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# Essay Method at The Advanced Stage of Russian Language Learning

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## ABSTRACT

This article examines the essay method as an effective tool for developing students' speech, cognitive, and creative skills at the advanced stage of learning Russian. The didactic potential of essays is analyzed, along with their role in fostering critical thinking and independent language activity. The article also provides sample tasks and methodological recommendations for using essays in Russian as a foreign language (RFL) classes.

**Keywords:** Essay method, advanced stage, Russian language learning, RFL, speech activity, critical thinking, creativity.

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization and intercultural interaction, knowledge of the Russian language is of particular importance as a means of international communication and professional development. In this regard, teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL) should be focused not only on mastering lexical and grammatical structures, but also on developing functional literacy, which is understood as the ability to effectively use the language in various areas of communication - academic, professional, everyday.

Modern RFL methods emphasize the need to develop students' linguistic competence, as well as cognitive abilities, such as critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and argumentation. A special place in this process is occupied by the development of written speech, since it allows the student to fully reveal his or her intellectual potential, and contributes to the formation of a coherent, logically organized and stylistically correct statement.

At an advanced stage of learning, when students have

already mastered the basics of grammar and active vocabulary, there is a need to move from reproductive forms of speech to productive and creative ones. In this context, the essay method becomes not only an effective tool for language practice, but also a powerful means of developing students' analytical, semantic and communicative independence. The essay genre gives students the opportunity not only to reproduce learned constructions, but also to express personal opinions, interpret texts, build arguments and engage in written dialogue with the reader. This makes the essay method especially relevant at an advanced stage, when the emphasis of learning shifts toward developing high-level thought processes and academic writing skills.

Thus, the use of the essay method corresponds to the principles of the competence-based approach in teaching, ensuring the integration of linguistic, cognitive and creative components in a single educational space. The purpose of this article is to substantiate the effectiveness of the essay method in teaching Russian as a foreign language

at an advanced stage, analyze its didactic capabilities and present methodological recommendations for its implementation in educational practice.

### **Theoretical Foundations of the Essay Method**

The essay method occupies a special place among productive forms of speech activity that contribute not only to the mastery of linguistic means, but also to the formation of the student's personality. Its theoretical foundations are rooted in the concepts of personality-oriented, activity-based and communicative approaches, according to which learning should not only impart knowledge, but also develop the skills of self-determination, critical assessment, meaning generation and self-expression.

According to the personality-oriented paradigm (Vygotsky, Leontiev, Elkonin), the student is considered an active subject of learning, not a passive object. In this context, the essay acts as a mediator between the inner world of the student and the language being studied. By writing an essay, students internalize the lexical and grammatical material, giving it personal meaning and cultural significance. In the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language, the essay is considered not only a genre of written speech, but also a powerful didactic tool that ensures:

- Activation of lexical and grammatical skills: essay writing requires a conscious choice of language tools, which helps to consolidate grammatical structures and expand active vocabulary;
- Formation of coherent monologue speech: the student learns to build a logically organized statement, adhere to compositional principles (introduction, main part, conclusion);
- Development of interpretive and argumentative skills: essay writing involves not only presenting facts, but also interpreting them, analyzing them, expressing a position and proving one's point of view;
- Formation of motivation for linguistic and cultural reflection: when working on an essay, the student comprehends linguocultural differences, compares the native and studied languages, reflects on cultural realities and universals.

Researchers in the field of methods of teaching RFL, such

as I.L. Bim, M.V. Verbitskaya, I.A. Zimnyaya, emphasize that writing an essay contributes to the formation of complex speech skills that go beyond the simple transfer of information. An essay is a form of written discourse that requires cognitive depth, speech flexibility and cultural awareness. In addition, the essay method is harmoniously combined with the principles of the competence approach, according to which training should provide not only a knowledge component, but also the formation of key meta-subject and communicative competencies. It is in the essay that such skills as independent problem setting, information search, content structuring, self-control and reflection are realized.

Thus, the essay method has a powerful didactic potential, which makes it indispensable at the advanced stage of studying Russian as a foreign language. It not only deepens the language training of students, but also contributes to the formation of their intellectual and personal maturity.

### **Features of the application of the essay method at an advanced stage**

The advanced stage of teaching Russian as a foreign language is characterized by the transition from operating with basic lexical and grammatical units to mastering complex forms of speech activity, in which the central place is occupied by meaningful and creative use of language. At this level, students have already formed stable language automatisms, an expanded vocabulary, and developed perceptual and productive skills. This creates favorable conditions for the introduction of such forms of training that contribute to the development of verbal thinking, independence, and interpretive activity. The essay method meets all these requirements, since it is focused on productive language activity and the integration of cognitive, emotional, and linguistic resources of the student's personality.

At the advanced stage, the essay method performs a number of key didactic functions:

- Communicative function — the essay creates a space for written dialogue, where the student can not only express his position, but also enter into a correspondence discussion with the intended reader. This contributes to the formation of discursive competence, as well as the development of the ability to make a reasoned and targeted statement.

- Cognitive function — writing an essay requires the student to organize the thought process: selection of information, its analysis, classification and interpretation. Thus, the essay stimulates the development of logical-structural and abstract thinking, as well as metacognitive strategies.

- Speech function — the essay method allows students to consolidate and actively apply language tools in realistic, contextually determined situations. This contributes to the formation of flexibility in the choice of speech strategies, stylistic adequacy and grammatical accuracy.

- Cultural function - the essay's subject often touches on socio-cultural, ethical and intercultural aspects, which encourages students to understand cultural differences, to reflect on the norms and values of a foreign-language society. Thus, intercultural competence is developed - one of the key components of modern humanitarian education.

In addition to the above aspects, the essay method helps to develop and strengthen meta-subject skills, such as:

- argumentation - the ability to logically and consistently defend one's point of view;
- text structuring - compliance with the logic of presentation, compositional integrity, transitions between parts of the text;
- critical understanding of information - the ability to analyze different points of view, identify hidden meanings, make comparisons;
- reflection - awareness of one's own speech and thinking strategies, setting goals and monitoring their implementation.

Thus, at the advanced stage of teaching Russian as a foreign language, the essay method not only helps to improve linguistic competence, but also integrates the student into the space of academic and intercultural communication. It becomes an effective tool for developing personal and professional readiness to participate in a multilingual and multicultural world.

### **Essay typology in teaching Russian as a foreign language**

One of the key factors for the successful implementation of the essay method in the practice of teaching Russian as a

foreign language is the competent selection of its genre forms and thematic content. The variety of essay types allows taking into account the individual characteristics of students, their language level, cognitive preferences and socio-cultural context. In addition, genre variability contributes to the holistic development of speech, logical-analytical and intercultural competencies, which is especially important at the advanced stage of language acquisition.

In the practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language, the following types of essays are the most productive and didactically justified:

#### **1. Problem essay**

Example of the topic: "What does it mean to be a free person?"

This type of essay is aimed at developing argumentative and critical-reflective competence. The student learns to formulate a problem, identify its relevance, put forward theses, support them with logical arguments and examples, which contributes to the development of academic writing skills and dialectical thinking. The problem essay is ideal for discussing philosophical, ethical and socially significant topics, which, in turn, broadens the horizons of students and strengthens the motivation to study the language.

#### **2. Comparative essay**

Example of the topic: "Russian and my native culture: points of contact"

A comparative essay develops the ability to identify similarities and differences between two phenomena - cultural, linguistic, behavioral. This genre contributes to the formation of intercultural competence and skills in interpreting cultural codes. Writing such essays requires students not only to master the linguistic means of comparison and contrast, but also to have the ability for cultural reflection and a tolerant view of differences. In addition, this genre helps to integrate the student's personal experience into the learning process, enhancing his subjective involvement.

#### **3. Analytical essay**

Example: Analysis of a fiction or journalistic text, article,

film fragment. An analytical essay develops the skills of critical analysis, interpretation, identification of subtext and the author's position. It is relevant when working with literary works, mass media, scientific or journalistic texts. Within the framework of Russian as a foreign language, this genre allows you to practice complex syntactic constructions, terminological vocabulary, means of logical connection and citation. In addition, it contributes to the development of academic literacy, which is necessary for studying at universities in the Russian-speaking area.

#### 4. Personal (reflective) essay

**Example of the topic:** "What surprised me in the Russian language?"

A personal essay gives the student the opportunity to express their subjective perception of the language being studied, share discoveries, associations, impressions. It develops the skills of self-presentation, emotional expressiveness and spontaneous speech activity. This type of essay is especially useful for creating a trusting atmosphere in a group, developing language confidence and removing psychological barriers. In the RKI methodology, personal essays are often used as a means of language diagnostics and self-assessment of progress.

Each of the presented essay types is aimed at developing specific cognitive, speech and socio-cultural skills. Their alternation and combination in the educational process allows you to create a variable, personally significant and meta-subject oriented learning environment. Thus, the essay typology becomes not just a tool for genre diversity, but also an effective mechanism for individualization and differentiation of learning within the framework of the competence-based approach.

Methodological recommendations for the use of the essay method in teaching Russian as a foreign language

For the effective implementation of the essay method in teaching Russian as a foreign language, it is necessary to follow a step-by-step, systematic approach that provides both linguistic and cognitive support for students. The essay writing methodology should be integrated into the educational process, taking into account the principles of gradualism, awareness, and reflexivity. Below are the main stages of working with essays, accompanied by specific methodological instructions.

#### 1. Preparatory stage (motivational and diagnostic)

The goal of this stage is to create basic conditions for successful perception and subsequent completion of the task. Here, the focus on genre specifics and mobilization of relevant language resources are especially important.

- Introduction to the essay genre and its structure

Students are given a brief theoretical introduction to the genre features of the essay: introduction - thesis, main part - argumentation and examples, conclusion - generalization. It is advisable to use graphic diagrams (mind-maps) and tables to visualize the structure.

- Work with authentic samples

Analysis of real student essays or samples prepared by the teacher is proposed. Joint analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the texts contributes to the formation of genre sensitivity, awareness of errors and a better understanding of the requirements.

- Targeted lexical and grammatical exercises

Before writing an essay, you should conduct a series of exercises that activate vocabulary on a given topic, practice means of logical connection (conjunctions, introductory constructions), argumentation and evaluation (for example, "in my opinion", "therefore", "one can assume", etc.).

#### 2. Main stage (creative and productive)

This stage involves independent productive activity of students, based on previous preparation.

- Group discussion of the problem (prescription)

Before individual essay writing, it is advisable to organize a group discussion on the proposed topic, during which students formulate the main theses, exchange opinions, and clarify their position. This helps to reduce anxiety and actively engage in the topic.

- Drawing up an essay plan

Individual or paired drawing up of a plan helps to structure the future statement, organize the material logically and consistently. The plan can be discussed in mini-groups and receive feedback before writing.

- Writing a draft of the text

At this stage, the main productive work is carried out. It is important to emphasize the value of the draft version, where errors are possible, since they serve as a basis for subsequent editing and learning from your own examples.

### **3. Reflective stage (analytical and corrective)**

This stage is aimed at understanding the result, refining it and developing self-control skills.

- Editing and improving the text

Working on errors, lexical and stylistic editing, eliminating logical gaps. It is possible to use “linguistic checklists” that allow the student to systematize the check (grammar, vocabulary, structure, logic, argumentation).

- Oral essay presentation

Oral defense or presentation of an essay forms the integration of written and oral speech, promotes the development of public speaking skills and confident self-expression. It also enhances motivation and a sense of responsibility for the result.

- Self-assessment and mutual assessment

Formative assessment using criteria (structure, logic, originality, linguistic correctness, etc.) helps students realize their strengths and weaknesses. Feedback can be provided both orally and in writing.

## **CONCLUSION**

The essay method occupies a special place in the system of teaching Russian as a foreign language at an advanced stage, combining linguistic, cognitive and cultural components. Due to its genre flexibility, personal focus and analytical potential, the essay allows not only to improve the language competence of students, but also to form meta-subject skills: critical thinking, logical expression of thought, the ability to self-analysis and cultural reflection.

An analysis of the theoretical foundations of the essay method and its practical application showed that systematic work with this genre facilitates the transition from reproductive forms of language acquisition to productive

and creative ones. The essay acts as a means of implementing a competency-based approach to teaching Russian as a foreign language, allowing for the integration of language knowledge with the student's personal experience and stimulating his or her speech independence. The introduction of the essay method requires careful methodological support from the teacher: step-by-step organization of the process, differentiation of tasks, creation of a motivational environment and formation of a culture of written reflection. Of particular importance is the post-writing stage, in which editing, oral presentation and formative assessment play a key role.

Thus, the essay method is a powerful didactic tool that ensures not only the development of the student's linguistic personality, but also the formation of a humanitarian worldview based on a dialogue of cultures, respect for the other and the ability to express one's position in a reasoned manner.

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