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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR THE "THIRD AGE" LEARNERS

Abstract. Some theoretical and methodological aspects of the use of modern information and communication technologies (ICT) in foreign language education for the "third age" learners are analyzed. The global trend of life-long learning and the development of universities of the "third age" are discussed. Contradictions related to scientific and methodological support of modern ICT in foreign language education for the "third age" learners are outlined. Brief analysis of recent research and publications on the above mentioned issues is offered. Theoretical framework and methods of the research, with a participatory approach as a basis, are described. Content of the foreign language education for the "third age" learners within the conducted research is specified. Results of the research are summarized, methodological recommendations are given and the prospects for further research are outlined.

Key words: foreign language education; informal education; lifelong learning; ICT in education; "third age".

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on personal, cognitive and cultural potential of the elderly people suggests that under certain conditions their learning skills often rise instead of decreasing. It is well known that the creation of certain conditions taking into account the psychological characteristics of an elderly person is important for improving the teaching methods for this age group.

One of such conditions is overcoming the age-related stereotypes. Thus, for instance, the "critical period" hypothesis, developed in 1960, argued that human brain loses its ability to build new links. With this very hypothesis it was popular to explain the difficulty of learning foreign languages for seniors in comparison with children and young people. Some provisions of this hypothesis even now can be found on the Internet, despite the fact that in 1978 neurologists proved that under certain conditions adults are even better in studying foreign languages.

The next condition is taking into account the age characteristics of the elderly people. The state of human health is of particular importance during the education process; loss of hearing and visual acuity reduction can significantly affect the adult education. However,

good lighting, silence, combination of audio and video presentations are likely to solve this issue immediately.

Positive internal motivation plays one of the key parts in the process of successful foreign language teaching for elderly learners. Usually they learn a foreign language with a specific and clearly defined purpose: communication abroad, work, etc.

The analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature allowed the authors to determine a permanent tendency towards the increasing scientific interest in the issue of foreign language education for the "third age" learners. On the basis of the conducted analysis and the global trend towards the informatization of the society and the widespread penetration of ICT in everyday life, we consider it necessary to actively use them for the purpose of efficient foreign language training of the "third age" people.

Target setting. The analysis of methodological and pedagogical literature shows that various aspects of ICT in foreign language education require further investigation [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 8; 9; 13; 14].

Nowadays, in the age of the Fourth industrial revolution, when globalization processes are being replaced by the processes of globalization (according to the principle "Think globally – act locally") [1], the rapid development and active penetration of Internet technologies, Smart Objects, Smart Devices and Smart sensors, we can observe the contradiction between rapid development of ICT and lack of scientific and methodological support of modern ICT in foreign language education for the "third age" learners. We can speak of the gap between willingness and need for lifelong self-education of seniors and the lack of proper methodological support.

The abovementioned facts and contradictions define the theoretical and methodological problem of scientific and methodological support of the use of modern ICT in foreign language education for the "third age" students.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Questions concerning the specifics of social work with elderly people have been the subject of investigation of many scholars, among them: E.I. Holostova, who studies lifelong activities of the seniors, describes the advanced age as a social problem [2, p. 56-73]; V.M. Shakhrai, who studies the old age theory and the principles of social work with the elderly; I. D. Zvereva [3, p.341], who investigates the levels of social work with seniors and the foundations of this activity; L.A. Yakubova, who generalizes the peculiarities of organization of social assistance to the elderly [4], and others.

General issues of the adult education are analyzed in the studies of L.I. Lukyanova, N. I. Klokar, O.I. Ogienko, P.I. Sikorsky, S.O. Sysoeva [5]

Problems of the third-age universities and their activities are investigated by J. Cowdel, R. Swindell, M. Famosa, V.G. Chaikivska, L.I. Stadnyuk, N.V. Lifareva and others [6].

The process of foreign language education organization is the subject of research of A. Raasch, D. Eggers, K. Pehl, V.A. Gamanuk, A.V. Maksimenko, N.V. Mahynya and others [7].

In the national scientific space, the theoretical issues of education informatization and information technology application are analyzed by V.Yu. Bykov, M.I. Zhaldak, N.M. Morse, S.G. Lytvynova, O.V. Spivakovsky and others.

Modern methods of foreign language competence formation with the use of ICT are investigated by such scholars as N.M. Bilan, O.V. Vaschilo, N.M. Prevozyuk [8].

The purpose of the article is to outline the pedagogical conditions for successful use of modern ICT in foreign language education for the "third age" learners, obtained during the experimental studies from 2010 till 2016.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The urgency of adult education is a generally recognized fact. The economic progress of the vast majority of countries became possible due to this educational direction [9].

In a report of UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) [9], experts point out that the humanity is getting older very fast: already by 2022, the number of people over 60 will exceed one billion, and by 2050, there will be more seniors than children under the age of 15. Today the average life expectancy in developed countries is 78 years, and in developing countries - 68 years. Experts predict that in 2045 the average life expectancy will increase up to 83 and 74 years respectively [9, p. 112]. The number of people aged over one hundred years by 2050 may rise up to 3.2 million.

Experts of the UN Fund for Population Activities point out that elderly population becomes a big challenge for many countries of the world, but the authors of the report [9] note that despite the tendency towards aging among the Earth population there is no reason to consider the situation critical, since seniors make a huge contribution into social life. "World leaders have to recognize this fact and develop policies that will ensure the effective functioning of the economy under such demographic changes," the report states [9, 87].

Population grows old all over the world and in Ukraine as well. Here, according to statistical surveys of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the population keeps decreasing and growing old. The dynamics of the recent years (2010 - 2016) indicates an increasing number of the elderly people - 15.5% of the total population [10].

At the same time, it should be mentioned that according to the European Union standards [11], it is necessary to create such conditions for the elderly that would not only provide public support but would also stimulate their activity.

One of such methods to activate the seniors is the Third Age Universities introduced in Europe and successfully operating since 1973 (Toulouse, France). Created at the higher education institutions or non-governmental organizations, they carry out the mission of human lifelong learning. The main objective of the Third Age Universities is to improve the physical, mental and social health of the elderly population [6].

In Ukraine, in 2009, with the support of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, a draft Concept of development and provisions for Third-Age Universities were developed. Since 2011, the social-pedagogical service "University of the Third Age" has been operating in Ukraine, its activity being regulated by the Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine No. 326, of August 25, 2011 "On the Introduction of the Socio-Pedagogical Service "University of the Third Age".

In 2017, following the initiative of the Ministry of Social Policy and with the support of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, a draft Strategy of the National Action Plan for Positive Ageing [12] was developed, in which one of the focus areas is introduction of an innovative model of providing social and pedagogical services "Universities of the Third Age".

In the report of the International Telecommunication Union "Measuring the Information Society 2015", which contains the rating of 167 countries according to the ICT development index, Ukraine has ranked the 79th place. According to experts, one of the reasons for such low indicators is an unequal access to ICT among various categories of the population, including the elderly [13].

In accordance with the European Union – Ukraine Association Agreement, in the process of developing the information society, the attention should be focused on one of the seven priority directions, namely: strengthening of digital education, skills and inclusion that is relevant to the elderly people [10].

In this context, on the basis of the above-mentioned, there arises a separate social request for the needs of the seniors, who constitute a numerous category of the population and are becoming one of the most vulnerable categories in terms of adaptation to the information environment.

Such situation has led to an increased awareness of the needs of the elderly and the necessity to develop new practical approaches towards social work with this category of population, and modern information and communication technologies can be efficiently used to improve the living standards of these people.

Thus, the need to involve seniors into the educational process in order to master modern ICT is primarily due to a number of the abovementioned socio-demographic preconditions. Same ideas can be found in the papers of S.A. Fedorenko [14], I.B. Savelchuk [15], T.V. Skoryk [16] and others.

In this paper, we will consider the results of implementation of the scenarios of modern ICT usage in foreign language education of the elderly, conducted on the basis of Universities of the Third Age within the framework of the project of the "New Life" Youth Public Organization – "IDEA - an open world of information technologies".

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The results of the study were obtained through the implementation of the "IDEA - an open world of information technologies" project.

The "Information Dissemination and Equal Access (IDEA)" project has been implemented in Ukraine since 2008 [17]. Its goal is to develop information literacy, improve the quality of education, provide advanced social and cultural development, and, in such a way, improve the lives of people faced with a difficult socio-economic situation.

The target audience of the Project are, first of all, people who need special social support: graduates who are getting ready for an independent life, students, unemployed and partially employed young people, disabled, underprivileged, retired persons.

Within the scope of this article we present the results of using modern ICT in foreign language education for the elderly people. The selection of specific target audience was made by a partner organization – Youth Public Organization "New Life". The project was implemented in cooperation with other nonprofit organizations, information centers, social services, state authorities, and socially responsible business.

During the implementation of foreign language education for seniors, we followed such principles of adult education as:

- the principle of self-study priority, which is ensured by observing value and motivational guidelines. This principle provides an opportunity to get acquainted with the study material in a free mode, which allows you to comprehend and master both the processes and the methodology;
- cooperation with the participants of the training group and the teacher during the training;
- the use of positive life experience, realized through active teaching methods;
- actualization of learning results, namely, their immediate use in your everyday life (watching foreign movies, news, TV programs, etc.);
- self-development and self-education are realized due to the motivation for preserving cognitive activity;
- the principle of an individual approach is ensured through the use of various forms and methods of teaching, a wide choice of ICT tools;

- the principle of voluntary participation is realized through free choice of educational goals, forms and methods of teaching.

We agree with I.G. Shamshina [15] and take into account the following age peculiarities of the elderly which may complicate their studies:

- a painful perception of the transformation in the process of learning the basic living values that have developed;
- the difficulty of abandoning the skills and abilities that were received earlier and are already out of date;
- barriers of biases against innovations and changes;
- the difficulties of changing the existing status (especially if the person is an ex-leader) for the status and role of the person who is being taught.

For teaching English to the seniors, a participatory approach was chosen. It implies the interaction between students and teacher in order to develop and find a joint solution of any specific problem.

We consider the participative approach as a theoretical and methodological basis, built on the understanding of the learner as a free creative person capable, according to their age-specific features (physiological, psychological, etc.), of making an independent choice of the type of interpersonal communication through activities together with the teacher [18, c.129]

Participative approach originates from the critical pedagogy by P. Freire [19], who, in his research, has shown that uneducated people can quickly learn to write and read if the words they are taught are of importance to them, and literacy is usually accompanied by improvements in everyday life.

In the context of new "Lifelong education" paradigm, which involves the development of a person throughout life as an employee, citizen, individuality, continuous education, accompanying a person within different periods of their life and contributing to the development of their social and professional mobility, definition of their place in society, their human and civic duty, the importance of informal adult education is significantly growing. Despite the fact that lifelong education contains all types of learning: formal, non-formal and informal, we have focused on the non-formal and informal learning.

We were guided by theoretical and practical studies [20] that demonstrated that the most successful and effective form of non-formal adult education is the University of the Third Age, especially its British model. The British model was developed on the basis of the so-called autonomous self-help groups, which means that the lecturers themselves are the participants of the program.

4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The "IDEA – an open world of information technologies" project has been implemented by the Youth public organization "New Life" from 2008 till the present time. 12,419 people have been trained at 63 courses and workshops in terms of "Microsoft Unlimited Potential" program [21].

As of 01.10.2017, 12,419 people have been trained at the courses and workshops of the IDEA project, including 823 people trained at 63 courses within "Microsoft Unlimited Potential" program and 1943 people trained at 26 courses in terms of the program "Kids safety on the Internet».

English language courses for the elderly were conducted separately within the University of the Third Age. Altogether, 750 individuals were enrolled in the education, 310 of them started their education, 213 attended all the classes. All participants completed an

introductory survey; one of its sections was aimed to identify the motivation to learn English at an advanced age (Figure 1).

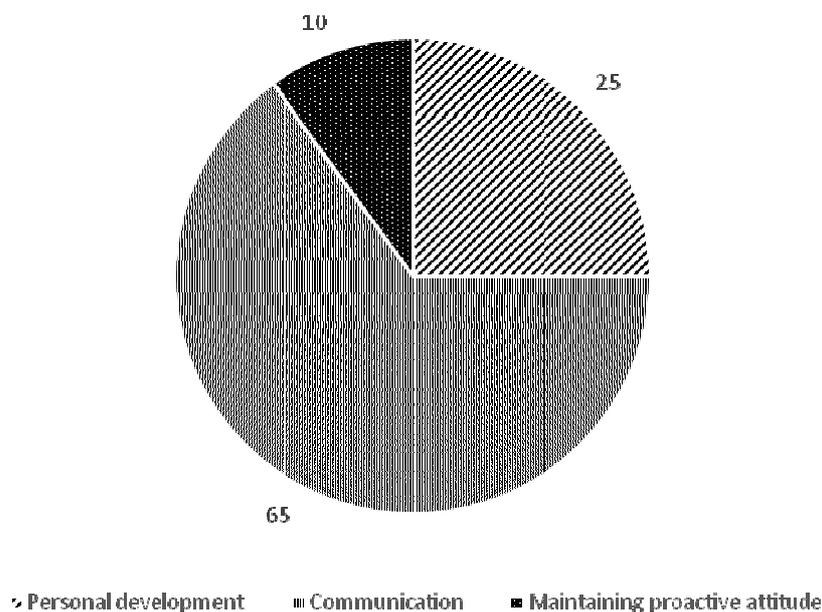


Fig. 1. Motivation to attend English courses for elderly people

As we can see from Fig. 1 the overwhelming majority of elderly people have chosen English language courses for communication with other people (65%), 25% - for personal development and 10% - to maintain their proactive attitude.

According to the analysis of the introductory and outgoing surveys for the English language learners, we outlined the following learning outcomes:

- students noted the results of personal development, namely: increase of self-awareness, improvement of social and communicative skills - 75% of students;
- students mentioned the following benefits of communication in small groups: comparing life experiences, broadening of outlook, active involvement of the people with special needs, ability to relieve psychological tension, communicative skills improvement, ability to teach each other - 45% of students;
- students noted the following benefits of the study: better understanding of different processes that occur in public life; understanding of the culture of different ethnic groups; better understanding of English; the ability to use modern ICT in everyday life - all students (100%).

It should also be mentioned that, as it turned out from the survey results, the main result of English learning courses for the elderly is the ability to use modern ICT in everyday life (85% of the students noted this as the main result).

The curriculum of English language courses is developed, as we have already mentioned, on the basis of the participative approach and consists of the several modules. Each module includes the following elements: mastering certain vocabulary in accordance with the tasks of the module and English communication in the group and with the teacher.

Module 1. Basics of working with a computer. Students get to know about the basic hardware components of a computer. The module includes an overview of ICT tools for working with texts and spreadsheets, making presentations and work on the Internet. Duration of the module is 24 hours.

Module 2. Digital lifestyle. During the module, which lasts 10 hours, students learn to use mobile phones, digital cameras, tablets in their everyday lives. After completing the module, students are able to do and view photos and videos on their own devices (smartphone or tablet), record and listen to audio records, use the Internet of things if the appropriate devices are available.

Module 3. Security and Confidentiality. The duration of the module is 6 hours, during which students get to know about the risks on the Internet and the guidelines of protecting personal and confidential data in everyday life.

Module 4. Personal productivity applications. Duration of the module is 12 hours. Students study software products, the use of which in everyday life allows older people to live on a different, higher level of life. It can be software products that allow distance communication between the elderly, exchange of data (photos, videos, useful information, etc.), using Internet of things, etc.

According to the results of teaching a foreign language to the seniors with the use of modern ICT, we can distinguish the following positive aspects of the implementation of ICT in the system of Third Age Universities:

- increase in general motivation to attend classes at the University of the Third Age;
- improvement of learning experience and transition from passive to active learning;
- improvement of the quality of life through the everyday use of ICT;
- available access to ICT for the elderly: public libraries, social service centers, territorial centers for social services, and community centers - all these are places with free Internet access.

Nowadays we can distinguish the following techniques of Internet-assisted foreign language teaching:

- use of online platforms for learning a foreign language;
- use of e-mail, social networks, forums and blogs by the elderly people in order to further develop their intercultural and socio-cultural competence;
- use of Wiki technologies to develop writing skills and increase self-esteem for the elderly through the awareness of their own intellectual contribution into the social and cultural life of society (M.N. Yevstygneev, Yu.Y. Markov, P.V. Sysoev);
- use of podcasts to develop listening and speaking skills.

Such groups of open Internet resources can be successfully used in foreign language training of the elderly people. These ICT tools can be used to enhance the quality of English language teaching during group activities or act as an instrument that can be used by the learners on their own.

Learn English (<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en>) is a collection of free British Council materials for learning English at various levels. It is quite convenient to use both for self-study and as a supplement to group work. Registered users can communicate with participants from different countries, ask questions and download educational materials.

The Distance Learning School ESHKO (<https://eshko.ua>) also offers elementary foreign language courses. ESHKO provides a democratic European way of learning in an interactive format. The services for students include printed and online versions of the textbooks. As a disadvantage, students point out the lack of free training plans.

Duolingo (<https://www.duolingo.com>) is a leading online language learning service (Fig.2.).

The general Duolingo course consists of the so-called "skills tree", which the student masters gradually. You can go to the next skill only after completing the current one: inaccessible skills on the tree are indicated by gray circles, the current ones are multicolored, those that are already mastered are marked yellow.

It should be noted that Duolingo does not teach to read, write, pronounce and memorize the vocabulary and grammar theory. However this resource is very popular among the seniors. Students like that skills represent a certain logical lexical and grammatical section of the course in which they can learn the vocabulary on a particular topic independently (eg. food, animals, clothes, etc.) and study different grammatical constructions and categories (number, time, etc.)

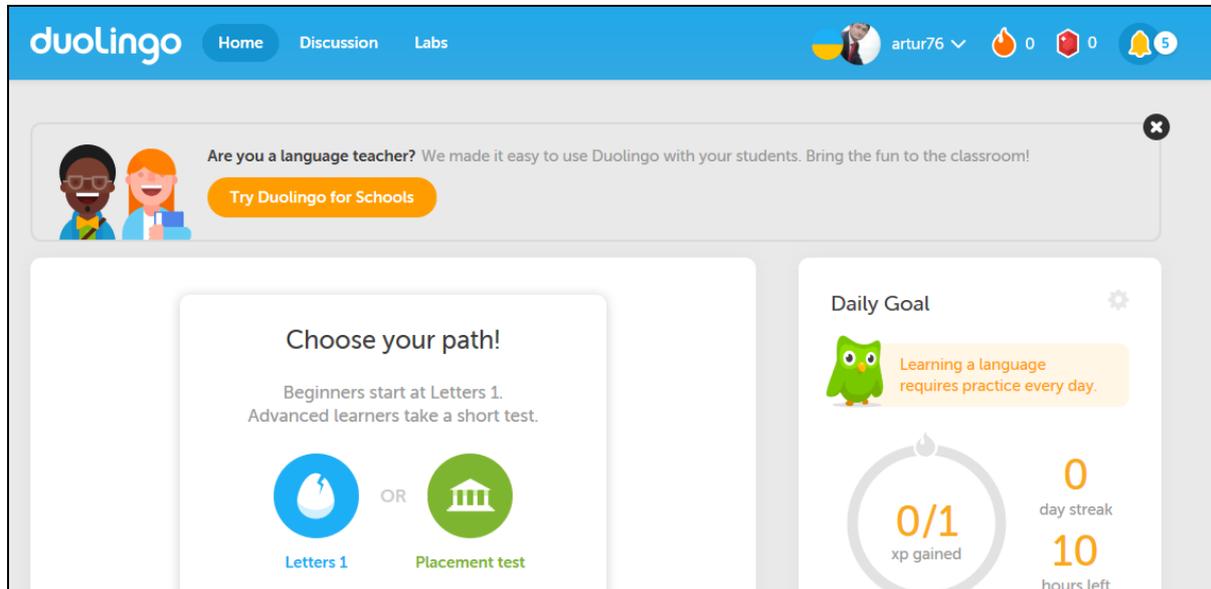


Fig. 2. The home page of Duolingo after user authentication

Lingualéo (<http://lingualéo.com>) is a shareware online foreign language learning platform. Developers call their approach "Secrets of learning a foreign language", namely: understanding the purpose of studying, satisfaction from regular exercise, working online, support from native speakers and doing exercises until a skill is formed through the use of visual, auditory and motor memory.

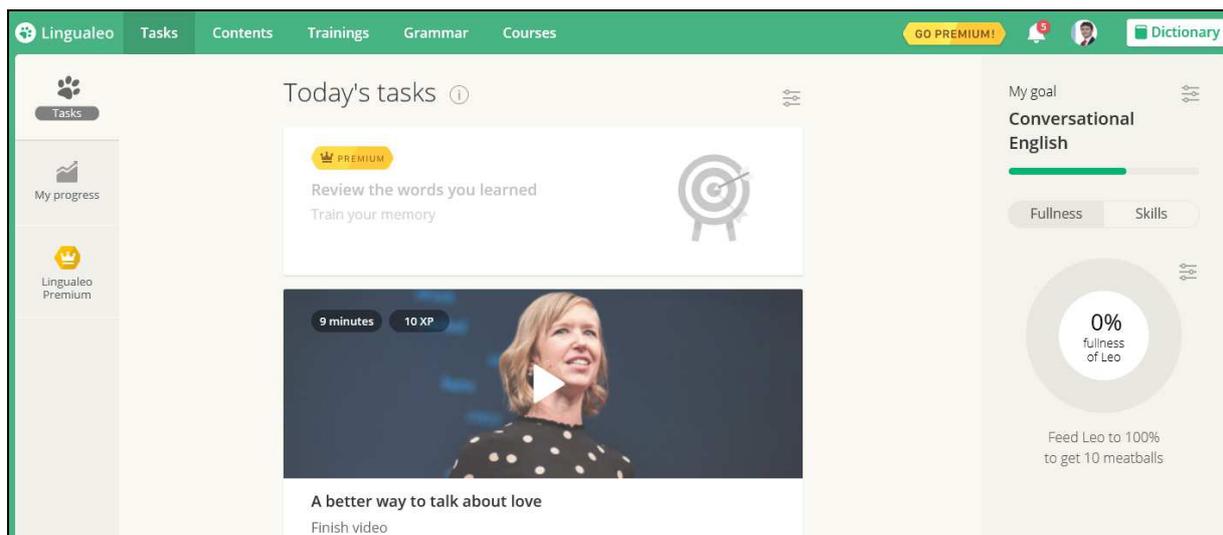


Fig. 3. Home page of Lingualéo after user authentication

The training begins with the entrance test of foreign language proficiency and making user profile. Particular attention is paid to filling in the interests, because the content of the curriculum is formed according to them. Lingualeo creates a personal training plan, progress in completing the plan in different categories of skills (speech comprehension, grammar, etc.) can be seen in your personal cabinet (Figure 3).

The platform is conditionally free, but students are interested in using it. In addition, there is an opportunity to download the application to your mobile phone.

Ukrainian start-ups **Prometheus** (<https://prometheus.org.ua>), **SkillsAcademy** (<http://skillsacademy.com.ua>), **Lingva.ua** (<https://lingva.ua>) are free open massive online courses that offer foreign language education for users. The disadvantage is that users should have upper intermediate skills for using Internet resources (they need to be logged in with user ID and have profiles on social networks).

The cloud-based **Office 365** service has a free tariff plan which allows non-profit organizations, libraries and social institutions to actively use it, besides, all its resources are available for the elderly people. The use of e-mail (Figure 4), blogs and forums in Office 365 does not require the student to remember the electronic mailboxes of their friends - it is enough to remember only their names; a user-friendly and easy-to-use interface requires minimum skills to use it.

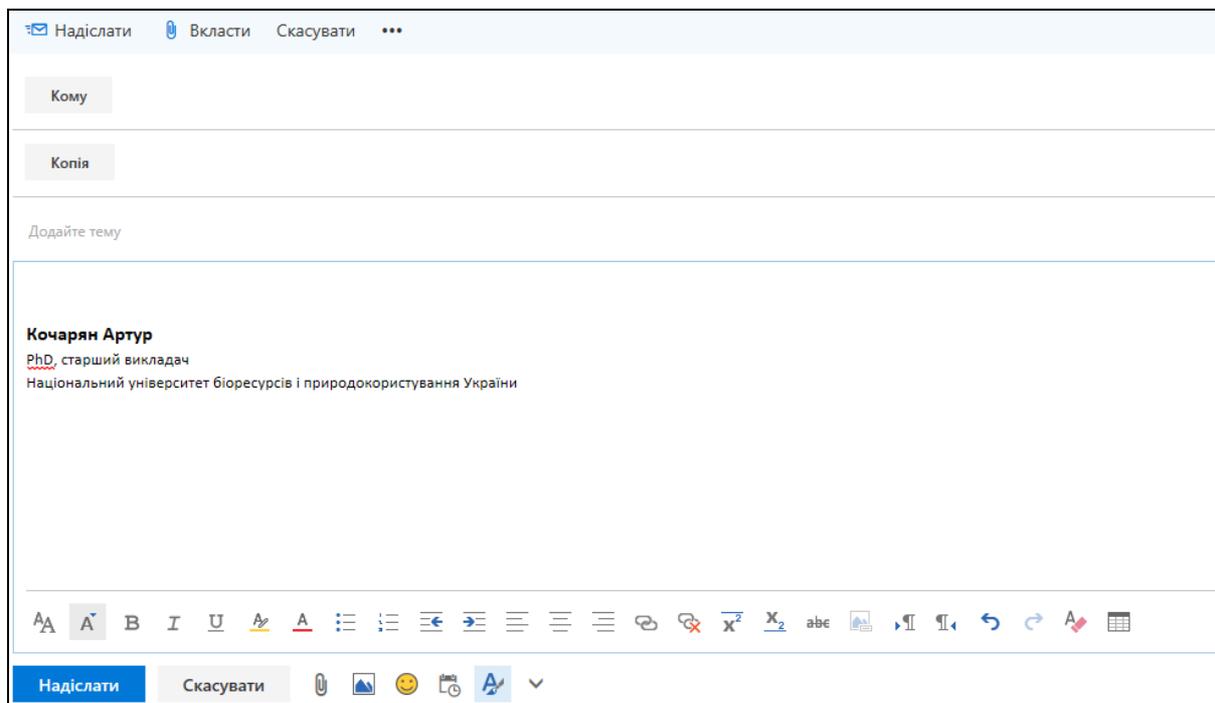


Fig. 4. Creating a message in Outlook Office 365

Wiki Technology allows users not only to view the existing content pages but also to create their own (Figure 5).

After completing the English language courses, students may be asked to create their own page on the Wiki. We offer the following recommendations to ensure that the use of Wiki Technologies allows to develop literacy skills and increase self-esteem for the elderly students:

- content should be unique and interesting. As a rule, the life experience of course students makes it easy to choose the topic of a unique article. Usually, these are tips from user's personal or professional experience

- it is preferable to create a page in a small group of 3-5 people
- course teacher should be a member of a group. The teacher will check the text for stylistic and spelling mistakes.

Not only the cloud services of Office 365 and Wiki technologies can be used to organize the joint activities of the elderly students while learning a foreign language.

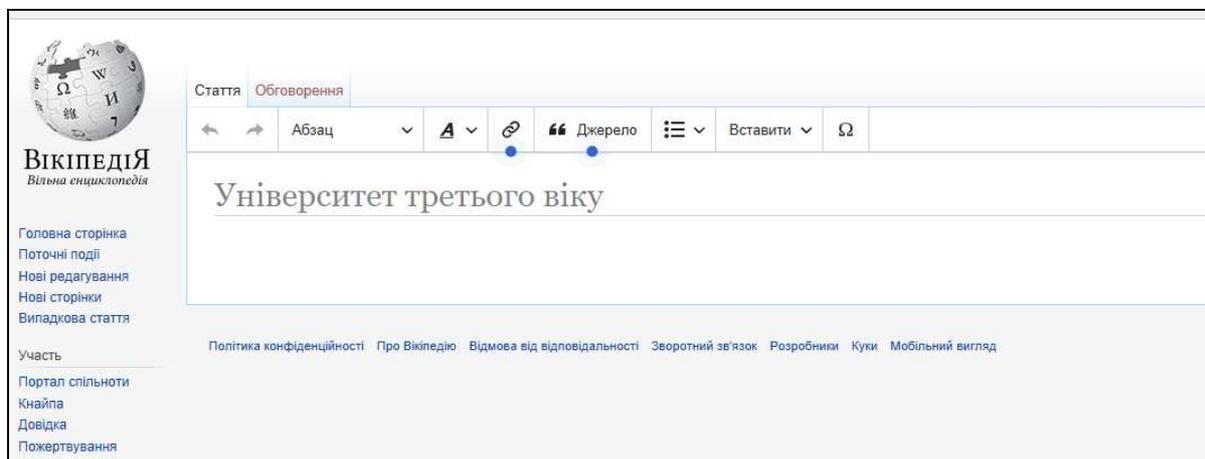


Fig. 5. Wiki page for creating your own content

Padlet (<https://padlet.com>) is a website that allows you to communicate with other users through text messages, photos, links, and more. Each place for communication is called the "wall". It can also be used as a private bulletin board. According to our results, this tool can successfully be used in the process of reflection at the beginning or at end of the class.

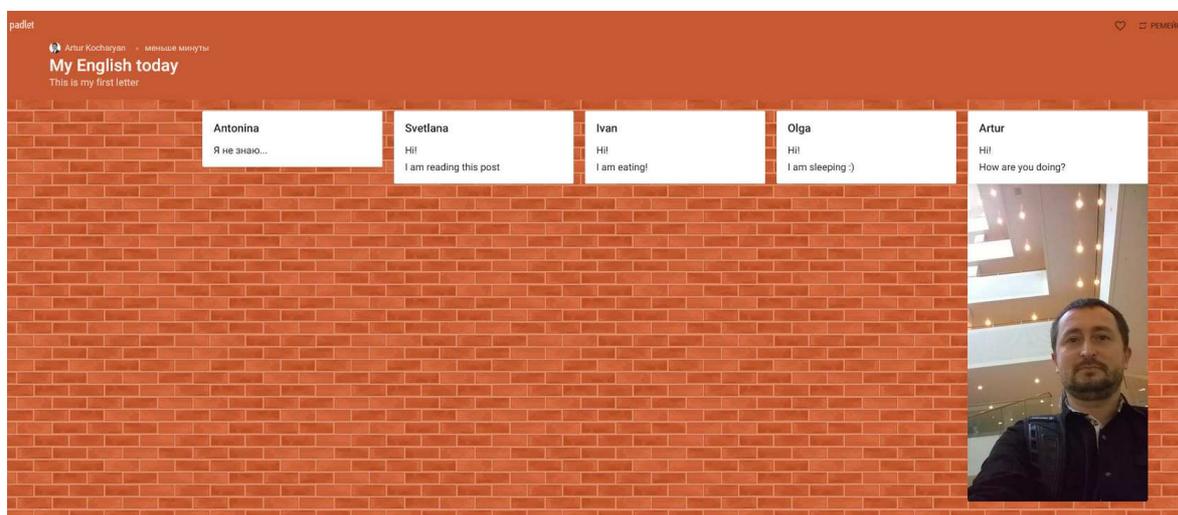


Fig. 6. Shared Padlet page

Viber (<https://www.viber.com>) - a software application that can be used both from a personal computer and from smartphones. The software application integrates with the address book on the smartphone and identifies the user by their mobile phone. Its main purpose is communication.

Positive results were obtained from using Viber when teaching foreign language to the seniors. The following benefits, which are noted by the students of the Third Age University,

allow to actively use them by the elderly: a simple interface; understandable navigation; possibility of free telephone communication via this application (if Internet access is available); sharing photos, videos and audio messages. Ordinary communication and messaging can easily be turned into everyday foreign language learning if the parties agree to communicate in foreign language (via text and voice messages).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

We believe that the implementation of the andragogical approach is an essential condition for the development of adult foreign language education. While elaborating the methodology of adult foreign language teaching, one must rely on andragogy as a science about the peculiarities of adult education according to age, educational and life needs, evident and hidden skills and abilities, individual characteristics and experience, mentality and physiology.

In the process of adult foreign language teaching we consider it necessary to take into account the following andragogical approaches: the priority of self-education, the principle of teamwork, the principle of relying on the experience of colleagues, individualization and systematic training, the principle of awareness and actualization of education.

Correct application of the andragogical approach in the process of adult foreign language teaching allows:

- to create the necessary conditions for self-realization of an individual;
- contributes to solving the issue of internal personal motivation to learning a foreign language;
- to create an informal atmosphere during the study, due to mutual respect, cooperation and responsibility for the learning outcomes;
- to make the elderly people active participants and equal subjects of the educational process.

Foreign language as one of the disciplines studied in the University of the Third Age, of course, has its own specificity, which is determined not only by the age peculiarities of students.

The results of our study confirm the expediency of distinguishing the following main directions of informatization of foreign language education for the elderly:

- Definition of the methodology for selecting ICT tools to be used in adult education, methods and forms of teaching foreign language.
- Definition of the content of adult foreign language teaching. Internet resources for foreign language learning create a wide choice for educational content selection.
- We suggest the following perspectives for further research:
- Development of innovative methods of ICT use in adult foreign language teaching. Despite the large number of available online resources for learning foreign languages, their quantity does not always correspond with their quality. In our opinion, the development of a methodology for correct ICT tools selection, as well as elaboration of scenarios for its application according to the goal, personalization and individualization specifically for the elderly people - all these are perspective areas of scientific research;
- Development of innovative teaching materials for adult foreign language training. Rapid development of ICT allows to use them to create quality and efficient products, which will increase not only the motivation of students for self development but also the result of their training.

- Unresolved remains the issue of the system of training and professional development of the teaching staff involved in adult foreign language teaching. Difficulties with the implementation of ICT into the educational process of the Third Age Universities are in most cases determined by the incompetence of the teachers themselves;
- Still pending is the question of ensuring information security of the students. Course attendees should be familiar with the basics of information security, the risks on the Internet and ways of preventing them.

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ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ИНФОРМАЦИОННО-КОММУНИКАЦИОННЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ В ИНОЯЗЫЧНОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ ЛЮДЕЙ «ТРЕТЬЕГО ВОЗРАСТА»

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Аннотация. В статье рассмотрены некоторые теоретико-методологические аспекты использования современных информационно-коммуникационных технологий в иноязычном образовании людей «третьего возраста». Актуализовано глобальную тенденцию образования на протяжении всей жизни, развития университетов «третьего возраста». Определены противоречия, которые обозначили теоретико-методическую проблему научно-методического обеспечения использования современных ИКТ в иноязычном образовании людей «третьего возраста». Подано обобщенный анализ последних исследований и публикаций по данной проблематике. Описаны теоретические основы и методика проведенного исследования, основой которого был партисипативный подход. Детализировано содержание иноязычного образования людей «третьего возраста» в рамках проведенного исследования. Обобщены результаты исследования, поданы методические рекомендации и обозначены перспективы дальнейших исследований.

Ключевые слова: иноязычное образование; неформальное образование; непрерывное образование; ИКТ в образовании; люди «третьего возраста».

ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНО-КОМУНІКАЦІЙНИХ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ В ІНШОМОВНІЙ ОСВІТІ ОСІБ «ТРЕТЬОГО ВІКУ»

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Анотація. Розглянуто деякі теоретико-методичні аспекти використання сучасних інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій в іншомовній освіті осіб «третього віку». Актуалізовано глобальну тенденцію освіти впродовж життя, розвитку університетів «третього віку». Виокремлені протиріччя, які окреслили теоретико-методичну проблему науково-методичного забезпечення використання сучасних ІКТ в іншомовній освіті осіб «третього віку». Подано стислий аналіз останніх досліджень і публікацій із зазначеної проблематики. Описані теоретичні основи й методика проведеного дослідження, основою якого був партисипативний підхід. Деталізовано зміст іншомовної освіти осіб «третього віку» в рамках проведеного дослідження. Узагальнені результати дослідження, надані методичні рекомендації й окреслені перспективи подальших досліджень.

Ключові слова: іншомовна освіта; неформальна освіта; неперервна освіта; ІКТ в освіті; особи «третього віку».

