



RUSSIAN HYPERTUTOR, VERSION 1.0,

BY GEORGE MITREVSKY

REVIEWER: PAUL M. MITCHELL, MIAMI UNIVERSITY

- Distributor:** TechKnowledge, 128 S. Ryan Street, Auburn, Alabama 36830
Telephone: (205) 821-6369
- Price:** \$250 per site license; \$150 for individual copy.
- Computers:** Macintosh computers, model SE or higher, with minimum of 2 megabytes of RAM and a hard disk; requires HyperCard version 2.0 or later.
- Format:** 8 disks: Dictionary & Endings, Introductory Lessons I & V, Introductory Lesson II, Introductory Lesson III, Introductory Lesson IV, Lessons 1-3, Lessons 4-7, Lessons 8-22.
- Documentation:** Guided Tour of Russian HyperTutor (7 pp.).
- Copyright:** 1991
- Level Reviewed for:** Russian beginning
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| Ratings: | Use of Computer Capabilities | B |
| | Technical Performance | B |
| | Documentation | B |
| | Overall Performance | B |

DESCRIPTION

Russian HyperTutor 1.0 is a Russian tutorial program intended as a supplement to the English-language edition of the textbook *Russian for Everybody*, including all introductory phonetics lessons (I-V) and the first 22 of 34 lessons in the textbook. The introductory lessons contain tutorials on phonetics and sound discrimination exercises; lessons 1-22 consist of grammar tutorials, exercises, vocabulary, and a "potpourri" section designed to allow instructors to insert relevant cultural material or to expand



on material presented in other parts of the lesson. Tutorials and exercise sections also are designed for possible alteration or expansion by individual instructors.

The exercise sections of *Russian HyperTutor* seem to offer the best opportunities for students using the program as a supplement. Exercises range from multiple-choice format to English-Russian translation, with answers in all such formats available after each item. More open-ended exercises (such as describing an illness, in lesson 22) are meant to be printed and checked by an instructor of Russian. There are exercises for readings contained in the textbook, although not all topics treated in tutorials have corresponding exercises. The vocabulary sections also contain exercises, as well as accented vocabulary items corresponding to the various lessons.

While some tutorial explanations are detailed (e.g., introduction to verbal aspect, in lesson 11), others are minimal or consist of entirely of examples (e.g., expressions of motion corresponding to English "from," in lesson 22). With the latter point in mind, the reviewer recommends that students have their textbooks with them when using the program.

Sound quality in the introductory phonetics lessons is poor in places, even with the use of headphones, which method affords the best sound reproduction and is recommended by the author (over use of the Macintosh internal speaker or an external speaker). However, the greatest problem with the phonetics introduction seems to be imprecision in the description of various sounds (for instance, the Russian dental consonants [t] and [d] are not presented as such, but as the equivalents of non-dental English sounds). Since *Russian HyperTutor* is intended for use with *Russian for Everybody*, which contains more precise descriptions of Russian sounds, one wonders why the author has made these changes.

The section on endings would be more helpful with additional explanation. In discussing masculine nouns, for instance, Mitrevsky provides paradigms for inanimate hard and soft stem nouns, citing the nouns **журнал** (žurnal) and **портфель** (portfel'), respectively and for animate nouns of the same stem types, citing **мальчик** (mal'čik) and **строитель** (stroitel'), respectively. However, while notation is given to account for variance in genitive or animate accusative plural nouns with stems ending in **ш, ж, ч, щ** (s, z, c, sc), and for the occurrence of **ём** (em) endings, no examples are given for such occurrences; furthermore, no account is taken for the loss of the stem final consonant



й (j) with endings, in such nouns as трамвай (tramvaj). In addition, alteration here of the order of cases from NAGPDI (as occurs in *Russian for Everybody*) to NGADIP negates the juxtaposition of identical forms and is thereby inconvenient for students.

Although proofreading appears generally to have been good, there are several errors in instructions to the exercise in lesson 22 (referred to above) "Describe a time when you were ill." Errors in Cyrillic text noted by this reviewer include курит (kurit), for курить (kurit'), and едите (edite), for едите (edite), both in lesson 22. Finally, there are occasional lapses in English syntax (for instance, in introductory lesson I, we read that Russian contains many sounds that are "the same [as] or similar to English sounds").

In summary, I would say that *Russian HyperTutor*, in its present form, can be most useful as an optional supplement to exercises and some grammar topics in *Russian for Everybody* (through lesson 22). Students using *Russian HyperTutor* should be advised to have their textbooks handy while they are using the program.

REVIEWER'S BIODATA

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