



Voronezh N.N. Burdenko State Medical University,  
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## Teaching Foreign Languages to the Academic Staff of a Medical University: Challenges and Perspectives



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Currently, education is considered to be a purposeful cognitive activity, providing training of qualified staff to maintain the survival of society. At the same time, it is the most important means of socialization of a person, the development of his mental, moral and emotional-sensory traits.

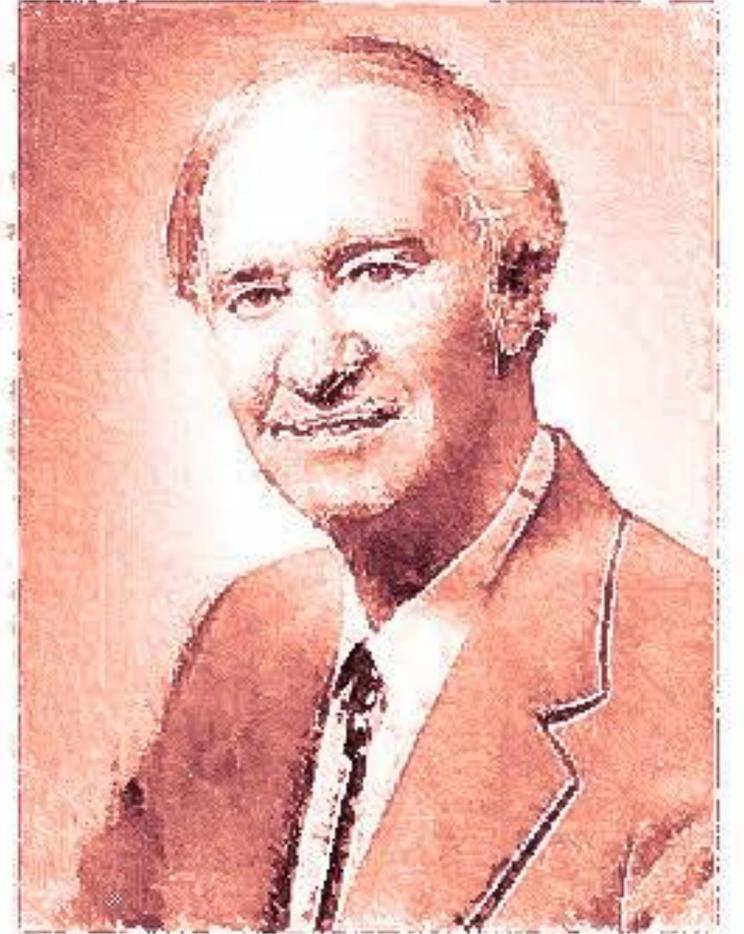


*ANDRAGOGY - the method and practice  
of teaching adult learners;  
adult education.*

The word comes from the Greek ἀνδρ- (andr-),  
meaning "man", and ἀγωγός (agogos),  
meaning "leader of".

Therefore, andragogy literally means "leading  
man", opposing "pedagogy" which literally means  
"leading children".

The major problems of our age deal with human relations; the solutions can be found only in education. Skill in human relations is a skill that must be learned; it is learned in the home, in the school, in the church, on the job, and wherever people gather together in small groups.



Malcolm Shepherd Knowles (1913 - 1997), a central figure in US adult education in the second half of the twentieth century.

# Goals of andragogy = goals of our society

Adults should acquire a mature understanding of themselves

Adults should learn to react to the causes, not the symptoms, of behavior.

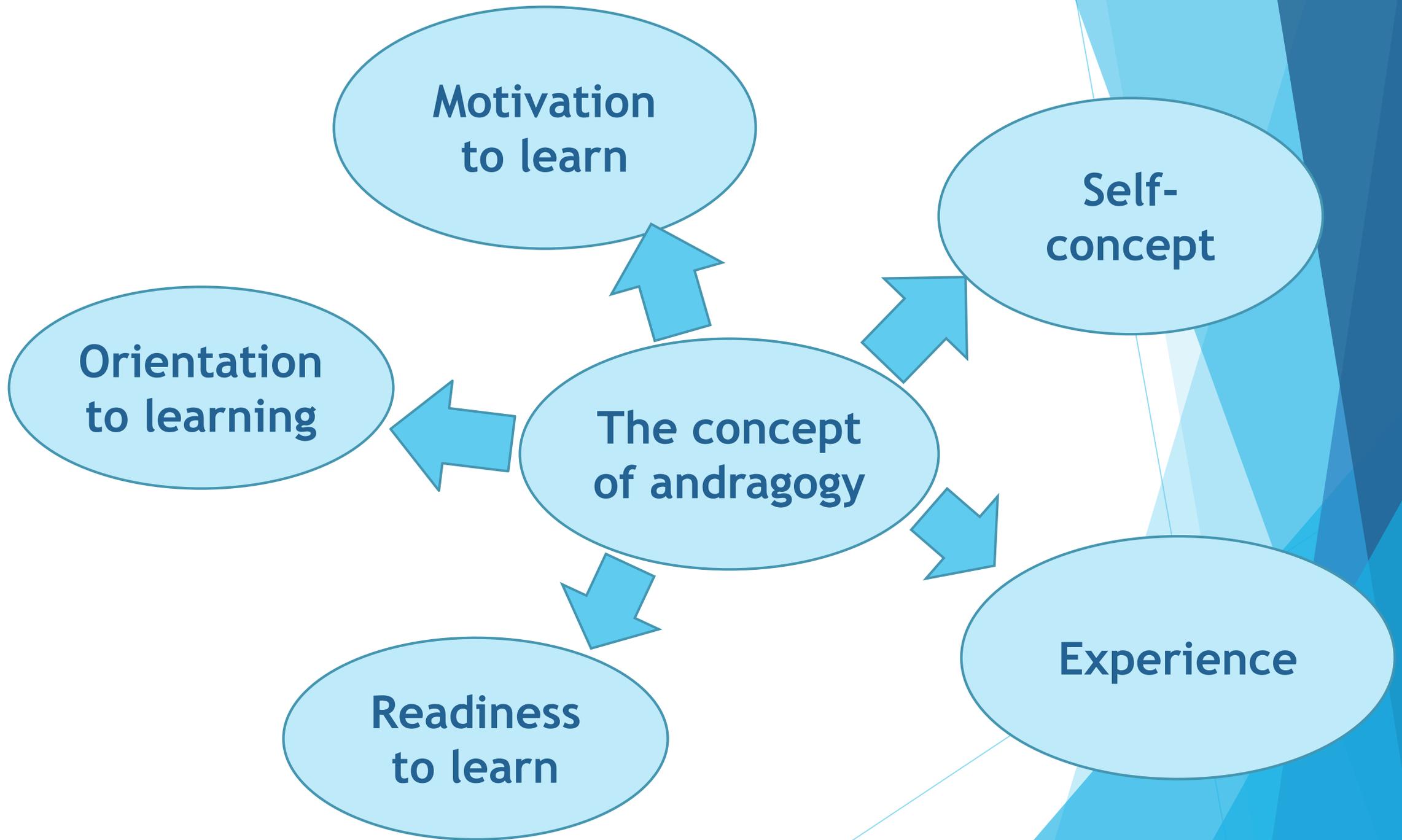
Adults should develop an attitude of acceptance, love, and respect toward others

Adults should acquire the skills necessary to achieve the potentials of their personalities.

Adults should develop a dynamic attitude toward life.

Adults should understand the essential values in the capital of human experience

Adults should understand their society and should be skillful in directing social change



The success of adults learning a foreign language is largely determined by how much it is possible to anticipate and diagnose their possible difficulties in the educational process.

The specificity of the andragogical basics of learning is determined by the psychophysiological and social traits and capabilities of an adult learner, as well as pedagogical conditions formed by the developing educational environment in which learning takes place.

The increased status of a foreign language in the scientific and educational activities of the academic staff is explained by various factors:

- ❑ the expansion of economic, political and cultural relations between countries;
- ❑ international integration in the sphere of education;
- ❑ the possibility of international internships;
- ❑ the need to present results of research studies at international conferences;
- ❑ the need to publish articles in a peer-reviewed journals included in the bibliographic and abstract databases of Scopus and Web of Science;
- ❑ the need to communicate with international partners in joint educational programs;
- ❑ the need to develop and give lectures in English to foreign students.

The main difficulties for an adult in the learning process are psychological in nature. Speaking about the basic needs of the individual, it is noted that the need for knowledge is integrated with the fear of knowledge, with anxiety, with the need for security and confidence.

Three important parameters that affect the process of foreign language learning:

- 1) age;
- 2) frequency of contact with the language environment;
- 3) linguistic remoteness (degree of difference) between the native and the studied language.

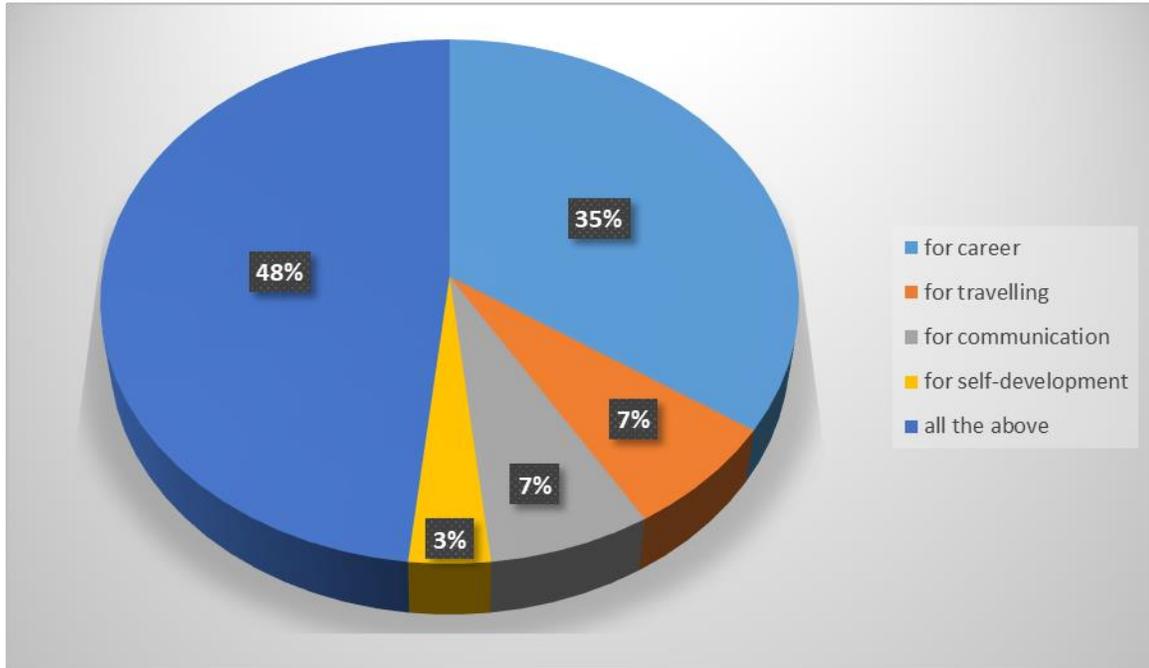
The presence of all three variables has a dramatic negative effect on the efficiency of the process of teaching a foreign language to adults.

## Distinctive features of adult foreign languages learning

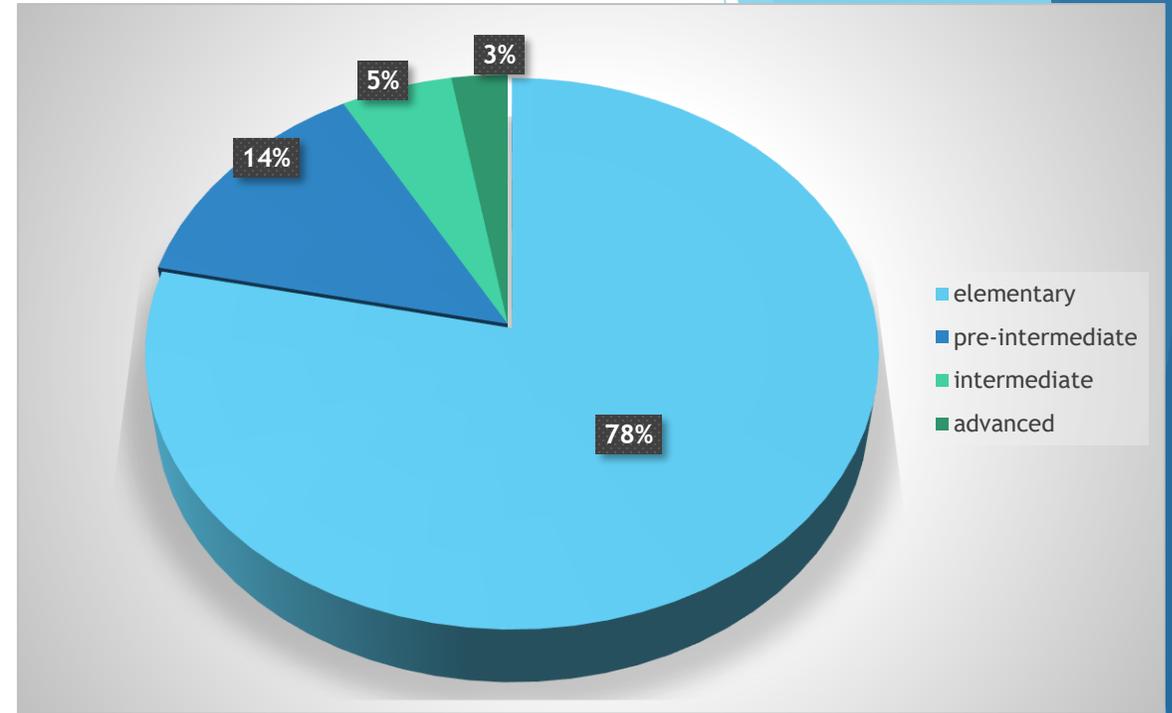
The core of the difference between the andragogical approach and traditional teaching principles is that in the learning process the dominant role belongs to the adult learner, who becomes an active participant in educational activities and perceives his teacher rather as a consultant or organizer to help him develop his own learning process.



What do I want?  
What do I need?  
What do I know?



Educational goals of adult learners (survey involving the academic staff of VSMU)



Initial level of adult learners' knowledge  
(survey involving the academic staff of VSMU)

## Basic techniques used in the andragogical approach:

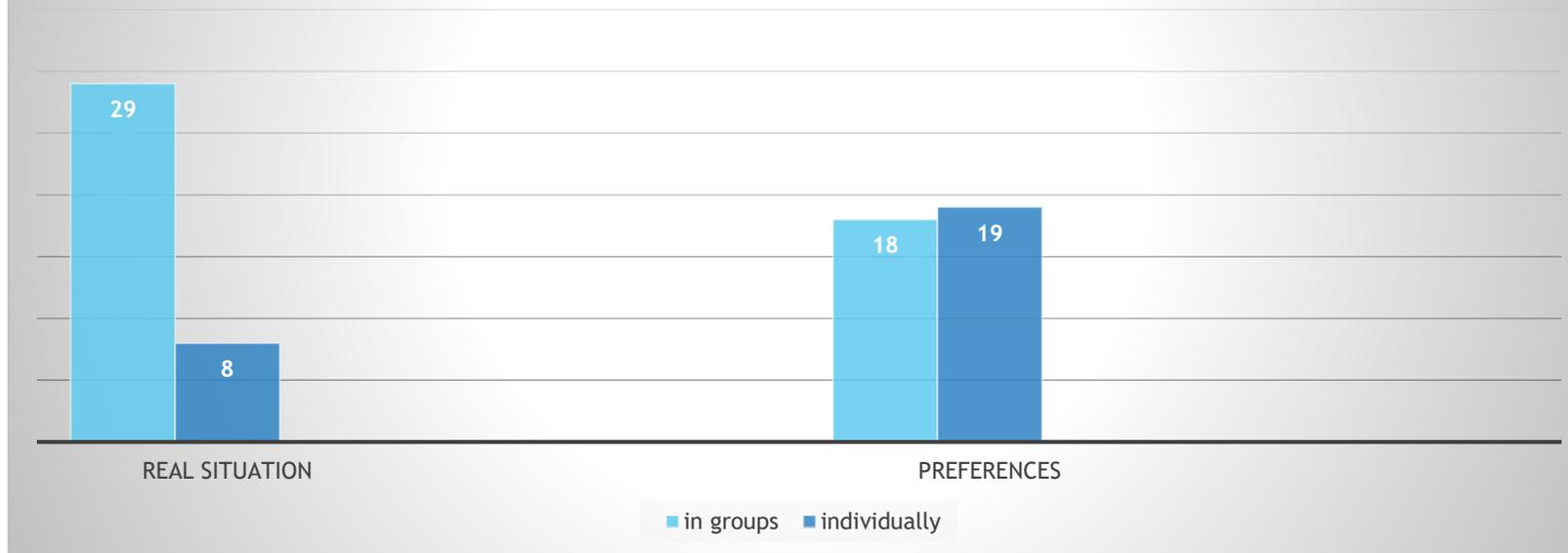
- ❑ method of positive attitude towards making mistakes,
- ❑ creative-problematic, game methods,
- ❑ study of role models, social interaction,
- ❑ presentation of ideas,
- ❑ project method.





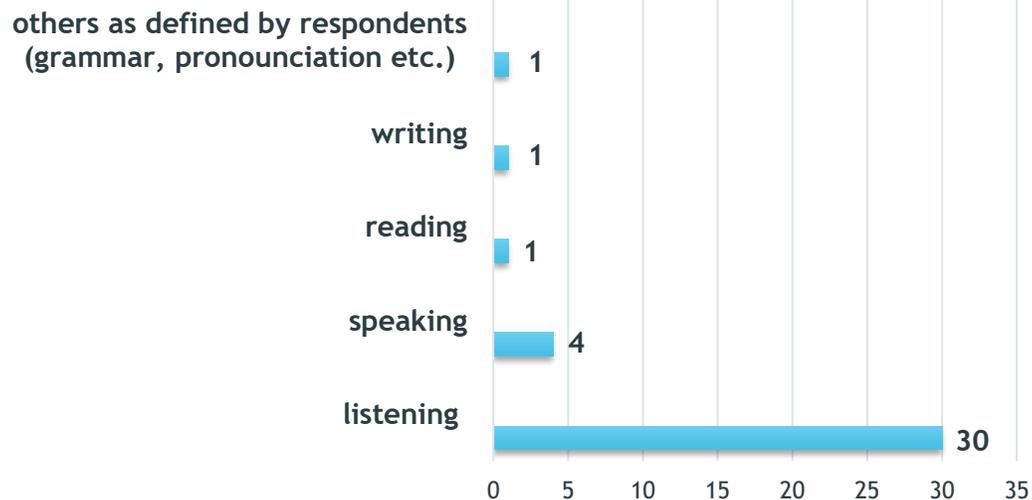
A key to success in adult foreign language learning is also the formation of psychological inclusion in the learning process and communicative flexibility by performing a large number of exercises aimed at pair and group work.

Distribution of adult learners depending on their inclusion into group/individual work: real situation and preferences



(survey involving the academic staff of VSMU)

### Main difficulties in the foreign language learning as defined by adult learners



(survey involving the academic staff of VSMU)

Therefore, it is necessary to take into account that selection of the materials should be done thoroughly in accordance with the needs of adults, e.g., listening and speaking should be given the greatest amount of time in the lesson.

It seems advisable for the teacher to use an extensive arsenal of Internet resources, as well as authentic materials from open lectures, specialized programs and educational resources designed for these purposes.



The learning process must be designed in the way considering the previous experience of adult learners and their real opportunities for the practical application of acquired knowledge in a friendly atmosphere of cooperation and co-creation.



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