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ASPECTS OF TEACHING THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE – THE ROLE OF THE SECOND LANGUAGE AND THE STATE LANGUAGE IN MODERN CONDITIONS (Language as a bridge between cultures)

Annotation

The paper aims to analyze specific linguistic challenges in teaching Georgian as a second language (L2) and to propose effective pedagogical strategies to overcome them.

The main linguistic and methodological aspects of teaching the Georgian language to foreigners are discussed. Attention is focused on phonetic, grammatical and lexical difficulties that are especially relevant for non-Georgian-speaking listeners in the teaching process: the multifaceted nature of the Georgian verb system, series and complex functions of turnover. The theoretical foundations of teaching a second language, the role of linguistic interference and the importance of the communicative approach are analyzed. The paper emphasizes the need to integrate the cultural component as a prerequisite for effective language acquisition.

Keywords: state language, Georgian as a second language (L2), linguistic didactics, multilingualism. Georgian as a second language; teaching Georgian to foreigners; phonetics; grammar; communicative approach; language and culture.

Aspects of teaching the Georgian language – the role of the second language and the state language in modern conditions (Language as a bridge between cultures)

Introduction

Teaching Georgian as a second language, as a unique Caucasian language, is gaining special importance in the modern world and is of particular interest to foreigners. In the process of globalization, Georgia's cultural and economic relations with foreign countries are increasing, and therefore, the demand for studying Georgian is increasing. In this context, it is important not only to develop the methodology of language teaching, but also to understand its psychological, social and cultural aspects.

Teaching Georgian is not just a linguistic process — it is a cultural dialogue, where language becomes a bridge between different worlds. As is known, “learning a language is learning a culture” (Brown, 2007), therefore, when teaching Georgian, foreign students/interested individuals simultaneously become acquainted with the history, traditions, and everyday life of Georgia.

Second Language Learning Model(s): Stephen Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis emphasizes that language acquisition occurs through natural communication. This is especially important in Georgian, as the language's complex grammatical system often requires “live” examples. Communicative Approach:

“Learning should be about speaking, not just writing” — This principle is especially effective in Georgian, where everyday dialogues create a natural environment for better language acquisition.

The theory of second language learning is based on psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic approaches, according to which language acquisition depends on both individual cognitive mechanisms and the social environment. In the case of the Georgian language, the status of a second language implies that the person wishing to learn the language has already developed one or more linguistic systems, the influence of which is clearly reflected in the process of acquiring the Georgian language. When teaching the Georgian language to foreigners, it is important to take into account linguistic interference. The difficulties at the phonetic and morphosyntactic levels are especially noticeable, which are due to the agglutinative and partially polysynthetic nature of the Georgian language.

Georgian as a state language in modern conditions: The Georgian language is recognized as the state language by the Constitution of Georgia, which gives it a special status. The function of the state language is not only a means of communication – it is the basis of national identity, cultural heritage and state unity. The Constitution gives special importance to Georgian as a state language: it is not only a symbol of national identity, but also the basis of legal and public life.

For all undergraduate majors: In recent years, Georgian higher education institutions have introduced a requirement that all students, regardless of major, take a course in Georgian. This decision emphasizes the importance of the language, both in academic and professional contexts. This approach promotes social integration – foreign students studying in Georgia are obliged to study Georgian in order to be able to fully participate in the educational process and public life. In turn, studying Georgian additionally ensures the smooth integration of different ethnic groups into a single state space.

Cultural diplomacy: Georgian, as the state language, is the main representative of Georgian culture and identity in international relations.

Legal and administrative function: State documentation, legal acts, and administrative procedures are carried out in the state (Georgian) language, which further strengthens the status of the language and makes it necessary to study it.

Language Policy: Teaching the state language should not only be a formal requirement, but also a real opportunity for students to fully participate in professional and public life.

Globalization conditions: Despite the dominance of English and other international languages, Georgian, as the state language, is given special importance within the country – it is a guarantor of national unity. The theory of second language learning is based on psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic approaches, according to which language acquisition depends on both individual cognitive mechanisms and the social environment. In the case of the Georgian language, the status of a second language implies that the listener has already formed one or more linguistic systems, the influence of which is clearly reflected in the process of acquiring the Georgian language.

When teaching Georgian to foreigners, it is important to take into account linguistic interference. The difficulties at the phonetic and morphosyntactic levels are especially noticeable, which are due to the agglutinative and partially polysynthetic nature of the Georgian language. The leading place in modern methodology is occupied by the communicative approach, the goal of which is not only the formation of grammatically correct, but also functionally effective speech. This approach is especially important when teaching the Georgian language, since the language is closely related to national culture, traditions and communicative etiquette.

When teaching the Georgian language, various points must be taken into account:

Cultural context

Language learning cannot be complete without culture. For example, the word “sufra” in Georgian does not only mean “table” — it also includes cultural traditions and the process of feasting. It is useful to use a variety of texts, songs, proverbs, and fairy tales in the learning process, which makes language acquisition more natural and comfortable. Integrating a cultural component into the learning process increases motivation and simplifies the practical use of the language. Authentic texts, folklore samples, and examples of everyday speech contribute to understanding the living functioning of the language.

Psychological factor

Foreign students/language learners often have what is called “language fear” — they are afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, it is important to have a supportive environment where mistakes are perceived as part of learning, not as an insurmountable problem.

Phonetic difficulties

The Georgian alphabet is unique and contains sounds that are difficult for foreigners to pronounce (e.g., ejective – “sharp sounds” – sounds: “k”, “p”, “t”).

Phonetic exercises and audio materials are important here, so that those wishing to learn the language can pronounce the peculiar sounds correctly. Auditory exercises, the imitation method, and the use of minimal pairs are considered effective for the development of phonetic skills. It is also recommended to gradually introduce phonetic transcription, which will help the listener understand the differences between sounds.

Vocabulary development

Vocabulary teaching in Georgian as a second language should be based on thematic and semantic principles. It is important to select high-frequency words that provide a communicative minimum at the initial stage. In addition, attention should be paid to culturally marked vocabulary that demonstrates the relationship between language and culture.

The use of visual material, dialogues, and text-based tasks is effective in developing vocabulary skills. Vocabulary presented in context is better retained in long-term memory and reduces or completely eliminates the need for mechanical memorization.

Conclusion

Teaching the state (Georgian) language to foreigners/anyone interested is a multifaceted and complex process that requires the joint consideration of linguistic features, the linguistic experience of the listeners, and modern methodological approaches. Overcoming phonetic, grammatical, and lexical difficulties is possible only through systematic and communication-oriented correct teaching. The above-mentioned approaches will contribute not only to the successful acquisition of the Georgian language, but also to a better understanding of Georgian culture and identity by foreign listeners, which in turn is a factor contributing to the rapprochement of cultures.

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