

# REALIZATION OF FACTORS DETERMINING THE TATAR BILINGUALS' DISCOURSE TRANSFORMATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN

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## ANNOTATION

This article represents an analysis of linguistic and non-linguistic factors determining the degree of the transformation of the Tatar bilinguals' (living on the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan) discourse. Having applied descriptive, statistic and contrastive methods and also one of introspection, we came to the conclusion that some of the factors namely the high proficiency in the Russian language, high social status of Russian and its domination in social and professional life of the Republic of Tatarstan, ageing of an average active Tatar speaker – for young Tatar speakers Tatar plays status role rather than instrumental one, it is predominantly used within family circle, more rarely within friends circle. As a counterweight, there is a considerable difference between systemic and structural features of the languages, pragmatic settings of Russians and Tatars and also the language policy of the Tatar language development and conservation that is held by the government of the Republic of Tatarstan.

**Key words:** discourse, transformation, linguistic factors, non-linguistic factors.

## INTRODUCTION

The transformation of a bilingual person's discourse is inevitable, especially if he or she lives on a bilingual territory. The degree of discourse transformation depends on a number of factors:

1. Level of proficiency in the second language of a bilingual territory;
2. Social functions and social prestige of the two languages and prevalence of one of them as a result;
3. Individual features and pragmatic features of a bilingual speaker – his age, his attitude to his native and second language, duration and frequency of contacts with second language speakers, individual psychologic and neurophysiologic features, living in a city/countryside etc.
4. Similarity or difference of systemic and structural features of the languages in contact;
5. Similarity or difference of social, cultural, historic background and mentalities of two nations in contact as the notion of discourse also implies extra-linguistic characteristics of a speaker;
6. The degree of formality of the situation.

At the present moment there are a lot of treatises on the relations of the two languages on the territory of Tatarstan. In this article we are going to make an accent on the complexity of the process of bilingual Tatars' discourse transformation as the result of influence of different factors that are sometimes contradictory to each other.

## METHODS

In order to analyze the impact of these factors on the transformation of the Tatar bilinguals' (living on the territory of Tatarstan) discourse, we applied to descriptive, contrastive, statistic methods and to introspection.

## RESULTS

Let us analyze realization of all the factors given above in terms of transformation of Tatarstan's Tatar bilinguals' discourse.

1. According to the data obtained in population census of 2010 [1] the Tatars are 53, 2% of Tatarstan's population, i. e. they form the majority. Nevertheless, Tatar-Russian bilingualism prevails – 95, 5% of Tatars can speak Russian while only 3, 6% of Russians living in Tatarstan can speak Tatar. This misbalance is a result of a number of historic factors. The Tatar language had been repressed for a long time by the Russian government – since the Kazan Khanate was conquered in 1552 and up to 1917 the Tatars were extremely poorly presented in the local government [2]. Russian-speaking population didn't need the knowledge of Tatar, but Tatar intellectuals realized the necessity of the Russian language proficiency for climbing up the career and social ladder at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tatar enlighteners K. Nasyri and Sh. Marjani supported the introduction of the Russian language into the curriculum of national schools; K. Nasyri published textbooks "Rules of reading in Russian", "Russian grammar", "Russian-Tatar dictionary for Tatars". The Tatar "Ficker" newspaper said: "Don't waste your time ... join Russian youth" [3]. The situation changed after the Revolution – national republics of a new state – USSR – at first were given much autonomy and in 1920s- 1930s there was a boom of "language construction". Tatar was not an exception – that time its alphabet was twice reformed. Educational process in lots of schools and vocational training institutions ran in Tatar, but higher education was still available only in Russian. In the end of 1930s the situation changed completely as the policy of the state did. Stress was made on centralization and the Russian language popularization. L. V. Sagitova writes, "A lot of representatives of Tatar intelligentsia told that in their childhood their parents made them learn Russian.

They used to say, "If you know Russian, you will be able to become an influential person" [3]. As a consequence, some part of Tatar population started to neglect their mother tongue as it did not seem to be prestigious anymore. [4] Parents would more voluntarily give their children to Russian schools and the amount of Tatar schools declined sharply in 1970s-1980-s. At the beginning of 1990-s the USSR broke apart, the Republic of Tatarstan gained sovereignty and Tatar got the second breath – it obtained the status of one of two official languages of Tatarstan (alongside with Russian) that was written in the constitution of Tatarstan, it became the mandatory part of curriculum, amount of Tatar schools rocketed. Though, despite all the effort made by the government of Tatarstan, not all the Tatars can speak Tatar – according to the census of 2010, 92,4% of Tatars can do it [5], but the opinion poll conducted in 2011-2012 revealed that only 86,2% stated the Tatar language as their only mother tongue (in 1926 that was 99,71%, in 1989 – 96,6%), 7,4% stated both Tatar and Russian, 6,4% claimed that their native language is Russian. Moreover, the proficiency in speaking Tatar has changed – if in 1926 that question seemed to be stupid for a Tatar, in the survey of 2011-2012 only 72,1% of Tatars are sure they are proficient in Tatar, while 22,4% confess that they can speak Tatar, but not so well [3]. The reasons are numerous: in Soviet Tatarstan Tatar was mainly used in the family or friend circle or school in the rural area. Scientific and industrial activity was in Russian. Nowadays, though both languages are official, the situation is still the same as the terminological apparatus in Tatar is not formed well enough and the total decline in language proficiency is observed. Young and middle-aged Tatars claim that mostly they speak colloquial Tatar and some of them are hardly able to read books in Tatar or to discuss any political or economic topics in Tatar without code-switching to Russian.

2. As it was stated, Russian dominates in social, scientific and industrial life of the Republic of Tatarstan. Also let us remind that 95, 5% of Tatars can speak Russian (the rest are likely to be elderly people living in the countryside).

3. Pragmatic settings and age correlations related to speaking Russian are well described in a thesis “Consolidating identities and modernizing resource in Tatarstan” [3]: “ The presence of Russian (as the only native or alongside with Tatar) in an identification structure of a personality is different for different ages ... 14,3% and 4,8% - for those from 18 to 24, 15,8% and 2,2% respectively from 25 to 34, 16,7% and 5,1% from 35 to 49, 8,6% and 0% - from 50 to 59, 11,9% and 2,6% - from 60 and older. The differentiation takes place ... within age groups. The younger the group is, the more often Russian is stated like the only one native language – the share of such Tatars is 9,5% for citizens aged 18-24, 7,9% - 25-34, 6,3% - 35-49, 4,8% - 60 and older”. Regarding the functions of the two languages in pupils’ minds, the authors note that Russian has instrumental function while Tatar has symbolic one that explicitly shows that for a young generation Tatar is the symbol of their ethnicity having little practical significance. Meanwhile, for 70, 6% of Tatar school children Russian is a “habitual language of communication”. However, it should not be missed that Tatars living in the rural areas demonstrate much more adherence to their mother tongue.

4. Tatar and Russian are not relative languages as Russian is a Slavic language of Indo-European family and Tatar is a Turkic one of Altai family. According to morphological classification, they are also different: Russian is inflectional and Tatar is agglutinative with all the differences of morphological features of the languages inherent to it – polysemy of affixes in Russian and monosemy in Tatar etc. On the phonetic level the languages differ greatly: both have sounds that are not presented in the neighbor language – in Russian they are sounds [β], [ɯ], [ɰ], in Tatar - [γ], [ə], [ɰ] and others. “In Tatar hard and soft consonants do not bear any phonemic sense but in Russian they are distinct phonemes” [6]. In terms of grammar there is a common feature as there are 6 cases in both languages (though only two have the same meaning – nominative and accusative) and 6 independent parts of speech (noun, adjective, numeral, pronoun, verb and adverb). The following differences are crucial – there is no category of gender in Tatar (consequently there is no agreement between nouns and adjectives), there are no prepositions, but the system of tenses in Tatar is more complicated. Also it should be mentioned that there are two types of verbs and two conjugations in Russian. On the syntactic level the most important difference is the fixed position of a predicate in Tatar (it is always at the end of the sentence) while in Russian there is no fixed word order in a sentence.

5. Russians and Tatars have common values such as family, friendship, collectivism, hard-working etc. [7] Still the differences in cultural norms are obvious and different religious are also of great importance – being a Muslim or a Christian means observing some traditions that form difference of experiences and extra-linguistic features of speakers’ discourse. For example, Tatars are considered to be more conservative towards living together before marriage and stricter in observance of religious rituals – among Russians religious marriage is not so wide-spread but for Tatars it is obligatory and sometimes it is even paid more attention to than to laic one. Negative attitude to mixed marriages is quite characteristic for Tatars.

6. The fact that the choice of lexical means depends on the formality of the situation is indisputable. On some family occasions you may hear literary Tatar language, but everyday life speech in Tatar is full of lexical and morphological borrowings from Russian and sometimes even the sentence structure is not kept [8]. Also the degree of formality determines the choice of a language itself. In official institutions the choice is usually made in favor of Russian – “almost all the clerical duties, legal proceedings, work of State Council and departments is in Russian” [9], “decrees, acts and laws are discussed and enacted in Russian ... and translated into Tatar afterwards... in a court Tatar is extremely rarely used as all the clerical duties are in Russian and there are no salaried translators” [10]. Other public institutions service population primarily in Russian, Tatar is typically spoken when a Tatar speaking employee understands that his middle-aged or elderly interlocutor has some problems with understanding or expressing his or her ideas in Russian. A. F. Valeeva and K. R. Minasova concluded after a survey conducted that Tatar is more widely used in the field of public health, especially in rural areas, as it is really simpler to set up a contact

with a patient, elderly one in particular, in his native language [11, 12]. Even in socializing in a family circle there is a stratification of usage of languages: “61, 1% of school children communicate with their grandparents in Tatar while only 48, 8% do it with parents and 17, 6% with their siblings”. [3]

## DISCUSSION

The question of the two languages correlation in the Republic of Tatarstan is quite complex as it also touches upon the relations of the two nations – the Russians and the Tatars. It should be noted that all the linguistic and non-linguistic inter-ethnic social processes in Tatarstan are going on peacefully, that is extremely essential in the modern era of social and international global tension. The phenomenon of peaceful cohabitation of two nations in Tatarstan is worth detailed study.

## CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the data given and social situation observed we can conclude that the influence of the Russian language on Tatar is rather strong. Nevertheless, there is a counterweight in this process of inter-lingual integration that is considerable differences in morphological and grammatical structures of the languages. One more factor preventing the discourse transformation is adherence to different religions and different cultural norms.

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