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## ***Modern Teaching of Russian for Specific Purposes: Problems and Prospects<sup>2</sup>***

### **Extended summary**

This paper presents the results of a critical analysis of the current status of teaching Russian for Specific Purposes (RSP) at the faculties of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Serbia. Teaching Russian for Specific Purposes is viewed as a system of inter-connected and well-organized components of the teaching process, with a special emphasis being placed on the functioning of individual components within the system and the particularities in the functioning of the teaching process as a whole.

The problem areas that are the topic of the research have been analysed from the theoretical-conceptual and the evaluation-based perspectives. The former perspective encompasses the scientific, theoretical and methodological bases of the system of teaching Russian for Specific Purposes at tertiary level and represents an attempt at developing an optimal model of teaching Russian for Specific Purposes in the area of the Humanities and Social Sciences. The latter aspect includes the analysis and evaluation of the current state in the given area, as well as the evaluation and correction of the currently valid normative documents, Russian language textbooks and reference books for the given educational profile.

From the theoretical-conceptual perspective, teaching Russian at all levels of education, including the subject-specific instruction at the non-philological faculties, is determined by many psychological, didactical and methodological factors. The psychological factors include the level of motivation, concentration ability, the quality of memory, as well as individual cog-

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nitive styles of learning, psychological profiles of students, and their ability to learn languages. The didactical and methodological factors relevant for learning language for specific purposes include: the status of a foreign language in the curriculum, duration of language courses, number of lessons, the absence of an authentic language setting, as well as the professional competencies of teachers of foreign languages for specific purposes.

The evaluation aspect is based on the analysis and evaluation of the most important teaching goals and the teaching content at the faculties of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Serbia. The analysis of the teaching contents encompasses specific aspects of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes (primarily in terms of vocabulary and stylistics), and different forms of language activity (receptive and productive).

When it comes to teaching language aspects, the research results indicate that the focus in teaching language for professional purposes is on vocabulary and style. These two aspects involve teaching professional vocabulary, learning grammar that commonly appears in science, and developing students' ability to read and use professional literature. Vocabulary lessons include various types of vocabulary practice, primarily the exercises based on intra-lexical systems, while special attention is given to the words that can potentially cause problems in terms of the reception and decoding of scientific texts (polysemic words, inter-linguistic homonyms and paronyms, differences in word valence), as well as professional terminology.

As far as stylistics is concerned, the research shows that the curricula and Russian language textbooks used at the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Belgrade offer the most detailed teaching content for stylistics. Stylistics lessons at these faculties include the basic characteristics of scientific style at all levels: phonetical-phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactical, as well as an overview of different functional styles and genres pertaining to the Church activities.

Teaching different aspects of language is complex, i.e. it occurs in interaction and interconnectedness of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills required for a proper understanding of scientific and professional texts. Given the specific goals of teaching languages for specific purposes, the focus is on developing reading skills and techniques, which implies the ability to properly decode scientific texts, elicit key information, and encourage an independent use of professional and scientific literature and reference books. The analysis of the Russian language textbooks and pertaining normative documents for the faculties of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Serbia has shown that students are taught different reading techniques – reading for gist and information, in-depth reading, diagonal reading and reading without translation by anticipating the meaning of the words.

Teaching reading skills is closely related to teaching speaking and writing skills. The analysed textbooks offer a wide spectrum of exercises for practising written and oral language of pre-communicative and communicative types. However, the author of the paper observed the prevalence of pre-communicative and provisionally communicative types of exercises, while communicative exercises are less common. Given the significance of productive written and oral language skills (writing a plan, a summary, annotation, a concept, especially the skill of expressing personal views and attitudes, writing commentaries, providing arguments, and participation in discussions and debates) for the formation of communicative and professional com-

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petencies of the future experts in the fields of the Humanities and Social Sciences, communicative exercises must be included to a greater extent in the textbooks of Russian language for the students of these specific subjects.

The results of the research have shown that the current status of Russian for Specific Purposes at Serbian faculties of Social Sciences and the Humanities calls for further modifications and improvement. Therefore, the suggestions and conceptual solutions offered in this paper aim at improving the current status and the model of teaching the language for specific purposes at the above-mentioned faculties.

**Keywords:** Russian for Specific Purposes, Russian language teaching, Russian language teaching methodology, textbook, curriculum.

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- K RJM UFBG – Kurikulum za Ruski jezik na diplomskim (master) akademskim studijama Učiteljskog fakulteta u Beogradu (2014).
- K RJ1–RJ2 UFU – Kurikulumi za Ruski jezik 1 i 2 na osnovnim akademskim studijama Učiteljskog fakulteta u Užicu (2013).
- K RJ1–RJ2–RJ3 UFL – Kurikulumi za Ruski jezik 1, 2 i 3 na osnovnim akademskim studijama Učiteljskog fakulteta u Leposaviću (2013).
- K RJM UFL – Kurikulum za Ruski jezik na diplomskim (master) akademskim studijama Učiteljskog fakulteta u Leposaviću (2013).
- K RJ1–RJ2 UFV – Kurikulumi za Ruski jezik 1 i 2 na osnovnim akademskim studijama Učiteljskog fakulteta u Vranju (2014).
- K RJM UFV – Kurikulum za Ruski jezik na diplomskim (master) akademskim studijama Učiteljskog fakulteta u Vranju (2014).
- K RJ1–RJ2 PFS – Kurikulumi za Ruski jezik 1 i 2 na osnovnim akademskim studijama Pedagoškog fakulteta u Somboru (2009).
- K RJS FPNJ – Kurikulum za Ruski jezik struke na osnovnim akademskim studijama Fakulteta pedagoških nauka u Jagodini (2013).
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- K RJ1–RJ2 FFN – Kurikulumi za Ruski jezik 1 i 2 na osnovnim akademskim studijama Filozofskog fakulteta u Nišu (2014).
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