



PSYCHO-PHYSIOLOGICAL FEATURES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE
LEARNERS AND THE PROCESS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO
DIFFERENT AGE LEARNERS

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Annotation

This article explores the psycho-physiological factors influencing foreign language learning and examines how these factors vary across different age groups. The study focuses on the role of age, motivation, cognitive abilities, anxiety, and other physiological aspects in the language acquisition process. It investigates the challenges and advantages faced by children, adolescents, and adults in learning foreign languages. The findings emphasize the need for age-specific teaching methods to maximize learning outcomes. Younger learners benefit from immersive and interactive environments, while adolescents require strategies to address self-confidence and anxiety. Adults, meanwhile, need a balanced approach that combines formal instruction with practical language use. Overall, the research highlights the importance of understanding the psychological and physiological features of learners to design effective, learner-centered language teaching strategies.

Keywords: *psycho-physiological features, foreign language acquisition, age and language learning, motivation in language learning, cognitive capacity, language anxiety, age-specific teaching strategies, children language learners, adolescents and language learning, adult language learners, language teaching methodologies, second language acquisition, learning outcomes*

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola chet tili o'rganish jarayoniga ta'sir qiluvchi psixo-fiziologik omillarni o'rganadi va ularning turli yosh guruhlarida qanday farq qilishini tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqot yosh, motivatsiya, kognitiv qobiliyatlar, xavotir va boshqa fiziologik omillarni til o'rganish jarayonidagi roli va ta'sirini ko'rsatadi. Maqolada bolalar, o'smirlar va kattalar chet tilini o'rganishda duch keladigan qiyinchiliklar va afzalliklar muhokama qilinadi. Natijalar o'quvchilarni har bir yosh guruhining ehtiyojlariga mos ravishda o'qitish metodlarini ishlab chiqish zarurligini ta'kidlaydi. Yosh bolalar interfaol va ko'nikmalarni oshirishga yordam beruvchi muhitda samarali o'rganishadi, o'smirlarga esa o'ziga bo'lgan ishonchni oshirish va xavotirni kamaytirish bo'yicha strategiyalar kerak. Kattalar esa rasmiy ta'limni amaliy til qo'llanilishi bilan uyg'unlashtiradigan yondashuvga ehtiyoj sezadi. Umuman olganda, tadqiqot psixologik va fiziologik xususiyatlarni hisobga olib, samarali va o'quvchiga yo'naltirilgan chet tili o'qitish strategiyalarini ishlab chiqish zarurligini ko'rsatadi.





Kalit soʻzlar: *psixo-fiziologik xususiyatlar, chet tili oʻrganish, yosh va til oʻrganish, til oʻrganishda motivatsiya, kognitiv qobiliyat, til xavotiri, yoshga xos oʻqitish strategiyalari, bolalar til oʻrganuvchilari, oʻsmirlar va til oʻrganish, kattalar til oʻrganuvchilari, chet tili oʻqitish metodologiyalari, ikkinchi tilni oʻrganish, oʻrganish natijalari.*

Аннотация

Данная статья исследует психо-физиологические факторы, влияющие на процесс изучения иностранного языка, и анализирует, как эти факторы различаются у разных возрастных групп. В работе рассматриваются такие аспекты, как возраст, мотивация, когнитивные способности, тревожность и другие физиологические характеристики, которые влияют на процесс освоения языка. В статье обсуждаются проблемы и преимущества, с которыми сталкиваются дети, подростки и взрослые при изучении иностранных языков. Результаты исследования подчеркивают важность применения методов преподавания, адаптированных к возрастным особенностям учащихся. Дети лучше всего обучаются в интерактивной и иммерсивной среде, подростки нуждаются в стратегиях для повышения уверенности в себе и снижения тревожности, в то время как взрослые предпочитают сбалансированный подход, сочетающий формальное обучение с практическим использованием языка. В целом исследование показывает, что для эффективного преподавания необходимо учитывать психо-физиологические особенности учащихся и разрабатывать методы, ориентированные на их потребности.

Ключевые слова: *психо-физиологические особенности, освоение иностранного языка, возраст и изучение языка, мотивация в изучении языка, когнитивные способности, тревожность при изучении языка, возрастные методики обучения, дети, изучающие язык, подростки и изучение языка, взрослые, изучающие язык, методологии преподавания иностранных языков, освоение второго языка, результаты обучения.*

Introduction

The process of acquiring a foreign language (FL) is a complex cognitive and physiological challenge that involves a variety of factors, including the learner's age, motivation, and psycho-physiological state. The manner in which individuals learn foreign languages varies significantly across different age groups, as each developmental stage carries its own strengths and challenges. These differences can influence how effectively a learner acquires new linguistic skills, adapts to the complexities of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, and navigates the cognitive processes involved in language learning. Understanding the psycho-physiological features of foreign language learners is crucial for educators as it helps to design more effective and tailored teaching methodologies. This article explores the psycho-physiological factors influencing foreign language learners and examines how these factors affect the language acquisition process in different age groups, including children, adolescents, and adults.





Literature Review

The psycho-physiological aspects of foreign language learning have been widely studied, and various theories have emerged that help explain the differences in language acquisition across age groups. One critical factor is age, which plays a vital role in determining the success of language learners. According to Krashen [1, 56], younger learners, especially those under the age of 12, are typically better at acquiring native-like pronunciation and fluency. This is largely due to the plasticity of the brain in early childhood, which makes it more adaptable to language input. In contrast, older learners face greater difficulties with pronunciation and may rely more heavily on cognitive strategies like memorization and analytical learning to master grammar rules [2, 103].

Furthermore, motivation and cognitive processing capacity are key psycho-physiological factors that influence language acquisition. Motivation, as identified by Gardner and Lambert, plays a central role in determining the extent to which a learner engages with the language learning process. Integrative motivation, where the learner has a desire to integrate into the culture of the language being learned, is often linked with higher success rates, especially in young learners [3, 88]. Additionally, the cognitive load theory, developed by Sweller, emphasizes that learners can only process a limited amount of information at a time. This theory is particularly important for older learners, who might experience cognitive overload when attempting to process complex grammatical structures or unfamiliar vocabulary, thus affecting their learning efficiency [4, 67].

The role of anxiety in language learning is another well-documented psycho-physiological feature that impacts foreign language acquisition. Horwitz found that language anxiety could impede language performance, particularly in young learners who may not yet have developed coping mechanisms for managing stress in a foreign language environment [5, 56]. For adults, who often have established social identities and more self-consciousness, the fear of making mistakes or being judged in a second language can significantly affect their confidence and willingness to participate in language learning activities.

Finally, physiological factors such as attention span, memory, and stress tolerance also play a critical role in language learning. Studies by Paivio suggest that young learners generally exhibit higher levels of attentiveness and working memory capacity, making them more suited for learning foreign languages in immersive and interactive contexts [6, 95]. In contrast, older learners may need more structured approaches to learning and may benefit from mnemonic devices or other memory-enhancing strategies.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to investigate the psycho-physiological features of foreign language learners across different age groups and to examine the process of language learning in these groups. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with foreign language educators and classroom observations across three distinct age groups: children (ages 6-12), adolescents (ages 13-18), and adults (ages 19+). The teachers, who were all experienced in teaching English as a second language (ESL), were





asked about their observations on age-related differences in language learning, motivation levels, cognitive challenges, and affective factors such as anxiety and confidence. In addition, classroom observations were conducted to identify the strategies used by teachers to address the unique needs of each age group, as well as the pedagogical approaches that seemed to yield the best results. A thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns in the data, which were then categorized into themes such as "Age and Pronunciation," "Cognitive Strategies," "Motivation," and "Anxiety Management."

Results

The findings of the study indicated significant differences in the psycho-physiological features and learning outcomes across the three age groups. Younger learners exhibited greater flexibility in acquiring pronunciation and a more natural use of language, especially in immersive environments. This age group also demonstrated higher motivation levels, with an intrinsic desire to play and engage with the language in social contexts. Adolescents, however, showed a heightened awareness of their language mistakes, leading to an increase in language anxiety. Their learning was influenced by a stronger reliance on cognitive strategies, particularly memorization and repetition. Adults, on the other hand, faced more challenges with pronunciation and fluency, often relying on formal learning strategies and analytical approaches to understand complex grammar rules. Language anxiety was particularly prevalent in adults, with many reporting fear of making mistakes in front of others, which inhibited their active participation in class activities. The study also found that older learners, particularly those with more life experience, benefited from strategies that focused on pragmatic use of the language rather than focusing on fluency or perfect pronunciation.

Discussion

The study's results emphasize the need for age-appropriate teaching methods that cater to the distinct psycho-physiological features of different learner groups. Younger learners, due to their neuroplasticity and heightened ability to acquire native-like pronunciation, benefit from immersive, playful, and communicative language activities. These activities can help them internalize the language in a more natural way. For adolescents, teachers need to focus on building confidence and managing language anxiety. This can be done through positive reinforcement and using communicative tasks that allow them to make mistakes in a safe environment. Adolescents also benefit from more structured learning techniques that integrate both cognitive and communicative methods. Adults, meanwhile, require an approach that acknowledges their cognitive maturity but also respects their emotional and motivational challenges. Teaching adults involves finding a balance between formal learning strategies and opportunities for real-life language use, such as conversations and role-playing. Overall, understanding the psycho-physiological features of learners at various age stages allows educators to design more effective, learner-centered curricula that enhance language acquisition at any age.





Conclusion

The psycho-physiological features of foreign language learners, including age, motivation, cognitive capacity, and emotional state, significantly influence the effectiveness of language learning. The study revealed that children, adolescents, and adults each experience unique challenges and advantages in the process of language acquisition. Tailoring teaching methodologies to address these age-specific needs is crucial for maximizing learning outcomes. For children, immersive, playful language learning environments are most effective; for adolescents, building self-confidence and managing anxiety should be prioritized; and for adults, a combination of formal instruction and practical language use can yield the best results. By acknowledging and addressing the psycho-physiological differences across age groups, educators can create more engaging and efficient foreign language learning experiences for all learners.

References

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