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LINGUISTIC PLURALITY OF LANGUAGES IN RUSSIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

This article is a conceptual piece reviewing and problematizing various perspectives to language education in Russia with a particular attention paid to the case of Tatar language. A general overview of the existing literature will be presented highlighting the situation with the minority language in Russia, comparing and contrasting it with the English language education. After providing the background of English and minority language instruction in Russia, the authors zoom in on the case of Tatarstan, to explore the workings of the discourses on identity and education in a multilingual region, where teaching of English goes along with the teaching of national (Russian) and regional (Tatar) languages. Lastly, the discussion and conclusion summarize the current vision of the interaction between Tatar, Russian, and English languages. It also proposes directions to further exploit the topic in order to serve the needs of multilingual students in a wide range of similar multilingual contexts, to seek ways towards maintaining the plurality of languages and strengthening the linguistic diversity of the world.
Keywords: language policy, language learning, multilingualism, Tatar language, Russian language, English language.

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ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОЕ МНОГООБРАЗИЕ ЯЗЫКОВ В РОССИЙСКОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ

Рассмотрены различные аспекты многоязычного образования в России. Особое внимание уделено обучению татарскому, русскому и английскому языкам. Представлен обзор англоязычной литературы, где используются лучшие методики и кейсы преподавания государственных языков и языков народов мира. Раскрыты особенности преподавания языков в Республике Татарстан. Проанализирована реализация системы обучения английскому, русскому и татарскому языкам в регионе с использованием типологии профессора Бейкера. Предложены направления для дальнейшей проработки вопроса по улучшению многоязычной педагогики с целью поддержания множества языков и укрепления лингвистического разнообразия в России и в мире.
Ключевые слова: языковая политика, языковое обучение, многоязычность, татарский язык, русский язык, английский язык.

Introductory remarks

This article will be framed around Baker's framework (2011) of typology in bilingual education. Baker distinguishes "monolingual forms of education for bilinguals," "weak forms of bilingual education," and "strong forms of bilingual education for bilingualism and biliteracy." The first type is the usage of the dominant language by the minority-language students. In the second form of bilingual education students temporarily use their ethnic minority language. In the third, "strong" form of bilingual education, both – minority and majority languages – are used in the classroom. In this article, we will

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classify which forms of bilingual education, if any, according to Baker's framework, are present in Russian context of education.

Linguistic composition of Russia

Russia is a multilingual and multi-national state consisting of 170 ethnic groups speaking around 100 minority languages. Nineteen percent of Russian population belongs to different ethnicities: 5,3% Tatars, 1,9% Ukranians, 1,6% Bashkirs, 1,4% Chuvashes. (Federal Agency of State Statistics, 2010). Other groups are Avars, Kazakhs, Udmurts, Azerbaijanians, Maris, Germans, Kabardinians, Oseets, Darghins, Burvats, Yakuts, Kumyks, Ingushs, and Lezghins. Even though Russian is the only official state language in the country, the Constitution of the Russian Federation (RF) allows republics to maintain their ethnic languages (The Constitution of the Russian Federation, article 60, part 2). However, the symbolic value of Russian as the primary language of the country often obscures the fact that Russia is a multilingual country. Consequently, the speakers of other languages, including Tatar, the case language of this article, have to consciously work towards creating conditions for maintaining the language. Lastly, the value of Tatar and other local languages of RF, such as Chuvash, Bashkir, Yakut languages, among others, are often compared to that of global languages. The superior position of English and its active penetration into the RF creates additional layers of complexity to the discourse about language learning in general and maintaining local languages in particular. Thus, the Tatar language, as many other languages of the peoples of Russia, is in a precarious position. To avoid its gradual decline, it is necessary to search for novel solutions, one of which is a merge of global and local languages. The ongoing spread of English is a call to further examine the possibilities and tensions of language education within this inherently multilingual context.

Language Policies in Russia

Before dwelling upon the language education in Russia, it is important to provide the background of language policies in Russia, which create the context and conditions of language maintenance and development. *The Law on Languages* was adopted in 1991 and was laid in the foundation of Article 69 of the Constitution, which establishes the equality of all languages in Russia. The languages of minority ethnic groups are declared to have economic, social, and juridical support from Russia, as well as the right to be taught and learned regardless of number of its speakers (Ulasiuk, 2011). Another law, the Law on National-Cultural Autonomy (NCA) adopted in 1996 recognizes the right of its speakers to receive primary education in their first language.

Regardless of these existing laws designed to promoted ethnic minority-language rights and education, federal authorities stimulate primarily Russian language, while ethnic minority languages are to be supported by the republics. Since 2000s forward, the Russian language promotion has been strengthened. For example, in 2015 there has been adopted the project of Guidelines for the Teaching of the Russian Language and Literature for General Educational Establishments. This document suggests removing instruction in the minority languages with the exceptions of a few non-core curriculum subjects (Tovar-Garcia & Font, 2016).

Additionally, Russian language acquires a symbolic meaning of being the language that unites peoples of Russia. For example, the Federal State Standard for Primary Education (2009) describes the knowledge of Russian language in terms of the importance "осознание значения русского языка как государственного языка Российской Федерации, языка межнационального общения" (awareness of the meaning of Russian language as the state language of RF, the language for cross-cultural communication). To make the use of terminology clear, 'state language' (*gosudarstvennyi iazyk*) loosely corresponds to "official language" or "national language" internationally (Zamyatin, 2012).

The situation gets complicated by the fact that any curriculum must consist of the core part and the part that is chosen by each individual school. The former is regulated by federal educational policies and makes up 80% of curriculum, and the remaining 20% are regarded as school's educational component that should be allocated by various stakeholders, teachers, parents or legal caregivers, local educational authorities. Some schools make use of most, if not all, time allocated as school's educational component aimed at teaching English language.

English language learning in Russia

A brief historic sketch of teaching foreign and local languages in Russia reveals complex relationships that evolved among Russian, English and Tatar languages over the course of the last century. While education in the early years of the Soviet Union was characterized by an increased attention to local languages and cultures, it was done primarily through "classifying its citizens according to their nationality" (Grenoble, 2003, p. 38). A more in-depth analysis shows that "the language used to deliver the message of the Communist party was inconsequential, compared to the message itself" (p. 41). As Soviet language policies were implemented over the years, the country aimed at fusing peoples and creating one unified identity, that of the Soviet people. As these ideas became more and more solidified, the language education reforms continued to privilege the Russian language over others, both foreign and local languages. Despite the presence in the curriculum, English or other foreign languages were viewed negatively ideologically (Ter-Minasova, 2005). It was realized through the mindset of the society, which prioritized Russian and neglected the other languages. Ter-Minasova (2005) suggests that one of the possible explanations was that Soviet linguists were determined to develop Russian language standards for a multilingual state where Russian was the lingua franca, what, as a consequence, negatively affected foreign language teaching and learning.

A number of pedagogical characteristics reveal a different set of challenges that existed within English language education at the time. First, curriculum and educational materials in foreign and local languages could not be described as state of the art for the time being. During Soviet times, teachers of English had little access to materials developed out-

side of the country, exposure to opportunities to keep up with the curricula innovations in the field of foreign language education around the globe and most of the teachers had limited, if any, exposure to practice the language in the English speaking country. As a result, most of the English language textbooks were developed by local linguists and educators, and the options were not many; most popular textbooks were developed by professors Arakin, Starkov and Ostrovsky. This is one more form of contextualizing and localizing the learning and teaching of English language. The problems with curriculum were acutely experienced by Tatar language educators as well. Several factors covertly or openly impeded the development of Tatar educational materials; among some of the major ones are two changes in language script from Arabic to Latin in the 1920s, and from Latin to Cyrillic. In 1936 Cyrillic was adopted as the script for Tatar language, thus significantly cutting access to print for those who were educated via other scripts and leaving much information not transferred to the new script (Garipov & Faller, 2003). More so, control over most of the publications was given to the federal bodies leaving little room for developing "in-house" materials.

Second, instructional problems accompanied those of curricula difficulties. In the collectivist culture of the USSR it was not acceptable to be a teacher who exercises an individual approach and attention to each student. Therefore, differentiated instruction, tailoring teaching approaches to specific needs of students were neglected. Next, Ter-Minasova (2005) argues that theory dominated much of the English language instruction. For example, the teachers focused on teaching separate words rather than collocations. Fan (2009) claims that collocations are particularly important for second language learners to speak more fluently and construct comprehensible speech. Another example of the theoretical nature of foreign language education comes from teacher training programs. Getty (2000) contends that over the course of 5 years of undergraduate training English language teachers received very little teaching practice at school. The learning of theoretical grammar, phonetics, history of language, theory of education among many other courses was the core part of the training, leaving only the last semester of the training for student teaching experiences.

Over the last decades globalization and market requirements have stimulated more Russian people to start learning English. In particular, employers of business sector are expected to be proficient in English. The information revolution, Internet, and English media promote English language all over the world, and Russia is not an exception. According to Ustinova (2005), these trends penetrated the Russian society and promoted the emergence of several types of English. Reduced English allows students to read and translate from English to Russian, but does not provide the communicative skills. The next type, Survival English, is offered by the private language schools which became very popular recently in Russia. English for Specific Purposes is learned by specialists in different areas. Pidgin English includes business mix, computer mix and Brighton mix. And, lastly, Runglish, was created specifically for the space station Mir (Ustinova, 2005).

The types of English have evolved along with new functions of language: instrumental, interpersonal, and communicative (Ustinova, 2005). The first function implies that English serves as a tool for international communication in business, education, science, and governmental offices. Therefore, foreign (most often English) language education starts from the 2nd grade in Russian public schools (Federal State Standard for Primary Education, 2009).

At higher education institutes (universities and colleges) two years of language education are required to obtain undergraduate degree. English is the language of such associations as British Council, English Language Office, the Peace Corps, the Project Harmony, and National Association of Teachers of English in Russia. It is the language of international conferences and publications as well (Ustinova, 2005). For many people, English is the sign of prestige and good education, especially in big cities, such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarks, Kazan', Vladivostok, among others.

In the past, it was perceived that only a *native speaker* speaks the *standard* variety of English. Moreover, this native speaker was pictured as a white male with a British accent. Although no scholarly publications are available to pinpoint that aspect, this idea is still circulating in the newspapers and academic circles. One of them is the article published by the Russian office of BBC "British vs. American English: What to learn?" (Ostapenko, 2014). Furthermore, there has always been a divide in English language teaching between correct and incorrect versions of English. American English used to be considered as improper or inaccurate, whereas British English as correct and proper one. This dichotomy can still be found in a diverse landscape of English language teaching in Russia. Studying the historical and perhaps political roots of these perceptions might be another intriguing scholarly investigation that is outside the scope of this article.

According to McCaughey (2005), the greatest challenge for Russian teachers of English is to overcome the existing dichotomy of British vs. American version of English, as well as a pure prescriptive grammar, which means that the major focus of this approach is on teaching grammar where only one grammatical form is considered to be correct. The varieties of English spoken in different parts of the world contribute to the cultural and identity formation of the groups living in those areas. If students are taught according to the old British vs. American dichotomy, they would not be prepared to the reality of modern world with its diversity, existing in different political, economic, socio-cultural, geo-political, and socio-linguistic contexts. Contrary to McCaughey (2005), Ustinova (2005) claims that the current situation is changing and the students in the English language departments of Russian universities are being trained in the number of regional dialects and varieties. Canadian, Australian, and Black English were added to the traditionally represented Standard British English and Standard American English.

The inevitable penetration of global movements is observed in instruction as well. The shift from purely grammatical to communicative methods is observed more often than ever before. According to Ter-Minasova (2005), the sole focus on reading has transformed into the focus on all domains of literacy in a foreign language – reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. The popularity of a communicative approach revealed that background knowledge and socio-cultural factors play a crucial role in the process of language learning, the processes which started elsewhere decades.

Minority Languages in Russia

In regard to local languages, people of non-Russian ethnic backgrounds usually speak Russian and their minority ethnic language. For example, there are many ethnic groups in the Russian regions of Volga and Urals, such as Bashkirs, Mari, Chuvashes, and Udmurts, who can be characterized as trilingual, as they speak

Russian, their ethnic language, and often Tatar as well (Sinagatullin, 2013).

Altai and Kazakh. The situation with minority ethnic languages is similar across Russia. For example, the situation with two minority languages in Russia – Altai and Kazakh is described by Yagmur & Kroon (2006). The indigenous population of Altai was 31.0 percent of Altaians and 5.6 percent of Kazakhs. Generally, Altanians and Kazakhs feel proud if they can speak their native language, because it comprises an important part of community's identity and spirit (Yagmur & Kroon, 2006). Despite the high status of these two languages, the parents of the Altai and Kazakh communities send their children to the Russian schools wishing a better future for their children because minority children will not be able to get the higher education and a good job without the Russian language knowledge.

In order to address the decreasing number of native language speakers, the Altai local Government created well paid jobs for the minority language speakers, what also influenced the status of these languages. At the structural level, these changes are giving an impetus to the problem solution at the high societal level. Taking into consideration a very positive attitude of people towards their native languages and the structural support from the Government, Altai and Kazakh languages in Altai should not extinguish (Yagmur & Kroon, 2006).

Karelian. Karelians constitute 130, 000 in present-day Russia, most of them live in the Republic of Karelia (Pyoli, 1998). Similar to other minority languages in Russia–Mordvins, Udmurts, Maris, and Komis (Lallukka, 1995b) – Karelian language is experiencing a language shift. In Pyoli's study (1998), 54 Karelians self-assessed that they did not have any command of Russian before elementary school. Some informants reported that in 1920s and 1930s they had some instruction of closely-related to Karelian, Finnish language. However, today Karelian students receive education solely in Russian language, similar to students of other ethnic groups in many other regions of Russia. Karelian language is still vivid means of communication among middle-aged and elderly Karelians in households.

Chuvash. Chuvash is a Turkic language spoken primarily in the Republic of Chuvashia, исправить на the 5th language by the number of its speakers in RF. Chuvashia has two official languages – Chuvash and Russian. There is a strong tendency of a language shift, similar to other minority languages, when the first generation born in cities loses the ethnic language skills. In the education sector Chuvashia had several Chuvash-medium schools of instruction in the 1990s. However, by 2012/13 there were almost no schools with Chuvash language of instruction. Students transition from Chuvash language education in the 4th grade to fully Russian-language education in the fifth grade. Despite the federal and local right granted to ethnic minorities to get education in the first language, it is not evident in practice and students are taught solely in Russian (Alos i Font, 2014).

Buryat. Buryat language is spoken by Buryats, who belong to the North-Asian race of the Mongoloid race. The number of Buryats living in Russia in 2004 was more than 400,000 (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004). Buryat and Russian were declared as state languages of the Buryatia Republic in 1992. Buryat language is normally used for private purposes by its speakers, whereas Russian is used for official communication purposes. These trends affect language status even Buryat-speaking parents view it as a low-status language who prefer to use Russian when speaking to their children (Khilkhanova & Khilkhanov, 2004).

Summary of the situation with the minority languages in Russia. All these languages described above experience inadequate support from federal authorities, regardless of proclaimed support in the federal and local laws and regulations. There is barely maintenance of minority languages and support through the language-in-education. Thus, minority languages in Russia seem to be in the marginalized position and in less demand (Nazimova, 2016). According to Baker's framework (2011) of bilingual education, all the languages reviewed above fall under "monolingual form of education for bilinguals." None of the described cases above correspond to the "weak" form of bilingualism. Below, we represent a detailed case of Tatar language, to see whether it corresponds to any of the higher type of Baker's typology – weak or strong forms of bilingualism.

Tatar Language

The Republic of Tatarstan, Russia, is a bi-ethnic and bilingual region, politically situated within the Russian Federation. Tatarstan has 53.2% of ethnic Tatars, 39.7% of Russians, 3.1% of Chuvashs, and 4% of other nationalities, such as Udmurts, Kriashens, Bashkirs, Bulgars, and Azeris (2010 Russian Census). Tatar language is a "western Turkic-Altaic language and is the result of complex linguistic contact from Kipchal Turkic, Volga Bulgar, Volga Finnic, and Mongolic" (Wigglesworth-Baker, 2016, p.21). In 1990, when Tatarstan adopted sovereignity declaration, two languages – Tatar and Russian – were proclaimed official. Since 1997 teaching of Tatar became compulsory in all Tatar schools with the curriculum load equally devoted to the two languages and literature (Faller, 2011).

The plight of Tatar language education in modern Russia also revealed glimpses of opportunities. After receiving a relative autonomy from the Russian Federation in the early 1990s, Tatarstan declared a new Constitution and passed a language law that makes both Russian and Tatar official languages of Tatarstan by Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan (art.VIII). Additionally, in 1994, Tatarstan put forward the State Program on the Preservation, Study, and Development of the Languages of the Peoples of Tatarstan, which was devised to include an explicit set of measures to be undertaken to remedy the ongoing decline of Tatar language in the region (State Program, 2013). As a result, several changes were ensued. First of all, the teaching of Tatar language was introduced into all elementary and secondary schools to the same extent as Russian language. Second, a special committee was created to oversee the implementation of language legislation in the office of the premier minister of Tatarstan. Since 2014, four commissions of the committee have been carrying out their work in the following areas: law and research, pedagogy, use of language, and spelling, terminology and onomastics (Mustafina, 2012). In the 1990s new schools with Tatar medium of instruction opened and Tatar language began to be introduced into the coursework of colleges and universities in the region (Mustafina, 2012).

The language programs in Tatarstan schools require additional attention here, as they differ in some ways from language programs elsewhere. First of all, Russian language is taught together with Russian literature classes in all schools in Tatarstan. In most of the schools, the curriculum and instruction are developed based on the needs of targeted student population – native Russian speakers. Only a few schools, predominantly in rural areas, use Russian language and literature curriculum designed for non-native speakers. Second, Tatar language and literature classes are taught in the same amount

as Russian classes across all types of schools in Tatarstan. In the Russian MOI schools, two variants of Tatar language curriculum can be found: (1) based on ethnicity and/or language competence, that is, Tatar for native speakers of Tatar or ethnic Tatars (Tatar group), and (2) Tatar for Russian-speaking students or ethnic Russians (Russian group). From 1991 to 2010, several generations grew up in the atmosphere where Tatar language was supported by local (Tatar) government, and where parents opted to send their children to study in Tatar-medium schools (Marquardt, 2013). By the beginning of 2015, "there were 827 Tatar-language, 709 Russian-language, 95 Chuvash, 34 Udmurt, 18 Mari, and four Mordvin schools" (Nazimova, 2016, p. 79).

Accordingly, different sets of Tatar language and literature curricula are available: one set for students in Tatar-medium schools, the same or modified set for Tatar groups in schools with Russian MOI, and for the Russian group in Russian MOI schools. However, more research is needed to investigate these curricula differences. Lastly, the situation with language textbooks also varies tremendously. For the Tatar language, some schools use the materials provided by the Ministry of Education and Science of Tatarstan, others combine them with their own materials, and the latter buy or develop their own curricula. When it comes to English, most of the schools tend to use English textbooks published by foreign publishing houses, such as Oxford or Cambridge, while others use locally developed curricula. Textbooks also vary according to many other dimensions: the sequencing of topics, vocabulary, and type of activities. What is uniform is the method, vis-a-vis, teaching of English as a foreign language.

A deeper look into the schools and their role in Tatar language education shows a situation that is far from being one-sided and monolithic. Veinguer and Davis' (2007) research suggests that Tatarstan language-in-education policies had a significant effect on Tatar language education in schools, in particular for Tatar renaissance after "dormant" Soviet period. They argue that "language has central importance in the Tatar schools and is treated as essential to what it means to be Tatar" (p. 186).

Moreover, Tatar philology is allowed to be reduced in order to teach in the Mari, Mordvin, Udmurt, and Chuvash languages. According to Nazimova (2016), it is suggested that in the 5^{th}–8^{th} grades, there are three hours of Russian language, two hours of Russian literature, one hour of Tatar language, and four hours of native language and literature per week. Tatar language is taught roughly in the same amount as Russian across all schools in Tatarstan, whereas the number of English language classes vary from two periods/hours a week as required by the standard to up to six hours a week as offered in some schools at the expense of their school's educational component.

However, in non-Tatar schools, situation can be drastically different. The official language policy is tolerated without much enthusiasm, "and indeed with some hostility, because of the number of hours, poor organization and inadequately trained teachers" (Veinguer & Davis, 2007, p. 202). This asymmetry between language education models created within Tatar-medium schools and predominantly Russian schools has a potential to generate tensions. Those educated in the Tatar-medium schools embrace both languages and cultures, while the latter for the most part remain indifferent to Tatar and stay dominant in Russian. Veinguer and Davis (2007) state that "the fact that bilingualism appears as a one-way process historically… reinforces feelings of injustice, unfairness, inequality, cultural domination and discrimination" (p. 202). Thus, Tatarness

at the nexus of Tatar and Russian is shaped significantly by means of language policies in education.

The types of language classes and programs offered in Tatarstan do not fit a multilingual education model because none of the above-mentioned programs includes explicit instruction of content area classes in more than one language. The strong forms of bilingual education include: immersion, maintenance/heritage language, two-way/dual language and mainstream bilingual programs (Wright & Baker, 2017). The two types of schools (Tatar and Russian MOI) are conceptualized to teach predominantly in Tatar or Russian languages. Moreover, the number of ethnic Tatars school using Tatar as the language of instruction has declined with maximum in 2007, when 52.7% of Tatar schools were taught in the Tatar language (Alos i Font, 2015). Thus, the language of such classrooms is not bilingual, the societal and educational aim is limited enrichment, with only limited bilingualism (if achieved at all) as the language outcome (Wright & Baker, 2017). Even among adults of Tatarstan, the situation can be described as "asymmetrical bilingualism," when Russians are monolingual in Russian, and non-Russians are bilingual in the native language and Russian (Wigglesworth-Baker, 2016). Russian is prevalent in different functional spheres of life, whereas Tatar is the symbol of Tatar identity, which is used for household communication and among Tatar group belonging (Minzaripov, Akhmetova, & Nizamova, 2013). Fifty-three percent of Tatarstan residents use Russian to speak to the family members, while 20% use both languages (Tatar and Russian), and 26% speak Tatar (Minzaripov, et al., 2013).

With the declining Tatar language proficiency of the younger generation, existing Tatar language programs within Tatar and Russian MOI schools might not be the best solution for students. Bilingual education research shows that strong forms of bilingual education foster bilingualism, biliteracy, biculturalism sometimes in more than two languages (Wright & Baker, 2017). Studies on heritage language programs (Valdés et al., 2006) and dual language programs prove to revitalize home languages, increase students' academic achievement (Cummins, 2000; Tse, 2001), provide cognitive benefits (Bialystok, 2011), raise learners' self-esteem (Cummins, 2000), establish a more secure multicultural identity (Norton, 2013). In other contexts, heritage and second language programs have been developed to better build on students' linguistic and cultural proficiency, and thus, provide a more targeted language instruction. The existing models of language education may benefit from integrating the best practices from other multilingual contexts in order to better address the needs of the multilingual population.

Thus, even after certain language reforms since the 1990s, language education in Russia is still confined to its own illusionary boundaries, where few connections are made across these languages, their roles in local society, nationally and the world. Learning of any language does not preclude and should not be detached from the processes of learning and teaching other languages. Russian, Tatar, and English language education should become synchronized, that is to build on one another rather than be treated as separate and unrelated content areas. More bi- and multilingual forms of curriculum and instruction should be developed, and more than one language should be offered as the language of classroom instruction. Besides the linguistic enrichment, the societal goal should be set to avoid the essentialized categories of being only an ethnic Russian, Tatar, Kazakh,

Altai, or any other local language community member. Instead, the aim should be to help learners develop new facets of their identity, including those that come from an acquisition of another language. As García (2009) puts it: "bilingual education is the only way to educate children in the twenty first century" (p. 5), and the Russian society should strive towards this ideal as well.

Discussion

The analysis reveals that despite various challenges, English is becoming more and more attractive to people, and it is more likely to be viewed as part of a Russian-English bilingualism. The space for Tatar language, on the contrary, is not yet organically woven into the discursive space of multilingualism. Some reasons for that stem from the problems of creating room for multilingual education where approximately equal amount of attention is paid to all three languages, where the value of official languages in Tatarstan co-exists with those of the capitalist market, and the stipulation of the federal educational policies. The analysis of current tensions in language education in Tatarstan and Russia shows that while English language is gradually being included, Tatar is still walking the fine line of ex- or in-clusion. The real presence of Tatar must therefore be managed. The management is double, on the one hand, the presence of Tatar is constructed as a waste of time or as a course that takes away from learning "more important" subjects, such as English. On the other hand, Tatar is relegated the status of an official language in Tatarstan. But despite the official status of Tatar language, it is in the off-stage zone. Thus, the existing situation in Tatarstan has potential rich soil for multilingualism when languages merge, co-exist, and share power, functions, and equal status.

Possible solutions: discourse of multilingualism in Tatarstan

One possible strategy to move towards multilingualism is to adopt a universalizing discourse focused on language quality, which mystifies the distinction between Tatar-Russian, Russian-English, or Tatar-English bilingualisms under the umbrella of multilingualism and acceptance of all other languages. This strategy means that teachers of any language need to introduce to students the idea that all languages are of equal status and importance, and that there is no language hierarchy presupposing the hierarchy of cultures, traditions, and nations. Only with this concept at the foundation of language learning, students will adapt the perspective on languages as tools, broadening their access to the world careers with the local unique knowledge and skills.

Elite as an indicator for a possible direction in language policy. Another direction for probing possibilities is targeting the elite. Perhaps it is the elite that needs to define what counts as multilingualism and therefore, should serve as a model for everyone. By building on their social status and other possible privileges, the elite can rid the Tatar language from stigmas and add a symbolic value to the language. The elite can initiate the neutralization of the tension between the prestige of English language and the authenticating value of Tatar by promoting language learning as advantageous entity and by accepting multilingualism in Tatar, Russian, and English languages as a norm.

Spread of English as a danger for regional languages. Another way to achieve a multilingual norm is by equating the challenges of minority groups to those of national majority groups in the face of burgeoning spread of English as the current world language (May, 2013). If the growth of English language persists, then not only regional

languages, but major national languages will be under a pressure to succumb to more global and transnational languages. One way to solve the problem is to explicitly talk about how English can impact national languages, then draw parallels between English and national language, and national and regional language. Joseph and Ramani (2012) state that a global spread of English is accompanied with two phenomena. Firstly, it can bring a danger of monolingual dominance in some countries (for example India, where many middle-class children get education in English-medium school and associate English as their mother tongue). And secondly, a global spread of English can lead to social exclusion and isolation for some people, who do not speak English, but whose social status and position necessitates its knowledge.

World examples of multilingualism. Various stakeholders should be able to put language education in their region and country in perspective. For example, they can draw parallels and analyze the similarities and differences in the language education discourses of each language. Likewise, providing an opportunity to compare and contrast language education in different parts of the world, where multilingualism is a common phenomenon might show that a world of multilingualism is not a vague ideal, but a reality existing somewhere. Successful examples of such contexts include officially multilingual Québec, Belgium, Ecuador, where local language are granted some form of equality at the level of the nation state (Oviedo & Wildemeersch, 2008; Ricento & Burnaby, 1998; Van Tubergen & Wierenga, 2011). It is noteworthy that there is still a divide between policy and practice, where official multilingualism existing in these entities does not necessarily result in individual multilingualism (Kiss, 2011).

Federal and state support. The analysis of Tatar and English language education within the framework of the nation-state allows questioning some of the underlying ideologies and ingrained meanings and provides some tools for deconstructing their origin and legitimacy. Education is also the area that witnesses how language minority students and their parents are willingly dispensing their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities and heritage to access opportunities that are being seen as only available via the global language and by abandoning their language and culture. A prerequisite for a pluralistic view is the formal legitimation and institutionalization of minority languages along with the dominant languages within both the state and civil society through policy and other decisions. Only with the support at many levels - local and federal policies, and changes in civil attitudes towards language education, language power, and statuses, the situation can be changed. But these changes are incremental, and require a constant involvement and attention form the sides of different stakeholders, including students, parents, families, school districts and administrations, as well as policy makers and implementers.

Language revitalization. There are some other speaker-dependent factors, which can improve the status/maintenance of an endangered language/minority ethnic language. For example, Crystal (2000) suggests that language revitalization can be progressed, if its speakers are able to: increase language prestige among the dominant community; increase their wealth relative to other communities; have access to a stable economic base; increase their legitimate power; increase the number of domains where their language is used; have strong presence in the educational system; be literate in the language; use technologies in the language; have a strong sense of ethnic identity; be formally recognized by the dominant culture.

Furthermore, multilingualism and language revitalization heavily depend on three groups of macro factors: status factors, demographic factors, and institutional support factors (Giles, 2001). Status factors include economic status of a minority language, social status (prestige value), and symbolic status (a symbol of ethnic identity). Demographic factors include geographic distribution of a language minority group, number of its speakers, and their saturation within a particular geographic area. Additionally, interlanguage marriages contribute to the loss of minority language because a higher status language will dominate the ethnic language. In rural areas ethnic language have more chances for revitalization and survival than in urban areas. Regarding the third group of factors – institutional support factors – the presence of an ethnic language in mass media and providing administrative services in the language effects its prestige and status. Religion is an important way of supporting language maintenance. Finally, ethnolinguistic vitality corresponds to quantity and quality of TV programs and websites in minority and dominant languages factors (Giles, 2001).

Conclusion

Using the case study of Tatarstan, framed around Baker's framework (2011), this article suggests that the situation around Tatar language education in Tatarstan falls under weak/transitional form of bilingualism interchanging with rear cases of strong bilingualism in Tatar-medium schools where students get bilingual education across curriculum in all core subjects. The close proximity of many languages within the border of Tatarstan (Tatar, Russian, and English) and overall in Russia, raises the questions about bi- and multilingualism, where learning and teaching of each language gets compared to and influenced by one another. In multilingual contexts, speakers have to make choices about which language to choose, when, why, and for what purposes; and these decisions have long-lasting effects and consequences for each language. If we use bi- and multilingualism as a norm, then learning English should be accompanied and supported by learning of both minority and dominant languages. Thus, it should be a bi-directional approach, where each language has an equal status and attention in a language learning community.

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