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ISSUES OF USING INTERACTIVE METHODS IN TEACHING THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: Changes in teaching Russian at higher education levels in the conditions of globalization, digitalization, and intercultural communication took place very quickly. This article explores the most pressing problems related to the teaching of the Russian language at higher education levels through interactive techniques, and the pedagogical efficiency of learner-centered technologies according to the latest studies in the linguodidactics. The article bases its research on the analysis of domestic and foreign scientific literature, dedicated to the problems of teaching Russian from the communicative perspective and the possibilities of using digital linguodidactics, gamification, project-based learning, blended learning and virtual interactive rooms. A special emphasis is laid on the contradiction between the traditional system of grammar learning and modern requirements to have communicative skills, critical thinking and professional communication ability. Statistics of the newest educational research shows that interactive learning techniques make learning process more stimulating (more than 40%) and enhance the levels of student's communication and the stability of knowledge over time.

Keywords: interactive methods, Russian language teaching, higher education institutions, communicative competence, digital pedagogy, blended learning,

Modern higher education system is undergoing tremendous changes because of globalization, digital communication, academic mobility, and integration of educational technologies into educational environment. In such circumstances, teaching Russian language in higher education institution is not only of academic importance as linguistic subject, but it also play crucial role as a language of intercultural communication, scientific communication and professional interaction. In many of post-Soviet and multilingual countries, including Uzbekistan, Russian remains one of the most important languages for communication in academia, technical expertise and international cooperation. This obliges university teachers to update the traditionally taught language teaching methodology and bring it in accordance with the communicative and professional requirements of contemporary student.

Teaching Russian language in university has for many years been confined within a framework of reproductive teaching methods, where learning and language skills development rely on memorization, grammatical analysis and passive acquisition of theoretical knowledge. Modern studies clearly demonstrate that traditional language teaching approach does not comply with modern learning needs of the digital generation and is detrimental to effective language acquisition. Contemporary student is in search of an active learning environment where a language is practiced through active communication, interaction, discussion, problem-solving and simulation of realistic communicative situations. Today research in linguodidactics proves that interactive methods enhance learners communicative competence, motivation, and involvement in learning process more than a traditional teacher-centered learning methodology.

According to latest analysis, implementing interactive learning technologies can increase student participation rate by 35-45%, and retention of language practical aspect by almost 30%. One of the main contradictions observed in higher education institutions is the discrepancy between methodological updating and conservative learning process. The latest innovations such as internet platforms, digital technologies and online systems are introduced into educational

settings but still do not eradicate the usage of old-fashioned methods, where students stay on the sidelines of learning process. For instance, there are situations when modern teaching tools and methods are used formally, without actually stimulating communicative interaction, thus making the process of digitalizing learning process less efficient and leading to a lack of real speech competence. This phenomenon is especially relevant to the course of the Russian language as communicative, adaptive and contextual knowledge is vital to develop high speaking proficiency. Another important issue the inadequate readiness of university teaching staff to introduce innovative teaching methodologies. Implementing interactive methods like role playing, project-based learning, gamification, discussion, problem solving, etc.

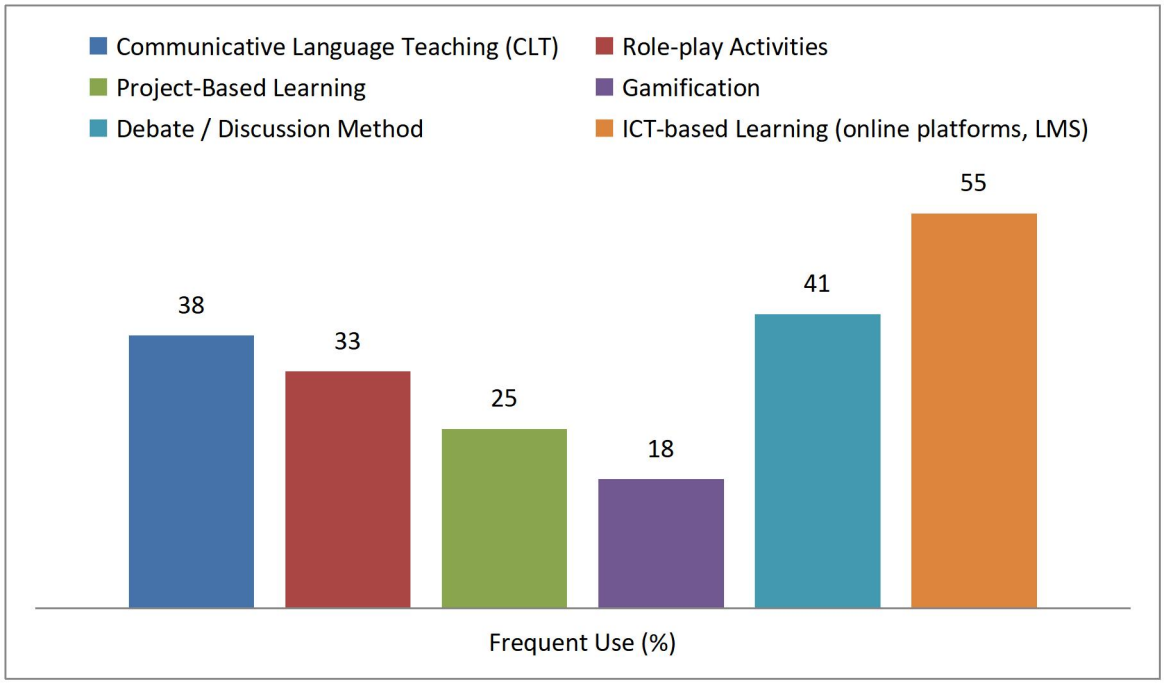
Demands profound knowledge of not only computer skills, but also of communicative methodology and cognitive psychology. Many university teachers know about innovative methods and can explain them verbally but find it difficult to apply in real classroom setting and consequently transform interactive learning activities into an unstructured sequence of exercises. We often see students engage in communication or take part in the digital exercises for the sake of participation, without developing any actual speech skills. This clearly shows that digital innovation can be a factor in educational advancement only when coupled with methodological readiness of teachers. It is obvious that the recent digital revolution of language learning created many new challenges and opportunities for the Russian language teachers. Online platforms, AI programs, interactive applications and virtual reality have increased access to information resources and created more flexibility to learning. During the last years blended learning (a combination of classroom teaching and online learning) was adopted by higher education institutions all over the world. According to studies, interactive online environments foster independent learning, critical thinking, and communicative adaptability skills among students.

But overdependence on modern technologies can lead to poor face-to-face communication and weakens social aspect of language learning if it is not integrated properly into the pedagogical process. The primary lesson is to use technology as a tool of effective learning, but not as an excuse for avoiding direct communicative contact. One of the key challenges in Uzbekistan's higher education context also includes uneven technical and methodological facilities in universities. Whereas major universities in big cities enjoy digital labs, multimedia equipped classrooms and extensive learning platforms; those situated in remote regions often lack up-to-date equipment and materials. This disparity has a direct effect on the quality of Russian language teaching and limits students' ability to participate in modern learning methods. In some universities there is a lack of interest to communicative aspect and priority is given to grammatical correctness, contrasting the latest worldwide trends and needs.

These discrepancies point towards the necessity of developing a clear and universal methodology which will unite the goals of higher education in Uzbekistan with the international trends and standards in language teaching. The development of Russian language teaching in universities is closely linked to the trend towards an interactive and competency-based learning in general. A significant number of modern researches in the sphere of linguodidactics emphasizes the irrelevance of lecture-style language instruction for the development of communicative competence, especially in the context of multicultural professional environments.

International researches, carried out in Europe, Asia and post-Soviet countries reveal a growing awareness that active learning methods such as communication, task-based learning, project-based learning and cooperative learning are crucial for successful language acquisition as they imitate the natural speech context as closely as possible.

Diagram 1. Level of Use of Interactive Methods in Russian Language Classes in Uzbek Universities



Many experts point out the necessity to bring into the focus the student as an active learner who is set in the center of the learning process, learning through actively using the language in various real-life communication settings instead of passive learning of grammar rules. The communicative approach (CA) is among the most popular interactive methods; it emphasizes purposeful communication rather than solely on linguistic form. International research conducted at universities shows that the CA approach increases speaking fluency and listening comprehension by 25-40% compared to the traditional approach. However, implementation of the CA approach is often hindered by the lack of appropriate materials or specific skills of teachers to integrate language and communication effectively. The main pedagogical goal here is not to do away with grammar-based learning but to embed grammatical knowledge within a communicative framework. The analysis and use of project-based learning (PBL) is another crucial aspect for development of language teaching methods. PBL engages students in real or simulated tasks, like preparing presentations, researching and developing projects etc.

Numerous international studies prove that using PBL in Russian language teaching in higher education institutions enhances learners' knowledge retention of vocabulary and their motivation level up to 35%. In addition, such kind of activities as projects usually involve several learning activities; they encourage students to take various roles within the team, which is extremely important for acquiring fluency in speaking and developing interpersonal skills. Gamification has also been adopted in teaching foreign languages including Russian. The inclusion of game features in the process of learning increases motivation and enthusiasm among learners by using rewards, scores, levels and so on. Research proves that in gamified learning environments student participation rates have increased by up to 30-50% among young university students.

However the success of gamification depends to a great extent on pedagogical design of the game; only well-designed, interactive game can develop students' skills and competencies effectively. We often see such kind of games being used merely as an entertaining factor. If the game is properly designed it can have a great impact on the students' language competence especially their vocabulary, reading and communication skills. In some universities we see students compete with each other playing some language games on a computer, but they often use language for the purpose of victory in the game rather than for actual communication. So it becomes very important to control the whole process and have an eye on the pedagogical

potential of the game. Use of the digital learning environment is yet another direction of modern language teaching methods.

The number of platforms that can be used for learning Russian is rapidly increasing, from simple web-based exercises to complex virtual realities. Blended learning approach integrating classroom activities with learning through different electronic platforms like forums, online classes and so on became very popular. However, an important issue in Russia, like in many other parts of the world, is digital disparity between higher education institutions. Many well-equipped institutions implement all innovations but some of the regional ones lag far behind both technically and methodologically, thus negatively impacting the teaching process and limiting students' exposure to interactive learning. Some universities also continue to overemphasize linguistic accuracy instead of functional proficiency despite the fact that it is practical communication that has a prominent place on a global scale. Thus there is a need to develop integrated teaching methodology for Russian language in higher education institutions in Uzbekistan, which will combine national educational policies with worldwide approaches to language teaching and acquisition.

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