

# Techniques for Reading Texts in Russian Language Classes at Technical Universities

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on the development of speech skills in foreign students learning Russian as a foreign language in technical universities. It presents methods aimed at expanding students' vocabulary and discusses approaches to organizing skimming, scanning, and intensive reading. Examples of lexical, grammatical, and syntactic exercises aimed at developing both oral and written speech are provided. The proposed task formats help students better understand the structure of scientific texts. An integrated approach to such tasks contributes to the development of the ability to use specialized literature in future professional activities.

**Keywords:** Professional vocabulary, speech development, Russian language, reading, scientific style, foreign language, technical terminology.

Each state and nation is strong, first and foremost, through its intellectual potential and high spirituality. The source of this invincible power is books and libraries — the great invention of humanity.

— President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev

**Introduction:** “Place your heart in reading,” said the Egyptian Khordi over 5,500 years ago. Reading, books, and libraries have always attracted the greatest minds throughout human history.

The invention of writing and printing are among the greatest achievements of civilization—without them, civilization itself would have been impossible. Reading is a universal form of speech activity, as it allows individuals to acquire new knowledge, improve their vocabulary and grammar, and broaden their linguistic and cultural horizons. Reading in a foreign language, in particular, holds great potential in this regard. Texts serve as the primary source of information in a foreign language, and reading, in turn, is a leading type of speech activity that helps improve speaking skills.

Speech development and the formation of speech skills are key aspects of modern methods for teaching Russian as a foreign language. Special attention in teaching first-year students at technical universities is given to working with professionally oriented texts. This helps them master the language of their future profession and the scientific style as a whole. The main difficulty lies in learning technical terminology and

specialized vocabulary. To ease this process, it is important to regularly practice reading scientific and popular science materials and to complete exercises involving professional vocabulary.

At the initial stage of instruction, first-year students undergo a remedial course in Russian grammar, which includes sections on morphology and syntax.

At this stage, the instructor seeks to activate students' professional vocabulary and develop their ability to use technical terms in professional communication. Particular emphasis in practical Russian language classes is placed on intensive reading of specialized literature, which facilitates deeper retention of professional terminology. To assess how well this vocabulary has been acquired, gap-fill tasks are used, requiring students to insert appropriate terms. These methods aim to overcome lexical and grammatical difficulties, as foreign students often understand only part of the information presented during lectures. This is due not only to the fast pace of speech but also to their limited vocabulary, which hinders their participation in oral responses during lessons. Word formation exercises are an effective supplement to

learning. Mastery of suffixes and the ability to form deverbal nouns contribute to expanding the active vocabulary of foreign students.

The syntactic component of the remedial course includes a set of exercises aimed at analyzing simple and complex sentences, as well as studying word order typical of the scientific style. Students are taught the principles for identifying the grammatical structure of a sentence, including methods for determining the subject, predicate, and objects by asking guiding questions. To ensure better understanding, individual words and phrases are analyzed, and their syntactic function within the sentence structure is clarified.

In the second half of the semester, practical lessons are focused on working with professional texts. The main goal is to teach foreign students in technical fields to understand Russian-language literature in their area of specialization without using a dictionary. Educational materials include not only textbooks, but also articles from specialized journals and popular science publications. Reading without translation helps students acquire and retain professional vocabulary and develop skills in constructing oral statements on topics related to their field.

Although translating into the native language helps students better understand the text, it simultaneously hinders the deep assimilation of lexical and grammatical material. Therefore, when working with scientific texts, it is important not only to check students' knowledge of words and their meanings, but also to monitor how confidently they use this vocabulary in speech. To achieve this, it is necessary to apply exercises that activate vocabulary: students not only retell the text but also discuss its content and express their own opinions. Such activities contribute to moving words from passive to active vocabulary and promote better mastery of scientific expressions and grammatical constructions.

There are three types of reading: scanning, skimming, and intensive reading. The goal of scanning is to quickly determine whether a text contains the necessary information and to identify its main topics. This type of reading requires the ability to understand titles, subtitles, and analyze the overall structure of the text. It implies a high speed of perception — students should scan the text by paragraph rather than reading it word for word, and without relying on translation.

Skimming involves the ability to quickly find segments of the text that contain essential information. However, this type of reading often presents difficulties for foreign students due to insufficient language proficiency, which prevents them from distinguishing between important and secondary content. To ease the

process, the teacher precedes reading with a set of questions that introduce the topic and focus students' attention.

Intensive reading is aimed at deep comprehension and interpretation of the content. Students must be able to identify both primary and supporting information, answer questions about the text, and develop statements based on what they've read. When encountering unfamiliar words, they may rely on contextual guessing. Intensive reading is most commonly used in the first year of study.

In Russian as a foreign language classes, complex grammatical topics are reviewed and specialized terminology is introduced. Foreign students generally learn to identify syntactic elements, break down complex sentences, and understand complex words and the principles of word formation. Nevertheless, when reading scientific texts, students often misidentify grammatical forms, which leads to a distortion of meaning. Typically, they can easily find the predicate expressed by a verb, as it is clearly presented. Accurate identification of the subject and predicate significantly facilitates comprehension.

Students often confuse syntactic roles of words — for example, they may mistake a noun in an oblique case for the subject, and a noun in the nominative case for an object. This leads to misinterpretation of the meaning. In such cases, the teacher explains that the subject is generally a noun in the nominative case. For instance, in the sentence "The path to increasing the strength of concrete lies through crushing materials into the smallest particles," students may mistakenly consider the phrase "smallest particles" to be the subject, and the word "path" the object. Similar errors occur in the sentence "Reinforced concrete structures are capable of assuming various structural and architectural forms."

When analyzing sentences, students must not only identify the main and secondary components but also be able to ask clarifying questions, determine the connection between a participial phrase and the word it modifies, and transform simple sentences with participles into complex ones.

During syntactic analysis, students' attention is drawn to word order within the sentence. In cases where one noun follows another, the second is usually placed in the genitive case. For example: technique of constructing high-rise buildings, application of concrete, use of a cross-ventilation system. If a student has difficulty determining the gender of a noun, the word is first written in the nominative case, and then word combinations are created using the correct case forms.

When a student does not know the meaning of a preposition, the teacher first explains the meaning of the verb, after which phrases are constructed to illustrate verb governance. Then the subject is identified, and only afterward is the entire sentence analyzed.

If a sentence contains a noun with a preposition, the teacher explains whether the preposition depends on the verb or the noun. In doing so, the topic of verbal versus nominal governance is revisited. For example: ceramic brick was used for wall construction, elements are part of the building structure, the airflow circulates between the wall and the facing.

In-depth syntactic analysis is carried out only in cases where the sentence structure causes difficulties. If the meaning of the sentence is clear upon first reading, no additional analysis is required.

Before reading without translation, students are introduced to pre-reading and while-reading tasks. These include working with the text's vocabulary, practicing grammatical agreement and governance, and using contextual guessing to understand unfamiliar words based on analogies, comparisons, and word formation.

When offering a professionally oriented text, the instructor must ensure that most of the vocabulary used is familiar to the students. Although contextual guessing plays an important role in the process of intensive reading without translation, it does not develop automatically. Easily recognizable loanwords such as interior, structures, dimensions, component, and insulation should not be considered the result of contextual guessing.

When first encountering a new specialized text, students are asked to translate the section that the instructor believes may present the greatest difficulty. This segment typically contains key information. During the analysis of this passage, the instructor provides a series of tasks aimed at overcoming lexical and grammatical challenges. These include exercises for identifying the base form of words, determining verb governance, transforming simple sentences with participial phrases into complex constructions, as well as lexical tasks such as selecting synonyms and antonyms, and paraphrasing.

While working with professional texts, foreign students often face serious difficulties, as their vocabulary is usually insufficient to comprehend the text without using a dictionary. In practice, students' lexical preparation levels vary, but are generally inadequate for working with authentic professional sources. In such cases, the ability to make educated lexical guesses becomes especially important.

To assess how well a student has understood the text, questions are asked that pertain not only to the main content, but also to secondary details. For example: What new information did you learn from the text about...? How does the author express their attitude toward the issue discussed? In what context is this topic addressed in the text? It is also useful to ask questions that require students to formulate responses based on their own analysis, even if the answers are not explicitly stated in the text.

After completing comprehension tasks, students move on to outlining the text. Those who are able to identify the main idea of each paragraph and distinguish between primary and secondary information find it easier to remember and reproduce the content.

Intensive reading without translation is aimed at developing the ability to construct independent statements based on scientific material. Both in-class and at-home reading contribute to a deeper understanding of professional literature. The principles used in this process help reinforce grammatical structures typical of scientific style and promote better mastery of professional terminology.

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