

Review of A. Kuznecov's doctoral thesis

Отзыв диссертации А. Кузнецова на соискание ученой степени
кандидата педагогических наук

Candidate: Andrej Kuznecov (Андрей Кузнецов)

Institution: Moscow State University (Московский Государственный Университет им. М.В. Ломоносова);
Faculty of Foreign Languages and Regional Studies (Факультет иностранных языков и регионоведения)

Field of study: 13.00.02 – Теория и методика обучения и воспитания (иностранные языки)

Topic of the dissertation: «Методические основы проектирования кросс-платформенного курса для организации самостоятельной работы студентов (РКИ, языковой ВУЗ)»

A. Kuznecov offers a 235-page-thesis consisting of four Chapters (plus Introduction, Conclusion, Attachments etc.), in which he presents the methodological framework for a Cross-Platform Online Course for independent student work in Russian-as-a-Foreign-Language (RFL). The framework covers the new standards and goals set in the current curricular study programmes at Moscow State University and other Russian universities. It is the candidate's aim to foster students' communicative competence by designing an e-learning course meeting the ever-changing IT requirements in our modern society.

In his dissertation, Kuznecov clearly outlines the research carried out in this field in the past twenty years and expertly links it to his own project by paying attention to the course objectives of the MGU study programmes – such as norms, functions and notions of Russian as L1 and L2, linguistic competence in various domains, stylistic, terminological and digital skills, academic writing and presentation skills in the FL, and so forth. The challenge of the project – as well as its topicality – lies in the combining of new FL teaching approaches with the innovations in IT so that students are constantly motivated to engage in their individual learning process.

Kuznecov dedicates his study to Cross-Platform Development (CPD). Again, he presents a complex overview of works on IT in language teaching, hereby revealing the gaps that have not been covered in the research literature so far. What is new in Kuznecov's concept is that, first, he sets up a useful typology of existing online services and web-programmes and, second, by clearly stating his own goal, content and method(s), tries to develop the sociocultural and communicative awareness of the students in order to improve their writing (or, rather, reading) ability. Kuznecov is familiar with the various didactic concepts of such web programmes, and so he can adapt them to his own and develop appropriate exercise and task formats.

By proposing a clear hypothesis, Kuznecov shows he is not only capable of academic research in ICT but also demonstrates profound knowledge of the national literature. His coverage of foreign publications in this

field, however, is less obvious. As evidence for the innovative character of his Online Project he mentions three points:

«Langteach-Online»

- reduces or even replaces the use of (American) LMS,
- allows individual selection of materials and
- supplies new task-based writing formats for RFL.

Two more lists regarding the technical and practical values of his study are given not as mere enumerations of advantages but as evidence since all formats and tasks have been pretested both with RFL teachers and students during a period of seven years (2013–2019). The results of the piloting have been presented and discussed in seminars and at conferences (and the reviewer himself had the opportunity of listening to the candidate's presentation of Langteach at the МАПРЯЛ-Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, in May 2019).

When writing this review, I once again had a look at <http://www.langteach-online.ru> and was surprised at how much the site had improved since my last access in June 2019. At first sight, the site is modern, clearly arranged and seems very user-friendly. However, when I went on the site «Актеры», and in particular selected the text about «Высоцкий», I could neither access the exercises nor the homework or the test page. Another fact I would like to comment on is that the selection of actors starts with Mejerchol'd and ends with Andreev. Where are all the young actors that many students would feel attracted to?

Kuznecov forwards six comments or «положения» for his dissertation defense. I would like to pose the following questions:

- How is a student's individual trajectory supported, guided and commented on by the teacher?
- How is the student's self-assessment corrected or adjusted by the teacher, if necessary?
- Which arguments are brought forward for the choice of texts representing the cultural background of the target language?
- Are there any statistical data that confirm the hypothesis that CPD improves students' writing?
- How was the piloting phase processed?
- The author states that Langteach has been developed to teach students «особенности письменной речи», yet it seems that the focus is rather on the receptive than on the productive skill of writing. How does the author account for that?
- A great advantage of the choice of texts is that they have been categorised according to the various competence levels of the *Common European Framework of Languages* CEFR (A1–C2). How has this categorisation been achieved?



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Reviewer: Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Wolfgang Stadler, M.A, Innsbruck University (Austria)

Department of Slavic Languages, Literatures and Cultures / Department of Subject-Specific Education