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DIFFICULTIES IN MASTERING THE CASE SYSTEM OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE BY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND WAYS TO OVERCOME THEM

Mirkhanova Matluba Sadykovna
Lecturer at Bukhara State Technical University

Abstract: The article examines the main difficulties encountered by national university students in studying the case system of the Russian language. The causes of native language interference, the peculiarities of mastering case forms, and the problems associated with the use of prepositional-case constructions are analyzed. Particular attention is paid to methodological techniques that contribute to the formation of stable grammatical skills. Effective ways of overcoming typical mistakes through communicative, functional, and practice-oriented approaches are proposed.

Keywords: Russian as a foreign language, case system, national students, interference, teaching methodology.

Introduction

One of the most challenging grammatical topics in teaching Russian as a foreign or second language to university students is the case system. The Russian language is characterized by a highly developed declension system, a variety of case forms, and a wide range of syntactic and semantic functions. For students in non-Russian medium groups, mastering these cases presents a severe difficulty because a similar category is either absent in their native language or functions under fundamentally different rules.

The relevance of this topic is driven by the urgent need to improve the methodology of teaching Russian to multilingual audiences. Practice shows that even students with an otherwise sufficient vocabulary experience persistent difficulties in:

- Choosing the appropriate case form;
- Ensuring correct adjective-noun agreement within a sentence;
- Using prepositions accurately.

These deficiencies lead to a violation of communicative accuracy and decrease overall language proficiency. Therefore, the **purpose of this article** is to identify the main systemic difficulties in mastering the Russian case system by university students and to propose an effective pedagogical framework to overcome them.

Methods

To investigate the root causes of grammatical errors and evaluate potential pedagogical interventions, a multi-step qualitative and empirical methodology was applied:

- **Error Analysis (Corpus-Based Observation):** Written essays, exam papers, and oral speech samples from university students were collected and analyzed to classify recurring grammatical anomalies.
- **Comparative Linguistic Analysis:** The structural differences between the Russian case system and the typological profiles of the students' native languages were mapped to identify areas prone to negative language interference.
- **Pedagogical Modeling:** A functional-communicative teaching framework was developed and integrated into the curriculum, shifting the focus from structural drilling to context-dependent speech production.

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• **Action Research:** Interactive methods (role-playing, visual scaffolding, and sentence-pattern automation) were deployed in the classroom to test their efficacy in reducing the students' psychological barriers.

Results

The analysis of students' oral and written speech demonstrated a persistent pattern of errors rooted in native language interference, where learners directly transfer the grammatical templates of their first language into Russian.

The investigation categorized the most critical errors into the following matrix:

Error Type	**Linguistic Manifestation**	**Example Observed**	**Root Cause**
Case Confusion	Blending Accusative/Dative/Prepositional forms	*"Иду в университету"*	Inability to distinguish directional vs. locational case requirements.
Incorrect Animacy/Case	Mismanagement of Genitive vs. Prepositional	*"Говорю о преподавателя"*	Failure to grasp the specific morphological endings governed by the preposition *о/об*.
Spatial Preposition Errors	Faulty spatial placement patterns	*"Живу на Ташкенте"*	Literal translation of locative concepts from the native language.
Violations of Verbal Government	Misaligning verbs with their mandatory cases	*Нарушения управления глаголов*	Mechanical memorization of nouns separate from their governing verbs.
Agreement & Negation Failure	Adjective-noun mismatch; dropping Genitive after negation	Faulty syntax under negative construction	Lack of automated structural habits in syntax

Error Type	Linguistic Manifestation	Example Observed	Root Cause
			shifting.

Beyond purely linguistic data, the results highlighted a severe **psychological barrier**. The fear of making case-ending mistakes heavily reduces students' spontaneous speech activity, stalling the formation of communicative competence.

Discussion

The empirical findings prove that traditional, mechanical memorization of abstract paradigms and endings causes knowledge to become formal, brittle, and quickly forgotten. To successfully overcome these barriers, an **integrated, functional-communicative approach** must be adopted.

Key Strategies for Pedagogical Intervention:

- **Contextualized Case Study:** Cases should never be taught in isolation. For example, when introducing the Prepositional case, it must be bound directly to spatial themes: *"at the university"* (*в университете*), *"in the library"* (*в библиотеке*).
- **Syntactic Automation via Sentence Patterns:** Regular work with transformation, substitution, and dialogue-building drills automates the target structure, shifting processing from conscious monitoring to natural production.
- **Visual and Digital Scaffolding:** Tables, diagrams, color-coded flashcards, and digital applications ease cognitive load, allowing students to map complex morphological relations visually.
- **Interactive and Low-Stakes Communication:** Utilizing peer pair-work, role-playing games, and problem-solving tasks activates the student's cognitive drive, transforming the case system from an abstract rulebook into a practical tool for real-world interaction.

Conclusion

The Russian case system remains a primary linguistic bottleneck for non-native speaking university students due to language interference, the multi-functional semantic load of single cases, and complex verbal government. Overcoming these hurdles requires moving past rote memorization toward communicative, functional, and practice-oriented teaching methodologies. Systematic speech application, visual synthesis, and careful consideration of the audience's native linguistic background not only lower psychological anxiety but directly enhance accuracy and elevate overall communicative competence in Russian.

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