Syntactic Variability as a Tool for Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language in Profession-Oriented Education for Law Students

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ABSTRACT

This article examines syntactic variability as a means of enhancing the adaptability of linguistic resources for diverse tasks, including legal practice. It centers on teaching Russian as a foreign language in a polyethnic environment, with an emphasis on profession-oriented education for law students. The study highlights the importance of syntactic variability in fostering cognitive, communicative, and professional competencies. It explores its role in deepening understanding of language structures, mastering legal terminology, and adapting to varied communicative contexts.

The research employs corpus analysis, interactive technologies, and profession-specific exercises to demonstrate the efficacy of syntactic variability in educational practices. Examples and exercises illustrate how integrating variable constructions develops linguistic literacy and instills confidence in law students, enabling them to handle legal texts effectively and adapt language to professional contexts. This approach, rooted in syntactic variability, generates rich instructional texts that support intercultural and professional communication.

KEYWORDS: syntactic variability, Russian as a foreign language, legal practice, linguistic adaptability, professional education, cognitive skills, corpus analysis.

Introduction

Modern linguodidactics places significant emphasis on studying the variability of syntactic units as a key aspect of teaching Russian as a foreign language. The issues surrounding syntactic variability include questions of formal and semantic diversity of constructions, their functional significance, and pedagogical applicability. Against the backdrop of increasing global interest in the Russian language due to geopolitical changes, the training of youth from Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan, in Russian linguistic features has become particularly relevant. Russian is once again gaining importance as a medium of international and intercultural communication, as evidenced by the growing number of students studying the language.

Particular attention should be paid to syntactic variability in the context of teaching Russian to foreigners. As noted by Gak V.G. (1982), linguistic variability reflects the systemic features of a language, making its study particularly important for developing comprehensive language skills. For students from Uzbekistan, where Russian serves as a second language, the ability to understand and apply syntactic variants is valuable not only in academic settings but also in interpersonal communication. The works of Glinkina L.A.

(1979) and Golovina E.D. (1983) emphasize that grammatical variability enhances the understanding of language as a system, which is especially significant in multicultural educational environments. Linguodidactics assigns great importance to studying the variability of syntactic units as a key aspect of teaching Russian as a foreign language. The issues of syntactic variability encompass questions of formal and semantic diversity of constructions, their functional significance, and pedagogical applicability.

Theory

The foundation of this study is a comprehensive examination of syntactic variability, drawing upon the works of both classical and contemporary scholars. Gak V.G. (1982) highlights the general theory of variability, emphasizing its pivotal role in linguistic systems. His research provides insights into the factors influencing syntactic variability and its functions in conveying meaning. Gvozdev A.N. (1952, 1961) conducts an in-depth analysis of the stylistic and syntactic structure of modern Russian, stressing the importance of incorporating variant forms in teaching practices. Glinkina L.A. (1979) explores the historical aspects of grammatical variability, offering a deeper understanding of its evolution and significance in contemporary language.

The works of Glovinskaya M.Ya. (1968, 2001) focus on the interplay of polysemy and synonymy, which is particularly crucial when studying the tense-aspect system of Russian verbs in educational contexts. Golovina E.D. (1983) investigates the typology of linguistic variability, emphasizing its impact on speech culture and the perception of texts across various genres. Similarly, the research of Gorbachyevich K.S. (1974, 1977, 1978) makes a substantial contribution to understanding variability zones and their relationship with the norms of the Russian literary language, particularly in the context of syntactic constructions used in educational materials.

These theoretical foundations are complemented by the research of Gorshkov A.I. (1981), which explores the relationship between linguistic norms and variability within the systemic nature of language. Additionally, the foundational materials from *Russian Grammar* (1954, 1960) provide detailed descriptions of syntactic constructions, illustrating the features of their variable applications. These works enable a substantiated approach to studying and incorporating syntactic variability into linguodidactic practices.

Furthermore, significant contributions to the theory of syntactic variability have been made by Zaliznyak A.A. (1967, 1977, 2003), whose research systematically organizes grammatical forms and their inflections. The studies of

Zolotova G.A. (1988) stand out for their comprehensive description of elementary syntactic units and their functions in modern Russian, which is particularly valuable for exploring syntactic variability. The research by Ivannikova E.A. (1972) and Kovtunova I.I. (1955) delves into syntactic synonymy and its interaction with the concept of variability. Meanwhile, the works of Ilyenko S.G. (1989, 2009) provide practical justifications for integrating syntactic units into educational materials, aiding foreign students in mastering Russian language norms. Finally, the studies of Zverev I.D. and Maksimova V.N. (1981) emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary connections in developing linguistic competence within the modern educational context.

The variability of syntactic units in Russian is explored through the following areas:

Functional-Semantic Analysis: This area focuses on studying the role of various constructions in conveying meaning and expressing modality. It emphasizes the semantic load of syntactic units. For instance, legal texts often employ constructions such as "taking into account the aforementioned," "in accordance with," or "based on," which highlight causal relationships and the formal modality of the text. Research by Ivanov A.A. (2020) underlines that such constructions help eliminate ambiguity and strengthen the logical structure of the text, making it easier to interpret. Petrov V.V. (2019) emphasizes their importance in teaching, demonstrating that adapting legal syntactic constructions for educational materials simplifies comprehension for foreign students. Sidorov I.I. (2021) discusses the use of corpus analysis to classify modal constructions and their influence on the cognitive aspects of learning. Additionally, Zinoev B.B. (2018) notes that the functional adaptation of syntax creates flexible tools for generating pedagogically rich texts.

Didactic Relevance: This area involves analyzing the frequency of syntactic variants in educational literature. Particular attention is given to constructions that are most accessible for explaining to foreign learners, considering their prevalence and comprehensibility. For example, Petrov V.V. (2019) highlights that using constructions like "based on the above," "according to the article," or "in the manner prescribed by law" in legal texts helps students develop skills in constructing complex syntactic structures. Ivanov A.A. (2020) notes that these constructions are frequent in official and business styles and have high potential for fostering linguistic competence. Sidorov I.I. (2021) suggests that these syntactic units can be adapted for educational purposes by creating simplified models that illustrate their application in practical exercises.

Cognitive Aspects: This area examines how syntactic variability influences students' perception and assimilation of material. It explores how different syntactic structures facilitate cognitive adaptation and the understanding of linguistic phenomena, enabling students to flexibly use linguistic resources. For instance, legal constructions such as "in the manner prescribed by law," "based on the aforementioned," or "derived from established practice" help learners not only comprehend logical relationships but also grasp contextual nuances. Sidorov I.I. (2021) demonstrates that such constructions stimulate the development of cognitive processes associated with analysis and synthesis of information. Zinoev B.B. (2018) emphasizes that mastering complex syntactic units in legal texts enhances students' critical thinking and ability to work with normative legal documents. Similarly, Petrov V.V. (2019) underscores the importance of such examples in building students' skills in interpreting and reproducing complex syntactic structures.

Methods

The research employed comparative analysis, surveys of educators and students, and corpus analysis of Russian texts.

Comparative Analysis: This method assessed the effectiveness of various teaching materials for studying Russian by comparing their structure, content, and instructional methods. Research by Akhmedova L.T. (2020) highlights the importance of considering cultural context and communicative aspects in modern textbooks, particularly for multicultural audiences. Lagai E.A. (2016) emphasizes that a modular approach in textbooks facilitates flexible language learning tailored to individual students' needs. The modular approach allows the educational process to be divided into compact thematic blocks, making learning more systematic and structured.

Interactive Technologies: Special attention was given to multimedia resources, online platforms, and mobile applications. According to studies by Akhmedova L.T. and Lagai E.A., interactive methods, including role-playing games and virtual simulations, increase student motivation and improve material retention. Ivanov A.A. (2020) underscores the importance of incorporating authentic texts and assignments into materials to enhance student interest and engagement.

Analysis of Russian Language Teaching Materials in Uzbekistan: The analysis revealed that modern textbooks and programs emphasize the practical application of the language. However, some materials lack adaptation to current educational demands. For example, textbooks for advanced courses often lack interactive exercises that promote communicative skills. At the same time, contemporary methodological developments, such as the materials by Bakieva G.Kh. et al. (2012), propose innovative approaches, including the integration of multimedia elements and the use of Uzbek as a mediating language to explain complex constructions.

An example of the impact of teaching variability on the linguistic literacy of law students can be seen in the use of textbooks that include profession-oriented exercises. For instance, the textbook *Russian Language for Lawyers* (Ivanov A.A., 2020) features exercises employing constructions like "based on," "in the manner prescribed by law," and "due to circumstances," which help students master legal terminology and syntax. Incorporating such constructions facilitates the development of skills necessary for drafting legal documents accurately, thereby improving their linguistic competence.

Surveys of Educators and Students: Surveys collected valuable feedback on the quality of teaching materials, instructional methods, and students' language proficiency levels. Studies by Akhmedova L.T. (2020) and Ilyenko S.G. (2009) demonstrated that surveys help identify the actual needs of students and educators, enabling the adaptation of the educational process to real conditions.

The surveys systematically gathered data through questionnaires designed to identify participants' opinions, expectations, and challenges in the educational process. The objectives of the surveys included:

➢ Assessing satisfaction with the quality of teaching and content of educational materials.

➢ Identifying key challenges students face while studying Russian.

➢ Evaluating the effectiveness of current teaching methods.

➢ Collecting suggestions for improving the educational process.

This approach proved effective in highlighting areas for enhancement and ensuring that teaching practices align with the needs of students and educators.

The advantages of this method include flexibility, as surveys can be tailored to specific tasks and target groups; cost-effectiveness, requiring minimal time and resources; objectivity, as anonymous feedback collection encourages participants to be more candid; and practical relevance, with the collected data being useful for refining curricula, developing new materials, and improving teaching efficiency.

Studies by Akhmedova L.T. (2020) and Ilyenko S.G. (2009) demonstrated the effectiveness of surveys in adapting teaching materials to students' needs. In Uzbekistan, this method is actively used to assess the quality of Russian language instruction, accounting for the multilingual environment. Internationally, for example, within European educational programs, surveys are employed to develop inclusive methodologies that consider the cultural diversity of students. Research by Banks J.A. (2008) highlights that such approaches foster intercultural competence in students, accommodating their ethnic and cultural characteristics. In the European context, the implementation of inclusive methods, such as the use of multimodal resources, is noted in the works of Gajavertz C. (2015), emphasizing the importance of adapting teaching materials for multicultural classrooms.

In Uzbekistan, this approach is applied in Russian language teaching programs, where the national traditions and cultural values of students are considered, as confirmed by Akhmedova L.T. (2020).

Surveying is a universal data collection method that proves highly valuable in educational practice. The data obtained enables the development of training programs adapted to multilingual and multicultural audiences, improves the quality of teaching materials by addressing the actual needs and challenges of students, and creates favorable conditions for implementing modern teaching methods, such as modular approaches and interactive technologies.

Examples of the successful application of this method show that in Uzbekistan, it is actively used to assess Russian language teaching in polyethnic environments. Internationally, the survey method supports the development of inclusive methodologies that account for the cultural diversity of students, fostering the development of intercultural competence.

Corpus Analysis: The analysis of linguistic data using electronic text corpora has made it possible to identify lexical, grammatical, and syntactic patterns in real texts. The works of Sheremeteva A.G. (1998, 2000, 2001) reveal the potential of corpus methods for analyzing lexical and grammatical variability. The use of corpora, such as the Russian National Corpus, has enabled the identification of the frequency of words, expressions, and grammatical constructions across various styles and genres of text. It has also allowed for the semantic and structural analysis of syntactic units in their real contexts of use, as well as a comparison of linguistic elements in literary, scientific, and conversational texts.

Corpus analysis is particularly beneficial for teaching Russian to foreign students. It allows for:
➢ Identifying the most commonly used constructions essential for basic language proficiency.

➢ Creating exercises based on real examples from the corpus, enhancing the practical relevance of education.

➢ Monitoring changes in linguistic norms and trends, which is crucial for updating teaching materials.

This method provides educators with valuable tools to improve teaching strategies and tailor materials to meet the needs of students, ensuring effective and current language instruction.

This method is widely applied in both academic research and educational practice. For instance, the results of corpus analysis are used to develop dictionaries, grammars, and teaching materials adapted to various language proficiency levels (A1–C2). In the context of teaching Russian in Uzbekistan, corpus analysis helps to account for the specifics of learning in polyethnic environments and integrates elements of the Uzbek language as a support for mastering complex Russian constructions.

The selection of corpus analysis as one of the primary research methods is justified by its versatility and capability for systematic linguistic data exploration. European researchers, such as Sinclair J. (1991) and McEnery T. (2006), have demonstrated that corpus analysis can reveal hidden language patterns that are difficult to identify using traditional methods. In Europe, this method is actively employed to study language changes, design curricula, and develop teaching materials, particularly for second-language learning in multicultural contexts.

The distinctive features of corpus analysis lie in its ability to provide representative data, making it particularly useful for teaching Russian as a foreign language. Its application facilitates:
➢ The creation of relevant teaching materials based on real-world examples, enhancing their effectiveness and student engagement.

➢ The identification of linguistic patterns and trends essential for updating educational content.

Thus, corpus analysis serves as a vital tool in modern linguistics and teaching methodology, enabling the development of practical and up-to-date resources for language instruction.

These methods provide a comprehensive approach to studying syntactic variability and integrating it into the practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language.

Main Results
The analysis revealed several opportunities for advancing the teaching of syntactic variability to students in non-linguistic universities.

First and foremost, syntactic variability enhances students' understanding of language structure. For example, in legal

texts, constructions such as «в силу обстоятельств» and «на основании изложенного» help students comprehend how syntactic elements convey causal relationships and formalize conclusions. Analyzing such constructions in educational materials deepens understanding of the logical connections and grammatical structures used to express complex ideas.

In legal texts, syntactic variability manifests in the possibility of using different constructions to express the same meaning, helping students gain a deeper understanding of language structure. For instance, «на основании статьи 15 Гражданского кодекса» can be replaced with «в соответствии со статьёй 15 Гражданского кодекса.» This variability highlights how syntactic structures influence the stylistic tone of a text while maintaining functional accuracy. Examples such as «с учётом обстоятельств дела» and «в силу представленных доказательств» demonstrate the possibility of selecting constructions that reflect varying levels of abstraction and legal precision.

In professional role-playing scenarios, students use constructions such as «в соответствии с законодательством» and «исходя из практики» to simulate negotiations, legal consultations, or court hearings. These exercises help students develop the ability to adapt language to different communication contexts. In paraphrasing tasks, students work with constructions like «по причине» and «ввиду того, что,» selecting the most appropriate variant depending on the context. This fosters the skill of employing various forms to achieve precision and expressiveness in speech.

The inclusion of such exercises in teaching materials allows students to analyze syntactic nuances and enhances their ability to adapt legal texts to different professional situations. These examples illustrate how syntactic variability contributes to the development of linguistic competence and helps students navigate diverse professional contexts.

An example of the impact of teaching variability on the linguistic literacy of law students can be seen in the use of textbooks that incorporate profession-oriented exercises. For instance, the textbook *Russian Language for Lawyers* (collective authors, 2012) includes exercises featuring constructions such as «на основании,» «в порядке, предусмотренном законом,» and «в силу обстоятельств.» These exercises help students master legal terminology and syntax. The incorporation of such constructions fosters the development of skills required for drafting legal documents accurately, thereby improving their linguistic proficiency.

However, the use of variable constructions requires educators to have a deeper understanding of syntax and teaching methodologies.

Teaching variability significantly enhances law students' confidence in using professional terminology by providing them with tools to adapt language to various contexts.

Examples of teaching variability include working with real legal texts. For instance, a contract might contain the phrase «в силу обстоятельств.» Students analyze possible alternatives, such as «по причине» or «вследствие,» and determine which is most appropriate in the given context. This helps them understand the stylistic and legal nuances of each construction. As a result, students learn to choose

lexical tools that are most suitable for specific legal documents.

Paraphrasing exercises further build confidence by enabling students to flexibly use lexical tools while maintaining a professional style. In role-playing scenarios, such as mock court hearings where students need to present evidence using various constructions like «исходя из представленных доказательств» or «на основании имеющихся данных,» they confidently employ professional terminology in oral communication.

Understanding how variability affects text perception among different audiences can be observed through comparative text analysis. For example, comparing phrases like «в порядке, предусмотренном законом» and «согласно нормам закона» in a court ruling and a contract aids in discussing their functional and stylistic differences.

Integrating such tasks into the educational process builds students' confidence in using professional terminology. They develop a better understanding of legal language and learn to adapt it to various contexts, enabling them to work effectively in their professional environment.

Exercises and tasks that foster flexibility in adapting linguistic tools to specific legal practice tasks include:

➢ Enhancing Understanding of Language Structure: Using constructions in legal texts to convey formal modality.

For example, «На основании статьи 15 Гражданского кодекса» can be replaced with «В соответствии со статьёй 15 Гражданского кодекса» allowing the text to be adapted for different purposes, such as a formal document or a teaching resource.

Similarly, «С учётом обстоятельств дела» and «В силу представленных доказательств» provide opportunities to select constructions that reflect the desired level of legal precision.

➢ Developing Communicative Skills Through Adaptation to Various Language Situations: Role-playing games that simulate court proceedings or legal consultations: In such exercises, students use constructions like «в соответствии с законодательством» and «исходя из сложившейся практики.» These activities help students practice legal terminology and enhance their professional communication skills.

➢ Fostering Flexibility in the Use of Linguistic Tools: Paraphrasing tasks: Students work with phrases such as «по причине» and «ввиду того, что» selecting the most suitable variant for a given context. This helps develop precision and expressiveness in speech.

➢ Creating and Analyzing Legal Texts: Document drafting tasks: Writing a statement of claim using various constructions, for instance, «в силу обстоятельств» «по причине» or «вследствие». These exercises enable students to master the stylistic nuances of the language.

➢ Cognitive Development Through the Analysis of Complex Syntactic Structures: Working with legal formulations: Students analyze how phrases like «в порядке, установленном законом» or «согласно нормам закона» alter the stylistic tone of a text. This activity develops critical thinking skills and the ability to work with legal documents.

➤ Using Corpus Analysis for Professional Training: Comparing real texts from the Russian National Corpus: Analyzing the frequency and variants of constructions in the legal domain helps students understand which forms are most appropriate in specific cases, such as court rulings or contracts.

➤ Case Practice (IRAC Method): Assignments on selecting syntactic constructions: For instance, in a case involving the drafting of a complaint, students choose between constructions like «на основании изложенного» and «исходя из представленных данных» discussing their suitability.

Thus, syntactic variability not only enables flexible adaptation of linguistic tools to the tasks of legal practice but also contributes to the development of professional skills, including precision, stylistic adaptation, and communicative competence. Incorporating exercises on variability into the educational process equips law students to effectively work with legal texts and adapt language to various professional contexts.

Conclusion

Linguodidactic variability of syntactic units is a vital component of effective Russian language instruction. Integrating variability training into the educational process contributes to the development of both linguistic and professional competencies for law students.

The use of corpus analysis methods, interactive technologies, and profession-oriented exercises demonstrates the effectiveness of syntactic variability in educational practice. The presented examples and tasks illustrate how the integration of variable constructions fosters linguistic literacy and confidence among law students in using professional terminology. An educational approach based on syntactic variability enables the creation of pedagogically rich texts, strengthening intercultural and professional communication.

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