

Introduction to Volume 59

The present volume of *Russian Language Journal* offers a rich selection of new research and studies in all three of the Journal's major areas of focus: language policy, research on the study and teaching of Russian as a foreign or second language, and original research.

Our first article in Volume 59 addresses the continuing need for comprehensive information on the number and distribution of Russian language programs across the U.S., an issue that has come to acquire particular importance, as the U. S. Congress embarks this year on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). For that reason, RLJ is pleased to release the first "ACTR 2009 Census of K-12 Russian Programs in the U. S." by Davidson and Garas. Based on direct contacts and confirmations from more than 27,000 public, private, and parochial schools in the U.S. in May of 2009, the Census represents the first in what ACTR hopes will become a regular periodic update on the state of pre-college Russian in the United States: current enrollments, numbers, and locations of teachers and programs, and levels of training offered. The K-12 Russian Census can support broader cooperation between schools and colleges, as well as aid in the expansion of cooperation among schools and school districts where Russian is offered, or being considered for introduction.

In May of 2009, with support from the Language Flagship, a program of the National Security Education Program (NSEP), ACTR/Washington hosted a two-day international symposium under the aegis of the International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature (MAPRIAL) on the current position of Russian as a language of interpersonal and trans-national communication in different regions of the world. We are pleased to present three selected papers from that symposium reflecting the changing status and functioning of Russian as a second language and as a lingua-franca in Kazakhstan (Sulejmenova), Kyrgyzstan (Derbisheva) and Moldova (Mlechko). All three authors, leading specialists in language policy studies, share their perspectives and newest research on the current status and functioning of Russian in three quite distinctive linguistic situations within today's Russophone world.

This year's Research on Teaching and Learning begins with a report (Bazarova, Lekic, Marshall) to the field concerning American Councils/ACTR's

Online Proficiency-based Reading, Listening, and Integrated Writing External Assessment Program for Russian, which is now in operation and available to Russian programs at both the high school and university level. Proficiency-based measurements of student learning outcomes in Russian have not been generally available for more than a decade. The descriptions of the tests and the means by which its construct validity has been established is likely to be of interest to teachers and specialists alike in this time of heightened attention to student learning outcomes.

A further group of papers in this section reflect new areas of research on the teaching of Russian at the advanced level and beyond, in part a result of the demands of Flagship-supported professional-level instruction. Katherine Moskver investigates the challenges of creating with the language at the advanced levels, while Olga Ryabova focuses on the development of native-like intonation at the advanced levels. Bill Comer's welcome attention to the "null possessive" in Russian represents an area of need and increased interest for curriculum development and teaching at both the advanced and intermediate levels. The final paper in this section by Avram Lyon, an investigation of the language of Russian adoptees, represents a first report for the field on this important and still rarely studied aspect of Russian heritage language in the U.S., including reports on attitudes toward the study of Russian that will be of wide interest to the heritage community.

Volume 59 concludes with the presentation of new research on the structure of Russian in areas of long-standing interest to specialists in the study and teaching of the language: David Gotsiridze presents his latest research on the functional category of the "prizyv" ("call," "summons"); while western specialists have attention on the socio-pragmatics and pragmo-linguistics of requests, expressions of gratitude, and apologies, the present paper breaks new ground for American Russianists in this field. Similarly, Steriopolo's case study on expressive morphology provides a new and original analysis of a central and long-standing area of interest to linguists and teachers alike.

ACTR has contributed over the years to a broadly international dialog among Russian scholars and teachers. The May 2009 Washington Symposium was the latest in a long series of ACTR-organized international conferences that began with the Soviet-American conferences at M.I.T. and Amherst College in October of 1974. RLJ is pleased to have included a number of papers from the May Symposium in the present volume, new work produced by both younger and established scholars from the U.S., Russia, Canada, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova.

The Editors. December 2009.