

ПЕДАГОГІЧНІ НАУКИ

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*Vasylieva Maryna Petrivna**Lecturer of the English Language Department**H.S.Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University***TEACHING ADULTS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF A MULTI-AGED GROUP OF LEARNERS**

The article deals with the main psychological, physiological, cognitive and behavioral characteristics of an adult learner as a subject of foreign language learning in a multi-aged group of learners. It is proved that teaching adults is different from teaching younger age groups. Teaching older learners is based on the principles of the science about teaching adults – andragogy, the foundations of which were laid by the American scientist M. Knowles. Features of teaching adults are compared with features of teaching teenagers. The difficulties encountered by adult learners while learning a foreign language in a multi-aged group of learners are shown. Practical advice for teaching foreign languages in a multi-aged group of learners is given.

Keywords: *adult learner; psychological, physiological, cognitive and behavioral characteristics; foreign Language; multi-aged group of learners; andragogy.*

Problem statement. There is a great demand for foreign languages learning nowadays. Good knowledge of a foreign language gives people more chances to find a better job, improve education, feel free while travelling abroad. It often happens that people of different ages are the members of the same foreign language classroom. The analysis of Internet resources [2] as well as attending classes at foreign language schools and courses proved that the age range of learners in the same group varies from 14 to 65 and even older. In spite of the fact that there have been lots of researches conducted on the issues of teaching groups of different ages, there are very few investigations on teaching learners under the conditions of a multi-aged group of students. As the bigger part of a group consists of adult learners, we would like to describe some characteristics of adults as the subjects of foreign language teaching in a multi-aged group of learners.

The analysis of the recent research and publications. Features of foreign language learning under the conditions of higher educational establishments attracted the attention of many foreign and Ukrainian scientists. Thus, H. Artamonov, R. Bezliudnyi, Yu. Dehtiarova, I. Koval, Yu. Kolisnyk described peculiarities of teaching English for special purposes in non-linguistic higher educational institutions. The studies done by I. Hirenko and Yu. Pavlovskaya are devoted to the methodological issues of teaching students a foreign language. Research works of N. Hordiienko and Yu. Laptinova deal with different aspects of teachers' work in multi-level groups of

learners. Numerous works by V. Burenko, O. Hladkova, T. Hryhorieva, R. Yefymova, Ye. Kryvonosova, T. Modestova, Ye. Semenova, O. Shum are devoted to teaching English to adults. Scientists T. Polshyna, D. Starkova, V. Tylets, L. Tsviak, O. Shcherbina study psychological peculiarities of teaching foreign languages to adults. Research works done by O. Banit, R. Presner, O. Tarnopolskyi concern organizational and pedagogical conditions of teaching English at language schools and courses. Some works of foreign scientists C. Bishop-Clark, D.F. Faust, Lee Ferrel, J. Lynch, R. McKinley, Mariano Sánchez [8], Michelle Schwartz [9] are devoted to general issues of teaching multi-aged groups of learners. But unfortunately, there are no scientific works dealing with teaching foreign languages to adults in a multi-aged group of learners.

The **purpose of the article** is to describe adult learners as the subjects of foreign language teaching under the conditions of a multi-aged foreign language classroom.

Main material presentation. It has already been proved scientifically that teaching children is completely different from teaching adults [7]. There is also a generally-accepted opinion among practicing teachers and methodologists that the learners' age "is associated with specific needs, competences, and cognitive skills, which, in their turn, involve characteristic teaching and learning patterns" [3].

In this paper we will describe adult learners' cognitive, physiological, attitudinal, and behavioural characteristics that should be borne in

mind while teaching adults in a multi-aged group of foreign language learners.

As it has already been mentioned, mature students learn differently from the younger ones. Bearing this idea in mind, an American educator Malcolm Knowles developed the principle of "andragogy", that is, in his opinion, "the art and science of helping adults learn" [4]. M. Knowles developed a number of assumptions on which teaching adult should be based. They are: since adults are usually self-directed personalities, they can direct their own learning; adults possess a wide variety of life experiences on which their learning should be based; adults resort to learning when they feel a real need for it; mature learners have a problem-oriented approach to learning, they want to apply the results as soon as possible; adults are usually driven by internal rather than external motivation [4, p. 12]. In spite of being criticized, Knowles' ideas laid the foundation of adult learning and were soon developed by other researchers [3], [5].

Let's consider some of the cognitive characteristics of adult learners in comparison with the younger ones. There is a widespread opinion that younger students are better at language learning than the older ones. However, there is some scientifically-grounded evidence that teenagers are better at mastering pronunciation while older students have stronger cognitive abilities, are capable of abstract thinking, and are better at understanding the system of a foreign language and how the language works [6, p. 77].

Mature learners who come to the foreign language classroom usually know what they want to achieve. They possess a high level of internal motivation. Moreover, a lot of adult learners manage to sustain a high level of motivation by holding on to a distant goal [5, p. 84]. Teenagers who are in the same classroom with older learners are usually driven by external motivation, which makes the work of an instructor more complicated.

Adult learners are more goal-oriented, more cooperative and have a longer attention span. Moreover, due to their wider understanding of a language system and learning experience, adult learners usually understand what the point of teaching is. Therefore, there is no need for a teacher to "conceal" grammar points and complicated material by using games, songs, etc. Though, considering the presence of younger students in the same classroom and the need for

variety in the classroom, it is a good idea to use communicative tasks and entertaining activities to engage all learners.

There is one more point to consider. Older students coming to classroom having a wide range of experience: social, educational, professional, etc. They evaluate all the new information through it. This experience can be used as an important source of learning both for mature students themselves and for their groupmates. Some of the students might have studied other foreign languages. However, there is a negative point of it. Some learners attend a classroom having a number of expectations for the instruction process. They might get disappointed if their expectations are not met. In such a case, a teacher has to be tolerant and spend some time explaining and preparing students for new approaches.

It is quite evident, that older learners are likely to have some health problems, problems with sight and hearing as well as chronic diseases. There is an opinion that people's memory worsens as they get older. It is true that a human memory deteriorates, but to a very slight extent, which doesn't prevent them from learning and obtaining new information. Moreover, there is evidence that memory capacity depends on human activity. Those people who have intellectual jobs have no problems with learning no matter how old they are [1, p.129]. Another factor to keep in mind is that adults have developed analytical abilities.

Adults are usually very busy with everyday lives. They have to combine their studies with performing professional and social duties, taking care of children and other obligations. They sometimes come to a classroom in a bad mood; have no time to do homework. To deal with the situation, a teacher's job is to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom, to cheer the learners up. Instead of giving a large amount of homework a teacher could give a few five-minute tasks which could be done while having pauses at work, during lunch break, on a public transport, etc.

Some other problems adult learners might have include: being afraid of making a mistake, fear of losing one's authority, being afraid of looking stupid in the presence of younger learners. A teacher's task is to create a friendly atmosphere, to explain that mistakes take place in any learning process, to create situations of "success".

Conclusions and recommendations for further research. In the conclusion, we need to state that

teaching adults in the multi-aged foreign language classroom should be based on students' psychological, physiological and sociological characteristics. A lot of attention should be paid to learners'

experience. Student-oriented learning is preferred. Teachers should be more flexible and create a positive atmosphere in the classroom in which all the learners would feel comfortable and safe.

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Васильева Марина Петрівна

НАВЧАННЯ ДОРОСЛИХ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ В УМОВАХ РІЗНОВІКОВОЇ НАВЧАЛЬНОЇ ГРУПИ

В статті розглядаються основні психологічні, фізіологічні, когнітивні та поведінкові характеристики дорослого слухача як суб'єкта вивчення іноземних мов в різновіковій навчальній групі. Доведено, що навчання дорослих відрізняється від навчання більш молодших вікових груп. Навчання старших слухачів базується на принципах науки про навчання дорослих – андрагогіки, основи якої були закладені американським вченим М. Ноулзом. Порівняно певні особливості навчання дорослих з особливостями навчання підлітків. Наведено труднощі, з якими стикаються дорослі слухачі під час вивчення іноземних мов в різновіковій навчальній групі. Надані практичні поради викладачам іноземних мов різновікової навчальної групи.

Ключові слова: дорослий слухач; психологічні, фізіологічні, когнітивні та поведінкові характеристики; іноземна мова; різновікова навчальна група; андрагогіка.

Васильева Марина Петровна

ОБУЧЕНИЕ ВЗРОСЛЫХ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ В УСЛОВИЯХ РАЗНОВОЗРАСТНОЙ УЧЕБНОЙ ГРУППЫ

В статье рассматриваются основные психологические, физиологические, когнитивные и поведенческие характеристики взрослого слушателя как субъекта изучения иностранных языков в разновозрастной учебной группе. Доказано, что обучение взрослых отличается от обучения более младших возрастных групп. Обучение старших слушателей базируется на принципах науки об обучении взрослых – андрагогике, основы которой были заложены американским ученым М. Ноулзом. Сравниваются особенности обучения взрослых с особенностями обучения подростков. Показаны трудности, с которыми сталкиваются взрослые слушатели при изучении иностранных языков в разновозрастной учебной группе. Даны практические рекомендации преподавателям иностранных языков разновозрастной учебной группы.

Ключевые слова: взрослый слушатель; психологические, физиологические, когнитивные и поведенческие характеристики; иностранный язык; разновозрастная учебная группа; андрагогика.