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FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS A MEANS OF HARMONIOUS PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

***Annotation.** The article describes the benefits learning a foreign language brings (e.g. it contributes to an increase in brain volume as well as improves memory) . One can find the explanation why multilinguals tend to multitasking and how it changes our personality and enriches our understanding of reality. Authors provide the proof that any new language you learn potentially opens up new horizons and gives extraordinary opportunities.*

***Key words:** learning a foreign language, multilingual environment, brain activity .*

***Анотація.** У статті описано, яку користь приносить вивчення іноземної мови (наприклад, сприяє збільшенню об'єму мозку, а також покращує пам'ять). Можна знайти пояснення, чому багатомовні люди схильні виконувати багато завдань, і як це змінює нашу особистість і збагачує наше розуміння реальності. Автори надають доказ того, що будь-яка нова мова, яку ви вивчаєте, потенційно відкриває нові горизонти та дає надзвичайні можливості.*

Ключові слова: вивчення іноземної мови, багатомовне середовище, діяльність мозку.

Introduction. Learning a foreign language is one of the most beneficial activities for the brain. By studying a foreign language, we literally train the brain to think quickly, be flexible, learn easily, perceive new systems. We already know that the brain is always trying to automate those processes that we repeat most often - the brain optimizes them and connects them with the process of secreting pleasure hormones.

The purpose of this article is to reveal the advantages of learning a foreign language as a means of harmonious development of the person.

Research results. Facts about learning a foreign language:

1. Learning a foreign language most easily develops the human ability to learn and explore new things.

2. Learning a language changes our personality and enriches our understanding of reality.

3. A foreign language enriches the emotional vocabulary: language determines the meaning for objects in the environment - something new becomes meaningful for us when we can name this «something» through a word. This ability evokes emotions.

Learning a language changes our personality.

4. Learning a foreign language enriches our map of experiences, diversifies life experiences, and adds a wider view of the world: In Eskimo, for example, there are more than 20 words for the word «snow» because snow has a lot of meaning in their language. Learning these 20 words will change the way we think about snow forever. So, it is with everything else: learning French or Italian will forever change our attitude to food, fashion, style. We will gain the ability to realize and understand much more and deeper.

5. Learning a foreign language expands analytical skills: that is, it's not about knowing the translation of a known word. This is about gaining the ability to analyze

and perceive the world around us in a different way - we literally expand our consciousness thanks to the ability to see more and wider.

6. Numerous studies have proven that when we think in a foreign language, we are able to make more rational decisions. This is because template decisions, which are often caused by unconscious prejudices, the brain stores in its native language. When we think in a foreign language, the brain does not appeal to ready-made templates, but constructs new ones.

The brain is the most complex (in fact, the most complex in the world) system. Our thoughts and knowledge are billions of neural connections - interconnections and combinations that trigger decision-making, situation analysis, emotions, reflexes and behavior. Nerve pathways run along these chains, along which neurotransmitters move, which activate certain neural connections - our previous experience and knowledge that underlie our thinking. There are a number of mechanisms that turn the activity of different parts of the brain on and off.

Most of our rational thinking, learning, and creativity is controlled by the prefrontal cortex, the frontal part of the cerebral cortex. It is here that the largest number of neural connections, synapses, is located.

The learning process is the process of forming new neural connections, synapses (connection points of neurons) and changing existing ones. This is a chemical process. Neurons connect through the action of neurotransmitters (we have already heard about endorphins and dopamine). Neurotransmitters for the brain are the letters of the alphabet, and the chains are the sets of words that we have. Every time we learn something new, a new neural connection is created or an old one is changed.

A new language is literally born in the brain in the form of new synapses.

According to the theory of William Levelt (from the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands) there are three systems that are involved in the process of memorizing and using words: lexical, grammatical and phonetic.

The lexical system is activated when we want to say something. This system is not responsible for the meaning or definition of a particular word, but for their meanings. When we want to say something, before uttering the word itself, we first

feel its meaning with the senses. We first activate the meaning, and then we look for the word corresponding to the meaning.

The grammatical system applies its respective rules: cases, genders, numbers... This system is known to us through the expression «on the tip of the tongue» - when we are almost ready to pronounce the word, but have not yet fully «caught» it. We already know at this moment the meaning of the word, and the grammatical system is switched on to select the appropriate form, given the language in which we will speak. Here the memory activates the grammatical constructions known to it and chooses the appropriate one.

The phonetic system is the use of sounds. We say what we want to say. We name the word itself.

All three systems are interconnected, activated together when learning a language and determine the difficulty of learning a foreign language.

Every time we want to learn a word, we need to learn all three systems: phonetic, lexical, and grammatical. And since the file cabinets of sound, forms and meanings are located in different parts of the brain and, in fact, are not ready-made folders, each time the brain starts a complex thought process, for which it accumulates a large amount of energy, oxygen, glucose, and water.

Every time we study a foreign word, repeat it, use it in combination with other words, pronounce it several times, we train the brain by activating those parts of it that are responsible for the processes of perception, memorization, pronunciation, search for meaning, analysis.

If learning a foreign language were a sport, then it would be the most beneficial sport for brain health [1].

Learning foreign languages allows you to burn extra calories.

Few people know that the main consumer of energy in the form of calories in the human body is far from muscles and internal organs, but the human brain. A person in the process of learning foreign languages increases calorie intake several times, and even more during direct contact with native speakers of foreign languages.

Thus, learning and proficiency in foreign languages allows you to optimize the energy balance of the body, and save you from extra pounds. In the human brain at this moment, not only metabolism takes place, but all internal organs optimize their activity to process calories into the necessary substances and compounds necessary for brain activity, as well as the activity of the auditory and speech apparatus.

Translators from foreign languages, especially those working in interpreting mode, could observe the appearance of a feeling of hunger or a breakdown after performing work related to translation, especially from their native language into a foreign language. This is a manifestation of the rapid acceleration of metabolic processes in the human body with a sharp increase in brain activity [2].

Learning a foreign language contributes to an increase in brain volume.

Did you know that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg studied ancient Greek as a teenager? And at some faculties, even in the 21st century, they continue to study Latin, which is considered a dead language and is not used in everyday life (unless it is applicable by doctors). The question is why? The answer is great brain training!

Have you started learning foreign languages? Rest assured, your brain has begun to grow, and more specifically, certain areas of it (certain areas of the cerebral cortex and the hippocampus) are increasing, which is confirmed by the MRI results of participants in various studies.

Before publishing the results of the research, scientists observed the work of professional translators for a long time and studied the work of their brains at that time. So, those translators who have been studying the language in depth for at least 3 months show an increase in the volume of gray matter. And the most interesting thing is that the increase in the volume of gray matter depended on the efforts that each individual participant in the experiment showed.

Learning foreign languages can save you from Alzheimer's disease

In the course of studies conducted by experts in neuropsychology, it was noticed that knowledge of foreign languages affects the course of Alzheimer's disease. Scientists have come to the conclusion that people who speak two or more foreign

languages (bilinguals and polylinguals), dementia (senile dementia) as one of the manifestations of Alzheimer's disease, comes at least 5 years later.

Also, medical scientists focus on the fact that the intensive development of the human brain contributes to the inhibition of the development of Alzheimer's disease. In addition to learning languages, you can do mathematics and logic.

And most importantly, in this case, the study of foreign languages provides prevention of this disease and, to some extent, is much more effective than drug treatment.

Few people also know that while learning foreign languages, blood circulation and nutrition of the brain as a whole and the parts of the brain that are responsible for the functioning of the speech and hearing aids improve, and this is the prevention of diseases such as stroke and microstroke of the brain.

Multilinguals (bilinguals) have musical ability

It turns out that when learning foreign languages, our brain contributes to the discovery of the widest abundance of sounds that were previously inaccessible to us for some reason. That is, in the process of learning a foreign language, we learn to recognize and fix sounds. And this, in turn, creates the basis for a fairly successful mastery of various kinds of musical instruments.

Some of you may object: «What does a foreign language have to do with it?» After all, our ears allow us to catch the sound. This is not entirely true. The key role regarding the fixation and recognition of sounds belongs to the brain, and not to the organs of hearing (ears).

The human speech and auditory apparatuses carry out brain commands in the perception and transformation of sounds and tonalities, both when playing and listening to musical works and singing, and when listening to the sound of foreign languages and the pronunciation of languages with imitation of tones and various guttural-nasal sounds [3].

Multilinguals tend to multitask.

Another interesting observation is that people who speak several languages (multilinguals), as a rule, have the ability to switch between certain issues quite

easily, as well as to solve several problems in their mind at the same time. Such people can adapt relatively quickly and easily to sudden changes in conditions.

The described conclusion was made as a result of the study. So, scientists gave tests to solve people who speak one language (monolinguals), and people who speak two or more languages.

The reason lies in the fact that bilinguals and multilinguals do not lose the ability to solve difficult problems in parallel with age. However, researchers emphasize that in order to achieve such a result, it is recommended to learn languages from childhood.

Learning foreign languages improves memory

Researchers, observing people who grew up in a monolingual and multilingual environment, note that those people who grew up in a multilingual environment have a relatively better memory.

Children who speak two or more foreign languages can remember the logical chain and sequence of certain phenomena and things much easier and better. This makes it possible to identify the terrain with confidence and navigate in unfamiliar terrain, keep in mind a list of necessary actions and activities. Especially such differences begin to appear when children reach the age of five to seven years, and, apparently, remains with the person for the rest of their lives.

Multilinguals concentrate more easily and are also rational.

Bilinguals and multilinguals are able to focus on the main thing, and are quite attentive to the little things. That is why people who speak two or more languages adapt quite easily in a new team. This is explained by the fact that it is easier for bilinguals and multilinguals to catch the microclimate in the team and, accordingly, to understand the relationship between people in this team.

And one more important nuance. Numerous experiments and studies confirm that a person who analyzes a situation and formulates his opinion about it in a foreign language makes a more logical and sound decision. However, there is an important detail here - you must have a good vocabulary.

As you can see, the process of learning foreign languages is very exciting and useful at the same time. This is the intellectual training of your brain, necessary to keep it working. In addition, any new language you learn potentially opens up new horizons and gives extraordinary opportunities.

Practical advantage of learning foreign languages

Foreign languages, as we see, must not only be learned, but also applied: speak, read, write, communicate in social networks and find friends around the world.

For some reason, most people mistakenly believe that it is worth using knowledge of a foreign language only if the level of proficiency is high enough and errors are minimal. But in reality, it is necessary to start communication and use of language from the lowest level. Only in this case, both the positive aspects and the quality of learning a foreign language will work [4].

Conclusions. So, let's summarize this article - learning foreign languages is not only useful, but also pleasant: the chance to make friends and just good interlocutors in different countries is simply huge, you can learn the culture, not be afraid to travel around the world and feel comfortable!

Good luck and new horizons in the knowledge of the world and cultures of other peoples through the best communication tool - foreign languages!

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