

# **SPEECH FEATURES OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE. DIFFICULTIES OF LEARNING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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## **Annotation**

This article discusses some of the features of learning Russian as a foreign language, described from the perspective of comparing two languages by a foreign student: their native language and Russian. The research uses the observation method, carried out during an internship in the master's program "Russian as a Foreign Language."

**Keywords:** Russian language, foreign languages, learning, difficulties, grammar, pronunciation, cultural characteristics, strategies, practice.

## **Introduction**

In today’s globalized world, learning a foreign language is key to fostering communication and mutual understanding. Mastering a foreign language now goes beyond grammatical competence—it requires understanding the cultural and social dimensions of language use. When studying Russian, students often encounter specific speech patterns, idiomatic expressions, and cultural contexts that differ greatly from their own, making learning challenging but rewarding.

The Russian language, with its rich history, complex grammar, and vast expressive potential, holds a unique place among world languages. Its intricate structure, characterized by a complex system of cases, verb aspects, and extensive vocabulary, presents both opportunities and challenges for learners. For those

studying Russian as a foreign language, the task of mastering these features often becomes a journey through cultural and linguistic nuances that require significant effort and dedication.

Understanding the speech features of the Russian language is crucial for effective language acquisition. These features include the use of stress and intonation to convey meaning, the interplay of formal and informal styles, and the nuanced role of context in shaping word choice and sentence structure. For learners, such features often represent significant hurdles, especially when paired with cultural differences and limited exposure to authentic spoken Russian.

The difficulties in learning Russian as a foreign language stem not only from its grammatical complexity but also from the linguistic distance between Russian and other languages. For example, learners whose native languages lack cases or Cyrillic script face additional challenges. Furthermore, the variability of regional dialects, colloquialisms, and idiomatic expressions adds another layer of difficulty, emphasizing the need for tailored teaching approaches.

This article aims to explore the speech features of the Russian language and the specific challenges they pose for non-native speakers. It also seeks to examine effective strategies for overcoming these difficulties, providing insights into how educators and learners can navigate the complexities of Russian language instruction. By addressing these issues, the article contributes to a deeper understanding of how the unique characteristics of Russian influence its acquisition as a foreign language.

## **Key Speech Features of the Russian Language**

### **1. "Давай" ("Come on!")**

This small but versatile word has multiple meanings depending on the context:

- **"Give it back."**
  - **"Go ahead."**
  - **"Goodbye"** – used when ending phone calls or saying farewell.
2. **"Да, нет, наверное" (Yes, no, maybe)**  
A seemingly paradoxical phrase that often confuses learners. Though it literally translates as "Yes, no, probably," it means "I think not" or "most likely not."

### 3. **Untranslatable Words and Idioms**

Russian is rich with expressions that have no direct translation:

- **"Беспредел" (Lawlessness)** – often used to express disbelief or describe something outrageous.
  - **"Не води меня за нос" (Don't lead me by the nose)** – used when someone is being deceived.
4. **Cultural and Artistic Language**

Russian literature, particularly poetry, often contains artistic expressions that are hard to grasp without cultural context. For example:

- **"Унылая пора, очей очарованье"** ("Sad time, eyes of enchantment") from Pushkin's poem is difficult for learners to comprehend due to its figurative language. It can be simplified as "A melancholy time, yet charming to the eyes."

## **Main Difficulties in Learning Russian as a Foreign Language**

### 1. **Grammar**

Russian grammar, particularly its case system, can be a significant challenge for foreign students. The six-case system, verb conjugations, and declensions are complex and require extensive practice.

### 2. **Pronunciation and Phonetics**

The Russian sound system is unique, featuring soft and hard sounds, and vowels that change in stressed and unstressed positions. Learners must

practice these sounds using audio materials and feedback from native speakers to develop proper pronunciation.

### **3. Idiomatic Expressions**

Russian idioms and sayings present another difficulty. Understanding their meaning requires both linguistic and cultural knowledge. Practical communication and extensive exposure to idiomatic phrases are essential for mastering them.

### **4. Cultural Aspects**

Language learning is intertwined with understanding the culture. Foreign students may struggle with Russian communication styles, which can be more direct and involve different levels of politeness. They must familiarize themselves with Russian traditions, customs, and societal norms.

## **Strategies for Overcoming Difficulties**

### **1. Grammar Mastery**

Using grammar tables and consistent practice can help students navigate Russian's complex grammatical system.

### **2. Improving Pronunciation**

Audio resources, phonetic exercises, and interaction with native speakers are crucial for refining pronunciation skills.

### **3. Understanding Idioms and Phrases**

Learners should actively study idiomatic expressions, using dictionaries and online resources, and apply them in real-life communication.

### **4. Cultural Immersion**

Students should immerse themselves in Russian culture through literature, films, and conversations with native speakers. This will deepen their understanding of cultural norms and communication styles.

## **Conclusion**

Learning Russian as a foreign language is a rewarding journey filled with challenges. Students face difficulties with grammar, pronunciation, idiomatic

expressions, and cultural differences. However, by adopting effective strategies—such as consistent practice, cultural immersion, and the use of diverse learning materials—learners can successfully overcome these challenges and achieve fluency in Russian.

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