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## INTENSIFICATION OF TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: MOBILE APPLICATIONS

G.M. Lyovina

Moscow city teacher training university  
*Malyi Kazionnyi pereulok, 5, Moscow, Russia, 105064*

The paper addresses methodological potential of mobile technologies in teaching a foreign language. The principles of creating exercises for Russian as a foreign language mobile learning at levels A1-A2 are considered in the article.

**Key words:** mobile apps, mobile exercises, creating complexes of exercises

Learning a foreign language is not an easy thing. It is a long and slow process that takes a lot of time and efforts. Nowadays it is especially important to know foreign languages. Some people learn languages because they need them for their work, others travel abroad, for the third studying languages is a hobby.

Russia is integrating into the world community and the problem of learning Russian for the purpose of communication is especially urgent today.

In modern educational space Russia announced the promotion of the Russian language in the world. Hence, it is necessary to attract hundreds of thousands new students to learn Russian as a foreign language. New students are first of all those who represent a new generation, which is grown up in front of the computer screens, with a smartphone in hand, which is brought up in network communication, blogs and Twitter. The new generation is used to get information first of all not from a sign system — writing — the transformation of letters into meanings, but from visual images. The cognitive system of a modern young person has changed.

Therefore, the attractiveness of teaching materials is primarily due to the familiar format of getting knowledge: from displays and bright pictures with sound effects.

Besides, American researches show that the duration of learning process does not exceed 2 minutes, then a person switches to something else: another topic, another exercises or another form of work. At a young age, pupils are enthusiastic to learn new things. The primary time table should allow more frequent shorter sessions for maintaining learner's enthusiasm and progress. Acquiring foreign languages can also help them to understand other cultures.

Consequently, mobile language learning is becoming increasingly popular. It is carried out by means of introduction of mobile devices to the learning process. Foreigners have an opportunity to train their language skills at any time and anywhere.

Mobile learning is an e-learning with the help of mobile devices, time- and place-independent, with the use of special software on a pedagogical basis of interdisciplinary and modular approaches[1. C. 164].

Teachers and technology developers should take into account the following factors in order to use mobile devices effectively and successfully in educational process:

1) contents. The information of an app should coincide with the students' interests;

2) mobility. It is very important that a device should be small and light. It means it can be taken anywhere. Students should have an opportunity to join the learning process outside the classroom at suitable time, which does not necessarily coincide with the schedule;

3) learning beyond study hours/ classroom. In order to put this into practice one needs some instruments with the help of which the learning process will be organised effectively;

4) informality. In this case, students can use certain technologies with greater enthusiasm [1. C. 166].

In this article, we do not observe mobile dictionaries, tests, chats and etc. We concentrate only on grammar and lexical exercises for levels A1-A2. According to Titova S.V. and Avramenko's A.P. (who published a manual «Mobile Teaching of foreign languages» in 2014) studies, mobile language learning apps are divided into the following groups:

1) mobile apps — a supplement to the student's books, manuals (English Grammar in Use);

2) self-study apps (LinguaLeo, Duolingo);

3) apps for distant/mobile forms of learning (such apps are created by teachers for a certain course of study; they are not available to all) [3. C. 193].

As a result of the analysis of mobile apps, conducted by the students of MGPU, we can draw the following conclusions:

1) there are noticeably less mobile apps for Russian as a foreign language learning than apps for English learning.

2) not all existent apps for Russian as a foreign language learning and for English learning are of high quality.

3) a wide variety of different apps for English learning allows teachers either to use certain exercises of the apps partly or to create their own exercises in mobile format on the basis of existent apps.

4) mobile apps for Russian as a foreign language learning are few in number, fragmentary, incomplete, i.e., they are aimed at training selective language learning material. They do not correlate with the levels of language proficiency, the objective and tasks of the course of study. Their main drawback is that they do not form a system and do not suppose subsequent logical development of language training.

Thus, nowadays, the base of mobile apps for Russian as a foreign language learning is very poor and the principles of creating these apps are not worked out.

S.V. Titova and A.P. Avramenko offer the following stages of teaching with apps: "It's better to begin with the existent apps created by famous mobile app developers and publishers. Then, when students are already aware of the process of learning a language through apps, teachers may use their own apps created by themselves" [3. C. 167].

We do not consider this way as an optimal one because Russian is an inflexional language and the main aim at the initial stage of language learning is to learn the case system (6 word-forms for each noun, adjective, possessive pronoun, ordinal number in the singular and 6 word-forms in the plural). English learning patterns do not work here.

Before defining the aims facing mobile app developers, we should highlight that first of all students must have a notion about the case and the aspect-tense systems, and to acquire approximately 500 vocabulary units.

Hence, our methodologists' and Russian as a foreign language learning app developers' main aim is to grasp the importance of creation of logical and interconnected complexes of exercises on concrete themes of the language. These complexes should be united, comprise an integrated system and consist of exercises which vary in difficulty. They also should conform to the main objective and the tasks of different stages of Russian as a foreign language learning.

While creating a complex of exercises, despite it should correlate with the other complexes of the system and take a certain place in it, it is important to present the language material correctly. We consider it must be presented consecutively in accordance with the principle from the simple to the complex. It means we should take no more than one difficulty per exercise.

Habitualness, screen format — are not the main qualities of mobile apps. The most important fact is that they must be interesting for the learners, who will derive pleasure from language learning through such apps. A student's attention should be at least 50 per cent focused on winning, a desire to win, scoring points, and not on memorizing words and rules.

Thus, mobile app developers should have a clear idea of the sequence of the introduction of grammatical and lexical material, of exploring each difficulty sequentially and of a correspondence between grammatical theme and vocabulary.

While creating an app for Russian as a foreign language learning, one should draw the algorithm of introducing the difficulties of a language phenomena. We offer to examine such an algorithm by the example of the use of the prepositional case in the meaning of place with gradual increasing of difficulties. The prepositional case usually is studied first because it has the same inflexions for masculine, feminine and neuter gender. However, many problems arise, when we begin to examine it from the point of view of a foreigner:

- 1) the meaning of the case — the answer to the question *где?*;
- 2) the distinction between the prepositions *на* and *в* (*в школе, на почте*);
- 3) masculine, feminine and neuter ending *-е*. The masculine noun ends in *-е* (*магазин — в магазине*); the feminine and the neuter nouns — the endings *-а, -я, -о, -е* are dropped, instead of them we add the endings *-е* (*комната — в комнате, окно — на окне*);
- 4) nouns ending in *ия* in the form of the nominative case, end in *-и* in the prepositional case (*Англия — в Англии*);
- 5) nouns ending in *-у* in the form of the prepositional case (*в аэропорту, в шкафу*);
- 6) nouns ending in *-ь* end in *-и* in the form of the prepositional case (*тетрадь — в тетради, площадь — на площади*);
- 7) forms of nouns in the plural (*города — в городах*).

We see that at first glance the theme «Forming of the prepositional case of nouns» may seem simple, but it has seven stages, for each of which one should offer at least three or four mobile exercises. Assuming that this case is studied first, the vocabulary is still very small and the exercises should be interesting, the task is hard to be done.

Another example is the introduction of the main meanings of the instrumental case:

- 1) formal, i.e., the meaning is connected with the form: *кто, что, с кем, с чем*. The preposition *с* is the formal feature, a signal that one should use the instrumental case. The forms of masculine, feminine gender of Russian nouns and the plural forms of nouns

are trained there. It is logical to train the names of food and drinks: *чай с сахаром и лимоном, кофе с молоком, пирожки с мясом, с рисом, с рыбой, с капустой, с яблоками, с грибами, борщ со сметаной, пельмени с уксусом, блины с икрой* и т.д.;

2) the meaning of the instrument: *писать ручкой, рисовать фломастером, красками, есть вилок, ложкой;*

3) the use of verbs that require the instrumental case: *заниматься чем? интересоваться чем? любоваться кем? чем?;*

4) training of the construction of the verb *быть* in the infinitive, past and future tenses: *он — студент. Быть, был, будет студентом. Он справедливый. Он был, будет справедливым;*

5) training of the construction *мы с братом* (а не я и мой брат).

The possibilities for training are endless here. For example, a student needs to remember a lot of adjectives in order to describe a person: clever, kind, greedy, modest, cheerful, shy, silent and etc.

These exercises can be used as self-study supplementsto any textbooks for training language skills and speech habits. Offering students such a sequence of tasks, we fix in their minds the meanings of the cases and, more importantly, enlarge the vocabulary.

Working with a difficult theme — the dates — (*в каком году, какого числа какого года*), one must provide the learning material in such a way, that users' attention will be focused primarily on the content, that young people will be able to ask questions to their peers, look smart and knowledgeable in their eyes. Questions can be the following:

Когда Юрий Гагарин полетел в космос?	12 апреля 1961 года (двенадцатого апреля тысяча девятьсот шестьдесят первого года)
Когда шотландец Александр Флеминг открыл пенициллин?	В 1928 году (в тысяча девятьсот двадцать восьмом году). Лекарство начали делать в 1943 году (в тысяча девятьсот сорок третьем году)
В каком году южноафриканский хирург Кристиан Барнард сделал первую пересадку сердца от человека человеку?	3 декабря 1967 года в Кейптауне
В каком году Джеймс Уотсон и Фрэнсис Крик открыли структуру ДНК (дэ эн ка) (DNA)?	В 1953 (в тысяча девятьсот пятьдесят третьем) году

The answers in the right column are given in undefined sequence. The users should choose the correct answer by implication (or guess it).

As we all know, the main thing in language learning is the extension of the vocabulary. Exercises with pictures, for example, about the weather: *сегодня дождь, вчера был снег, завтра будет пасмурно, ветер, гроза, туман*, may be suggested there in order to improve the vocabulary.

And here is an exercise for a description of a person's appearance.

After completing the preliminary tasks, which help students to become acquainted with the vocabulary (height, weight, hair, clothes, age), users can be provided with the following 2 exercises:

1. Listen to the dialogue, then read it, and then choose the answers to the questions.
  - Алло, привет!
  - Привет, как дела?
  - Нормально. Слушай, ты помнишь, что мне нужно передать тебе посылку?
  - Конечно, я не забыл!

— Проблема в том, что я заболел, но я могу попросить старшего брата подвезти тебе посылку на вокзал. Так пойдёт?

— Да, думаю, так будет нормально. А чем ты заболел?

— Гриппом. Ну так как, прислать брата?

— А как я его узнаю? Как он выглядит?

— *Он среднего роста, у него тёмные волосы и короткая стрижка. Он всегда ходит в футболке с надписью на груди и чёрной куртке с серым капюшоном.*

— Ладно. А как его зовут?

— Сергей. Тогда я ему всё передам, не опаздывай!

— Хорошо, я постараюсь! Поправляйся!

2. At the next stage, we offer a picture on which students must find a person, who is described.



Thus, we see that mobile app developers have two main tasks. The first one is to identify all lexical and grammatical themes and to create complexes of exercises for each theme in order to promote the gradual mastering of themes, repeatability and concentricity of the presenting material. The second task is to make mobile apps, which will be more entertaining, interesting, enriching knowledge about the world, developing observation and memory.

In case of creating a large number of exercises, there is no need to bind mobile apps to any textbooks (it means a basic level of language proficiency, which includes the compulsory acquisition of the case and the aspect-tense systems by the example of 500—700 lexical units). Users can gradually move from one exercise to another, expanding the vocabulary, automating skills in the use of grammatical forms, training listening skills. Of course, nowadays, it's impossible to evaluate speaking skills without a teacher, but the whole mechanical training can be turned into entertaining and informative game with automated evaluation, sounds, scoring, moving to higher levels.

Another question arises: how well teachers should be proficient in using mobile technologies? Studies conducted by S.V. Titova, and A.P. Avramenko have shown that only

slightly more than half of teachers (58%) offer mobile exercises in Russian. Only 7% of teachers find no sense in them. The rest, refraining from practice of use of online exercises, admit that they, especially in a mobile format, lead to the training of language material and to saving time in class [1. С. 164].

There is another point of view: m-learning teachers will not teach students what they themselves cannot do. [Son 2013: 165]. We believe that while creating numerous complexes of mobile apps, the ability of use of these apps will not be part of the teacher's tasks (although, their content, brightness, brilliance will attract everybody), and will include evaluation of speaking skills at the lesson, encouragement for students in order to make them use an extra vocabulary, complex grammatical structures and etc.

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## ИНТЕНСИФИКАЦИЯ ОБУЧЕНИЯ РКИ: МОБИЛЬНЫЕ ПРИЛОЖЕНИЯ

**Г.М. Лёвина**

Московский городской педагогический университет  
Малый Казенный пер., 5-Б, Москва, Россия, 105064

В статье обосновываются методические возможности мобильных приложений в обучении иностранным языкам, в частности РКИ. Рассмотрены принципы создания упражнений по РКИ для уровней А1-А2 в формате мобильных приложений.

**Ключевые слова:** мобильные приложения, мобильные упражнения, создание комплекса упражнений в формате мобильных приложений

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