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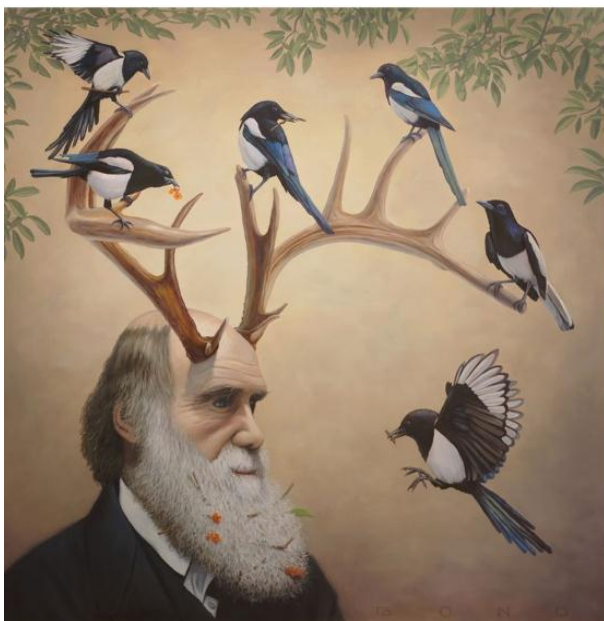
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Destination and essence of Arabic studies in Russia

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Abstract

The article describes the paths of development and the formation stages of Russian Arabic studies via the systematization of the accumulated body of knowledge about Russian Arabic studies, as well as the analysis of the information received and the synthesis of new ideas. As a result, after the changes in the world linguistic science, communicative competences came to the forefront in foreign language teaching, and grammar faded into the background. Thus, it can be concluded that Russian Arabic studies have great potential for development and rich history.

Keywords: Russia, Arabic, Islam, Caliphate, Muslim.

Destino y esencia de los estudios árabes en Rusia

Resumen

El artículo describe las vías de desarrollo y las etapas de formación de los estudios de árabe ruso a través de la sistematización del conjunto de conocimientos acumulados sobre los estudios de árabe ruso, así como el análisis de la información recibida y la síntesis de nuevas ideas. Como resultado, después de los cambios en la ciencia lingüística mundial, las competencias comunicativas llegaron a la vanguardia en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, y la gramática se desvaneció en un segundo plano. Por lo tanto, se puede concluir que los estudios árabes rusos tienen un gran potencial para el desarrollo y una rica historia.

Palabras clave: Rusia, árabe, islam, califato, musulmán.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, Arabic is one of the most important and most common world languages. It is one of the six official languages of the United Nations and its associated organizations, the working language of regional and international institutions, and has the status of an official language in twenty-two countries. It should also be mentioned that the Arabic language has become widespread in non-Arab states. For example, it is the language of communication and business correspondence for a number of representatives of the international academic community. All mentioned above indicates that Arabic has a special place in the world and may become the language of science and education as the means of interpersonal, interstate, interethnic, and international communication (AMEEN, AHMED & HAFEZ, 2018; GUNDOGMUS, 2018).

Arabic is the only language in which we can read a document which is over one thousand and four hundred years old. It is the language of the heritage of various epochs and civilizations that have developed over vast territories, and is a source of great human experience with all its senses, cultural variations and differences. Using it, people passed on experience to next generations, wrote about feelings, about cultural peculiarities and changes in all spheres of society. This experience is now being studied not only in Arab countries. The scientists of the world are looking for answers to social, economic and other questions in this experience of civilizations. In

order to satisfy the scientific interest in the Arabic-speaking heritage, universities and other scientific institutions from different countries open the departments of Arabic studies. It happened in Russia.

The interest in teaching Arabic at Russian universities and scientific institutions arose in the 18th century, during the era of Peter the Great, but systematic study of the Arabic language took shape only by the 19th century. Among the numerous institutions that explore the Arab East and North Africa, there are scientific and educational institutions in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan. Scientific schools with a rich and unique experience were formed there. In our article, we would like to tell about their stories, goals and features. Islam is one of the religions of Russia. Muslims live in the national republics of the Russian Federation, and beyond. It is an important part of the country historical, cultural and spiritual heritage. This factor gives Russian researchers the advantages that Western scientists cannot possess. Russia is connected with the East and is close to it, however, Arabian scientists are hardly aware of Russian Arabistics (KHADEMOSHARIE, TADIBI, BEHPOOR & HAMEDINIA, 2018; MWANIKI & ONDIEK, 2018).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

The purpose of our study is to trace the history of teaching the Arabic language and its current state. As for its methodological

component, our main method is the systematization of the accumulated body of knowledge about Russian Arabic studies, as well as the analysis of the information received and the synthesis of new ideas. Sources include Arab medieval treatises, the modern works of Russian historians, as well as the works of great Arabists and the information from the official sites of educational institutions. The first section of the work informs about the factors causing the need to study Arabic in Russia, the second about the meaning of Arabic for Russian Muslims, the third describes the schools for Arabic studies, and the fourth describes the curricula in Arabic.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the 18th century to the present day, Russian scholars gain more and more experience in the field of Oriental studies and, in particular, Arabic studies. However, of all the Arabic schools created in Russia, only three were able to make a significant contribution to the development of this area. They are known for their progressive work and important scientific achievements (IBRAGIMOV, 2008). These schools include:

The St. Petersburg School of Arabic Studies, now represented by SPSU, is one of the most important centers for teaching Arabic and Oriental Studies in Russia. Arabic studies began in the northern capital already during Peter I. The Asian Museum, located in this city, attracted many scholars, enthusiasts and researchers of Arabic

manuscripts kept in the museum. Besides, St. Petersburg was the capital of the Russian Empire for a long time, that is, there was located the Academy of Sciences, one of the most important duties of which was the Arabic language teaching. All these factors led to the rapid development of the school of Arabic studies, and it became extremely influential both in Russia and abroad (ABDURRAHIM, 2002).

The teaching of the Arabic language at the St. Petersburg Main Pedagogical Institute began in 1818. The teachers were represented by Demange, the student of Sylvestre de Sacy, who entered the service in 1818 and left it in 1822. He was replaced by O. Yu. Senkovsky, who had just returned from the East. During the period when he headed the department, many prominent experts became its graduates, who later became famous as Arabists. After Senkovsky, Sheikh Muhammad Ayad al-Tantawi took the post.

He arrived from the University of Egypt al-Azhar, and served in this position until 1847. He became the first who introduced the Egyptian national language as an object of research and teaching in Russia and in Europe. Well-known Arabists Krachkovsky, Girgas and Rosen belong to the famous university graduates. The latter can rightly be called the founder of Russian Arabic studies. During the years when Professor Krachkovsky worked at the department, new trends appeared in Arabic studies: the study of poetry, as well as local Arabic dialects. Krachkovsky is the most significant Russian scholar in Arabic

philology and Arabic studies in general. He wrote a number of essays in Russian and Arabic (ZAKHIDULLIN, 2003).

Nowadays, since 1998, the Department of Arabic Philology has been constantly developing the methods of Arabic language teaching. It is open to new methods while striving to preserve the achievements of previous eras (STUCKRAD, 2013).

The Moscow School of Arabic Studies is represented by a number of universities and institutes where Arabic is taught. Moscow State University is the oldest university in Russia, founded in 1755. It has several faculties teaching Arabic. The most important of them are the Institute of Asian and African Countries and the Faculty of Foreign Languages. Also, the Higher School of Economics is among the most important Moscow universities. The Department of Arabic was opened by BERGUNDER (2014), who was the rector of the university from 1832 to 1837. He made a great contribution to the development of teaching Arabic and in 1827 created one of the first Russian Arabic textbooks, called *Brief Arabic grammar in tables*, after the establishment of the oriental language department, among which was Arabic (YUSUPOV, 2005).

The Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages was founded in 1815 as a non-state school, and in 1827 it was transformed into an institute. It constantly taught Oriental languages, including Arabic, which was taught thanks to the assistance of many Arab and European organizations. In 1921, by the decree of the Soviet government, all

organizations engaged in Arabic studies in Moscow were merged into the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, and they functioned until 1954 when a state decree was issued on disbanding this institute and joining MGIMO MFA (AL-FOADI & MINGAZOVA, 2018).

Moscow also has the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, founded in 1991 on the basis of the Institute of Asian Countries, as well as many other institutes and universities where the Arabic language is taught: for example, RUDN and the military university. Sharbatov was among the largest scientists of the Moscow School of Arabic Studies. He wrote over 800 publications. Among them are four dictionaries, the largest of which is the dictionary of the Egyptian dialect. It is the first unique dictionary in Russian arabistics. The author spent 25 years compiling it. Sharbatov held high positions in Russia and abroad: he was the member of the Academy of Arabic language in Cairo, as well as the member of the Iranian and Syrian Academy of Sciences, and he also was the member of the Tunisian National Council for Research and Translation (ISHMUHAMETOV, 1979).

The Kazan School of Arabic Studies is represented by Kazan University, which is one of the oldest universities in Russia, founded in 1804. During the same year, the German A. Fren was appointed an Arabic teacher, but over the following years the teaching of the Arabic language was not adjusted due to the instability at the university, but teaching methods were chosen, and research was carried out on

sources. Then Fren went to St. Petersburg, and the real beginning of Kazan Arabic studies history was already in 1826 when Mirza Kazembek entered the university. In 1849, he also left Kazan and went to the capital, but his students remained in Kazan: Zhukov, Ilminsky, Navrotsky. The latter also moved to St. Petersburg, as the Oriental Languages Department was founded there and there was a need for teachers. Many other Kazan Arabists did the same, and the Kazan school was liquidated

At the moment, Kazan University is making great efforts to return to Kazan Arabic studies its historical role of a bridge connecting the Russian Federation and the Arab states. As part of this strategy, the Al-Hadara Center for Arab Culture was established. It is a link between Kazan University and Arab universities, and besides, it plays a large role in teaching Arabic to students by organizing internships in various Arab countries, including Morocco, Egypt and Syria.

Both substantively, and systemically, close attention has always been paid to the methods of teaching the Arabic language in Russia. After the first department of the Arabic language was founded, a scientific delegation set off to the Arab East, searching for Arabic methods and writings necessary to study numerous manuscripts that had already arrived in Russia. The purpose of such expeditions of Russian scientists was to improve their knowledge of the Arabic language, master the Arabic methods, and participate in the creation of textbooks meeting the demands of the Russian representatives of the

academic environment and the specifics of Russian realities (MOHAMMED, 1992).

The system of teaching oriental languages in general and Arabic in particular at the institutes of Oriental studies and African studies has undergone major changes recently. These changes were carried out in order to transfer to international standards of learning and to use communicative methods, where speaking is one of the most important beginnings in language mastering. After the changes in the world linguistic science, communicative competences came to the forefront in foreign language teaching, and grammar faded into the background. In this regard, Russia has undertaken significant reforms in the training system, since it was obliged to meet international standards. These reforms aim to make Orientalists and Africanists to speak Arabic, and to some extent local dialects. All this was done within the framework of the strategy of bringing Russia closer to this region, preserving and expanding its interests in the Middle East, and therefore a request was made to provide the necessary conditions for proper training of experts.

The interests of Russia in Arab countries, as well as the existence of Muslim peoples originally living on the territory of Russia, led to increased attention to the Arabic language, making it the third language of the Russian intelligentsia. Teaching Arabic in Russian universities is held according to modern standards that have been established by the Ministry of Education of the Russian

Federation. In particular, they determined a number of standards to which a bachelor's graduate must meet. These include the knowledge of the Arabic language and the ability to communicate in it, sufficient knowledge of the Arabic language features, its developmental stages, the interrelationship of the Arabic language and its dialects, the history of the Arabs, the modern economic, political and cultural aspect of Arabic society, that is, everything that introduces a student to the Arab world.

To achieve a similar level of preparation, the Russian education system sets two goals for the institutions of Oriental studies: first, to monitor curricula for Arabic language study in the Arab world and to borrow experience so that the teaching methods correspond to the modern achievements in the field of linguistics; secondly, the development of Russian curricula taking into account the specifics of the Russian language in order to overcome the difficulties faced by Russian-speaking students, while meeting international standards. The process of creating the methods of Oriental language teaching and, in particular, Arabic in Russia (at that time the USSR) began with the All-Union Conference organized by the Institute of Asian Nations in Moscow (now the Institute of Oriental Studies) in 1964, where grammar was recognized as the basis for the Arabic language mastering.

During recent years, profound changes have occurred in the teaching methods associated with global trends in this field. In accordance with the tasks set by the Ministry of Education in 2004,

speaking in Arabic became the main aspect of education. The Russian education system is similar to the systems of other countries where undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate degrees are present in education. The number of years of study varies according to a degree. The undergraduate degree lasts four years, and Arabic is taught by modules during these four years. A student passes four modules per year. Some of the modules are mandatory, and some are optional. Mandatory modules include basic subjects, while optional ones are additional activities, research, translation, and various exercises.

The result of the active work of Russian scientists is represented by numerous textbooks and study guides on the Arabic language. In particular, in 1827 Brief Arabic grammar in tables by Boldyrev was published, and after it The Arabic grammar experience by Kazem-Bek and his pupil Navrotsky, as well as Chrestomathie arabe by Rosen, Girgas and others, according to a similar chrestomathy of the French scientist Sylvester de Sasi, al-Muallim al-Sani Maksudi, as well as numerous publications by Krachkovsky. The Academician Sharbatov wrote four textbooks, the first of them was published in 1960 in collaboration with the Academician Kovalev.

A major role in the definition and creation of Arabic language teaching methods was played by the conference of 1964 in Moscow. Today, there is a great number of Russian and Arabic textbooks created in various universities, for example, Textbook of the Arabic language by Kuzmin, Lessons of the Arabic language by Dubinin,

Rules of the Arabic language by (Redkin and Bernikova, 2015). The latter is currently used at St. Petersburg State University. Its peculiarity is that the examples from the Quran are given there according to the Basrian and Kufi linguistic schools.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Studying the topic of teaching Arabic in Russian universities requires the knowledge of the East, the language, and the world culture more than one, two, or three people can master. It is a project that should be carried out by one of the Arab research centers with sufficient financial resources. In our opinion, joint Russian-Arab research groups should be established for the further development of Arabic studies in Russia and for a deeper study of Arab heritage. In connection with the facts set forth in the article, this seems to us a promising project, which is quite feasible, due to the historically developed character of Russian Arabistics.

The openness of Russian research centers and universities is not only the reflection of the intellectual strategy of rapprochement with the Arab East, but also shows an interest in Arab and Muslim history and heritage. Modern research on Russian Arabic studies deserves the attention of the world scientific community.

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