

SPECIFICITY OF LANGUAGE MATERIAL SELECTION FOR INTRODUCTION OF RUSSIAN IMPERATIVE MOOD IN “RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE” CLASSES

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Abstract

The article is dedicated to the research of specificity of language material selection for introduction of Russian imperative mood in “Russian as a foreign language” (“RFL”) classes. Authentic language materials from different discourses that best showcase the diversity of modern Russian language (such as young people slang, jargons, common folk slang etc.) are required for the modern approach of communicative competence improvement.

Key terms

Russian as a foreign language, imperative mood, verb, communicative competence, methodology

Introduction

Russian verb formation is usually considered an enormous challenge for foreigners studying Russian language. This is due to the fact that Russian verb, thanks to the amount of its grammar categories, is considered one of the richest parts of speech in Russian language. Moreover, many students may not find correct counterparts in the existing grammar system of their native language while comparing it to Russian. This is especially true if their native language is not in any way similar to Slavic languages and their language mindset is much more different than the Russian one. The aim of this article is to justify the need for thorough selection of language materials for introduction of Russian imperative mood in “RFL” classes.

Theoretical background

Modern Russian language has a rich system of lexical and grammar means of expressing requests, commands and prohibitions. In our opinion, it is important to note the different features of the studying group (such as gender aspect, age and nationality), aside from the traditional teaching recommendations that consider the students’ language proficiency (ranging from pre-intermediate to advanced) [work citations: Kryuchkova L.S., Moshchinskaya, N.V. (2013); Shibko N.L. (2014), Lysakova I.P. (2015), Velichko A.V. (2018).] Under the modern approach of mastering communicative use of language in “RFL” teaching, it would be appropriate to include not only classic examples from Russian literature language, but also other sides of modern language (young people slang, professional jargons etc.) The current research includes recommendations about illustrative factual material selection for lessons that discuss features of Russian imperative mood.

The specificity of factual material selection must increase in difficulty depending on students’ language level, and context usage can be compared to the lesson’s theme (e.g.: movement verbs, verbs of speech etc.) Teacher of the “RFL” classes must place emphasis not only on the grammar material, but also on how common this language material is used in communication. Language material selection for exercise creation must take into account not only the lexical and grammar aspects, but also such important learning aspects as listening comprehension, linguistics and area studies, reading. „Nowadays teaching is the process of integrating methods and ways of conceptualizing educational material, because interest in combined methods is justified in connection with steadily increasing social needs and virtually unlimited possibilities“ (Makleeva, 2018, p.174).

Basic methodology and description of the issue

Within current research, method of working with language material taken from different discourses (advertisement, computer, sports discourses etc.) is suggested, as well as variants of standard exercises etc. The main research method is the descriptive method, with the help of which the main empirical material was collected. Methods of context analysis and continuous sampling were used as well.

Advertisement discourse

Teacher, while selecting factual material for their lessons, can use language arsenal of advertisement discourse without any drawbacks. Modern advertisements provide rich factual material that includes all important aspects in itself: audio sequence, visual perception, written slogans. For the increasement of students' motivation to learn foreign language and for illustrative purposes, modern stage of teaching classes uses multimedia services that help increase students' communicative competence. „Teachers of foreign languages can not disregard this fact. Besides, many learners have a lack of public speech experience even in the native language. At an advanced stage specific oral monologue speech skills (management of speech expressiveness (tempo, loudness, intonation of the utterance), diverse preparation techniques (planning, drafting work materials, proceedings, written texts); composition of various speech patterns) should be acquired in inextricable connection with the development of these skills through the use of new technologies including multimedia presentations“ (Bochina, 2014, p. 7662).

Imperative mood of verb is an important part of any advertisement. Furthermore, depending on the student group's knowledge of language (pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate), different verb forms can be introduced, starting from the most traditional ones (*купить, получить, сделать* etc.) to Russian neologisms (*стримить, сникерснуть* etc.) Thus, while introducing students to Russian imperative mood and refining its use in their speech, a task to restore the most popular advertisement slogans related to Russian reality might be useful. Teacher's task is to define the conditions of verb form recreation in order to get the original text, for example by noting the correct imperative mood form (second-person singular or second-person plural).

Task. Introduce yourself to these famous Russian advertisements. Write the verb in the correct form:

а) Second-person singular:

- **Узнать [To learn]:** ..., на что ты способен (Узнай, на что ты способен (Burn)) [... what you are capable of (Learn what you are capable of (Burn))]
- **Брать [To grab, to get]:** ... от жизни все! (Pepsi) (Бери от жизни все! (Pepsi)) [... what you can from your life! (Get what you can from your life! (Pepsi))]
- **Добавить [To add]:** Просто ... воды (Просто добавь воды (Инвайт)) [Just ... water (Just add water (Invajt))]
- **Вливаться [To merge]:** ... (Вливайся! (Fanta)) [... (Merge in! (Fanta))]

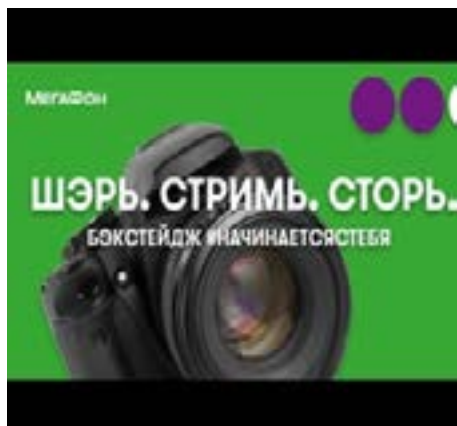
б) Second-person plural:

- **Хранить [To store]:** ... деньги в сберегательных кассах! (Храните) деньги в сберегательных кассах! [... your money in savings bank! (Store) your money in savings bank!]
- **Летать [To fly]:** ... самолетами „Аэрофлота“ (Летайте) самолетами Аэрофлота“ [... with “Aeroflot” airplanes (Fly with “Aeroflot” airplanes)]
- **Слушать [To listen]:** Эхо Москвы. ... радио, остальное – видимость (Эхо Москвы. Слушайте радио, остальное – видимость) [Echo of Moscow. ... to the radio, everything else is a facade]

- **Требовать [To demand]:** ... долива пива после отстоя пены (Требуйте долива пива после отстоя пены (Ресторан «Главпивпром»)) [... to refill your beer when the foam has settled (Demand to refill your beer when the foam has settled (Restaurant “Glavpivprom”))]

It is important to note that some of the slogans that were created in the late 20th century that are still relevant to this day have become sayings, precedent texts. It would be useful to introduce students of “RFL” classes to some of the slogans that are still referenced in speeches of Russians or are still broadcast on television: *Заплати налоги и спи спокойно!* (advertisement of Federal Tax Police Service), *Сделай паузу – скушай Twix* (advertisement of sweets), *ТНТ. Почувствуй нашу любовь* (advertisement for television channel), *В животе ураган – принимай Эспумизан* (advertisement for medicine) etc.

It is important to take into consideration age group of students, since students are usually interested in advertisements that include a great deal of neologisms popular with youth. Occasional imperative mood formation is done via defined models in the language. For example, neologism *Сникерсни*, created to attract attention to the brand itself, has gone through segmentation and has been firmly established in the language realities of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens of neighboring countries. It has been also included in several full-fledged lexemes, such as *Сникерсни! Прокачай мозги! Сканируй батон!* (advertisement for videogames and giveaways, 2020, Republic of Belarus). In the thesaurus, this word is considered synonym in young people slang to such words as “don’t be thick, don’t slow down, keep a move on” (Thesaurus of the Russian Language).



In 2019, a company named “MegaFon” has promoted several slogans in Russian market that use imperative mood form of English verbs, Russian versions of which are popular in young people slang: “Шэрь. Стримь. Сторь” [“Share. Stream. Upload stories”]. For young people who speak English language quite well, this slogan does not require any explanations. Same goes to people studying “RFL”. In our opinion, work with advertisement discourse, in terms of Russian imperative mood introduction, fits smoothly into all types of “RFL” exercises, starting from grammar and ending with listening comprehension.

It may be noted that such neologisms are ingraining with modern Russian’s life and are starting to be widely used in various areas of life, they can be heard and seen everywhere. One of such examples is an advertisement named “Хайпни хату” for one of Russia’s food chains.



The first word came from the English word “hype”, from which Russian verb *hajpnut’* (*hajpanut’*) has been created. It can be translated as “to make some noise, to rev up some action”. Imperative mood form *hajpni* is created by Russian language model and can be compared to the verb from colloquial speech *hapnut’* with its form *hapni*, due to their similarities in pronunciation. Big Russian dictionary of Colloquial Expressive Speech gives the next definition: **hapnut’**, -nu, -nesh’; perf. asp., trans. verb without object (imperf. *hapat’*). Colloquial speech. 1. To grab something quickly. *Такая сука ехидная, так и норовит за голую ногу хапнуть.* Gaidar, *Bandit’s Nest*. 2. To grab, keep something illegal; to steal. – *Вы ежли хапнете, перед вами шапки ломают, меня же, бывало, за рубли секут, и в клубе по щекам бьют.* Chekhov, *Old Age* (Evgenyeva A.P., 1981-1984). It is important to note that the current advertisement has a clear semantic approximation of these verbs and an association with easy prey is created in Russian’s linguistic consciousness.

Computer discourse

Modern Russian language constantly evolves, as any other world language. The first thing to update is lexical composition and it is an important thing to note while introducing basics of modern communication in “RFL” classes. Total computerization of society has led to the appearance of theme group of words related to this event in Russian language. Computer lexicon usually has English background, which in itself does not create any obstacles in learning it, but in our opinion, the creation of computer slang based on this theme group of words, the form making of which is done by Russian language models, is something to make notice of. A handful examples of imperative mood use in forms of chat messages, social network posts, screenshots of social network pages etc. can be given to students to analyze. Typical examples are *Лайкните аву, отвечу взаимностью :)))!*; *Вы способны апгрейдить свою собственную операционную систему.* (Стив Павлина) etc. A lot of times, in terms of computer slang, a Russian imperative mood verb is created from English word, which could be easily replaced by the already existing Russian word. Examples given: *Даунлодь* from “download” and *скачать* (скачай); *Запости* from “post” and *опубликовать* (*Опубликуй* or *Выложи в интернете*): *Придумай броский заголовок, запости наш ролик, и я дам тебе стаканчик; Создай импровизированный класс, запости детали на нескольких социальных сайтах, и позвони Ари, попроси прийти, можешь даже послать цветы* (ReversoContext).

Sports discourse. Football slogans

In terms of introduction of imperative mood verb use in communication, such elements of texts as various sports mottos, slogans, chants etc. have great potential. Teacher’s task is to interest language learners with their collected material. Size of lexical means also depends on students’ language level and training of usage skills may vary from reading small texts, listening comprehension of separate audio fragments to written exercises.

In our opinion, football chants deserve to be highlighted, since they greatly represent language creativity of Russian people. Due to this, we believe that they may be interesting to all students to analyze. It is fair to note that Russian society has a great deal of interest in this kind of sports. If a student is currently living in the country which main language is the one they are studying, is an active football fan and often visits games, then they have a chance to hear football chants of Russian fans live. And if they are only preparing to go to the stadium, they might be interested in what kinds of chants they might hear. Without a doubt, these texts might be hard to comprehend by listening. This is why they are recommended to students with higher-than-average language level, while other students may be introduced with them by reading exercises with grammar tasks. Quite often such texts use second-person singular verbs in order to save the “friendly treatment”, generic effect:

*ЦСКА, давай, забей, три гола в ворота „свиней“. ЦСКА Москва! Оле-оле, ЦСКА;
Вперед, мой клуб! Вперед, родной! Иди вперед, вали врагов, мы все с тобой (Динамо);
Терек, Терек, забивай! Перелейся через край.*

Based on the material of such texts, a short regional commentary may be given and texts and cultural facts may be compared. For example, one chant from “Spartak” fans is a reference to the national anthem of Russian Empire from 1833 to 1917 “God Save the Tsar!”. The use of imperative mood verb can be compared in these two works.

Russian Empire national anthem:

*Боже, Царя храни! Сильный, державный, Царствуй на славу, на славу нам!
Царствуй на страх врагам, Царь православный!
Боже, Царя храни! Славному долги дни Дай на земли! Дай на земли!
Football chant of “Spartak” fans:
Боже, „Спартак“ храни, дай ему силы, Чтоб победил он все клубы страны!
Боже, „Спартак“ храни, дай ему силы, Чтоб победил он во имя Москвы!*

Overall, the tradition of remaking songs based on the urgent demands is quite common. Another note can be made between one “Krasnodar” fans chant and famous hit of 2000s by rapper Seryoga “Black Bummer”. In terms of “RFL” classes, students can analyze two texts and analyze verbs’ forms or recreate them in a task in order to train their skills of imperative mood verb usage.

Song “Black Bummer”:

*Черный бумер, черный бумер, Стоп-сигнальные огни.
Черный бумер, черный бумер, если сможешь – догони!
Football club’s chant:
Черный буйвол, черный буйвол! Дай врагу достойный бой!
Враг достоин пораженья. Черный буйвол, мы с тобой!
Победи, как ты умеешь, Покажи красивый гол!
Краснодар, прославь скорее атакующий футбол!*

Authentic material from sports discourse can be used in different types of grammar tasks. As an example, students may be given the following task: restore official slogans of national football teams-participants of 2018 FIFA game held in Russia:

Russia: "... (*играть – second-person singular*) с открытым сердцем”

[Play with the open heart]

Australia: "... (*быть – second-person singular*) храбрым, ... (*быть – second-person singular*) смелым, Соккеруз в зеленом и золотом”

[Be courageous, be brave, socceroos in green and gold]

Iceland: "... (*давать – second-person plural*) осуществим нашу мечту”

[Let us fulfill our dream]

United Kingdom: "... (*принести – second-person plural*) нам победу”

[Bring us the victory]

Japan: "... (*биться – second-person plural*), синие самураи”

[Fight, blue samurai]

Discourse of cosmetology. Fashion discourse

Teacher of “RFL” classes must note the requests from student group, focus on changes in the modern speech, select contexts that reflect real condition of language and highlight all sides of modern Russian’s life. That is why contexts that hold recommendations from beauticians, stylists, makeup artists etc. can be great examples. Thus, noting the group’s gender aspect, different exercises may be given to men and women. For example, advices on how to take care of eyelash extensions may be given *Избегайте механических воздействий! Постарайтесь не спать лицом в подушку!* Or advices for men on how to take care of their hair may be provided: *Внимательно изучите потребности своих волос, а потом делайте выбор. Если вы спешите, воспользуйтесь шампунем 2 в 1. Этот шампунь сразу обеспечивает чистоту и должный уход за волосами.*

As an example of such exercises, a “Memo on how to take care of your eyelashes” can be provided: all forms of imperative mood verbs must be written, students need to name verb’s infinitive mood and then individually complete a written task by writing their own “lifehacks” for their friend or sister.



It is worth to note that by the group’s demand, men may be given advices and “lifehacks” from stylists instead. For example: *Часы – атрибут респектабельного образа делового мужчины. Хотите произвести впечатление – не экономьте на покупке, выбирайте модель, которая долго прослужит и эффектно дополнит ваш look.* A number of verbs can be given as a written task, with which students can form their own advice for their male acquaintances, for example: *снимать (снять), заглянуть, комбинировать, учесть, стараться, помнить, выбирать.* Additional words and phrases may be added for the reference: *старая одежда, белая рубашка, шкаф, толстовки, свитшоты, черный цвет, джинсы* etc.

It is hard to imagine our modern world without recommendations and advices from all the different aspects of life. Which is why inclusion of such contexts, in our opinion, can be quite effective

not only in lessons, but also in terms of independent studying, such as Russian magazines and websites analysis.

Song discourse

To enhance learners' communicative competence, lyrics of songs can be used for factual language material that includes imperative mood forms. Many researchers highlight the importance of using lyrics in "RFL" classes [works of Vereshchagin E.M. (1981), Ibragimova G.B (2014), Vohmina L.L. (2016), Erykina M.A. (2017), Tolstova N.N. (2017) etc.]. As Sternin I. A. noted, "People in Russia use songs to greet, call, say goodbye, support, motivate, complain, search for sympathy and help, thank – palette of Russian song's communicative functions are unusually wide and almost matches main functions of Russian communication by its range" (Sternin, 2004, p. 30).

It is important to note that quite often Russian folk songs like *Во поле березонька стояла* ["In The Meadow Stood a Little Birch Tree"], romances and drinking songs like *Ой, мороз, мороз, не морозь меня* ["Oh, You Frost, Harsh Frost"] etc. are usually given as examples in "RFL" classes. Some of these songs feature outdated lexicon not seen in modern language, which makes it hard even for native speakers to fully understand the context of the song, and which requires additional comments. As an example, a famous song about Stepan Razin "*Из-за острова на стрежень*" ["From Beyond the Wooded Island"] (Russian folk song, lyrics by Sadovnikov D.N.) features such lyrics: *Из-за острова на стрежень, На простор речной волны выплывают расписные Острогрудые челны* (Russian folk songs). Dictionary of the Russian language states next: **стрень** – the fastest and deepest part of the lake (usually in the middle); traditional-poetic, (Russian Dictionary, 1998).

In our opinion, lyrics of modern songs attract much more attention from students, since they can easily find these songs for themselves, they are often broadcasted to radio and reach top of the charts. Teacher of "RFL" classes can use the advantages of modern songs at listening comprehension with additional writing exercises to motivate students to learn language and to intensify their language mindset. For example, songs of such modern Russian musicians and music groups as Dima Bilan, Egor Krid, "Para Normal'nyh", "Potap and Nastya" contain factual material that can enhance communicative competence of students when using forms of imperative mood verbs. Songs of Egor Krid, for example, quite often feature imperative mood verb forms – that is why they can be taken as a base for listening comprehension and verb form highlighting with an additional task of finding the verb's initial form:

„Заведи мой пульс“ ["Rev up my pulse"] (2013): *Заведи мой пульс, научи вновь дышать Тобой, тобой; тобой, Загляни в меня и дотронься рукой, Я с тобой, я с тобой, я с тобой, Ты и я, ты и я, Заведи мой пульс.*

„Закрой глаза“ ["Close your eyes"] (2015): *Закрой глаза, и молча дай мне знак. Закрой глаза, и прошепчи мне „Да“. Закрой глаза, и мы окажемся а краю Земли.*

„Время не пришло“ ["The time has not come"] (2019): *Детка, я влюблен, Не беру твой телефон. Ты же знаешь, я с другой. Забывай меня, все. Ты прости, отпусти и будь с ним счастливой, Но только тихий мой дом запомнил любовь и твой запах духов* (Discography of Egor Krid).

Thus, song discourse can be actively used by teachers of "RFL" classes in order for students to study Russian language, to expand the knowledge of Russian verb formation and how to use them in speech practice. Bolotova Yu.V. notes that "authentic lyrics of songs equally showcase culture of the studied language and many of its communication features in an appealing way" (Bolotova, 2017, p. 6).

Art discourse. Modern literature

Without a doubt, teacher always tries to reference literary materials in “RFL” classes. In this case, it would be wise to note that specifics of illustrative language material should not be restricted to examples from classic literature – it is also important to include works of modern writers, works that attract the attention of modern Russian readers. While selecting materials to introduce for the lessons dedicated to improving Russian imperative mood verb usage in communication, works of such female prose writers as Tatyana Tolstaya, Lyudmila Ulitskaya, Dina Rubina etc. can be chosen.

Furthermore, examples from works of Dina Rubina – widely acclaimed master of showcasing expressiveness in her short stories – can show to the students not only the classic models of Russian imperative mood formation, but also introduce material to enhance linguistic intuition while working with occasional forms of verbs skillfully used in her works. Techniques of expressiveness creation, unique tone for imitation of special conversation specific to the real dialogue can be noted in the following examples:

Слушай, слушай! Теперь я имею двадцать, тридцать долларов в день! Скажи, что ты там такое написал?! (Rubina, 2010, p. 16)

„Кондрат приподнимается, присаживается поближе..., несколько минут сидит довольно кротко с выражением скорее приглашающим – „Угостите собачку“, – чем требовательным. Если гость не дурак и слабину не дает, Кондрат, сидя на заднице, протягивает лапу и треплет гостя по коленке – дай, мол, дядя, не жадись...“ (Rubina, 2010, p. 157)

Please note that the casualness and talkativeness are present even when describing dogs fighting for a treat (*Кондрат* is a dog and a protagonist of the story “Я и ты под персиковыми облаками” [“Me and you under the peach clouds”]). Teacher’s task is to direct their students’ attention to the speech formations and occasional use of them and to give explanations to them.

„На реплику хозяйки: „– Кондрат! А ну, отвали! Шас получишь раза! Немедленно отстань от Саши (Иры, Маши, Игоря)!“ пес „...несколько минут пережидает. ...дотягивается передней лапой до руки с вилкой. И требовательно треплет эту руку. На этот раз подтекст: „Не зарывайся, дядя! Не кусочничай. Угости честную собаку“ (Rubina, 2010, p. 158).



In these examples, writer skillfully uses expressiveness of spoken forms, some of which are not even documented in dictionaries, but used often in conversations. Thus, the imperative mood form of **жадничать** [to be greedy] in this case is non-normative form **не жадись** (examples of creolization: *Не жадись, рыбкой поделись!; Не жадись, кинь кусочек! Заходи, не жадись, покупай живопись!* etc. – taken from <http://kotomatrix.ru>).

The language of Dina Rubina’s works is bright and modern, it consists of verb forms diversity. Meanwhile, it is important to note that a number of verbs actualize the semantics inside of the context, for example the verb **кусочничать**. This verb is documented in Russian dictionaries, but has another meaning from the one used in casual conversation. That is why teacher of “RFL” classes can note this fact and give explanations in order to enhance students’ communicative competence.

Results of the analysis and conclusions

As such, it should be noted that teacher of “RFL” classes must quickly react to the appearances of new tendencies in the language, which is why inclusion of such elements as computer slang, modern advertisement slogans, lyrics of popular songs and different precedent texts as lessons material gives the students the opportunity to dive into language environment and increase their knowledge level of Russian language.

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