

Мурадян К.Г.

Руководитель: Е.В. Молодкина

Муромский институт (филиал) федерального государственного образовательного учреждения высшего образования «Владимирский государственный университет имени Александра Григорьевича и Николая Григорьевича Столетовых»
602264, г. Муром, Владимирская обл., ул. Орловская, 23
Email: kreitspwnz@mail.ru

General differences between English and Russian

It is impossible to imagine a world where everyone speaks the same language nowadays. Most languages can be divided into language families. English is a West Germanic language of the Indo-European language family, Russian is an East Slavic language of the Indo-European language. Russian is a mother tongue for about 144 million people. Despite the fact that they belong to the same language family, they are very different in many important aspects.

1. Alphabet and phonology. The alphabet for English is a Latin-script alphabet consisting of 26 letters. Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet, which consists of 33 letters. The Russian language has 6 vowels and 6 vowel sounds, while The English language has 5 vowels and 7 short sounds, 5 long sounds and 8 diphthongs! But there are no such sounds in Russian as /ð/ in “that” and /θ/ in “think”. Many English learners from Russia replace long vowels with short vowels, because there is no such a thing like short and long vowels in Russian. Another common mistake Russians make is substituting various English pronunciations. The most common ones for example: [θ] to [s] “thing – sing”, [θ] to [f] “first – thirst”, [ð] to [z] “Zen – then” and so on.

Unlike English, Russian pronunciation is less chaotic and follows certain rules. Russian is phonetic, so spelling determines pronunciation, and vice versa, the word’s spelling defines its pronunciation. Meanwhile, English is full of irregular spelling rules, the main reason for that because of French influence and writers trying to fit their alphabet and sounds to English. Non-native English speaking Russians may ask questions with falling intonation instead of rising intonation, which may sound impolite to people with English as a mother tongue. “Где ты был?”, “Where have you been?” have the same meaning, but the first one uses falling intonation, and the second one uses rising one.

2. Articles, grammar and sentence composing. English has a very complex system of articles, meanwhile there are no articles in Russian. The Russian language bases on cases and gender system instead, therefore nouns are either masculine, feminine or neutral. When the word does not refer to physical gender (like in words mother and father) it becomes harder for a language learner, because they have to know object’s gender to use it correctly. It’s a very good thing for not native speakers that the noun’s spelling defines its gender.

Russian tends to use a lot of negative words, constructions with the negation and double negation; the thought is often expressed from the reverse. While in English, affirmative sentences are mainly used, negative structures are rare, double negation is extremely rare. The English language has a fixed word order, the meaning is expressed by adding auxiliaries and moving words within limited boundaries. In Russian auxiliaries are not being used that much in sentences and word order doesn’t matter as much as it does in English. Different word order is used to emphasize certain points, every part of speech can be moved to any part of the sentence and the point will not be lost.

“Волк убил зайца. Убил волк зайца. Зайца убил волк. Убил зайца волк” - all the examples have different word order but what is common between them is the meaning. Sadly, the word order in English is not as free-flow.

To recapitulate, English and Russian have many similarities, but over a fairly long period of development of both languages, many differences have appeared, which create problems in learning each other's languages. However, this does not prevent many people from learning English thoroughly.

Литература

Cambridge Advanced Dictionary - <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
Collins English Dictionary - <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>.