ADAPTATION AND PRESENTATION OF GRAMMAR IN TEXTBOOKS IN RUSSIAN FOR NORWEGIAN SPEAKERS WITHIN RUSSIA'S ASSESSING SYSTEM TORFL

Zoia Aleksandrovna Nikolskaia

Språkskolen russisk.no &METODIUS, Oslo, Norway

Abstract

The purpose of the study presented here, was to adapt the theoretical material required by the TORFL Standards for textbooks, aimed at Norwegian-speaking students. The study was carried out by the author by observing her own teaching practice for this audience, at all TORFL levels. The study consisted of analysing obtained TORFL test results and identifying systemic errors as well as considering ways to prevent these errors. A new teaching approach was developed. The method consists in determining and identifying the grammatical topic, which plays the role of the backbone of the entire system of educational materials in each of the textbooks for a given level, not only materials on grammar, but also on reading, speaking practice, writing skills, listening comprehension. In this case, there may be several topics, but they are interconnected by cause-and-effect relationships. For each topic, a table is developed in which the logic of the material and the ways of mastering the topic are visualized. The material presented in the table in a condensed form is disclosed in the textbook of the corresponding level.

The new teaching approach makes it possible for students to discover the logic inherent in the Russian language, linking different elements into a coherent system. For example, the main principle of Russian pronunciation, reflected in the special rules for combining consonants with vowels, is to be found in combining word stems with flexions or with connecting vowels. The concept of a connecting vowel allows minimizing the number of flexions to be studied. Mastering rules mentioned above makes possible teaching declensions and conjugations in terms of types of stems, flexions and connecting vowels when necessary.

The above approach is a new one when it comes to textbooks for foreigners. Division into stems that have lexical meanings and flexions that carry purely grammatical information, makes possible to divide parts of speech in a new way: parts of speech with flexions and without them. Within parts of speech with flexions we can find words belonging to different parts of speech but having same flexions. The flexions of substantives are inherent not only in nouns, but also in cardinal numbers for a soft sign (light sign accoridng to my new terminology), for example. The flexions of long adjectives are common to all impersonal pronouns, ordinal numbers and participles. By uniting similarities we can minimize the number flexions that need to be taught. In terms of stems and flexions, it is less costly to learn the forms of the Russian verb.

Keywords: *rules for combining consonants and vowels, types of stems and flexions, Russian morphology for Norwegian speakers, Russian phonetics for Norwegian speakers, Russian verb classes, conjugation and declension in Russian, textbooks in Russian for TORFL*

Adaptation and presentation of grammatical material in textbooks for Norwegian speakers within the framework of the testing system for Russian as a foreign language (TORFL) will be discussed in this article. TORFL is a six-level system. For each level, a standard has been published. Standards content lists of topics to be studied before TORFL testing. There are five subtests in each test, one of which is grammar. The word grammar is used here in the everyday sense. In a more precise sense, grammar means topics from different field of linguistics concerning Russian language: phonetics, phonology, prosody, morphology, syntax and so on. Here we will concentrate on phonetics, spelling and morphology.

PHONETICS AND SPELLING

Working mainly with the Norwegians, I had a good idea of the stumbling blocks they stumble over.

The presence of a large number of vowels (9 phonemes) does not create prerequisites for intuitive understanding of vowels' reduction. There is no need to duplicate consonant phonemes, distinguishing them by hardness-softness. The Norwegian's hearing is focused on vowels, while the Russian's hearing primarily perceives the quality of the consonant.

All of the above indicates a different mental approach, a different hearing setting. Indicates the uselessness of the tandem of consonants and vowels in writing. The presence of such a large number of vowel phonemes contributes to the preservation of musical stress: in the Norwegian language, two tonems are distinguished (tonem 1 and tonem 2), with the direction of the tone up or down, and this, in turn, makes it difficult to perceive the Russian power stress in the word, as well as the correct recognition and pronunciation of phrasal stress. This also makes it difficult to master the reduction of Russian vowels. And most importantly, this makes the Norwegians immune to the main distinguishing feature of Russian sounds - the division into light and dark.

The main core in Russian is distinction between palatalized and unpalatalized consonants which in textbooks are called soft and hard. Who does not know that Russians have soft and hard consonants? But the thing is that this knowledge can be misleading. People think that palatalized means pronounced with an added й-sound which is not correct. Besides, soft consonants for Norwegian native speakers mean something else: it is p, t, k pronounced without aspiration and almost voiced, like people in south-west Norway do, turning bløte into bløde. 15 of 33 letters of Russian alphabet stands for two sounds: a palatalized consonant and an unpalatalized. The same letter stands for two different consonants: a light one and a dark one. They distinguish words. I started with the visualization of the main principle of Russian pronunciation, reflected in the rules of writing. There are two things which helped me to find out how.

The first thing is acoustic phonetics with its classification of both consonants and vowels according to same criteria. I took only one criterion: high and low frequency (диезность - недиезность) and adopted it to my purposes: I applied it not to sounds, but to letters. All the letters denoting unpalatalized consonants, the vowels a, o, y, э, ы and hard sign (which I renamed to dark sign) I called dark. All letters denoting palatalized consonants, letters denoting so called ioated vowels (я, ё, ю, е) and и as well as soft sign ь I called light. In my poster [1] I marked all light letters with a picture to their right. All dark letters got a picture to their left. The 15 letters got to pictures: one to the right and one to the left. These 15 need markers to be pronounced correctly in words. Such markers are vowels in the middle of words and light sign at the end. Vowels can be such markers because they are either light or dark, never can be both dark and light. Besides, they form light -dark pairs: а-я, о-ё, у-ю, э-е, ы-и. Here it will be appropriate to mention the other thing which I had in mind working with my first poster. This is old Russian Alphabet books. In these books children learned not isolated letters, but syllabic combinations consisting of a consonant followed by a vowel: ма-мя, мо-мё, мэ-ме, му-мю, мы-ми. This indicates the role of the vowel as a marker of the quality of the previous consonant. A dark vowel marks a dark pronunciation of the preceding consonant, a light vowel marks a high pronunciation. There are three consonants with two pictures in my poster which differ from the rest. These are гкх. They are palatalized only before е and и. Before а, о, у these are always unpalatalized. It means that after гкх can be used only unpaired vowels а, о, у, е, и. Neither dark nor light sign can be used after гкх. As for sibilants, they are either light (ч, щ) or dark (ж, ш) and their behaviour is similar to гкх, but not identical with it. Behind ж, ш, щ, ч can а, о, ё, у, е, и and light sign be used. Neither vowels nor a light sign are markers of ж, ш, щ, ч. They reflect more etymology and are not related to pronunciation. Concerning ц we can say the same: vowels which are permitted to come behind (i.e. а, о, у, е, и, ы) have nothing to do with pronunciation. All consonants with one picture are pronounced in accordance with the location of this picture: dark is always dark, regardless of the subsequent vowel, light is always light. To consonants with two pictures pronounced dark in a particular word, we assigned the abbreviation C2T, which stands for a consonant with two pictures, dark. To consonants with two pictures pronounced light in a particular word, we assigned the abbreviation C2C, which stands for a consonant with two pictures, light. Dark in Russian is тёмный, therefore C2T. Light in Russian means светлый, therefore C2C. Now we can

formulate the rules for the type of combinations of consonants with vowels. There are 6 rules: 1) C2T can be followed by а, о, у, э, ы; 2) C2C can be followed by я, ё, ю, е, и and ь (light sign); 3) г, к, х can be followed by а, о, у, е, и; ж, ш, щ, ч can be followed by а, о, ё, у, е, и and ь (light sign).

The types of consonants described above and the rules for combining them with vowels are presented together in the textbook for the introductory course. Not all at once in one place, but distributed over 26 lessons, in exercises and in combination with other important topics of phonetics: vowel reduction, voiced and voiceless consonant pairs, vowel assimilation, etc.

Having familiarized themselves with the rules of writing certain vowels after certain consonants, students thereby get acquainted with the internal logic of the structure of the Russian language, it will be easier for them to think in terms of stems and flexions in the future, which is important when studying declensions and conjugations.

Vowel reduction is also difficult for Norwegians. To master it, a table was developed [2].This is a useful table, also woven into the introductory course.

It is not always possible to recognize a Russian letter written by hand in a printed one. Norwegian children are often not taught to write by hand at school, and they write by copying block letters. I am of the opinion that writing with your hand is useful, although the standards do not require this skill, and I teach my students how to use modern tools and write with electronic pens on whiteboards and tablets.

There is one more topic that is not reflected in the standards, but is necessary when dealing with two languages. I mean the rules of transcription when transmitting Russian names and names in Norwegian letters, and vice versa.

I developed the poster &METODIUS Alfavit [3], where both printed and capital letters are presented, as well as the ways of their transmission in Norwegian letters.

Above we talked about how to adapt the methods described here on phonetics and spelling. And I make an application of this in my textbook for beginners. The above-described tables (Azboka, Alfabet and Vokalreduksjonstabell) were the three pillars on which the introductory course is built in this textbook. The material adapted to them is presented in the textbook in the form of rules and exercises. All exercises are read on audio files and are freely available on the school website. The link to this resource is printed in a textbook consisting of content, Norwegian and Russian forewords, 26 lessons, Russian-Norwegian, Norwegian-Russian dictionaries, keys to transcription and dictation exercises, a dictionary of abbreviations with explanations, an application of theoretical material collected from all lessons and more. I'll tell you a little more about the principles of presentation. They are as following: 1) the title of the topic of the lesson is the letters that will be studied in this lesson; 2) words in the lesson should consist only of the letters that have been studied for this lesson; 3) from simple to complex, which is easy to see from the tutorial structure: in the first lesson, only known from the native language vowels а, о, у, э; in the second lesson - only ы; in the third lesson sonorous м, н, р. Sonorous л is difficult, so it is only covered in lesson 19; и in lesson № 4; й in lesson № 5; е, ё, ю, я in lesson № 6; in lesson № 8 about the structure of the Russian syllable and about the rhythmic structures of polysyllabic words; in lesson № 9 reduction of а and о; in lesson № 10 about light sign (soft sign); in lesson № 11, 13-16 consonants, paired not only for light-dark, but also for voiced-voicelessness consonants п-б, з-с, в-ф, д-т; in lessons 17 and 18 - about a pair of г - к and unpaired voiceless х, about the peculiarities of the use of vowels after г, к, х; in lessons 21 - 25 ш, ч, ж, ц, щ; in lesson 26 repetition of words, both grammatical forms that come across in the lessons in texts and dialogues, and their lexical meanings.

MORPHOLOGY

There are few flexions in Norwegian, and the existing ones do not have the same meaning as they do in Russian. After the introductory course, students are familiar with the rules for combining consonants with vowels. This is a very good base on which you can build the training of declensions and conjugations. The stems in the Russian language as a rule end with a consonant, the most flexions are either vowels, or begin with a vowel. If the flexion begin with a consonant, a connecting vowel is used.

The rules for combining consonants with vowels are already known to students from the introductory course. We introduce the concept of types of stems and flexions. The type of the stem is identical to the type of the final consonant of this stem. Thus, we can use the already known material in a new quality. So, we have 6 types of stems: 1) C2T, 2) C2C, 3) кгх, 4) жшщч, 5) ц, 6) й. As for the flexions, all vowels are used for them, except for э. For convenience, I consider the light sign (ь) to be a vowel that has lost its sound, which corresponds to the historical truth, and I also consider it a flexion.

The mastery by students of the rules for combining consonants with vowels allows them to show how Russian words are divided into stems and flexions. All words can be divided into those that have stems and flexions, and those that have only stems. The first ones are difficult to learn. We divide all flexions into four types: 1) substantive type, 2) adjective type, 3) type «personal pronominal», and 4) type «personal flexions of the verb». By the substantive type, nouns and cardinals which end in a light sign are inclined. Pronouns он, оно, они, full adjectives, ordinals, participles and impersonal pronouns are inclined according the adjective type. Personal pronouns я, ты, мы, вы, она are inclined according to the pronominal type. Verbs in the present and future tense have special personal flexions.

The above makes it possible to structure flexions in such a way as to shorten the corpus of the flexions for memorization.

Our noun declension table demonstrates how stem type affects the choice of flexion. Usually, the most difficult is the choice of the flexion option: я or а, ю or у, и or ы. Our table solves this issue.

The reduction of adjective flexions is also possible because we operate with the concept of connecting vowels. Connecting vowels connect a consonant which is end consonant of stem, with a consonant wich is the first letter of flexion. For example, in the adjective красный red, the stem is красн-, the connecting vowel is -ы-, the flexion is -й. In the adjective больной, the stem is больн-, the connecting vowel is -о- , the ending is -й. We see that both красный and больной have the same flexion -й, but they have a different connecting vowel. The term connecting vowel has another advantage. By introducing this term, we were able to easily teach stress in long adjectives: connecting vowel о is always stressed, connecting ы and и are never stressed.

Adjectival flexions of oblique cases are characteristic not only of long adjectives, but also of all non-personal pronouns, ordinals, participles. According to this type in singular, the cardinal один is inclined, according to the same type, but in the plural, the numerals 2, 3, 4 are inclined.

Adjectives in Russian are short and long. Long ones are short ones to which demonstrative pronouns have been attached. These latter play the role of the flexions of full adjectives in modern Russian. There were two demonstrative pronouns, not one: 1) и 2) он. The first one became flexion in the nominative case and the second became flexions in the oblique cases. What explains the difference between oblique and nominative flexions existing today.

I won't discuss syntactic topics here and how morphology topics will be reflected in this discussion, but I can't help but notice that familiarity with the origins of long adjectives can make it easier to explain the difference in usage between short and long adjectives. The long adjectives, as opposed to the short ones, have definiteness in their meaning. And this reminds of the postfixed definite article in Norwegian with the difference that articles are used with nouns, but flexions that come from demonstrative pronouns, are an attribute of adjectives.

Comparing the flexions of long adjectives with the flexions of demonstrative pronouns он, оно, она, они, which are considered personal pronouns of the third person in modern Russian, we will find that the flexions of both in the neuter and masculine singular and the flexions of all genders in the plural are identical. As for the feminine singular, we will find differences there, but if we look closely, we will notice that in the oblique cases of long adjectives there are only two flexions in feminine forms: -й in all cases except the accusative, and -ю in the accusative. You may have noticed that I do not designate the endings with two letters, as is usually done in textbooks, but with one. This is because I operate with stems and flexions. The latter, if necessary, are joined by connecting vowels. Having learned the flexions of он, оно, они, students master the flexions of ordinals, all non-personal pronouns, cardinals один, два, три, четыре and participles.

Following Émile Benveniste, we call only the pronouns я, ты, мы, вы personal pronoun. The flexions of personal pronouns are not unique either. The pronouns я and ты have a genitive and an equal accusative animated with the same flexions -а, as the masculine nouns of the second declension, compare: мен-я, теб-я, кон-я, стол-а. The dative and prepositional have both the flexion-е, and the instrumental has the flexion -й. These three flexions are absolutely the same that nouns of the 1st declension have. Compare: дают теб-е, мн-е, пап-е, дяд-е; думают о теб-е, мн-е, пап-е, дяд-е; довольны мн-о-й, тоб-о-й, пап-о-й, дяд-е-й. Connecting vowels are inserted between the end of the instrumental case and the stem. The rules for joining them are identical to the rules for joining vowels to consonants. As for the pronouns мы and вы, their flexions in the dative and instrumental are identical with the flexions of long adjectives in these cases, compare: дают на-м, ва-м, мальчик-а-м, девочк-а-м; довольны на-ми, ва-ми, девочк-а-ми, мальчик-а-ми. Personal pronouns denote people, and this means that their accusative is identical to their genitive. The pronouns мы and вы in the genitive-accusative and prepositional have the flexion -с, which is the only thing left to learn.

A few words about gender reflected in flexions. Clear marks of the gender are visible in short and long adjectives, non-personal pronouns, the numeral один and in past tense forms of the verb, which are historically short participles, show gender. Nouns show signs of gender in the nominative singular. Compare: одна маленькая девочка была так умна, что не захотела зелёное яблоко, а съела один жёлтый банан, лежавший рядом.

The flexions of all these forms are the same: -а in the feminine, -zero in the masculine and-о in the neuter gender. Only nouns have flexion -ь. This inflection can indicate both feminine and masculine. One thing is for sure: a noun with the flexion -ь cannot be neuter. And the question arises: how can students find out the gender of a noun with the flexion -ь? There are several recommendations here. If the stems is of the жшщч type, then there are no problems: such words are all feminine without exception: вещь, ночь, дочь, брошь. If the stem type is С2С, then you need to look at whether the word is monosyllabic or polysyllabic. If the word is monosyllabic like конь, соль, гость, its gender should be memorized. If the word is polysyllabic, then you can look from the end inside the word and see what kind of suffixes precede ь there. A list of suffixes that help to attribute a word to the masculine and feminine gender is given in many manuals, including in my textbook for the A1 level [7].

When it comes to the plural nominative, identification marks of genders are neutralized. Let's look at the table representing the plural nominative flexions:

Table 1

-ы	-а	
-и	-я	-е

We see that there are two pairs of light-dark (ы-и and а-я) and light е alone.

The following tables 2-show exactly which parts of speech have variants-ы, -и, -а, -я, -е:

Table 2. Flexion -ы

Masculine and feminine nouns with the stems С2Т and Ц	студенты, лампы, устрицы, молодцы
Short adjectives	рады, готовы, счастливы, заняты
Short participles	сделаны, независимы

Table 3. Flexion -и

Masculine and feminine nouns with the stems of type C2C, гкх, жшщч, й	дяди, тёти, кухарки, кони, товарищи, студентки, музеи
neuter nouns with the stem гкх	яблоки, очки, семечки, веки
the past tense of the plural of the verb	пошли, сказали, были, ехали

Table 4. Flexion -а

Masculine nouns with the stems of type C2T	дома, вечера, поезда, ребята
a noun whose singular number is not easy to determine	девчата
neuter nouns with the stem C2H, Ц and few with the stem гкх	окна, болота, облака, имена, небеса, блюдца
Cardinal two	два

Table 5. Flexion -я

Masculine nouns with the stem й	братья, мужья, учителя,
neuter nouns with the stem of C2B and й	моря, поля, задания, умения

Table 6. Flexion -е

the numeral quantitative two, used when counting feminine	две
masculine nouns with a stem C2T ending in the suffixes -арин, -анин in the singular	болгаре, англичане, крестьяне, датчане, прихожане
demonstrative pronoun тот	те
long adjectives	красные, синие, большие
long participles	читающие, любимые, сказавшие, сделанные
the cardinal four	четыре

The above indicates that the nominative case differs from the oblique ones by its many flexions. The plural genitive is also difficult in this regard. Both nominative and genitive plural need to be studied longer than other cases.

When it comes to verb, I separate the personal endings of the verbs from the connecting vowels, as a result we get only 6 personal endings and two connecting vowels: е and и. Connecting vowels - conjugation names: first conjugation - е/ё-conjugation, second conjugation - и-conjugation. By doing this, we kill two birds with one stone: we reduce the number of endings and understand why we need to distinguish between 1 and 2 conjugations.

The requirements for test takers in Russian as a foreign language say that they must know the classes of verbs. This requirement can be difficult to meet, because both the number of classes and their content are described differently in different manuals and grammars. Besides, it is not clear what the students should do with these classes. Gradually I realized how the verb class system can be used for practical purposesI figured out what to do with them and created a table that has practical value.

When I met Belyakova [8] in 2003, I learned about her approach to classes. She divided all verbs into

productive classes, of which she had 4, and unproductive groups, of which there were 12. In total, 16. 16 classes are the Zaliznyak [9] class system. I gradually came to understand what benefits they can bring to students, and reflected my understanding in the table of classes of verbs [10]. My division of verbs into classes is very similar in many respects to the division made by Nina Nikolaevna Belyakova [8]. This division is generally like that of A. Zaliznyak in his "Grammatical Dictionary" [9].

My table is focused on practical use. There are 16 classes in my table. The division into classes is based on one principle: the rules of forming the stem of the present tense and the stem of the past tense (when it differs from the infinitive stem) from the stem of the infinitive. Some of the classes are subdivided. The rule of forming the stem of the present tense from the stem of the infinitive is what distinguishes one class from all others. There are 16 rules of forming the stem of the present tense from the stem of the infinitive, and therefore 16 classes. In cases where there are small deviations from the main rule within the class, this class is divided into subclasses. There are 5 such classes with subclasses in my table: classes 3, 7, 8, 14 and 16. The table contains also a rule for forming the stem of the past tense for those classes in which the stem of the past tense differs from the stem of the infinitive. In the table you will find information about stress patterns in the present and past tense forms, about the alternation of the final stem where it is relevant, i.e. in classes 4, 5, 6. The same table with the help of color gives information about the belonging of the verb to the first or second conjugation. The verb class table helps students quickly and easily learn how to determine the conjugation of verbs, the class of verbs, form personal and past tense forms, and also learn what stress should be in one form or another.

The practical significance of this table can be illustrated by an example. Let's take the verb рисовать (to draw). Students who are not familiar with the verb classes form the present tense forms like this: я рисоваю etc. The table of verb classes clearly shows that the verbs ending in-овать in infinitive belong to the second class. The rule of forming the stem of the present tense from the stem of the infinitive in this class is as follows: it is necessary to replace -ова- with -уй. Thus, a student familiar with the table understands what needs to be said, я рисую.

Having this table, I developed on its basis the participle formation table [10], which helps students to more easily navigate the material, which is usually described with a large number of exceptions to the rules. [11]

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