

Title: Teaching Russian Through Sitcoms

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Abstract:

In language pedagogy, audio and visual materials are a strong stimulus for students to gain and practice their skills. In our Russian classes we have traditionally taught students through Russian movies (for example *Ирония судьбы*, *Служебный роман*, etc) these are staples of the Russian movie culture. Students enjoy watching these movies and teachers are happy due to the fact that it helps to spark the conversation and improves their listening and comprehension, as well as writing skills, and also to introduce new vocabulary and organize context based grammar drills. Nowadays, in the free time life of students, watching TV series in their native language has taken a significant role. Watching marathons of half hour shows has become a hobby. The story lines have become a conversational ice breaker, and something that young people enjoy following. In addition to the movies we are trying to introduce Russian TV series into our curriculum keeping in mind these purposes:

1. **TV series as a great source of motivation.** Sitcoms are familiar to our students as a genre, they find it entertaining to watch them. This type of classroom activity/entertainment is very “light” so students don’t feel pressure when watching more than one episode. Furthermore, they get a feeling of accomplishment by watching the entire season.
2. **Communicative situation as a foreign language methodology concept.** Sitcoms have a number of situations that will be easily recognized by students who might not even possess the language level required to understand the language. They understand the situations, and can better understand the nature and context of the dialog, through this they can also more quickly build passive vocabulary.
3. **Introducing Modern Russian culture through sitcoms.** As more TV series are being produced, we can discuss the cultural advantages of adapted and original Russian sitcoms have for the learners. This can be a great source of activities such as identifying Russian culture core concepts, stereotypes and humor. The contrast of adapted series to their western counterparts can also bring insight.
4. **Using sitcoms for speaking, listening, writing and reading activities.** A few examples of activities and techniques, as well as their advantages and disadvantages will be given and discussed.