

**METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF USING SONG MATERIAL IN TEACHING
RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the analysis of methodological principles underlying the use of song-based materials in teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL). Songs are examined as a specific type of authentic instructional text possessing significant linguodidactic and sociocultural potential. The study substantiates the relevance of applying text-centered and communicative approaches when working with song texts and identifies the key methodological principles and stages of their didactic implementation in the RFL classroom. It is demonstrated that the systematic integration of song materials into the teaching process contributes to the development of linguistic, communicative, and sociocultural competences of foreign learners. Due to their emotional richness, rhythmic structure, and cultural embeddedness, songs enhance learners' motivation, facilitate comprehension, and promote more effective language acquisition.

Keywords: Russian as a foreign language, RFL, song text, authentic materials, communicative competence, language teaching methodology

1. Introduction

In contemporary methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language, there is a growing interest in the use of authentic texts that ensure not only the formation of linguistic skills but also the learners' immersion into the culture of the target language. Authentic materials are increasingly regarded as an essential component of communicative language teaching, as they reflect real patterns of language use and cultural norms of native speakers (Passov, 2000; Bim, 2001). One such effective instructional resource is song-based material, which integrates verbal text, musical and rhythmic organization, and an emotional-evaluative component.

The relevance of employing songs in RFL instruction is determined by several factors. First, the formation of communicative competence in conditions of intercultural interaction requires exposure to texts that function in real communicative contexts (Shchukin, 2003). Second, song texts possess a high motivational potential, as music facilitates emotional engagement, reduces psychological barriers, and creates a favorable learning atmosphere (Levi, 1966). Third, songs provide a unique opportunity to integrate linguistic and cultural content, allowing learners to perceive language as a living cultural phenomenon rather than a purely formal system (Galskova & Gez, 2006).

Despite the widespread use of songs in teaching practice, the methodological principles governing their effective application remain insufficiently systematized and theoretically grounded. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the didactic potential of song materials is required.

The aim of this article is to describe the key methodological principles and stages of working with song-based materials in RFL classes within the framework of text-centered and communicative approaches.

2. Literature Review and Methodology

In foreign language teaching methodology, the text has traditionally been regarded as the central didactic unit through which all types of speech activity are formed and the linguistic personality of the learner is developed (Leontiev, 1999; Shchukin, 2003). It is at the textual level that lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic components of language are integrated and the communicative orientation of instruction is realized. Within the text-centered approach, the text functions not only as a source of linguistic material but also as a model of speech behavior that reflects culturally specific ways of conceptualizing reality (Arutyunov, 1990).

In this context, the song is interpreted as an authentic instructional text characterized by specific structural, semantic, and functional features. Song texts reflect elements of the national worldview, capture aspects of living language practice, and demonstrate culturally relevant modes of emotional and evaluative interpretation of reality (Galskova & Gez, 2006). Their use in RFL instruction allows educational communication to approximate real conditions of language functioning, which is particularly important in intercultural learning environments.

Song texts are distinguished by their syncretic nature, manifested in the organic combination of verbal and musical components, as well as by their compact form and high emotional intensity. These characteristics contribute to more durable retention of linguistic material. The rhythmic and intonational organization of songs enhances memorization of lexical and grammatical structures and facilitates the perception of phonetic features of the Russian language (Levi, 1966). Moreover, song texts incorporate linguistic units at various levels—phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic—functioning in a natural communicative context. At the same time, they contain culturally marked elements, symbolic imagery, and precedent phenomena, as well as a pronounced pragmatic orientation toward the addressee (Kudryavtseva, 1985). These properties make songs an effective tool for developing both linguistic and sociocultural competences of learners.

The methodological framework of the study includes the descriptive-analytical method, which makes it possible to identify structural and functional characteristics of song texts; the functional-communicative approach, focused on analyzing language in use (Passov, 2000); and elements of linguocultural analysis aimed at revealing cultural meanings and value dominants. The integrated application of these methods allows songs to be viewed as a multifunctional instructional resource contributing to the formation of comprehensive communicative competence in learners of Russian as a foreign language.

3. Results

In RFL methodology, communicative competence is defined as the learners' ability to effectively use linguistic resources in a wide range of real-life communicative situations, including the perception, interpretation, and production of utterances (Passov, 2000). From this perspective, song texts demonstrate high methodological effectiveness, as they meet the essential requirements imposed on instructional texts: informativeness, coherence, integrity, pragmatic orientation, and semantic completeness (Arutyunov, 1990).

The use of song-based materials in the learning process promotes the development of listening skills due to the natural intonational and rhythmic organization of speech. Musical

accompaniment facilitates the perception of linguistic material, enhances its memorability, and enables learners to intuitively acquire intonation patterns, rhythm, and stress typical of Russian speech (Levi, 1966). Subsequent work with song texts stimulates productive types of speech activity—speaking and writing—through discussions, expression of personal attitudes, and interpretation of the author’s intent (Shchukin, 2003).

Songs also serve as significant carriers of national and cultural information. Their content reflects social values, emotional and evaluative attitudes, elements of historical and social context, as well as features of the linguistic consciousness of native speakers (Galskova & Gez, 2006). The inclusion of song materials in the instructional process makes it possible to model situations of intercultural communication and foster sociocultural and intercultural competences.

4. Discussion

The methodological principles governing the use of song-based materials in teaching Russian as a foreign language constitute an integrated system of interrelated pedagogical guidelines ensuring purposeful inclusion of songs in instruction (Shchukin, 2003). Their consistent implementation makes it possible to regard songs not merely as auxiliary or motivational elements, but as full-fledged instructional tools contributing to the development of communicative competence in foreign learners.

The principle of communicative orientation presupposes the use of song texts as a basis for developing speech skills and abilities related to meaning interpretation. A song is viewed as a complete communicative act characterized by a specific pragmatic intention and addressed to a particular audience. This allows song-based materials to be effectively incorporated into both dialogic and monologic speech activities, to model authentic communicative situations, and to foster learners’ ability to express, justify, and negotiate personal viewpoints in the target language.

The principle of authenticity focuses on the use of original song texts that reflect real linguistic usage and contemporary cultural processes. Authentic songs provide learners with exposure to natural lexical choices, idiomatic expressions, and culturally embedded meanings. At the same time, authenticity does not exclude methodologically justified adaptation. Selective adaptation is aimed at reducing excessive linguistic complexity while preserving the semantic integrity and cultural value of the original text, thus maintaining its educational effectiveness.

The principle of accessibility is implemented through the careful selection of song material in accordance with learners’ language proficiency levels. Lexical and grammatical complexity, text length, thematic content, and stylistic features should correspond to learners’ cognitive and linguistic capacities. Observing this principle ensures an optimal balance between cognitive challenge and comprehensibility, which is essential for maintaining motivation and preventing communicative frustration.

The principle of cultural embeddedness involves treating songs as carriers of national and cultural information. Song texts reflect cultural realities, value systems, emotional attitudes, and symbolic representations characteristic of Russian linguistic culture. Working with song-based materials encourages learners to interpret culturally marked elements, compare cultural perspectives, and develop awareness of sociocultural norms, thereby contributing to the formation of sociocultural and intercultural competence.

The principle of staged instruction ensures the logical organization of work with song materials and is realized through a sequence of pre-text, while-text, and post-text stages. This structured approach enables a gradual transition from initial perception and comprehension of the text to its interpretation and active use in speech, thereby supporting the systematic development of communicative skills.

The principle of methodological relevance emphasizes that the use of song-based materials must be strictly aligned with specific instructional objectives and expected learning outcomes. Songs should not serve a purely decorative or entertainment function in the classroom; rather, they should be deliberately selected and integrated as tools for solving concrete linguistic, communicative, and cultural tasks.

Stages of Working with Song-Based Material

From a methodological perspective, a three-stage model of working with songs is considered pedagogically effective.

The pre-text stage is aimed at preparing learners for text perception. It includes activities focused on predicting content, activating background knowledge, and introducing key vocabulary. This stage reduces language anxiety and facilitates more conscious and meaningful comprehension of the song text.

The while-text stage involves direct listening to the song and focuses on understanding both the general meaning and specific details of the text. Learners identify linguistic features, expressive devices, and key semantic elements, which contributes to the development of listening comprehension and analytical skills.

The post-text stage is oriented toward productive speech activities. Learners participate in discussions, retell or interpret the song's content, express personal reactions, and complete creative tasks. This stage promotes the active use of newly acquired language material in speech and supports the integration of linguistic knowledge into communicative practice.

Conclusion

Song-based material represents an effective didactic resource in teaching Russian as a foreign language, provided that it is employed in a methodologically sound manner. Adherence to the principles of communicative orientation, authenticity, accessibility, and staged instruction allows songs to be integrated into the learning process as full-fledged instructional texts (Passov, 2000; Galskova & Gez, 2006). Systematic work with song material contributes to the development of learners' linguistic, communicative, and sociocultural competences.

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