



THE TEACHING METHODS OF NEOLOGISMS IN RUSSIAN CLASSES

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Abstract: This article explores effective methods for teaching neologisms in Russian language classes. Neologisms, as dynamic lexical units, reflect the ongoing sociocultural and technological changes in society. The paper presents classification types, sources of modern Russian neologisms, and challenges related to their instruction. Practical strategies such as contextual learning, project-based tasks, digital media analysis, and interactive techniques are suggested to improve students' lexical awareness and communicative competence. Special attention is given to how teaching neologisms enhances cultural literacy and real-world language skills.

Keywords : Neologism, Russian language teaching, vocabulary development, contextual learning, interactive methods.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly changing world of communication, the Russian language, like many others, constantly evolves by adopting new words, expressions, and forms. Neologisms — newly coined terms or words that have recently entered the language — serve as linguistic reflections of socio-cultural, political, and technological transformations. Teaching neologisms in Russian classes has become increasingly important to equip learners with the skills to navigate modern speech environments, especially in digital contexts where new vocabulary appears at an accelerated rate. This article explores the methodological approaches and didactic strategies that enhance students' awareness, comprehension, and practical application of Russian neologisms. Emphasis is placed on communicative competence, language adaptability, and contextual learning.

2. Definition and Classification of Neologisms

Neologisms are newly created lexical items that emerge in response to changes in society, technology, and culture. While some neologisms quickly fade, others become stable elements of the vocabulary. They can be classified in several ways:

- Lexical neologisms: completely new words formed from existing morphemes (e.g., киберпространство).
- Semantic neologisms: existing words that gain new meanings (e.g., мышь as a computer device).
- Stylistic neologisms: familiar words used in new stylistic or ironic senses.
- Borrowed neologisms: words imported from other languages, often English (e.g., лайкать, блогер).
- Internet neologisms: words that emerge in digital and social media spaces (e.g., мем, репост).



Understanding these categories is crucial for both language learners and educators, as it frames how new words can be introduced and explored in the classroom.

3. Sources of Neologisms in Modern Russian

Neologisms in Russian are largely driven by external and internal societal influences. The following are the primary sources contributing to the influx of new words:

Media and journalism: News outlets introduce new terminology to describe social trends, technological changes, and political events. Terms such as фейк (fake), ковид (COVID) and самоизоляция (self-isolation) became widespread through journalistic discourse.

- Internet and digital communication: Social media platforms and online communities are hubs for language innovation. Neologisms like хейтер (hater), стримить (to stream), and сторис (stories) are typical examples of this domain.

- Technology and science: Advances in science and technology give rise to new terms like блокчейн (blockchain), искусственный интеллект (AI), and криптовалюта (cryptocurrency).

- Youth subcultures: Russian-speaking youth generate slang and playful linguistic forms that may enter general usage. For instance, кринж (cringe), зашквар (embarrassment), and краш (crush) are common in digital youth slang.

- Politics and socio-economic changes: Events like sanctions, elections, and reforms introduce neologisms such as импортозамещение (import substitution) or мобилизация (mobilization) with new connotations.

These sources illustrate how neologisms are not random but reflect the real-life priorities and anxieties of society.

4. Challenges in Teaching Neologisms

Incorporating neologisms into Russian language instruction is beneficial but presents several pedagogical challenges:

- Temporal instability: Some neologisms may be ephemeral, disappearing as quickly as they appeared. Teachers must choose examples that have reasonable permanence or broader usage.

- Lack of dictionary support: Many neologisms are not yet included in traditional dictionaries, making it difficult for students to find definitions or proper usage contexts.

- Cultural specificity: Neologisms are often culture-bound and context-sensitive, making them hard to translate or explain without deep background knowledge.

- Ambiguity and humor: Slang neologisms may contain irony, sarcasm, or double meanings, which are not always transparent to non-native speakers.

These factors require educators to be flexible, creative, and culturally informed when integrating neologisms into their lessons.

5. Effective Methods for Teaching Neologisms

Effective teaching of neologisms in Russian language classes requires a combination of traditional linguistic methods and contemporary communicative approaches. Below are several methods that have proven useful in the classroom:

1. Contextual Learning

Introducing neologisms through authentic texts — news articles, social media posts, blogs, and online forums — helps students understand how new words function in real-life discourse. Contextual clues support comprehension and enable learners to infer meanings.

2. Thematic Grouping

Classifying neologisms according to themes (e.g., technology, youth culture, politics) allows learners to build semantic fields. This makes retention easier and supports vocabulary expansion within specific areas of interest.

3. Comparative Analysis

Encouraging students to compare neologisms with their traditional or standard language counterparts fosters critical thinking. For example, comparing the neologism “лайкать” with the verb “нравиться” helps students see how digital culture influences language behavior.

4. Project-Based Assignments

Students can be assigned projects in which they collect, analyze, and present current neologisms found in media. This encourages independent research and fosters learner autonomy. Example project: “10 Russian neologisms from TikTok – meanings and usage.”

5. Lexical Notebooks and Reflection Logs

Maintaining personal vocabulary journals helps students record new words, their meanings, and examples. Regular reflection enhances metalinguistic awareness

6. Interactive Techniques in Classroom Practice

To ensure active learning and student engagement, interactive methods play a critical role in teaching neologisms. Some effective classroom techniques include:

1. Role-Play and Simulation
Creating real-life scenarios where students use neologisms (e.g., online chatting, vlogging, debating) enhances fluency and confidence. Example: A simulated press conference about a trending topic using neologisms like “фейк”, “стрим”, or “блогер”.

2. Word Formation Games

Games such as “Create a Neologism,” where students form new words using common prefixes/suffixes, reinforce morphology and creativity. Example: forming tech-related neologisms using корень “цифр-” (digital).

3. Meme and Social Media Analysis

Analyzing memes, short videos, or tweet threads allows students to see how neologisms work within humor, irony, and youth speech. This also builds cultural competence.

4. Quizzes and Kahoot-style Reviews

Using online quiz platforms to test recognition and understanding of neologisms keeps the learning process dynamic and interactive.

5. Group Debates or Discussions

Assigning discussion topics involving new societal phenomena (e.g., “digital detox,” “influencer culture”) ensures spontaneous use of neologisms in argumentation and expression.

7. Assessment of Neologism Mastery

The assessment of students’ understanding and practical use of neologisms requires both traditional and innovative evaluation methods. Since neologisms are often situational, context-dependent, and culturally nuanced, it is important to assess not only recognition but also comprehension and application.

1. Vocabulary Quizzes and Mini-Tests

Short quizzes help to check students’ ability to recognize, define, and use neologisms in context. Matching exercises, multiple-choice questions, and gap-filling activities can be used with neologisms found in media and digital texts.

2. Creative Writing Tasks

Students are encouraged to write short stories, blogs, or dialogue scenes incorporating 5–10 neologisms. This demonstrates their ability to apply new vocabulary in meaningful communication.

3. Oral Presentations

Students prepare presentations on the origin, meaning, and cultural background of selected neologisms. This method promotes research, speaking skills, and deeper linguistic reflection.

4. Media Diaries or Lexical Portfolios

Learners keep a diary or portfolio of neologisms encountered during a period of time (e.g., 2–4 weeks), with source references, definitions, and usage samples. This supports long-term vocabulary retention and metacognitive awareness.

5. Group Projects and Peer Review

Team-based activities like “Neologism Newsroom” or “Trendy Word of the Week” involve collaboration and discussion. Peer feedback sessions build analytical and communication skills.

Reflection Journals

Students reflect on how neologisms change their perception of language and culture. They comment on which words felt intuitive, confusing, humorous, or interesting — fostering personal engagement.

CONCLUSION

Neologisms represent a vibrant and dynamic component of the Russian language, reflecting the evolving realities of modern life. Their emergence is closely tied to technological advancements, globalization, youth culture, media, and social change. Therefore, teaching neologisms in the classroom is not just a lexical enrichment exercise but a necessary step toward building communicative competence in contemporary contexts. Incorporating neologisms into Russian language instruction enables students to stay current with modern speech, understand cultural nuances, and develop adaptive linguistic strategies. Moreover, neologisms help learners better connect with native speakers and authentic materials — such as social media, blogs, and digital forums — that are heavily saturated with new vocabulary.

Teachers play a vital role in this process. By selecting relevant examples, providing contextual learning opportunities, and encouraging active student participation through interactive methods, educators can transform neologisms from confusing “slang” into a powerful tool for learning. Furthermore, formative and summative assessments focused on neologisms promote awareness of language innovation and encourage learners to think critically about how and why new words arise.

Ultimately, the inclusion of neologisms in Russian classes supports not only linguistic fluency but also cultural literacy, critical thinking, and language dynamism. It bridges the gap between classroom instruction and real-world communication, preparing students for both academic and everyday interactions.

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