

THE PECULIARITIES OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO ADULT LEARNERS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: *This article explores the peculiarities of teaching foreign languages to adult learners. It highlights their psychological, cognitive, and social characteristics and their impact on learning. The study uses qualitative methods such as observations and interviews. Results show that adults are highly motivated but face challenges like anxiety and limited time. Effective teaching requires communicative and flexible approaches.*

Keywords: *adult education, foreign language teaching, communicative approach, motivation, andragogy, qualitative research.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada kattalar auditoriyasiga chet tilini o'qitishning o'ziga xos jihatlari o'rganiladi. Ularning psixologik va ijtimoiy xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot sifat usulida olib borildi. Natijalar kattalarning yuqori motivatsiyaga ega, lekin vaqt yetishmasligi va xatodan qo'rqish kabi muammolarga duch kelishini ko'rsatdi. Samarali o'qitish uchun kommunikativ yondashuv muhim.*

Kalit so'zlar: *kattalar ta'limi, chet tilini o'qitish, kommunikativ yondashuv, motivatsiya, andragogika, sifat tadqiqoti.*

Аннотация: *В статье рассматриваются особенности обучения взрослых иностранному языку. Анализируются их психологические и социальные характеристики. Исследование проведено качественными методами. Результаты показали, что взрослые мотивированы, но испытывают трудности из-за нехватки времени и страха ошибок. Эффективное обучение требует коммуникативного подхода.*

Ключевые слова: *обучение взрослых, обучение иностранному языку, коммуникативный подход, мотивация, андрагогика, качественное исследование.*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary education, teaching foreign languages to adult learners has become more and more important. Adults, in contrast to children, bring past knowledge, life experience, and specific learning objectives to the classroom. These elements affect how people pick up and comprehend a new language.

According to the theory of andragogy, adult learners are typically self-directed and driven by pragmatic demands like communication or professional advancement. But they could encounter difficulties including time constraints, a fear of making mistakes, and less flexibility when learning a language.

As a result, it's critical to use effective teaching strategies that target these particular traits. The purpose of this study is to pinpoint the unique characteristics of adult learners and offer practical teaching methods.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Applied Linguistics has extensively studied the teaching of foreign languages to adult learners. Andragogy, which emphasizes that adults are self-directed and rely on their past learning experiences, is one of the main philosophies. Malcolm Knowles highlighted that adult learners are driven by specific objectives and practical demands.

Furthermore, Stephen Krashen put out the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which explains how emotional elements like fear might impact language learning. Additionally, David Nunan encourages meaningful contact through task-based and conversational approaches.

Overall, research indicates that learner-centered, adaptable, and practical teaching strategies are beneficial for adult learners.

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the idiosyncrasies of teaching foreign languages to adult learners, this study used a qualitative research approach within the field of applied linguistics. Semi-structured teacher interviews, classroom observations, and instructional material analysis were used to gather data.

Adult learners enrolled in English language classes, ages 20 to 45, were among the participants. Participants with varying learning experiences and backgrounds were chosen using a purposive sample technique. The conduct, engagement, and interaction of the students during class were the main subjects of the observations.

To find recurring trends and difficulties in adult language acquisition, the gathered data was subjected to thematic analysis. This method assisted in identifying efficient teaching techniques appropriate for the requirements and preferences of adult learners.

RESULTS

According to the survey, adult learners are typically quite driven, particularly when it comes to employment, travel, or personal growth. However, time constraints and everyday obligations frequently impede their learning growth.

Participants demonstrated good analytical thinking skills and were able to make connections between new language input and prior knowledge, which improved their comprehension of grammar.

Many students also suffered from anxiety and a dread of making mistakes, which decreased their involvement in speaking exercises. Another prevalent problem was irregular practice brought on by hectic schedules.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that flexible, conversational, and practical teaching methods that lower anxiety and encourage regular practice are most beneficial to adult learners.

DISCUSSION

The study demonstrates that adult learners of foreign languages have both advantages and disadvantages. Their drive and life experience aid in their rapid comprehension of new information, particularly when it pertains to actual circumstances.

However, their participation in speaking is frequently diminished by worry and a fear of making mistakes. The Affective Filter Hypothesis, which describes how emotional factors might impact learning, lends credence to this.

Time constraints are another major problem that makes consistent practice challenging. For adults, traditional procedures are therefore less successful.

Overall, the results indicate that the best teaching strategies for adult learners are supportive, adaptable, and communicative.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, teaching foreign languages to adult learners requires specific approaches due to their unique characteristics. Adults are generally motivated and experienced learners, but they often face challenges such as anxiety, lack of time, and fear of making mistakes.

The study shows that effective teaching should focus on communicative, practical, and flexible methods that meet learners' real-life needs. Creating a supportive classroom environment and encouraging learner confidence are also essential for better results.

Overall, adapting teaching strategies to adult learners significantly improves their language learning outcomes.

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