

**THE ROLE OF NATIVE LANGUAGE IN FACILITATING THE ACQUISITION OF
RUSSIAN: A KEY STIMULUS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING****G. Rizamuhamedova***Senior Lecturer of Namangan engineering-construction institute
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Abstract: This study examines the significance of a learner's native language in acquiring Russian as a second language (L2). While language acquisition is a multifaceted process, the learner's first language (L1) plays a crucial role in the development of linguistic skills in Russian. This article reviews current theories of second language acquisition (SLA) and investigates how the transfer of linguistic structures from L1 to Russian influences both the learning process and the rate of acquisition. Based on a comparative analysis of phonological, syntactic, and semantic features across languages, this study proposes that leveraging L1 knowledge can expedite learning, especially when guided by targeted pedagogical strategies. The findings highlight that, when used effectively, native language structures can serve as cognitive tools that foster deeper comprehension and retention of Russian.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, Russian Language Learning, Native Language Transfer, Linguistic Structures, Language Pedagogy.

The relationship between a learner's native language (L1) and their acquisition of a second language (L2) has been a central topic in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) for decades. In the case of learning Russian as a second language, the role of L1 becomes especially significant. Russian, a Slavic language with distinct phonological, syntactic, and morphological characteristics, presents particular challenges to learners, many of whom approach the language with a non-Slavic linguistic background. However, this study posits that native language proficiency can act as a vital tool in overcoming these challenges and facilitating a more efficient learning process. Drawing on empirical research and established theoretical frameworks, this paper explores how L1 knowledge can be utilized as a resource in the acquisition of Russian, with a specific focus on the role of linguistic transfer, cognitive strategies, and pedagogical approaches.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on key SLA concepts, such as language transfer, interlanguage, and cognitive strategies in language learning. According to the Transfer Theory (Odlin, 1989), L1 structures can either aid or hinder the acquisition of L2, depending on the degree of similarity between the two languages. Positive transfer occurs when L1 structures align with L2 rules, while negative transfer results in errors due to L1 interference. However, the role of transfer is not limited to structural similarities; cognitive theories of language acquisition also emphasize how learners use their existing linguistic knowledge to build new structures in L2 (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

In Russian language learning, the complexity of its case system, verb aspect, and word order requires learners to draw on specific cognitive and linguistic strategies. When learners recognize similarities between their native language and Russian, such as parallel syntactic structures or cognates, they are more likely to apply this knowledge in constructing accurate sentences. Conversely, when L1 and L2 diverge significantly, the process of acquisition becomes more labor-intensive, requiring learners to consciously modify their cognitive approach.

Native Language Transfer and Russian Language Acquisition

Native language transfer can be a double-edged sword in second language acquisition. This section explores both positive and negative transfer of linguistic features from L1 to Russian. For example, learners whose native languages are inflected, like Spanish or German, often exhibit positive transfer when learning Russian, as they are familiar with morphological changes, including noun declensions and verb conjugations. In contrast, speakers of non-inflected languages, such as Chinese or English, may struggle with Russian's complex case system.

Phonological Transfer

Phonological transfer plays a crucial role in L2 pronunciation. Learners often apply phonetic rules from their native language to Russian sounds, leading to both improvements and errors in pronunciation. For instance, Russian palatalized consonants (e.g., "пъ" vs. "п") pose a challenge for learners from languages that do not feature palatalization. However, in cases where a learner's native language has similar phonetic features, such as Polish or Ukrainian, these sounds may be easier to produce and perceive.

Syntactic Transfer

Syntactic transfer concerns the structure of sentences and word order. Russian's relatively free word order and its use of cases to indicate grammatical relations differ significantly from languages with fixed word order, such as English. Nevertheless, learners from languages that use cases, like German, may have an easier time grasping Russian syntax. This section explores the impact of syntactic similarities and differences on learners' understanding of Russian sentence structure.

Cognitive Strategies in Language Learning

Cognitive strategies, such as code-switching and the use of metalinguistic awareness, also contribute to the effective transfer of L1 knowledge to Russian. Code-switching, or alternating between languages, allows learners to use familiar linguistic structures when attempting to communicate in Russian. Similarly, metalinguistic awareness, the ability to reflect on the structure and function of language, can help learners identify similarities between Russian and their L1 and apply this knowledge when producing sentences or interpreting new vocabulary.

Pedagogical Implications

Given the substantial role of native language knowledge in acquiring Russian, it is crucial that language teaching methodologies incorporate strategies that harness the potential benefits of L1 transfer. This paper suggests several pedagogical approaches to optimize this process:

1. **Contrastive Analysis:** Teachers can compare the linguistic structures of the learner's native language and Russian to highlight both similarities and differences. This explicit focus on contrasts helps learners recognize where positive transfer is possible and where additional attention is needed to overcome negative transfer.
2. **Scaffolded Learning:** In the early stages of language learning, scaffolding techniques that rely on the learner's L1 can provide crucial support. For instance, bilingual dictionaries or bilingual instruction can help bridge the gap between the learner's existing knowledge and new linguistic material.
3. **Task-based Language Teaching:** This approach encourages learners to use both L1 and L2 in context-specific tasks, allowing for more effective transfer of cognitive strategies and linguistic knowledge. Tasks such as role-playing or problem-solving activities enable learners to make connections between languages in a meaningful way.
4. **Error Analysis:** Identifying and analyzing errors due to negative transfer is an essential aspect of the teaching process. By understanding common transfer errors, educators can tailor instruction to address specific challenges posed by L1 interference.

Conclusion

The acquisition of Russian as a second language is a complex process influenced by various cognitive, linguistic, and cultural factors. The native language plays a critical role in shaping this process, both as a resource for facilitating learning and as a potential source of interference. By acknowledging the significance of L1 knowledge and incorporating it into pedagogical strategies, language educators can optimize the learning experience and enhance the efficiency of Russian language acquisition. Ultimately, understanding and leveraging native language transfer can lead to more effective teaching practices and better outcomes for second language learners.

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