

The Heritage of the Kazan Linguistic School: Jan Baudouin De Courtenay and Foreign Languages

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Abstract

On the basis of the archival data of the Central State Archive of the TASSR published for the first time, the active work of the world famous scientist and teacher Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, who worked at Kazan University for more than ten years, was analyzed. Particular attention is paid to the attitude of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay for teaching foreign languages at Kazan University. Strict control was noted in connection with the reactionary charter of 1884 over the course of teaching at Kazan University. Archival data made it possible to highlight the participation of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay in a discussion of various issues related to the teaching of foreign languages. He made his proposals for monitoring students and for the first time suggested that students of the Faculty of History and Philology should know at least two or even three foreign languages. He was the first to voice the requirement for students to translate texts in their specialty (as extracurricular reading), followed by a report to the lecturer of a foreign language and a professor of a special department for communication with them. It turned out that Jan Baudouin de Courtenay taught Italian at the request of students and German for two years free of charge. The active participation of the scientist in the analysis of the works of applicants for the position of lecturer of foreign languages at Kazan University is of interest. For more than two hundred years of history of Kazan University, many world-famous scientists have studied and worked there. And on this starry sky, the name of the outstanding scientist and teacher Jan Baudouin de Courtenay shines like a bright star.

Keywords: Kazan Linguistic School, linguistics, foreign languages, scientific school, archival data.

Introduction

Kazan University, widely known all over the world, gave many outstanding scientists who were the founders of a number of scientific schools and directions. One of them, undoubtedly, is the Kazan linguistic school - "the most precious fruit of the activity of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay at the Kazan University" (Nikolaev, 1995), so he entered the history of science. Here the methodology of the linguistic school and its basic principles, which he himself listed, will be worked out:

- strict distinction between sound and letter;
- distinguishing phonetic and morphological divisibility of words;
- distinguishing phonetic and mental elements in a language;
- distinguishing between changes occurring both in a given state of language and changes in

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history;

- the advantage of observing a living language;
- the importance of analyzing and decomposing language units into their distinctive features;
- the desire for theoretical generalizations, without which "no science is unthinkable" (Nikolaev, 1995).

Analyzing the active and fruitful activity of the Kazan Linguistic School, it is impossible to ignore the fact that everything began with specially organized home "triple" practical classes for N. V. Krushevsky, a prominent representative of the Kazan Linguistic School, a talented student, scientist and associate of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay. The sessions of one of them were entirely devoted to Slavic dialectology, the other to Sanskrit and Lithuanian. The third stage was devoted to the analysis of the most important linguistic works. Thus, the linguistic circle of Baudouin de Courtenay was formed, which soon began to be attended by students and young teachers, and gradually became a new school for the participants of its meetings (Nikolaev, 2001). Thus, the famous Kazan Linguistic School emerged, whose students and followers were well-known scientists and who managed to reveal the multidimensional and diverse essence of language as a kind of worldview.

Recognizing the great role of language as a cultural code of a person, representatives of this school in many of their works pointed to the exceptional role of language, indicating the necessary scientific positions for subsequent researchers (Bayramova & Tazeev, 2010).

Methods

Data on the activities of the founder of the Kazan linguistic school, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay presented in the article were obtained in the course of studying the archival data of the Central State Archives of the TASSR for the first time published. At the same time, during the analysis of archival documents, special attention was paid to the attitude of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay for teaching foreign languages at Kazan University.

Results and Discussion

According to the researcher of scientific and pedagogical activity of N. V. Krushevsky M. V. Cherepanov, the Kazan Linguistic School has passed three stages in its development:

since 1875, from the moment of Baudouin de Courtenay's occupation of the post of professor of comparative linguistics at the Kazan University until the arrival of N. V. Krushevsky in 1878;

from 1878 to 1883, this period is characterized both by the more active activity of the Kazan Linguistic Circle, and by its final formation into an independent linguistic direction; from 1883 onwards.

The heyday of the Kazan Linguistic School falls, according to researchers, on the second stage (Bayramova & Tazeev, 2010).

All representatives of this school were closely connected with the Kazan University. It consisted of N. V. Krushevsky, V. V. Bogoroditsky, S. K. Bulich, N. I. Anastasiev, S. P. Orlov, N. S. Kukuranov, and others.

It is important to emphasize that all representatives of the school paid special attention to living languages and dialects, which fully coincides with the methodological foundations of the school. It was during the heyday of the school that its representatives actively published, which suggests the emergence of a new linguistic direction in the science of linguistics, and its founder, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, is one of the leaders of Slavic linguistics, who played a huge role in the foundation and development of linguistics in Russia (Sharadzenidze, 1980).

The versatility and diversity of Baudouin de Courtenay's scientific interests, which are clearly visible in the abundance of his lectures and special courses that he taught at Kazan University, are highly respected. The archived data provides sufficient evidence of this on the basis of the programs, curricula and reports submitted to them:

- introduction to linguistics;
- comparative grammar of Slavic languages;
- Russian grammar;
- comparative grammar of Indo-European languages;
- Sanskrit;
- comparative phonetics of the Latin language;
- German, etc.

It is worth mentioning in more detail the atmosphere that prevailed at the meetings held on Saturdays from 5 to 8 pm at the home of Baudouin de Courtenay. His student N. Kukuranov recalled that he was, according to colleagues and students, "not only a deep scientist, but also an extremely sincere and sympathetic person who passionately loved his science and gave it all his time." His other colleagues, well-known scientists V. Bogoroditsky and A. Alexandrov wrote that "these home conversations had the character of a real linguistic society, and each of the participants tried to prepare something interesting. At the same time, these meetings were disciplined, since every communication caused lively discussions, of course, of a purely scientific nature" (Sharadzenidze, 1980), that is, the nature and content of the meetings were extremely fruitful. For example, V. Bogoroditsky made 19 reports at the meetings in 1881 alone. This is how the circle of like – minded scientists formed, which later turned into a group of scientists who formed the basis of the Kazan Linguistic School (Sharadzenidze, 1980).

The topic of relations between Jan Baudouin de Courtenay with his students and followers, testifying to both demand and participation and concern for them, is no less interesting. Jan Baudouin de Courtenay took an active part in his positive reviews of their work and petitions to their superiors for their employment. This is evidenced by archival data, for example, very flattering characteristics that he gave to V. Bogoroditsky, N. Kukuranov, N. Krushevsky, S. Orlov and others..

He writes about V. Bogoroditsky as a talented person, notes his diligence, perseverance and energy in work, great modesty and lack of any boasting, and adds that over time he will become a real engine of science.

He characterizes N. Krushevsky as a person with remarkable abilities and extensive knowledge. He gives a brilliant assessment to N. Kukuranov as a specialist, recommending him as a teacher of the Russian language and literature at the Kazan Gymnasium (Sharadzenidze, 1980).

No wonder and rightfully on October 6, 1801, at the request of his students V. Bogoroditsky and A. Alexandrov, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay was unanimously awarded the title of "Honorary Member of Kazan University". The newspapers described this event as follows: "Professor Baudouin de Courtenay was a professor at our university until 1883. This is one of the oldest and most famous linguists, whose merits in the study of Slavism, in the sense of language and ethnography, and works on comparative linguistics are well known to the entire scientific world. The activities of such a scientist at Kazan University constituted an era in the life of the faculty" (Sharadzenidze, 1980).

On August 24, 1874, the University Council unanimously elected him to the Department of Comparative Linguistics, where he served until 1883. It was at this time that the university had to obey the rules of the reactionary charter adopted in 1884, according to which the university was made completely dependent on the Ministry of Education and the trustee of the educational district. The whole life of the university was strictly regulated. Even the postponement of lectures from one day or one hour required the permission of the minister (taking into account the distance from St. Petersburg to Kazan).

Jan Baudouin de Courtenay was already a well-known scientist in Europe. Many of his articles were published abroad. He wrote in Russian, Polish, German, French, Czech, Lithuanian and Italian, studied Latvian, Arabic, Estonian and Armenian. He was also interested in Altai and Chuvash, he was a lifelong member of the Parisian Linguistic Society.

His life, active creative and scientific activity could not ignore the teaching of foreign languages at Kazan University. Archived data allows us to mark some milestones related to foreign languages. For example, he took an active part in the discussion in 1879 of new measures to strengthen control over students "to arouse the scientific spirit and scientific aspirations in students" (Nikolaev, 1995). What is important to us is that the Kazan University for the first time demanded the translation (and, moreover, free) of texts in the specialty. Baudouin de Courtenay believed that students should be required to have a satisfactory knowledge of German (we are talking about students of the Faculty of History and Philology), but he also considered knowledge of French and English to be very desirable. At the same time, he believed that students are required to read at least 10 printed sheets of texts on their specialty and give a detailed report not only to the language lecturer (the so-called foreign language teachers used to be), but also to the professor or associate professor of a special department (Nikolaev, 1995).

Thus, for the first time there was a demand for the introduction of extracurricular reading and for communication with special departments. Jan Baudouin de Courtenay also voiced the requirement for a compulsory examination in a foreign language for all students. It is interesting to add that he taught Italian at the request of students (Nikolaev, 2001).

In connection with the departure of his student, the German language lecturer L. Kolmachevsky, who "was sent abroad to prepare for a professorship" (Bayramova & Tazeev, 2010), the German language was taught free of charge (!) for two years by Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (Bayramova & Tazeev, 2010).

It is necessary to pay attention to the activities of students and followers of the famous linguistic circle, which was organized and led by Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, in relation to foreign languages. In addition to N. Krushevsky, they were graduates of Kazan University who

knew foreign languages well. N. Kukuranov was certified with the highest score (Sharadzenidze, 1980). The students S. Orlov (the future lecturer of the English language V. I. Ulyanov-Lenin) and V. Bogoroditsky were certified in the German language with the rating "excellent" (Sharadzenidze, 1980).

In 1906, already a well-known professor, V. Bogoroditsky believed that the teaching of foreign languages, for example, German, which is very important for philologists, is conducted by an improved method, breaking up into courses for beginners and continuing students, and that students achieve good results "with the conscious attitude of the students themselves" (Sharadzenidze, 1980).

In 1911, under the direction of V. Bogoroditsky, his students V. Petrov and P. Alexandrov (a member of the linguistic circle) published two works in the "Scientific Notes" of Kazan University, "Sound characteristics of German and French languages according to statistical data" (Sharadzenidze, 1980).

The system of competitive selections for the position of lecturer of foreign languages, in which Jan Baudouin de Courtenay actively participated, is of interest. The members of the council always gave preference to graduates of Kazan University, for example, in 1874, a graduate of the Faculty of History and Philology, L. Kolmachevsky, a future professor, a student of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, was elected to this position (Sharadzenidze, 1980).

It is important to note that applicants for the position of lecturer had to give two trial lectures in foreign languages and submit their own works. For example, the candidate of the Faculty of History and Philology S. Orlov (a member of the Baudouin Circle) presented two works in English: "The present participle and the object case in English" and "Notes on Shakespeare's Dramas" (Central State Archive of the TASSR, fund 977, inventory of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, storage unit 1137, sheet 1).

Jan Baudouin de Courtenay was not always benevolent and gave in 1878 a sharply negative review of the work of a certain Gotzhets, in which he wrote that too often the author gives completely unscientific explanations and too often reveals scientific dishonesty in order to be able to recognize any scientific merits in his work other than the courage to speak and write about what you do not know and do not understand. Such qualities are far from desirable, he wrote in conclusion, for a teacher of any subject (Central State Archive of the TASSR, fund 977, inventory of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, storage unit 1137, sheet 8-9).

At the same time, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay and L. Kolmachevsky highly appreciated the works of S. Orlov as works "with indisputable merits" (Central State Archive of the TASSR, fund 977, inventory of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, storage unit 1149, sheet 2). As we can see, the requirements for foreign language lecturers were very broad and high. For example, despite the positive review of L. Kolmachevsky, who convincingly proved that the work of N. V. Kukuranov (a member of the linguistic circle) is a welcome phenomenon, a serious and conscientious attitude to the language, hard work and well-known scientific techniques, he did not have enough votes to be elected in 1885 to the post of lecturer of the French language (Central State Archive of the TASSR, fund 977, inventory of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, storage unit

1100).

Summary

Thus, the faculty (and its members were outstanding scientists Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, N. Krushevsky, V. Bogoroditsky, N. Alexandrov – all participants of the linguistic circle) confirmed that the ability to express their thoughts smoothly in a foreign language alone cannot yet serve as a guarantee of suitability as a university teacher (Central State Archive of the TASSR, fund 977, inventory of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, storage unit 1096, sheet 19).

Decades later, one can rejoice that the faculty, following N. Lobachevsky, rightly believed that only the pedagogical ability to teach is the best guarantee of successful work.

Conclusions

All of this confirms with a sufficient degree of persuasiveness the activity of I. Baudouin de Courtenay's scientific activity at Kazan University regarding the teaching of foreign languages, his close connection with language teaching and as the founder and head of the so-called "Baudouin Circle", where the main directions of the famous Kazan linguistic school were formed.

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