

**ICHEU 2021**  
**International Conference «Humanity in the Era of Uncertainty»**

**RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY GUIDES IN THE  
AGE OF DIGITALIZATION**

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**Abstract**

The article is dedicated to the principles of study guides creation in light of such modern problem as a preservation and transmission of humanities in the age of digitalization, which assumes an active implementation of new technologies in the education system. On the one hand, thanks to the government project “Modern Digital Educational Environment”, conditions for systemic advancements of education’s quality, online teaching availability, mixed studying organization, enhancements of continuous education’s possibilities, self-studying and more are created. On the other hand, a dire need for quick responses to the everchanging modern conditions, which require formation and organization of fundamentally new teaching structures for all educational process levels, is evident. Furthermore, new educational standards require new tools for collecting and compiling learning materials for students, including those who are studying Russian as a foreign language or who are planning to in the context of Russia’s entry restrictions. As a result of such ambivalent position, an uncertainty in the environment rises in both teachers and students. In such conditions, more effective and productive teaching technologies are needed for an effective access to the content and knowledge for students. Authors of the current article propose a study guide for dramatic reading, oriented to the development of skills related to the continuous, phased and systematic work on Russian literary texts, as a suggested content to the learners of Russian as a foreign language.

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*Keywords:* Digitalization, competence approach, dramatic reading, Russian as a Foreign Language



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## **1. Introduction**

The background to this article is the set of reflections of famous Russian philosopher and educator Dmitry Likhachov about the importance of humanities. In 1997, at his performance, he responded to the question should physicists and mathematicians learn human sciences, saying that any scientific work requires a general intelligence from a person, the main source of which is human sciences. Likhachov (1997) noted that art itself, art of speech or painting is founded on intuition and it nurtures this intuition, which is crucial to the human sciences and mathematics. Intuition is at the core of all, it cannot be replaced by a machine, and an artistic creation nurtures intuition the most. As an example, he cited Einstein, who was inspired by the works of Dostoevsky.

At the same time, we can witness an active integration of digital technologies in the educational environment that radically changes both the structure of learning itself and organization of teaching process, which used to prioritize its human component. Thus, by extrapolating Likhachov's thoughts to the present-day reality, we note that nowadays human sciences should not lose its relevance – especially when talking about communicative competence formation in the modern system of university education through the prism of texts, including classical Russian literature works.

It must be pointed out that, on the one hand, thanks to the government project “Modern Digital Educational Environment”, conditions for systemic advancements of education's quality, available online teaching, mixed studying organization, enhancements of continuous education's possibilities, self-study and more are created. On the other hand, a dire need for quick responses to the everchanging modern conditions, which require formation and organization of fundamentally new teaching structures for all educational process levels, is evident. As a result of such ambivalent position, an uncertainty in the environment rises both in teachers and students.

Moreover, it is revealed that the digitalization of education system, while relying on new teaching standards, requires the use of a new, competent approach that will make students master skills that will help them in their professional, personal and public lives if implemented.

Meanwhile, new educational standards require new tools for collecting and compiling learning materials for students, including those who are studying Russian as a foreign language or are planning to in the context of Russia's entry restrictions. In such conditions, more effective and productive teaching technologies are needed for an effective access to the content and knowledge for members of certain cultural and professional stratum.

## **2. Problem Statement**

As scientists note, digitalization of the higher education brings changes to both qualification requirements for teachers that are supposed to start using digital technologies, which will hopefully facilitate their work and the formats of knowledge transmission by them. This means that the role of teacher will change and instead of being a study material translator, one will act as a guide in a digital world. The result of such changes is the availability of electronic library resources from all world universities, as well as learning materials from the best teachers, to each and every student (Safuanov et al., 2019).

Authors of the current article propose a study guide for dramatic reading, oriented to the development of skills related to the continuous, phased and systematic work on Russian literary texts, as a suggested content to the learners of Russian as a foreign language.

Currently, a study guide for dramatic reading, proposed by the authors of this article, which is oriented to the development of skills related to the continuous, phased and systematic work on Russian literary texts in the context of complex work on the tone, expression and articulate-rhythmic compound of spoken speech of learners of Russian as a foreign language, can play the role of the available content (Sadykova, 2021).

Thus, by acknowledging text as a main unit of communication, researchers consider text as a mean and an example of “speech actualization of units studied in foreign language courses” (Ageeva & Makrishina, 2021, p. 2549). In the context of active use of text-centric approach by teachers, a solid text becomes the main didactic unit of teaching process and is perceived as a framework for skill formation both in receptive and reproductive types of speech activity (Ageeva & Makrishina, 2021).

Furthermore, researchers also acknowledge the fact that when finding and adapting texts of cultural and logical content for Russian as a Foreign Language lessons, an anthropocentric principle with moral and ethical foundations and human values in its core should be followed. Use of didactic materials will help compare and contrast material and spiritual values of different world nations, seek unique and shared features in cultures (Shtyrlina et al., 2020).

And finally, a formation of new discursive field and system of indication and representation of Russian literature outside of highly specialized (literature) knowledge in foreign students should be in focus of researchers’ interest (Salakhova & Burtceva, 2016, 2017).

### **3. Research Questions**

The set of main principles of the study guide for dramatic reading creation is the subject of the current article. Principles of developmental education, consciousness and activity, as well as visibility, were the fundamental principles of the study guide creation. Such key factors allow foreign students to form their skills and qualities required to successfully enter a foreign-language environment and adapt in it in the age of digitalization.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Dramatic reading is understood as “an art of recreating feelings and thoughts, which work of fiction is full of, in a live word; an art of expressing personal relationship of the performer toward the performed work” (Bim-Bad, 2002, p. 46). This is precisely why the main goal of implementing the current development into the foreign students’ learning process is the desire to form not only skills of aesthetic appreciation of Russian literary texts, but also the ability to replicate them independently. Furthermore, it is also noted that for dramatic readings, which are meaningful and emotional, it is important to develop reader’s certain skills that can be understood as a complex of abilities taken from both semantic and technical sides. Semantic side includes understanding of direct and indirect meanings of words, as well as

contents of each sentence, separate parts of the text (paragraph, epilogues, chapters) or text itself (Miftakhova et al., 2019).

The pedagogical goal of the suggested content is that communicative competence mostly forms not as a result of teacher's actions, but as a result of student's activity. This goal becomes more relevant with deeper understanding of the language, when dramatic reading can act as an additional effective method of controlling Russian language understanding and raising its quality of conscious use. It is no coincidence that scientists highlight that thanks to its abilities, dramatic reading can help teachers overcome problems related to the teaching of many human science disciplines, including literature, linguistic culturology, linguistic geographics, rhetoric and speech, while increasing motivation and saving study hours (Miftakhova et al., 2019; Razuvaeva, 2010; Sinadskaya, 2005).

## **5. Research Methods**

It is well known that there are two closely related methods widely used in the teachings of Russian as a Foreign Language: communicative and intensive.

Thus, as our colleagues are fairly pointing out while referring to the credible sources (Passov, 1985), in the process of material learning within communicative methods usage, students must have several formed types of interconnected competences that form speech activity: linguistic, speech, communicative, linguogeographical, all of which are related and updated in the process of speech activity formation (Makleeva et al., 2019). Leaving aside each one's analysis, let us list those competences, which are updated in terms of the proposed study guide – communicative and linguogeographical. The first one proposes an inclusion in the specified speech situation; the other one appeals to the features of culture, tradition and customs of the learning language country.

Moreover, a group of intensive methods holds a communicative direction and deserves special attention, in particular a method of relaxopedy by professor I.E. Schwarz and his colleagues. It provides maximal concentration from both teacher and learner by engaging them in a playful communicative environment and removing both parties' emotional barriers by audio and visual means (music, lightning, environment) (as cited in Makleeva et al., 2019). Within the suggested course, this method is actively used, since it requires a collective form of work with the proposed works of fiction with the maximal demonstration of each one's cognitive abilities.

## **6. Findings**

Within this article, we propose an experience with dramatic reading skill refining represented by modules that include continuous, phased and systematic analysis of authentic works of fiction.

The suggested content contains four thematic modules that include continuous, phased and systematic analysis of authentic works of fiction and processing of communicative competences.

1. Dramatic reading in the system of fairy tale analysis.
2. Dramatic reading in the system of fable analysis.
3. Dramatic reading in the system of lyric works analysis.
4. Dramatic reading in the system of prosaic works analysis.

Each mentioned modules includes a set of exercises build around the text. The selection of suggested texts from multiple genres was made taking into account the study plan for bachelor's program "Russian as a Foreign Language (for international students)".

Within this article, we can present our experience with the material from "Dramatic reading in the system of fable analysis" module, the point of which is to introduce foreign students to the features of dramatic reading in the system of fable's executive analysis. A work plan includes 1) actualization of their knowledge of fable as a genre of didactic literature, 2) executive analysis of Ivan Krylov's fable "*Vorona i Lisica*" ("The Crow and the Fox"), and 3) mastering their skills of fable's monologic reading (Krylov, 2021).



**Figure 1.** A drawing based on Ivan Krylov's fable

Before starting a dramatic reading of Ivan Krylov's fable "*Vorona i Lisica*" (Figure 01), students are offered the following list of tasks dedicated to the development of their communicative competences (Figure 2).

The first type of tasks implies the actualization of vocabulary and its enrichment. Furthermore, an actualization of information on regional geography, which increases with information and features about culture, traditions and customs of the learning language country, might occur.

**Task 1.** Familiarize yourselves with the words below. For example,

*lest'* – hypocritical obsequious praise. Related to the word *l'stec*

*licemerie* – insincerity

*vzgromozdyas'* – to climb on top of smth.

*plenil* ← *plenit'* – to charm someone

*plutóvka* – clever liar, swindler (feminine form)

*angel'skij golosok* – soft, kind

*veshchun'ya* – fortuneteller, usually predicts misfortunes in fairy tales and fables

*car'-ptica* – the best of the best

*bog poslal kusoček syru* – "godsent cheese". Cheese was considered an overseas delicacy due to its rarity

*vsyo ne vprok* – not good for someone

The second type of tasks implies working with text as a memo and answering the questions after text.

**Task 2.** Carefully read the memo about how to read fables. Answer the following questions.

The third type of tasks implies working with the fable’s text.

**Task 3.** Read the Ivan Krylov’s fable “*Vorona i Lisica*” to yourself. Pay attention to the details.

The fourth type of tasks implies the inclusion of audio and visual means in the educational process.

**Task 4.** Watch an animated film based on the Ivan Krylov’s fable “*Vorona i Lisica*”:

<https://youtu.be/mFWOHQpYhjk>.

The fifth type of tasks implies independent work with text.

**Task 5.** Read the Ivan Krylov’s fable “*Vorona i Lisica*” on your own.

The sixth type of tasks implies the semantic analysis of the fable.

**Task 6.** Read the following questions and semantically analyze the fable.

1. Who acted cunningly and flattering in the fable? 2. Why did the Fox succeed in fooling the Crow? 3. How does Ivan Krylov describe it? 4. Describe the Crow’s appearance. 5. Can the Crow be described as the prettiest bird? 6. What did the Fox say about crows’ appearance? 7. What kind of voice did the Crow have? 8. What did the Fox say about the Crow’s voice? 9. Why did the Fox praise the Crow so much? 10. Who does Ivan Krylov satirize and criticize the most in his fable?

The seventh type of tasks includes recommendations on how to prepare for dramatic reading.

**Task 7.** Read the first and second parts of the fable and the correlating recommendations for dramatic reading.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. <i>Vorone gde-to Bog poslal kusoček syru;<br/>                 Na el' Vorona vzgromozdyas',<br/>                 Pozavtrakat' bylo sovsem uzh sobralas',<br/>                 Da prizadumalas', a syr vo rtu derzhala.</i></p>  | <p>This part should be read in such a way that describes the “thinking” Crow with the precious finding.<br/>                 There is an ironic context in the words “<i>da prizadumalas</i>”, since the Crow was not that smart and had no smart thoughts.</p>   |
| <p>2. <i>“Golubushka, kak horosha!<br/>                 Nu chto za shejka, chto za glazki!<br/>                 Rasskazyvat', tak, pravo, skazki!<br/>                 Kakie peryshki! Kakoj nosok!<br/>                 I, verno, angel'skij byt' dolzhen golosok!<br/>                 Spoj, svetik, ne stydis'! Chto, ezheli, sestrica,<br/>                 Pri krasote takoj i pet' ty masterica, –<br/>                 Ved' ty b u nas byla car'-ptica!”</i></p> | <p>This part should be read in such a way that describes the nature of the flattering Fox.<br/>                 Exclamation marks enhance the emotional suspense of the waiting scene and require long pauses after: the Fox is waiting for the Crow’s reaction.<br/>                 The Crow reacts to the Fox’s words with movement:<br/>                 “<i>Nu chto za shejka</i>” (Crow moves her head)</p> |

**Figure 2.** Example of text and recommendations on its dramatic reading

## 7. Conclusion

Therefore, a multidimensional complex of tasks, which assumes a phased work with foreign students, reflects the presented work made with Ivan Krylov’s fable “*Vorona i Lisica*”. Such complex can be presented as a digital educational resource, since it includes audio and visual means and links to the available educational material for independent work. Thus, the fundamental principle of the suggested study

guide creation, which includes principles of developmental education, consciousness and activity, as well as visibility, is proven true. Such key principles allow students learning Russian as a foreign language to form their skills and qualities required to successfully enter a foreign-language environment.

## Acknowledgments

The research was carried out with the financial support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research.

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