DEVELOPING LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY IN BEGINNER LEARNERS OF RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: GAME-BASED APPROACHES TO TEACHING WORD FORMATION

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Abstract. This article examines the development of linguistic creativity in beginner learners of Russian as a foreign language through game-based approaches to teaching word formation. The study focuses on the role of morphological awareness, derivational competence, and interactive educational methods in fostering productive language use. The article argues that word-formation games contribute not only to vocabulary acquisition but also to the gradual formation of learners’ linguistic creativity and communicative competence.

Keywords*: linguistic creativity, Russian as a foreign language, word formation, game-based learning, morphology, neologisms, communicative competence.*

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается развитие лингвистической креативности у изучающих русский язык как иностранный на начальном этапе посредством игровых методов обучения словообразованию. Анализируется значение цифрового дискурса, неологизмов, юмора и визуальных образовательных материалов как средств повышения мотивации и коммуникативной вовлеченности обучающихся. Делается вывод о том, что словообразовательные игры способствуют не только усвоению лексики, но и постепенному развитию языковой креативности и коммуникативной компетенции.

Ключевые слова: *лингвистическая креативность, русский язык как иностранный, словообразование, игровое обучение, морфология, неологизмы, коммуникативная компетенция.*

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada rus tilini o'rganuvchilarda lingvistik ijodkorlikning dastlabki bosqichda so'z yasashga o'rgatishning o'yin usullari orqali chet tili sifatida rivojlanishi ko'rib chiqiladi. Talabalarning motivatsiyasi va kommunikativ ishtirokini oshirish vositasi sifatida raqamli nutq, neologizmlar, hazil va vizual ta'lim materiallarining ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Xulosa shuki, so'zlarni shakllantirish o'yinlari nafaqat so'z boyligini o'zlashtirishga, balki til ijodkorligi va kommunikativ kompetentsiyani bosqichma-bosqich rivojlantirishga yordam beradi.

Kalit so‘zlar*: lingvistik kreativlik, rus tili chet tili sifatida, so‘z yasalishi, o‘yin asosidagi ta’lim, morfologiya, neologizmlar, kommunikativ kompetensiya.*

INTRODUCTION. The concept of linguistic creativity was first systematically formulated by Noam Chomsky, who viewed language as a generative system capable of producing an infinite number of novel utterances. In the Russian linguistic tradition,

L.V. Shcherba emphasized that language does not offer ready-made expressions, but structural patterns and models that speakers actively realize in communication. In the context of Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) instruction, this perspective implies that learners should gradually develop the ability to use language productively and creatively, rather than simply memorize vocabulary. Even at the beginner level, linguistic creativity can be fostered through word-formation teaching combined with game-based learning strategies that reduce cognitive load and increase learner engagement. Research also demonstrates that the formation of a “secondary linguistic personality” improves learner motivation, communicative adaptation, and educational outcomes among international students [3]. Contemporary digital communication further shows that linguistic creativity actively develops in online discourse,

where simplified lexical structures, expressive devices, and multimodal communication become increasingly common. Studies on medical media discourse demonstrate that emotionality, visualization, humor, and linguistic accessibility significantly influence audience engagement and comprehension in digital environments.

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: WORD FORMATION AND LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY

Psycholinguistic research suggests that the mental lexicon is organized not as isolated words, but as a structured system based on roots and derivational families. Even beginner learners benefit from exposure to systemic lexical relations rather than fragmented vocabulary learning. For example, acquiring the Russian root

пис- allows learners to recognize and gradually produce related lexical items:

писать – писатель – записка – подпись International research in second language acquisition confirms that morphological awareness contributes significantly to reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, and productive language skills. Recent methodological studies also emphasize that visual and humorous forms of language presentation facilitate memorization and comprehension. Humor may function as an "emotional form of cognition," helping learners internalize linguistic material more effectively while simultaneously introducing sociocultural codes embedded in the target language [1].

The development of linguistic creativity is closely connected with learners' integration into the communicative and cultural environment of the target language community. At the beginner level, learners often perceive words as indivisible units, which limits productive language use. However, this stage is crucial for establishing foundational morphological awareness. Russian word formation remains highly productive and includes:

- prefixation *(читать – прочитать),*
- suffixation *(дом – домик),*
- derivational modeling *(учить – учитель),*
- borrowing and neologization *(лайкнуть, блогер).*

As noted by Zemskaya and Krysin, modern Russian continues to develop new derivational patterns influenced by technological and social change.

GAME-BASED LEARNING AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPING CREATIVITY

1. Root-Based Word Games

Students are given a common root (e.g., дом, пис-), and are asked to:

- identify known words,
- guess meanings of unfamiliar derivatives,
- create new forms.

This activity promotes systemic lexical awareness from the earliest stages of learning.

2. Morphological Construction Games

Teachers introduce simple word-formation patterns such as:

- verb + -тель – учить – учитель
- noun + -ик – дом – домик

Learners then:

- construct words using morphological "cards,"
- compete in forming correct derivatives,
- explain meanings in simple terms.

3. Neologism Creation Tasks

Even beginner learners can engage in controlled language creativity by inventing simple words, for example:

- "a person who forgets everything" – *забыватель*
- "a phone addict" – *телефономан*

The pedagogical focus is not only on creativity, but also on evaluating whether the formed word corresponds to Russian derivational norms. This approach resembles methodologies based on meme creation and humorous linguistic tasks, where students independently generate linguistically appropriate and contextually meaningful forms using specific grammatical constructions. Creative exercises may also incorporate analysis of internet neologisms and colloquial innovations frequently encountered in social media communication.

4. Morpheme Recognition Games

Tasks may include:

- identifying prefixes (по-, пере-, не-),
- segmenting words into meaningful parts,
- matching word parts with meanings.

Such activities develop early morphological awareness and analytical skills.

5. Contemporary Neologism Awareness

Even at the beginner level, learners can be introduced to simple modern formations such as:

- блогер
- лайкнуть

The use of contemporary internet language, memes, and humorous microtexts strengthens learners’ perception of Russian as an authentic and socially functioning means of communication rather than a purely academic system [1]. Online discourse provides numerous examples of conversational neologisms, expressive suffixation, and metaphorical simplification of complex concepts, which may serve as accessible material for introducing beginner learners to the dynamic nature of Russian derivational processes.

CONCLUSION. Word formation should be regarded not as a secondary component of RFL instruction, but as a fundamental tool for developing linguistic competence even at the beginner level. Game-based approaches create a learning environment in which morphological awareness, motivation, and creativity develop simultaneously. As a result, learners gradually transform into active users of the language capable of controlled linguistic creativity. Future research should focus on:

• the effectiveness of game-based word-formation instruction across proficiency levels,
• cross-linguistic influences on morphological acquisition,
• methods for assessing early-stage linguistic creativity in RFL learners,
• and the role of digital discourse and contemporary media language in developing productive derivational competence.

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