



IMPROVING THE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING LISTENING AND READING THROUGH AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN RFL INSTRUCTION

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Abstract

The article examines modern approaches to teaching listening and reading in Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) using authentic materials. It describes methodological stages for working with genuine texts, audio, and video materials and proposes interactive, creative techniques aimed at increasing students' motivation and the effectiveness of language acquisition. Special attention is given to digital technologies, adapting materials to learners' proficiency levels, and developing sociocultural competence. Examples of classroom tasks and procedures applicable in a university setting are provided.

Keywords: RFL, authentic materials, listening, reading, teaching methodology, digital technologies, motivation.

Introduction

Contemporary methodology for teaching Russian as a foreign language strives for learning that mirrors real-world communication as closely as possible. Listening and reading are fundamental skills for comprehensive foreign-language comprehension.

The Nature of Listening

Listening is the comprehension of speech perceived aurally. It is a perceptive-cognitive-mnemonic activity comprising:

Perceptive processes: perception, reception;



Cognitive processes: analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, comparison, abstraction, concretization;

Mnemonic processes: identifying and retaining salient features, forming mental images, recognizing information by matching it with stored patterns.

Advantages of Authentic Texts

Authentic texts offer significant advantages over textbook excerpts. Above all, they reflect the worldview of native speakers. As I.A. Moiseenko notes, “Authentic texts reproduce the worldview characteristic of speakers of the target language” (Moiseenko, 2016, p. 145). These materials acquaint learners with national culture, foster cultural competence, spark interest, encourage discussion and analysis, and thus increase motivation. They also develop communicative competence by exposing students to thematic vocabulary, conversational clichés, fixed expressions, slang, and contemporary grammatical structures typical of spontaneous speech.

Classifying Authentic Materials

Methodological literature offers several approaches to classification. K.S. Krichevskaya groups them under "pragmatic materials" comprising information about everyday life (Krichevskaya, 1996; see also Voronina, 1999; Stempleski & Tomalin, 1991). J. Gebhard (1996) proposes the following typology:

Audiovisual materials — TV commercials, feature and documentary films, TV shows, cartoons, music videos, news broadcasts;

Audio materials — audiobooks, musical works, radio commercials and broadcasts;

Visual materials — artistic images, photographs, slides, road signs, stamps, postcards;

Print materials — newspaper articles, sports pages, song lyrics, playbills, phone directories, tourist brochures, comics, tickets, receipts;

Real-world objects — coins, banknotes, masks, toys, and other artefacts.

Listening as Goal and Means

In modern methodology, listening functions both as an objective and as a means of instruction. It introduces new linguistic material, helps form skills in all other



language activities, maintains achieved proficiency, and shapes learners' own listening strategies. Listening is the goal when students obtain information through auditory input, for example from a text or a film.

Theoretical Foundations

Employing authentic materials draws on communicative, learner-centred, and cognitive approaches. I.L. Galskova emphasises that language acquisition should develop as a “dialogue of cultures,” with authentic material mediating between linguistic form and sociocultural content (Galskova, 2004). N.D. Gez stresses the need for gradual inclusion of genuine texts, beginning with adaptation and progressing to full originals (Gez, 1996). E.V. Makhmutova (2020) notes that such materials help form a realistic understanding of linguistic norms, style, and etiquette. N.V. Bondarenko (2018) observes that they stimulate cognitive activity and foster critical thinking.

Principles for Selecting Authentic Materials

- Cultural richness (elements of everyday life, traditions, realia);
- Topical relevance (work, finance, transport, education);
- Linguistic value (vocabulary, grammar, phraseology);
- Potential for multi-level processing (from global understanding to detailed analysis).

Methodological Stages

- Pre-text stage: motivation, topic discussion, introduction of key vocabulary;
- Text stage: first and repeated exposure followed by comprehension tasks;
- Post-text stage: discussion, application of new language, creative follow-ups.

Sample Tasks

Listening (job-interview excerpt):

- Identify where and in what role the speaker works.
- What does he say about his schedule?
- Do you agree with him? Why?

Reading (article on bank cards):

- Find arguments for and against cash-free payments.
- Create a diagram: advantages – disadvantages.



Write a short personal opinion.

Interactive (video clip with subtitles):

Watch the video “How a Job Interview Goes in Moscow.”

Compare it with the situation in your country.

Prepare a mini-dialogue: a student at an interview.

Digital Technologies and AI

Platforms such as LyricsTraining and YouGlish, together with AI-driven tools like ChatGPT and Rewordify, give instructors new means to adapt authentic input and personalise tasks. They allow teachers to generate, for example, a quiz on a blog post or a question list for a podcast, aligning with Galskova’s emphasis on individualised instruction.

Creative Component

Project “Russian Speech Around Us”: collect five authentic texts (announcement, chat, menu, news item, post) and analyse their vocabulary;

Review: write a film or article review using the listened/viewed material;

Role play “Interview at an International Company” — prepare using videos, job listings, and discussion of Russian business-communication norms.

Conclusion

Authentic materials immerse learners in natural linguistic contexts, nurturing both language and sociocultural skills. Although their use demands methodological flexibility, creativity, and digital literacy, the resulting student engagement and motivation fully justify the effort. The future of RFL methodology lies in the broad integration of such resources together with AI and adaptive platforms. Applying the principles articulated by Galskova and Gez supports learner-centred instruction that respects cultural diversity and employs effective cognitive strategies for text processing.



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