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### Language identity and its context policies *Identidad del lenguaje y sus políticas de contexto*

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#### ABSTRACT

Formation of the civil nation is the most important task for any state which is related to all-civil identity. Russia faces serious ethnocultural problems connected to the formation of both linguistic identity and civil identity. At the theoretical level, this research investigates the question of important factors of balanced language policy in the multinational states and the preservation of language identity. The linguistic dimension of globalization takes into account the constructive language policy with regard to languages of national minorities and destructive forms of language interaction caused by economic and political dependence on more developed states.

**Keywords:** Identification, Language Identity, Language Policy, Nationality.

#### RESUMEN

La formación de la nación civil es la tarea más importante para cualquier estado relacionado con la identidad totalmente civil. Rusia enfrenta serios problemas etnoculturales relacionados con la formación de la identidad lingüística y la identidad civil. A nivel teórico, este trabajo investiga la cuestión de los factores importantes de una política lingüística equilibrada en los estados multinacionales y la preservación de la identidad lingüística. La dimensión lingüística de la globalización tiene en cuenta la política lingüística constructiva con respecto a las lenguas de las minorías nacionales y las formas destructivas de interacción lingüística causadas por la economía y la política.

**Palabras clave:** Identificación, Identidad Lingüística, Política Lingüística, Nacionalidad.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The research problem is connected with the theory of identity development in the context of interaction and development and transformation studies of several types of identity (linguistic, ethnic, regional and civil). These areas of research are perspective. They are interdisciplinary and impact on areas of science such as sociology, linguistics, political science, and psychology (Norton: 2016).

The definition of the notion "identity" refers to the psychological phenomenon coming from the theory of E. Erickson: "A personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the perception of self-sameness and continuity of one's existence in time and space and the perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity" (Erickson: 2006, p. 342). The basic premise of this definition is that identity is produced in human's awareness during the process of accumulation of social experience, expressing through speech. It is necessary to mention that the concept of "identity" is the effectiveness and the concept of "identification" is the processualization.

## **1. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

At the theoretical level, this research investigates the question of important factors of balanced language policy and identity: to define advantages and disadvantages of state strategies in the field of language policy of the multinational states based on the comparative analysis of world experience. At the practical level, this study includes recommendations to State authorities of Russia and members of the Russian Federation in the field of improving national and language policy. The research topic is formulated in both linguistic-theoretical and political-practical relations and is mainly related to the Republic of Tatarstan (Ricento: 2015).

The current research is based on the fundamental research of domestic and foreign authors who investigate the problems of language identity and language policy, ethnic and civil identity, civil and state or national-state identity (L.I. Naumenko, A. A. Belik, L. M. Drobizheva, I. V. Malygina, M. A. Marusenko, S. V. Ryzhova, E.H. Erikson, MarkBassin, Catriona Kelly, etc.). Within the humanities and social sciences, the problem of interethnic interactions and conflicts is studied quite fully through the image of the "other" in the formation of national identities on the basis of historical material in the works of researchers I. Neumann, B. Anderson, E. Said, H. Bhabha. This research is aimed at both the inductive analysis of linguistic identity and the deductive analysis of different types of a modern person's identity, living in a multinational state, and their combination in the dynamic conditions, blurring of borders and structural mixing of communities and social groups (Spolsky: 2004).

## **2. RESULTS**

Language is considered as one of the main factors of (ethnic) identity as language occupies one of the leading places in an ethnic group or people. In the mid-19th century, M. Lazarus and G. Steinthal developed the famous theory "psychology of peoples" in which the fundamental place was held by "national spirit", manifesting primarily in language, and then in manners and customs, constitutions and actions, traditions and chants. Over the years, the comprehension of between language and ethnic group or nation has changed. It was mainly due to political events. As a result of all the changes in recent decades, according to some researchers (A.I.Dontsov, T.G.Stefanenko, Zh.T.Utalieva), more and more attention is paid not much to the real language used by all group members, but to the symbolic role in forming a sense of community with the group, and at the same time a differentiated sense of separation compared to other groups (Tsui,Tollefson: 2017).

Language is both a connecting and distinguishing factor between groups. Language, in fact, is the core of group identity. On the one hand, language use influences the formation of group identity, and on the other

hand, group identity influences the language use and the orientation for them (Sachdev & Bourhis: 1990). The problem of the relationship between language and identity (ethnic/national) is one of the most relevant in the modern world and is becoming an increasingly important category of humanitarian science: it reflects the most important processes of man and society's self-determination, determines the ability to self-preservation and maintenance of own integrity in the modern conditions of globalization. J. Edwards emphasizes that language is the main "marker" of group identity (in the case of national identity is key) (Edwards: 2009). It seems that group members form their common (ethnic) identity through the choice of a language. It is noted that social, political and economic changes in society impact the choice of personal language identity at the moment of history (Pavlenko & Blackledge: 2004). A language is an effective tool for mobilizing and rallying individual members of society into ethnic groups.

Throughout the 20th century, political leaders of the Russian Empire, the USSR, and then the Russian Federation followed diametrically different approaches to the issue of languages. In recent years, there is the purposeful movement of the Russian Federal Center towards a certain unified concept of language policy in order to form a common civil identity. Unfortunately, this process is ambiguous.

Language policy in Russia was not developing in the same direction and rather resembled a pendulum. If at the beginning of the 20th century the government of the Russian Empire carried out a radical policy of Russification in different areas (Miller: 2000), after 1917, language policy was adopted a diametrically opposite character. Lenin's language policy assumed that each region had the opportunity to use and develop a language or languages in accordance with the ethnic peculiarities of the region's population. According to the researcher V. M. Alpatov:

Such policy, of course, was a reaction to the assimilatory tsarist policy, which provoked protest among many people. It stemmed from spread ideas in the country about the necessity to build a rational and scientific basis of a new society that takes into account the interests of ordinary people (Alpatov: 2013, pp. 11-22).

The Soviet Government in the first decades of its rule established conditions for language development among ethnic minorities. However, the early Soviet experiment with language policy quickly stopped. At the beginning of the 30s, I. Stalin followed the continuity of "Lenin's case," in practice, the Russian language regained a dominant position in the entire territory of the USSR again. Socio-political processes in the late 20th century significantly influenced people's social life in general and man in particular. The pendulum swung in the other direction during the era of "Perestroika" and in the first years after the collapse of the USSR. Then, in the conditions of re-ethnization, ethnicity acquired special importance, but some values (moral, ideological, etc.), orientations and life positions were lost (Barkhuizen: 2016).

In 2017 the Federal Center decided to transfer the study of regional languages at schools on a voluntary basis. The question about the study of native languages caused a significant response among the population of national republics. A.G. Bolshakov pointed out that "Mass character is explained by the fact that almost all parents who have children of school age were involved in campaigns "for" and "against". However, if other relatives of pupils (grandparents, etc.) are added to the number of these parents as well as school administrations and teachers, it turns out a significant part of the population of Tatarstan with an "active position" (Bolshakov: 2018, pp. 78-85). It is possible to establish a parallel with the 20th century, as the reform of school language education of 2017 partially copies the reform of 1958 done in the USSR. In the Soviet Republics, all parents had the right to choose between the national school and the Russian school for their children's education. According to researchers, this measure reduced the number of language students in the Union Republics and parents chose a language that would provide a better future for their children in certain conditions (Alpatov: 2000). Learning the Russian language for successful passing the Unified State Examination and entering a more prestigious University is a significant factor for strengthening the Russian language position in school education, regardless of the region. Moreover, it is necessary to say that

awareness of the danger about the disappearance of minority languages in Russia and the growing demands for changes in language policy led to an aggravation of the situation around the development problems, study and use of languages in the constituent territories (Marusenko: 2017). It put at the core of identity loss as well and, as a consequence, disappearance of minority peoples, small groups, ethnic, religious and cultural minorities. Awareness of social responsibility for the future of the native language, for the fate of peoples, increasing personal motivation in learning and use of the native language and culture are the basis of self-organization of indigenous peoples and the manifestation of self-identification. This is due to the fact that it is quite difficult to find forms and ways of implementing language policy, satisfying all political factors and social groups.

Belonging to a particular ethnic community are studied with the help of two concepts in science: Tajfel and Turner's theory of social identity (Tajfel, Turner: 1985); and Berry's model of two identity dimensions (Berry: 1992). Tajfel and Turner put forward social identity and a general psychological principle which is associated with the differentiation of categorized groups. In search of a positive social identity and individual or group strives to define a sense of identity, to stand apart from others and to assert its independence. Based on the theory of social identity, Giles and Johnson examine the language role in interethnic relations and develop the concept of ethnolinguistic viability (Giles, Johnson: 1987). The status of language, some demographic characteristics, institutional support and other factors impacting the group's preservation of its own language as a viable means of communication are analyzed in this concept. This concept can be considered within the framework based on problems of identity and linguistic identity as an objective reality related to the search for ways to analyze national consciousness.

National self-consciousness is understood not only as national self-determination (identification) but as ideas about people (stereotypes) as well, its origin, historical past, language, culture, including traditions, norms of behavior, customs, art and what we can refer to the image of "we" (Drobizheva: 1991, pp. 26-38).

Ethnic feelings and the desire to preserve identity are rooted in the historical peoples' consciousness. The language system is a product of the historical development of the ethnos and is closely related to genesis and history. Based on the discussion mentioned above, language identity is understood as one of the varieties' social identities connected with ethnic and cultural identity as a whole.

One of the identity aspects deserving of special attention is the role of Tatar and Russian languages in the Tatarstan Republic. Many Tatar-speaking citizens proudly defend the learning Russian language as well as Russian-speaking citizens, and they associate it not with the ethnic origin or language practice, but with citizenship. However, public discourse shows very different opinions about the influence of identity choice on the language practice of society. While supporting a free use of the Russian language, most Tatar people wish to promote the development of their national language, which they perceive not only as of the language of the State apparatus but as a national attribute as well (Derwin, & Jackson: 2018).

This posed a dilemma of language policy in Russia. The dominant position of the Russian language is an incentive for the mass inhabitant of the regional ethnic groups to refuse from the regional language learning in favor of Russian language learning. This statement is true for large industrial urban centers as there is no necessity to know the regional language for comfortable everyday communication. Since the Unified Russian State Exam is obligatory for entering the leading universities of Russia, motivation for learning the Russian language is increasing. Is not it better to spend energy on Russian language learning for the successful passing of the exam and not to spend time and effort on regional language learning, which has a limited range of users? This shows some degree of motivation of large cities' residents in the national republics of Russia.

The problem of identity is connected with the identification process (Ashrapova: 2018). Any form of identity (linguistic, ethnic, and civil) can overlap in Russian, but the peoples of language minorities in the Russian Federation do not mix them, and identities are represented differently due to the fact that people identify

themselves primarily by language and culture. There is an understanding that it is necessary to learn Russian and foreign languages. Minority languages remain a lower priority. Although minority peoples identify themselves with the people through language, identification comes out through the ethnic component rather than through the linguistic component. But this does not reveal the degree of language proficiency, that is, identity is determined primarily by the language preference rather than its real use. Many researchers believe that a language plays an important role in national and ethnic differentiation, as there is the influence of some community's spiritual existence, a sense of mutual complementarity and difference from other nations and ethnic groups.

## **CONCLUSION**

The question of preserving the native language for each nation is preserving identity and traditions (Ashrapova: 2015). Nowadays in the Republic of Tatarstan, Tatars are a group for which the mastery of the Russian language facilitates the perception of the second culture and the knowledge of conflict-free interaction with members. In addition, it has no risk of losing the language and culture, in other words, it is a risk of assimilation.

The complex overlap of languages and identities, the demands of ethnic groups for the realization of their group rights, attempts to provide state legislation into uniformity of the globalization processes and the aspirations of national states to protect their sovereignty through the mechanisms of identity formation are the factors in strengthening of linguistic contradictions, leading to conflicts at different levels.

At the beginning of 2019, the current language situation in the Russian Federation is unstable. The solution of the dilemmas requires a significant revision of the language policy in Russia. In our view, the biggest challenge is that Russia, as a great state, is characterized by spatial heterogeneity, therefore it is impossible to develop a unified language policy program. Consequently, it will be a difficult road ahead to develop a concept that would take into account the interests of all sides, for instance, the Federal Centre and various ethnic groups.

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