

Editorial

We are pleased to introduce the first issue of the new peer-reviewed electronic journal *The Russian Journal of Cognitive Science*. Cognitive science refers to an interdisciplinary field focused on studies of cognition; the latter may be broadly described as the acquisition, maintenance, transformation and usage of knowledge by living and artificial systems.

The history of the cognitive science movement may be traced back to the 1950s. By now it is a well developed branch of knowledge in Western Europe, the United States and Canada. In Russia, however, the institutionalization of cognitive studies is relatively recent, about a half century behind those western countries. At the same time, the groundwork for the study of cognitive science in Russia was laid by decades of research on cognition in cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, neurophysiology, linguistics and artificial intelligence, although these disciplines initially were not considered as parts of the single whole. George Miller, one of the founders of the American cognitive science movement, wrote in his memoirs: “I have been working toward a cognitive science for about twenty years beginning before I knew what to call it” (Miller, 1979)¹. Many Russian scientists followed a similar path, and only when they first attended a special seminar or a conference on cognitive science, did they realize that their work contributes to this field.

In the first decade of the new millennium, the self-organization of the Russian cognitive scientists developed faster than that of our American predecessors at their time. The Moscow Cognitive Science Seminar started in 2002. The first Russian Conference on Cognitive Science took place in Kazan in 2004 and was continued by a series of the International Conferences on Cognitive Science held in Russia biannually since then. Also in 2004, the Russia-based Interregional Association for Cognitive Studies (IACS) was organized. In 2008 the first Master-level program in cognitive psychology and cognitive sciences debuted at the Russian State University for Humanities, and the first graduation from this program took place in 2010.

The present decade have seen a growth in the number of regular workshops and conferences. The poster-only conference “Cognitive Science in Moscow: New Research” began in 2011; it brings together not only Moscow researchers, but scientists from other cities and countries as well. Our colleagues from Moscow and Saint-Petersburg organize the annual workshop “The Grand Illusion of Consciousness”. Beyond Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, research groups from Kazan, Tomsk, Yaroslavl, Samara, and Novosibirsk are becoming involved in more intense research interactions.

Russian researchers have confronted a difficult task in overcoming isolation and establishing communication with scientists from other disciplines, other cities and other countries. Russian cognitive scientists often face intolerance of their work solely because it is interdisci-

plinary and therefore “not psychology”, “not physiology”, “not linguistics”. Enforced isolation of the Soviet sciences from the international academic community for many years formed a strong background for geographical and cultural self-isolation. Constraints on professional communication became traditional and are often willingly continued; the barrier that makes Russian scientists prefer local journals to international ones is nowadays largely subjective.

The mission of the new journal is to encourage the communication between the academics from different disciplines who share an interest in cognitive studies, and to provide an outlet for Russian researchers to publish their results and ideas not only in Russian, but also in English, which is now broadly accepted as a language of international communication.

We are especially pleased by the fact that in the first issue of the new journal the articles by Russian researchers are complemented with a paper by colleagues from the Central and East European Center for Cognitive Science (Sofia, Bulgaria) which for many of us has become a window not only to Europe, but to the field of cognitive science as well.

The format of scientific communication has changed over time, and the new journal will be published only online. Indeed, it is remarkable that ten years ago the first Russian on-site Conference on Cognitive Science was preceded by the first online Russian Internet Conference on Cognitive Science. We believe that open access to the articles will also play a positive role in the dissemination of the advances and discoveries in cognitive science within Russian and in the international academic community.

We wish you an interesting reading and hope that many of our readers will eventually become our authors.

Ekaterina Pechenkova
Editor-in-Chief

¹ Miller, G. A. (1979). A very personal history. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Cognitive Science. P. 9.