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CHAPTER 8



Native Tongues and Foreign Languages in the Education of the Russian Nobility: The Case of the Noble Cadet Corps (1730s–1760s)

Vladislav Rjéoutski

This chapter deals mainly with one question: the choice of languages to learn in the major Russian educational institution for the nobility, the Noble Infantry Cadet Corps in St Petersburg, in the first period of its existence (1731–62). A combination of various sources gives us some idea of the evolution of language learning at the Corps over the period and the reasons why a given language was learned to a greater or lesser extent. The choice of languages to learn depended, indeed, on various factors, such as: the educational model followed by the Corps; the national origins and cultural outlook of the pupils and teachers; the organization of non-linguistic teaching; and, more broadly, considerations about the cultural and social value of given languages in the Russian Empire in general and, more specifically, for the two major ethnic groups (Russian and Baltic German) of nobility present at the Corps. The first part of the chapter briefly presents the position reserved for language teaching at the Corps and discusses the possible reasons for choosing to teach given languages there. In the second part I shall present the social and cultural outlook of the main ethnic and linguistic group at the Corps, i.e. the Russian cadets. Finally, I shall discuss the relationship between the popularity of given languages and the cultural outlook(s) of the pupils and teachers.¹

Eighteenth-century Russia was characterized by an increasing interest in foreign languages. The situation upended Russian society as far as the knowledge of foreign languages was concerned because, before Peter the Great (1696–1725), only a few people knew the rudiments of foreign languages. This lack of knowledge of foreign languages affected the development of general knowledge and scientific studies, the transfer of technological knowledge, diplomacy, printing etc. Whenever, before Peter the Great, Russia had somehow been able to cope with these needs, it had often been with the help of foreigners. With the acceleration of exchanges with

Western countries under Peter the Great, it now became vital for at least some social and professional groups of people in Russia to have a command of foreign languages.

Language learning and usage have deeply affected some social groups like the nobility. The choice of one language rather than another, as I will argue, not only shows the nobility's cultural orientation: it is also an indicator of changes in the social and cultural identity of this Estate or, at least, of a new perception of its identity and desire to refashion itself according to new ideas about the nobility's education, outlook and sociability.

In Russia, the hubs for the acquisition of foreign languages included state schools for noble boys and, later, from the time of Catherine the Great (r. 1762–96) onwards, the Smolny Institute for noble girls in St Petersburg. The most important school of this sort was the Noble Infantry Cadet Corps, founded in St Petersburg in 1731. Foreign languages were of great importance in the professional education of a nobleman because many key works — for example, books on fortification — were not yet available in Russian. In addition, foreign languages were useful for the social life of a nobleman or noblewoman. French was becoming essential for life at the court. At the same time, command of the mother tongue was gaining in importance.

In this chapter, I focus my attention on one point in particular: the choice of languages to learn and the variety of factors that explain it. I do not discuss the books used in language classes but very briefly discuss the teachers' methods. I intend to show the links between the imagined value of a given language and the rating of that language at the Corps, the social and cultural outlook of the pupils and the teachers, and their national origin. For a long period, cadets could choose the languages they wanted to learn, not because these subjects were thought to be unimportant, but because the 'founding fathers' of the institution shared the idea that learning had to correspond to the personal tastes and talents or *génie* of each pupil (Fedyukin 2014). I begin by briefly presenting the position reserved for language teaching at the Corps and discussing the possible reasons for the proposal to teach certain languages there. I then present the social and cultural outlook of the main ethnic and linguistic group at the Corps, i.e. the Russian cadets. Finally, I discuss the relationships between the popularity of given languages and the cultural outlook(s) of the pupils and teachers.

Choosing Languages to learn: Planning Language Learning at the Corps at the Time of its Foundation

The Cadet Corps was what we would today call a 'secondary school' for the nobility of the Russian Empire, including the German-speaking nobility of the Baltic provinces which Russia had invaded under Peter the Great. The acquisition of foreign languages was, from the start of the school, considered to be of utmost importance for the Russian nobility. Incidentally, among the main reasons given for the fact that the Cadet Corps was opened in St Petersburg and not in Moscow

was the presence of numerous foreigners in St Petersburg, the Russian capital of the time, which could be beneficial to language learning at the Corps (Luzanov 1907: 16).

The first list of the staff of the Corps (published on 18 November 1731) included one Russian-teaching position, three German-teaching positions, two French-teaching positions, and one Latin-teaching position. There were four positions for instructors of writing: two for Russian and one each for German and Latin (*PSZ* 1830, 43: 185). From this first list of positions, published before the Corps came into being (in 1732), it is apparent that German was already considered to have the potential to become the most important language at the Corps, at least in terms of the number of classes offered. The staff regulation published on 6 July 1732 provides a modified list of language-teaching positions: two for Russian, three for German, two for French, one for each of the other languages: Latin, Italian and English. For each language there was also an apprentice teacher. Moreover, there were positions for teachers in writing: three for Russian and three for both German and Latin (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 396 (1732-42), fol. 16^{r-v}).² The small increase in the number of positions is probably attributable to an increase in the number of cadets and, probably, the need to cope with the problem of illiteracy among a minority of Russian cadets. New on the list were positions for Italian and English. This certainly reflects a broad view of the education of nobility and the prioritization of access to a variety of languages of professional, social, or cultural relevance. There would also have been a position for a professor of Russian (with a salary of six hundred rubles per year; cf. two hundred rubles for language teachers and one hundred rubles for writing teachers). The role of the professor of Russian would have been to teach Russian not only to the cadets but also to the teachers and officers working at the Corps, thus enabling them to communicate with the Russian cadets in Russian.

In reality, the composition of the language-teaching staff varied somewhat from these staff regulations. In 1737, there were classes in Latin (two), French (four), Russian (one) and German (three); there were writing classes in Russian (one) and German (four); there were also classes in basic German and orthography (two); and, finally, there were classes in Russian style (two) and German style (five). Italian was not taught before the 1760s and English was not taught at the Corps at all during the eighteenth century. The number of classes did not correspond to the number of pupils. The latter varied between thirteen and eighty-six per class (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 396, fols 65-67). Obviously, pupils were progressing from the fundamentals to writing and finished with 'style', the highest level of language study, though this was not available for French at the time.

Various factors could explain the choice of German. Some were specific to the Corps, namely, the presence of many German or German-speaking teachers among the staff. It was difficult to find enough teachers who could teach various subjects in Russian and therefore pupils had to learn German and French in order to understand their teachers (*PSZ* 1830, 8: 558-59, n°5881; see more on this below). Other reasons were extrinsic to the Corps and could have played a role in securing

the exceptional position for German. Among these, it is necessary to mention the new geopolitical situation of the Russian Empire. The Empire's Baltic provinces had a German-speaking nobility who needed to be culturally and linguistically integrated into the Russian nobility and bureaucracy. Furthermore, German held international prestige as one of the major European languages and the language of some countries with which Russia had historically been in contact, such as the Hanseatic cities (Lübeck, Danzig, Hamburg), Brandenburg-Prussia etc. The choice of French was even more understandable as French was the *lingua franca* of Europe, the 'universal language', and the sign of a good education (RĴéoutski, Offord and Argent 2014). Whether French was also considered a social marker of nobility at the Corps is not clear.

If we compare the situation at the Cadet Corps in St Petersburg with the situation at its German model, the Corps des Cadets in Berlin (Fedyukin and Lavrinovich 2014), some similarities as well as some striking differences are evident. On the one hand, in Berlin French does not seem to have been described as a social marker of nobility, at least not in the initial period of its existence (1717–70 (cf. Crousaz 1857)). However, the cadets needed French for their future professional lives (e.g. literature on fortification was often available in French). On the other hand, Latin was not taught in Berlin (while it was taught at the Cadet Corps in St Petersburg). Latin was probably first introduced into the curriculum of the Corps des Cadets in Berlin in 1771. The initial exclusion of the language from the curriculum at the foundation of the Corps in Berlin can be attributed to the personal antipathy of the Soldier-King, Frederick William I, to Latin. He forbade his son, the future Frederick the Great, from learning Latin (see, for example, Boehm 2013).³ Like the St Petersburg school, Berlin's Cadet Corps was conceived as a school for nobility (in Berlin, French, dance, and fencing, together with military training, were among the most important subjects). However, the Cadet Corps in St Petersburg seems to have been conceived with a broader scope. Indeed, not only was its curriculum targeted at nobles preparing for careers as army officers, but also at those seeking to become civil servants. The inclusion of Latin on the curriculum was an indicator of this orientation: Latin was the key to accessing knowledge in some subjects, such as civil law, that were not taught in Berlin. Indeed, books in Latin were used for this subject (*Materialy* 1886: 445). This broad definition of the curriculum of the Russian school for the nobility and the inclusion of Latin in particular were probably the result of the influence of the Academy of Sciences. In the 1730s, relations between the Academy of Sciences and the Cadet Corps were very close: the administration of the Corps reported to the Academy on the subjects taught at the Corps and the books used in classes; some teachers from the Academy came to the Corps and the Academy was generally expected to become a source of qualified teachers for the new institution; the Academy actively participated in discussing the organization of exams at the Corps; and several academicians attended the exams (see, for example, RGADA, f. 248, op. I, d. 396, fols 17^v, 71–76, 543–45^v; *Materialy* 1886: 462–66).

The Cultural Outlook of Young Russian Nobles before their Entrance into the Cadet Corps

It is not clear how many nobles learned foreign languages at home (which was then the most frequent form of education in Russia) prior to their entrance into the Corps. However, some idea of foreign language learning through private education in Russia at the time can be grasped from the following figures (Fedyukin 2015). Out of 714 young Russian nobles who were present at the 1736 general inspection (a public examination for nobles), 164 (23%) were illiterate, and most of the latter were poor (they possessed no more than twenty serfs); only seventeen (2.5%) out of 714 said that they had learned German, one French, and one Latin. However, it is not clear whether they had been asked to indicate the languages they had learned or whether they volunteered the information on their own initiative. On the basis of these figures, one could think that the vast majority of the Russian nobility probably neglected foreign languages. According to the *ukaz* of 9 February 1737, all young nobles had to learn arithmetic, geometry, reading and writing (in their native tongue), and foreign languages (which their parents could choose). Education at home was the responsibility of parents. However, it was proposed that those who were not wealthy (i.e. who possessed fewer than one hundred serfs) should put their boys into state schools (e.g. the Noble Infantry Cadet Corps) (*PSZ* 1830, 10 (no. 7171): 43-45). It seems that the situation did not change considerably in the years after this *ukaz*. In 1745, at a new general inspection of the nobility, the state of play was quite similar to that in 1736. If we compare these figures with the level achieved by the boys who entered the Cadet Corps in the years 1732-62, it turns out that their level was higher than the general level achieved by the young nobles present at the 1736 inspection. Among some 1760 cadets who studied at the Corps over the period, 239 (or about 13.5%) stated, when entering the Corps, that they had learned more than reading and writing in Russian. Among them, 101 had studied German (6.25%), fifty-nine French (2.5%), and twenty-eight Latin (1.5%). The difference between the figures of the general inspection of the Russian nobility in 1736 and the figures for the Cadet Corps of 1732-62 can be explained less by the progress in education among Russian nobles over three decades than by differences in wealth among these groups of nobility. Indeed, while the poorest nobles (with fewer than twenty serfs) never constituted more than 17.6% of all the cadets before the reign of Catherine II (this was to change in her reign), they made up between 51% and 60% of all the Russian nobles over the same period (Fedyukin 2015).

The fact that an average Russian cadet was more cultivated than an average Russian nobleman does not mean that he was well prepared for the curriculum of the Corps. Concerning language learning, there were a number of difficulties. The first was the ethnic origins of the pupils, which were far from uniform. In 1732 the Director of the Corps, Baron Johann Lüdwig Luberas von Pott, reported to the Empress that, among the pupils registered at the Corps, 237 were Russian, thirty-two belonged to the Livonian nobility, and thirty-nine to the Estonian nobility (*RGADA*, f. 248, op. 1, d. 396, fol. 2). In other words, seventy-one out of 308 pupils (or about 23%) came from Baltic noble families whose mother tongue was

typically German. In April 1734 there were 265 Russian pupils, thirty-eight pupils from Livonia, twenty-eight pupils from Estonia (Estland), and twenty-nine pupils from the families of foreigners, giving an overall number of 360 pupils (Tatarnikov and Yurkevich 2009: 57). Thus, Baltic Germans made up 18.3% of all the pupils, and foreign pupils constituted 8% of the total. Clearly, then, as far as language learning was concerned, the goals of these groups varied. Another major difficulty was the absence of uniformity in age and knowledge among the pupils during the first years of the existence of the Corps. The first cadets were of various ages; some were aged about twenty. Many of them were ignorant (they ‘had no notions in any science’ (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 396, fol. 61)) and some illiterate. Indeed, the director of the Corps, Abel Friedrich von Tettau, specified clearly in his report of August 1737 to the Empress, Anna Ivanovna, that some Russian cadets could neither read nor write in their ‘natural’ language. He was of the opinion that there was no possibility of teaching Latin to these pupils, their age being an obstacle. According to the director, even German pupils (who spoke German and thus could more easily follow what was taught at the Corps) could not have an easy grasp of Latin (which was generally considered to be a difficult language at the time). As for other languages, the situation was similar. Some of the Russian cadets, who had hardly any training in their native tongue, had some knowledge of German or French or Latin, but rarely all three. Some had only oral command of one of the living foreign languages; others could read and write. The Baltic Germans’ abilities were hardly better: some could barely write their names in their mother tongue, although they were nearly adults (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 396, fol. 61).

Language Learning and the National Origins of the Cadets (1730s–1760s)

What languages did the pupils learn and what levels could they achieve over the long period of their studies at the Corps (which could last twelve years)? Below, I provide data based on various documents, including summary tables produced by the administration of the Corps and examination records.

Language/Origin	<i>Russian cadets</i>	<i>Other cadets</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of pupils	117 (69.5%)	51 (30.5%)	168 (100%)
<i>Russian</i>	0	48 (94%)	48 (31%)
<i>German</i>	104 (89%)	51 (100%)	155 (92.5%)
<i>French</i>	65 (62.5%)	40 (78.5%)	105 (67.5%)
<i>Latin</i>	1 (1%)	3 (6%)	4 (2.5%)
Not studying any language	13 (11%)	0	13 (8.5%)

TABLE 1. Languages studied at the Corps in 1732. Based on a list of pupils which probably represented only half the cadets. Russian State Archive for the History of the Armed Forces (RGVIA — Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv), f. 314, op. 1, d. 1654, fols 1–176. (In this and the following tables, the percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest half.)

Language/Origin	Russian cadets	Baltic cadets	Foreign cadets	Total
Russian	24 (9%)	49 (74%)	23 (79.5%)	96 (26.5%)
German	215 (81%)	15 (22.5%)	15 (51.5%)	245 (68%)
French	85 (32%)	51 (77%)	28 (97%)	164 (45.5%)
Latin	4 (1.5%)	15 (22.5%)	19 (65.5%)	38 (10.5%)
Total	265 (73.5%)	66 (18.5%)	29 (8%)	360 (100%)

TABLE 2. Languages studied at the Corps in 1734. Based on a summary table (April 1734) published in: Tatarnikov and Yurkevich 2009: 57

Subject	Number of pupils learning the subject
Basic German style	30 (8%)
German	215 (58%)
German writing	313 (84.5%)
German style	117 (31.5%)
French	251 (67.5%)
Latin ⁴	24 (German cadets) /16 (Russian cadets) (11%)
Russian	56 (15%)
Russian writing	41 (11%)
Total number of cadets	371 (100%)

TABLE 3. Number of pupils per language subject in 1737.
Based on: *Materialy* 1886: 446–50

Language/Origin	Russian	Other	Total
Russian	60 (23.5%)	44 (70%)	104 (32.5%)
German	249 (97%)	59 (93.5%)	308 (96.25%)
French	98 (38%)	53 (84%)	152 (47.5%)
Latin	13 (5%)	1 (2%)	14 (4.5%)
Total	257 (80.5%)	63 (19.5)	320 (100%)

TABLE 4. Languages studied at the Corps in 1748.
Based on examination records (RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 2178).

Language/ Origin	Russian cadets	Other cadets	Total
Number of pupils	120 (69.5%)	53 (30.5%)	173 (100%)
Russian	58 (48.5%)	47 (88.5%)	105 (60.5%)
German	120 (100%)	44 (83%)	164 (95%)
French	65 (54%)	48 (90.5%)	113 (65.5%)
Latin	8 (6.5%)	10 (19%)	18 (10.5%)
Italian	8 (6.5%)	5 (9.5%)	13 (7.5%)
History in French	7 (6%)	2 (4%)	9 (5%)
Geography in French	1 (1%)	0	1 (0.5%)

TABLE 5. Languages and subjects studied in foreign languages at the Corps in 1764. Based on the examination records of the pupils finishing their studies at the Corps (RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 3213 (1764))

Languages/Origin		<i>Russian</i>	<i>Other</i>
No. of students		120 (69.5%)	53 (30.5%)
<i>Courses in Translation</i>	Russian → German	Nearly all	7 (13%)
	German → French	6 (5%)	17(32%)
	Russian → French	27 (22.5%)	4 (7.5%)
<i>Courses in German</i>	Basics	60 (50%)	3 (5.5%)
	Orthography	89 (74%)	4 (2%)
	Style	24 (20%)	44 (83%)
<i>Courses in French</i>	Basics	29 (24%)	26 (49%)
	Orthography	10 (8.5%)	6 (11.5%)
	Style	8 (6.5%)	11 (21%)

TABLE 6. Languages studied at the Corps in 1764. Based on the examination records of the pupils finishing their studies at the Corps (RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 3213 (1764))

Table 1 is based on a list of cadets aged between seventeen and twenty-two, representing the oldest pupils at the institution. This age group was of particular concern to the Director of the Corps because of its disparate levels of knowledge. In 1732 it seems that German was mandatory for the Russian pupils,⁵ and Russian was quasi-mandatory for Baltic Germans. In 1737, the new Director, von Tettau, thought that German was necessary for all the pupils, including Baltic Germans. The insistence on this mutual linguistic training of the two major ethnic and linguistic groups within the nobility of the Russian Empire denotes the desire for their cultural rapprochement. This rapprochement was probably considered to be a factor for stability in the Empire. Many years later, in 1773, the Senate sent a decree to Moscow University, the Noble Infantry and Noble Navy Corps, and the Academy of Sciences (RGA VMF, f. 432, op. 1, d. 70, fol. 2^{r-v}). The Senate regretted that the Russian nobility had little knowledge of German and saw the acquisition of the language as one of the state's priorities. The main reason that the decree invoked for strengthening training in German was the integration of the Baltic provinces into the Empire. The Senate ordered that German be given priority over other languages in the aforementioned institutions.

In the 1730s, however, German was absolutely not an 'endangered language' at the Corps. Training in German was rather intensive: in 1737, there were twenty-two hours a week available in German; twenty-two in German writing (or four hours in a different group); four in German style; and four in 'orthography', probably spelling. Out of a total of 371 students 217 took training in German, 150 in German writing for 22 hours a week and 163 for four hours a week, 97 took German style and 30 took German orthography (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 348, fols 65-67). In fact, even training in French and in Latin was based on German: texts were translated from German into French or Latin and vice versa. However, in 1734 (Table 2) not all Russian pupils studied German and even fewer Baltic Germans studied it. Pupils had been divided into levels and those at the higher levels of mastery were obviously exempted from attending German class. The Baltic

pupils who studied the language did so probably because they did not have a good command of written German.

At the time German (and not French) was the main language of teaching at the Corps, irrespective of the pupils' ethnic origins and native tongues. In April 1734, roughly two years after the opening of the Corps, there was only one Russian teacher of a non-language subject and one German teacher of mathematics who knew some Russian (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 396, fol. 29). In 1737 the books used for teaching non-language subjects were still nearly all in German or, rarely, in Latin. Only in the geometry class was a Russian compendium, translated from a German one which one of the teachers had authored, used to teach Russian pupils (*Materialy* 1886: 464-65). As shown by Kristine Dahmen, this was by no means an exceptional situation in Russian educational institutions in the first half of the century. Thus, somewhat paradoxically, German became more than a foreign language. It became a language of teaching that played a role in Russia similar to that played by Latin in Jesuit colleges or universities in Europe. This was a source of continuous outrage because many pupils did not understand the teachers, and the benefits of such teaching could be rather poor (Koch 2002: 155-68). As shown by a letter written by two Italian teachers teaching French at the Corps in 1781 (Rjéoutski and Offord 2013), even in the second half of the century such resentment was evident. In 1747 a decision was taken to ban the use of German or French in non-language classes at the academic institutions and to leave in place only two teaching languages, namely, Russian and Latin. However, nothing changed much because of the lack of teachers capable of teaching in Russian (Koch 2002: 160). In the Cadet Corps in 1734 language classes in German, Russian and Latin were organized separately for Russian and Baltic German pupils (Koch 2002: 158). However, it is not clear whether that improved the situation: in 1737 the teachers teaching German to the Russian pupils were still all German-speaking and presumably had insufficient knowledge of Russian (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 348, fols 65-67). This was to change progressively but it would take considerable time. Judging by the following case, the shortage of Russian-speaking teachers seems to have been dramatic in the first years of the existence of the Corps: a German-speaking teacher, Ebel, was recruited in 1738 with the hope that, having already studied Polish, he could learn some Russian quickly and teach Russian cadets history and geography in Russian (Koch 2002: 158).

In the beginning French was not studied by all the cadets and the number of Russian cadets who studied French varied between one third and two thirds.⁶ Among the Baltic and foreign pupils, the proportion of pupils studying this language was much higher. The first impression is that Baltic and foreign nobles were more exposed to modern European trends and had chosen French because of its role in the sociability of nobility and, more generally, its role as a *lingua franca* in Europe (Rjéoutski, Offord and Argent 2014); and that the Russian nobility, who followed traditional ways, lagged behind. Whether all the families of the Russian cadets were aware of the role of French in Europe and, particularly, its role as a social marker for nobility is not obvious. However, there was a different reason for

the small number of Russian pupils who opted to study French. In his report to the Empress in 1739, the Director, von Tettau, explained:

before they [some Russian cadets] entered the Cadet Corps they did not know any German; and the teachers who teach them are all foreigners and do not know any Russian. Therefore the cadets (because they like French more than German) have to be taught German first so that the teachers could then teach [other subjects] to them and they would understand the teachers better. (RGADA, f. 177 (1739), d. 70, fol. 5^v)⁷

Among the four teachers of French working at the Corps in 1737, at least three (including a father and son Feray; and Ruynat, who was also teaching French at the Academy school) were of Huguenot origin; the fourth (Gay) taught German as well as French, so he was probably of Huguenot origin too (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 396, fols 65–67). These teachers could use German as a ‘supporting’ language in their French classes: that is, they could translate from German into French and vice versa, but they did not use Russian (see Rjéoutski and Offord 2013). It is striking to note the degree to which all the major Russian institutions in which vernacular foreign languages were taught encountered similar difficulties: one of the professors of the Academy of Sciences, Pierre Louis Le Roy, complained in 1745 that the use of German in French classes at the Academy’s school put off Russian pupils (Koch 2002: 160). This system resulted in rather poor knowledge of French among the Russian cadets, at least during the first thirty or forty years from the foundation of the Corps. Some works produced by the best cadets were shown to the Empress in 1739. Not only did these extant French texts have spelling errors, but they also frequently included non-colloquial constructions (RGADA, f. 177, op. 1, 1739, d. 70, fols 29–30).⁸ Thus, the problem involved human resources as well as the choice of teaching methods.⁹ In 1733 Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer, a member of the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences, proposed adopting in the Academy’s school the ‘direct method’ of teaching languages that was used to teach Latin in Kiev. This would facilitate access to Latin for those pupils who were not fluent in German (Koch 2002: 159). The use of the direct method, as we would call it today, explains the successful learning of French in private education, particularly at the highest levels of nobility. Indeed, teachers in private education mostly taught their pupils languages by emphasizing speaking, dictation, and copying, probably because many of these teachers knew no languages apart from their own (Rjéoutski 2013).

The number of Russian students studying French at the Corps increased over the period (from 38% in 1748 to 54% in 1764), but a closer investigation seems to indicate that French was still rather neglected at the Corps in 1764. A small number of Russian pupils (see Table 6; 27.5% of this group) tried their hand at translating into French; and only eight of them (6.5%) studied French style, which was the highest level at which the language was taught. In other words, only a small proportion of Russian pupils left the Corps with a fairly good knowledge of French: sufficient knowledge for a fluent conversation or for correspondence in the language. In this regard, the situation does not seem to have changed substantially between the 1730s and 1760s. It was different, though not markedly so, among the non-Russian

students. Nearly 21% of them had studied French style by the time they graduated and about 40% had studied translation into French.

In 1748 (Table 4), as in previous years, the majority of Baltic German and foreign pupils studied Russian. The documents I have seen do not comment on the absence of Russian as a subject for Russian pupils in 1732. In 1748, fewer than a quarter of Russian students studied Russian. Does this mean that only one quarter of all Russian students (or families) considered Russian (a subject) of use to them? The proportion of those who chose Russian continued to grow. In 1764 (Table 5), approximately 50% of the students from Russian families were studying Russian. This figure may show a growing awareness of the necessity to study Russian among the Russian nobility. Interestingly, this trend went along with a debate about the role of various languages, including Russian, in the education of the nobility (Betskoy 1766). However we shall not deal with this subject here because this discussion took place essentially in the following period.

The first charter of the Corps specified that only those who were willing to study Latin should do so (*PSZ* 1830, 8: 558–59, n°5881). The number of pupils studying Latin was small, and the Russian pupils were the least enthusiastic about Latin. The situation was more or less the same in other institutions where noble children were studying: at the school attached to the Academy of Sciences and later in the school depending on Moscow University. Unlike noble students, the students of other social origins (children of priests, soldiers, low court officials etc.) often studied Latin, which was becoming for some of them a language of social and professional distinction, as French was for the nobility. Latin was thoroughly studied in Church schools in the time after Peter the Great's death, when it was introduced into Church education thanks to Ukrainian bishops close to the Tsar. Therefore, in this respect there was a considerable contrast between the nobility and other classes who learned languages. There was also a considerable gap between Western European nobles, many of whom were still learning Latin, and the Russian nobility.

This confirms Max J. Okenfuss's conclusion about the unwillingness of the Russian nobility to learn the language (Okenfuss 1995). The proportion of foreign pupils studying Latin in 1734 (Table 2: the only year for which it is easy to distinguish between Baltic and foreign pupils) is extremely high (65.5%) compared to that of Baltic nobles (22.5%) and to that of Russian pupils (1.5%). In the case of foreign pupils (and certainly partly in the case of Baltic pupils) we are very probably dealing with a population which was in contact with the tradition of studying Latin. The low figures for Latin among Russian pupils in the first years of the existence of the Corps can be explained by the advanced age of the first pupils and their general level of knowledge, which seems to have been rather poor, with a proportion of illiterates. However, other factors certainly played a more important role: there was hardly any tradition of learning Latin in Russia among the nobles, and the language was progressively associated with the clerical Estate or the medical profession. Interestingly, despite the obvious failure of Latin at the Corps, it was included in official ceremonies during the exams. In October 1738, in front of selected guests, cadets made speeches in Latin, French and German (but not Russian).

Latin speeches were probably included as an indication of the thoroughness of the education provided at the Corps and as a courtesy to the professors of the Academy of Sciences present in the audience (RGADA, f. 248, op. 1, d. 396, fols 543–57). One can observe a slight progression in the proportion of Russian pupils taking Latin over the period between 1732 and 1764. However, it is not significant enough to change our opinion about the Russian nobility's lack of interest in Latin.

This situation was not completely at odds with what was going on in other European countries. In the eighteenth century, in France, as in many other parts of Europe, Latin was progressively losing its hegemonic place at the institutions we would consider institutions of 'secondary education' today. According to André Chervel, Latin ceased to be spoken in university colleges at the end of the seventeenth century and persisted in Jesuit colleges only until the 1730s (Chervel 2006: 36). Françoise Waquet asserts that Latin maintained its role as the language of teaching in France until the middle of the eighteenth century and in Jesuit colleges until the expulsion of the Jesuits from France in 1764 (Waquet 2002: 9). Institutions for the nobility also progressively replaced Latin with vernacular languages, inspired by the idea that teaching should be quick, practical and more focused on professional skills. Latin authors were not excluded from studies, but they were progressively read in the native languages of pupils or in other vernacular languages, often French (all the main authors of antiquity were translated into French). Vernaculars also facilitated noble boys' access to the 'sciences' because Latin was considered to be a difficult language (see, for example, the programme of the proposed Academy of Richelieu in France (Gras 1642: 23–30)).

Conclusion

In this chapter I show that the choice of languages to study at the first major educational institution for the nobility in Russia, the Noble Infantry Cadet Corps, depended on a multitude of factors. Among these, the most decisive were probably the educational model followed by the institution, the national origins and cultural outlook of the pupils and teachers, and the organization of non-language teaching. More broadly, other decisive factors included considerations about the cultural and social value of given languages in the Russian Empire in general and, more specifically, for the two major ethnic groups (Russian and Baltic German) of nobility present at the Corps. However, making distinctions between the most important reasons is no easy task, especially as the official documents which have been preserved rarely give any direct explanations of language choice. In the case of personal language use, particularly in a linguistic situation characterized by some stability (e.g. in the second half of the eighteenth century or in the early nineteenth century), testimonies which could give us insight into the reasons for the preference for one language over another are rare (with the exception of satirical comedy and the press, which indirectly reflect the linguistic situation (see, for example, Offord 2015)). However, a combination of sources gives us some idea of the evolution of language learning at the Corps over the period and the reasons why a given language was studied to a greater or lesser extent.

As we have seen, during the entire period under consideration German was the major foreign language at the Corps and *de facto* the first teaching language in general. Notwithstanding its role as the European *lingua franca* and the major prestige language, French did not have such a brilliant position. Without a doubt, this was partly due to the slow progress of Russian *francophonie* in general before the reign of Catherine the Great and partly because of the primarily German-speaking staff and the teaching methods used at the Corps. By the end of the century, though, French would play the leading role at the Corps, corresponding to the huge social success of the French language in Russia at the time. Russian was studied by Baltic nobles: it was a means to integrate the group linguistically into the Russian nobility. Moreover, it was progressively studied to a greater extent by Russian cadets, probably a sign of growing national consciousness on the part of this group. The latter process could also be linked to the (slow) development of Russian as the language of teaching at the Corps. Under Catherine II, Russian would become one of the three 'official' languages of the Corps (Offord, Argent and Rjéoutski 2015). The rise of Russian was obviously caused by the development of national consciousness in Russia, which affected the elites. There was one loser in this story: Latin. Efforts to promote the language at the Corps at the beginning of its existence did not give rise to any substantial results.

The data presented in this chapter allow us to question one of the best-established ideas in the historiography of Russian eighteenth-century education. Starting from the nineteenth century up to the present day, the advance of education in Russia over this period has been regarded as the direct result of the reforms carried out by the government. Where language learning is concerned, this point of view has been formulated by Max J. Okenfuss. In his well-known article with the provocative title 'The Jesuit Origins of Petrine Education' (1973), Okenfuss presents Latin education in Russian schools as a direct result of Petrine reforms. In the same way, in his book on Latin in Russia (Okenfuss 1995) he considered that the failure of Latin among the Russian nobility should be attributed not only to the latter's backwardness but also to a voluntary action of the authorities of the post-Petrine period.

The story of language learning at the Noble Cadet Corps in Saint Petersburg helps to correct this picture and relativize the scope and the results of the action of the authorities. Latin was hardly studied at the Corps, but not because there was any unwillingness of the authorities to promote it among the pupils. On the contrary, before the time of Ivan Betskoy (1760s) there seem to have been combined efforts on behalf of the administration of the Corps and the Academy of Sciences to further Latin training at the Corps. However, Russian pupils were reluctant to study the language. It would also be simple, but in my view incorrect, to attribute the rejection of Latin to the traditional character of the culture of Russian nobility stressed by Okenfuss.

An important clue is given by the Director of the Corps, von Tettau, who points out in 1739 that young Russian nobles were very eager to learn French. If they followed traditional ways and were reluctant to embrace cultural innovations, why did they reject Latin and not French or German? I think that as early as

the 1730s parts of Russian nobility associated French with their Estate and with noble sociability. Just a couple of years after von Tettau's report, a French theatre troupe was hired for the Court of Saint Petersburg, thus symbolically indicating the place of French in Russian Court culture. Latin on the contrary, as mentioned before, was more and more associated with the clerical Estate (because training in Latin developed in ecclesiastical seminaries in the period after Peter the Great), academic research and the medical profession. Unlike Jesuit colleges in Europe or colleges in the Ukraine, Russian ecclesiastical schools accepted hardly any noble pupils. Therefore, the social contrast between ecclesiastical and civil educational establishments was very pronounced in Russia and led to social connotations of the languages learned in these institutions.

When Ivan Betskoy became *de facto* Russia's Minister of Education, Latin was already a defeated language in Russian noble education, so it would be an exaggeration to say that Betskoy's position on Latin, as formulated in his writing (Betskoy 1766), had any serious consequences in this situation. Betskoy was himself a product of this time; and his views reflected what in the eighteenth century many Russian nobles thought about languages, their usefulness and suitability for their Estate.

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Notes to Chapter 8

1. I am grateful to Sandra Dahlke, Kristine Dahmen, Igor Fedyukin, Gary Marker, Denis Sdvižkov and two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on this paper.
2. RGADA = Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhov drevnikh aktov [Russian State Archives of Ancient Documents].
3. His antipathy to Latin was by no means a whim and should be explained as reflecting a wider hostility to Latin education which was developing in Europe at that time.
4. Presumably taught in separate groups for German Baltic and Russian pupils.
5. However, some of them did not learn any language, probably because they were considered to be 'too old'. The figures published by P. Luzanov are quite different from these data. According to him, in July 1732 of 282 cadets only 163 (58%) learned German (Luzanov 1907: 31).
6. These data roughly correspond to those published by P. Luzanov, according to whom ninety-one out of 282 cadets (32.5%) learned French in July 1732.

7. Translation from Russian by the author. I am grateful to Igor Fedyukin for drawing my attention to this document.
8. I am grateful to Igor Fedyukin for drawing my attention to this document. For more detail, see Rjéoutski and Offord 2013.
9. On the question of the qualification of teachers of languages, see Häberlein and Kuhn (2010) and Glück (2013).