



ADAPTATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE AGE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article examines the importance of choosing a methodology for teaching English as a foreign language depending on the age and psycholinguistic characteristics of students. It analyzes in detail the characteristics of language perception and language acquisition in children, adolescents and adults. Based on modern research in the field of psycholinguistics and pedagogy, adapted approaches to teaching for each age category are proposed. The purpose of the article is to choose the most effective teaching methods that help to increase the motivation of students and successfully master a foreign language.

Keywords: Age characteristics, psycholinguistics, teaching methods, teaching English, language motivation, speech perception.

Introduction

In the modern world, sooner or later, everyone encounters learning English. Globalization, the development of the Internet and the availability of education contribute to the fact that the number of people learning a new language continues to grow from year to year.

Learning English is a complex psycholinguistic process that occurs unconsciously, but significantly affects the structure of thinking. The human brain is rebuilt: new neurons are formed, both hemispheres are activated, neural connections are strengthened, etc.

However, the ability to absorb information depends on brain plasticity, which decreases with age. This makes it difficult for adults to remember words, constructions, or pronunciation. However, age is not an obstacle to learning a language: it opens up access to a huge number of opportunities – from understanding films in the original to moving to another country.



A thorough approach to teaching is the most important factor in promoting effective learning. Responsibility for the choice of teaching methodology lies with the teacher. However, it is important not only to choose the right methodology, but also to adapt it to a specific age group. To do this, it is necessary to take into account age-related psycholinguistics, a discipline that is closely related to teaching methods.

The article considers three age categories: children (preschool and primary school age), adolescents (puberty), adults (after puberty - middle and older age).

Main part

Children.

Preschool age (from 2 to 7 years).

In early childhood, language acquisition occurs naturally. A child learns the world through his senses: hearing, sight, smell, tactile sensations and taste. At this stage, children are not yet able to think abstractly, instead they use concrete images and symbols. Language serves as a means of expressing thoughts, but it is built on imitation of the environment. That is why psycholinguists say that the age under 7 years is optimal for the formation of correct pronunciation.

Studies confirm that people who started learning a language as adults do not achieve the same level of pronunciation as those who started learning as children. High neuroplasticity contributes to the rapid formation of neural connections, which makes it easier to remember words. However, due to the immaturity of the nervous system, children quickly lose attention, especially when the material is too abstract, complex or uninteresting

Average time of concentration of attention in preschoolers:

Age	Time
2-3 years	2-5 minutes
3-4 years	5-10 minutes
4-5 years old	10-15 minutes
5-6 years old	12-20 minutes
6-7 years old	15-25 minutes

For example, the combination of tactile and visual perception contributes to better assimilation of information. For example: when learning colors, you can give



paints to children. By mixing yellow and blue, the child will not only see the result, but will also be immersed in the process. This will attract his interest and attention. but will also encourage children to continue learning about other colors in the same way.

The main goal of the methodology of teaching language in preschool age is to form a positive attitude towards the language. It is important to create emotional engagement, a friendly and educational atmosphere. Sentences that children are able to learn usually contain 2-4 words. Games and songs help to memorize words and contribute to the formation of correct pronunciation.

Based on this, we can distinguish the following teaching methods:

1) Language immersion is a method of teaching a second language, in which the teacher conducts a lesson partially or completely in the target language, thereby creating conditions for natural language learning (as was the case with the native language).

Example: the teacher speaks to the children in English throughout the lesson, showing animal toys "This is a pig. The pig is pink. Say: pink pig!»

2) The game method is a technique in which the assimilation of new material takes place in the form of a game in order to reduce the load and maintain the interest of the child.

Example: The teacher uses cards with images of animals. The children take the cards one at a time, and without words show how it moves or makes sounds. The rest will have to guess what kind of animal it is.

3) The song-rhythmic method is a method of listening to songs performed by native speakers. This way of learning English contributes to the development of phonetic hearing, pronunciation and listening training. It is best to listen to rhythmic songs in dim light. In this way, we can eliminate the possibility of visual noise that will distract children.

4) The TPR (Total Physical Response) technique is a technique in which children learn new words and phrases, accompanying them with movements, gestures and emotions. This method helps to absorb the material more deeply due to the activation of motor memory.

Example: The teacher stands in front of the students and gives commands: "Touch your nose", "Clap your hands", etc.



These approaches help create a functional and engaging environment for language learning, contributing to the formation of sustainable skills at an early age.

Primary school age (from 7 to 11 years old). During this period, the prefrontal cortex of the brain is actively formed, which is responsible for logical thinking, retention and processing of information, as well as for impulse control. The child is already able to think logically based on previous experience, but abstract thinking is still being formed. especially related to physical objects. Communication in a team contributes to the imitation of language models observed in peers and teachers.

Reducing egocentrism contributes to the formation of dialogues, taking into account the position of the interlocutor. Right brain development promotes recognition of intonation and emotion, which improves understanding of context (e.g., "are you ready?" and "are you ready"). With better impulse control, children become more assiduous and able to concentrate on tasks. It should be noted that the critical age for learning correct pronunciation is on average 12 years old (maximum 15 years old): after that, mastering a neutral accent is much more difficult.

The main task of the methodology of teaching English at primary school age is the gradual introduction of grammar, the formation of correct pronunciation and maintaining interest in learning. Since the material is complicated during this period due to the introduction of grammar rules, there is a high probability that students may lose motivation to learn. That is why special attention should be paid to: regular repetition (contributes not only to memorization, but also to better assimilation of the material), a system of praise (stickers, stickers, etc.), work in pairs (practice of dialogues to consolidate vocabulary and grammar).

Based on this, the following effective teaching methods can be distinguished:

1) The methodology of bilingual education is an approach in which school disciplines are mastered using the English language.

Example: in a math lesson, when solving equations, the teacher may suggest writing expressions not in the form of numbers ($3 + 8 = 11$), but in words in English (three plus eight equals eleven). This method contributes to the natural expansion of vocabulary and the strengthening of language structures in practice.

2) The method of working in pairs is an effective way to teach English, aimed at developing communication skills and increasing the activity of students. Working



in pairs helps each student to take part in the lesson and maintain interest through social influence (in larger groups, there is a high chance that due to a lack of individual involvement, children may not participate in the task or take minimal participation).

Example: students will be divided into pairs by the teacher, their task will be to come up with a dialogue on the topic of "Supermarket". After 5-7 minutes, the students come out and tell their dialogue in front of the rest of the students and the teacher.

3) The Predictive Reading Technique is a teaching method focused on the development of imagination, understanding of the context and active interaction with the text. Students should assume the content of the text before and during reading, carefully studying its title, illustrations and key words. This technique contributes to a deeper understanding of the text.

Example: A teacher shows a picture of a book and reads the title "The Magic Hat," then asks, "What do you think this story is about?" The teacher reads the beginning and asks: "What do you think will happen next?" After the reading is completed, the teacher compares the real ending with the endings that the children are supposed to have. Then he asks questions on the topic of the text: "If I had the magic hat, I would..."

Teenagers

Adolescence covers approximately the period from 12 to 18 years. At this stage, personality is formed, social identity and abstract thinking develop. The transition to operational thinking allows the use of metaphors, irony, and complex syntactic constructions. Language becomes a means of self-expression, belonging to a group and protesting.

Pragmatic skills are developed - the use of sarcasm, humor, subtext. Due to the lack of maturity of the prefrontal cortex, adolescents can be impulsive and emotional. The development of brain regions responsible for social interaction reinforces the desire for identity and social acceptance. Despite the instability, the level of neuroplasticity in adolescents remains high, which contributes to successful language learning.



1) Project-based learning is an approach to learning in which students work in groups on long-term projects, actively using English. Such work helps to develop communication skills, critical thinking and the ability to solve real problems.

Example: Creating a "My City" vlog with interviews, landmarks, and editing.

2) The thematic immersion method is a method based on learning the language through topics that are really interesting to teenagers: music, humor, games, hobbies, social networks. This makes the lessons more fun and motivates children to actively use English in a live context.

Example: Stranger Things tutorials: vocabulary, quotes, discussion of characters and alternate endings.

3) Flipped Classroom is a format in which the student himself becomes a "teacher": he studies the topic at home in advance, and then explains it to classmates in class. This approach helps to understand the material more deeply and develops confidence in your knowledge.

Example: A student explains a topic to the whole class, then conducts a survey among students during the lesson.

Adults

The period of adulthood begins at about 19 years of age and continues further. In adults, the prefrontal cortex is almost fully formed (it will be formed until about 25 years old), which contributes to the development of analytical thinking, planning, self-control of speech and emotions. The nervous system is stable, and attention is stable.

Reduced neuroplasticity makes it difficult to memorize words and master phonetics. A decrease in the activity of mirror neurons weakens the ability to imitate, which is why the emphasis is preserved. However, developed cognitive skills allow adults to cope better with grammar and writing. Adults are motivated – they are motivated to learn a language by career goals, emigration, study, or travel.

1) The shadowing technique is a language learning technique that helps to improve pronunciation by repeating the speech heard almost simultaneously with the speaker, trying to repeat the tempo, intonation and rhythm as much as possible.

Example: Listening to a TED Talk and speaking behind the speaker at the same time.



2) The English for Specific Purposes method is a language learning method that considers the language in the context of a specific profession or field of activity: business, IT, economics, etc.

Example: For a programmer, learning terms like "debug", "compile", "source code" within role-playing dialogues.

3) The spaced repetition method is a technique that is especially effective in conditions of reduced neuroplasticity. After the first contact with new information, the brain begins to forget it, each subsequent repetition occurs after a short period of time (1 day – 3 days – 1 week – 1 month).

Example: New words are recorded in an app (e.g. Anki) that reminds you of repetition at increasing intervals: 1 day, 3 days, a week, etc.

Conclusion

In the process of teaching English, it is extremely important to take into account the age psycholinguistic characteristics of students. For preschoolers, game methods based on imitation are effective. Younger schoolchildren begin to effectively learn simple grammatical structures, with an emphasis on visual supports and context. Adolescents need the personal significance of the material, creative tasks and the opportunity for self-expression. orientation and adaptation to reduced neuroplasticity. Taking into account age characteristics helps to make learning more effective, motivating and effective. It is important to remember that many teaching methods can be adapted to different age groups. However, if we are talking about gradual learning of English throughout life, the methods described in the article will be the most effective learning plan at different periods of life.

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