



Bilingualism Implementation Policy in the Republic of Tatarstan

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ABSTRACT This study revealed an active discussion in Tatarstan society, which took on the character of a conflict between the supporters and opponents of the Tatar language study. The researchers indicated that it risks escalating into a protracted ethno-linguistic conflict in the absence of a competent solution to the problem. Most informants believed that the Tatar language had the most important function as a means of intercultural interaction. In addition, according to the analysis of the interview, it could be concluded that there is a certain divergence in the field of motivation for bilingualism. In fact, if some of the informants considered the knowledge of the Tatar language by Russians to be the most important means of saving the Tatar language, and bilingualism is the institution that supports the status of the republic, other informants justified the need for bilingualism by the requirements of intercultural interaction, which would eliminate its statist grounds.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the speech by Russian President V.V. Putin (2017), an active discussion was revealed in the multi-ethnic regions of the Russian Federation regarding the study of national languages in regional schools.

All subsequent actions of the federal and regional authorities and the reaction of the population of the regions to them showed the existence of a hidden ethno-linguistic contradiction, requiring adequate analysis by the scientific community and development of mechanisms for bilingualism policy optimization in multi-ethnic regions (Andrews 2018).

As mentioned earlier, an active discussion was disclosed in Tatarstan society, which took on the character of a conflict between supporters and opponents of the Tatar language study. Actually, parent communities have led and continued to conduct active discussions in social networks where the groups of both orientations are created. However, the researchers analyzed such discussions and showed that it risks escalating into a protracted ethno-linguistic conflict in the absence of a competent solution to the problem, which will negatively affect the level of ethno-confessional tolerance in the republic, which altogether, is at a high level according to research results.

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and indicated that it risks escalating into a protracted ethno-linguistic conflict in the absence of a competent solution to the problem, which will negatively affect the level of ethno-confessional tolerance in the republic, which altogether, is at a high level according to the research results. Based on the materials of in depth interviews with the intellectuals of Tatarstan, the modern policy of bilingualism implementation was assessed in the republic (Omotade and Oluwafemi 2018). The authors distinguished between language discourses of intellectuals and showed mutual cancellation of ethnic, cultural, and statist motivations to study and the ways of further deepening the proficiency in both official languages of the Republic of Tatarstan (Nagel et al. 2015; Maximova et al. 2017).

It should be noted that one of the most important social groups, which can influence the development of a situation by implementing a bilingualism policy, is the intelligentsia as the most intellectual part of society involved in the functioning of social institutions such as education, politics, and culture. Therefore, it is recommended to analyze how representatives of this social group consider the prospects for further implementation of bilingualism policy in the region (Volchikov 2015; Bowring and Borgoyakova 2017).

Objectives

Revealing an active discussion in Tatarstan society, which took on the character of a conflict between the supporters and opponents of the Tatar language study.

METHODOLOGY

According to the framework of this study, one of the most important methodological tasks is to distinguish between concepts such as intelligentsia and intellectuals, which have different interpretations in the Russian scientific discourse. Therefore, Bauman believed that the intelligentsia are people who used intellectual power more than physical skill in their work, and who played the role of ideology distributors in a communist society under the cover of the political elite (Bauman 1995) while the concept “intellectuals” was used in relation to the experts who defended important values from the government (Bauman 1995).

In this regard, Gella singled out two differences between the intelligentsia and intellectuals. The first is expressed by the fact that the intelligentsia are dissidents, while intellectuals are experts. The second is in the nature of their institutionalization; that is, unlike intellectuals, the intelligentsia emerged as a social stratum. Owing to this differentiation, Gella undermined his idea of equation between the intelligentsia and dissidents. He further pointed out: “As for the social stratum, it is much more than a group of people united by certain intellectual interests and political goals”; therefore, “the classical intelligentsia ... was a social stratum, because ... it formed a wide segment of society” (Gella 1976). In this way, he tended to combine social and political criteria.

Moreover, Gouldner considered the intellectual class to be the third revolutionary class in the West, possessing features like cultural capital and the culture of critical discourse as a specific community of speech that forms its ideology. In fact, he subdivided this class into opposing and differently opposed to the authority intelligentsia, whose intellectual interests are basically “technical”, and intellectuals, whose interests lie in criticism, emancipation, and politics. Actually, humanitarian intellectuals work in the field of culture commercialized by capitalism, and therefore, they are opposed to the authorities. Although the technical intelligentsia are also revolutionary, they are more loyal to the authorities, because they have something to lose (Gouldner 1979).

Consequently, a completely new approach was proposed in the post-Soviet era. The Georgian researcher Nodia (2005) was among the first ones who revealed “a significant gap between the intelligentsia of the old model and intellectuals”. Another scholar from Georgia, Shatirishvili, substantively proved this gap, linking the differences between the “old” nomenclature intelligentsia and the “new” (West-oriented) intellectuals with language preferences in many respects. In general, it was found that the intellectual gap manifests itself in three areas of language, institutions, and discourse (Shatirishvili 2003).

It should be noted that discourses indicated by these authors were outlined in the composition of the domestic intellectual layer, and one of the most important criteria for their distinction is an attitude to bilingualism in the republics of the Russian Federation. However, the issue of bilingualism is becoming the subject of research in foreign literature (Romanowski and Jedynak 2018; Eben and Declerck 2019; Sampedro and Pena 2019). Accordingly, domestic sociologists are also more and more interested in such an issue (Maximova and Belyaev 2017; Marini et al. 2019). Therefore, in order to study the linguistic discourses in the intellectual context, the researchers analyzed the results of some interviews. In contrast to the mass survey data, which simply show the prevalence of answer options already set by researchers, qualitative analysis allowed informants to prove their position independently and thus reveal the motivation of thinking and behavior of Tatarstan residents (Surrain and Luk 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the analyses, the presence of several discourses diverging in their orientations and consequences revealed peculiarities of the relationship between the intelligentsia and intellectuals regarding bilingualism in the Republic of Tatarstan.

As seen, the first discourse is more ethnocentric.

So, the informant 1, who has been referred by the researchers to the intellectuals (28 years old, philologist, translator, and activist of the movement for the protection of the Tatar lan-

guage in the Republic of Tatarstan), her husband and children are also Tatars. His children learn the Tatar language in kindergarten. Her answer to the following question is provided here: "Why Tatar is the language for you and your children?", "This is one of those elements of the worldview that people don't choose, because I lived in a very Tatar family, where the whole atmosphere is permeated by this ... My husband, whose mother is Russian, and father is Tatar, he chose what is closer to him, what is dearer ... because he grew up in Kazakhstan. But he communicates with the children in Tatar"

In this case, the motivation for studying the Tatar language is very important. Therefore, the informant noted: "Now the state language has ceased to be compulsory for studying in Tatarstan, and in fact it turns out that, firstly, two problems arise: the practical one involves those people who ... wanted to learn Tatar are significantly limited in this now, ... and here is another question that I have not thought about before, the functioning of the Tatar language as the state language ..." Thus, it could be summarized that the informant identifies three motivations for the general study of the Tatar language, without noticing that they "extinguish" each other to some extent both logically and practically. However, the first motivation is that the Tatar ethnic group is preserved only if the Tatars speak their native language. The second motivation refers to the universal study of the Tatar language that is necessary for mutual understanding and psychological comfort. Third motivation represents the study of Tatar by Russians that is necessary in order to force the Tatars to study it and to fund the status of the republic.

Therefore, the researchers attributed other informants on linguistic discourse to the intelligentsia. Informant 2 (38 years old, geologist, research scientist of the research institute, two children) believes that she speaks the Tatar language at a sufficiently high level, which was facilitated by her Tatar family and the study of this language at school, although bilingualism predominates in her family, and Russian language prevails in her work surroundings. Correspondingly, she admits: "Very little time is left for fiction, so I practically don't read in the Tatar language now, I read the scientific literature re-

lated to my profession, and there are no longer any publications in the Tatar within this field."

The informant speaks out for the voluntary translation of the language through generations: "I want my children to know the Tatar language, speak it, and pass this knowledge on to their children, too, but I am a fairly democratic mother, so I give them the right to choose." She assesses the need for directive language learning at school in a completely different way: "Maybe children need to be forced to, because if they are given the right to choose, they all refuse; for this reason, they need a minimal load ... there is no need to force children to study Tatar at universities...." Of course, the informant emphasizes that the status of the republic allowed Tatarstan to create higher socio-economic conditions for the population than in many regions. Thus, he adheres to the incoherence discourse concerning the need to study the Tatar language and the status of the republic. In fact, in his opinion, the development of colloquial Tatar by all children at schools is not based on the presence of the republic, but on the intentions of a family, the school resources, and internationalist environment prevailing among the population.

The informant 3 (45 years old, works in a network company, three children) considers his family Russian, although his grandfather was a Tatar. According to her, it is necessary to learn colloquial Tatar by all children: "Maybe she would like to, but not so deeply, so that they understand and read some signs there, so that they know." Correspondingly, she is convinced that even in the absence of learning the Tatar language, the social environment that generates linguistic accommodation contributes to its mastering: "(the eldest son) stopped studying the Tatar language, speaks purely Russian, but his friends are Tatars, the Tatar language is always heard, because we hear Tatar speech in public places. This knowledge is accumulated, we remember it, understand it, and communicate with the Tatars, this is a voluntary matter, which refers to learning the Tatar language."

Then, the informant 4 (34 years old, a teacher of history and social studies, has 9-year-old daughter) identifies himself as Russian, and her husband is half German; therefore, she considers his family Russian. The informant states: "The daughter studied the Tatar language for 2

years, can read some signs, inscriptions, and ... Well, of course, we speak Russian at home ... my grandfather developed love in me for the Tatar language, but it was voluntary ... when I was in kindergarten." We can say that the informant has a very benevolent attitude towards the study of the Tatar language. However, her motivation for turning to Tatar is somewhat different. It seems that this is also connected with her profession, it is no coincidence that she mentions "social order" to expand the functions of the Tatar language.

Accordingly, the informant sees a contradiction between the "order" and the requirements of the information society: "There is so much information, the basic education program is rich and complex enough that the family, being the foundation, the unit of our society, chooses the easy way ... In fact, Tatar language remains at the family level, at the level of the republic; that is, the family offers a broader horizon, a wider world, ... and parents want the child ... to compete, to enter the Russian university, not only in the republic ... parents understood that the study of the Tatar language resulted in damages in the study of the Russian language ... completely ethnic native speakers of the Tatar language refused to study the Tatar language; that is, it could be deplored ... when people refuse to study the national language and culture; that is, the culture, the sphere of this communication is lost - it is sad." Thus, state motives are not traced among the motives of interest in the Tatar language. In her opinion, "the language fades as the basis, unfortunately, especially in such megacities as Kazan, ... I don't know a single family who spoke the Tatar language beyond the megalopolis, ... the situation is different there, although friends spoke the Tatar language more in families earlier, because not only one generation participated in their upbringing, including mother and father, and there were multi-generational families, as a rule, living together, and naturally ... we still understood something at the household level."

Therefore, the informant clearly tended to the position of the majority of Russians, who justify the Tatar development with the needs of interethnic interactionism, and not with references to the status of the republic or the language.

The informant 5 (37 years old, preschool teacher, has 12-year-old son) calls himself Russian, and her husband a Tatar. According to her, in a mixed family, there are slightly different problems with bilingualism. At home and with relatives (even with her husband's relatives), the son communicates in Russian, though "I would like him to know, understand, and communicate in the Tatar language, as we still live in Tatarstan." As for the husband, "he can say some everyday things ... for example, he cannot help his son do exercises in Tatar."

In addition, the informant feels that there is a certain anomie; that is, a gap between his intentions and resources: "Actually, I wanted to know Tatar very well myself, since I live in Tatarstan, I went around, asked for additional tasks ... it didn't bring much success ... it's difficult for me to communicate." To resolve this anomie, the informant suggests that "The language should be studied more like colloquial, so that children can communicate in Tatar, maybe in some game forms and dialogs, they should perform skits; for example, Tatar culture day." Then, informant explains the reduction of the Tatar language use by the internationalization of life in megacities: "In fact, young people still speak more in Russian, although many young people who come from villages communicate in Tatar, and then they speak more in Russian."

Hence, the informant recognizes the important role played by the subjective efforts of citizens and authorities to preserve the Tatar language and leaves a decisive place in the dynamics of the bilingualism situation for objective processes of globalization and mixing.

The informant 6 (39 years old, preschool teacher, has 12-year-old son) mentions that her family members are baptized Tatars. The son is interested in learning both languages, all Tatar rituals are preserved in the family, but everyone thinks and speaks Russian. She claims: "My grandfather, who is 92 years old, speaks Tatar, my mother speaks Tatar very well, but she prefers to speak Russian"... She also mentioned that her husband's family, grandmother, and grandfather spoke only Tatar, and their faith was Muslim, but the next generation speaks only Russian.

It can be seen that the informant understands Tatar performances, but not literature. She wants her son to know the second mother tongue as

he lives in Tatarstan: "But to teach a child to think in this language at least a little, like us ... the origin is still taken from the family, if the parents speak ... then, the child will be able to build some phrases, sentences, and even texts mentally, ... many children do not see the need for the Tatar language. In fact, if they are forced to teach it, it will be even more difficult ... this obligation, leveling, distribution, which has been happening lately, has ruined deplorable state of learning the Tatar language." Consequently, the informant considers communication in the family and with the older generation, as well as the visits to theaters, films, and national holidays as the main channels of familiarization with the Tatar, and thus it is necessary to start from the kindergarten. Moreover, the informant said that the older people always go to Tatar theaters, and practically do not take children.

It should be noted that realizing the objective of universal knowledge of the spoken Tatar language in Tatarstan would result in the communication with people living in the republic. Therefore, it is important to develop Tatar culture in the Russian language and support interpenetration of customs, traditions, and celebrations. Unfortunately, none of the informants paid attention to new forms of the interest in bilingualism; for example, in multilingual schools.

CONCLUSION

According to the analyses of the interview, it could be concluded that there is a specific divergence in the field of motivation for bilingualism between the intelligentsia and intellectuals of the new generation. In fact, if some of the informants considered Russian knowledge of the Tatar language as the most important means of saving the Tatar language, and bilingualism is an institution that supports the status of the republic, other informants (both Tatars and Russians) justified the need for bilingualism by the requirements of intercultural interaction, eliminating its statist grounds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Development of Tatar culture in the Russian language and support interpenetration of customs, traditions, and celebrations can be further

investigated. Future studies can consider new forms of the interest in bilingualism; for example, in multilingual schools.

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