This article briefly outlines the history of Turkic studies in Poznań. Practical Turkish was first offered to the students of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 1982 as a free elective. That year also marks the beginning of Turkological research in Poznań. Turkish was initiated in 2002 as an integrated master’s program. In 2007, the study was divided into a three-year undergraduate BA and a two-year postgraduate MA programs. In addition to the figures and events related to the courses and degrees, this outline provides details on teaching staff, their research, activities, contacts with other institutions and publications.

1. Background

The first MA study program in Turkic studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań was initiated in 2002 as a fourth Oriental specialization after Japanese, Chinese and Arabic. This program was run by the Department of Oriental Studies, which is part of the Faculty of Modern Languages and Literatures. The curriculum and syllabuses were developed by this author with the support of the department, faculty and university authorities.

Turkic studies in Poznań did not spring into being from nothing. Practical Turkish was taught as a language course for the students of various specializations almost continuously from 1982 on. As a school without a long tradition of oriental studies, the university held a relatively good collection of Turkology books and journals, mostly German and some English publications from the period before

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1 For a Polish version of this outline see Jankowski 2012a.
3 In Polish Katedra Orientalistyki, which was restructured in 2005 to the Institute of Oriental Studies (Instytut Orientalistyczny) and from 2008 onwards has been the Department of Asian Studies (Katedra Studiów Azjatyckich).
1939 as well as recent Soviet, Hungarian and other East European publications. However, the university library and the library of the Institute of Linguistics also held some important recent books published in Western Europe and America. Soviet publications included books and journals from Soviet Turkic republics, i.e. Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Turkmen and Uzbek, as well as some from Tatar, Yakut and other autonomous regions of the USSR.

There were also books from related fields, e.g. Mongolian and Tungusic. From 1982, when the idea of the future Turkology department was first conceived, books were also acquired from Turkey.

2. Starting point

When we started first admissions in 2002, our colleagues in Krakow and Warsaw, where Turkology had existed for a long time, gave our initiative a warm welcome. However, our intention was not to copy their curriculum, but to develop something new. Emphasis was put on modern Turkish and another obligatory Turkic language to be taught practically throughout the five years of the MA program, along with such subjects as grammar, history and culture. We thought of Central Asia and our choice became Kazakh as the language and culture of the largest and most prosperous, as we then assumed, post-Soviet state. This second Turkic language was designed as supplementary to Turkish, important for both practice and research.

The first specialists were Henryk Jankowski as professor (from 1996) and Andrzej Drozd (JD in 2000) as adjunct and MA in Arabic whose specialization was also the art of Islam and the language, literature and culture of Polish and Lithuanian Tatars. We were supported by Niyar Qurtbilal, a Crimean Tatar fluent in Turkish, who was a doctoral student. Lecturers in Turkish and Kazakh came from their respective countries. It was Tamer Gençer who was sent to us by the Turkish Ministry of National Education a year before the first students were enrolled, as well as Gulayhan Aqtay, assigned to our department by the Ahmet Yasawi International Kazakh-Turkish University from the city of Turkistan, Kazakhstan.

The first curriculum included a practical Turkish course with 300 hours a year throughout the first four years of the study and sixty hours in the last year. Practical Turkish was conducted every day from Monday to Friday, two hours per day. Kazakh was taught on a similar basis four days a week, which amounted to 240 hours annually throughout the first four years of study and thirty hours in the last year. Our first students had all of their language classes with native speaking lecturers and this system brought about very good results. When they went to Turkey and Kazakhstan for mobility grants, they were highly assessed by the hosting universities. Our students frequently surpassed students from other
universities. Descriptive grammar of Turkish and Kazakh were two courses provided with the aim of helping students understand the languages taught by the native speakers without a medium language and also to explain the structure of Turkish and Kazakh in the terms of modern linguistics. Initially, the grammar portion was planned for three years, but it soon proved that two years were enough and grammar courses were completed at the end of the second year of study. In the first year the curriculum also included such subjects as an introduction to Turkic studies, the culture of Turkey and Central Asia and Islam. In the second year of the study the students took Buddhism in Central Asia, introduction to Arabic studies, Arabic paleography and Chinese writing. We intended to educate future Ottomanists and specialists able to study the Turkic languages of China. The specialization courses of the third year also included a comparative grammar of Turkic languages, Old Turkic, Khwarezmian Turkic literature and Mongol paleography. This course was later transformed into Written Mongolian. In the fourth year the students were obliged to take Chagatai literature after the completion of Khwarezmian. These subjects were supplemented by oral and written translation from and into Turkish, a course in Polish Tatar literature and another in Islamic law. At the same time students started working on their MA theses, for which we offered an MA seminar continuing to the end of their studies. The fifth year included four courses, a continuation of practical language courses, the MA seminar and a selected lecture. According to the requirements, there were also some compulsory and elective non-specialization courses such as logic, then philosophy, information science, etc.

Some courses of this first curriculum have been retained and are offered today as well, while others continue with various changes, either required by new regulations or practice. In 2006 a deficiency in our curriculum, the lack of Turkish literature, was removed and the number of translation classes increased.

3. Shift into undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programs

After some minor changes mentioned above, we substantially reshaped the curriculum in 2007 when the integrated MA program was transformed into a three-year undergraduate BA and a two-year postgraduate MA programs according to the Bologna Process. The new system of education was confronted with new expectations of students and their attitudes. It caused additional modifications of the curriculum to be implemented almost annually.

The basic idea was to create two independent study programs, although access to the postgraduate program is limited for candidates who graduated from programs other than Turkic studies because they must have a command of Turkish
at the B2 level according to CEFR requirements. Another idea was to move the more specialized courses from the initial years of the old integrated program to the postgraduate program and to cancel some subjects not strictly related to Turkology.

Here I will present some of these changes. The culture of Turkey and Central Asia was divided into two different courses: the history and culture of Turkey and the history and culture of Central Asia. The former was afterwards further divided into the history of Turkey and the culture of Turkey, and the latter was limited to the culture of Central Asia. Chinese writing was transferred to the postgraduate program, but later removed from the curriculum. However, our students may still take practical Chinese as an elective within the course of modern foreign language. Arabic paleography was replaced with Ottoman paleography and finally with Ottoman Turkish. In 2009 we began offering a new course on the history and culture of Mongolia, changed in 2012 to Mongolian Literature and Culture. Written Mongolian was cancelled, but students wishing to study Mongolian may take this course as an elective. Islam was made optional along with Buddhism and Judaism, although the overwhelming majority of our students prefer Islam. Khwarezmian literature was substituted by pre-classical Turkish literature with a greater focus on Turkey.

Although some subjects from the old curriculum were included in the new MA program, it is in fact a completely new scheme. Practical Kazakh was replaced with specialized Kazakh (business, administration, banking etc.), Islamic law with Turkish law, Old Turkic with Orkhon Turkic and Old Uyghur. New courses were introduced as well: business Turkish, the history of Turkish art, codicology and epigraphy, literature and culture of the Karaites and fieldwork Turkology.

It should be noted that most subjects are taught in Turkish from the second year of the BA program onwards. This has both advantages and drawbacks. Among the advantages one may include the possibility to read courses in the language of specialization, thus making progress and developing language skills. A drawback is the difficulty of understanding new subjects with multiple new words and terms. Another drawback is that Turkish-language classes hamper professional development in our national language.

As all other study programs in Oriental languages, Turkology is not a mass specialization. Since 2007, when our first students graduated, only 35 students have received MA diplomas: 2007 – 9, 2008 – 2, 2009 – 6, 2010 – 5, 2011 – 5 and 2012 – 7, which gives an average of 5 students per year. One student, Bermet Bazarkulova from Kyrgyzstan, received a financial grant from our university and

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was awarded her MA degree in 2001, after the approval of a Turkic studies curriculum, but before the first admissions.

Outstanding students may apply for a four-year doctoral program, run at our faculty with financial grants. The first to complete this program and receive a PhD degree in 2003⁶ was the aforementioned Niyar Qurtbilal from the Crimea. She was awarded a grant from the Polish government. Two more doctoral students defended their dissertations in 2012: Katarzyna Stefaniak-Rak⁷ and Dorota Smętek.⁸

4. Staff members

As was mentioned above, at the outset our teaching staff was small. We consisted of staff members from the Section of Near and Middle Eastern Studies, which was transformed into the Section of Turkic, Mongolian and Korean Studies in 2005: Henryk Jankowski, Andrzej Drozd, Gülayhan Aqtay and Niyar Qurtbilal (2002–2006). At present our section, in addition to the two former members, employs the following academic teachers: Radosław Andrzejewski (from 2009), Dorota Smętek (from 2013), Otgonsukh Tsagaan (from 1994) and Cem Erdem (from 2012). The Turkic Studies program is run in cooperation with the Section of Kazakh Studies, established in 2009, which employs three specialists: Gülayhan Aqtay (between 2002–2009 with the former section), Katarzyna Stefaniak-Rak (from 2011) and Luiza Banach (from 2012). Therefore, there are six employees in the former and three in the latter sections, one a titular, full professor, three assistant professors (adjuncts), two senior lecturers and three lecturers. Seven staff members are Turkologists; one is a specialist in Mongolian (Otgonsukh Tsagaan)⁹ and one a specialist in law and Arabic (Andrzej Drozd). In the past the following academic teachers were employed at the sections: Yasemin Anastazja Çetiner (2007–2009), Natalia Waszyńska (2008–2010), Zuzanna Grzywacz (2009–2010) and Karol Wojciechowicz (2010–2012), all of whom graduated from our university.

The native speaking lecturers in Turkish assigned to us by the Turkish Ministry of National Education have included Abdullah Ertit (2002–2006), Halil Küçükler

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⁶ On the basis of the thesis Güney-Doğu Kırım’ın Mikrotoponimisi (The Microtoponymy of South-East Crimea), written in Turkish.
⁹ She got her PhD degree in 2004 on the basis of the thesis Językowy obraz świata Mongolów na podstawie przysłów.

As for Kazakh, apart from Gulayhan Aqtay, who has worked with us from the very beginning, we have had the following lecturers from Kazakhstan: Damira Beysenova (2004–2005), Gulzhan Bakayeva (2005–2006) and Bibigül Khalykov (2009–2009), the first three from the University in Türkistan, the last from Al-Farabi University in Almaty.

According to the regulations governing universities in Poland, doctoral students are also obliged to teach, with a workload of 60–90 hours per year. Accordingly, all of our doctoral students conducted courses, some more than three hours per week: Niyar Qurtbilal, Katarzyna Stefaniak-Rak, Dorota Smętek and Karolina Romanowska, who has not completed her doctoral degree.

5. Domestic and international cooperation

The students participating in our programs, as all other students in Poland and Europe, are eligible for the Erasmus mobility scheme. We have cooperation agreements with the major universities of Turkey, such as Istanbul University, Ankara University, Ege University in Izmir, Anadolu University in Eskişehir, Çukurova University in Adana and Caucasus University in Kars. Their students also visit our department every year. This exchange is very advantageous for both sides. Outside Turkey, we have agreements with a few universities in Kazakhstan, e.g. Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty, Abai University in Almaty, Gumilev Eurasian University in Astana and others.

Students and academic teachers from Central Asia, mainly from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, are among our constant visitors. Our past visiting professors include Mahanbet Zhusupow (Tashkent), Sawle Tazhibayeva (formerly Taraz, now Astana), Biibaysha Nurdalietova (Aqtaw), Alibii Shapauov (Kökshetaw); among doctoral students Otabek Nosirov (Bukhara), Ziyada Abdulzhanova (formerly Almaty, now Astana) and Nuraly Ötegen (Almaty).

Some guests have come from non-Turkic countries close to our interest, e.g. Muyasar Mirzoyeva (Tajikistan) and Fahime Sayyahiyan (Iran).

We do not invite professors from other Polish academic institutions that run Turkic studies too often, since we regularly meet at conferences and symposia. Our distinguished guests have included Prof. Marek Stachowski (Jagiellonian University) and Prof. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk (Warsaw University).

10 Bibigül Khanym, our excellent former teacher, untimely passed away in Almaty in 2010.
Our visiting guests often come from abroad. The inauguration in 2002 was marked by lectures and seminars by Prof. Mehmet Ölmez (Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, Istanbul). We have also hosted Prof. Ildikó Bellér-Hann (University of Copenhagen), Prof. Claus Schöning (Free University, Berlin), Prof. Peter Zieme (Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Berlin), Prof. Mustafa Özkân (İstanbul University) and others.

The Section of Turkic, Mongolian and Korean Studies convened the first meeting of the Polish Turkological Conference in 2007. This conference has become a regular event and is being organized alternately by the three Polish universities that run programs in Turkic Studies. The second meeting was convened in Warsaw (2008), the third in Krakow (2009), the fourth in Poznań (2010), the fifth in Warsaw (2011), and the sixth is announced to be held in Krakow this autumn.

We have not organized any international conferences yet, but we have held several small meetings, among them a Polish-Turkish workshop in linguistics and literature in 2011 with the participation of our teaching and research staff and colleagues from Çukurova University, Adana.

6. Research and publications

The basic domains of research in our center include Turkish (e.g. Jankowski 1993, 2012b), Kazakh (e.g. Aqtay, Jankowski 2011), Karaim (Aqtay 2009, Jankowski 2009, 2010b), Crimean Tatar (Jankowski 2006, 2010a) and Polish Tatar or, more exactly, Tatar of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Drozd 1999, Drozd with Dziekan and Majda 1999, Drozd with Dziekan and Majda 2000, Jankowski with Łapicz 2000, Stefaniak-Rak 2009a, Stefaniak-Rak 2009b). Naturally this is not a full list of our publications and fields of research.\footnote{For a full list of publications see http://www.azjatystyka.amu.edu.pl/turkologia/index.php?site=4.}

Since 2009 we have been publishing an online, peer-reviewed series called *Turkic Studies* with free access, in which this volume also appears. Two volumes have been published so far.\footnote{The first volume is Dorota Smętek’s bibliography *A Bibliography of Turkic Studies in Przegląd Orientalistyczny 1948-2008* (2009), the second one is Zuzanna Grzywacz’s study *Traditional Kazakh Medicine in Change* (2010), see http://turkicstudies.amu.edu.pl/}.

We also try to encourage our students to do research and publish their articles but so far very few have done so; among the few are Andrzejewski with Pankalla (2008). Some of the MA theses have also been excellent and worth publishing, e.g. Grzywacz’s dissertation, which was revised and submitted anew in English and published as the second volume of *Turkic Studies*. Another one should also be revised, translated into English and published this year.
The first attempt to produce a publication with students was Aqtay (Akhtay 2005, second edition 2007). She edited a collection of Polish folktales, translated into Kazakh by the students under her guidance and published with short glossaries after each tale. This was the first practical aid for Kazakh prepared by our center and published in Poznań.

When assessing the output and achievements of our institution, it is clear that we cannot compete with either Krakow or Warsaw, where Turkology has a long established teaching and research tradition, highlighted by such masters as Tadeusz Kowalski or Ananiasz Zajączkowski, not to speak of famous centers in such countries as Germany, France or Japan. However, in some fields, e.g. Karaite studies, our achievements are recognized worldwide. Our Turkology department is also one of the few that provide regular classes in Kazakh backed by grammar and culture.

Although we are a Member State of the European Union and our jobs are open to all other EU citizens, the salaries offered by Polish universities are too low to attract scholars from other countries. Therefore, we have to rely on our own graduates, but educating them to achieve the highest level of proficiency is a long process.

Bibliography


