that a particular teaching style "emerges as a set of behaviours arranged into varying patterns" that result from "proportion and frequency of occurrence, as well as the presence or absence of contrasting units".

Examining teacher styles, Komorowska (1993) draws attention to the aspect of the organisation of the process of learning by the teacher, which serves as a starting point for her division of the following teacher styles: the autocratic, the laissez-faire, the paternalistic, the consultative, the participatory and the democratic style.

The autocratic style

The autocratic style is the style of teacher management in which she takes full responsibility for students, sets objectives and makes plans by herself, manages the class and gives instructions without ever consulting the group, and expects the instructions to be thoroughly carried out (Komorowska 2005: 107). According to Ryans (in Janowski 1998: 118), the teachers in favour of the autocratic style do not tolerate any ideas on the students' part, and in general they instruct students without participating in their activities. Hence, students taught in the autocratic style are very disciplined, sometimes under threat, and usually cover the learning content through mechanical memorisation.

The laissez-faire style

In opposition to the autocratic style, the laissez-faire style is characterised by a lack of teacher-imposed restrictions and a great deal of student freedom. Students, especially those who are hard-working and independent, may work on their own and develop their ideas freely without much of the teacher's interference. Therefore, this style is considered to provide no ground for the teacher-student conflicts.

The paternalistic style

Like the autocratic style, the paternalistic style is characterised by the teacher's giving instructions and setting objectives. Unlike the autocratic style, in the paternalistic style teachers justify and explain to students their decisions concerning the material or techniques chosen. Thus, they take care that learn-

ers understand their classroom behaviours, which may be significant in the case of students not mature enough to think independently.

The consultative style

The consultative style is characterised not only by the teacher's provision of explanations of their decisions, but also by the teacher's changing of decisions under students' influence and suggestion. Komorowska (2005: 108) claims that in the previous styles such teacher behaviour would equal 'losing face', whereas in the consultative style students are encouraged to take an active part in making key decisions regarding their activities or deadlines.

The participatory style

The participatory style is characteristic of teachers who, before taking an important decision, inquire about students' opinions. However, the teacher's final decision does not necessarily correspond to students' suggestions. A significant aspect of this style is that learners regularly take part in decision-making, which allows for developing good teacher-student rapport.

The democratic style

The democratic style is typical of teachers who set precise boundaries within which students act (ibid.: 109). According to Ryans (in Janowski 1998: 119) teachers who favour this style:

- point out to students a mode of behaviour, not necessarily expecting them to act accordingly,
- exchange ideas with students,
- encourage students to express their opinions,
- participate in negotiated activities, without domination.

Basically, the class conducted under this style guarantees the realisation of the syllabus and, in addition, provides students with freedom and responsibility for their work.

In a word, all teacher styles distinguished by Komorowska can be orientated towards educational aspects, for instance students' behaviours or work atmosphere, or didactic effects, for instance syllabus-related tasks (Komorowska 2005: 109).

Another presentation of teaching styles is based on Fenstermacher and Soltis's (2000) distinctions and comprises the three most representative styles: the managing style, the therapeutic style and the liberating style.

The managing style

The *managing* style is the most frequent style encountered in contemporary schools. It can be characterised by five essential features: the engaged time, the teacher's instructions, corrective feedback, reinforcement and student learning opportunity. The engaged time, in contrast to the assigned time, is the *real* amount of time spent by a learner on studying the material. The teacher's instructions are to make students' attention concentrate on the content of learning. Teachers who make intensive use of corrective feedback, based on the teacher's quick correction of students, as well as instructions in the early stages of learning, are believed to influence students' progress more than those who do not (ibid.: 24). Reinforcement (or reward), was originated by Thorndike's 'stimulus-response-reinforcement' scheme and made famous by Skinner, who claimed that learning is based on constructing a sequence of reinforcements. In the style discussed, reinforcement can assume the form of a good mark, verbal praise or any other sign of the teacher's approval. Finally, student learning opportunity is an optimal way created for the student to learn what is supposed to be learnt. If, for example, the learning material is presented too quickly, or in too complicated a way, the learning opportunity for students does not exist.

In brief, the *managing* style implies that the teacher uses her organisational and managerial skills to convey certain facts, ideas, conceptions in the best possible way for students to acquire them. Duty fulfilment, results achievement and responsibility for lack of progress make the task the most important issue in this style. In the literature the *managing* style is often presented as 'effective teaching', and studies on the *managing* style are often referred to as process-product studies (see *Chapter 1*).

The therapeutic style

The *therapeutic* style is the style originating from humanistic psychology and its philosophical pillar - existentialism. A characteristic aspect of this style is *authenticity*. The learner's authenticity is developed thanks to helping the learner make choices about what knowledge is to be acquired. Then, learning carries for students personal connotations, is not imposed, and is therefore *authentic*. The teacher's authenticity occurs when she is honest towards learners about, for example, her weaknesses, errors, emotions. Because the teacher admits to her feelings, there is no need to impose them on learners. Encouraging and suggesting, supporting in knowledge getting, rather than transmitting it, are, therefore, the functions of the teacher in the *therapeutic* style.

In a word, the *therapeutic* style transfers the main emphasis from the material to be learnt onto the learner's internal features. Preparation of students to become authentic, self-actualised individuals, able to make choices and bear their consequences, rather than simple acquisition of the teacher's pre-selected material, is the thing that distinguishes this style from the *managing* one.

The liberating style

Like the *managing* style, the *liberating* style can be characterised by its emphasis on the material to be taught. Unlike the managing style, however, the material in the liberating style is not only conveyed to develop measurable competencies. Its principal role is to determine the manner of teaching and liberate certain procedures proper for acquiring a specific subject matter. The teaching manner can be defined as a stable disposition to act in a certain way in repetitive conditions (ibid.: 47). The principal claim of this style is, therefore, that each subject imposes a certain kind of teaching manner restricted only by the nature and complexity of its material.

As teaching manner is so important in the *liberating* style, what it will look like in the language teacher seems worth considering. The content to be taught is again a determining factor here. If one, for example, treats literature as a medium to teaching a foreign language, the teacher's emotionality, expressiveness as well as willingness to involve students in her feelings are to be expected. If, on the other hand, teaching a language means for the teacher making students communicate in that language, the manner of teaching presented by her will most probably entail her being a very communicative person.

In short, teaching manner is part of the material to be taught. Through teaching manner the teacher conveys the material as well as the way of dealing with it. Hence, students learn not only what is said by the teacher but also what is done with it by the teacher. This aspect of teaching, although part of the so called 'hidden curriculum', amounts to being a key element of this style. Thus, acquiring a refined body of subject matter knowledge and constant developing the manner of teaching it seems to be extremely important for the teacher in the *liberating* style.

It can be concluded that all teaching styles presented above are slightly different and, on this account, they may cause different problems. In Fenstermacher and Soltis's (2000) division, one teacher can teach according to the managing style and, consequently, restrict the material to the knowledge base, failing to take care of the student's situation. Another teacher can apply the therapeutic style in which learners are consulted about what their learning preferences are, although this style can still be received as anarchy by many a parent. Still another teacher can strive to liberate learners' minds

through constant developing of her knowledge and deepening her teaching manner to find that, for example, her style agrees only with the privileged few, both economically and intellectually. Perhaps a compromise of three styles can offer a solution, one in which a foreign language teacher can find her own teaching style.

Teaching strategies

A teaching style favoured by a teacher is a cogent reason to make use of the teaching strategies compatible with the style. Providing a definition of a language teaching strategy, Marton (1988: 2) claims that it is "a globally conceived set of pedagogical procedures imposing a definite learning strategy on the learner directly leading to the development of competence in the target language".

Accordingly, Marton (ibid.) postulates the existence of four language teaching strategies labelled as: the *receptive strategy,* the *communicative strategy,* the *reconstructive strategy,* and the *eclectic strategy*. The *receptive* strategy is based on the assumption that once learners are exposed to meaningful spoken and written input in the target language, they develop their receptive, as well as potential productive skills. This is possible thanks to one global linguistic competence which develops no matter which activities put it into motion. The *communicative* strategy also promotes meaningful exposure to the target language but, additionally, from the very beginning, learners are encouraged to produce their own utterances in the target language despite their linguistic deficiencies, which contribute to inaccuracy and ill-formations. The *reconstructive* strategy, very much related to the psychological schema of information processing, consists of a gradual and totally controlled development of competence in the target language by participating in reconstructive activities, such as re-narrating L2 texts and adapting them to the learner's personal experiences. Finally, the *eclectic* strategy should be understood as a principled combination of the previous strategies that can be usefully applied to remedial teaching. In this way, the four teaching strategies highlight particular classroom activities used in the mode of instruction adopted by a language teacher.

The definition of a teaching strategy offered by Stern (1992: 277) refers to "broad intentional action", or "instructional option" (ibid.: 278) adopted by a language teacher. Accordingly, he distinguishes three language teaching strategies: the *intralingual-crosslingual strategy,* the *analytic-experiential strategy*, and the *explicit-implicit strategy*. The *intralingual-crosslingual* strategy basically

depends on translation, which is a principal factor in the crosslingual strategy and totally absent in the intralingual strategy. A factor attracting attention in the *analytic-experiential* strategy is the treatment of content. The analytic strategy encourages the learner to treat the target language and culture as objects to be analytically studied, whereas the experiential strategy invites the learner to use the language globally, for a purpose, concentrating on the message rather than a linguistic code. Finally, a criterion feature of the *explicit-implicit* strategy is whether the learner should approach the learning task as an intellectual exercise, or rather learn intuitively, without conscious thinking effort. The former strategy is referred to as the explicit strategy whereas the latter one is called the implicit strategy. Although sharing a number of features with the analytic approach (ibid.: 327), the explicit strategy is not identical with the analytic strategy. Likewise, the implicit strategy is not synonymous with the experiential strategy because the former one can "encompass implicit code--focused presentation and practice techniques which fall within the analytic strategy" (ibid.: 328). Intralingual and crosslingual strategies can be both explicit or implicit. Despite these definitions, Stern's teaching strategies do not have to be perceived in absolute terms. Teacher techniques falling dominantly under the heading of one strategy rather than the others can be decisive about her instructional option.

Still another division of teaching strategies is put forward by Komorowska (2005) who distinguishes as many as six strategies typical of teachers trying to avoid conflicts in the classroom. Her strategies resemble Woods'[24] (in Janowski 1998: 131-8) "survival strategies" and include the following ones: the *activity strategy,* the *routine strategy,* the *withdrawal strategy*, the *power strategy,* the *fraternisation strategy,* and the *negotiation strategy.* The first three strategies are heavily content dominated while the latter three involve the student and teacher-student interaction.

The *activity strategy* is characteristic of the teachers who try to avoid discipline problems through maximising the number of classroom activities. According to Janowski, the main premise of this strategy is to "keep on doing something no matter how much sense is involved in it" (1998: 136). In this strategy, teachers assign so many activities that their students have little time and energy to do anything else but perform the teacher's assignments.

The *routine strategy* is a characteristic strategy of the teachers who "use identical ways of starting a lesson, taking the register, checking homework, presenting new material, etc." (Komorowska 2005: 110). Every class of such

[24] Woods distinguishes two more teacher survival strategies: the socialisation strategy and the moralisation strategy. For details, see Janowski (1998: 131-6).

teachers has its fixed structure, and according to Woods (in Janowski 1998:135), teachers would be completely exhausted were it not to be applied because routines reduce teacher tension connected with cognitive information processing (cf. Sędek 2001: 271).

The *withdrawal strategy* characterises teachers who do not pay attention to the process of learning, spend considerable amount of time on, for example, looking out of the window and, in a word, waste the time of students and themselves. This strategy rarely results in student progress but, fortunately, few teachers apply it regularly.

The *power strategy* is characteristic of teachers who favour the autocratic style of management. Using this strategy, teachers do not approve of any objections, and even concentrate their attention on students' clothes, appearance, manner of speaking, or behaviour (Komorowska 2005: 111). Janowski (1998: 133) notes that the proponents of this strategy probably started their teaching careers with over-idealistic views of the child's nature and educational science. On pedagogical failure, however, they resorted to the autocratic style which, in their understanding, would provide help.

The *fraternisation strategy* is characteristic of teachers who enjoy the laissez-faire style of management. Janowski (ibid.) reports that those teachers "become a member of children's world" so that they can be on friendly terms with their students, even at the cost of giving up their position and requirements. Nevertheless, teachers following this strategy usually end up losing student respect, which in consequence contributes to the loss of student learning success.

The *negotiation strategy* is based on requests, promises, praise and threats as well as discussion of rules with the group. It implies, therefore, that students' opinions and preferences are taken into consideration by the teacher. Yet, Komorowska (2005: 112) warns that when certain permitted behaviours lack clarity, this strategy may turn into "a bargaining game", definitely unfavourable from an educational point of view. Nonetheless, this strategy may prove successful in attaining good teacher-student relationships along with preserving the leading role of the teacher in class once it is clearly defined what behaviours are not subject to negotiation.

To sum up the discussion of teaching strategies, it can be said that they refer to different areas of teacher classroom activities. Some of them amount to preferred pedagogical procedures (Marton's strategies) or instructional modes (Stern's strategies), while others focus more on teacher survival in the classroom (Woods' and Komorowska's strategies). All of them, however, constitute the teacher's belief system to a certain degree,

and, in turn, influence what teachers consider to be teacher effectiveness in the language classroom.

3.4.5. Beliefs about the language teaching profession

Professionalism is a recurring topic of language teachers and language teacher educators. Language teaching is not universally regarded as profession in so far as to involve specialised skill and knowledge, to be a valued lifelong career and to offer a good deal of satisfaction. The degree to which individual teachers develop a sense of professionalism depends on their working conditions, their personal goals and ambitions, and the career possibilities available to them (Richards and Lockhart 1994: 40).

Relating the notion of professionalism to the work of the English teacher, Ur (2005: 388-91) suggests that the understanding of the word "professional" can be better grasped by contrasting it with such concepts as "lay", "amateur", "technician" and "academic". In contrast to "lay" people, professional English teachers belong to one identifiable group, inaccessible to others, whose members communicate between themselves employing vocabulary that is not readily comprehensible to a lay person. The distinction between the professional and the amateur is based on differences in performance in the field, involving the quality of preparation, standards and commitment. In opposition to the "technician" who has acquired certain teaching skills, the professional English teacher understands the principles underlying them, is ready to articulate them, relate them to others and innovate them. Finally, Ur (ibid.: 390) claims that "an academic" is not a professional because professional English teachers are primarily occupied with real-time action rather than thought, think in order to improve teaching rather than refine thinking, are interested in finding out what works rather than the truth or more information, are immediate, rather than indirect, agents of real change and, last but not least, are evaluated by the extent to which they bring about change rather than by their publications. Hence, becoming a professional language teacher is not an equivalent of being a teacher of English. The above criteria have to be met if one aspires to take pride in being considered a professional teacher of English.

As the above discussion demonstrates, teachers' beliefs about their profession consider the way teachers view themselves as professional people. Yet, setting the word 'professional' in opposition to other concepts may offer an understanding of professionalism from a different perspective.

3.4.6. Teacher beliefs – a summary

There is a growing body of evidence to indicate that teachers are highly influenced by their beliefs and assumptions[25], which in turn are closely linked to their values, views of the world and to their conceptions of their place within it. Reflecting upon their belief systems is personally meaningful and significant in teachers' professional roles because it enables them to better understand their own actions. Teachers' beliefs about language, learning, curriculum, teaching and the teaching profession will affect almost everything that they do in the classroom, be it implicit or explicit. Because these deep-rooted assumptions pervade teachers' classroom actions to such a great extent, it seems crucial that teachers understand and articulate their own theoretical underpinnings.

Teachers' beliefs about the English language, the process of learning and teaching, the programme they work in, and their profession constitute the basis of their individual teaching theories. In the construct of personal theories (see *Figure 11*), teacher personal theories serve as a filter through which new information and experience is interpreted. As subjective accounts of the principles underlying classroom actions, they offer an important perspective on what teaching is and how people acquire the capacity to teach. Moreover, teachers' images and perspectives often have such a powerful and lasting impact on their thinking and practice that they may prove resistant to alternative modes of thinking[26]. Hence they amount to a key element in determining how teachers respond to teaching experiences[27]. Therefore, understanding of what constitutes teacher beliefs is of paramount importance.

Since this work is devoted to examining a profile of a Polish teacher, of equal significance might be understanding and, perhaps, attempting to generalise the beliefs typical of Polish teachers only. It could be speculated that before the access to the European Union, Polish teachers took more traditional views in which language was tantamount to a system, teacher to an executor of top-down ministerial decisions and learner to a passive imitator of his teacher. With joining the European Union, as well as economic, social, and cultural changes that are spreading through Poland right now, the

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[25] According to Woods, teacher beliefs and assumptions, as well as knowledge, can be treated as one concept, termed BAK. For reasons and features, see Woods (1996: 184--212).

[26] Such beliefs are usually called *disabling beliefs*. For more information between *disabling beliefs* and *enabling beliefs*, see Head and Taylor (1997: 184-212).

[27] Almarza (1996: 73-4) stresses that they are also important in student teachers' thinking.

beliefs of Polish teachers are probably less isolated than they used to be and may well overlap with the views held by other European language teachers due to their commonality of experience and the trends in all-European schools towards the development of learners' communicative language ability. This is why the understanding of what constitutes language teacher beliefs equals finding out individual teachers' personal and subjective philosophies of teaching.

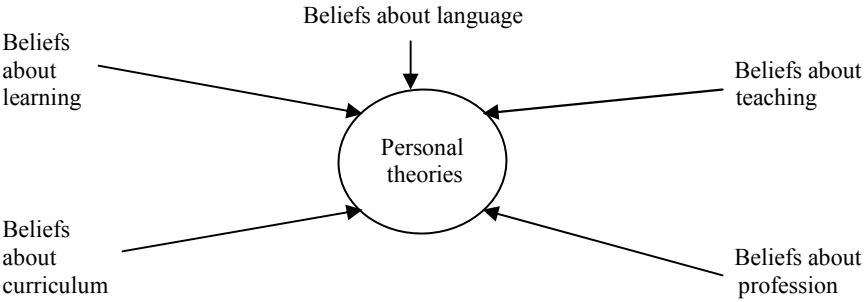

Figure 11: The personal theories construct

3.5. Metaphors as an aid to understanding teacher personal theories

Metaphor has become one of the fastest-growing and important areas of language research over the past twenty years and it is now recognised as central to language use. Understood as the means by which one thing is described in terms of something else, metaphor has been described as a central tool of the cognitive apparatus (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Consequently, the application of metaphor has been of interest to researchers investigating teachers' use of metaphors in conceptualising their work (Katz 1996; Wallace 1999; Cameron and Low 1999; Ellis 2001; Kramsch 2006).

3.5.1. Advantages of metaphor

It has long been recognised that metaphor can be much more than a literary embellishment or "a figure of speech" (Wallace 1999: 179). Instead, it can be chosen as a lens to focus on language teacher beliefs because it expresses the

meaning more concisely than a non-metaphorical equivalent (Cortazzi and Jin 1999: 161). This is achieved through two important qualities that metaphor offers to the researcher:

- it can reduce data by taking a number of particulars and making a generalisation,
- it can create patterns, embracing separate pieces of information (Miles and Huberman 1984, in Katz 1996: 61).

Through these two qualities, metaphor works as a heuristic for capturing multiple meanings and extracting the essence of each teacher's individual beliefs.

The centrality of metaphor in the construction of personal theories of teaching is summed up well by Thornbury (1998: 37) who claims that "it may in fact reach parts of teachers' thinking that other instruments do not". This argument for the use of metaphor resembles the understanding of metaphor in NLP (Revell and Norman 1997: 101). Viewed from this perspective, metaphor by-passes the conscious mind and provides direct access to the non-conscious mind. Therefore, it enables teachers to verbalise what is unknown or difficult to describe in other terms. It frames a problem by putting it into words, thus helping teachers identify for themselves what they actually experience. For the researcher, it provides a fruitful, however indirect, way to track important aspects of teacher cognition.

3.5.2. Metaphors in teacher beliefs

As language teachers' beliefs concerning the issues of language, curriculum, learning, teaching and the teaching profession constitute these teachers' personal theories, it is assumed that the generation of metaphors for these issues will guarantee a better grasp of their essence. Therefore, metaphors of language, metaphors of curriculum with a particular reference to language classroom and language lesson, metaphors of learning and learners, as well as metaphors of teaching and teachers will be explored now.

Metaphors of language

In the discussion of language, many prominent linguists have often defined their understanding of language by resorting to different metaphors. For example, for Saussure (1960: 110) language was *a game of chess*, Chomsky (1978, in Cortazzi and Jin 1999: 153) called language *growth* and *an organ*,

Pinker (1994: 18) referred to language as *an instinct* whereas for Halliday (1978: 17) it seemed to be *a resource.* Each of these researchers tried to advocate their different understanding of language. The use of metaphors was to assist them in organising and conveying their thought better.

An attempt to obtain metaphors on the theme of language was made by Cortazzi and Jin (1999: 164). On the basis of their research and subsequent analysis of the language metaphors collected from undergraduate students, they identified the following concepts of language:

- language is *nature* (e.g. river, sea, flower, tree, sky, galaxy, weather, a thunderstorm, a spider's web, etc.),
- language is *leisure* (e.g. music, sport, play/ing, art or a game),
- language is a *tool* or *object*,
- language is *everyday life* (e.g. food, drink, shopping, medicine, a supermarket, a recipe),
- language is (part of) a *building* (e.g. a pile of bricks, a nuclear power station, a house, a wall, etc.),
- language is *society, relationships* or *people* (e.g. a family, love),
- language is *clothes, cloth* or *jewellery* (e.g. a big, baggy jumper, a wardrobe of clothes),
- language is a *journey* (e.g. a motorway, a mystery tour),
- language is an *institution* (e.g. the state, law, religion, education, politics, power),
- language is a *biological activity* (e.g. death, life, dream, sleep),
- language is *body parts* (e.g. body, brain, heart),
- language is *finance* (e.g. money, bank, stock exchange) (ibid.: 164-5).

Clearly, all these conceptual metaphors reflect two main themes. One view of language is that it is structural (as metaphors of *buildings, body parts, institutions, society* indicate). The other view on language suggests that it is functional (reflected in such metaphors as *tools, leisure, everyday life, relationships, cloth*). These two perceptions of language seem to dominate students' metaphors.

An interesting feature of these results is that relatively few metaphors are found which can be categorised as communicative. Although language is generally perceived as a means for communication and interaction, Cortazzi and Jin's study does not confirm this.

To conclude, conceptual language metaphors are widely used in the literature and when elicited from students of linguistics, a whole range of epigrammatic replies can be obtained. Most common language metaphors, however, seem to emphasise their structural or functional aspects, somewhat underrating the communicative purpose of the language.

Metaphors of curriculum

Considering metaphorical constructs about curriculum, our focus of attention is restricted to two issues: the language classroom and the language lesson. This choice is dictated by a considerable importance of these two aspects in any discussions about the language programme as well as by the fact that teachers' feelings towards their classrooms and lessons influence a whole range of other things subsumed under the heading of a curriculum.

Metaphors about classrooms compiled by Bowen and Marks (1994: 13) are as follows:

- the classroom is a *workshop*,
- the classroom is a *playground*,
- the classroom is a *courtroom*,
- the classroom is a *factory*,
- the classroom is a *greenhouse*,
- the classroom is a *parade ground*,
- the classroom is a *prison*,
- the classroom is a *minefield*,
- the classroom is a *church*.

Bowen and Marks (ibid.) suggest that each classroom metaphor describes teachers' perceptions of the classroom and what should happen inside it. Likewise, teachers' metaphorical thinking about their ideal classroom can lead them to see things hitherto hidden from them. What is more, an image of an ideal classroom can spark the teachers' interest so much that they might feel encouraged to strive towards achieving one.

Teachers may also hold different beliefs about language lessons. Talking about lessons Scrivener (1994: 37) construes the following metaphors:

- a lesson is a *logical line*,
- a lesson is a *topic umbrella*,
- a lesson is a *jungle path*,
- a lesson is a *rag-bag*.

A description of these four basic lesson types can usefully be given to illustrate them better.

In the *logical line* lesson there is a clear attempt to follow a logical route in which one activity leads to the next. The learners are, therefore, guided in the step by step fashion through a clearly programmed sequence of activities in the hope of reaching a specific, pre-determined end point.

In the *topic umbrella* lesson, a topic provides the main focal point for student work. Although during a lesson there might be a variety of separate activities, the umbrella topic remains unchanged.

In the *jungle path* approach to the lesson, however, the use is made of whatever is happening in the room, of responding to problems, options, questions as they are encountered and of finding new activities to particular situations. The *jungle path* lesson places smaller emphasis upon prediction and preparation but greater upon the human factor, rather than material or plan.

The *rag-bag* conception of the lesson takes this process one step further. The lesson is principally made up of a number of unconnected activities. It is based on a view that variety in a lesson is the most appealing to students (cf. ibid.: 32-6).

Even prior to Scrivener's conceptions, Munby (1986: 203-6) generates a metaphor of the lesson as a *movement* on the basis of one teacher's words: "Keep it moving somehow smoothly; We move along faster; We were slow at getting started today; Well I keep going; They won't follow along, they're behind".

Each of these statements, be they about a language classroom or a language lesson, reflects an important aspect of teachers' cognition. The way teachers see these two aspects of the curriculum and the metaphors by which they describe them indicate teachers' understanding of their classroom actions and hence need to be made explicit.

Metaphors of learning and learners

Metaphors capturing the essence of learning and roles of learners are frequently used by teachers and teacher trainers alike. An interesting selection of metaphorical constructs with reference to learning and learners is presented now.

Cortazzi (1991, in Cortazzi and Jin 1999: 157) focused on metaphors obtained from teachers' accounts of classroom experiences of children's learning. He observed that in recalling "breakthroughs" in learning (itself a metaphor), teachers used metaphors repeatedly, especially in the evaluation sections of their narratives. The dominant generic metaphors in these narratives, all of which in their original context referred to moments of learning, were as follows:

- learning is a *click* (e.g. *it just clicked together, he has clicked, the words clicking and the number clicking, etc.*),
- learning is *light* (e.g. *he's seen the light, the light in his eyes, her face lit up, a spark, etc.*),
- learning is *movement* (e.g. *it's come, they are beginning to go, they are not going to move that much, this sudden leap, they zoomed away, etc.*),
- learning is a *jigsaw* (e.g. *the pieces came together, it all sort of came into place*),
- learning is *taking* (e.g. *he suddenly picked it up, it takes the thing into its head*).

Similar conceptual metaphors were found by teachers asked to finish the sentence which began *Learning is...* In Munby's examples (1986, in ibid.: 160), for instance, the image of *movement* also appeared in metaphors in which "learning is a *journey* where children made steps and great strides, reaching milestones and peaks" and "learning is *movement* through water where children moved by spurts, surges or making headway". Also, for Revell and Norman (1997: 102) "learning English is like doing a 1,000-piece *jigsaw puzzle*" (this resembles Cortazzi and Jin's examples) and "learning English is like a *journey* that students and teacher take together" (this refers to Munby's data).

From the above presentation, it can be inferred that although metaphors commonly occur in teachers' jargon, the range of teachers' metaphors about learning seems to be restricted. Teachers' attempts to account for children's *breakthroughs* referred to *clicks, light* or *movement*. These metaphors preserve elements of mystery and joy but somehow diminish the teacher's role in learning and, thereby might suggest teachers' absolving from responsibility.

In constructing metaphors about learners, the present author draws on Meighan's (1990, in Williams and Burden 1997: 57) categorisation. He suggested that learners can be viewed by teachers in at least seven different ways. His metaphors for learners were as follows:

- *resisters*,
- *receptacles*,
- *raw material*,
- *clients*,
- *partners*,
- *individual explorers*,
- *democratic explorers*.

The first three of these conceptions can be conveniently subsumed under the heading of *teacher dominated* metaphors while the subsequent three can be seen as *involving learner participation* ones. A brief discussion can usefully be given to illustrate these seven categories.

Resisters are seen as learners who do not want to learn but are made to do so. Such a view has given rise to the use of force and punishment as a means of overcoming problems caused by resistant students. In the class full of resistant students, the teacher's role is primarily viewed as instructional.

The notion of *receptacles* sees learners as people who are to be filled with knowledge. This view of learners is likely to bring about methods which involve transmission of language items to learners' heads. 'The jugs and mugs' theory, as it is sometimes called, implies that instruction and information-giving are natural functions of the teacher.

Perceiving learners as *raw material* is a common metaphor. It echoes the learner's innocence and passivity that can be used for building something solid. Here inspiration becomes the natural way of working for teachers, but a possible danger might be manipulating learners and shaping them according to teachers' wishes.

In the metaphor of learner as a *client*, the emphasis is primarily based on the identification and addressing students' educational needs. The role of the teacher is equal to meeting those needs. Although this perception of the learner has been prevalent in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), it is rarely found among school learners.

Another metaphorical conception is viewing the learner as a *partner*. This view refers to humanistic approaches (cf. *Chapter 1*) in which learners are involved in decisions about classroom practices. Then, the teacher assumes "the role of student among students" (ibid.), which implies not only her equality but also the learning aspect.

In the next two metaphors learners assume the role of *explorer*. The conception of learner as an *individual explorer* suggests that learners primarily work on their own. The teacher's function is one of facilitator who minimally prompts learners and makes them arrive at their own conclusions.

The notion of learner as a *democratic explorer* is a metaphor favoured by Meighan (1990, in ibid.: 57), at least in working with mature students. An example of treating learners as democratic explorers is provided by A.S. Neill's alternative school, *Summerhill* (Neill 1962) in which learners themselves decide upon its goals and ways of working. The teacher is here again a facilitator but democratic exploration, in contrast to individual exploration discussed above, takes this process one step further.

To conclude, there are many metaphors for learning and learners. Metaphors about learning are usually used as symbols for communicating the essence of a learning event. Metaphors about learners convey a combination of beliefs about the learner's role, simultaneously reflecting the nature of the teacher-learner power relationship. The identification of both, therefore, gives an insight into the ways in which learning and learners can be perceived by teachers.

Metaphors of teaching and teachers

Metaphors of learning and learners can be contrasted with conceptual metaphors describing what teaching is and who teachers are. They are to be discussed subsequently now.

The data elicited from teachers in Cortazzi and Jin's study (1999: 161) were classified according to the metaphor itself, the reasons given by the respondents themselves, and similarities with other metaphors. The concepts identified were as follows:

- teaching is a *journey* (e.g. an endless journey, a mystery trip),
- teaching is *food/drink/cooking* (e.g. making bread, a coconut),
- teaching is *plant growth* and *cultivation* (e.g. an oak tree, a tree),
- teaching is a *skill* (e.g. juggling),
- teaching is an *occupation* (other than teaching e.g. a judge, a priest),
- teaching is *entertainment* (e.g. acting, a comedy hour),
- teaching is *searching for treasure* (e.g. mining, a priceless jewel),
- teaching is *family relationships* (e.g. a respected aunt, a responsible uncle),
- teaching is *war* (e.g. war, arming the troops),
- teaching is *construction/ (part of) a building* (e.g. an open house, building a wall).

The following metaphors were accorded a lower emphasis among the subjects:

- teaching is *art*,
- teaching is *fire*,
- teaching is a *creature*,
- teaching is a *machine* or *tool*,
- teaching is *communication*,
- teaching is a *source*,
- teaching is a *text*.

Asked to define what teaching English is like for her, Revell and Norman (1997: 102), gave the following metaphor:

> Teaching English is like using the zoom lens on a camera: you pull back to show the whole frame, then you zoom right down onto one specific bit of language. Then pull back to show how it fits together with things around it.

In Thornbury's (1998: 36) study on the teaching metaphors, however, images of light, dark and speed emerge:

> My impression is very much of being on a roller coaster; in a dark tunnel. At the beginning there was light and the next it was the end and there was no light. And the middle a kind of daze.

> I was scared of getting into deep water; staying in the shallows. I also didn't want to push things home with the students.

> I've never tried speed, but it sounds like teaching – you take it and go you go go go, you're unstoppable, and you know this is not normal and you're just waiting to come down.

Developing her conception of teaching, Lehtovaara (2001: 146) suggests the metaphor of a *path* which takes practice in walking and needs the genuine craft of thinking so as to avoid the danger of getting lost. As any path always threatens to lead astray, teaching should never be considered safe from uncertainty and never lose its touch with reality.

It is obvious from the data above that several conceptual metaphors for teaching are identical to the ones elicited with reference to learning (i.e. *movement, light*) or even those generated about language (i.e. *journey, growth, construction, relationships, tool or food*). This fact corroborates the interrelationship of these three notions and hereby similar teachers' conceptualisations are offered.

The data considered earlier can also be compared to examples of metaphors generated in response to the question what teachers are who, in classical presentations, are described as *midwives* (Socrates)*, artists* or *scientists* (Dewey) or *technicians* (Skinner).

Larger scale studies of pre-service teachers included Marchant's (1992) who obtained eight generic metaphors:

- teacher as *authority* (e.g. judge, police officer, prison warden),
- teacher as *caregiver* (e.g. parent, doctor),
- teacher as *director* (e.g. movie director, orchestra conductor),
- teacher as *captive* (e.g. prisoner),
- teacher as *party host*,
- teacher as *person on trial* (e.g. in a courtroom),
- teacher as *referee*,
- teacher as *agent of change* (e.g. advocate of change).

As a result of the study eliciting the answer from Chinese, Turkish, Japanese, Lebanese and Turkish students, Cortazzi and Jin (1999: 167-8) obtained interesting results. Among Chinese metaphors the dominant are:

- a teacher is a *friend* (e.g. respected, close, strict, kind),
- a teacher is a *parent* (e.g. strict, patient, mother),
- a teacher is a *source of knowledge*,
- a teacher is a *guide*,
- a teacher is a *model of moral example*,
- a teacher is a *gardener*,
- a teacher is an *actor*.

Other respondents added to the list these conceptual metaphors:

- a teacher is an *arouser*,
- a teacher is a *lover*,
- a teacher is *food* (e.g. a juicy fruit, fresh food, bread),
- a teacher is a *catalyst*,

- a teacher is an *anchor*,
- a teacher is a *sunny day*.

The metaphorical perception of teachers in the ELT literature is equally illuminating. Most metaphors in this field are divided into four domains of the language teacher's job: teacher as the manager of classroom work, teacher as the user of the foreign language, teacher as the creator of a positive atmosphere, teacher as the social worker[28].

Task-related teacher metaphors can be twofold. On the one hand, they describe a dominant function performed by teachers who are *organisers* (Harmer 1991: 239; Prodromou 1991: 24), *instructors* (Wright 1987: 63), *controllers* (Harmer 1991: 236), or even, to use more vivid metaphors, *factory managers, assembly line foremen* or *gallery whips* (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2000: 25). On the other hand, influenced by humanistic models of teaching, teachers can be referred to as *catalysts* (Jensen 1988: 62), *facilitators* (Harmer 1991: 241; Prodromou 1991: 24; Underhill 1999: 125) *participants* (Harmer 1991: 241) or *therapists* (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2000: 40). With reference to metaphors about teachers as users of the foreign language the terms *model*, *expert, resource* and *evaluator* often crop up. As far as the interpersonal roles of the teacher are concerned frequent terms used are *friend* and *confidant* (cf. Prodromou 1991: 24). They denote that the difference in status, age, knowledge, etc. should not amount to an obstacle to teacher-student friendship. The teacher perceived as a *social worker*, however, implies the role of a disciplinarian (Havighurst and Neugarten 1967: 445) having to exert control over learners.

Thornbury's (1998: 37) study attempting to obtain an insight into teacher candidates' belief systems was based on the selection of the job best preparing a person for language teaching. As a result, job metaphors depicting images of teaching were generated. In addition to the notion of teacher as an *actor* and a *social worker*, they included metaphors of a *sports coach*, a *tour group leader*, a *driving instructor*, a *sales person*, a *nurse* and a *lecturer*. Hence, interesting platforms for considering the teacher's job were obtained through contrasting it with the images of other professions.

In summary, metaphors about teachers imply a multiplicity of possible interpretations. They can be culturally loaded (Cortazzi and Jin 1999: 170), can represent the perception of the teacher in relation to their four basic domains: instructional, linguistic, affective and social and, last but not least, can make use of the qualities of other jobs that are frequently encountered in teachers.

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[28] Based on Kębłowska (1999).

Metaphors of the teaching profession

As metaphors of teaching often overlap with ones about the teaching profession, the metaphors discussed in this paragraph are ones deliberately used by teachers with reference to the language teaching job. The emotions communicated through them are two: delight and concern.

In the study conducted by Cortazzi and Jin (ibid.: 159), in which teachers narrated incidents of children's learning, elements of delight or even euphoria appeared: "I was so thrilled, It was amazing, Fantastic, Terrific, Marvellous, You can't put a price on it". Their reactions could also be compared to metaphors of a journey when they said: "I was riding on a cloud, I was up in the air, I was over the moon". In the same vein, metaphors in sentences such as "That, for me, is the reward this year", "That's what makes the job worthwhile" indicate that they were satisfied with their job and that teaching was worthwhile.

Aldred's (1992) metaphor, however, strikes a different chord. Herself a teacher and teacher trainer, she likes to use the metaphor of "opening a can of worms" by which she encourages language teachers to experience their job anxieties (personal communication). This is what she means by her metaphor:

> The "opening the can" metaphor struck me as an appropriate way of thinking about my role in working with teachers. The "can" here is obviously ambiguous; meaning both building confidence, encouraging the realisation of potential or empowerment of teachers so that they feel they "can", and also bringing into the public domain aspects of professional and sometimes personal lives from the hidden or known-to-self domains in the "can". . . there are many types of "can", they need to be opened in different ways, as with the sardine can we can easily lose the key, or with the beer can a sudden wrong movement can tear the ring-pull off, leaving the can well and truly sealed.

Aldred's metaphor represents her own set of beliefs about her role as the teacher in which *the worms* depict her uncertainties about whether she is giving students what they want. "A can of worms", therefore, is a symbolic metaphor suggesting that, albeit worthwhile and satisfying, the teacher's profession is not devoid of personal concerns.

3.5.3. Metaphors – a summary

Analysing various metaphors, like for instance the ones about learning and teaching or learning and language, it can be said that there is a certain degree of overlap. This consistency about central topics of learning is repeat-

edly yielded by many researchers who studied the explanatory power of metaphors. On the other hand, certain responses (especially those in Cortazzi and Jin's studies) seemed to be taken as tasks for originality, which resulted in more innovative associations. This fact also proves how varied the metaphors can be and, therefore, how varied concepts of language, classroom, lesson, learning and teaching are. It remains an inference that both of these conclusions reflect actual teaching or learning. In consequence, metaphors vividly convey teachers' direct hands-on experience and represent attempts to make sense of the experience in terms that are personally significant. Therefore, they offer an important insight into the individual teacher's system of values and beliefs and, in turn, into their personal theories.

3.6. Concluding remarks

The premise of this chapter was that teachers' implicit theories influence classroom practice greatly and, therefore, hold the key to the teacher's professional effectiveness. Hence, the notion of personal theories has been offered with a variety of definitions of the term, as presented by different researchers. It has been assumed that teacher personal theories are built out of teacher beliefs, among which beliefs about language, curriculum, learning, teaching and the teaching profession come to the fore. This assumption gave rise to a personal theories construct, which is claimed to offer an insight into teacher personal theories. In addition, it has been claimed that individual teacher theories can best be accessed through the application of metaphors concerning the beliefs of teachers about the five issues suggested. Therefore, a review of metaphors has been offered in relation to each of these aspects. All in all, learning about teacher personal theories through becoming familiarised with teachers' beliefs about language, curriculum, learning, teaching and their profession, and with the metaphors used by them to depict these beliefs, can provide an invaluable insight into the essence of language teachers' practice.

CHAPTER 4

THE EFFECTIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER – INTERVIEWS

Introduction

The purpose of the previous chapters was to present the perception of an effective language teacher in the literature, the kinds of competences at the disposal of a language teacher, as well as language teacher's beliefs. The following chapter is the presentation of views as represented by one real teacher, recognised as excellent in her professional environment, and the examination of her competences and personal theories. As the object of the study is the same teacher who was investigated in my previous book on effective teachers, the differences between the beliefs held by her ten years ago and now can be highlighted.

4.1. Selection of teachers for the study

Those who are not familiar with my previous book may wonder how the effective teachers were selected for the study in the first place. This is why I decided to describe the whole procedure of the teachers' selection used before, especially considering the fact that the teacher examined below would be one of the same teachers investigated then.

The easiest possibility of teachers' selection would have been the choice of teachers whose students in great numbers take part in all Poland English language contests, enter neo-philological university departments or pass difficult examinations in English with very good results. However, as practice suggests, many students achieving very high results in English have studied it

outside of school (private lessons, language courses abroad, knowledge of the language in the family). Therefore, making use of the mere figures obtained from local educational authorities could have resulted in the selection of a poor teacher whose students had to take care of proper sources of English language learning themselves, and that was why they achieved success.

An equally improper source of information on English teachers would have been school principals. They are usually not English teachers by profession themselves, and may find it difficult to assess their teachers' actual language competences. Faced with the shortage of qualified teachers of English on the job market, school principals are often forced to employ people who are willing to work in their schools despite their lack of sufficient qualifications. This situation is further aggravated by the fact that school principals, mindful of the good image of their schools, may sometimes conceal information that can potentially harm the school's image. From my experience as an all-province methodological adviser for over two decades, it transpires that there are principals whose criteria of teacher quality (her usefulness in school) do not concur with the actual teacher's ability to teach the language (the possession of professional knowledge). For instance, from the principal's perspective it may appear more important that the teacher is punctual, obedient, or physically remains in the classroom from the beginning to the end of the lesson, than whether or not her professional knowledge is sufficient to teach English at school.

I assumed that the best source of information allowing a selection of teachers for the project would be the evaluation of teachers by their methodological advisers. Their professional remit makes them familiar with most teachers in their area, the schools where the teachers work, and the results their students achieve. They also observe 'their' teachers' lessons regularly and, having made informal and holistic judgements about them, are probably more able to determine the quality of the teachers' work than any other party. As a result, methodological advisers from different voivodeships were contacted and asked to name the outstanding teachers of English and their places of work in their areas. Consequently, I obtained the data of 24 'excellent teachers' working in different regions of Poland. During the period of collecting data, however, 8 teachers gave up working at schools for different reasons, 4 declined to take part in the study due to the lack of time, 2 went on maternity leave, and 1 refused to take part in all of the parts of the study. As a result, I was confined to examining 9 female teachers who were willing to assist her in her research endeavour. The subjects came from Gdańsk, Kalisz, Lębork, Poznań, Ustka, Warszawa (3 persons) and Wrocław. The teacher described in this research project was the one from Lębork, the second to be investigated ten years ago.

4.2. The objectives

The main purpose of the research project was to elicit information about the effective teacher's practical knowledge. It was presupposed that there is a specific core in an effective English teacher's competence that underlies her activities, as related to the teacher's role.

4.3. The technique of data collection

I decided to conduct a semi-structured interview with the teacher investigated. It was 'structured' in the sense that the teacher answered the questions asked, and these questions generally indicated the direction of the talk. However, it was not fully 'structured' because if the teacher elaborated on some aspects of teaching barely related to the question asked, she was not interrupted. At all times I tried to refrain from putting words into her mouth, and the occasional additional questions were only asked for the sake of improving clarity. Such an approach was taken due to the fact that tampering with the wording of an interviewee's answers might result in failing to discover the real emphases, or perceive the most salient features appearing in her accounts.

The questions were asked in the identical order as before: first, questions confirming some background information about the respondent, including her family status, qualifications, teaching experience, professional achievements, then questions connected with different kinds of competences, followed by questions about her viewpoints on language, syllabus, learning, teaching, her own profession, to end up with questions on the metaphors on these issues. The second interview lasted longer than the first one.

Because the examination of a teacher's profile is a broad topic necessitating the selection of aspects to be investigated, the questions concerning competences asked to the teacher by and large reflected the criteria used in the definitions of teacher competences discussed in *Chapter 2*. Likewise, the exploration of effective teacher personal theories was based upon assumptions presented more thoroughly in *Chapter 3*. It should be noted, however, that not all the points mentioned in *Chapter 2* and *Chapter 3*, or metaphors, were fully addressed by my interviewee.

For the sake of clarity, the key points that I attempted to infer about different kinds of English teacher competences are presented below (cf. *Appendix A* for the complete questionnaire):

- *Linguistic competence*: level of language knowledge with reference to fluency, accuracy, lexicon, pronunciation, knowledge of target language culture, etc.,
- *Methodological competence*: the use of methods and techniques in the lessons, knowledge of current methodological trends, lesson preparation, methodological development, etc.,
- *Psychological competence*: creating friendly relations between the teacher and students, offering help, contactability, etc.,
- *Pedagogical competence*: lesson time management, system of assessment, lesson pace, etc.,
- *Normative competence*: values governing teacher behaviours, etc.,
- *Experiential competence*: length of years as a teacher, the importance of experience, etc.,
- *Contextual competence*: making use of the available context, promoting the values of the educational reform, etc.,
- *General competence*: teacher interests, analytical skills, personal culture, etc.

For the sake of clarity, it is also worth presenting the most important points which were sought after in teacher personal theories (cf. *Appendix B* for the complete questionnaire). These comprise the following teacher beliefs:

- *Concerning language*: what 'language' means for the teacher, attitude to teaching language skills, subsystems, culture, etc.,
- *Concerning syllabus*: attitude to the use of course books, the role of aims in teaching, etc.,
- *Concerning learning and the learner*: associations with learning, the role of the learner, etc.,
- *Concerning teaching and the teacher*: associations with teaching, the role of the teacher, teaching strategies, etc.,
- *Concerning profession*: job satisfaction, opinions of Polish language teachers, attitude to the educational reform, etc.

Finally, the teacher was asked to create the metaphors of language, lesson, classroom, learners, learning, teacher, teaching and teacher of English. Yet, as in the case of the previous points, the failure of coming up with all the requested metaphors did not have any adverse effect on the results of the study, because I was more concerned with the teacher's perception of the point discussed. Consequently, lack of an answer indicated a lack of opinion about the issue in question and, thereby shed some light on the profile of the teacher.

4.4. Analysis of the data

On the basis of the information resulting from the interview with the teacher, her profile was formulated. This was accomplished in three phases.

Firstly, all the data concerning the teacher were transcribed. This was done through listening to the recording and rereading the notes. This was achieved within a week of the completion of the study, when the memory of the interview details was still fresh in my mind.

Secondly, an analysis of the data under investigation was carried out. The analysis was produced with a view to exploring the teacher's competences as well as her personal theories. As some attention was devoted to teacher perception of different facets of her profession through metaphors (*Chapter 3*), the analysis also included the employment of metaphors by the interviewee.

Then, the dominating features of the teacher were specified, thus outlining her profile with reference to the competences and personal theories which she represents.

Finally, on obtaining the data from both interviews, a special emphasis was placed on what has been maintained and what has been altered with respect to her competences and beliefs now.

4.5. Interview

In the research project a profile of an effective English language teacher is presented. Throughout the descriptions, the teacher is referred to by her true initials. The use of an initial rather than a real name ensures the anonymity of the subject, thus protecting her privacy. Yet the use of the true initials, with the subject's permission, is a modest way of recognising the teacher's valuable contribution. The analysis reported below oscillated around two components of teacher professional knowledge: competences and personal theories, as well as metaphors provided by the teacher to designate her understanding of the issues discussed. For the sake of clarity, the aspects investigated were largely the same as those discussed in *Chapter 2* and *Chapter 3*, and it is the taxonomies presented therein that constituted the frame.

For the better orientation of the reader, below there are two presentations of the subject's views taken at two interviews. The first interview took place at the beginning of 2001 and was described in the book published in Polish, whereas the following one was taken on a second occasion, at the end of

2010, only three months separating from a full decade between them. The placement of two interviews in a row may also enable the reader to compare and contrast them in a better and more accurate manner.

4.5.1. Interview 1

The research study took place on 28 February 2001 in Linguistic Civic Gymnasium (*Społeczne Gimnazjum Językowe*) in Lębork. Apart from the interview itself which lasted about 75 minutes, on that day I also observed 3 lessons conducted by ME in two grade 1 classes, distributed the questionnaires to 30 students about ME's teaching, and conducted an interview with the school director on her work.
Personal data: 31 years old, married, one child.
Qualifications: Teacher Training College with licentiate, M.A. in English, graduate of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, postgraduate studies in Criterion-Referenced Measurement at University of Gdańsk, a British Council educator specialising in *Teaching Young Learners*.
Experience: 7 years' teaching experience, also as a teacher of English in a Bilingual Secondary School and methodology teacher at a Teacher Training College.
Other information: ME finished music school (1st and 2nd degree) and is working on a Ph.D. dissertation on the use of metacognitive strategies in teaching English.

Kinds of competences

Linguistic competence: ME uses the target language most of the time. Her pronunciation is pleasant and resembles British English. She speaks swiftly and correctly and indicates philological education through her use of structures, vocabulary, accent and target culture information. She willingly attends any forms of linguistic development available to her. In general, her linguistic knowledge can be considered to be very good.

Methodological competence: ME gives the impression of a person always prepared for the lesson. Her orientation in contemporary issues concerning English language teaching is admirable. In the interview ME often uses professional metalanguage**,** such as "individualisation", "strategies", "reflectivity", "learning and teaching styles", etc., which is certainly influenced by her vociferous reading of teacher journals. A variety of teaching

methods, activities and aids, such as pictures from magazines, drawings, coloured cards or chalks, markers, photocopies with extra exercises, and a frequent change of furniture arrangement accompany her lessons. Yet none of the techniques dominates over others. It can be said, therefore, that ME's methodological competence is impressive.

Psychological competence: ME's approach to the learner is striking for the observer and analyser of her students' questionnaires. All the students like her very much and the phrase "nice and friendly"[29] is the most frequently mentioned characteristic of ME in the eyes of her pupils. She enjoys the company of young people and they cling to her sincerely talking about their problems. According to her students' opinions, ME never raises her voice or gets irritated. In addition, she is very well-oriented in youth trends, which, in turn, may contribute to her understanding of young people better.

Pedagogical competence: ME also excels as far as her pedagogical competence is concerned. The leading features named by her students are as follows: conducting interesting lessons, fair assessment, the ability to explain new things well. All of the lessons have a definite aim which is realised with the help of multiple activities, adapted from professional teaching journals. Observing her classes, I was impressed by the quick pace of her lessons and the fact that ME offers her students a variety of methods and teaching techniques so that they themselves can find something compatible with their learning styles. Some of the offered techniques naturally evoke loud responses on the part of the students, which for some observers[30] may be associated with disciplinary problems. However, the noise resulting from the students' right to express their opinions aloud or joke harmlessly about something seems to be congruent with ME's encouragement for them to be sincere and authentic, and the teaching process does not appear to suffer from this.

Normative competence: ME stresses that the most important thing in life is deriving satisfaction from one's life and continuous learning. ME's professional development, embracing many courses, working in various schools, as well as working on her doctoral dissertation, constitute examples of continuous learning, and they are certainly sources of satisfaction. From the interview, the questionnaires and pupils' behaviour in the lessons it follows that honesty plays a major role in ME's system of values. In one of the

[29] As mentioned above, the first interview was accompanied with students' questionnaires (see *Appendix C*) and my observations of ME's several lessons.

[30] Several students slightly complained about this in their questionnaires.

questionnaires, a pupil wrote "Our teacher hates being cheated". Hence, although ME does not name honesty *per se*, her pedagogical activities are guided by it.

Experiential competence: According to ME, experience allows her to improvise and this is why it is important. It can also generate better ideas than those prepared at home. However, her own experience, amounting to 7 years of working as a teacher of English, is not particularly long.

Contextual competence: In ME's teaching, the ideological policy of school is her first priority. Then she takes into consideration contemporary methodological trends, and finally what she herself deems effective in language learning. Learner autonomy, individualisation, teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies are issues to which she devotes a lot of time in her lessons, because thanks to them the teacher, and even more the student, can achieve better results. Although such a teaching approach is not widely and consistently employed by the majority of Polish teachers, it mirrors the recommendations of the recent Polish educational reforms.

General competence: Although it was not revealed in the lessons observed, according to ME, her musical competence is frequently utilised in class. However, the issues concerning general competence were not widely perceived by her learners (only 4 of them name "intelligence") as an outstanding characteristic of ME.

In conclusion, ME's strength lies in her methodological, pedagogical, contextual and, above all, psychological competence. Linguistic and normative competences play a supporting role, whereas general competence and experiential competence seem to be less important than the others.

Personal theories

Beliefs about language: ME names foreign languages as one of her key interests. She seems to pay a lot of attention to pronunciation, which is to be "comfortably intelligible" (Kenworthy 1987), and the pupils in her classes do not on the whole seem to have many pronunciation problems. Although she says nothing about other subsystems or language skills, ME appears to like teaching speaking, and perceives language primarily as communication.

Beliefs about syllabus: According to ME**,** general aims are more important than specific ones. Her work in class usually begins with the analysis of learners' needs and interests, which she later includes in her teaching programme, having first satisfied external requirements. Interestingly,

although she declares a great interest in individual learners, resource possibilities and external demands take precedence over her concentration on the learner. For ME, a course book is an invaluable teaching aid. Nevertheless, she has never taught any course relying on the course book exclusively.

Beliefs about learning and the learner: Well informed on various aspects of learner-centred teaching, ME declares her belief in the latest developments in foreign language teaching. An independent and reflective learner, consciously employing learning strategies and an advisory role towards another student seems to be the most effective one. The advisory function involves the formation of co-operative student behaviour**,** equally important in her teaching. Hence, autonomy and co-operation constitute the core of ME's theories on learning and the learner.

Beliefs about teaching and the teacher: From the observation of the lessons it follows that the therapeutic style based on friendliness, support and the techniques advocated by the Humanistic Approach appear more prominent than the other styles, as presented by Fenstermacher and Soltis (2000). The teaching strategies employed by ME are mostly intralingual rather than crosslingual, but equally experiential and analytic as well as explicit and implicit.

Beliefs about the teaching profession: Although ME likes her job she would rather have more time to prepare to her classes even better. A foreign language teacher is, according to her, an actor introducing realistic scenes, and this is what distinguishes her from other teachers. A frequent use of authentic materials aimed to prepare students for real communication seems to testify to this perception of her teaching role. A variety of teaching aids certainly contribute to this purpose, too.

Metaphors: The metaphors used by ME can be considered in two ways. Firstly, they oscillate around the therapeutic style, previously discussed, in which the teacher is "willing to help" students, who assume the roles of "patients", and expect help from the teacher. Giving help takes place in a friendly and respectful atmosphere, which seems to be appropriate for the process of learning. In this understanding, learning is "getting to know oneself", because her patients – students – are expected to be autonomous, responsible and co-operative, qualities that will certainly contribute to better self-knowing. Secondly, ME's metaphors resemble theatrical associations in which a classroom is "a stage", a teacher is "an actor" or "a chameleon", and the classroom is "a meeting" in which, as in every social gathering, a powerful role is played by language, understood by ME as "communication".

The profile of ME as an effective teacher ten years ago

Analysing the sources of ME's pupils' language knowledge, it transpires that knowledge gained from ME achieved a higher percentage than that due to the other sources. Almost 50% of what ME's pupils know in English seems to be thanks to ME's teaching and, considering the fact that they were only in the 1st gimnazjum class, after having been taught by ME for one term, the result is very positive. Thus, the choice of ME to represent an effective teacher of English can be recognised as accurate.

On the basis of her characteristics represented by the dominant kinds of knowledge and personal theories of the teaching profession, ME's effectiveness is made up of the following features:

- very friendly attitude to students,
- a lot of practical knowledge concerning methods and techniques of foreign language teaching,
- learner-centred lessons: teaching learning strategies, autonomy and responsibility,
- placing emphasis on helping others,
- continuous development of her professional expertise,
- justice in teacher-students relations.

In conclusion, it can be said that ME is a teacher with extensive methodological, psychological and pedagogical competence, supported by linguistic, contextual and normative competence and, lastly, experiential and general competence. In other words, ME's effectiveness relies on the combination of features embracing an excellent psychologist, an exceptional pedagogue and a special methodologist who aims at organising her lessons in such a way that the ideas of autonomy, co-operation and self-development are passed on to her students. All these outstanding qualities also contribute to her outstanding counselling skills which make ME not only a teacher of a subject but also a person extremely well liked by her students, or an "intuitive teacher" (Dobrowolski 1959).

4.5.2. Interview 2

The interview was held on 14 November 2010 in Lębork. It lasted over three hours, and the answers were recorded on a dictating machine. In addition, I took notes which proved indispensable in subsequent transcribing of the report.
Personal data: Age 40, married, one adult child (a student).
Qualifications: Since the first study, this teacher has succeeded in the de-

fence of a doctoral thesis on the use of learning strategies in English language learning in lower secondary school.

Experience: Teacher and lecturer on various subjects at a higher school of English, including Practical English; methodological adviser in a language school working with experienced and inexperienced teachers; *Matura* examiner, expert on teacher professional promotion; a participant of a few academic conferences.

Other information: Currently working on obtaining a certificate in Italian (*Certificazione di Italiano come Lingua Straniera*).

Kinds of competences

Linguistic competence: ME continually develops her linguistic knowledge of English and Italian. Her working on linguistic knowledge is facilitated by the fact that she teaches Practical English at an advanced level as well as giving lectures in such courses as Introduction to Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Descriptive Grammar. The mere fact of teaching and lecturing in the English department suggests that her language skills must be very good and require constant reviewing. She often travels abroad and socialises with people from other countries using English as the medium of communication. Moreover, her husband is a qualified teacher of English, and the potential of talking about various aspects of language at home certainly contributes to her linguistic excellence. In addition, she is a skilful speaker of Italian, currently preparing for an external certificate, and the knowledge of an additional language sharpens her linguistic intuition and general understanding of language.

Methodological competence: ME has always been fascinated with methodological trends, and pursuing her PhD thesis has fortified these interests. She regularly reads professional methodological books, subscribes to language-teaching magazines, and is always ready to discuss any aspect of language teaching. With all these assets in her repertoire, it might be assumed that she can deliver her classes spontaneously. In practice, however, she always prepares for them, even though some of the topics have been delivered a number of times. A laptop is her basic tool of work, which she uses to put down her plan and notes for each lesson and to illustrate her lectures with examples of films. Always striving to introduce something new or at least update the content, her primary concern is the recipient, whose possibilities, needs and expectations are highlighted. No matter how large the group she is addressing is, she always tries to establish a good

contact with learners and treat them individually. The innovative application of information and communication technology has recently become her passion. She is the originator of a website promoting English-language learning, as well as the author of a course book for elderly learners, piloted very successfully in a private language school which she supervises methodologically. Her course book is, to her mind, better adjusted to the perception of adults, stressing, for example, slower introduction of material and a lot of conversation.

Psychological competence: ME likes her students and is fond of teaching. She has never had any problems with establishing good rapport with her learners and takes care to be fair to all of them, yet her favourite students are those who are interested in what she does. A most desirable situation seems to be when she teaches what she likes, students are co-operative and the content is connected with their specialisation. She does not consider herself a severe teacher although she can be strict if a learner takes advantage of her leniency. Her contacts with students are also increased and deepened due to her function as a European Programmes Co-ordinator who mediates between students and foreign partners. Therefore, she has more opportunities of talking to learners and getting to know them from another perspective than learning.

Pedagogical competence: The least favourite aspect of teaching for ME is the necessity of assessment, which stems from situations in which learners question her grading and come begging to her, requesting another try. She takes care that her lessons have logical structure so that it can be seen why she starts and ends, having covered a certain point, but she does not always provide the aims or objectives to her classes. These are taken into consideration while preparing the lessons, but in the classroom more pragmatic aspects are introduced to students. What distinguishes her lessons is the variety of forms of interaction: students work individually, in pairs or in groups, or sometimes are given class lectures.

Normative competence: As to her life values, ME favours goal orientation, in which the fulfilment of linguistic and professional aims come to the fore. Defending PhD dissertation or gaining a sound knowledge of Italian are good illustrations of this approach. Other values dear to her are tolerance, creativity, seeking after the new, change and looking at a problem from a number of perspectives.

Experiential competence: Working for different educational institutions such as lower and upper secondary schools, civic schools, bilingual schools, higher schools as well as performing such jobs as a teaching adviser, a *Matura* examiner or a teacher promotion expert make up her extensive

experience. She skilfully uses the knowledge from various sources introducing, for example, the principles of new external examinations in teaching a foreign language or the possibilities of teacher professional promotion to students of philology, or using her practical experience as a homeroom teacher during methodology classes.

Contextual competence: In her opinion, context amounts to everything, embracing students' competencies, authorities' expectations, and prevailing trends or conditions. She regularly changes her presentations so as to accommodate these variables. In her opinion, today's learners are different from those she taught in the past – not worse, but endowed with different motivations, requiring from a teacher new behaviours and approaches to teaching. Modifying a lesson can be stressful or even irritating for her if it concerns a subject she is not a specialist in.

General competence: ME's other interests are learning foreign languages, music and information technology. She incorporates them into her classes (although as regards music, less than she used to).

To conclude, ME still excels in methodological, pedagogical and contextual competences but linguistic and experiential competences have become very impressive as well. Normative competence, more focused on pragmatic achievements, and general competence, primarily related to modern foreign languages and information technology resonate with the values of the contemporary times.

Personal theories

Beliefs about language: ME has slight problems with naming the most important aspects for learners, feeling this depends on a particular individual or a group of learners. When it comes to specific aspects of language, she has more to say about her understanding of them. Let us analyse what she thinks about the four language skills and the three subsystems.

As regards skills, she associates listening skill with listening to the authentic language, looking for it everywhere outside of the classroom and practically hearing anything that comes in the target language. She definitely stresses the practical aspects of developing listening, even for the language teacher. This very same opinion was expressed by Medgyes (2003), who claimed that in a target-language country, a language teacher is always a learner, as well as Komorowska (1993), according to whom the possession of good listening skills is an important indicator of a language teacher's proficiency. When asked about speaking, ME immediately talks about hav-

ing contacts with people, especially native speakers. Delving into the issue deeper, she claims that there are many more situations when language is used, if it is taught by native speakers, and these are the teachers she opted for when she decided to learn Italian in earnest. She adds that methods such as the Callan Method, which use the ability to rapidly learn English in its advertising slogan, will never be able to bring about the same effects as being taught by a native- speaking teacher who creates authentic communicative situations. If it is to be effective, the development of skill in reading must be based on authentic situations, as well. The introduction to reading should be done gradually, starting with shorter, simpler and more understandable, but primarily authentic, texts – notices, leaflets, advertisements, etc. The fourth skill, writing, is like the systematisation of information, which requires logical thinking. Yet it is still perceived by ME in the practical dimension; she gives an example of short message texts used for everyday communication. In contrast to other skills, writing seems to be the most challenging for learners, because emotional aspects such as dislike or learners' general reluctance to write make them unwilling to practise this skill.

As to the language subsystems, to her mind, the necessity to place a great deal of attention on grammar depends on a person. She is of the opinion that effective practising of grammar can be accomplished via traditional methods such as drills and exercises as well as through conversations. Although grammar is important and the ignorance of it may impair comprehensibility or negatively influence the reception of a learner (Swan 2006), the learner must desire to learn grammar in order to be successful in this aspect of language. ME adds that as inductive abilities are a component of language aptitude, some people may fail to acquire grammar due to a lack of natural capacity. She seems to be lacking in vocabulary more than in grammatical structures because she is constantly groping for more sophisticated words to convey the subtleties of meanings. The fault for such a state of affairs should be borne by teachers who introduce too many words to be memorised, with hardly any reinforcement activities. Ineffective ways of teaching vocabulary coupled with weak memory skills result in learners' frequent complaints about the weak possession of foreign vocabulary items at their disposal. The opinion about the teacher's neglect of vocabulary reinforcement exercises has been confirmed by secondary school learners in Werbińska's study (2011). ME's opinion on pronunciation is a repetition of a frequently quoted view, originally stated by Kenworthy, that pronunciation should be "comfortably intelligible" and correct in the context of word stress. She is certain that a basic model should be taught, although it should be acknowledged

that the pronunciation of Polish learners is generally better than that of people of other nationalities, for example the French. In addition, frequent contacts and sojourns to the British Isles have positively influenced the pronunciation of Poles which, as far as English is concerned, seems to be better than it was, for example, a decade ago.

Those who are bent at achieving success in a foreign language should above all look for individual possibilities of using it. This is how ME understands autonomy and an autonomous learner.

Beliefs about curriculum: Despite the many educational changes resulting from computer technology, ME still appreciates course books. As people's mentality does not change as quickly as the world around, traditional elements must remain. It is important to be open to novelty, but not totally. The strategy of 'dripping', which boils down to gradual introducing the new, seems recommended. As she mentioned several times, aims are paramount in her teaching. She always takes into consideration students' expectations, including their critical remarks and her own opinion about their possibilities, and tries to better adjust her lessons to their needs. Since she constantly modifies her lessons, they certainly provide the students with information about different realisations of her aims. As she said in the interview "Whether you like it or not, you'll find it useful, you'll see that the same aim can be attained in different ways". The English classroom is still associated with students' motivations and predisposition for language learning. She is opposed to forcing learners to be happy by having to learn English, which brings about disputable benefits. On the one hand, there are more and more people who can communicate in English – which is positive. On the other hand, the necessity of learning English has a demotivating effect upon the learner who experiences an excess of English – which is negative.

Beliefs about learners and learning: ME defines 'learning' as searching conducted by a learner. This involves looking for new information on one's own via computer programs, the internet, personal acquaintances and creativity. With all this encouragement of being a researching learner, she never considers that the role of a teacher can be fully substituted by technology. The best learners are those who are goal and success oriented, think from a multiplicity of perspectives and perceive different aspects of language. Having said this, she is far from introducing changes by force. She rather believes in the healing change of context, which makes alterations on its own. By the same token, she promotes in her learners autonomy and self-dependence, and being active, independent and open to challenges – qualities which some learners already possess to a great extent (Can this be another kind of intelligence added to Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory taxonomy?) but

which others totally lack. In her classroom learners are expected to do something more than simply consume the content in a passive way. Even during her lectures she always attempts to establish contact with her audience, asking them for the opinions or simply letting them discuss the presented issues in pairs.

Beliefs about teachers and teaching: ME promotes learners' activity, dislikes monotony and passiveness, and wants to receive students' feedback. As far as teaching methods or techniques are concerned, she opts for self-discovery or guided-discovery, although she realises that not each group seems to be ready for this. Discovery techniques are close to her teaching style as they allow the teacher for more freedom in terms of teaching possibilities. Asked to offer her definition of 'effective teaching', she talks about good rapport with students, showing and giving possibilities of what can be done, and then waiting for positive feedback, whether or not they can use their opportunities and achieve something on their own. In her teaching she always thinks of her students in the long term. She knows that a strict teacher has diligent students who often learn out of pressure or fear. Such an idea of teacher is, however, alien to her. Making students afraid of the teacher is a short-term kind of teaching focused on here and now. After a while, they may forget what they have learnt. An effective teacher should also be sensitive to learners' needs and abilities. Then comes linguistic competence although it may lose contest with methodological skills because a teacher can 'convert' students to language if she is methodologically excellent. If she only possesses qualifications oscillating somewhere between intermediate and advanced English, they may fail to motivate their students. At this point ME digresses about the situation of English teachers in Poland, where there are too many so-called 'free hand' teachers who obtained credentials in language teaching from low-prestige schools of higher education or finished language courses which entitled them to teach English. Such teachers represent a low level of language competence, and even if they have adequate linguistic skills, their methodological competencies, gained in private quick-study courses, leaves much to be desired.

Beliefs about the language teaching profession: ME's present attitude to teaching is very positive, but she would like to have her work load reduced. In fact, too much work, including some additional jobs to cover all her expenses, seems to be the only problem she mentions in this context. The most pleasant moments are those when she receives positive feedback from her learners, very often personal, that she has helped someone, that someone thanks to her has succeeded or managed something. The aspects she complains about concern students and herself. She feels sorry when there is little

student progress despite her attempts to do her best, and students demand higher comments, come to her begging for the change of a grade, or even accuse of being unfair when she refuses to do so. As it comes to herself, she explicitly states that there is little possibility of development for teachers of languages working at higher schools, the only obligatory course being one in safety and hygiene at work. The remaining offers are not obligatory and usually amount to conferences dominated by those working at scholarly posts. Having said this, she shares her reflection about the downfall of the language teaching profession – a general loss of quality, rare situations where a language teacher speaks two or three languages on a comparable level. She also adds her thoughts on native-speaking teachers of English, who, to her mind, are being favoured over Polish teachers of English, even though they frequently cancel their classes, demand higher rates and have excessive expectations disproportionate to what they themselves offer in reality. Hence, ME likes her profession but seems to perceive some of its problematic aspects.

Metaphors: The focal points of ME's metaphors are four: continuous learning, mediation, students' needs and verification. The first motif is expressed in the metaphors defining language ("perceiving it in another way or in a different perspective from the one that is familiar and well-trodden") and learning ("constant expanding of new horizons"). The second motif is represented by the metaphor symbolising teaching ("opening the door", "showing how to catch fish"), the third one by the metaphors referring to the teacher ("an actor", "a chameleon"), and the lesson ("a way and a place where one's aims can be achieved"), whereas the last strand is evident in the metaphor of language-teaching profession ("taking a risk", "checking yourself"). Asked to enlarge on the metaphor offered for the understanding of language, she explains that, in the case of a teacher, it could be learning another foreign language or teaching one's native language, or learning about language – all of which offer numerous new vistas for a language teacher and contribute to the deeper understanding of language. Likewise, her understanding of 'learner' evokes an image of an active person who, like a language, constantly changes, vulnerable to contexts and conditions, whereas 'learning', as noted above, is „constant expanding of horizons". ME perceives her teacher's role in the classroom metaphorically as "opening the door". She would like to show her learners, as she says, "how to catch fish" – that is, how to set new targets and achieve aims, and to present that most things in life are possible to attain. Trying to offer a metaphor of teacher, as before, she recalls the role of "an actor" (or "a chameleon") but not in the sense of provision of entertainment so that learners will not experience

boredom. Her understanding of the teacher as an actor means the teacher's ability to deal with each 'audience', that is, respond properly to students' needs, adjust to new conditions or enter into spontaneous interactions with them. Moreover, like an actor, a teacher has to pretend that her frame of mind is good, that she is enthusiastic about the lesson, that she is fair to everyone or willing to give each student an equal share of attention. All in all, she still considers a teacher as an actor but in a different perspective than one might commonly assume. Asked to elaborate on her metaphor of language-teaching profession which is "taking a risk and checking yourself", she says that this conception refers primarily to the selection of teaching techniques – their effectiveness, adequacy or orientation to needs. Such a declaration seems to overlap with the previous strand enumerated here because a good choice of teaching techniques also resonates with students' needs. Therefore, it can be concluded that ME is a person for whom her own professional development is important but who also cares for her students and their needs.

4.5.3. ME as an effective teacher: the 'change' aspect

A span of a decade constitutes a long time, throughout which a person's attitudes, behaviours or convictions can become subject to considerable modification. A person is a social being and this is why the greatest influence on someone's change can be exerted by the social context (both macro and micro) in which an individual functions. Like in a lens, the context is reflected in a teacher's actions and beliefs, together with its facilitating or constraining factors. Let us see how variable or stable ME's competences and beliefs related to the key aspects of language learning and teaching are, as demonstrated by her in the past and at present.

Methodology

In order to identify what has remained the same and what has been altered, a qualitative interpretivist approach was adopted (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The data were read a number of times until a number of significant concepts focusing on the participant's words appeared. Then, the concepts were grouped into categories which were subsequently revised for consistency. Finally, the resultant statements were verified by ME for their truthfulness and her approval. Let us have a look at some of the key aspects of what is stable and what is different in ME as a professional language teacher.

The stability issue

- Continuous learning

The greatest value for ME constitutes continuous learning. She always willingly attends any form of professional development and tries to keep abreast of new teaching trends. Probably her newly discovered interest in information and communication technology has much to do with it. Likewise, her interest in learning foreign languages, culminating in earning external certificates in Italian, reflects her opinion that any teacher of a foreign language should possess a working knowledge of more than one language. What is more, she is not afraid of new challenges, be it a new school, a new subject taught in English, or a new job connected with teaching languages (*Matura* examiner, expert on language teachers' professional promotion, methodological adviser, course book writer for private courses, academic successfully defending a PhD dissertation). Clearly, she fits well into the contemporary model of the learning society in which learning is considerably emphasised, and "the individual members possess a large resource of knowledge" (Szempruch 2010: 18).

- Variety of teaching techniques

The use of a variety of methods, techniques, forms of interaction and teaching aids seems to be striking in the case of ME. It drew my attention ten years ago, and it is noticeable that ME still considers variety a teacher's great asset. Although ten years ago she did her best to make her lessons interesting and appealing to her learners; now she is more directed by the students' needs, using various techniques as a means of realising her overriding aim.

- Logical lessons

Despite a great deal of variety in her lessons, ME's primary aim is giving lessons based on logical structures, in which one activity leads to another one. At times it can be a topic providing the main focal point for students' work, or a step by step sequence of activities whose ultimate aim is to achieve a previously determined end point. Hence, her lessons are never "rag-bag" (Scrivener 1994: 32) because the variety used in them is subordinated to their logic.

- Good rapport with students

ME is of the opinion that a teacher cannot achieve much if students are afraid of her. Although in popular folk wisdom a strict teacher is considered a good teacher, being strict to students is still alien to ME. In the previous book ME was metaphorically called "a friendly learner" which, apart from the learning aspect raised above, well mirrored her friendly attitudes to others. She is of the opinion that a teacher can be demanding without being strict, and the humanistic approach is still close to her nature.

- Preparation for efficient communication

Although ME stressed the role of learning languages for the sake of better communication in the first interview, communicative purposes come to the surface even more in the second interview conducted with her. She frequently refers to the authenticity of teaching the four skills, pointing to non-fabricated listening or reading texts; holding conversations with native speakers; or writing communicative texts, such as short text messages. As before, pronunciation is still understood in terms of "comfortable intelligibility" (Kenworthy 1987), which further strengthens its pragmatic dimension. Jenkins' proposals of a "Lingua Franca Core" can also be pedagogically valuable here. However, ME's mention of native speakers as teachers of authentic communication is worth sparing a thought. With English being a global language, choosing an exonormative native speaker model (Kirkpatrick 2007: 184), is somewhat outdated because "communication across world Englishes has to be seen in terms of accommodation between codes and in a multilingual context" (Bamgbose 2001:359). Komorowska (2006: 116-18) adds that preparing learners to communicate with native speakers of English and to function in various English speaking-countries within the sociocultural norms of native speakers of English as well as to help learners develop near-native levels of competence are the past educational aims in adult language education and in teaching English for specific/ professional purposes. Although educational and motivational aims should be stressed while teaching English in the school system, "intelligibility criteria should be given more emphasis in teaching pronunciation ... and not so much of the teacher's attention should go to errors which do not block communication" (ibid.: 121). ME's focus on pragmatic objectives seems to be somewhat incongruent with her expression of the superiority of learning a language from a native-speaking teacher. Yet, in her account, she mostly referred to her Italian teacher, and there might be a difference between learning a foreign language which is a lingua franca or an international language (like English) and learning a foreign language which is primarily restricted to one country (like Italian).

- Long-term aims

Aims-based teaching is still crucial for ME. In her interview almost ten years ago she expressed the opinion that general aims seem to be more important than specific ones. Now she calls them long-term aims and maintains that it is they that should provide a sense of direction, as long - term aims are more long-lasting and guarantee a deeper accumulation of knowledge, skills or attitudes. It can also be said that they are more personally cherished by learners because the investment in something for a long time undoubtedly causes its frequent verification or questioning its legitimacy. If an adopted aim

or objective resists modification or abandonment altogether, it becomes a worthwhile investment in an individual's value system.

- Learner autonomy

The aims that ME desires to shape in her learners are still those connected with learner autonomy. In the same vein, a language learner should be independent, reflective and self-directed. Discussing autonomy in her first interview ME underscored cooperation, learners' interdependence, their capacity for making informed decisions through collaboration, rather than teacher intervention. Cooperation is not mentioned in the second interview, probably because learners, after all, need teacher's intervention at the start of the course. Such factors as lack of collaborative culture in previous schools, learners' expectations of traditional roles of a teacher, lack of reflective competence – in a word, learners' experiential backgrounds typical of most Polish schools - hinder the development of learner autonomy. Preventing learners from reproducing the dominant values and practices, such as passivity or a low-risk stance for the sake of protecting one's face, self-image or strategic survival, a teacher should show them the direction. Once the direction has been set, however, learners can regulate their own activities, and this is when they have stepped on the path of autonomy[31]. On a number of occasions ME underscores the independent looking for an answer, solving a problem, or self-discovering, which is very much in line with contemporary images of a good teacher in the literature (Lamb and Reinders 2008).

- Using course books

Being a practising advocate of computer technology, ME still believes in the power of printed words. She says that people do not change as quickly as the world around, and this is why she always selects a course book which provides the main focal point for students' work. She simultaneously adds that she never uses a course book on a sole basis, but it is meant to accompany her courses and give learners a sense of security.

- Too little time

It is striking that in both interviews ME expressed her complaint about having too little time. In the first interview she wished she had had more time for the preparation of classes, in the second one she objected to the excessive teaching load, probably again bearing in mind her better preparation for classes were it to be different. The permanent lack of time can be a 'distinguishing characteristic

[31] The time useful for teachers to regulate the activity and set the direction is called by Littlewood (1999) *reactive* autonomy, as opposed to *proactive* autonomy when learners regulate both the direction of activity as well as the activity itself. A somewhat analogous distinction was introduced by Smith (2003) who calls it *weak* and *strong* autonomy.

feature' of effective teachers because the excellent teachers researched in Michalak's (2007) study complained about the very same aspect.

- Teacher as an actor or a chameleon

The same metaphor of teacher as an actor or a chameleon has been used repeatedly on two interview occasions.

Table 2 presents those personal theories of ME that have resisted the

Table 2: Stability of ME's personal theories

Competences	
Linguistic	Continuous linguistic development: - teaching new subjects in English - working at the English department - learning Italian
Methodological	Variety of: - methods and techniques - forms of interaction - teaching aids - ways of working with IT
Psychological	Good rapport with students: - emphasis on being fair
Pedagogical	Logical organisation of lessons
Normative	Continuous learning
Experiential	–
Contextual	–
General	–
Beliefs about	
Language	Focus on communication: - authenticity -'comfortable intelligibility' of pronunciation
Syllabus	Long-term achievement of aims
Learning, learner	Language learning based on learner autonomy
Teaching, teacher	Experiential and analytic strategies, A demanding but not a strict teacher
Teaching profession	Lack of time
Metaphors	Teacher is like an actor

lapse of ten years' time. For the sake of clarity, they are attributed to the previously discussed taxonomy of teacher's competences and beliefs.

The variability issue

- More 'serious' challenges

Over the last ten years ME has taken up a few really challenging tasks that undoubtedly have contributed to her effectiveness as a language teacher. It can be argued that everyday work of any teacher is a serious challenge; yet ME's achievements may amount to milestone decisions which are not so frequently encountered among most language teachers. One of these efforts can be the completion and a successful defence of her doctoral dissertation in language teaching. Certainly such a challenge contributed to her extensive reading on the researched topic, which naturally leads to more accurate interpretation of reality, more reflection, making better decisions, and the application of the authors' experience in practice. All these probably resulted in her decision to write her own course book for the adult learners she worked with. Again, many teachers create their own course books which address their students' needs, but such instances are still few and far between. One more illustration of the serious challenges she opted for is her regular use of computer technology. Although the use of information and computer technology is considered to be common practice[32], much depends upon to what purposes it is used. ME creates her own teaching programs based on information technology, and using the computer in a number of ways features predominantly in the course book she has written. Hence, it can be stated that, far from being a passive consumer of methodological trends, ME contributes to producing knowledge, and this is also why the challenges she has taken are labelled as 'serious' in this work.

- A 'new' recipient

Although ME has always highlighted a good rapport with all her students, in the second interview she repeatedly distinguished her favourite recipient – a learner who is interested in what she does. Most probably, she referred to her students of English philology, fond of the language and learning or teaching it. Interestingly, it must be considered natural that even those for whom fairness is so important still have some learners whom they like better, even though it may not shown externally.

[32] This is what teachers claim during their examinations for teacher professional promotion.

- The assessment issue

The assessment issue hardly appeared in the first interview; ME only remarked that she did not like giving bad grades. Now she explicitly states that she dislikes assessing students. Her unwillingness to assess is evoked by students who, used to being given innumerable attempts of correcting their original bad grades, come and beg her to change a grade. In the case of her refusal, they may even go too far and question her fairness. Her dislike of assessing seems understandable because, with the students begging for changes in their grades, it signifies, from her perspective, teacher's fault and partiality with which she cannot agree.

- Deriving satisfaction from goal orientation

Goal orientation has become for ME a driving strategy which she willingly transplants into her students. While devoted to seeking after the new, she believes it is important to proceed in a step-by step fashion, with targets indicating the road to follow. The mere process of attaining targets generates a person's creativity and tolerance to the new, whereas the achievement of different goals lets her look at a problem from a multiplicity of perspectives. The qualities accompanying her goal setting and achieving, such as creativity, tolerance, looking at a problem from multiple angles are academic virtues promoted in scientific endeavours. Their mention by ME as her life-guiding values demonstrate greater maturity than was evident ten years ago. Still, it is important to note that too much emphasis placed on goals may result in avaricious acquisitive learning caused by the mere will to pass examinations and restricted to perfect mastering of the knowledge specified in the syllabus. Inquisitive learning, rather than acquisitive learning – referring to the internal desire of mastering a body of knowledge – should be promoted instead.

- Hierarchy of aims

As stated before, aims have always been important for ME's professional work. However, it is worth mentioning that the ordering of aims has changed in her personal hierarchy. When ME was still a school teacher the most important aims were those provided by the school, followed by methodological trends, and finishing up with her own evaluations of what her learners needed. Now, what students expect and what she feels they need seem on a par and take precedence over school requirements or new teaching trends. Unhappy with the available course books addressed to middle-aged learners, she decided to create her own, more congruent with her learners' needs with reference to teaching grammar and their perception possibilities. The decision to concentrate on students' needs also testifies to her teacher's autonomy and courage, including opposition (she may disagree and fail to fulfil what she is

expected to, if she thinks otherwise) and resistance (she does something else instead, which, to her mind, seems better under given circumstances)[33]. Probably only those teachers who are respected by their superiors and students as well as convinced about their self-efficacy, to use Bandura's words, can dare do this.

- New interests

In contrast to the teacher of ten years ago, ME has ceased to incorporate music in her lessons. Learning foreign languages is still her passion, but computer science has become a new fascinating area. Popularising knowledge with the use of innovative information and communication technologies makes ME contribute to the knowledge-based society – one of the tenets as declared by the *Commission of the European Communities.*

- A gradual downfall of the English language teaching profession

Ten years ago the profession of an English teacher was still in its infancy. There was a shortage of English teachers, but those who graduated study from English philology were generally very good linguistically. As for teachers' methodological expertise, teacher training colleges contributed a lot, mostly through devoting many hours to pedagogical subjects and following action-research teaching. Around the turn of the century, the number of private regional institutions mushroomed, sometimes even under the auspices of a university, where obtaining English teaching credentials became the norm, even for those students who were openly against ever becoming English teachers. Most graduates with English teaching credentials teach, and a lot of them have even attained subsequent degrees in teacher professional promotion[34]. Such a situation has brought about the downfall of standards because too many badly-qualified, unmotivated and accidental teachers have been permitted to perform the English teaching profession. Since the level and standards of language teaching are important for ME, her revelations about its gradual collapse and loss of previous quality seem understandable.

- Teacher as an actor in a new perspective

Although the metaphor of teacher as an actor is still chosen by ME, her understanding of teacher as actor has changed. Now a teacher resembles a barometer that reads the audience's (learners') feelings, needs and expecta-

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[33] Both categories of teacher's opposition and resistance (*opór* and *odpór*), taken from military terminology, were originally introduced by Rutkowiak (2010).

[34] It often happens that a positive decision about a promotion depends not on realistic, well-documented effects but rather on a teacher's skilfulness in self-presentation (Kubacki 2009: 287).

tions and performs (teaches) accordingly. Such an approach is still reminiscent of the importance of addressing students' needs, so high in the placement of her hierarchy of aims.

As before, for the sake of clarity, the alteration of ME's personal theories is presented in Table 3, together with their attribution to the kinds of teacher's knowledge and beliefs composing our taxonomy.

Table 3: Variability of ME's personal theories

Kinds of competences	
Linguistic	More serious challenges: - writing a PhD thesis in English - writing a book for teaching English
Methodological	More serious challenges: - reading extensively to write a PhD thesis in methodology - writing a book with a view to focusing on target group needs - innovative applications of IT
Psychological	The best students are those who are interested in what the teacher does
Pedagogical	Dislike of assessment
Normative	Satisfaction from goal-orientation
Experiential	–
Contextual	Students' needs are the most important
General	Focus on language learning and IT, less focus on music
Beliefs about	
Language	–
Syllabus	–
Learning, learner	Teacher intervention in the development of learner autonomy
Teaching, teacher	Teacher intervention in the development of learner autonomy
Teaching profession	The downfall of English teachers' profession due to a general loss of quality
Metaphors	Teacher is like an actor but different aspects of this metaphor are raised

4.5.4. The profile of ME as an effective at present

From the information obtained and presented above, it could be inferred that the following characteristic features relate to the components of ME's profile as an effective teacher:

- promoting autonomy,
- goal orientation and continuous self-development,
- pragmatic aspects of teaching focused on communication and authenticity,
- information technology,
- stressing good relations with students.

Bearing in mind the above qualities, we can infer that the most significant changes in the investigated teacher's professional development concern her goal orientation and, in particular, using technology. Obviously, there are other dimensions crucial for the contemporary discourse on language learning and teaching, such as learner autonomy, catering for teacher's expertise or striving for maintaining good relations with students but they seem to have featured in ME's professional credo earlier. Goal orientation, however, only flickered in her revelations a decade ago but now it has surfaced in full swing. Yet it is the regular integration of technology into her English classes that has developed ME so considerably. She is clearly aware that the growth of the Internet has radically changed English language teaching and today's learners – 'the digital natives' – belonging to the Net generation simply expect their teachers to apply technology in their language courses.

To conclude, the effective language teacher as derived from the recommended examples of ME's 'good practice' embraces the features of an autonomous language user, a goal-oriented learner, a friendly communicator and, above all, a lesson innovator making use of multiple technological opportunities. Such a teacher attempts to combine a number of roles expected of her, activating all competences at her disposal.

4.6. Concluding remarks

This chapter has aimed at analysing one English language teacher's profile considered effective in her environment, in particular her competences and beliefs about key issues referring to the process of language learning and teaching, as they were a decade ago and they are at present. In both cases, the research study used the semi-structure interview, a "compromise" one

(Dornyei 2007), based on key topics to be covered, but less controlling than the structured interview and more pre-determined than the open interview (Richards 2009: 184-185).

As a result of the comparative research project presented above it was possible to find that many of her former competences have remained equally prominent (methodological, psychological or linguistic competences), whereas some of them have adopted a somewhat new dimension (general competence or, even more, normative competence). Likewise, some of her beliefs have resisted temporal alteration (for instance, ME still gives priority to communication aspects of language learning or teaching), whereas some of the others held by her before, have now become modified (for example, a new perception of teacher' role as an actor).

It seems that those language teachers or candidates for this profession who would like to be considered effective should excel in language skills, possess a friendly attitude towards students, promote the development of communicative language ability in learners, integrate technology into their classes and encourage learner autonomy. Hence, the language teacher as derived from the recommended examples of ME's 'good practice' still embraces the features of a good language user, of an empathetic and friendly psychologist, but also of a "trendy" educator attending to the values and requirements of the times in which she lives.

FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

The major aim of this work has been to explore the profile of an effective Polish teacher of English ten years ago and now. In particular, it has attempted to determine what competencies or kinds of professional knowledge distinguish this successful professional, as well as what personal teacher theories she seems to hold. In order to accomplish these goals, two interview studies were conducted, one almost a decade ago and the other recently.

The results of the analysis of different spheres of an English language teacher's professional competences may have significant implications for teacher education in Poland, and make it possible to identify these characteristics of the teacher that can foster their effective performance of the job. On a more general level, they also enable us to make some recommendations concerning the optimum preparation of potential candidates for becoming teachers of foreign languages in Poland. Due to the focus of this study, the tentative model to be presented here pertains to a profile of the effective language teacher in Poland. It is also important to keep in mind that the guidelines the present model offers are not necessarily applicable to another context, but to the Polish context at a time when the Polish educational system is still being affected by sweeping institutional and curricular changes.

Having made the above comments, the task of formulating the needs of a foreign language teacher aspiring to professional effectiveness, as well as the decisions on the part of school authorities that are likely to transform foreign language teachers into effective teachers, can be now tackled. Informed by the study, a list of such recommendations follows:

1. The study clearly demonstrated that an effective teacher of a foreign language is principally an effective user of that language, continuously working on updating and developing her linguistic knowledge. Therefore, it appears extremely important that high demands be set for prospective language teachers as far as language competence is concerned. Good linguistic competence may significantly increase teacher credibility, perspectives or skills, as well as offering students a new and ex-

tremely valuable dimension - a practical kind of knowledge - processed for students by their master teachers.

2. The study also underscored the significance of psychological competencies in the repertoire of an effective language teacher. These competencies are usually understood as being communicative, understanding, empathetic, friendly, approachable and, on the whole, caring about teacher-student rapport. It can be added, however, that the sphere deserving the greatest attention seems to be the teacher's working ability to include learners' needs, often understood as their emotional and intellectual capabilities into their work. Educating language teachers who are authentic individuals sensitive to human emotional dimensions seems to be an important requirement.
3. The importance of developing learners' communicative competencies was appreciated in both interviews. Teaching language for purposes of practical communication, a move away from mechanical grammar practice, the emphasis on authenticity of tests and tasks are well acknowledged by the *Common European Framework* (Morrow 2004), as they allow students to become more effective language users.
4. The study attributed a lot of significance to teacher methodological competencies. There was a difference in emphasis between the two interviews. In the first one, variety was all important as the main component of giving interesting lessons. In the second interview, it is computer technology, so much emphasised in Polish school guidelines, to which other teaching aids are subordianted and on which successful lessons seem to depend. Consequently, any teacher-training institution should include in its programme aspects related to teaching languages via information technology and thereby link theory to teaching practice more closely, if contemporary educational challenges are to be handled effectively by the teacher.
5. The research project very much emphasised teacher autonomy, again so much theoretically underscored in contemporary Polish education, but with rather inconclusive results in practice. A good teacher is not the one who "goes through all the content in the syllabi, helping achieve the pre-determined goals" (Nicolaides 2008), but an expert in language learning, positioning herself in her working place in such a way that she is willing to transform rather than reproduce dominant practices, or challenge rather than conform to encountered situational constraints. Encouraging self-discovery and stressing creativity and independent thinking makes ME a good embodiment of an autonomous teacher who questions the traditional canons of teacher roles and

makes informed choices with their positive and negative consequences. A teacher's driving force cannot be mere transmission of knowledge. Rather, she should aim at teaching how to function in a world of contradictory information, values and interests. Hence, the subordination of teacher education to 'giving', ready-made instrumental recipes, or clear distinctions between what is good and bad in teaching seems to be out of place because, among other disadvantages, it suppresses teacher creativity. The stimulation of teacher autonomy with its focus on problem solving, reflecting and questioning seems to be the right answer in developing both different kinds of teacher knowledge and, in general, better performance of their new teacher roles.

It is my hope that adhering to the principles outlined above will make foreign language teachers or candidates for this profession more effective. These recommendations would seem to be particularly valuable at a time of extended overhaul of the Polish educational system. By showing various aspects of the profile of an effective foreign language teacher, this book may contribute to a better understanding of foreign language teachers in Poland and, in the long run, an enhancement of the overall quality of language education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Teacher questionnaire: kinds of competences

Semi-structured interview: part one

1. Linguistic competence:
   What qualifications/ updating language courses has she finished, how does she work on her language?
   Which skill / subsystem does she like the most and the least as a teacher and as a person?
   What are her linguistic interests?

2. Methodological competence:
   Is she familiar with the latest methodological trends?
   How does she prepare for the lesson?
   Does she still write lesson plans?
   Is she inclined to treat students en masse or individually?

3. Psychological competence:
   What is her attitude to learners?
   Does she like spending time with learners outside of the class?
   Is she forgiving, tolerant in terms of requirements, grades?
   Does she feel good in the classroom (her second nature), or uncomfortable (her duty)?
   Does she try to make a team and with what effect?
   Do students come to her with their problems?

4. Pedagogical competence:
   Does she like assessing learners?
   What is the structure of her lessons? Is it more logical or psychological (based on learners' interests, even at the cost of its systematicity)?
   Does she always consider the aims/objectives of her lessons?

5. Normative competence:
   What is the most important/valuable in her life?
   What characteristics does she try to promote and what does she stigmatise in her learners?

6. Experiential competence:
   What kinds of language teaching experience does she have?
   How does she perceive the role of experience in her job?

7. Contextual competence:
   What are the most important contextual factors when teaching a language?
   Is it easy for her to change the subject of the lesson?

8. General competence:
   What are her other interests? Does she use them in her lessons?

Appendix B Teacher questionnaire: personal theories

Semi-structured interview: part two

1. Beliefs about language:
   How does she perceive skills, subsystems?
   Is learning English more/less important, if compared to other subjects?
   What attitudes should successful learners present as to learning a foreign language?
   What metaphor would she use to convey her understanding of 'language"?

2. Beliefs about currciulum:
   What is the role of course books and teaching materials in her courses?
   How important are aims in teaching?
   How does she decide what she is going to teach?
   To what extent is her teaching based on learners' needs?
   What metaphor would she use to convey her understanding of „lesson" and „classroom"?

3. Beliefs about learner and learnig:
   How does she define learning?
   What are the best ways of learning a language?
   What kind of learners achieve success in learning a language?
   What does she promote and what does she blame in learning?
   What roles do learners assume in her classroom?
   What metaphor would she use to convey her understanding of „learner" and „learning"?

4. Beliefs about teacher and teaching:
   How does she perceive her role in the classroom?
   What teaching methods/ techniques does she prefer?
   How would she define „effective teaching"?
   What are the qualities of an effective teacher?
   What metaphor would she use to convey her understanding of „teacher" and „teaching"?

5. Beliefs about language teaching profession:
   What is her present attitude to teaching? Has she thought of changing her job?
   What is the most pleasant and unpleasant in this job?
   What metaphor would she use to convey her understanding of „language teaching profession"?

Appendix C Student questionnaire (interview 1)

Komplet nr ....

1. Zaznacz źródła swojej wiedzy z języka angielskiego i nadaj im wartość w procentach:
   1 – lekcje w szkole podstawowej,
   2 – lekcje w szkole średniej,
   3 – kursy, korepetycje prywatne,
   4 – samokształcenie,
   5 – wyjazdy zagraniczne,
   6 – znajomość języka przez osoby z najbliższej rodziny,
   7 – inne (podaj jakie) . . . . . .
2. Podaj 6 najważniejszych twoim zdaniem cech charakteryzujących nauczyciela języka angielskiego, który uczy cię w tej szkole:
   1 – . . . . . .
   2 – . . . . . .
   3 – . . . . . .
   4 – . . . . . .
   5 – . . . . . .
   6 – . . . . . .
3. Czy jest coś, co chciał/a/byś zmienić u tego nauczyciela?
   . . . . . .
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   . . . . . .
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