

MSC 2020**International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.
COMMUNICATION»****RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LESSON: LEXICO-
GRAMMATICAL BASIS OF TEACHER-STUDENT SPEECH
INTERACTION**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the actual problem of conversational interaction between teacher and foreign students at the Russian language lessons. There are some difficulties in the system of educational interaction for both a native speaking teacher and a foreign student learning the Russian language. The authors pay special attention to the fact that foreign students are representatives of many cultures and languages. Moreover, foreign students are in a multi-aspect complex process of adaptation throughout the entire learning period. In order to achieve positive results in the formation of students' competencies, a teacher should organize the educational process methodically competently, taking into account all the difficulties. In this connection, there is a question on the reason for the lack of productive interaction. According to the authors, one of the problem solutions is the correct organization of the teacher's speech so that it is not only clear to a student, but it also serves as an example for one to organize own speech. The article presents the lexical-grammar foundations of the RFL teacher' speech regarding questions that allow fulfilling pedagogical functions successfully. The authors believe that a skillful combination of all kinds of questions, taking into account the national and psychological characteristics of students, will help teacher and student to interact effectively. A strong lexical-grammar foundation of the questions will provide students with an opportunity to participate in the dialogue, to feel the language in action, to see their success and increase interest in the language.

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Keywords: Authentic language environment, conversational interaction, lexical-grammar foundations, speech of RFL teacher



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1. Introduction

A lesson of Russian as a foreign language is not just a form of the educational process organization, but also a special sphere of interaction between representatives of different languages and cultures. A native speaking teacher and a foreign student, who learns Russian, aim to achieve common goals and tasks of the lesson, however, in the system of this educational interaction, each side has its own difficulties. In intercultural dialogue, it is necessary to achieve mutual understanding, and not just correctly answer a question or ask a question. "The goal of teaching foreign languages at the present stage is not a language system, but a foreign language speech activity, and not by itself, but as a means of intercultural interaction" (Plakhova et al., 2019, p. 38).

1.1. Difficulties of Intercultural Dialogue between RFL Teacher and Foreign Student at the Lesson

Foreign students are representatives of many languages and cultures. At group lesson, they all may have different levels of language proficiency, experience some difficulties connected with variance in their native language systems and with their personal psychological characteristics, "immersion in a different cultural and linguistic environment, acquaintance with Russian realities, new features of Russian etiquette lead to confusion of concepts, the emergence of incidental situations, and sometimes to confusion and complete bewilderment" (Petrova, 2019, p. 53). "The educational and professional sphere of communication is one of the dominant ones in teaching Russian to foreign students. In this regard, the topic is relevant for the practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language" (Fedotova et al., 2020, p. 44). For every foreign student who studies Russian in Russia there is already a stereotype of the educational process, a system of relations between a teacher and a student adopted in his country. Also, foreign students throughout the entire learning process are involved in a multifactorial complex adaptation process. In order to achieve positive results in the formation of students' competencies, the teacher must methodologically competently organize the educational process, taking into account all the difficulties, including one of which concerns the correction or non-correction of errors in writing or speaking, as well as what mistakes should be corrected. An RFL teacher must solve methodological, pedagogical and other problems.

When teaching Russian as a foreign language, there is a problem of constant updating of educational materials. Educational texts should not only form competence in the study of Russian as a foreign language, but also take into account the individual approach and influence the acculturation process of foreign students. (Selyutina & Sakharova, 2018, p. 413)

Creation of a favorable and comfortable atmosphere in the lesson for learning a language is one of the tasks of the teacher, "in order to achieve the goals set in the lesson, the RFL teacher must remember that his oral speech should be accessible to foreign students; the accessibility of the teacher's speech in this case is closely related to the requirement of appropriateness" (Vishnyakov & Tarasova, 2017, p. 49). However, according to surveys conducted in groups of foreign students, 66.7% of them experience psychological discomfort in the classroom. The speed of teacher's speech always seems very fast, a student

does not have enough time to understand the meaning (58.33%). Students cannot formulate a question for a teacher correctly (91.7%); they hardly perceive the “long” teacher’s monologue (75%). It is difficult for them to determine where one sentence ends and another one begins in the teacher’s continuous speech (66.7%), the wording of the task in a large block by teacher is incomprehensible (91.7%), students cannot understand the meaning if some unfamiliar words are found in the teacher’s speech (75%). We mean the following words, phrases and sentences that sometimes a teacher can include in the speech: *sovershenno verno* (quite right); *vnimatel’no posmotreli* (let’s look carefully at); *teper’ davaite obobschim scazannoye* (now let’s summarize); *nu vot, tol’ko odin student vidit, a ostal’nye ne vidyat?* (well, only one student sees, what about the others?); *sadimsya na mesto* (take your sit); *poprivetstvuem drug druga* (let’s greet each other); *segodnyashniy urok ne isklucheniye* (this lesson is not an exception); *pishem krasivo* (write beautifully); *sobludayem naklon bukovok* (take the right slant); *chisto pishem* (write carefully); *nastraivayemsya na urok* (let’s warm up on the lesson); *propuskayem dve strochki* (skip two lines); *pishem krasivo, razborchivo* (write beautifully, clearly); *ne zabud’te pro polya* (don’t forget about the margins); *vse glazki na menya* (keep your eyes on me); *my vidim bukvy glazkami, a zvuki my slyshim ushkami* (we see letters with eyes and hear sounds with ears); *mnogo-premnogo slov* (many-many words); *segodnya my s vami uzhe videlis’, pristupim* (we have already seen each other today, let’s start); *chtoby ne mudrstvovat’ lukavo* (without further ado); *zaintrigovat’ vas* (in order to intrigue you); *vzyali ruchki i zapisali* (take your pen and make a note); *sidim pryamo* (sit up straight) and etc. Perhaps, the reason of misunderstanding is explained precisely in the warning, made by Balykhina (2012), to RFL teacher working with foreign students, who already have some language skills. She claims that “active speech interaction at the lesson can lead to the penetration and even “invasion” of spoken elements into linguo-didactic discourse, though some of them can be inappropriate in a particular educational situation or even prohibited by educational traditions” (p. 261). There are some other practical examples of working with foreign students: the teacher asks the question “*Soglasny li vy s tem, chto zimoy polezno est’ frukty?*” (Do you agree that it is good to eat fruits in winter?), and the student names favorite fruits and vegetables. Probably the student does not understand the question or is not ready to give a detailed answer. The teacher asks in what situation it is necessary to use the imperative form of the verb and the student just gives some examples of the imperative. The dialogue between student and teacher is unproductive, because, according to G. Gao, “At the lessons of Russian as a foreign language, the most important thing for teachers is the way students can understand and perceive teachers’ speech, and how, in the end, they can master the studied language in order to achieve successful intercultural communication” (Gao, 2018, p. 12).

1.2. Openness of Problem of Conversational Interaction between RFL Teacher and Student

Despite the existing scientific and methodological developments, the problem of communicative interaction between the teacher and the student remains open, “the main problem of the teacher is the search for methods of developing the educational competencies of students studying the language as a condition for ensuring the quality of the program” (Aripova et al., 2020, p. 393), “The development of oral skills is the most frequent pedagogical goal of teacher-student interaction” (Gulubba et al., 2019, p. 1035). The question arises, what is the reason for the lack of productive interaction. Of course, when answering this question, one cannot deny the level of a foreign student's knowledge of the Russian language, exclude

possible options for ignorance of the lexical meaning of the word, the grammatical form of the verb, etc., “education should be aimed at mastering universal communicative competence” (Volchenkova et al., 2019, p. 648). The relevance of studying the problem of communicative interaction between an RFL teacher and a foreign student is also due to "the need to introduce innovative pedagogical technologies into the educational process of higher education as the most important form of modern education" (Ivanov, 2020, p. 1).

2. Problem Statement

In our opinion, one of the solutions to the problem is the correct organization of the teacher's speech, so that it is not only understandable to the student, but that it serves as an example for the student to organize his speech. “Teachers can achieve good learning outcomes by carefully asking questions in front of the class, organizing class discussions, and summarizing post-class reflections” (Xie, 2021, p. 347), also "dialogical interaction includes mutual evaluation of various ideas, manifested in the teacher's support for students" (Lehesvuori et al., 2019, p. 2557).

2.1. RFL Teacher’s Speech as the Knowledge Source and Speech Model for Foreign Student

In practice, even after a brilliant lesson, a teacher can see sometimes that a student has many questions, one’s self-esteem is low and communicative competence does not develop. Moreover, even active teaching methods do not always contribute to the formation of the correct, clear speech of a student. One still creates sentences according to the rules of native language, makes mistakes in constructing coherent logical speech and, unfortunately, a teacher does not have enough time to correct these mistakes orally. In addition, such a problem of the correct formulation of tasks of a communicative type in a foreign audience remains relevant, "the authors discuss the basic skills necessary for an effective communicative process of interpersonal interaction" (Mikhaylova et al., 2020, p. 120), as "to construct a modern effective teaching model based on an innovative platform that is formed in the process of deploying classroom discourse in educational communication" (Chailak & Mukhammad, 2017, p. 77).

2.2. The Necessity of Search for Effective Form of Interaction between RFL Teacher and Foreign Student at the Lesson

The search for an effective form of interaction between teacher and student continues. It is known that “teacher’s speech is a teaching instrument, but it should not prevail at the lesson, and a teacher, especially on the advanced stages, must abandon the role of the “speech leader” (Kharitonova & Baranova, 2018). In this article, we pay attention to that part of RFL teacher’s activity, which includes the issue of the lexical-grammar foundations of the interaction between teacher and student in terms of formulating questions for a student. Correct formulation of questions will not only improve the quality of students’ learning process, but will also contribute to the formation of a positive attitude towards the subject through meeting their educational needs in “Russian as a Foreign Language” lesson.

3. Research Questions

Among all the functions of an RFL teacher, such as explaining, telling, controlling, evaluating, encouraging, praising, clarifying, stimulating, suggesting, sharing impressions, expressing emotions, asking, motivating, correcting, objecting, doubting, agreeing, disagreeing, being surprised, listening, we pay special attention to the way of asking questions. We believe that the use of various types of questions at the lesson should not be spontaneous and unprompted, but conscious and prepared for all stages of the lesson. As a rule, at the beginning of a lesson, a teacher's activity is focused on establishing contact with students. According to our opinion, clarifying or alternative questions may be more effective at this stage. This will attract the attention of students, involve shy ones in the lesson process, demonstrate the correct order of speech organization and focus on new vocabulary and repetition of familiar words. Then, at the stages of explaining new material, when the students' mental activity and motivation to learn new vocabulary are required, a teacher can use closed-ended questions; open-ended questions will be appropriate when a teacher wants to hear a free and detailed answer from a student.

Therefore, in our research, we raise the following questions:

3.1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the different types of questions a teacher poses to students?

3.2. What are the methodical risks for a teacher when posing different types of questions?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to present the lexical-grammar foundations of the RFL teacher's speech in the aspect of questions, the correct formulation of which will allow a teacher to fulfill one's pedagogical functions successfully. It is also necessary to characterize the advantages of the questions, their methodological capabilities, as well as the disadvantages and methodological risks, which can take place in the result. It is supposed to formulate conclusions about the necessity of all types of questions as a component of the RFL educational system.

5. Research Methods

In order to identify the essence of the use and the content of questions, we applied theoretical research methods, such as analysis, synthesis, generalization, the empirical method of questioning, experiment.

To study the effectiveness of using all types of questions, we conducted a lesson in one group on the topic "Profession. Job. Employment" according to the traditional structure. In total, 36 questions were asked by the teacher, 21 of them were closed-ended questions (58.3%) and 15 – open-ended (41.7%). As a result, 25% of students were involved in a dialogue with the teacher. Other 75% of students carefully listened to those who answered, expressed their opinions, asked questions, but most of them could not become active participants in the dialogue themselves. They wrote down everything that was studied at the lesson diligently, but did not decide to express speech activity. What is the reason? It is important to consider what types of questions the teacher asked at the lesson. In another group, the teacher used all kinds of questions

(total number of questions – 36) on the topic “Profession. Job. Employment”: 11% – open-ended questions, 27.7% – closed-ended questions, 22.2% – clarifying questions, 22.2% – alternative questions, 16.7% – guiding questions. As a result, 83.3% of students joined the dialogue with the teacher presenting expressions of different volume. This is because students were not limited in their ability to use their range of language instruments. Each of them found the question that corresponded with one’s language and communicative level, psychological characteristics.

Thus, we conclude that in practical work with foreign students, some questions, which are familiar to a teacher, can turn out to be unproductive. After visiting a lesson, a student is not satisfied with the results of personal work and the student’s educational needs are not realized. Verbalization of communicative tasks through special methodological techniques, which expresses in questions, helps to create an authentic language environment and to realize the goals and objectives of the lesson.

6. Findings

Various types of questions allow predicting the indicators of quality education of foreign students in their learning and cognitive activities and focusing on the formation of foreign language communicative competence. Now let us consider them.

6.1. Lexical-grammar Foundations of Different Question Types

6.1.1. Lexical-grammar Foundation of Closed-ended Questions

Closed-ended questions do not have interrogative words. Sometimes they can include a particle “*li*” in their structure. There are examples of closed-ended questions: *vybor professii po dushe vazhen dlya kazhdogo cheloveka, ne tak li?* (Finding a profession you like is important for every person, right?); *vy khoteli by imet’ professiyu po dushe?* (Would you like to have a profession that you like?); *professiya perevodchika trebuyet vysokogo urovnya vladeniya yazykom?* (Does the profession of translator require a high level of language proficiency?); *vy khoteli by stat’ lotchikom?* (Would you like to become a pilot?); *vy smogli by seychas poyti uchit’sya i smenit’ professiyu?* (Could you now start new training and change your profession?); *budushchemu inzheneru vazhno znat’ fiziku?* (Is it important for a future engineer to know Physics?); *psikholog vseгда mozhet pomoch’ lyudyam reshit’ svoi vnutrenniye problemy?* (Can a psychologist always help people to solve their internal problems?), etc.

6.1.2. Methodological Possibilities of Closed-ended Questions

Closed-ended questions are necessary in the situations, when a student cannot formulate one’s own statement and a teacher wants to make sure that a student understood the task correctly; a student is restrained due to personal characteristics or nationality factors; a teacher wants to get a clear answer “Yes” or “No” from student or to determine the student’s attitude to something. Such questions allow a teacher to establish contact with students, who are initially not inclined to take part in the lesson or doubt the correctness of one’s answer, being indecisive or just not having enough words to express the answer. Closed-ended questions stimulate students, as far as they do not require a detailed answer. These questions

are useful at the beginning of the conversation and in all cases when it is necessary to get an affirmative answer or determine certain facts in order to plan your further actions.

6.1.3. Disadvantages of Closed-ended Questions and Methodological Risks

The choice of answers for students is limited to “Yes” or “No”. Student is not supposed to give the detailed answer, creative approach to formulating one’s own statement is impossible. The risk is that a student may be asked, though one is ready to give detailed answer.

6.2. Lexical-grammar Foundation of Open-ended Questions

Such questions begin with “*Kto?*” (Who), “*Gde?*” (Where), “*Kogda?*” (When), “*Zachem?*” (What for), “*Pochemy?*” (Why), etc. There are examples of open-ended questions: *cto dlya vas vazhno pri vybore professii?* (What is important to you when choosing a profession?); *cto nuzhno sdelat', chtoby pravil'no vybrat' professiyu?* (What do you need to do to choose the right profession?); *kto mozhet dat' khoroshiy sovet, kakuyu professiyu vybrat'?* (Who can provide good advice, what profession to choose?); *gde mozhno poluchit' vybrannuyu vami professiyu?* (Where can you get the chosen profession?); *kakiye professii seychas nakhodyatsya na pike populyarnosti?* (What professions are very popular now?); *pochemu luchshe vybirat' professiyu po dushe?* (Why is it better to choose a profession that you like?); *zachem pri vybore professii nado uchityvat' sposobnosti rebyonka?* (Why is it necessary to take into account the child’s abilities when choosing a profession?), etc.

6.2.1. Methodological Possibilities of Open-ended Questions

Open-ended questions require a detailed answer. It is better to use them in small groups, when each student has the opportunity to speak on the issue, to express personal opinion and assessment of something. A student cannot give a simple answer to these questions. The open-ended questions allow a student to express thoughts freely. A teacher can find some errors in the use of words or in the grammar construction. A student creates the answer in accordance with the rules of free speech. One thinks out loud, gives an assessment of the event or subject, formulates personal thoughts on the basis of language knowledge. Such questions allow creating a comfortable situation for communication at the lesson, identifying the grammatical, lexical and stylistic errors of a student.

With the help of such questions, it is possible to identify meaningful problems of students and introduce the necessary adjustments in the methodology of teaching the subject.

6.2.2. Disadvantages of Open-ended Questions and Methodological Risks

A teacher has to listen to the whole answer. It can be too long, so other students do not have time to present their answers. This makes it difficult to use open-ended questions in a limited time. If a student belongs to a certain type of culture, the need to make a detailed answer can put one in an awkward position. While listening to the answer, a teacher may find some facts to clarify in the student’s response. The question asked in an unusual for a foreign student form may confuse one and destroy the established

communicative contact. That can lead to difficulties in continuing the speech or to finishing the response abruptly. A student's monologue may be illogical, inaccurate and difficult for other students to understand.

6.3. Lexical-grammar Foundation of Clarifying Questions

Clarifying questions contain “*Pravil’no li my ponimayem...?*” (Do we understand correctly ...?), “*Vy imely v vidu...?*” (Do you mean...?), “*To est’ vy khotite skazat’, chto...?*” (So you want to say that...) There are examples of clarifying questions: *pravil’no li ya vas ponimayu, chto dlya vas pri vybore professii vazhno uchityvat’ interesy cheloveka?* (Do I understand you correctly, that it is important for you to take into account the interests of a person when choosing a profession?); *to yest’ vy predpochitayete vybor professii po dushe, a ne po sposobnostyam?* (So you prefer to choose a profession that you like rather than this that you have abilities for?); *vy imeyete v vidu, chto nikto luchshe ne znayet, kakuyu professiyu vybrat’?* (Do you mean that no one knows better which profession to choose?); *vy schitayete, chto pri vybore professii nuzhno ponyat’ dlya sebya, chto takoye professiya?* (Do you think that when choosing a profession you need to understand for yourself what a profession is?), etc.

6.3.1. Methodological Possibilities of Clarifying Questions

Such questions should be asked if a teacher wants to teach a student to formulate concise answer in a situation, when a listener has doubts that one correctly understood the speaker. Clarifying questions can help a student to precise information, to concentrate the will and attention and mobilize. A teacher will be able to clarify the student's personal ideas about something, bring the student closer to preparing a detailed answer to the question. Since clarifying questions require short answers, they help create a comfortable environment for a student.

6.3.2. Disadvantages of Clarifying Questions and Methodological Risks

The choice of answers is also limited. A teacher spends a lot of time rephrasing student's answers.

6.4. Lexical-grammar Foundation of Alternative Questions

Alternative questions, which include “or-or” structure, offer ready-made answers to a student. There are examples of alternative questions: *vas interesuyet professiya vracha ili inzhenera?* (Are you interested in the profession of a doctor or engineer?); *professiyu cheloveku imet’ obyazatel’no ili neobyazatel’no?* (Is it necessary or mandatory for a person to have a profession?); *rabota shakhtera – odna iz samykh opasnykh ili samykh tyazhelykh v mire?* (Is a miner's job one of the most dangerous or the hardest in the world?); *rabota uchitelya trebuyet dobrozhelatel’nosti ili otvetstvennosti?* (Does a teacher's job require goodwill or responsibility?); *tvorcheskim lyudyam luchshe vybirat’ professiyu aktera ili dizaynera?* (Is it better for creative people to choose the profession of an actor or designer?); *yesli professiya interesnaya, to kazhdy den’ na rabote budet schastlivym ili produktivnym?* (If the profession is interesting, then every day at work will be happy or productive?), etc.

6.4.1. Methodological Possibilities of Alternative Questions

Such questions can be successfully used at any stage of the lesson. If asking these questions, it is possible to involve in the dialogue even the most indecisive students, to make them talk. It is easy for a student to choose the answer, since the alternative question offers two options. This simplifies the preparation of the answer and creates a comfortable environment for the dialogue. Indecisive students can also find advantages of this question for themselves.

6.4.2. Disadvantages of Alternative Questions and Methodological Risks

The choice of answers is limited. As far as there are given options, a student cannot express personal ideas and is forced to accept one of the answers that has already been proposed in the question. Excessive use of alternative questions does not contribute to the development of a student's vocabulary, because it is limited by the proposed answer options.

6.5. Lexical-grammar Foundation of Guiding Questions

The guiding questions include such words as “razve”, “ved” (after all), “ne pravda li” (is it not true, that), “konechno” (of course). Guiding questions have interrogative intonation and include the correct answer in their structure. A student should only repeat a part of the question that is the answer. There are examples of guiding questions: *razve ne vse mechtayut vybrat' professiyu po dushe?* (Everyone dreams of choosing a profession that one likes, doesn't it?); *ne pravda li, chto mnogiye schitayut, chto professiyu imet' ne obyazatel'no?* (Many believe that having a profession is not necessary, don't they?); *razve rabota vospitatelem ne trebuet ot cheloveka byt' dobrozhelatel'nym, otvetstvennym, umet' kontrolirovat' svoi emotsii?* (Work as a teacher requires a person to be friendly, responsible, able to control emotions, doesn't it?); *ved' tvorcheskiye lyudi dolzhny prismetret'sya k kreativnym professiyam?* (Creative people should take a closer look at creative professions, don't they?); *ved' sushchestvuyut zhe seychas spetsial'nyye nauchnyye testy, kotoryye pomogut cheloveku pravil'no vybrat' professiyu?* (There are now special scientific tests that will help a person choose the right profession, aren't they?), etc.

6.5.1. Methodological Possibilities of Guiding Questions

A student has the opportunity to get correct information about thing, which one does not know, when answering guiding questions. A teacher prepares a part of the answer. Such questions present a student the correct grammatical construction, formulated in accordance with the language rules. Guiding questions allow a student, who formulates the answer freely, to see the mistakes, to realize them, to correct and think about the way one creates sentences. It is possible to demonstrate correct speech patterns, if using these questions. A teacher can ask indecisive students and to see whether a student is ready to enter the dialogue at the lesson.

6.5.2. Disadvantages of Guiding Questions and Methodological Risks

A student is limited in expressing personal opinion and providing creative speech.

6.6. The Meaning of Structured System of Questions

A well-thought out and clearly structured system, a strong lexical-grammar foundation of questions can become an indispensable instrument for a teacher. Students can choose the answer that is most appropriate for them. They are able to express their answer in those language forms that they know best.

Thus, the disadvantages of students' reproductive perception of material are excluded, their activity is not minimized. They are required not only to understand, but also to reproduce the material, to receive, to systemize and repeat it.

7. Conclusion

It is a well-known fact that all students in the group are different. Everyone has their own level of language proficiency, even if all students have the same certificates. Each student has national and personal characteristics. A skillful combination of all kinds of questions, taking into account the national and psychological characteristics of students, will allow teachers and students to interact effectively. A strong lexical-grammar foundation of the questions will provide students with an opportunity to participate in the dialogue, to feel the language in action, to see their success and increase interest in the language. Properly formulated and stated questions will contribute to creating a positive atmosphere at the lesson, increasing student motivation to participate in an active dialogue and maintaining student attention during the lesson. However, mastering the technology of different question types formulating requires additional training for a teacher.

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