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Introduction

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Introduction

On behalf of the editorial team of *Russian Language Journal (RLJ)*, we are pleased to present this volume of *RLJ* dedicated to “Digital Humanities and Russian Language Teaching.” As digital humanities (DH) programs and materials enter their third decade in the academy, it is fitting to present here a snapshot of the many and varied applications of digital technologies in the teaching and research of Russian language and culture. The articles in this volume represent the breadth of DH endeavors in our field and serve as exemplars of the aspirations and potential that the future of digital technologies in the Russian field holds.

As an introduction to the field of digital humanities and their connection to the teaching of Russian language and culture, in the first section of this issue, “DH and Russian,” Krasner and Garza offer an overview of DH in philosophical and disciplinary frames, tracing the history of DH in academia and its rise in the sphere of humanistic inquiry. They then outline the ways that DH has brought teaching and research in Russian to ever-broadening audiences, increasing access to the language and culture. The subjects of equity and critical pedagogy are examined as potential strengths of DH programs, especially for students for whom access to materials, programs, and native speakers is limited or absent.

In the second section, “DH and Research,” the focus is on the use of digital technology in the service research. Pheiffer takes on the use of digital resources to engage with the debate surrounding the authorship of members of the “Bakhtin Circle” in the 1920s. The article outlines the debate over Bakhtinian authorship and stylistic methods in authorial attribution and proposes tentative conclusions based on frequency word analyses of fourteen selected texts from 1920–1930.

The third section of this issue, “DH and Translation,” considers the applications of digital technologies in the service of translation. Baer, Bystrova-McIntyre, and Dzero revisit the use of translation and interpreting activities in the Russian language classroom based on recent developments in the language industry, most notably in the creation of text corpora and digital applications, and research in second language acquisition. Their article then examines some concepts from the field of translation studies that would be useful in designing activities that align with the principle
programs aimed at “government learners.” They describe their flipped model of language instruction, including methods for holding students accountable under such a system. Their small-scale study demonstrates that the OPI can be a very useful tool even in intensive elementary courses.

Kourova and Mihai describe a Fulbright-Hayes study abroad program aimed at increasing the intercultural sensitivity of educators at various levels. The program gave educators the opportunity to understand the roles and realities of Russian in a global society by studying Russian culture, language, history, and politics. As part of the program, the educators also developed workshops, courses, or digital repositories focused on Russian culture, language, history, or politics. Kourova and Mihai also present the results of their research, examining changes in the participants’ intercultural sensitivity as a result of the short-term program.

Finally, the guest editors of this volume express their thanks to Jennifer Bown, Sofia Kasmeridi, the RLJ staff, and all who submitted and reviewed contributions for this special issue of RLJ. These contributions and our reviewers’ careful reading make the publication both possible and rewarding. The RLJ continues to be the primary venue for disseminating pedagogical practices and empirical research on the teaching and learning of Russian. And so, we commend to you the work of our colleagues as collected here in volume 71 of the RLJ.

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