

FORMATION OF SKILLS IN TEACHING THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND IN USING IT IN PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: This article analyzes the formation of professional competence in teaching Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) within the higher education system. The research emphasizes the transition from traditional language instruction to a communicative-activity approach focused on students' future specializations (e.g., agriculture, engineering). Using the context of Uzbekistan and other CIS countries, the study examines key aspects such as teaching Russian as a medium for professional communication, terminology acquisition, the integration of digital technologies, and the pedagogical mastery of instructors. Furthermore, the role of CEFR international standards in developing students' linguistic and professional-communicative skills is discussed, alongside contemporary educational challenges and strategic solutions.

Keywords: Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL), professionally oriented teaching, communicative competence, higher education, agricultural terminology, methodology, digital literacy, CIS, professional

In contemporary higher education, teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL) is increasingly understood as training for real academic and professional communication rather than as the transmission of an abstract language system. In CIS countries, this shift is closely linked with national development strategies that emphasize international cooperation, including collaboration with Russia in fields such as agriculture, engineering, and other applied sciences. For Uzbekistan, where state policy explicitly prioritizes mastering the languages of partner countries and strengthening the agricultural sector, professionally oriented RFL becomes a key instrument for preparing competitive specialists able to function in a multilingual labor market. In this context, the formation of skills in RFL teaching is inseparable from the ability to use Russian for solving professional tasks in real-life settings. Modern RFL methodology in higher education is based on the principle of professional orientation, which requires that language instruction reflect students' future specializations, their anticipated communicative tasks, and the discursive practices of their professions. Professionally oriented teaching of Russian is seen as a structured process that coordinates goals, content, methods, and assessment tools to develop both linguistic and professional-communicative competence. This approach moves away from mass, purely theoretical instruction toward individualized learning trajectories, where students choose not only the linguistic material but also the cultural and professional contexts in which they will apply Russian. The main pedagogical focus is no longer simply mastering grammar and vocabulary, but achieving the ability to participate in professional dialogue, understand specialized texts, and operate effectively in multicultural and multilingual environments in which Russian serves as a medium of communication.



The core objective of RFL teaching today is the formation of communicative competence, understood as the ability to perform verbal communication in different spheres of life, including academic and professional domains. Communicative competence integrates several components: linguistic knowledge (grammar, phonetics, vocabulary), speech skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), and practical abilities such as managing interaction, using appropriate registers, and interpreting implicit meanings. In higher education, these components are developed systematically through work on four types of speech activity, with special emphasis on oral communication and interactive tasks that approximate authentic situations. At the same time, the development of communicative competence is linked with personal qualities such as responsibility, autonomy, and initiative, since a significant share of success depends on students' independent work and their readiness to repeat, consolidate, and apply material beyond the classroom. The methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language has therefore undergone a qualitative transformation, adapting to global changes in education, new technological conditions, and evolving student needs. Traditional, teacher-centered models based on explanation and reproduction have gradually been replaced by communicative, activity-based, and competency-oriented approaches that foreground interaction, problem solving, and reflection. In this paradigm, teachers are required to design tasks that imitate real professional communication: role-plays, case studies, simulations, project work, and “edutainment” activities that integrate entertainment with serious learning. At the same time, methodological thinking must take into account the multilingual background of students, the interference of their native languages with Russian, and the specific lexical and grammatical difficulties that arise at the intersection of systems. In higher education, effective RFL teaching depends on a complex set of teacher skills that extend far beyond linguistic competence. Methodological mastery is fundamental: instructors must be able to select and sequence learning materials according to students' proficiency levels, communicative needs, and professional orientations, as well as to combine traditional and innovative methods in a coherent way. This includes designing exercises that not only train grammatical forms but also create meaningful communicative situations in which students must express opinions, justify decisions, and negotiate meanings. Digital literacy has become equally important, as modern RFL instruction widely uses multimedia presentations, online platforms, educational applications, and gamified tools to simulate an immersive language environment and sustain student motivation. Cultural sensitivity is another key component of the teacher's professional profile. Since RFL classes are often multicultural, instructors must be able to take into account students' national and cultural specificities, prevent misunderstandings, and turn differences into a resource for intercultural dialogue. This involves choosing examples, texts, and topics that are relevant to the students' realities and, at the same time, open windows into Russian-speaking cultures and professional communities. Psychological adaptability is also crucial, as many students experience language anxiety and a persistent “fear of mistakes” that blocks communication. Teachers must build a supportive atmosphere, encourage experimentation with language, and demonstrate concretely how Russian increases students' academic and professional opportunities, for example through participation in joint projects, internships, or international conferences.

For students in non-linguistic specialties, including future agricultural engineers, the ultimate goal is professional communicative competence—the ability to solve specialized tasks in Russian within their field of study. This competence presupposes a high degree of autonomy in reading and interpreting professional texts, producing oral and written discourse in standard



professional genres, and interacting with colleagues and partners on technical, economic, or organizational issues. Terminology acquisition is central here: learners must master scientific and technical vocabulary specific to their profession, understand term definitions, and apply them correctly in context. In agriculture, this includes terms related to crop production, livestock, mechanization, soil science, irrigation, and agribusiness, which appear regularly in textbooks, regulations, and research literature in Russian.

Alongside terminology, students must acquire skills of business communication in Russian, as they will often need to prepare reports, write business letters, fill out technical documentation, and participate in meetings or negotiations. This requires knowledge of the conventions of business style, the ability to structure information clearly and logically, and awareness of etiquette norms in Russian-speaking professional communication. Scientific proficiency represents another important dimension: students must be able to work with the scientific style of speech—reading articles, understanding abstracts, formulating hypotheses, and summarizing research results. Competence in this area opens access to Russian-language scientific journals, conference materials, and technical standards that remain significant in many fields across the CIS.

The integration of agricultural or other specialized terminology into RFL courses is not simply a matter of vocabulary expansion; it is a way to connect language learning directly with students' professional identity and motivation. When learners see that the Russian words and structures they practice are immediately applicable to their core subjects—such as agronomy, engineering, or economics—their engagement increases and they perceive RFL classes as an integral part of their professional formation rather than an abstract requirement. Task design plays a decisive role here: instructors can create communicative situations in which students discuss experimental data, analyze technological schemes, or solve production problems using Russian, thereby simultaneously forming both subject and language competencies.

In many universities, including those in Uzbekistan, RFL programs are organized according to national educational standards and aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which describes levels of competence from A1 to C2. Students typically progress from basic social interaction at A1–A2, where the focus is on elementary everyday communication, to B1–B2 levels, where they can understand and produce more complex texts, including professional content. For future specialists, the target is usually at least B2 or C1, which allows them to interpret abstract and specialized texts, participate in discussions on professional topics, and express nuanced opinions. Alignment with CEFR ensures transparency of learning outcomes and facilitates academic mobility, enabling graduates to validate their Russian proficiency in international contexts.

The broader social and economic context strongly influences the formation of skills in RFL teaching and learning. In Uzbekistan and other CIS countries, competition in the labor market is increasing, and graduates of local universities must match the competence levels of their peers from foreign institutions. Russian continues to play a significant role in regional cooperation, functioning as a language of scientific communication, business, and official documentation in many cross-border initiatives. This situation creates objective demand for high-quality RFL instruction that develops not only linguistic and communicative skills but also the capacity for lifelong learning, self-education, and adaptation to changing professional requirements.



At the same time, the RFL system faces serious challenges: shortages of qualified teachers, insufficient funding for professional development, and the slow renewal of teaching materials and technological infrastructure. These problems can hinder the implementation of modern communicative and professionally oriented methods, especially in regional universities. A strategic response requires investment in teacher training centers, expansion of continuing education programs, and the creation of up-to-date, culturally relevant textbooks and digital resources that reflect current communicative practices and professional realities. Networking and cooperation between universities across the CIS, including joint curricula, academic mobility, and shared online platforms, can help to pool resources and disseminate innovative practices in RFL teaching. Despite the growing role of technologies—online courses, virtual classrooms, automatic assessment tools—the teacher remains the central figure in the RFL learning process. Modern digital instruments can support practice, provide additional input, and facilitate independent work, but they cannot replace live pedagogical interaction, timely feedback, and the modeling of accurate, stylistically adequate speech. The teacher's personal speech culture, ability to communicate clearly and without errors, and willingness to engage in dialogue with students significantly influence the formation of learners' language habits and their attitude toward Russian. The most productive model is a partnership in which the teacher guides, supports, and motivates, while students assume responsibility for their own progress, regularly revisiting and deepening their understanding through repetition and active use of the language in and beyond the classroom.

Overall, the formation of skills in teaching Russian as a foreign language in higher educational institutions and in using it in professional activities is a multidimensional process that combines methodological innovation, professional orientation, and the development of individual learner autonomy. In CIS contexts such as Uzbekistan, where state strategies emphasize both international cooperation and sectoral priorities like agriculture, professionally oriented RFL serves as a bridge between education policy and labor market needs. Through the integration of specialized terminology, interactive communicative tasks, and alignment with international standards such as CEFR, RFL programs can produce graduates who are able not only to communicate effectively in Russian but also to function confidently as specialists in a competitive, multilingual professional environment.

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