

LEARNING AND TEACHING OF LANGUAGES IN GRADES 8 TO 12 IN GEORGIA

ИЗУЧЕНИЕ И ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ ЯЗЫКОВ В 8-12 КЛАССАХ В ГРУЗИИ

GÜRCİSTAN'DA 8-12 SINIFLARDA DİL ÖĞRENİMİ VE ÖĞRETİMİ

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ABSTRACT

The integrated approach to learning is advanced as the best to utilize in the Georgia setting as it gives both the learners and their instructors space to query, correct flaws, and generally engage in a constructive discourse. The teaching of grammar and vocabulary, reading and writing, listening, phonology, pronunciation, speaking/oral communication, and pragmatics among other language aspects require distinct strategies to achieve success on the learning behaviour of students. In the context of language learning in the Georgian context, there is a fundamental focus on context and complexity that enables instructors to deal with the crucial triad of learning language that makes it a unique setting. The teachers view instructional methods as a model for professional practice. Teachers and students from different learning environments across Georgia provided data for this research. Simple random sampling was used to provide data for the study. It was used to select the participants as it offers an equal chance of participation. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire included both closed and open ended questions to enable the researcher cover great ground on the strategies and styles of teaching and learning language. The teaching and learning of languages in grades eight to twelve in Georgia presents an essential model that can be emulated across other learning environments to attain success in language learning. Nonetheless, there are gaps that need to be addressed to improve the language learning experience of learners.

Key words: Georgia, teaching strategies, teaching styles, instructional model, cooperative learning, integrated approach.

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Интегрированный подход к обучению продвигается как лучший для использования в условиях Грузии, поскольку он дает как учащимся, так и их преподавателям возможность задавать вопросы, исправлять недостатки и в целом участвовать в конструктивном диалоге. Обучение грамматике и лексике, чтению и письму, аудированию, фонологии, произношению, говорению/устному общению и прагматике среди других языковых аспектов требует различных стратегий для достижения успеха в учебном поведении учащихся. В контексте изучения языка, в контексте грузинского языка основное внимание уделяется контексту и сложности, что позволяет преподавателям иметь дело с важнейшей триадой изучения языка, что делает его уникальным. Учителя рассматривают методы обучения как образец для профессиональной практики. Учителя и студенты из разных учебных заведений по всей Грузии предоставили данные для этого исследования. Для получения данных для исследования использовалась простая случайная выборка. Он был использован для отбора участников, так как он предлагает равные шансы на участие. Анкеты и расписания интервью использовались для сбора данных от участников. Анкета включала как закрытые, так и открытые вопросы, чтобы исследователь мог лучше понять стратегии и стили преподавания и изучения языка. Преподавание и изучение языков в 8–12 классах в Грузии представляет собой важную модель, которую можно использовать в других учебных средах для достижения успеха в изучении языка. Тем не менее, есть пробелы, которые необходимо устранить, чтобы улучшить навыки изучения языка учащихся.

Ключевые слова: Грузия, стратегии обучения, стили обучения, учебная модель, совместное обучение, интегрированный подход.

ÖZ

Gürcistan şartlarında dil eğitimi için bütünleşmiş tarzda öğretim yaklaşımları teşvik edilmektedir. Bu durum hem öğrencilere hem de öğretmene soru sorma, eksiklikleri düzeltme ve genel olarak yapıcı diyalog kurma fırsatı tanımaktadır. Dilbilgisi ve kelime bilgisi, okuma ve yazma, dinleme, fonoloji, telaffuz, konuşma/sözlü iletişim ve pragmatik öğretimi, diğer dilbilimsel yönleriyle birlikte, öğrencinin başarılı olması için farklı stratejiler gerektirir. Dil öğrenimi bağlamında, Gürcü dili bağlamında, odak noktası bağlam ve karmaşıklığıdır. Bu durum eğitimcilerin dil öğrenmenin temel üçlüsü ile başa çıkmalarına izin vererek onu benzersiz kılar. Öğretmenler, öğretim yöntemlerini profesyonel uygulama için bir model olarak görürler. Gürcistan'daki çeşitli eğitim kurumlarından öğretmenler ve öğrenciler bu çalışma için veri sağlamıştır. Çalışma için veri elde etmek üzere basit rastgele örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Bu metot eşit katılım şansı sunduğu için ve katılımcıları seçmek üzere kullanılmıştır. Anket hem kapalı hem de açık uçlu sorular içeriyordu, böylece araştırmacı bir dili öğretme ve öğrenmenin stratejilerini ve stillerini daha iyi anlayabilecekti. Gürcistan'da 8-12. Sınıflarda dil öğretmek ve öğrenmek, dil öğrenmede başarıya ulaşmak için diğer öğrenme ortamlarında kullanılacak önemli bir modeldir. Bununla birlikte, öğrencilerin dil öğrenme becerilerini geliştirmek için doldurulması gereken boşluklar vardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gürcistan, öğrenme stratejileri, öğrenme stilleri, öğretim modeli, işbirliğine dayalı öğrenme, entegre yaklaşım.

CHAPTER 1: 1.1 Introduction

There are several aspects involved in the teaching and learning of languages for learners in grades eight to twelve. At this level, the instructor presumes that the learner has a basic foundation in language. On the other hand, the learner expects to develop what they learned in their earlier grades (Thomas, Rose, and Pojanapunya, 2019:8). Many approaches have been advanced towards the study of language. The integrated approach has been popularized over the years by various scholars as providing the best platform for learning languages regardless of the learner characteristics. That is, for instance, the native speakers of a language and those learning it as a second or foreign language. The integrated approach to learning is advanced as the best to utilize in the Georgia setting as it gives both the learners and their instructors space to query, correct flaws, and generally engage in a constructive discourse (Rachvelishvili, 2017). Such a discourse enables the instructor to identify problematic areas of the learners.

The learners are also encouraged to raise areas and issues of concern without feeling embarrassed or intimidated. An integrated approach fronts several teaching styles, for instance, the cooperative style. This style creates a sense of interdependence among students who are then compelled to help each other become competent in their learning of language. It encourages the reconciliation of differences and working towards common goals that ultimately motivate all learners to forge ahead with confidence (Benson, 2015:296). The role of the instructor in a cooperative learning environment is crucial in achieving success. The teacher has to be keen when structuring the groups in terms of the type of students, size, and type of task among other parameters. When giving language tasks, the teacher must ensure that the groups formed comprise both weak and strong learners of that specific aspect.

For instance, groups for pronunciation tasks should be made up of students whose native language is English as well as those who learned it as a second language. In that way, the learners will help each other with limited intervention from the teacher after building consensus. That has been ratified as one of the best ways to learn language because students will not shy away from seeking help from their classmates.

Scholars have interrogated numerous strategies that can be employed to the teaching and learning of the various skill areas and subsystems of language with varying levels of success. The teaching of grammar and vocabulary, reading and writing, listening, phonology, pronunciation, speaking/oral communication, and pragmatics, among other language aspects, require distinct strategies to achieve success on the learning behavior of students (Oxford, 2016:18). It is these strategies that distinguish between learners who acquire competence and performance and those who do not. Entirely learning a language encompasses both theoretical (competence) and practical (performance) knowledge. It is imperative for learners to comprehend both for them to claim to know a language.

1.2 Background

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Every educational setting has a distinct focus when it comes to the teaching and learning of different discourses. Nonetheless, learning strategies are intricate, making it a controversial topic for scholars to find consensus regarding the techniques of learning language. There are techniques that work for one setting but do not attain the same success in another. In the context of language learning in the Georgian context, there is a fundamental focus on context and complexity that enables instructors to deal with the crucial triad of learning language that makes it a unique setting. The teachers view instructional methods as a model for professional practice. In the handling of the various language tasks, the teachers consider the content and processes to be handled, the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the needs and interests of students (Tassinari, 2018:339–341). The making of decisions regarding the instructional approaches to be utilized in the setting are of the essence and are decided upon consciously and objectively.

Motivation has been fronted as a key element in the successful learning of language for learners in grades eight to twelve in Georgia. Distinct forms of language learning produce among strong and weak learners and consequently result in divergent goal orientations. A positive attitude towards learning language distinguishes between learners who attain high levels of success and those who do not. It triggers students to effectively attain their language goals. Previous research has unveiled that there is a difference between master goals and performance goals. Students who attain high grades have a robust ability of the master goals, while those with relatively low grades have record impressive performance goals (Rachvelishvili, 2017: p.366).

Another issue of concern in the Georgian setting is the variation in beliefs between teachers and students concerning success in the attainment of the second language. Most students and teachers believed that knowledge of grammar is a significant prerequisite to the learning of language; that is, knowledge of the L1 and learning of the L2 cannot be underscored in the learning of language (Uztosun, 2015:99-104). Nonetheless, there are two camps when it comes to this assertion. There are those teachers and students who champion the traditional ways of learning language, while there are those who believe in contemporary styles. The presence of an instructor in either party was paramount in the learning process. The use of course books and other language resources ease learning as long as there is a proper guidance in their usage.

Subsequently, the degrees of successful language learning will vary depending on the numbers supporting the presented notions. For instance, in a setting where the majority of the students and teachers believe in the traditional way of learning language, that is, the instructor is the authority and source of information while the learners are the receivers, successful learning has been witnessed. Also, in a setting where the contemporary methods of learning are encouraged, for instance, where learners are encouraged to learn language on their own through practice and observation, successful learning has been recorded. The contrary is true in both scenarios. These language situations introduce a new phenomenon in the teaching and learning of languages. In other words, a

contemporary outlook regarding the language instructional process arises that encourages adaptation to the context to achieve success rather than dependence on the prescribed ways of language learning (Rachvelishvili, 2017:366). This idea applies to the Georgian setting, where language learning is influenced by numerous variables including the intercultural aspect.

Intercultural sensitivity is of the essence when dealing with education in the modern Georgian environment. It is important for teachers to consider the intercultural aspect when dealing with their learners. Learners have to feel accommodated for them to be motivated to attain successful learning. Language learning is particularly sensitive as language is a part of the culture, and people are sensitive to elements that could change who they believe they are. That calls for the adaptation of learning to make sense to the learners' world (Tabatadze, 2015:248-262). Learners need to be convinced of the significance of language learning to their overall well-being for them to be adequately motivated to attain success in their learning of language.

1.3 Research objectives

- Establish the strategies employed in the teaching and learning of languages in grades eight to twelve in Georgia.
- Elaborate on the teaching styles utilized in the teaching and learning of languages.
- Interrogate the uniqueness of Georgia on their language instructional methods.

1.4 Research questions

- What are the strategies employed in the teaching and learning of languages in grades eight to twelve in Georgia?
- Which teaching styles are utilized in the teaching and learning of these languages?
- To what extent is Georgia unique with regard to the language instructional methods used?
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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies are essential in determining the levels of language success. Some techniques function well in specific settings but fail in others. Thus, it is important for instructors to ascertain what techniques work best for them in their settings while considering among other factors, the characteristics of the learners. An effective instructional approach is one that includes the important conventional learnings, accommodates the distinct needs of students, abilities, and interests rather than focus on a single parameter that may fail to serve all the students' demands. Such an instructional approach empowers instructors to adapt their learning in any learning environment. There is an interrelationship between the instructional approaches used and the learning outcomes. The link between the

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skills, methods, strategies, and models cannot be underscored. The following figure presents one of the advocated instructional approaches that require the creativity of an instructor to develop the science and art of teaching depending on the task at hand.

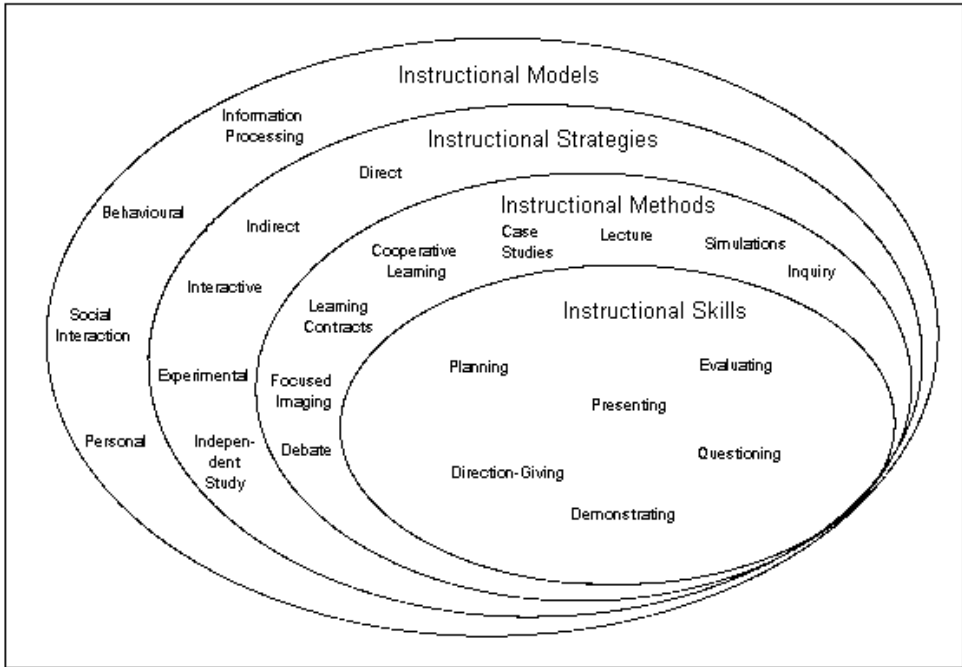


Figure 1: Instructional model

Source: (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/canajeducrevucan.35.1.202>)

An instructional model presents a philosophical outlook on instruction. It enables an instructor to select and structure their methods, learning tasks, and activities to achieve a specific instructional emphasis (Thomas, Rose, and Pojanapunya, 2019:1-17). For instance, if the focus is on pronunciation, there will be a bias on the skills of presenting and demonstrating. On the other hand, if the focus is on the learning of grammar, the bias will be on questioning and evaluation. Generally, a model provides a basis upon which a teacher develops a creative framework of learning.

The interactive teaching strategy is suitable for learning languages as it provides an avenue for both learners and instructors to engage in productive discourse. The teacher detects problematic areas among learners easily while learners feel free to air their challenges. Issues of stigmatization and embarrassment, among others that pose hindrances to the learning process, are minimized greatly. On the other hand, an instructional method enables a teacher to create a productive learning environment where learners can anticipate the activities that they will engage in during the lesson. That way, they will adequately prepare and also anticipate likely challenges. Proper preparation of class will result in great outcomes for both the teachers and their learners (Tassinari, 2018:339–

341). Teachers will realize their lesson objectives adequately, resulting in the realization of the expected educational outcomes outlined in the schemes of work. Students, on the other hand, are better positioned to learn and objectively point out challenging areas. Also, they are well prepared by focusing on the specific areas they have issues with.

Subsequently, learners are encouraged to practice self-regulation in learning language. Students are capable of identifying, raising concerns, and tracking their progress. That practice encouraged self-initiative in the learning of language rather than dependence on teachers to learn language. A self-driven learner learns language at a faster pace than learners who lack the same. Self-regulation also motivates autonomy in language learning (Margalitadze and Meladze, 2016:787-797). Students in grades eight to twelve are in the process of determining what they will pursue and are highly biased. They also direct all their effort towards subjects they like. That is crucial in the realization of good grades.

2.2 Teaching styles

Teaching styles are highly individualized. Teachers adhere to or prefer particular styles depending on the learning environment as well as the characteristics of learners, which vary across different states (Benson, 2013, p.296). These styles are developed over time and depend on teachers' prior experiences, learners' needs and interests, and the accompanying levels of success. Different teachers are comfortable with distinct styles and justify their usage accordingly. Nonetheless, certain styles have been agreed upon by many scholars as effective in realizing great educational incomes. The first includes the cooperative style. Cooperative learning requires learners to work together to attain mutual goals (Sales, Sentočnik, Richardson and Gorgodze, 2018:5-25). That creates interdependence among learners, which compels them to help and support each other in all possible ways. For instance, learners with different spelling, pronunciation, and punctuation problems are helped by those with more prowess than them.

The teacher only comes in when there are real challenges that none of the learners can deal with. The cooperative style of learning also builds tolerance among learners as they develop the patience to listen to each other rather than defending their perspectives. Subsequently, they are able to reconcile their differences, get help, and design democratic means of solving learning hurdles. It may seem that this style requires a great deal of effort from the students' side (Benson, 2013:296). This is not the case because the teacher cannot expect the students in their small groups to work cooperatively by simply giving the instructions for them to do so. Instead, the teacher is obligated to structure the groups in a way that will encourage the development of independence among learners. The implication is that the teachers have a very crucial function in ensuring the success of cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning largely adopts the indirect approach to learning. The indirect approach is highly student-centered and encourages the development of

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problem-solving and decision-making skills among learners. Rather than depending on the teacher to suggest ways of dealing with language learning challenges, learners design methods to solve their challenges, only involving their teachers when they are entirely unable to maneuver. This approach is based on the premise that it is the students who completely understand their situation and thus best placed to deal with it as compared to the teacher who has to study past learning behavior keenly and learner characteristic among other factors (Uztosun, 2015: 99-104). Ultimately, the language learning process is eased as the frustration of debating what will work best in a certain scenario is eliminated. The result is near-native competence of L2 learners and great performance of L1 learners. The teacher is mainly a facilitator and a resource person rather than the director of learning tasks.

Another style that has been fronted relatively similar to cooperative learning is participatory learning. This method, though depending on the teacher to largely provide guidance on the learning tasks, it requires learners to participate during the learning process greatly. The learning sessions are highly characterized by question and answer activities where both the teachers and learners query on the learning aspects thoroughly (Tabatadze, 2015: pp.248-262). That system encourages critical thinking that is an important element in productive learning. An efficient teaching style is one that merges the four teaching strategies, as displayed below:

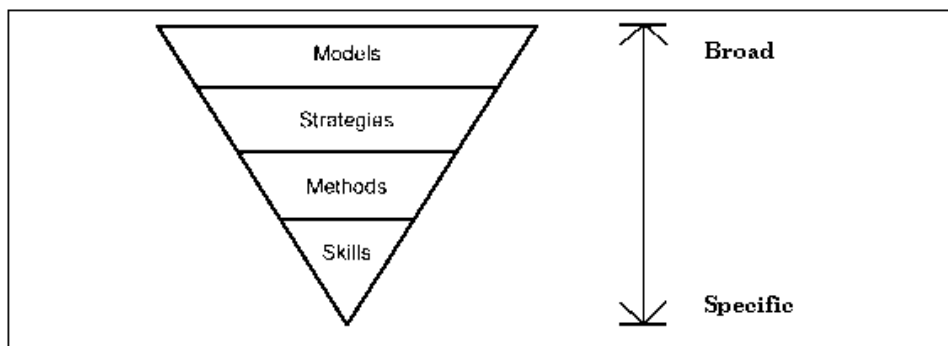


Figure 3. Relationship Among Instructional Models, Strategies, Methods, and Skills

The participatory learning style requires the teacher to create a learning environment that creates plenty of opportunities for student engagement, which is a crucial aspect in the learning of language (Rachvelishvili, 2017:366). There is no single aspect of language where successful learning can be attained without participation, whether it is grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, phonology, and pragmatics, among other language aspects.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section presents the mechanisms that were employed in the selection of research participants, and tools that were used to collect data for the study.

Simple random sampling was used to arrive at the sample size. Questionnaires and interviews enabled the collection of data. Tabulation and content analysis were utilized for data analysis and presentation.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

Teachers and students from different learning environments across Georgia provided data for this research as it involved both learning and teaching. The information is displayed in the following table:

Table 1: Summary of participants

Schools	Teachers	Students
School 1	5	10
School 2	10	20
School 3	6	15
School 4	8	10
School 5	3	10

Simple random sampling as used to select five schools in Georgia. Due to the different school sizes, the number of teachers and students selected for the study varied. They were also selected through simple random sampling. School two was the largest in size hence the high number of students and teachers as compared to the others. School 5 had the lowest number of teachers and hence the small sample size. The different school capacities determined the sample sizes. The numbers were also limited to the minimum because the assumption was that participants had relatively similar opinions regarding the research topic

3.3 Sampling method

Simple random sampling was used to provide data for the study. It was used to select the participants as it offers an equal chance of participation. Simple random sampling helps in the generalization of research results (Sharma, 2017:749-752). This generalization helps the research outcomes to be applied in other contexts with varying levels of success. That also helps in triggering researchers to advance their work in that area.

3.4 Research instruments

Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions to enable the researcher to cover great ground on the strategies and styles of teaching and learning language. Questionnaires are effective data collective tools as they provide participants with utmost privacy and autonomy (Patten, 2016:160). Given the delicate nature of students, they will not be comfortable with a face-to-face engagement. They will end up answering falsely or failing to answer at all, thereby negatively impacting the outcomes of the research. On the other hand, interviews are significant when dealing with adults. The researcher captures the non-verbal

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elements of the responses that are also crucial in leading to accurate research results.

3.4 Study limitation

The assumption made regarding the number of participants could impact negatively on the generalization of results. The number employed may not be sufficient to generalize the study findings to the entire Georgia educational setting.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Results

The teaching and learning of languages in grades eight to twelve in Georgia presents an essential model that can be emulated across other learning environments to attain success in language learning. Nonetheless, there are gaps that need to be addressed to improve the language learning experience of learners. The data collected revealed that the cooperative and participatory styles were the most preferred by teachers in the teaching of language. These styles encouraged learner engagement that enabled the teachers to detect problematic areas while empowering them to identify and design strategies for dealing with their learning challenges. The accurate assessment of the learning environment helps the current learners and provides a guide for future teachers and learners to improve their learning experiences. In that way, there is a significant contribution to the corpus of language teaching and learning.

Language learning in the Georgian context focuses on context and complexity that enables instructors to deal with the crucial triad of learning language that makes it a unique setting. The teachers view instructional methods as a model for professional practice.

The participants also explained that intercultural sensitivity was significant when dealing with education in the modern Georgian environment. Teachers seriously considered the intercultural aspect when dealing with their learners to promote accommodation. Learners have to feel accommodated for them to be motivated to attain successful learning.

The interactive teaching strategy was preferred for the learning of languages as it provided an avenue for both learners and instructors to engage in productive discourse. The teachers were able to single out problematic areas among learners easily while learners presented their learning challenges with ease.

The following table summarizes the preferred teaching strategies and styles, as presented by the research participants:

Teaching strategies	Teaching styles
Integrated approach	Cooperative style
Motivational techniques	Participatory style
Self-regulation	Direct approach
Autonomy	Indirect approach

Out of the thirty two teachers who participated in the study, twenty eight agreed that the integrated approach was the best in achieving great results in the teaching and learning of languages. The remaining four preferred to use one method at a time switching to another if the selected did not produce the expected results. Twenty teachers favoured the use of motivational techniques to attain results while twelve argued that self-driven students did not require motivation from them. Nonetheless, all the teachers agreed that self-regulation and autonomy are of the essence in achieving successful language learning.

Out of the fifty five students who participated in the study, forty preferred the direct approach to learning. That implied that most of them were not self-driven and that is why they preferred to rely on their teachers to attain their competence in the learning of languages. Fifty students agreed that the participatory learning style made studying interesting and gave them the morale to work hard. However, fifty two of them complained that the cooperative style was not as effective as it should be because most of the teachers did not supervise them well. Thirty of them stated that the indirect approach to learning could be effective in helping them acquire competence and performance at a fast pace.

4.2 Conclusions

There are several aspects involved in the teaching and learning of languages for learners in grades eight to twelve in the Georgian environment. The integrated approach to learning is advanced as the best to utilize in the Georgia setting as it gives both the learners and their instructors space to query, correct flaws, and generally engage in a constructive discourse.

An effective language instructional approach is one that includes the conventional important learnings that accommodate the distinct language needs of students, abilities, and interests. In that way, the needs of all the students will be dealt with.

The cooperative style of learning also builds tolerance among learners as they develop patience to listen to each other rather than defending their perspectives. Subsequently, they are able to reconcile their differences. In that way, learners will not ridicule their fellow classmates who have issues with pronunciations, for instance, but will instead find a way of helping them rather than viewing their cases as those of language attrition where nothing can be done to assist them.

The research participants' agreed that self-regulation is of the essence in achieving successful language learning. It encourages the students to become creative in developing their own individual solutions to learning challenges. In that way, the levels of language success are higher as compared to when teachers are at the forefront in developing solutions to learner challenges. Autonomy is viewed as a result of self-regulation in learning. With time, learners learn to become independent in their learning and thus engaging their teachers as resource persons and facilitators rather than the directors of learning.

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Two main aspects stand out in the teaching and learning of languages in the Georgian environment. The first includes intercultural sensitivity. That is the reason for the advancement of multicultural education in order to accommodate all learners regardless of the language background. This sensitivity is crucial as it creates a positive learning environment.

The second includes the difference in beliefs regarding the success in L2 attainment and general language learning. The levels of success of language learning are higher in institutions where both teachers and students share similar beliefs.

From the data collected, it is evident that certain strategies and styles of teaching and learning accommodate culturally and linguistically different learners. Subsequently, high levels of language learning success are achieved. The goal of any strategy and style is to develop a model that will meet the diverse language needs of the learners.

4.3 Recommendations

The teaching and learning of languages should largely be developed from a student approach rather than the teacher's approach. Thus, the indirect approach, rather than the direct approach, should be adopted by more instructors across the Georgian environment.

The cooperative and participatory style will allow accommodation of the different cultures in the Georgian classroom to enhance the teaching and learning of language.

The Georgian environment can act as a platform for the comparison of the strategies and styles utilized in the teaching and learning of languages across similar settings.

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