

AN ANDRAGOGICAL APPROACH TO TEACHING MILITARY ENGLISH TO ADULT LEARNERS IN THE AZERBAIJANI MILITARY EDUCATION CONTEXT



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ABSTRACT

This article examines the application of the andragogical approach in teaching Military English for adult learners within the context of the Azerbaijani military education system. In the modern military environment, officers and cadets must possess professional communication skills in accordance with NATO standards, which ensures their effective participation in international trainings, peacekeeping operations, and multinational headquarters activities. In this regard, traditional pedagogical approaches do not fully meet the needs of adult military learners.

The research is based on the fundamental principles of andragogy proposed by Malcolm Knowles—learner autonomy, integration of professional experience into the teaching process, problem-based and goal-oriented learning. The article analyzes specific methods that can be applied in Azerbaijani military educational institutions, including scenario-based tasks, real operational examples, authentic NATO documents, and task-based communicative activities.

The study shows that the andragogical approach has a positive impact on increasing motivation in the teaching of Military English, deepening terminological acquisition, and forming communicative skills in an operational context. The results of the article have practical significance in terms of improving the professional language training of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan and updating the methodological foundations of military language teaching.

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AZƏRBAYCAN HƏRBİ TƏHSİL SİSTEMİ KONTEKSTİNDƏ YETKİN ÖYRƏNƏNLƏR ÜÇÜN HƏRBİ İNGİLİS DİLİNİN TƏDRİSİNDƏ ANDRAGOJİK YANAŞMA



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Açar sözlər:

Andragogika,
Hərbi ingilis dili,
Yetkin öyrənənlər,
Hərbi təhsil,
Azərbaycan Silahlı
Qüvvələri,
Kommunikativ
yanaşma

ANNOTASIYA

Bu məqalə Azərbaycan hərbi təhsil sistemi kontekstində yetkin öyrənənlər üçün hərbi ingilis dilinin tədrisində andragojik yanaşmanın tətbiqini araşdırır. Müasir hərbi mühitdə zabidlər və kursantlar NATO standartlarına uyğun peşəkar kommunikasiya bacarıqlarına malik olmalıdırlar ki, bu da onların beynəlxalq təlimlərdə, sülhməramlı əməliyyatlarda və çoxmillətli qərargah fəaliyyətlərində effektiv iştirakını təmin edir. Bu baxımdan, ənənəvi pedaqoji yanaşmalar yetkin hərbi öyrənənlərin ehtiyaclarını tam şəkildə qarşılıdır.

Tədqiqat Malcolm Knowles tərəfindən irəli sürülmüş andragogikanın əsas prinsiplərinə — öyrənənlərin muxtariyyəti, peşəkar təcrübənin tədris prosesinə inteqrasiyası, probleməsaslı və məqsədyönlü öyrənmə — əsaslanır. Məqalədə Azərbaycan hərbi təhsil müəssisələrində tətbiq oluna biləcək konkret metodlar, o cümlədən ssenariyə əsaslanan tapşırıqlar, real əməliyyat nümunələri, autentik NATO sənədləri və vəzifəəsaslı kommunikativ fəaliyyətlər təhlil edilir.

Araşdırma göstərir ki, andragojik yanaşma hərbi ingilis dilinin tədrisində motivasiyanın artmasına, terminoloji mənimsəmənin dərinləşməsinə və əməliyyat kontekstində kommunikativ bacarıqların formalaşmasına müsbət təsir göstərir. Məqalənin nəticələri Azərbaycan Silahlı Qüvvələrinin peşəkar dil hazırlığının təkmilləşdirilməsi və hərbi dil tədrisinin metodoloji əsaslarının yenilənməsi baxımından praktik əhəmiyyət daşıyır.

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АНДРАГОГИЧЕСКИЙ ПОДХОД К ПРЕПОДАВАНИЮ ВОЕННОГО АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА ВЗРОСЛЫМ ОБУЧАЮЩИМСЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ВОЕННОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА



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Ключевые слова:

Военный английский язык,
Андрагогика,
Взрослые обучающиеся,
Военное образование,
Вооружённые Силы Азербайджана,
Коммуникативный подход

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье исследуется применение андрагогического подхода в преподавании военного английского языка для взрослых обучающихся в контексте системы военного образования Азербайджана. В современных военных условиях офицеры и курсанты должны обладать профессиональными коммуникативными навыками в соответствии со стандартами НАТО, что обеспечивает их эффективное участие в международных учениях, миротворческих операциях и деятельности многонациональных штабов. В этом отношении традиционные педагогические подходы не в полной мере удовлетворяют потребности взрослых военнослужащих-обучающихся.

Исследование основывается на основных принципах андрагогики, выдвинутых Малкольмом Ноулзом, — автономии обучающихся, интеграции профессионального опыта в учебный процесс, проблемно-ориентированного и целенаправленного обучения. В статье анализируются конкретные методы, которые могут быть применены в военных образовательных учреждениях Азербайджана, включая задания, основанные на сценариях, реальные примеры оперативной деятельности, аутентичные документы НАТО и коммуникативные виды деятельности, ориентированные на выполнение служебных задач.

Исследование показывает, что андрагогический подход оказывает положительное влияние на повышение мотивации при обучении военному английскому языку, углубление усвоения терминологии и формирование коммуникативных навыков в оперативном контексте. Результаты статьи имеют практическое значение с точки зрения совершенствования профессиональной языковой подготовки Вооружённых Сил Азербайджана и обновления методологических основ преподавания военного языка.

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1. Introduction

The growing participation of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces in international military cooperation, including NATO Partnership for Peace programs, peacekeeping missions, and multinational exercises, has significantly increased the demand for effective Military English instruction. English has become not only a medium of communication but also a professional tool for operational planning, coordination, and leadership.

However, most military English learners in Azerbaijan are adult officers, non-commissioned officers, and cadets with prior service experience, which necessitates an instructional approach fundamentally different from traditional school-based language teaching. As Knowles [1984] argues, adult learners differ from children in terms of motivation, self-concept, and learning orientation. This article contends that an andragogical approach is particularly suitable for teaching Military English in the Azerbaijani military context.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Andragogy

The concept of andragogy was systematically developed by Malcolm Knowles, who identified six core assumptions about adult learners:

1. *Need to know*
2. *Self-concept*
3. *Prior experience*
4. *Readiness to learn*
5. *Orientation to learning*
6. *Motivation*

According to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson [2015], adult learners are problem-oriented rather than subject-oriented and prefer learning that has immediate relevance to their professional tasks. This aligns closely with military training culture, where learning is directly linked to mission success and operational effectiveness.

In contrast to pedagogy, which assumes learner dependency, andragogy positions the learner as an active participant responsible for their own learning outcomes [Knowles, 1984]. This distinction is critical in military education, where autonomy and decision-making are core professional competencies.

3. Characteristics of Adult Military Learners in Azerbaijan

Adult military learners in Azerbaijan possess several defining characteristics that influence language learning:

- **Operational experience:** Many learners have participated in real or simulated missions, which shapes their learning expectations.
- **Hierarchical mindset:** Military structure can inhibit open classroom interaction if not properly managed.
- **Goal-oriented motivation:** Learners prioritize language skills that directly improve professional performance.
- **Time constraints:** Intensive schedules require efficient and purposeful instruction.

As emphasized by Long [2015], adult second-language acquisition is most effective when instructional content reflects learners' professional realities. In the Azerbaijani context, this includes briefings, rules of engagement, standard operating procedures, and NATO-standard terminology.

4. Applying Andragogy to Military English Instruction

4.1. Problem-Centered Learning

Andragogical instruction prioritizes real-life problem-solving rather than abstract language drills. For military English classes, this involves scenario-based activities such as

operational briefings, patrol reports, or joint mission planning. Such tasks reflect real communicative demands and increase learner engagement [Hutchinson & Waters, 1987].

4.2. Use of Learners' Experience

Adult military learners bring valuable experiential knowledge to the classroom. Rather than treating learners as novices, instructors should integrate their experiences into discussions and tasks. According to Kolb [1984], experiential learning enhances retention and critical thinking, particularly in professional contexts like military education.

4.3. Learner Autonomy and Responsibility

Encouraging self-directed learning is a key andragogical principle. In the Azerbaijani military education system, this can be implemented through guided independent tasks, mission-based projects, and reflective learning logs. Knowles et al. [2015] emphasize that autonomy increases intrinsic motivation, a crucial factor in adult learning.

5. Azerbaijani Military Context and Cultural Adaptation

While andragogy promotes learner autonomy, its application must be culturally sensitive. The Azerbaijani military tradition values discipline, respect for authority, and collective responsibility. Therefore, the instructor's role shifts from authoritative lecturer to facilitator within a structured framework, maintaining discipline while fostering interaction.

Research by Basturkmen [2010] highlights that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction must adapt to institutional culture. In Azerbaijan, this means balancing NATO-oriented communicative practices with national military values and command structures.

6. Implications for Military English Curriculum Design

Implementing an andragogical approach requires curriculum adjustments:

- Needs analysis based on operational roles [Hutchinson & Waters, 1987];
- Task-based assessment aligned with real military functions;
- Integration of authentic materials such as NATO manuals and mission reports;
- Continuous professional development for military English instructors.

Such measures ensure that language instruction supports both linguistic proficiency and professional competence.

7. Conclusion

The findings suggest that an andragogical approach provides a theoretically sound and practically effective framework for teaching Military English to adult learners in Azerbaijan. By recognizing learners' experience, fostering autonomy, and focusing on problem-centered instruction, military language education can better meet the operational demands of modern armed forces. Adapting andragogy to the Azerbaijani military context enhances not only language outcomes but also overall training effectiveness.

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