

EXPERIMENTAL AND INNOVATIVE MODELLING OF PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY IN EDUCATION

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The impact of age, motivation and language proficiency differences among English learners on English language teaching in Azerbaijan and proposed solutions to emerging challenges

Abstract: The presented article aims to identify the variations in English language learning among individuals in Azerbaijan, differentiated by age group and motivational factors. Drawing on data obtained through a structured survey, the findings are synthesized to highlight key trends, and targeted recommendations are proposed to support more effective language instruction across diverse learner profiles.

Key words: second language acquisition, age factor in learning, learner motivation and attitudes, structural differences of L1 and L2.

In today's globalized world, English is not only a means of communication, but also the main language of science, technology, and international collaboration. Interest in learning English is growing steadily in Azerbaijan. However, due to differences in learners' age groups, levels of motivation, and prior language knowledge, the teaching process can lead to varying outcomes. This research aims to explore the impact of these differences on teaching and learning English and to suggest solutions to the related problems.

Based on survey data, the study seeks to:

- examine the differing needs and approaches of various age groups (adults and adolescents) in learning English
- analyse the impact of motivation types (intrinsic and extrinsic) on teaching effectiveness
- identify the relationship between learner's prior language knowledge (native and other languages) and their English acquisition
- determine how challenges manifest during instruction and offer practical solutions

Summarising the survey result of 12 adults and 15 younger adults, it can be stated that age factor plays an important role in language learning. Studies and the results of conducted survey show that language learning that begins at early age can be

more effective, as neuroplasticity in the brain is high during this period. Children are more receptive, but they have difficulty understanding systematic grammar. The survey proves that, younger adults' grammar and writing skills are more easily formed because of their strong analytical thinking. For adults, language learning is based on motivation and is goal-oriented, but the learning process is relatively slow. J. Harmer articulates his perspective on this concept as follows: "The age of the learners in front of us will be a major deciding factor in how we teach them and we ask them to do. People of different ages have different needs, competences and cognitive skills." [2, p.80]

Another factor that affects language learning is motivation. Motivation is the driving force of language learning. There two main types of motivation; intrinsic motivation- interest, personal development, enjoyment, extrinsic motivation- exams, job applications, social status. If the teacher can correctly identify the type of motivation, the effectiveness of the lesson significantly increases. The survey indicates that learner motivation among both adolescents and adults in Azerbaijan is predominantly extrinsic.

In relation to this matter, R. Gardner states: "A consideration of the motivational construct also suggests that attitudes and motivation might relate to other aspects of behavior which are related to second language acquisition. Two of these, persistence in language study and classroom participation, reflect volitional behavior on the part of the student, and a consideration of them demonstrates once again that attitudes and motivation are involved in the learning process. These relationships suggest, therefore, that attitudes and motivation are important because they reflect an active involvement on the part of the student in the entire process of learning a second language." [6, p.61]

Of course, the influence of the learners' previous language experience (mother tongue or other languages) on the acquisition of English also plays an important role. If there is a similarity between the mother tongue and English, learning goes more smoothly. If the learner already knows another foreign language, this makes it easier to adapt to the structure of the new language. Azerbaijani is an agglutinative language, characterized by the attachment of multiple suffixes to simple root words to convey grammatical and lexical meaning. Structurally, Azerbaijani follows a subject-object-verb (SOV) word order. While learners tend to grasp the basic principles of English syntax in simple sentence constructions relatively quickly, they often struggle with mastering more complex syntactic patterns.

General psycho-pedagogical factors affecting teaching include the individual learning styles of the learners, self-confidence and language barrier, social environment and teacher-student relationship. The survey findings suggest that, in the context of English language instruction in Azerbaijan, communication in the mother

tongue is generally perceived as advantageous. By highlighting this issue, D. Riddell states: “Students have different learning styles. Some students prefer to be taught through exercises and grammar rules, whereas others seek a purely communicative approach. In either case, avoiding the use of L1 in the classroom will help students immerse themselves in English.” [1, p.22]

We can summarize the main problems that emerged during the study as follows:

1. Failure to select teaching methods appropriate to age differences
2. Failure to take personal motivation into account
3. Incorrect determination of the level of language learning skills
4. Failure to adapt curricula to individual needs

To solve the problems noted, we can suggest the development of differential teaching models appropriate for different age groups, the inclusion of interactive technologies and real-life topics to increase learning motivation, the correct assessment of language proficiency at the beginning and the formation of appropriate groups, and the development of practical training and methodological recommendations for teachers.

This study showed that differences in age, motivation, and language proficiency of English learners in Azerbaijan have a significant impact on the teaching process. The application of appropriate methods for each age group and different motivation levels increases the effectiveness of lessons. Proper grouping by language level creates opportunities for an individual approach for teachers. Taking these factors into account makes English teaching more purposeful and successful. The proposed methodological innovations and measures to increase motivation can improve the quality of the teaching process and ensure students' continuous learning enthusiasm. Increasing the professionalism of teachers is one of the main conditions. In general, the results of the study provide practical recommendations aimed at solving the problems encountered in English teaching and improving the quality of teaching.

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