
PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES AS A FACTOR OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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Abstract

It is a characteristic feature of today's multilingual world that the current language situation in independent states has been developing under the influence of two contradictory factors. The first factor is determined by the need to preserve national identity, the desire of citizens, native speakers, to identify themselves with a certain ethnic group. The second one stems from the need for people to understand each other while building economic, political and cultural relationships, and meeting communication needs. The authors discuss groups of stabilizing and destabilizing factors considering, on the one hand, language tolerance and balanced policy of the state and, on the other hand, uneven development of national languages in the state. These factors make it possible to predict how social-and-linguistic situation would develop and adjust the systematic monitoring of negative and positive linguistic processes in the global world.

Keywords: native, globalization, socio-cultural, spiritual, culture

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1. Introduction

Language is a determinant of national consciousness, the foundation which generations of any national culture use ‘to build the house’ for their spirituality. Destroying the foundation one would cause ‘the house to collapse’. It is not surprising that many countries have a clear national policy to protect their national languages.

The language situation in a multilingual state or region is influenced by two contradictory factors [1]. The first is determined by the identity needed by an individual; it is realized through the desire to be identified as a representative of a certain ethno-linguistic group. The second factor originates from the need for people to understand each other while building economic, political, cultural relationships, and meet their communication needs.

The major structural constituent in the content of national security is the spiritual component which includes culture, education, media communication with the national (native) language as the link [2]. For example, the Russian language acts as a factor of the spiritual unity of the peoples in multinational Russia and the language of interstate communication for former Soviet republics, the countries of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). Different levels of security stratify language activity of human society as a whole. They involve international global, international regional and national securities covering state, regional and private sectors. “Coupled with the advancement” of modern communication technologies, “these challenges carry the potential not only to destabilize the society’s social cohesion but also undermine the very roots of human culture on the level of family ties and interpersonal relationships” [3].

The decisions related to the choice of official languages at the national and regional levels are of military and political importance as they allow the states to ensure their constitutional sovereignty with certain specific content. Language security as an integral part of national security is a complex and multifaceted object for scientific analysis. Security implies the feeling of being safe and protected against possible harm or damage, the ability to control, contain, or take a hit associated with hazardous impacts as well as to quickly replenish the actual harm or damage. Security is associated with keeping the system stable, resilient, persistent and capable of self- regulation and self-improvement [4]. This definition proves a clear relationship between the public systems with the features like ‘stability’ and ‘resilience’.

Therefore, the concept of security in relation to the sociolinguistic situation in a multilingual global world is closely connected with the balance in the coexistence of languages spoken by different ethnic groups in a common geopolitical territory. It is also connected with the problem of preserving the minority languages spoken in an individual state.

The logical consequence of multilingual interaction is competition. It is common for the history that the development of ethnic relations would lead to an asymmetric language situation when the majority language becomes dominant,

often becoming the language of interethnic communication. Other languages (minority languages) become marginal with the significantly reduced sphere of functioning and, subsequently, might be displaced until they completely disappear. Such a situation leads to destabilization of the language balance in the region and, as a result, to the growth of tension and conflicts which are very difficult to be settled applying only administrative measures.

For example, the problems related to linguistic diversity, the asymmetry of the language situation in general, existed in a latent form in Soviet Russia. It was the time when there was a tendency in the Russian Federation for the non-Russian population not to speak their mother tongue. Therefore, they lost the ability to speak their mother tongue and recognized the Russian language as their native language. According to the research made by V.V. Romashkin “almost half of Karelians, more than a third of Bashkirs, Komi, Mordvins, Udmurts, 20 to 25% of Mari and Chuvash consider Russian as their native language. In the period from 1970 to 1989, the share of the Buryat, Komi, Mari, Udmurt, Chuvash, Yakut people who ceased to speak their native languages had even doubled, and the number of Karelians and Mordvins had increased by half” [5, p. 31]. It should be said that experts argue that the language is endangered and is becoming extinct if it is studied by less than 30% of schoolchildren of the ethnic community.

The collapse of the Soviet system has revealed a protest feature in the nature and existence of regional languages, and the inconsistency of the current language situation with the absolute dominance of the Russian language. In addition, it is worth emphasizing that Russification was often a combination of voluntary and forced processes; it was a reality caused by opportunities in interethnic communication that made it possible to ensure and implement the right for every individual to live a full-fledged life. However, voluntarily or not, they give up their culture and language in favour of the Russian one. Similar processes can be observed today in relation to the English language in the contemporary globalizing world; in fact, English has become the language of international communication.

Drawing a parallel between modern global processes in the world and the situation in Russia in the early 90s of the last century we cannot but call the attention to the fact that the growth of national consciousness of non-Russian peoples of the Russian Federation has led to the emergence of 260 national cultural organizations on its territory. In the second half of the decade, they made more than 420 in number, 43% of them offered courses to study a native language [6].

So, there are two main trends in the modern world. On the one hand, English remains the predominant means of international inter-ethnic communication, despite some attempts to weaken its role and influence in some regions. On the other hand, there is a growing interest in national, regional languages as an important component of national identity. Hence, the living languages are essential for national security in the language sphere; sociolinguistic processes ensure the preservation of national identity for

representatives of all ethnic groups in the global world. They are also interconnected with the external circumstances that provide stability, resilience, and balance of the language situation of the states. We suggest that the major components of language security should be considered here.

2. Methodology

The current language situation in the Russian Federation, in the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the related experience of European countries have been studied, and the results and findings have been used as the methodological basis of the investigation.

The study involved consideration of the trends typical for the education system, regulatory framework, social and cultural spheres of different societies under the conditions of globalization. First of all, it is worth mentioning that there is an intrinsic linguistic potential specific for different languages because it is obvious that different languages possess different degrees of ‘survivability’, ‘strength’, ‘competitiveness’. To ensure that the language continues to exist, it should function as a means of communication, cater to different spheres of human activity and perform a number of predefined functions [7]. Only in this case the language proves its intended function, its purpose, and does not just turn into historical and cultural value, archaic as Latin, or old Slavonic or Sanskrit. The language situation reflecting the balance of languages in society is determined by a number of external conditions, and the major ones we are discussing in this paper.

2.1. The official status of the language

In world practice, the legal regulation of the language existence and development in the country is carried out in several ways. The first option: to announce a dominant language to be an official language throughout the country. The second option: to declare all historical languages to be official ones. For example, the four historical languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh) are the official languages of Switzerland; two languages (Finnish and Swedish) are official ones in Finland where 91% of the population is Finnish, and only 6% of the population is Swedish [8]. In accordance with Article 68 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the official state language throughout its territory is Russian. At the same time, the Basic Law recognizes the right of the republics to establish their official languages. At present, 14 constituent republics of the Russian Federation have adopted legislative acts establishing the status of national languages as official languages. On these territories, along with Russian is recognized as the first official language the official regional language(s) that have also been declared. For example, three official languages are legally approved in the Republic of Mari El and the Republic of Mordovia.

2.2. Official language policy

Adoption of legislative acts in the field of language is intended to enhance the prestige of the national languages, expand spheres of their functioning, and create conditions for their preservation, development, as well as for protection of language rights and personal language independence of an individual and the people on the whole. This historical period is characterized by the fact that all languages in the country with literary traditions and writing systems are used in education and training, though with different intensity and at different levels of the Russian educational system. The authors believe that the defining features of the modern language situation are the following:

- (a) assimilation into the dominant language, particularly significant in the information sphere;
- b) the threat of disappearance, extinction, of living national (regional) languages which concerns not only their speakers but also researchers. Undoubtedly, language merely reflects an objective reality. Therefore, the contemporary world so prone to conflicts can bring to destabilization, to the emergence of various kinds of threats endangering the language system and the state as a whole.

2.3. Language security threats

Globalization has changed the language situation throughout the world. Moreover, it has affected the situation in Russia making the issue of language policy more complex and controversial. Considering language interaction phenomenon in terms of global processes we can see a certain contradiction between assimilative phenomena that can be justified pragmatically, and conservative-individualistic attitudes important to preserve national identity. It should, therefore, be emphasized that the heterogeneity of the language situation in the territory of the Russian Federation has developed considerably due to the uneven and unstable functioning of regional languages as a means of communication in various spheres of a certain nation's life. Language security threats are rooted in the asymmetry of the language situation itself and a number of misconceptions. The destruction of language caused by the onslaught of Anglo-American vocabulary is a dangerous phenomenon for a national language. This form of language aggression undermines the roots of national culture, changes the traditions and values of the people.

3. Discussion

Language security factors are the circumstances that affect the sociolinguistic situation in a certain region of the world, influence the functioning of national languages can strengthen or weaken their development. Depending on the action vector, factors form the opposition, notably the factors

stabilizing and destabilizing the language situation. Let us consider the most influential of the factors.

3.1. Group of stabilizing factors

1. Historically, a long-term neighborhood of ethnic groups raises the hope for a conflict-free resolution of language tension in the region. Language tolerance is associated with an organic and non-aggressive co-existence of languages. Together with the long-term use of a common language for international communication, they make a serious basis for the balanced existence and development of all languages in the global world [9, 10].

2. A balanced and well-thought-out public policy that encourages official bilingualism and multilingualism reflected in language laws. For example, the development of languages is guaranteed by legislation, the law on the state language of the Russian Federation adopted in 2005 which represents a set of rights granted to every individual man and the nation:

- the right to choose the language or languages for communication and in education;
- the right to create and develop the literary form of the mother tongue;
- the right to use the native language in official and business communication providing translation to the official language [*The Federal Law on the State Language of the Russian Federation*, 01.06.2005 N 53-FZ (last edition), http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_5-3749/, accessed 04.10.2018].

3. Cultural and language policy of a country aimed at developing communicative resources of national languages [11]. The principles of regional language policy reflected in the legislative acts contribute to ensuring equal opportunities and creating conditions to implement and develop all components that make up the communicative potential of the language:

- the spoken language used in the upbringing of children involving the language in the family and the language of everyday communication;
- writing system;
- a literary language;
- the official language [12].

Undoubtedly, a positive result is the fact that national languages are being studied in equal volumes in all educational institutions of the overwhelming number of countries. In the early XXI century there was a survey carried out in Russia according to which there were 21 state universities and 11 branches in Tatarstan with a total number of 108 000 students, and almost all educational institutions there created conditions for entrance examinations to be taken in two state languages of the Republic, i.e., in Russian and Tatar. Still, the multi-ethnic and multilingual nature of the population in the republic suggests special attention be paid to other regional languages as well. According to the survey, there are 148 mixed schools providing teaching in two languages, such as Chuvash, Tatar and Russian and Chuvash, to 3700 children in the republic. The

Udmurt language is taught in 45 schools of the Republic, Mari language is studied by schoolchildren in 10 schools, the Mordovian language has also been introduced in schools [13].

As we can see, positive factors form a fairly solid basis for the development of national languages and balanced functioning of the language systems in all spheres of human activity.

3.2. A group of destabilizing factors

1. The idea of sovereignty, sometimes verging on nationalist sentiments, in fact, leads to the infringement of the interests of small ethnic groups. Dependence on the nation who view themselves as a distinct one, i.e., national self-determination, brings about situations when the majority of the population is deprived of their rights because they speak only the state language, for example, Russian in Russia. This policy generates regional linguistic nationalism [A. Solodov, *Language terror continues in Latvia*, 2016, <https://www.kompravda.eu/daily/26582/3598143/>, accessed 04.10.2018]. Displacement of the national language or its 'replacement' in the political, economic and cultural life of the state with the language of international communication does not contribute to the strengthening of the integrity of the country. It hinders the younger generation's national self-identification.

2. Globalization is increasingly affecting the internal in-state language conditions in developed countries. World language practice proves that it is a common language that is necessary for international communication, and the English language is taking over the world accepting these responsibilities [14]. The continuing process of Russification in the sphere of interethnic language practices in the territory of the Russian Federation can be considered as a similar factor, in fact. Furthermore, the Russian language is a reliable repository of universal information of mankind, a powerful means of interethnic communication in a multilingual state. Nevertheless, these conditions suggest that regional languages are at some risk, and considerable efforts are required on the part of society and the state to balance the overall language situation.

3. Uneven development of national languages is associated with a number of purely linguistic reasons. In this regard, it should be recognized that even if the national languages of all actors in the global world have equal rights, the conditions and development level of languages and cultures of these peoples will be different [15].

4. Conclusions

Systematic monitoring of negative and positive language processes taking into consideration sufficient and reliable in quality researches is becoming an urgent need to order to preserve the unity, integrity and normal development of the global world. The real-world experience shows that in order to fully exercise the right to have two or more official languages, preserve national languages and

develop their communicative resources we need a serious legislative framework, special programs for the development of national languages and measures to stimulate the study of languages (free courses, schools, good teachers, textbooks, and much more). Though further research is, certainly, needed, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Settlement of the current language situation requires joint efforts of linguists, public and the state authorities in order to ensure the safety of the national language community.
2. Preservation and development of languages causes expansion of domestic and international cooperation rather than isolationism.
3. Protection of some languages should not be achieved at the expense of official or any other languages.
4. Development of tolerance and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity should be at the core of any state language policy.
5. The Russian Orthodox Church is of great importance, since it contributes to the preservation of divine services in old Slavonic language, which is the basis for the Orthodox tradition in all spheres of Church and common life.

A long period of time and painstaking efforts are needed to create a stable and balanced multilingual community and ensure language stability which definitely is a factor of national security in the global world.

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