

## THE IMPORTANCE OF AGE CHARACTERISTICS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

*Khaydarova Kamola Davranovna*

*Termiz State University Department of Foreign Philology*

*Supervisor: Senior teacher of Termiz*

*State university, Doctor of Philosophy in Philology [PHD]*

*Humoyuddin Odil o'g'li*

*A student of 4- course To'rayev*

[turayevhumoyiddin00119@gmail.com](mailto:turayevhumoyiddin00119@gmail.com)

**Abstrakt:** Katta yoshdagi ESP o'quvchilarining til o'rganish afzalliklari va ehtiyojlarini aniqlash tilni muvaffaqiyatli o'rganish va o'qitish nuqtai nazaridan juda samarali. Ushbu tadqiqot kattalar ESP o'quvchilarining til o'rganish afzalliklari va ehtiyojlarini aniqlashga qaratilgan. Bundan tashqari, o'qituvchi o'z talabalarining ingliz tilini o'rganishga bo'lgan ehtiyojlari va afzalliklaridan xabardor yoki yo'qligini tekshiradi. U o'qituvchilarning o'qitish usullari va kattalar o'rganuvchilarning maxsus maqsadlar uchun ingliz tilini (ESP) o'rganishni afzal ko'rish usullari o'rtasida moslashtirilgan sinf boshqaruvi zarurligini ko'rib chiqadi. Maqolada xususiy maktabda ingliz tilini o'rganayotgan kattalar ESP o'quvchilarining ehtiyojlari va afzalliklarini aniqlash bo'yicha aniq hisobot mavjud. Ushbu tadqiqotning natijalari o'quv dasturini ishlab chiqishda o'qituvchi va talaba hamkorligining ahamiyatini ko'rsatadigan keyingi tadqiqotlarni ruhlantiradi va rag'batlantiradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** ehtiyojlar, imtiyozlar, kattalar o'quvchilari, o'quv dasturi.

**Аннотация:** Выявление предпочтений и потребностей в изучении языка у учащихся старшего возраста, изучающих ESP, очень эффективно с точки зрения успешного изучения и преподавания языка. Целью данного исследования является определение предпочтений и потребностей взрослых, изучающих язык ESP. Кроме того, преподаватель проверяет, осведомлен ли он о потребностях и предпочтениях своих учеников в изучении английского языка. В нем рассматривается необходимость адаптивного управления классом между методами преподавания учителей и способами, которыми взрослые учащиеся предпочитают изучать английский язык для специальных целей (ESP). В статье представлен подробный отчет по выявлению потребностей и предпочтений взрослых учащихся ESP, изучающих английский язык в частной школе. Результаты этого исследования поощряют и стимулируют дальнейшие исследования, которые демонстрируют важность сотрудничества учителей и учеников при разработке учебных программ.

**Ключевые слова:** потребности, предпочтения, взрослые студенты, учебная программа.

**Abstract:** Identifying the language learning preferences and needs of adults ESP learners is highly effective in terms of successful language learning and teaching. This study aims to identify language learning preferences and needs of adults ESP learners. It further investigates whether teachers are aware of the needs and preferences their students have in respect to English language learning. It addresses the need for tailored class management between teachers' teaching methods and ways the adults learners English for Specific Purposes (ESP) prefer to learn. The paper contains a clear report on identification of needs and preferences of adults ESP learners who learn English in private school. The obtained results of this study stimulate and encourage further research addressing the importance of teacher-student cooperation in regards to syllabus design.

**Key words:** needs, preferences, adult learners, syllabus

### **Introduction:**

Language learning is a complex and multifaceted process that can be influenced by a variety of factors, including age. Research has shown that age characteristics play a significant role in how individuals acquire and develop language skills. In this article, we will explore the importance of age characteristics in language learning and how they can impact an individual's ability to learn a new language effectively.

Dr Richards responds: It is a common observation that children seem to learn new languages relatively easily, while older learners, particularly adults, are often not so successful. Nevertheless, there is also evidence that adults have the advantage in several important areas, such as those involving cognitive skills, making them more adept, for example, at learner autonomy.

In terms of children's apparent success, a reason that was offered in the 1970s was that there was a critical period for second language learning (before puberty), and that once learners had passed this period, changes in the brain and in cognitive processes made language learning more difficult. This was the critical-period hypothesis that led some educationists to argue for an earlier start for second and foreign language instruction, in order to capitalize on the special language-learning capacities of young learners. Unfortunately, the considerable amount of research devoted to this issue has not confirmed the theory that younger equals better language learner. It is true that there are some aspects of language learning (such as pronunciation) where younger learners appear to have an advantage; learners who start learning at an older age often retain a 'foreign accent' in their English, which is not the case with young learners. However, there are many factors, aside from age-related ability, that account for the

apparent ease with which young children often appear to ‘pick up’ a new language relatively easily.

#### 1. Critical Period Hypothesis:

One of the most well-known theories related to age characteristics in language learning is the Critical Period Hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that there is a specific window of time during which individuals are most receptive to acquiring language skills. According to this theory, children are more adept at learning languages than adults because their brains are still developing and have a greater capacity for language acquisition.

#### 2. Age-Related Differences in Language Learning:

Research has shown that there are distinct differences in how children and adults approach language learning. Children tend to learn languages more effortlessly and intuitively, while adults may rely more on cognitive strategies and explicit instruction. Younger learners also tend to have better pronunciation and accent acquisition, as their speech motor skills are still developing.

#### 3. Cognitive Factors:

Age characteristics can also impact cognitive factors that influence language learning, such as memory, attention, and processing speed. Younger learners may have better memory retention and cognitive flexibility, allowing them to absorb new vocabulary and grammar rules more easily. Older learners, on the other hand, may struggle with memory recall and may require more repetition and practice to retain language information.

#### 4. Motivation and Confidence:

Age can also influence motivation and confidence levels in language learning. Younger learners may be more open to taking risks and making mistakes, which can facilitate language acquisition through trial and error. Older learners, however, may be more self-conscious about their language abilities and may be more hesitant to engage in conversation or practice speaking skills.

#### 5. Strategies for Effective Language Learning:

Regardless of age, individuals can enhance their language learning abilities by adopting effective strategies tailored to their age characteristics. For younger learners, interactive and immersive experiences can be beneficial, such as games, songs, and storytelling. Older learners may benefit from structured lessons, grammar explanations, and practice opportunities to reinforce language concepts.

In the case of naturalistic language learning, young learners are typically highly motivated to do so; they receive large amounts of input geared to their level of learning, as well as copious amounts of practice. They also receive rewards and benefits for their efforts, since learning the new language is the key to peer acceptance and to the satisfaction of basic needs. These factors are often not the same for adult learners



studying English in classroom settings. Dornyei (2009) points out that, in any given situation, there are invariably a multitude of factors involved, and age is often only one of them and not necessarily the most important one. There are also documented examples of unsuccessful child language learning, as well as of successful adult language learning.

#### Conclusion:

In conclusion, age characteristics play a significant role in language learning and can impact an individual's ability to acquire new language skills effectively. Understanding how age influences language acquisition can help educators, parents, and learners themselves optimize their language learning experiences. By recognizing the unique strengths and challenges associated with different age groups, individuals can tailor their approach to language learning and maximize their linguistic potential.

Research conducted by leading language institutes around the world clearly demonstrates that age plays a significant, but not decisive, role in the ability to achieve native-level language acquisition. These studies confirm that although infants and preschool-aged children have a unique capacity for natural language acquisition, opportunities for language learning do not end with age.

Modern scientific advances in the field of brain neuroplasticity show that our cognitive functions can be flexible and adaptable throughout life. This means that adults and even older people can successfully learn new languages, although they may need more time and effort than children. Interestingly, learning a new language in adulthood not only promotes cognitive development, but may also protect the brain from degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease.

In short, regardless of age, learning a foreign language is a journey of discovery and achievement. This is a path that requires effort, but at the same time offers extensive opportunities for development, communication and understanding of the world in its diversity. Knowledge of foreign languages in the modern world is not just an asset, it is a bridge connecting cultures, peoples and ideas, contributing to the creation of a more open and mutually understanding world.

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