

Title: "Post-Soviet Russia": Register and Genre in Advanced Russian Course
Author: Irina Six, University of Kansas

Abstract:

Among advanced non-heritage and heritage learners of Russian, the ability to employ social registers has proven beyond the sphere of immediate "practical command." For this reason, there is great need for learning materials that help illustrate the differences in Russian registers (Moskver, 2008). Advanced students need to develop their ability to identify registers of political and social journalism, participate in official correspondence and interaction, as well as write in specialized discourses from the sciences or the humanities. This paper describes material selection and teaching strategies used in a thematic Russian course, "Post-Soviet Russia," geared toward helping advanced audiences practice and improve their grasp of Russian registers.

To acquaint students with registers of contemporary Russian and their distinctive features, reading samples from different genres were selected, such as interviews with native Russian speakers of different age group, recorded and transcribed debates among famous public figures, articles from scholarly scientific journals, official and business style, journalistic style, and fiction. These study materials aimed to enhance student awareness of the specifics of Russian oral communication and stylistic nuances, with the ultimate goal being improvement of student communication skills in these styles. Each text was accompanied by pre-reading vocabulary assignments, comprehensive questions, and post-reading activities. The presentation of grammar was focused around communication categories. Students were also given notes on style description, exercises on style's lexicon, word formation, morphology, syntax (including specifics of sentence structures), and comments on the word order. Judging by student feedback, overall, this advanced course framed around different modes of communication has challenged students and helped them improve expression of complex ideas and respond contextually in given situations.