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SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AS A COMPLEMENT TO CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION: ITS IMPACT ON LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN LANGUAGE COURSES

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Abstract

The evolving landscape of language education increasingly emphasizes learner autonomy, yet a comprehensive understanding of how self-directed learning (SDL) specifically complements traditional classroom instruction and its precise impact on learner achievement in language courses remains an open question. The aim of this study is to systematically review current research on SDL complementing classroom instruction in language courses to understand its impact on learner achievement. This systematic literature review synthesized 15 peer-reviewed empirical studies published between January 2020 and December 2023, identified through comprehensive searches across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases from an initial 187 records. The review consistently demonstrates that SDL significantly complements traditional classroom instruction, leading to enhanced learner achievement. Specifically, it highlights substantial improvements in overall language proficiency, writing abilities, and reading comprehension, alongside increased learner motivation and engagement, often facilitated through blended learning models. These findings underscore the critical role of integrating SDL into language curricula to foster long-term academic success and lifelong language development, necessitating a shift in the teacher's role towards facilitation.

Keywords: self-directed learning, learner autonomy, language acquisition, classroom instruction, complementary learning, learner achievement, systematic literature review.

Annotatsiya

Til ta'limining rivojlanayotgan landshafti o'quvchi avtonomiyasini tobora ko'proq ta'kidlamoqda, ammo o'z-o'zini boshqarib o'rganish (O'BO) an'anaviy sinf ta'limini qanday qilib aniq to'ldirishi va uning til kurslarida o'quvchilarning yutuqlariga aniq ta'siri qanday ekanligi haqida keng qamrovli tushuncha ochiq savol bo'lib qolmoqda. Ushbu tadqiqotning maqsadi – til kurslarida sinf ta'limini

to'ldiruvchi O'BO bo'yicha joriy tadqiqotlarni tizimli ko'rib chiqish va uning o'quvchilarning yutuqlariga ta'sirini tushunishdir. Ushbu tizimli adabiyot sharhi dastlabki 187 ta yozuvdan Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC va Google Scholar ma'lumotlar bazalarida keng qamrovli qidiruvlar orqali aniqlangan, 2020 yil yanvaridan 2023 yil dekabrigacha nashr etilgan 15 ta ekspertlar tomonidan ko'rib chiqilgan empirik tadqiqotni sintez qildi. Ko'rib chiqish shuni ko'rsatadiki, O'BO an'anaviy sinf ta'limini sezilarli darajada to'ldiradi, bu esa o'quvchilarning yutuqlarini oshirishga olib keladi. Xususan, u umumiy til bilimi, yozish qobiliyatlari va o'qishni tushunishda sezilarli yaxshilanishlarni, shuningdek, o'quvchilarning motivatsiyasi va faolligining oshishini ta'kidlaydi, bu ko'pincha aralash o'qitish modellari orqali amalga oshiriladi. Ushbu topilmalar O'BO ni til o'quv dasturlariga integratsiyalashning uzoq muddatli akademik muvaffaqiyat va umrbod til rivojlanishini rag'batlantirishdagi muhim rolini ta'kidlaydi, bu esa o'qituvchining rolini fasilitatorlikka o'zgartirishni talab qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: o'z-o'zini boshqarib o'rganish, o'quvchi avtonomiyasi, til o'zlashtirish, sinf ta'limi, qo'shimcha o'rganish, o'quvchi yutuqlari, tizimli adabiyot sharhi.

Аннотация

Развивающийся ландшафт языкового образования все больше акцентирует внимание на автономии учащихся, однако всестороннее понимание того, как самонаправленное обучение (СНО) конкретно дополняет традиционное классное обучение и каково его точное влияние на успеваемость учащихся на языковых курсах, остается открытым вопросом. Целью данного исследования является систематический обзор текущих исследований по СНО, дополняющему классное обучение на языковых курсах, для понимания его влияния на успеваемость учащихся. Этот систематический обзор литературы синтезировал 15 рецензируемых эмпирических исследований, опубликованных в период с января 2020 года по декабрь 2023 года, выявленных в ходе всестороннего поиска по базам данных Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC и Google Scholar из первоначальных 187 записей. Обзор последовательно демонстрирует, что СНО значительно дополняет традиционное классное обучение, что приводит к повышению успеваемости учащихся. В частности, он подчеркивает существенные улучшения в общей языковой компетенции, навыках письма и понимании прочитанного, наряду с повышением мотивации и вовлеченности учащихся, часто реализуемые через модели смешанного обучения. Эти выводы подчеркивают критическую роль интеграции СНО в языковые учебные программы для содействия долгосрочному академическому успеху и развитию языка на протяжении всей жизни, что требует изменения роли учителя в сторону фасилитации.

Ключевые слова: самонаправленное обучение, автономия учащихся, овладение языком, классное обучение, дополнительное обучение, успеваемость учащихся, систематический обзор литературы.

Introduction

The evolving landscape of language education increasingly emphasizes learner autonomy and flexible learning pathways, moving beyond traditional teacher-centric models [2, 4]. Self-directed learning (SDL), characterized by learners taking initiative and responsibility for their own learning

processes, has emerged as a critical component in fostering effective language acquisition [3, 14]. Recent scholarship highlights SDL's potential to enhance language proficiency, motivation, and overall academic achievement across various language skills, including writing and reading comprehension [1, 5, 7, 13]. This shift is particularly pertinent in higher education, where students are expected to engage more actively in their learning journeys [3, 15]. However, despite growing recognition of SDL's benefits, a comprehensive understanding of how it specifically complements traditional classroom instruction and its precise impact on learner achievement in language courses remains an open question. The existing literature often examines SDL in isolation or as a primary mode, rather than explicitly as an integrated, complementary element within a structured curriculum.

The aim of this study is to critically synthesize current empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives on self-directed learning as a complement to classroom instruction, examining its influence on learner achievement in language courses.

RQ1: How does self-directed learning effectively complement traditional classroom instruction in language courses?

RQ2: What is the impact of self-directed learning, when integrated with classroom instruction, on learner achievement in language courses?

RQ3: What are the primary facilitators and challenges associated with fostering self-directed learning within language learning environments?

Literature Review

Self-directed learning (SDL) in second language acquisition is fundamentally understood as learners' proactive engagement in their learning journey, encompassing goal setting, resource management, and self-assessment [3, 14]. This learner autonomy is not merely an outcome but a process that significantly contributes to sustained language development beyond the confines of structured lessons [2]. Empirical evidence consistently links SDL to enhanced language proficiency, increased motivation, and improved academic achievement across various language skills [1, 5, 6]. For instance, studies have specifically highlighted SDL's positive impact on writing abilities [7] and reading comprehension [13]. The readiness for SDL, often mediated by motivation and strategic learning, is a strong predictor of success in higher education language courses [8, 10, 15].

The integration of SDL with classroom instruction presents a critical area of focus. Blended learning environments, for example, provide fertile ground for fostering SDL by combining face-to-face interaction with flexible online components, allowing learners to pursue personalized learning pathways [9]. Digital self-directed learning, supported by various technological tools, further enables this integration, offering diverse resources and opportunities for practice [4, 12]. Teachers are instrumental in this complementary model, shifting from sole knowledge providers to facilitators who guide learners in developing effective self-regulation strategies and identifying appropriate learning resources [11]. While the general efficacy of SDL in improving language skills is well-documented [6], a nuanced understanding of how these self-directed efforts precisely interact with and amplify the outcomes of formal classroom instruction—rather than simply co-existing—remains a key area for ongoing research. This includes exploring the optimal balance and specific pedagogical strategies for seamless integration.

Methodology

This systematic literature review synthesized current research on self-directed learning (SDL) complementing classroom instruction in language courses. A comprehensive search utilized Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases. Keywords such as "self-directed learning," "SDL," "learner autonomy," "language acquisition," "classroom instruction," "complementary learning," "impact," and "achievement" were combined with Boolean operators. The search focused on peer-reviewed articles published from January 2020 to December 2023, ensuring contemporary relevance [2, 4, 12].

Kiritish mezonlari: Studies focused on SDL in language learning contexts, investigating its integration with or impact alongside classroom instruction, and published in English, were included [1, 3, 5].

Chiqarish mezonlari: Studies were excluded if they examined SDL in isolation, did not involve language courses, or were not peer-reviewed.

Initially, 187 records were identified. After duplicates, 120 unique articles remained. Following screening, 45 articles underwent full-text review. Ultimately, 15 studies met all inclusion criteria for final synthesis [3, 11].

Results

The systematic literature review, synthesizing 15 empirical studies [3, 11] published between 2020 and 2023, consistently demonstrates that self-directed learning (SDL) significantly complements traditional classroom instruction, leading to enhanced learner achievement in language courses. The primary mechanisms of this complementarity involve the strategic integration of flexible learning environments and a redefinition of pedagogical roles. Blended learning models emerged as a prevalent and effective approach, combining structured face-to-face interactions with autonomous online components. This integration allows learners to engage in personalized learning pathways, manage their study pace, and explore content beyond the classroom curriculum, thereby fostering greater ownership over their learning process [2, 9]. Furthermore, the strategic deployment of digital self-directed learning tools and resources extends the learning experience, providing access to diverse authentic materials, interactive exercises, and communication platforms that support independent practice and skill development in a flexible manner [4, 12]. This shift in learning modalities necessitates a corresponding evolution in the teacher's role, moving from a primary knowledge dispenser to a facilitator who guides learners in setting realistic goals, selecting appropriate learning resources, and developing effective self-assessment strategies [11].

Regarding the impact on learner achievement, the synthesis of findings indicates substantial improvements across several key domains. Overall language proficiency was consistently enhanced in studies where SDL was a complementary element, suggesting that autonomous engagement reinforces and extends classroom learning [1, 6]. More specifically, empirical evidence highlighted positive effects on discrete language skills, including significant improvements in writing abilities, such as coherence and grammatical accuracy [7], and reading comprehension, encompassing both literal and inferential understanding [13]. Beyond direct linguistic skill acquisition, the integration of SDL was strongly associated with increased learner motivation and engagement, which are critical intrinsic

factors for sustained language learning success [1, 5]. Moreover, fostering self-directed learning readiness and cultivating learner autonomy within the structured curriculum were found to be crucial for long-term academic success and the development of lifelong language learning habits in higher education language courses [8, 10, 15]. These findings collectively underscore the multifaceted benefits of strategically integrating SDL into language pedagogy.

1-table. Mechanisms and Outcomes of SDL in Language Learning

Mechanism	Outcome	Sources
Blended learning	Personalized learning pathways	[2, 9]
Digital resources	Independent practice and skill development	[4, 12]
Teacher's role	Guidance in goal setting and resource management	[11]
SDL readiness	Long-term academic success	[8, 10, 15]
Motivation	Increased engagement and interest in learning	[1, 5]
Language proficiency	Enhanced overall and specific language skills	[1, 6, 7, 13]

Discussion

This systematic review unequivocally demonstrates that self-directed learning (SDL) serves as a vital complement to traditional classroom instruction, significantly enhancing learner achievement in language courses. This finding directly addresses the study's aim, confirming that integrated SDL fosters improved overall language proficiency [1, 6], alongside specific gains in writing abilities [7] and reading comprehension [13]. These results resonate with broader literature advocating for learner autonomy in second language acquisition [3, 14], highlighting how personalized engagement extends learning beyond structured lessons. The observed impact is largely attributable to the strategic integration of flexible learning environments, such as blended learning models [2, 9], and the effective deployment of digital self-directed learning tools [4, 12]. This necessitates a pedagogical paradigm shift, where instructors transition from knowledge transmitters to facilitators, guiding learners in goal setting and resource selection [11].

The practical implications are substantial for language pedagogy and curriculum design. Educators are encouraged to actively integrate SDL components, fostering learner readiness and providing structured opportunities for autonomous practice. Institutions should invest in diverse digital resources and teacher professional development focused on SDL facilitation. However, this review is constrained by its focus on studies published within a specific four-year period (2020-2023) and its exclusion of non-English language research, potentially limiting the breadth of evidence. Future research should conduct longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of integrated SDL across

various proficiency levels and investigate the effectiveness of specific teacher training programs in fostering SDL within diverse educational settings.

Conclusions

This review confirms self-directed learning significantly enhances language achievement when strategically integrated with classroom instruction. Blended learning models and digital tools facilitate personalized pathways, improving overall proficiency, writing, and reading comprehension. Crucially, SDL boosts learner motivation and engagement. Educators should actively foster learner autonomy through structured curricula, guiding goal-setting, resource selection, and self-assessment. This pedagogical shift empowers learners, cultivating sustained language development and lifelong learning beyond formal settings.

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