

GRAMMATICAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

Farrukh Bakhramovich Khakimov

Student, Faculty of Philology

Mamun University

Khiva, Uzbekistan

e-mail: slswlasow@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Studying the grammatical structures of the Russian language is a significant challenge for speakers of other languages. This article examines the main grammatical difficulties encountered by learners of Russian as a foreign language. Key aspects include the case system, verb aspect, word agreement, and the use of prepositions.

Typical errors made by foreign students are analyzed, and methods to overcome these difficulties are proposed. Emphasis is placed on individualized teaching approaches and the use of diverse materials and methods to help students effectively master Russian.

Key words: Russian as a foreign language, grammar, cases, verb aspect, word agreement, prepositions, negation, teaching methods

INTRODUCTION

Russian is one of the most complex languages for foreign learners due to its rich grammatical system. Particularly challenging are the case system, verb aspect, agreement of words by gender, number, and case, as well as the use of prepositions and negative constructions.

For students whose native languages lack these categories, mastering Russian grammatical structures is especially difficult. The aim of this article is to systematize the main grammatical challenges, identify common errors, and propose methods to overcome them, thereby improving the effectiveness of teaching Russian as a foreign language.

METHODS

The following approaches were applied:

Comparative analysis of Russian grammatical categories and their equivalents (or lack thereof) in English, French, and Chinese to identify specific difficulties.

Content analysis of written and oral works by foreign students to determine frequent errors.

Case study method to demonstrate typical mistakes and ways to correct them.

Pedagogical testing using adapted exercises, tables, and reference materials.

RESULTS

1. Case System

The case system is a key feature of Russian grammar, affecting syntax and word agreement. Russian has six cases:

- **Nominative:** "The book is on the table."
- **Genitive:** "There is no book."
- **Dative:** "I gave the book a new cover."
- **Accusative:** "I am reading the book."
- **Instrumental:** "I am proud of the book."
- **Prepositional:** "I am thinking about the book."

Common errors:

- Incorrect use of cases after prepositions.
- Failure to agree adjectives with nouns.
- Omission of case endings.

2. Verb Aspect

Russian verbs have a grammatical category of aspect: imperfective and perfective. This is challenging for learners from languages without aspect distinction (e.g., English).

Examples:

- Imperfective: "делать" (doing — ongoing action)
- Perfective: "сделать" (to do — completed action)

Typical mistakes:

- Using the imperfective aspect where the perfective is required.
- Errors in future tense forms: *"I will be doing the homework"* instead of *"I will do the homework"*.
- Misunderstanding nuances of motion verbs: *"I go to the store"* (imperfective) vs *"I went to the store"* (perfective).

3. Word Agreement

Words in Russian must agree in gender, number, and case.

Examples:

- "Красивый дом" (masculine) — "Beautiful house"
- "Красивая женщина" (feminine) — "Beautiful woman"
- "Красивое дерево" (neuter) — "Beautiful tree"
- "Красивые дома" (plural) — "Beautiful houses"

Common errors:

- *"Красивая дом"*
- *"I see he"* (incorrect pronoun usage)
- Mistakes with numerals: *"three book"* instead of *"three books"*

4. Prepositions

Russian prepositions govern cases and change meaning depending on context.

Examples:

- "I am going to school" — Accusative
- "I am at school" — Prepositional
- "I don't have a book" — Genitive

Errors: omitting prepositions or using the wrong case.

5. Negative Constructions

Russian allows double negatives, which is unusual for English speakers.

Example: "Никто ничего не знает."

Errors arise when applying English logic: *"Nobody knows nothing."*

6. Methods to Overcome Difficulties

1. Individual and group lessons

- Role-plays, dialogues, grammar exercises

2. Adapted learning materials

- Conjugation tables, reference guides, error-analysis exercises

3. Practice with native speakers

- Watching films, listening to podcasts, participating in language clubs

These methods help reinforce correct structures and develop oral and written communication skills.

DISCUSSION

Grammatical difficulties are a major barrier for foreign students in both academic and everyday Russian. Overcoming them requires a systematic approach, individualized methods, and regular practice.

Using adapted materials, communicative teaching methods, and practice with native speakers significantly accelerates mastering complex grammatical categories.

CONCLUSION

The main challenges for foreign students include:

- Case system
- Verb aspect
- Word agreement
- Prepositions
- Negative constructions

Effective learning requires a combination of individualized lessons, adapted materials, and native speaker practice. This ensures high literacy levels and successful participation in academic and social contexts.

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