

**LANGUAGE POLICY AND REVITALIZATION OF TATAR IN THE REPUBLIC OF
TATARSTAN**

by

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Introduction

It is widely recognized in the scholarly literature that the “questions of language are basically questions of power”.¹ This means that the minority language condition (e.g. its decline or its rise) depends to a great extent on the status the language enjoys within a state. There is nothing “natural” about the status and prestige attributed to the majority languages and, conversely, the stigma that is often attached to minority languages or to dialects.² This claim is best illustrated by a simple fact that the same language may be regarded as both a majority and minority language, depending on the context.

This attests to the significance of language policy for the maintenance of endangered minority languages. Language policy is commonly defined as a complex of measures aimed at altering the status, the modes of use and the corpus of a language.³ One of the crucial goals of political mobilization of minorities is to acquire an opportunity to influence or to determine directly language policies that affect minority languages many of which are disappearing at an alarming rate. Language gained prominence within several minorities’ political movements in Europe, with the most famous examples of Catalonia, Basque country, Ireland, Corsica, Wales, Brittany, Scotland, etc.

Similar to the aforementioned cases of minorities’ political mobilisation the nationalist movement in the Republic of Tatarstan – one of the autonomous republics within the Russian Federation - has combined political demands for greater autonomy and even independence for Tatarstan with the demands for raising the status of the Tatar language. Tatarstan is a multi-ethnic republic in which Tatars constitute about 53 % of the whole population, another 40 % are Russians, and 7 % - other nationalities.⁴ During the soviet period Tatar language was marginalized in which its use in public domains was discouraged and excluded. This resulted in the reduction of the linguistic functions of Tatar which was confined to domestic use, as well as in the decline of the

¹ Noam Chomsky. *Language and Politics*. Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1999, 56.

² Stephen May. *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language*. Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001, 4.

³ Richard Bourhis. “Introduction: Language Policies in Multilingual Settings.” In *Conflict and Language Planning in Quebec*, ed. Richard Bourhis. (Clevedon: Multilingual matters, 1984), 3.

⁴ Russian census 2002.

language competence among Tatars especially urban residents when by the end of 1980s about 30 % of Tatars in Kazan (the capital city of the republic) were unable to speak Tatar or spoke it with difficulty.

In the decisive period of nationalist mobilisation at the beginning of 1990s the republican government enacted language policy legislation which raised the status of the Tatar language to the state language of the republic¹ and set foundations for conducting an autonomous republican language policy which mainly concentrated on the measures to revitalize the Tatar language.

The general research question of this study is why Tatarstan's language policy (1992-2006) had little success in revitalizing the Tatar language. Guided by this question, I examine the Tatarstan's language policy on two levels – the level of institutional design and the level of implementation. This allows me to identify the constraining factors that shaped the language policy and influenced its outcomes on the first stage – the stage of decision-making and on the second stage – the implementation of the language policy provisions.

I argue that language revitalization was significantly constrained due to the shortcoming in the language policy design which failed to create incentives for learning and using the Tatar and due to the flaws in the implementation determined by the organizational, financial and bureaucratic deficiencies. This language policy design was to a significant degree constrained by the conflict of interests within both the multinational population of Tatarstan as a whole, and the Tatar population in particular; as well as by the overall political context in which the language policy legislation was adopted.

In the discussion of language policy in Tatarstan I concentrate on the internal factors and dynamics paying less attention to the impact of the center-region relations on the language policy. This is due partly to the fact that there was less direct impact of federal authorities on the language policy in Tatarstan except two issues – the change of the Tatar language to Latin script and the

¹ Law of the Republic of Tatarstan “On languages of the peoples of the Republic of Tatarstan”, 8 July 1992.

subject of mandatory teaching of Tatar at schools.¹ As Laitin rightly pointed out, most portrayals of political movements that are dedicated to political, economic or cultural autonomy for a region primarily focus on the conflict of interest between power at the center and allegedly united national movement in the periphery. What these portrayals often miss is the conflict of interests that exists within the population of the region.²

In general, as Cashaback concluded the jurisdiction over the language policy of the Tatarstan's authorities to implement the desired language policy measures was sufficient.³ However, the question remains open whether the jurisdiction would be sufficient if Tatarstan would envision a more far-reaching and extensive language revival program which would come into a more direct conflict with the federal authorities. At the same time, the question of how the Russian federal language policy affects the linguistic situation in Tatarstan and other national republics with considerable minority population remains under-researched and could be a potential topic for future investigations.

Unfortunately, I had to omit the discussion of the impact of the globalization processes and of certain cultural and language unification associated with it on the linguistic situation in Tatarstan. The scope of the thesis does not allow me to look at all possible factors influencing the linguistic situation. Thus the present thesis mainly focuses on the internal, endogenous factors that shaped the language policy and consequently the linguistic situation in Tatarstan.

First I will examine why the Tatar population was mobilized around the language issue and the demands for an autonomous language policy in Tatarstan, and whether there was an intra-group divergence of interests that constrained the solidarity of preferences for the language policy design (Chapter 1). Then, the decision-making process that led to the adoption of the particular institutional design of language policy (language laws, programs, initiatives) will be analyzed. I aim to

¹ Whereas the change to Latin script has been suspended by the federal authorities, the mandatory teaching of Tatar in schools in equal amounts with Russian was not challenged (decision of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, 16 November 2004).

² David Laitin, "Language and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Republics," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 12, no.1 (1996): 43.

³ David Cashaback. "Accommodating Multinationalism in Russia and Canada: a Comparative Study of Federal Design and Language Policy in Tatarstan and Quebec." Unpublished PhD diss. (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2005), 86.

reconstruct the public debates around the adoption of the language legislation, and will present several competing visions of the language policy (including the language revival program proposed by the radical nationalist movement), and at the same time will show how political and ethno-social context has shaped the language legislation that was eventually adopted by the Republic's government (Chapter 2). In other words, I will ask the question, why from the range of possible solutions and actions regarding the language policy, some were preferred to other. This discussion will be followed by the examination of the implementation process of the language policy provisions in several domains (education, mass media, institutional structures). This part shows how the language policy provisions were further constrained by the flaws in their implementation on the ground (Chapter 3). The conclusion summarizes the findings from three chapters and synthesizes the arguments discussing the effectiveness of the existing language policy design in addressing the issue of language revitalization.

Existing research and approaches to the topic

The topic of the language policy in Tatarstan so far received little scholarly attention. Despite the fact that Russia is a multilingual country with more than 120 unique languages and several officially recognized regional languages, there are few studies that deal with minority languages in Russia, with language policies on the federal and regional level.

One of the few scholars in the western academia who is involved in the study of minority ethno-national movements and political development of national republics in the Russian Federation is Dmitry Gorenburg. His main book on this topic "Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation"¹ examines four cases of ethnic mobilization within autonomous republics of Russia, among them the Republic of Tatarstan. In this book he addresses the national revival programs, including language policy, implemented by the republics in the aftermath of the nationalist mobilisation. Gorenburg recently began to work more closely on the problem of the

¹ Dmitry Gorenburg. *Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

language revival policies in Tatarstan¹, however the majority of his published works consider this question within the broader analytical framework of the political mobilization of minorities in Russia. The issue of language policy has also received some coverage in the works by Graney Katherine² and Elise Giuliano.³ An unpublished PhD dissertation recently defended by David Cashaback examines language policy of Tatarstan within the comparative study between Canada and Russia in the effectiveness of their federal designs to accommodate multinationalism.⁴

Helpful analysis of language policies in post-soviet successor states is presented in the works by David Laitin.⁵ The author provides insights into the effects of language revival policies on the linguistic behaviour of the population of post-soviet states,⁶ in particularly considering the rational choice strategies of Russian-speaking minorities in these states to assimilate into dominant culture.

Language policy in Tatarstan is an important issue for political development and inter-ethnic relations in the republic. That is why it continues to draw the attention of public and academic debates. However, the existent local literature on language policy in Tatarstan has serious shortcomings. First, although there are numbers of works which focus on different aspects of the problem, there is no comprehensive study of the language policy in Tatarstan. Second, these studies largely concentrate on quantitative aspects of language policy, presenting different kinds of data (on language situation, on adopted policy measures and their outcomes) but lack a broader analytical

¹ For example his unpublished paper: Gorenburg Dmitry. "Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective: Why Some Revivals Fail and Some Succeed. Debating Language Policies in Canada and Europe", University of Ottawa, 2005.

² Katherine Graney. "Projecting Sovereignty: Statehood and Nationness in Post-Soviet." Russia. Ph.D., dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1999; Katherine Graney. "Education Reform in Tatarstan Bashkortostan: Sovereignty Projects Post-Soviet Russia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 4 (1999): 611-632;

³ Giuliano Elise. "Who Determines the Self in the Politics of Self-Determination? Identity and Preference Formation in Tatarstan's Nationalist Mobilization", *Comparative Politics* 32 (3), 2000.

⁴ David Cashaback. "Accommodating Multinationalism in Russia and Canada: a Comparative Study of Federal Design and Language Policy in Tatarstan and Quebec." Unpublished PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 2005.

⁵ David Laitin. "Language and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Republics." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 12, no.1 (1996); David Laitin, David. "Language Conflict and Violence: the Straw that Strengthens the Camel's Back." *European Journal of Sociology* 41, no.1 (2000).

⁶ Mostly on non-Russian republics.

framework for the analysis of the empirical data.¹ In general, they predominantly have descriptive character, have little theoretical and conceptual grounding and are weakly connected to the major trends and topics in the western academia. Since majority of those who somehow deal with language issues and language policy are sociolinguists, their analysis is focused on the language situation, linguistic contact, linguistic attitudes² and less on the political aspects of the situation.³ Other scholars who write on these issues are policy-makers themselves and, although their publications are a valuable source for policy analysis, they have even less connection to the theoretical questions. The existing gap in the academic literature on the topic of language policy in Tatarstan thus calls for further research in this direction.

Note on the sources and methodology for research

The research is based on secondary literature as well as primary sources, which include the programs of nationalist organisations, newspaper and journal publications, language laws and programs which were collected during the fieldtrip to Kazan in April 2007. During this research trip I also conducted several interviews with the functionaries responsible for the policy implementation, with the representatives of young Tatar intellectual and cultural elite, as well as Tatar intelligentsia of the older generation. I have undertaken several observations in the Russian-language and Tatar-language schools attending Tatar language lessons and observing the teaching process as well as linguistic behaviour of pupils and teachers.

¹ *Yazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: Etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoi situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*. Kazan: Magarif, 2002; *Yazykovaja politika v Respublike Tatarstan: Dokumenty i materialy 80-90-e gody*. Kazan: Magarif, 1999; *Yazykovaja situacia v respublike Tatarstan: sostojanie i perspektivy*. Materialy nauchno-prakticheskoi konferencii "Yazykovaja situacia v respublike Tatarstan: sostojanie i perspektivy." Chast 1, Kazan, 1999.

² Iskhakova, Z. A. *Dvuyazychie v gorodakh Tatarstana (1980-90e gody)*. Kazan: Fiker, 2001; Bayramova, L.K. *Tatarstan: Jazykovaya simmetria i assimetria*. Kazan: Kazan State University Press, 2001.

³ An exception to this is a work by Mukhariamova, L.M. *Jazykovye omoshenia: politologicheskii analiz*. (Kazan: Kazan State University Press, 2003);

Chapter 1. Language issue in the nationalist mobilisation in Tatarstan at the end of 1980s – beginning of 1990s

This chapter focuses on the role of language in the nationalist mobilisation in Tatarstan and provides the broader context of the rise of the nationalist movement within which the language issue was raised and debates on language policy were opened in Tatarstan. First, some historical, demographic and linguistic information on Tatarstan will be provided. Then, I will outline the history of formation of the nationalist organisations, followed by the analysis of the social basis of the nationalist movement and variation in support for nationalism. I will proceed with the discussion of the role of language in the popular nationalist mobilisation and conclude with the debate with the elite manipulation/instrumentalist account on the role of cultural agenda in the minority ethnonationalist movements. I argue that nationalist mobilisation on the part of Tatar population in Tatarstan was to a large extent connected to the incentives of maintaining cultural identity and language as well as to eradication of discrimination and injustice which was linked to the unequal position of their cultural identity and language. At the same time, the social basis for the nationalist movement in Tatarstan shows that an intra-group socio-linguistic split exists within the Tatar population which explains the dynamic of the nationalist mobilisation around language as well as variation in support for the language policy.

Introducing Tatarstan: historical background and linguistic situation

Republic of Tatarstan is located on the Volga river in central Russia, about 800 km east of Moscow. It has about 3.7 million inhabitants 52.9 % of which are Tatars, 39.5 % - Russians, about 7 % - other nationalities (among them Chuvash, Mordva, Mari, Ukrainians, Udmurts, and others).¹ Tatarstan is a highly urbanized and economically well developed region. The Tatars are Turkic-speaking people mainly concentrated in the Republic of Tatarstan but historically residing in other parts of the Volga-Ural region as well as in other parts of the former Soviet Union (Siberia, Central Asia, Ukraine, Far East). The total number of Tatars in the Soviet Union according to 1989 census was approximately 6, 6 million; only a bit more than 2 million reside in Tatarstan. Tatarstan is a

¹ Data of 2002 Russian Federation census.

historic homeland of Tatars on territory of which mediaeval states of Tatars' ancestors - Volga-Ural Bulgaria (9-14 cc.) and Kazan Khanate (14-16 cc.) existed. The history of independent statehood ended as a result of the conquest of the Kazan Khanate by the Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible in the middle of the 16th c.¹ Since then the territory of the Kazan Khanate was incorporated into the Russian state.

During the process of creation of the USSR, the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialistic Republic (TASSR) was established in 1920 as a form of the self-determination of the Tatar nation. Its borders, however, were drawn in such a way, that left considerable part of the Tatar population outside the republic. As Rorlich notes only 1.459.000 of the 4.200.000 Tatars living in the Middle Volga area were included in the new republic. The borders of the republic, as they stood in 1920, excluded such areas as the Belebeev, Birsk, and Ufa provinces, where Tatars represented the majority of the population.²

In 1920s within the TASSR Tatar language had a status of the official language which was widely used in government, public service, mass-media and education.³ However, the language policy drastically changed in 1930s when the concept of the “congruence of nations into one soviet community of people” began to dominate the nationalities policy of the USSR. Efforts to build the universal Soviet culture in the 1920s and 1930s included the “systematic destruction of the traditional social and cultural institutions which had served to construct and transmit the group identities of the Russian Empire’s non-Russian minorities before the Soviet period”⁴, and the purging of Tatar nationalist and cultural leaders.⁵ From that time, the Tatar language has been gradually displaced from the public life.

The most thorough exclusion the Tatar language has experienced in the urban areas where government and public services were not available in Tatar, where almost no Tatar-language school

¹ Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation...*, 20.

² Azade-Ayse Rorlich. *The Volga Tatars: a Profile in National Resilience*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 138.

³ Zakiev, M.Z. “Tatarskiy jazyk.” In *Gosudarstvennye i titulnye jazyki Rossii*, ed. Neroznak V.P, 354-370. (Moscow: Academia, 2000), 7.

⁴ Graney, *Projecting Sovereignty...*, 79.

⁵ Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars...*, 155.

were left by the end of 1980s.¹ By the end of 1980s the volume of radio broadcasting in Tatar was three hours a day, of TV broadcasting – one hour a day. The number of books and newspapers being published in Tatar annually in the late 1980s was lower than the number published in 1913. Stigma as being “backward and kitchen language” was attached to the Tatar language and it was not uncommon for example for a Russian office worker for example to scold two Tatar coworkers for conversing in Tatar.² By the end of 1980s Tatar language did not function in majority of public spheres – including governmental, public institutions, industry, service, higher education, where Russian was exclusively used. Schools and preschools in Tatar language were only available in villages but not in the cities. In rural areas Tatar language was still the main medium of communication, local administration and everyday interaction were functioning in Tatar. In urban areas Tatar was only used in intimate spheres – within the family, friends, relatives from villages. The linguistic situation in Tatarstan was thus characterized as stable diglossia.³

Survey data collected by local researchers shows that prior to the commencement of the Tatarstan’s language revival program, the Tatar language was relatively secure among rural Tatars, but in decline among Tatarstan’s urban population. While in 1989 95 % of urban Tatars claimed Tatar as their “native language”, further surveys revealed that only 36 % of them actually used Tatar on a daily basis with their spouses, only 25 % used it with their friends and 21 % with their colleagues.⁴ Most urban Tatars used either a mixture of Tatar and Russian or only Russian in these different situations. According to another sociological poll, being fluent in the Tatar language have indicated 49 % of Tatars, whereas 43 % indicated that they have only knowledge of spoken Tatar.⁵ In general these numbers show that while the Tatar language remained dominant in Tatar rural areas, large number of urban Tatars switched to Russian as their primary language of

¹ There was one Tatar-language school in Kazan in 1989.

² Giuliano, *Who Determines the Self...*, 305.

³ Diglossia – the situation of the disproportional use of languages when a higher status language is used in most of prestigious public domains and marginalized language mostly in the context of intimacy.

⁴ Graney, *Projecting sovereignty...*, 310.

⁵ Lilia Sagitova. “O nekotorykh aspektakh etno-kulturnoi specifiki sovremennogo Tatarskogo obshestva”, in *Islam of tatarskom mire: istoria i sovremennost*. Kazan, 1996, 3.

communication at work and in public and used a mixture of Tatar and Russian or only Russian at home.

Formation of the nationalist organisations and nationalist mobilisation in Tatarstan

The foundations of the language policy in Tatarstan were laid down during the period of political reconfiguration in the Soviet Union launched by Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika*. The liberalization and democratization program led to a systemic crisis of the political system allowing the emergence of many kinds of protest movements.¹ In Tatarstan within the period of 1988-1992 different informal, non-governmental public organizations and associations (with religious, environmental, political, cultural agenda) were formed most of them of nationalist or cultural-nationalist orientation. Nationalist organisations during the first years of their existence focused on the issues of national revival - raising the status of the Tatar language and building a Tatar high culture.² Later on they elaborated a political program which included demands for raising the status of the TASSR from an autonomous to union republic and later for sovereignty.³ Radical nationalist organisations (Ittifak, Azatlyk) have advocated a complete independence from Russia.

The first public organisation of nationalist orientation was Tatar Public Center (TPC) created in 1988.⁴ Modeled on the "popular front" organisations of Baltic republics, during the early period of the movement's existence TPC focused primarily on cultural demands. Raising the status of the Tatar language and culture, establishing equality between Russian and Tatar population, improving access to Tatar culture for Tatars living outside the republic were the main issues on the agenda of this movement.⁵ At the same time, in line with similar organisations' positions during *perestroika*, it advocated advancement of democratization and securing greater rights for Tatarstan

¹ Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation...*, 7.

² Jean-Robert Raviot. "Natsionalizm v Tatarstane: ego tipy", *Idel*, no. 7-8, 1994: 50.

³ More on claims to sovereign statehood by Tatarstan see: Katherine Graney. *Projecting Sovereignty: Statehood and Nationness in Post-Soviet Russia*. Ph.D., dissertation. (University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1999.)

⁴ It must be emphasized however that national historiography attributes first instances of the Tatar nationalism to the beginning of 20th c. (*djadidizm* movement), in particularly to the period of 1905-1928 which is seen as the period of Tatar national renaissance. see: Iskhakov, D. *Problemy stanovleniya i transformatsii tatarskoi natsii*. Kazan: Master Line, 1997.

⁵ Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation...*, 57.

(then TASSR).¹ Later on, political demands came to the front within the organisations' agenda. They consisted of "upgrading" the status of Tatarstan from autonomous to union republic (within then-existing Soviet Union) which would give the republic more autonomy and self-rule especially in economic and cultural issues.²

The founders and main body of this organisation were comprised of representatives of Tatar intelligentsia – mostly academia, but also intellectual and cultural workers, students, teachers.³ Later on, the nationalist movement was joined in large numbers by the migrants from Tatar rural areas which settled in urban centers for working purposes.⁴ Most of the movements' followers were Tatar-speaking city-dwellers of the first generation or newcomers from rural areas. However, these organisations also included Russified urban Tatar intelligentsia who did not speak Tatar fluently since they were educated in the cities.⁵

During this period of organizational development, the Tatar nationalist movement was united in a single organization that was seen as representative of all Tatars who should fight for equality with the dominant Russian population. However, later the movement was split. In 1990 the radical part of nationalist movement separated from the TPC and formed a Tatar party of national independence "Ittifak" (Alliance). Ittifak demanded a complete independence from Russia and formation of the national state of Tatars, a subject of international law. Later on, in 1990-1991 other non-governmental public organisations and associations were formed. As a result the nationalist movement in Tatarstan was divided into the centrist bloc represented by the TPC and pro-government organisation and the more radical block opposed to the government of the republic represented by Ittifak and Azatlyk.

The demands advanced by the nationalist movement – the raise of the status of Tatarstan (which was in fact demand for more political and economic autonomy) and the program of cultural

¹ Cashaback, *Accommodating multinationalism...*, 37.

² Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation...*, 57.

³ Iskhakov, Damir. "Neformalnye objedinenia v sovremennom tatarskom obshestve." In *Sovremennye mejnacionalnye processy v Respublike Tatarstan*, vypusk 1. (Kazan: IYALI, 1992), 8.

⁴ Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation...*, 183.

⁵ For the social basis of the nationalist movement see following sections. Elise Giuliano. *Who Determines the Self ...*, 305.

and language revival - found wide support among the representatives of titular nationality – Tatars, which is evident from the demonstrations and protests that were organized by the nationalist organisations, mainly by the Tatar Public Center.¹ As Dmitry Gorenburg asserts Tatarstan has experienced more protest activity than any other republic in the Russian Federation outside the Caucasus.² Altogether, of the 173 protests that took place in Tatarstan between 1987 and 1993, 142 focused on nationalist demands. Early protests called for increase in cultural autonomy – such as the enhancement of the status of the Tatar language, while later protests focused on political demands – first for union republic status and later, after the August 1991 coup, for complete independence for the republic.³ During the peak of nationalist mobilisation under the pressure of demonstrations and protests the government of Tatarstan has adopted the key documents which the nationalist movement demanded.⁴ Among them the Sovereignty declaration which was demanded by the thousands of demonstrating in Kazan in front of the Supreme Soviet of Tatarstan (1990), the law on languages of the Republic of Tatarstan (1992), in 1991 50 thousands people demonstrated against the conducting the elections of president of Russia Boris Yeltsin in Tatarstan and have succeeded in this demand.⁵

Another sphere where the issues of cultural revival and regional autonomy were raised and widely discussed was republican press. The period of 1989 – 1992 was characterized by the explosion of the debates on national topics in the republican press which frequently were highly emotionally charged.⁶ Significant difference however was present in the coverage of issues of national revival in the republic's press between Tatar-language and Russian-language news-papers. While Tatar-language news-papers devoted much more publications to the topics of national

¹ Lilia Sagitova. *Ethnichnost v sovremennom Tatarstane*. Kazan: Tatpoligraf, 1998, 63.

² Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation...*, 122.

³ *Ibid*, 122-123.

⁴ Sagitova, *Ethnichnost v sovremennom...*, 64.

⁵ The population of Tatarstan thus have not elected the president of Russia Yeltsin and did not vote on Russian constitution. Damir Iskhakov. "Sovremennyi nacionalizm tatar" In *Model Tatarstana: za i protiv*. Vol.2. Moscow, 1998, 19.

⁶ Sagitova, *Ethnichnost v sovremennom ...*, 77.

revival, including the status of the Tatar language, the Russian-language news-papers rarely covered these issues.¹

The situation with the Tatar language was second most discussed “national” topic after the problem of sovereignty in the Tatar-speaking press in the beginning of 1990s.² The importance of the issues of national revival was evident not only from the frequency of publications on that matter but also from the readers’ letters to the editorship of the news-papers which was the highest in these years.³ Majority of these letters were written in the Tatar language and many of them were devoted to the situation with the Tatar language and difficulties people experienced if they wanted to receive services in the Tatar language or wanted education for their children.⁴

The socio-linguistic split within the Tatar population

Several western scholars, in particular Guiliano⁵ and Gorenburg⁶, studying nationalist mobilisation in Tatarstan came to conclusion that assumption that ethnic group members have fixed, uniform preferences to support nationalism is misleading. Response to nationalist message among population can vary within the social group, thus some social groups can be more “nationalistic” than others. The similar point was made by local scholars such as Sagitova who states that Tatar population is divided in relation to the place of ethnic values such as native language and culture in their personal lives which manifests itself in the different support for the agenda of national revival.⁷

This point has a particular importance for this research. First it can clarify why language occupied such a prominent place within the nationalist mobilisation or in other words why part of the Tatar population has mobilized around language. Second, the existence of the intra-group split

¹ Gabdarkhak Shamstudinov. Rol’ respublikanskoi pechati v ukreplenii gosudarstvennosti Tatarstana. Dissertacia na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kand.istor.nauk. Kazan’, 2000, 23.

² Lilia Sagitova. “Respublikanskaja pressa kak faktor formirovania nacionalnogo samosoznania v Tatarstane v sovremennykh u sloviakh” In *Suverenitet i etnicheskoe samosoznanie*. Moscow, 1995, 238.

³ Sagitova. *Ethnichnost v sovremennom ...*, 77.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁵ Giuliano. *Who Determines Self...*, 307.

⁶ David Gorenburg. Not With One Voice: “An Explanation of Intragroup Variation in Nationalist Sentiment”, *World Politics* 53, no.1 (2000).

⁷ Lilia Sagitova. O nekotorykh aspektakh etnokulturnoi specifiki sovremennogo tatarskogo obshestva”, in *Islam v sovremennom mire: istoria i sovremennost’*. Kazan, 1996.

within the Tatar population shows that support for the Tatar language revival was not uniform within the group which in turn contributes to the understanding of the reasons of its minor success.

Studying variation in support for nationalist agenda (this included support for the raise of the status of the Tatar language and support for regional autonomy/separatism) among the Tatar population Gorenburg came to conclusion that it was the strongest among those groups within the Tatars that had maintained the strongest connections to their group's cultural traditions and native language, in other words that had stronger sense of ethnic identity. The sense of ethnic identity in turn was very much depended on the fluency in the Tatar language and on the exposure to the native-language education.¹ Sociological polls conducted in Tatarstan have shown that support for nationalism increased with the greater use of and fluency in the Tatar language.² However, the argument that strength of ethnic identity and fluency in the native language can explain the extent of the support for nationalist agenda tends to reproduce the cultural explanation of the ethnic conflict in which nationalist mobilisation or inter-ethnic conflicts is direct outgrowth of the people's sense of ethnic identity and cultural difference.

While it is true that Tatar-speaking Tatars are much more supportive to the agenda of national revival, of enhancement of the Tatar language status than the Russian-speaking Tatars, there are further differences within these groups that are important. Since native-language education in soviet times was available only in villages, in social terms Tatars who still speak it as the first language are mostly inhabitants of rural areas and urban dwellers who migrated to cities from rural areas.

According to Sagitova a further differentiation can be made in which the representatives of Tatar creative, cultural and intellectual elite as well as Tatar migrant workers (from rural areas) of large industrial centers (such as Naberezhnye Chelny) are the most supportive part of the population

¹ In fact Gorenburg proposes an institutionalist explanation which argues that strength of ethnic identity is mediated by the state institutions, thus the system of native-language education established by soviet state has reinforced the sense of ethnic identity among its minorities. For a full account of this argument see: Dmitry Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation in the Russian Federation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

² Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation ...*, 178.

for the nationalist agenda.¹ In fact, the most radical supporters of Tatar nationalism came largely from the ranks of recent migrants from rural areas. The high proportion of such migrants from Naberezhnye Chelny helps to explain the strength and radical view of the nationalist movement there.² Among the urban youth those university students who were educated in Tatar-language schools (mostly coming from rural areas) were supportive of nationalist agenda whereas those that received their education in Russian-language schools usually avoided the national movement.³ However, as data have shown among rural population strongest support was found among teachers and doctors whereas the other villagers, particularly those who directly worked in agriculture had little support for nationalist movement agenda and did not participate in the nationalist movement.⁴ The similar passivity of the simple rural population in the nationalist movements was emphasized by Giuliano. A particular group within the Tatar population represents the local communist elites that mostly originate from rural areas. In this social group the support for nationalist agenda appeared to be low. The question of the role of political elites in the language revival will be considered separately in the next chapter where an explanation on why they had little support for language revival will be suggested. In sum of this analysis, it can be concluded that not all Tatars coming from rural areas and being educated in the native language have supported nationalist agenda.

The urban Tatars of second and further generations are mostly Russian-speaking with limited knowledge of the Tatar language and exposure to Tatar culture. Being linguistically and culturally assimilated into dominant Russian-speaking culture, they are mostly indifferent to the problems of national culture and language.⁵ However, a further differentiation can be made within this group. Among those intellectual and cultural elites who supported nationalist movement were also Tatar urban dwellers of second or third generation who received their whole education in Russian language. Many of them spoke Russian as their first language and were striving to learn

¹ Sagitova, O nekotorykh aspektakh ethnokulturnoi ..., 34.

² Gorenburg, Minority Ethnic Mobilisation..., 183.

³ Ibid., 198.

⁴ Gorenburg, Not with One Voice..., 136.

⁵ Sagitova, O nekotorykh aspektakh ethnokulturnoi ..., 34.

Tatar being particularly concerned with the saving of the Tatar language and culture. According to one of the founders of TPC, many members of this organisation who represented humanitarian intelligentsia had very weak knowledge of Tatar.¹ *Azatlyk*, the nationalist Union of Tatar Youth, had a membership requirement to “strive to learn the Tatar language”. Thus, not all urban Tatars who were educated in the Russian-language schools were indifferent and passive in regard to nationalist movement agenda.

In fact, among those Tatars who had the strongest support for the agenda of national revival were rural Tatars who migrated into the cities – migrant workers, students from rural areas and those who were exposed to the Tatar culture and language due to their professional activities – cultural and intellectual workers, teachers. In my view the fact that exactly these social groups were most responsive to the nationalist agenda can be explained by two major threats that they faced in the environment of a Russian-language dominated city – discrimination and disadvantages faced by them as Tatar speakers in the cities and the fear of losing cultural identity in a Russified urban settings. These Tatars who knew Tatar and learned it in school and then migrated to the Russian-language dominated cities are most likely to believe that the Tatar nation is threatened by the assimilation, Russification and thus are more likely to advocate political action to ameliorate this threat.

These socio-linguistic split within the Tatar population is expressed in the results of opinion surveys about the status of the Tatar language within republic. The question was on the attitude of the Tatar respondents to the proposal to make Tatar the sole official language of the republic. In favor of this proposal were 53 % of rural inhabitants and 18 % of urban residents; against this were 57 % of urban residents and only 19 % of rural inhabitants.²

Thus, the linguistic split within the Tatar community which can be also described as socio-linguistic urban-rural gap led to the situation when support for the nationalist agenda and language revival as a part of it was strong only within the part of the Tatar population. In the following

¹ Giuliano, *Who Determines Self...*, 305.

² Sagitova, *O nekotorykh aspektakh...*, 18.

section I will elaborate more on why this part of the population was ready to mobilize for the language revival.

The language issue in the nationalist mobilisation

In order to successfully mobilize supporters the nationalist movement activists need to formulate demands and select symbols that would resonate with the experiences and attitudes of the population. The concept of collective action or mobilising frames that was developed within the analysis of social movements can be applied to nationalist movements and their mobilizing strategies.¹ Collective action frames “serve as accenting devices that either underscore and embellish the seriousness of a social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral what previously was seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable”.² In other words, collective action frames punctuate the grievances of a group.

Such strong mobilisation potential can have linguistic grievances. As it is evident from the previous sections language was one of the strongest symbols and values around which the nationalist mobilisation in Tatarstan took place.³ The frames that Tatar nationalist leaders initially used to mobilize their supporters focused on the decline of native languages and cultures in the face of official neglect and gradual Russification.⁴ Until recently however many political and social scientists tend to ignore language as an important factor in contemporary nationalist or ethnic mobilisation. As Safran has emphasized, political scientists tend to undermine language revival as an important and relevant motivation in nationalist or ethnic mobilisation emphasizing instead access to decision-making institutions, economic incentives, race so that “it is not a coincidence that a major recent work on ethnic conflict by Gurr⁵ devotes virtually no attention to language as a

¹ See for example: Matthew Levinger and Paula Lytle. “Myth and Mobilisation: the Triadic Structure of Nationalist Rhetoric,” *Nations and Nationalism* 7, no.2 (2001). For the theory of collective action/mobilizing frames: Snow D. “Frame alignment processes, micromobilisation and movement participation”, *American Sociological Review* 51(1986).

² David Snow and Robert Benford, “Master frames and cycles of protest”, in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. Aldon Morris and Carol Mclurg Mueller. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992), 137.

³ Sagitova, *Ethnichnost’ v sovremennom ...*, 34.

⁴ Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation...*, 78.

⁵ Ted Gurr. *Minorities At Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1995.

factor of discontent among “ethnic contenders”.¹ As Laitin has noted under modern conditions, people have become quite sensitive to the language of state business and if it is not their own, they feel alienated from the state.²

The question however arises why this resonated with the attitudes and experience of the Tatar population, why it mobilized around language? The significance and mobilisation potential of the language in nationalist mobilisation in Tatarstan has various grounds. One of them is based on the intimate link that is made between language and collective existence of the nation. Language is seen as a repository of collective memory, of cultural achievements and of the “soul” of the nation. The rhetoric of the threat to the collective existence of Tatars as a nation if language is lost was extensively and emotionally articulated in press and public debates. Referring to the linguistic situation in Tatarstan and the policies of the previous communist regime, in particular to linguistic Russification of urban Tatars and to the absence of the social and cultural infrastructure in the Tatar language in the republic, the intellectual and cultural elite warned of the disappearance of Tatars as a nation, their gradual Russification. The headings of news-paper and journal articles related to language issue typically express this causal relationship between the danger of language loss and the danger to the existence of the nation - “The fate of the language is the fate of the nation”, “Without the language there is no a nation”, “The immortality of the nation is in its language”, and the like.

As Arel has emphasized the fear for cultural survival is an important factor in the dynamics of secessionist movements in the West.³ He concluded that states with secessionist movements can be stable when a national groups which perceives itself as a minority and fears for its cultural survival is successful in reversing assimilatory trends.⁴ The cultural insecurity on the part of the minorities in turn is dependent on the situation with a minority language. He particularly

¹ William Safran. “Nationalism,” *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. by Joshua Fishman. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 86.

² Laitin, *Language conflict ...*, 101.

³ His argument is based on the comparison of Flanders, Catalonia and Quebec. Arel, Dominique. “Political Instability in Multinational Democracies: Comparing Language Dynamics in Brussels, Montreal and Barcelona.” In *Multinational democracies*. ed. Alain Gagnon and James Tully. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

emphasized the significance of the reconquering of the big cities, urban metropolis in which the fear of minorization is most outspoken particularly because the social status of minority language can be quite low in the city.¹

In Tatarstan the collective cultural survival of the Tatar nation appeared to be mostly under threat in urban areas because of the dominance of Russian language and high linguistic and cultural assimilation of the Tatars there. In Tatar rural areas where Tatar was still the main language of communication this was not a big issue. However as soon as inhabitants of Tatar rural areas – students and workers – moved to cities, they were confronted with the different Russian-speaking cultural and linguistic environment which did not have infrastructure and institutions that would accommodate their Tatar cultural and linguistic identity, that would meet their needs as Tatar-speakers. Thus, they were the foremost group who felt the pressure of necessity to assimilate into dominant culture if they wanted to be integrated, to be accepted and to advance socially. Due to these personal experiences of being “between two cultures” they were the group that had the most outspoken and sharp belief that Tatar nation is threatened by assimilation. Another group who had a particularly strong concern with the Tatars losing their cultural identity were intellectual and cultural elites, including those who already partly lost proficiency in their mother tongue. Due to their professional activities they were particularly exposed to the Tatar cultural heritage, to the rich cultural and political history associated with Tatars and thus have had a high appreciation and respect to it. At the same time, they were involved in sustaining the small-scale Tatar cultural life (theaters, literary life, journals, social clubs) in a dominated by Russian language and cosmopolitan culture city and faced the ignorance of the large part of the Tatar urban youth of the rich Tatar cultural heritage.

The problem of cultural survival was linked in the nationalist rhetoric to the concrete measures that state should undertake, most importantly in the realm of language policy, in order to prevent the further assimilation of the national group. These measures first of all included the rise of

¹ Arel, *Political Instability ...*, 78.

the status of the Tatar language making it state language of the republic with the following enhancement of its position in all spheres of public life. State policies were seen as crucial steps for preventing disappearance of Tatars as a distinct national group.

Related to the sense of collective insecurity was the feeling of national inferiority widely held by Tatars since communist times especially in relation to the subordinated position of their language. This feeling of inferiority and inequality was another strong motivation under mobilisation around the language. As anthropologists have concluded, many analyses of language shift reveal the fact that the minority group in the situation where its language is displaced from the public use has what is called variously ‘negative self-identification,’ ‘self-deprecation,’ or ‘low prestige’. For example, Gal (1979), studying the shift from Hungarian to German in Oberwart, Austria found there stigmatization, “a near universal lack of linguistic pride and confidence” on the part of the Oberwarters.¹

The similar process of negative self-identification was characteristic for Tatars too as a result of disrespect to the Tatar language and ideology of inferiority of considered as “low” and “backward” Tatar language and culture in relation to “high” and “developed” Russian. It was not uncommon when representatives of Tatar nationality were called with humiliating names.² Stigma attached to the Tatar language in communist times was particularly outspoken in the cities. After 1945 speaking Tatar was increasingly considered to be “barbaric” and doing so publicly limited one’s access to career advancement.³ According to personal experiences of people of soviet epoch the representatives of Tatar nationality were scolded by Russian co-workers for conversing in Tatar in the workplace.⁴ Since speaking in Tatar was publicly discouraged in the cities speaking Tatar was confined to private settings – within the family, mostly with relatives of older generation – grandmothers and grandfathers, the language thus turned to “a kitchen language”. As a result of this

¹ Susan Gal. *Language shift: Social determinants of linguistic change in bilingual Austria*. New York: Academic Press, 1979: 104.

² From the personal interviews.

³ Helen Faller. “The Influence of Tatar language Revival on the Development of Divergent Referential Worlds”, in *Rebounding Identities: The Politics of Identity in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. by Dominique Arel and Blair A. Ruble. (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), 308.

⁴ They are many urban residents of Tatar nationality who experienced the instances of this negative attitude to Tatar language in communist times. See for example: Faller, *The Influence of Tatar language Revival...*

stigma attached to the Tatar language, the Tatars were ashamed to speak Tatar publicly which influenced the sense of their self-respect. In the beginning of 1990s during nationalist mobilisation the fostering of the “sense of national self-respect” among Tatars was one of the most important issues – raised within the nationalist movement agenda, widely discussed in the Tatar-speaking press.¹

This problem was particularly acute for Tatars who moved to cities from rural areas and who spoke Tatar better than Russian, often with a Tatar accent. When coming to cities to work in the factories or study as students they encountered a negative and humiliating attitude from the side of urban-dwellers who accused them of not being able to speak proper Russian and speaking with a “rural” accent. These negative attitudes affected the sense of self-respect and psychological security of the Tatar-speaking new-comers to the cities and led to the sense of discrimination and inequality which were later mobilized by the nationalist movement. These grievances could explain why Tatar Tatar-speaking students formed the part of the nationalist movement and why in Naberejnye Chelny – one of the most industrial cities in Tatarstan with large percentage of Tatar-speaking working migrants from rural areas, the national movement comprised to a considerable degree of workers and it was (and still is) one of the most radical in their nationalist orientation.

At the same time, these personal linguistic grievances coincided with the discrimination in the social sphere. In communist times an occupational structure dominated in which Tatars were overrepresented in low-skill labor (particularly agriculture) and underrepresented in service, industry and white-collar positions.² Since higher education was only available in Russian the graduates from Tatar schools in rural areas had less chance to enter the university and were underrepresented in the institutes of higher education. As a native Tatar-speaker one could only get a job in mother tongue in a rural area, whereas to advance socially, to get a prestigious job or to receive a better education the knowledge of Russian language was absolutely crucial. Thus social advancement was connected to linguistic and cultural assimilation. As Laitin has noted people

¹ Sagitova, O nekotorykh aspektakh ..., 8.

² *Sovremennye natsionalnye protsessy v Respublike Tatarstan*, vypusk 1, ed. Musina R.K.(Kazan, 1992), 74.

whose native language is not the state one (that is those from minority groups) “feel a sense of unfair competition for jobs that are more easily garnered by those whose mother tongue is the state language”.¹ He brings the example of the Habsburg Empire where peasants from non-German-speaking areas who became urban migrants were most receptive to pleas for official recognition of their languages.

The practical dimension of language competence which can limit access to public services if they are not in a mother tongue of the person was less acute in Tatarstan. Since practically all Tatars spoke Russian, the non-use of Tatar in public services did not impede on their ability to use them. The knowledge of Russian language was limited among rural inhabitants, in villages however all the routine public interactions would proceed in Tatar. There are however several cases when it became an issue for example as some Tatar-speaking rural inhabitants were complaining in the letters to the news-paper that the Tatar language is not used in courts proceedings which are conducted in Russian that creates difficulties to understand and participate fully in these proceedings.²

The problem of accessing cultural production in the Tatar language is another acute issue for people whose first language is Tatar. They are experiencing a “cultural famine” because there is not so much mass-media, literature and cultural production available in their mother tongue. As it was mentioned earlier at the end of 1980s there was only one-hour of TV and three hours of radio broadcasting in Tatar. Tatar-speakers mostly use Russian-language sources of information and cultural production. This is particularly a problem for young Tatar students and intellectuals who wish to have modern and up-to-date cultural and media production in the Tatar language. From the personal interview with a young Tatar women working on a local television station in Kazan as a journalist she says that there is so little mass-media, TV and modern cultural production in the Tatar language that she mostly has to turn to Russian-language products. In contrast to one news-paper in the whole Tatarstan dedicated to cultural issues in the Tatar language, there are hundreds of such

¹ Laitin, *Language conflict ...*, 101.

² Sagitova, *O nekotorykh aspektakh ...*,

news-papers in Russian. As she admitted, she would wish to see more programs in Tatar language and of more high-quality on TV and radio, more journals and news-papers in Tatar.¹

Language and its role in the nationalist mobilisation - a debate with the instrumentalist/elite manipulation account

According to the instrumentalist or elite manipulation view, the cultural claims in the ethnonationalist movements are only used as rhetoric aimed at justifying and providing a smokescreen for intrinsically self-interested aims of political actors such as retaining power or increasing revenues.² In order to obtain the support of their potential followers, political leaders of groups use “primordial” symbols such as language, culture, and history in their political strategy. These symbols are invoked within the political mobilisation insofar as they can represent an effective tool and additional resource for the political entrepreneurs to outcompete their rivals and to achieve their aims.

The instrumentalist account was often applied in interpreting ethnonationalist mobilisation in the 1990s in the Russian Federation. The central role in launching and developing the ethnonationalist movements within the Russian Federation was given to communist elites which resorted to ethnic issues in order to maintain their power positions.³ Triesman for example, believes that ethnic separatism in Russia was simply a tool to increase the wealth of regional elites at the expense of the central government. “Separatist threats may, at times, be bids to increase region’s financial dependence on the centre. Rather than expressions of primordial cultural aspirations, they may constitute weapons in competitive struggle to extract a larger share of centrally bestowed benefits”.⁴

The evidence from Tatarstan suggests that contrary to the instrumental / elite manipulation view nationalist mobilisation on the part of the Tatar population in Tatarstan had its roots not within

¹ From personal interview. April 2007.

² Dmitry Gorenburg. “Regional Separatism in Russia: Ethnic Mobilization or Power Grab?” *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no.2 (1999): 2.

³ For this view see: Valery Tishkov. *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and After the Soviet Union*. Sage: London, New Delhi, 1997; Roeder Philip. “Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilisation.” *World politics* 43 (1991); Steven Solnick. “Federal bargaining in Russia”. *East European Constitutional Review* 4, no.4 (1995).

⁴ Daniel Treisman. “Russia’s Ethnic Revival: The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Postcommunist Order”. *World Politics* 49 (1997): 34.

the local political elites and their manipulative actions, but independently and in opposition to them. Nationalist movement in Tatarstan emerged as a result of the formation of cultural organisations whose initial and primary goals were to raise the status of Tatars in Tatarstan, to revive Tatar language and culture. They were formed by representatives of Tatar intellectual and cultural elites, and received support from other social groups within the Tatar population - especially students and migrant workers. They gradually transformed their agenda into political demands for more economic and political autonomy, still emphasizing that this would secure more opportunities for language revival and cultural development.

When looking into the reasons why language has revealed such a strong mobilisation potential on the part of Tatar population, I came to conclusion that it was determined by several reasons. First is the fear of losing cultural distinctiveness/identity (sense of cultural insecurity) and of associated with this identity cultural heritage and collective memory which in my view was the main motivation for cultural and intellectual elites to initiate the nationalist movement. Second, is the need for a “positive self-image” and symbolic equality – which is achieved by correcting the long-term institutionalized hierarchal unequal relationship between Tatar and Russian identity, in which Tatar identity (through the negative perception of Tatar language and culture) was seen as inferior, “rural”, backward unless it assimilated into “modern” and “developed” Russian-language culture. This can explain why mostly migrants from Tatar rural areas who moved into the Russian-dominated cities (workers and students) and not just all Tatar rural inhabitants were mostly inclined to support nationalist movement. And at last, but not least, discrimination which was experienced by the Tatar-speaking Tatars in their attempts to advance socially (to get better jobs, to get higher education) in *their mother tongue* and in providing and accommodating for their cultural needs (cultural and information infrastructure) in *their mother tongue* was another motivating factor to join the nationalist movement.

This supports the argument that not only economic and political, but also cultural and linguistic grievances – deriving from language and cultural assimilation– can constitute a powerful

sentiment and discontent serving as a precondition for the mobilisation. A fear of cultural loss, sense of cultural insecurity can constitute a powerful sentiment on the part of minority groups which is the case in minority movements in Catalonia, Basque Country, Quebec, in Russian republics. This attests to the importance of “cultural membership” to modern citizens who have compelling interests related to culture and identity.¹ Thus, many minorities’ ethnonationalist movements are concerned with and in fact attribute central importance to the problems of maintaining their identities and associated languages and cultures.

At the same time, the evidence from Tatarstan shows that the minority group cohesion should not be taken for granted. We should not think that minorities are bounded and cohesive groups united in their preferences to resist assimilation and support national revival. As Rogers Brubaker has pointed out it is deeply problematic to regard (ethnic / national) groups as internally homogenous and externally bounded.² The intra-group divisions well show that we cannot talk about national/ethnic groups as unitary collective actors with common purposes.

The Tatar case shows that the intra-group split based on socio-linguistic criteria did not make the support for national revival within the Tatar population uniform. This split was due to the fact that the urban part of the Tatar population did partially assimilate into the Russian language because they lived in an urban environment where Russian language dominated all spheres of life. This split has played significant role in the support for the language revival when Russian-speaking Tatars were not inclined to support restrictive language policy (one state language) due to their low competence in Tatar language whereas Tatar-speaking Tatars did support it. In this respect, Laitin talks about the frequent inability of minority language entrepreneurs to solve collective action problem - although collective refusal to assimilate would be to everyone’s interest, it would be individually rational for any particular member of the minority to assimilate.³

¹ Will Kymlicka and Alen Patten. “Introduction: Language Rights and Political Theory: Contexts, Issues, and Approaches.” In *Language rights and political theory*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 21.

² Rogers Brubaker. “Ethnicity without groups”, in *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Minority Rights*, May Stephen et al (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004: 51.

³ Laitin, *Language conflict...*, 113.

Chapter 2. Language policy decision-making: establishment of the language policy design and debates around it

This chapter will provide political context within which language policy legislation was adopted. It will show how ethno-demographic situation and strategies of political elites in power bargaining with the federal center have pre-determined the kind of language policy design that was adopted. The chapter begins with the introduction into the development of political situation in connection to the sovereignty campaign of Tatarstan and shows how language policy issue was addressed by the political leadership of the republic. Then, I will look at how language policy issue was addressed within the cultural and language revival program proposed by the nationalist movement. Thereafter, I will address the language policy design – embodied in the language law adopted by the government of Tatarstan, followed by the analysis of the most controversial issues that arose in connection with it. And finally, concluding remarks will be made on the influence of the political context on the language policy in Tatarstan.

Strategies of political elites: the politics of multinationalism

Political communist leadership of Tatarstan was first in opposition to the emerging nationalist movement and their agenda. During the late perestroika years they advanced something like “regionalism” – a claim for economic sovereignty for their region, which would allow them to increase control over republic’s economic assets.¹ They remained salient on the issues of national revival and status of the Tatar language.

Strengthening of the nationalist movement in 1989-1990 led to the transformations in the strategies of political elites who adopted part of the rhetoric of the nationalist movement in particularly the claims to sovereignty and the raise of the status of the Tatar language. As Gorenburg pointed out the cultural issues were raised by political leadership because they were threatened by nationalist movement who sought to displace the *nomenklatura* in the name of democracy and national self-determination.² From that moment on, especially after the Declaration

¹ Iskhakov, *Sovremennyi natsionalizm tatar...* 22-23.

² Gorenburg, *Regional Separatism...*, 250.

of Sovereignty of Tatarstan was adopted (when 7000 protesters gathered in front of the Supreme Soviet in Kazan to press for its adoption¹) the political elites took over the leading role in the movement for sovereignty and had pressured the federal centre in Moscow to accept its political claims using the nationalist mobilisation in Tatarstan. Within this period in the speeches of political elites language issues were becoming more prominent. For example, the then-chairman of the republic Supreme Soviet and later president of Republic of Tatarstan – Mintimer Shaimiev called for granting Tatar an official status noting that “it used to be considered apostasy to speak Tatar”.²

At the same time, realizing that in their power struggles with the federal center in Moscow they needed support from the majority of the republic’s population which meant from Tatars as well as Russians,³ and being influenced by the communist discourse of “internationalism” political leadership gradually put forward an idea of Tatarstan as a multinational republic in which sovereignty will benefit all the republic’s population and not only Tatar population.⁴ These duality in understanding what constitutes the nationhood underlying the sovereignty of Tatarstan was eminent in the text of the Declaration on Sovereignty of Tatarstan (30 August 1990) which stated that sovereignty of Tatarstan was being declared in order to realize the right of the *Tatar nation* and *of all the peoples of the republic to self-determination* which attests to the fact that political elites were trying to response to the demands of the nationalist movement at the same time framing republic’s sovereignty as deriving from the multinational people of Tatarstan. The declaration further stated that the equal functioning of the Tatar and Russian languages as state languages was guaranteed.

The political leadership framed the issue of sovereignty of Tatarstan as a public good that will benefit the whole population in Tatarstan irrespective their ethnic background.⁵ This was also a strong argument on the part of political leadership in its negotiations on the status of Tatarstan with

¹ Gorenburg, *Minority Ethnic Mobilisation ...*, 124.

² *Ibid.*, 251.

³ Russians constituted by that time about 43 % of the Tatarstan’s population.

⁴ As Graney pointed out the fact that Tatarstan followed an official civic national ideology reflects also an understanding that the international community has not tended to validate claims to self-determination and statehood made on purely ethno-nationalist grounds., see: Graney, *Projecting Sovereignty...*, 41.

⁵ Giuliano, *Who Determines Self...*, 312

the federal center in Moscow. The Tatarstan's president article in one of the federal news-papers "Our position remains the same, the sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan will not have a national coloring" articulated this claim for the federal audience.¹

Consequently, political leaders have tried to avoid the emphasis on Tatar national revival instead highlighting the multicultural character of Tatarstan and the need for the equal treatment and parity between Russians and Tatars as main national groups. President Shaimiev and his advisor Khakimov stressed the importance of tolerance and bilingualism reassuring Russians in Tatarstan that raising the status of Tatar would not come at the expense of their rights as Russian-speakers. While calling for making Tatar the republic's official language, Shaimiev stated that no one would be required to become bilingual in a set period of time. He noted that the leaders of Tatarstan had convinced its people to reject a nationalist orientation in their drive for sovereignty.²

This political strategy turned out to be successful when the referendum on the sovereignty of Tatarstan (March 1992) with a vague wording: "Do you agree that the republic of Tatarstan is a sovereign state, a subject of international law, building its relations with the Russian Federation and other republics and states on the basis of treaties between equal partners?" was approved by 61.4 % of Tatarstan's voters.³ This shows that many Russians voted in favor for sovereignty. It was also clear that Tatars had voted "yes" in greater number than Russians, moreover, support for referendum was higher in predominantly Tatar rural areas (75.3%)⁴.

As a result of this referendum⁵ political leadership of Tatarstan has gained an additional strong leverage in power struggles with the federal centre in Moscow, making the federal side more willing to compromise and negotiations which resulted in the sign of the Federal Treaty on delimitation of powers between Russian Federation and Republic of Tatarstan in February 1994. According to it Tatarstan was recognized as a sovereign state that was united with Russia on the

¹ Mintimer Shaimiev. "Nasha pozitsiya ostaetsya neizmennoi, no suverenitet respubliki Tatarstan ne budet imet' natsionalnoi okraski", Rossiiskaya gazeta, 17 August 1991.

² Gorenburg, *Regional Separatism...*, 252.

³ Giuliano, *Who Determines Self ...*, 18.

⁴ Edward Walker. "The Dog that didn't Bark: Tatarstan and Asymmetrical Federalism in Russia," *The Harriman Review* 9 (Spring, 1996), 14.

⁵ Officially it was not recognized by Moscow.

basis of the treaty.¹ Although, the Treaty was presented as a success by political elites thanks to which inter-ethnic peace was preserved and compromise with the federal center in Moscow was reached, many Tatar nationalists saw this treaty as betrayal of Tatar interests.² After adoption of the treaty the nationalist mobilisation potential has significantly decreased. De-mobilisation of the Tatar population proceeded from 1993-1996 when the support for nationalist movement has gradually decreased and the protests and demonstrations organized by the nationalist organisations could not gather much people as they did before.³

As Walker pointed out, within two years between the referendum and signing of the Federal Treaty, the political leadership of the republic represented by the president Shaimiev faced a considerable political challenge.⁴ Shaimiev had to secure his political standing in the republic by maintaining the support of both Tatarstan's electorate and its political and economic elite, at the same he also had to avoid provoking Moscow's hardliners, many of whom continued to advocate the use of force to "restore constitutional order" in Tatarstan.⁵ The strongest argument that would allow him to balance between these two actors was preserving the inter-ethnic peace in Tatarstan. This meant he had to balance between the claims of the Tatar nationalist movement to launch an extensive program of cultural revival on the one hand and the interests of the Russian part of the population backed by the federal authorities who could see this program as discriminatory and impeding on their individual rights. It is within this time period and these political conditions when the language legislation was adopted in Tatarstan (the "Law on the Languages of the Peoples of Tatarstan", June 1992). Indeed, the government was careful not to embrace the entirety of the cultural agenda of Tatar nationalists, particularly on symbolic issues. In the following section I will elaborate on what was the language and culture revival program of the nationalist movement.

¹ Walker, *The Dog that didn't Bark...*, 14

² *Ibid*

³ Iskhakov, *Sovremennyi natsionalizm tatar...*, 11.

⁴ Walker, *The Dog that didn't Bark...*, 14.

⁵ *Ibid*.

Language revival program within the nationalist movement

In this section I will elaborate on what were the visions of the nationalist movement concerning the Tatar language revival policy. The nationalist movement was not only the first who launched the debates on language policy in connection to the poor state of Tatar and contributing to the creation of political conditions in which a new autonomous language policy became possible (through mobilisation of the Tatar population). It also provided a concrete program of language revival, sketching the measures necessary for the enhancement of the situation with the Tatar language. It is important to look into the language revival program of the Tatar nationalist movement in order to assess the nature of the language revival and in order to look at how the governmental language policy program corresponded to the nationalist one, what was implemented from it, what was ignored. Although nationalist movement had not a direct access to language policy decision-making, some figures from the nationalist movement were incorporated into the government elite and the legislation was adopted with the help of the intellectual elite many of whom sympathized to nationalist movement.

Tatar national organisations saw official, state status for Tatar as a cornerstone of the language and cultural revival program. Each of organisations has elaborated on the status of the Tatar language and on the measures necessary to adopt in the sphere of language policy. The programs of nationalist organisations in the realm of language policy were unanimous in the key goals they pursued – the extension of functional domains of the usage of Tatar and inclusion of as many representatives of Tatar nationality as possible into linguistic nation-building (extending the Tatar-language education for Tatars).

All Tatar national organisations have advocated special affirmative action program for the Tatar language. This was justified on the grounds that the principle of equality of languages in the conditions when two languages (Russian and Tatar) are unequal in their functional use and strength require compensatory program for the weaker language. As some nationalist programs stated non-usage of the Tatar language in the public spheres is an act of national discrimination and against the

principle of equality of languages.¹ TPC stated for example that ideal linguistic model for Tatarstan is complete bilingualism – this however is only achievable if special program for support of the Tatar language will be adopted. The question of language regime was thus framed not in terms of Tatar being the main or the only legitimate language in Tatarstan that should have gradually replace the use of Russian, but in terms of creating conditions for Tatar as a weaker language to “catch up” to the status and functional strength of Russian. In this respect it is comparable to the policies of “normalization” of Catalan that were adopted by the government of Catalonia.² In each program of the nationalist organisations the use of Russian was guaranteed as official without any sign within these programs to limit the use of Russian in any way.

At the same time, there were certain differences in the question of state/official languages of the republic and deriving out of it crucial question of mandatory use of Tatar and Tatar knowledge requirement in public services. The moderate Tatar Public Center was in favour of linguistic model of complete bilingualism in which Russian and Tatar would be freely used in all spheres of public life. However since the Tatar language was at the moment displaced from public life, the spheres of its functional use were very limited and the Tatar youth was non-proficient in its native language, TPC advocated making Tatar the sole state official language of republic giving Russian however the constitutionally guaranteed status of the language of “inter-ethnic communication” which would be freely used in all spheres of public life.³ Giving to Tatar status of the state language meant “mandatory use of Tatar in official paperwork (along with Russian), knowledge by the public servants of the Tatar language, conducting of court proceedings and meetings on both languages ...”

The Ittifak was more explicit and consistent in its proposals concerning language policy. Although it proposed that both languages – Russian and Tatar - are declared as state languages however this would be a temporary measure after which only Tatar would have status of state

¹ The Program of the Republican Party of Tatarstan, in *Suverennyi Tatarstan: dokumenty i materialy*. Tom 3: Model Tatarstana.ed. Damir Iskhakov. (Moscow: CIMO, 1998), 279.

² More on comparison with Catalonia in following sections.

³ The Programm of the Tatar Public Center. In *Suverennyi Tatarstan: dokumenty i materialy*. Tom 2: Sovremennyyi nacionalism tatar, ed. Damir Iskhakov. (Moscow: CIMO, 1998), 118-119.

language.¹ More importantly they explicitly stated in their program that the public servants are *obliged* to know both languages, thus the knowledge of Tatar would be a requirement for civil service jobs. According to Ittifak the compensatory program for the Tatar language should create economic incentives for officials and certain professions for learning Tatar.

Special parts in the program of nationalist organisations are dedicated to the establishment of a unified system of Tatar national education which was seen as a precondition for national consolidation and nation-building. This system of national education is supposed to embrace Tatar children in rural and urban areas that would have their complete education from pre-school (kindergarten) throughout secondary, special technical education, etc. to the higher education in the Tatar language. A special program in the demands of nationalist movement was creation of the Tatar National University.

The question of a language policy was closely related to the issues of high culture-building, creating cultural infrastructure and cultural production. Most of the organisations advocated such measures as increase in the publishing in the Tatar language (news-papers, books, etc.), publishing of the classics of Tatar literature, increasing and improving the quality of radio and television broadcasting, establishing national film production in the Tatar language, reviving theater in the Tatar language. To establish institutions that would deal with the problems of the Tatar language - terminological commission that would develop new terminology in the Tatar language, research institutes, etc. The problem of Latin script was raised by the educational section of TPC “Magarif” in 1992 which advocated an adoption of special state program for the transition of the Tatar to Latin alphabet.

An important part of the nationalist programs was dedicated to the measures that republic should undertake to support Tatars outside the republic, in particular to extend republic’s language

¹ They did not specify how long “transitory period” would last, however one of the Ittifak’s leaders uttered that it should be decreased from 10 to 3 years. The Program of the Tatar party of national independence Ittifak. *Suverennyi Tatarstan: dokumenty i materialy*. Tom 3: Model Tatarstana, ed. Damir Iskhakov. (Moscow: CIMO, 1998), 229-230.

policy measures on Tatars living in other parts of Russia.¹ Since the majority of Tatars live outside the Tatarstan – in Diaspora (Moscow, St. Petersburg) as well as in their historical homelands (in Bashkortostan, in other republics of Volga region, in Siberia. It was argued that publishing in the Tatar language outside the borders of Tatarstan should be supported, there has to be a system of distribution established for Tatar books, journal and news-papers throughout the whole territory of the then-USSR, republic's government should help in establishing new Tatar schools and other educational institutions outside its borders.

The Tatar language revival program of nationalist movement was rather extensive, tended to be based on the linguistic model which foresees certain degree of constraint in the use of Tatar (requirement for public jobs or economic incentives) at the same time assuring the linguistic rights of other language-speakers. This language revival program reveals certain characteristics of being a part and an instrument of a cultural nation-building. This cultural nation-building is pursued through establishing an integral educational system which encompasses all stages of education including university in the Tatar language, through building cultural infrastructure and cultural production, in other words “high culture”² such as publishing, literary creation, film and theater production, radio and television – all the institutions of modern, based on European models, cultural infrastructure/life. It aspires to build a “high” Tatar culture which is integrated into the global processes of informatization and mass communication and is being competitive on the global market of cultural production. Tatar nationalists strived to build a “societal culture” – set of social institutions centred on a shared language, in both public and private life (school, media, law, economy, government, etc.) so that individual members can find a relatively full range of economic, social, and cultural options and opportunities in their own language.³ As the nationalist movement leaders themselves assert the Tatar cultural heritage has all potential to be competitive on the global level and to offer its speakers range of attractive opportunities and perspectives. This was a

¹ Damir Iskhakov, ed. *Suverennyi Tatarstan: dokumenty i materialy*. Tom 2: Sovremennyi nacionalizm tatar. (Moscow: CIMO, 1998), 120.

² The term which is being used by the nationalist movement leaders themselves.

³ Will Kymlicka. *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, 25.

challenge to the established by soviet regime ideology of hierarchy of cultures in which national (or “native”) cultures were seen as “folk”, “rural”, traditional, lacking the development potential and soviet culture based on Russian was a “high”, modern and developed and the culture of the future. Some representatives of Tatar intellectual elite have even proposed a Belgian model for Tatarstan in which two – Russian and Tatar “societal cultures” – will be built within one sub-state.

The republican law on languages and language policy program

The motivation and incentive on the part of the political leadership for the language policy in Tatarstan was different from those of the nationalist movement that focused on the goal of Tatar national revival. As Graney showed in her study of the projects of sovereign statehood in Tatarstan by devising its own language policy and establishing state status for the Tatar language, Tatarstan political leaders bolstered Tatarstan’s overall “sovereignty” project and “sovereign” status claims.¹ On the other hand, language policy was an instrument of construction a multicultural “Tatarstan” nation based on the understanding of nationness in civic terms in which all nationalities residing on the territory of Tatarstan irrespective their ethnic background – Tatars as well as Russians will equally identify with Tatarstan and see it as their homeland.² As Shaimiev stated on the day of the adoption of the declaration a main goal of the new sovereign republic was to make “true bilingualism of Russian and Tatar” a reality for all citizens in Tatarstan, as well as to help to develop the other minority languages in the republic, such as Chuvash and Mari.³

The “Law on the Languages of the Peoples of Tatarstan” was passed in the Supreme Soviet of Tatarstan in June 1992. Some months later (6 November 1992) constitution of Tatarstan was adopted which contained several articles on language. One of them (art.8) repeated the provisions of the sovereignty declaration and of the law on languages that state languages of the Republic of Tatarstan are equal (in rights) Tatar and Russian languages. It further stipulated that in state bodies, local government bodies, state languages of the Republic of Tatarstan are used on equal basis.

¹ Graney, *Projecting Sovereignty ...*, 244.

² *Ibid*, 306.

³ *Ibid*, 310.

Another article related to language (art.91) stipulated that the President of Tatarstan should know both state languages of Tatarstan.

The law on languages establishes both Tatar and Russian as equal state languages (art.3) and enshrines the principle of non-discrimination, of freedom of choice and use of native language, and states that on the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan conditions for the peoples of Tatarstan to maintain and develop their languages are created (art.2). Most of law's articles regulate usage of "both state languages" in different official settings. This creates a regime of official bilingualism in public administration and state affairs, permitting the use of Tatar and Russian in the proceedings of state bodies and materials published by the state (art.10-17). In public sector the law requires to make bilingual signs for public institutions, street signs, etc. Article 20 also regulates usage of state languages in the spheres of industry, transport, communications and energy where "Tatar and (or) Russian" are to be used.

In education law states that citizens have the right to choose freely the language of instruction and parents are free to choose to school with which language of instruction to send their children. However, in the same article, it prescribes study of Russian and Tatar as mandatory subjects in all preschools, general, middle and specialized middle schools in *equal amounts*.

Number of provisions of the law specifically addresses the Tatar language. Paragraph 3 of the article 7 stipulates that the "State programme for the preservation, study and development of the languages of the peoples of the Tatarstan Republic" (was adopted after the law has been signed) should include a part aimed at revival, maintenance, development, and research on the Tatar language. Article 23 – "on language in the sphere of culture" – prescribes translation of the scientific, political literature, fiction, films and audio-visual material into the Tatar language as well as translation of works of Tatar literature into Russian and other languages.

According to the resolution of the Supreme Soviet of Tatarstan, the paragraphs of articles 14, 15 ,16 ,20, 21 and 27 that regulate use of state languages in state bodies have to be put into the force during 10 years after the signing of this law as the population of Tatarstan will become

proficient in state languages of the Republic of Tatarstan.¹ Thus the transition period to achieve an official bilingualism within state bodies was set as 10 years.

What this document did is it raised the juridical status of the Tatar language making it a state official language of the republic. It also set bilingualism as the main priority and goal of the language policy. It was intended to make Tatar a truly state language which was to be employed equally with Russian in the government, economic and social spheres of the republic. It is not clear however whether the law merely allows the usage of Tatar and Russian or whether it requires to do so, creating binding obligations to use Tatar in official state business. It is interesting to note that where the law regulates usage of state languages in official paperwork - translation of official documents for example, it is rather explicit in stating that it should be done “on Tatar and Russian”. However when it comes to the usual activities within the official institutions, they are conducted on “both state languages”. This ambiguity as the later section will show was result of the debates on these issue within the discussion of the language law.

Tatarstan adopted its language law in 1992 however concrete policy initiatives and bodies to oversee their implementation were not put in place until 1994.² In 1994 the “State programme for the preservation, study and development of the languages of the peoples of the Tatarstan Republic” (state programme on languages) was adopted by the Supreme Soviet of Tatarstan in order to execute the language law and set concrete policy objectives. It consisted of more than 100 policy recommendations majority of which set measures for the kind of affirmative action program for the development of the Tatar language. This program has incorporated many of the those measures that were proposed by the nationalist movements’ program of national revival, including expanding teaching of Tatar in educational institutions, creating of the Tatar-language educational system (with Tatar National University), expanding publishing as well as developing information media (print, TV, radio) in Tatar, integrating the Tatar language into communication and information

¹ The resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Tatarstan about the order of putting into the force the law of the Republic of Tatarstan „On languages of the Republic of Tatarstan“, in *Jazykovaja politika v Respublike Tatarstan: dokumenty i materialy: 80-90e gody*. (Kazan: Magarif, 1999), 31

² Cashback, Accommodating Multinationalism ..., 94.

systems, creating film production in the Tatar language. Separate parts of the program addressed the issue of support in maintaining and teaching the Tatar language outside the borders of Tatarstan, in regions of the compact settlements of Tatar population. Most importantly, the introductory part of the program included provisions which called for setting special salary bonuses for bilingual civil servants (after the examination) as well as proposed creation of the list of positions of civil service and national economy which would require their holders to be competent in both state languages. However, this program did not have any juridical status and as we shall see later, very little from this program was actually implemented due to several reasons.

Debates and controversial issues of the language policy design

As Cashaback noted the work and discussions of committee responsible for drafting the language law filtered very little into the press.¹ However, some available sources still make it possible to reconstruct public controversies and debates that arose around the adoption of the language legislation.

First of all, there was a discussion on whether to make both - Tatar and Russian - state languages of republic or only Tatar.² There was an overall consensus over the first variant, however many voices also argued for the second solution. The arguments of the proponents of Tatar as the only official language in republic were in many respects similar. They were based on the understanding that formal equality of languages only disguises and perpetuates the existing inequality between them and that the weaker language will not sustain the competition with the stronger one. As Fauzia Bayramova – one of the leaders of nationalist movement uttered: “If one would make Tatar and Russian both equally functioning state languages – then the Tatar will not sustain the competition and will die out. Since Russian language is everywhere – from beerhouses up to the Supreme Soviet...”³ Some argued that making bilingualism³ the main priority of language policy in Tatarstan is the main danger to the survival of the Tatar language (and Tatar nation as a

¹ Cashaback, *Accommodating Multinationalism...*, 90.

² It must be noted however, that since Russian according to Russian constitution is the state official language of Russian Federation throughout its whole territory, even when recognizing Tatar the sole state language of Tatarstan, Russian would be still an official language within republic.

³ *Jazykovaja politika v respublike Tatarstan: dokumenty i materialy 1980-90e gody*. (Kazan’: Magarif, 1999), 143.

whole) and main defeat to the Tatar national movement since bilingualism will only mask the continuing dominance of Russian language and its gradual displacement of Tatar from all the spheres of life.¹ This dominance of Russian language did not even need special measures on the part of the central Russian government since Russian was the language of social advancement, of science, popular mass culture, television, etc. that made the process of linguistic assimilation into Russian “natural” and “inevitable”. The proponents of Tatar as the sole official language argued that this will make use of Tatar mandatory in all republican official affairs, in public institutions, etc. this way creating concrete incentives that would make people learn Tatar. As for the Russian and native languages of other nationalities residing in Tatarstan they would be no any restrictions set to freely use them in all spheres of public life, and they will be a native-language education provided in these languages.

The question of *obligation* of using Tatar in official state affairs and unclarity of whether the law on languages establishes such obligation had provoked particular concern on the part of Russian-speakers. They were worried that the law includes provisions that occupation of certain positions in the government, civil service would be dependent on the language competence in both state languages – Tatar and Russian. They brought examples from Baltic countries in which a system of language competence examinations as qualification for public jobs was introduced which led to the “ethnic cleansing” of the state apparatus when only the titular population occupied public positions.² One of the members of Tatarstan’s parliament (State Council) argued that the law stipulates that state bodies in their activity should use both - Russian *and* Tatar. However, this in his view would require that everyone who is working in state bodies and deals with clients, visitors and official paperwork would be required to know both languages – Tatar and Russian. This for certain people who are not proficient in one of the languages would mean discrimination on the grounds of language. The law in his view should provide for usage of two languages however on voluntary

¹ Imamov R. „U gosudarstva yazyk odin“, *Nezavisimost'* no. 8 (10), 1993.

² Matylitskii, V. “Jazyk kak sredstvo razobshenia,” *Kazanskije vedomosti*, 7 July 1992.

basis – that would mean Tatar *or* Russian.¹ Similar debate was going in plenary debates of article 15 where State Council members disagreed whether the provision should read “proceedings are conducted in “Tatar *and* Russian” or “in Tatar *or* Russian”. A compromise was reached on a more ambiguous wording: “proceedings are conducted in the state languages of Tatarstan”.²

Furthermore, the law itself nowhere has any provisions that the state employees are required to know both languages. On the contrary in the preamble it states that in the Republic of Tatarstan any discrimination on the grounds of language competence, including the bans and limitations on professions, is forbidden. This preamble apparently also provoked certain debates since some representatives of the parliamentary fraction “Tatarstan” were against including this provision.³

In April 1993 a controversy arose around the provision of the draft law “On the status of the judges in the Republic of Tatarstan” which set knowledge of both state languages as a condition to become a judge.⁴ The final law did not include this provision.

Attempts to introduce some state-sanctioned constraints and incentives to use the Tatar language in the governmental sphere as a response to public criticisms that Tatar language did not become truly state language of the state affairs, of parliament, of government, courts, were made in 1997-1998.⁵ At a meeting of the Tatarstan’s State Council in May 1997 the deputies appointed a commission to draft a list of official state positions which would require the holder to be fluent in both the state languages of Tatarstan. The parliament also proposed that people who demonstrate bilingual abilities in these official positions would be given a 15 % pay raise over their monolingual colleagues. This list and the 15 % pay bonus were adopted by the State Council of Tatarstan in 1998.⁶ However, these initiatives have provoked a storm of public criticism obviously from the part of Russian-speakers. A contemporaneous report in a Moscow-based Russian newspaper has vividly expressed these concerns:

¹ Matylitskii, *Jazyk kak sredstvo razobshenia...*

² Cashaback, *Accommodating Multinationalism ...*, 90.

³ Matylitskii V. *Jazyk kak sredstvo razobshenia ...*

⁴ Graney, *Projecting Sovereignty ...*, 312

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

“Though this provision covers ethnic Russians as well, observers interpret it as a disguised discriminatory measure against them because virtually all the Tatars know Russian, whereas most Russians do not know Tatar. In reality, ethnic Tatars, who have declared themselves a title nation despite the fact that the Russian population of Tatarstan equals the Tatar population, will get a bonus just for being Tatars”.¹

At the end of this controversy, in June 1998 Tatarstan’s procurator-general declared the list of professions and bilingual pay bonuses illegal and they were suspended pending further legal review of the procedure.²

The question of the competence in the Tatar language as a precondition for civil service jobs became one of the most controversial ones in Tatarstan’s language policy. As the officer of the governmental department for the development of languages admitted in a personal interview to create a list of professions which would be required the holders to be bilingual is something extremely difficult and almost impossible in today’s circumstances.³ The main ground for that as she admitted is concern that this would somehow violate individual rights and provoke resentment on the part of Russian-speaking citizens. At the moment (2007) her department is working on carrying out a provision which would provide a 15 % salary bonuses for those people who due to their positions are working in two state languages – Tatar and Russian (and not just because they are bilingual). However as she admitted this process is going very slowly and hardly since many are concerned that this would “in some way infringe on the individual rights of citizens”.

On the other hand, resistance to this kind of measure can come from the political elites and bureaucratic apparatus itself. The political elites and bureaucracy in Tatarstan were composed mostly of Tatars coming from rural areas – 77 % of the ruling elite are representatives of titular nationality (1995).⁴ This was the consequence of the state-led “nativization” and Russification policies which USSR followed in 1920s as a strategy of co-opting local representatives of the titular nationality in the ethnic republics in order to assert central control over potentially secessionist

¹ Izvestia Press Digest 1998, cited by Suzanne Wertheim. “Linguistic purism, language shift and contact-induced change in Tatar.” Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Department of Linguistics: University of California, Berkeley, 2003.

² Graney, *Projecting Sovereignty* ..., 313.

³ From personal interview in April 2007 in Kazan.

⁴ Mansurova G.M. “Dinamika rotatsii politicheskikh elit RF i RT”, *Regionalnye elity i obshestvo: processy vsaimodeistvia*. Materialy respublikanskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferencii. (Kazan, 1995), 52.

regions.¹ As Giuliano has suggested the Tatar-speaking political elite has opposed the full-scale language revival because “allowing a new cohort of Tatars onto the political playing field would threaten the jobs of existing cadres directly and straightforwardly”.² If language competence requirement for governmental jobs would be introduced, this would jeopardize positions of the older bureaucracy since they would be confronted with the sudden influx of new Tatar-speakers into republic’s politics. The newcomers, furthermore, might introduce the attributes of merit and ability, rather than connections and custom, as preconditions for government appointment.³ This argument however can be questioned on several grounds. First, the language competence requirement for governmental jobs would rather create deficit of the qualified and competent Tatar-speaking workers than their influx. Tatar-speakers from rural areas usually had lower levels of education and for acquiring posts in the civil service a higher education is usually a pre-condition. In this case, it would create a problem of educating Tatar-speaking Tatars from rural areas. On the other hand, the most educated part of Tatars was usually urban residents that had limited knowledge of Tatar. To be able to hold governmental posts they would have to receive additional Tatar-language teaching. Consequently, the position of the existing bilingual cadres would rather be strengthened than weakened since they will be much more needed on the part of the state for their language abilities. Especially, in light of the proposal that was envisioned by the state program on languages however not realized – the 15 % salary bonus for bilingual functionaries.

At the same time, one must take into account the possible reaction of the federal center to this kind of initiative. Although I was not able to find that this issue somehow was being discussed on the federal level, however another related issue can shed light on this question. The constitution of Tatarstan does stipulate that to become the president of Tatarstan one should know both state languages (art. 91). Similar provisions are contained in constitutions of other Russian republics - Buryatia, Sakha (Yakutia), North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Tyva, and Adygea.⁴ As a result of last

¹ Giuliano, *Who Determines Self...*, 309.

² *Ibid.* 307.

³ *Ibid.*, 308.

⁴ RFE/RL Newline, 30 April 1998.

initiatives of the president Putin to bring into compliance the constitutions of subjects of the Russian Federation with the federal constitution, in one of these republics – Adygea - the provision that the president of Adygea should know Adygean and Russian was recognized as contradicting the federal constitution and was removed.¹ In Tatarstan this issue is not resolved yet, since the fate of this provision will be decided in the framework of the new Treaty on delimitation of powers between Tatarstan and federal center which was recently overturned by the Upper House of the parliament – Federation’s Council.² In this light, the language competence requirement for civil servants if would be accepted in Tatarstan would not only create resentment within the republic’s Russian-speaking population who would see it as a violation of their individual rights but would most probably be opposed by the federal center.

The influence of the political context on the adopted language policy design

In this chapter I tried to show how strategies and behaviour of political elites have influenced the adopted language policy design in Tatarstan. Realizing that they could use nationalist mobilisation to increase their power vis-à-vis Moscow,³ political elites took over the initiative in the movement for sovereignty. In order to gain support of the whole population of Tatarstan – Tatars and Russians - in their negotiations with Moscow, they put forward the ideology of civic / multicultural nationalism in which equal treatment and balance of interests of main nationalities of Tatarstan should be protected.

The main legislation on language policy was adopted in the political conditions of the pressure from the federal centre who opposed the movement for sovereignty and internal pressure from the nationalist mobilisation which pushed for further political emancipation of Tatarstan. At the same time, there was an important issue of inter-ethnic stability of Tatarstan’s society in which only about 48 % of population was represented by the titular nationality (state-wide minority) and another 43 % was represented by the state-wide minority. Official language policy of such

¹ As a protest against this measure the representatives of Cherkessian Congress (Cherkess or Adyg – the indigenous titular nationality of Adygea) have sent an address to the Council of Europe. Information agency Regnum, Newline, 30 January.2006, www.regnum.ru/news/581045.html

² RFE/RF Newline. February 22, 2007.

³ Ibid.

multinational republic as Tatarstan has important implications for the inter-ethnic peace. Language policy was associated with a conflict potential since this was the issue on which interests and preferences of the Russian and of the Tatar population diverged. Although there were no incidents of inter-ethnic violence in Tatarstan at that time, the situation seemed still to be precarious. At the same time there was a certain divergence over the language policy within the Tatar population itself. Results of the surveys on the attitude of the Tatar respondents to the proposal to make Tatar the sole official language of the republic showed that in favor of this proposal were 53 % of rural inhabitants and 18 % of urban residents; against - 57 % of urban residents and only 19 % of rural inhabitants.¹

As the political leaders themselves frequently emphasize the language policy has also decreased the potential for inter-ethnic conflict within the multinational population of Tatarstan. The language policy did affect the Russian population attitudes leading to the increase in their overall concern about their position and rights within Tatarstan (having the examples of Baltic republics before the eyes). An English-language “Moscow Times” reported that Tatar-promoting affirmative action policies were not well-received by the republic’s Russian population:

“Russians are beginning to grumble. They feel they are being gradually marginalized by policies that make it easier for Tatars to receive influential posts, as well as outright nepotism. Often, Russians are excluded from top posts because they don’t speak the Tatar language, one of the republic’s two official languages. ‘The channels of mobility are closed for Russians,’ says the Russian activist Salagayev, who is also a sociologist. ‘Russians are practically unrepresented in the legislative and executive organs.’ Indeed, a look at the names of the top figures in Tatarstan’s government reveals a striking absence of Russians – who make up 43 percent of the population of Tatarstan and percent of Kazan – among the elite. The overwhelming majority of Shaimiyev’s administration officials, Cabinet ministers and State Council deputies are Tatar”.²

Although, the fact that Tatars are overrepresented in the executive branch of government has to do with the consequences of the communist policies of *korenizatsia*, and not with their linguistic competences, these overall attitudes show how in the perceptions of the Russian-speaking population the language policy is connected to the general “dominance” of Tatars and discrimination of the Russians.

¹ Sagitova, O nekotorykh aspektakh..., 18.

² Sarah Karush. “Tsar of Tatarstan,” *The Moscow Times*. 23 October 1999.

These ethno-social conditions as well as the official ideology of civic nationalism have pre-determined what kind of language policy design was adopted. Indeed, the government was careful not to embrace the entirety of the national revival agenda of the Tatar national movement in order not to alienate the Russian-speaking part of the population at the same time remaining committed to some the nationalist demands. First of all, the demands of the nationalist movement to make Tatar the sole official language of the republic and Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication were dropped off. In line with the ideology of equitable parity Russian and Tatar were both declared as state languages and bilingualism was set as the main framework for the language policy. This on the one hand has decreased the level of anxiety among Russian-speaking population which was rather high during the peak of nationalist mobilisation.¹ On the other hand, the policy of equality of languages did meet the expectations of the part of the Tatar population who shared moderate nationalist views and who saw in the adoption of the language law as a victory, as a sign of the final eradication of discrimination and equity between Tatars and Russians. However, part of the Tatar population, those who shared more radical nationalist views, were not contented with the language law. They advocated a more far-reaching language policy design in which the usage of Tatar would be based on constraint. The use of Tatar on the voluntary basis according to them would result in further decline of and disregard for the Tatar language.

The adopted language policy model embodied in the law “On languages of the peoples of the Republic of Tatarstan” was intended to make Tatar an equally functioning language in the institutions of the state and society (government, mass-media, and education). However, it largely avoided the mandatory nature of the language policy measures (except the mandatory learning of Tatar at schools) and did not create neither administrative (language requirement as condition for taking certain positions) nor economic (salary bonus) incentives for using the Tatar language. After several attempts to create such incentives, these measures were dropped off on the grounds that they

¹ Sagitova. *Ethnichnost’ v sovremennom ...*, 116.

could violate the individual rights and freedoms of citizens of Tatarstan and threaten the inter-ethnic peace in the republic.

Language legislation although not as far-reaching as nationalist movement proposed has significantly decreased the mobilisation potential and concern of the Tatar population since it gave state status for the Tatar which was one of the most important demands of the nationalist movement. However this policy design did not foreseen concrete measures and mechanisms to enforce language law provisions. As I will show in the third chapter this had consequences for the implementation process in which not only lack of political will but also lack of real incentives in using language were the reasons in that many of the “declared” measures were not implemented.

Chapter 3. Language policy making: implementation and outcomes

In the previous chapter I have analyzed the Tatarstan’s language policy design embodied in the republic’s law on languages (1992) pointing out to controversies that arose in connection to some of its provisions. In this chapter I will look at how the envisioned language policy measures were implemented on the ground. Within this part only certain spheres of language policy will be considered, in particular education and mass-media. The outcomes and assessment of language policy in Tatarstan are usually represented in local literature in form of *quantitative* results, showing the evolution of the number of Tatar schools opened, news-papers and books in Tatar language published, etc. At the same time, as I will show in the following sections there is a discrepancy between the official statistics and the real situation on the ground. A separation section of the chapter is devoted to the outcomes of the language policy with the discussion of how bureaucratization of the language policy led to the decrease in mobilising capacity of the language issue. This chapter is among others based on the materials that were gathered during the field research conducted in Tatarstan (in Kazan).

Education

Language policy choices in education are relevant not just to the effective delivery of a public education but also to the future patterns of language use by the generations of children whose

linguistic repertoires are shaped by the school system.¹ As scholars admit, education was the sphere where Tatarstan's language policy objectives were implemented rather extensively and where visible progress has been made.² The policy program in this respect was indeed an ambitious one. The conception of the development of the Tatar national education adopted by the Ministry of Education of Tatarstan in 1991 and incorporated into the Law on Education of Tatarstan in 1993 declared that modernisation of the system of Tatar national education and its expansion to encompass every Tatar child "is the most important condition for the further development of Tatar ethnos".³ The core of the conception of the Tatar national education is creation of a unified and continual system of educational institutions with Tatar as a primary language of instruction - starting from pre-school institutions (kindergartens), middle and specialized schools up to institutions of higher education. This conception of modernized Tatar educational system was almost identical to the one proposed by the nationalist organisations (see chapter 2). The priority in the sphere of the general education was set as to expand the number of preschools and schools with Tatar as a language of instruction and upbringing as well as make Tatar compulsory subject of study in all schools in Tatarstan. In higher education, the foremost measures included creation within the existing institutions of higher education classes with Tatar as language of instruction, creating conditions for those who wish to have entrance exams to higher institution in the Tatar language, and others.

According to official statistics considerable progress was achieved in expanding the number of Tatar-language schools. Whereas at the end of 1980s there were only 995 Tatar schools in the whole republic (absolute majority of which in rural areas), in 2004 there was 1210 Tatar schools.⁴ In Kazan – the capital of Tatarstan by the beginning of 1990s only one Tatar school was functioning; now there are 69 schools with Tatar as a language of instruction. In Naberezhnye

¹ Kymlicka, Introduction: Language Rights..., 21.

² Mukhariamova, L.M. *Jazykovye otnoshenia: politologicheskii analiz*. (Kazan: Kazan State University Press, 2003), 247; Interview with Fariya Shaikhieva, April 2007.

³ Katherine Graney. "Education Reform in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan: Sovereignty Projects in Post-Soviet Russia", *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 4 (1999): 620.

⁴ Statistics on the Development of National Education in Tatarstan 1991-2004. Online source of the Tatarstan Ministry of Education. http://www.tatedu.ru/index.php?link=138&st=623&type=3&str=1&parent_m=135

Chelny, another large city in Tatarstan the number of Tatar school has increased up to 14.¹ In fact the number of Tatar schools fluctuated considerably in time. As Iskhakova have noted the number of schools where Tatar is the principal language of instruction has decreased and number of mixed schools – were Russian and Tatar both languages of instruction have increased:²

Table 1. Dynamics of Development of Tatar-language education in Tatarstan³:

	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Total schools with Tatar as language of instruction	1236	1253	1218	1220
Of them mixed schools (Russian-Tatar, Tatar-Russian)	401	394	421	437

	1991	2004
Percentage of pupils taught in native Tatar language	29.8%	51.9%
Total pupils studying Tatar language (as percentage of all pupils)	28.5%	99.7%

Although, the number of Tatar-language schools has increased since beginning of 1990s however, the objective of “every Tatar child studying in a Tatar school” was not achieved. According to the latest data (2004) 51.9 % of Tatar children in Tatarstan as a whole and only 34.5 % of Tatar children in the cities study in their native language.

Moreover, the data of official statistics do not correspond to the real situation. First of all, in Kazan out of 64 schools where Tatar is the language of instruction there are only 27 Tatar schools whereas remaining 46 are bilingual Tatar-Russian or Russian-Tatar. At the same time, in those schools that are officially designated as Tatar, the language of instruction is only partly Tatar. As I was conducting field research in Kazan I found out that one of the well-known Tatar gymnasiums in the city had only part of subjects taught in Tatar and only until a certain grade.⁴ Thus, the majority of subjects in the upper classes of school (from 9th till 11th grade) were in Russian including subjects such as, economics, introduction to social sciences, geography, biology, mathematics. The subjects that were taught in Tatar included the Tatar language itself, Tatar literature and history of

¹ Mukhariamova, Jazykovye otnoshenia ..., 247

² Iskhakova, Z. A. *Dvuyazychie v gorodakh Tatarstana (1980-90e gody)*. (Kazan: Fiker, 2001), 27.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Tatar gymnasium nr. 155 in Kazan.

Tatarstan. From 5th to 9th grade the half of subjects was in Tatar whereas the primary school (from 1st to 5th grade) was mostly in Tatar. The medium of teaching English as a subject was also Russian and when I asked why not in Tatar if it is an official language of instruction in this school, the teachers in school with astonishment asked me: “How can you teach English in Tatar?”.

My observations were confirmed by results of the study conducted by a group of researchers who investigated the problem of availability of higher education for the students who graduated from Tatar schools. They came to conclusion that the number of Tatar children in the cities who receive their education in native language is much lower than the official statistics show. In many Tatar schools in the cities one third of education is conducted in Russian language including such subjects as physics, mathematic, chemistry, geography, history.¹ The decision to teach certain subjects in Russian language is usually made by the director of school and by teachers (they have autonomy to do that), often this is made on the request of the parents of students. The main objective in this decision is that teaching subjects in the upper grades in Russian will make it easier for Tatar students to pass entrance exams into the institutions of higher education which are mostly in Russian language.²

Thus, the inadequacies of Tatarstan’s language policies are likely to remain a consequence of endogenous factors and a lack of resources and political commitment.

As sociological polls of students from Tatar schools have shown majority of them would prefer Russian as the language of instruction since “*institutes of higher education are mostly in Russian*”, “*many institutes of higher education do not provide education in Tatar*”, “*for the professional career the knowledge of Tatar is not so important*”, “*to be a good specialists it is advantageous to learn Russian from school ages*” and the like.³ Although many of them admit that the Tatar language is their native language that they love, the language choice of younger generation to a large degree is determined by the concrete possibilities of continuing their higher

¹Mukharyamova L. M., Morenko I. B., et al. “Problema dostupnosti vysshego obrazovaniya dlya uchashchikhsya natsional’nykh shkol: Etnosotsial’nye aspekty,” *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* no. 3 (2004): 5.

² Ibid., 7.

³ Mukharyamova, Problema dostupnosti ..., 8.

education in Tatar and concrete career perspectives and benefits that knowledge of Tatar can offer them.

However, the system of higher education at the moment does not provide for the needs of Tatar-speaking students. Although in line with the implementation of language legislation provisions, official reports do state that examinations on both languages are available for Tatar-speaking students, in fact this is not the case and many students are not allowed to take examinations in Tatar.¹ As results of the aforementioned research have shown, only in two out of studied eleven institutes of higher education, there was a visual material about the rules of admission and subjects taught provided in the Tatar language.²

The situation with opening of classes with Tatar as a language of instruction in the institutes of higher education is far from being satisfactory. Out of 22 institutes of higher education in republic 15 have education in Tatar in some forms (mostly only certain subjects are taught in Tatar depending on the availability of teachers). As interviews with administrators and employees of educational institutions have shown there is no direct and effective policy on behalf of the state to integrate the Tatar language into the higher education. The institutes mostly decide on their own in what form they will integrate the Tatar language into the higher education. Many administrators of educational institutions admit the pointlessness of establishing groups with Tatar as a language of instruction. They see it in the fact that there is no necessity in using and learning Tatar for the professional career: *“we were always ready to prepare specialists fluent in Tatar, however there is one constraining factor: since all operations in public institutions are conducted in Russian in the republic, we have to prepare specialists who will be prepared to do it in Russian”*.³ There is also no so much need on the part of the students to receive their education in the Tatar language as officials admit. They emphasize that if there would be *“a real need on the part of the students to learn Tatar, we would create conditions for that, would write books, publish journals, ...”*.⁴ The officials from

¹ Ibid., 10.

² Ibid., 11.

³ Mukharyamova, Problema dostupnosti ..., 17.

⁴ Ibid., 18.

the institutes of higher education admitted that the groups with Tatar as a language of instruction were opened due to the “*initiatives of individual enthusiasts*”.¹

A separate issue within the Tatarstan’s education policy is creation of the Tatar National University. University in the Tatar language was the demand of the nationalist movement from the very beginning. The aim of this institution was supposed to train specialists and cadres to take up positions in the bilingual republic and prepare lawyers, administrators, diplomats and teachers who would be fluent mainly in Tatar and Russian, and additionally in English.² However, it was not until 2005 when a university was created. Furthermore, its was not a wholly new institution, but consolidation of three existing institutions (Kazan State Pedagogical University, the Tatar American Regional Institute and Tatar State Humanities Institute) into the Tatar State Humanities and Pedagogical University (TGGPU). The fact that the university that should have educated civil servants fluent in two state languages only recently shows that the whole period before that there was basically no necessity in such specialists as it is no such necessity at the moment. This university was in fact an upgrade of the old Tatarpedagogical institute which had some departments that educated Tatar teachers for different disciplines.

In general only 10 % of students receive higher education with some form of instruction in the Tatar language in Tatarstan.³ There are no institutions of higher education that would educate bilingual, Tatar-Russian specialists in the spheres of public administration, management, economics, law that can be illustrative in respect to the absence of need in such specialists even though the law on languages stipulates the use of both state languages in the state affairs, public administration. The Tatar language knowledge is mostly required for jobs in pedagogy, in linguistics, journalism that is why majority of education that is provided in the Tatar language is in humanities.

The situation with the teaching of Tatar as a subject for all pupils in Tatarstan has also revealed some problems and controversies. According to provision of the 1992 language law all

¹ Ibid., 15.

² Cashaback, *Accommodating Multinationalism ...*, 101.

³ Ibid., 15.

pupils in Tatarstan regardless their nationality starting from the first grade have mandatory classes of the Tatar and Russian languages in equal amounts.¹ In the beginning the implementation of this law faced considerable problems. There was a lack of qualified teachers to teach Tatar in schools, of textbooks and pedagogical materials for teaching Tatar. During the first years of implementing this provision teachers of Tatar barely had a special pedagogical or higher education at all. Gradually, teachers and pedagogical cadres were trained within several institutes of higher education where Tatar pedagogical departments were established or expanded. Through the state-owned publishing houses the publication of textbooks and methodological materials was arranged.

In majority of usual schools (those where Russian is the language of instruction) there are special Tatar groups established for pupils of Tatar ethnicity. The distribution of Tatar children to Tatar groups is proceeding not according to their knowledge of the language but according to their ethnicity which is being defined by the surname.² In these groups children are supposed to have a more advanced program of learning the Tatar language and Tatar literature. Teachers are using textbooks and methodological material for learning Tatar as a native language whereas in normal classes the textbooks for learning Tatar as a foreign language are used. During my fieldwork in Kazan I attended a lesson of the Tatar language in a Tatar group of a usual Russian-language school.³ While the class was proceeding in Tatar and the teacher spoke Tatar to children and they responded in Tatar, in interactions with each other they very quickly switched to Russian language and only used Russian. Many of the pupils had very limited knowledge of Tatar and would ask the teacher whether they could answer the question in Russian since they cannot say it in Tatar. Thus, the methodology of teaching Tatar as a native language in the situation where Tatar children obviously speak Russian as their first language was not very appropriate in these circumstances.

As to teaching Tatar to other pupils (not all of them are Russians, they are also children of mixed Tatar-Russian marriages), the quality of teaching Tatar here remains low. At the end of their

¹ Law “On languages of the peoples of the Republic of Tatarstan”, article 10, paragraph 2.

² In Tatarstan this is one of the most eloquent indications of the ethnic nationality of the person but not always.

³ Middle school nr. 98 in Kazan.

school education pupils have very limited knowledge of Tatar which they cannot really use except for some simple everyday conversations.

Besides, an opposition arose on behalf of Russian parents against their children learning Tatar in equal amounts with Russian. This opposition became particularly outspoken since the end of 1990s – beginning of 2000s when several Russian parents created an organisation with the aim to overturn the language law provision on mandatory teaching of Tatar at schools which in their opinion violated their individual rights as citizens of Russia and democratic freedoms.¹ One of the Tatarstan's residents Sergei Khapugin brought a case to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation claiming that Tatarstan's requirement violates the equality of Russian pupils, compared to pupils of other subjects of the federation, and by taking time from learning Russian diminishes competence in the Russian language. However he did not succeed in overturning the legislation.²

Mass media

Mass media is an important sphere of language policy not only because it provides information for people in their native language but also because it creates necessary language environment for an endangered language-speakers in which they use their language in a daily manner thus maintaining its vitality. The language shift among Tatars was progressing in particularly due to the very few Tatar-language mass media that was available in the republic. The volume of radio broadcasting in Tatar was three hours a day, of TV broadcasting – one hour a day.³ There were few news-papers and journals available in the Tatar language.

Extending broadcasting and publishing in the Tatar language was one of the main demands of the Tatar nationalist movement. It was part of the republican state program on development of languages (1994) that set expansion of the Tatar-language content of information media (print, TV, radio) as one of its main objectives. There was a relatively significant quantitative progress

¹ The web-page of this organisation <http://www.notatar.narod.ru>

² The Constitutional Court found that study of both – Russian and Tatar as state languages in the republic does not contradict the federal constitution. Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation from 16 November, 2004 on the constitutionality of the provisions of the paragraph 2, article 10 of the Law of the Republic of Tatarstan “On languages of the peoples of the Republic of Tatarstan...”, *Rossiskaja Gazeta*, 23 November 2004.

³ Zakiev M.Z. “Tatarskiy jazyk”, in *Gosudarstvennye i titulnye jazyki Rossii*, ed. Neroznak V.P. (ed.). (Moscow: Academia, 2000), 134.

achieved in this area. In terms of written materials, as of April 2004, 517 newspapers and magazines were in circulation in Tatarstan of which 421 were in Russian, 90 - in Tatar, five in Chuvash and one in Udmurt.¹ Visible progress was achieved in the radio broadcasting in Tatar which consists of 47 hours per week and TV broadcasting that has increased up to 41.5 hours per week (2003).² Tatarstan government radio station broadcasts on short wave for both Tatars living outside Tatarstan in the Russian Federation and for Tatars living abroad.

The main TV station that broadcasts in both state languages – Tatar and Russian - is a recently (2001) created republic's network TNV ("Tatarstan Novyi Vek", or "Tatarstan New Century"). Tatar-language programs constitute about a half of the whole broadcasting, the other half is given to Russian-language programs. Before that the TV broadcasting in Tatar was available on the Tatarstan's branch of the State television and radio company (GTRK) owned by the federal government. However, under the 2003 reorganization of the regional branches of GTRK, the federal government cut the financial support and airtime reserved for regional programming by half, and stipulated that this time can be used only for news programming.³ Besides there are also some local TV stations that broadcast in Tatar however they only cover certain rural areas and have limited airtime. Creation of the new TV station - TNV thus has secured the Tatar-language broadcast within the media landscape of Tatarstan.

Despite these improvements the needs of Tatar-speakers in Tatar-language mass media are not satisfied. As it is evident from the table majority of Tatars find the quantity of Tatar-language programming insufficient. At the same time, 30 % of Tatars and majority of Russians find it sufficient. The 30 % of Tatars who find it sufficient are probably those Russian-speaking Tatars who do not usually watch Tatar-language programs.

Table 2. Opinion on the Quantity of Tatar-language Programming by National Group (in %)⁴:

¹ Cashaback, *Acommodating Multinationalism ...*, 96.

² Yagfar Garipov and Helen Faller. "The Politics of Language Reform and Bilingualism in Tatarstan." In *Nation-building, Ethnicity and Language Policy in Transition Countries*, ed. Farimah Daftary and François Grin, (Budapest: OSI, 2003), 189.

³ Cashaback, *Acommodating Multinationalism ...*, 97.

⁴ Iskhakova, *Dvujazychie v gorodakh ...*, 51.

	Tatars	Russians
Entirely sufficient, perhaps too much	4.0	22.9
Entirely sufficient	28.6	32.4
Often insufficient	30.6	5.8
Completely insufficient	24.2	2.7
No answer	12.5	36.1

However, the quantity is not the only problem with the Tatar-language mass media. The main problem appears to be the quality of media content in the Tatar language. The Tatar-language programs on the TV or radio are limited in their topical scope and are frequently of lower quality than the Russian-language ones. Majority of them are music programs (concerts of Tatar pop-singers), programs dedicated to Tatar culture or literature, to Tatars living outside Tatarstan, in other words cover only limited set of issues. At the same time, programs that address social or political issues are mostly in Russian (except news – there are always on both languages).

The main difficulty that TV companies which broadcast in Tatar are experiencing is the deficit of the professional and qualified workers who are proficient in the Tatar language. This was repeated to me by several informants in personal interviews. As director of the local TV station has stated the 50 % of Tatar population in the republic turns into 5 % when it comes to recruiting journalist cadres, most of them in addition are of “rural mentality”.¹ Although there is a department of Tatar journalism at the university, many of those who graduate from it return back to their localities, or try to find work in a more profitable enterprises than local TV which is usually not very well-paid. Practical problems arise when journalists make TV reports in the Tatar language on different occasions (for example in hospitals, offices, factories, etc.) and try to find a person within these institutions who would speak a good Tatar (this is usually a problem for urban areas).

Another acute problem is that state financed TV companies do not have enough material, organisation and financial resources to produce films or new programs in the Tatar language and commercial TV companies are not at all interested in it. TNV for example is a mixed state-private

¹ Ilshat Aminov, “Problemy razvitiya tatarojazychnogo veshaniya na GRTK Tatarstan”, *Jazykovaja situacija v Respublike Tatarstan: sostojanie i perspektivy*, chast’ 1, (Kazan: Master-line, 1999), 124-125.

TV company.¹ Tatar-language programs are entirely financed by the republic's state budget and their share on this TV station is about a half of the total broadcast. Since the budget provided by the republican government for this purposes is very limited they do not have opportunities to create new TV programs in Tatar language or to improve their quality, as well as to invest into professional training of the employees. At the same time commercial companies are not interested in financing Tatar-language programs and even provide very few advertisement in the TV that would be in Tatar. The limited budget has also impact on the salaries of the journalists working for Tatar-language programs that are usually quite low. As a Tatar-speaking journalist has pointed out in an interview people who work for Tatar-language TV are mostly local "*enthusiasts*", working for an idea rather than for money.²

In sum, mass media in the Tatar language although has significantly extended its scope in comparison with the beginning of 1990s still offers very little range of information and cultural production in the Tatar language. The mass media in the Russian language remains the main source of information, entertainment and cultural consuming. The gap between the volume of information available in Tatar and Russian became even more unbridgeable since various cable and satellite channels became now available for local consumers in which dozens of different programs in Russian, as well as partly in English (such as CNN, BBC), are broadcasted.

A resentment about this lack of good-quality and interesting Tatar-language TV and radio programs, news-papers is particularly expressed by the young Tatars – mainly by urbanized intellectual and cultural but still Tatar-speaking and with a strong sense of national identity young Tatar "elite".³ As a young Tatar journalist working on a local television station in Kazan has stated there are so few TV programs, news-papers and modern cultural production available in the Tatar language that to fulfill her needs in information and culture, she has to turn to Russian-language

¹ A bit more than a half of the shares belong to a private company TAIF, the other to republic.

² From the personal interview, Kazan, April 2007.

³ There are in Tatarstan, in particularly in Kazan, several organisation that unite these nationally-oriented Tatar-speaking Tatar young people.

products. As she admitted, she would wish to see more and of higher quality Tatar-language programs on TV and radio, more journals and news-papers in Tatar.¹

Constraining factors in the implementation of the language policy

This chapter has shown flaws and inadequacies in the execution of the language policy provisions in two crucial for language policy spheres – education and mass-media. The implementation of language policy provisions is associated with vast administrative tasks which require political will, organisational and financial resources. Republic’s budgetary constraints and under-funding of language policy prevented the full execution of the measures in the spheres of mass media and education. On the other side, there was little interest on the part of business community and commercial structures to invest into creating media and cultural infrastructure in the Tatar language.²

As Cashaback has concluded political commitment and bureaucratic inertia is a key factor in the implementation of language policy in Tatarsatan.³ At the same time, I would argue that the analysis of the flaws in the language policy implementation should be seen in connection with the fundamental failure of the language policy to create incentive and enforcing mechanisms that would bolster the implementation of language policy provisions. In education for example, the lack of motivation to integrate Tatar language in the institutes of higher education or transition to Russian language in the higher grades of Tatar-language schools can be seen in connection to such illustrative expressions as *“for the professional career the knowledge of Tatar is not so important”* or *“we were always ready to prepare specialists fluent in Tatar, however there is one constraining factor: since all operations in public institutions are conducted in Russian in the republic, we have to prepare specialists who will be prepared to do it in Russian”*, etc.⁴ This shows that no real career chances are associated with the Tatar language which makes it “pointless” for administrators of educational institutions as well as to students themselves to integrate Tatar language in the higher

¹ From personal interview with a young Tatar lady. April 2007.

² The use of the Tatar language in commercial enterprises in Tatarstan is an interesting topic that requires a separate investigation.

³ Cashaback, *Accommodating Multinationalism ...*, 93.

⁴ Cashaback, *Accommodating Multinationalism ...*, 17.

education by for example creating Tatar-language groups. The example of Tatar National University is also illustrative in this respect. The main endeavor of this institution was to educate bilingual workers for different spheres of republican life however the fact that it was created 13 years after the bilingualism was legislatively enshrined attests to the absence of real demand on the part of the public institutions in bilingual Tatar-Russian speaking officers, public administrators, lawyers, etc.

The occupational structure in Tatarstan shows that professions that require Tatar-language knowledge are disproportionately tilted towards cultural and media production (theater, music, television, radio, magazines), and education (both secular and religious). Salaries for these professions are, in general, quite low: higher-than-average salaries are not found in the arts or education. Young people consequently do not strive for such jobs which creates deficit of the qualified Tatar-speaking workers in the spheres of media, cultural production and education. More prestigious and better-paid positions are found in the government, business, legal offices where knowledge of Tatar is not an advantage. Illustrative in this respect is that most of facilities for adult learning of the Tatar language that were opened in the early 1990s have closed due to lack of interest.¹

¹ Ganiev F.A, *Tatarskii jazyk: problemy i issledovaniia*. (Kazan: Tatar Publishing, 2000), 364.

Chapter 4. The outcomes of the language policy in Tatarstan

The impact of the language policy on the linguistic situation

The republic's language policy has led to significant changes in the linguistic situation in Tatarstan. However there was markedly less success in achieving the main goals of the language policy, particularly concerning bilingualism and "equality" of languages.

The raise of the status of the Tatar language to the state language of the republic led to positive changes such as the quantitative increase of the usage of Tatar. Due to direct policy efforts aimed at altering the situation of diglossia the Tatar language was introduced in the spheres of public administration, in the governmental bodies. However, the use of Tatar except some operations that do require it (for example translations of official documents or simultaneous translations of speeches in Tatar) was left on the voluntary decision of civil servants. Since Russian was for many years the usual language of public administration and there was no need to develop a special vocabulary for this purposes, as it was the case with Tatar, Russian maintained its dominant position and the Tatar language did not become the real language of operation of public and governmental authorities. At the same, for those who had desire and will to use Tatar (for example, making presentations in the parliament in Tatar), there were no deliberate constraints set and the necessary conditions for that were provided.

The public presence of Tatar has increased significantly starting from bilingual signs on the streets, announcements in both languages in public places, addresses in Tatar by republic's officials on different occasions, speeches by MP's in the Tatarstan's parliament, etc. People on the workplace or on the streets speaking Tatar became a usual thing. The presence of Tatar in TV and radio has also increased. Tatar language became publicly accepted and stigma attached to is gradually fading away. This expansion in use and public acceptance of Tatar was unthinkable before the new republic's language policy.

The quantitative success of language policy was probably most visible in the realm of education. The numbers of Tatar schools opened, percentage of Tatar children educated in their

mother tongue, of all children in Tatarstan studying the Tatar language is eloquent and is widely used by public authorities to illustrate the “success” of language policy in education. The opening of the Tatar University for Pedagogy and Humanities added to the successful picture of language policy in the higher education. However, as it was shown in the third chapter, these quantitative results do not correspond to the real picture of the usage of Tatar in education, and far less it reflects the *qualitative* results of the language policy in education, namely the degree of actual knowledge and usage of Tatar by the younger generation.

The raise of the symbolic status of the Tatar language has led to the changes in the linguistic attitudes of the population in Tatarstan. As surveys and sociological polls show the linguistic attitudes of Russian-speaking population of Tatarstan in relation to Tatar are quite positive. Thus, about 80 % of Russians in Tatarstan positively evaluate if nationalities other than Tatar have language abilities in Tatar, about 60 % of Russians have positive attitudes to learning Tatar at schools and about 70 % of Russians agree that the president of Tatarstan should know both state languages.¹ At the same time, the linguistic attitudes to Tatar among Tatars themselves have changed. People are not afraid or not ashamed to speak Tatar, there appeared many cases of positive “ethno-linguistic consciousness”² were many Tatars deliberately and consciously prefer to speak only Tatar even if they are in predominantly Russian-speaking settings. This is particularly characteristic for representatives of Tatar intellectual and cultural elite, however also for some groups of Tatar youth and “technical” intelligentsia.³

However, all these changes in the linguistic situation, although positive, have not fulfilled the main objective of the language policy - the complete bilingualism. Although the linguistic situation in Tatarstan cannot be characterized as stable diglossia, the linguists tend to call it an “asymmetrical bilingualism” in which only part of the population is bilingual (Tatar-Russian

¹ Bayramova L.K, *Tatarstan: Jazykovaya simmetria i assimetria*. Kazan: Kazan State University Press, 2001, 179.

² The term of Joshua Fishman. See: Joshue Fishman. *In Praise of the Beloved Language: a Comparative view of Positive Ethnolinguistic Consciousness*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997.

³ In fact, the change in the linguistic situation in Tatarstan has led to the emergence of different kinds of non-governmental, voluntary organisations whose main or one of the points of activity is Tatar language.

bilingualism) and another part of the population is monolingual.¹ Both languages are present in different public domains, including the higher-status ones, however very disproportionately. This disproportion has also a socio-geographic dimension – urban areas being dominated by Russian and Tatar rural areas by the Tatar language. The dominant language in the education, public administration, industry, commerce and service remains Russian, Tatar having a formal status within these domains however lacking actual functional utility.

Whereas the official public institutions do integrate the Tatar language in their activities, the commercial sector since its activities are not regulated by the language legislation² largely disregards the Tatar language. Commercial enterprises have made few efforts to ensure the availability of Tatar speakers for contact with customers who would prefer to speak Tatar; they rarely use Tatar in the TV commercials, do not provide bilingual content of their advertising in public spaces such as posters or advertising boards. They are less interested in sponsoring publishing or cultural production in the Tatar language and do not see it as a profitable enterprise.

The most striking failure of the Tatarstan's language policy in revitalization of Tatar is that it could not stop the language shift to Russian among Tatars. The linguistic behaviour of the language-bearers has not changed significantly and the knowledge and use of the Tatar language continues to be in decline among Tatars especially among Tatar youth. An American linguist Suzanne Wertheim for example assesses that Tatar “can be potentially classified as a language in the process of the third type of language death in the language death typology: a gradual death with a multi-generational language shift involving at least one bilingual generation.”³ As she asserts, the most salient evidence of this language shift found in Kazan, “in addition to the proportionally low amount of Tatar heard there, is the quite common sight of “mixed” conversations in which a parent or grandparent speaks to a child or teen in Tatar, and that child or teen responds in Russian.”⁴

¹ Bayramova, *Tatarstan: Jazykovaya ...*, 203.

² Contrary for example to Quebec where language legislation obliges commercial sector to use French in their activities in different forms.

³ Wertheim, *Linguistic Purism...*, 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Speaking ability among Tatars had declined in the years since the start of the republic's language policy. The 2000 survey of Tatar youth showed that only 20.5 % of Tatars under age 30 speak Tatar better than they speak Russian, 42.9 % declared that they speak both languages equally well, and 36.6 % said they are more fluent in Russian than in Tatar.¹ While complete 2001 data for urban Tatars is not available, published results from this survey indicate that only 58.8 % of urban Tatars are completely fluent in the Tatar language, as compared to 65.1 % in 1990. A similar decline is registered among rural Tatars, of whom 91.6 % considered themselves able to speak, read and write in Tatar in 2001, as compared to 97.4 % in 1990.²

Most strikingly, even though the Tatar language is a compulsory subject in all schools in Tatarstan and according to data 51.9 % of Tatar youth is studying in their mother tongue, this has not significantly changed the linguistic behaviour of youth among which the use of Tatar is still in decline. This data thus shows that the results of language policy in education have not been as successful as number of opened Tatar schools and percentage of Tatar children studying Tatar suggests. For Tatars learning Tatar at school is largely irrelevant since it does not really alter the level of linguistic competence in Tatar which they acquire from the conversations with their parents or grandparents. Those who study Tatar in usual groups (not for "native-speakers") have at the end a fairly low level of knowledge of Tatar confined to some basic expressions.³ At the same time, it has been effective in increasing the Tatar language knowledge among that part of the population that does not study in Tatar schools. Surveys show a substantial increase in the number of Russians with at least some knowledge of the Tatar language, although the total number of Russian fluent in Tatar is still quite tiny.⁴ Nevertheless, Russians have largely very low linguistic competence in Tatar and neither use it in public settings, nor in private when communicating with their Tatar

¹ Zinurova R.I. "Rol' rodnogo iazyka v protsesse etnicheskoi sotsializatsii molodogo pokoleniia v Respublike Tatarstan", in *Iazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: Etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoi situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*. (Kazan: Magarif, 2002), 94.

² Iskhakova Z.A., "Funktionalnoe vzaimodeistvie tatarskogo i russkogo iazykov v sovremennom Tatarstane," In *Iazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoi situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*, (Kazan: Magarif, 2002), 30.

³ Personal observations.

⁴ Dmitry Gorenburg. "Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective: Why Some Revivals Fail and Some Succeed." Conference Paper: Debating Language Policies in Canada and Europe, University of Ottawa, 2005, 17.

interlocutors.¹ The Russians who have learned Tatar in the last fifteen years have done so largely for pragmatic reasons and this knowledge has not led to changes in their linguistic behavior. Although in the beginning of language policy program, there was a rise in the interest to learn Tatar and different facilities, such as language courses for adult learning of the Tatar language were opened in the early 1990s, soon they have closed due to lack of interest.

Table 3. Primary speaking language among the Tatars in Tatarstan (2001)²

	Urban		Rural	
	At home	At work	At home	At work
Tatar	36.1	9.6	89.8	69.5
Both	37.1	41.5	4.8	13.8
Russian	24.3	43.5	3.0	12.0

Another important issue in the language policy outcomes is the supply of Tatar-language media, cultural production, and publishing. Though it has increased significantly in comparison to the years preceding the republic's language policy, its *quantity* and *quality* are still not sufficient for those whose primary language is Tatar as well as the content of Tatar-language media for example is not attractive enough for those who do not speak it as a primary language to motivate to improve the competence in Tatar. The media, publishing and cultural production (such as films, music, artistic production in the Tatar language) are important for creating a language environment in which the language knowledge can be activated, used and improved. As well as it can be a significant motivating factor to acquire knowledge of a particular language.³

The general and preliminary assessment of the language policy outcomes in Tatarstan suggests that the Tatar language has gained much more on the symbolic level rather than on practical, functional one. Tatar has gained symbolic status; it became publicly present, integrated into the daily life of Tatarstan, especially on the symbolical level. The visual and presence of Tatar

¹ Personal observations.

² Iskhakova, Funktsionalnoe vzaimodeistvie ..., 31.

³ This can be illustrated by the motivation of young people to learn English in order to be able to access entertainment and cultural production available in this language.

in Tatarstan became one of the distinguishing characteristic of the public space of Tatarstan. Certain symbolization of the language, linguistic situation occurred.

Bureaucratization and “banalization” of the language issue through the language policy

Language policy had significantly influenced the strength of nationalist mobilisation around language in Tatarstan as well as it had affected the inter-ethnic relations in the republic. Language legislation enacted in Tatarstan contributed to the decrease in the activity and popular support for the nationalist movement. The de-mobilisation process has started in 1992 after the key documents of Tatarstan’s sovereignty were adopted – the declaration on sovereignty, the law on languages, the constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan.¹ The conflict and mobilisation potential of language was mitigated through the bureaucratization of language policy. The language issue moved from the realm of political protest and activity of grass-root organisations to the realm of state decisions and public policy.

On the one side, the language legislation did decrease the concern of the Tatar population by giving the Tatar language an official state status and adopting a language revival program. Since the Tatar language was returned to public life and gained symbolic importance, it could not anymore serve as a symbol of exclusion of the Tatar population. As Sagitova remarks, the rise in status and respect for Tatar has contributed to curtail the everyday resentment and discrimination to which Tatar-speakers were subjected in the late Soviet period.² The language policy measures such as minority language broadcasting can in this respect work against the nationalist mobilisation. As Cormack pointed out:

“a minority language may well have a strong potential as a symbol of a nation, but once it has become an everyday presence in broadcasting, it loses its radical power. Presence in broadcasting, especially television, shifts the language towards the banal and therefore defuses some of its mobilising, symbolic potential. ... It becomes banal.”³

The language policy in Tatarstan which brought the Tatar language back to public life, which made it present and visible in everyday life, through mass media, bilingual sings and

¹ Iskhakov, Damir. “Sovremennyi natsionalizm Tatar,” in *Suverennyi Tatarstan. Sovremennyi natsionalizm Tatar*, ed. Damir Iskhakov. (Moscow, TsIMO, 1998), 19.

² Cashback, *Accommodating Multinationalism...*,18.

³ Mike Cormack. “Minority Languages, Nationalism and Broadcasting: the British and Irish Examples”, *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no.3 (2000): 393.

announcements, which accorded it symbolic importance as a state language of Tatarstan, made the Tatar language a daily feature of public life. By this the Tatar language lost its power to symbolize the exclusion and inequality of Tatars, thus its mobilisation potential has significantly decreased.

At the same time, though decreased in comparison to the peak years of the nationalist mobilisation the concern with the state of Tatar did not disappear from the public discussion. Especially illustrating in this respect the content of the Tatar-language press that has frequent publications devoted to the failures in the implementation of the language policy objectives, to failure to bring about a real complete bilingualism in Tatarstan. The today's publications in the Tatar-language press still articulate the sense of cultural insecurity and threat of losing cultural identity, and widely criticize the language policy outcomes complaining that it did not provide sufficiently for the needs of Tatar-speaking population.

The effectiveness of the language policy design in Tatarstan

For its time, language legislation was a great progress – the stigma attached to the Tatar language was released (although the real language attitudes change much more slowly), Tatar was declared an official state language which raised its prestige and symbolic status. The framework of bilingualism has allowed Tatarstan's authorities to justify allocation of the most of resources to create necessary public infrastructure in the Tatar language that was mostly absent by that time (education, mass media, corpus planning, research, bilingual signs and announcements, etc.).

One the other hand, the adopted language policy design largely avoided the mandatory nature of the language policy measures (except the mandatory learning of Tatar at schools) and did not create neither administrative (language requirement as condition for taking certain positions) nor economic (salary bonus) incentives for using the Tatar language. After several attempts to create such incentives, these measures were dropped off on the grounds that they could violate the individual rights and freedoms of citizens of Tatarstan and threaten the inter-ethnic peace in the republic.

Tatarstan's language policy has failed to enforce the use of Tatar as a working language of the governmental authorities and public institutions. However this appears to be one of the key elements of successful language revival policy. As Laitin has highlighted, regional revival movements are most powerfully constrained when state administration is conducted largely in the language of the former center. To the extent that the bureaucracy continues to operate in the language of the former center, signals will be sent to other professionals to maintain their skills in that language.¹

As relatively successful cases of language revival such as those of Catalonia, Quebec, and Basque country suggest one of the primary reasons for the effectiveness of language policy measures was that conditions were set in which the use of the endangered language was mandatory in certain spheres as well as certain economic incentives were created to increase the utility of the language.

In Catalonia for example, language policy was designed so as to put certain duties on its citizens. As observers admit Catalan language normalization has been most successful in the domain of public administration where Catalan is now the language used by all local/regional official bodies.² This was largely due to Catalan language competence as a precondition to take public service positions. In Catalonia civil servants must sit Catalan language examinations and the School of Public Administration provides classes in Catalan for those who move from other parts of Spain to take posts in Catalonia.³ Catalan is mandatory to use in Catalan administration and institutions despite the right of citizens to use either official language when dealing with that administration and institutions.⁴

The question of which language policy model to adopt - based on constraint as in Catalonia or on voluntary as in Tatarstan usage of languages - is to be seen in connection with the question of priorities of language policy. The bilingual model of Tatarstan where two languages are adopted as

¹ David Laitin. "Language and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Republics." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 12, no.1 (1996), 15.

² Josep Costa. "Catalan linguistic policy: liberal or illiberal?" *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no.3 (2003): 435.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Costa, Catalan linguistic policy ..., 417.

two equal state languages can work effectively in conditions when both languages have strong potential of vitality and none of them is considered to be endangered as a linguistic entity. However, the application of this model to the situation where one of the languages is endangered, and most importantly the language shift towards second official, more dominant language is occurring, can be questioned. In case of the Tatarstan's language policy, although securing of the equal status of both languages was a significant and progressive for its time measure however paradoxically it blocks necessary decision-making aimed at the Tatar language – special measures to increase its functional use/capacity.¹

If we accept the importance of language to an individual's identity (being proud of one's own language and the cultural achievements that have been expressed through it, taking pleasure in using it, in encountering others who are willing to use them) then we have to accept an argument on behalf of the language maintenance policies.² This means we should accept the legitimacy of setting minority language maintenance as the priority of the language policy and to recognize that for this reason a special design of language policy is needed which would envision special affirmative measures such as language competence as a pre-condition for certain public and governmental positions, economic incentives, system of language quotas. Such system of quotas was for example implemented in Catalonia where certain percent of cultural products must be in Catalan language (25 % of all major films must be dubbed into Catalan) with the system of fines for violation of this provision. The language policy in Catalonia, Basque Country and Quebec have allocated the majority of their resources and enforced special affirmative action measures that to certain degree constrained the individual rights of other language-speakers. In fact, whereas they remained committed to the bilingualism on the formal level, on the ground in certain cases they have opted for monolingual solutions. Thus, the education policies in Catalonia for example were aimed at

¹ Mukhariamova L.M. „Osnovnye polozenia proekta koncepcii jazykovoï politiki respubliki Tatarstan“, in *Jazykovaja situacija v respublike Tatarstan: sostojanie i perspektivy*. (Kazan: Master-Line, 1999), 57.

² Kymlicka, Introduction: Language Rights ..., 45.

establishing wholly Catalan-language system where Castilian is taught as a foreign language.¹ The monolingual solution was adopted in Switzerland where according to recently adopted law that the percentage of Rhaeto-Romanic speakers necessary to make a locality in the canton of Grison a monolingual one which would make Rhaeto-Romanic the official language of administration has decreased from over 50 to 40 percents.²

Tatar language is still a strong language that has several millions of native speakers that are not all fluent but that all have some degree of language knowledge, particularly understanding of Tatar. It is a standardized language with a developed vocabulary and not so difficult to learn. There is still a lot of chances to save it. In this respect it is comparable with Catalan or Basque rather than with Rhaeto-Romaic or Welsh. The mobilisation of the Tatar population around their language has shown that language is a value that people are attached to. May be this is less case for those who assimilated entirely into Russian culture and do not know Tatar. Tatar is functioning now due to the initiatives of enthusiasts with a positive ethno-linguistic consciousness.

However, to be able to implement such kind of language policy measures a certain consensus within the respective regional population is needed. Although the certain frictions existed in case of Catalonia and Quebec the overall consensus over such language policy measures existed. The demographic situation in these cases an important factor.³ In Switzerland such a policy is possible because of the high levels of linguistic tolerance and the important national language status held by the Rhaeto-Romanic language. In case of Tatarstan in which the mandatory nature of language provisions had provoked a lot of debates this consensus has not been yet achieved and is not clear whether it would be achieved at all. The consensus within the whole regional population in Tatarstan (that is of the Russians as well as the Tatars) to make the maintenance of the Tatar language the priority of the language policy and adopt a more far-reaching language revival program is at this moment almost impossible to achieve in Tatarstan.

¹ Charlotte Hoffman. "Balancing Language Planning and Language Rights: Catalonia's Uneasy Juggling Act." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 21, no.5 (2000): 430.

² "Stellung des Romanischen gestärkt", *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 19 Oktober 2006.

³ The French-speakers in Quebec comprise about 80 % of population, in Catalonia – native Catalan-speakers comprise about 60 % (unofficial data).

Conclusion

Although Tatarstan's language policy brought some positive changes in the linguistic situation, it did not resolve the main issue that was raised by the Tatar nationalist movement - it had not secured the position of the Tatar language in Tatarstan which is still endangered as the number of its speakers is diminishing. In order to identify the endogenous factors that could account for the little success of the language policy in revitalization of the Tatar language I came to several findings summarized in this conclusion.

The opening chapter of the thesis demonstrated centrality of the language issue in the political mobilisation of the Tatar population in Tatarstan at the end of 1980s – beginning of 1990s. The Tatar nationalist movement that was initiated by the Tatar cultural and intellectual elite was mainly supported by the Tatar-speaking Tatars which unlike the Russified urban ones maintained strong identification with the Tatar language and culture. The sense of threat to the Tatar language due to its marginal position within the Tatarstan's society linked to the fear of losing cultural identity was a particularly strong resentment in the political mobilisation of the Tatar-speaking population (especially those who migrated into Russified urban environments). Simultaneously, linguistic grievances were related to the perpetuation of the economic and social disadvantages, since the educational and social advancement opportunities for the Tatar-speaking population in their mother tongue were limited. At the same time, Tatar population was not a cohesive group unified in its political preferences. An intra-group division within the Tatar population based on socio-linguistic criteria (Tatar-speaking/rural vs. Russian-speaking/urban) had influenced the differences in the support for the nationalist movement and their cultural revival agenda.

In the second chapter I examined how political context and ethno-demographic conditions have influenced the language policy decision-making process and determined the kind of adopted language policy design. Whereas nationalist movement has set the Tatar language revival as a priority of the language policy, Tatarstan's political leadership that overtook the leading role in the political mobilisation has framed the issue of the language policy in line with the ideology of the civic, multi-ethnic nation of Tatarstan in which equality and parity of main nationalities - Tatars and

Russians – has to be secured. The issue of the inter-ethnic conflict arose in connection to the fear that an extensive Tatar national revival program would impede on the individual rights of Russians. The problem was in particularly articulated in connection with the language policy in which certain measures to promote Tatar language (such as language requirement for jobs in public institutions) would hinder the linguistic rights of Russian-speakers. At the same time, the part of the Tatar population that was not enough proficient in the Tatar language had similar fears and thus tended not to support those language policy measures in which their opportunities would be affected by the (in)competence in the Tatar language.

Within this political context the law “On languages of the peoples of the Republic of Tatarstan” was adopted in which bilingualism and equality of languages were set as the basis and the priority of the Tatarstan’s language policy. On the one hand, the framework of bilingualism has allowed Tatarstan’s authorities to justify allocation of the most of resources to create necessary public infrastructure in the Tatar language that was mostly absent by that time (education, mass media, corpus planning, research, bilingual signs and announcements, etc.) on the grounds that a special compensatory program for Tatar is necessary in order to achieve real bilingualism. This led to the decrease of the mobilisation potential of the language issue and to its certain “banalisation” and “bureaucratisation” in which Tatar became widely present in daily public life and ceased to be the symbol of exclusion and subordination of Tatar population.

On the other hand, the main shortcoming of the language policy design is that it did not create enforcing mechanisms and incentives for using Tatar in state and public institutions, in particularly in public administration. Since in most of these domains Tatar is used on the voluntary basis, the older patterns of language use take over and the Russian language continues to dominate. As a result although some operations such as translation of official documents do require the use of Tatar language, on the whole Tatar did not become the working language of public institutions.

Organizational insufficiency, lack of financial resources, bureaucratic inertia in connection with the difficult socio-economic situation in Tatarstan hinder the implementation of the language

policy provisions. However, to a certain degree flaws in implementation are linked to the shortcomings of the language policy design. This was demonstrated in the third chapter of the thesis in connection to the implementation of language policy in education and mass media.

Since the main working language of public institutions is Russian, the demand for the Tatar-speaking employees remains low. Consequently, there is less incentive to provide education in the Tatar language, and to train Tatar-speaking employees for work in different spheres of state and public affairs. The limited scope of career perspectives in the Tatar language diminishes the commitment of administrators to provide for Tatar-language groups in the institutes of higher education, as well as decreases motivation on the part of the students to receive education in Tatar.

At the same time, those spheres of public domain that do require workers proficient in the Tatar language such as Tatar segment of mass media, pedagogics, cultural production (theater, magazines, literature) are financed from the state budget and are usually low paid. Since young people are less inclined to take low-paid jobs, these spheres encounter a deficit of the qualified personnel proficient in the Tatar language.

While there is less demand on the part of the public institutions for the Tatar-speaking workers there are less incentives for business to invest into enterprise connected with the Tatar language such as mass media, education (for example language courses), advertisement, etc. The additional financial investments into these domains could partly solve the problem of the lack of financial resources that they face.

From a socio-linguistic perspective, efforts to counteract language shift require an “affirmative action” or “pro-active language policies”, i.e. a form of positive discrimination which encompass certain language policy measures that could constrain individual rights.¹ In case of Tatarstan in which the possibility of constraining language policy measures had provoked a lot of debates this consensus has not been yet achieved and it is not clear whether it could be achieved at all.

¹ Hoffman, *Balancing Language Planning...*,439.

The general research question of this study was why Tatarstan's language policy (1992-2006) had little success in revitalizing the Tatar language. I have approached this question by examining the Tatarstan's language policy on the level of language policy design (language policy legislation) and on the level of language policy implementation. I argue that language revitalization was significantly constrained due to the shortcoming in the language policy design which failed to create incentives for learning and using the Tatar and due to the flaws in the implementation determined by the organizational, financial and bureaucratic deficiencies.

By analyzing the wider political context I identified the endogenous factors that have constrained language policy on these two levels. This language policy design was to a significant degree constrained by the conflict of interests within both the multinational population of Tatarstan as a whole, and the Tatar population in particular; as well as by the overall political context in which the language policy legislation was adopted.

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