To whom this may concern

I am writing to express my enthusiasm for the Aspect in Russian Mediabook. I have worked through the current version available on http://isl.unc.edu/russian/ainr and I am familiar with the theoretical model behind the teaching materials: both the theoretical and educational parts of this project have been presented at several linguistic conferences and have appeared in leading journals for general linguists and well as for teachers of Slavic languages.

In my view, the Aspect in Russian teaching materials are unique in their kind. The Mediabook reflects how original research on non-elicted data leads to an elegant explanatory model that is both comprehensive and intuitive. Both properties make the model extremely well suited to serve as the foundation for teaching materials: where previous attempts left us with a bewildering number of rules that often fail to account for aspect assignment in non-elicted clauses, this metaphor-based approach is the first to offer students what is needed to really understand aspect as it is used in Russian. Apart from having a sound scientific foundation, this project carries great scientific promise. Unlike existing teaching materials, the Mediabook is not just designed to teach students facts about aspect; it goes much further, showing students of Russian language how to become linguists. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to collect and analyze data and draw inferences, skills that teaching materials rarely aim to develop. Last but not least, the materials are wrapped up in attractive interactive packaging. The multimedia approach no doubt appeals more to the generation of students making up the college population than any traditional textbook as it presents instructional material in the familiar, high-tech format of the digital age.

From Fall 2006 onwards I will be teaching Russian Linguistics to B.A. students at the K.U Leuven (Belgium) and intend to use the Aspect in Russian materials in my classes. In addition, I am most willing to let my group of students serve as a site where new modules can be beta-tested as they become available. I believe this exciting and innovative project deserves the support of any teacher of Russian linguistics: not only does the Mediabook provide students with the exceptional opportunity to master aspect in Russian, it also gives them a unique chance to experience what it is like to be a linguist.

Respectfully submitted,

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