

THE INFLUENCE OF AGE FACTORS AND THE LEVEL OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE ON THE PROCESS OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Akramova Mohinur Akramovna

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of age and language proficiency in foreign language teaching. It demonstrates that a differentiated approach based on students' age and level improves language acquisition and learning motivation. The findings support the advisability of adapting teaching methods and content to foster sustainable communicative competence.

Key words: teaching foreign languages, age factor, level of language proficiency, differentiated approach, communicative competence, teaching methods.

ABSTRAKT

Ushbu maqolada chet tilini o'qitishda yosh va tilni bilishning roli o'rganiladi. O'quvchilarning yoshi va tilni bilish darajasiga asoslangan tabaqalashtirilgan yondashuv tilni o'zlashtirishni va o'rganishga bo'lgan motivatsiyani yaxshilashi ko'rsatilgan. Natijalar barqaror kommunikativ kompetensiyani rivojlantirish uchun o'qitish usullari va mazmunini moslashtirish maqsadga muvofiqligini qo'llab-quvvatlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: chet tilini o'qitish, yosh omili, tilni bilish, tabaqalashtirilgan yondashuv, kommunikativ kompetensiya, o'qitish usullari.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается роль возраста и уровня владения языком в преподавании иностранных языков. Показано, что дифференцированный подход, основанный на возрасте и уровне владения языком учащихся, улучшает усвоение языка и мотивацию к обучению. Результаты подтверждают целесообразность адаптации методов и содержания обучения для развития устойчивой коммуникативной компетенции.

Ключевые слова: преподавание иностранных языков, возрастной фактор, уровень владения языком, дифференцированный подход, коммуникативная компетенция, методы обучения.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization and the expansion of intercultural communication, knowledge of foreign languages is becoming an integral part of professional and educational training. The effectiveness of foreign language teaching largely depends

on taking into account the individual characteristics of students, in particular, their age and level of knowledge of the target language. Different age groups exhibit differences in cognitive abilities, motivation, language acquisition strategies, and learning pace, which requires a differentiated approach to organizing the educational process.

In addition, the level of students' language knowledge determines the choice of methods, formats, and the amount of educational materials. Ignoring these factors can lead to a decrease in motivation, ineffective learning, and difficulties in developing communicative competence. Therefore, taking into account age and language knowledge is an important practical task in modern foreign language teaching methods, and is also of great scientific importance for the development of flexible and student-centered educational models.

Literature review

The influence of age on foreign language learning is actively discussed in linguistics and psycholinguistics. Critical period studies (Lenneberg, 1967; Singleton, 2005) point to age-related limitations in mastering phonetic and grammatical aspects of language, while more recent work emphasizes the role of motivation and the learning environment in adult learners (Ellis, 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Language proficiency as a learning factor is considered within the communicative and level-based approaches (CEFR, 2001), which emphasize the need to adapt teaching content and methods depending on learners' linguistic competence. Several studies have focused on the development of differentiated tasks and teaching strategies for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels (Nation, 2001; Harmer, 2007).

Despite a significant body of work, most studies examine age and language proficiency in isolation, paying insufficient attention to their interrelationships in real-world classroom settings. The comprehensive consideration of these factors when designing curricula and selecting pedagogical strategies has also been insufficiently explored. Thus, there is a need for further research aimed at integrating age- and level-based approaches in foreign language teaching.

MAIN PART

Learner age is a key factor determining the effectiveness of foreign language learning. Research on the critical period (Lenneberg, 1967; Singleton, 2005) shows that young children more easily acquire the phonetics and grammar of a new language, demonstrate high sensitivity to pronunciation, and experience less communication anxiety. Meanwhile, adult learners have developed metacognitive abilities, allowing them to more consciously assimilate grammar rules and construct complex linguistic structures, although mastering pronunciation may require more time and effort.

Age also influences motivation and learning strategies. Young learners often prefer game-based and interactive methods, while adult students focus on the practical

application of language and the systematization of knowledge. These differences highlight the need for a differentiated approach that takes into account the age characteristics and cognitive abilities of learners.

2. The Impact of Language Proficiency

Students' language proficiency directly determines their ability to comprehend new material and apply what they've learned. Beginner students require more structured and supportive teaching methods, simplified texts, and the gradual introduction of new vocabulary and grammar. Intermediate and advanced students are able to work with more complex texts, engage in dialogue, and independently use self-monitoring strategies.

A high level of language proficiency promotes the development of autonomy and independent learning skills, including the use of dictionaries, online resources, and audiovisual materials. This allows teachers to introduce more complex tasks and encourage creative use of language, which positively impacts the development of communicative competence

3. The Relationship between Age and Language Proficiency

The effectiveness of foreign language teaching is determined by a combination of age and language proficiency. For example, young learners with a basic language level learn better through playful activities and visual aids, while adults with an advanced language level are able to analyze language structures and independently formulate rules.

A pedagogical experiment showed that a differentiated approach, taking into account both age and language proficiency, increases motivation, promotes deeper learning, and improves communicative competence compared to traditional teaching methods.

4. Practical Recommendations

For children, it is recommended to use game-based and interactive methods, visual and audiovisual materials.

For adult learners, the emphasis should be on conscious study of grammar, text analysis, and practical communication situations.

The level of language proficiency should determine the complexity of the material and the types of tasks, ensuring a gradual increase in complexity and stimulating independent learning.

Research Methods

This study utilizes a comprehensive approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods. The primary research methods are questionnaires, pedagogical observation, and an experiment. Questionnaires are used to identify the age characteristics of students, their level of foreign language proficiency, as well as their

learning motivation and preferred learning strategies. This method was chosen due to its ability to reach a large number of respondents and obtain generalized data.

Pedagogical observation is used to analyze students' behavior during the learning process, their activity, interactions with the teacher, and responses to various teaching methods. The experimental method is used to test the effectiveness of a differentiated approach to foreign language teaching, taking into account the age and language proficiency of the students. These methods were chosen due to their complementary nature and the ability to comprehensively analyze the problem under study.

Results

The study results showed that age and language proficiency significantly influence learning effectiveness and the selection of optimal teaching strategies. Analysis of questionnaire data and diagnostic testing results revealed differences in learning preferences and learning rates across age groups. Younger learners demonstrated a high receptivity to interactive and game-based learning methods, while older learners demonstrated a greater focus on the conscious acquisition of grammatical structures and vocabulary.

It was also found that learners with higher language proficiency demonstrated greater autonomy in their learning, actively utilized self-monitoring strategies, and demonstrated higher levels of communicative competence. In the pedagogical experiment, improved learning outcomes were recorded in groups that utilized a differentiated approach tailored to the learners' age and language level, compared to control groups.

These results indicate that taking age and language proficiency into account enhances learners' motivation and language learning effectiveness. Differences in learning outcomes between age groups can be explained by differences in cognitive development, attention levels, and differences in learning motivation. The greater autonomy of learners with advanced language proficiency indicates the importance of developing independent learning strategies at higher stages of language proficiency.

The effectiveness of a differentiated approach confirms the advisability of adapting teaching methods and content based on the individual characteristics of learners. Thus, the data obtained suggest that integrating age and level factors into foreign language teaching is an important prerequisite for improving the quality of learning and developing sustainable communicative competence.

CONCLUSION

The study found that age and language proficiency are significant factors influencing the effectiveness of classroom learning. The results showed that taking into account students' age characteristics facilitates more successful acquisition of language material, increased motivation, and active participation in the educational process. It

was also found that language proficiency determines the degree of student autonomy and the effectiveness of various teaching methods.

Based on the results obtained, it seems appropriate to recommend the introduction of differentiated foreign language teaching methods, taking into account students' age and language proficiency, into teaching practice.

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