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Introduction to Volume 64

On behalf of the editorial team of the Russian Language Journal, it is with great pleasure that we present Volume 64. The current issue of RLJ sees an expansion of our reinstated section of reviews, under Professor Michael Gorham’s editorship, as well as a special section, Humanities+, edited by Dr. Tony Brown of Brigham Young University, on the excellent joint Symposium held there this past January by the Russian State University for the Humanities and BYU. His summary appears next; as a participant in the symposium, I can report that the papers collected here present the symposium’s thought-provoking perspective on the curricular requirements of the 21st century, and the opportunities now before the Russian field to better prepare our students for the wider world, including further academic study.

In addition, RLJ presents several scholarly articles from our regular submissions process. Ekaterina Nemtchinova highlights the careful integration of 21st century web searches into the curriculum. Beata Gallaher takes up the pedagogically vital, complex issue of politeness and its differential sociocultural expressions in English and Russian, through the lens of the speech act of complaining. Valentina Soboleva delves into the semantics of secondary imperfectives, with an analysis of their connotations in terms of duration and completion. Finally, Todd Drummond explores the cross-linguistic issues arising from the development of national college entrance examinations in Kyrgyzstan. Taken collectively, the articles in the current number of the Russian Language Journal span the interests of the membership of the American Council of Teachers of Russian, touching on pedagogy, linguistics, policy, testing, and curriculum development.

Finally, on behalf of the editorial team, let me express our thanks to all who submitted and reviewed this year for the Russian Language Journal, as these contributions and our reviewers’ careful reading make the publication possible. It is my personal view that the Russian Language Journal fulfills an important mission in our field, serving a diverse audience and providing a place for serious scholarship which might not otherwise fit into the other fine journals in our field. In closing, I
commend to you the work of our colleagues as collected here in Volume 64 of the Russian Language Journal.

William P. Rivers, Ph.D.
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Introduction to Articles from the 2014 Annual Conference of the Russian State University for the Humanities American Studies Center: Special Section on Humanities+

N. Anthony Brown

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Professor Marina Kaul of the Russian State University for the Humanities (RGGU), together with Professor Irwin Weil of Northwestern University, co-founded the American Studies Center at RGGU, the two-fold goals of which were 1) to expose post-Soviet Russian scholars and students to a reasonably objective view and appreciation of American history, culture, and politics; and 2) to help American scholars and students to see themselves as others saw them. Thus far, the Center has held annual conferences, facilitated professional and student exchanges, and published numerous conference proceedings. It has enjoyed the active support of numerous organizations, including foremost a longtime partnership with the American Councils for International Education.

Associate Professor Tony Brown, German and Russian Department at Brigham Young University, and co-director of the American Studies Center at RGGU, organized the Center’s annual conference in 2013, which convened on the campus of BYU in Provo, Utah—the first such conference to take place on American soil. John Rosenberg, Dean of the BYU College of Humanities, together with Matthew Wickman, Director of the BYU Humanities Center, hosted the conference, the theme of which was “Humanities Plus: Advancing Global Dialogue and Initiatives through Experiential Learning.” Humanities+ represents a college-wide initiative that provides students ideas and resources for bridging traditional humanities major to the professional work world.

Participants in the conference represented academia, government, industry, professional organizations, research centers, and non-profit organizations. The symposium underscored a growing need for
proficient foreign language skills and the competitive advantage that a humanities education, particularly with an emphasis in foreign languages, gives students applying to professional schools and any number of jobs in the private and public sectors.

The articles presented in this issue highlight the role of academic and government institutions in coupling classroom foreign language learning with real world experience. From the academy, Tony Brown in his article titled “Foreign Language Study Coupled with Internship Experience as an Entrée to Professional Opportunities” and John Grandin and Sigrid Berka in their article titled “The University of Rhode Island International Engineering Program: Merging Technology with the Humanities” contend that combining formal language instruction with pre-professional experience in the target language and culture facilitates significant foreign language uptake and gives students the requisite knowledge and skills to compete in the twenty-first century. From the government sphere, Sam Eisen in his article titled “The Language Flagship Model and the Humanities,” and James Bernhardt in his article titled “Thoughts on High Level Proficiency in Arabic, Russian and English with a Platitudinous Postlude” discuss the efforts of the Language Flagship Programs and Foreign Service Institute respectively in training students to carry out advanced-level target language functions that reflect an understanding of domain-specific terminology and, perhaps more subtly, nuanced modes of expression that demonstrate a sophisticated level of control in the target language.

Special thanks go to Bill Rivers, Editor of *Russian Language Journal* and longstanding supporter of the American Studies Center, for devoting part of this issue to research presented at the conference. Participants were invited to formalize their remarks into a journal-length article and submit them to *RLJ* for consideration. In keeping with standard editorial practices of the journal, all submissions underwent a double-blind peer review.

Special thanks also go to Dan Davidson, President of American Councils for International Education, for generously providing travel grants to conference participants.
The Language Flagship Model and the Humanities

Sam Eisen

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the Department of Defense.

The Language Flagship program provides a model that strengthens and deepens cultural engagement within the humanities and creates bridges to collaboration across disciplines. Flagship addresses needs for national security and global competitiveness and integrates professional and life experience into the humanities and other fields for the students who engage in this course of study. The cross-disciplinary nature of the Flagship program and the level of personal, cultural and professional engagement required to complete the program are successfully changing the undergraduate study experience in ways that address significant issues in the ongoing discussion of a crisis in the humanities. The Language Flagship model stresses in all aspects: participation over marginality; experiential components of value to intellectual and academic growth; collaboration across disciplines and professional fields; a clear articulation of rationale and accountability to the public; and integration of professional level language proficiency and cultural understanding across disciplines.

The idea of real world and professional experience playing a key role in the fields of literature and history is not a new one. To take an example from Russian cultural history, in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s Viktor Shklovskii took on with some irony the role of advisor and mentor as a literary professional to the masses of young would-be writers many of whom lacked both literary and personal experience. In his pamphlet on “The Technique of the Writer’s Craft” Shklovskii (1928) advised these young writers: “In order to write, one has to have a second profession, besides literature, because a professional person, having a profession, describes things in his own (unique) way, and this is interesting….Before becoming a professional writer, one needs to acquire different experience and knowledge and then be able to bring
that into the literary work” (p.3, p.5). However paradoxically, Shklovskii cites the career of Lev Tolstoy, arguing that Tolstoy’s professional experience both as an artillery officer in the military and as a landowner engaged in agriculture underlay his ability to become a fully professional writer: this was the experience Tolstoy relied on as he undertook the drafts leading to War and Peace. (p. 4) Addressing an audience congregating in the housing for young writers in the Soviet Union, Shklovskii observes: “If Lev Tolstoy had gone to live in the Herzen House at age 18, then he would never have become Tolstoy, because he would have had nothing to write about” (p.4). Likewise, the literary sociology developed by Shklovskii’s friend and colleague, Boris Eikhenbaum, foregrounded the professional and social experience of the author as an integral component of artistic creation (Erlich 1981). This view was deeply rooted in the sociology of knowledge as developed by Georg Simmel and Karl Mannheim (Eisen 1994). Mannheim’s observation about the importance of life experience in the social sciences certainly applies to the field of history as well as other aspects of the humanities:

In order to work in the social sciences one must participate in the social process, but this participation in collective-unconscious striving in no wise signifies that the persons participating in it falsify the facts or see them incorrectly. Indeed, on the contrary, participation in the living context of social life is a presupposition of the understanding of the inner nature of this living context (Mannheim 1985, p. 46).

Active participation in professional and social activity contributes to the strength and vitality of the humanities disciplines. The sociological perspectives above extend the concept of Humanities + in so far as they emphasize that participation in professional activities nurture and enrich the humanities (in addition to the humanities enriching the life and activity of the professional). The Chinese Language Flagship program at Brigham Young University is a model component of the Humanities+ idea, which is the focus of this special section of this issue of Russian Language Journal. As we consider the Humanities+ idea, we should examine not only what the humanities contribute to other disciplines and professional fields (see esp. Menand
2010, 91), but conversely, what professional training and life experience through internships and experiential learning contribute back into the study of the humanities. How do professional engagement and career focus contribute back to the study and practice of the humanities as a fully engaged set of disciplines?

Geoffrey Galt Harpham (2011) connects the origin of the term “the crisis in the humanities” in the post WWII era in U.S. higher education to the tendency on the part of those in the humanities to see professional education (“professional or vocational utility”) as a threat to general education and the humanities (pp. 14-15). Helen Small (2013) also connects the “rhetoric of anti-instrumentalism” to a reaction to large-scale structural changes in the university in which “humanities departments have come to seem economically and institutionally irrelevant” (p. 63). Interestingly, Small notes that faculty may object primarily to externally-dictated terms of assessment of the value of the humanities, rather than to the idea of the humanities having social value (p. 62). The Language Flagship program introduces practices that incorporate assessment and professional focus in ways meant to strengthen the overall position of foreign languages, literature and cultural study in a broader context. The catalogued experience of participants in the Language Flagship over time may well provide a model for bridging this perceived chasm between the humanities and professional training.

The Language Flagship program under the National Security Education Program (NSEP) is unique in terms of uniting goals both internal and external to the humanities. The program aims to improve language, culture and regional studies education, as well as to serve a pressing national security need: the need to develop a generation of well-educated graduates with professional-level proficiency in strategic languages who will negotiate the global challenges facing the nation. The mission of the National Security Education Program explicitly includes goals both internal and external to the humanities sphere:

*Improving Foreign Language Education
*Creating a Pool of Global Professionals for National Security
*Advocacy for Foreign Language Education.

The Language Flagship is forging a path that serves all three goals of the NSEP mission cited above through close partnership among higher
education, government, and associations aligned with promoting these goals. This article will examine the value of the Language Flagship model for strengthening support for humanities study within higher education and from outside academe as well.

The idea of a “crisis” in the humanities, or relatedly in the liberal arts, goes back decades, and arguably centuries, and has engendered a massive amount of scholarship and discussion. Major scholars addressing the humanities crisis have noted the clichéd nature of the discussions of “decline” (Steiner 2012, p. 26) and the nature of the topic as a “common genre” (Perloff 2012, p. 43). In 1980 the Commission on Humanities outlined issues still discussed today: decline in enrollments and funding, and pressure from the public and the government (p. 60). These elements of the discussion have not greatly changed in the intervening decades. For example, in a May 2010 symposium, Ricardo Gil Soeiro and Sofia Tavares (2012) cited resurgent interest in the same topics of “budget cuts, waning student interest, and dwindling tenure-track positions as evidence of a crisis in the liberal arts and Humanities” (p. 1). In 2013, Michael Berube, President of the Modern Language Association, moved to counter the rhetoric of decline by citing more positive recent enrollment numbers, noting further that constant inaccurate talk about enrollment declines itself feeds a crisis in legitimation. The 1980 Commission report further pointed out that students and faculty are missing out on the richness of connections of the humanities with other disciplines: “Faced with an uncertain economy and job market, a disorderly curriculum, and educators’ diminished confidence in the purpose of a college education, many undergraduates choose majors narrowly aimed at obtaining a first job. They seem unaware that most subjects, disciplines, and careers intersect the humanities. Humanists themselves often neglect the connections between their disciplines and education in the natural and social sciences, engineering, business and other fields” (p. 61). The Commission also notes the lack of foreign language skills and cultural understanding as an educational deficit (p. 61).

The 2007 MLA report still represents the leading statement in the foreign language field on reform. The MLA report cites the need for foreign language programs in particular to reach out across the institution: “Replacing the two-tiered language-literature with a broader
and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture and literature are taught as a continuous whole, supported by alliances with other departments and expressed through interdisciplinary courses, will reinvigorate language departments as valuable academic units central to the humanities and to the missions of institutions of higher learning” (p. 4) However, the report is still highly focused on the language and literature major, and the interdisciplinary approach primarily relates to having language faculty expand their range of topics and material (pp. 4-5). As the interdisciplinary model relates to students from other majors, the report suggests that interdisciplinary courses may be taught in English with a “credit-bearing discussion module taught in the target language” (p. 5). Noting this feature of the MLA report, Carol Klee (2009) outlines further discussions in the field for strengthening the Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) model by developing courses in the social sciences and sciences taught in the target language and developing a “collaborative, integrated curriculum” (pp. 618-619). Klee points out that the Language Flagship model developed interventions to support students developing their language skills while engaging in content study in the foreign language (previously the LAC model had not been registering language gains for participants due to limited time on task).

Some leading scholars attribute the crisis directly to the trends within the humanities relating to theory and interdisciplinarity. George Steiner (2012) examines what he terms the “radically spurious” (p. 31) misapplication of theory to the humanities through the approaches of deconstruction and postmodernism as part of the malaise leading to the decline in the authority of the humanities practitioners. (An example of the vehement polemics on this topic can be found in Ellis’s 1997 Literature Lost: Social Agendas and the Corruption of the Humanities). More broadly, Steiner raises the questions of whether, in light of the atrocities of the twentieth century, the humanities have indeed fulfilled their humane promise (p. 36). Responding in part to Steiner’s pessimism, Perloff (2012) argues that the primary need in reviving the discipline of literary studies is to move away from interdisciplinary approaches in which literary studies borrow from other disciplines and instead focus on poetics and the works of art: “Indeed, what is urgently needed in the “Humanities” today is more knowledge of actual art works and a great
emphasis on induction” (p. 57). Julie Thompson (2006) documents statements from a range of prominent scholars (Helen Vendler, Edward Said) who also expressed concern about the interdisciplinary trends dissolving their distinctive field (pp. 100-101). In her 2012 essay on “After the Humanities,” Garber observes, “It’s only since the Enlightenment that ‘science’ and ‘the humanities’ have evolved along different paths. One way of imagining the humanities ‘after the humanities’ is, as we will see, to repair this breach” (p. 186) Garber points to the Humanities Centers on campuses as “the places where one can do post-humanities work in the humanities. The places where disciplinary boundaries are meant to break down, where collaboration, cooperation and cross field investigations are designed to take place” (p. 195). Garber emphasizes the need to set up “standards for the evaluation of collaborative work” when the collaboration crosses disciplines, and to concentrate on the question of the “practice” of the disciplines (pp. 200-201). The Language Flagship model creates a cross-disciplinary rather than interdisciplinary space that encourages collaboration and integration of humanities disciplines so as to inform social science and science endeavors. The ability to pursue a discipline or profession is enhanced by humanities study (a biologist who thoroughly understands an African language and culture is better prepared to confront health or environmental issues overseas in conjunction with skills acquired from a biology major or degree: the cultural factors cannot be separated from environmental and medical solutions).

The 2013 report on The Teaching of the Arts and Humanities at Harvard College: Mapping the Future outlined a series of arguments that represent a threat to the humanities. The arguments cited are:

* “The Economic Argument”
* “The Cultural and Social Arguments”
* “The Scientific Argument”
* “The Vocational Argument”; and
* “The Technological Argument”

To summarize, the arguments are that the humanities fail to prepare for economic and strategic need; do not serve a positive social function; unlike science do not go beyond mere interpretation; are not useful in job placement; and will become more irrelevant as technology advances (pp. 3-6). The authors continue to argue for the value of the humanities
in terms of the value of the humanities for democratic society: the distinctiveness of the humanities, and the intellectual training these disciplines provide (See also Small 2013, for a thorough and historically well-informed treatment of the strengths and weaknesses of each of these arguments). Reacting in the Chronicle of Higher Education to the overall negative tone of the report, Alexander Beecroft (2013) suggests a more “engaged discussion of why the humanities matter instead of finger-pointing over who’s responsible for a largely imaginary decline in our numbers” (Beecroft, in tenth paragraph).

The Harvard report indeed suggests an inherent movement of the humanities toward marginality over time. The authors chart a path of the humanities originating from identity with the center in mediaeval times to an increasingly critical and marginal role within society up to the present time (See also Han Ulrich Gumbrecht’s (2004) description of this moment as “a new configuration of self-reference in which men began to see themselves as eccentric to the world” p. 24). The Harvard report finally traces the position of the humanities to the current mode of “scholarly skepticism” or “hermeneutic suspicion” (p. 19). The report summarizes that “Those historical experiences tend to produce a Humanities teaching that stands back from the collective project to critique its premises. The task is to unmask the operations of power” (p.19). The crisis of the humanities stems in part from the inherent marginality of criticism and interpretation that constitutes the field. The tendency towards marginality is problematic as the field faces demands and questions from parents, communities, legislatures, and businesses that are defining educational goals not specifically connected to criticism and interpretation. In Production of Presence, Gumbrecht (2004) looks for a way beyond essentially what the Harvard study had termed a stance of “hermeneutic suspicion” (p. 19):

Today we may add that it was most probably the trauma inflicted by this—hermeneutically induced—‘loss of world’ that explains why the only value (at least the highest value) that many humanists can find in the phenomena they are dealing with is the motivation to enter yet another intellectual loop of ‘self-reflexivity,’ and this is also probably the reason why adopting anything but a ‘critical’ attitude toward the things of
the worlds in which we are living seems to be something like an original sin, at least in the eyes of the average humanist” (p. 92)

Gumbrecht goes on to look at ways of incorporating moments of epiphany and “presentification” as a way beyond the current core hermeneutic practice of the humanities. Gumbrecht discusses confronting students with intellectual complexity and “to make them feel specific moments of intensity” (p. 97). He primarily looks to aesthetic experience as the locus of this intensity (p. 99), but Gumbrecht also leaves the door open to suggest that presentification may be found in lived experience as well as aesthetic experience.

Addressing the malaise in the humanities to the American Council of Learned Societies, Robert Weisbuch (2006, 27) concluded, “The world never refused the humanities. The humanities have shown a tendency to refuse the world. Reconsidering that choice should be the chief business of this generation.”

The Harvard report characterizes the arguments that contemporary U.S. education should be oriented towards increasing global competitiveness and national security needs as an argument hostile to the value of the humanities in the current world. Yet increasingly there is recognition from within the national security community, drawing on recent experience in Afghanistan and the Middle East, that language, culture, and regional expertise are crucial underpinnings to success in pursuing U.S. interests abroad, with all the historical and cultural background that that entails. While it is true that the stance of “hermeneutic suspicion” is not a value easily embraced within the concern for global competitiveness and national security, the knowledge, perspectives and ability to question assumptions afforded by humanities education are actively sought after in the national security community. The authors of the Harvard report see the disillusionment of the Vietnam experience as still the defining cultural experience for the Humanities today. As Menand (2010) observed, the “war in Vietnam exposed almost every weakness in the system” (p. 77) of the structure of humanities education. However, the authors of the Harvard report seem to dismiss the relevance of the break-up of the former Soviet Union or the events of 9/11 as defining moments for cultural study. The key historical moment for the National Security Education Program was the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc and fall of the Soviet Union. As it became
clear that it was necessary to negotiate a world that was no longer clearly in a bipolar alignment, the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991 posited that U.S. citizens would need greater knowledge of all the regions, countries and languages that had been traditionally less studied. (Sec. 801 [50 U.S.C. 1901] b (3) and (4)) The humanities (language, literature and culture, history) are an integral but not exclusive piece of this mission to provide broader global education to students across all majors and disciplines. The events of 9/11 and subsequent engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq increased recognition of the need for greater understanding of culture and greater professional language skills across government and the private sector. Harpham (2011) concludes his study of the humanities in American higher education with a postscript citing an Air Force Major General and Vietnam POW describing that the humanities courses he took at the Air Force Academy “cultivated the seeds of hope and put [one] in touch with the centuries-long development of an intellectual tradition that contains essential, life-giving wisdom—a body of knowledge that provided a reason to persevere and survive the hell of captivity and torture” (p. 202-203).

The Language Flagship Model
The Language Flagship offers an opportunity for students from all majors and disciplines to work toward professional language proficiency (ILR 3 or ACTFL Superior) in one of ten strategic languages sponsored by the program (Arabic, Chinese, Hindi Urdu, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish, Swahili). There are 27 domestic flagship programs at 22 U.S. campuses with 10 capstone overseas study locations. Approximately 2000 students take courses within Flagship, and over 900 are registered as Language Flagship students intending to pursue the full course of domestic and overseas study. On their home campus undergraduate students pursue courses in their chosen major, participate in intensive foreign language instruction and co-curricular activities, and develop the ability to interact in their areas of academic and professional interest in the target language. This model includes higher-level content learning in the target language through special course offerings, special sections in the target language that supplement regular course offerings in various disciplines, and tutoring by native
speakers specializing in the student’s domain. Most students take advanced-level media and culture courses in preparation for their overseas Capstone experience.

The Flagship model provides one set of answers to the questions posed by Heidi Byrnes (2009) on the role of foreign language departments in internationalizing curricula on campus (p. 607). In addition, Stephen Straight (2009) has called for foreign language departments, other departments and institutions to expand “meaningful use of multiple languages in every nook and cranny of undergraduate and graduate curricula throughout their respective institutions, large and small” (p. 625). As Alan Goodman (2009) notes, in the Flagship model “language teachers can play a greater role in internationalizing the curriculum and the campus, preparing graduates to succeed as professionals operating in the language in which they have achieved proficiency” (p. 611).

Madeline Spring (2012) describes in detail how the Chinese Flagship program has integrated a Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) approach in an articulated manner across domestic and overseas programs in coordination with defined student proficiency goals. In discussing the importance of the LSP courses in reaching proficiency goals, Spring writes: “Superior Level language proficiency implies both linguistic goals and sociocultural competence and knowledge-based cultural understanding. […] To succeed in high-level intellectual communication, written or oral, within the various Chinese worlds and professions, students need to be familiar with China’s vast historical, philosophical, and literary traditions (p. 146). Spring outlines the various curricular pathways to proficiency, emphasizing the different types of LSP courses that may be included. While theme-based language courses are common in many language programs, sheltered courses provide “accommodations for second language learners both in materials and instruction” (p. 148) in order to enable learners to take content courses in an academic discipline of interest fully taught in the target language. Spring then explains that adjunct courses may be taught concurrently with Foreign Language Medium Instruction (FLMI) courses (content courses fully taught in the target language) in order to assist students in developing strategies to fully assimilate material in the target language (p. 148). Thus, in Spring’s example, an adjunct course
on “Chinese for Academic and Professional Purposes” may accompany courses in other disciplines taught in Chinese on the ASU campus such as “Understanding China’s Economic Reform” or “History of Chinese Medicine.” After completing such coursework on the domestic campus students are fully prepared to take courses in a variety of subjects at programs at Nanjing University or Tianjin Normal University during the Flagship capstone year.

The Language Flagship sets specific language proficiency targets for selection to the overseas Capstone experience, which includes at least an academic year of overseas immersion. Students must demonstrate ACTFL Advanced or ILR 2 level oral proficiency in their target language, and ACTFL Advanced or ILR 2 level proficiency in Reading or Listening on the required online assessment instruments (See ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and ILR Skill Level Descriptions). No skill level may be rated lower than ILR 1+ or Intermediate-high. Writing skill is also evaluated. In the Arabic Flagship an ILR scored writing test is employed to verify proficiency at least at the 1+ level. In the other Flagship languages candidates provide writing samples which are reviewed by the selection committee to ensure capacity to function well in overseas courses. If students reach these levels and have sufficient preparation in their major and content areas, they can qualify for the Overseas Capstone program, which consists of intensive language instruction and immersion, direct enrollment in courses in disciplines related to the students’ major or professional interests, and a professional internship conducted in the target language, in most cases with a local organization as circumstances in country permit. Examples of recent internships include experiences with the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce in Russia, Drug Free Zanzibar in Tanzania, the Shanghai Institute of Neuroscience in China, PriceWaterhouse Coopers in Brazil, and work with a local filmmaker in Egypt. On a recent site visit to the Arabic Flagship program in Meknes, Morocco we visited internship sites and discussed internships with the Flagship students. We observed a biology major conducting blood tests at a Moroccan clinic, and discussed internship experiences with a group of students working with the Culture Ministry to prepare for a major exhibition. Most interesting, however, was an internship at a traditional crafts training center (supported in part by the Millennium Challenge
that was training young Moroccans to preserve the intricate traditional crafts that distinguish the local culture. This Flagship student was learning traditional woodcarving alongside Moroccan apprentices from the local craft masters. This internship experience offered a unique opportunity to engage in cultural production and preservation while developing relationships with local artisans. While the traditional professional office internships proved valuable to the students, this internship in particular was distinguished as a method for full cultural engagement and immersion.

At the end of the Capstone students undergo further language proficiency testing, and those who complete all program elements and attain ILR 3 language proficiency receive certification as a Language Flagship Global Professional. Those students who also received Boren Scholarships (Boren Flagship Scholars) are able to document their skills on official government tests from the Foreign Service Institute and the Defense Language Proficiency Test to assist them in their search for a federal position to fulfill their service commitment through the Boren Awards.

As the undergraduate Flagship model matures, numbers of certified students are increasing and overall results are improving. In the 2012-2013 Capstone year 68% of students reached the ILR 3 program goal in oral proficiency, with 93% of students reaching 2+ or above. The core Language Flagship elements of assessment, documented results, and focus on career preparation should be attractive to any Dean of Humanities facing pressure from parents, administrators, and trustees or state education officials to justify programs. Documenting results tied to professional goals provides a powerful antidote to what Menand (2010) calls a “rationale crisis” or an “institutional legitimacy crisis” in which humanists were unable to make their case to university administration or the public (pp. 61-62). On the question of enrollment, even with the emphasis that students engage in a major outside of the traditional language and literature track, it is clear that the Language Flagship model provides benefits for humanities departments. The insistence that Flagship students attain Advanced and Superior proficiency creates a structure whereby students from a variety of disciplines pursue double majors in languages or area studies in addition to major related to their professional interests. The latest statistics show that out of 964 currently
registered Flagship students, 45% are pursuing a humanities major. More significantly, 74% of those Flagship humanities majors are pursuing a double major, with 57% pursuing a second major outside of the humanities fields. Those students include 128 combining humanities and social science majors, 47 combining humanities and STEM majors, and 38 combining humanities and business and professional majors. (See Eisen, McDermott, and 2014 for summary percentages of primary majors and double majors). Tying language study to the specific professional interests of students, and demonstrating that U.S. undergraduates can attain professional proficiency levels in their chosen language, will underscore the value of advanced language and culture study across campus. The challenge for the Language Flagship model is, over time, to demonstrate and document the results of the program—academic and professional—and to disseminate the model more broadly, garnering the support of administrators and education officials as well as faculty and students. The intended program result is to develop the broad capacity of U.S. higher education to produce a pool of graduates with professional language skills across a variety of disciplines who will contribute greatly to national security and global competitiveness. The aim of the Language Flagship is to promote partnerships among higher education, government, and business in support of improved foreign language, regional studies, and culture education.

**Flagship and the Humanities**

The emphasis on professional-level language study is breaking new ground in U.S. higher education in terms of the greater cultural, regional and historical knowledge needed in to function at these higher levels in a living environment. Reaching professional proficiency and striving towards near-native ability in the foreign language requires assimilating the elements of culture, cultural and historical references, and the ability to understand highly nuanced discourse in a variety of settings and contexts. Reaching these levels requires rigorous training and education in fields beyond grammar and vocabulary in order to be able to interact in a foreign context as an academic or professional colleague. The ILR descriptors at ILR 3 and above describe precisely the types of skills that humanities departments emphasize as their end result in an English language classroom environment. The ILR 3 speaking definition states:
“Can use the language as part of normal professional duties such as answering objections, clarifying points, justifying decisions, understanding the essence of challenges, stating and defending policy, conducting meetings, delivering briefings, or other extended and elaborate informative monologues.” The ILR 3 reading criteria for media and material in one’s professional area include “Misreading rare. Almost always able to interpret material correctly, relate ideas and ‘read between the lines,’ (that is, understand the writers’ implicit intents in texts of the above types).” (ILR Reading Skill Level Descriptions) As students progress above these levels (and some Flagship students are registering 3+ and 4 abilities at the end of the overseas capstone year), speaking, reading and listening become more nuanced, with more ability to understand cultural nuance and correctly interpret all but the most specialized technical vocabulary or slang. At these proficiency levels, language study is inherently tied into the skills needed for higher-level critical, rhetorical, cultural and professional performance.

One practice being developed and integrated into the Language Flagship overseas programs is the use of the Language Utilization report, or LURs. In the LUR the students record the amount of time they spend on various activities in their immersive language environment (homework, reading for pleasure, watching TV, conversation with friends, conversation in host family, etc.). In addition to providing valuable information about the types of overseas immersion activities that promote higher-level language gain, the qualitative comments of the students about their experiences provide a reflection on the real-life experience of interacting in classes, internships, and social life while developing these higher-level proficiencies. Sample quotes from the students record moments when they are able to understand local humor or tell jokes successfully and appropriately in the culture, conduct an impromptu exchange on a cultural topic of interest, or behave correctly in the host family environment in order to negotiate the subtleties of different cultural norms in family life and relationships. These comments form a record of learner’s experience, including at times epiphanies of heightened cultural awareness and presence within a new cultural environment. In a presentation at the February 2012 Interagency Language Roundtable, Dan Davidson highlighted excerpts from students beginning to interact freely in chance encounters with
people ranging from cab drivers to leading cultural figures. One excerpt cited the experience of a young woman reflecting on her ability to integrate her English language U.S. persona into her Arabic language persona in relation with her host sister. Davidson cites this as an important aspect of higher level language proficiency acquisition, and we can also understand this moment as an important experience for the student in gaining presence within the host culture.

Dan Davidson’s initial research on the LUR material from the Russian Flagship program at St. Petersburg State University reveals a significant result at the highest end of the Flagship program. Heritage Russian language speakers in the Flagship program given the opportunity to improve their language structure and cultural awareness have achieved some of the highest language proficiency results in the program, with scores of ILR 3+ or ILR 4, or Distinguished on the ACTFL scale. Davidson’s examination of the LUR reflections from this population reveals that Heritage learners identify the internship component of the overseas capstone year as one of the most significant opportunities for improvement. “For example, heritage students consistently identified the field trip and internships components as particularly helpful among the co-curricular components. Internships, in fact, were uniformly rated as of ‘great’ value for improving their understanding of Russian culture...” (Davidson 2012, 73). The finding that the professional internship component is of the greatest value to those most able to bridge cultures and immerse themselves fully in a cultural experience brings us back to the observations from the sociology of knowledge cited earlier from Mannheim (1985), specifically that “participation in the living context of social life is a presupposition of the understanding of the inner nature of this living context” (Mannheim, p. 46). Davidson notes that in contrast, non-heritage students found homestays to be “most valuable for their linguistic and cultural growth, outside formal instruction” (Davidson, p. 73). One may surmise that the homestay environment represents a new and challenging social environment for the non-heritage learners, while the heritage learners who were more used to a Russian language environment at home were more challenged by the demanding professional internship experience. In both cases the students identified a level of engagement that contributed to growth experiences.
The engagement of the Language Flagship across disciplines and in live cultural experience finds resonance with the concepts of dynamic scholars from within the humanities who are exploring new ways forward for the humanities. The Overseas Capstone experience is a model that merges cross-disciplinary study with immersion experience in the social, academic and professional life of a foreign culture at a level higher than has been the norm within undergraduate education. In particular, the Language Flagship provides educational experience that resonates with Garber’s (2012) ideas on collaborative work and practice, and with Gumbrecht’s (2004) concept of the importance of “presentification” and “epiphany” in revitalizing the humanities.

The Language Flagship model by its very nature is designed to bring together the widest array of disciplines in a collaborative project of cultural and global engagement. In order to reach advanced and professional levels of language proficiency, students must engage in higher level content learning across a variety of fields in order to become global professionals. Developing appropriate courses requires that faculty from social sciences, science and professional fields collaborate with language and culture specialists to design content courses in the target languages. These content courses should serve the joint goals of increasing proficiency and expanding the global perspective for students and faculty within the content disciplines. As Dean John Rosenberg of Brigham Young University concluded in his Op-ed relating Humanities+ to the Language Flagship (2013): “The Language Flagship is a model not only of language acquisition but also a kind of whole-sighted learning that best serves students and their evolving communities” (p. 3).

As we gather more and more information from the Language Flagship about the lived experience of these exceptionally well-prepared students as they encounter foreign cultures, family life, and work experiences, we may well gather a picture that shows students having moments of epiphany and presence that take us well beyond the traditional classroom and study abroad experience. Exploration of the ties between language acquisition, cultural interaction, student experience in work and scientific fields, and collaborative endeavors across disciplines will position the Language Flagship as a significant laboratory in re-defining the position and mission of the humanities.
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The University of Rhode Island
International Engineering Program:
A Model for the Merger of Technology and the Humanities

John M. Grandin
Sigrid Berka

American Higher Education in Crisis
Contrary to a long-established and seemingly irrefutable tradition, American parents, educators, private and public sector leaders, and students are beginning to doubt the value of a university education. Charges have been leveled, for example, that students today are spending substantially less time on academics than their predecessors and are making little progress during their undergraduate years in their ability to read, write, speak, or think analytically and critically (see, for example, Arum and Roksa 2011, Vedder and Denhart 2011). Others have argued that college is burdening young people with lifelong debt to the degree that it is stifling their creativity and freedom to innovate. The Thiel Foundation, for example, awards $100,000 stipends to bright young persons who choose to pursue their own ideas independently rather than attend a college or university. And these doubts are, of course, reinforced by prominent degreeless role models like Steve Jobs, Michael Dell, Mark Zuckerberg, and Bill Gates, who have helped give rise to such phenomena as the UnCollege Movement (http://www.uncollege.org/manifesto/) and to reports that universities are not educating students for the needs of the market place. (See: http://mckinseyonsociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/Education-to-Employment_FINAL.pdf). As this recent McKinsey study reports, high percentages of students do not believe that higher education will prepare them for the contemporary workplace, while companies lament that they want to hire, but often cannot find qualified candidates (McKinsey, pp. 11-13).

1 An earlier version of this paper appeared in the ADFL Bulletin, 43, no.1 (Fall 2014): 23-44. This article is published here with permission of the Modern Language Association.
Parallel to this skepticism and perhaps in part because of it, both federal and cash-strapped state governments are pulling back from long-standing financial commitments to higher education. The State of Rhode Island, for example, provided 47% less state support per student in 2012 than in 2002 (Providence Journal, Report: URI in Peril as State Funding Erodes, October 1, 2012) and now covers less than 10% of the overall funding required to keep the university afloat and competitive. Given that the difference can only be made up by an increase in tuition, the resulting sticker prices for a college education are shocking today, whether at a state-supported university like URI or a private institution, and the end of the increases seems nowhere in sight. The financial sacrifice for a college degree might be deemed acceptable if graduates could be guaranteed a position appropriate to their education, but a high percentage, perhaps even over one-half of recent college graduates, is unemployed or underemployed, (See: http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/04/53-of-recent-college-grads-are-jobless-or-underemployed-how/256237/) while saddled with enormous debt, the total of which now surpasses one trillion dollars. (New York Times, A Generation Hobbled by the Soaring Cost of College, May 12, 2012).

A Challenge to the Humanities
Given the high cost of an undergraduate degree and the high unemployment rate of graduates, those who do opt for college today are becoming much more deliberate and pragmatic about their choices of major and have thus become reformers in their own way. Fearing unemployment, students are increasingly shying away from fields that do not promise a job, such as English, history, philosophy, art history, and classics. Even at Yale University, which has always been a bastion for the humanities, undergraduate enrollments in this area have fallen from 19,250 in 2000-2001 to 14,604 in 2010-2011. Course enrollments in English, for example, were down from 3248 to 2595, and in history from 4448 to 2259, as noted by Antonia Woodford on April 18, 2012 in an article for Yale Daily News. It is not surprising, therefore, when cash-strapped administrators do not hire replacements for retirees in these fields, or look for creative ways to reinvigorate departments with falling enrollments. Students are looking for programs that will open doors, enable them to pay off their loans, and assure a satisfying career.
Clearly, there is a need to sound an alert in the United States regarding higher education. We need to prepare our students more deliberately, and realistically for the ever-changing workplace of the 21st century, and we need to do this without saddling our students with enormous debt. We must consider carefully the skills needed for successful careers in today’s global workplace, and promise our students a clear return on their investment. In order to meet this promise, universities must keep pace with the highest standards, which are now set at a global level, and focus more on the STEM disciplines needed to guarantee our nation’s ongoing reputation for innovation. Furthermore, we must find ways to support our students financially. We agree with critics that drastic steps will be required to adapt our institutions to today’s realities, especially given the limited resources available, and the innate resistance to changing longstanding educational traditions. We strongly disagree, however, with those who would drop everything of a non-professional nature like classics and German and educate solely scientists and engineers. Such a step would be shortsighted. America does indeed need more engineers, but the complexities of life in the 21st century demand that all students, including, and perhaps especially, the engineers and those from other STEM disciplines and professional school programs, be broadly and liberally educated. This will mean that the humanities must not only be retained, but also given an expanded, if modified, role.

The Role of the Liberal Arts
In his blog, of June 4, 2012, (http://presidentdooley.blogspot.com), President David Dooley of the University of Rhode Island defended a liberal arts education, arguing that “the skills of critical reading and thinking, strong writing, and effective presentation are essential in practically any career” and, as such, are classic outcomes of coursework in the humanities. The ability to learn continuously and to teach oneself, he argues, are also outcomes of the humanities disciplines, though not exclusively. “Creativity, a strong work ethic, self-discipline, and teamwork have always been, and will continue to be, keys to success.” Dooley argues that these combined qualities are essential markers of the liberally educated person, and are typically “the
foundation for success after college.” He stresses that many great leaders and professionals have backgrounds in the arts and humanities.

While agreeing with Dooley that the “soft skill” outcomes of a liberally educated person are critical for success in a competitive global workplace, we must also face the reality that a high percentage of graduates with majors in the arts and humanities are struggling to find their place in the workforce, and often end up unemployed or taking jobs for which they need no higher education, e.g., as bartenders or food servers. Many are forced to move back home with mom and dad to make ends meet financially. It is easy to pass this problem off as the unfortunate temporary result of a bad economy, arguing that the situation will soon improve. After all, this would mean there is no cause for alarm and that we can and should maintain the status quo.

Unfortunately, a lot of evidence suggests that the job market for the average college graduate will not improve substantially in the coming years. The economic situation might seem better in any given year, but increasingly any boom times in the United States will depend upon corresponding booms in the Far East, Latin America, the European Union and elsewhere across the globe. As a result of shakiness and long-term challenges in this new interconnected economy, jobs will be tight except possibly for those who have paid attention to the very latest trends and technologies in the global marketplace, and are ready to meet the competition from their peers abroad. Jobs can be found, especially those associated with alternative energy, nanotechnology, biomedical technology, advances in information science, and other fields tied largely to science and engineering. Indeed we hear from employers that many positions are open, but that the great majority of applicants do not qualify.

We in higher education need to pay more attention to the employability of our grads, especially if we want to contribute to regional and national economic development, not to mention keep our lecture halls full, enable parents and future students to pay for that which we provide, and, above all, ensure our students find career opportunities. But this does not mean that we should drop majors such as philosophy, classics or German from our offerings in favor of more courses in topics such as solar power or entrepreneurialism. It does mean, however, that we should be brutally honest with our foreign
language or philosophy majors about what it is that such a major provides and what prospects a major in the humanities might have for a future career. And we need to ask how and in what context the philosophy or any other liberal arts major makes sense, and whether the changing times require a realignment or reorganization of what we teach, how we teach, and to whom.

As former philosophy and literature majors ourselves, we, the authors of this paper, would argue that the study of classically humanistic fields provides an important path toward acquisition of the goals President Dooley has described in his blog. Learning to read carefully and critically, think analytically, define problems, understand and care about values, appreciate different perspectives, communicate in other languages as well as across national and cultural borders, gain an overview of thought in different historical periods, write carefully and clearly are all of utmost importance for our students regardless of long-term disciplinary and career goals. These represent important learning goals which accrue from a good liberal arts education, and less so from a purely technical or professional education. These skills are all important traits of an educated person today.

Humanists might argue that we are speaking of the humanities here almost as a supplement to the STEM and/or professional school disciplines and are thus cheapening or weakening them as disciplines unto themselves. On the contrary, we are arguing that there is a greater need for humanities education than ever before and that it must play a role for all students, not just its disciplinary majors. We in no way wish to disavow the humanities as independent areas of intellectual pursuit, but the realities of a technologically driven global society demand a reconsideration of the roles of the humanities. To be liberally educated today demands significant background in both humanistic and technical endeavors.

These considerations are not intended solely for the students in the STEM disciplines, but also carry clear implications for the student majoring in the humanities. Just as we argue that engineering students need to broaden their background with the study of language, culture, and other humanities fields, we also argue that the humanities major, if claiming to be liberally educated today, needs to broaden his/her background with exposure to the sciences and technology. All of the six
hundred language majors at the University of Rhode Island, for example, are now strongly advised to develop a companion expertise with their language skills and cultural understanding, such as engineering, computer science, business, teacher education, journalism, or international policy studies. If students learn to speak other languages, that is good, but if they hope to contribute to society, they must consider how and where they might apply their language skills and what background they will need to do this. Furthermore, if a humanities major wishes to lay claim to being a liberally educated person in today’s society, then he/she needs to have a firm understanding of the scientific issues and technologies which are the basis for the bulk of our daily routines, not to mention jobs. Language without application is inadequate, just as technology without language and culture, i.e., the liberal arts, is insufficient.

**Technology, Science and the Liberal Arts**

There is a message in these deliberations for both society as a whole as well as for higher education in particular. While we have always thought of educating philosophers or engineers, humanists or scientists, today we need to strive for philosophically astute engineers and scientists, and philosophers who understand, appreciate and can contribute to the world of science and technology. It is incumbent upon higher education, therefore, to rethink its structure and system of rewards for faculty in order to bring these traditionally disparate areas of the academy closer together and to provide all of their students the benefits of both a humanistic and a professional education. And it is incumbent upon humanists to recognize the practical value of their disciplines in the workplace and to embrace the role that their disciplines can play in partnership with their colleagues from professional and scientific school programs.

One can easily compare our current situation with the climate that gave birth to the Morrill Act, which was signed into law 152 years ago by Abraham Lincoln in 1862. It was this act that created the Land-Grant colleges and universities. As the wording of the bill attests, its authors were concerned about educating young people for the needs of the times, which were largely defined by the industrial revolution. They thus created a new kind of university focused on the agricultural and
mechanic arts, in contrast with the existing, traditional universities that were bastions of the liberal arts. It is critical to note, however, that in stressing professional education, they specifically emphasized that this should not be done at the expense of “other sciences or classical studies.” Their goal was to “promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.” It is, therefore, very much in the spirit of the Morrill Act to suggest that we adapt our universities today to the needs of our technology driven contemporary society with a greater focus on the STEM disciplines, while at the same time recognizing and promoting the need for a strong background in the arts and humanities.

Is it a fantasy that higher education might reconfigure its offerings and redefine what it means to be a liberally educated person, or is it a necessity? Is it possible for engineering faculty (and others from scientific and professional fields) and philosophy professors (with others from the arts and humanities) to collaborate and provide their students with a more rounded education and thereby not only greater employability in today’s complex global workplace, but also an increased sense of responsibility? Can higher education be so flexible? Can more be packed into an already full curriculum without adding time and expense to an already overpriced commodity? If so, how might this be achieved? What changes would be required in the structure and nature of American higher education? What forces would have to converge to make this possible?

Needless to say, a change of this magnitude would, in an ideal world, call for an act of Congress comparable to the Morrill Act of 1862, resulting in a new kind of higher education institution for our age of globaliza- tion. In 2014, such a bill would not sponsor the land to create new campuses, but would rather sponsor and support a new vision of education designed to graduate technically and scientifically savvy young people with the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills required for careers in a complex global society. But, given the fact that we do not live in that ideal world at this time, it is perhaps more realistic that we in higher education look for ideas and inspirations and for individual initiatives which will point us in the right direction.
Language and Engineering: A Template for Reform

Berka and Grandin, the authors of these pages, are respectively the current executive director and the recently retired founder, executive director, and developer of a now twenty-seven year old program at the University of Rhode Island which has proven it possible for students to efficiently achieve the goals of a technical and a liberal arts education in a financially responsible manner highly appropriate to today’s workplace. The International Engineering Program (IEP), which was developed in close partnership with business and industry, is a cost-effective, career-oriented program combining the study of language and culture with engineering, and including a full-year of study and work abroad. It is a five-year undergraduate curriculum, leading simultaneously to both the BA with a major in a language and the BS in one of the engineering disciplines. IEP grads are highly qualified engineers, who have stronger writing, speaking, analytical, and problem-solving skills, in combination with the command of a second language and the cross-cultural communication skills acquired through a year of in-depth study and work abroad. With over 400 graduates, and with a highly competitive employment rate, the program demonstrates the fact that the humanities and the sciences do work together productively, i.e., that universities are indeed adapting to the contemporary needs of society. Our research documents the long-term value of such an education in today’s workplace, where IEP graduates have been able to excel and achieve beyond their initial expectations, and make meaningful contributions to society (Grandin 2011).

The IEP is built, of course, on the reality that engineering is a global field today and that engineers commonly work in teams crossing many cultural and linguistic borders. Even when not travelling, it is typical for engineers to be working on projects with others in widely dispersed locations, where successful communication depends upon knowledge of and sensitivity to other cultures and languages. Engineers need to be many things today: technically savvy, analytically sharp, culturally astute, and cross-culturally informed. Moreover, they must be good problem solvers, good communicators, and lifelong learners who are able to take calculated risks. The IEP experience is designed to support the acquisition of all of these skills with a curriculum that combines the best of both a technical and humanistic education.
The University of Rhode Island International Engineering Program (IEP) began as a partnership between two faculty, Dean Hermann Viets of the College of Engineering, and Professor of German, John Grandin, who also served as associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Both shared a common interest in Germany and the belief that all students, engineers included, would greatly benefit from becoming bilingual and by including a significant experience abroad as part of their undergraduate education.

Grandin and Viets were well aware that they were entering a partnership fraught with barriers and hurdles. Aside from some outspoken engineers who saw no need for language study and a core group of language faculty who saw no reason to teach languages to engineers, there were manifold challenges from many bureaucratic corners of the academy. Would it be feasible or even wise to complete two undergraduate degrees in five years? Could six-month professional internships really be arranged in companies abroad? Who would teach the proposed special, content-based German classes for engineers? How would one convince and recruit students to study both German and engineering? Would students see value in spending an additional year of study before entering the workforce? Who would find answers to these questions and complete these tasks? Despite the many questions, Viets and Grandin believed that all the challenges could be met and they agreed to pool their efforts and sell their idea, each to their respective faculty groups, arguing strongly that such a partnership would be mutually beneficial, i.e., that it would bring more and stronger students to both the engineering and language classrooms.

Indeed the partnership between Grandin and Viets, which grew to a partnership between engineering and languages, or viewed more broadly, a partnership between technology, science and the humanities, and subsequently a partnership between the university and the corporate sector, has been a great success, truly beneficial to all parties. The IEP today enrolls approximately 345 students, and has expanded from the initial German and engineering model to include programs with French, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, and Italian. It has benefitted languages, for example, by vastly increasing the number of German majors at the University of Rhode Island from a shrinking handful to over 180, and by sustaining the second largest enrollment of German
majors in the country. Prior to the founding of the IEP, there had been genuine concern for the viability of the shrinking German major, which no doubt would have gone the way of so many such programs in the country. Benefits for the engineers included not only an increase in applicants to all engineering fields at URI, but also a substantial increase in the quality of the students. By marketing the IEP as a challenging program for gifted students who wanted more than what the pure engineering major could provide, the IEP became a magnet for such students. Gifted and motivated students seeking to enhance and build on their technical skills, were attracted to URI and the IEP, often turning down admission offers from far more prestigious schools.

A New Kind of Teaching
The success of the IEP, which has received many awards and been emulated by several other institutions, has not come, however, without considerable work and reassessment of what it means to be a humanist in American higher education today. Establishing the International Engineering Program meant, for example, a major shift in professional duties for founder John Grandin. Prior to that time, he had been a traditional professor of German, teaching three courses of German language and literature per semester and pursuing a research and publication program in German literature. But after launching the IEP together with Hermann Viets, his career took a very different direction. He first became a grant writer and fund-raiser, then a program developer, student recruiter and advisor, and teacher of specialized German language courses for students of engineering. The next steps involved the creation of an advisory board from the public and private sectors, and outreach to companies, both in the U.S. and Germany, to foster interest in the program and its students and to create six-month internship opportunities in Germany. Soon there was the addition of a program in French, to be followed by Spanish, Chinese, and Italian. Then came the IEP housing program, the dining program, and the acquisition and renovation of two buildings, with all of the issues associated with their management and maintenance. As the program

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For an account of enrolled German majors in U.S. institutions, see Personalia, *Monatshefte* 104, no. 4 (winter 2012).
expanded, the duties and responsibilities grew even more. Soon there would be the addition of an assistant director, the development of short-term study tours for younger students, the creation of a regular newsletter, outreach to alumni, complex recruiting programs, and meetings with alumni, not to mention the founding of a yearly professional conference, the Annual Colloquium on International Engineering Education and a professional Online Journal for Global Engineering Education (http://web.uri.edu/iep/colloquium/ and http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/ojgee/ respectively).

Though Grandin did less and less traditional classroom teaching as the program matured, he came to see himself as a new kind of teacher with increasing hours of contact with his students. An open-door policy now brings in a steady stream of students. Though preparing students for study abroad and professional internships is technically not a classroom experience, it is an important part of the educational goals of the IEP, requiring many meetings, face-to-face and in groups. Moreover, helping students design their foreign language résumé or draft their letters of application for internships are equally important educational steps. Yet another important component of this new form of teaching involves sitting down with students at the lunch table to learn how they are doing and what problems they may be having.

This new demand with more emphasis on advising and career coaching was accompanied by a shift in the research and publication side of Grandin’s professorial obligations. It meant moving from research on the works of Franz Kafka, to becoming a writer, presenter, and disseminator based on his experiences as an international educator and academic entrepreneur. Over the years, Grandin has become an authority on the internationalization of engineering education, the placement of students in international internships, fund-raising and grant writing, and the teaching of content based language courses, all of which are reflected in his lengthy list of publications.3

3 Several new appointments in the German, French, Spanish and Chinese sections hired to help administer the various IEP programs have also shifted their research focus more toward applied language studies, and international engineering education.
A New Kind of Learning
The IEP curriculum is far more comprehensive than that of the traditional major, whether in engineering or the humanities. Though it has its share of typical classroom learning, the overall program is part of a well-planned all-encompassing living, learning, and working experience focusing on the development of technical understanding and skills, as well as in-depth language and culture study and learning. What happens in the classroom is supported outside the classroom through regular interaction with peers and faculty, study tours abroad, professional internships at home, study and work abroad, journal writing in the target language, and capstone learning experiences in the final year. In short, the IEP provides a supportive framework enabling motivated and gifted young people to prepare broadly and extensively for lives and careers in today’s complex global society.

Both the language and the technical learning experiences are integrated into every semester of the five-year program. The language learning is further highlighted by the design of content-based language courses, allowing the students to enhance their language skills in courses infused with technical materials (Rarick 2010, von Reinhart 2001). IEP language learning also focuses on cultural issues and cross-cultural communication, helping to prepare students for their year abroad as exchange students and professional interns. In the final year, after students have strengthened their language abilities with a year of in-country use, students are better prepared, both intellectually and motivationally, to deal with sophisticated texts selected from the history of the culture and literature of their chosen language. By graduation they have advanced-level proficiency in the language, backed by direct experience with engineering as it is taught at a technical university and as it is practiced in the country of their choice.

The IEP is a demanding program in terms of its language and its requirements for time spent abroad. Students in the program may participate in optional, short-term study tours abroad without considerable background in the language. However, no student is sent abroad for study and professional internships without having completed at least six full semesters of language study or the equivalent, and at least six semesters of the engineering curriculum. With this stringent requirement, the IEP sets itself apart from most study abroad programs,
whether in engineering or any field. The trend today in American higher education is to send more students abroad, but predominantly for short-term stays such as in the summer or between semesters, and for programs conducted solely in English (Institute for International Education 2014). IEP students complete a full semester at a partner university, where they study engineering and language/culture, and complete research projects in university institutes, with all work done in the language. The work is pre-approved, enabling students to complete a full semester of credit, which is transferred to URI.

The internship follows the semester of study and is carried out in collaboration with cooperating companies in the country of the target language and culture. Internships are professional, full-time, paid, and conducted under the supervision of an engineering mentor. The internships are also arranged to coordinate with students’ majors, i.e., mechanical engineers often work with automotive-related companies, electrical engineers with companies such as Siemens, chemical engineers with companies such as Bayer, and so forth. While on location during the six-month period, the students are required to submit written reports in the foreign language every second week, discussing their work and offering observations on the culture, both in a day-to-day sense, but also as it impacts engineering practice in that location.

The IEP year abroad is financially very cost effective, especially when compared with most study abroad programs arranged by American universities. The IEP semester of study is based upon a one-to-one exchange relationship with the IEP partner schools. Participants in the exchange meet all financial obligations at the home institution and then exchange places, one-for-one. By special arrangement, IEP students pay in-state tuition for the one semester of study, whether they are in-state students or not, and they are not required to pay any tuition during the internship semester. Students thus pay URI tuition for one semester of study for the entire year. Living expenses come out of their own pockets, but room and board tend to be highly subsidized at foreign universities and thus far less expensive than in Rhode Island.

**Expanded Learning Outcomes**

In a recently published study of fifteen IEP graduates in the workplace, Grandin (2011) sought to define more clearly what skills or qualities IEP
students specifically gain from the linguistic and international components of this unique five-year program, and how these come into play in their professional careers. What skills are gained from the IEP curriculum and from the time spent abroad? What skills or qualities are acquired over and above those of a traditional engineering program? And what difference have the outcomes of the IEP education made for them in their lives and careers since graduation? Grandin interviewed the fifteen former students in depth, asking them to look back at their undergraduate years and to evaluate what they achieved as a result of the IEP and how this may have helped them in their professional and personal lives since that time.

Historically the IEP has always promoted itself as a special program with a strong international dimension. It promises a first rate engineering education, and language skills strong enough to participate in an accredited semester-long study abroad program at a partner university, as well as a six-month professional internship. The IEP has always argued that study and work abroad in the language give access to a culture and professional practice in a manner otherwise not available. Students develop strong language skills, strong cross-cultural communication skills, appreciation for different points of view and different attitudes influencing things like design, safety, environmental protection, and quality. IEP students also become mobile, flexible, and tolerant of difference.

Grandin was able to legitimatize these claims through the case studies of these fifteen alumni, but he was also able to discover other commonalities among this group that the program had not typically identified. Each member of this group stressed, for example, that he or she had developed far more advanced problem solving skills during the time spent abroad. They pointed out that they were sent to another culture well outside of their comfort zone, where all matters, both large and small, were dealt with in another language, and where they were expected to take far greater responsibility for themselves. Adapting to a different university system, a dormitory philosophy, banking system, diet, sense of humor, interpersonal reaction patterns, and so forth, required attentiveness and a sharp learning curve, all to be dealt with in a milieu which provides far less hand-holding and spoon-feeding than the American university system. Learning to use their language skills
and to build on the background that had been provided through three years of study was a huge challenge in and of itself. But beyond that, they all reported that each day brought new issues, problems, and challenges, linguistic, cultural and otherwise, but that this process in turn resulted in major personal growth during the year abroad, enabling them to return home and enter their careers with a far greater maturity than most of their peers who did not have such an experience during their undergraduate years.

The members of this group also reported that their success in learning to communicate in another language and in another culture, along with their new problem solving skills led to a greater sense of self-confidence, and a new sense of what they might be able to achieve in life. Learning at age 21 that one can live abroad, communicate in another language, and, for example, successfully take a seminar in Finite Element Analysis in German and apply that knowledge in the workplace, builds confidence and helps one to understand that goals once thought to be mere dreams are now achievable.

While studying and working abroad for one year provided a boost in self-confidence, the fifteen alumni also reported that the experience enhanced their ability to take calculated risks. In looking back, the alums could view the IEP curriculum itself as a risk that has paid off handsomely. They committed to learning a new language, spending a year abroad, taking engineering courses in a foreign language, going to work for a company with unknown supervisors and unclear assignments in advance, and yet they met all these challenges and succeeded. As a result, they were each able to reassess the future and the goals they might set for themselves. Matthew Zimmerman, for example, had the courage to turn down job offers in his senior year, with the belief that he could start his own company – which he did. Sharon Ruggieri turned down an offer from a major automobile manufacturer with the hope that she would be accepted to MIT’s Sloan School of Management – which she was. Rather than go directly into a full-time job in the U.S. after graduation, Daniel Fischer chose to do a second internship with Siemens in Germany, with the hope that he might be able to land a regular position with them at their German headquarters for MRI technology – which he did. Sareh Rajee decided to apply for early admission to Brown Medical School – where she recently
completed her MD while simultaneously earning a Masters in Public Health from Harvard. In their own words:

The IEP experience, especially my year abroad, helped me build confidence in my interpersonal communication skills, in my independence, and in myself as an individual. The IEP showed me what I am capable of, and I am now a stronger, happier, and more independent person because of it. (Sareh Rajaee, 2006, Biomedical Engineering and German)

The IEP put me in situations that I would not have experienced in the U.S. In that sense, you grow and learn how big your comfort zone is and what you can do when you find yourself in situations on the border of or outside of this zone. (Daniel Fischer, 2002, Electrical Engineering and German)

I’m a much different person as a result of the IEP. The world is a lot smaller and my ambitions are a lot larger. Challenges don’t look as daunting, and as a result, I’m more willing to provide my opinion or step forward to work on a project. (Johnathan DiMuro, 2003, Chemical Engineering and German)

A comprehensive longitudinal assessment of IEP alums’ perception of the technical, linguistic and cross-cultural gains they made during their five year IEP program and the impact it had on their careers confirm the findings of the case studies of the smaller segment of alums cited above. Walter von Reinhart, a faculty member who teaches German for Engineers at URI undertook the assessment of IEP alums over a ten year period (2001-2010), and Erin Papa, Assistant Director of the Chinese Flagship Program and Sigrid Berka cross-checked the results with outcomes of a survey on company needs in Rhode Island. They found an excellent match between the IEP alums’ skill-sets and the hard and soft skills as well as linguistic and cultural proficiency needed in Rhode Island companies with global operations and a diverse work force (Berka, Papa, and von Reinhart 2013).
Partnering with the Private Sector
As explained above, the IEP is built upon a series of partnerships, beginning in 1987 with the initial shared vision of Dean of Engineering Hermann Viets and German Professor John Grandin. The resulting partnership between engineering and languages faculty has grown significantly and thrived over the years, with the two fields working closely together in many ways. Going far beyond the superficial or symbolic level, the staff and faculty involved in the program today feel an equal allegiance to the two colleges involved, and vice versa, to the extent that the IEP Director has voting rights in the College of Engineering chairs meetings as well as in the Department of Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures’ department meetings. The College of Engineering and the College of Arts and Sciences are equally proud of the program, have joined in helping to support its costs, and both have made a major commitment to seek extramural funding for its long-term infrastructure.

Faculty from each area have discovered the many benefits of their IEP partnership. The program has helped to recruit a larger and stronger student body; it has made it possible to launch joint research projects with faculty from partner institutions abroad; and it has made the faculty more competitive for research funds from agencies such as the National Science Foundation. The partnership has resulted in joint faculty publications, and joint presentations at both technical and language based professional meetings. In the final analysis, the IEP has brought considerable recognition to both engineering and language programs at URI from peers at other institutions and leaders in higher education, and many awards have come to the program from both the engineering and the language professional communities.

The IEP and its directors have received awards from ABET (Educational Innovation Award), IIE (the Heiskell Award for Innovation in Study Abroad), ADFL and MLA (2012 Award for Distinguished Service in the Profession), NASULGC (Michael F. Malone Award), the German government (Federal Cross of Honor), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD Alumni Award for International Exchange), AATG (Outstanding German Educator), NAFSA (Senator Paul Simon Spotlight Award for Campus Internationalization)
If the IEP relies on a willing interdisciplinary partnership within the institution, its relationship with the private sector is equally important and equally vibrant. Since its beginning, the IEP has relied on globally-involved companies who see the value of the program and participate by providing paid internships to qualifying students. Initial contacts with companies in Germany were made by Hermann Viets and John Grandin, with the promise that we would send students with good conversational ability in the language and at least third-year standing in the engineering curriculum. The companies, in turn, agreed to provide a meaningful, supervised, professional internship experience with a housing arrangement and a subsistence stipend. From the beginning it was clear that the companies valued the idea of American engineers with global communication skills and most hoped, in the long run, to be able to hire IEP graduates. Indeed, many of our partner companies have recruited and hired our graduates, with some companies employing as many as 8-10 former students at locations in both the U.S. and abroad.

The IEP leadership has found business and industry very open to the idea of a partnership with the IEP and more than willing, if not eager, to play a role in shaping such an educational curriculum. Our corporate partners thus helped us found an external advisory board for the program, whose members would help guide its direction and eventually also support it financially. The IEP Advisory Board is made up of members of both the public and private sectors, including the German Consul General in Boston and corporate leaders from several global companies, including U.S. companies with subsidiaries abroad and European companies with strong representation in the U.S. The Board is chaired by a private citizen, Heidi Kirk Duffy, who has a strong commitment to the IEP and has been one of its strongest financial supporters. It meets as a group annually, most often at the URI campus, but every third year or so at a location abroad, at one of our partner universities or at the headquarters of one of our global partner companies. To date the group has met in San Sebastian, Spain, in Paris, and in Munich, Berlin, Friedrichshafen, and Braunschweig, Germany.

Our corporate partners all provide internships for our students, with approximately 60 placements per year in Germany, France, Spain, Mexico, and China. Given the fact that participating companies are global in their structure and commitments, it is often possible to work
with the same companies in multiple countries. Our German partner, ZF Friedrichshafen AG, for example, has provided internships for IEP students in Germany, France, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, China, and the U.S. Ideally, students are placed with a partnering company for a summer position following the second and/or third years of the curriculum, and then placed with the same company when completing the six-month position abroad. Such was the case with Sheida Danesh, a German and Mechanical Engineering major who interned for two summers locally with Hexagon Metrology in Quonset, R.I., followed by research in the Institute for Metrology at TU Braunschweig during her semester of study abroad, and then a six-month internship at Hexagon Metrology in Wetzlar. This practice provides a consistent educational plan for the student, while providing the company the opportunity to review the student’s work and capabilities in two different locations. The student also, in such situations, collaborates with the same company when completing the required senior design project, and thus becomes a strong candidate for any open positions at the company.

Most of the IEP cooperating companies have become willing partners, partly out of their personal eagerness to be involved in educational innovation at the university level, but also due to the direct benefit they can accrue by hiring IEP graduates. Our partner companies are very aware of the need for engineers with international experience and global communication skills, and are thus eager to be in the front line when the best students are ready to enter the workplace. Now that the program can boast an alumni body of over 400, the partner companies can assess the extent to which their participation has been worthwhile. Although many of the grads have gone to work for other firms, a sizeable number has indeed joined the cooperating companies. Thus, there are IEP graduates working for Siemens in Germany and the U.S; for BMW, likewise in Germany and the U.S; for ZF Friedrichshafen AG in Germany, the U.S., and Japan; for Continental AG in Germany; for MTU Aero Engines in Germany and the U.S.; for Sensata Technologies in the U.S. and China; for Hexagon Metrology in the U.S.; for ExxonMobil in Texas, and Nigeria; for the Deutsche Bahn in Germany, and so forth.

Partner companies see it in their direct interest to work with the IEP and also to support the IEP financially over and above the promise
of internship positions and stipends. As noted above, several of our companies supported the development of the IEP House and the Texas Instruments House. In addition, many of our partners have provided scholarship support for our students, in the form of direct grants or endowed scholarship funds. More recently, our partners, along with many alumni and other friends of the IEP, have contributed to an endowed directorship fund, which has been established in the name of emeritus director John Grandin, with the goal to achieve financial independence of the directorship position in the future.

What are the Barriers to such Reform?

If we have successfully presented the International Engineering Program as a model to provide today’s students with the extensive knowledge and skill sets required for the contemporary workplace, then we need to ask what stands in the path of its adoption on a broad scale. As acknowledged above, the marriage of engineering with languages is unique and few have tried to imitate the IEP, despite its obvious advantages and despite its many admirers. Why is this the case?

The problems begin first with long-standing traditions in academia, reinforced by an overwhelming tendency to preserve the status quo. As mentioned above, language faculty view themselves as traditional humanists, with their disciplines based in the study and teaching of national literatures. Furthermore, many language faculty fear the notion that their language courses might be placed in the “service” of other disciplines. On the engineering side, there are many who argue the prevalence of English on the global scene and see no value in devoting time to learning languages other than English. Additional time, they argue, should be devoted to supplemental technical courses. These barriers can only be overcome if, as was the case at URI, the doubters begin to see the mutual value of working together with faculty across the disciplines, leading to the understanding that both parties can benefit through collaboration. As a result of the IEP, both the URI language and engineering classes were soon full of very talented students, many of whom would not have come had it not been for this program.

Secondly, humanists are reluctant to recognize and market any pragmatic value of their studies for the future careers of their students.
Though all students can benefit from exposure to our disciplines through the acquisition of very definable skills, the first priority has been and remains the training of small numbers of students to pursue graduate studies with a narrow and esoteric focus. The workplace calls for scientists and engineers who are good problem solvers, good communicators, good team leaders, who are culturally aware and informed, who can communicate in other languages and across cultures, and who can see the value of their work in a larger context. As the IEP has shown, these are all qualities that emerge from a rigorous liberal and international education. The IEP has given a whole new dimension to the engineering student at URI, and, in the process, enabled the German program to blossom, rather than wither on the vine. Language and culture study at URI have not only been preserved through the creation of the IEP, but have become far more central to the entire university curriculum.

Another major hurdle for the development of such innovative curricula is found in the nature of the faculty tenure and promotion system, which, by design, directly discourages faculty from committing time and effort to programs like the IEP. Language faculty are promoted as a result of good teaching, but typically not without publication records in their esoteric literature specializations. Engineers, of course, will not be tenured or promoted without a strong research record and success at attracting substantial outside funding. Faculty who involve themselves extensively in designing new curricula or promoting the partnerships required for an IEP place themselves and their careers in jeopardy. There is simply no motivation for faculty to become involved in such projects other than personal commitment to its value. Unfortunately, this is not sufficient to support widespread change.

It is also true that significant innovation in any organization requires visionaries with the sustained passion and commitment necessary to bring the desired change to fruition, and the relative freedom to do so. An example is the case of Hermann Viets and John Grandin who rapidly became consumed by the idea of the IEP, and who both were in a position to act. Viets was dean of his college and thus unconstrained; Grandin had already been promoted to full professor and thus had the freedom to set his literary projects aside. Had they not met, had they not shared a common interest, had they not had the
freedom to act, and had they not been successful opinion shapers, the IEP would not have come about. Change of this nature requires zealous champions, reliable partners, and leaders with credibility and the freedom to move forward.

Funding is another very real hurdle. Visiting companies in the U.S. and Germany to develop internships required funding. Grandin further needed release time to commit to the project and to enable him, for example, to develop and offer separate introductory German courses for students of engineering. Funds to create promotional materials were also needed. Since there was no internal fund or seed money to get the program started, Grandin turned to the U.S. Department of Education and secured a FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education) grant which supported all of the immediate needs, such as hiring young language faculty with an additional background in a STEM or business field to implement content based instruction, and also lent prestige to the effort. Realistically, failure to find extramural support would have made the project unrealizable.

The lack of institutional commitment and support can also be a hurdle in the path of change. When the IEP was first in place, URI administrators in international education, with the exception of Hermann Viets, demonstrated very little interest, thus leaving the full effort of the program in the hands of just a few faculty. Once the program had a longer track record of success and had begun to attract attention and financial support from the private sector, however, the president took a greater interest in the project. Were we to start the program today, it would very likely find immediate administrative support, since the current president has designated global education as a major priority.

Overcoming the Challenges
We feel strongly that the kind of change suggested here must begin with recognition of the extent of the crisis in higher education today. Nothing will happen if the engineering faculty, for example, are blind to the challenges of the contemporary workplace or are unaware of the high disciplinary standards and competition set by colleagues across the globe, especially in Europe and Asia. Nothing will happen if faculty members are comfortable in their departmental silos, convinced that
their classes will always be filled for their traditional lectures. And nothing will happen if language faculty are allowed to teach to the very few students who enroll in their esoteric upper-level classes, which have no direct relationship to the world of employment. Faculty in all disciplines must open their eyes to the problems facing higher education today and must reassess the roles that they and their disciplines can or could play in preparing young people for meaningful careers.

Incentive for change can come from institutional leadership. Faculty need to be encouraged by their presidents, provosts, and deans to think about the university and its curriculum in a time of major change such as this. Institutional leadership is always “looking for stellar programs in which to invest” (Roche 2011). A flagship program such as the IEP with its impressive success of garnering external support as well as several national awards both from the languages as well as from the engineering side provides such an investment opportunity. In addition, it gives the President, Provost and the collaborating deans a narrative, a story to tell which is unique and makes the university and its leadership stand out. Faculty should be encouraged to explore what students need to know in today’s society, to rethink their places in the educational curriculum, and to reach out to untraditional partners. A president, for example, could offer challenge grants and seed money to explore opportunities with potential partners, to research potential funding sources, and to experiment.

As mentioned above, incentive for change could also come from the federal government in the form of a Morrill Act for the 21st century. Just as President Lincoln reacted to the education needs for the age of industrialization, the current administration and Congress might seek to redefine the undergraduate curriculum for the age of globalization. There might, for example, be a certification process resulting in special funding for universities that could be certified as Morrill 2014

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5 President Obama’s 100,000 Strong Initiatives to China, and the newly launched 100,000 Strong Initiative in the Americas is a step in the right direction, but needs to be complemented by a more comprehensive reform of higher education curricula. Programs like the IEP with a strong pipeline of students and an international infrastructure of academic and industrial partners are uniquely suited to win such grant competitions, as recently demonstrated by the Spanish IEP’s successful grant competition for exchanges with Chile, see http://web.uri.edu/iep/files/100000-Strong-Launch-1.17.14-APPROVED-FOR-RELEASE.pdf
universities. Land Grant was a concept for its time, just as Sea Grant became a concept for its time in 1966, Space Grant in 1988, and Sun Grant in 2003. Morrill 2014 institutions would redefine liberal education by creative curricula through which students would acquire the benefits of both a technical/professional and a liberal arts education. They would possess the skills to thrive in an era of rapid change, defined by modern technology and globalization.

With or without federal support, higher education leaders should and can take specific action to drastically change the rewards system for faculty, making it possible to commit themselves to programmatic ventures such as the IEP without endangering their university careers. One might, for example, allow faculty to pursue different tracks, with some focused more on teaching than research, with others more on research, and others on entrepreneurial program building. Given these options, one might even build flexibility into the system so that a research faculty member could, for example, devote five years to the teaching track or the administrative track. Such five-year blocks could be defined by contract, with very clear duties and expectations. All of these professional strands would be acceptable as steps toward tenure and promotion, assuming that certain predefined standards are met.

Administrators should also provide more than lip service for interdisciplinary teaching and programming. It could be made much easier for faculty to have joint appointments, and for programs such as the IEP to be at home in both a College of Engineering and a College of Arts and Sciences. Deans should be prepared to co-fund projects that are in the interest of both colleges. They should be prepared to jointly mentor and evaluate faculty participating in cross-disciplinary programs.

The administration should also be prepared to help faculty overcome university bureaucracies which are, by design, equipped only to deal with the status quo. Faculty can easily be discouraged by institutions that do not embrace attempts to do things differently or that have little room for experimentation in the curriculum. The IEP survived by persisting in the face of resistance when proposing, for example, two degrees (BA/BS) in five years, or attempting to streamline the general education program for IEP students, or creating dual degree masters programs with partner schools abroad, or even accepting financial support from the People’s Republic of China. It is an
unfortunate reality that institutions often say “no” in the face of common sense proposals, when they should be saying: “Now this makes sense. How can we make this happen?” Would it not be possible to appoint an innovation board, i.e., a group of faculty and administrators who are pledged to help their school’s academic entrepreneurs?

To encourage cross-disciplinary teaching, administrators should require all faculty to participate in general education curricula. It would be important, for example, for engineering faculty to offer engineering courses for non-science majors, or engineering courses for an engineering minor or an engineering Bachelor of Arts degree. Science faculty should do the same, as should pharmacy and medical school faculty, and law and business faculty as well.6 No humanities or social science student should be allowed to graduate without sufficient background in science and technology to comprehend and appreciate those things that drive our economy and impact our daily lives. Likewise, no engineering student should be allowed to graduate without exposure to engineering as practiced abroad and without demonstrating the acquisition of strong communication skills, problem-solving skills and a commitment to lifelong learning.

Administrators and faculty should be continually networking with the leaders from the private sector who will be hiring their graduates, as has been shown in the example of the URI International Engineering Program. The urgency of this matter stands at the heart of the McKinsey report cited above, reminding higher education of the huge gap between the needs of business and industry and the related perceptions of educators. The report found that 84% of higher education providers believed they were preparing students well for the workplace, while less than half of the business leaders agreed (66-68). Higher education curricula can and should be developed, therefore, in consultation with leaders from business and industry, who should be expected to take an active and engaged interest in the formation of their future employees. Employers and educators should be in continual

6 At the University of Rhode Island, the Provost’s interdisciplinary cluster hire initiative in which three faculty from different educational backgrounds each were hired jointly to collaborate within “clusters” such as sustainable energy, water resources, and the ageing society, is a laudable undertaking in that sense.
conversation about the skills needed for success in the workplace, both “hard and soft,” and the appropriate means for providing students with such skills. As has been shown in the example of the IEP, employers should also understand that it is in their best interests to help finance the education of their future employees. Students of our programs should be able to find appropriate internships, special projects, and advising opportunities, through which they can learn, be supported, and also receive valuable feedback. If such a network is active, we should never hear that our education system is not producing graduates with the skills needed for the workplace and for the 21st Century. And we should no longer hear that 50% of our graduates are unemployed or underemployed.

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Thoughts on High Level Proficiency in Arabic, Russian and English with a Platitudinous Postlude

James Bernhardt

In the present paper, I look at the top of the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Skill Level Descriptions and critique several of their assumptions. As I do this, I speak for myself and not for the Government in general or the U.S. Department of State in particular. I also do not pretend that my conclusions are not uncontroversial. I also discuss the 2012 ACTFL proficiency standards, but note that we do not train to those standards at the Foreign Service Institute.

September 11, 2001 focused the energies of the Foreign Service Institute’s (FSI) Arabic language training section on the highest levels of the proficiency scale. After the 2001 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, one of the most pressing questions at the Foreign Service Institute was whether we could train people to appear on Arabic-language media effectively. Could we train our students to a level where they could appear on Al-Jazeera’s equivalent of “Firing Line” and articulate our nation’s values and foreign policy to audiences that were predisposed to dislike the message? Could we train people to successfully handle media appearances especially when confronted by hostile reporters?

We quickly understood that the optimal long-term fix for our language problem would include giving some Foreign Service Officers more than the full two-year course in Arabic. We also came to understand that our interpretations of requirements set out in the ILR table’s Skill Level Descriptions did not fully meet or reflect the demands put on our students. We knew that we needed to develop a new way to understand the requirements of high-level proficiency.

The tasks of training students to become highly articulate speakers who could appear in the media required us to focus our attention on the audience rather than on any linguistic features of the language. To speak on the record meant that form, structure, and word choice would have to be correct. To speak on sensitive topics required
that our students be able to articulate U.S. foreign policy positions in a way that, while not what the audience wanted to hear, would help the audience understand the position. Training our students to speak to a broad audience was perhaps the most difficult task. What would be acceptable to the university professors in Damascus may sound pretentious to the shop keepers of Cairo or Casablanca. Our work at the top of the proficiency scale suggested that we might need to reinterpret some aspects of the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) skill-level descriptions.

A short history of the proficiency movement and its standards at the State Department is in order. In the late 1950s Congress directed the Department to develop a language test for its employees. It also directed the Secretary of State to establish a language requirement for each position in its embassies around the world. The Foreign Service Act of 1959 established the prime directive for language training at State, “The Secretary shall designate every Foreign Service officer position in a foreign country whose incumbent should have a useful knowledge of a language or dialect common to such country.”

In many ways, the term “useful knowledge” sets FSI training apart from other forms of language education. FSI trains its students, who are well educated when they enter the Foreign Service, to use foreign languages on the job. While all aspects of a liberal arts education at university are important to development of our students, some aspects of foreign language programs at America’s universities are beyond the scope of FSI language training, which is focused on getting people ready to work.

Since every student coming to FSI for language training has a specific job assignment, at FSI we can focus training on the specific tasks we know individuals will have to perform on the job. There are advantages and disadvantages to FSI’s type of language training.

In the early years of proficiency training at the State department, graduates were assessed according to a heuristic, rather than explicit standard. In the early 1960s, FSI testers knew success when they saw it. In the mid 1960s, FSI, working with other government agencies in an informal, unfunded group called the Interagency Language Roundtable, created the first set of standards. After another twenty years, the government testing community came to feel that those standards were
too vague. In the early 1980s, a small ILR working group wrote the standards that we know today as the ILR Skill Level Descriptions.

The current skill level descriptions establish the “Highly Articulate, Well Educated Native Speaker” as the standard against which the performance of language learners is to be measured. The ILR also noted, “Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘native speaker’ refers to native speakers of a standard dialect.”

Reading the ILR standards some 30 years after they were written, especially in light of current training requirements, we see that there are few terms that are not controversial. I will discuss the issues of standard language first, then turn to the question of native speakers. The definition of “well educated,” according to the ILR, refers to a person who has graduated from a college or university and can speak the standard dialect. “Highly articulate” is not defined. We conclude our studies by examining samples of speech at the highest levels of proficiency and finish with a platitudinous postlude.

The concept of standard language has been with us for several centuries. English, with its many homelands and regional variations, may be more challenged than most languages when we are pressed to define or describe its standard form or forms. Should we be speaking the Queen’s English? BBC English? Should we try to sound like Walter Cronkite or Peter Jennings? Should we in America give up all hope, believing that Professor Henry Higgins was right when he said “There even are places where English completely disappears. In America, they haven’t used it for years!”

Is it even possible to argue for a Standard English when British English, South Asian English, Australian English and American English differ in their own ways? Braj B. Kachru, Centre for Advanced study Professor of Linguistics and Jubilee Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Emeritus, at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, puts the issue in its simplest terms, “Whose language is English, anyway?” (Kachru 2005, 11)

Russians call their standard language “literary” or литературный русский язык. Literary Russian is the goal of most Russian as a foreign language programs. It is the object of study in a multitude of grammar books and linguistic studies.
Michael Lomonosov in ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ О ПОЛЬЗЕ КНИГ ЦЕРКОВНЫХ В РОССИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ (Preface on the Use of Church Books in the Russian Language, 1757) identified three registers or styles for literary Russian: low, middle and high. Anton Barsov allows for a church variant in the pronunciation of standard Russian in his Российская грамматика (Russian Grammar) of 1830. Even from the earliest descriptions of Russian, literary Russian was not a single concept.

Contemporary Literary Russian seems to be fairly standard from the Baltic to the Pacific. Non-literary Russian is becoming ever more available to students of the language using social media. The omnipresent pro form че/чо/чё exemplifies of the kind of language that can befuddle earnest students striking out on their own into the world of social media and blogs.

In the 21st Century, the question of variants of Russian has become quite interesting and, sometimes, controversial. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian found itself to be an official language in the several countries that made up the USSR. The migration for Russian speakers at that time brought large numbers of speakers of Russian to many other countries, including the United States. Perhaps Russian is in the process of becoming a language of many homes, like Spanish and English. In comments published on February 21, 2014 on ru.delfi.lt, Maksim Krongauz, the head of the Russian State University for the Humanities, commented:

Это проблема чisto лингвистическая и решается без политических амбиций. Но если все-таки вариант существует, то возникает следующий вопрос — имеет ли он право на собственную кодификацию, на собственный стандарт? И, конечно, этот вопрос должен решаться сообща русскоговорящими в разных странах. Насколько нам нужен разный стандарт? Если же мы говорим о русском языке, то вряд ли можем говорить о швейцарской русской литературе, потому что там живет известный русский писатель Шишкин, или об эстонской, потому что писатель Иванов получил очередную премию. То есть мы с вами заинтересованы в едином стандарте и едином пространстве русского языка или мы созрели для чего-то нового?
[This is a purely linguistic problem which can be solved without political agendas. But if variations of Russian actually exist, then we must turn to the next question - whether they have the right to own codification, on their own standards? And, of course, this issue must be resolved by the Russian-speaking in different countries working together. How much do we need different standards? If we are talking about the Russian language, it is unlikely that we would talk about Swiss Russian literature, just because the well-known Russian writer Shishkin lives there, or about Estonian Russian, because the writer Ivanov received another award. That is, are we interested in a uniform standard and a single space of Russian language, or we are ripe for something new?]

Many heritage speakers of Russian in our classrooms would be especially pleased to hear that a Russian Professor recognizes an American variant of the Russian language. Giving status to their use of кушать and брать класс among other things, affirms them in their self-identity and their ability to speak the language they actually use at home and with their friends.

For Arabic, the question of which type(s) of language are considered standard is especially difficult. The Ethnologue, published by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, lists 36 languages under the heading of Arabic. While Standard Arabic is cited as the official language of Saudi Arabia, the Ethnologue notes that Standard Arabic is not a first language for anyone. “In most Arab countries only the well-educated have adequate proficiency in Standard Arabic, while over 100,500,000 do not” (Ethnologue 2014). Standard Arabic, a term which can include Classical Arabic, Koranic Arabic, Fusha, and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), is used in education, and for official purposes as well as in written materials. Formal speeches are often made in standard Arabic, but not always. It is not uncommon for speakers to begin in standard Arabic and switch to the vernacular, or to code switch between the two. The Fusha holds a special place in Arab societies because it has roots in the Koran and plays a central role in religion and ceremonial functions.

Yasir Suleiman, Professor of Modern Arabic Studies at the University of Cambridge, argues that Standard Arabic, the Fusha, is
everybody’s native language. According to Suleiman, everybody also has a “mother tongue,” which is a dialect of Arabic and which can be called the vernacular, amiyya (in Egypt), khaliji (in the Gulf), or dereja (in Morocco), among other things (Suleiman 2011). Several of the dialects of Arabic are mutually incomprehensible with other dialects of Arabic.

In many languages, a discussion about the differences between standard language and other forms of the language is actually a discussion of register. For some in the second language testing community, high-level proficiency implies high-level language, which is, in turn, high-register language. According to Suleiman, making the distinctions in this way for Arabic is misleading, “because it wrongly generalizes diglossia into a universal feature by associating it analogously with register distinctions in language” (Suleiman 2004). In vernacular Arabic it is possible to speak at all registers. Many of the defenders of the privileged position of Fusha state their cases using the vernacular.

Most Arabic as a Foreign Language programs in the United States teach MSA since it is widely believed that MSA serves as the foundation for all of the dialects of Arabic. Teachers tend to believe that students who have a strong foundation in MSA will be able to localize their language to the dialect they need once they arrive in country. The most popular Arabic language textbook, *Al Kiitab*, focuses on MSA, but has introduced expanded use of dialect with its fifth edition.

Which type of Arabic a student may want to study or which type of Arabic a program should focus on depends on the objectives and goals of the student or program. A program preparing students to be tomorrow’s scholars and professors may well want to work with MSA and use dialect only in as much as it will help students navigate study abroad experiences. Programs training professionals to work in the Arabic speaking world might focus on the vernacular and train students to mix MSA with it appropriately. In the professional world the question “What language will your customers speak?” may hold the answer to the MSA vs vernacular Arabic question.

For those programs using proficiency tests, how are the many forms of Arabic going to be assessed? Can you get a good score on a proficiency test if you speak in the vernacular? Can you get a high score...
on a proficiency test if you use only MSA and fail to demonstrate abilities in at least one dialect?

An important consideration for all of our programs has to be the expectations of our students. Many students of Arabic find that they are not able to understand what people are saying when they are holding general conversations even though most people can understand their performance in standard language. Even when our students are able to say what they want to say, they are often discouraged when Arabs may react negatively or even laugh when our students use MSA rather than vernacular Arabic.

When the ILR skill level description calls for us to focus on the performance of “native speakers of a standard dialect,” they may be giving us a nearly impossible task. We have seen that the term “standard dialect” raises a multitude of questions and objections. When a language is as widely spoken as Russian, where widely agreed upon standards exist, studying literary Russian, with some time spent with conversational Russian may make sense. Studying MSA might not be the best answer for all students of Arabic. While MSA is a standard language, it is not the home language for anyone. Many standards exist for English, but picking which ones to use may present challenges.

Let us turn to the question of the “native speaker.” Who is she? If we are to measure learner performance against that of the Native speaker, we should be able to identify who she is and how she speaks.

In a keynote address for the James E. Alatis Plenary Session at the 2014 TESOL Conference in Portland, David Graddol said that in the 20th Century we were in a much more certain world, and in the 21st Century he doubts “we could really get away with using the term ‘native speaker’ or the category Native Speaker of a language in the same unproblematic way we used to.” He also notes that with the rapid growth of English around the world, and with all of the various types of English used around the world, the distinctions among native speakers, second language speakers and speakers of English as a Foreign Language have become less useful.

As I worked on this paper, I began to wonder about the origins of the use of the term “Native Speaker” in the ILR skill level descriptions. I turned to H. David Argo, erstwhile Associate Dean for Washington
Instruction at the Foreign Service Institute and one of the people involved in the reconceptualization of the skill-level descriptions in the mid-1980s. I asked him if the term “native speaker” referred to Noam Chomsky’s “Ideal Native Speaker,” which I understood to be a person who could create an infinite number of grammatically correct sentences. Argoff suggested that in order to get a feeling for what the government language community was talking about in the 1980s, I read Thomas M. Paikeday’s (2003) *The Native Speaker is Dead.*

Paikeday’s book, first published in 1985, presents a conversation among some thirty-three linguists, psychologists, philosophers, and lexicographers. The participants respond to a series of questions about concept of the “native speaker” and his/her role or importance for linguists, etc. Even in 1985, there was little agreement about the term “native speaker.” Who can be considered a native speaker? Who not?

Paikeday’s group seemed to agree that a native speaker is valuable to linguists because he/she is a good judge of grammaticality. The Native Speaker could rule on whether a grammatical construction was correct or not. Paikeday’s linguists, however, struggled to agree on who could be called a Native Speaker. Edward Gates from the Department of English at Indiana State University suggested, “Native speaker is one who speaks a language as his/her mother tongue” (Paikeday, 15). The moderator points out that the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, published in 1978, does not do justice to the term Native Speakers when it defines them as “Those who learn English as the first language.” William T. McLeod, Managing Editor, Wm Collins Sons & Co., Glasgow, argues, “I think the [Collins] definition is accurate. A native speaker of a language in the usual and general sense in which that term is used denotes someone who has learned the language from his earliest days by virtue of having been born in the country in which it is spoken” (Paikeday, 16). And Edward Gates responds, that while he concurs with McLeod’s definition, “if one starts probing its boundaries, one finds them fuzzy” (Paikeday, 16). For the rest of the book the linguists probe the boundaries of the term Native Speaker, and find them fuzzy nearly to the point of being impossible to use.

Is having been born into the language community enough? Is your native language the same as your mother tongue? Could a person
who is bilingual be considered a native speaker, when we know that word usage and sentence structures can be affected by the words and structures of other language? And finally, once again, who gets to decide which usages and which dialects of a language are standard?

So, if the term “Native Speaker” is as suspect as “Standard Dialect,” will we have any more luck with “well educated”?

We have seen that the elements of the yardstick created by the ILR for measuring performance are problematic at best. Our analysis would suggest that is high time to abandon the ILR Skill Level Descriptions and move on to something better. But with students who need to prepare for their jobs and with thousands of tests to perform each year, dropping the descriptions is not practical. So perhaps if we look at the actual speech acts of particular individuals who most of us can agree perform at the highest proficiency levels, we can learn something.

We begin looking at high-level speech by considering a sentence from the first paragraph of Joseph Brodsky’s 1987 Nobel Lecture. Brodsky said,

Для человека частного и частность эту всю жизнь какой-либо общественной роли предпочитавшего, для человека, зашедшего в предпочтении этом довольно далеко — и в частности от Родины, ибо лучше быть последним неудачником в демократии, чем мучеником или властителем дум в деспотии, — оказаться внезапно на этой трибуне — большая неловкость и испытание.

[For someone rather private, for someone who all his life has preferred his private condition to any role of social significance, and who went in this preference rather far - far from his motherland to say the least, for it is better to be a total failure in democracy than a martyr or the crème de la crème in tyranny - for such a person to find himself all of a sudden on this rostrum is a somewhat uncomfortable and trying experience.]

Brodsky’s text has many of the hallmarks of high-level, difficult speech. The sentence is long. Brodsky puts words in a non-English word order, для человека частного rather than для частного человека. Brodsky uses a verbal adjective предпочитавшего separated from the
word it refers to by ten words. He uses the same word three times, with each having a slightly different meaning or function: частность, частного, в частности. He uses a low frequency conjunction ибо лишь. And finally, the simplest collocation turns out to be one of the most difficult components of the passage: эту всю. The problem is that эту refers to частность, which come before it, and всю refers to жизнь, which comes after it. My students have a devil of a time overriding their internal English grammars, which are driving them to read the collocation as “this whole.”

A key skill that marks one as having high level proficiency is the ability to adapt one’s speech to the audience. Facing a hostile audience is particularly challenging. When the audience agrees with you and when they like you, it is easy to focus on the form, structure and rhetoric style. When the audience is hostile, when they do not like you or like what you have to say, carefully crafting speech becomes a much more difficult task. When they are shouting you down, it can be nearly impossible to stay focused on form.

Nobel Prize winning physicist Andrey Sakharov faced a very hostile audience when he addressed the First Congress of Deputies in May and June of 1989. In the YouTube video clip, we see Sakharov take the podium, begin his speech, and begin to draw mixed reactions from his audience starting with his very first words (the reader who takes the time to look at the YouTube.com video will have a fuller impression of this amazing event). Sakharov chooses short sentences. He repeats key words several times. When the auditorium is vociferous, Sakharov’s speech becomes less well planned. Under intense pressure, Sakharov’s sentences become shorter and are often reduced to phrases. His grammatical structure also seems to deteriorate. He starts some phrases or sentences, backs out, and rephrases. At one point he seems to change course mid-collocation.

Я меньше всего желал оскорбить советскую армию, я глубоко уважаю советскую армию, советского солдата, который защитил нашу родину в Великой Отечественной войне, но когда речь идет об афганской войне, то я, опять же, не оскорблю того солдата, который проливал там кровь и героически выполнял свой приказ, не об этом идет речь, речь
идет о том, что сама война в Афганистане была преступной, преступной авантюрой предпринятой (аплодисменты), предпринятой неизвестно кем по неизвестно… неизвестно кто несет ответственность за это огромное преступление нашей родины, и это преступление стоило жизни почти миллиону афганцев, против которых… Против целого народа велась война на уничтожение, миллион человек погиб … и это … и это то, что на нас лежит страшным … страшным грехом, страшным упреком. Мы должны смыть с себя именно этот позор, этот страшный позор, который лежит на нашем руководстве вопреки народу, вопреки армии, совершило это … э … этот акт агрессии. Так вот что я хотел… Я выступал против введения советских войск в Афганистане и за это был сослан в Горький. Именно это послужило главной причиной, и я горжусь этим. Я горжусь этой ссылкой в Горький, как наградой, которую я получил. Это первое, что я хотел сказать.

[The last thing I want to do is to offend the Soviet army, I have great respect for the Soviet army, the Soviet soldier who defended our country in World War II. But when it comes to the Afghan War, I, again, do not want to offend that soldier who shed blood and heroically carried out his orders. That is not what I am talking about. The war in Afghanistan was a crime. A criminal adventure undertaken (applause), undertaken by someone unknown due to unknown… no one knows who is responsible for our country’s great crime, and this crime cost the lives of almost a million Afghans. Against which, the war of extermination was carried out against the entire nation. A million people died … and this … and for this we bare a terrible sin, a terrible reproach. We need to wash away this shame, this terrible shame that rests upon our leadership who committed a sin against the people, in spite of the army, … uh … this act of aggression. What I wanted … I opposed the introduction of Soviet troops in Afghanistan and for this I was exiled to Gorky. That was the main reason, and I’m proud of it. I am proud of this exile in Gorky. It was my award. This is the first thing I wanted to say.]
In order to look at the speech of a highly articulate, well-educated native speaker of English, I have chosen three short texts by John Steinbeck. John Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962. Steinbeck studied at, but did not graduate from, Stanford University. His books include Of Mice and Men (1937), The Grapes of Wrath (1939), Cannery Row (1945), East of Eden (1952), and many others. Of special interest to Russian culture courses might be his Russian Journal, an account, published in 1948, of his travels to the Soviet Union. Steinbeck’s Soviet hosts, having read Grapes of Wrath, were clearly expecting him to be a fellow traveler, which he turned out not to be.

In this paper I am arguing that the speeches given at the Nobel Luncheon are examples of the highest levels of speech. Steinbeck does not disappoint us when he speaks at the luncheon in 1962. He says, “Literature was not promulgated by a pale and emasculated critical priesthood singing their litanies in empty churches--nor is it a game for the cloistered elect, the tin-horn mendicants of low-calorie despair” (Steinbeck 1962)

The Gunning Fog readability index gives Steinbeck’s text a score of 20.66, meaning that it would take over twenty years of education in order to read and comprehend the text easily on one pass. That places our successful reader in her fourth year of graduate work. Like many of Steinbeck’s sentences, this one is made difficult by its length. The sentence is forty-seven words long. It is also made difficult by the very high number of words that are low on English word frequency lists.

The top five words in English are here: the, be, and, of, a. Steinbeck gives us two more words from the top 1,000 words in English: low, church. We could argue about whether “low” as an adjective at position 361, should be counted as the same word as low-calorie” when the word “calorie” falls outside the top five thousand words in English. He gives us six words from the top three thousand: critical, empty, literature, elect, priest, pale. The word “elect” occupies position number 2287 as a verb, but that is not the way Steinbeck uses it in this speech. Low frequency usages of high frequency words are a hallmark of difficult texts. Finally, Steinbeck gives us the word “horn,” which comes in at number 3687 on the word frequency list.

Eight words in Steinbeck’s text fall outside of the top five thousand words in English: promulgate, emasculate, priesthood,
litanies, cloistered, tin, despair, and calorie. That means that seventeen percent of the words in this text are very low frequency. If we bear in mind the literature that tells us that students need to know 95-98 percent of the words in a text in order to actually read the text, we see how challenging Steinbeck’s Nobel speech may be.

A numerical analysis of Steinbeck’s text misses its beauty and the sheer pleasure we get from reading it or listening to it. What a memorable phrase Steinbeck gives us in “tin-horn mendicants of low-calorie despair.”

Finally, when you listen to Steinbeck giving his speech, you hear him mispronounce, or not pronounce according to the phonetic standards given in the dictionaries, the word “promulgate.” Who has the power to decide whether John Steinbeck, with his tremendous command of the English language and a Nobel Prize in Literature or an anonymous lexicographer, has the power to determine which pronunciation is correct?

For a second example of Steinbeck’s use of English, we turn to the first paragraph from Cannery Row. Steinbeck writes,

Cannery Row in Monterey in California is a poem, a stink, a grating noise, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia a dream. Cannery Row is the gathered and scattered, tin and iron and rust and splintered wood, chipped pavement and weedy lots and junk heaps sardine canneries of corrugated iron, honky tonks, restaurants and whore houses, and little crowded groceries, and laboratories and flophouses. Its inhabitants are, as the man once said, “whore, pips, gamblers, and sons of bitches,” by which he meant Everybody. Had the man looked through another peephole he might have said, “Saints and angels and martyrs and holy men,” and he would have meant the same thing. (Steinbeck 1994, 5)

Once again the Gunning Fox readability index indicates that the reader should have more than twenty years of formal education to process the text efficiently. The challenge here is the length of the sentences. If we break the sentences into shorter units, without making any other adjustments, we can bring the text down to about a seventh grade
reading level. This text has fifteen words of three syllables or more, which means that there are 112 short words in the text.

Short words in simple sentences have made up some of the most powerful moments in English public speech. Hamlet says “To be or not to be.” President Reagan said, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.” General Macarthur quips, “I shall return.” And Arnold said, “I’ll be back.” So while the proficiency skill level descriptions suggest that the highest levels reflect the highest registers of language and often, at least in the ACTFL descriptions, sound like written texts, we see that the performance of actual highly articulate native speakers can lead us to the simplest sentences and shortest high frequency words.

Finally, for a third sample of Steinbeck’s language we turn to a phone conversation between the Nobel laureate and president Lyndon Johnson recorded by the White House and available from the Johnson Presidential Library. The call took place on December 4, 1966. Johnson and Steinbeck were friends through their wives, who had spent their college days together at the University of Texas at Austin. Thomas E. Barden, editor of Steinbeck in Vietnam: Dispatches from the War, writes of the Johnson-Steinbeck relationship, “Steinbeck and Johnson had a great deal in common, from a general discomfort with Harvard and Yale types and a hatred of communism to their shared passion for social justice” (Barden 2013, xiv).

The call begins with a fairly traditional set of opening lines:

LBJ: Hello.
JS: Hello.
LBJ: John, how are you?
JS: Mr. President, I’m just fine.

The two then continue talking about family and the possibility that Steinbeck will travel to Vietnam to report on the war for a Houston paper. When Steinbeck asks the President about the progress of the war, Johnson switches to the first person plural.

LBJ: We never can be very optimistic, because we never know, but we think that it’s getting better every day.
JS: It sounds that way.
LBJ: We think the one thing that helped a good deal was that they felt the elections would be helpful. They were not. And we think that it’s an endurance contest and that they have about
concluded they can’t win but I don’t think they know where they, which way to go from there. (Johnson and Steinbeck 1966)
The call returns to a conversational tone when the topic switches back to the president’s health and the wellbeing of both their families.

Steinbeck’s speech in this sample does not present the formal register we heard at the Nobel Luncheon or the carefully planned language we found in Cannery Row. The beginning and end of the conversation cover health and family issues. The center is business. The president, while maintaining his down-home style country boy speech throughout, changes registers when the topics change. He switches from the first person singular to the first person plural when the conversation changes from talk about family to information about the progress of the war. Steinbeck, the reporter, redirects the flow of the conversation with his comment, that he smells a change. When Steinbeck says that the mood in North Vietnam seems to be changing, the president responds by saying, “I know that,” which seems to end that part of the phone call.

And then the conversation goes back to questions about health, which had already been asked and answered. We see in this text, a very informal register yet sophisticated speech acts. Steinbeck is interviewing the President of the United States. President Johnson, while maintaining his carefully crafted persona, skillfully answers questions, pronounces on policy and ends the discussion.

This phone conversation gives important data for our understanding of high-level proficiency. The ILR does not ask us how educated an educated person can sound when an educated person wants to sound educated. The ILR tells us that high level proficiency is performance that approaches that of a highly articulate person, and we have seen that language used by such people bridges many different registers, including seemingly simple chit chat.

The Platitudinous Postlude

We have seen that the yardstick against which second language performance is measured is fraught with difficulties and may be a candidate for reconsideration. We have also seen that the speech performance of people generally recognized as exemplars of highly articulate well-educated speech can be simple or even halting. We have
observed that high-level speech can be carefully crafted, but it can be many other things depending on the audience, the message and the intent to communicate.

At no point in the ILR skill level description does it say that an individual speaking at the highest level of proficiency should always sound like an educated person giving a carefully crafted lecture. People move from level to level and register to register as they speak. A highly articulate well educated native speaker talking to elementary school children about science, or talking to a hostile crowd, or exchanging pleasantries with the neighbors is performing at a high proficiency level even when the register of speech is low or informal. The ability to perform in high registers and sound like written texts without the ability to move across the whole range of registers would be a sign of limited proficiency.

Works Cited


Foreign Language Study Coupled with Internship Experience as an Entrée to Professional Opportunities

N. Anthony Brown

Introduction
Today’s global age presents its share of unique challenges, not the least of which is communication. Whereas in past centuries, fossil fuels played a central role in driving economies and influencing policy decisions, “language is the new oil” in the twenty-first century.¹ Some forward-thinking individuals and organizations have responded to the times and teamed up with universities and government agencies to develop new and innovative foreign language programs. Consider, for example, the U.S. federally funded National Flagship Language Program that offers upwards of nine months to one year of intensive language instruction in the target language culture and experiential learning in the form of an internship, the objective of which is to produce Level 3 speakers, referring to the federal Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale, or the equivalent of Superior level, according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency scale. Immersion-type programs, such as the Flagship Programs, reflect a response to a shortage of highly proficient learners of foreign languages in corporations, nongovernmental organizations, militaries, diplomatic services, and universities. The Flagship programs guarantee extensive contact with a target language over a concentrated period of time, while simultaneously responding to a growing demand among university students nationwide to pursue pre-professional experience in their respective target languages. Findings presented in this article focus on the professional goals and language gains

¹ Speaking at Brigham Young University’s Symposium “Humanities Plus: Advancing Global Dialogue and Initiatives through Experiential Learning” on 30-31 January 2014, GALA’s CEO Hans Fenstermacher asserted that languages today must be a core competency of every organization that seeks to remain relevant (https://plus.google.com/+BYUHumanities/posts/McL5H2QxDj3).
demonstrated by students at Brigham Young University (BYU) participating in the Moscow Internship Program.

**Review of the Literature**

Traditionally, students pursuing foreign languages have participated in study abroad programs that offer an immersion experience living in a target language culture. Such intense exposure often leaves an indelible impression on young minds and influences the way they perceive themselves and others. Yet as the global economy has expanded and demand for foreign language credentials grown, students increasingly have sought to supplement their study abroad experience with actual pre-professional experience.

In the decade between 2000 and 2010, the number of students who traveled abroad for a credit-earning internship program ballooned from 1,700 to 16,400, with another 8,700 working abroad on a non-credit basis (Simon 2013). Perhaps this shift could most accurately be described as one of augmenting existing study abroad programs and, thereby, providing students with “work-study abroad” (Ibid.). Recognizing the added value of working and studying abroad, many humanities programs around the U.S. have retooled their study abroad course offerings and built a practicum-like experience into them that gives students an opportunity to work in the target language culture. Administrators from the College of Humanities at Brigham Young University refer to this bridging of a liberal arts education with pre-professional experience as Humanities+™ and provide students important support in the form of advisement and program discounts.

But expanding global markets are just one of many factors that have influenced college administrators to rethink their study abroad curricula. For years, the humanities have had to defend their place in the university amidst skyrocketing demand for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors. With shrinking

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2 Annalyn Kurtz, reporting for CNN Money, writes that between 2010 and 2020, jobs for interpreters and translators are expected to grow by forty-two percent (not including the military sector).

3 Humanities+™ represents an initiative designed “to provide ideas and resources for bridging the traditional humanities major to the professional work world” (see blog at http://humanitiesplus.byu.edu/).
university budgets in a flaccid economy and calls for trimming or altogether cutting programs that seemingly contribute to unemployment rates, administrators have targeted the humanities, which often are perceived as “soft” sciences and expendable. To counter this misperception of the humanities, in recent years, many foreign language departments across the U.S. have articulated clear learning outcomes by drawing on ACTFL proficiency guidelines to define expectations of their curricula. For this reason, foreign language instructors have made important strides in the way of implementing rigorous proficiency testing that aligns with other STEM fields and that makes foreign language graduates more attractive to employers.

The question of return on investment (ROI) with regard to foreign language study and, by extension, experiential learning, remains a disputed and even polarizing one. Advocates of education for the personal growth that it provides often encounter resistance from individuals who view a degree as a means to an end – a golden ticket, so to say. Naturally, there also are those who espouse a centrist position on the issue and recognize that a college education entails some of both and that conceding such a point does not imply selling out to either extreme. After all, asks Lane Greene of *The Economist*, “What is the return on investment for history, literature or art? Of course schools are intended to do more than create little GDP-producing machines” (Greene, 2014). Greene goes on to argue that, aside from the non-economic benefits of learning a foreign language, there are many economic advantages to learning them, particularly in a world in which the number of English speakers is not growing as fast as some would like to think (Ibid.).

Although the issue of ROI has vexed academe for many years, the combination of rising tuition costs coupled with mounting student debt and a weak economy has driven home its acute nature (Carlson 2013). Some U.S. universities, such as the Texas A&M International University, have sought to streamline costs by offering a bachelor’s degree that does not require registering for a foreign language course (Riley 2010). However, such a model fails to take into consideration the

4 In their full report to the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, George Kuh and Stanley Ikenberry point out that “Another indicator of the growth of the assessment movement is the sharp increase since 2000 in the range of assessment tools and organizations devoted to some aspect of assessment” (2009, 6).
linguistic disadvantages that graduates will face when competing for international education opportunities, U.S. government work (the Foreign Service, the Intelligence communities, the armed services, e.g., ROTC candidates must now have some foreign language coursework), and the like.5

Indeed, as the authors of a nationwide Russian language survey soberly concluded: “The pre-occupation with preparing a generation for the globalized economy of the 21st century in the foreign affairs community of the U.S., and in virtually every world center today from Beijing and Brussels to Moscow, Shanghai, Seoul, and Tokyo appears to have left most of the American heartland untouched” (Davidson and Garas 2009, 17). However, programs, such as the American Graduate School of International Management at Thunderbird, require that students complete the equivalent of four semesters of foreign language study, which far outstrips foreign language requirements at most MBA programs in the country (Grosse, Tuman, and Critz 1998).

Program development
Most students enrolled in upper-division Russian courses at BYU have spent eighteen months to two years living in a Russian-speaking country where they gave volunteer service. Upon returning, many opt to test out of first- and second-year Russian and matriculate directly into third-year advanced grammar. Consequently, the gradual attrition that normally occurs over the course of four years of foreign language study does not apply to foreign language study at BYU. Conversely, the numbers swell at the third year and stay consistently high through fourth year. Students in the Russian program have the option of going on study abroad to Nizhny Novgorod, but the program caters to those who are completing second-year Russian and do not have prior immersion experience in the target language culture. Even though most students in upper division courses have lived in a Russian-speaking country, they lack professional language skills and it is precisely these types of language skills that many want to develop.

For these reasons, in 2005, the researcher surveyed a cross-section of upper-division students at BYU (N = 190) to ascertain, on a scale of

5 Correspondence with William P. Rivers in regards to the announced closing of the Russian, Italian, and French language programs at SUNY Albany, 17 October 2010.
one to five, the degree to which they considered pursuing an internship in Russia important to their overall undergraduate education and future professional development. Figure 1 illustrates students’ responses, with one being not interested and five being very interested.

Figure 1: Level of Interest

![Figure 1: Level of Interest](image1.png)

Figure 2: Field of Interest

![Figure 2: Field of Interest](image2.png)
Furthermore, they were asked to indicate their desired field of interest by checking one or more boxes next to the following options: business, law, medicine, sciences, social sciences, humanities, government, non-profit, teaching/education, and other (specify). Responses to the aforementioned question are illustrated in Figure 2 above.

Combining data from the previous two questions provided additional insight into the students’ level of interest by their reported field of interest (see Figure 3).

As illustrated in Figure 3, the overall median level of interest was 3.68 (out of 5) with business, law, social sciences, humanities, government, and non-profits all exceeding the average.

Such findings suggested that students, indeed, desired to couple their classroom learning with in-country experiential learning. Furthermore, they provided the basis for the creation of an internship program in Russia, which eventually resulted in a collaboration between
Language Development
Since 2007, BYU students have interned in Moscow with a number of prestigious non-governmental organizations, political and economic think tanks, hospitals, law firms, businesses, investment banks, consulting firms, and news media organizations. In its infancy, the program spanned summer semester; however, as demand grew, program dates likewise expanded to include fall and spring semesters.

In addition to pursuing full-time internships, students attend advanced foreign language courses twice a week (six hours total) where they analyze and discuss readings dealing with global issues, review grammar topics, and resolve language-related questions that arise at their respective internships. Consistent contact with and feedback from a native speaker trained in teaching Russian as a foreign language lends structure to their otherwise informal study of the language on the job.

Prior to going abroad, students complete an ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), or as of winter 2013, a computer-adapted ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPIc). Shortly before returning to the states, they complete a post-OPI in order to ascertain the degree to which their language skills improved while participating in the program. In order to clarify what constitutes a speaker at the Advanced and Superior levels, the researcher discusses the ACTFL proficiency guidelines and distributes them to students prior to their departure. With such criteria in hand and having received their pre-OPI ratings, students are able both to pinpoint their strengths and weaknesses and target specific areas on which to focus.

Findings
Over the course of eleven twelve-week programs encompassing fall, spring, and summer semesters, 61 students completed a pre- and post-
OPI. Figure 4 presents a comparison of their ratings. The data in Figure 4 indicate a definitive departure from the Intermediate level and a solid entry into the Advanced and Superior levels. Results of performing a t-test of the mean gain reveal statistical significance in terms of gain at the .01 level. Results from the aforementioned analysis are provided in Table 1.

Figure 4: Comparison of Pre- and Post-OPI Ratings (N =61); IM = Intermediate-Mid, IH = Intermediate-High, AL = Advanced-Low, AM = Advanced-Mid, AH = Advanced-High, and S = Superior

![Bar Chart](image)

Table 1: Post-hoc t-Test for Russian Pre- and Post-OPI Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian Post-OPI – Pre-OPI (ACTFL scale)</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>9.48</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
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**Discussion**

Overall, students who participated in the Moscow Internship Program demonstrated either sublevel (e.g. AL to AM) or threshold (e.g. IH to AL)...

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8 All analyses were done using SAS 9.2 (SAS Institute, Inc.).

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or AH to S) gain over the course of twelve weeks. ACTFL depicts its proficiency scale as an inverted pyramid in order to show that one can progress from Novice to Intermediate on the scale much more easily than from Intermediate to Advanced and beyond. By the time one reaches the Advanced level, noticing gain becomes increasingly difficult, particularly for the learner, hence the added value of outside testing in order to objectify one’s progress.

Pushing beyond AM to AH typically presents an enormous challenge since learners at the AH level already demonstrate skills indicative of a Superior-level speaker, albeit inconsistently. Thus, a sublevel gain from AM to AH arguably represents an even more difficult leap than from AH to S. Yet, of the 17 students who started at AL, 6 of them progressed to AM and beyond to AH, while 9 of them moved up to AM and 2 remained at AL. Of the 23 students who received a rating of AM on the pre-OPI, 14 demonstrated gain (10 with sublevel gain from AM to AH, and 4 with threshold gain from AM to S). Eight students rated at AH on the pre-OPI, and of those, 2 crossed over into S. Such improvement suggests that coupling professional development in the target language with scaffolded classroom instruction provides the needed structure and application to make rapid gains at the Advanced level.

**Conclusion**

As demand grows for Advanced and Superior-level foreign language proficiency, so too does demand for work-study programs that offer professional development in the target language and formal language instruction. Such programs build on university foreign language curricula and prepare students to pursue advanced degrees, enter government service, and find employment in the private sector. Foreign language study can thus lead to greater professional employment opportunities for graduates by increasing their overall marketability in this global age.

**Implications for Future Research**

Findings from this research represent an important step in demonstrating the added value of coupling foreign language study with pre-professional experience. Future research that tracks career paths of
past participants on the Moscow Internship Program stands to substantiate preliminary findings presented herein and offer valuable insights into the marketability of foreign language study.

Woks Cited


http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/03/education/edlife/the-world-is-their-workplace.html?_r=0.
Developing Information Literacy Skills in the Beginning Language Classroom: A Case for WebQuests

Ekaterina Nemtchinova

Introduction
To say that the Internet has had an enormous impact on the world of education is to state the obvious, and the world of foreign language education is no exception. The advancement of Internet technologies necessitates the development of a new set of abilities in conjunction with more traditional language competencies: in addition to being able to write compositions and read newspaper articles, foreign language students need to know how to compose e-mail messages, perform searches on the Internet, and use online information. In other words, students have to be information literate to adapt to today’s increasingly complex multimedia environment.

This study addresses the issue of information literacy (IL) through the use of WebQuests in a beginning-level language classroom. While WebQuests are considered a “widely popular learning activity” (Abbit and Ophus 2008, 443), little research has analyzed their impact on teaching, learning, and information literacy in foreign language classrooms. Although several studies have examined IL curricula for promoting cultural or content goals (Giullian 2009; Reznowski 2008), this discussion has omitted foreign language learning objectives. In a recent article, Hock (2007) presented a thorough analysis of the integration of IL into a German class through texts and tools, but failed to access its effect on language learning.

This paper aims to add to the body of knowledge on WebQuests by exploring the topic of IL and language development in the context of a beginning Russian class. It surveys students’ opinions on WebQuest assignments and their attitudes to information literacy in a target language.
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**Information literacy and language learning**
The concept of information literacy (IL) was introduced in 1974 to describe the process of accessing and using a variety of information tools to retrieve and synthesize information from diverse sources (Zurkowski 1974). More recently, IL has been defined in terms of “the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, evaluate, and use information” (Association of College and Research Libraries 2014). Other related terms describing the interaction of people with multimedia technology include media literacy (the ability to understand the organization, functioning, conventions, and usage of different forms of mass media), visual literacy (a set of skills necessary to appreciate, use, and create visual media), digital literacy (knowing how to effectively use the Internet and informational technologies), and information fluency (stressing the speed, accuracy, and dynamic nature of the process) (Lorenzo and Dziuban 2006). Notwithstanding the difference in concepts, terminology, and focus, this article will use the term information literacy to refer to the knowledge and skills necessary to detect, process, and effectively use information in a variety of formats.

The rapid growth of digital technologies and the immeasurable amount of information available today affects the very nature of teaching and learning. To be information literate in any discipline or learning environment, a person must be able to establish a need for information, determine what information is needed, find the necessary information, evaluate its relevance and reliability, and use it effectively for specific purposes while understanding the economic, legal, ethical and social implications of its use (ACRL 2014). As new technologies become increasingly present in everyday life, our understanding of the concept of IL must extend to these new uses. Thus, Shapiro and Hughes (1996, 33) argue that IL should be regarded as a “new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure and its social, cultural, and philosophical context and impact.” At the same time, the rapid proliferation and change of the digital world divests the concept of IL of a static or absolute value. Rather, IL is a moving target, a continuum of skills, strategies, and competencies that together promote lifelong independent learning and
ensure a high degree of control over one’s learning processes (ACRL 2014).

How does the concept of IL apply to foreign language education? IL in language learning means accessing, selecting, evaluating, and using appropriate target language information in the most efficient way. IL enables a person to make an informed decision about the information needed for a specific purpose; understand the nature, type, and structure of that information; find information using a variety of tools (e.g. search engines, online databases, library); analyze and evaluate the information in regards to needs; use the information effectively to achieve a specific goal; and present the information using an appropriate media format. In this regard, IL is closely related to critical thinking processes that involve reasoning, analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of information. While analysis and synthesis may be more suitable for higher levels of language proficiency, Novice learners can successfully process authentic texts on familiar topics with visual support, ask simple questions, express judgment, and make inferences based on background knowledge (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages 2012). In addition, IL implies a high degree of cultural competence, which is seen, for example, in one’s familiarity with target language search tools, major sources of information in the target culture and their political bent, culturally-appropriate methods of citation, and culture-specific communication strategies (both interpersonal and online). Thus IL goals assist instructors and students in meeting the standards of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities proposed by ACTFL.

IL in the target language can lead learners to a deeper appreciation of linguistic and cultural contexts by allowing access to information about a subject matter, language, and culture. As students step away from traditional texts toward authentic online materials, they “can have almost instantaneous access to a range of foreign experiences in their target language. The computer serves as a gateway to the virtual foreign world where real people are using real language in real contexts” (Osuna and Meskill 1998, 71). To handle the wealth of authentic materials, learners can rely on IL skills to find, evaluate and select the information they need. Hicks (2013, 56) deems IL as “being
instrumental in communicative language learning, in which language is used to convey information or mediate between people and the world.”

It seems safe to assume that today’s college students feel quite comfortable in the digital environment. They communicate, consume, and create information online by instant messaging, blogging, downloading texts and images, listening to podcasts, and visiting social networks, to name just a few options. And yet educators question their understanding of information quality and approaches to technology use, noting that access to and familiarity with new technologies does not often translate into sound, insightful, critical, or comprehensive skills and applications (Lorenzo and Dziuban 2006; Mellon 1999). Did the students perform an effective search or just click on the first link provided by Google? Are they aware of the ethical issues involved in the use of another’s intellectual property? Do they realize that posting certain personal information online might have negative consequences?

For foreign language students, the issues surrounding the development of IL are exacerbated by a certain degree of anxiety. Although it is most commonly associated with speaking performance, research shows that anxiety can cripple online work too. Thus, Aydin (2011) notes that Internet anxiety is caused by fear of danger and powerlessness when using the Internet. Moreover, high levels of anxiety associated with insufficient language ability and online communication skills, lack of Internet instruction and unfamiliarity with the Internet can have a negative impact on achievement in language learning. Similarly, Yang (2001, 155) reports that many foreign language learners approach Web resources with both anxiety and excitement, and that “a computer-mediated learning experience in language studies could not be achieved by itself simply by the introduction of the learner to Web technology.” Thus, in order to prepare students to function in a networked society, educators must explicitly teach technological literacy and integrate it into the curriculum in meaningful ways (Warschauer and Healey 1998; Lengel and Lengel 2006).

Another obstacle to the development of IL in foreign language classrooms is the dependence of certain skills on the target language itself. Although some IL reading and research skills are universal and could be expected to transfer to a new language environment (Rosell-Aguilar 2004), others are language-specific and need to be built anew.
Understanding Internet vocabulary (e.g. link, search, click); using a keyboard (in the case of a different writing system); performing a keyword search; navigating search engines and Web pages; identifying, selecting and retrieving specific information; documenting resources; communicating online have a strong linguistic and cultural aspect that needs to be addressed in the course of instruction.

**WebQuests**

A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity designed to maximize the students’ time on the Internet while increasing exposure to authentic resources and promoting critical thinking skills in the target language. It represents a common and practical way of using Web resources to accumulate information on a topic in order to research an issue, solve a problem, or create a product.

The concept was first introduced in 1995 by B. Dodge, who distinguishes between short- and longer-term WebQuests. While the former can be accomplished in one to three class periods and is aimed at knowledge acquisition and integration, the latter can take between a week and a month and involves expanding and refining knowledge. Both types of WebQuests may result in written or oral products and may be completed individually or in groups. Group assignments often include a role-play element such as assigning different functions to participants (e.g. a secretary, a researcher, an investigator), inviting them to assume a certain personality or work within a scenario.

A typical WebQuest activity consists of an introduction that presents the context and background for the assignment; a task “that is doable and interesting” (Dodge 1995, 10); a process that describes how the task can be fulfilled in a number of clear sequential steps; a means of organizing the information such as questions, a chart, a diagram, a timeline etc; evaluation of the task which may or may not involve presenting the finished product to others; and a conclusion that provides closure to the activity as learners reflect on what has they have learned and how this experience can be extended to different contexts.

An important component of well-designed WebQuest activities is appropriate scaffolding, a process of supporting learning through context, simplified language, modeling, visuals, collaboration, and hands-on learning. Scaffolding is achieved by providing a structured
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Task, often accompanied by template, graph, or chart students have to complete, a group arrangement that requires collaborative work on parts or the whole assignment, a context, and a teacher’s model showing a possible way of accomplishing the given task. March (2003, 42) notes that scaffolding allows students to try new ways of learning within a structured environment by creating a “temporary framework to support student performance beyond their capacities,” thus “positively affecting student achievement” and encouraging them to take control of their learning by approaching and completing the task in their own way. This type of support is particularly beneficial for beginning students who need instructional assistance to enable effective language processing and production. An example of scaffolding is presented in Appendix 1: the task poses specific questions and provides a graphic organizer in the form of a chart; familiar vocabulary, true cognates and online images facilitate comprehension; simple yes-no questions and model verb forms facilitate production.

Theoretically, WebQuests are based on the implications of the constructivist perspective of second language acquisition and its instructional strategy of inquiry-based learning. Constructivism views the learning process as a transformation of raw input into knowledge, and learners as active participants who construct their own meaningful interpretation of knowledge based on their individual social and personal experiences. As they use their individually constructed knowledge, learners become responsible for the progress and outcomes of the learning process. This responsibility is shared by the teacher who, instead of directly imparting the knowledge to learners, acts as an organizer, coordinator and moderator of their academic and cognitive activity (Rosell-Aguilar 2004). In this view WebQuests allow learners to “activate...prior knowledge and create a personal curiosity that inspires investigation and brings about a more robust understanding of the material” (March 2003, 44).

The inquiry-based process of learning is characterized by students’ engagement with a driving question, active research that involves collection, analysis, synthesis, and presentation of information, and reflection on the original problem and the process of reaching the solution. It accentuates learner-centered instruction, critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving practices. Rather than simply
memorizing established facts or giving right or wrong answers, students actively search for explanations based on contextualized, meaningful, real-life situations through observation, inquiry, reasoning, and reflection. Depending on the level of scaffolding provided, educators distinguish between structured inquiry (a problem and an outline for its solution are presented by the instructor), a guided inquiry (the instructor provides the question, but no guidelines as to how to approach it), and an open inquiry (students generate and investigate their own questions) (Spronken-Smith and Walker 2010). The implications of constructivism and inquiry-based learning provide WebQuests with the advantages of active learning, increased student motivation, and engagement of cognitive skills (Laborda 2009; Kanuka, Rourke and Laflamme 2007). As they proceed from collecting and interpreting information to taking action on it to work out a problem at hand, students learn to posit more questions, generate answers, and create new knowledge, thus developing into independent and creative thinkers.

The use of WebQuests has been well documented in the literature (Abbit and Ophus 2008). They have been described as useful, challenging, meaningful, entertaining, motivational, and leading to experiential learning (Warschauer 1996). Teachers find them appealing because they allow an easy integration of technology, content, and pedagogy into an existing curriculum while fostering academic language development, Internet inquiry, and student collaboration (Sox and Rubinstein-Avila 2009). Of particular interest to language educators is the ability of WebQuests to provide access to authentic target language materials and culture in a structured and organized way (Osuna and Meskill 1998; Laborda 2009). As students follow a specific set of steps to complete their task, they come in contact with up-to-date images, texts and cultural information that improve their language and cultural awareness.

A critical aspect of a WebQuest is the cognitive requirements it impresses on the learner. While Dodge (1995) asserted that WebQuests involve such cognitive skills as comparing, classifying, inducing, deducing, and analysis, several later studies have subjected these claims to empirical investigation. Popham and Wentworth (2003), for example, analyzed the cognitive requirements of WebQuests on pre-service and in-service teachers using a rubric that measured the amount of inquiry
learning and critical thinking involved, among other factors. They discovered a close connection between critical thinking proficiency and problem-solving activities: the more activities were focused on solving a problem, the more they demonstrated the characteristics of a critical thinking instructional activity. In another study, Kanuka, Rourke, and Laflamme (2007) observed that WebQuests resulted in the higher “cognitive presence” of their subjects. They compared the quality of online discussion posts by students involved in five communicative activities using four levels of cognitive presence (triggering event; exploration; integration; resolution). Their conclusion was that a highly structured activity with clearly defined roles such as WebQuests elicited more frequent posts resulting in higher scores on cognitive presence, particularly in the exploration category.

At the same time, some researchers question the assumption that WebQuests develop higher-order thinking skills. For example, Molebash et al. (2002) recommend caution in praising the potential of WebQuests to promote critical thinking. Their analysis of 75 WebQuests submitted to the WebQuest.org database indicates that 20% of the submissions were rated as having 0% of inquiry, (level 0) 4% as Confirmation/Verification, (level 1) 60% as Structured Inquiry, (level 2) 16% as Guided Inquiry, and (level 3) 0% as Open Inquiry. The results indicate that, although WebQuests claim to be inquiry-oriented activities, they mainly support low levels of inquiry. Two more studies have compared WebQuests with traditional classroom activities to conclude that, while both students and instructors enjoyed WebQuests, conventional instruction led to significantly greater student learning. Gaskill, McNulty and Brooks (2006) examined pre- and posttests of geology knowledge to discover no significant difference in student achievement between a control group that used conventional instruction and an experimental group that used WebQuests. Similarly, Strickland and Nazzal (2005) reported no evident advantage of WebQuests over traditional methods after analyzing the end-of-unit exam scores of 86 middle school students who completed a WebQuest or a poster on the Texas Revolution.

Mixed findings from different studies notwithstanding, WebQuests continue to draw educators’ attention because of their potential for effective technology integration, positive impact on
motivation, and inquiry level. It was these benefits of WebQuests that prompted me to include it in the first-year curriculum and motivated this study.

Several reasons prompted me to make WebQuests a regular part of the syllabus, including my desire for interesting and relevant teaching resources and the students’ need for additional practice with the Cyrillic alphabet. WebQuest assignments provided much-needed exposure to authentic materials beyond the textbook as well as reading and writing (and often speaking) practice in a real-life context and a new format.

An additional impetus for including WebQuests in the syllabus was the opportunity to provide Web-enhanced language learning. Most foreign language textbooks are supplemented by online reading, listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary exercises that provide controlled practice in the mechanics of the language directly tied to a particular unit of the textbook. Although the widely adopted elementary-level Russian course books Golosa and Nachalo provide Internet links and WebQuest-like assignments, most of the web addresses are outdated. Troika invites students to find an apartment on http://realty.rambler.ru/ but does not give any specific guidelines. The structure of WebQuests, along with clearly stated tasks, support novice students in searching the Web in an organized fashion and in achieving a feasible result.

Finally, given the degree to which the Internet is present in today’s students’ lives, it seemed natural to extend its usage to a new language. While it is common for Web-based activities to target Intermediate- levels of language proficiency and above (Laborda 2009; Osuna and Meskill 1998; Yang 2001), beginners can research information on the Web provided the task is carefully structured to be within their linguistic grasp. Just as it is customary to introduce and practice all four language skills simultaneously, IL can be integrated into regular class work from the very beginning. Not only do Web-based activities add variety and novelty to the syllabus, but they enhance reading and writing proficiency as well as promote independent learning and problem-solving in a new language. The ability to find target language information on the Web takes students outside of the traditional classroom and into a real-life world.
Method
Beginning Russian at Seattle Pacific University is offered every other year. It is a five-credit, three-course sequence aimed at developing oral and written communication skills as well as introducing students to various aspects of Russian culture. WebQuests were first introduced in 2009 as a general course requirement and are now worth 10% of the final grade. They are assigned on a bi-weekly basis. Each WebQuest is based on the topic of the textbook chapter and involves finding information on the Internet to answer specific questions (see Appendix 1). Students are given a week to complete each WebQuest on their own. The two criteria for evaluating WebQuests are adequacy and completeness of the task and accuracy and fluency of the written response; fluency at Novice level is measured in terms of spontaneous, non-rehearsed sentences using memorized language related to familiar areas (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages 2012). Depending on the nature of the assignment, the results of a WebQuest may be presented in class.

The data for the study were collected over the period of 2009-2013 by means of a self-report online questionnaire administered at the end of the year. Participants of the study were undergraduate students in the first-year Russian class. Sixty-eight questionnaires were completed; the average response rate was 94%. After consulting several sources (Osuna and Meskill 1998; Yang 2001) the following dimensions were identified as critical for the development of the survey: Demographics (two questions dealing with participants’ familiarity and comfort with Internet technology), Information literacy in Russian (five questions on various aspects of information literacy in a foreign language), Assignment (six questions surveying participants’ attitudes to WebQuests), Logistics (four questions on the how of WebQuest assignments) and Concluding remarks (two questions on the importance of information literacy in a foreign language). A combination of multiple choice, rank order scaling, and open-ended questions was used. The qualitative data, including comments and responses to open-ended questions were used to corroborate the questionnaire-based quantitative data.
Results and Discussion

Demographics

When asked to rate their Internet skills, 58.8% of the participants described themselves as intermediate and 41.2% as advanced users. The most commonly visited websites were those for e-mail (94%), course management systems (e.g. Blackboard) (88%), and social networks (82%). Somewhat less popular applications were YouTube (41%), WIKI (17%), blogs, discussion forums, and news portals (5% each). According to these responses, the students in the survey were frequent and experienced Internet users who regularly visited its various destinations for a variety of academic and social purposes. At the same time, they were novice users of the Russian Internet who experienced anxiety when approaching the familiar tool in a new language, as is seen from the following sample comments: “Once I got over the intimidation factor, the assignments became kind of fun” and “I was afraid I won’t (sic) understand enough to learn something from it.”

Information literacy in a foreign language

Figure 1 summarizes the students’ attitudes toward information literacy in the target language. The overwhelming majority believed that it is either very important (43%) or important (50%) for a foreign language student to be able to use electronic resources in the target language while 6% believes it to be somewhat important. Students explained that because they “would like to be able to read the Russian Internet” and “want to get hold of the information about Russia in Russian,” they viewed IL as an “important addition to the class.”

As indicated in Figure 2, students indicated that WebQuest assignments generally improved their IL skills (25% very much, 43.8% much, 31.3% somewhat) and made them more willing to explore and use Russian online resources in the future (18.8% very likely, 50% likely, 31.3% somewhat likely). A high percentage of positive ratings in this category suggests that WebQuests appeal to beginning-level students and can have a positive impact on the development of IL leading to an increased use of Internet resources in the target language.
Figure 1
Importance of information literacy skills in a foreign language

- deciding on the extent of foreign language information needed
- understanding the nature, type and structure of information in the foreign language
- finding information in a foreign language using a variety of tools
- analyzing and evaluating the information in a foreign language in regards to ones’ needs
- using the foreign language information effectively to achieve a specific goal
- presenting the foreign language information using an appropriate format
Figure 2
Students’ attitudes toward WebQuests as a means of improving the language, culture, and IL skills

When asked what specific skills would make Russian online resources more accessible, students responded that they would like to become “more proficient in typing with a Russian keyboard” to “use the keyboard faster,” “learn some of the common Internet vocabulary,” “technical vocabulary,” and “key navigational words like ‘search’, ‘forward’, ‘back.’” Many participants believed that “most of the skills will come naturally as we progress learning the language” because “the most beneficial way for me to use online resources to a greater extent would be to continue to improve my language skills.” Some students pointed out that “just reading it [information in Russian] and being able to navigate what it is saying on websites,” knowing “how Russian websites are laid out,” and “how to use general Russian search engines” would help them use the Russian Web more effectively. These comments imply that both increased exposure to the Web through teaching activities and specific exercises targeting such IL skills as using search engines to find information online as well as exercises to
promote comprehension and analysis of this information could be included along with more traditional language learning activities in the beginning classroom.

Assignments
This part of the questionnaire reflects students’ attitudes toward WebQuests as a means of improving their language, culture, and IL skills.

According to the survey, a majority of students find WebQuests enjoyable (12.5% very much, 50% much, 37.5% somewhat). While student evaluations of the linguistic value of WebQuests were somewhat tepid (63% very much, 25% much, 62.5% somewhat, 6.3% a little), many comments suggest an improvement in vocabulary development as a result of WebQuests: “I know that my word recognition seemed to improve as I progressed through the exercise;” “Initially looking at a sea of Cyrillic was overwhelming, but this exercise helped me to focus on specific words and then the process allows me to find out that I knew more than I realized;” “I am recognizing more and more Russian words. It makes me happy.”

Along with general enjoyment of WebQuests students are particularly appreciative of the cultural and IL aspects of the assignments, as seen from predominantly positive rankings of these categories (31.3% and 12.5% very much, 50% much, 12.5% and 37.5% somewhat, respectively). As one participant related, “I like these because it puts you out into the culture more than the classroom.” Another echoed, “Although it was often a pain to do the WebQuests it was very beneficial to be using Russian websites and getting more familiar with all things Russian.” It appears that WebQuests can successfully support linguistic and cultural instruction by exposing students to a range of short contextualized authentic texts on familiar topics and up-to-date cultural information, at the same time providing exposure to and experience in using target language web sites.

What makes WebQuest assignments particularly enjoyable? Ranking their preferences, 81.3% of participants mentioned the practicality and realism of tasks, 75% chose the interest level of topic and content, 50% enjoyed instructions that were easy to understand and the challenge of coping with new vocabulary and grammar. Of the
respondents, 43.8% liked open-ended questions, while 25% selected easy to navigate websites, visual organizers (charts, graphs, pictures), and specific questions. Written responses to this question revealed that students enjoyed having “a lot of choices” of things to look for, “viewing the photos,” and “just reading Russian.” Thus WebQuests can benefit the beginning curriculum, provided the instructor designs motivating and realistic tasks based on an interesting topic. WebQuest assignments should also include a variety of questions and strike a balance between new and familiar language.

Nevertheless, not all responses to the WebQuests were positive. Students cited the following reasons for not liking the assignments: (1) “websites were difficult to navigate” (71.4%), (2) “challenges of coping with new vocabulary and grammar” (42.9%), (3) “Lack of visual organizers” and “Specific questions” (14.3%), and the difficulty of understanding instructions (7.1%). Several comments suggested an increased cognitive load associated with the assignments: “Sometimes I looked really hard for everything on the list and didn’t find much of it. And my brain hurt!” and “This is as far as I could get without my head exploding.” At the same time some students noted the benefit of mental exertion: “In my opinion it was difficult but very beneficial- I found everything I wanted. I like these assignments because they make me think.”

Occasional technical difficulties were another common reason for dissatisfaction with WebQuests. Students noted that on several occasions “the website was really slow… sometimes it would take up to 5 minutes to process after I clicked on something” which made certain assignments “really hard, maybe because the website was giving me trouble.” Interestingly, such reasons as “Tasks were impractical and unrealistic,” “Topic/content was unexciting,” and “Open-ended questions” were not selected by any of the 68 participants.

Logistics
The survey shows that 62.5% of the participants spent 30-60 minutes on a WebQuest, while 25% took 15-30 minutes, and 12.5% more than an hour to complete an assignment. Of the respondents, 87.5% used an online dictionary and typed assignments rather than writing by hand. The ability to use a target language keyboard is critical for Internet
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research and writing online. This last finding supports the intended benefit of WebQuests as an important IL tool: as students search for and process the information in the target language, they develop new technology skills and apply them to accomplish tasks.

Concluding remarks
In terms of the importance of IL in foreign language instruction, 43.8% of participants strongly agreed and 56.3% agreed that IL should be a necessary component in the curriculum. An overwhelming majority (93.8%) of respondents believed that WebQuests made them feel more comfortable using electronic resources in Russian, while only 6.3% (4 people) remained undecided. This is a convincing argument for the use of WebQuests in the beginning language classroom.

Implications for teaching
The results of the study show that developing IL skills in a beginning language class is possible and, in fact, desirable, and WebQuest assignments can be an effective means of doing so, provided the following considerations are taken into account.

Objectives
A very important aspect of WebQuest design is selecting linguistic and IL objectives. Instructors must consider such questions as (1) What will students accomplish as a result of this activity? (2) What language and IL skills will be developed? WebQuests are well suited for such linguistic objectives as vocabulary and grammar development, reading comprehension, speaking, writing, pragmatic competence, and culture appreciation, often combining several objectives in a single activity. In order to add purpose and clarity to WebQuest assignments, instructors should identify a set of objectives and design tasks to reach the outcomes.

In addition to language development, the survey respondents mentioned keyboarding, familiarity with Russian search engines, and basic Internet search vocabulary as the skills they needed most in dealing with the target language media. To develop keyboarding fluency, students should be encouraged to type, rather than handwrite, their responses. Many learners find a transliterated (phonic) keyboard
an easier option than a traditional Russian layout, so they need to be provided with instructions on how to install one on their computer. Alternatively, an online phonemic keyboard available at www.translit.ru can be used. Mobile devices present yet another option for typing in Cyrillic by allowing an effortless switch between keyboards.

Assignment
According to the survey, the success of any given WebQuest depends to a large extent on the assignment: students are motivated by the practicality and realism of the task, as well as by their interest in the topic. It takes some time and creativity to design an effective WebQuest, but the clearly defined topics of elementary-level textbooks and the abundance of Internet resources make it a less daunting task. Several portals on the Web (www.BestWebQuests.com, www.questgarden.com, webquest.org) provide step-by-step assistance in creating WebQuest and offer research articles, guides, rubrics, and WebQuest databases. Because many of these ready-made activities were not created for elementary-level language learners, they require such modification as inclusion of visual organizers and links to online dictionaries, preteaching of vocabulary, and adaptation of instructions.

However, some instructors may prefer to design their own activities rather than adapt existing ones. A key word search on a particular topic will usually yield several content-rich websites. Once the appropriate website is identified, its text will help define the actual task. Farreny (n.d.) offers a useful typology of WebQuest tasks, most of which are suitable for an elementary-level classroom; the suggested sample assignments follow the topics of first-year textbooks (Table 1). The typology is not rigid, as different categories can overlap and combine in the same assignment to suit a particular classroom need. To facilitate linguistic production, direct factual comprehension questions should be supplemented by open-ended evaluative, interpretive, and inferential questions. For example, a WebQuest on Russian cities may ask, “Which city would you like to visit and why?” To add an interactive and authentic component, a dialogue or a role-play activity could follow. For example, a sample WebQuest (Appendix 1) invites students to assume the roles of a buyer and a seller discussing one of the items on the list.
Table 1
Typology of WebQuest tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of task</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>compilation</td>
<td>the most elementary type of quest that requires students to search for information and make a compilation</td>
<td>Students search for the TV programs they would like to watch to create an ideal channel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judgment</td>
<td>a decision is made on the basis of online information</td>
<td>Students choose a language school where they would like to study and justify their choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retelling</td>
<td>online information is presented in students’ own words</td>
<td>Students describe a department at the Moscow State University that they would like to apply to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journalistic</td>
<td>online information is collected, organized and presented according to a journalistic genre</td>
<td>After studying a travel website students create a travel commercial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>design</td>
<td>online information is used to create a specific product with a pre-established goal</td>
<td>After browsing a collection of recipes students create a menu for an ethnic restaurant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>A more open-ended assignment with a more creative output than design tasks</td>
<td>Students create online postcards; a poster of a city they would like to visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Online information is examined for different types of relationships, e.g. cause and effect, similarities and differences</td>
<td>Students compare two apartments for rent or an online daily schedule with their own.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to short-term teacher-designed WebQuests, students may also create their own. Teachers may assign such student-created WebQuests as long-term individual or group projects; the resulting WebQuests could then be completed by other members of the class or filed away for use in other classes.

The success of a WebQuest activity depends to a large extent on the task itself. The need for clear directions and meaningful, understandable, and manageable tasks for students on a wide continuum of developing language proficiency has been stressed by the literature. According to the ACTFL Guidelines (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages 2012), examples of elementary-level tasks include understanding information about familiar topics, searching for names, numbers and recognizable content words, creating lists and short messages, and answering simple questions. Visuals, a variety of highly contextualized texts, and a focus on key vocabulary also benefit low-level learners by making input more comprehensible and familiarizing learners with the target culture (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short 2000). Echoing the research, survey participants indicated that they enjoyed easy-to-understand tasks, working with images, and having plenty of choices in terms of texts, websites, and questions. Highlighting pertinent vocabulary, providing a graphic organizer to elicit specific information without excessive writing, formulating the task in unambiguous, concise and realistic language, and providing
step-by-step instructions ease the cognitive load, putting the WebQuest assignment within students’ reach.

There are numerous rubrics for evaluating the quality and design of WebQuests, e.g. Dodge (2001) and March (2003) that both instructors and students can refer to as they develop their own activities.

**Evaluation**
WebQuest evaluation criteria will be guided by objectives and include both language and IL aspects. For example, the linguistic assessment of a WebQuest could include vocabulary (the use of vocabulary and spelling), grammar (correctness of structures), content (understanding the topic and context while addressing the task), task completion (whether the information is present or missing; originality and creativity), organization (of ideas in a written task) or presentation (fluency of the spoken output). Some possible IL evaluation rubrics for elementary-level students may include effective navigation of the Web to find information, successful identification of required information, appropriate use of online information to complete the task, ability to quote online sources appropriately etc. The same criteria could be used for peer assessment of WebQuests, which can be utilized to add variety and increase student involvement in the learning process.

**Potential pitfalls**
The most common complaint about WebQuest assignments, according to the survey, concerned the difficulty of navigating Russian websites. At the same time, survey participants noted that navigation became easier with time, underscoring the importance of practice and exposure. The more students browse the Web, the more familiar they become with the format, layout, and features and the more comfortable they become with reading and vocabulary. Another common source of dissatisfaction was the slowness of websites. Students need to be reminded that the nature of the Internet is such that they might experience technical difficulties. This could also be an opportunity to remind students of the numerous benefits of WebQuests which far outweigh the inconvenience. Allowing plenty of time for completion of the assignment and telling students to access websites at different times of day to avoid heavy
traffic hours are yet other ways of making the Internet experience less stressful.

To help students negotiate the online environment and overcome initial anxiety, an introductory Internet Search lesson could be added to the curriculum. It could include a demonstration of the main Russian search engines, several sample websites and their basic features, and an online dictionary. The instructor could also introduce vocabulary items (e.g. poisk [search], vxod [entrance], najti [find], perejti [to go to], registracija [registration]) and review useful reading skills such as skimming (reading to understand the main idea), scanning (reading to find specific information), chunking (breaking down a text into smaller comprehensible pieces), guessing from context, recognizing true and false cognates, and distinguishing facts from opinions. Even though students may be used to employing these skills in their daily academic life, they often need to be reminded to apply them to target language texts. During the introductory lesson, the instructor could demonstrate how to complete a sample WebQuest to familiarize students with the process, model the use of reading and vocabulary strategies in practice, discuss the copyright issues associated with online information use, and explain the evaluation criteria.

Instructors, in their turn, may be challenged by the fleeting nature of the Web. As websites change their content, layout, URL addresses, or even completely disappear, recycling the assignments becomes almost impossible; it also becomes difficult to plan a long-term WebQuest. Even in the case of short-term assignments, instructors would have to verify that a particular website is available prior to assigning the WebQuest and be ready to modify the existing task. It is also recommended that instructors carefully screen the sites for authenticity and appropriateness of the content, as well as reminding students about the basic Internet safety rules.

Limitations
This study assessed the perceptions of Russian students about the effectiveness of WebQuests as a means of fostering IL in a first-year classroom. While students’ opinions can provide important insights into the learning process, it may be useful to include a separate measure evaluating the learning outcomes of these activities. A list of “Can-Do
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statements” based on National Council of State Supervisors for Language (NCSSFL) -ACTFL scale (2013) before and after exposure to each WebQuest might reveal what language and Internet skills were developed and to what extent, e.g. “I can express my likes and dislikes about online information,” “I can recognize words and phrases with the help of visuals,” and “I can perform an Internet search using familiar key words.”

To measure the learning potential of WebQuests even more accurately, a control group that would receive the same instruction but would not be assigned WebQuests should be included. Comparing the language and IL gain of the two groups would offer a better understanding of the specific benefits of WebQuests and might help promote their effectiveness.

Conclusion
Two important conclusions emerge from the study. First, the study participants showed an overall highly positive attitude toward WebQuests as a means of increasing exposure to the Russian Web and developing IL skills, which they deemed a necessary component of the foreign language curriculum. Second, students saw the main value of WebQuests in their impact on the acquisition of target vocabulary, culture and technology skills. These results confirm earlier research citing the advantages of WebQuests in improving motivation, student engagement, technology integration, linguistic and cultural exposure (Gaskill et al. 2006; Sox and Rubinstein-Avila 2009; Tsai 2006). WebQuests prove to be a flexible activity that allows beginning-level students to gain experience in the target language Internet environment, develop fluency in searching and keyboarding, and learn to integrate online information into their own language production. Because of the WebQuests, students were also more willing to explore and use Russian online resources in the future. A careful consideration of objectives, resources, assessment, and evaluation rubrics could make WebQuests a welcome addition to an elementary-level curriculum and a vehicle for promoting IL in a foreign language classroom.
Appendix 1
Web quest
А что у вас?

Name: ___________________  Date: ___________________

1. You have decided that your need to buy any three items from the following list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Машина или мотоцикл</td>
<td>Авто и мото</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Фотоаппарат</td>
<td>Фотография</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Компьютер</td>
<td>Компьютерная техника</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Книга, журнал, словарь</td>
<td>Книги, учебники, журналы</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Телефон</td>
<td>Телефоны и связь</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Собака, кошка, птица</td>
<td>Животные и растения</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Go to http://www.irr.ru Click on the category, then on the item, and you will see the details and the price. Provide the following information about the three items of your choice. To convert rubles into dollars use http://quote.rbc.ru/cur/converter/ or simply multiply the ruble amount by 0.03.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Что это?</th>
<th>Сколько стоит в рублях и в долларах?</th>
<th>Цвет?</th>
<th>Новое или старое?</th>
<th>Дорогое или дешевое?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Create your own ad about buying or selling something and type it below. Try to use as many Russian words as you can. Do not use Google Translate because it strips the assignment of its purpose—to practice manipulating new and familiar words to express the meaning.
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The following vocabulary may be of help:
купить (я куплю) - to buy    продать (я продам) - to sell

3. Prepare a dialogue based on your ad to be practiced with a partner in class. What questions could you ask? How can they be answered?

Grading criteria
20 points each; 100 points total

| vocabulary | Uses a variety of old and new vocabulary |
| grammar    | Errors do not interfere with the meaning |
| content    | Accomplishes the task; includes details; contextually correct |
| fluency    | Generally smooth flow; uses well-formed sentences |
| technology | Correctly finds, identifies and selects information; types in Cyrillic |

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http://www.citejournal.org/vol5/iss2/socialstudies/article1.cfm


http://www.gse.uci.edu/person/warschauer_m/overview.html


Accuracy in Predicting Cross-lingual Differential Item Functioning (DIF): A Study of Russian to Kyrgyz Language Test Item Adaptation in the Kyrgyz Republic

Todd Drummond

Introduction

Russian-speaking teachers, assessment specialists, and other educators in Eurasia are frequently tasked with effectively translating and adapting sophisticated educational materials from Russian into non-Slavic languages. While standards, textbooks, and other teaching materials have been adapted from Russian to other Eurasian languages for over a century, a contemporary challenge is the adaptation of highly complex, standardized tests and assessments produced in the Russian language (Drummond and Gabrscek 2012). Because the results of educational assessments are often employed in high stakes decision-making, the room for error in the adaptation of cross-lingual tests is small: Capturing exact meaning in all language versions, accounting for cultural nuance, and ensuring corresponding difficulty of the multiple versions in standardized testing are essential.¹

Due to the lexical, syntax, and other differences between languages, as well as cultural differences between language groups, the test adaptation process is fraught with challenges (Hambleton, 2005). Test developers can only assure the validity of inferences based on assessment results if the content, meaning, and difficulty of test items are similar across different language versions (Camilli and Shephard

¹ Assessment practitioners and researchers employ cross-lingual assessments and tests for various descriptive, analytical and selection purposes both in comparative studies across nations and within countries marked by linguistic diversity. A cross-lingual assessment is a single assessment (with the same tasks and test questions) that is administered in more than one language (Hambleton, 2005). Employing cross-lingual educational assessments in the Eurasian countries of the former Soviet Union is common practice due to linguistic diversity and the provision of secondary and tertiary education in more than one language (Shamatov, 2012).
1994; Ercikan 2002). It is essential that newly established assessment centers in the Russian-speaking world develop and maintain the institutional capacity to adapt Russian-medium materials to other languages at a high level of quality that can be empirically verified. The appearance of new assessment regimes throughout the region has provided considerable data and the opportunity to conduct studies of that capacity.

The National Scholarship Test (NST), conducted in the Kyrgyz Republic since 2002, is a university admissions test conducted in the Russian, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek languages. Since implementation, this high stakes test has increased the transparency and quality of university selection by providing a reliable, quality assessment from which valid inferences about student performance can be drawn (Shamatov 2012). Early research on the NST has demonstrated that early iterations of the test had reasonably high levels of predictive validity (Davidson 2003). Initially supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with technical assistance from the American Councils for International Education, today the NST is conducted by the Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods (CEATM), the first non-governmental assessment organization in the republic.

With student response data made available by CEATM and funding provided through American Councils’ Research Scholars Program, a dissertation study was conducted in 2010 to examine two key questions: (1) How accurate were bi-lingual (Russian/Kyrgyz language) test reviewers in predicting how differences in content, meaning, and difficulty across Russian and Kyrgyz test items would impact student response patterns (correct/incorrect answers)? In order to determine accuracy, reviewers’ predictions about the scale of difference between the Russian and Kyrgyz items were compared to the results of a statistical test (null hypothesis of “no difference”), using actual student data. (2) What were the primary sources (origins) of difference, if any? Could differences in student outcomes be attributed to variation in cultural interpretation of items, properties of language that made meaning incomparable, technical expertise in translation and adaptation, or other factors? In this paper, the results from the first question are presented and implications discussed.
Key Terms
In the assessment literature, the term test or item adaptation from a source language (language items were written in) to a target language (language the original is translated into) is employed to imply a process that produces a variation of the original item that may or may not be a literal translation of the original: Necessary, because literal translation often results in an inadequate correspondence in meaning between two items due to cultural, contextual or linguistic challenges (Camilli and Shephard 1994). In the Eurasian States, test item adapters (called translators in most Eurasian contexts) have traditionally relied on substantive review of items by bi-lingual educators (reviewers) to ensure measurement invariance across groups. Substantive review in cross-lingual testing relies on bi-lingual experts’ best estimates of item differences across groups and sometimes a prediction of how language groups may be impacted by those differences (Allalouf, Hambleton, and Sireci 1999). Substantive review relies heavily on the subjective experience, professional judgment, and knowledge of experts, working either in isolation or in review committees, often without statistical analyses of actual student performance (Drummond 2011).

However, when performance data is available and specialists have expertise in statistical methods, these best estimates of reviewers can be compared to a statistical test for differential item functioning (DIF) of two or more groups (by gender, language, race, or other category). DIF is present when examinees from two or more distinct groups (language in this case) do not have the same approximate probability of responding correctly to a given test item, after controlling for examinee ability (Camilli and Shephard 1994). A large number of DIF items on a given assessment can result in invalid categorization, selection, or policy decisions and consequently have important political and social implications (Ercikan and Koh, 2005; Grisay and Monseur 2007).

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2 It is important to emphasize that the term DIF refers to a statistically measured difference after controlling for ability. Item reviewers do not determine DIF levels, but rather predict whether observed differences between group differences are great enough (in their subjective estimation) to lead to DIF between the language versions. The investigator in this study conducted the DIF analyses for each test item. In later sections, both the scoring rubric which quantifies reviewers’ estimations as well as the statistical method (logistic regression) used for determining DIF are explicated.
Research in North America and other contexts has shown that substantive reviews are not consistently effective at accurately predicting or interpreting statistical DIF (Plake 1980; Engelhard, Hansche and Rutledge 1990). In cross-lingual assessment situations, if bi-lingual item reviewers can not detect differences or predict performance patterns across language groups with at least a modicum of accuracy, this calls into question the feasibility of accurate test adaptation and hence the feasibility of cross-lingual assessments: Thus, the need to examine the ability of the bi-lingual reviewers to accurately predict statistical DIF. By using statistical approaches to DIF detection, an empirically-based case can be made as to whether or not adapted tests can be considered equivalent in meaning and difficulty and thus fair to all groups assessed.

To my knowledge, no cross-lingual DIF studies involving Turkic and Slavic languages in the Eurasian region have been carried out. This study contributes to an understanding of the unique challenges of test adaptation between these two language groups and the Russian and Kyrgyz languages in particular. Understanding the challenges in predicting and explaining DIF will inform the planning and design of future cross-lingual assessments in the Kyrgyz Republic and elsewhere in Eurasia where Slavic and Turkic languages are routinely employed in educational assessment (Gierl and Khaliq 2001; Jodoin and Gierl 2001).

The National Scholarship Test (NST)
The objective of the NST is to assess the mathematical and verbal reasoning skills of university scholarship applicants. High scorers on the NST are awarded full scholarships to state institutions of higher education (Shamatov, 2012). In 2010, 30,264 examinees sat for the NST; approximately 18,720 in the Kyrgyz medium, 10,994 in the Russian

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3 Recent research has shown that the more disparate the language families involved in a cross-lingual assessment, the more challenging it can be to ensure the equivalence of test forms or unambiguously interpret assessment results (Sireci, Pastula and Hambleton 2005; Ercikan and Koh 2005; Grisay, de Jong, Gebhardt, Berezner, and Halleux 2006; Grisay and Monseur 2007). While there may be some common challenges to cross-lingual test adaptation (regardless of specific languages involved), it is increasingly clear that the feasibility of employing equivalent cross-lingual tests is also a function of the particular languages in question.
medium, and 1,000 in the Uzbek language medium (CEATM³, 2010). In 2010, the NST lasted 3 hours and 35 minutes and had 150 test items (CEATM³, 2010). The items analyzed in this study were taken from the NST verbal reasoning (словесно-логический) domain. The verbal reasoning format of the NST contrasts with what was historically assessed for university entry in the republic, native language and literature which focused on knowledge of grammar and literary works (Drummond & De Young, 2004).

The verbal reasoning domain on the NST consists of four sections: Reading comprehension (24 items, 3 texts), analogies (20 items), sentence completion (10 items), and grammar use (20 items) (Valkova 2004). All the test items were multiple-choice and each item had three distractors (incorrect answers) and one answer key (correct answer). The 38 items reviewed consisted of eighteen analogy items, ten sentence completion items, and ten reading comprehension items; all item types similar in purpose and format to the items found on the verbal reasoning skills section of the North American SAT.

According to the test developers, the purpose of the analogies and sentence completion sections were to check verbal reasoning skills at the word, sentence and text level. More specifically (text translated from Russian into English):

“Analogies check (a) lexical richness, (b) ability to analyze logical relations between concepts, (c) ability to find relations (dependencies) between words in pairs (d) ability to determine similarities or differences by one or several indicators, (e) ability to analyze, synthesize, compare, generalize, and classify” (CEATM 2007, 14-16).

The sentence completion items:

“… check (a) the ability to understand logical connections between different parts of verbal expression, (b) vocabulary richness” (Ibid., 14-16).

In regard to the reading comprehension items:

“The questions from this section evaluate the ability to carefully read different texts of 400 to 850 words, understand and analyze what has been read. Fragments of texts can be taken from
different domains of knowledge: humanities, social science, and
physical science. Popular literature is also utilized. This section
has two independent texts and two related text fragments for
comparison with each other. Each text or pair of texts is
accompanied by questions that check: (a) understanding of the
content of the text, its basic concept; (b) ability to interpret
portions, connections between such portions in the text; (c)
connections between the text and the real world; (d) ability to
understand hidden meaning; (e) ability to determine the style of
the author and his/her disposition, as articulated in the text, and;
(f) understanding of the structure of the text and its connection to
content…” (Ibid., 14-16).

Below are two translated versions (from Russian into English) of the
type of NST items analyzed in this study. These are example items from
a previous NST year as items from the 2010 test have not yet been
released to the public. Due to the length of the reading comprehension
texts, translations from that section are not provided here. However, the
reading comprehension section is similar to the reading comprehension
section found on tests such as the American SAT or Graduate Record
Examination. For more examples of NST items in the Russian or Kyrgyz
languages, including reading comprehension sample items, see Valkova
(2004), CEATM (2007), or the center’s website at: www.testing.kg.

Example Analogy and Sentence Completion Items

**Analogy**

**Instructions**: Every task has five pairs of words. The highlighted
pair of words presents a relationship between two words.
Determine the relationship between those two words and then
select another pair below with the same relationship. The order of
the words should be the same as in the example.

**7. music: composer**

(A) poem : poet
(B) aerodrome : pilot
(C) fuel : engineer
(D) doctor : patient
Sentence Completion

Instructions: Each sentence below contains two to four blanks. There are four groups of possible answers to complete the sentence. Select the best answer to make the sentence logical.

3. ______ to believe this theory, ______ nobody has _____ yet.

(A) It is easy / because / formulated it
(B) It is not possible / for / refuted it
(C) It is easy / although / proven it
(D) It is common / although / cancelled it

(Valkova 2004)

The investigator did not have access to the schools or names of the individual examinees who sat for the 2010 NST. Reliability estimates calculated by the test center for the items analyzed in this study were .907 for the Russian language verbal items and .702 for the Kyrgyz language verbal items.

Methods
Selecting and Preparing Item Reviewers
The first step in the study was to select bi-lingual test item reviewers. It was important that the pool of selected reviewers be skilled bi-linguals, preferably with experience in educational assessment, test item writing and translation (adaptation). After conversations with CEATM, it was determined that eligible candidates could be those with experience writing or adapting NST test items in previous years, those who worked on 2010 NST sections not under study, materials translators with extensive experience, and content specialists knowledgeable about assessment issues. Reviewers selected served as proxies for “as qualified as any other feasible sample” of potential reviewers in the republic, but did not have a conflict of interest due to experience working directly with the items under study.

4 In the 2011 dissertation study, the term item evaluator is used instead of item reviewer.
The candidate pool included linguists, translators, philologists, and teachers because the task required not only the identification of linguistic differences in the two language versions but an understanding of student cognition and problem solving skills which would enable accurate predictions as to whether item differences would lead to performance differences by group (Mazor 1993; Ercikan et al. 2004). Potential reviewers were identified with the assistance of CEATM employees. Each prospective candidate was provided with full information about the study. If they agreed to participate, they first completed a questionnaire which elicited detailed information about their language knowledge and skills, as well as educational backgrounds. In order to encourage only true bi-linguals to participate, potential participants were informed in an interview that they would be required to speak and write in Russian and Kyrgyz equally, not only on an individual written analysis but in discussion with their peers – many of whom would be translators, linguists and other knowledgeable specialists. As part of this investigation, reviewers would be required to state and perhaps defend their views on the test items under study using both languages. Several of the candidates who initially applied declined to participate in the study after learning about these high expectations.

Half of the reviewers selected had completed their secondary education in the Russian language medium of instruction and half in the Kyrgyz language medium of instruction. Three reviewers had received higher education in both languages while only two had completed their higher educations in the Kyrgyz language medium. Seven reviewers reported using both languages at work and six of them reported using both languages in the home. None of the reviewers reported that Russian was their primary home language. Interestingly, however, four reviewers reported that they “think” primarily in the Russian language. Four marked that they were slightly more literate in Russian than Kyrgyz, three marked that they were slightly more literate in Kyrgyz than Russian, and three marked that they were equally literate in both languages.

All the reviewers had completed higher education and nine of the ten were women. The majority were women because women are over-represented in teaching and in areas related to pedagogy, translation, philology and linguistics in the republic (De Young, Reeves,
and Valyaeva 2006). As it is primarily ethnic Kyrgyz who are bi-lingual (Russian speakers from other nationality groups tend not to be proficient in Kyrgyz), all reviewers were ethnic Kyrgyz (Korth 2005). The majority of participants indicated that they had more than one workplace because in Kyrgyzstan educators often work in many capacities or teach at more than one institution (Ibid. 2005). None of the selected reviewers had ever participated in a formal DIF analysis. Table 1 presents the background characteristics of those selected to serve as reviewers. All participants signed consent forms and were compensated with an honorarium for their work.

Prior to convening the group of item reviewers, a glossary of technical terms that defined all key concepts was distributed. A pre-test of the item scoring rubrics was conducted with one reviewer in order to determine if adjustments were needed to the glossary or rubrics. The pre-test yielded important results: In addition to the discovery of some minor formatting and typographical mistakes, in the debriefing the pre-test reviewer reported that the most challenging aspect of the item scoring rubric was interpreting the coding categories in section 2.2. Changes were made to the rubric based on this feedback (more below).

**Item Scoring Rubrics**

In order to answer the research questions, item rubrics were developed to capture not only the evaluators’ estimations of content, meaning and difficulty differences between item pairs, but also to elicit hypotheses about the cause or source of those differences. They needed to be short enough to allow efficient rubric administration but thorough enough to ensure that essential data was captured that would enable clear interpretation. The test items selected for analyses were collated in test booklets which consisted of each of the 38 item pairs (1 version in Russian, 1 version in Kyrgyz), one test item pair per page. Rubric 1 was a graphic organizer which required evaluators to provide an initial categorization of the type of differences between versions (if any).

Rubric 2, also called “the scoring rubric,” was developed and translated before the investigator arrived in country. At the top of Rubric 2 were the item number and a series of prompts offering possible

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5 Table 2 presents a Russian version of Rubric 2 for Cultural/linguistic differences.
explanations for differences between the language versions. Rubric 2 had the following sections: (2.1) a section to estimate the level of difference(s) in content, meaning, or difficulty (if any) between the two items in the pair (Степень различия); (2.2) a section to identify the specific nature of the difference(s) (Причина различий); (2.3) a section to describe the difference(s) in detail (Подробно опишите различия); (2.4) estimation of which group might be advantaged (favored) by differences (Преимущества); (2.5) suggestions for improving equivalency of the item pairs (Улучшение эквивалентности). Rubric 2 was printed in three colors for each category of difference: Content (violet form), format (green form), or cultural/linguistic (pink form). This color scheme allowed the researcher to easily collate the forms by nature of difference during later analysis. The directions (English translation) for the reviewers for completing rubric 2 follow:

**Directions**
Fill in item rubric 2 for each item not identified as “identical.” The purpose of item rubric 2 is to collect data that will facilitate an understanding of the level and nature of difference as well as the cause (source) of difference for each item. Please describe the issue or problem you see with the item in as much detail as possible. You need not comment on each prompt but please do your best to characterize the items in a complete and descriptive way. We will review these items together during our group discussion.

The rubric is broken into three color coded categories. The main categories are: Content differences (purple), Format differences (green), and Cultural/Linguistic differences (pink). Match the color of the rubric that best fits the nature of the difference you identified in 1.b and fill it in. Note that these categories are not always mutually exclusive. However, these three categories provide a strong foundation from which to classify core item issues. You can also note other reasons for difference if necessary on any of these rubrics.

At the top of each rubric, you are provided a series of prompts – or possible explanations for differences. These prompts are not meant to be exhaustive but are examples of issues that can help you classify the
nature of the differences. In section 2.1, please score the item as “somewhat similar”, “somewhat different” or “different” per the guidance in the glossary of key terms. Then, in 2.2, circle the most likely cause/source of the differences. In section 2.3, describe in as much detail as possible the problem of equivalence. Next, in section 2.4, estimate which group, if any, the item favors. Finally, in section 2.5, provide an improved item if you can, or a solution to the hypothesized problem with the item.

If you find it difficult to classify the problem or see problems in more than one area, please describe the nature of the problems on one of the rubrics under section 2.3.

This use of item scoring rubrics was adapted from item studies conducted by other researchers (Allalouf et al. 1999; Ercikan et al. 2004).\footnote{The term \textit{rubric} is used because reviewers were required to provide numerical estimate for difference levels (above). A full explication of the item types, item scoring rubrics, Russian and English language versions of data collection protocols, etc. can be found in the full study.} In terms of the estimation of the \textit{level of difference}, a marking scheme was adopted from Ercikan (2002) and Reckase and Kunce (2002), which defined these terms as follows:

- **0- Identical**: no difference in meaning, content, or difficulty between two versions;
- **1- Somewhat similar**: small differences in meaning, content, or difficulty between two versions, will not likely lead to differences in performance;
- **2- Somewhat different**: clear differences in meaning, content, or difficulty between the two versions, may or may not lead to differences in performance between two groups;
- **3- Different**: differences in meaning, content, or difficulty between the two versions that are expected to lead to differences in performance between the two groups.\footnote{In Russian, the descriptors read: “somewhat similar” (небольшие различия), “somewhat different” (средние различия), and “different” (значительные различия).}
The use of the above scoring scheme provided a way to score the extent to which reviewers believed that differences in the item versions would lead to DIF. How these scores were tabulated is presented below under the section *Scoring the Reviewers’ Predictions*.

**The Item Review Process**

The review of the thirty-eight item pairs took place over a three day period. The review was a “blind review” which meant that the reviewers did not have access to the DIF statistics (i.e. had no idea of actual examinee performance by group) when they conducted their review. On day one, all reviewers participated in a forty-five minute overview of the item review process, asked questions and clarified expectations. Next, test booklets were provided to each reviewer with each pair of items (Russian/Kyrgyz) set on the same single page. Reviewers were asked to try and solve the items and to take notes only on the most important problems that arose. After going through all the items, item pairs coded as “identical” on rubric 1.b were set aside as they were not needed for the completion of rubric 2. On the first day, all reviewers were seated in individual work stations and asked not to communicate with each other about their initial perceptions.

On day two the reviewers completed the scoring rubric (2) for each item they had marked with any rating other than “identical” on day one. This stage of the process took approximately four hours to complete. At the end of this session, the test item booklets and rubrics were collected and in the evening the investigator reviewed the rubrics to make sure that any items needing special attention would be prioritized for discussion on day three. The purpose of the discussion on day three was to provide reviewers an opportunity to reflect on each item pair by discussing their views with their peers, to think more deeply about the items, and to change their predictions (scores) if necessary. The investigator facilitated the discussion in the Russian and Kyrgyz languages and audio recorded the conversation. A note taker from the test center also recorded the conversations in writing. Areas of agreement and disagreement were noted and recorded.
Collating and Analyzing the Rubrics

Over 150 individual item rubrics were filled out by reviewers. Reviewer scores and data from reviewer discussions were next recorded on a summary table for each item which collated all the individual scores from each of the eight reviewers and group discussion comments for each item in one summary table (Tables 3 & 4, presented below). The summary tables for all 38 items can be found in the full study. All comments in Russian or Kyrgyz from the individual rubrics were translated verbatim into English without editing or synthesis on the summary tables. Reviewers’ scores and descriptive data from the individual rubrics and discussion notes provided considerable data about reviewers’ DIF predictions as well as hypotheses about the causes of plausible DIF.8

Under section 2.3 on the summary rubric, each bullet point and comment represents a statement from a different evaluator. This allows the reader to see both the nature of the issues described in detail as well as the “strength of agreement” in the commentary. For example, if six or seven individuals all seem to be saying the same thing, this is visible. Or, the opposite, if only one or two people are noting certain issues or tendencies, this is also on display. The two example summary tables presented here in Table 3 (item 3, statistical DIF item) and Table 4 (item 2, non-statistical DIF item) differ from the individual rubrics (Table 2) completed by each evaluator in a few important ways. On the summary table, section 2.2, the “nature of difference” data was not recoded from each of the item individual summary tables. Based on feedback from the pre-test about conceptual clarity, reviewers were instructed to focus on item description in section 2.3 and not to worry about categorizing their coding in section 2.2. The a priori coding categories under section 2.2 were thus used to guide reviewers’ thinking in how best to characterize the differences between the item versions but were not analyzed rigorously.

The “level of difference” on section 2.1 of the summary table was coded under the color-coded categories (content, format, cultural/language, or other) as submitted by each reviewer. Notice in the summary tables that a difference that was defined by one as

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8 A full explication on sources (origins) of predicted and actual DIF can be found in the full study.
“cultural” for example, might have been characterized by another as a “content” issue. Again, these categories were employed as a way to collate the data but the investigator did not focus on the consistency of the reviewers in marking these categories. The important data for analysis was the totality of the description, not how the issues were coded according to each individual reviewer. Otherwise, the summary table in Tables 3 and 4 in this paper reflect the same organizing principles and data as collected from each of the reviewers on each of the individual rubrics.

Scoring the Reviewers’ Predictions
Before describing how the statistical DIF levels were calculated for each item, it is necessary to explain how the reviewers’ predictions (scores) were tabulated. The critical part of the scoring rubric required reviewers to estimate the level of difference between item versions. Recall that the possible values were 0, 1, 2, or 3; the higher the value, the stronger the belief that differences between the item versions would lead to statistical DIF. Recall from above that a score of “3” (different) meant that the reviewer believed that the difference “would likely lead to differences in performance outcomes between the two groups,” or, DIF.

The scores for each item were totaled across all reviewers to produce a combined total score for each item.9 Recall that the accuracy of these predictions would later be tested by doing an actual statistical DIF analysis. The total scores for each item could thus range from 0 to 24 total points per item. For example, 8 reviewers @ 3 possible points (maximum) is equal to a maximum score of 24 total points per item. The quantification of the reviewers’ predictions enabled a rank order of correlation estimation between the statistical DIF results and the reviewers’ predictions (more below).

In order to facilitate a coherent discussion about each item and come to a common agreement about when the group believed an item was likely to exhibit DIF, it was necessary to set a kind of cut score beyond which “the group” predicted an item to be DIF (as distinct from individual predictions). As there was inevitable variability in scoring by the reviewers, this was not a straightforward task. Before the process of

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9 While ten item reviewers were initially selected, the data from two reviewers were not tallied.
scoring items began on day two, reviewers were asked to consider what total score per item would serve to indicate that the reviewer group predicted DIF. Ultimately, it was determined that it was not the item total score (a sum of the scores of 0, 1, 2, or 3) that mattered most, but rather the number of reviewers who predicted difference. The reviewers proposed that four total marks in any combination from the two categories of “somewhat different” (2 points) or “different” (3 points) would be considered a vote for DIF.

Four total marks from these two categories thus served as a “cut score” (resulting in 8 points minimum if considering the sum of scores) for DIF prediction; less than four total marks for any item pair meant reviewers (as a group) believed that differences were not likely to impact group performance (statistical DIF). The rationale for using a certain number of “high marks” as the criterion rather than a total numerical score was the concern that a small number of “outlier opinions” could result in over prediction of DIF. For example, the argument made was that an item could also receive a score of 8 when only three evaluators marked it as DIF – scores of 3, 3, and 2, or 3, 3, and 3, for a total of 9 points. In other words, common agreement by at least half the group was perceived to be of more value than the possibility of 2 or 3 very high scores from just a few group members.

Estimating Statistical DIF

Up to this point, reviewers’ predictions of difference and their beliefs about the likelihood that a perceived difference in content, meaning or difficulty would impact performance of a group have been calculated to provide a means of scoring “likelihood of difference” from a subjective perspective. This is, of course, not the same thing as calculating DIF with actual examinee response patterns for each item. As highlighted above, DIF is a function of statistical analysis and needed to be calculated accordingly. The test center did not have the capacity to conduct DIF analyses independently so the investigator calculated statistical DIF estimations for each of the items as a key part of the study.

Logistic regression (LR) analysis was employed to detect DIF levels for each of the 38 items. The LR method is a non-parametric probabilistic approach to DIF detection that utilizes observed scores to test for the likelihood of difference in group performance on an
individual item, after conditioning on ability. In most non-parametric DIF studies, the total test or sub-score (verbal reasoning score here) on the test examined can be used as a proxy for examinee ability (Sireci, Patsula and Hambleton 2005).\textsuperscript{10} It is important to recall that aggregated “average score differences” between groups on a given test or item is not an indication of DIF: There was in fact a large achievement gap between Russian and Kyrgyz language groups on the NST with the Russian language groups scoring significantly higher (almost 1 standard deviation) throughout the republic. The comparison that the LR method employs compares only “like students to like students” using ability (test score as a proxy for ability) as a control.

The LR approach to DIF analysis relies on a chi-squared test of statistical significance and has an established measure of effect size.\textsuperscript{11} The LR model is easy to implement and has power comparable to other DIF detection methods (Swaminathan and Rogers 1990; Zumbo 1999; Gierl, Rogers, and Klinger 1999; Jodoin and Gierl 2001). The logistic regression model for predicting the probability of a correct response to an item can be formulated as (Swaminathan & Rogers, 1990):

$$P (u = 1) = \frac{e^z}{1 + e^z}$$

where: $$z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \theta + \beta_2 G + \beta_3 (\theta G)$$

For each item analysis, the dependent variable was dichotomous - “1” for correct item response, “0” for incorrect response. On the right hand of the equation (independent variables), \( \theta \) was a measure of examinee

\textsuperscript{10} It is important to note that most non-parametric DIF studies measure on internal criteria. In essence, DIF detection assumes at least a modicum of overall validity because if all items were biased (systematically) no DIF would be evident (Hambleton, Clauser, Mazor and Jones 1993).

\textsuperscript{11} This was not the case with LR originally until Zumbo (1999) and Jodoin and Gierl (2001) introduced a pseudo R-squared measure of effect size for LR in DIF analyses. Effect size measures are employed in statistical tests to ensure that high incidences of statistical significance (common in in hypothesis testing with large samples), does not lead to faulty inferences about the meaning of that significance level, i.e., a test can be statistically significant but not necessarily have practical significance.
ability - verbal reasoning scores in this case. Language group membership was a categorical variable “G” and was coded “1” for Kyrgyz or “0” for Russian. The term θG represented an interaction between the two independent variables and in DIF studies serves as a test for non-uniform DIF. Uniform DIF is evident when differences between groups are found across the continuum of ability and non-uniform DIF is evident when an item shows DIF for lower or higher scorers in a group but does not for the other end of the ability spectrum.

In each item analysis, the null hypothesis is “no difference” in item response patterns for the Russian and Kyrgyz language groups under study (Swaminathan and Rogers 1990). A chi-square test of significance was applied to assess this null hypothesis at the .05 level. At 1 degree of freedom at the .05 level, the test statistic was 3.841. Jodoin and Gierl (2001) propose assessing separately for uniform and non-uniform DIF in order to capitalize on the use of a 1 degree of freedom model. Using the steps they propose, each item was assessed in a two-step process using SPSS software. In order to assess for uniform DIF, two models were identified (Swaminathan & Rogers, 1990). A “compact model” - where \( z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \theta \) - was entered first. The presence of uniform DIF was then tested by examining the improvement in chi-square model fit when the group membership (G) term was added, resulting in the “full model” \( (z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \theta + \beta_2 G) \). The chi-square value of the “compact model” was then subtracted from the chi-square value of the “full model” and this difference was compared to the test statistic (3.81) for statistical significance. Then, the presence of non-uniform DIF was tested in similar fashion by examining the improvement in chi-square model fit associated with the “full model” (above) and the addition of the interaction term (\( \theta G \)), or \( (z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \theta + \beta_2 G + \beta_3 (\theta G)) \).

In LR, which group is favored by DIF (in terms of who was disproportionately getting the correct answer) is determined by the sign of the \( \beta_2 \) value (Jodoin & Gierl 2001). An early criticism of the LR approach was that it did not have a measure of effect size (Kirk 1996), considered important to reduce type 1 error. An effect size measure \( (R^2 \Delta) \) proposed by Jodoin & Gierl (2001) for DIF detection was employed to address that concern. As with the two step chi-squared comparisons, the effect size from the compact model was subtracted from the effect
size from full model to determine effect size value. The resulting effect size values utilized to classify the practical significance of DIF were:

- Negligible DIF: $R^2\Delta < .035$
- Moderate DIF: $.035 \leq R^2\Delta < .070$, and the null hypothesis is rejected
- Large DIF: $R^2\Delta \geq .07$, and the null hypothesis is rejected

Before conducting the statistical DIF analyses the sample of student item responses was selected. Large sample sizes enable more accurate DIF detection across different combinations of item types, ability distributions and other experimental conditions (Mazor, Clauser, and Hambleton 1992; Rogers and Swaminathan 1993; Hambleton 1993). However, it is also known that in chi-squared tests, large sample sizes can result in high levels of type 1 error (statistical significance of a finding that is a result of a statistical artifact rather than a finding of practical significance). Thus, the need for sample sizes of between 200-1,000 responses. The test version of the NST from which the 38 items were drawn had been administered in all regions of the country and had a total 4,407 examinees. This selection included a total of 1,550 Kyrgyz language and 2,850 Russian language examinees. From this test version, using SPSS software, I randomly selected a sample of 1,000 examinees per language group to be analyzed.

**Study Results**

*Reliability of Reviewers*

An important question on the use of reviewers or item raters in any DIF study is the extent to which their estimations can be considered reliable. As bi-lingual reviewers represent a sample of a larger possible domain of reviewers, it was necessary to see how much measurement error existed. After collecting the initial data, the first step of the analysis was to determine the inter-rater reliability of the reviewers’ scores and how much variation there was in their estimations. In order to do this an inter-class correlation coefficient was estimated with SPSS statistical software. Inter-class correlations are ratios of rating variance to total variance and can be used as reliability coefficients for assessments of

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13The investigator did not have access to the schools or names of the individual examinees who sat for the 2010 NST.
raters that are deemed to be in the same category or class (McGraw and Wong 1996).

In order to estimate this coefficient a scoring system was developed that would allow the coding of the reviewers’ marks for each item. A matrix of their scores (0, 1, 2, 3) for each item was produced in an Excel file. Each column represented a reviewer and the thirty-eight rows represented each of the items analyzed. Before conducting the reliability analysis two reviewers’ scores were dropped from the data set. The one reviewer who had worked as a translator on the NST 2010 filled out only six total scoring rubrics and these six contained a considerable number of missing values. A second reviewer filled out the rubrics incorrectly using the same single rubric to record scores for many different items.\(^{14}\)

The scores from the eight remaining reviewers were then examined for missing data. There were 13 missing entries from a total of 304 possible entries (38 items x 8 scores). Data was imputed for these missing scores by entering the average scores from the other seven reviewers into each cell where data was missing. Then, Pearson’s reliability was calculated in SPSS. Two-way random effects models are used where people effects and measures effects are random. The inter-rater reliability coefficient when “consistency” was selected was .66 with a 95% confidence interval of .473 to .804. This positive correlation is indicative of a fair amount of agreement between reviewers.

**Comparing Reviewer Predictions and Statistical DIF Estimations**

In all, a total of only six items had no significant statistical DIF as estimated by the LR analysis. These included four analogy items and two sentence completion items (items 9, 2, 24, 7, 17, and 29). Twenty-eight items had statistically significant but negligible DIF (no practical significance), determined based on their effect size values below .035. According to the statistical calculations, only four items were found to have effect sizes larger than .035 and thus were characterized as having

\(^{14}\) This led to confusion as it was not clear which marks were meant for which items. Approximately one third of her rubrics were filled in this way. Using these rubrics would have demanded considerable guess work in trying to interpret the intent of this reviewer. Nonetheless, after dropping two reviewers, a group of eight remained which provided an ample number of scores for each of the items. 
Three items had moderate DIF (13, 19, and 32), and one item had large DIF (item 3). These four DIF items are referred to going forward collectively as “practical DIF” items when distinguishing them from the statistically significant but “negligible DIF” items. All four of the practical DIF items were uniform DIF. The analogy items (numbers 1-20) were spread throughout all classification categories (not significant, negligible, moderate or large DIF) relatively evenly. The sentence completion items (numbers 21-30) were concentrated more heavily in particular categories, typically closer to the DIF cut-off.

The total of only 4 practical DIF items from 38 would seem to indicate that there is considerable capacity for cross-lingual test adaptation in the republic. This represents only about 10% of the items studied. By contrast, Gierl, Rogers and Klinger (1999) found that 52% of English–French item pairs on a Canadian elementary social studies test exhibited DIF. Ercikan & McCreith (2002) discovered DIF rates of 41% on science items from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) test. Robin, Sireci and Hambleton (2003) reported 21% of items on a credentialing exam exhibited DIF when the two languages studied were both European languages: When looking at a European and Altaic language on the same exam, DIF rates were 46%. However, as discussed below and in the larger study, there are also a considerable number of items from this study (10-12) that were both close to the “large DIF” cutoff of .035 and marked as “probable DIF” by many item reviewers. Thus, the practical implications mean that those responsible for analyzing items flagged as DIF might need to consider reviewing items that show some “negligible DIF” as well.

In order to better understand how to interpret the reviewers’ predictions and the statistical results, Table 5 presents them in a clear, readable format with an easy to follow logic. The items can be conceived of as arranged in ascending order from most equivalent (top of table) to least equivalent (bottom of table), or from items that are most similar to those that are clearly DIF (last four items in Table 5). Recall that the test statistic used for interpreting the result in terms of the null hypothesis of no difference was 3.81. This means that the first six items with test

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15 For a discussion on how some DIF results may be a result of statistical artifacts, see the full study.
statistic values lower than 3.81 are items for which the null hypothesis of no difference is retained. Note also their p-values above the .05 level. Finally note also that in the LR model, Exp (β) (last column) indicates an approximate ratio of likelihood by both groups to answer an item correctly. Note that the coefficients for these first six items are all at or near “1” which indicates an approximate 1 to 1 correspondence in likely response patterns between groups for those items. The four items at the bottom of the table have practical DIF and have the highest chi-square values, effect sizes over .035, and Exp (β) values far from 1. Of the four items identified as practical DIF, three favored the Russian group while one favored the Kyrgyz group, determined by the direction (+/−) of β2.

Item reviewers’ scores for the items were tallied and a total of eight items were expected to be DIF according to the criteria presented above (four or more scores of 2 or 3). In order to compare their results clearly with the statistical estimations, note that column 2 in Table 5 presents the results for the reviewers’ predictions for easy comparison with the actual statistical DIF estimations. Again, the results of the DIF item analyses are presented in rank order by χ² difference (chi-squared values from the full equation subtracted from the value from the compact equation, per methods section); and, as the χ² values increase (ascending order in the table), the items move closer to medium and large DIF levels.

In column two in Table 5, each X represents a score from the reviewers of either “somewhat different (2 points)” or “different (3 points).” It is apparent by glancing at the data that a modest correlation in reviewers’ scores and statistical DIF values does exist. Note that many of the items that received four or more DIF marks from reviewers are clustered closer to the DIF cut off level at .035, in the bottom half of the table. In order to determine the actual relationship (correlation) between the reviewers’ predictions and the statistical DIF estimations, a rank order correlation analysis of their estimated numerical scores and the statistical chi-squared values using Spearman’s rho was conducted.

In order to calculate the rank order calculation, the numerical score of the items was calculated. The result of the correlation was a significant, positive relationship of .45, .004 significance at the .01 level (Output in SPSS in Table 6). This modest, positive correlation indicates that as reviewers’ total scores for the items increased (greater likelihood
of DIF), so did the chi-square difference values (statistical values). This finding would seem to indicate that reviewers’ predictions were far from random and that indeed they were “on to something” in their predictions of difference. However, determining the accuracy of the reviewers is not that straightforward, as the discussion below will reveal.

By the standard above, reviewers predicted eight total items to be DIF (Table 7). Seven of the eight items predicted to be DIF by reviewers were statistically significant. The only item predicted to be DIF by reviewers that turned out not to be statistically significant was item 7 (four marks). However, most of the eight predicted items were indeed located in the lower part of the table with relatively high chi-squared values and effect size values close to the cut-score delineating DIF from non-DIF items at .035. Five of their eight predictions had effect size values above the effect size median of .009, i.e. closer to the DIF cut off. For example, item 21 had a .024 effect size and received six marks for DIF from reviewers. Item 11 received five marks for DIF and had a .028 effect size. Item 33 received five marks and had a .027 effect size. It seems that reviewers’ moderately accurate estimations in the middle to lower part of the order best explain the positive rank order correlation of .45.

If there is gray area in terms of interpreting the relationship between reviewer and statistical results, it stems mostly from the challenge posed by the large number of items that were perceived as DIF by reviewers that are close in proximity to the DIF cut-off as determined by the effect size measure at .035. The range of the effect size measure for negligible DIF items starts at .003 and goes until .029. The median effect size measure is .009. From a practitioner’s perspective, it should be noted that some of the items predicted as DIF did in fact have relatively high effect size values but not quite at .035. As statistical estimations are not always flawless, it is possible that some of these “high effect size items” (.024, .027, .028, .029, .031) items might in fact have moderate DIF but the effect size measures were influenced by statistical artifacts in the estimation process. For example, the relatively lower reliability levels of the Kyrgyz items (.702 compared to the Russian .907) might have impacted accuracy in statistical estimations. From a practical standpoint, this might mean that reviewers and assessment specialists select another
10-12 items with high effect size levels for careful review, perhaps reviewing those items with values over .015.

There were of course several outliers in terms of correspondence between reviewer predictions and statistical DIF estimations which kept the overall correlation from being higher. For example, item 15 received five marks from reviewers but had negligible DIF and a fairly low effect size measure of .008. Items 7 and 18 also demonstrated little correspondence between reviewers’ marks and the DIF statistics (many reviewer marks but non-significance or negligible DIF with low effect size values). Item 28 was very close to the DIF cut off at .035 but received no marks as DIF from reviewers. Interestingly, looking at the very bottom of Table 5, it is apparent that three of the four practical DIF items did not in fact receive four or more marks from the reviewers. Only item 3 exhibited a high statistical DIF level and received many marks (six) from reviewers as probable DIF. Items 13 and 32 had practical DIF but only 1 and 2 marks for DIF from reviewers, respectively. Thus, the positive rank order correlation cannot be attributed to the close correspondence between estimations of the four practical DIF items and reviewers’ predictions for these particular items.

**Direction of DIF**

A key finding of this study was that for the eight items predicted as DIF, reviewers correctly predicted the direction of DIF only 29% of the time (2 of 7 statistically significant items). Note in Table 8 the difference between their predictions and actual DIF direction (which group is favored by item differences) in columns five and six. Five of the seven items favored the Kyrgyz group which means that differences in the items had a discriminatory impact on Russian language examinees. The reviewers were only correct in their predictions with the one practical DIF item (item 3) and with item 21 because, from the eight items they predicted as DIF, with the exception of one lone vote, the reviewers predicted DIF to favor the Russian group for each item.

In general, from the total pool of 38 items, reviewers marked a total of 26 items as “favoring Russian” and only two as “favoring Kyrgyz.” One item received a mark of “no advantage” and four items received no marks at all. Of the items that received mixed marks however, the most marks any item received as “favoring Kyrgyz” was one (items 16 and 21). In terms of the four practical DIF items, three of
these items advantaged the Russian group and the evaluators got all three of these predictions correct. Practical DIF item 32, which advantaged the Kyrgyz group statistically, was not predicted to be a DIF item but still received two marks as “favoring Russian.”

**Discussion and Conclusions**

Despite a satisfactory level of inter-rater reliability in reviewer predictions (.66) and a modest correlation between the reviewers’ predicted differences and actual statistical DIF for the Kyrgyz and Russian item pairs (.45), the inference that reviewers had a clear understanding of what was going on with the item pairs remains tenuous: The data indicate that reviewers could not correctly predict the “direction of DIF” (which group is favored by difference) on more than a random basis. At first glance, this is a curious finding considering that the low overall number of practical DIF items (4 from 38 total) indicates that there is capacity in the republic to develop equivalent cross-lingual test items, even if we allow that some of the non-DIF high effect size items (.024, .027, .028, .029, .031) may also actually be DIF items. Below, some possible interpretations are offered for this result.

These results contrast with Gierl and Khaliq’s (2001) study of cross-lingual DIF that found Canadian reviewers to have better than random prediction rates for DIF direction for French and English versions of mathematics and science items. However, for their 2001 study the reviewers set out to predict DIF direction on item pairs they knew had been flagged as DIF - while in the Kyrgyz case, this was a blind review. Plake (1980) and Engelhard et al. (1990), however, had similar findings with DIF prediction involving a U.S. study where reviewers were tasked with predicting DIF for black and white examinees. Plake (1980) found that the reviewers scored twice the amount of DIF than the statistical procedures yielded. In this study, reviewers also over predicted DIF (8 total items) and only predicted one of the four DIF items correctly (item 3). Engelhard et al. (1990) found that item reviewers could not predict DIF for blacks and whites in the U.S.A when reviewers had no statistical data. This would seem to indicate that predicting DIF in any context is a challenging endeavor.

Engelhard et al. (1990) suggested that one reason for the low agreement in the U.S. was the infrequent use of the category “favors
blacks” and concluded that asking some reviewers to represent the interests of their race in a high stakes situation might have caused stress and influenced their predictions. As in the Engelhard et al. (1990) study, the category “favors Kyrgyz” was only selected twice (two individual marks) in the item review. It seems plausible that in many contexts (not just the Kyrgyz Republic), reviewers enter DIF analyses with the assumption that DIF most often penalizes minority or disadvantaged groups. Thus, one plausible explanation for the one-sided outcome is strongly-held reviewer dispositions towards the groups being compared.

Considering the turbulent language and educational politics in the republic since independence in 1991, perhaps the tendency to mark almost all the NST items as “favoring the Russian group” should not be surprising when considered in post-Soviet context (Huskey 1995; Grenoble 2003; De Young et al. 2006). The ten ethnic Kyrgyz evaluators in this study were certainly cognizant of both the large NST score gaps (favoring the Russian-medium educated), and the overall state of Kyrgyz-medium instruction in the republic (Korth 2005; De Young et al. 2006; CEATM 2010a; CEATM 2010b). To some extent, subtle, even subconscious, tendencies to “defend” the Kyrgyz examinees against what might be perceived as a privileged and historically hegemonic force (the Russian language) might have resulted in a tendency to mark the Russian groups as advantaged without deep reflection upon the differences between item versions.

These findings, along with the previous work in the U.S. context, underscore the need to conceptualize the review of cross-lingual items as a context-bound, social and political process, not simply a technical endeavor. Language as the key variable in DIF studies is invested with symbolic social meaning and language politics can be the means through which power relations between groups are mediated. Participants enter into the review process with dispositions, prejudices and strongly held beliefs, all shaped by individual experience and social context. This finding underscores Grisay et al.’s (2006) point that each study involving language comparison is a unique endeavor in its own right. While Grisay was referring to the specific linguistic properties of the language(s) themselves, this study indicates that there are also potentially important social and political dimensions to DIF studies.
Of course the one-sidedness of reviewers’ predictions may not be attributable to reviewer dispositions alone. Throughout the item discussions, reviewers’ comments focused almost exclusively on the quality of the Kyrgyz items and the challenge of adaptation from Russian into Kyrgyz, especially the sentence completion items (see full study). No hypotheses were generated as to problems that might lead to items favoring the Kyrgyz group even though the majority of the statistically significant items did, in fact, favor Kyrgyz students. Reviewers indicated that one of the main differences between the Russian and Kyrgyz languages is the extent to which they are “standardized.” Indeed, the contested nature of what constitutes “correct literary Kyrgyz” kept the focus of most item analyses squarely on the Kyrgyz items. Almost all of the adaption, content, format and cultural issues raised by reviewers about the items (see full study for complete listing) were related to alleged problems with the Kyrgyz language items.

Discussions typically focused not on the differences in how Russian and Kyrgyz examinees would respond to item differences, but rather on the correct style, grammar, syntax, meaning, and regional vocabulary of the Kyrgyz item versions. An issue that arose consistently in the analyses was the gap between everyday usage and various (disputed) versions of “correct language.” It is indeed difficult to compare Kyrgyz and Russian versions of an item if there is little consensus as to what “correct Kyrgyz” should be. And, as reviewers often noted, the Russian items tended to be “quite good.” Thus, whatever the political dimensions of language equivalence, the inherent attributes of a language can also make item adaptation challenging, and can potentially affect prediction of DIF.

A lack of reviewer experience could have also contributed to inaccuracy in prediction. While the sample of reviewers represented the most qualified pool possible from the republic, in general, the reviewers had no experience with probability or statistical methods, nor did they have experience as participants in any type of DIF study (as they are unknown in the republic to date). They had no information about the actual statistical DIF outcomes when they completed the individual rubrics and participated in discussion. It is plausible that lack of experience contributed to the focus on such overt, Kyrgyz-related issues
and distracted reviewers from a more nuanced, in-depth examination of the psychology of item response. Russian items at times seemed to be viewed primarily as “references” against which reviewers could check their understandings of the Kyrgyz items.

Perhaps many issues that may have made Russian items more challenging simply went unnoticed in lieu of “finding the mistakes” in the Kyrgyz versions (see transcripts in full study for such conversations). It is conceivable that to novice reviewers, mistakes and contestation in one language version are associated with DIF that disadvantages that group. In other words, the “high quality” (and uncontested) items could perhaps become associated (erroneously) with “advantage” while “lower quality” (contested, more mistake prone or allegedly mistake prone) items could become associated with “disadvantage” in the minds of reviewers. The fact that the Russian items were characterized as high quality might have contributed to the assumption that Russians were favored in most instances where differences were evident.

Whether the reasons for inaccurate prediction of DIF direction were due to political dispositions, the focus of attention on “correctness” of the Kyrgyz versions, or lack of experience with such studies, there is nonetheless room for optimism that reviewers in the republic can improve their estimations. First, the reviewers’ inter-rater reliability estimate of .66 and the .45 rank order correlation between their estimations and chi-squared values indicate that their overall estimations were not completely random. Second, reviewer marks on direction of DIF were often more tentative than the marks on levels of difference (sometimes item reviewers left the “direction of DIF” blank or only a few reviewers checked this category, see Table 8). This indecision perhaps indicates that inexperience played as an important role in their estimations as dispositions. Third, as Ercikan (2002) argues, DIF study outcomes can differ depending on whether both versions of the items are reviewed simultaneously or individually by reviewers.

Exposure to statistical DIF detection methods by embedding them in some form of practice with action research might improve reviewer accuracy. One way to do this in the Kyrgyz Republic would be to conduct several individual item analyses and later compare the reviewers’ preliminary predictions with the actual statistical estimations and discuss the results together as a group. This would underscore the
need to think deeply about the differences between item versions before predicting the direction of DIF and thus serve as a pedagogical tool in item adaptation. This kind of fine tuning and skills enhancement through the introduction of statistical methods holds promise for better analyses in the Kyrgyz Republic. Educators, philologists and assessment adaptors in the Eurasian context working with Russian and other languages could enhance the quality of adaptation of new standardized tests and assessments by introducing both substantive review and empirical statistical testing.

The paradox of this study seems to be that the cultural intimacy of the within country DIF study in some ways makes cross-lingual testing more feasible than in broader cross-national comparisons due to the availability of bi-lingual and experienced translators with cultural knowledge: Only 4 of 38 items being flagged for moderate or large DIF is encouraging from the perspective of the testing center. However, cultural proximity may mean that there are added dimensions of sensitive language politics (and subjectivity) when the research touches on questions such as “who benefits from item differences?” While this was not an anticipated result, it should perhaps not be too surprising considering the context of the DIF study and the history of Russian and Kyrgyz language politics in the republic. With the opening of the Soviet space and the introduction of new cross-lingual assessment and testing regimes, the Eurasian context offers a new and rich area for exploration of these and other questions related to challenges in cross-lingual test adaptation.

**Table 1: Background Characteristics of Selected Item Reviewers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher (secondary and tertiary) (5), Test item writer (3), Philologist/language specialist (6), Methodologist (1), Translator (5), Linguist/editor (2), Lawyer (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Medium</th>
<th>Kyrgyz</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Both/Equal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium of secondary education?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium of higher education?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main medium at work?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main medium at home?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium in which you think?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly more literate in?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Example of Rubric 2, Cultural or Linguistic Difference (Russian Version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Опросник 2. Культурные/лингвистические различия</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Номер задания: _____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Рассмотрите задания на эквивалентность по следующим вопросам:

Кыргызская и русская образовательная среда, важность и релевантность, сходство нравов, сходство норм, психологическая составная присутствующая в обеих группах, эквивалентность языковых выражений, сходство языковых структур и грамматики, символизм, значение метафор, степень очевидности и т.д.

2.1. Степень различия по культурному признаку (обведите одно):

- небольшие различия (1)
- средние различия (2)
- значительные различия (3)

2.2. Причина различий (обведите одно):

- Различия в значении
- Контекстуальные различия
- Лингвистические различия
- Другое

2.3. Подробно опишите различия:

2.4. Преимущества

Если задания не эквивалентны по культурным признаком, у какой группы больше шансов на правильный ответ: кыргызской или русской? (обведите одно)

2.5. Улучшение эквивалентности

Можно ли решить проблему эквивалентности? Как?
Table 3. Example of Item Summary Table (Statistical DIF Item)\textsuperscript{16}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Item 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Difference Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cult/Ling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3. Describe Differences in Detail:

Content:
- City kids do not encounter “күл” (ash) in distractor (I); they live in apartments and don’t know what “күл” (ash) means because they have not encountered this (so, this is a lack of vocabulary, nuance).
- There is a problem in distractor (A). In the Kyrgyz version, “бак” (tree) can mean both “дерево” (tree) and “сад” (orchard). In the Russian distractor - “сад” (orchard) is utilized.

Format:
- Misprint in Kyrgyz distractor (B), which is the answer key; wrote “Чоно” (no meaning) – should be “Чопо” (clay)
- Orthographical mistake in distractor (B) – student can’t understand the word “Чоно” (no meaning) - and the result is that they can’t find the correct answer.
- Instead of “Чоно” (clay), the word “Чоно” (no meaning) is written, a misprint which results in a loss of meaning.
- Misprint with one word in (B) – the word “Чоно” (no meaning) should be “Чопо” (clay).
- The word “Чоно” (no meaning) should be “Чопо” (clay).
- Misprint – instead of the letter “п” they printed the letter “н” in distractor (B).
- Incorrect letter in word. The word “Чоно” (no meaning), in the pair where Kyrgyz is “Чоно” and Russian is “глина” (clay) - should be “Чопо” (clay).

Culture/Language:
- In distractor (a) in the Kyrgyz pair “бак: алма” (tree: apple) - “бак” (tree) can mean both “дерево” (tree) and “сад” (orchard) in Russian. However, the corresponding Russian pair is “сад: яблоня” (orchard: apple trees). In the Russian language the Kyrgyz “алма” k. (apple) means “яблоко” r. (apple)

\textsuperscript{16} the letters “k” and “r” following words in written in Cyrillic indicate whether the word is a Kyrgyz or Russian word when it is not indicated clearly in the explanation.
and “яблоня” (apple trees) is “алма бак” in Kyrgyz.

- The problem is incorrect translation - “бак” k. (tree) is both “дерево” r. (tree) and “сад” r. (orchard). In Kyrgyz, apple trees is “алма бак” k. which is “яблоня” r. (apple trees) in Russian. The Kyrgyz “алма” k. (apple) is “яблоко” (apple) in Russian.
- The word “бак” k. (tree) and “алма” k. (apple) in comparison to Russian “сад” (fruit orchard) and “яблоня” (apple trees) have many meanings.
- The word “алма” k. (apple) is not correctly translated. The correct variant is “яблоко” (apple).” (difference in meaning)

2.4. Advantage (DIF Direction): Russian: ❌❌❌✅ Kyrgyz:

2.5. Can the items be reconciled?

- Yes, with the correct letter added in distractor (B).
- The translation needs to be tested. You can’t rely on only one person for translation.
- Improve translation in distractor (A) by using “бакч” k. (garden)

Discussion:

MK: There are many problems with this item, especially with the item distractors. The first problem I see is confusion in distractor (A) because of the translation of “сад: яблоня” r. (orchard, apple trees) into Kyrgyz is incorrect. The given Kyrgyz version – “бак: алма” (tree, apple). NO: Yes, but in Kyrgyz “бак” can mean trees or orchard. MK: OK, but we must consider that the Russian variant “сад” (orchard) is only fruit garden, not trees - that is the problem. A better analogy might thus be “tree: apple” – not “orchard: apple.” In other words, “from what/where” (material) comes.

MD: I agree, “бак” k. (tree) is “сад” r. (orchard) and “дерево” r. (tree). The word “бакча” k. is “огород” (vegetable garden). I think a problem arises in analogies when the Kyrgyz words have many different meanings, and these same words in Russian have only one meaning. I do not know how much this affects overall results but this is true. Again, the problem is the use of multiple meaning and uncommon words in the Kyrgyz language when in the Russian language they have only one meaning. This is a problem of item adaptation.

RM: Another problem is distractor (B). There is a typographical error in this distractor that might cause the question not to work. ZS: Yes, the problem is the format (it could have been done correctly, but it wasn’t). The results might be influenced by the fact that kids cannot determine the meaning of the word “Чопо” because there is no such word in Kyrgyz! NO: Yes, item distractor (B) Чопо is the problem– this question will definitely not work because there is no correct answer; and, there is no way to find the correct answer. AA: I agree, further, many kids in Bishkek do not know the meaning of the word “Чопо” (clay) as this word is rarely used and therefore can lead to problems. So, they couldn’t have guessed that there was a misprint in this word.

MD: In regard to city- village kids, we can probably divide kids in into three socio-linguistic groups – Kyrgyz who study in Kyrgyz schools in villages (and don’t know Russian), Kyrgyz who study in Russian schools (and speak primarily Russian), and Kyrgyz who study in Kyrgyz schools but communicate often in the Russian language (kids from Bishkek). AA: That’s true in general, there are different cultural groups who took the test, but I don’t see how that affects this item because all the kids tested here took the test only in Kyrgyz, which doesn’t impact the result. We can’t compare how different Kyrgyz groups will react... but it is clear that the incorrect word use is a problem. Thus, I think the problem is the typographical mistake (format).
Table 4. Example of Item Summary Table (Non-DIF Item)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Difference Levels:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cult/Ling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3. Describe Differences in Detail:

**Content:**
- In the second word of the analogy pair in the item stem, there are some differences in meaning between the two language groups. In the Kyrgyz stem, the word “шорпю” (broth) suggests “first course,” that is “something liquid.” In the Russian stem, some people might not understand the corresponding “борщ” (borscht) like “шорпю,” as it is the name of a soup.
- Poor translation of item stem: soup is not a direct equivalent to “борщ” – soup is however, equivalent to “шорпю”k. (broth).
- In distractor (r), there is a Kyrgyz word for “деталь”r. (detail) used in the Russian version. The word is “төник” in Kyrgyz.

**Culture/Language:**
- In Kyrgyz, “шорпю” (broth) implies “first course” – soup. In Russian, “борщ” (borscht) is the name of a kind of soup. The item stems are thus not perfectly matched.
- A literal translation of “шорпю”k. (broth) will be “soup.”
- The translation of “шорпю”k. (broth) will be “soup.” (this is a difference in meaning)
- The word Russian word “деталь”r. (detail) perhaps won’t be understood by village kids as this is a Russian loan word. Should have used the Kyrgyz word “төник” (detail).
- The word “деталь”r. (detail) – city kids (those who know Russian) will know this, but village kids may not, which will create difficulties in understanding.
- The equivalent word for “деталь”r. (detail) in the Kyrgyz language is “төник.”
- The word “деталь”r. (detail) = төник; (these are linguistic differences)

2.4. Advantage (DIF Direction):  
**Russian:** ✔ ✔ **Kyrgyz:**

2.5. Can these items be reconciled?

**Discussion:**

MD: I think we agree that the words utilized in the analogy stem are not strictly equivalent; however, there is disagreement as to whether or not this lack of equivalence should be considered a serious enough difference to estimate a lack of equivalence in outcomes. CJ: the problem here is the incorrect translation (not adaptation) of the item stem from Russian into Kyrgyz. KK: Yes, they are different, but I don’t think the differences affect the relationship of the words in the analogy pair.
**Table 5: Reviewers’ Scores and DIF Statistics in Rank Order by $\chi^2$ Difference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>$\chi^2$ Difference</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>$\beta_2$</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>Exp ($\beta$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.494</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.085</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>0.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.733</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td>0.393</td>
<td>1.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>0.752</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>0.908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td>1.318</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.122</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.077</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.202</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>0.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>2.369</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>1.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.733</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>4.796</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>-0.242</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>1.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>5.293</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>1.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6.208</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.307</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>1.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.399</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>-0.275</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>7.638</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>-0.308</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>9.704</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>-0.331</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>9.779</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>1.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
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<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td>15.464</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.456</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>15.510</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>-0.428</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15.595</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.429</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>18.174</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.515</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>19.501</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.574</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>20.21</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>-0.507</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20.749</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>2.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>xxx</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0.583</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>xx</td>
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<td>0.013</td>
<td>-0.532</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>xx</td>
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<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.634</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td>38.703</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.694</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ZS:** also, in regard to item stem (i) it is important to utilize commonly used words, as some terms in this item are rarely used or completely unknown. **NO:** Yes, I agree, the use of uncommon words and terms is problematic. So, the problem is translation, the use of uncommon words, sometimes due to the poorness of the language itself. Some kids in rural areas do not know some of these equivalents, like “деталь” (detail); And, there is a Kyrgyz equivalent for it. It is “тептик,” and it should be used.
### Table 6: Rank Order Correlation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>$\chi^2$ Difference</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>$\beta^2$</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>Exp ((\beta))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>42.413</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>-0.738</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>xx</td>
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<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>2.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>43.423</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>2.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>49.326</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.791</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>2.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
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<td>xx</td>
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<td>1.101</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>3.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.287</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>0.072</td>
<td>-1.218</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

### Table 7: Reviewers’ Scores and DIF Statistics for Items Predicted as DIF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reviewers’ Scores</th>
<th>$\chi^2$ Difference</th>
<th>$\chi^2$ Rank Order</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>1.318</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>14.890</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>15.464</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>23.006</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>42.413</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>49.326</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.028</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>111.086</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Prediction of DIF Direction for Items Reviewers Predicted as DIF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Evaluators’ Marks</th>
<th>$\chi^2$ Difference</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>Evaluators Predict*</th>
<th>Statistics Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td>1.318</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>xxxxxxx</td>
<td>14.890</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>Russian (5)</td>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td>15.464</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>Russian (4)</td>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>xxxxxxx</td>
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<td>.016</td>
<td>Russian (1)</td>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>xxxxxxx</td>
<td>42.413</td>
<td>.024</td>
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<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td>43.427</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>Russian (3)</td>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>.028</td>
<td>Russian (3)</td>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>xxxxxxx</td>
<td>111.086</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>Russian (3)</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in parentheses are number of votes for DIF direction

Works Cited


Mazor, Kathleen M. 1993. “An investigation of the effects of conditioning on two ability estimates in DIF analyses when the data are two-dimensional.” PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, Amherst.


On Semantic Peculiarities of Secondary Imperfective Verbs in Russian: Their In/Compatibility with the Notions of Duration and Completion

Valentina S. Soboleva

Introduction

It is a well-known fact that some secondary imperfective verbs in Russian cannot express duration – a notion, ascribed to the imperfective aspect. Of the three, or even four, possible aspectual meanings of the imperfective aspect – duration / progressive continuity, general validity, and repetition – some secondary imperfective verbs are limited to expressing only iterativity, a notion of repetition, embedded in their lexical semantics. The interpretation of the term iterativity in this work is close to the one given by Mehlig (2006) in which the iterative predicate describes an unbounded number of repetitions and the particular meaning is embedded in the verb’s semantics. In other words, iterativity is expressed by the verb form itself without additional contextual indicators of repetition, unlike regular imperfective verbs. To my knowledge, no comprehensive and generally accepted explanation of this phenomenon exists in theoretical works on the Russian verbal aspect; moreover, no reasonable classification of such verbs for practical teaching / learning needs is available.

Most Russian language textbooks typically introduce the aspectual opposition of Russian verbs as a contrast between duration and completion, considered basic meanings of the imperfective and perfective aspects respectively: for example, (1) Он читал (Imp.) книгу неделю / (He read the book for a week) vs (2) Он прочитал (Per.) книгу за неделю (He read the book in a week). In both sentences, duration of a week for the same type of activity is specified. However, the imperfective verb читал entails an open-ended duration, expressed by the noun неделю in the accusative case, while the perfective form прочитал requires an indicator of ‘close-ended’ duration – such as the prepositional phrase за
неделю, in which the preposition за refers to a final point in time by which the activity had been completed.

Quite often though, we run across contexts, in which certain secondary imperfective verbs are not compatible with open-ended duration indicators, as is expected. Instead, they are compatible with indicators of completion, which are usually associated with perfective verbs. As a result of such compatibility, a repeated completion, or iterativity, is expressed. Compare the following sentences: (1) «Он читал (Imp. Simplex) книгу неделю», (2) «Он прочитал (Reg.) книгу за неделю». and (3) «Он прочитывал (Imp. Sec.) книгу ?неделю / за неделю».

In example (1), the indicator of duration «неделю » (for a week) is compatible with the primary, simplex imperfective verb читал but incompatible with the secondary imperfective verb in example (3). However, an indicator of completion за неделю (in a week), is compatible with both forms of the verb, the secondary imperfective form прочитывал and the perfective form прочитал, meaning that both verb forms require a ‘close-ended’ indicator of duration emphasizing completion of the action. The difference between contexts (2) and (3) is that context (3), in addition to the notion of completion, also refers to a number of completed actions, while context (2) refers only to a one-time completion.

This type of secondary imperfective verb still puzzles many linguists and complicates explanation of the verbal aspect in Russian as a binary opposition of the perfective, as its marked member, and the imperfective, as an unmarked one. See, for example, Roman Jacobson’s seminal work “О структуре русского глагола” (1985) or Oscar Swan’s “The Mystery of the Imperfective Completive” (1977).

According to V. D. Klimonov (2010), who investigated the reorganization of aspeectual paradigms in the history of Russian verbs within a framework of the natural grammar theory, iterativity, as a grammatical notion of imperfective verbs in Russian, is traced back to the earlier stage of the Old-Russian language, of the eleventh through twelfth centuries. It was expressed in such oppositions as пълзти – пълзать, пасти (<падти) – падати, etc. A new, original Russian

1 Throughout this work the sign ‘?’ is used before contextual indicators if they seem to be incompatible with either of the aspectual verb forms – imperfective or perfective. The explanation of such incompatibility is provided.
suffix *-ыва- / -ива- appeared in the second stage of the language’s development in the thirteenth through fourteenth cc. and, according to Klimonov, the suffix became a formal means for denoting imperfectivity. In the third stage of Russian language development, from the fifteenth through the seventeenth cc., the sphere of usage of the imperfective suffix *-ыва- /-ива- widened: in addition to the notion of imperfectivity, it became a marker of *iterativity* in secondary imperfective verbs, as in *хаживати, писывати, тапливати*, etc., formed from simplex imperfective verbs *ходити, писати, топити*. Lastly, during the fourth and final stage in the development of Russian, which began in the eighteenth c., the sphere of usage of imperfective verbs with the purely *iterative* notion of repeated actions became obsolete, and the suffix *-ыва- / -ива-*, when added to prefixed perfective verbs, assumed its first function of denoting only *imperfectivity*. Unfortunately, Klimonov does not specify exactly what the term imperfectivity meant in the earlier stages in the Russian language history.

Indeed, verbs such as *хаживати, писывати, тапливати* became obsolete; however, many secondary imperfective verbs, formed from prefixed perfective verbs, still preserve a semantic notion of iterativity. The existence of this type of secondary imperfective verb prevents linguists from coming to a generally accepted position on how to properly categorize the aspect of Russian verbs. As early as the 1930s, in his work “О структуре русского глагола” (1985), Roman Jacobson struggled to define the verbal aspect as a binary opposition. Due to the presence of this type of secondary imperfective verbs with iterative meaning, he had to suggest a special model of binary opposition, a

---

2 It can be assumed that he meant a traditional interpretation of the basic function of imperfective verbs to indicate duration. For example: «В отношении категории вида все глаголы старославянского языка распались на две основные группы: глаголы имперфективные и перфективные. Имперфективные глаголы – это глаголы, выражающие длительное действие: например, творити, дѣлати. Перфективные глаголы – это глаголы, которые обозначают действие, находящееся в определенном отношении к законченности или с оттенком законченности (например, сътворити, съдѣлати).» (In regard to the category of verbal aspect, all Church-Slavonic verbs have fallen into two groups: imperfective and perfective. Imperfective verbs are the verbs that denote continuous actions: for example, to create, to do / make. Perfective verbs are the verbs that denote actions being in a certain relationship with the concept of completion: for example, to have created, to have done / made.) (Ёлкина, 1960,152)
“privative” opposition, which included two marked members within the same binary opposition in which perfective verbs are marked (+), and imperfective verbs are generally unmarked (--), although the latter include a marked group of secondary imperfective verbs with iterative meaning. His interpretation has been accepted but not without doubts and reservations. In fact, questions about the essence of the category of aspect in the Russian verbal system, especially about the place of secondary imperfective verbs with iterative meaning occupy, still emerge recurrently among Russian aspectologists (see, for example, Кравченко 1995, Соболева 2011, Титаренко 2007, Ясаи 1997, LeBlanc 2006, Swan 1977).

**Research Questions**

This study is an attempt at unveiling what Swan (1977) coined the “mystery of the imperfective completive” and finding answers to the following questions: 1) What factors contribute to the limitation of certain secondary imperfective verbs in expressing duration, a notion ascribed to the imperfective aspect? 2) What role do the semantics of prefixes and verb stems play in this limitation? 3) Why are some secondary imperfective verbs compatible with contextual indicators of completion typically associated with the perfective aspect?

**Data Collection and Instrument for Testing Verb Compatibility with Aspectual Notions**

This research is based on an analysis of the contextual usage of 300 secondary imperfective verbs. As a starting point, the researcher used the dictionary *The Big Silver Book of Russian Verbs*, a 2000 verb index, by Jack Franke (2004). The index lists aspectual verb pairs in alphabetical order with the imperfective forms as their initial forms. Using this index, the researcher selected perfective verbs that allowed the formation of secondary imperfective verbs which, in their turn, seemed to tolerate indicators of completion. During this procedure the researcher relied predominantly on her native speaker’s intuition, consulting with two other educated native speakers in ambiguous cases.³

³ The author is grateful to her colleagues Elena Sedova-Hotaling and Elena Koudinova for contributing their opinions on the issue.
The selected verbs were supplied with minimal contexts in which the verbs were used in the past tense masculine form with a direct / indirect object or a prepositional phrase semantically required by the verb. In addition, extended contexts of duration – минуту / час / неделю (for a minute / for an hour / for a week) and completion – за минуту / за час / за неделю (in a minute / in an hour / in a week) – were provided. Further, two other parameters were added: (1) a present-tense context – сейчас (now) – for checking the verbs’ ability to express actions in progress; and (2) a column for checking whether the notion of iterativity was included in the verbs’ semantics.

The final list consists of 300 contextual usages of secondary imperfective verbs. In some cases, a verb shows compatibility with contextual indicators of both duration and completion. An example is доказывал правоту час (was proving his right position for an hour) which indicates duration and доказывал правоту за час which indicates completion. It should be noted, though, that the second context доказывал правоту за час expresses both completion and repetition (used to prove his right position in an hour). This verb is also compatible with an indicator of progression: сейчас он доказывает свою правоту (now he is trying to prove his right position).

In other cases, though, the verb is compatible with only one context, either duration or completion. For example, in the expression вскипала от злости за минуту – duration / за минуту – completion, the predicate вскипала от злости (boiled in anger) is incompatible with the notion of duration due to its semantics of instantaneous emotional reaction that precludes its being stretched out in time. For the same reason, it cannot be perceived in progression – сейчас он вскипает от злости. However, the element of instantaneity in its semantics allows it to express the notions of both completion and iterativity: вскипала от злости за минуту implies the tendency to get angry in every provocative situation.

In contrast, the predicate доверял жене is compatible with both the notion of duration – доверял жене только год пока она не изменила ему (trusted his wife for only a year until she betrayed him) and progression – сейчас он доверяет своей жене (now he trusts his wife).4

---

4 It should be noted though that, unlike English, the Russian verb system does not differentiate formally between durative and progressive meanings. Therefore, both
However, it precludes the notion of *completion*: доверял своей жене за год / за час / за минуту. Such incompatibility relates to the verb’s semantics: stative verbs usually assume continuity.

The predicate *посматривал на нее* represents yet another example of the different distribution of aspectual notions; it inherently involves an unbounded number of repetitions but precludes a notion of *completion*. Two other aspectual notions, *duration* -- *посматривал на него час* (was glancing / glanced at him for an hour) -- and *progression* -- *сейчас он посматривает на него* (now he is glancing at him) -- suggest the following interpretation. Even though both contexts are valid, each one is nevertheless perceived as primarily *iterative* because each implies an unbounded number of glances rather than a *continuous* uninterrupted activity of looking at someone.

All the verbs and contexts selected for the study are presented in Table 1 in the Appendix. Table 1 includes the following nine columns: (1) prefix, if it is discerned\(^5\); (2) perfective form, marked as transitive (t) or intransitive (int); (3) secondary imperfective form in a minimal context, described above; (4) type of aspectual membership: pair or triplet; (5) indicator of *duration*; (6) indicator of *completion*; (7) indicator of *progression* in the present-tense context; (8) semantically embedded *iterativity*; and (9) types of aspectual combination. Please see example directly below:

context (доверял жене только год and сейчас он доверяет своей жене) sound normal despite the fact that the latter is not *progressive* per se.

\(^5\) Verbs are considered prefixed if other verbs with different prefixes and the same stems exist in the language. For example: читать – прочитать / прочитывать, перечитать / перечитывать; от привыкнуть / привыкать and отвыкнуть / отвыкать. The two latter pairs are still considered prefixed although no simplex verb without a prefix exists in the language. Therefore, verbs that do not fit either of these two groups are considered in a separate group: for example, дать / давать, заснуть / засыпать, надоест / надоедать, etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>в- /вз- /вс-</td>
<td>вложить - t</td>
<td>вкладывал деньги в автомат</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>взглянуть - int</td>
<td>взглядывал на неё</td>
<td></td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>вскипал от злости</td>
<td></td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>до-</td>
<td>дождаться - int</td>
<td>дожидался его</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data description
Of the 300 secondary imperfective verbs, 204 verbs are transitive, and 96 are intransitive. In all, 270 verbs are prefixed, and 30 verbs make up a motley group in which some have no prefix (e.g., быть – бывать, явиться – являться), while others have a prefix that is no longer discernable due to the absence of same-stem simplex verbs in contemporary Russian with the same meaning (надоест – надоедать, заснуть – засыпать, оказать – оказывать). The most numerous group includes verbs with the prefix за- (38 secondary predicates), followed by a group with no prefixes (30); and groups with the prefixes по- (27), вы- (26), до- (23), при- (19), на- (18), пере- (14), про- (14), вз- (13), с- (13), пере- (13), от- (11), об/об- (11), у- (10), раз-/рас- (9), пред- (7), под- (6), пр- (6), and из-/ис- (6). Most secondary imperfective verbs in the data form pairs with the perfective verbs from which they are formed. Only one tenth (about 32) of the 300 total verbs form triplets: пахать / вспахать / вспахивать, лечить / вылечить / вылечивать, тащить / вытащить / вытаскивать, пить / выпить / выпивать, etc. All of the triplets in the data are confirmed by the Ozhegov dictionary (1960) except the following three – болеть / заболевать / заболевать, таить / затаить / затаивать, греть / согреть / согревать. In the researcher’s opinion, they are still perceived as triplets because, like all other triplets, they differ from each other only aspectually, not semantically. For convenience, triplets in Table 1 are written in a bold font, and the original simplex verbs are also bolded and underlined: выпить / выпивать.

An analysis of the compatibility and incompatibility of secondary imperfective verbs with indicators of duration and completion yields the following results: of the 300 secondary imperfective verbs, 127 verb predicates (42% of the total number) are incompatible with the notion of duration – quite a big group for an exception, since the notion of duration is considered a primary aspectual notion of the imperfective aspect. Surprisingly, of the same 300 secondary imperfective verbs, 245 predicates (81.6%) are compatible with the notion of completion, and only 55 predicates incompatible. Both observations question the traditional approach to teaching Russian verbal aspect by ascribing a notion of completion exclusively to the perfective aspect.
An analysis reveals four combinatory patterns of the aspectual semantic notions associated with secondary imperfective verbs. See the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notions</th>
<th>Duration (неделю)</th>
<th>Completion (за неделю)</th>
<th>Progression (сейчас)</th>
<th>Iterativity (imbedded in verb semantics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type A - 162</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type B - 44</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type C - 83</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type D - 11</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs in pattern A are compatible with contextual indicators of duration, completion, and progression but do not include iterativity in their lexical semantics. This is the biggest group in the data, a total of 162 verbs, of which 132 verbs are transitive and 30 intransitive. For example, the following verb predicates concur with both contextual indicators of duration and completion, and they can also be perceived as situations in progress: (1) вносил чемодан в комнату две минуты / за две минуты / сейчас он вносит чемодан в комнату (he was bringing a suitcase into the room for two minutes / he used to bring it into the room in two minutes / now he is bringing it into the room); (2) выбрасывал хлам два часа (he threw away a junk for two hours) / за два часа (in two hours) / сейчас он выбрасывает хлам (now he is throwing away a junk) ; (3) подкрадывался к дому полчаса (he was sneaking / snuck / sneaked up to a house for half an hour) / за полчаса (in half an hour) / сейчас он подкрадывается к дому (now he is sneaking up to a house); (4) молоко прокисало день (the milk was turning / turned sour for a day) / за день (turned sour in a day) / сейчас молоко уже прокисает (now the milk is turning sour). In these examples, as well as in others of this type of context in the data, the compatibility with the indicators of duration and progression is obvious and can be explained by the fact that such verbs belong to the classes of either activities (вносил, выбрасывал, подкрадывался) or states (прокисало). Both activities and states are perceived as situations stretched out in time. The semantics of the prefixes in each of these verbs also reinforce the perception that these situations are extended in time.
However, the ability of these verbs to express the notion of completion reveals that, in such contexts, the focus is shifted from duration of the situation to its completion: вносил / выбрасывал / подкрадывался / прокисало за две минуты. All these contexts -- Он вносил чемодан / выбрасывал хлам / подкрадывался к дому за десять минут -- mean that it took him ten minutes to complete these activities. A similar interpretation applies to the context молоко прокисало за десять минут – the milk tended to turn sour in ten minutes. It is logical to conclude that verbs of this type preserve in their semantics a notion of perfectivity, which is interpreted here as a one-time, or localized-in-time, occurrence (Соболева 2011).

Pattern B comprises verbs that are truly iterative. Semantically, they express an unbounded number of occurrences and are incompatible with notions of either completion, duration, or progression. There are a total of 44 verbs of this type: 18 are transitive, and 26 are intransitive. Examples are (1) взглядывал на нее ?две минуты (he glanced at her ?for two minutes) / ?за две минуты (?in two minutes) / ?сейчас он взглядывает на нее (?now he is glancing at her); or (2) замалчивал истину ?час (he hushed up the truth ?for an hour) / ?за час (?in an hour) / ?сейчас он замалчивает истину (?now he is hushing up the truth); or (3) посещал друга ?день (he visited his friend ?for a day) / ?за день (?in a day) / ?сейчас он посещает друга (?now he is visiting his friend). It seems that the semantics of both verb stems and their prefixes prohibit these verbs from being perceived as situations stretched out in time or be completed in a certain period of time; however, the notion of repetition is easily recognized.

The contexts with simultaneous situations illustrate this point well. In the following complex sentences, verb situations in both clauses present two simultaneous situations, each one referring to an unbounded number of repetitions due to the presence of secondary imperfective verbs in one of the clauses: Когда он взглядывал на нее, она краснела (Every time he glanced at her, she was turning / turned red); Когда он замалчивал истину, это приводило к беде (Every time he hushed up the

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6 The choice of emphasis on either duration or completion is purely pragmatic and depends on the speakers’ preference (see Соболева 2011).

7 The progressive notion, clearly perceived in Russian, does not sound good in English though.
Yet, the predicate помешивал каши differs from the three predicates considered above: помешивал каши час (he stirred porridge for an hour) / за час (?in an hour) / сейчас он помешивает каши (now he is stirring porridge). Due to the iterative semantics of its simplex stem мешать (to produce a number of movements to prevent porridge from clotting), this predicate denotes a series of movements. However, the delimitative semantics of the prefix по- allows it to concur with indicators of both limited duration -- помешивал каши час (he stirred porridge for an hour) and progression -- сейчас он помешивает каши (he is stirring porridge now). Nevertheless, the overall notion of separate multiple movements is preserved in either context -- durative or progressive; its incompatibility with the notion of completion is also due to the same semantic peculiarity of denoting a multiple number of discrete movements, each so short in its realization that even together they cannot entail the notion of completion.

Pattern C verbs express both completion and iterativity but are incompatible with notions of duration and progression. Of 83 such verbs, 49 are transitive and 34 intransitive. For example, it is possible to say переставал / прекращал работать за минуту (used to stop working in a minute); появлялся дома за минуту (used to appear at home in a minute); прочитывал книгу за день (used to finish reading in a day), or наезжал на газон за минуту (used to run over a lawn in a minute). However, the context переставал / прекращал работать ?минуту does not make any sense -- ?stopping working continued for a minute. Yet, it is possible to say both in Russian and English: переставал работать на минуту (he used to stop working for a minute), meaning that he periodically stopped working for one minute. It is also impossible to express a truly progressive situation with the verb переставать: ?Сейчас он перестает работать (?Now he is stopping working). In both languages the past perfective / present perfect forms are more pertinent: Сейчас он уже перестал работать (He has already stopped working).

The same explanation applies to the incompatibility of the three other verb predicates with indicators of duration and progression: появлялся дома ?минуту (used to appear at home ?for a minute); прочитывал книгу ?день (used to finish reading a book ?for a day);
наезжал на газон минуту (used to run over a lawn for a minute); Сейчас он появляется дома / Сейчас он прочитывает книгу / Сейчас он наезжает на газон. The notion of repetition (iterativity) embedded in the semantics of these verbs does not allow them to be perceived as either stretched out in time for a certain period or simultaneous with the moment of speech (a context for the present progressive).

The data show that verbs of this group include both prefixed activity verbs (прочитывал книгу, наезжал на газон) and prefixed achievements (переставал работать, появлялся в доме) 8. It seems that in the case of activity verbs, the semantics of prefixes play a decisive role in making them incompatible with the notion of duration. Compare, for example, the predicates прочитывал книгу неделе and до считывал книгу неделю (was finishing reading a book for a week) or наезжал на газон пять минут and перезжал через газон пять минут (was crossing a lawn for five minutes). Both prefixes про- and на- put emphasis on the final stage of achievement, while the prefixes до- and пере- suggest that even though some time is needed for completing an activity, the focus is still on completion. In the predicates переставал работать and появлялся в доме the verbs are formed from the perfective verbs перестать and появиться, formed in their turn from the simplex perfectives стать and явиться. The common semantic dominator of all perfective verbs is the notion of being a localized-in-time, or a one-time, situation. It is obvious that this notion is preserved both in the prefixed derivates перестать and появиться and in the secondary imperfective verbs переставать and появляться. Hence, indicators of duration are not acceptable in contexts with such verbs, while indicators of completion are.

Finally, pattern D includes verbs that are compatible only with indicators of duration and progression but not completion. They also do not assume iterativity semantically. There are only 11 verbs of this type in the data. Five of them are transitive, and six intransitive. For

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8 In this work, the Vendler (1967) classification of verb semantics is used for its convenience. Paducheva (2009) gives the following Russian equivalents of Vendler’s terms: state -статив, activity - деятельность, accomplishment - совершение, achievement - достижение. The extent to which Vendler’s classification is applicable to the Russian verb system will be considered in the discussion section.
example, (1) раздумывал о решении час / за час / сейчас он раздумывает о решении (he considered his decision for an hour / in an hour / now he is considering his decision); (2) сгорал от стыда весь день / за день / сейчас он сгорает от стыда (he felt ashamed for the whole day / in the whole day / now he feels ashamed); (3) затруднял мне работу все утро / за все утро / сейчас он затрудняет мне работу (he made my work difficult for the whole morning / in the whole morning / now he is making my work difficult); (4) увлекался музыкой неделю / за неделю / сейчас он увлекается музыкой (he became engrossed in music for a week / in a week / now he is becoming engrossed in music); or (5) переживал горе год / за год / сейчас он очень переживает из-за дочери (he took hard his sorrow for a year / in a year / now he takes it hard on himself because of his daughter).

These verbs are predominantly states that presuppose an extended period of time for their realization; hence, no completion is expected. Their semantics also exclude the concept of iterativity.

As to the notions of duration and progression, the examples considered above reveal an interesting observation. It seems that in Russian, due to the absence of special progressive verb forms, the same imperfective forms (past, present, and future) are used to express the notions of both duration and progression. The former requires a contextual indicator of duration, while the latter requires a broader context that includes either the moment of speech or another verb situation for establishing condition for simultaneity. For example, Он читал газету час. (He read a newspaper for an hour.) / Сейчас он читает газету. (Now he is reading a newspaper.) / Когда дети спали, он читал газету. (When the children were sleeping, he read a newspaper).

However, in the present tense context, stative verbs are not perceived as truly progressive. A translation of contexts with stative verbs in pattern D illustrates this point: Сейчас он очень переживает из-за дочери means He takes it hard on himself now because of his daughter and not He is ?taking it hard on himself now because of his daughter. Another example, Сейчас он увлекается музыкой, means Now he is engrossed in music rather than He is ?becoming engrossed in music.

9 Stative verbs in English are rarely used in the present progressive tense.
The combinatory patterns in semantic distributions and the numbers of occurrences for each of the four groups A, B, C, and D (prefixed / non-prefixed or transitive / intransitive verbs) are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: **Combinatory Distribution of Semantic Notions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Pattern A</th>
<th>Pattern B</th>
<th>Pattern C</th>
<th>Pattern D</th>
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<td>в/вз 13</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>вы 26</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>ДО 23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>ЗА 38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>из/ис 6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>на 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>от 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>пере 13</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>по 27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>под 6</td>
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<td>пре 6</td>
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<td>пред 7</td>
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<td>при 19</td>
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<td>раз 9</td>
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Proceeding from the data, the following observations are formed:

(1) An incompatibility of secondary imperfective verbs with indicators of duration is attested in 127 of the 300 total contexts: of these 127, 67 verbs are transitive and 60 are intransitive. This group makes up 42% of the total number of verbs considered in the research. In Table 2 these verbs are placed under Patterns B and C, with total numbers at the bottom of the table.

(2) The data on the compatibility of secondary imperfective verbs with indicators of completion is even more striking: of 300 verbs, 245 verbs (82.6%) are compatible with it. This is, of course, contrary to the prevalent position in methodological explanations of the verbal aspect in Russian, which presents a notion of completion as the basic function of the perfective aspect. These verbs are placed under Patterns A and C in Table 2. Of these, 181 verbs are transitive, and 64 are intransitive.

(3) Moreover, the data also show that a quite large number (162) of contexts with secondary imperfective verbs reveal their compatibility with notions of both duration and completion, making up 54%. All these verbs represent the type under Pattern A; 132 of them are transitive, and 30 are intransitive verbs.

(4) The data suggest that transitive / intransitive features do not seem significant within the three groups: respectively, 18 transitive verbs versus 26 intransitive verbs in group B; 49 versus 34 in group C; and 5 versus 6 in group D. However, the verbs in group A are mostly transitive – 132 versus 30 intransitive. Transitive verbs in this group predominantly
describe activities, and this explains their compatibility with the notions of both duration and completion.

(5) Another observation worth mentioning is the compatibility / incompatibility of prefixed imperfective verbs of motion with indicators of duration and completion. Of the 300 total verbs in this study, 41 are prefixed verbs of motion, derived from their multi-directional simplex verbs of motion, such as вносить, въезжать, въезжать, доехать, доходить, дозвозить, заезжать, объезжать, etc. Verbs of motion were not a focus of this research mainly because that large group of verbs has been described in great detail and quite comprehensively in the methodological literature for learners of Russian. However, even this small number of randomly selected verbs shows the same patterns as most of the secondary imperfective verbs in this study in regard to their compatibility / incompatibility with indicators of duration and completion.

Group A includes 20 verbs: for example, Он вносит чемодан в дом за минуту (He was bringing a suitcase inside the house for a minute) / за минуту (he brought a suitcase inside the house in a minute). Сейчас он вносит чемодан в дом (Now he is bringing a suitcase inside the house).

Group B contains 11 verbs: for example, Он забегал домой за минуту / за минуту / Сейчас он забегает домой. All three contexts are untranslatable to English because, in each context, the verb forms забегал / забегает refer to a number of occasions when he stopped or stops by the house: He used to stop by the house for minute (на минуту, not ?минуту), and not ?in a minute (?за минуту); similarly, he stops, not ?is stopping by the house. This phenomenon reveals the verb’s truly iterative nature because its semantics has preserved a multi-directional essence of its original simplex verb бегать (to run multiple times).

Group C includes 10 verbs: for example, Он доходил до дома за минуту (He used to reach the house / come up to the house ?for a minute ) / Он доходил до дома за минуту (He used to reach the house / come up to the house in a minute) / Сейчас он доходит домой (?Now he ?is coming up to the house). As in the case of the verb забегать, the semantics of verb доходить have also
preserved the iterativity notion which is characteristic of all simplex multi-directional verbs of motion. Therefore, its iterative nature does not tolerate either the concept of duration or progression. However, it differs from the verb забегать in its compatibility with an indicator of completion. This is due to the semantics of the prefix до- which presupposes some period of time needed for attaining a goal. On the contrary, the prefix за- does not imply such an idea. Rather, it refers to an initial point of visit which presupposes a possible period of stay: Он забегал на минуту means He stopped by and stayed for a minute and then left.

Discussion
The data used in the research is small in its scope. It includes only 300 secondary imperfective verbs, selected from a 2000-verb index and then supplied with minimal and extended contexts to check the compatibility of each with aspectual indicators of duration and completion. Nevertheless, it is representative enough to make observations about how distribution of aspectual notions within this group of secondary imperfective verbs takes place.

The data reveal four combinatory patterns, described above, that allow one to draw insightful conclusions, such as why some secondary imperfective verbs are incompatible with indicators of duration and progression, the prevalent notions of the imperfective aspect, and why many other verbs are compatible with indicators of completion, typically associated with the perfective aspect. Overall, the decisive factors in combinatory distribution of aspectual notions are the semantics of the verb stems and their prefixes.

The fact that 82.6% of 300 secondary imperfective verbs are compatible with the notion of completion and 42% of them are incompatible with the notion of duration raises several questions concerning the traditional approach to introducing the category of verbal aspect to learners of Russian. Among these are: Is the category of verbal aspect in Russian indeed a privative binary opposition if, as we have just observed, it embraces at least four types of verbs that function differently? Does it help Russian language learners to grasp the essence of the category of verbal aspect if we introduce it through aspectual
On Semantic Peculiarities of Secondary Imperfective Verbs in Russian
Valentina S. Soboleva

pairs, despite the fact that no general agreement exists among grammarians and lexicologists as to how to define the pairs?

Indeed, more and more researchers express doubts about the traditional explanation of the category of verbal aspect. A convincing critique of the predominant approach to the interpretation of verbal aspect in Russian is given by А. В. Кравченко. In his article “A New Cognitive Framework for Russian Aspect” (1995), he presents his own classification of aspectual features of Russian verbs, proceeding from their morphological characteristics. He recognizes three parameters for describing the formation of aspectual verb forms in Russian: (1) base verbs + (2) spatial prefixes → (3) derived verbs. Base verbs can be imperfective (IMP1 - вести) or perfective (PF1 - дать). Proceeding from the imperfective base verb, he identifies six steps in the formation of aspectual forms: IMP1 (вести)→IMP2 (водить)→IMP3 (важивать)→PF3 (вывести)→IMP2der (выводить)→IMP3der (выжавивать). Proceeding from the perfective base verb, he identifies four steps: PF1(дать)→IMP2 (давать)→PF3 (выдать)→IMP2der (выдавать). He also identifies a third type of formation of aspectual verb forms that includes six steps, proceeding from the perfective suffixed form (PF2): PF2(толкнуть)→IMP2 (толкать)→IMP3 (талкивать)→PF2 der (вытолкнуть)→PF4 (выталкивать).

This approach looks attractive because it allows for the systematization of all existing morphological types of aspectual forms of Russian verbs in a simple yet comprehensive way. It focuses on verb formation and shows how various aspectual verb forms correlate with each other. Hence, dealing with aspectual pairs becomes unnecessary. Instead, a dictionary can simply provide verb forms in the alphabetical order, listing all other related verbs with a common stem and lexical meaning in the same entry: for example, 1) увезти (prefixed per.) / везти (base unidirectional imp.) / возить (base multidirectional imp.) / увозить (prefixed sec. imp.) , 2) завезти (prefixed per.) / везти (base unidirectional imp.) / возить (base multidirectional imp.) / завозить (prefixed sec. imp.), 3) прочитать (prefixed per.) / читать (base imp.) / прочитывать (prefixed sec. imp.), 4) перечитать (prefixed per.) / читать (base imp.) / перечитывать (prefixed sec. imp.), and so on.

Approaches to organizing verb entries in a dictionary can vary considerably; however, pairing verbs as perfective versus imperfective
should be abandoned. It would be more beneficial for the learner of Russian to be exposed to the rich and intricate system of Russian verbs that allows for differentiating meticulous nuances in their semantics.

We definitely need to reconsider the traditional approach to defining basic aspectual meanings of the perfective and imperfective aspects as, respectively, completion and duration / progression. The data of this research questions the validity and rationale of this approach. How can we continue to confuse Russian language learners telling them that the notion of completion is ascribed only to the perfective aspect if so many secondary imperfective verbs are just as compatible with it? 10

In her empirical study, В. С. Соболева (1998, 2011) suggested that (1) the basic invariant aspectual notion of the perfective verb is a specific localized-in-time situation and (2) the basic notion of the imperfective aspect is a general validity. Their Russian equivalents are, correspondingly, конкретно-фактическое значение andобще—фактическое значение. 11 These two basic notions are interchangeable in minimal contexts – the preference for one over another reflects a purely pragmatic decision on the part of the speaker: Я уже говорил (Имр.) ему об этом сегодня утром (general) / Я уже сказал (Пер.) ему об этом сегодня утром (specific). The semantic difference between these two forms is untranslatable into English: both sentences mean I have already told him about it this morning. For the Russian speaker, though, the difference depends on the emphasis, whether she recalled the fact as a situation that happened some time in the morning or as one that happened in the morning at a particular time.

All perfective verbs are contextually independent; in any context, minimal or extended, they designate a specific, localized-in-time situation and, therefore, are used for expressing sequential situations: Вчера я купил (Пер.) новую машину. После того как я купил (Пер.) ее, я сразу поехал (Пер.) на ней кататься по городу. (Yesterday I

10 The same applies to consideration of boundedness or totality as the basic meaning of the perfective aspect. See, for example, the arguments of А. В. Кравченко (1995).
11 The Russian terms were suggested by О. П. Рассудова (1968), though she considered them only contextual, not basic aspectual meanings of the perfective and imperfective aspects. J. A. Forsyth (1970) was more accurate, defining the basic meaning of the imperfective aspect as simple denotation, which, in essence, does not differ from the term general-validity.
bought a new car. After I had bought it / After buying it, I immediately drove it around the town.)

Of the four meanings of the imperfective aspect, only the basic meaning of general-validity is bound to a minimal context. The three other aspecual notions of the imperfective aspect -- repetition (повторяющееся действие), duration and progression (длительное and актуально-длительное действие) -- are contextually dependent. They are realized in extended contexts: repetition and duration are expressed on the phrasal level, for example, читал книгу каждый вечер / два дня (read a book every evening / for two days), and progression is expressed on the sentential level, as simultaneous situations, for example, Когда дети читали, мать готовила ужин (While the children were reading, the mother was preparing dinner).

Such interpretation of aspecual functions of the perfective and imperfective verbs seems to be in agreement with the binary opposition principle on the basis of which the category of verbal aspect is described. However, the secondary imperfective verbs that reveal their iterative nature and compatibility with indicators of completion raise reasonable doubts about the validity of the binary opposition approach. Obviously, we need to develop a new, different approach. Maybe, after all, Vendler’s (1967) classification of verb stems is applicable if we abandon the aspecual pairing approach and follow instead Kravchenko’s (1995) approach to describing aspect from the verbal morphology perspective. Although application of Vendler’s classification to the Russian verb system was not the purpose of this research, it would be interesting to look at such a possibility in the near future.

Conclusion
It is quite obvious that secondary imperfective verbs in Russian do, indeed, create the ‘mystery’ Oscar Swan mentioned in his article (1977). It seems that, contrary to Klimonov’s position (2010), the semantic notion of iterativity has not been lost by the language; rather, it has found another way of expressing itself through a combination of originally iterative suffixes -ыва-/ива- and prefixed perfective verbs.

Even though specialists on the verbal aspect in Russian have in the past periodically devoted their attention to this phenomenon, up to
now no comprehensive explanation has been offered. Likewise, a survey of Russian textbooks yields no specific information about introducing secondary imperfective verbs to students of Russian.

The findings of this research strongly suggest a revision of the existing approach to the introduction of the Russian verbal aspect in textbooks as a binary opposition between the perfective completive and the imperfective durative. Teachers of Russian need to focus more on the role of verb morphology and context in the distribution of aspectual notions between the aspects. Indeed, changing what we are accustomed to requires, first of all, making a decision and then putting some effort into developing a new approach. However, the need for change is urgent: creating a simple, comprehensive, and generally accepted interpretation of the verbal aspect in Russian will benefit all parties: linguists, who are concerned with theoretical explanations of language phenomena, as well as teachers and learners of Russian, both of whom are in need of systemic and comprehensive explanations of how Russian verbs function.

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## Appendix

### Table 1: Classification of secondary imperfective verbs (300)

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<td>в /вз / вс</td>
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<td>вкладывал деньги в автомат</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>(13)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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On Semantic Peculiarities of Secondary Imperfective Verbs in Russian  
Valentina S. Soboleva

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*Valentina S. Soboleva*

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| съесть - t | съел кашу | triplet | -- | + | -- | + | C |
| снить - t | снёл гнездо | triplet | -- | + | -- | + | C |
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<td>pair</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>уничтожить - t</td>
<td>уничтожал жилье</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>удаться – int</td>
<td>удавалось всё (ему)</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>упасть - int</td>
<td>падал на пол</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>явиться - int</td>
<td>явился в дом</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оказывать - t</td>
<td>оказывал помощь</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>остаться - int</td>
<td>оставался дома</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>остановить - t</td>
<td>останавливал машину</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>оказаться - int</td>
<td>оказывался в ситуации</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>обратиться - int</td>
<td>обращался за помощью</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>обновить - t</td>
<td>обновлял инструкцию</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>A</td>
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Politeness and Sociocultural Values in American and Russian Cultures Emerging from the Speech Act of Complaint; Pragmatic Competence of L2 Learners of Russian

Beata Gallaher

Introduction
In the last two decades, there has been an increasing number of empirical studies on complaints that explore the effects of sociocultural values and linguistic politeness on the language performance of native- and non-native speakers of English (Kasper 1981; Piotrowska 1987; Olshtain and Weinbach 1987, 1993; Trosborg 1995; Arent 1996; Murphy and Neu 1996; Kraft and Geluykens 2002, 2007; Tanck 2002; Umar 2006; Prykarpatska 2008). However, the empirical data on complaints by Russian native and non-native speakers remains scarce (Olshtain and Weinbach 1993; Gershenson 2003; Kozlova 2004; Perelmutter 2010). The research on complaints is particularly important for studying the impact of cultural values on speakers' linguistic choices in problem negotiations within and across cultures.

Given the limited research on both intercultural differences in the realization of complaints as well as interlanguage complaints in Russian, the present study investigates empirical data on complaints as performed by American first language (L1) speakers of English (ASs), Russian native speakers of Russian (RSs), and American learners of Russian as a foreign language (L2) who studied abroad. A complaint is an illocutionary act in which the speakers convey negative feelings about their current situation, for which they hold the hearer directly or

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1 I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dan Davidson for his support and guidance with my research. I am very grateful to Prof. Irina Pavlovna Lysakova, the ACTR staff members, and resident directors in Russia for their assistance in data collection. I also would like to thank the editorial team of RLJ, two anonymous reviewers, and Victor Frank for their valuable and detailed comments on my article. I thank Mary Zaborskis for her proofreading in English. Any remaining errors are my own.
indirectly responsible (Trosborg 1995, 311-12). In a complaint, speakers show their displeasure at something that they believe the hearer did, failed to do, or is still doing (311). Boxer (1993, 106-7) identified complaints that speakers address toward hearers as direct, as opposed to indirect complaints when speakers convey dissatisfaction about themselves, someone that is not present, or something, such as circumstances. Following Boxer’s (1993) classification, this study explores direct complaints. Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987, 65) classified complaints as inherently face-threatening acts (FTAs) because their performance may threaten the speaker’s and hearer’s face. They defined face as a public self-image that speakers want to maintain in social interactions. To carry out a complaint, speakers may use a certain strategy depending on the degree of face threat, which can be estimated by an interaction of three social factors: social power, social distance, and the degree of imposition (76). According to Brown and Levinson, this estimation determines the degree of linguistic politeness that speakers employ in FTAs. If face threat is high, speakers may decide to opt out of performing a FTA and not say anything at all.

The present study offers a systematic analysis of empirical data based on the participants’ opt-out behaviors as well as on their complaints with a focus on linguistic politeness and the sociocultural values underlying American and Russian cultures. The analysis also provides insights into the pragmatic competence of American L2 learners of Russian at the Intermediate and Advanced proficiency levels and with study abroad experience.

**Literature review**

Cross-cultural studies on American and Russian cultures have indicated that ASs place a great value on independence, private space, individualism, self-reliance, individual responsibility, and friendliness, whereas RSs value hospitality, honesty, straightforwardness, intimacy among friends, and emotionality (Wierzbicka 1991; Kartalova 1996; Ogiermann 2009). Studies have shown that cultural values in American and Russian cultures affect the speakers’ perception of linguistic politeness, which may cause miscommunication across cultures. ASs avoid directness and prefer indirectness in social interactions because they do not want to impose upon interlocutors out of respect for their
independence and private space (Wierzbicka 1991). Unlike ASs, RSs do not perceive directness as an imposition, but as a reflection of sincerity and closeness (Wierzbicka 1991; Ogiermann 2009). RSs also value advice from interlocutors and expect to be morally evaluated by others. Sometimes they even “require from others moral evaluation of mutual loyalty, respect, [and] sincerity” (Bergelson 2003, 3). ASs who value individualism may perceive such behavior as an intrusion into privacy.

RSs also openly express their emotions because they associate it with truthfulness and solidarity, whereas ASs may perceive emotionality as imposition upon the freedom of the interlocutor (Wierzbicka 1991; Kartalova 1996). The differences in cultural values are particularly important for the present study that explores linguistic behavior of ASs and RSs in problem negotiation.

Cross-cultural research on direct complaints has shown that cultural values affect the linguistic choices of the speakers within culture and can cause miscommunication across cultures. Gershenson (2003) in her study on complaints performed by Israelis, Russians and Russian immigrants in Israel found that Russian and Hebrew speakers employed different linguistic strategies in a complaint situation, which reflected their cultural values. The differences in cultural values led to cross-cultural misunderstandings and conflicts between these two language groups. Olshtain and Weinbach’s (1993) study showed that Russian and Moroccan immigrants in Israel differently structured their complaints related to money, friendship, and parking, which reflected their respective culture-specific values. However, in another study, Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) found that American speakers, British English speakers, and Hebrew speakers employed similar strategies (warning, complaint, and disapproval) when complaining in situations that are socially unacceptable in all three cultures. The authors asserted that the situation itself, and not language- or culture-specific norms, was a significant factor in the strategy selection across cultures.

Cross-cultural studies have also indicated that speakers across cultures differently perceive social variables of distance and power, which affects their linguistic behavior. Hebrew speakers in Olshtain and Weinbach’s (1993) study opted for less severe strategies with a person of a higher status than with a person of a lower status. Similarly, native speakers of English in Trosborg’s (1995) study employed more indirect
strategies (hints) with an authority figure to be polite. However, native speakers of Danish did not select more indirect strategies when the status was unequal, but they used significantly more supportive moves than English speakers. Trosborg concluded that Danish and English speakers differently perceive the parameters of social status. She also found that social distance was a negative predictor for strategy selection in both language groups because speakers put the least amount of effort into structuring and modifying their complaints when social distance was considered (372).

Studies on direct complaints that investigated learners’ pragmatic competence at the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic levels have shown that learners’ pragmatic inappropriateness may result from limited linguistic competence and different sociocultural norms across cultures. Piotrowska’s (1987) study showed that Cantonese learners of English made different linguistic and strategic choices than native speakers when social distance and situational context were considered. Piotrowska attributed the differences to sociocultural norms in both language groups. Arent (1996) made similar observations in his study on Chinese speakers of English as L2. He found that there is “a strong relationship between linguistic and cultural background and sociopragmatic failure” (138). Some studies have shown that learners made inappropriate linguistic choices, which native speakers perceived as a critique, not a complaint (Murphy and Neu 1996), or led to

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2 In recent years, there have been several empirical studies exploring pragmatic competence of American L2 of Russian in interlanguage request (Owen 2001; Frank 2002, 2010) and apology (Shardakova 2009). Although these studies do not refer to complaints, they provide valuable insights into the inter-relationship between learners’ pragmatic and grammatical competences in the domestic classroom (Frank 2002, 2010) and study abroad program (Frank 2010), as well as the development of learners’ pragmatic competence in relation to their proficiency level and study abroad experience (Owen 2001; Shardakova 2009).

3 Pragmalinguistics refers to linguistic strategies like directness, indirectness, language routines, and linguistic forms employed by speakers in communicative acts while sociopragmatics describes the social conditions in which language use is appropriate (Leech 1983; Thomas 1983). Scholars in sociopragmatics investigate social factors, such as social distance, relative social power, and the degree of imposition as well as cultural values, which determine rights and obligations in each specific culture.
pragmatic failure (Kasper 1981; Gershenson 2003). Tanck’s (2002) study on direct complaints and refusals of non-native speakers of English showed that learners may produce grammatically correct utterances in complaints, but they may be socially and culturally inappropriate, revealing their lack of pragmatic competence. The studies mentioned above indicate that learners need to acquire sociocultural norms in order to improve their pragmatic competence and effectively negotiate a problem with native speakers.

Some researchers have attributed learners’ divergence from native norms to transfer of their L1 and their native culture (C1) (Kasper 1981; Gershenson 2003; Umar 2006). Gershenson (2003) found that complaints of Russian L2 learners of Hebrew in Israel were more verbose, indirect, and playful than those of Hebrew speakers, which she attributed to learners’ L1 transfer (285). Umar (2006) found that advanced Sudanese learners of English differed from native-speakers’ norms at the linguistic and sociopragmatic levels when social distance and severity of offense were considered. Umar attributed these differences to cultural norms (the value of friendship), pragmatic transfer (the use of the imperative), and limited linguistic competence (34).

As the above-mentioned studies indicate, speakers across cultures differently negotiate problems based on language- and culture-specific norms, which, in turn, affect the learners’ linguistic behavior in the target language. As evidenced from the foregoing, learners’ complaints differ from native speakers’ norms in terms of strategy selection and linguistic choices, which are often determined by social factors and cultural values. The differences may also result from learners’ transfer of L1 and C1.

The present study expands the existing data on sociocultural norms and politeness rules underlying American and Russian cultures as well on the pragmatic competence of American L2 learners of Russian. The study provides a thorough investigation of empirical data by exploring the social variables of distance and power.

**Methodology**

Thomas (1983, 91) defined pragmatic failure as speakers’ “inability to understand ‘what is meant by what is said,’” which can cause a communication breakdown between native and non-native speakers.
Research questions
The article reports on the major findings of a study on direct complaints of ASs, RSs, and American L2 learners of Russian with reference to the following research questions:

1. What cultural values underlying American and Russian cultures are revealed in the complaints of ASs and RSs?
2. Do ASs and RSs differ in their assessment of social power and social distance in a complaint situation?
3. To what extent do the complaints of American L2 learners of Russian reveal transfer of their L1 and C1, and to what extent do they reflect native speakers’ norms?

Participant profile
This study is based on data obtained from 30 ASs, 30 RSs, and 37 American L2 of Russian at the Intermediate and Advanced proficiency levels with study abroad experience. ASs were randomly recruited at Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore Colleges in Pennsylvania. They were in the age range of 18 to 22. The data from RSs was collected at Moscow State University in Moscow and Herzen State Pedagogical University in Saint Petersburg, Russia. This group encompassed students in the age range of 17 to 24.

The group of American L2 learners of Russian consisted of students who participated in the study abroad program in Russia under the auspices of the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR). The L2 learners were enrolled in the language program for the fall semester of 2010 and the spring semester of 2011 at Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia in Saint Petersburg, Moscow International University in Moscow, and the Center for Russian Language Study (CORA) in Vladimir. The learners’ proficiency levels were established for ACTR by certified testers who administered the OPI to students before their departure to Russia, except for three male students, whose proficiency levels were based on their in-country OPI.

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5 An additional thirty-three participants were excluded from the final analysis because they did not complete the questionnaires appropriately or were bilingual.
Elicitation of the data
A combination of an open-ended oral discourse completion questionnaire (DCQ) and an assessment questionnaire was used to elicit data. Although the validity of DCQs has been widely criticized, some researchers emphasize that this method of collecting data is a good instrument for exploring cultural values reflected in speech acts (Beebe and Cummings 1996) as well as semantic strategies and linguistic structures frequently employed in speech act realization (Beebe and Cummings 1996; Kasper and Roever 2005). Therefore, this study utilized DCQs to elicit data.

Participants in the present study did not interact with another speaker, which may have altered their natural linguistic behavior. However, role-plays were not considered as a method to collect data because, as some studies have indicated, the tester’s age, gender, and social status may affect participants’ responses, and, consequently, the results of the study (Owen 2001; Shardakova 2009). Natural settings that may provide more authentic data than experimental methods were also not considered as an alternative method because some variables (e.g., age, social status, severity of offense, the sample population) are difficult and even impossible to control in natural environments (Beebe and Cummings 1996; Cohen 1996).

In the present study, participants in each language group first reacted orally to fifteen situations, twelve of which triggered complaints (see Appendix), and then filled out an assessment questionnaire, in which they rated on a 3-point scale the degree of offense and the obligation to express complaints. The scenarios were provided in English for ASs, in Russian for RSs, and in both languages for L2 learners to ensure their understanding. Scenarios varied in the degree of imposition/offense (severe or moderate), social distance (the degree of familiarity), and the relative social power between the speaker and the hearer (social status) by featuring communication with a friend, a stranger, and a person of an unequal status (see Table 1).

6 The situations were adjusted to each culture, which resulted in some differences in the translation. For example, spilling coffee in the subway in American culture was replaced with dropping ice cream in Russian culture.
Table 1. Distribution of social variables in situations featuring complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social distance</th>
<th>Interaction with a friend</th>
<th>Interaction with a stranger</th>
<th>Interaction with a professor</th>
<th>Interaction with a person whom the speaker hired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Power</td>
<td>S = H (the same social status between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H))</td>
<td>S = H (the same social status between the speaker and the hearer)</td>
<td>S &lt; H (the social status of the speaker is lower than the status of the hearer)</td>
<td>S &gt; H (the social status of the speaker is higher than the status of the hearer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Imposition</td>
<td>severe/moderate</td>
<td>severe/moderate</td>
<td>severe/moderate</td>
<td>severe/moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each participant was instructed on how to complete the oral and written tasks and was left alone in the room. The participants were asked to carefully read each scenario and to voice their reaction into a tape recorder. They were instructed to react spontaneously, but they were not told to complain. They also had a choice of saying nothing if in real life they would not give any response. The participants were instructed not to use indirect strategies, such as Я бы сказал (a) or I would say, but direct strategies, as if they were talking to the interlocutor. Participants who used indirect strategies were excluded from the final analysis.

The recorded data was transcribed. In addition, the researcher transcribed the explanations participants gave when they chose not to react to a scenario. The data obtained from L2 learners was also evaluated for linguistic and cultural appropriateness by two native speakers who were graduate students in philology at Herzen State Pedagogical University in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Coding
The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part of the investigation is based on the situations to which the participants in each language group decided not to react and on the explanations that they provided to their opt-out behaviors (cf. Bonikowska 1988). To analyze the participants’ choices, descriptive statistics and qualitative analyses were conducted.
The second part of the investigation is based on the reasons that the speakers in each language group provided most frequently to justify their complaints. The study investigated the following reasons: 1) the speaker’s appeal to the hearer to take responsibility; 2) the speaker’s appeal to the hearer to respect his/her private territory and independence; 3) the speaker’s justification of the hearer’s behavior; 4) the speaker’s appeal to the hearer’s moral consciousness; 5) and the speaker’s appeal to the hearer by lecturing him or her about how they should behave. Although category 2 was absent in complaints of RSs, and category 4 was not present in complaints of ASs, both categories were used to code the data because of their high frequency in their respective groups.

The second part of the investigation also includes an analysis of the speakers’ linguistic choices in terms of linguistic politeness by considering face threat. To assess the directness level of complaints, a taxonomy of directness was established based on the CCSARP perspectives of directness (Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984) as well as Owen’s (2001) coding system to capture the linguistic reservoir in Russian. The following taxonomy of directness was used in the present study:

1. **Speaker-oriented - I or я**
The speakers identify themselves as complainers, and, at the same time, they take responsibility for expressing a complaint by using the personal pronoun in the first person singular.

2. **Hearer-oriented – you or ты (informal) / вы (formal)**
The speakers explicitly refer to the hearer as responsible for the wrongdoing by using the personal pronoun in the second person singular or plural. In both languages, the *hearer-perspective* is an open-face threatening act that causes damage to the speaker’s and to the hearer’s face.

3. **Speaker- and hearer-oriented - we or мы**
The speakers use the personal pronoun in the first person plural that minimizes the imposition upon the hearer. By employing the first person

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7 According to statistical analyses, in all interactions, L2 learners were more likely to use speaker-oriented strategies than RSs (p = .004), which was attributed to their L1 transfer. RSs, in turn, most frequently used hearer-oriented strategies (p = .004).
plural, the speakers reduce the risk of losing their face by reducing their role as a complainer through the hearer’s involvement, which leads to the speaker and the hearer sharing responsibility for a wrongdoing.

4. Impersonal (in English) - one, people, it and Non-Personalized (in Russian) ⁸- passive structures and он (а), они [he/she/it], and они [they] with reference to external elements as a source of the complaint, for example, Опять посуда грязная. [The dishes are dirty again.]

In Russian, this category includes passive structures and structures with third person singular and plural referring to external sources but not people as a source of the complaint. By shifting to the third person singular or plural, the speaker changes the focus from the wrongdoer to the wrongdoing, which, in turn, minimizes the risk of losing face by the speaker and the hearer.

5. Subjectless sentences in Russian - expressions of type не получилось [(it) did not work out], or пришлось [(it) was needed], and expressions with generic subjects in the third person plural (Shardakova 2009, 59), for example, в библиотеке сказали [in the library (they) said].

By avoiding the subject in the nominative case, Russian speakers shift the focus from the speaker or the hearer to an unspecified source of control over the situation, which minimizes the risk to the speaker’s face and the hearer’s face.

Analysis and discussion of the findings
Results based on opt-out behaviors

Striking cross-cultural differences between ASs and RSs arose from the situations to which the speakers decided not to react. The most significant differences were observed in public behavior between ASs and RSs, as well as L2 learners (see Figure 1). Most frequently ASs and L2 learners did not react in the “Subway” and “Cutting Line” scenarios: 32.4% of learners decided not to say anything to a woman who cut in line in front of them in the grocery store, and 48.7% did not address a woman who stained their white shirt with ice cream in the subway. In

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⁸ The category impersonal has been renamed as non-personalized to reflect the linguistic features of the Russian language.
the group of ASs, 26.7% of the participants decided not to say anything in the store and 33.3% did not react in the subway, while among RSs there was only one female and one male speaker who did not react in the grocery store and in the subway. It should be noted that the same Russian female did not react in the subway and in the grocery store.

The speakers’ explanations of their opt-out behaviors in public offered valuable insights into sociocultural values underlying both cultures. The explanations indicated that ASs avoided confrontations in public and justified the hearer’s behavior in order to save their own face and the hearer’s face. RSs, in turn, took into consideration teaching strangers how to behave and referred to the wrongdoer’s conscience; thus, they were less concerned about losing face. The learners’ behavior revealed various reasons behind their decisions, and some of them were attributed to transfer of sociocultural norms from their L1, such as justification of the hearer’s behavior and avoidance of conflict in public. Some, on the other hand, reflected a high degree of awareness of American-Russian cultural differences and of their linguistic limitations as L2 speakers.

Figure 1. Distribution of opt-out behaviors in public (percentage)

![Figure 1. Distribution of opt-out behaviors in public (percentage)](image-url)
Significant cross-cultural differences between ASs and RSs were also observed in their interactions with friends. As Figure 2 exhibits, while all RSs addressed a roommate who did not do the dishes, 20% of ASs decided not to say anything in this situation because dirty dishes are not an important reason to confront friends. Similarly, in the situation “Library Fee,” 20% of ASs, as compared to 10% of RSs, decided not to address a friend who did not return a book on time. The explanations of ASs and RSs revealed different cultural values: the speaker’s discomfort in talking about money, even among friends, in American culture, and the speaker’s uneasiness to address money because of friendship with the hearer in Russian culture. Learners’ explanations showed that their perceptions of friendship and money are similar to the behavior of ASs, which indicates transfer from their L1 at the sociopragmatic level.

**Figure 2. Distribution of opt-out behaviors with friends (percentage)**

![Chart showing distribution of opt-out behaviors with friends](chart.png)

The analysis also revealed important cross-cultural differences regarding the impact of social status on interactions in both cultures. RSs who opted out of the situations “Bad Grade” and “Missed Meeting” explained that they would not negotiate a grade with a professor or ask...
about his absence in a meeting due to their upbringing and because they would never question the professor’s authority. One participant also said that a professor is kind of святой [sacred] and she would not confront him in order to avoid damaging the relationship. ASs and L2 learners gave as explanations their previous bad experiences negotiating a grade and the fact that they themselves are responsible for their grades. The explanations have shown that the hearer’s higher status affects the behavior of native speakers in Russian culture who are more reserved and respectful toward professors in Russia, while the hearer’s status has less of a constraining effect for both L1 speakers of English in American culture and American L2 learners of Russian.

Figure 3. Distribution of opt-out behaviors with a person of a different social status (percentage)

Moreover, the analysis of opt-out behaviors indicated that speakers in both cultures behaved differently toward a hearer of a lower social status (see Figure 3). In the situation “Translation Services,” 13.3% of RSs decided not to address a student who did not return his part of a large project on time as compared to 3.3% of ASs. The explanations provided by ASs indicated that they have higher expectations and are

\[ \text{Bad Grade (S<H): 13.5\%} \]
\[ \text{Missed Meeting (S<H): 6.7\%} \]
\[ \text{Translation Services (S>H): 8.1\%} \]
\[ \text{Tutor (S>H): 0\%} \]
more demanding toward a person whom they hired than RSs. With regard to L2 learners, their explanations were closer to those of their American peers, which was attributed to transfer of L1 sociocultural norms.

**Analysis of complaints**

The analysis of complaints revealed major cross-cultural differences between ASs and RSs in their interactions with friends, strangers, and people of a higher status, which, in turn affected the L2 learners’ pragmatic competence in Russian.

The data has demonstrated that in the situations in which a contract has been broken, such as “Library Fee,” “Late for Project,” “Paying Rent,” “Dirty Dishes,” and “Translation Services,” speakers in all language groups asked the hearers to take responsibility and to fulfill their obligations. While confronting friends and hired persons, overall, the speakers in all language groups reprimanded and criticized the hearers about the wrongdoing, and they often lectured them about their behavior, particularly in the situations “Late for Project” and “Dirty Dishes.”

However, RSs stood out from the other speakers because of a strong tendency to teach the hearer how to behave properly, which reinforces the results obtained in the analysis of opt-out behaviors. RSs reprimanded not only friends but also strangers by lecturing them about how they should behave, being judgmental about their behavior, and giving them advice about how to live, учить жизни, [to teach life] as one of the RSs said. They also appeal to the hearer’s morality and conscience, which was absent in the data of ASs. The way RSs taught strangers how to behave can be seen in the following example:

(1) RS (Subway): Ė-моё! Извините, пожалуйста: поаккуратней! Я понимаю, очередь, много людей в метро, давка, но надо было бы хотя бы доесть мороженое в метро или не открывать его, и счас съесть, когда вы выйдете из метро. Предусмотрите ситуацию на пару ходов вперёд.

“What the hell! Excuse me but please: (be) more careful. I understand there is a line, many people in the subway, crowds, but (you) should have at least finished eating the ice cream in the
subway or not have opened it and eat it now when you get off the subway. Please foresee the situation by a few moves ahead.”

RSs preferred to directly address the wrongdoer and openly show the negative emotions triggered by the hearer’s behavior. Sometimes, they sounded angry and rude as exemplified by their emotionally loaded vocabulary. They were judgmental about the hearer and rarely justified the hearer’s wrongdoing in public: only three speakers showed understanding toward the woman’s behavior in the subway.

In contrast, ASs and L2 learners hardly ever reprimanded strangers because, as demonstrated in the previous section, they avoid criticism of people they do not know and because they do not want to have public confrontations. Unlike RSs, ASs and L2 learners preferred to express their frustration in exclamations and not to address the wrongdoer in public: only 13.3% of ASs openly addressed the woman about the spilled coffee and only 24.3% of the L2 learners held her responsible for the wrongdoing. The majority of ASs and L2 learners excused the woman’s behavior in the subway, and a few speakers even felt responsible for what had happened because they felt they should have been more careful. This sense of mutual responsibility was absent in the Russian data. The following examples demonstrate the behavior of ASs and L2 learners in public:

(2) AS (Subway): *Hey! Don’t worry about it! Um: not a problem! Let me help you clean it up.*

(3) L2 (Subway): *Ой! Ой! Боже мой! Ну ничего ээ- вы не виноваты. Ой! Надо было наверно быть более осторожно. Ну ничего! Наверно я тоже тороплюсь. Ну (вздох) всё хорошо.*

“Oh! Oh! My god! Well it’s nothing, um: it’s not your fault. Oh! You perhaps should have been more careful. Well it’s all right. Perhaps I am also in a hurry. Well (sigh) everything is fine.”

It appears that ASs and L2 learners were more linguistically restrained in their reactions in public than RSs. Their strategy selection indicated that they tried to save their own face and that of the hearer, while RSs were less concerned about saving their face.

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9 Learners’ errors are underlined in this article. The errors in pronunciation, stress and intonation are indicated by capitalized letters.
With regard to learners’ behavior in public, in the opinion of two Russian speakers who evaluated the learners’ data, learners’ reactions were often “too soft,” which is unusual for Russian culture. The learners were too apologetic and often justified the hearer’s behavior, while, according to the evaluators and to the researcher’s own analysis, RSs would either reprimand the wrongdoer in public or would not say anything. Apparently, some L2 learners would pragmatically fail while confronting strangers in Russian culture because RSs would not understand their overly polite behavior in Russian as a complaint.

The situations with friends in which money was involved, “Library Fee” and “Paying Rent,” triggered some differences in strategy selection among the speakers across cultures. In general, in the situation, “Library Fee,” the speakers in each language group asked the wrongdoer to pay or to help pay the fine and not to do this anymore in the future. However, the speakers in both cultures expressed it differently: while most ASs avoided directly addressing the wrongdoer and instead referred to the fine or the lateness of the book, nearly all RSs directly held the hearer responsible for the wrongdoing. By referring to the wrongdoing, ASs tried to reduce the imposition upon a friend, whereas RSs did not try to minimize or spare the feelings of a friend. The linguistic behavior of the speakers shows their different involvement in face-saving strategies in both cultures.

The learners displayed behavior similar to RSs: nearly all learners held the hearer responsible for not returning the book on time by using the 2nd-person singular. Their linguistic choices may reflect their acculturation process in adopting Russian behavior that could have been triggered by frequent interactions with Russian peers and their host families. However, more research is needed to make generalizations about the acculturation process of L2 learners because in other situations they behaved similarly to ASs by referring to the wrongdoing or using first-person singular to take responsibility for expressing a complaint.

In the situation “Paying Rent,” speakers in all language groups usually focused on their urgency to pay rent or on personal financial problems, and they rarely blamed the hearer directly for not returning the money on time. Some speakers hesitantly reminded the hearer about the money because they felt embarrassed or uncomfortable doing so. RSs often referred to the promise that the hearer made to return the
money. The speakers’ reactions also reflected some underlying cultural values in both cultures: self-sufficiency in American culture (Hoffman 1989; Wierzbicka 1991) and suffering that the hearer’s wrongdoing caused in Russian culture (Kozlova 2004; Larina 2009).

The situations with professors, “Bad Grade” and “Missed Meeting,” provided culture-specific characteristics of relationships between professors and students in both cultures. Similar to other studies (e.g., Shardakova 2009), ASs behaved in a friendly and informal manner with the professors by using the informal greeting hi while all RSs behaved formally with their professors, which reflects the impact of social power on social interactions in Russian culture. Many intermediate learners and one advanced learner behaved inappropriately by greeting the professors with привет ‘hi’ and addressing them with ты, informal you; the former one was accounted to the L2 learners’ transfer of sociocultural norms from their L1, while the latter resulted from a lack of a distinction in formal and informal address forms in their L1. In their interactions with a professor who forgot about their meeting, ASs and L2 learners suggested a certain time to meet with him, while only 6.7% of RSs made a suggestion to meet on a certain day. The learners exhibited an inappropriate sociopragmatic behavior because the professor suggests a certain time to meet with a student, and the reverse situation is improper in the Russian academic environment.

The analysis also showed some unexpected findings. Contrary to other studies (e.g., Murphy and Neu 1996), 23.3% of ASs openly criticized their professor and demanded a better grade. In the Russian data, 10% of the speakers criticized the professor. This finding confirms differences in social norms between professors and students in both cultures, which are much more formal in Russian culture than in American culture.

With reference to the L2 learners, overall, they were apologetic and indirect in expressing their disappointment by focusing on the exam

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10 These results may reflect a growing trend toward emphasis on customer satisfaction rather than learning outcomes alone among American students in the US. The hierarchy of the relationships and the academic freedom in the education system in American culture open some possible areas for further research.
or on the grade, while 16.2% of the learners, most of them at the intermediate level, openly criticized the professor, like in the following example:

(4) L2 (Intermediate): Николай Борисович! Ва на- вы включил в экзаменные билеты материал, который вы не проходили на:: семинарах а мы не проходили. А потом ты мне:: дал плохую оценку. Это:: но можно это (смех) я думаю, что не считается, если мы не проходили эти темы. Хочу хочу выше оценки.

“Nikolaj Borisovich! You at- you included in the exam tickets material that you did not cover in:: seminars and we did not cover. And later you me:: gave a ba- bad grade. This:: but can this (laugh) I think that (this) does not count if we did not cover these topics. (I) want want gra- (I) want a higher grade.”

Such an inappropriate sociolinguistic behavior could be perceived as poor mannered in Russian culture, and, consequently, could prevent the learners from any further negotiations about improving their grade and could even lead to a conflict with a professor in the future. Learners at both proficiency levels were also very verbose and lengthy in their explanations, which demonstrated their uncertainty about how to negotiate a problem with a professor in Russian culture. Unlike other studies that attributed learners’ wordiness to their linguistic shortcomings (Kraft and Geluykens 2002) and pragmatic competence (Shardakova 2009), the present study to some degree attributed the learners’ verbosity to their linguistic limitations. However, this study primarily attributed learners’ verbosity to their involvement in face-saving strategies,11 which they employed to minimize imposition upon the hearer.

The analysis also indicated culture-specific differences among ASs, RSs, and learners in their expression of gratitude. ASs and L2 learners expressed their gratitude toward the hearer, regardless of the fact that the hearer had let them down. They used gratitude as a face-saving strategy to minimize the offense in a complaint situation. In contrast, RSs showed their gratitude only in interactions with professors,

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11 Statistical analyses showed that advanced learners were more verbose than intermediate learners based on their use of words (p = .458) and strategies (p = .052).
which is in line with other studies (cf. Larina 2009) that indicated that RSs express gratitude for something that has already been done in their favor and not just to demonstrate politeness, unless speakers interact with the hearer in formal settings.

Conclusions
The results of the study show major differences between ASs and RSs in their perception of social distance (communication with friends and strangers) and social power (communication with an authority figure), as well as cross-cultural differences in speakers’ attitude toward friendship and money (cf. Kartalova 1996). It was also found that, to some degree, the situation itself elicited similarities in the ways that the speakers in all language groups justified their complaints, while sociocultural values in American and Russian cultures caused significant differences in the speakers’ strategy selection and linguistic choices in relation to politeness.

The results demonstrate that RSs show a tendency to teach (in the sense of воспитывать [to educate]) friends and strangers how to behave properly, give them advice, and openly judge them, and these results are in line with other studies (e.g., Bergelson 2003; Larina 2009). RSs preferred to directly address the hearer about the wrongdoing unless interacting with a person of a higher social status (Wierzbicka 1991; Larina 2009; Ogiermann 2009). The behavior of RSs in public may appear rude to ASs. However, as some scholars point out, the interactions with strangers imply less social distance in Russian culture, which Ogiermann (2009) put in the following way: “Apparently, the high social distance among strangers in Poland and Russia is quickly overcome when people become involved in a common situation – even if it takes a form of an offence” (228). These aspects of Russian culture were not present in the data of ASs. Overall, ASs were indirect, apologetic, and grateful toward the interlocutor in order to minimize the offense. They used these face-saving strategies in an effort to respect the interlocutor’s private space and independence and to avoid personal judgments. Unlike RSs, their interactions with professors indicated that the hearer’s higher status did not have a significant effect on their linguistic choices.
With regard to L2 learners, their strategy selection and linguistic choices were similar to those of ASs, which was attributed to transfer of their L1 and C1. Overall, learners preferred indirectness because they associated it with polite behavior, and they used various strategies to mitigate the offense, such as gratitude, apology, and justification and excuse of the hearer’s behavior. They tried to reduce the imposition upon the hearer by using these face-saving strategies, which RSs rarely used. It appears that most learners negotiated a problem according to sociocultural norms and politeness rules that they knew from their L1 and C1. Thus, they had difficulties adjusting their responses to the parameters of social distance and social power in Russian culture. In some situations, particularly in public and sometimes with an authority figure, their inappropriate sociopragmatic behavior could prevent them from effective negotiations with Russian native speakers. However, advanced learners more successfully negotiated problems because they had better control over the linguistic devices they used to address the wrongdoer and to mitigate the offense than intermediate learners.

The findings indicate that learners at both proficiency levels, but in particular intermediate learners, would greatly benefit from classroom activities in which speakers of different social distance and status negotiate a problem that involves money, time, friendship, and breaking rules. Learners need to master the linguistic reservoir that native speakers use in various sociocultural contexts, for example, the use of (in)formal personal pronouns and hearer-oriented strategies in relation to politeness and sociocultural values, as compared to English norms (cf. Frank 2010).

Classroom activities like these would help learners to improve their pragmalinguistic competence and inform them about sociopragmatic rules in the target language so that they better understand the impact of social distance and social power on interactions in Russian culture. As some scholars point out (Thomas 1983; Shardakova 2009), it may be difficult to teach sociopragmatic rules in the L2 classroom because learners’ sociopragmatic choices stem from their cultural background, and they may decide that adopting Russian cultural behavior violates their own cultural identity. Despite this fact, learners need to be made aware of sociocultural norms encoded in the target language so they can successfully communicate with native
speakers as well as be better prepared for daily encounters during their study abroad program.

**Appendix. Scenarios for the DCQ**
If you decided not to say anything, please explain why.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of the scenarios</th>
<th>Title of the scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann, you friend, borrowed a library book from you that was checked out in your name. She returns it to you late, and now you have to pay the fine in the library. You say to her:</td>
<td>Library Fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have been working together with your friend Boris on a project for your statistics class that is due tomorrow. Each time, your friend comes to the meeting late. Today, you have been waiting for him for over 30 minutes. Now, in order to finish it, you will be late for your evening part-time job. Finally, he is there. You see him and say:</td>
<td>Late for Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You lent your friend money that she was supposed to return at the beginning of this month. It is already the end of the month, and Sarah has not returned the money yet. You need your money back because you need to pay the rent for your apartment. You see her and say:</td>
<td>Paying Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have already talked a few times to Andrew, your friend and roommate, about taking care of the kitchen that you share with him in the dormitory apartment. Today, he again left a pile of dirty dishes in the sink although it was his turn to take care of the kitchen. You see Andrew and say:</td>
<td>Dirty Dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a new neighbor next door in the dormitory. You do not know him yet. Since he moved in five days ago, he has been listening to loud music every night. You already overslept once, and you were late for work. Today, you cannot sleep because the music is loud again. It is already midnight, and you have a terrible headache. You go to your neighbor and say:</td>
<td>Loud Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is Christmas time. You are in a grocery store waiting in a line for over 30 minutes. A woman cuts in line in front of you although she clearly saw you. You say to her:</td>
<td>Cutting Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are in a taxi driving from the airport to your hotel. You do not know the city, but, based on the information from the hotel receptionist, the taxi would cost you no more than 30 dollars. When you arrive at the hotel, the taxi driver asks you for almost 70 dollars. You say to him:</td>
<td>Taxi Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In one hour, you are having a job interview. Now, you are entering the subway station. At that moment, a woman also rushes to the entrance and spills coffee on your new white shirt. You say to her:</td>
<td>Subway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your English professor included material on the final oral exam that was not covered in the class, and, as a result, you got a low grade on the exam, which caused you to receive a “C” instead of a “B” as a final grade. You are not satisfied with your grade, and you believe that you deserve a better one. You are coming to the professor during his office hours and you say to him:</td>
<td>Bad Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your professor agreed to meet you 30 minutes before the class starts in order to discuss some preliminary ideas about your master’s thesis. You were waiting for him, but, unfortunately, he did not come. After class, you approach your professor and say:</td>
<td>Missed Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You provide translation services to finance your studies at the university. This month, you hired Vania, another student, because you got a large project to translate. Unfortunately, Vania did not return his part of the translation to you on time. As a result, you were not able to finish the project on time. The client got angry with you, and has decided not to use your services anymore. You see Vania and you say:</td>
<td>Translation Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You hired a tutor to help you with mathematics. He knows the subject very well, but he covers the material too fast. You already asked him to do less during each meeting. Today, you again do not understand his explanation because of the amount of material covered. You say to him:</td>
<td>Tutor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works Cited


Fundamentals distinguishes itself from other English-language textbooks about the structure of Russian by being usage-based, which means that the authors eschew underlying abstract forms and ordered rules and instead anchor their synchronic description of Russian phonetics, phonology, and morphology in correspondences and choices among surface forms. (ix, 56ff.) The assertion that “a usage based description [...] renders a better picture of [phonetic and orthographic] reality than the generative-based description” (56; bracketed text added) is self-evidently true, and it is hard not to appreciate the difference the authors draw between generative production and what they archly call degeneration in the case of listener perception (57), that is, the unwinding of generative processes by a listener who begins with a surface form and must deduce an abstract underlying representation.

Because Fundamentals is a textbook, though, a more useful question in a pedagogical context might address not physical reality, but whether this particular descriptive approach is more successful than others in helping advanced language learners become more accurate and comfortable in their use of the target language. The anecdotal classroom experience of at least some language teachers seems to be mixed; there are students for whom the generation of related concrete surface forms from a common abstract base is illuminating, explanatory, and pedagogically useful, and others for whom the very fact of abstraction is distracting and confusing. Given that type of learner difference, this new textbook is welcome because it provides a pedagogical alternative to the more abstract models found elsewhere, and may therefore prove successful with students who find abstract treatments more alienating than illuminating.

Fundamentals is divided into three main sections: “Russian sounds” (1–63), “Morphology and morphophonemics” (65–149), and “Historical sound changes” (151–94), followed by a list of fifteen sources consulted by the authors (195–96). There is no index of either words or
ideas, but the table of contents and the use of section headings are sufficiently detailed to make it possible to navigate to major descriptive topics. The unequal allocation of pages to the three principal sections reflects the authors’ primary emphasis on providing a synchronic description of modern Russian that uses only surface information available directly to speakers (parts 1 and 2). The authors segregate historical explanation (part 3) because, although it may illuminate why Russian behaves the way it does, diachronic information cannot be usage-based in situations where early linguistic forms are not directly accessible to modern speakers, and therefore cannot play an explicit role in a model that is allowed to look only at real surface forms (x). The title is potentially misleading because the treatment of structure is systematic, while the treatment of history is anecdotal; *Fundamentals* is not equivalently and comparably about the structure and history of Russian as much as it is a textbook about structure that makes effective and illuminating reference to history where it can help explain how structure came about.

The target audience for *Fundamentals* is advanced Anglophone students of Russian—advanced both because of the breadth of coverage and because the lengthy citations in academic Russian are presented without translation (e.g., 15). Technical linguistic terms (e.g., involving articulatory phonetics, 13) are given in both English and Russian, presumably so that students will learn this specialized vocabulary and be able to read more about the subject in authentic Russian linguistic sources. Each explanatory section is accompanied by exercises that enable students to explore and apply what they are learning in practice (e.g., phonetic transcription, 11). The language of the text is direct, informal, and clear, and the style, which incorporates rhetorical questions and a wealth of illustrative examples, makes the information (both factual, about Russian, and methodological, about how to think about Russian) accessible to a student audience that may lack experience reading academic prose. The authors’ frequent emphasis that alternation under inflection exemplifies relationships (e.g., 30) and generalizations about relationships (e.g., 39, 59), rather than processes, is important to their methodology, although some instructors who are otherwise comfortable with the explanatory model might nonetheless prefer not to emphasize the methodology itself as strongly as the authors have chosen to do. The authors themselves occasionally find it difficult to adhere consistently to their orientation around surface forms,
e.g., “a complete word can be composed of a single morpheme: столь ‘table’” (69) alongside the description of “the ‘no ending’ or ‘zero ending,’ the lack of an overt ending” as “there is an ending [...] the ending is empty” (72–73).

What is likely to prove most original and broadly valuable in Fundamentals is the authors’ decision to provide a separate historical section in a textbook about the structure of Russian, and this part is likely to be of use as a supplement even in classrooms where the instructor might otherwise prefer a generative approach to synchronic description over the authors’ usage-based one. The phenomena discussed in this part correspond to questions that arise frequently in language classes (e.g., fleeting vowels [187–90], э ~ ё [162–66]) or those that have historical explanatory value (e.g., jotation, here called dejotation [180–82]), and the authors make effective use of comparison with other Slavic languages (166–70), something students of Russian frequently find exciting and engaging. The explanations and examples are clear, and although the section is too brief and selective to serve as a general introduction to the history of Russian, the historical discussion of specific topics is likely to be highly effective in the important role that the authors have defined for it: showing how language history can illuminate how modern Russian came to be the way it is.

It is difficult to avoid letting a small number of errors, inconsistencies, and imprecisions slip through in the first edition of a book that entails this degree of typographic complexity: The softness diacritic is described as an apostrophe written above a letter (7), but the example writes it after, rather than above, the consonant to which it applies, and it is described correctly as being written after the base consonant elsewhere (9). The phrase usage-based is sometimes hyphenated and sometimes not, even on the same page (e.g., “a usage-based program” ~ “a usage based description”, 56). The authors generally avoid Romanization of Cyrillic spelling, but where they do use it, their usage is not consistent either internally or with traditional practice in Russian linguistics and language pedagogy; thus Julija (34), ikanje (41), yeri (27ff.), yat’ (158), jer (161). The decision not to mark stress on monosyllabic words (e.g., in the reading passage on p. 40) is common in textbooks, but since there are both stressed and unstressed monosyllabic words in Russian, as well as monosyllabic clitics that may be stressed when attached to some headwords but not to others,
this decision seems to perpetuate a questionable line of reasoning that rests on assumptions (stress needn’t be marked in these situations because its presence and placement can be inferred) that are only largely, but not entirely, supported by the facts of the language. The curved superscript diacritic over the letter ĭ is oddly displaced to the right in a few places (e.g., 3 of 8 times in the list of sources, 195–96).

Whether instructors will adopt Fundamentals as the primary textbook for their Structure of Russian courses is likely to depend on how effective they find the usage-based explanatory model. Even those instructors who prefer a more abstract generative model for pedagogical reasons, though, should nonetheless consider incorporating the material from the historical portion of the book into their courses. And perhaps not just at the advanced level; if you’ve taught first-year Russian, you’ve probably had students ask “so where does that peculiar hard sign come from anyway?” You can find an accessible explanation on p. 161.

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David Pesetsky’s Russian Case Morphology and the Syntactic Categories (MIT Press, 2013) is one of the most thought-provoking works of theoretical linguistics to appear in many years. It provides a startlingly original analysis of a well-known thorny problem of Russian morpho-syntax, embedding the analysis of that puzzle within a radical rethinking of the role of case in syntactic theory, and taking us on a journey of consequences and extensions that challenge one’s views of many aspects of minimalist theory, including key components of case theory, phrase structure, locality and others. If a monograph is to be judged by its creativity, its significance for the theoretical field at large and the range of details of its technical implementation, then Russian Case Morphology and the Syntactic Categories deserves mention among some of the most significant recent works of theoretical linguistics.
Readers must approach the work with an open mind, however, and be willing to adjust, and in some cases, abandon core assumptions about syntactic relations in order to embrace the proposed system. Many, though not all, of those adjustments seem worth the effort; it remains to be seen to what degree syntactic theory as a whole will alter its course to accommodate the full set of necessary changes. In this review, I will not attempt to weigh the benefits against the costs of the proposed system. Rather, I will describe the structure of the theory Pesetsky builds to solve the Russian Paucal Puzzle, an apparently minor puzzle of Russian morphosyntax, introduced in Chapter 1, and raise some concerns about consequences that might be less innocuous than they might seem at first glance. First and foremost, however, my goal is simply to encourage people to read the book and judge for themselves. It is not only persuasively written and constructed, it is highly enjoyable to explore.

The core meta-theoretical question underlying the monograph is presented in Chapter 2, namely: “why is there case?” Related to this is the question of the elusive relationship between the set of morphological case paradigms we find in highly inflected languages such as Russian and the syntactic structure in which they occur -- can this relation be systematically captured in an enlightening way? In Chapter 2, Pesetsky discusses and dismisses the possibility that the morphological categories known as Genitive, Accusative, Nominative and so on can be reduced to something morphologically more basic, while at the same time arguing that it is a worthwhile project to try to relate those categories to something more basic within the syntactic apparatus. And this is exactly what the book proposes to do—to reduce (the primary) morphological case categories (at least 4 of them) to part of speech morphology – in the form of a direct relationship of the following form:

(1) Reduction of case to part of speech categories: (Pesetsky p. 7)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. Genitive} & \rightarrow \text{N} & \text{b. Accusative} & \rightarrow \text{V} \\
\text{c. Nominative} & \rightarrow \text{D} & \text{d. Oblique} & \rightarrow \text{P}
\end{align*}
\]

The claim is that the cases listed in (1) are simply morphological instantiations of the associated part of speech categories. That is, Genitive case morphology is the appearance of [N], Accusative is [V], Oblique case is [P], and Nominative case is [D]. Some of these associations are of course
familiar from case assignment systems – in three of the four instances (a,b,d) the claim may seem somewhat unremarkable – we often think of Accusative as canonically “assigned” by V (or v), of Genitive, at least in adenominal usages, as being “assigned” by N and of Oblique as being “assigned” by P\(^1\) (I return below to the 4th claim, (c) the issue of D and Nominative case). However, such familiar case “assignment” by a head to its complement represents only the first of two ways that part of speech features can end up on an element in Pesetsky’s system. What is unexpected about Pesetsky’s version of these associations is that what he means by (1) is not (only) that these category heads “assign” this case to their complements (and inside their complements), but also that they “wear them on their sleeves,” themselves. This is particularly relevant for Genitive, which is the “primeval” form of the NP part of nominals, as given in (2).

(2) “Primeval genitive” conjecture (Pesetsky p. 9)

\[ \text{N}_\text{GEN} \] categorizes a Russian root as a Noun (in the lexicon)

That is to say, NPs (a sub-structure of DPs) are themselves inherently Genitive – Genitive case simply IS a spellout of the category feature [N]. If nothing else happens to mask its appearance, an NP (at least in Russian) will surface as Genitive -- “you are what you assign.”\(^2\) The theoretical benefits should be fairly obvious – cases are reduced to parts of speech, an undeniable primitive of any grammatical system.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Pesetsky leaves aside the issue of distinction among Obliques (Instrumental vs. Dative vs. Prepositional, etc), though he does tackle some of the issues of Prepositions that assign Accusative (Section 7.3) and Genitive (Section 8.5). He also does not address other possibly structural instances of Genitive unrelated to primeval instances, such as Genitive of negation, Genitive time expressions, Genitive after intensional verbs and others.

\(^2\)Pesetsky does not concern himself in detail with the cross-linguistic consequences of this approach to case, except with regard to the possibility of a default-like Nominative case emanating from the category D in Russian, but possibly not elsewhere, (see Chapter 7). However, the implication is that the essential relations given in (1) are universal, with differing systems of morphological realization. How this relates to languages with more than 4 major distinct case categories, or to ergative systems, is not taken up in the monograph, though it certainly opens up new ways of approaching such questions.

\(^3\)Interestingly, the notion that a case is just the spellout of its traditional assigner’s part of speech category is one of the best-known strengths of a series of papers by Pesetsky and Torrego (2001, 2007), in which Nominative (and Accusative) are claimed to be reflexes of T. That is not one of the associations proposed in this work, but it is a direct precursor of
Of course, many, if not most, NPs do not in fact surface with Genitive case. This leads us to Pesetsky’s other major innovation in the book, namely the system of case stacking and overwrite that he promotes. The basic assumption is that cases stack, so that the primeval Genitive that NPs carry finds itself stacked within the Nominative layer associated with D, which in turn could be stacked within an Accusative layer associated with V or an Oblique layer associated with P and so on. Thus we would often expect to have a situation such as (3):


in which 3 cases are stacked on N, in the layering GEN > NOM > OBL. A case realization rule, such as (4) then determines which element surfaces in the morphology:

(4) The One-Suffix Rule: Delete all but the outermost case suffix⁴ (Pesetsky p. 11)

Thus we find Oblique case on objects of prepositions because it is the outermost suffix in the construction and not because it is the only one. It simply “overwrites” the Nominative and Genitive cases already stacked on the relevant elements. Note that this system contrasts sharply with more standard approaches to the locality of case-assignment, whereby a more local head simply blocks the application of a more distant case-assigning head, as might be expected within Relativized Minimality (Rizzi 1990, 2004 etc.). Indeed, Pesetsky removes locality from the case assignment component of the grammar, other than through the indirect mediation of phases, a move whose consequences are taken up in detail in the later chapters of the book, especially Chapters 7 and 8.) In fact, a recurring

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the idea of associating part of speech with case realization. I return below to the question of whether [T] in fact might be a better candidate for Nominative than [D], even given the rest of Pesetsky’s assumptions in the book.

⁴On p. 101, this is replaced by the The One-Prototype Rule:

In the configuration [β n x [β n y … β …]] (order irrelevant), where x and y are the realization of prototypes, delete y.

The prototype version is not relevant to the discussion at hand about Pesetsky’s general case-stacking resolution (“overwrite”) system.
theme of the book concerns the burdens faced by an overwrite-based system of case realization as compared with a locality-based system, and how to overcome them. I say “burdens” because although the overwrite system solves the core Russian morphosyntactic puzzle, in some ways for the first time satisfactorily, the solution comes with a cost in terms of expectations of overwrite in many instances where it is not found. Proponents of Pesetsky’s approach will want to find additional instances where overwrite accounts for linguistic phenomena better than locality does.

Because there is a claim of universal case stacking, we have an expectation that overt instances of case-stacking would occur in some languages. One such language, Lardil, is examined in detail in Chapter 3, (and a more subtle version of overt stacking is also proposed to account for certain Russian word internal morphology in Chapter 9 -- that of certain personal possessives such as Mašina kniga [“Masha’s book”]). In the absence of overt case-stacking in the majority of instances, however, it is a morphological resolution rule such as (4) that determines which of the stacked cases appears, namely the outer one.

Now, why might we prefer a grammar with a case-stacking and overwrite system over a system of locality? We would prefer it if there were grammatical phenomena in which a primeval category/case surfaces in certain instances, but is overwritten by a higher category/case feature in other instances. That is, if there are clear instances of higher case manifestation within what appears to be the domain of a more local case assigner, then the stacking+overwrite system has a clear advantage over one of absolute locality. The Russian Paucal Puzzle is exactly such an instance, and it is careful analysis of this long-standing problem that is Pesetsky’s central accomplishment in the book, the details of which occupy Chapters 4-6.

In order to elucidate the ingenuity of the solution offered, one needs to understand the basic puzzle, which I will present briefly here. The Russian paucal numerals (“2”, “3”, “4”, “1.5” and certain other lexical items), themselves marked Nominative or Accusative (in Nominative or Accusative contexts) are typically followed by adjectives in the Genitive plural and nouns in the Genitive singular, but can be preceded by Nominative plural elements. This so-called heterogeneous pattern is shown in (5).
• Nom/Acc “context” -- **Heterogeneous pattern:**

(5) èti dva novyx stola
"these, new tables"

There is a clear number mismatch – the associated adjectives are plural, but the paucal element itself and the head noun following it are (apparently) singular. In terms of case, the paucal seems to determine a Genitive case domain, and has traditionally been assumed to “assign” Genitive to its complement (Babby 1987, Bailyn 2004 a.o.) in one way or another (after all, without a paucal or other numerical expression present, there is also no Genitive present). The case piece here is not in and of itself a difficult puzzle – after all these could be case assigning heads, and only the number mismatch would be mysterious. However, as soon as the relevant DP finds itself in an Oblique context, that is, as object of a Preposition, the paucal no longer behaves as if it determines a Genitive case domain. Rather, the entire phrase is *overwritten* by the (Oblique) case required by the preposition, producing what is usually referred to as a **homogenous pattern**. (Note that the number mismatch also disappears). This is shown in (6):

• oblique “context” -- **Homogeneous pattern:**

(6) s dvumja novymi stolami
"with two new tables"

It is the contrast between (5) and (6) that constitute the full Paucal Puzzle – why do paucal elements and their complements differ in case (and number) when the entire phrase is in a Nom/Acc environment, whereas they share case and number in an Oblique context? No theory of case locality can easily account for this contrast; Pesetsky’s system can.⁵

The number mismatch is resolved by Pesetsky in Chapter 4 in a particularly creative way. This is the core of the analysis: in keeping with

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⁵Traditionally, the related case puzzle involving the higher numeral “5” and above had been resolved by appealing to a Case Hierarchy (see Babby 1987), whereby lexical case outranks structural case, allowing apparently non-local case assignment in (6). Of course such a system can in and of itself be understood as a precursor to an overwrite system, as it also defies standard locality of case assignment. Another relevant overwrite system is proposed in Matushansky (2010), with regard to other puzzles of Russian case.
somewhat similar–looking classifier systems, the paucal is analyzed as a self-standing [-sg] number (Nbr) head (with which adjectives show number agreement, hence their plural form). Crucially, the head noun in the construction is *numberless*, given the separate manifestation of the Nbr element. It is the ability in Russian to have the Nbr feature surface independently that allows the construction in (5). The Nbr element is generated low, and raises to D (in fact through an intermediate Q position, whose relevance is discussed in detail in Chapter 6), and the noun remains numberless. At Spellout, a default number form surfaces, which mimics the singular. The number mismatch is thus explained. (In Oblique overwrite instances such as (6), the P head acquires a [-sg] value from below and passes it down into the NP domain, thus eliminating the number mismatch in those cases as needed.)

The strength of the analysis is in its derivation of the case pattern in (5). This works as follows: the raising of the Nbr head to D means that when D merges with NP, NP does not entirely satisfy the “complementation requirements” of D, and this renders D powerless to allow Nominative to overwrite the Genitive below. Thus the appearance of Primeval Genitive is directly tied to the separate head status of the paucal. Overwrite by $D_{NOM}$ is impossible, while overwrite by a higher $P_{OBL}$ is not only expected, but required. The case contrast between (5) and (6) is now derived.

Chapter 5 then follows with a brilliant piece of confirming evidence that paucal Nbr elements are indeed generated *lower* than the adjectives that follow them in surface order and raise to a higher spot. The evidence comes from certain feminizable Class I nouns (typically masculine), such as vrač (‘doctor’), whose intricate patterns of agreement are the subject of Chapter 5. Lebanese Arabic is shown to have an identical system in its number agreement; both systems show that a mismatch of features of a certain kind can be explained by the insertion of a feminizing (Russian) or pluralizing (Arabic) morpheme in the spine of the nominal, but only at a certain height. Pesetsky proves that that height is lower than adjectives, and thus derives the claimed base position of the paucal Nbr heads. The evidence is incontrovertible and the analysis high in originality and elegance.

Chapter 6 then extends the analysis to constructions with higher numerals, which do not show a number mismatch, but have the same case
situation as paucals. The puzzle here is essentially the same – in Nomina-
tive/Accusative environments we get a heterogeneous pattern, whereas in
Oblique contexts we get Oblique homogeneity throughout.

• higher numerals in Nom/Acc context (gender neutralized)
  = Heterogeneous pattern:
  (7) èti pjad’ novyx stolov
      these-NOM.PL 5-NOM new-GEN.PL tables-GEN.PL
      “these five new tables”

• higher numerals in oblique context (gender neutralized)
  = Homogenous pattern:
  (8) s ètimi pjad’ju [novymi stolami]
      with these-INSTR.PL 5-INSTR [new table]-INSTR.PL
      “with these five new tables”

The analysis of numerals such as “5” is essentially the same as for paucals,
though technical issues of number agreement and complementation re-
quirements might need closer scrutiny to determine all consequences.
Certain assumptions about the timing of the derivation, spellout, and the
inability to value number need to be accepted to allow things to proceed,
but if that much is granted, the elegant solution for the paucal numbers
extends naturally to the higher numbers. The overwrite system remains
at the core of the analysis, and the potential advantage of eliminating case
locality and directly associating case with part of speech is maintained as
the meta-goal of the approach. This alone sets Pesetsky’s book apart from
many other works on this topic.

Pesetsky’s monograph is also to be praised for its honest attempt
at addressing potentially problematic consequences, such as the expecta-
tion that we would find overwrite in all sorts of instances where we do
not find it – such as verbal Accusative overwriting into the paucal domain,
Oblique and Accusative overwriting into the adnominal Genitive domain
and various others. Chapters 7 and 8 address this potential problem. The
essential insight is that DPs form phases that exempt them from the reach
of overwrite from above, thereby maintaining the apparent effect of case
assignment locality into, say, an adnominal Genitive domain within a PP.
In the absence of phasehood, however, we expect outer case instances to
overwrite inner ones. One might also expect non-local overwrite to be more typologically prevalent (the book offers us only the Russian numerical constructions in Oblique contexts as examples of overwrite), a consequence Pesetsky does not discuss.

By virtue of pioneering a new approach to old problems, Pesetsky’s monograph forces us to accept a fairly wide range of non-conventional assumptions and conclusions. The discussion of prototypes and selection in Chapter 9 is one such consequence of the larger system, whereby we must worry about the spread of plural features to “numberless” nouns in paucal constructions (or lack thereof) in the relevant constructions. When the paucal is Nominative and the head noun Genitive (as in (5)), we have to be sure (a) that Nominative case does not overwrite Genitive and (b) that plural number spreads throughout the constructions in Oblique contexts, but not in Nominative contexts. The machinery created to achieve the necessary result is to value P for number in the course of the derivation rather than inherently. However, we would not expect this to be possible with a singular N taking a plural DP complement, since N enters the derivation carrying number. (Clearly, this is an issue standard theories do not face). For this reason, Pesetsky offers the prototype system described in Chapter 9, and then delves into additional support for it, including a possible analysis of English “little words” such as of, which turn out to be the prototype heads themselves surfacing in the syntax. This nicely exemplifies the reach of the monograph – it carries us from analysis of a minor mismatch problem in a single language through a serious re-imagining of the status of case in grammar, with important consequences for number valuation, that in turn require a rethinking of selection, leading to a possible analysis for a set of initially entirely unrelated items that may have previously defied satisfactory analysis. This is how the best results in science are often discovered, and Pesetsky is a master tour guide through such unchartered territories.

It must be noted, however, that the journey is not without stops that are less appealing than others. Readers will have to decide for themselves the degree to which the end result is worth the difficult journey – for me there were three such required “stops” that caused concern, all involving the “structural” cases (Nominative and Accusative). One, discussed in Chapter 5, concerns the status of Nominative case in Pesetsky’s larger case theory. The second is perhaps the hardest to swallow for those
dedicated to theoretical elegance, namely the unfortunate need for Pesetsky to maintain a notion of abstract case, in the form of “Vergnaud-licensing,” alongside the otherwise satisfying reduction of case to part-of-speech features. The third, and perhaps most worrisome for Russianists, involves the proposed divorce of Nominative and Accusative “contexts” under which the primeval Genitive appears, (both discussed in Chapter 7).

The three issues are all related, stemming from Pesetsky’s claim that Nominative case is a reflex of the D category, meaning, in essence, that all else being equal, DPs (can and do) assign (Nominative) case to themselves. This is the “DNOM claim”. This claim is, of course, at odds with a long linguistic tradition associating Nominative case with (finite) T, and, ironically, at odds with the 2001/2007 claim by Pesetsky & Torrego that Nominative case is the realization of T on nominals. Here, Nominative is claimed to represent a different category (D) than it is in the Pesetsky & Torrego papers (T). The discussion of default case in Chapter 7 brings only partial satisfaction in this regard – the interested reader will have to decide for him/herself whether the advantages of looking at things this way outweigh the potential pitfalls. For advocates of the original P&T notion that Nominative is simply [T] morphology on nominals, it may be hard to embrace the DNOM claim for various reasons.

For one thing, to accept DNOM claim we have to abandon traditional generative approaches to Nominative as being somehow related to T. There are well-known paradigms of finite vs. non-finite contexts where nominals are licensed and not-licensed, respectively, that would now have to be disassociated with the morphological appearance of Nominative case. Instead, Nominative will appear on any DP not otherwise overwritten from above. As Pesetsky argues, this accords with notions of

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6Ironically, because although the P&T claim is an important precursor to the central claim about case in the current monograph, (namely that it is nothing more than a spellout of a part of speech feature) the details differ so radically.

7At least for Russian. Pesetsky does allow the possibility (p. 74) that “T might be a [Nominative] morphology assigner in other languages.”
Nominative as a default case. But it no longer allows us to relate Nominative morphology to certain kinds of syntactic environments. Thus, traditional characterizations of case positions vs. non-case positions, such as, say, the object of active vs. passive verbs, will also have to be entirely divorced from the actual appearance of Nominative case. So the theory still needs the equivalent of abstract case-licensing to determine why the object of a passive verb is not licensed in situ, with Nominative, and so Pesetsky maintains abstract case in the system, relabeling it “Vergnaud-licensing” in (9):

(9) Feature Assignment (FA) and licensing (Pesetsky, p. 75)

FA applies to DP only in the position in which it is Vergnaud-licensed

Although Vergnaud-licensing is nowhere defined by Pesetsky, it is, for all intents and purposes, the Case Filter. He does not define it, but presumably assumes what is standardly assumed, namely that Vergnaud licensors are (typical) case assigners, (and that something about passive and unaccusative verbs interferes with Vergnaud-licensing). For Pesetsky, (9) blocks Accusative, and default Nominative appears. There is no discussion of why Vergnaud-licensing fails here, but clearly it must. So we need a system of abstract case licensing. However, the need to maintain something like Vergnaud-licensing in Pesetsky’s system comes as a disappointment, given the book’s remarkable achievements in (otherwise) reducing case to part of speech, and also considering the fairly significant overlap between the part of speech<--->case associations in (1) and the presumed class of Vergnaud-licensors (V; P; N, etc.). We neither eliminate abstract case, nor have insight into this potentially significant overlap.

There may be a way out: notice that it is primarily Pesetsky’s $D^{\text{NOM}}$ claim that underlies the need for Vergnaud-licensing. If instead Nominative were associated with a category outside DP (such as [T]), then (9) (blocking of case due to lack of Vergnaud-licensing) would perhaps not be necessary. Whenever DP objects of passives get no Accusative from V (an assumption every system needs), Nominative (from T) would appear

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8Note, importantly, that the monograph’s claims about Accusative (=V), Oblique (=P), and even Genitive (=N) in the adnominal instances, do not encounter this issue, - as pointed out above, these associations accord with traditional notions of case assignment, for the most part. But that is not true of Nominative and D.
as expected. That is, Vergnaud-licensing would be worked into the associations in (1) rather than be entirely divorced from them.\footnote{Granted, this is a significant change to the system – the Paucal Puzzle would have to be resolved somewhat differently. It is not my place to suggest significant revisions to the Pesetsky theory, but it is interesting that all three issues discussed here involve the $D_{\text{nom}}$ claim in particular.} As it stands, we are forced to maintain Pesetsky’s conclusion, following Schütze (2001), that “licensing and morphological case are independent systems... [D]efault case ... can never ‘save’ a DP from violating the Case Filter.” (p. 73)

The third consequence of the $D_{\text{nom}}$ system involves the necessary separation of Nominative and Accusative contexts for the purposes of the Paucal (and higher numeral) Puzzle. In Pesetsky’s system, we expect Acc to overwrite Nom and Gen (in Accusative contexts), and this needs to be prevented. That is, we expect the primeval Genitive of (5) in paucals to disappear when the phrase is an object, as in (10):

(10) a. expected form in Accusative context, showing Accusative overwrite:

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*ja videl [dva novye stoly]
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I saw 2-Acc new-Acc.Pl table-Acc.pl

“I saw two new tables”

b. actual form in Accusative context, traditional labeling:

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ja videl [dva novyx stola]
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I saw 2-Acc.new-Gen.Pl table-Gen.Sg

“I saw two new tables”

c. actual form in Accusative context, with Pesetsky’s labeling:

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ja videl [dva novyx stola]
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I saw 2-NOM new-Gen.Pl table-Gen.Sg

“I saw two new tables”

First and foremost, the system must prevent (10)a, in which Accusative overwrites primeval Genitive.

Chapter 7 deals with this prevention, attributing it to a complex system of resistance to Accusative overwrite in exactly those instances
where Accusative and Nominative morphology are identical (traditionally known as syncretism). Identity of form allows Pesetsky to claim that the apparently Accusative form of the paucal in (10), is in fact Nominative. He argues that “we are clearly not dealing with mere syncretism between NOM and ACC, but with genuine NOM morphology in a position where we might have expected to see ACC” (p 64).

Because the Nominative and Accusative forms of the numbers are indistinguishable, an analysis that the paucals are truly Nominative here is not impossible. Pesetsky is well aware of the consequences of such a move, and devotes considerable discussion to the rules that will make all of this work out correctly (the focus of Chapter 7). The details are well-attended to, as throughout the book, and the overall account survives. But we lose something we might miss—the generalization that there is parallel blocking at work in structural case environments with paucals, disallowing (traditional) structural case assignment from outside paucals.11, 12

10 In fact, this conclusion is not entirely clear. The claim is that some such objects are true Nominative and some are true Accusative, depending on a morphologically stipulated blocking rule. This inanimate Class I and plural nouns in Accusative context surface as Nominative (syncretism!), whereas with animate paucal constructions we appear to have real Accusative (surfacing as Genitive, as animate plurals always do: (ja videl [dvux mužčin]-Gen.Pl (“I saw two men’)). Such instances might be analyzed as animate Accusative versions of collective numerals however, required anyway for constructions such as dvoe mužčin (“a twosome of men”), as Pesetsky points out. If so, then the need for a non-syncretism account might be avoided. I thank Boris Jacobson for pointing out this possibility to me.

11 Indeed, it is the fact that in both structural case contexts paucals show the heterogeneous pattern that led Babby (1987) to propose a grammaticalization of the distinction through a case conflict resolution hierarchy whereby Lexical (Oblique) case wins out over Structural case. This is also a form of overwrite, and a proposal of non-locality, and as such is an important precursor of the Pesetsky account as we have seen. However, for Babby, the unification of the heterogeneous contexts (Nominative and Accusative) is maintained.

12 Note that if, as discussed above, Nominative were indeed related to a category outside DP (such as [T]), just as Accusative is related to [V], then the blocking at hand could possibly still be related to the separate head status of the paucal (essentially, Pesetsky’s analysis of the heterogeneous pattern) in both instances, delimiting the domain of Accusative and Nominative in parallel ways, though details would have to differ from how things are done by Pesetsky now. However, the case as part of speech and overwrite system could still be maintained without having to analyze differently the Nominative and Accusative contexts that trigger the heterogeneous paucal pattern.
One final note. It is important to realize that the overwrite system and the category=case system are not necessarily co-extensive. That is, Pesetsky’s proposed system of association between parts of speech and (traditional) case categories does not, in and of itself, entail a stacking and overwrite resolution system over one of strict locality of case-assigning heads. The former is the large meta-project of Pesetsky’s book, intended to relate case to something more basic in the grammar, and even if some details raise questions, the overall enterprise is surely one to be taken very seriously as things move forward. It potentially answers questions about the existence of case, and places the relation between abstract and morphological case in important new light. The overwrite piece, on the other hand, stands on slightly shakier ground typologically, if only because we see its application in the Russian numerical oblique contexts but perhaps not elsewhere, and because it leads to a set of anti-locality assumptions that we might not otherwise want. But it certainly solves the Paucal Puzzle and various other troublesome issues of Russian morphosyntax, in a creative and significant way. And it forces us to revisit core aspects of our theory and to consider fairly radical alternatives through the lens of meticulous analysis of small syntactic puzzles. This is the best kind of linguistic science.

Works Cited


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Alexander Burak’s book “The Other” in Translation does two things: it draws attention to the field of Comparative Translation Discourse Analysis, with reference to numerous concrete examples, and it offers thought-provoking and informative discussion of a number of translation situations drawn from the interactions of Russian and Anglophone literature and culture. The book will be especially interesting to students and teachers of Russian at all levels, but it also has a great deal to offer readers from other languages and literatures, especially those with a background in translation studies.

13I am very grateful to participants in my LIN 651 Syntax seminar at Stony Brook University in Fall 2014 for careful reading and engaged discussion of the entire monograph: Judy Bernstein, Paola Cépeda, Boris Jacobson, Lei Liu, Ala’a Melebari, Hwichan Oh, Robert Pasternak, Jaime Suzuki, Russell Tanenbaum, and Chong Zhang. All mistakes remain my own responsibility.
Comparative Translation Discourse Analysis aims, in this case, to elicit specific details of how ‘otherness’ is handled in translation from Russian to English and English to Russian. Burak’s book includes six case studies, involving Russian translations of Ernest Hemingway; “sexed-up” Russian voiceover film translation; translation of skaz (an oral form of narrative, in this case peasant speech in Leo Tolstoy’s War and Peace) as a “whole-text realium;” translating postmodernism (in Vladimir Sorokin’s Day of the Oprichnik); and the political implications of variously tendentious translations of the name of the punk-protest group Pussy Riot into Russian. Thus the book devotes attention both to literary translation and to film voiceovers (providing a detailed background on Russian film voiceovers, which differ from both dubbing and subtitling) as well as the phenomenon of a Russian group who chose a name in a foreign language (English). The final chapter deals usefully with new developments in the academic organization of translation studies and the profession of translation in Russia today; readers will want to pursue the references to online materials.

Burak is unusual in that he can translate confidently both from Russian to English and from English to Russian. He frequently offers his own solutions when one that he cites presents problems, and so in this way has “skin in the game.” His versions show great sensitivity to stylistic level, especially the conversational and colloquial, and inspire confidence that he knows what he is talking about. His often witty style is echoed in the cartoon on the book’s cover (though it is too bad that it refers to French rather than Russian): despite its wealth of specific detail, “The Other” in Translation is not at all a tedious read.

Several of these chapters were previously published as separate articles in various professional journals. While this means they are well-written and shapely in themselves, it sometimes makes for repetition within the book as a whole: the reader is introduced more than once to Puchkov-Goblin, and some of the conceptual definitions recur. However, the book enjoys very high production value (a credit to Slavica Publishers) – aside from occasional odd wording, this rather compulsive reader found almost no typographical errors in either Russian or English. Some of the appendices supply additional data to support analysis in the chapters (listing various translations of Catcher in the Rye, etc.), while others feel
like a selection of interesting items that Burak could not resist including, pointing outward into further topics of study.

One of very few quibbles I could mention is with Burak’s critique of the title Nad propast’ju vo rzhi for Salinger’s Catcher in the Rye. He rightly points out that it is not entirely adequate (adding the sense of “above” and “abyss” to the original, and removing the catcher), but, since it is taken from Samuil Marshak’s translation of the Robert Burns poem, poetic translation required that the line scan in a way that is bound to impact meaning. By using the line from a well-known translation of Burns, the Russian edition ties the two texts together even more tightly than in the English original. (And no doubt it is true that “propast’” could be read as a negative reference to Western anomie.)

In sum, Alexander Burak’s “The Other” in Translation is an informative, provocative, thought-provoking, interesting book that should help to start and continue many conversations among both translators to and from Russian and the scholars and students who use their products in working with Russian literature, film and culture. Now that Translation Studies is growing as a discipline, impacting the teaching of literature in translation as well as other fields, academic libraries will want to acquire this title as well.

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Villains are in, as we see in our Disneyfied multiplexes and musical theater productions, and what better villain to highlight than one who is functionally ambiguous? Given that Baba Yaga has been featured in a Hellboy comic (Mignola, *Hellboy, Vol. 3: The Chained Coffin and Others*, Dark Horse,
2004) as well as a Scooby Doo episode (“The House of the Nightmare Witch,” *Scooby Doo! Mystery Incorporated*, episode 202, airdate July 31, 2012, written by Adam Beechen, directed by Victor Cook), it should come as no surprise that she has finally demanded her own gloriously illustrated book.

That Baba Yaga has gone her entire existence without a colorful tome dedicated to her seems inexplicable, and Forrester rights a longstanding wrong by providing us with this collection. The book includes a Foreword by fairy tales scholar Jack Zipes, as well as Forrester’s preface and translator’s note, lengthy introduction, and brief bibliography highlighting Baba Yaga in various works. Beyond these prefatory pieces, Forrester offers 29 tales, some variations on one another, some well known, some obscure, in vibrant new translations that avail the non-Russian-reader of much of the flavor of the original language, with its nuances and jibes. The lengthy introduction probably should be called what it is, e.g., a chapter unto itself, with its detailed and in-depth examination of the history and modernity of Baba Yaga and the various ways in which she has been interpreted over time.

The introduction is based on the “Russian Fairy Tales” course Helena Gosciło pioneered at the University of Pittsburgh, a version of which I taught at Pitt and continue to teach at West Virginia University. That connection clearly strengthens the book and its presentation, as many semesters of teaching about Baba Yaga have guided Forrester and Gosciło in identifying the most interesting aspects of her character and the most effective ways of presenting those to the reader. In fact, the overall structure, the approachable language, and the incorporation of theory in a way that is accessible to non-academic readers work in harmony to make the book appropriate for a wide range of audiences; Slavists and Russianists, folklorists and art connoisseurs, students and instructors alike will find something worthwhile in this book. Helpful linguistic and etymological notes, especially those comparing Russian words to words in other Slavic languages, as well as curious and clever cultural tidbits, offer something for everyone, delivered in a style that neither condescends to the non-Russian-reader and layman nor bores the Slavic folklorist. The chief beneficiaries of the book, however, will be those of us who teach courses dealing with Baba Yaga, and our students. The price tag, while not miniscule, is reasonable, given the number and quality of images selected by Gosciło.
and Skoro. Such images offer a wonderful collection, enhanced by the astute editorial comments on the photos, such as the sometimes-snide remarks on the overt commercialism exhibited by some newer works featuring Baba Yaga. Such comments are welcome first because of their content, but also because they are much more entertaining to read and more thoughtful than the standard photo captions. They also draw our attention to another innovative feature of the book: rather than limiting itself to classical fairy tale illustrations or antique woodcuts, this publication is rich in contemporary renderings and even high-tech offerings. The up-to-the-minute illustrations reflect not only the diligence of the contributors, but also, more importantly, the vital role Baba Yaga continues to play in Russian and global culture.

Perhaps the most useful indirect feature of the book is its review of other books on Baba Yaga, providing interested readers with other avenues for their own continued study. The tangible tastes of humor throughout the text, the clever turns of phrase, and the elegant translations combine to serve up a feast worthy of Baba Yaga’s bounteous table; the illustrations ensure that the reader, like Vasilisa, will find her way to the hut where Baba Yaga waits, ready to impart her wisdom or gobble up the overcurious. Forrester’s collection ensures that the hut with chicken legs will remain in the woods, ready to delight and terrify all who encounter it.

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Now in its fourth edition (first published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in 1974), Gerhart’s and Boyle’s encyclopedic catalogue of “common knowledge” among “Russians” is a classic; readers of this review likely have at least one well-worn edition of The Russian’s World on their bookshelf. Where else under one cover can one find the rules for “gorodki” (240–1), a guide to (Soviet) Russian clothing sizes—“take the bust or chest
measurement and divide it in two” (111), or the how-tos on visiting a Russian Orthodox church (270–80)? Abundantly illustrated with no-frills line drawings and black-and-white photographs (of uneven quality), with two color maps on the inside covers, the book’s seventeen chapters and multiple appendices range from the physiological (“The Human Being/Человек”) to the abstract (“Numbers/Числа”), with “Conduct/Поведение,” “Names/Имена, Отчества, Фамилии,” “Speech/Речь,” “Clothing/Одежда,” “Housing/Жилище,” “Food/Русская пища, еда,” “Medicine/Медицина,” “Shopping/Помагазиным,” “Play/Отдых,” “Holidays and the Church/Праздники и церковь,” “Education/Образование,” “Work and Money/Работа и деньги,” “Comunications/Связь,” “Transportation/Транспорт,” and “Nature/Природа” in between. The “verbose” table of contents lists chapter topics by key concepts in English and Russian; it is supplemented by a thorough index, and key words in Russian appear in bold print with accents. For its intended audience (“the traveler who might be happier or even healthier knowing what to expect” and “for those studying the language who are blessed with curiosity and [temporarily] tired of verb forms” [xxvii]), in terms of breadth of coverage or ease of use The Russian’s World has no equal.

From the outset Gerhart and Boyle advise that “[m]ost Russians will agree with most of what is written here. None will agree with everything—the borders of common knowledge are not easily drawn” (xxvii). Nowhere in their work do the authors claim objectivity, and value-laden generalizations run throughout the text creating an unabashedly subjective view of the world, Russian or other. The section on “Sex (Половые отношения)” begins: “The girls pictured below are checking messages on their cell phones; note the very common squatting position. This particular pose is also useful when encountering pit toilets. They are going to need those muscles during attempts at procreation, as do Chinese and Japanese, where the woman is on top” (54). On Russian interior design: “Typifying the ‘Russianness’ of Russian décor is difficult. No one style seems to predominate; indeed, the Russian ego did not seem to extend to household possessions until the arrival of capitalism” (121–122). On the future of the USE (ЕГЭ) Gerhart quips: “I suspect the test will die of disrespect [. . . ]. Tune in tomorrow.”)
Problems arise when subjectively presented information is misleading or incomplete. In the chapter on “Sex,” which immediately moves to “Really Dirty Words,” readers are admonished “[n]ever, ever use these words,” then treated to a list that would make both Erofeevs blush, including references to “the major female obscenity,” which gets translated as “vagina.” Often in talking about everyday life the authors’ lack of firsthand knowledge shows. Regarding window treatments (122), занавески are not heavier, nor do they admit less light than шторы (just the opposite is true). Among sports teams (238), of which the authors also lack firsthand knowledge, ЦДСА (the predecessor of ЦСКА) became extinct in 1960, and BBC, whose patron was Stalin’s pilot son, Vasily, disappeared in 1953, but both are mentioned alongside existing teams (238). A much-needed description of the ritual of sitting down in silence before a trip omits perhaps the most significant detail: the youngest person in the group breaks the silence (36). When describing the game of фантики, the authors erroneously claim that the object is “to make one's фантик go farther,” which makes little sense; rather the object is to land one’s фантик on other wrappers (247). And while “женщина” as a form of address is cited with no explanation in the section on lines (218), the appearance of this word (together with “мужчина”) as substitutes for “comrade” and the inadvisability of foreigners using it receives no mention in the section on address (75).

In part, the fourth edition was published to preserve phenomena that disappeared along with the USSR, and this information is invaluable, but some advice is just outdated and should have been removed: “Toilet paper туалетная бумага is commonly available in private homes . . .” (124). “If you want to rent anything from baby diapers to harps, consult the telephone book under Прокат” (220). As for new phenomena, when outside their areas of expertise, as in the section on computer jargon, Gerhart and Boyle founder, placing “кул,” “топтать батоны,” “резак,” and “писюк” alongside “панель управления,” “курсор,” “файл,” and “папка” as “computer jargon.” Elementary mistranslations occur in both directions: “макияж” is not a “facial” (221); “ballet school” is an “училище,” not a “спецшкола” (294); a “corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences” is a “член-кор,” not a “член-коров.” Not terribly grievous (in fact, somewhat entertaining) when considered individually, such inaccuracies are on the order of the “перегрузка ” button Hilary
Clinton presented to Sergei Lavrov and should have been edited out long ago.

Before including *The Russian’s World* in a required list for students teachers will want to consider what is missing as well as what is present. For example, the overview in “Housing,” begins with constructivism, neglecting at least fifty years of private rental housing (доходные дома) that provided the setting for Dostoevsky’s novels as well as those middle-class living spaces eventually carved up into the communal apartments of the Soviet era (117). “Доходные дома” built at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, like other examples of modern architecture (e.g., the Riabushinsky House built by Fedor Shekhtel’), also inspired the architectural revival of Russia’s nouveau-riche. The section in “Education,” flawed insofar as it describes Russia’s transition to four-year tertiary education five debate-and legislation-rich years before the transition was undertaken, also ignores a growing body of literature on post-tertiary degree evaluation between single-tier (US) and two-tier (RF) doctoral systems, summarily declaring a Russian кандидатская the equivalent of a US PhD (291–3). *The Russian’s World* contains no mention of the flag of the Russian Federation or its origins. In fact, the book is practically devoid of all Russian state symbols, save a mention of President Putin (a symbol in his own right) in the Introduction (xxiv). Most significant, nowhere between its covers will students find a definition for the term “Russian,” leaving them to infer from overall content (e.g., a half-chapter devoted to Russian Orthodoxy, only passing mention of Judaism and Islam, and no mention of Buddhism or shamanism) that what is implied is a one-size-fits-all ethnic “русский” and not just any citizen (россиянин) of the Russian Federation. True, some of these questions and other cultural phenomena are addressed in a companion volume, *The Russian Context* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 2002), but price and sheer weight likely exclude both as “recommended” texts for students. In fact, price and weight (more than two pounds) constitute the greatest limitations to using *The Russian’s World* in most contexts, particularly if travel is involved. In an age of handheld devices and economically priced eBooks, Slavica should consider producing a (meticulously edited) fifth edition in digitized format.

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Both of these readers are excellent additions to available annotated readers for students of Russian that would be most appropriate after students have completed two full years of Russian.

*The Meek One*, as a single story, would be most appropriate as one of a number of texts for a 19th century literature class. The book itself has an informative brief biography of Dostoevsky as well as a well-laid-out two-column design with the text in the left column and lexical items glossed on the right. Titus also provides extensive explanatory notes that explain both cultural concepts and challenging linguistic formulations. In addition, there are also written vocabulary exercise, as well as activities for students to recognize related words by identifying their roots. The volume also provides suggestions for in-class discussion and writing assignments. There are keys to the exercise and quizzes included as well. I highly recommend the wonderful on-line expanded “digital version” which contains an introduction about Dostoevsky (in Russian and in English), the text in both audio and electronic written format with an excellent gloss, electronic flashcards for vocabulary study, and the same fill-in-the-blank exercises that are in the hardcopy, except that students can complete the exercise and get immediate feedback by checking their answers. This online companion appears to be available and free of charge. The online version, however, does not contain the extensive notes, or the suggestions for oral and written assignments. That said, it would be entirely possible for the instructor to use the hardcopy as a kind of “teacher’s edition,” with students working primarily from the online companion, as it appears to be available without a password and free of charge. Both the hardcopy,
and especially the online companion, could easily be used for self-study for more advanced students.

Unlike *The Meek One*, which would have to be included in a more extensive reading list, the volume by James S. Levine *Selected Short Stories by Vassily Aksyonov. A Reader for the Intermediate and Advanced Student of Russian with Explanatory Notes, Exercises and Glossary* could easily form the basis of an entire course for students who have had at least two full years of Russian. This is an exceptionally well-done reader that includes five stories by the young Aksyonov - *Samson and Samsonikha* and *Surprises* from 1959, *From Morning Until Dark* published in 1960, *Catapult* from 1962, and *Local Hooligan Abramashvili* from 1964; and one story, *The Lion’s Den* by the mature Aksyonov written in 2003 after his return to Russia after more than 20 years in exile in the West. The five early stories all have young characters who are dealing with the kinds of common issues faced by young people even today, making some of the themes accessible and familiar to the student of Russian. Though the stories are set in a much different time and place, they provide the opportunity to explore the realities of life in the USSR during the 1950s and 1960s. *The Lion’s Den* is a wonderful account of the author’s visit to Pushkin’s apartment-museum, providing rich material for discussion. The introduction by Julie A. Christensen places Aksyonov’s life and work in context. Each text is superbly glossed (lines are numbered, glossed items run along the margin) and includes footnotes with cultural and linguistic information that the student is not likely to know already. One of the most difficult things for our students reading in the original is coping with participles and gerunds. After each text is a comprehensive list of all such forms, in the order in which they appear; given for each form is its infinitive and aspect, as well an indication of whether it is a verbal adverb or participle (past or present). For each text, there is an extensive list of questions about the text that serve to check comprehension and can easily be used to guide class discussion, a set of topics for written essays, and a section highlighting Russian word-building based on roots. There is also a comprehensive Russian-English glossary containing all the words that appear in the stories (with the exception of numbers, personal and possessive pronouns, and person and place names). This volume could be used to offer any number of courses, depending on program needs and student level: it may be used as the primary text for an author’s course on Aksyonov himself, or it may
be integrated (in its entirety or in part, again depending on institutional context and student level) into a course on literature of the post-WWII period, the Thaw of the late-1950s-early 1960s, or 20th century Russian literature in general. There are very few readers available today that can be used as the main textbook for a course, either because they are single-story readers, or because though they may include a collection of stories, the supplementary material included in the volume is insufficient, requiring the creation of such material by the instructor. This superb volume is likely to appeal to instructors and students alike, for both its selection of stories and its approach to the material.

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*Первый круг: Russian Full Circle* is the first edition of a beginning Russian textbook that represents a contemporary communicative approach with an emphasis on grammatical and pragmatic competences. Additionally, it offers an open-source ancillary web site. The goals and objectives of the course are clear, challenging and feasible. The materials can be used in a traditional year-long language course or in an intensive summer language program.

The course consists of ten lessons consisting of vocabulary, grammar explication, conversation practice, and homework exercises. A unique feature of each chapter is the culture section that includes poetry, tongue twisters, and Soviet propaganda posters related to the chapter’s theme. The slogans in the posters not only convey cultural knowledge, but also illustrate particular grammar points in an authentic and amusing way. Along with the posters, the book contains abundant popular Russian jokes, including contemporary political jokes, to provide the necessary element of fun.
Russian Full Circle includes the following features that make it stand out from most other elementary Russian textbooks: a full presentation of the grammatical system, authentic material from the Russian National Corpus, and a particularly high quality website. Первый круг presents each case’s morphological and semantic paradigm in full within one chapter instead of fragmenting and dispersing the numerous case functions throughout the textbook, as is the case with other first-year texts. This systematic approach conveys important facets of Russian grammar in all their complexity at early stages, allowing learners to build their proficiency on a strong foundation. Moreover, it makes the book more accessible for review, as students can easily find information on a particular case in one place rather than searching through the entire volume.

One of the strengths of the book is the source of its mini-dialogues: the Russian National Corpus (ruscorpora.ru), which provides authentic speech patterns that are integrated in the speaking tasks that follow. In addition, the textbook includes fully glossed poems of classical Russian authors in each lesson to provide authentic reading practice.

In spite of the book’s strengths, several significant elements are missing. The book lacks original listening comprehension exercises, though the web component of the book does provide links to other open sources with their own listening exercises. Moreover, pronunciation and intonation drills are absent, making that important aspect of Russian even harder to grasp for beginners. Instructors who adopt this textbook will likely need to supplement their courses with both listening exercises and pronunciation and intonation drills.

The ancillary web site is an entertaining component of the course, containing optional material appropriate both for classroom use and independent exploration. It is easy to navigate and immediately catches the reader’s attention with a collection of relevant YouTube videos applicable to all levels of Russian learners, not only beginners. Unlike the illustrations in the textbook itself, the quality of which leaves a lot to be desired, the web site contains superb contemporary photos, authentic ads, menus, store signs, and so forth, used to promote reading proficiency in the exemplary PowerPoint presentations for each lesson. Students can listen to the pronunciation of all new vocabulary and textbook dialogues online. This supplementary component promotes independent work while
providing a rich contemporary cultural context. The absence of a traditional workbook makes *Russian Full Circle* more affordable. On the other hand, the number of homework exercises (around 20 per chapter) might be insufficient for the book’s intensive and ambitious grammar coverage.

Notwithstanding the small number of shortcomings, *Russian Full Circle* provides an excellent compilation of lucid grammar explanations and practical exercises for the development of adult learners’ language proficiency. The loose topical structure of the course allows for instructor creativity and easy tailoring of the material according to learners’ needs.

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