

Proprietary Methodology of Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language

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Abstrac

The main objectives are as follows: to conduct a comparative analysis of the current state of teaching Russian as a foreign language; to describe the role of the graphical-symbolic analysis of a fictional work as a set of linguistic and artistic-pictorial resources forming a literary text in the system of teaching Russian as a foreign language; to prove the importance of the proprietary methodology including elements of graphical-symbolic analysis (based on semiotics, mnemonics and ergonomics) for foreigners comprehending the ideological meaning of the fictional work under study, national traditions and customs, forming a sustainable interest in the Russian language; to determine the effectiveness of the above-mentioned proprietary methodology at different stages of teaching foreign students the Russian language (pre-university, Master's Degree and postgraduate courses, as well as the system of academic mobility of foreign students). Foreign students take an active part in international academic competitions concerned with the study of the Russian language, "Diamond up your language" essay contests, become winners and awardees of student conferences (John Andersen from Guyana, Luu Thị Huyèn from Vietnam).

The method of teaching foreign students the Russian language using the graphical-symbolic analysis of a fictional work is exemplified by I.S. Turgenev's short story – "Bezhin Meadow". This writer was chosen not only because of his 200th anniversary (Novikova, 2015) celebrated in different countries around the world (The Order of the President of the Russian Fede

ration No. 114, 2014), but also because of his contribution to the development of the Russian literature in the 19th century (Nedzvetsky, Poltavets, 2016), as well as the preservation of the Russian language. His literary works are analyzed in numerous scientific studies (Polunina, Bauder, 2015). "Bezhin Meadow" (Lomakina, 2017) is an excellent learning material that helps foreign students understand the past era, the Russian traditions and customs described by the author, artistic and stylistic features of the Russian language starting from "... the sky overhanging it", "My heart sank", "I found myself on the edge of a horrible precipice" to nature description when the narrator meets children "It was a marvelous picture...", "... darkness was struggling with light", "The dark unclouded sky stood, inconceivably immense, triumphant, above us in all its mysterious majesty". While working with the text, foreign students begin to better understand the Russian language, its shades of meaning ("...One felt a sweet oppression at one's heart, breathing in that peculiar, overpowering, yet fresh fragrance--the fragrance of a summer night in Russia"). Various means of visualization (slides, illustrations, the author's portrait, etc.) help foreign students fully perceive the topic under study, which contributes not only to the development of their coherent speech, but also to a better understanding of Russia's past and present.

The main provisions of the proprietary methodology under consideration are reflected in journals indexed by the Higher Attestation Commission, international conference proceedings published in Russia (Kazan, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Vladivostok) and abroad (Mongolia, Japan, Republic of Korea, China, Tunisia), the textbook entitled "The graphical-symbolic analysis of a fictional work in the system of teaching Russian as a foreign language", the online educational resource called "Russian studies in northeast Russia and countries of the Asia-Pacific region", proceedings of three international conferences "Russian studies in northeast Russia and countries of the Asia-Pacific region" (Yakutsk, 2014, 2015; Seoul (Republic of Korea), 2016); the 1st International forum "Russian studies in Russia and China: innovative practices" (Harbin, China, 2018); Master's Degree programs "The multicultural teaching of Russian as a foreign language in the field of education and tourism" and "Interactive technologies in teaching Russian as a foreign language".

Keywords: Russian as a foreign language, the Russian literature of the 19th century, I.S. Turgenev, "A Hunter's Sketches", "Bezhin Meadow" short story.

Metodología patentada de enseñanza del ruso como lengua extranjera

Resumen

Los objetivos principales son los siguientes: realizar un análisis comparativo del estado actual de la enseñanza del ruso como lengua extranjera; describir el papel del análisis gráfico-simbólico de una obra de ficción como un conjunto de recursos lingüísticos y artísticos-pictóricos que forman un texto literario en el sistema de enseñanza del ruso como lengua extranjera; para demostrar la importancia de la metodología patentada que incluye elementos de análisis gráfico-simbólico (basados en semiótica, mnemotécnica y ergonomía) para que los extranjeros comprendan el significado ideológico del trabajo ficticio en estudio, las tradiciones y costumbres nacionales, formando un interés sostenible en el idioma ruso ; Determinar la efectividad de la metodología patentada mencionada anteriormente en las diferentes etapas de la enseñanza de la lengua rusa a los estudiantes extranjeros (preuniversitario, maestría y posgrado, así como el sistema de movilidad académica de los estudiantes extranjeros). Los estudiantes extranjeros participan activamente en concursos académicos internacionales relacionados con el estudio de la lengua rusa, concursos de ensayos "Diamond up your language", se convierten en ganadores y premiados de las conferencias de estudiantes (John Andersen de Guyana, Luu Thị Huyền de Vietnam).

El método para enseñar a los estudiantes extranjeros el idioma ruso utilizando el análisis gráfico-simbólico de una obra de ficción se ejemplifica en I.S. El cuento de Turgenev - "Bezhin Meadow". Este escritor fue elegido no solo por su 200 aniversario (Novikova, 2015) celebrado en diferentes países del mundo (La Orden del Presidente de la Federación de Rusia ración No. 114, 2014), pero también por su contribución al desarrollo de la literatura rusa en el siglo XIX (Nedzvetsky, Poltavets, 2016), así como a la preservación del idioma ruso. Sus obras literarias se analizan en numerosos estudios científicos (Polunina, Bauder, 2015). "Bezhin Meadow" (Lomakina, 2017) es un excelente material de aprendizaje que ayuda a los estudiantes extranjeros a comprender la era pasada, las tradiciones y costumbres rusas descritas por el autor, las características artísticas y estilísticas de la lengua rusa a partir de "... el cielo sobresaliendo", " Mi corazón se hundió ", " Me encontré al borde de un horrible precipicio " a la descripción de la naturaleza cuando el narrador conoce a los niños" Era una imagen maravillosa ... ", " ... la oscuridad estaba luchando con la luz ", " La oscu

ridad cielo despejado se erguía, inconcebiblemente inmenso, triunfante, sobre nosotros en toda su misteriosa majestad ". Mientras trabajan con el texto, los estudiantes extranjeros comienzan a comprender mejor el idioma ruso, sus matices de significado ("... Uno sintió una dulce opresión en el corazón, respirando esa fragancia peculiar, abrumadora y fresca, la fragancia de un noche de verano en Rusia "). Varios medios de visualización (diapositivas, ilustraciones, el retrato del autor, etc.) ayudan a los estudiantes extranjeros a percibir completamente el tema en estudio, lo que contribuye no solo al desarrollo de su discurso coherente, sino también a una mejor comprensión del pasado y el presente de Rusia.

Las principales disposiciones de la metodología patentada bajo consideración se reflejan en revistas indexadas por la Comisión Superior de Atestación, actas de conferencias internacionales publicadas en Rusia (Kazán, Moscú, San Petersburgo, Vladivostok) y en el extranjero (Mongolia, Japón, República de Corea, China, Túnez), el libro de texto titulado "El análisis gráfico-simbólico de una obra ficticia en el sistema de enseñanza del ruso como lengua extranjera", el recurso educativo en línea denominado "Estudios rusos en el noreste de Rusia y países de la región de Asia y el Pacífico", actas de tres conferencias internacionales "Estudios rusos en el noreste de Rusia y países de la región Asia-Pacífico" (Yakutsk, 2014, 2015; Seúl (República de Corea), 2016); el primer foro internacional "Estudios rusos en Rusia y China: prácticas innovadoras" (Harbin, China, 2018); Programas de maestría "La enseñanza multicultural del ruso como lengua extranjera en el campo de la educación y el turismo" y "Tecnologías interactivas en la enseñanza del ruso como lengua extranjera".

Palabras clave: ruso como lengua extranjera, literatura rusa del siglo XIX, I.S. Turgenev, "Bocetos de un cazador", cuento de "Bezhin Meadow".

1. Introduction

The study of the Russian language in the territory of Russia, its popularization in neighboring countries and global promotion become strategically important areas of the state's international policy. The philological discipline entitled "Russian as a foreign language" is a dynamically developing direction of Russian science. The Russian language is not only a "translator" of cultural values, but it is also an integral part of the global civilization.

Recently, Russian as a foreign language has drawn much attention and become the subject of active discussion and research, which highlights the need to form the most effective methods of its mastering. Modern Russian studies should create experimental and alternative educational programs, search for new teaching technologies, combine national and ethnocultural education systems into the global educational space (Petrova, 2013).

In this regard, the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language should

correspond to the current geopolitical, global and socio-linguistic situation, as well as to new linguistic processes taking place in the Russian language. Therefore, there is a need for principally new approaches to teaching Russian as a foreign language (Petrova, 12). We believe that teaching Russian as a foreign language "should comply with the principles of brain functions" (M.F. Kosilova). Since the foreign students participating in this experiment are residents of the Asia-Pacific region, it is necessary to consider their learning abilities, specific perception and understanding of educational materials (Yu.M. Lotman). On the practical side, some scientists rightly believe that the most promising way of teaching foreign students the Russian language is to replace "the traditional methods with the ethnic ones" (Balykhina, Yujiang, 2012).

However, this teaching method has its own specifics. In the age of developed information technologies, semiotics is again regarded as the study of signs. Modern scholars notice that "semiotics [...] helps understand not only different cultures, but also their aesthetic universals and psychological constants of humankind" (Mechkovskaya, 2008). Semiotics has both theoretical and practical significance (Vraymud, 2014). It plays an important role in understanding the communicative-cognitive evolution of any given culture. Foundations of semiotics as a science were laid back in antiquity: from Aristotle who considered "words as signs of thoughts" to A.F. Losev who acknowledged that "any symbol is an unfolded sign". The Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School founded by Y.M. Lotman played an important role in the development of the Russian semiotics since this researcher formulated sign-symbol philosophy (Lotman, 2015). His theoretical notions mostly apply to the semiotics of text. Scholars from different countries and epochs found many similarities between the sign and the symbol: "The sign expresses some meaning, while the symbol fully reveals it" (A.M. Pyatigorskii, etc.). Nowadays this problem is reconsidered. Given the multifunctional nature of semiotics, some scholars view it as a "method of deciphering signs", thereby they create a new direction of this "study of signs" (M.K. Mamardashvili, A.M. Pyatigorskii).

The problem under study cannot be solved without the latest educational technologies, including the effective method of teaching foreign students the Russian language using literary fiction and graphical-symbolic analysis. Literature has certain advantages for studying national perception and world transformation. It is built on the principle of the global intertext that allows experiencing and reading the literary tradition of previous epochs in different ways (Fateeva 2012). This method has demonstrated its effectiveness due to its close connection with history, philosophy, culture and literature.

The practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language has a long history and has

been formed by Russian scholars (E.I. Motina, O.D. Mitrofanova, S.A. Khavronina, E.M. Vereshchagin, V.G. Kostomarov, E.I. Passov, I.P. Lysakova, A.N. Shchukin, V.G. Moskovkin, etc.) and foreign researchers (Wierzbicka, 2003; Stryker, Leaver, 1997; Thomas, Clift, Sugimoto, 1996) who investigated this problem at different times and in various aspects.

To teach foreign students the Russian language effectively, it is necessary to introduce the innovative graphical-symbolic analysis of a fictional work into the learning process, which not only enriches a student's vocabulary and develops their coherent oral speech, but also supports intellectual and emotional activity and arouses great interest in Russian as a source of knowledge about the Russian history, national traditions and customs reflected in the literature.

2. Methods

This proprietary methodology can be used to teach foreign students the Russian language regardless of their level of knowledge, but a teacher should consider the above-mentioned level to properly use the methodology. The new methodology takes into account

the specific way of thinking common to foreigners (as a rule, they are young people from Asia, Africa, the Middle East). Their right-brain thinking is based on associative links and figurative comparisons; easily perceives drawings, signs and symbols. Scholars emphasize that "... any person has one more world image – a symbolic world representing the surrounding world [...] in literary texts" (G.A. Glotova). It is clear that foreigners cannot read the authentic Russian literature, and even reading these texts in their native language causes many difficulties. The use of texts is explained by the desire to introduce foreigners to Russian history, traditions and customs through fiction and thereby heighten their interest in the Russian language.

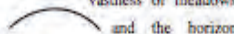
Teachers of Russian as a foreign language make an abridged version of some literary text. The content of each chapter is retold in the brief form (as a rule, 10-12 sentences). It is the most difficult task because it is necessary to retell the text and reveal its artistic features while preserving key and pivot words. Then students receive homework consisting of different parts. The first part includes the abridged text with the following tasks: 1. to read and retell the text; 2. to learn the vocabulary (to look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary); 3. to compose a new text using the given words (the text is provided as a kind of support); 4. to be able to ask questions and answer them. In the end, foreign students are shown some chapter-related graphics that reflect the main idea of this chapter. It is hard to come up with such a sign as teachers should know the era under study, its history and philosophy, understand events that took place

at that time, know the author's biography, the history of the chosen fictional work and, of course, carefully read and comprehend the text under analysis. That way teachers can create graphics that are easily memorized and helps reproduce the sequence of events depicted by the author. Looking at the graphics, foreign students remember not only the text but also grammatical rules and reproduce the correct Russian text. The above-mentioned confirms the following statement – "a truly valid text consists of ... numerous non-verbal signs (numbers, symbols, drawings, etc.)" (italic – S.P.) (Plotnikov, 1992). This methodology has proved its effectiveness, and foreign students could speak Russian after three months of its study. Now they not only speak Russian, but also begin to think differently. They are interested in the Russian language, culture, history, traditions and customs. This attitude is reflected in tests and their participation in various competitions (reading contests, "Diamond up your language" international essay contests, "Lomonosov-16" and "Lomonosov-17" international student conferences held by the Moscow State University).




3. Results


The graphical-semiotic analysis of a fictional work in the system of teaching Russian as a foreign language is demonstrated in the table below.

Table 1. The graphical-symbolic analysis of I.S. Turgenev's short story – "Bezhin Meadow

Story parts	Graphics and symbols	Pivot, key and symbolic words
<p>Part I. Nature description. It was a glorious July day. The sky is clear. The sun with a bright radiance. A multitude of rounded clouds. In the evening these clouds disappear. I was out grouse-shooting. I shot a fair amount of game and decided to turn back homewards. I was utterly lost. The night had crept close. Darkness was rising up on all sides. Fires side by side were smoking in the distance. I had been mistaken in taking the figures for drovers. They were simply peasant boys who were in charge of a drove of horses at night.</p>	<p>This line denotes space, the vastness of meadows and the horizon line that cannot be seen.</p>  <p>'It was a glorious July day. The sky is clear. The sun with a bright radiance'.</p> <p>(This description is associated with space. Semicircle is the celestial sphere. This graphical image is easy to memorize and is used to retell the text – the author's comment – S.P.).</p>	<p>Vocabulary: clouds, to disappear, grouses, game, to get lost, in the distance, to graze, a drove.</p> <p>Pivot words: day, sky, grouses, game.</p> <p>Keywords: night, fires, boys.</p>

<p>Part 2.1. Meeting the boys. The first, Fedya, one would take to be about fourteen. He was a well-made boy, [...] with curly fair hair, bright eyes, and a perpetual [...] smile. He belonged [...] to a well-to-do family, and had ridden out to the meadow [...] for amusement. He wore a gay print shirt, with a yellow border; a short new overcoat [...]; a comb hung from his blue belt. His boots [...] were certainly, his own – not his father's.</p>	<p>Details He was a well-made boy, [...] with curly fair hair, bright eyes, and a perpetual [...] smile. (The key word to describe Fedya's appearance is well-made, i.e. it is denoted by a long straight line – <i>the author's comment – S.P.</i>).</p>	<p>Vocabulary: curly hair, an overcoat, a border, a belt, a comb, boots, necessity, amusement. Pivot words: eyes, a shirt, an overcoat, a belt, a comb, boots. Keywords: smile, family, amusement.</p>
<p>Part 2.2. The second boy, Pavlusha, had tangled [...]</p>	<p>Details The second boy, Pavlusha, had a</p>	<p>Vocabulary: tangled hair, cheek-</p>

<p>hair, broad cheek-bones, a pale face; [...] his head altogether was large, his figure was square and clumsy; [...] he looked very sensible and straightforward, and there was a vigorous ring in his voice. His attire consisted simply of a homespun shirt and patched trousers.</p>	<p> square and clumsy figure...</p> <p>The key word is 'a square and clumsy figure', i.e. Pavlusha is not tall. This part is marked with a shorter straight line (<i>the author's comment – S.P.</i>)</p>	<p>bones, a square figure, a homespun shirt, patched trousers.</p> <p>Pivot words: <i>hair, cheek-bones, head, figure.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>vigor.</i></p>
<p>Part 2.3. The face of the third, Ilyusha, was rather uninteresting; it was a long face, with short-sighted eyes and a hooknose: it <i>expressed a kind of dull, fretful uneasiness</i>; his <i>tightly-drawn lips</i> seemed rigid; his <i>contracted brow</i> never relaxed; he seemed continually blinking from the firelight. His flaxen—almost white—<i>hair hung out in thin wisps</i> under his low felt hat, which he kept pulling down with both hands over his ears. He had on new bast shoes and leggings; a thick string, wound three times round his figure, carefully held together his neat black smock. Neither he nor Pavlusha looked more than twelve years old.</p>	<p> Details</p> <p>“...a thick string, wound three times round his figure, carefully held together his neat black smock”.</p> <p>The key word is ‘a string, wound three times...’. It is graphically represented as three parallel lines (<i>the author's comment – S.P.</i>)</p>	<p>Vocabulary: <i>uneasiness, tightly-drawn lips, contracted brow, to blink, hair 'hung out in thin wisps', bast shoes, leggings, a string, a smock.</i></p> <p>Pivot words: <i>face, lips, brows, hair, a hat.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>firelight.</i></p>
<p>Part 2.4. The fourth, Kostya, a boy of ten, aroused my curiosity by his <i>thoughtful and sorrowful look</i>. His whole face was small, thin, freckled, pointed at</p>	<p> Details</p> <p>His whole face was small, thin, freckled, pointed at the chin like a squirrel's...</p> <p>The typical detail ‘face pointed</p>	<p>Vocabulary: <i>curiosity, a thoughtful and sorrowful look, pointed at the chin like a squirrel's, thin face, eyes that 'shone</i></p>

<p>the chin like a squirrel's; his lips were barely perceptible; but his great black eyes, that shone with liquid brilliance produced a strange impression: they seemed trying to express something for which the tongue—his tongue, at least—had no words. He was undersized and weakly, and dressed rather poorly.</p>	<p>at the chin like a squirrel's" is graphically represented as a triangle that is easy to memorize (the author's comment – S.P.)</p>	<p>with liquid brilliance", freckles, undersized, weakly. Pivot words: face, freckles, eyes. Keywords: curiosity, look, impression, tongue.</p>
<p>Part 2.5. The remaining boy, Vanya, I had not noticed at first; he was lying on the ground, peacefully curled up under a square mat, and, only occasionally thrust his curly brown head out from under it; this boy was seven years old at the most.</p>	<p>Details "... he was lying on the _____ ground...". It is one of the most symbolic images used in the novel. It is the youngest boy. He is lying on the ground. He is unseen, but the time will come and Vanya with his curly brown head will get up and the brighter future the author believes in will begin (the author's comment – S.P.).</p>	<p>Vocabulary: to notice, peacefully, to curl up, a mat, occasionally, to thrust, curly brown head. Pivot words: a mat, head. Keywords: a boy, the ground.</p>
<p>Part 3. Boys' stories about the goblin, the huntsman Yermil, the departed, Trishka Antichrist, Gavrilá and the mermaid, the water-spirit.</p>	<p> The stories and legends told by the boys during the night and based on myths and tales woke in their mind phantasmagoric images which are depicted as a spiral (the author's comment – S.P.).</p>	<p>Vocabulary: a goblin, a huntsman, the departed, a mermaid. Pivot words: a huntsman, a mermaid, a goblin, a water-spirit. Keywords: Antichrist.</p>
<p>Part 4. Farewell, Before I had walked two miles, already all around me [...] flowed fresh streams of burning light, first pink, then red and golden... All things</p>	<p>↑ The final part of the story is filled with optimism and stylistic dynamics: "to awaken, to sing, to flutter, to speak", which reflects the author's</p>	<p>Vocabulary: a gule, streams flow, glittering diamonds. Pivot words: a mile, dew, a drove. Keywords: a</p>

<p>began to stir, to awaken, to sing, to flutter, to speak. On all sides thick drops of dew sparkled in glittering diamonds; to welcome me, pure and clear as though bathed in the freshness of morning, came the notes of a bell, and suddenly there rushed by me, driven by the boys I had parted from, the drove of horses, refreshed and rested.</p>	<p>positive thinking and his faith in renewal. This mood is graphically represented as a pointer looking up (the author's comment – S.P.).</p>	<p>stream, freshness, a bell, light, boys. Symbolic word: <i>faith.</i></p>
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4. Discussion

The above-mentioned proprietary methodology (Petrov, 2012) is based on practice-oriented provisions of semiotics, mnemonics and ergonomics, as well as general didactic principles, including historicism, scientificity, accessibility, visibility and applicability. We place special emphasis on the understanding of epoch-related philosophy, good knowledge of how a certain fictional work was created and perception of the author's moral and ideological position. To understand the literary work under study, foreign students should work with its vocabulary and phraseological units where the semantic role is played not only by key or pivot words commonly used in modern methodologies, but also the symbolic word (unique concept) expressing the main idea. As a rule, the latter is not directly used in the text. During conversations, foreign students share their impressions about the text and this kind of activity in general. Some of them ask questions, others try to answer them. In addition, we pay much attention to words that reflect the historical-national color of the short story (peasants, pasturing horses for the night, scroll, etc.). This approach helps foreign students mastering the Russian language better understand Russia, its culture and the spiritual world of its people.

Adapted texts contribute to the development of oral coherent speech, a student's vocabulary enrichment and meaningful perception of the literary work under study. Foreign students work with adapted fiction according to the following system: they read the given text for the first time, reread it, compre

hend it and then retell the narrative. Each part of the text under study is marked graphically (with special symbols) and is very easy to memorize. Graphics improve the student's creative imagination, stimulates their mental activity, teaches them how to logically analyze the text under study and quickly memorize its structure. The use of semiotics radically changes the thinking of foreign students and provides each of them with their own learning path.

Literature plays a special role during classes of Russian as a foreign language. The introduction of literary texts enlivens the work with foreign students and motivates them to independently develop coherent speech. Teachers prepare an adapted retelling of the chosen educational text and explain unfamiliar words differentiated into pivot and keywords. I.S. Turgenev's short story "Bezhin Meadow" is conditionally divided into four parts. Teachers adapt each of them so that they can be understood by foreign students. Moreover, it is crucial to preserve the meaning of I.S. Turgenev's story filled with unique symbols, metaphors and stylistic features. Foreign students are taught to correctly read the text and search for pivot and keywords. Before getting their homework connected with the adapted text and understanding of specific graphics illustrating its parts, foreign students perform the following tasks in the classroom: slowly read the text aloud and carefully pronounce difficult words, consult with dictionaries and explain word meanings, retell some fragments, formulate questions and answers to them. This preparatory work guarantees a student's interest in homework.

As the work at the North-Eastern Federal University has shown, interdisciplinary links are gaining more and more significance. In particular, teaching staff at the Medical Institute of the North-Eastern Federal University pay much attention to the educational influence of literature on the professional development of future doctors (Petrova, 2015). It is known that such writers as V.I. Dal, A.P. Chekhov, M.A. Bulgakov and some others were doctors by training. Their fictional characters often suffer from different diseases. Although I.S. Turgenev was not a physician, many of his literary works, including "Bezhin Meadow", are concerned with the theme of disease which is reflected in the description of characters. Since there are many foreign students attending pre-university courses of the Medical Institute, the study of the Russian literature is more than a pedagogical or cognitive activity, it is gaining educational importance.

5. Conclusion

The graphical-symbolic analysis of a fictional work in the system of teaching Russian as a foreign language has proved to be effective. This methodology

contributes to a better understanding of the Russian language, enriches the vocabulary of foreign students, and helps them learn more about the Russian history, culture, national traditions and customs reflected in literary works. The traditional methodology of teaching foreign students the Russian language "from square one" takes many months, while the proposed technology of teaching Russian through the graphical-symbolic analysis of a fictional work requires from three to four months. As a result, foreign students begin to speak well, which motivates them to achieve new levels of language knowledge.

Acknowledgments

This article is written in the framework of Grant No. 8 provided by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation "Development of open education in Russia and teaching the Russian language" for the training program (subprogram) "Development and spread of Russian as the foundation of civic self-identity and language of international dialogue" as a part of the state program of the Russian Federation "Development of education". The project title – "The Asia-Pacific online school of Russian studies: strategies and technologies". Minutes of the meeting held by the contest committee of June 8, 2018, No. 3.

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