



THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

The article is dedicated to current problems and difficulties encumbering the learning of a foreign language by adults. As a result of analysis, a classification of possible barriers is given. Special attention is headed to the psychological barriers combined with professional experience, the forced acceptance of the student's position, distrust of the andragogue and students' own knowledge. The main causes and consequences of the described problems are identified and analyzed. The conclusion is made about the decisive importance of psychological support from the andragogue, emphasizing high degree of responsibility. The author presents techniques and examples of psychological support provision to adult students, which highlight the importance of preventive work and psychological preparation for students' educational process.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES: *adult students; educational activity; andragogue; psychological support; barriers; foreign language teaching*

The consequences of technological progress, globalization and other factors in the development of human civilization, such as the rapid obsolescence of knowledge, general informatization, the shortening of the life cycle of many professions, constant modernization or changing working conditions, make the modern world and society very dynamic and unstable. Difficulty keeping up with rapidly changing conditions but it is possible due to regular updating of existing knowledge and skills, increasing or expanding qualifications, ability to quickly adapt and entrepreneurship. Adult education is designed to meet precisely these needs. Thus, lifelong education, or lifelong education, is becoming increasingly relevant, and the new pension reform law adopted by the government, which involves raising the retirement age, makes self-education, especially at an older age, more in demand than ever. The age limits are shifting, the period of active social and professional life is lengthening, and its successful implementation requires constant work on oneself. So, in the "race" for well-being and successful self-realization, a modern person needs to meet fairly high, often overestimated requirements, the main of which are flexibility, speed and the availability of appropriate knowledge and skills.

A special place in the system of requirements is occupied by the knowledge of a foreign language, in most cases - English. Indeed, a foreign language is not only an end in

itself, but also a means necessary for the implementation of labor and educational activities to acquire new skills or expand existing existing qualifications. Awareness of the need for foreign language training leads to a huge number of the population of the country to educational institutions providing services for teaching a foreign language.

However, on the way to mastering the skills of foreign language communication, adults are forced to overcome a lot of difficulties. the number of difficulties that can be conditionally divided into the following groups: problems at the macro level, micro level and subjective barriers.

At the macro level, a modern adult encounters obstacle in the form of excessive requirements for communicative competence, prejudices associated with the influence of age-related changes on learning ability, misunderstanding of the true reason and the need for foreign language training on the part of society. Indeed, public opinion has a strong influence on the attitude of the subject to this or that phenomenon, it can promote or, on the contrary, hinder the formation of learning motivation.

Difficulties encountered at the micro level come from the person's close environment (family, friends, colleagues) and imperfect learning conditions. Situations such as lack of support from the family in matters of self-



education, misunderstanding of friends or the inability to be alone to do homework, have an extremely negative impact on the motivation of the subject and the attitude to foreign language training in general. Subjective barriers include two large subgroups - physiological and psychological difficulties. When they talk about the physiological barriers of foreign language learners, they mean characteristic age-related changes that make it difficult to learn a foreign language, such as some memory impairment, slow reaction, hearing loss and, in some cases, vision, etc. However, experts disagree about the real impact of age on learning abilities. The group of psychological barriers is the most complex and includes many subgroups. There are several classifications of psychological barriers of adults in teaching a foreign language. The most generalized is T. M. Shepelenko, who divides this type of barriers into two groups: external psychological barriers arising as a result of objective circumstances that do not depend on the subject; internal, due to purely subjective characteristics of the individual [6, p. 118-119].

O. G. Barvenko refers to psychological barriers the peculiarities of motivation, personal characteristics, the level of readiness for mastering a foreign language [1]. Indeed, low motivation, some features of the subject's character and an insufficient level of psychological readiness represent significant difficulties in the process of mastering a foreign language. This list of psychological barriers is supplemented by a personal system of self-esteem, perception and attitude to the surrounding reality, based on the accumulated life experience and the social attitudes and principles adopted by the individual.

The main source of such psychological difficulties lies in the following contradictions inherent in adult learners, namely:

- 1) between the social status and the position of the student, when an adult is forced to be in a position some conditional submission that does not correspond to his extracurricular status, which often causes discomfort. An adult perceives the need to sit at a desk as a lowering of his status;
- 2) between awareness of their competence in professional and other activities and incompetence in the subject being studied. In such a situation, adults experience a strong fear that in the learning process their illiteracy, lack of skills and abilities will be revealed, and the inevitable

comparison of them with other students will show their incompetence [4]. At the same time, the personal experience of success in the conditions of an adult's learning situation is often more important than the assessment of the andragogue, while the remark, on the contrary, in some cases, it can cause an extremely negative reaction in the student and become a decisive factor in refusing to continue learning [3]; R. P. Milrud writes that some adult students "tend from time to time to be offended and capricious in a childish way, capable of impulsive and irrational actions need encouragement and rely on individual attention" [5, p. 177];

3) Between expectations from the process and learning outcomes and their discrepancy with reality. So, illusions, misconceptions and high expectations from the training course, the andragogue and oneself are often imposed from the outside with the help of advertising messages of educational organizations promoting language courses. In cases of their discrepancy with reality, the student has a feeling of deep disappointment, dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction.

All of these stressful situations, in the worst case, can lead to the fact that an adult simply goes off the intended path, refuses to achieve the goal and quit school. To successfully overcome psychological barriers of adults that impede the process of learning a foreign language and maintaining persistent motivation, competent support of the training andragogue is necessary.

Thus, the correct behavior and friendly form of communication, the highest degree of tact, the non-judgmental nature of speech contact, the respectful and patient attitude of the andragog to his for an adult learner are critical in the process of mastering a foreign language [2]. Therefore, such an aspect of learning activity as the psychological support of the andragogue is one of the most important for the successful implementation of the learning process for the adult contingent foreign language in particular. Therefore, the role of psychological support in the learning process cannot be overrated.

Psychological support must be provided at each stage of training. It permeates all educational activities from beginning to end and requires patience, knowledge and understanding of the psychology of adults, andragogical training, tangible additional efforts, the highest degree of attentiveness and love for their students.



All aspects of the learning process have a specific algorithm of actions that allows you to implement psychological support for adult students. When developing this algorithm, we took into account all psychological and physiological characteristics, the importance and characteristics of the student's subjective position, life experience and the ideas and attitudes formed on its basis. The forms of psychological support in this context include the verbal nature of work, when the andragogue, as the main person responsible for the psychological climate in the classroom, using verbal tools, forms the most favorable psychological state for successful learning in the classroom. At the same time, we consider the andragog to be responsible for this important factor in the educational process for several reasons:

- 1) students in most cases do not know each other, and the task of the andragogue is to introduce them, explain to them the rules of communication in the classroom and create a friendly atmosphere;
- 2) students are forced to leave their usual comfort zone in the classroom, while the andragogue is in "its place" and does not experience fear and anxiety at their level;
- 3) as a leader or guide, the one who offers tasks for work, andragogue can provide impact and psychological plan;
- 4) as a person who is aware of the peculiarities and difficulties of adults, the andragogue can predict and reduce or prevent many difficulties;
- 5) ideally, the andragogue is an authority in the field of teaching a foreign language for adult learners, which makes all his statements weighty and meaningful for them;
- 6) adult students, in addition to learning a foreign language, have many other important life tasks that distract them from educational activities, while for an andragog, conducting classes is the main professional task, for which he can use his main physiological, psychological and mental resources.

The andragogue is aware of his responsibility and the dominant role in creating a favorable psychological climate in the classroom, as well as maintaining strong motivation and learning activity among students and provides all the necessary support.

Psychological support is provided in the following areas in the learning process:

- 1) introduction to the educational process;

- 2) the mood for the working area;
- 3) error correction;
- 4) overcoming the difficulties of the learning process;
- 5) maintaining stable motivation;
- 6) assistance in overcoming barriers;
- 7) creation of a favorable psychological climate in the classroom.

An algorithm of verbal actions or psychological support techniques are carried out in order to reduce the level of anxiety; form an adequate attitude and real ideas about their abilities and the possibilities of the training course, preventing a feeling of disappointment or dissatisfaction in case of difficulties; mobilize the learning resources of students as much as possible; raise self-assessment of students; maintain strong motivation and learning interest; increase the level of trust in students to the andragogue and to himself. So, to achieve the goal of providing psychological support to adult students in the classroom a foreign language andragogue performs the following general actions:

- together with students, conducts a clear arrangement of rules, conditions and learning strategies; warns of possible difficulties; talks about the requirements for students as participants in the educational process;
- forms the right positive attitude towards difficulties, mistakes and failures as obstacles, which should stimulate students to further hard work, while overcoming them is considered as a reason to increase the level of self-esteem;
- phrases motivate students to intensify their educational and mental activity and make efforts to complete tasks; regularly gives motivational speeches and reminds about goals and objectives of the course;
- praises, encourages students and criticizes when necessary; creates situations of success and focuses on the result; supports in all endeavors;
- jokes; gives examples from his life experience; often has casual conversations and discussions in a foreign language and is not afraid to spend more than a lesson on them if necessary.
- time than planned;
- all mistakes are corrected gently, without hurting the self-esteem and feelings of the student;
- before each task or transition from one type of task to another warns students, adjusts them to a working mood;



- communicates with students in the highest degree respectfully and attentively throughout the course during classes and outside of school hours.

As can be seen from the above, the actions of the andragogue in providing psychological support to adult students to a greater extent consist in preventive work, which involves the prevention of all negative aspects associated with the psychological state, mood of students and their motivation, both individually and as a group as a whole. Indeed, to solve the negative consequences of a situation of misunderstanding, disbelief in one's own strength, distrust of one's knowledge and an andragogue, uncomfortable position of the student and the contradictions associated with professional experience and status, social pressure or misunderstanding from the inner circle, as well as problems associated with natural age-related changes, are much more difficult and longer than regular psychological support above. Therefore, this algorithm of actions is aimed at preventing the occurrence of an unfavorable psychological state and at the formation of a stable motivational component and the correct attitude and perception of the educational process and results.

Thus, the effectiveness of teaching adults a foreign language significantly depends on the impact of andragogue on the psychological state of students. So, friendly atmosphere in the classroom, a respectful tone, appropriate praise and criticism, support in emerging difficulties, the formation of a correct attitude towards the process and learning outcomes, as well as the correct perception of oneself and one's abilities are extremely important for the successful implementation of foreign language training of an adult contingent. However, the problem of this aspect of the andragog's learning activity has not been adequately studied and requires further research.

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