Title: How Can Linguistics Help Language Teaching? Multiple Wh-Questions in Russian as a Foreign Language

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Numerous studies in theoretical linguistics have been devoted to the analysis of the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties of multiple interrogatives, i.e., clauses that contain two or more *wh*-words (*Who says what to whom?*). However, these constructions have hardly been studied in the field of language acquisition, and are practically absent in the literature on foreign/second-language teaching.

This study draws attention to the teaching of multiple questions in Russian with respect to English and, especially, French-speaking learners. It is to be noted that the languages concerned use very different strategies for the formation of multiple interrogatives. Russian uses a quite complex derivation, multiple fronting, placing all *wh*-words at the beginning of the clause, while in French the interrogative phrases can stay in their original positions. *Wh*-fronting is also allowed in French, but only the first interrogative word may be displaced; in English, this latter strategy is the only one possible.

The derivational complexity of multiple questions in Russian represents a particular challenge for second language learners. Moreover, these constructions are not described in grammar manuals and, consequently, they are never explicitly taught in Russian courses. Under these conditions several questions arise - from where and how do Russian language-learners acquire the structure and usage of multiple interrogatives if they cannot be exposed to the target language in a natural setting? And how can the findings of theoretical linguistics help the learning process?

This paper discusses an experimental teaching project which helps students of Russian as a foreign language develop their grammatical awareness, as well as their linguistic competence and performance. We show that introducing some basic linguistic information about the formation of multiple *wh*-questions across languages, focusing on the different strategies of fronting operations and putting this new knowledge in context, would be highly beneficial to foreign-language learners.