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LINGUISTICS, LITERARY CRITICISM

Strategies of Georgian writing in Turkish-speaking groups

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Abstract

The present work deals with the problems encountered in the process of teaching Georgian as a foreign language to Turkish-speaking students. The main focus of the study is on the difficulties, associated with the development of writing skills, which are caused by significant differences in the phonemic structures of the Georgian and Turkish languages. The study was conducted among students of levels A1-A2 of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. Based on the accumulated experience of working with Turkish-speaking groups through observation, analysis of written tasks, interviews and experimental methods, we have developed such effective strategies as repetition of sounds separately, practicing vocalization, using minimal pairs, audio recording and self-assessment. The effectiveness of the implementation of the mentioned complex strategies and approaches based on scientific data depends on their consistency and systematicity.

Keywords: teaching; writing; strategy; Georgian; Turkish-speaking; phonetic.

Introduction

Teaching Georgian as a foreign language is a topical issue, but it is associated with a number of problems, as it is accompanied by many, often insurmountable, difficulties. Listening, speaking, reading, writing - the development and the mastery of these four skills through language learning is a complex process, especially writing. The difficulty of teaching writing in Turkish-speaking groups is mainly due to the fact that there are typological, structural, phonetic and grammatical differences between the Georgian and Turkish languages. This is due to a wide range of problems in teaching the Georgian language, especially at the initial stage (level A1), when students are just beginning to learn to write in Georgian.

Development of Georgian writing skills in Turkish-speaking students is difficult because they usually rely on phonetic skills and norms of their native language, which negatively affect the formation of Georgian writing skills.

The aim of the article is to describe the existing problems we face at the initial stage of teaching Georgian language in Turkish-speaking groups and to present the strategies we use to master the phonemic structure and overcome graphic problems.

The article deals with the following research questions: What is the difference between the phonemic structure? What is the main difference between the pronunciation habits of the Georgian and Turkish people? What difficulties do students face when learning Georgian as a foreign language for the first time? How do Turkish-speaking students learn the phonemic structure of the Georgian language? What typical mistakes do they make when writing individual sounds, mainly Caucasian specific sharp sounds? What strategies are used to overcome difficulties and which of them are the most effective?

The present work discusses the problems associated with teaching phonetics, as well as writing strategies in Georgian in Turkish-speaking groups when teaching Georgian as a foreign language.

The results of the study are based on the analysis of writing techniques used by Turkish-speaking students, typical mistakes they make, taking into account the phonetic features of their native and target languages.

Methods

Observation, analysis of written assignments, interviews with students, induction, deduction, experiment.

Research Results

There are a number of problems in teaching Georgian as a foreign language, which are based on significant differences in the phonemic structures of the Georgian and Turkish languages. The specific phonetic characteristics of Georgian writing are particularly difficult for Turkish-speaking students. Most of them are accustomed to the Latin alphabet, so learning the Georgian alphabet and, especially, the correct spelling of specific sharp consonants is problematic.

These are important factors that affect writing learning, so it is necessary to develop effective strategies to overcome them.

Result

The study has been conducted with the participation of 23 Turkish-speaking students studying Georgian at Batumi Shota Rustaveli University. They were selected according to the level of teaching Georgian (A1-A2) in order to take into account, the writing strategies of both beginners and novices, as well as intermediate learners. The students were offered to write a short narrative on an interesting topic, form their own opinion. The analysis of the completed written assignments also showed the need for interviews. After observing and analysing the written assignments, we developed a questionnaire. In the recorded interviews, the students described the learning process, the time it took them to learn, and the difficulties they encountered.

Based on the experience gained during the learning and the analysis of the students, we have developed several strategies: **repeating sounds separately, teaching the vocalization of sounds** (fami-

liarization with the sound signal, visual and auditory perception); **inserting sounds into words, minimal pairs**; recording words and **self-assessment**.

It is recommended to implement these strategies step by step, in stages, consistently, and most importantly, with the help of samples, models of the teacher.

Using the above methods, students will be able to better distinguish and accurately perceive sounds, which will help them correctly pronounce and write sharp consonants, master Georgian speech and graphic skills.

Discussion

When teaching writing in Georgian, special attention is paid to the specifics of pronunciation and graphic features.

In the scientific literature, a special place is devoted to the difficulties of teaching Georgian as a foreign language. Research confirms that learning Georgian is particularly difficult for Turkish-speaking students (Alptekin & Evirgen, 2020:).

“The agglutinative nature of the Turkish language contrasts with the Georgian language, so it is difficult for Turkish-speaking students to perceive complex grammatical constructions in the Georgian language” (Gökdemir, 2018:).

The present study has shown that Turkish-speaking students need different strategies to master writing skills, which are aimed at identifying their own needs and developing logical thinking.

Graphic problems are most pronounced in Turkish-speaking students. These problems arise at the initial stage, so a graphic adaptation strategy should be developed first.

This strategy involves encouraging students to learn Georgian phonetics and graphic structure in the process of active writing, thereby avoiding the influence of the Latin alphabet. For example, Gökdemir's (2018) study shows that students with an agglutinative language often tend to use their own alphabet. Specific tasks such as "distinguish Georgian double consonants" or "write a text using only

the Georgian alphabet" can help students better understand Georgian phonetics. We systematically work with students using practical examples. Every day, they are given the task of writing simple phrases and texts using certain Georgian consonants: ძ, ბ, თ, ჳ, ჰ, ტ, კ, ჳ, ყ.

Some of the students have difficulty distinguishing the sounds **ძ** and **ბ** (dz and kh), **ჳ** and **თ** (ts and sh). We recommend that they first pay attention to the direction of writing. This will make it easier to adapt the graphic structure.

Also, a proven method is to teach words in which these sounds make the meanings different: **შობ** / **წობ** (shin / tsin), **ძე** / **ბე** (dze / khe); **ძაძა** / **ხახა** (dzadza / khakha).

შობ - evde (at home), წობ - önde (in front of)

ძე - oğul (son) ბე - ağaç (tree)

ძაძა - matem elbisesi (mourning clothes), ხახა - boğaz / gırtlak (throat)

To study the Caucasian sharp consonants, we offer students various practical exercises that will help them correctly perceive and pronounce these complex sounds.

To correctly pronounce the sounds **ჰ, ტ, კ, ჳ, ჳ, ყ** (p, t, k, ts, ch, k'), there should be enough flow of air in the mouth. All six sounds are pronounced without the need to supply air from the lungs, the throat is closed, the vocal cords are closed too, the tongue is not involved. Due to the peculiarities of pronunciation, the Caucasian sharp consonants are called abruptives. These sounds are produced with greater tension and the release of a stronger flow of air. In Turkish, the abruptness of pronunciation depends on the place of formation (Kvantaliani, Janashia, 1999:7), but there is no such type of abruptive consonants (ჰ, ტ, კ, ჳ, ჳ, ყ), (p, t, k, ts, ch, k'), the so-called Caucasian sharp sounds, which are pronounced due to glottalization (due to drawing air into the larynx).

In short, in Georgian, the sounds **ჰ-ტ-პ** (k-t-p) differ from the sounds K-T-P in many other languages by the abruptness, sharpness of pronunciation (Akhvlediani, 371). The physiological nature of abrupt-

tives causes difficulties in their pronunciation. Incorrect pronunciation causes an incorrect spelling.

M. Kikvadze writes about the difficulties mentioned: “For a foreigner, the pronunciation of Georgian sharp and soft consonants, such as: პ, ფ=P; კ, ქ=k; ტ, თ=T, is difficult. To overcome the difficulty, it is suggested to practice reading words in full, as well as syllable by syllable: პური – ჰაჰა – პეპელა, კატა – კაცი - კიბე, ფულ - თითი – თავი – თამაში.

The situation is even more complicated with those Georgian consonants that have no equivalents in Turkish: ყ, წ, ჭ, ღ (Kikvadze, 2009: 19).

Step I. Comparison and repetition of “similar” sounds.

Pronouncing each sound separately. Students should repeat sounds that are familiar to them in sound, but have different phonemes in the Georgian language (for example, „ქ“ and „კ“). With the help of this exercise, it will be possible to feel the difference between sharp and soft sounds.

To do this, we offer **practical examples**: a teacher writes down each sound separately and as a whole word (for example, “კარი”, “ქარი”). Then the students are asked to first listen to the sound and then repeat it.

Observation of the position of consonants. There is another strategy: when pronouncing a sound, students should place their palm on the throat area, they can feel different warmth and tension, vibration. In the case of a sharp sound, less vibration will be felt.

Step II. Exercise in vocalizing sounds

Familiarization with the sound signal - first a teacher pronounces the sounds ourselves and give the students time to visually and aurally perceive different sounds. After that, the students are asked to repeat the sounds and **note the difference**. Following the teacher, the students repeat each sound and focus on the difference.

Step III. Inserting sounds into words - minimal pairs

The students need to **look for** words in which these sounds occur in different contexts, as well as with different semantics.

A teacher explains to students that, in addition to physiological and acoustic properties, sounds also have a social purpose. The social side of speech sounds is designated by the term **phoneme** (Akhvlediani, 1999: 17).

Turkish-speaking students have difficulty pronouncing and writing specific Georgian consonants.

For example, in the word **წიწილა** - tsitsila (chicken), the pronunciation of the sound "ts" is not peculiar to the Turkish language. Close to it there are the sounds "c" - something between ç and ğ (j and ç in Turkish), "s" (in some cases), "ç" (a sound close to ß (ch)).

Turkish-speaking students usually have difficulties writing the word **წყალი** "tskali" (water) - because the complex "წყ" is foreign to them, "ცკალი" "tskali" - that is, they do not distinguish and, accordingly, incorrectly write and pronounce the sounds წ' and ც'.

The word **ყვავილი** - khvavili (flower) is found in the following phonetic variants: "კვავილი" "kvavili" - instead of "ყ" they write "კ", "ქვავილი" - instead of "ყ" they write "ქ", "კავავილი" - a vowel is added here, "კავილი" - the consonant complex is simplified.

Students have to compare words that sound very similar in their language, but have completely different meanings. First, the teacher pronounces each word himself, then the students should repeat it to feel the difference by ear and when pronouncing.

Practical examples:

• it is effective to work with such pairs as: **ქარი/ კარი; ფური/ პური, ჭირი/ ჩირი, ღერი/ გერი; ყელი/ ხელი, ბალი/ ქალი**

• ქარი (pronounced as khari) – Turkish "rüzgar" (wind), კარი (pronounced as kari) - kapı (door)

• ფური (phuri) - Turkish "inek" (cow) პური (puri) – ekmek (bread)

• ჭირი (tchiri) - dert / bela (disaster), ჩირი (chiri)- kurutulmuş meyve (dried fruit)

• ღერი (gheri) - sap (twig), გერი (geri) (stepchild) - no direct equivalent in Turkish.

- ყელი (k'eli) - boğaz (throat), ხელი (kheli) - el (arm)
- ბალი (bali)- kiraz (cherry), ქალი (kali)- kadın (woman).

If the forms being analysed are not abstract names, it would be good to show the corresponding pictures.

The meaning of these words will be unknown to Turkish-speaking students, so it is appropriate to give examples that explain their meaning.

For example,

- ფური - an adult cow that gives birth to a calf and is milked.
- პური - bread is a food product.
- ჭირი - is both a disaster and an infectious disease.
- ჩირი - dried fruit.
- ღერი - a part, a strand of hair, a strand of a match;
- გერი - child of a wife or a husband whom he/she has from another husband/wife.
- ყელი - a throat, front part of the neck,
- ხელი - hand, arm.

Attached pictures and images (for example, a cow eats bread, the wind opens the door, a child puts his hand on the throat) will convince the students of the need to separate these sounds, that they have a distinctive function.

After this, it is effective to give a task in which the students choose the words that are needed in the context and pronounce them.

დედამ (ჩირი/ჭირი) გაახზო;

კაცმა (ჭირი/ჩირი) მალა, მალა (ჭირმა/ ჩირმა) თავი არ დამალა;

ნიას ნაცინის ჭამის შემდეგ (ყელი/ ხელი) ასტკივდა.

Method of controlling specific gestures and breathing.

When pronouncing sharp sounds, it is important to regulate breathing and open the mouth correctly (i.e., position of the teeth and lips).

Practical examples of the mentioned strategy:

- Students should hold air in their mouth while pronouncing the sound, and then release it to pronounce the sound sharply and clearly.
- Students look at their lips in the mirror and perform movements to ensure that the lips and tongue are in the correct position.

Step IV. Audio recording and self-assessment

The students are given the task of pronouncing words that contain sharp and soft consonants and writing them down. After that, they compare it with the words pronounced by the teacher. Self-assessment is necessary in the learning process. With the help of the above-mentioned practical task, recording own voice and then comparing it with the teacher's sample, the student will be able to find out where he makes mistakes and which sounds require additional practice.

Such exercises will help students distinguish Caucasian sharp sounds, thereby improving the correct perception and pronunciation of sounds.

In short, **recording the voice and its analysis** is a guarantee of self-assessment and strengthening the pronunciation of sounds.

In the works of Turkish-speaking students, there have been observed such errors that are caused by the difference in the syllabic structure of the Turkish and Georgian languages. For example, in Georgian complex consonants are allowed (CCCCV), „წვრთნის“, „ბრწყინავს“, whereas in Turkish the syllabic structure is simpler (CV, CVC); complex consonants are not allowed there, and to overcome this complexity, epentheses are introduced: წვრთნის - წივირითნის, ბრწყინავს - ბიოიწყინიავს. In this case, we turn to the methods of decomposition into syllables and their counting, thereby convincing students of the invalidity of such forms.

Conclusion

Mastering, improving and developing the ability to write in Georgian, overcoming graphic difficulties among Turkish-speaking

students, taking into account the phonetic features of their native language, requires individual strategies. The effectiveness is noticeable only if they are implemented in stages.

In the learning process, it is important to focus on the main phonetic differences between the native and target languages, the structural features of the Georgian language, as well as the cultural differences that affect the learning process. The present study has shown that with the right approach, it is possible to successfully develop writing skills, which will help Turkish-speaking students to better master the Georgian language.

The research showed that developing Georgian writing skills among Turkish-speaking students is a complex process that requires a purposeful and systematic approach. The results of the study indicated to the fact that successful learning should be based on the following principles:

1. Deep understanding of the differences in the phonemic structures of the native and target languages;
2. Using consistent and step-by-step strategies in the learning process;
3. Using a variety of practical exercises, including both isolated study of sounds and their contextual use;
4. Active using of self-assessment and feedback mechanisms.

The effectiveness of the developed strategies is confirmed by a significant improvement in the writing skills of students. The progress in the correct use of Caucasian sharp consonants is especially noticeable. The results of the study can be used as a basis for further development of methods of teaching Georgian as a foreign language, especially when working with Turkish-speaking and Azerbaijani-speaking audiences.

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