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SYNERGETIC APPROACH TO TEACHING ADULTS FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE CONTEXT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The paper presents an attempt of formulating combined or synergetic approach to teaching adults foreign languages in the context of lifelong learning. The EU vision of continuing education and lifelong learning and principles of their implementation are described. The necessity of the European lifelong learning paradigm adoption and contemporary problems faced by Ukraine in this regard are outlined. It is noted that adult learning is a vital component of the lifelong learning continuum and its main components are listed. The urgency of adult language learning intensification and creating a methodological basis for the organization of teaching adults foreign languages is emphasized. It is stated that under modern conditions of academic and labor mobility it is necessary not only to absorb best European practices but to adjust them to existing conditions and educational environment and develop the ways of intensification of lifelong learning programs increasing mobility. It is suggested to combine three basic paradigms of adult learning: andragogy, acmeology and transformative learning theory in order to outline common and essential principles of teaching adults foreign languages. The essence and basic features of each of the above mentioned theories are described. It is argued that their combination and resulting synergy will promote the development and implementation of lifelong learning language programs in Ukraine by applying insights of researchers and methodologists working on adult learning and considering this concept from different points of view. The paper proposes basic directions for the implementation of outlined principles within the framework of higher school.

Key words: synergetic approach, lifelong learning, adult language learning, teaching adults foreign languages, andragogy, acmeology, transformative learning strategy.

Problem statement. Professional integration and mobility in labor market nowadays imply new approaches and qualitative shift of educational vision giving boost to the advancements in the creation of integrated scientific and professional space. According to D. Thomas and J.S. Brown, the half-life of a learned skill is 5-years. This means that much of what was learnt 10 years ago is obsolete and half of what is learnt 5 years ago is irrelevant [2]. This statement is the illustration of the relevant concept of lifelong learning.

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a standard tool for general comparisons of living standards in different countries and regions. The index was developed in 1990 and published in annual reports under the United Nations Development Program. When calculating the HDI, three indicators are taken into account: life expectancy; the level of literacy of a country's population (the average number of years spent on training) and the expected duration of training; the standard of living, estimated based on GNP per capita. Thus, the expected duration of training is recognized as one of the key indicators of human development. It is important to note that since 2010, not only the level of education, but also the duration of learning [4] is taken into account. This indicates the emphasis on continuing education, or, in the more used term in recent years, on lifelong learning (LLL). To determine the category of lifelong learning, a number of terms are used. In modern literature, such terms as adult education, continuing education; fur-

ther education, recurrent education which is defined as alternation of learning with other types of activities, mainly with work; permanent education and lifelong learning (LLL). In each of these terms, emphasis is placed on a particular aspect of the phenomenon, but the idea is that adult education is incomplete.

Lifelong learning has been discussed among researchers and policy makers since the middle of the twentieth century. In 2007 The European Commission has united various educational and training initiatives into a single Lifelong Learning Program. It was further enlarged and developed to ERASMUS+ platform. Lifelong learning implies an increase in investment in people and knowledge; acquiring basic skills, including digital literacy and language training expanding opportunities for an innovative, more flexible learning form. The goal is to provide people of all ages with equal and open access to quality education. Lifelong learning encompasses all purposeful learning, formal or informal, with the goal of expanding knowledge, improving skills and competence. The Council of Europe has approved lifelong learning as one of the main components of the European social model. This concept is not limited to the field of education; it is also a critical factor in employment and social security, economic growth and competitiveness [3].

Adult learning is a vital component of the lifelong learning continuum, comprising general and vocational education and training (CVET), undertaken by adults after completing initial education. It covers the following directions:

- formal, non-formal and informal learning for improving basic skills, obtaining new qualifications, or up-skilling or re-skilling for employment;
- participation in social, cultural, artistic and societal learning for personal development [4].

A strong emphasis regarding the adult learning component of lifelong education is placed on language training as the linguistic skills and competences acquired will not remain at the level achieved unless they are actively maintained and consolidated. Also, it is to be expected that the linguistic demands made on adults will increase in quantitative and qualitative terms as the European labor market becomes more integrated.

Relevance. This issue is specifically relevant for Ukraine. After the recent cementation of the European choice made by corresponding amendments to the Constitution, Ukrainian policy makers in the educational sphere should adopt the EU approach to lifelong learning. The legislation of Ukraine on education among the main principles of state policy determines the promotion of sustainable development of society through the preparation of a competitive human capital and the creation of conditions for lifelong learning [4]. In Ukraine, lifelong learning has not been systematically developed. The Law of Ukraine "On Extracurricular Education" does not solve this problem in any way because it does not regulate the issues of integration of extracurricular education into the general educational system of the country, leaving away the key problems of ensuring and controlling the quality and recognition of non-formal education. There is no official statistics on this issue; there are no special concepts and programs and it is extremely important for Ukraine to take effective measures in the near future to overcome the gap in this area. Especially acute for Ukraine has always been the issue of lifelong language learning as it is a prerequisite of the active participation of Ukrainian specialists in EU labor market and scientific community. Nowadays Ukrainian professionals from various fields of knowledge have open access to international mobility programs and possibilities for involvement in global research projects. Higher education institutions have major responsibilities and duties for the promotion of lifelong language learning. Although mobility has become an accepted part of university life, the provision of linguistic and intercultural preparation and support for mobility is often insufficient. Each educational program, each language course for adults in Ukraine must have strong and refined methodical basis ensuring the achievement of the best possible results and optimal efficiency.

The aim of this paper is to propose synergetic approach to the formation and development of adult language competence as a component of lifelong learning paradigm formed at the confluence of three basic scientific theories regarding adult learning:

andragogy, acmeology and transformative learning strategy. As Oxford dictionary defines it, 'synergetic' means involving the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. We strongly believe that three above mentioned paradigms embody the best practices of adult learning and their merging will provide the synergy which is substantial for boosting lifelong learning in Ukraine.

Presenting main material. The fundamental principles of the synergetic approach are provided by andragogy. Knowles' theory of andragogy is an attempt to develop a theory specifically for adult learning. Knowles emphasizes that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions. Adult learning programs must accommodate this fundamental aspect.

In 1980, Knowles made 4 assumptions about the design of learning: (1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something (2) Adults need to learn experientially, (3) Adults approach learning as problem-solving, and (4) Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value. In 1984, Knowles added the 5th assumption: the motivation of adults is internal. In practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught. Strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are most useful. Instructors adopt a role of facilitator or resource rather than lecturer or grader [6].

In 1984, Knowles suggested 4 principles that are applied to adult learning:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented [6].

The assumptions and principles of andragogy provide the strong basis for designing educational programs for adults and create a methodological framework of the teaching process. However, rapid changes in educational and professional domain require certain refinement of existing methodology and its further optimization. In this regard it is advisable to turn to *acmeology* which provides deeper understanding of psychological peculiarities of adults in the light of lifelong learning. Acmeology is a completely new type of science, which originated at the confluence of natural, social, humanitarian and technical fields of knowledge. It purposefully and consistently reveals the phenomena, patterns and mechanisms of human development in the stages of early, middle and late adulthood as an individual. The main task of acme-

ology is to determine the patterns of conditions and factors that ensure the possibility of achieving the highest stage of human development, the “acme”, as well as identifying possible obstacles arising along this path. It is the creative development, perfection of the personality in the learning process, competent professional assistance in reaching its heights in spiritual, moral and professional development that is the primary goal of acmeology. It outlines fundamental principles, the implementation of which in the process of learning contributes to the personal and professional development of students. Formulating the synergetic approach we focus on three of them.

1. The principle of the subject of activity. Personality is considered in its developing, functioning state. Acmeology treats a person simultaneously in a psychological and socio-professional capacity. Personality in this case is undergoing an upward development. Personality development is taken into account in functional (development in the profession) and in situational activity (personality development in difficult situations containing contradiction). It should be noted that on the basis of this principle, acmeology reveals the ways of the most complete and satisfying self-expression in the profession, which is a condition of creativity, on the one hand. On the other hand, this principle makes it possible to ensure the highest social and professional efficiency.

2. The principle of life. This principle is fundamental for acmeology historically, theoretically and logically. The concept of ‘acme’, formulated by N.I. Rybnikov and refined by M.M. Derkach, was associated with the life of the personality, with its life peaks. For acmeology, the principle of vital activity is one of the central ones, since each level achieved by a person opens a range of new opportunities. The principle of the subject of life and life activity allows one to see the place and the role, the meaning and significance of activity. It should be emphasized that personal and professional growth is closely related to the comprehension of the whole life path, i.e. the realization of personality most fully occurs in professional activity, which should not be considered in isolation, but on the contrary, should embrace the whole life course of a person.

5. The principle of optimality. The optimum in acmeological science is understood as the best, most rational, reasonable level of activity, which, in accordance with scientifically based criteria of optimality, determines the level of psychological culture. Optimization is the goal of the acmeological process and the central methodological principle of acmeology [1].

There is strong interlinking of lifelong language learning to the acmeology approach as acmeology, revealing the essence of professional skill in a context of ideas, will promote the most effective selection of methods and forms of the organization of lifelong

language learning in conditions of postindustrial culture, the search of solutions of global problems, characteristic for transitive societies.

The third theory proposed as another component of synergetic approach is transformative learning. Transformative learning theory says that the process of “perspective transformation” has three dimensions: psychological (changes in understanding of the self), convictional (revision of belief systems), and behavioral (changes in lifestyle). Transformative learning refers to those learning experiences that cause a shift in an individual’s perspective. It is based on the idea that learning is “the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience” [8, p. 90].

One of the major concepts of transforming learning has an alien-sounding name: heutagogy. The term is new, but it describes a very old human learning strategy. It is defined as the study of self-determined learning or the strategy of self-determined learning. Heutagogy is a kind of complement to two earlier concepts, pedagogy (a strategy for teaching children) and andragogy (a strategy for teaching adults). The key difference is that heutagogy is self-determined strategy – an instructor, teacher, or other arbiter is not necessarily involved, unless the individual chooses to involve one at some point. It is important to think of it as self-determined learning, not “informal learning” as contrasted to “formal learning.” It is also important to reflect on the fact that everyone with access to the Internet has, to one extent or another, already adopted heutagogy as a key part of their personal learning strategy. Heutagogy is clearly a personal strategy of individuals [7].

In our work the strategy of heutagogy is proposed to complete the suggested synergetic approach to lifelong language learning as it is a unifying factor of continuing education paradigm and, which is the most important, corresponds to contemporary requirements of creating strong framework of lifelong learning in transitive societies.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Thus, the proposed synergetic approach is based on the theories of andragogy, acmeology and transformative learning and has in its essence the following basic principles:

1. Self-determination. The educational process is focused on learners and is directed by learners. The program of study must be flexible, adoptable and controllable by those who study in collaboration with those who teach or, it would be better to say “consult and accompany”. In this regard it is advisable to use different forms of self-assessment and feedback. The techniques for their implementation are as follows: compiling student’s portfolio of learning outcomes, group discussions for assessment outcomes gained and planning further activities, one-to-one feedback interviews.

2. Maintenance of internal motivation and creativity. As it has been already indicated the motivation of adults is not external but internal and requires constant support as it declines easily. The main requirements that are to be met in this regard are adequacy to capabilities of learners, visibility of immediate results, and educational feasibility. The main techniques that provide implementing of this principle are the reliance on socio-cultural component, and techniques of active learning: the use of case-study method, games, discussions and group work. Modern trends put games on the first place when it comes to adult learning as they solve such frequent problems as age and social status heterogeneity of groups, psychological constraints, fear of speaking and lack of self-confidence.

3. Personalization and taking into consideration psychological peculiarities of a certain age group. Teaching principles used for children cannot be simply transferred to adults. Herewith it is important to understand the 'acme' concept and consider each learner as an individual at a certain stage of his or her professional and mental development, ensuring the possibilities for achieving personalized goals and career objectives. Each adult learner carries a load of personal experience, internal constraints, fears and ambitions. Teacher, playing the role of a passive mediator, has to be at the same time a delicate psychologist providing the optimal acmeological environment.

4. Practice, not theory. Skills, not memorization. This principle is fundamental in teaching adults foreign languages. It is closely connected with the above mentioned principle of maintenance of internal motivation and rests upon cognitive peculiarities of adult learners. Low reliance on independent work of students makes classroom the main place for adults to acquire language speaking skills. The result of learning can be considered as achieved when students are able to apply certain skill or knowledge when they leave the classroom rather than remember how to apply it.

Among the forms providing the possibility of adult language learning within higher school it is appropriate to suggest the following: organization of language training for university teachers of non-linguistic depart-

ments (the form which has been successfully implemented in Kherson National Technical University); implementing interdisciplinary round tables and discussions; creating a speaking club on the basis of departments of foreign languages; designing online language learning platforms for university communities; organizing foreign language speaking theaters and clubs. This list can be further enlarged and new forms are to be developed by universities taking into consideration the specific features of a certain academic environment.

Thus, the synergetic approach proposed in this paper can serve as a methodological base of developing adult language learning programs which would comply with the EU concept of lifelong learning. Further research will be focused on the refinement of the outlined principles and designing ultimate teaching techniques providing their implementation, in particular, practices of self-assessment and feedback, as well as creating the optimal set of active learning techniques and forms of adult language learning forms applicable within higher school.

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Гончарова-Ільїна Т. О. Синергетичний підхід до навчання дорослих іноземних мов у контексті безперервної освіти

Стаття являє собою спробу сформулювати комбінований або синергетичний підхід до навчання дорослих іноземних мов у контексті навчання впродовж життя. Описується бачення ЄС щодо безперервної освіти або навчання впродовж життя, а також принципи їх реалізації. Окреслено необхідність прийняття європейської парадигми навчання впродовж життя й сучасних проблем, із якими стикається Україна в цьому стосунку. Відзначено, що навчання дорослих є життєво важливим компонентом континууму навчання впродовж життя, і перелічено основні його складники. Підкреслюється актуальність інтенсифікації навчання дорослих і створення методологічної основи організації навчання дорослих іноземних мов. Зазначається, що в сучасних умовах академічної та трудової мобільності необхідно не тільки поглинати кращі європейські напрацювання й досвід, а й пристосувати їх до наявних умов та освітнього середовища, а також розробити шляхи інтенсифікації програм навчання впродовж життя, що підвищують мобільність. Запропоновано об'єднати три основні парадигми навчання дорослих: андрагогіку, акмеологію та теорію трансформаційного навчання, щоб визначити загальні й основні принципи навчання дорослих іноземних мов. Описано сутність та основні риси кожної з вищезазначених теорій. Стверджується, що їх поєднання та результативна синергія сприятимуть розробленню й запровадженню мовних програм у контексті навчання впродовж життя в Україні, застосовуючи ідеї дослідників і методистів, які працюють над навчанням дорослих і розглядають цей феномен з різних поглядів. Запропоновано основні напрями реалізації окреслених принципів в умовах вищої школи.

Ключові слова: синергетичний підхід, навчання впродовж життя, мовна підготовка дорослих, навчання дорослих іноземних мов, андрагогіка, акмеологія, стратегія трансформаційного навчання.