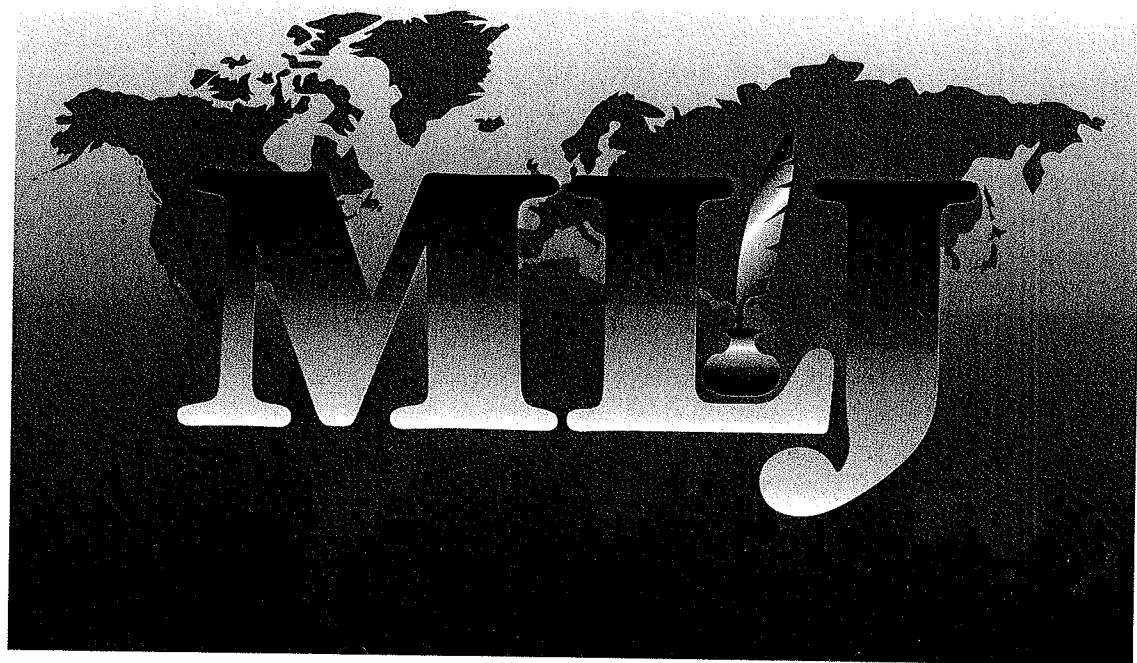

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include jigsaw puzzles, exercises, illustrations (for exercises on pronouns), and differences between Portuguese and Brazilian usage. Given their difficulty for speakers of English, conditional and subjunctive verbs and their usage occupy a lengthy part of the volume (ch. 7–12). The remaining chapters include the passive voice, reflexive use, pronominal construction, and indirect speech, among other selected verb forms. The indices of easy-to-find verb tables, much used in language textbooks, are also useful. In short, this essential guide is thorough, easy to read, and progressive in its content. The chapters are not overbearing, but rather are succinct and have much variety in the number of different verbs and other vocabulary in each lesson. Also, the model sentences are based on the everyday speech of people throughout the Portuguese-speaking world.

As a Portuguese American at a technological university, I seldom teach the language I spoke when I was a child and an adolescent. Therefore, I find that reading Cook's book is very beneficial for me and, I venture to say, others like me. Although the work is directed to an English-speaking audience, readers will also be able to draw similarities and differences with the Spanish language and culture.

The book is excellent for its content, variety, and the masterful way in which Cook handles the Portuguese verbal system. This valuable book will serve as an essential resource within my Portuguese language collection.

DAVID J. VIERA
Tennessee Tech University

RUSSIAN

BOGOMOLOV, ANDREI, & MARITA NUMMIKOSKI. *News from Russia: Language, Life, and the Russian Media*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005. Pp. x, 130. \$35.00, paper. ISBN 0-300-10437-5.

News from Russia is an ambitious, demanding, and welcome attempt to move the teaching of Russian at the intermediate and advanced levels into the twenty-first century. Five chapters prepare students to read and comprehend and then produce oral and written reports using the authentic language of the news media. The chapters cover the following topics: (a) the mass media; (b) the state, government, power; (c) official reports of meetings, visits, negotiations; (d) economics and business; and (e) war and peace—the roots of armed

conflicts. Each chapter opens with a series of questions in Russian focusing on its goals: *What will we learn? What will we be able to do?* Each content area is introduced with essential thematic vocabulary, followed by a useful section on roots, a key to understanding Russian, and expanding one's active and passive vocabulary. An extensive series of exercises on the vocabulary guarantees mastery before moving on to the reading passages. These exercises contain valuable linguistic and cultural information. Short reading texts (authentic passages from newspapers, journals, official documents, Web sites, etc.) are followed by exercises primarily intended to check comprehension, but they also serve as the building blocks for complex activities, such as oral and written descriptions and analyses. The printed exercises in the text are supplemented by a Web site: <http://mlc.utsa.edu/smi>. (The site contains useful links to Russian newspapers, journals, television stations, and press agencies that can be used by any teacher or student.)

News from Russia describes its goals as "multitiered" (p. ix) to provide content knowledge, real-life information about modern Russian society, and the enhancement of language skills, primarily reading comprehension, but with activities both inside and out of the classroom that require students to use Russian to gather information, and then present that information using the appropriate vocabulary in oral and written presentations (pp. ix, x). Judged on these assertions, this book is a success. Although there is no easy way to progress from the language and activities of basic and intermediate textbooks, this project makes a realistic and considerable leap. The authentic texts are presented with a variety of tasks that require different levels of language sophistication and proficiency. Students are presented with time-saving vocabulary lists and can learn to generalize from the root of a word to expand their recognition and comprehension of numerous related words. Useful lists of abbreviations provide the necessary background for negotiating meaning in authentic Russian media coverage of politics and economics. The exercises in the text reinforce the vocabulary and preview the simple and more complex texts. Each chapter concludes with one or two challenging reading passages that provide a rewarding conclusion to the hard work that precedes them.

The use of the Internet to provide an integral supplement to the printed text sets this book apart from others. The Web site has the answer key to some of the printed text exercises. But the core of the Web site is to offer challenging authentic materials with authentic tasks, such as using Russian

polling agency results to determine the popularity of various newspapers among Russians or Russian attitudes toward American elections. The authors have done the necessary preparatory work to create authentic tasks for the Internet that make the language and cultural acquisition practical, efficient, and informative.

The book contains more than enough material for a semester of 3 classroom hours per week. At times the authors have high expectations of American students. How many American students are familiar with European governmental structures? The promise of the Web page remains to be fulfilled; some activities are still forthcoming. One of the dangers of any text, particularly when the topics are current affairs, is the inevitable obsolescence of the material. Most of the texts in the book, printed in 2005, date from 2000–2001. George Bush and Vladimir Putin will soon be historical figures. Here some regular updating of material on the Internet could use what are essentially templates about the media, the political system, and so forth, to extend their life span by introducing new texts and tasks that reflect our current world. As templates, the chapters could also be used by an instructor to meet the individual needs of a particular set of students. Some might be interested in economics, others in politics, yet others in conflict resolution. Some instructors will find in the individual chapters a model for using the Russian media and Internet to explore other topics such as disease, oil prices, Russia's relations with its neighbors, and other ecological, economical, and political themes.

Bogomolov and Nummikoski have laid the foundation for how students can effectively use the electronic resources at their fingertips. Their multimedia text can serve as a model not only for the Russian language teaching profession, but also for instructors of other languages searching for an approach and materials that integrate the Internet into the development of advanced language proficiency.

THOMAS R. BEYER, JR.
Middlebury College

WADE, TERENCE, & NIJOLE WHITE. *Using Russian Synonyms*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. vii, 633. \$40.00, paper. ISBN 0-521-79405-6.

One of the characteristic features of a good command of a language is a wide vocabulary, in-

cluding a sensitive understanding of synonyms. Knowledge of subtle differences between synonyms equips the language user to select a more precise word to communicate a thought either orally or in written form.

The reviewed publication is aimed at a broad audience that includes students of Russian, teachers, lecturers, translators, and other professional linguists (p. 13). The first will use it as a means of expanding their vocabulary, and the latter will be able to render the finest nuances of a thought or a text with its help.

The volume consists of a brief introduction (pp. 1–3), approximately 950 frames of semantic fields that cover about 4,600 words (pp. 15–530), bibliography (pp. 531–532), and indexes of Russian and English words with frame titles (pp. 533–633). To take full advantage of the book, the reader should have a clear understanding of the terminology used by the authors. They use a traditional definition that describes synonyms as “lexical items which are identical or very close in meaning to each other” and that are “interchangeable in all contexts” (p. 1). However the writers’ application of the term is much broader (p. 1) as they rightfully argue that in practice very few synonyms meet this criterion. One would wish for a more precise explanation of what *broader* means. It would have been beneficial had the authors offered their own definition of synonyms.

The other important concept for understanding the book’s structure is “the frame title” or “the dominant word” (p. 4). This word is generally stylistically neutral, and it has a higher frequency of usage compared to the other words in the group. For example, a frame title немедленно (pp. 250–251) lists 12 synonyms that illustrate semantic and stylistic differences, ranging from a bookish безотлагательно to a colloquial сейчас. Each example is accompanied by a translation and a sentence in which the word is used. The number of synonyms in a frame varies.

The authors introduce a five-point stylistic register to describe synonyms presented in the book. These registers are demotic, colloquial, neutral, bookish, and elevated (p. 7). Although at times the boundary between registers is very fine, the authors justify using the scale as a vehicle for bringing order to the system. The description of styles would have benefited had the authors explained in detail which criteria they applied in assigning register to each of the synonyms. Without such clarification, it is hard to understand why, for example, взор is listed as neutral but not bookish (p. 52), whereas обжаловать is classified as neutral and official (p. 60), but not bookish.

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Examples from rich Russian literature, rather than correct but dry sentences, would have added flavor to the edition. At times it is not clear why some of the frames do not include frequently