

HENRYK DUDA

ON THE NOTION OF *LINGUISTIC THINKING*  
IN THE WORKS OF BAUDOIN DE COURTENAY

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the organizers for the kind invitation to participate in the Conference.\* I think that all of us who participate in it focus – or at least should focus – their attention at the beginning of Baudouin de Courtenay's paper entitled *Językoznawstwo czyli lingwistyka w wieku XIX-tym* [The knowledge of language, or linguistics, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century]:

If we had 12 fingers, the year coming to an end (i.e. 1900) would be 1124. It would be the 24<sup>th</sup> year (in the decimal system the 28<sup>th</sup>) of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (14<sup>th</sup> in the decimal system), that is of a cycle of 144 years. In this way there would be no grounds for the "cosmic shiver" of "fin de siècle", and for the large-scale retrospectives. (I, 153)<sup>1</sup>

Taking into account Baudouin's view, one has to admit that there is no special reason for any international retrospective of his thought. This is because 13 March 2005 was only the 114<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birthday (counted in the dodecimal system). However, the point I want to make does not relate precisely to the criss-cross quotation above, but rather to the latter part of Baudouin de Courtenay's paper, where one reads as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Unless marked otherwise, quotations from Baudouin are after: J. N. Baudouin de Courtenay, *Dzieła wybrane* [Selected writings], Vol. I-VI, Warszawa 1974-1983. The Roman number denotes volume, the Arabic one pages.

Thus, biased by our own anthropomorphic perspective on the quantitative relations in the whole world as well as by our linguistic representations, we constantly research and evaluate everything that mankind has achieved throughout the past century. (I, 153)

Two important elements of Baudouin de Courtenay's thought upon man and language stand out from this quotation: "the anthropomorphic perspective" – that is anthropocentrism – and the conviction that "linguistic representations" influence the way in which we think and act. An anthropocentric perspective on language attracted the attention of A. Wierzbicka a number of years ago.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I would like to discuss Baudouin de Courtenay's view concerning the influences of language on human thought and action. Taking the last quotation by face value, one could claim that Baudouin de Courtenay's ideas go hand in hand with what is widely known in modern linguistics as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis – or its weak version, to be precise. According to this version of the theory, language does not determine human cognition, but the cognition is under linguistic influence. As Baudouin de Courtenay puts it himself in another work, language is a continuous *memento*, a process of mental reconstruction, and linguistic structures disturb the logical formulation of thoughts.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the main pretext behind the discussion I present in this paper is the concept of *linguistic thinking*, so frequently found in Baudouin de Courtenay's studies. I have already made mention of this notion in a separate paper, when discussing Baudouin de Courtenay's views on grammatical gender.<sup>4</sup> As remarked by W. Doroszewski, *linguistic thinking* constitutes one of the main concepts for Bau-

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<sup>2</sup> A. Wierzbicka, *Baudouin de Courtenay and the theory of linguistic relativity*, in: *Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay a lingwistyka światowa. Materiały z konferencji międzynarodowej* [Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay and international linguistic studies. Materials from the international conference], Warszawa 4-7 Sept 1979], eds J. Rieger, M. Szymczak, S. Urbańczyk, Wrocław 1989, pp. 51-58.

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Pen (*Linguistic Relativity Versus Innate Ideas. The Origins of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis in German Thought*, Mouton: The Hague 1972, pp. 32, 54) mentions the influence of Baudouin de Courtenay on Whorf. I failed to find any evidence in favour of this claim in the literature.

<sup>4</sup> H. Duda, *Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay – prekursor „lingwistyki feministycznej”* [Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay – forerunner of "feminist linguistics"], „Roczniki Humanistyczne”, 46(1998), z. 1 [special edition], pp. 663-673.

douin.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Baudouin de Courtenay himself fails to define this notion, as well as many other key concepts he relies on in his theory of language, considering them self-explanatory and overtly comprehensible.<sup>6</sup> Doroszewski (*l.c.*) confines his comments on the notion to the formulation of an objection against Baudouin's putting on a par the idea of *linguistic thinking* and of *language as such*. In other works, Doroszewski admits that *linguistic thinking* is a vague concept (*op. cit.*, p. 65). B. Walczak and H. Zgółkowa mention this concept in their paper concerning the linguistic terminology used by Baudouin de Courtenay, but they do not classify the term among "the general linguistic concepts mirroring psychologically-oriented conceptions of Baudouin de Courtenay." Instead, they put *linguistic thinking* within the set of non-institutionalized linguistic terms, including items "that were not accepted or adopted in Polish linguistics," and which were considered "odd" by Baudouin de Courtenay himself. However, the paper under discussion does not bring us any further to the answer of how Baudouin de Courtenay understood the notion of *linguistic thinking*.<sup>7</sup>

Baudouin de Courtenay is known to us today as a forerunner of Structuralism, and his contributions to the rise of the theory are definitely beyond question. At the same time, it is worth remembering that Baudouin de Courtenay was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century linguist, a neo-grammarians, who sought grounds for his linguistic theories in psychology. What is more, he passed his psychological inclination on others, as noted by S. Urbańczyk.<sup>8</sup> Baudouin de Courtenay managed to "infect" a group of linguists of the consequent generation.

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<sup>5</sup> See W. Doroszewski, *Jan Baudouin de Courtenay – językoznawca i myśliciel* [Jan Baudouin de Courtenay – a linguist and a thinker], in: J. N. Baudouin de Courtenay, *Dzieła wybrane* [Selected writings], Vol. I, Warszawa 1974, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> This also holds true for such notions as *representation* (Doroszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 39). "Baudouin de Courtenay does not formulate overtly the definition of what language is. He only keeps repeating the main point that the real trace of the existence of language are individual human psyches" (*ib.*, p. 28).

<sup>7</sup> B. Walczak, H. Zgółkowa, *Terminologia lingwistyczna w pracach Jana Baudouina de Courtenay* [Linguistic terminology in the works of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay], in: *Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay a lingwistyka światowa. Materiały z konferencji międzynarodowej* [Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay and international linguistic studies. Materials from the international conference], Warszawa 4-7 Sept 1979], eds J. Rieger, M. Szymczak, S. Urbańczyk, Warszawa 1989, pp. 490-92.

<sup>8</sup> "Psychologism in linguistics may be generally defined as a scientific view that strives to connect linguistics with psychology, or even more – to root linguistics in psychology." Doroszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

S. Urbańczyk lists the following figures among them: Rozwadowski, Nitsch, Ułaszyn, Szober, Gawroński and Klemensiewicz.<sup>9</sup> To all these Polish linguists pertain the words which J. Rokoszowa wrote about Rozwadowski some time ago: “Rozwadowski was mostly interested in these aspects of language functioning which – to our surprise – are declared to be the foundations of the latest research [in the domain of linguistic studies].”<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, the post-Structuralist linguistic thought in Poland may be called neo-psychologism.<sup>11</sup> Two major sub-schools are noticeable within this scientific trend: the first – specially popular among neo-philologists, mostly specialists in English linguistics – is the theory of Cognitive grammar. The other, which concentrates around the so-called linguistic image of the world, wins its supporters among Polish philologists. This latter trend constitutes – by conscious effort or by coincidence – the direct continuation of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century linguistic psychologism. This school is sometimes referred to as the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin.<sup>12</sup> Some roots of the school’s main ideas are to be found among the works of Baudouin de Courtenay.

Let us put under closer scrutiny a selection of Baudouin de Courtenay’s statements; those relating to the concept of *linguistic thinking*. The main basis for our research is Baudouin’s work *Charakterystyka psychologiczna języka polskiego* [A psychological description of the Polish language] of

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<sup>9</sup> S. Urbańczyk, *Dwieście lat polskiego językoznawstwa* [Two centuries of Polish linguistic studies] (1751-1950), Kraków 1993, p. 111. E. Tabakowska’s opinion that: „[...] the research of many outstanding Polish linguists, grounded in the rules of classical structuralist paradigm, are, as a matter of fact, closely related to the main theses of cognitive linguistics. Zenon Klemensiewicz, Adam Heinz, Jerzy Kuryłowicz and many others may be named forerunners of cognitive grammar” is not surprising in this context. (*Gramatyka i obrazowanie. Wprowadzenie do językoznawstwa kognitywnego* [Grammar and representations. Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics], Kraków 1995, s. 7).

<sup>10</sup> J. Rokoszowa, *Problemy ogólnojęzykowe i filozoficzne w pracach Rozwadowskiego* [General linguistic and philosophical problems in the works of Rozwadowski] „Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Językoznawczego” 43-45(1981), p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> “The historically accepted definition of psychologism in linguistics holds it that not every kind of interest on behalf of linguists in the matters of psychology counts as psychologism. What matters here is a kind of extrapolation of psychological concepts and terms on the domain of language studies, like the one that occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with its later continuation in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [...]” Doroszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>12</sup> See J. Zinken, *Metaphors, stereotypes, and the linguistic picture of the world: Impulses from the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin*, “Metaphorik” 2004, nr 7, p. 115-136. See: <http://www.metaphorik.de/07/zinken.pdf>

1915 (vol. V, 28-98). According to Baudouin de Courtenay, language does not exist in a real, philosophically objective sense. Only individual humans exist in this way, or precisely “human minds, and those other parts of the body which are put under the linguistic influence in some way.” Human mind is where *linguistic thinking* takes place. Baudouin de Courtenay calls this process *linguistic cerebration*. Synonymous with *linguistic thinking* are also such terms as *internal movement*, *language in itself* (*O ogólnych przyczynach zmian językowych* [On the general reasons for language change], 1890; I, 206), or *language as such* (*O zadaniach językoznawstwa* [On the objectives of linguistics], 1889; I, 189). Communication (“communicative intercourse”) is effected by the “externalization” of linguistic thinking (V, 31). This “externalization”, also referred to as “sensitization”, is realized in speech: “in the articulatory-auditory domain, that is in «language» proper”, or, in other words, through what modern linguistics calls articulation and auditory perception (Exact Baudouin de Courtenay’s terms may be rendered as: *speech sound creation* and *speech sound reception* (*ib.*, 34)).

But for these two processes, whose function is to externalize language, language creation, use and existence would be impossible. These two processes alone are used by grown-up speakers to create a world of linguistic representations in a newly-born baby. (*ib.*, 34)

Baudouin de Courtenay adds that these processes:

change language, laying dormant somewhere in an individual human soul, into a powerful social tool of mutual communication within the particular socio-linguistic communities. (*ib.*)

In this context, it is necessary to highlight the opposition that Baudouin makes between *speech* and *articulation*:

In the language of an individual we can distinguish its internal, central facet, as well as its external, peripheral aspect. Thus, we can distinguish its spiritual part, relating to the mind; and the sensual one, connected with the extracerebral nerves. In other words, we distinguish between speech and articulation. (*O zadaniach językoznawstwa* [On the objectives of linguistics], 1889; I, 188)

This opposition frequently recurs in Baudouin’s works. Sometimes it is expressed by means of other juxtapositions, such as *cerebration* v. *phonation* (*ib.*, p. 189); *linguistic thinking* v. *externalization* (*A psychological description...*, 1915; V, 35). Though I find it troublesome to provide the reader with any definite conclusion on Baudouin de Courtenay’s conception of *linguistic*

*thinking*, I can state for sure that he was an advocate of the distinction between the psychological sphere of language and the physical one.<sup>13</sup>

I am of the opinion that in its many contexts the concept of *linguistic thinking* proposed by Baudouin de Courtenay matches the structuralist conception of the *system*. To demonstrate this point, let me present those ideas of Baudouin de Courtenay that justify my claim. First, consider the following quotations from *Charakterystyka psychologiczna języka polskiego* [A psychological description of the Polish language]:

For instance, in *linguistic thinking of Polish*<sup>14</sup> we find the kinakema of acoustically effective bilabial effort in the case of the phonemes fully or partly associated with the graphemes *p b m f* and *v*. (V, 39)<sup>15</sup>

*Linguistic thinking of Polish* lacks the sense, i.e. the live mental representation, of quantitative-temporal contrasts. (V, 45-6)

*Linguistic thinking of Polish* possesses a variety of exponents used to express the same inter-lexical and inter-phrasal relations, including the variety of exponents in word formation and inflection. For instance, the case markers for Nom. sg. masc. can be both *-m* and *-ę*; Dat. sg. masc. *-u* and *-ov'i*, etc. (V, 56)

*Linguistic thinking of Polish* displays a growing tendency towards semasiologization of formerly purely formal contrasts. This process takes place through association of certain contrasts which are of purely formal nature with contrastive semasiological (semantic) representations. (V, 49)

Similar examples are also to be found in other works by Baudouin de Courtenay:

<sup>13</sup> Por. P. A. M. Seuren, *Western Linguistics. An Historical Introduction*, Oxford 1998, p. 144.

<sup>14</sup> The exact translation should perhaps read: *linguistic thinking of a speaker of Polish*, to avoid the association with Polish as an objectively existing language – an idea to which Baudouin de Courtenay objected.

<sup>15</sup> I resign from an attempt to translate the term *kinakema* into English on purpose. I only want to remark that *kinakema* is an element of a phoneme that is no further divisible. A. Heinz comments on the notion of kinakema in the following way: “With the notion of kinakema we are very close to the conception of Baudouin «distinctive features», as known to modern phonology”. (*Jan Baudouin de Courtenay jako teoretyk języka i indoeuropeista* [Jan Baudouin de Courtenay as a language theorist and a specialist in the Indo-European], in: J. N. B a u d o u i n d e C o u r t e n a y, *Dziela wybrane* [Selected writings], Vol. IV, Warszawa 1990, p. 19.)

*Linguistic thinking of Polish* knows the following phonemes, psychologically individual items which exist as fixed independent mental representations. (*Fonologia (fonetyka) polska* [The phonology (phonetics) of Polish], 1898; V, 16)

*Linguistic thinking of modern Polish* recognizes triple grammatical gender [...] (*Zarys historii języka polskiego* [An outline of the history of Polish], 1922; V, 146)

The work *Введение в языковедение* [Introduction to linguistics] includes what we would call nowadays a phonemic chart of the Russian language. The chart is accompanied with the following caption:

Таблица, представляющая классификацию самостоятельно мыслимых фонем русского языкового мышления (русской церебрации). (*Введение в языковедение*, 1915; IV, 485)

[A table of mentally (psychologically) independent phonemes for *the linguistic thinking in Russian (the Russian cerebration)*]

Of special interest may be the thesis put forward by Baudouin de Courtenay concerning “the retaining or loss of phonemes depending on their morphological status”. Let me quote in more detail:

Thus, in the *linguistic thinking of Polish* and its externalization, the phoneme [-i], which constitutes a final morpheme of certain declension exponents (Gen. sg. fem., Dat. sg. fem, etc.) [...], is necessary for the clarity of formal expression. This is why it behaves in the same way on the level of *linguistic thinking* and in any case of its externalization. At the same time, the terminal phoneme [-i], found in other, historically active morphemes, e.g. full morpheme of the imperative mood, or the second phoneme in the morphemic structures [-ti → -ci] in the infinitive, lost its morphological function, and hence gradually disappeared from the language. (V, 58)

Assuming that Baudouin de Courtenay’s concept of *linguistic thinking* is equivalent to the basic structuralist concept of *system* (or *structure*), we cannot ignore the context in which these terms are used in modern linguistic studies. First and foremost, we have to keep in mind that the “concept of language in the sense of Saussurean *langue* was certainly alien to Baudouin de Courtenay.”<sup>16</sup> If we omit theoretical claims made by Baudouin de Courtenay, and concentrate on the way in which he explains linguistic facts, we can observe that his analyses are of definitely structuralist character, that the researcher is strictly consequent in his thought, and that large fragments of *Charakterystyka psychologiczna*

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<sup>16</sup> He i n z, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

*języka polskiego* [A psychological description of the Polish language] – which serves as the main basis for my discussion – reads as a very modern work, irrespective of the fact that it takes time to get used to the author’s style, archaic language and the terminology he employs. One cannot but agree with T. Zgółka, who noted discrepancies between the theoretical assumptions and the research practice of Baudouin de Courtenay, and stated:

The author himself seems to put aside theoretical assumptions (especially the individualist directive/imperative), and conduct research on an abstraction, a generalized construction, that is fiction.<sup>17</sup>

To give a possibly direct answer to the question of what Baudouin de Courtenay’s conception of *linguistic thinking* is like, I am inclined to state that “*linguistic thinking* is a system imposed on the human psyche (Baudouin de Courtenay’s equivalent of psyche may be the “head”, “mind” or “soul”).” Although his practical analyses of language data, especially in the domain of phonetics and phonology, are predominantly structuralist – seeing language as a system, that is as an “abstract network of relations between substantial elements,” Baudouin called the subject of his research *linguistic thinking*, and placed it in individual linguistically stimulated minds. In this way, he fell victim to the spirit of the era in which he lived and worked. According to Jakobson, in his inauguration lecture of 1870 Baudouin de Courtenay made a distinction between language *in potentia* and real speech (Russian *reč*). The latter is meant to be an “unstoppingly developing process.”<sup>18</sup> In this way, Baudouin de Courtenay laid the foundations to the understanding of language as abstract phenomenon. Later, Baudouin departed from these

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<sup>17</sup> T. Zgółka, *Psychologizm a społeczny charakter języka w koncepcjach lingwistycznych J. N. Baudouina de Courtenay*, [Psychologism versus the social nature of language in the linguistic conceptions of J. N. Baudouina de Courtenay], in: *Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay a lingwistyka światowa* [Jan Niecisław Baudouin de Courtenay and international linguistic studies.], p. 112. Zgółka makes reference (also lexically) to numerous statements by Baudouin de Courtenay about language. Consider for instance the following statement: “tribal language and national language is an abstraction and a generalizing construction [...]” (*Język i języki* [Language and languages], 1903; IV, 338), or: “any unified tribal language is a fiction” (*ib.*, p. 338).

<sup>18</sup> R. Jakobson, *Kazańska szkoła polskiej lingwistyki i jej miejsce w światowym rozwoju fonologii* [The Kazan School of Polish linguistics and its role in the international growth of phonological studies], „Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Językoznawczego” 19(1960), p. 19. See Heinz, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.



views. Keeping in mind this reservation, one can evoke here two other modern linguistic concepts: *competence* and *performance*.

In some works the concept of *linguistic thinking* corresponds directly to *language*, as conceived of by Baudouin de Courtenay in his earlier research, that is as a psychological being, only extant in “linguistically stimulated minds”:

[...] the psychological form of being, called language, is only stored in a cerebrational mode, staying outside the world ruled by laws of energy flow. (*Próba uzasadnienia samoistności zjawisk psychicznych na podstawie faktów językowych* [An attempt to justify the independent status of psychological phenomena on the basis of linguistic facts] – IV, 374)

Baudouin de Courtenay juxtaposes *thinking* against *linguistic thinking*. The relation between the two is a sort of feedback: “Linguistic thinking develops thanks to thinking and psychological growth in general, but linguistic thinking also influences thinking as such” (V, 91). In *A Psychological Description...* Baudouin discusses the influence of psyche on linguistic thinking and the other way round: the influence of linguistic thinking on “general outlook on life, moods and other attitudes of people speaking a given language, i.e. those who store in their minds strings and groups of representations typical of a given linguistic thinking” (V, 91). A more detailed, and presumably more precise opinion of Baudouin de Courtenay may be found in his paper of 1905, entitled *Próba uzasadnienia samoistności zjawisk psychicznych na podstawie faktów językowych* [An attempt to justify the independent status of psychological phenomena on the basis of linguistic facts] (IV, 372-391). In it, Baudouin explains that animals possess non-linguistic thinking:

[...] animal psychology is non-linguistic: non-linguistic thinking is typical of animal creatures

He also enumerates the following types of thinking:

1) sensual thinking, impressionistic, direct and concrete; 2) linguistic thinking; 3) analytical, theoretical, scientific thinking. The first type of thinking is what humans and animals share; the other two ways are only characteristic of human thought. The third kind of thinking process is known to only a limited number of people. (IV, 373)

Another opposition Baudouin de Courtenay discusses is that between *linguistic thinking* and *linguistic thought*. The latter type of thought is found among people who “are conscious of their linguistic thinking, and who ven-

ture scholarly research of it” (V, 33).<sup>19</sup> A key concept in this definition is the term *scholarly*, since without it the concept of *linguistic thought* would refer to any conscious, though non-scientific, interest in linguistic thinking. In the previously quoted work *Językoznawstwo czyli lingwistyka w wieku XIX-tym* [The knowledge of language, or linguistics, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century] Baudouin, full of his typical polemical zeal, wrote:

If linguistics is to cover every action of the human mind meant to organize the knowledge of linguistic phenomena, one has to keep in mind that apart from normal science of sane minds, the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the more distant past always witnessed the activities of lunatics, people of unlimited imagination and gift for fantasy, seeking accidental correspondences between sounds in language; people ready to derive “Giepidy” from “kpy”, “Turingi” from “durnie”. These “scientific” works of such “researchers” fall into the domain of psychiatrics or studies of humor. (I, 167)

Linguistics, or linguistic thought, is, according to Baudouin de Courtenay, or should be at least, *scholarly thought* (V, 35).

This distinction, though not always in agreement with language users’ intuition, matches the assumptions made by main modern linguistic theories. Take a Polish linguist for example: I. Bobrowski separates the implicit knowledge of language, which “allows creation of utterances and understanding of utterances created by other members of the same society,” from the explicit linguistic knowledge, which is a “set of propositions that we are able to formulate in relation to our implicit knowledge of language”.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in this perspective, linguistics is definable as a “set of propositions constituting the explicit knowledge of language.”<sup>21</sup>

Linguistic thinking influences thinking in general. In Baudouin’s terms, the relation between the two is that linguistic thinking is a disturbance to thinking, a hindrance to logical thought. The source of disturbance lies in various characteristics of linguistic thinking (e.g. synonymy, homonymy, diversity of morphological types whose operation leads up to synonymy, exceptions understood as fossilized forms, being at the same time markers of some future lexical developments; for full list see V, 93).

Baudouin de Courtenay distinguishes three ways in which language influences psyche:

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<sup>19</sup> The contrast between *linguistic thinking* and *linguistic thought* is also emphasized in *Wprowadzenie do językoznawstwa* [Introduction to linguistics] (IV, 540, § 142).

<sup>20</sup> *Zaproszenie do językoznawstwa* [An invitation to linguistic studies], Kraków 1998, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ib.*, p. 15.

Some modes of influence of linguistic thinking on the other psychological processes are common to every human being, that is they exist along with any type of linguistic thinking. Others are only known to some types of linguistic thinking. Yet others may be classified as exclusively belonging to a given type of linguistic thinking (V, 91).

The first mode of influence mentioned by Baudouin de Courtenay includes all those linguistic features that are shared universally by languages of the world. This type of influence may be exemplified by “our tendency to substantiate the reflections of the extralinguistic world in our psyche and to create linguistic myths” (*ib.*).

As everything that Midas touched changed into gold, everything that is thought of in separation, isolated from the whole of concrete life, becomes a substance, becomes a noun. (V, 47)

Some characteristics of linguistic thinking may be shared by a group or family of languages (mode 2), while others may be associated with only one language (mode 3). Although Baudouin de Courtenay showed interest in the influence of linguistic thinking on psyche in general, he only developed in detail an analysis of grammatical gender on the human outlook of life, and the mood of people speaking Indo-European languages. I devoted a separate study to this issue; here I would only like to quote the most important statement made by Baudouin de Courtenay in the speech he delivered on 15 March 1900 at the meeting of the linguistic section of the Neophilological Society at the University of Petersburg. The speech was entitled *О связи грамматического рода с мирозерцанием и настроением людей говорящих языками различающими род* [On the relation of grammatical gender to the outlook of life and general attitude of people speaking languages that have gender distinction]:

Beyond doubt, speakers of one of Indo-European tongues are constantly and repeatedly exposed to grammatical gender, whether conscious or unconscious of it. When we ponder upon the well-observable influence of tiny, minute, but consequent, even obstinate and thus powerful factors shaping the nature, we will finally understand the results of this eternal *memento sexus!*<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> И. А. Бодуэн-де-Куртенэ, *Лингвистические заметки. I. О связи грамматического рода с мирозерцанием и настроением людей говорящих языками различающими род* [ I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay, *Linguistic investigations. I. On the relation of grammatical gender to the outlook of life and general attitude of people speaking languages that have gender distinction*], „Журнал Министерства Народного Просвещения” [Kazań] 321, 1900, part 2, no. 10, p. 369.

The quotation above brings, as it seems, a clear view of Baudouin de Courtenay on the influence of linguistic thinking on human psyche. “Speakers are exposed to grammatical gender, whether conscious or unconscious of it.” This cannot be any other way, since we have to keep in mind that *linguistic thinking*, with the notion of grammatical gender, is not thinking in general. It must also be pointed out here that according to Baudouin de Courtenay, elements of linguistic thinking are arbitrary. This arbitrariness hinders logical thinking. As early as in his Dorpat speech, Baudouin observes:

[...] owing to its arbitrary setup language is often an insurmountable obstacle on the way to logical organization of thought. (I, 210)

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Baudouin de Courtenay makes a relatively frequent use of the term *linguistic thinking*. The present paper contains an idea that may be instrumental in interpreting this complex notion. Unlike some commentators of Baudouin (Walczak, Zgólkowa) quoted above, I refuse to classify the term *linguistic thinking* among the “odd” vocabulary used by the linguist. The first reason against this classification is the fact that Baudouin de Courtenay consequently sticks to this term in his works. Secondly, he is not the only linguist to make use of it. Take S. Szober’s *Zarys językoznawstwa ogólnego* [An outline of general linguistics] of 1924 for example. (as mentioned above, Szober is one of the linguists “infected” by the psychological inclination of Baudouin de Courtenay).<sup>23</sup> In contrast to Baudouin de Courtenay, Szober defines *linguistic thinking* in a very precise manner. For him, it is a kind of thinking as such, staying in contrast to *sensual thinking*. Szober claims that

[...] the limited capacity of our consciousness’ focus causes that pictures of objects are never fully represented in our minds. [...] Rendering the full picture of an object takes place, therefore, through the gradual reconstruction from individual elements. Thus, instead of one psychological act, we face the whole chain of such acts, coming in sequential order.<sup>24</sup>

Linguistic thinking comes to an aid.

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<sup>23</sup> S. Szober, *Zarys językoznawstwa ogólnego* [An outline of general linguistics]. Fasc. 1, Kraków 1924, pp. 1-4.

<sup>24</sup> Szober, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

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It consists in substituting the whole variety and complexity of the pictures of objects and their features with the set of simpler and more unitary sonic representations of words.<sup>25</sup>

These unitary “sonic representations” function here as ready-for-use, simplified “mental pictures” of objects. Hence, Szober’s *linguistic thinking* is a method of depicting reality. If Baudouin de Courtenay had understood *linguistic thinking* in this way, our understanding of the previously discussed quotations would be extremely difficult if not completely impossible. At the same time, it may well be that in some cases his idea of *linguistic thinking* was close to this point of view. It was true for these parts of his studies where he discussed the influence of *linguistic thinking* on *thinking in general*, i.e. in these places where he departed from what we would call today the issues of the language system. Chapter 10 of *Charakterystyka psychologiczna języka polskiego* [A psychological description of the Polish language], entitled *Wpływ właściwości myślenia językowego polskiego na psychikę w ogóle* [The influence of the properties of linguistic thinking of Polish on the human psyche in general], differs considerably from the rest of the work. The influence of language on thought can be understood as the influence of language structure (the structuralist *langue*) on human thinking. It may also be that the influence is understood in the way proposed by Szober, where *linguistic thinking* means a simplified, schematic picture of reality, and as such shapes the way we think. In fact, the two presented perspectives are not contradictory. The latter perspective seems broader, as it covers the problem of how language structure influences human thought. If such is the case, it comes as no surprise that Baudouin de Courtenay used the term *linguistic thinking* to refer to what today we are likely to call language system or linguistic structures. I think that this is the reason why “the concept of system was alien to Baudouin de Courtenay”. *Linguistic thinking* occurs in varied contexts, which allows its multiple interpretations. All in all, one has to agree with Doroszewski that the concept is nothing but vague.

When commencing the studies of the issue presented above, I was convinced that it should be approached in the spirit of the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin, as in my view it was to represent a 19<sup>th</sup>-century counterpart of the modern concept of the *linguistic picture of the world*. This conviction grew even stronger in the light of Baudouin’s statements about the influences of language on thinking, about the sexualization and virilization

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<sup>25</sup> *Ib.*

in linguistic thinking. This is because the grammatical properties of languages count as elements of the linguistic picture of the world. R. Grzegorzczkova uses grammatical gender for one of her examples.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, a deeper look into Baudouin de Courtenay's work forced us to alter this original assumption. The notion of *linguistic thinking* in the works of Baudouin de Courtenay may be understood in the way defined by S. Szober only in these places where Baudouin writes about the influence of *linguistic thinking* on *thinking as such*. And it is only in these cases where it gets closer to the notion of the linguistic picture of the world.

*Translated from the Polish by Konrad Klimkowski*

O POJĘCIU MYŚLENIE JĘZYKOWE  
W PRACACH BAUDOUINA DE COURTENAY

Streszczenie

W artykule omówiono pojęcie *myślenie językowe* w pismach Jana Niecisława Baudouina de Courtenay (1845-1929). Podstawą materiałową pracy były wybrane prace badacza, w większości wydane w *Pismach wybranych* (t. I-VI, Warszawa 1974-1983), przede wszystkim *Charakterystyka psychologiczna języka polskiego* (1915). Dotychczas przyjmowano, że pojęcie *myślenie językowe* jest niejasne, bądź – z innej perspektywy – że odpowiadający mu termin jest „dziwaczny”. Przeprowadzona analiza pokazuje, że *myślenie językowe* u Baudouina de Courtenay to wtłoczony w psychikę (w „duszę”) system (struktura). W innych miejscach natomiast, *myślenie językowe* należy pojmować jako pewien rodzaj myślenia – *myślenie językowe* jest tu przeciwieństwem *myślenia wrażliwego*. Pisząc o wpływie myślenia językowego na myślenie, Baudouin de Courtenay głosił poglądy, które później w nauce zyskały miano hipotezy Sapira-Wharfa. Niektóre użycia terminu *myślenie językowe* pokazują, że Baudouin de Courtenay może też uchodzić za prekursora badań nad tzw. językowym obrazem świata.

**Słowa kluczowe:** „myślenie lingwistyczne”, psychologizm w językoznawstwie, językoznawstwo w Polsce, językowy obraz świata

**Keywords:** “linguistics thinking”, psychologism in linguistics, linguistics in Poland, linguistic picture of the world.

<sup>26</sup> R. Grzegorzczkova, *Pojęcie językowego obrazu świata* [The concept of the linguistic image of the world], in: *Językowy obraz świata* [Linguistic image of the world], ed. J. Bartmiński, second edition, Lublin 1999, pp. 41, 43.