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УДК 374.7.016:811.111]:316.77-027.63(045)

TEACHING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION TO ADULT LEARNERS

The article seeks to establish the basic principles of teaching English communication to adult learners and elaborate a corresponding methodology. It proves that adult learners' behavior in a foreign language (FL) classroom is determined by their educational background, motivation to learning, social position and status, and their cognitive profiles. The obtained results indicate that adults as an age group possess a number of positive characteristics that substantially contribute to successful FL acquisition, as they may easily cope with abstract thoughts and ideas, utilize their life experience for accomplishing teaching objec-?ives, and pursue long-term educational goals. At the same time, adult learners' progress in developing FL proficiency can be hindered by diminishing cognitive and communicative abilities, previous negative experiences, prejudices and fears. All these obstacles may be overcome if their cognitive and psychological profiles are taken into consideration and the input is modified to their specific needs. With the intention to verify the practical utility of the suggested premises, a corresponding methodology has been devised, which incorporates the elements of the Commu-?icative and Cognitive model (O.Vovk), variations of the PPP model, the most effective constituents of the Suggestopedic model (G. Lozanov), and the model of Untapping the Reserved Capacities of an Individual and a Collective (G. Kitaygorodska). The elaborated eclectic model encompasses such stages as: Warming-Up, Perception of the New Input, Initial Reproduction of the Perceived Information, Apperception of the Perceived Input, Incubation of the Acquired Knowledge, Creative Reproduction of the Assimilated Information and Independent Speech Production. Each stage of the suggested model is characterized by definite goals and tasks, meant to simplify the process of FL acquisition by adult learners and stimulate their speech, memory and cogitative performance.

Keywords: *adult learners; andragogy; affective filter; foreign language acquisition; eclectic model of developing communicative competence*

Introduction. Recently, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on elaborating guidelines that enhance successful foreign language acquisition (FLA). Although a considerable amount of research has been conducted in this domain, yet few attempts have been made to investigate the methods of teaching English communication to adult learners (AL). In particular, no study has thoroughly considered the cognitive complexity and diversity of this issue. Granted that, this problem requires deep study.

Purpose. The main objectives of this paper are to theoretically substantiate the process of teaching English communication to AL and devise a well-grounded and comprehensive methodology, which indicates the congruous procedure and comprises a coherent system of activities that might foster this process.

Theoretical background. The literature concerning the mechanisms of teaching and learning English as a FL is now quite voluminous. Specifically, M. Knowles exposes specific traits of AL, S. Zhabotynska reveals neurocognitive prerequisites of FLA in adulthood, S. Krashen claims that AL are able to learn a FL but have no potential to acquire it, G. Lozanov and G. Kitaygorodska place much emphasis on the positive learning environment, which may foster successful FLA; O. Vovk introduces the communicative and cognitive model of FLA, J. Harmer, J. Scrivener, M. Lewis, and M. McCarthy offer multifaceted procedures of mastering a FL. And yet, there is no systematic study, which would offer a universal methodology of teaching a FL to AL.

Statement of the Problem. Despite the significance of the issue under discussion, most of studies in the field of bilingual education highlight the problem of developing FL proficiency of adults in a one-side manner, neglecting the specific properties of this age group and the nature of FLA itself. A possible solution to the problem at hand is to devise an eclectic methodological framework of developing FL proficiency among AL, which meet their individual and age-predetermined needs.

Methods. The effectiveness of the suggested methodology was verified in a pedagogical experiment conducted with the representatives of the elderly section. The experiment was aimed at establishing how the introduced eclectic model, which incorporates the elements of the Communicative and Cognitive model (O. Vovk), variations of the 3Ps (PPP) model, the most effective constituents of the Suggestopedic model (G. Lozanov), the model of Untapping the Reserved Capacities of an Individual and a Collective (G. Kitaygorodska) could stimulate AL's speech and cogitative performance. Before the experiment, it was assumed that AL could achieve a desirable level of FL proficiency if their psy-

chological, psycho-physiological and cognitive traits were taken into consideration while planning a lesson.

With regard to the specificity of this age group, the results of the experimental training were obtained through observation and numerous communication activities in which AL participated. The results of the experimental training indicate that teaching AL within the suggested methodological framework could decrease their affective filter, boost their self-esteem, increase memory capacity and, therefore, provide a considerable rise of communicative and cognitive abilities.

Results and Discussion. This section of an article rests on the claim that adults as an age group possess a number of specific properties, which dramatically affect their ability to acquire a FL. This claim requires cursory specification.

To begin with, it is expedient to define what is meant by the term "adult". The data suggest that there are at least four relevant definitions of this term: biological, legal, psychological and social. It is assumed that the psychological definition is most important for the adult learning theory, as it dwells on the idea that individuals are considered adults when they arrive at a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives and being self-directing [1, p. 43].

Conformably to the present findings, there are definite characteristics of AL. It is worthwhile delineating that adults as an age group are not homogeneous, as this age group falls into three categories: young adults (20–40 years of age), middle-age adults (41–64 years of age) and older adults (65 years of age and older). The following differences between individual age groups and within these groups may be significant [2, p. 56]:

– AL perform different roles in life, which stem from the nature of their work; the diversity of these roles has a tremendous impact on adults' wishes and needs for learning;

– AL are distinct in the level of formal education they acquired; their previous educational experiences are different; for this reason, the degree of adults' motivation can also vary;

– AL's social status and cultural, religious, ethnic and other characteristics largely determine the position of an individual in the process of adult education;

– AL's learning profiles can notedly differ.

Another issue that needs clarification is the definition of "an adult learner". P. Jarvis claims that AL are all socially mature citizens, who participate in an educational activity for a variety of reasons: personal, professional, economic, social, cultural, civic and spiritual. AL constitute a heterogeneous group of people with different educational backgrounds and various educational needs [2, p. 16].

More importantly, this group of learners possesses a number of positive characteristics that substantially contribute to successful learning. In particular, AL can deal with abstract thought and refer to a whole range of life experiences. Furthermore, AL are more disciplined and prepared to overcome different obstacles, which may frequently accompany acquiring new knowledge and skills. Another essential point is that students of this age group have expectations about the learning process, and they already have their own set patterns of learning [3, p. 116]. Additionally, AL can maintain a level of motivation by holding on to a distant goal in contrast to teenagers and other age groups [4, p. 1211].

Similarly, it is possible to identify the characteristics that blockade AL's progress in FLA. First of all, the above-mentioned expectations can transform into the criticism of applied teaching methods. In other words, AL's habituation to one particular methodological style can trigger the rejection of unfamiliar teaching patterns. Another problem that can inhibit AL's advancement is fear of failure, which makes them anxious and under-confident about learning. Besides, AL can worry that their intellectual powers (brain plasticity) and, consequently, muscular dexterity may be diminishing with age. Subsequently, they may demonstrate poor speech and cogitative performance in a FL classroom [5, p. 122].

These results cast a new light on the process of adult education in general and are in accordance with findings reported by M. Knowles, a prominent American adult educator, who popularized the concept of andragogy ("the art and science of helping adults learn"), opposing it to pedagogy [6].

Planned comparisons of pedagogy and andragogy revealed that there is a significant difference between the strategies, which an ideological pedagog and an andragog implement in the classroom. The pedagog adheres to the idea that learners remain dependent on the teacher. Adversely, the anragog's task is to create the environment in which learners feel confident enough to take increasing responsibility for their own learning [1, p. 48].

It is apparent that such a sharp value distinction between pedagogy and andragogy formed a basis for elaborating an andragogical model of teaching adults, which is considered to be a process model, as opposed to the content models applied by most tradi-

tional educators. Specifically, M. Knowles argues that andragogical instructors plan beforehand a set of procedures for involving the learners in a process. Conventionally, this set of procedures comprises preparing the learner, establishing a climate conducive to learning, creating a mechanism for mutual planning, defining the needs for learning, setting program objectives that will satisfy these needs, constructing a scheme of learning experiences, conducting these learning experiences with proper techniques and materials, estimating the learning outcomes and rediagnosing learning needs [1, p. 53].

The present findings confirm the importance of conducive learning environment for efficacious adult learning. The suggested theoretical assumption ties well with the research conducted in the sphere of bilingual education, as a similar conclusion was reached by S. Krashen and G. Lozanov. For instance, S. Krashen advances the idea that the effective language teacher is a person who manages to provide AL with comprehensible input and at the same time, create the environment that ensures a low affective filter [7, p. 32].

S. Krashen's premises are directly in line with G. Lozanov's research on this issue. The psychologist argues that each learner possesses an "optimum learning state". It activates when his/her heart rhythm and brain waves are synchronized, the body is relaxed, but the mind is alert to acquire new information [8, p. 311]. Moreover, G. Lozanov claims that the effective activity of the learner's brain can be notably increased if the barriers are eliminated. Such barriers comprise (1) the critical-logical barrier, which rejects everything that disregards logical explanation; (2) the intuitive-affective barrier, which discards everything that does not create trust and a sense of security; (3) the ethical barrier, which contests everything that is incompatible with ethical principles of a learner [9, p. 33]. Another psychological barrier that prevents learners from successful FLA is anxiety. E. Horwitz, M. Horwitz, and J. Cope first characterized FLA as a unique type of anxiety specific to language learning. E. Horwitz reveals that students who tend to experience such emotions can perform more poorly as compared to students with lower level of anxiety [10, p. 95–115]. It is worth emphasizing, that all these limitations may be eliminated if a positive stress-free atmosphere accompanies a LP. Specifically, a high affective filter, which is frequently experienced by AL, can be lowered by dent of music, songs, jazz chants, role-plays, games etc., which can help AL feel psychologically relaxed and cognitively alert.

Considering the aforementioned, it might seem self-evident that the main task of a FL teacher is to predict and surmount any obstacles that may complicate the process of FLA by AL. Assuming that, it is extremely important to cater for adults' cognitive profiles as the methodologically correct delivering of the learning information can dramatically simplify imbibing the input.

It is interesting to note that the term "cognitive profile" is not homogeneous in its meaning because it covers such properties of AL as a preferred mode of perceiving information (a learning style), a pronounced type of intelligence, a dominant hemisphere, epistemic style and personality type. The diversity of such characteristics are supposed to have a tremendous impact on planning a FL lesson as it largely determines how the material may be taught and assimilated, and in what activities AL can be engaged [11, p. 41].

Specifically, to meet the requirements of students who have different learning styles, teachers are required to present the course material (in particular, grammar and vocabulary), involving three basic stimuli: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. For instance, AL with a dominant visual modality can progress better if they are provided with videos, flash cards, colourful illustrations, board, picture and reading games, humorous comics and puzzles. Auditory AL's abilities to acquire new knowledge and skills can substantially increase if these students are exposed to oral instructions, listening-based tasks, recitation and listening games, story and sentence building games. To activate kinesthetic AL, teachers are supposed to utilize touch games when it is needed, for instance, to identify the objects in the bag, spatial games with rearranging items or people, or craft activities [12].

Furthermore, according to the latest studies, all humans tend to utilize their dominant brain side (left or right) for processing information. Although, no one is completely right-brain or left-brain, the learning behavior of the representatives of these two groups differs significantly. As evidence, right-brain AL may frequently employ their subjective skills, creative abilities and have a propensity to visualize more than think in words. Learners with this dominant hemisphere tend to deal with the problems via hunches, examining patterns and similarities. Contrastively, left-brain students prefer working with definite and established information, solving problems logically and sequentially. In addition, they explore parts and analyze differences. Given that, such learners can show encouraging results while doing multiple-choice tests rather than writing essays [13, p. 24].

Assuming the fact that teachers may deal with three types of AL, namely empiricists, rationalists and sensualists, it is pertinent to teach the course material in a way, which coordinates with AL's principles of evaluation and testing knowledge. For example, to stimulate effective FLA of empiricists', it is appropriate to practise speech patterns in a variety of communication activities, as this type of AL learn best by doing. On the other hand, sensualists' mental performance can be significantly improved if conceptual metaphors are employed [14, p. 3], while rationalists tend to process and assimilate the learning information more efficaciously, if it is presented in the form of conceptual models, mind maps, semantic nets, charts and schemes. In particular, it is suggested to create a conceptual map (ontology) of the topic, which may constitute grounds for structuring the learning content and compiling a thematically organized thesaurus of basic phrases [15, p. 51].

The existence of dominant types of intelligences implies that instructors are supposed to diversify the tools used for teaching AL, as it can maximize their mental potential. To activate linguistic intelligence, open-ended language activities, which incorporate both writing and speaking tasks, can turn out effective. Logical-mathematical intelligence can be engaged by dent of error recognition, grammar categorizing activities, Socratic questioning, inductive elicitation of grammar rules, creating mind-maps and other vocabulary charts. Students with dominant visual-spatial intelligence can learn productively if they are provided with visual aids like photos, movies, drawings, graphic symbols and ideographic languages. Singing songs, jazz chants, listening to music, reciting rhyming poems would be preferred by AL with prevailing musical intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence of AL may be boosted by means of co-operative learning, which presumes an active verbal interaction with other members of the group, namely, small group work, team competitions, role-plays with dialogues and peer teaching. Intrapersonal intelligence may be involved if AL are offered activities requiring independent work. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence can be remarkably activated on condition that AL's motor skills and body movements are engaged in the classroom, particularly in pantomime vocabulary activities, role-plays and drama. Activities involving the description of nature and natural phenomena can trigger attention of AL with dominant naturalistic intelligence [16].

Furthermore, AL differ in their personality types (after C. Jung). This may indicate the directions in which their energies or interests flow: to the outer world of people and events (extroversion) or to the inner world of ideas (introversion). Upon this factor may depend AL's perceiving and accumulating functions, as well as the activities, which the instructor may offer to the students [17, p. 249].

The indications are therefore that AL are heterogeneous in their nature, as they may belong to different age subgroups and social strata, possess various educational background and motivation to learning a FL. Assuming that, AL tend to perceive a new input through the prism of past learning experience, inner prejudices and barriers. Moreover, the quality of their cognitive, memory and speech performance can change with aging. Thus, it is evident that the process of FLA by AL has to be analyzed in its full complexity and cannot be limited to developing only speech habits.

The second section of this study illustrates a comprehensive methodology of teaching English communication to AL. It also reveals the procedure, sequence, and stages of enhancing AL's communicative skills, and provides a system of diversified activities, specifically devised for this purpose. The suggested lesson design is devised for AL with the intermediate level of FL proficiency and focuses on the topic *Travelling*.

Considering the specificity of the adult age group, we elaborated *an eclectic model of teaching English communication to AL*, which incorporated the elements of the Communicative and Cognitive model (O. Vovk), variations of the 3Ps model (PPP), the most effective constituents of the Suggestopedic model (G. Lozanov) and the model of Untapping the Reserved Capacities of an Individual and a Collective (G. Kitaygorodska). The elaborated eclectic model is devised for AL with the intermediate level of FL proficiency and encompasses such stages as Warming-Up, Perception of the New Input, Initial Reproduction of the Perceived Information, Apperception of the Perceived Input, Incubation of the Acquired Knowledge, Creative Reproduction of the Assimilated Information and Independent Speech Production.

Each stage is characterized by definite goals and tasks. Specifically, *the Warming-Up stage* is targeted at softening rigid muscular dexterity of AL's speech operators. Thus, we start the lesson procedure with practising thematic tongue twisters:

Activity 1
Practise the sayings [2]*:*
1. The crow went traveling abroad and came back just as black.
2. Travel east or travel west, a man's own house is still the best.

3. *When traveling do not calculate the distance, at dinner don't think of how much.*

At the stage of *Perception of the Learning Input* multimodal presentation of the basic dialogue occurs. It is aimed at facilitating the implicit memorization of the lexical stuff. Granted that, we propose to employ dramatic reading of the dialogue with its parallel translation into the native language, chanting the dialogue, using "intonation swings" and visual aids (the Power Point slides and the video recording). Table 1 presents the fragment of the basic dialogue [15].

Table 1

At the Travel Agency

T: *Good morning, sir! How can I help you?*	*Доброго ранку! Як я можу Вам допомогти?*
M: *Well… I have some time off from work next month and I was thinking of going to Australia.*	*Так… Я матиму час на відпочинок від роботи наступного місяця, тож думав вирушити до Австралії.*
T: *Hm..That sounds great! How long is your vacation?*	*Звучить чудово! Яка тривалість Вашої відпустки?*
M: *Just one week. My last day of work is the 26th of July and I go back on the 5th of August.*	*Лише тиждень. Мій останній робочий день 26 липня, а повертаюсь я до роботи 5 серпня.*
T: *OK. Here's our Sydney brochure. Have a look and see if there's a hotel that you like.*	*Добре. Ось наш сіднейський буклет. Подивіться, чи у ньому є готель, який Вам до вподоби.*
M: *Oh. This one is good–The Four Seasons Hotel. It's expensive but I've been told it's very nice.*	*М: О, це хороший готель–Чотири Пори Року. Він не дешевий, але мені казали, що він гарний.*

The stage of *Initial Reproduction of the Perceived Information* is directed at developing AL's speech habits. With this in mind, the basic dialogue is broken into mini dialogues. The students practise them (continuously changing the cues and communication partners), following the proposed sequence of modes: *English–English; English–Ukrainian; English–…; Ukrainian–Ukrainian (mini dialogues remain the same, though the mode alters each time). The illustration of such a mini-dialogue is presented below:*

Activity 2

Practice the mini dialogues, using the English–English mode:

T: *Good morning, sir! How can I help you?*
M: *Well… I have some time off from work next month and I was thinking of going to Australia.*
T: *That sounds great! How long is your vacation?*
M: *Just one week. My last day of work is July 26 and I go back on August 5.*

It is important that in order to maintain a positive attitude to learning and lower students' affective filter intensive practice should be mixed with games, jokes, jazz chants, and songs. For instance, a teacher may suggest playing the game "Ten Things", giving the following instructions:

Activity 3

Game "Ten Things" [14, p. 123]

Teacher: Split into two teams and choose someone to come to the board to write. I'll read out some categories. In your team, think of ten things in that category. Then one person should come to the board and write a list of these things. The first team to write the list is the winner.

Options of the things that: come in pairs, can fly, float in water, move fast, you keep cold, make a lot of noise, are symmetrical, make you feel good.

At this stage, practicing grammatical items also takes place. Considering the fact that AL may have different prominent epistemic and learning styles, we apply multifarious instructional tools (conceptual metaphors, charts, tables, models, schemes and speech patterns) to represent grammatical issues. Figure 1 illustrates the grammatical phenomenon *The Present Indefinite for Scheduled Events.*
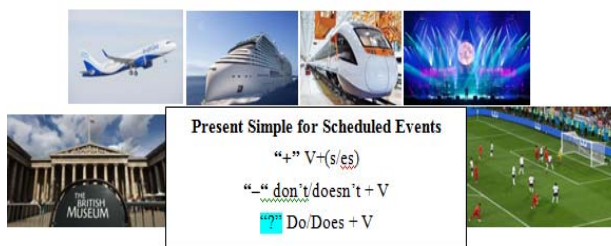

Fig. 1. The Present Indefinite Tense for Scheduled Events

The targeted grammatical issues are automated in a number of substitution dialogues with proposed options. For instance:

Activity 4

1. *Practise the substitution dialogues. Make use of the given options.*
2. *Is there the direct flight that I can take?*
   Yes, Malaysian Airways. That flight departs <u>at 7 o'clock on Saturday morning</u> and it arrives <u>at Sydney at 6:30 p.m.</u> local time.

Options: at 7 o'clock on Monday morning, at 8 o'clock on Tuesday morning, at 9 o'clock on Wednesday, at 5 o'clock on Wednesday evening.

The Apperception stage is aimed at stimulating AL's ability to conceptualize the input.

At this stage, students may be offered to construct a mind map of the basic dialogue or put the cues of the dialogue into the correct word order. Such activities may help them assimilate the input and further reproduce it when exposed to ideational communication practice.

Activity 5
1. Construct a mind map of the basic dialogue.
2. Place in the correct order the reshuffled cues of the dialogue.

At the stage of *Incubation of the Acquired Knowledge*, students are provided with the additional thematic video *At the Hotel*. After watching this video, AL complete the *post-watching* communication activities, based on the perceived conversation. The most typical tasks at this stage may encompass the following:

Activity 6
1. Watch the video, where this conversation occurs. In the pauses, enunciate the basic cues after the speakers.
2. Have a look at the sentences and tick only those ones, which were used in the video.
3. Say true or false, if false–give the correct answer.

To release Al's tension and lower their affective filter, we suggest having a minute of fun. For example, employing the fun video *Mr. Bean in Room 426*.

At the stage of *Creative Reproduction of the Assimilated Information,* the students reproduce the new course material creatively in invariant situational settings. To facilitate the reproduction of the input, AL are provided with a schematic net of the dialogue. For instance:

Activity 7
At the travel agency, you have met your friends. Tell them why you are there and ask them about their aim of coming to the travel agency. Provide them with the full information about your vacation plans and ask about theirs. Use the schematic net of the dialogue.

– Hello, Gregory and Ann, why … to the travel agency?
– I have … next month and I … of going to…, and you?
– I have … next month and I …of going to…. Ann, what about you?
– I have … next month and I …of going to….
– How long is…, Gregory? When … start? When… go back?
– … weeks. My last day of work is … and I …on …. And yours?
– … week. My last day of work is … and I… on…. Ann, how long is… ?
– …weeks. My last day of work is … and I ….on….

– Will you … alone, Gregory?
– No, I … with my wife, and you?
– Yep, just me. And you, Ann?
– I …. with my friends.

At the stage of *Independent Speech Production* AL are supposed to utilize the digested input in diversified communicative situations. One of the communicative situations is exemplified below:

Activity 8
Act out the following situation:
You have come to the travel agency to book a trip to Italy for your parents. You want to book airplane tickets and make a hotel reservation. Tell the travel agent what date and time you'd prefer, choose airlines and book airline tickets. In addition, ask the travel agent to make a reservation at a hotel. Don't forget to mention what type of room your parents would like. Provide its detailed description.

The devised activities conduce to and facilitate the acquisition of English communication skills by AL due to their gradual progressing through the Beginner to the Upper Intermediate Levels. The proposed tasks imply progressive extension and elaboration of the learning input.

Conclusion and Implications for Further Research. To summarize, this paper has broached the matter of teaching English communication to AL. It has emphasized that adult education differs from that to which children and adolescents may be exposed, as adults perform more actively in the FL classroom, largely determining the thematic and organizational components of the lesson. The article also has elucidated how specific properties of AL influence their ability to acquire a FL. This complex issue has been addressed from various angles, specifically, psycho-physiological, psychological, pedagogical and neuropedagogical, andragogical, and methodological.

On balance, the conducted research has allowed eliciting that AL's English proficiency can dramatically increase if their cognitive and psychological profiles are taken into account, if all psychological barriers are eliminated and the input is modified to their specific needs.

This study though far from being conclusive yet offers several insights into the issue of teaching English communication to AL.

The suggested methodology and devised practical guidance are compatible with online technologies, which outlines an implication for further research in this domain.

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МЕТОДИКА НАВЧАННЯ ІНШОМОВНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ ДОРОСЛИХ

Анотація. *Метою статті є з'ясувати базові закономірності і специфіку навчання дорослих англійської комунікації та розробити відповідну методику. Досліджено, що поведінка дорослих під час оволодіння іноземною мовою (ІМ) визначається їхнім попереднім освітнім досвідом, мотивацією до навчання, соціальним статусом і когнітивним профілем. Отримані результати доводять, що дорослі студенти володіють низкою позитивних характеристик, які значно сприяють успішному опануванню ІМ, оскільки представники цієї вікової групи можуть легко оперувати абстрактними поняттями, послуговуються життєвим досвідом для розв'язання навчальних завдань та здатні слідувати віддаленій меті. Натомість, прогрес дорослих у розвитку іншомовної комунікації може бути ускладнений зниженими з віком когнітивними й мовленнєвими здатностями, обмеженими можливостями пам'яті, внутрішніми переконаннями та страхами. Ці перешкоди можуть бути подолані шляхом модифікації навчального матеріалу до когнітивних та психологічних потреб цієї вікової групи. Для доведення практичної цінності запропонованих теоретичних положень була розроблена відповідна методика, що охоплює елементи комунікативно-когнітивного підходу (О. Вовк), варіації традиційної моделі «Представлення. Практика. Продукування», найбільш ефективні складники сугестопедичної моделі (Г. Лозанов), а також та моделі активації резервних можливостей особистості та колективу (Г. Китайгородська). Розроблена еклектична модель складається з таких етапів: фонетична розминка, перцепція навчального матеріалу, його репродукція, апперцепція, творча репродукція та, власне, продукція. Кожен із зазначених етапів має певні цілі та завдання та має на меті спростити процес оволодіння ІМ дорослими та поліпшити їхні мовленнєві й когнітивні здатності та пам'ять.*

Ключові слова: *дорослі учні; андрагогіка; афективний бар'єр; оволодіння іноземною мовою; еклектична модель формування комунікативної компетенції.*