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Psycholinguistic factors of foreign language acquisition

Abstract. This study is significant as it highlights the importance of teachers effectively utilising psycholinguistic and psychological approaches when teaching foreign languages, with a focus on enhancing students' communicative skills. The primary objective of teaching is to foster the ability to engage with authentic materials and apply acquired knowledge in practical settings, thereby addressing the challenges associated with foreign language learning. This study aimed to provide a detailed analysis of the essence of psycholinguistics and its contributing factors. The article clarified the key psychological characteristics of students learning foreign languages. It was stated that the potential of mental processes, as well as the emotional and volitional spheres of students, is determined by and connected to language. The article defined psycholinguistics and outlines the main stages of its development. It has been demonstrated that psycholinguistics emphasises the communicative activity of individuals and the cognitive processing of information based on mental representations. The role of age-related characteristics in foreign language acquisition was examined. It was emphasised that the necessary development of intellectual functions depends on factors such as aptitude and cultural background. Students were noted to experience effective improvement in moral and volitional qualities, the strengthening of character, and the acquisition of a comprehensive range of adult roles in society, all of which are essential for appropriate communicative activity. It has been established that foreign language learning should occur through the development of language awareness rather than the mechanical repetition of words, phrases, or extended speech. The practical application of the findings can be utilised by teachers, lecturers, postgraduate students, and researchers in educational institutions for preparing lessons, organising educational activities, and producing academic studies

Keywords: bilingual environment; psycholinguistics; communicative approach; language personality; educational process; practical activity; professionally oriented speech

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this scientific research primarily lies in the necessity for teachers to thoroughly understand the mechanisms underlying the emergence of language, which are the focus of psycholinguistics. Psycholinguistics is the study of the mental processes involved in language perception, encompassing speaking, listening, reading, and even the acquisition of language, whether native or foreign, during the early stages of life. The investigation of language abilities aims to analyse the internal organisation of linguistic processes, model language and communicative activities, and account for physiological mechanisms within the context of communication influenced by the language

environment. The subject of psycholinguistic research is understood to include the processes of language generation and perception, examined concerning the psychophysiological characteristics of participants in communication.

Modern scholars, such as O. Lozova (2010), who examined the psycholinguistic features of developing students' speaking skills, conducted a retrospective analysis of speech development issues as explored by psycholinguists. This research clarifies how speech mechanisms are formed and how children's minds process the acquisition of native and second languages, particularly in contexts involving closely related languages. O. Lozova (2010) asserts that a

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high level of speaking skill development is a foundational characteristic of an individual's personality and that the timely, high-quality development of oral speech is essential for comprehensive speech development in students. D. Parchevska & L. Shkoliar (2023) investigated the psycholinguistic aspects of translation, concluding that studying the psychological processes underlying communication elucidates the psychological essence of language, communication rules, and other facets of language activity – insights not achievable through purely linguistic approaches. Similarly, O. Raniuk (2021) explored the psychological and psycholinguistic factors influencing students' successful acquisition of a foreign language. The author concluded that foreign language instruction should integrate knowledge from general, developmental, pedagogical psychology, and psycholinguistics, particularly through understanding the psychological principles of foreign language learning and effectively modelling this process. O. Khomchuk & K. Velyka (2023) focused their research on the psychological aspects of language competence development. They argue that language competence is a component of communicative competence, encompassing knowledge, abilities, and skills applied to communication, following social norms. Language competence is also viewed in the context of educational activities as mastering a foreign language, with external and internal factors identified as influencing this process. T. Cherniuk (2023), in research on the psychological conditions for successful foreign language acquisition, highlights that motivation, enthusiasm for the subject, practical application of techniques, memorable educational materials, a cognitive-communicative learning model, emotional engagement, understanding of interlanguage transfer, and interaction with like-minded peers are all essential elements.

It is noteworthy that the study of a foreign language as an academic discipline is particularly unique, intersecting with nearly all sciences and fields of human knowledge, given that knowledge itself is inseparable from language. Therefore, language learning significantly impacts the personal, intellectual, and cultural development of individuals, underscoring the crucial roles of psychology and pedagogy in this process. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of psycholinguistics in foreign language learning, identify psycholinguistic factors, and characterise and systematise them. The research tasks included describing the development of psycholinguistics as a science, examining its role in foreign language learning, analysing age-related characteristics of language acquisition, and studying internal and external factors influencing foreign language acquisition. The novelty of this article lied in synthesising previous research findings and determining the psycholinguistic factors contributing to students' effective mastery of foreign languages in higher education institutions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to the purpose of the article, several scientific methods were employed to address the issues raised

during the study. To achieve the goal, theoretical research methods were utilised extensively, including analysis, synthesis, systematisation, and generalisation. The analytical method served as a tool for a detailed examination of the characteristics and specificity of psycholinguistic factors influencing the process of foreign language learning. The synthesis method facilitated the integration of the findings related to psycholinguistic factors. Through systematisation, the theoretical data obtained were organised and presented systematically in the article. Generalisation was applied in formulating the conclusions of the research. Theoretical analysis and synthesis enabled the examination of scientific studies in the fields of vocational pedagogy, psycholinguistic methods in educational activities, modern pedagogical concepts, diverse scholarly perspectives on the problem under investigation, and the identification of research areas. The methods of systematisation and generalisation proved instrumental in focusing on the preparedness of future specialists for professional development. The comparison method was used to juxtapose the author's findings with those of other researchers, allowing the subject under investigation to be considered independently and highlighting the distinguishing features for comparison. The successful combination of these methods facilitated the achievement of the article's objectives. Generalisation was also employed to formulate conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the research topic.

During the investigation, resources such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Microsoft Academic Search, and WorldWideScience were utilised. In alignment with the article's purpose, the following keywords were selected: bilingual environment, psycholinguistics, communicative approach, language personality, educational process, practical activity, and professionally oriented speech. These terms were chosen based on criteria such as their frequency of occurrence in the scientific studies, informativeness, relevance to the topic, and accessibility to a broad readership. It is worth noting that the key points derived from the source materials highlight the psychological aspects of language competence development, including various factors affecting the methods, speed, and quality of foreign language acquisition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly, the concept of psycholinguistics must be defined. This is a relatively young scientific field; however, its role in modern linguistics remains significant. Psycholinguistics is a scientific field that emerged at the intersection of psychology and linguistics, focusing on the study of human foreign language activities, beginning with speech generation and culminating in the ability to perceive speech expressions. There are several definitions of psycholinguistics in the scientific literature. One definition, proposed by psychologist Charles Osgood in 1954, describes psycholinguistics as the study of processes involved in encoding and decoding linguistic messages. Within this framework, language processes are not tied to the language system itself

but rather to an individual's psychological state. According to this perspective, the subject of psycholinguistics encompasses the processes of language creation and perception of the physiological and mental states of communication participants (Lozova, 2010).

Psycholinguistics examines the mental processes underlying language use, including speaking, listening, reading, and the acquisition of native or foreign languages by children (Parchevska & Shkoliar, 2023). This field treats language and speech as motivated actions interconnected with cognitive processes. It studies the mechanisms of language, speech types, speech recipients, intentions, internal language processes, code-switching, the relationship between language and thought, and the development of language skills. As a discipline, psycholinguistics overlaps with both linguistics and psychology. Its object is language as a system of signs, while its subject is the process of generating and perceiving these signs (speech). In speech (speech activity), psycholinguistics identifies elements not directly dictated by psychological or psychophysiological structures. For instance, while all languages feature vowels and consonants, the specific number of these sounds in a given language falls under the scope of linguistic, rather than psycholinguistic, inquiry. Thus, psycholinguistics focuses not on the structural aspects of a sign system but on the processes of generating and perceiving linguistic signs in the minds of speakers (Lozova, 2010).

The fundamental principles of psycholinguistics, its rich conceptual framework, diverse approaches, and novelty of methods enable researchers to conduct high-quality studies and produce reliable results (Zamoshnikova, 2021). Researchers argue that psycholinguistics developed alongside other disciplines to address the need for a holistic approach to explaining phenomena that cannot be fully understood within the confines of related fields (Dillard & Pfau, 2002). Psycholinguistics arose not only as a theoretical discipline but also as a practical one. In the 1940s and 1950s, various problems emerged that could only be addressed through interdisciplinary methods (Lozova, 2010).

However, the foundations of psycholinguistic research were laid as early as the 19th century in the studies of Wilhelm von Humboldt, Ferdinand de Saussure, and Ivan Baudouin de Courtenay, who initiated the psychological trend in linguistics (Zamoshnikova, 2021). Regarding the origins of psycholinguistics, particular attention should be paid to O. Potebnia (1993), who articulated ideas about language as an activity. The scholar proposed that humans perceive the surrounding world through images, and propositions are formed in the mind through comparisons and associations: "We cannot imagine the original proposition otherwise than it is obvious to the speaker, comparing two sensory images that were formed independently of each other from one". These images within a sentence combine into a single whole, forming the sentence's meaning: "(...) considering the language, it is necessary to add that such a decomposition of a sensory image can be achieved only by combining it with another similar means (...); since it

is expressed by the combination of at least two words, one can see not only the decomposition of a unit, but also the emergence of a new unit from a certain duality".

O. Potebnia (1993) drew upon the linguistic philosophy of V. Humboldt and the subjective idealism of I.H. Fichte. He was convinced that language represents the spirit of a nation, reflecting its unique worldview. V. Humboldt introduced the concept of the "linguistic consciousness of nationalities" and emphasised the relationship between understanding a language and comprehending the spirit of a people and their worldview: "Language is connected with the formation spiritual strength of the nation. But understanding the originality of the life of a people and the internal structure of a separate language... completely depends on the ability to see the originality of the national spirit in all its fullness... Language is an organ of the inner being... That is why it grew with all the thinnest threads of its roots by the power of the national spirit, and what... the stronger the influence of the spirit on the language, the more correct and rich the development of the latter". This perspective is significant: as the worldview of a nation is reflected in its language, so too are the traits of an individual's character revealed through their language use. Therefore, thinking depends on language and is shaped by the individuality of each speaker (Lanovyk, 2010). Thus, a person's essence manifests in language, which constantly acts as a medium of mutual understanding, uniting people as a mediator.

The psychologist Charles Osgood, however, was the first to introduce the concept of psycholinguistics into scientific discourse, defining it as a science studying the features of encoding and decoding information communicated through language (Osgood, 1971). Today, O. Selivanova (2008) characterises psycholinguistics as "marginal". This branch of linguistics investigates the ability to speak as a mental phenomenon, exploring its realisation in the mechanisms of speech production and perception, which represent human mental activity in socio-cultural interactions and linguistic coding systems. L. Zasekina & S. Zasekin (2002) describe it as "the science of human speech activity in the psychological and linguistic aspect, in particular, as an experimental study of the mental activity of the subject in the process of learning and using language as an organised and autonomous system, as the meaning of each sign consists primarily in the activation of the cognitive processes of the individual".

Psycholinguistics emphasises the communicative activity of an individual and the cognitive processing of information based on their mental representations (Zasiekina & Zasekin, 2002); therefore, the subject of its research is considered to be the "processes of generation and perception of language in relation to the psychophysiological features of participants in communicative processes" (Zamoshnikova, 2021). As a cognitive science, it examines how speech is planned, perceived, interpreted, understood, and produced; how human knowledge is structured and applied in the cognitive processing of discourse; how children acquire language during their development; and how the

processes of translation and foreign language learning are executed. The primary focuses of psycholinguistics include the functions of language, the generation and reproduction of texts, rhetoric, stylistics, translation, and language acquisition (Zasiekina & Zasekin, 2002). Among its main features, the field highlights the use of existing research

findings in cognitive psychology and the integration of new procedural research aspects, taking into account interlocutors' intentions and communicative goals. In the developmental phase of psycholinguistics, systematising its methods has become a pressing issue. L. Zasekina and S. Zasekin identify the following methods, summarised in Table 1:

Table 1. Psycholinguistic methods and their descriptions

Method	Description
Subjective gradations	Examines the semantic similarity of words within the same thematic group
Associative experiment	Involves selecting associations for the proposed stimulus words
Semantic differential	Combines subjective gradations and associative experiments to construct semantic spaces
Substitution or separable-transformative	Respondents evaluate the feasibility of changing words in specific contexts usually applied to limited vocabulary groups
Classification	Classification forms depend on internal semantic connections of language material, influencing the classification process
Indirect study of semantics	Explores semantic connections indirectly, determined by the nature and features of processing
Psycholinguistic methods of studying phonosemantic and psychographic features	Investigate styles of information presentation by analysing phonosemantic properties of words and psychographic features of written speech

Source: developed by the authors

Foreign language learning methods integrate psychological concepts to optimise the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, develop principles, forms, and methods of speech development, and explore strategies for engaging with listeners. Psychology serves as a fundamental framework for mastering foreign languages (Voloshyna, 2023). The teacher's role involves developing effective language skills, which necessitates an understanding of the formation of thought processes, the mechanisms of language emergence, and its forms and functions (Raniuk, 2021). As O. Lozova (2010) observed, for decades, the methodology of teaching foreign languages primarily centred on linguistic data, with many approaches developed by linguists. Only much later did psychology gain prominence in the methodology of foreign language instruction. Effective foreign language learning requires teachers to consider the intellectual, personal, and developmental characteristics of students. Organising foreign language instruction should take into account students' psychological and age-related traits to identify the most effective techniques, methods, and teaching tools.

One of the requirements for the development of foreign language skills in the future is the presence of specialists who primarily take into account age characteristics. The study of language abilities focuses on analysing the internal organisation of language processes and modelling language and communicative activity. It is shaped by physiological mechanisms in the communicative process under the influence of the linguistic environment (Khomchuk & Velyka, 2023). Conventionally, three aspects are recognised in the structure of language ability: the language mechanism or the ability to master a language (native or foreign); the language peculiarities of a person, or the mental representation of language in

the mind of the bearer of the sign systems of a language; and the norms of its functioning in communication. Additionally, language mechanisms involve the ability to carry out linguistic activity – producing and perceiving linguistic expressions. Sensitive periods of language development, especially in language acquisition, are age stages characterised by the presence of special mental reserves for language learning. These include the age ranges of 2-5, 12-15, and 27-30 years (Khomchuk & Velyka, 2023).

The development of language skills at an early age is connected primarily with phenomena such as the perception and distinction of speech sounds, as well as understanding the meaning of the language being studied (Herasymova & Malyk, 2023). Research conducted by V. Kohonen and co-authors on the duration of babies' listening to sound models imitating the phonetics of their native and non-native languages showed that nine-month-old children prefer the sounds of their native language. Notably, these features were not observed in six-month-old babies (Kohonen, 2020). The difference stemmed from the recognition of phonetic elements and individual sound features. Additionally, it was observed that stress in words is important for recognising sound forms. Data on the ability to distinguish sounds similar to words correlate with studies showing infants' ability to imitate the sounds of others (Campbell & Wales, 1970; Jusczyk, 1993). B. De Boysson-Bardies (1993) also conducted research on the development of speech during the period of language imitation in children of different nationalities. It was found that regardless of culture and nationality, the ability to imitate speech and distinguish between vowel and consonant sounds is well-manifested by around the age of one year.

P. Kuhl's (1994) research showed that between 12 and 20 weeks of life, children demonstrate significantly

developed imitation and well-perceived language. The researcher considers these findings as confirmation of the early development of the ability to perceive and distinguish speech sounds, as well as the emergence of language motor and perceptual activity. These studies indicate that even before children learn the meaning of words and phrases, they learn to pronounce them, master the ability to recognise speech elements by general perceptual signs and imitate pronunciation sounds. Furthermore, it is noted that in childhood, traditional learning mechanisms remain operational. This involves an unformed differentiating ability of a conditional-reflex nature, as there is no reinforcement, and conscious efforts aimed at producing sound images are also impossible. P. Kuhl emphasises that the ability of a newborn to distinguish nearly all phonetic elements occurring in different languages is a remarkable new capacity, reflecting sensitivity to acoustic changes in phonetic categories. However, by around the 12th month, this ability diminishes. The scientist provides an example: Japanese children distinguish the sounds “r” and “l” in early childhood, but as they grow older, they no longer notice these differences. Language development, therefore, progresses from a “general language” orientation to a “specific language” focus. P. Kuhl explains this as a process of self-regulation and adaptation to the native language, accompanied by a loss of flexibility. He proposes the theory of the “perceptual magnet”, which suggests that as linguistic experiences accumulate under the influence of linguistic material, general and typical phonetic regularities emerge and are fixed in the memory of young children. Such a solid prototype gains the ability to “attract” similar sounds.

Phonetic prototypes are specific to different languages; therefore, each speaker of a particular language has a unique perception that determines the classification of phonetic features. This characteristic facilitates the recognition of phonemes in various categories of the native language but is less influential in the perception of a foreign language (Kuhl, 1994). Typically, towards the end of the first year or the beginning of the second year of a child's life, sound complexes emerge that others perceive as the child's first words. Their phonetic structure resembles babbling, a universal phenomenon among children worldwide. The fundamental difference between words and gibberish lies in the meaning attributed by adults (Kravets *et al.*, 2021; Kondratiuk & Malyk, 2024). The content of these early words demonstrates originality, as a child can describe an entire situation using a single word. By the age of two, an active vocabulary expands to approximately 25 words, after which it grows rapidly. In six-year-old children, the vocabulary reaches 15,000 words, and by the age of 10-12, it nearly equals the household vocabulary of adults. Between the ages of one and a half and two and a half years, assuming normal developmental progression, a significant change occurs in children's speech patterns: they begin to use word combinations, and two-word sentences start to appear. These sentences are not yet grammatically structured; their semantic focus provides information about the

location of objects or describes actions and events. Further speech development involves the emergence of grammar. This period is marked by the formation of grammar in children's speech. Additionally, children spontaneously incorporate words into their vocabulary that mirror the language of those around them, often creating neologisms (Bohush, 1997; Kalmykova, 2003).

During the speech development of children aged 3-4 years, a phenomenon known as egocentric speech becomes evident. This phenomenon reflects the unique communicative characteristics of children's speech, where the child does not require an interlocutor and does not address anyone but instead verbalises their thoughts (Kravets, 2023). By school age, egocentric speech disappears. In the linguistic organisation of an individual, the following elements of linguistic knowledge are identified: phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and semantic. Proper organisation of a person's linguistic knowledge is a key condition for language acquisition. Only with a well-structured representation of linguistic knowledge is it possible to efficiently retrieve linguistic units from the “archive” of long-term memory and perform a series of linguistic actions, ultimately leading to automation, as well as enabling the flexible application of alternative strategies for speech communication (Zasiekin & Zasiekin, 2002). Considering the specifics of this research, the author highlights the nuances of mastering foreign languages by students. University life represents a unique stage of late adolescence and early adulthood, typically between 17 and 25 years of age (Kravets, 2023). The optimal development of intellectual functions depends on two factors: talent (an internal factor) and education (an external factor). As emphasised by L.H. Rusalkina (2015), educators should organise the learning process so that external social factors are transformed into internal drivers, creating an integrated structure of the student's intellect. Students, as members of a distinct academic community united by the pursuit of professional education, are characterised by traits such as the active development of moral and volitional qualities, stabilisation of character, and mastery of diverse social roles. These qualities are essential for the successful acquisition of communicative competence, which is crucial for functioning as an adult in society.

In the socio-psychological aspect, the student is characterised by a high level of cognitive motivation, social activity, and a relatively harmonious combination of intellectual and social maturity. During this period, cognitive development reaches a level sufficient for an individual to perform almost all types of mental activity associated with adulthood. At this stage, students demonstrate the highest activity in deliberate, logical, and abstract memory; thinking focused on solving mental tasks; the ability to adapt quickly to different types of activities when working on linguistic and logical tasks; and a high level of proficiency in logic and a systematic understanding of the nature and content of their actions. In students, the systematic and purposeful use of rational memory techniques is enhanced. Educators should optimise this potential, as the

age-specific psychological characteristics of students facilitate the highest pedagogical impact, particularly in uncovering the linguistic and rhetorical potential of each student during educational activities. Another psychological condition for the development of language competence is the consideration of the individual psychological characteristics of students, which are based on cognitive processes such as feelings, perception, imagination, memory, thinking, and attention (Raniuk, 2021). The ability to synthesise visual and auditory, kinesthetic, and static impressions contributes to the development of speech skills in a foreign language (Malyk, 2023).

Perception, as a cognitive process, manifests as a holistic representation of objects, situations, and phenomena that arise due to the direct influence of stimuli on the receptive surfaces of the sense organs (Polozenko *et al.*, 2009). Psychologists use the term “perception” to denote this sensory process, one type of which is the perception of people by others – referred to as social perception. Social perception is an important factor in speech activity, particularly in foreign languages, as the internal characteristics of a person are expressed through external signs, such as thoughts, feelings, desires, and emotional experiences. Perception is connected to prior experiences. This dependence of perception on prior experiences is referred to as “apperception”. To facilitate the effective acquisition of new material, the teacher must connect it with the student’s existing knowledge, thereby ensuring comprehension

of subsequent material. This creates causal relationships during foreign language learning. Apperception is closely linked to memory, as actual memorisation occurs only when individuals unconsciously retrieve prior knowledge while analysing past experiences and evaluating their relevance to current and future needs. Learning outcomes are influenced by a variety of factors, which can be grouped into two categories: internal and external. Internal factors are related to an individual’s physiological and psychological characteristics, while external factors are influenced by social conditions. Studies have shown that personal characteristics, particularly emotional and motivational traits, have a greater impact on the development of language skills than external conditions. Affective variables such as attitude and motivation play a critical role in determining language proficiency. Negative factors identified by researchers include anxiety, insufficient cognitive engagement, and a negative self-perception (Samimy & Tabuse, 1992).

H.D. Brown (1981) claims that learning a foreign language causes tension in individuals, which is accompanied by a sense of fear, disappointment, and doubt. Unlike children, adults are especially concerned about how others will evaluate them in public communication, particularly in the presence of native speakers. Anxiety stems from the fear of making mistakes or appearing ridiculous or awkward. Another internal factor is the ability to learn a language independently. Table 2 summarises four key indicators of foreign language learning ability.

Table 2. Key language learning skills and their descriptions

Skill	Description
Phonetic decoding	The skill to distinguish other’s sounds and encode them for later reproduction.
Grammar sensitivity	The ability to recognise the functions that words perform in a sentence.
Inductive study of foreign languages	The ability to draw conclusions, deduce or derive rules, and make generalisations based on regularities.
Memory for language material and learning ability	The capacity to construct phrases and recall associations between native and foreign language words.

Source: developed by the authors based on A.N. Smith (1975)

Two of these factors, phonetic decoding and memory, also correlate with intelligence. Another significant factor is attitude, which reflects how language and thinking are perceived and developed as a result of experiences shaped by the immediate environment, including peers, teachers, and parents (Ameto, 1988; Samimy & Tabuse, 1992). A positive attitude towards language learning enhances learning effectiveness, reduces the time required to master the material, and fosters positive emotions (Ameto, 1988). The central mental process important in foreign language communication is memory. Learning a foreign language should not rely solely on mechanical repetition of words, phrases, sentences, or entire texts. Instead, it should involve an awareness of linguistic peculiarities. Psychologists classify the mental processes mentioned above as cognitive. These processes integrate attention – the dynamic aspect of consciousness, characterised by the degree of focus on an object – and concentration, which ensures its proper reflection

within the time required to perform a specific action or communication process. Voluntary attention is associated with language in relation to socially developed methods of organising behaviour and communication (Ivashchuk, 2023).

The emotional and volitional domains exert a special influence on speech. Emotions are states linked to the assessment of specific factors affecting an individual and are expressed as direct experiences of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one’s needs. Feelings are among the primary forms of expressing attitudes towards objects and phenomena, as they represent emotional experiences that reflect a stable attitude towards external realities. Emotions and feelings are transmitted during communication and serve as important supplements to the content of speech received by the listener. Thus, mastering a language requires proficiency not only in its verbal components but also in its non-verbal elements, such as emotions, intonation, rhythm, facial expressions, gestures, and body movements.

Effective communication and the achievement of communicative goals depend on the ability to consider the emotional state of the interlocutor and to control and express one's own emotions (Raniuk, 2021).

Of particular importance is nonverbal communication, which is acquired when learning and using a foreign language. M. Kekosh (2017) points out that nonverbal communication plays an even greater role in this process than in learning the native language. An insufficient understanding of lexical or grammatical structures can often be compensated for by nonverbal means, which helps to better interpret various communicative situations. The combination of verbal and nonverbal communication in a foreign language can facilitate the memorisation of new words or grammatical structures. At the same time, the use of nonverbal means is particularly important in communication with people who speak a foreign language. Ignorance of the characteristic rules of nonverbal behaviour in other cultures (speaking another language) leads to misunderstandings and certain conflicts during cross-cultural communication. It is known that in different cultures, gestures, facial expressions, appearance, and even the distance between interlocutors have different meanings. What is permissible in one culture may be incorrectly perceived or interpreted by people from another culture. However, mastering the nonverbal communication techniques characteristic of a given foreign language allows one to avoid certain conflict situations and also provides the opportunity to better navigate different linguistic contexts and regulate one's behaviour during a conversation in a foreign language. M. Kekosh (2017) emphasises that the assimilation of nonverbal phenomena from a foreign culture should not be carried out through mechanical memorisation of the meanings of all gestures, facial expressions, etc. It is necessary to develop a certain sensitivity to the cultural behaviour of people who speak a foreign language and to cultivate the ability and willingness to understand the mentality of those who speak it.

The component of the emotional and volitional sphere is will – the ability of an individual to achieve a set goal while overcoming obstacles, which is expressed in self-determination and self-regulation of actions and various mental processes. The result of the goal-oriented development of will is higher volitional qualities: determination, perseverance, decisiveness, independence, the ability to self-control and self-regulate, the ability to make decisions, adherence to principles, initiative, stability, organisation, discipline, courage, the ability to distinguish social from personal aspects, etc. (Nyshcheta, 2017). Learning a language, especially a foreign one, should be based on these qualities. Such qualities are already well-developed by student age. At the same time, the content of the language material should focus on realising the importance of these qualities for future professional activity, to ensure effective communication in a foreign language.

Psychologists state that language barriers most often hinder students from effectively learning a foreign language. Therefore, they distinguish two main types of

language barriers: external and internal. External barriers are objective obstacles that appear before individuals, regardless of their desires. For example, when a person cannot choose a learning method that meets their goals or cannot find a suitable teacher. Internal barriers are subjective, arise within the individual, and their roots may lie deep in the subconscious. However, they can also be associated with certain physical problems (such as hearing loss), age, or a general deterioration in memory at a certain stage of life. The first and most significant obstacle to overcome when learning a foreign language is the fear of initial attempts at speaking, which usually does not cause further hindrances in language acquisition (Cherniuk, 2023). It is known that learning cannot be successful without knowledge of psychology and pedagogy, because there are key aspects that foreign language teachers should take into account when working with students:

- 1) each individual's action begins with their personal motivation;
- 2) the subject matter should not be too simple; students should not lose the desire to overcome their own barriers to learning;
- 3) new knowledge must have an emotional impact (inclusion in the process);
- 4) it is necessary to draw on the students' general erudition, basic knowledge, interlingual and intercultural connections, and teach an analytical approach to learning something new (Zernetskyi, 2020).

In learning a foreign language, the implementation of the communicative method plays a key role. Communication includes both oral and written forms, with the essence being the exchange of information. The author of the communicative method is R. Langs, who characterised the main features of this method:

- the approach assumes maximum use of the language learned within the group;
- emphasis on active learning models, including partner and group work;
- oral communication is preferred;
- anticipation of the use of software services;
- emphasis on modern spoken language;
- secondary importance is placed on the role of grammar (Bocharova, 2019).

Communicative learning of a foreign language involves not only specific knowledge, skills, and abilities but also communicative competencies that enable effective communication in situations where a foreign language is used. The European Commission interprets it as a continuum of several components or competencies (Halytska, 2019). Communicative skills are not without their drawbacks, especially since they can only be achieved with sufficient language practice. It is difficult to imagine the future of a modern specialist without proficient, professional reading of informational and professionally oriented texts. Readers of authentic, professionally oriented texts require developed reading skills, i.e., practical mastery of this type of linguistic activity. The linguistic-communicative model for

shaping reading and writing skills is based on authenticity (the use of authentic material in the learning process); contextual conditioning (the use of language in a general, social, and cultural context); intensive use of the student's basic knowledge (the formation of expected skills based on the informational content of the text, which appears in their mind even before familiarisation with the educational material); overcoming the cognitive gap (avoiding problematic situations and misunderstandings in the information contained in the text) using teacher-led tasks. The main psychological characteristics of students learning a foreign language are as follows:

1) they will learn only because they believe they need to, and their studies will be effective if they have a strong internal motivation to acquire specific knowledge – today, support and stimulation of motivation largely depend on the higher education teacher;

2) meeting the immediate needs of recipients by applying acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities through simulation (modelling) of situations—this significantly accelerates the practical use of the language;

3) students often study and work at the same time, so the main obstacle to practical interaction is that those who work frequently do not have enough time to attend courses. However, if a person requires a foreign language for professional development, it is easier for them to find time to study;

4) learning largely depends on previous experience – students' perception of knowledge. Therefore, knowledge must be correlated with accumulated life experience; if new knowledge does not correspond to what the student already knows, they subconsciously prepare to reject it;

5) it is important to be able to abandon unsuccessful educational experiences from the past and start anew. One of the factors hindering the learning of a foreign language is fear. Therefore, it is important to create an informal atmosphere for interaction among all participants in the educational process;

6) most students criticise their ability to learn. Therefore, according to psychologists and educators, tasks should not be assessed, but should guide, among others, B. Tasks that are often practised without a single correct solution, with the main goal being the development of language skills based on the personal experiences of the learners;

7) when learning a foreign language, multiple teaching methods should be employed.

Therefore, the potential of mental processes, and the emotional and volitional sphere of students, is determined and connected with language. Among contemporary scholars dealing with the specificity of foreign language teaching methods, there is an ongoing discussion regarding the approach to learning foreign languages based on psychological characteristics. The origin of the discussion lies in the well-known postulate of L. Vygotsky: "We can say that learning a foreign language goes along a path directly opposite to the path of development of the native language. A child never starts by learning the

native language, learning the alphabet, reading and writing, consciously building a sentence, verbally defining the meaning of a word, learning grammar, but usually all this comes at the beginning of learning a foreign language. A child learns the native language unconsciously, and a foreign language consciously and deliberately. Therefore, we can say that the development of the native language occurs from the bottom up, and the development of a foreign language from the top down" (Brown, 1981). However, complete mastery of a foreign language does not differ from mastering the native language: the speaker acquires the ability to think in a foreign language and develops linguistic intuition (Raniuk, 2021).

This leads to the discussion of the most important approach to learning foreign languages. The essence of the issue lies in the dilemma of whether effective foreign language learning can be achieved through a discursive method, where language learning is continuously supported by translations between the native and foreign languages, or through the use of the "direct method". In the direct method, a foreign language is learned in the same way as the native language – primarily through conversational exercises. One variant of the direct method is the "full immersion" method, which involves immersing the learner in a new, unfamiliar linguistic environment. No word in the native language is spoken aloud to avoid the need for translation. The emphasis is on the repetition of idiomatic constructions: the learner practices until they internalise this or that structure (Raniuk, 2021).

O. Lozova (2010) rightly notes that neither the first nor the second method of learning a foreign language can be the only possible one. An alternative must be sought. The foundation of foreign language learning is a constant practice through speaking exercises, during which it is crucial to ensure that the learner focuses not only on the specifics of linguistic means but also on the ideas expressed through the foreign language. This means that language should not be reproductive, but productive. The repetition of language is facilitated by the motivation of the speaker. However, one should not abandon the study of theoretical knowledge. Without the ability to analyse language, it is impossible to effectively master reading and writing or to understand the nuances of a foreign language.

The combination facilitates the active practice of spoken language and the acquisition of the theoretical foundations of a foreign language, thereby promoting the development of productive skills. It is also important to consider the observations of scholars studying the specifics of foreign language learning, who note that the process is accompanied by the development of new psychophysiological mechanisms in learners. These mechanisms enable learners to adapt to real-world goals, reflecting them differently and interpreting them using slightly different linguistic means. After all, a person who knows a foreign language must also understand a different linguistic image of the world. While awareness of the native language typically develops spontaneously, the formation of

linguistic awareness in a foreign language is a complex and prolonged process. However, the native language remains the primary and necessary condition for developing awareness of a foreign language. To make the learning process meaningful, the student must recognise the internal laws of the foreign language and compare them with the corresponding rules of their native language, which should become the focus of reflection.

Thus, in modern psychology and pedagogy, the study of the psychological specificity of foreign languages has emerged as an academic discipline. The characteristics of genuine foreign language learning are highlighted: the connection with the native language, thematic orientation, the inclusion of the foreign language component in communicative activities, fragmentation of learning, and the division of language learning into different types of linguistic activity that shape bilingual awareness. The success of students in learning a foreign language depends largely on the ability to predict and diagnose potential language barriers (Cherniuk, 2023). Overall, the principles of the cognitive-communicative learning model are widely applied in modern language teaching methods. For students at non-linguistic universities, in addition to language development, the ability to read and professionally process specialised texts is crucial. The teacher's task is to help the students integrate the new worldview presented in the foreign language with their individual context. In this way, bilingual awareness is formed.

CONCLUSIONS

In the socio-psychological context, the student is characterised by a high level of cognitive motivation, social activity, and a relatively harmonious combination of intellectual and social maturity. There are four indicators of the ability to learn foreign languages: phonetic decoding, grammar

sensitivity, the capacity for inductive study of foreign languages, memory for language material, and the ability to learn. The purpose of the study has been achieved. Following the topic and objective of the research, the following conclusions have been drawn during the research process: psycholinguistic factors of foreign language acquisition have been characterised, and a review and analysis of general non-scientific and psychological-pedagogical approaches have been conducted. These can improve and systematise the existing psychological conditions for psycholinguistic training of students, as well as overcome difficulties and barriers in the process of learning a foreign language.

The central mental process critical to communicating in a foreign language is memory. Learning a foreign language should not involve mechanically repeating words, phrases, sentences, or entire texts, but rather acquiring the language with an awareness of its linguistic peculiarities. In foreign language learning, the implementation of the communicative method plays a crucial role. Communication encompasses both oral and written communication, with the core purpose being the exchange of information. The main psychological characteristics of students learning a foreign language have been enumerated and characterised. Therefore, the potential of mental processes, emotional and volitional spheres of students is determined and connected with language. The author sees the prospects for further research in examining the components of personal psycholinguistic factors in foreign language acquisition and the practical implementation of these findings.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Викладач

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<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3291-4347>**Психолінгвістичні чинники оволодіння іноземною мовою**

Анотація. Тема дослідження є важливою в сучасний період часу, адже викладач, працюючи зі студентами, повинен вміти застосовувати на практиці психолінгвістичні та психологічні знання, знаходити потрібні методичні шляхи вивчення того чи іншого предмета. Зважаючи на особливості вивчення іноземних мов, основним завданням викладача є розвиток і вдосконалення комунікативних мовних навичок студентів, розвиток їх умінь працювати з автентичними матеріалами та застосовувати набуті знання у практичній діяльності, що і обумовлює актуальність аналізу психолінгвістичних факторів оволодіння іноземною мовою. Мета даної наукової роботи полягала у розкритті суті психолінгвістики, її значення при вивченні іноземних мов та детальному аналізі психолінгвістичних факторів. У статті дано визначення психолінгвістики та коротко описано основні етапи її розвитку. Доведено, що психолінгвістика акцентує увагу на комунікативній діяльності індивіда та на когнітивній обробці інформації на основі його ментальних уявлень. Розглянуто вікові особливості оволодіння іноземною мовою. Зазначено, що необхідний розвиток інтелектуальних функцій людини залежить від таких факторів як талант та походження. Студенти, будучи представниками конкретного студентського співтовариства, об'єдналися з метою здобуття вищої освіти, характеризуються такими особливостями, як ефективне вдосконалення морально-вольових якостей, зміцнення характеру, засвоєння всього спектру ролей дорослого в суспільстві та все з цих речей необхідні для відповідного оволодіння комунікативною діяльністю. Було доведено, що вивчення іноземних мов має відбуватися не через механічне повторення слів, фраз чи розширеного мовлення, а за допомогою розвитку мовного усвідомлення. Практичне застосування отриманих результатів може відбуватись при підготовці до проведення пар, навчальних заходів, написання наукових робіт вчителями, викладачами, аспірантами, науковцями освітніх установ

Ключові слова: білінгвальне середовище; психолінгвістика; комунікативний підхід; мовна особистість; освітній процес; практична діяльність; професійно спрямоване мовлення