

EDITORS' PREFACE

We are happy to present hereby the first issue of the new journal “Language in Africa”. The journal is co-founded by the Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow) and by the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg).

The journal is primarily focused on African linguistics, including ethno- and sociolinguistics, but also on literature, folklore, written and oral traditions. The audience of the journal is the international community of scholars working on African languages and related fields, and publishing is open to all scholars working in these spheres. Another aim of the journal is to provide international access to the Russian tradition of African studies which is often unknown internationally due to the language barrier. However, we welcome submissions of scholars working on African languages all over the world.

There is a long and rich tradition of African studies, and especially African linguistic studies in Russia, mainly concentrated in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In both cities there are chairs of African studies in the universities and research departments in Russian Academy of sciences institutes. The Department of African languages of the Institute of Linguistics RAS has for decades been publishing a book series ‘Studies in the languages of Africa’ edited by the late Viktor Vinogradov. Its focus and topics are close to those of “Language in Africa”, but the series was not truly international. The Department of Ethnography of Africa of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in cooperation with Department of African Studies in St. Petersburg State University published a biennial series ‘African Collection’ edited by Valentin Vydrin

and later by Alexander Zheltov. These volumes have wider focus on African studies in general, although linguistics has always played a significant role there; this series was not periodical and truly international either. In 1990s, the internationally oriented (mainly articles in English were accepted) St. Petersburg Journal of African Studies appeared, where linguistics occupied a central place. Six issues were published under the editorship of Valentin Vydrin during the period of 1993–1997, the journal played a rather significant role in providing an international access to Russian African studies, but further publishing was stopped due to technical and financial reasons. Starting from now, we join the efforts of two leading centers of African Studies in Russia (Moscow and St. Petersburg) and launch a joint journal targeting a more intensive integration of Russian African studies into the international network and creating opportunities for international cooperation.

Our policy is governed by our goals. To make the journal international, we plan to publish papers mainly in English, but we also give an opportunity to publish to those who prefer Russian and French. We accept only new original papers, but still, in order to present the work that is less known due to language barrier, we also accept revised and elaborated English versions of papers earlier published in languages other than English and French (for example, this is the case of Valentin Vydrin's paper in this issue). The journal is peer-reviewed and follows the standard double-blind reviewing procedure when neither authors, nor reviewers know one another's names. More details about the submission rules may be found on our webpage. The journal is open for publishing some special thematic issues dealing with some language groups, theoretical problems, and academic events concerning African languages in a wide sense, including linguistics, folklore, literature, writing tradition, manuscripts. However, the standard double-blind reviewing procedure will be applied in these cases too.

Being a new periodical, "Language in Africa" is based on the well-established traditions of African linguistic studies in Russia and worldwide. Its editorial board includes prominent and recognized scholars from not only Russia (Moscow and St. Petersburg), but various academic

centers from Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, the USA, France and Germany. The editorial board has the plans to include the journal into indexing databases as soon as it appears to be possible.

We are very grateful to our editorial board members for their acceptance to enter and for their active work. Our special thanks go to other colleagues who agree to our requests to be reviewers. We are happy with those who have already submitted to our journal. We have more or less exact plans for 2020. Some of submissions are published in this issue, some are already scheduled for the 2nd issue, others are being processed. We also thank our institutions who have supported our initiative and therefore made this journal possible.

*Andrey Shluinsky & Alexander Zheltov,
editors-in-chief of "Language in Africa"*