

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Listening and Pronunciation in Russian Language Education in Uzbek Schools: A Sociolinguistic and Methodological Perspective

 **Raimova Malokhatkhon Shuxratbek qizi**

Lecturer, Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages, Uzbekistan

 **Dumakhonova Shodikhon Iskandar qizi**

PhD researcher, Institute for Research of the Youth Problems and Training Prospective Personnel under Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This article examines the role of listening and pronunciation skills in teaching Russian as a non-native language in Uzbek schools. It highlights the importance of these skills for developing communicative competence and emphasizes their interdependence in language acquisition. The study also considers the sociolinguistic situation in Uzbekistan, where Russian continues to function alongside Uzbek in education and media. Special attention is given to phonetic challenges faced by Uzbek-speaking learners and to effective methodological approaches, including comparative and step-by-step instruction. The findings suggest that integrating listening and pronunciation into the core of language teaching significantly improves students' overall language proficiency.

KEYWORDS

Russian as a non-native language, listening skills, pronunciation, Uzbek schools, sociolinguistics, phonetics, language teaching methodology, communicative competence.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Uzbekistan, the teaching of Russian as a non-native language remains an important component of the national education system. This importance is shaped not only by pedagogical goals but also by the broader legal and sociolinguistic framework of the country. The modern educational policy of Uzbekistan emphasizes accessibility, quality, and inclusiveness, ensuring that all learners regardless of their linguistic background have equal opportunities to receive education.

A key document regulating this sphere is the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" (No. ZRU-637,

September 23, 2020), which defines the legal foundations of the education system and aims to regulate relations in the field of education [1]. The law establishes a unified structure of continuous education, including general secondary, vocational, and higher education, and highlights the importance of maintaining educational standards across all institutions. Within this framework, language education occupies a central place, as it directly contributes to the intellectual development and social integration of students. Importantly, the law guarantees equal access to education regardless of the language of instruction, which creates the conditions for multilingual education and supports the

teaching of Russian alongside Uzbek and other languages.

At the same time, language policy in Uzbekistan reflects the country's multilingual and multicultural character. In his official message dedicated to the Day of the Uzbek Language, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized that Uzbekistan creates favorable conditions for the development of all languages used by its population, including Russian, which continues to function in education and mass media. The address highlights that several languages such as Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Turkmen are actively used in educational institutions and communication, demonstrating the inclusive nature of the state's language policy [2].

In this sociolinguistic context, Russian serves not only as a subject of study but also as a means of interethnic communication and access to broader educational and informational resources. Consequently, teaching Russian in Uzbek schools should not be limited to the formal study of grammar and vocabulary. Instead, it must focus on developing communicative competence, enabling students to effectively understand and produce spoken language in real-life situations.

Listening and pronunciation skills are fundamental to achieving this goal. They form the basis of oral communication and play a crucial role in the acquisition of language as a functional system. Without well-developed listening comprehension and accurate pronunciation, students may struggle to participate in communication, even if they possess sufficient lexical and grammatical knowledge. Therefore, modern approaches to teaching Russian in Uzbekistan increasingly emphasize the integration of auditory and phonetic training as essential components of language education.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

The theoretical and methodological foundations of teaching Russian as a non-native language have been extensively explored in linguodidactic research. A central place in this field is occupied by works that systematize key concepts, define methodological principles, and propose effective approaches to language teaching. Among the most influential contributions are the studies by Azimov and Shchukin, Balykhina, Passov and Kuzovleva, and Dzhushupov, [3,4,5,6] which collectively provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the role of listening and pronunciation in language acquisition.

One of the fundamental sources in modern linguodidactics is the work by Azimov and Shchukin [3], which presents a detailed dictionary of methodological terms and concepts used in language teaching. This work includes over 2,500 definitions and reflects both theoretical and practical aspects of teaching languages. The authors emphasize the importance of terminological clarity and conceptual precision in the professional training of language teachers. Their dictionary not only systematizes existing knowledge but also serves as a bridge between theory and practice, helping educators understand the relationships between key concepts such as communicative competence, speech activity, and language skills. As noted in related research, mastery of methodological terminology is essential for effective teaching, as it ensures accuracy in pedagogical communication and instructional design.

Balykhina significantly contributes to the methodology of teaching Russian as a non-native language by focusing on practical aspects of instruction [4]. Her work highlights the importance of integrating linguistic knowledge with communicative practice. According to Balykhina, teaching should not be limited to the transmission of grammatical rules but must aim at developing communicative competence through meaningful interaction. She emphasizes that phonetic and auditory skills play a crucial role in this process, as they enable learners to perceive and reproduce language accurately. The author also stresses the need for a systematic approach to teaching pronunciation, including the use of exercises that develop articulation, intonation, and rhythm. These principles are particularly relevant for learners whose native language differs significantly from Russian in phonetic structure, such as Uzbek-speaking students.

A major theoretical framework for communicative language teaching is presented in the work of Passov and Kuzovleva [5]. Their communicative approach is based on the idea that language should be taught as a means of real communication rather than as a system of abstract rules. They argue that all types of speech activity listening, speaking, reading, and writing are interconnected and should be developed in an integrated manner. In this context, listening and speaking are viewed as two inseparable aspects of oral communication. The authors emphasize that effective speaking skills cannot be formed without well-developed listening abilities, as comprehension precedes production. Furthermore, they highlight the importance of authentic language input,

interactive tasks, and situational learning, which simulate real-life communication and enhance learner motivation. These principles form the basis of modern communicative language teaching and are widely applied in teaching Russian as a foreign language.

The phonetic aspect of teaching Russian in a Turkic-language environment is thoroughly analyzed in the work of Yusupov [6]. The author examines the evolution of methods for teaching Russian literary pronunciation to Turkic-speaking learners and identifies key stages in the development of phonetic instruction. A central idea in this research is the concept of interference, which arises due to differences between the phonetic systems of the native and target languages. Yusupov points out that similarities between Russian and Turkic articulation patterns can both facilitate and complicate learning: while some sounds are easier to acquire, others may lead to persistent errors due to incorrect transfer from the native language. The study also emphasizes the importance of considering the articulatory base of learners and adapting teaching methods accordingly. This approach is particularly relevant in the Uzbek context, where phonetic differences such as vowel systems, stress patterns, and consonant distinctions create specific challenges for students [6].

In addition to these core works, contemporary research in linguodidactics highlights the growing importance of communicative competence as the primary goal of language education. Scholars emphasize that effective language teaching requires a balance between linguistic knowledge and practical communication skills. This perspective aligns with the communicative paradigm, which prioritizes interaction, authenticity, and learner-centered approaches. It also underscores the need for integrating listening and pronunciation training into all stages of language learning.

Overall, the analysis of the literature demonstrates a clear consensus among researchers regarding several key principles. First, listening and pronunciation are essential components of language competence and should be developed systematically. Second, these skills are interdependent and must be taught in an integrated manner. Third, effective teaching requires consideration of the learner's native language and the potential for interference. Finally, modern language teaching should be based on communicative principles that emphasize real-life usage of language.

These theoretical insights provide a strong foundation for

improving the teaching of Russian in Uzbek schools. By applying the principles outlined in the literature, educators can design more effective instructional strategies that address the specific needs of learners and enhance their ability to use Russian in authentic communicative situations.

RESULTS

Sociolinguistic Context in Uzbekistan

The sociolinguistic environment in Uzbekistan significantly influences the teaching of Russian. While Uzbek is the state language, Russian continues to function as a language of interethnic communication, education, and media.

Russian is widely used in higher education, professional settings, and urban communication. It is also present in mass media and digital platforms. This creates a multilingual environment where students may encounter Russian both inside and outside the classroom.

However, exposure to the language is uneven, and not all students have access to consistent, high-quality input. As a result, the classroom plays a crucial role in providing a model of correct and standard Russian speech.

Phonetic Difficulties of Uzbek Learners

Uzbek-speaking students face several challenges due to differences between Uzbek and Russian phonetic systems. These include:

- Difficulty distinguishing certain vowel sounds (e.g., [i] and [y])
- Problems with hard and soft consonants
- Confusion between voiced and voiceless consonants
- Challenges in mastering Russian word stress

Unlike Uzbek, where stress typically falls on the final syllable, Russian stress is free and mobile. It also affects vowel reduction, which complicates both pronunciation and listening comprehension.

Importance of Integrating Listening and Pronunciation

Listening and pronunciation should be taught in close connection. Incorrect pronunciation not only affects speech clarity but can also distort meaning.

Students acquire language primarily through auditory input, including:

- Teacher's speech
- Classroom interaction
- Audio materials

Without systematic training in listening and pronunciation, errors may become permanent and negatively impact all language skills.

Effective Teaching Approaches

Several methodological principles are essential:

- Comparative approach: highlighting similarities and differences between Uzbek and Russian
- Gradual progression: moving from simple to complex language units
- Repetition and practice: ensuring skill automation
- Use of authentic audio materials: exposing students to real speech

Teaching should include stages such as sound recognition, differentiation, imitation, and application in connected speech.

Role of the Teacher

The teacher plays a key role as a model of correct pronunciation. In many cases, the classroom is the main source of exposure to standard Russian.

Effective teaching requires:

- Clear and accurate speech
- Proper intonation and rhythm
- Regular use of listening exercises

A well-organized speech environment in the classroom significantly enhances learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Listening and pronunciation skills are fundamental components of teaching Russian in Uzbek schools. They ensure the transition from theoretical knowledge to practical language use and contribute to the development of communicative competence.

The sociolinguistic context of Uzbekistan, characterized by multilingualism and the continued role of Russian, makes these skills particularly important. Effective teaching must take into account phonetic differences between languages, provide systematic training, and create a rich auditory environment.

An integrated methodological approach - combining sociolinguistic awareness, comparative analysis, and step-by-step skill development - can significantly improve the quality of Russian language education and help students become confident participants in a multilingual society.

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