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THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN RUSSIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract. This article examines the role of artificial intelligence in developing communicative competence in Russian language teaching. The study interprets AI not as a replacement for the teacher, but as a methodological tool that can support individualized learning, dialogic practice, automated feedback, vocabulary development, grammar accuracy, pronunciation training, mediation tasks and reflective language learning. The article argues that AI tools become pedagogically effective only when they are integrated into a clearly designed system of communicative tasks, assessment criteria and teacher-guided interaction. Special attention is paid to ethical, methodological and linguistic limitations of AI in Russian language education.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, Russian language teaching, communicative competence, language methodology, digital pedagogy, adaptive learning, feedback, speech skills.

INTRODUCTION

The development of communicative competence is one of the central aims of modern Russian language teaching. A learner who studies Russian should not only know grammatical rules, lexical meanings and pronunciation norms, but also be able to use the language in real communicative situations. Communicative competence includes listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, as well as sociocultural awareness, discourse organization, strategic behavior and the ability to select appropriate linguistic means according to context. In this sense, Russian language teaching cannot be limited to mechanical grammar exercises; it must develop the learner's capacity to participate in meaningful interaction.

Artificial intelligence has become an important factor in contemporary language education. AI-based tools can generate dialogues, correct written texts, explain grammatical mistakes, create individualized exercises, simulate communicative situations, analyze pronunciation and provide instant feedback. UNESCO's guidance on generative AI in education emphasizes that these technologies should be used within a human-centred, ethically controlled and pedagogically justified framework [1]. Therefore, the methodological question is not whether AI should be used in Russian language teaching, but how it should be used to strengthen communicative competence without reducing learning to automated interaction with a machine.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The communicative approach to language teaching is based on the idea that language is learned most effectively through meaningful use. E.I. Passov considered communication not as an additional exercise after grammar practice, but as the core mechanism of language acquisition [4]. This principle is especially relevant for Russian, where the grammatical system is complex and requires constant contextualized practice. Cases, verbal aspect, verbs of motion, word order, agreement, intonation and speech etiquette cannot be mastered only through isolated rules. They

must be used in situations where the learner has a communicative intention: to ask, explain, refuse, agree, clarify, compare, describe, argue or summarize.

AI can support this process by creating a dynamic communicative environment. For example, a learner may ask an AI system to simulate a conversation at a railway station, in a university office, during a medical consultation, in a shop or at an academic seminar. Such practice allows the student to use Russian not as an abstract subject, but as a means of solving communicative tasks. The CEFR Companion Volume also broadens language education by emphasizing mediation, online interaction and plurilingual competence [3]. AI tools can help design tasks aligned with these principles, especially when learners need additional practice outside classroom time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the most important functions of AI in Russian language teaching is adaptive feedback. Traditional classroom feedback is limited by time: the teacher cannot correct every written sentence or every oral response in detail. AI-based tools can provide immediate comments on spelling, grammar, word choice, punctuation and sentence structure. For example, if a student writes я был в университет, an AI system may indicate that the prepositional case is required after в when location is expressed: я был в университете. However, the teacher must guide students in interpreting such feedback, because AI may sometimes correct surface errors while ignoring pragmatic appropriateness, stylistic nuance or deeper communicative intention.

AI can also help develop lexical competence. Russian vocabulary presents many difficulties for learners: aspectual pairs, prefixes, suffixes, paronyms, stylistic layers, idioms and culturally marked expressions. AI tools can generate thematic vocabulary lists, provide contextual examples, compare near-synonyms and create short communicative tasks. For instance, learners can compare сказать, говорить, рассказать, объяснить and сообщить through context-based examples. This is more useful than memorizing isolated words. A.N. Shchukin notes that language teaching methodology should connect linguistic material with speech activity and communicative purpose [5]. AI can assist this connection if lexical material is introduced through situations, dialogues and texts rather than through disconnected lists.

Grammar teaching can also become more communicative with AI support. Russian grammar is often perceived as difficult because learners see it as a system of endings and exceptions. AI can generate personalized micro-dialogues, transformation exercises and problem-based tasks. For example, when teaching verbs of motion, the teacher may ask AI to create short situations requiring the contrast between идти, ходить, ехать, ездить, прийти, уйти and поехать. Instead of merely filling tables, students solve communicative problems: explaining where they are going, how they usually travel, why they came late or where they went yesterday. In this way, AI helps transform grammar into functional speech material.

Speaking competence is another field where AI has methodological value. Many students hesitate to speak Russian because they fear mistakes, lack vocabulary or do not have enough interlocutors. AI chatbots can lower this barrier by providing low-pressure practice. A learner may rehearse a dialogue several times before speaking with a teacher or peers. AI can ask follow-up questions, rephrase unclear utterances and suggest more natural expressions. Yet this practice should not replace human communication. Russian speech involves intonation, emotional nuance, politeness, cultural norms and interpersonal sensitivity. AI can prepare learners for communication, but genuine communicative competence develops through interaction with real speakers and meaningful classroom dialogue.

Pronunciation and listening skills can also be improved through AI-supported tools. Russian stress, vowel reduction, palatalization, consonant clusters and intonation patterns are difficult for many learners. Speech-recognition systems can help students compare their pronunciation with standard models, repeat phrases and receive automated comments. However, pronunciation correction should be careful and linguistically informed. AI systems may not always recognize accented speech accurately, and they may treat acceptable variation as error. Therefore, pronunciation training should combine AI-based repetition with teacher explanation, phonetic awareness and listening practice.

AI is especially useful for developing written communicative competence. Students can draft letters, essays, summaries, applications, comments and reports, then use AI tools to check coherence, grammar and style. For example, a learner may write an email to a university administrator and ask AI whether the tone is formal enough. The system may suggest formulas such as Уважаемый преподаватель, Прошу Вас, Заранее благодарю. Such work helps learners understand not only grammar but also genre conventions. E.G. Azimov and A.N. Shchukin define methodological competence in connection with speech skills, language skills and communicative tasks [6]. AI can support these tasks when writing is treated as meaningful communication rather than mechanical composition.

The role of AI in assessment should be considered separately. AI can generate quizzes, analyze common mistakes, classify learners' difficulties and help teachers design differentiated tasks. It can support formative assessment by showing which grammatical or lexical areas require additional practice. However, final assessment of communicative competence cannot be fully delegated to AI. Communicative performance involves appropriateness, fluency, coherence, interactional behavior and sociocultural adequacy. These features require human professional judgment. UNESCO's AI competency framework for teachers stresses that teachers need knowledge, skills and values for ethical and pedagogical use of AI [2]. Thus, teachers must remain responsible for methodological decisions and learning outcomes.

There are also serious limitations. AI may produce incorrect explanations, artificial examples or culturally inappropriate utterances. It may simplify Russian grammar too much or provide examples that are formally possible but stylistically unnatural. In addition, learners may become dependent on AI-generated texts and lose the ability to think independently in Russian. The ethical dimension is also important: data privacy, academic honesty, transparency and equal access must be considered. Holmes and co-authors emphasize that AI in education should be understood not only technically but also pedagogically, socially and ethically [7]. If these dimensions are ignored, AI may weaken rather than strengthen language education.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence can play a significant role in developing communicative competence in Russian language teaching. It can support adaptive feedback, grammar practice, vocabulary development, speaking rehearsal, pronunciation training, writing improvement and individualized learning. Its value lies in the possibility of creating additional communicative practice and providing learners with immediate support outside the limited classroom space.

At the same time, AI cannot be considered an independent methodological solution. Its effectiveness depends on teacher guidance, clear communicative goals, reliable linguistic control, ethical awareness and integration with real human interaction. Russian language teaching needs AI not as an automatic substitute for pedagogy, but as a carefully managed digital tool within a

communicative methodology. When used responsibly, AI can enrich Russian language learning and help students move from formal knowledge to practical communicative competence.

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