



# Quotidianity in foreign languages teaching for adult students over 45

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**I**n the context of an evolving global landscape, the importance of lifelong learning has become increasingly prominent, reflecting the need for continuous education across the lifespan. With people living longer and maintaining active lifestyles, there is a rising demand for educational opportunities that extend beyond traditional schooling, enabling individuals to pursue learning, personal development, and engagement well into later adulthood. This trend is particularly evident among adults over the age of 45, who are actively seeking meaningful educational experiences, including foreign language acquisition.

Recent developments in the field of adult education have underscored the unique requirements of learners over 45, necessitating the development of teaching methods that accommodate their specific learning preferences and life experiences [6]. One approach that has garnered considerable attention is the focus on quotidianity — the study of everyday life and practical language use. Unlike younger learners who may prioritise academic or professional proficiency, adults over 45 often pursue foreign language learning for practical purposes, such as travel, social connections, or career enhancement.

Emphasising quotidianity in language instruction offers a tailored approach that integrates familiar contexts, such as shopping, dining, medical visits, or social interactions. This method aligns the learning content with the immediate needs and interests of adult students, making the material more relatable and accessible. By

reducing cognitive load and facilitating the integration of new language concepts with existing knowledge, this approach has proven particularly effective in enhancing the learning outcomes and engagement of this demographic [8]. Thus, the study of quotidianity represents a vital feature in the development of contemporary foreign language teaching methods for adults over 45, reflecting broader trends in lifelong education and the pursuit of quality educational services at any age [10].

The concept of quotidianity, or the integration of everyday life and practical contexts into language learning, has become increasingly relevant in addressing the specific needs and preferences of adult learners, especially those over the age of 45. Recent literature on foreign language teaching for adult students over 45 emphasises the importance of quotidianity — integrating everyday life scenarios into language education.

Carol Griffiths in her book "The Strategy Factor in Successful Language Learning" (2018) explores various strategies that contribute to effective language learning, particularly among adult learners. She highlights the importance of context and practical use of language, aligning well with the concept of quotidianity. Rebecca L. Oxford in her scientific article "Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies: Self-Regulation in Context" (2017) discusses how strategies that involve real-life, everyday language use can enhance motivation and retention, especially for adult students of different ages. Her work supports the idea that incorporating



quotidian elements — such as shopping, travel, and daily social interactions — into language teaching is particularly effective for learners over 45, who value practical application.

**A**lan Rogers in his book "Reimagining Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" (2016) emphasises the role of lifelong learning in adult education and discusses the importance of contextually relevant content in educational programs for adults over 45. While not focused exclusively on language teaching, his book provides valuable insights into how quotidian content — rooted in everyday experiences — can make learning more meaningful and accessible for adult learners.

The article "Lifelong Learning, Citizenship, and Social Inclusion: Adult Learning and Language" written by Barbara Merrill in 2019, explores the relationship between lifelong learning, social inclusion, and language education for adults. She argues for the use of everyday contexts in teaching to ensure the educational experience is relevant and inclusive. Her article supports the incorporation of quotidianity as a way to promote social participation and integration, especially for adults over 45 who are learning a new language.

John Field's research "Cognitive Aging and Second Language Acquisition in Older Adults" (2018) focuses on the cognitive aspects of language learning among adult students. He examines how familiar, everyday contexts can help mitigate age-related cognitive challenges, such as reduced working memory or slower processing speeds. His findings underscore the effectiveness of quotidian elements in language teaching, which help older learners make meaningful connections and retain new language skills more effectively.

Celeste Kinginger's book "Language Socialization in Classrooms: Cultures of Learning" (2020) discusses the concept of language socialization and how incorporating everyday, practical contexts into language teaching can create more culturally

and socially relevant learning experiences. Her research supports the use of quotidian themes to help adult learners, particularly those over 45, navigate and understand cultural nuances, enhancing both linguistic and intercultural competence.

Scientific article "Engaging Older Learners in Language Classes: Practical Approaches" (2021), published by Zhang Wei provides specific strategies for engaging adult learners in language classes, highlighting the importance of quotidian contexts. She offers practical examples of how to use everyday scenarios — such as market shopping, transportation, and health-related conversations — to create a more engaging and relevant language learning experience for adults over 45.

**T**hese works collectively affirm that focusing on quotidian elements in language teaching not only enhances linguistic competence and cultural understanding but also supports the unique cognitive, motivational, and social needs of adults over 45. This literature suggests that as the demand for foreign language learning among older adults grows, integrating everyday contexts will remain a critical strategy for developing effective and meaningful language education programs.

The article aims to explore the effectiveness of incorporating quotidianity — a focus on everyday life and practical language use — in foreign language education for adult learners over the age of 45. It also seeks to demonstrate how this approach addresses the specific cognitive, motivational, and practical needs of adult students, enhancing their language acquisition and intercultural competence while aligning with the principles of lifelong learning.

*The practical tasks* of the article are seen as following:

- to analyse the unique learning motivations and cognitive characteristics of adult students over 45 and to discuss how these factors influence their language learning preferences and outcomes;
- to define and shape the usage of quotidianity in the context of foreign

language teaching, explaining its relevance and application for adult learners;

- to provide practical examples of how quotidianity can be integrated into language instruction for adults over 45, drawing from the practices of foreign language courses, including those for adult learners, at the V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University Department of Romano-Germanic Philology of the Faculty of Foreign Languages;

- to align the use of quotidianity in language teaching with the principles of lifelong learning, advocating for inclusive, adaptable, and high-quality educational services for adults at any stage of life.

When writing the scientific article several *research methods*, typical for theory of education and education comparativism, were employed to effectively investigate and analyse this topic. These methods aim to explore how integrating everyday life elements (quotidianity) enhances the learning experience for older adult students in language courses. By utilising a combination of these scientific research methods — such as literature review, qualitative and quantitative research, action research, content analysis, ethnographic research, mixed methods, and longitudinal studies — a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the role of quotidianity in foreign language teaching for adults over 45 was developed. Each method contributes unique insights into different aspects of the topic, from theoretical foundations and practical applications to adult learners' experiences and outcomes.

Quotidianity, in the context of language learning, involves a focus on everyday life, routines, and typical daily interactions [3]. For adults over 45, who bring extensive life experience and specific motivations to their studies, incorporating these everyday elements into language lessons enhances both relevance and engagement. This method prioritises practical language skills that learners can immediately apply to real-world situations they encounter regularly.

Adult students often pursue foreign language learning for practical reasons—such as traveling, staying connected with family and friends, or expanding career opportunities. Unlike younger learners who might concentrate on academic or professional language proficiency, these learners are generally more interested in acquiring language skills that are directly useful in everyday situations [7]. By integrating quotidian themes, such as shopping, dining, visiting a doctor, or socialising, educators can create lessons that are more relatable and reduce cognitive strain, making it easier for learners to connect new language concepts with their existing knowledge base.

The focus on quotidianity also aligns well with the cognitive processes associated with aging. Research indicates that adult students are more likely to retain new information when it is introduced within familiar contexts. Emphasising everyday scenarios in language instruction helps learners form meaningful connections between new vocabulary and grammatical structures and their personal experiences, thereby enhancing memory retention. This method leverages the brain's natural tendency to store information that appears immediately relevant and useful [2].

For many adult learners, the idea of learning a new language can be intimidating, especially if they have not studied one since childhood. By centering lessons around everyday life, educators can build confidence early on. Learners experience small but significant successes as they apply their new skills in familiar contexts, which reinforces their motivation to continue learning. This approach fosters a sense of accomplishment and reduces anxiety — two critical factors in maintaining long-term engagement with language study [5].

Studying quotidianity significantly enriches learners' cultural understanding, a vital component of language education. For adults over 45, who often have a heightened sensitivity to cultural nuances and a desire for genuine experiences, this approach fa-

cilitates deeper connections with the target culture. By engaging with everyday topics such as local customs, traditions, and daily practices, learners gain valuable insights into the cultural fabric, which enhances both their linguistic skills and intercultural competence. Integrating quotidianity into language teaching is also aligned with the principles of lifelong learning [10]. Adults in this age group frequently approach education with goals of personal growth, enjoyment, and meaningful engagement, rather than merely fulfilling academic requirements. By offering content that resonates with their everyday lives, educators can provide a more personalised and rewarding learning experience.

This approach supports the broader goals of lifelong education programs, rooted in the belief that quality education should be accessible to individuals at any stage of life. For adults over 45, learning a new language through quotidian themes can be empowering, promoting social inclusion, cognitive health, and personal fulfilment [9]. By focusing on practical, real-world contexts, educators can create learning environments that are both inclusive and adaptable to the specific needs and interests of adult learners.

Education is widely recognised as a fundamental human right, and it is crucial that programs are designed to be inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of all learners, regardless of age. Emphasising quotidian elements in language instruction ensures that the educational experience is both high-quality and relevant, respecting the unique backgrounds, motivations, and capabilities of adults over 45. This approach not only aligns with the values of lifelong learning but also guarantees that language education remains meaningful and applicable to learners' daily lives [4]. As to the practical approaches of quotidianity application in foreign language teaching for adults over 45, according to the authors experience and the information from the open Internet resources the following practical issues can be mentioned (all examples are

given from the practice of organising the educational process of foreign language courses including those for adult students, operating at the V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University Department of Roman-Germanic Philology of the Faculty of Foreign Languages):

*Simulated Real-Life Scenarios or Role-Playing Everyday Situations.* One of the most direct and popular applications of quotidianity is through role-playing exercises that simulate real-life situations. For example, learners might practice ordering food at a restaurant, asking for directions, or purchasing items in a market. These scenarios are carefully chosen to reflect situations that the learners are likely to encounter in their daily lives or while traveling. In a German language class, the teacher organises a “market day” activity where students role-play as sellers and buyers in a local market. Each student receives a list of items they need to buy and some basic phrases for bargaining. This exercise not only helps them learn essential vocabulary related to shopping, numbers, and food but also allows them to practice conversational skills in a dynamic, low-pressure setting.

*Utilising Real-Life Materials: Newspapers, Menus, and Schedules.* Using authentic materials such as local newspapers, restaurant menus, bus schedules, and brochures makes the learning experience more relevant and engaging. These materials provide learners with exposure to the language as it is used in everyday contexts and help them become familiar with common terms and phrases. In Spanish classes for adults, the teacher brings in real menus from local Spanish-speaking restaurants. Students are asked to read through the menus, identify key dishes, and discuss their choices with a partner. This exercise helps them learn vocabulary related to food and dining while also preparing them for real-life dining experiences in a Spanish-speaking country.

*Daily Routines and Personal Experience Sharing.* Encouraging learners to talk about their own daily routines and experiences in

the target language is another effective use of quotidianity. By focusing on topics that are inherently familiar to them, such as describing their morning routine, discussing their hobbies, or recounting their weekend activities, learners can practice using common vocabulary and grammatical structures in meaningful contexts. In French language classes, students are asked to prepare a short presentation on their typical day, using verbs in the present tense. This could include waking up, having breakfast, commuting, working, and leisure activities. The exercise not only helps reinforce the use of verbs and temporal expressions but also makes the language learning process personal and relevant to their own lives.

*Interactive Activities: Cooking Classes and City Tours.* Interactive activities that mimic everyday life are particularly effective for engaging adult students. For example, a cooking class conducted in the target language allows students to learn vocabulary related to ingredients, cooking techniques, and kitchen tools while engaging in a hands-on activity that is both enjoyable and practical. In Spanish language course classes, the teacher organises a cooking class where students learn how to make a traditional Italian dish, such as pasta or risotto. Throughout the class, they practice following instructions in Italian, ask questions, and discuss the recipe in the target language. Also, virtual and real Spanish language city tours (including some tours to the city museums and just street walking tours) are held for the students by teachers and by course listeners themselves. This approach not only makes learning fun but also provides practical language skills that can be used in everyday contexts.

*Field Trips to Local Cultural Centres or Neighbourhoods.* Field trips to local neighbourhoods, markets, cultural centres, or events where the target language is spoken can immerse students in a natural language environment. Such experiences allow them to practice their language skills in real-world settings, which enhances both their confidence and their ability to handle spon-

taneous conversations. French language department organises visits to a French Alliance center in Kharkiv for meetings with educators and social leaders from France, cultural festivals, master-classes etc. Students are encouraged to interact with vendors, ask about the different cultural exhibits, and even try simple conversational exchanges with native speakers. These real-life interactions help them use the language in a context that feels both authentic and culturally enriching.

*Integrating Technology: Language Apps and Virtual Reality.* Digital tools, such as language learning apps and virtual reality (VR) experiences, can also incorporate quotidianity by offering practical, everyday scenarios for practice. VR can simulate situations like visiting a foreign city, checking into a hotel, or shopping at a local market, allowing learners to practice their skills in a safe, controlled environment. English language department during classes for adult learners over 45 use a VR program that simulates different daily activities, such as buying a coffee, navigating public transportation, or visiting a museum. This technological approach helps learners feel more comfortable and prepared for real-life situations while also providing a visually engaging and interactive learning experience.

*Task-Based Learning: Practical Assignments Outside the Classroom.* Quotidianity is also applied through task-based learning, where students are given specific assignments that require them to use the target language outside of the classroom. This could include tasks like writing a diary entry in the target language, conducting an interview with a native speaker, or preparing a presentation on a local cultural event. In Spanish language classes, students are asked to visit a Spanish marketplace or store to order some goods. After completing the task, they report back to the class, sharing what they learned and any challenges they faced. This real-world application helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical usage.

Quotidianity as a teaching method for adults over 45 is not just about learning vocabulary and grammar but about making language relevant, meaningful, and applicable to everyday life [1]. By focusing on practical scenarios, using authentic materials, encouraging personal storytelling, and creating interactive and immersive experiences, educators can help adult students not only learn a new language but also enjoy the process, feel more confident in their skills, and stay motivated to continue their language studying process.

The study of quotidianity in foreign language education is particularly relevant for adults over the age of 45, as it aligns with their unique learning motivations and life circumstances. At this stage of life, learners are generally driven by practical objectives, such as travel, social interaction, and maintaining cognitive vitality. This approach not only makes the learning process more relevant and engaging but also addresses the distinct cognitive and motivational needs of older students, who benefit greatly from connecting new language concepts to their existing life experiences. The integration of quotidianity in foreign language teaching emerges as a key component of effective educational strategies for adults over 45. Focusing on the language of everyday life allows educators to make lessons more practical and meaningful, while also supporting cognitive retention and fostering deeper cultural understanding. As the demand for foreign language learning among adult students continues to increase, the incorporation of quotidian elements will be essential for developing comprehensive and impactful language instruction. Moreover, adopting a quotidianity-focused approach aligns with the broader principles of lifelong education. It ensures that language learning remains accessible, inclusive, and tailored to the specific needs of older learners, thereby promoting social inclusion, enhancing cognitive function, and upholding the right to quality education at any age. As

adult education continues to expand, the integration of quotidian elements in foreign language teaching will remain a crucial strategy for creating inclusive, effective, and meaningful learning experiences, fulfilling both personal and societal goals.

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