
METHODS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN NON-LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITIES FROM THE 1950S TO THE PRESENT

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This article examines the development of methods for teaching foreign languages in non-linguistic, particularly technical, universities from the 1950s to the present day. The authors analyze various teaching methods and highlight how these methods evolved based on state development goals and objectives. There was a time in the history of our country when learning foreign languages was not a priority. In the 1950s, the grammar-translation method formed the foundation of foreign language teaching in both secondary and higher education. This method remained dominant for many years. However, in the 1960s, its limitations led educators to reconsider existing methodologies and return to direct methods, which emphasized practical application, intuition, and avoided translation, discouraging the use of the native language in teaching.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the practical orientation of foreign language teaching methods gained prominence. Methodologists emphasized the need for linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills. It was argued that learning a foreign language should provide students with access to other cultures and facilitate a "dialogue of cultures." Following the fall of the "Iron Curtain," foreign language study transitioned from a theoretical discipline to a practical necessity. The communicative approach became the response to societal demands. This method prepares specialists with professionally oriented language skills, enabling them to use foreign languages as tools in their professional activities.

The new structure of higher education, which includes three levels—bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies—has improved the teaching system

for professional foreign language courses. The article asserts that foreign language study is an integral part of all three levels of higher education and fulfills the requirements of the new federal educational standards.

INTRODUCTION. Foreign language teaching has always been of great importance in our country. Even in Tsarist Russia, languages such as Latin, French, German, and Greek were taught in schools, gymnasiums, and universities. Teaching methodologies evolved according to the goals and needs of state development.

The term "non-linguistic university" itself indicates that there was a period when foreign language learning was of secondary importance. In the 1950s, the socio-economic situation did not require graduates of non-linguistic specialties to have profound foreign language knowledge. Moreover, post-war conditions made it nearly impossible to implement a robust foreign language education system due to the lack of qualified teachers.

In 1950, Joseph Stalin published "Marxism and Linguistic Questions," which emphasized that vocabulary and grammar form the core of a language. This work solidified the grammar-translation method as the dominant approach in Soviet schools and universities for many years. While the method's simplicity facilitated the rapid training of educators, its major drawback was the lack of conversational skills development and practical language use.

By the 1960s, increasing international engagement led to policy changes. The Soviet government recognized the growing need for foreign language proficiency among specialists. The 1961 resolution "On Improving the Study of Foreign Languages" mandated curriculum revisions, emphasizing foreign language proficiency for humanities graduates while widening the gap between humanities and technical graduates. At that time, technical university graduates were expected to read specialized literature but lacked basic conversational skills.

In the 1960s, the dominant methodologies were the conscious-comparative and conscious-practical approaches. The conscious-comparative method introduced speech models and emphasized oral communication training, treating grammar rules as action algorithms. The conscious-practical method aimed to integrate different aspects of language learning, focusing on speech orientation, situational context, and transferability of skills.

The 1970s and 1980s reinforced the practical application of foreign language skills. The teaching approach prioritized linguistic and cultural knowledge, ensuring that language learning facilitated intercultural communication. The textbook "English for Technical Universities" (1976) became a foundational resource for engineering students, later updated as "English for Engineers" (2007). These textbooks focused on reading comprehension,

professional communication, and expanding vocabulary, but primarily catered to passive language skills.

Following the fall of the "Iron Curtain," the shift from an industrial to an informational society made foreign language skills a practical necessity. Professionals needed to use foreign languages as tools for industry, research, and international collaboration. As noted by scholar S.G. Ter-Minasova, professionals were less interested in linguistic theory and more in practical language application.

To address this need, the Russian Ministry of Education introduced an optional "Translator in Professional Communication" qualification for non-linguistic university graduates. Specialized universities began training professionals with integrated foreign language skills as part of their core curriculum.

The term "specialized university" was adopted from Western education systems, particularly Germany, where it refers to institutions with a practical focus rather than purely theoretical instruction. In Russia, specialized universities prepare non-linguists with foreign language proficiency for professional purposes. Foreign language instruction in these institutions is not an elective but a mandatory part of the curriculum.

The integration of foreign language education into technical universities aligns with Russia's education modernization strategy. The federal educational standards emphasize foreign language training tailored to professional needs. Modern engineers, for example, are expected to possess broad knowledge, adaptability, and problem-solving skills, along with the ability to communicate with international colleagues.

Bachelor's degree programs now include competencies such as foreign language communication (OK-5) and the ability to apply foreign language knowledge in professional activities (OPK-7). However, many traditional teaching methods do not effectively develop interpersonal and intercultural communication skills. To foster communicative competence, foreign language education must shift from "teaching a foreign language" to "foreign language education," where students actively participate in their learning process.

Within the communicative approach, the goal is not just competency acquisition but engagement in a "dialogue of cultures." Humanistic pedagogy, which prioritizes the individual, culture, and society as interconnected factors, should form the foundation of foreign language education in technical universities.

The transition to a new higher education structure supports these methodological changes. The introduction of a two-tier education system (bachelor's and master's degrees) has been one of Russia's major educational innovations. However, the distinction between these levels remains unclear, and there is ongoing debate about whether bachelor's programs should provide general or professional education.

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Additionally, the status of doctoral programs has changed. Since 2013, doctoral studies have been classified as the third level of higher education, requiring new learning models to maximize research and professional potential.

Conclusion

The evolution of foreign language teaching in non-linguistic universities reflects broader educational and societal transformations. From the dominance of the grammar-translation method in the 1950s to the communicative and professionally oriented approaches of today, methodologies have continuously adapted to meet new demands. The current focus on communicative competence and professional application underscores the growing integration of foreign languages into technical and specialized education. Moving forward, the successful implementation of these methods will require ongoing curriculum development and alignment with global educational standards.

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