UDC 81’243:37.016-053.5-053.8(0432)

***Mariia-Liubov Stevchak***

*Student of 303 group IB (Bachelor),*

*ESIIR NAU, Kyiv, Ukraine*

***Scientific Supervisor:***

***Natalyya Vasylyshyna***

*Doctor of Philosophy in Pedagogics,*

*Associate Professor,*

*Associate Professor of Foreign Language Department*

*ESIIR, NAU*

*Kyiv, Ukraine*

**REAL FACT OR JUST MYTH: ADULTS HAVE LESS POTENTIAL TO LEARNING LANGUAGES THAN CHILDREN**

 ***Annotation.*** This article is based on giving convincing facts which prove that adults can learn languages as well as children and sometimes even better. In order to prove this statement the article also provides advantages for learning languages by adults comparing with children. The main criteria that were taken as the basis of the comparative characteristics of these two groups were: the level of comprehension and logical analysis, motivation factor, factor of experience and self-confidence. As a confirmation of all facts mentioned in study, there were used results of scientific research concerning this topic. The conclusion summarizes that the myth which was accepted by majority is not really true, nowadays adults have the same possibilities for learning languages as children and the age is not a barrier on the way of mastering languages.

***Key words:*** foreign language , master language, stereotype, motivation, language skills, life experience

***Марія-Любов Стевчак,***

*студентка 303 групи МБ (бакалавр)*

*ННІМВ НАУ, м. Київ, Україна*

***Науковий керівник:***

***Василишина Наталія Максимівна***

*канд.пед.наук., доцент,*

*доцент кафедри іноземних мов,*

*ННІМВ НАУ, м. Київ, Україна*

**ПРАВДА ЧИ МІФ: ДОРОСЛІ МАЮТЬ МЕНШИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ДО ВИВЧЕННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ, АНІЖ ДІТИ**

***Анотація.*** В основі даної статті лежать переконливі факти, які доводять, що дорослі так само як і діти, а іноді навіть і краще, можуть вивчати іноземні мови. На користь цих фактів в статті були наведені переваги дорослих у вивченні іноземних мов порівняно з дітьми. Основними критеріями, які були взяті за основу порівняльної характеристики обох цих груп були: рівень сприйняття та логічного аналізу, мотиваційний фактор, фактор досвіду і самовпевненість. Як підтвердження усіх наведених у статті тверджень були згадані результати наукових досліджень у цій сфері. У висновку підсумовується, що міф, який сприймається більшістю людей насправді неправдивий і на сьогодні дорослі мають ті ж можливості, що й діти при вивченні іноземних мов, а вік не є перешкодою на шляху до оволодіння мовами.

***Ключові слова:*** Іноземна мова, оволодіти мовою, стереотип, мотивація, мовні навики, життєвий досвід.

 **PROBLEM STATING.**Nowadays learning foreign languages gains more and more popularity not only among pupils and students but also among adult population. It caused by processes of globalization and internationalization which have already captured the whole world. International cooperation, international exchange and just any kind of international relationship demand knowledge of foreign languages at a high level. It is especially a big plus for adults, because knowing at least one foreign language gives them a whole world of possibilities whether it’s concerning international communication of career prospects.

That is why a rather actual question for today is if adults can learn foreign languages perfectly and if they have less potential for learning then children. The majority of people is convinced that beginning learning in adulthood is not so affective as at a young age, that is why there are some people who don’t even try learning languages because they believe this myth is really true. Some, on the contrary, strongly deny this stereotype and work a lot to achieve good results in mastering languages and eventually giving a real example of themselves prove that there is any reason which prevent from achieving success. Therefore, the definition of barriers or their absence in learning languages by adults is the question, which attracts the attention of many philologists and psychologists.

**THE ANALYSIS OF RECENT RESEARCHES AND PUBLICATIONS.**

There are no so many researches concerning this topic, because this problem has become relevant recently but nowadays it is widely researched by many scientists in this field. This question was a topic of investigation for Richard Roberts, a Foreign Service Officer in the US Department of State and Roger Kreuz , a Professor of Psychology and Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Memphis and some others foreign and national researchers. In their works they researched the ability of people to learn foreign languages from the physical and psychological point of view. They also tried to give a clear answer about the influence of age on this point.

**MAIN FACTS OF THE SURVEY AVERMENT.**

Everyone in his life at least once asked himself “ Why should I learn foreign languages? It is so difficult , I will never master this language “ Who of us didn’t find any reasons to leave the studying of a foreign language and to do something else, something that will suit you better. These all are widely spread excerpts and they are as old as the history of mastering of foreign language. In this regard here is one more the most popular stereotype: adults have less potential to learning languages then children and teenagers. Due to this myth adults are starting way too late to ever reach any respectable level of expertise in a foreign language, and they'll definitely never sound like a native speaker. This myth will be popular until it will be beneficial for people to think so and to use it as an excerpt. And only someone despite of this stereotype will continue or even start learning foreign languages.

Researching on this point, scientists proved that children have an advantage compared with adults. It is explained by the psychological and physiological development of different age groups.

Due to these results the first proof is that the child’s brain is more flexible than an adult’s, so it's easier for a child to remember new words, rules and foreign phrases. However, this statement is not entirely correct. The child's mind really works very intensely while learning the world around, but nevertheless, it's not as well-developed as an adult’s. because elderly people are more able to handle a large amount of information. They can think logically and systematize all information, that child can’t. The more important thing is that adult person can analyze and make conclusions, which indicates the effectiveness of learning [1].

The second thing is motivation. No one can refuse that children and adults are motivated in different way. First ones generally learn language due to their curricular or because they are forced by parents – they actually don’t understand the importance of learning and learn strictly to their programs. Adults , on the contrary, master foreign languages for their goals, projects, missions whether it’s the chance to get a better job or pay rise, travel the world or simply for a hobby, clear motivation makes it easier for adult learners to set goals and reach them faster. ant these are the main forces that drive them forward.

There is another difference between children and adult. And it is the adult’s week point -pronunciation. Some can agree that in rare it is possible for adults to gain a completely native accent in a new foreign language, but unfortunately it just doesn’t happen that often. There is a tendency that children are more adept at learning and are more likely to repeat native accents. However, for most adults, this doesn’t really matter. Their main purpose to learn language for communication; in other words it’s more important for them to be understood than to sound like a perfect native. So this difference is almost insignificant.

After that, scientist also say that children acquire a second language quicker than adults because of the different standards of proficiency between these two groups. The children’s language skills are limited by rather small vocabulary and it is easy to learn enough of language to communicate their needs. For adults, on the contrary, this glossary is definitely small. They have a much larger vocabulary and communicate in more complex ways than children. It follows that they need much more time to acquire the ability to communicate effectively in foreign language. Although it seems that children learn language quicker than adults, in actuality adults and adolescents have the edge[2].

Furthermore, such factors like motivation, personality, the learning environment and learning strategies are all things adults can control which have a huge impact on the success as a language learner. Children due to their early age can not control their process of studying, they don’t exactly know what they want and what are demanded from them, they have not yet formed as individuals, so they do not fully know what their mission is[4].

The next point related to adults advantages of studying languages is experiential factor. In this regard adults are in better position than children due to their life experience and basic knowledge. Having life experience, people can make associations that are not available to most children, and these associations are particularly helpful when learning a foreign language. Such imagination come up very unexpectively and sometimes they are connected with some others non related topics: some lines from a song, familiar slogans etc.

The problem can also be in ways of studying languages. A lot of people, and it is especially common for beginners, learn language as a subject not like a way of communication, paying a lot of attention and time to theoretical aspects, but not using their knowledge. Because they have less time to master languages then children do, adults always hurry to learn more and more, but because of lack of practice, the result becomes less progressive. In this case people should change their way of studying, and concentrate on application of skills . Once people stop learning and start using English as a normal, natural and enjoyable part of daily communication, they can make as much progress as children do. Or may be even more than they do.

And finally ,the most common reason why adults do not learn languages is self-suggestion that they can’t master them, that it is just impossible to learn a whole language when starting it in their mature age, they don’t believe in themselves. Unfortunately, they just give up even tot starting yet. Or one other common situation when they start learning, but after facing difficulties during the prosses people despair in their abilities, and as in previous case, just give up. The problem is people are not enough confident and motivated, so same external problems can easily influence on their choice whether to star learning languages or not.

As a prof to all facts, mentioned above experimental research in which children have been compared to adults in second language learning has consistently demonstrated that adolescents and adults perform better than young children under controlled conditions[3].

**CONCLUSIONS.** Summing up, it is undoubtedly true that the process of learning foreign languages for children and adults considerably differ , and answering the question who can master them more easily - yes, of course, children are in a better position to learn than adults are, but at the same time adults don't have any barriers to . Both groups have their advantages.

Yes, the child’s brain is more flexible than an adult’s -but adults can overthink and analyze what they learn.

Yes, beginning learning languages from the start is easier for children, but adults are more motivated and more willing to learn languages for their goals, projects, missions and just communication.

Yes, good pronunciation, grammatic and accent is more common among children, because they have more time to train it, but this point considered to be not so critical for adults because it’s more important for them to be understood than to sound like a perfect native.

Yes, from the first side it seems that children learn languages quicker than adults, but it is just because they don’t need to learn so many new words and phrases to communicate. Adults, on the contrary, have a much larger vocabulary and communicate in more complex ways than children. That’s why the process of learning demands more time for adults, but it justifies itself.

This list can be continued with many others proofs, as it was already mentioned, both groups have their advantages without any exception. Age , in no case, can’t be considered as an obstacle to learning a foreign language. And especially in modern world with so many great possibilities available through learning a foreign language, existing such kind of a social myth is almost impossible. There is no age when people become incapable to learn something new. There are many cases when people began to learn the language already in old age and achieved good results. In any case, the main thing is the dedication and the desire to learn and positive result will be obvious soon.

**REFERENCES**

1. Davidow, J. (2016). An upside to reward sensitivity: The hippocampus supports enhanced reinforcement learning in adolescence. Neuron, Vol. 92, No. 1, pp.93-99. Available from: DOI: /10.1016/j.neuron.2016.08.031.

2. Asher, J. J. (1967). The learning strategy of the total physical response: Some age differences. Child Development, Vol. 38, No. 4, pp.1219 – 1227.

3. Malone, J. (2011).Young Children Vs. Adults Learning a Second Language. O' Cat Literary Magazine. Available from: URL: <http://classroom.synonym.com/young-adults-learning-second-language-6635123.html>.

4. McLaughlin, B. (1992). Myths and Misconceptions about Second Language Learning. ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics Washington DC. Available from: URL: <https://www.ericdigests.org/1992-1/myths.htm>.