

## METHODOLOGY OF ORGANIZING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the theoretical and practical aspects of organizing project-based learning (PBL) in the context of teaching russian as a foreign language (RFL) at the university level. With the growing emphasis on communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and learner autonomy in modern language pedagogy, PBL emerges as an effective method for achieving these goals. The study outlines the main methodological principles of PBL, including authenticity, interdisciplinarity, and student-centeredness, and describes the stages of project implementation – from planning and execution to presentation and reflection. Several examples of successful project formats are presented, including thematic cultural comparisons, professional language applications, and campus-based mini-research projects. The article also addresses potential challenges such as students' limited proficiency and time constraints, offering practical strategies to overcome them. Ultimately, the paper argues that project-based learning fosters not only language acquisition but also critical thinking, teamwork, and real-world communication skills. The integration of PBL into RFL instruction represents a shift toward more dynamic, relevant, and student-driven learning in higher education.

### **Keywords**

project-based learning, russian as a foreign language, university education, interactive methods, communicative competence, student-centered learning, interdisciplinary approach, language teaching methodology, learner autonomy, collaborative learning.

**Introduction.** In recent years, the methodology of teaching foreign languages in higher education has undergone significant transformation. Traditional teacher-

centered approaches are increasingly giving way to interactive, student-oriented methods that focus on developing not only linguistic accuracy, but also real-life communication skills, critical thinking, and cultural competence. One of the most effective and widely implemented strategies in this context is project-based learning (PBL).

Project-based learning is a dynamic instructional method that engages students in exploring authentic problems and questions over an extended period of time. Unlike conventional methods, PBL emphasizes the process of learning as much as the final product. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively, take initiative, and apply the target language in meaningful and often interdisciplinary contexts. This makes PBL especially relevant for university students who are preparing to use Russian in academic, professional, or intercultural settings.

In the case of teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL), project-based learning offers a framework that can simultaneously address multiple learning objectives: from expanding vocabulary and mastering grammatical structures to developing presentation skills and cultural awareness. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for integrating language instruction with students' major fields of study, such as business, engineering, medicine, or international relations.

This article aims to present a comprehensive overview of the methodological foundations, practical implementation, and pedagogical benefits of project-based learning in the RFL classroom at the university level. It also outlines specific stages of organizing projects, suggests examples of effective project formats, and discusses common challenges and solutions in adopting PBL in non-philological educational contexts.

By placing learners at the center of the educational process and involving them in the creation of meaningful linguistic products, PBL contributes not only to improved language proficiency, but also to the development of essential 21st-century skills. The need for innovative and integrative teaching methods makes the exploration of project-based learning in RFL more relevant than ever.

**Theoretical background.** PBL is grounded in constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes knowledge construction through active participation. In the context of language education, it aligns with communicative and task-based approaches. According to researchers such as Thomas (2000) and Beckett & Slater (2005), project-based learning facilitates deeper language processing and retention by involving students in meaningful tasks.

The primary goals of implementing PBL in RFL instruction include:

- Enhancing communicative competence in real-world contexts
- Promoting learner autonomy and collaboration

- Developing cross-cultural understanding
- Integrating language learning with academic or professional fields

**Methodological Principles.** The organization of PBL in RFL should follow these key principles:

- **Authenticity:** Projects should reflect real-life communication needs and situations.
- **Interdisciplinarity:** Projects can be linked with students' major subjects (e.g., economics, medicine, engineering).
- **Student-centeredness:** Learners should take an active role in planning, executing, and presenting their projects.
- **Assessment:** Evaluation should include both the language outcome and the process of collaboration and problem-solving.

#### **Stages of project implementation**

1. **Preparation:** Define learning goals, choose a relevant topic, form student groups.
2. **Planning:** Discuss project structure, assign roles, and set deadlines.
3. **Research and execution:** Students collect information, conduct interviews, or create materials in Russian.
4. **Presentation:** Students present their work in oral or written form (e.g., poster sessions, reports, videos).
5. **Reflection and evaluation:** Debriefing sessions to analyze linguistic gains, teamwork, and challenges.

#### **Examples of projects.**

- “A guidebook to our campus in russian” – combining descriptive writing and speaking practice
- “Russian holidays and our national traditions” – a comparative cultural project
- “Professional vocabulary in action” – relevant for students in technical or medical specialties.

#### **Challenges and solutions.**

- **Limited language proficiency:** Scaffold tasks with visual aids and bilingual resources.
- **Time constraints:** Integrate project work into regular coursework gradually.
- **Assessment complexity:** Use rubrics to evaluate both linguistic and soft skills (e.g., cooperation, creativity).

**Conclusion.** The integration of project-based learning (PBL) into the methodology of teaching russian as a foreign language at the university level represents a significant step toward modernizing language education and aligning

it with contemporary pedagogical standards. Unlike traditional methods focused primarily on rote learning and grammar drills, PBL creates an interactive and immersive environment where students actively construct knowledge, collaborate with peers, and use the target language in meaningful, real-world contexts.

Through project work, students develop communicative competence, cultural literacy, and critical thinking skills—core components of language proficiency in the 21st century. Moreover, PBL encourages learner autonomy and motivation, as students take ownership of their learning process by engaging in tasks that are relevant to their personal, academic, or professional interests. The interdisciplinary nature of projects also allows for the integration of Russian language learning with subject-specific content, making instruction more relevant for students in non-linguistic fields such as engineering, business, or medicine.

Despite certain challenges—such as the need for careful planning, assessment difficulties, and possible limitations in students' language levels—project-based learning proves to be both adaptable and effective when implemented with thoughtful scaffolding and support. Teachers play a crucial role not only as facilitators but also as mentors who guide learners through each stage of the project, provide linguistic and methodological assistance, and foster a collaborative learning atmosphere.

In conclusion, project-based learning should not be seen as a supplementary activity, but rather as a core component of modern RFL instruction. By incorporating PBL into the curriculum, universities can create a more engaging, personalized, and practical language learning experience—one that prepares students not only to speak Russian, but to think, act, and interact meaningfully in the language. As global interest in Russian continues to grow, so does the importance of innovative, learner-centered approaches that meet the needs of diverse student populations in higher education.

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