

Problems of Linguistic Discrimination in the Communicative Space of Tajikistan: Legal, Sociolinguistic and Educational Aspects

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Abstract

Although it is disregarded and banned, a person can be discriminated in the society according to various attributes – due to the person's language, religion, nationality, social background. The problem touches upon not only individuals but minorities as well. Almost all states have one or several groups – minorities – that differ from the main population in ethnic, linguistic or religious lines. Most international treaties on human rights contain anti-discriminatory provisions. In addition to the main rights of the freedom of conscience, thought and associations, the principal legal guarantees for each representative of minorities consist in being treated equally by the law and courts and in equal protection of laws. The paper studies the problems of legal, sociolinguistic and educational basis of linguistic discrimination in the communicative space of Tajikistan. Linguistic discrimination and political correctness are closely connected with the language policy of the state. With exoglossic linguistic situation being characteristic for Tajikistan arises a need to study the questions related to linguistic discrimination. This will allow making certain adjustments to language building and harmonizing the ethnic and interethnic interests on the basis of a balanced and scientifically justified language policy.

Keywords: *discrimination, linguistic minorities, legal and sociolinguistic aspects, education, Tajikistan.*

Introduction

Just like a living organism, language is in the condition of endless motion and development while existing not only for transmitting the ideas but also for organizing them, for interpreting the structure and meaning of the world in the human consciousness.

Simultaneously, language is a potential tool of oppression, and a powerful one. The use of a discriminating language is one of the reasons hindering the achievement of social and public equality. In their turn, all discriminatory phenomena found their way into a new one that since the 1960s has been called linguistic discrimination. As a protest against linguistic discrimination, the notions of political correctness (PC), correctness toward various ethnic, sexual, age-related

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and other groups of society were introduced into scientific discourse. The notion is closely related to the idea of cultural pluralism.

Among the problems of the rise of polyethnic communities in the post-Soviet states, globalization (Ladygina, 2015) and transformation agenda in socio-economic and educational sphere (Bittman & Russell, 2016; Drascovic et al., 2017, Tarman & Chigisheva, 2017) the issue of language policy is one of the most urgent. The range of opinions on the most "necessary and correct" way of implementation of the latter is surprisingly broad (Tarman & Baytak, 2012). Here Tajikistan is no exception. During the process of the development and rise of the independent state, different attitudes toward the language problems in the Republic were observed. In the period of demise of the multinational and multilingual state, the first question to be dealt with was that about the development of the national – Tajik – language. The government and the solidary national intellectuals expanded the scope of the Tajik language in every way possible, which promoted its functional and infrastructural development. However, the full-fledged language policy should not be limited by the problems of the main language of the state only, as well as the question should not be over politicized.

The following languages function within Tajikistan: Tajik as the native and the state one, as well as a means of international communication for individual ethnic groups of Badakhshan; Russian as the native language (for the Russians, Koreans, Jews, Tatars etc.) and a shared language of international communication; Uzbek as the native language of the largest national diaspora after the titular nation of the republic. The Pamir nationalities – smaller ethnoses living in Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region, numbering over 270 thousand in total but occupying 45% of the area of the republic – are quite a special group, as they speak 14 languages and dialects that are conventionally united under a single name of the Pamir languages. Alongside with the listed larger national and linguistic formations, there are the Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Tatars, Koreans (categorized as the Russian-speaking population), Kirghiz (compact communities in the Murgab and Dzhirgatal areas) who live in the republic. All the above languages, except Tajik, are referred to the languages of national and ethnic minorities.

With exoglossic linguistic situation being characteristic for Tajikistan, the questions related to linguistic discrimination have to be studied, which will allow making certain adjustments to language building and harmonizing the ethnic and interethnic interests on the basis of a balanced and scientifically justified language policy.

Literature Review

Linguistic discrimination can be considered in various aspects and it overlaps the subject of the research of a number of applied fields of study. In this investigation of the problems of linguistic discrimination, the authors deal with aspects that are the most relevant for the society of Tajikistan: the legal, social and linguistic ones. The consideration of linguistic discrimination problems is closely connected with such sociolinguistic areas as language planning, language building and language policy.

Linguistic discrimination is otherwise called linguicism. Linguicism is discrimination based on language or dialect: linguistically argued racism. It's also known as linguistic discrimination (Nordquist, 2017). The term was coined in the 1980s by linguist Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1988), who defined *linguicism* as "ideologies and structures that are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, p. 339).

Several forms of linguicism are subdivided: "Overt linguicism is exemplified by the prohibition of the use of particular languages for instruction. Covert linguicism is illustrated by de facto non use of certain languages as languages of instruction, even if their use is not explicitly forbidden" (Velez, 1998).

"Linguicism can be *open* (the agent does not try to hide it), *conscious* (the agent is aware of it), *visible* (it is easy for non-agents to detect), and *actively action oriented* (as opposed to 'merely' attitudinal). Or it can be *hidden, unconscious, invisible, and passive* (lack of support rather than active opposition), typical of later phases in the development of minority education" (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2000, p. 109).

"Fundamentally, linguicism is a matter of depriving people of power and influence due to their language" (Gynther, 2007, p. 221).

Professor N. Golev (1999) suggests using the term "linguistic discrimination"; he singles out two types of linguistic discrimination (Golev, 1999, p. 34):

- politically-related and legal, as the people of "non-titular" nationality living in the country experience discrimination through limitations due to their language (which was the case of some republics of the former USSR, Tajikistan included),

- daily life and legal, as the people being in their native country and city turn out to be eliminated from full-fledged communicative acts, because they have to stay in several semiotic systems simultaneously without their consent for that.

The problem of linguistic discrimination implies turning to ecolinguistics. *Linguistic ecology* is the study of languages in relation to one another and to various social factors. Also known as *language ecology* or *ecolinguistics* (Nordquist, 2016). Haugen defined *language ecology* as "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen, 1972, p. 325).

Linguistic ecology studies the language sphere of habitation of humans and the society, the interaction between language, an individual as a linguistic persona and the individual's environment. With regard to this, language is viewed as an integral component of the chain of relationships between people, the society and the nature. Functioning and development of language are envisaged as an ecosystem, and the outside world – as a linguistic concept (Golev, 1999, p. 35-36).

The Tajik language is one of the pillars of statehood, and the state support of Tajik is up to the strategic interests of Tajikistan. However, Tajik being declared a state language does not diminish or prejudice the constitutional rights of citizens whose native language is any other one. Tajikistan seeks to create an optimum balance between the right of everyone to study, support and develop their native culture and language and to ensure the integration of their representatives into society as its equal members speaking the state language. The respect of language rights, the creation of conditions for maintaining the areas of functioning of the numerous languages of the national and ethnic minorities, including those of native speakers of endogenous languages of Tajikistan optimize the process of international communication and promote a successful state-building.

The legal protection of languages implies liability for violation of laws on language. However, although adherence to language standards and the culture of its use are not regulated by the law, it is an important factor of anti-discriminatory measures that allows saving the richness of the native language, the relevance of its being perceived by others, thus creating a comfortable communicative environment, reducing its aggressiveness and propensity to conflict.

Methodological Framework

Analysis of Significant Methods of Research on Linguistic Discrimination

The objective of this study is to analyze the legal, sociolinguistic and educational aspects of the problem of linguistic discrimination in the communicative space of the Republic of Tajikistan. In 2015-2016, the authors conducted the research "Cognitive and ethno-psycholinguistic study of the problems of tolerance and interethnic communications" (Iskandarova et al., 2015, Iskandarova et al., 2016). Within the research area of focus, they studied the questions concerning the analysis of discourse, sociological monitoring of sources of the ethnic intolerance in the RT, ethnic stereotypes, the differences in axiological picture of the world in the Russians and the Tajiks, association area, the formation of a linguistic persona's field of tolerance, which has allowed them to identify the main particularities of the ethnic and psycholinguistic background of the interethnic relationships having formed among the young people of Tajikistan as well as the sources of intolerance. The research has led the authors to understanding of the fact that intolerance is closely connected with linguistic discrimination. Accordingly, they believe the tasks of this study to be consideration of the bases of legal regulation of discrimination ban in the RT, including that on language-related discrimination; sociolinguistic monitoring of changes in the linguistic situation in Tajikistan; and the study of conditions of languages functioning within Tajikistan's communicative space.

Quite an important question for studying linguistic discrimination as a scientific object is the technique of the research. The analysis of works on this topic conducted has allowed identifying two main approaches depending on which the relevant methodology is selected: the theoretical and the applied one.

When the applied approach is adopted, the current condition of various aspects of linguistic discrimination in the society is represented, most frequently, in the quantitative or factual expression. Within the analytical approach, conclusions are made and forecasts are given as for the emergence of conflicts based on linguistic discrimination and solution options may be put forward. However, the authors believe this approach to be a derivative from the theoretical one or to be at the junction of both.

Selected Research Methodology

The study of linguistic discrimination implies a multi-dimensional, generalizing and systemic analysis of the legislative basis of the state language policy, as well as that of diagnostic

parameters and statistical data that reflect the most objectively any changes occurring in the communicative space of Tajikistan society. Based on the integrated analysis of the international and national law, the legal regulation of discrimination ban, including that on language-based discrimination, has been considered. Sociolinguistic monitoring of changes in the linguistic situation in Tajikistan, the study of conditions of languages functioning, the implementation of the right for linguistic ecology allow revealing the linguistic trends in order to adjust the state language policy, to prevent linguistic discrimination, and to create a comfortable communicative environment.

The works on linguistic discrimination (Inceli, 2015; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Velez, 1998; Golev, 1999; Gynther, 2007; Nordquist, 2017), linguistic ecology (Haugen, 1972; Skvorodnikov, 1992; Golev, 1999; Nordquist, 2016), and sociolinguistic situation, including that in Tajikistan (Nikolskiy, 2010; Nozimov, 2010; Shambezoda, 2013; Usmonov, 2014) formed the methodological basis of the research.

Results and Discussion

Legal aspect. Legal regulation of the ban on discrimination

As neither the international law nor the law of the Republic of Tajikistan contains a definition of the notion "linguistic (language) discrimination", the authors' definition will be based on three kinds of documents: the international legal documents of the comprehensive type; the documents adopted specifically for protection against discrimination; and documents adopted for protection of rights of the national minorities.

Anti-discriminatory provisions are contained in most international treaties on human rights, in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 27 of the Covenant is especially noteworthy: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language" (Kartashkin & Lukasheva, 2002, p. 136-138). This article grants the minorities the right for national, ethnic, religious or linguistic identity, just like the right to keep the distinctions and particularities that the minorities wish to maintain and develop. Although article 27 refers to the rights of persons belonging to minorities in their countries of residence, the official recognition of a minority by the state is not a condition for granting these rights. Article 27 does not call for

special measures to be taken by the states, but it is the states ratifying the Covenant that within their jurisdiction shall ensure the minorities an opportunity to use their rights, and it is the state that shall take action for eradicating any inequality and discrimination suffered by minorities, as necessary.

The principles of a non-discriminatory approach are also included in the documents on human rights of the Council of Europe, such as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Discrimination based on language, religion, national or social origin as well as place of birth is prohibited. The principal legal guarantees for each representative of the minorities consist in equality before the law and courts and in equal protection by the law, in addition to the main rights of the freedom of conscience, thought and association.

According to Article 2 of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the expression "intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief", should be understood as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on religion or belief and having as its purpose or as its effect nullification or impairment of the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis" (Protopopov, 2002, p. 22-23).

The following international legal documents ratified by the Republic of Tajikistan also provide liability for deeds of possibly discriminatory nature: the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of November 15, 2000 (Boboev et al. 2011, p. 418), Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of September 5, 2003 (Boboev et al. 2011, p. 540), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of December 21, 1965 (Boboev et al. 2011, p. 239), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of December 16, 1966 (Boboev et al. 2011, p. 234), the Convention of the Commonwealth of Independent States on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms dated 26.05.1995. (Boboev et al. 2011, p. 258), and others.

The legal instrument of the United Nations reflects the special rights of minorities in the individual document "Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities" (Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 1992). The text of the Declaration while ensuring the balance of rights of minorities for keeping and developing their identity and

originality ultimately protects the territorial integrity and political independence of peoples on the whole. The principles contained in the Declaration determine the special rights of minorities in addition to the generally recognized human rights guaranteed in other international documents. The Declaration does not put any legal obligations upon the states but it implies the possibility of political influence on the part of all member states of the UN, as the document was developed and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

In particular, the Declaration grants the minorities the state protection of their existence and the national, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity and originality (Article 1); the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public (Article 2.1); and the right to participate in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life (Article 2.2).

According to the Declaration, states shall protect and guarantee the rights of persons belonging to minorities by means of the following: 1) to create favorable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, traditions and customs; 2) to grant them adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue; 3) to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within the country and at the same time to grant the persons belonging to minorities adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society and culture of the community as a whole; 4) to grant them opportunities to participate fully in the economic progress and development of the country as a whole; 5) to take into account the legitimate interests of minorities in implementing the national policy and programs as well as in planning and implementing the programs of cooperation and assistance; 6) to cooperate with other states on questions relating to minorities, inter alia, exchanging information and experiences, in order to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

Many of these questions belong to the competence of language policy and language planning and state-building. States are expected to inform the minorities about any guarantees of their rights available as for the use of their language in private and in public, the use of their language at courts, the possibility for the representatives of a minority to be educated in their own language, to freely practise their religion, to create and maintain their own cultural associations being a key element of the rights of the minority for keeping their cultural originality, as well as about their being represented in the local and central authorities.

There are a wide range of international documents that contain provisions related to the rights of regional languages and languages of ethnic minorities (minority languages): the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. For the member states of the Council of Europe, the main document is the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950). The legal instrument was adopted in relation to CIS countries (No. 1249 in 2001). There are also The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities, the Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, etc. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) adopted in 1992 for the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages of Europe and suggesting a contemporary understanding of regional and minority languages is deemed to be the most important document in the area under consideration.

The legal status of ethnic minorities in the Republic of Tajikistan is determined in the Constitution of the state and in other laws current, as well as in the international regulations and laws adopted by Tajikistan.

The Constitution of the RT bans discrimination according to race, nationality and ethnic origin (Articles 1, 2, 5, 14, 24, 36, 41) (Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2016). All nations and peoples living within the RT have the right to freely use their native language. The Republic of Tajikistan has ratified a number of international regulations concerning the national minorities, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities. Under the requirements of the Constitution, they are considered to be an integral part of legislative system of Tajikistan and they shall be given priority in cases of any discrepancy of provisions of laws of the republic with standards contained in these documents.

The analysis of international legal regulations allows determining the language-based discrimination as any form of unjustified distinction or limitation that impairs or voids an individual's use of rights consolidated in the international legal documents or domestic law due to the individual's linguistic belonging. Linguistic (language-based) discrimination takes place if a person is treated worse than the others in a comparable situation due to the person's not

knowing or knowing poorly the official language set in this state or locality. The notion of linguistic discrimination also includes the actions aimed at discouraging or challenging the keeping or development of languages of the minorities. However, failure to fulfill its liabilities in the area of keeping and development of minority languages in its territory by the state is not always considered to be a breach of the equality principle that generates discrimination. Evidently, this is associated with the fact that simultaneous use of a large quantity of languages in the public sphere in a poly-ethnic state can paralyze the administration. Meanwhile, any obstacles in using a native language in private life, both in a written and oral form, shall be considered as linguistic discrimination. Hence the language policy of the government of Tajikistan toward e.g. the Djugi (Mugat) and Yaghnobi cannot be qualified as discriminatory from the standpoint of law. However, attention has to be drawn to the moral liabilities of the state in the sphere of protection of the linguistic rights. In particular, this is emphasized in an alternative report on Tajikistan's fulfilling the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in connection with consideration of the 9th-11th periodical reports of the RT for the years of 2012-2015: "Outreach programs have to be developed that are aimed at overcoming the alienation of the Mugat and their exclusion from the society of Tajikistan..." (Alternative report on Tajikistan's fulfilling the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in connection with consideration of the 9th-11th periodical reports of the RT for the years of 2012-2015, 2017, p. 7). In recommendations to the Government of Tajikistan, it is also suggested that they should render the state support for the keeping and development of the Yaghnobi and Pamir languages: finance academic research of these languages, introduce them into the school program.

The situation is regulated by the Law on language, in particular, by Article 3 thereof, which states that the questions related to the status and functioning of the Pamir languages are decided by the Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region independently (Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on the state language of the Republic of Tajikistan, 1989).

The Republic of Tajikistan recognizes the equal rights of languages, ensures legal guarantees and a respectful attitude to all languages being in use in the republic and protects the integral right of its citizens of any nationality to develop their language and culture and the equality of all citizens before the law regardless of their native language.

Sociolinguistic aspect. Language policy

The sociolinguistic aspect of studying the linguistic discrimination implies turning to language planning, building and the state language policy. The language policy is defined as an integral part of the national policy, the theory and practice of conscious and targeted influence of certain subjects on the progress of language development, the focused and scientifically grounded administration of functioning of the existing languages, the creation and improvement of the new linguistic means of communication. In his thesis research "The linguistic situation of today's Tajikistan: condition, particularities and prospects of development", A.A. Nozimov (2010) subdivides three strategic directions of language building in the language policy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- the expansion and consolidation of social and communicative functions of the state language;
- maintenance of the general cultural functions of Russian;
- the development of other languages of the peoples of Tajikistan.

Another objective of language policy of the Republic of Tajikistan is to create the optimum conditions for linguistic normalization, to settle functional relationships between the state language and other languages functioning in the republic, as well as to influence in a consistent and focused way the functional status and standardization of the Tajik language, normalization and alignment of its terminology (Nozimov, 2010, p. 4).

Language building and planning directly depends on the formed linguistic situation. Linguistic situation is one of the main categories of sociolinguistics. According to Ch. Ferguson (1989), the term "linguistic situation" refers to the overall configuration of use of a language at the given time and place and includes the information about how many languages and what exactly languages are used within this range, how many people speak them, under what circumstances, and what attitudes and opinions toward these languages are held by members of this collective (Ferguson, 1989, p. 123).

The modern linguistic situation of Tajikistan was influenced by geopolitical change due to the demise of the Soviet Union and the formation of independent states on its territory that redefined the role of ethnic and national element in public life and state political composition. The role was expressed in an aspiration to revive the ethnic languages and cultures. As a result of increased changeability of ethnic self-identification and migration of ethnic groups, some groups

shrank while others increased in number. In Tajikistan, the process was also affected by the civil strife of the 1990s.

It does not seem possible to specify an exact quantity of languages. Objective difficulties of sociolinguistic identification and calculation of Tajikistan's languages are associated first of all with linguonyms and ethnonyms mismatching and a special status of certain peoples. Moreover, during the census, the principles of ethnic and attitude classification are not adhered to (Nozimov, 2010, p. 14).

Lines were introduced in the census form that united peoples and languages of India and Pakistan, as well as "other nationalities" and "non-specified nationalities in the census form". According to the results of census of 2000 in the Republic of Tajikistan, 93 languages could be identified, while it was 88 in 2010, including the peoples of India and Pakistan. There are numerous ethnic groups that have a minor quantity of representatives and yet keep their ethnic and language identity. 57 languages have the number of speakers not exceeding 200 people (as per the 2000 census, they amounted to 48 languages). Among them, there is a special group of languages having a critical number of speakers – less than 10 people (35 languages). Thus, the exoglossic character of the language situation in Tajikistan has high averaged figures.

A special group of languages of Tajikistan is made up by the immigrant languages – the languages of peoples of other states who came to Tajikistan both for temporary and permanent residence. The immigrant languages fall beyond the language policy and language planning. Nevertheless, the fact of their existence and repeated registration of the immigrant languages in censuses makes one take consider them when taking sociolinguistic inventory of languages. It is non-governmental organizations founded under the Law "On public associations" that deal with the problems of keeping and development of such ethnoses and their culture: the society of the Azerbaijani of Tajikistan "Dostluq" (SAT), the Georgian cultural and educational society "Satvistimo Iberia", the Armenian community of Tajikistan named after Mesrop Mashtots (ACT), the Association of the Uigurs of the Republic of Tajikistan (AURT), the German society "Wiedergeburt" of the Republic of Tajikistan (GSRT), the Society of Ossetian culture "Alan" (SOC) etc. Their activity promotes mutual understanding between various nationalities and harmonization of national relationships. The total of 21 public associations of national minorities are registered who are active members of the civil society fruitfully participating in social, political and economic life of the country (Nozimov, 2010, p. 22).

In order to determine the sociolinguistic condition of the communicative environment, an important parameter is the geographical range of occurrence of languages. In the Republic of Tajikistan, three sociolinguistic areas can be singled out: the northern one (it is characterized by a high prestige of Tajik, Uzbek and Russian), the southern one (it is characterized by a high prestige of Tajik and Russian), with two sub-areas subdivided here – the Dzhirgatal area (the Kyrgyz, the Tajik and the Russian languages enjoy a high prestige) and the Shaartuz and Tursunzade areas (these are distinguished by a high prestige of Uzbek, Tajik and Russian). The third sociolinguistic area is the eastern or Badakhshan one (its feature is a wide use of the local languages, Tajik and Russian as well). Within this area, a sub-area should also be identified – the Murgab area (this is characterized by a wide use of the Kyrgyz, Tajik, Russian and Shugni languages) (Shambezoda, 2013, p. 16-17).

A characteristic of anti-discriminatory language policy is the opportunity of instruction in one's native language. The law on language does not prevent education, as well as activities in culture and art in the native languages. At schools, children are taught in languages of ethnic minorities: Russian, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Uzbek. However, there is a wide range of problems in this sphere, in particular, lack of teachers and textbooks at schools designed for ethnic minorities. Many representatives of ethnic minorities have quite a bad knowledge of the state language, which results in barriers to accessibility of higher education. This is true first of all for the Kyrgyz of Dzhirgatal and Murgab, the Uzbek in the near-border areas of Sughd and Khatlon regions of the RT, in the republican subordination regions of Tursunzade and Shahrinaw, and for the Turkmens in Kabadiyan and Kolhkozabad of Tajikistan. At higher educational institutions, the instruction is in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek. So, for example, Tajik State Pedagogical University, Khujand and Kurgan-Tyube State Universities train students in Uzbek in a number of pedagogical specialities. The professionals speaking Kyrgyz and Turkmen are mostly trained in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenia or they study at higher educational institutions of Tajikistan in the Russian and Tajik languages.

Within the information space of the country, there are quite a lot of mass media in various languages. As of January 1, 2011, 412 newspapers, magazines and information agencies were registered in the RT, of them 268 newspapers and 136 magazines. 10 of the said titles are published in the Uzbek language, 1 in Kyrgyz, while 260 have mixed materials in the Tajik, Uzbek, Russian and other languages.

In the republic, there are 8 information agencies active in Tajik, Russian and English. In the digital mass media there is also time spared for various broadcasts. So, the total volume of all-republican television programs per week is 20 hours 50 minutes, among them there are broadcasts in Uzbek, Russian, Arabic and English. Regional television also has programs in the languages of ethnic minorities. The total volume of programs in the languages of ethnic minorities amounts to 80 hours in the republican and regional radio channels.

Within the communicative space, the numerous languages have different statuses. The main subjects of the ethnic and linguistic situation are Tajik, Uzbek and Russian. With regard to this, the place and role of the Tajik language and the Russian language are consolidated by law: by the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, by the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on language (dated July 22, 1989) and the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the state language of the Republic of Tajikistan" (October 5, 2009), by the "Program of the Government of Tajikistan on the development of the state language and other languages in the state territory of the Republic of Tajikistan" (dated October 21, 1997). While Tajik has the state language status, Russian is, under Article 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, the language of international communication.

In spite of its sphere of use being narrowed down in the sovereign Tajikistan, Russian remains fairly important. It still is one of the main languages of the mass media. According to the information of the Ministry of Culture of the RT, in 1998, 32 titles were published in Russian of all 101 printed media issued in Dushanbe, and of 347 printed mass media, about 60 editions were in Russian at the early 2011 (Mulloev, 2017). In Tajikistan, the Russian periodicals are distributed without restraint, and the official mouthpiece of the government of Tajikistan, the *Novaya Gazeta*, is issued in Russian. The Tajik-speaking television has a daily news program in Russian, and the Russian radio station "Mayak" broadcasting covers the greater part of the area of the republic. There are also the Russian-speaking radio stations that enjoy popularity with the local people.

Tajikistan has no obstacles in using Russian for communication of citizens and as a working language in some international organizations that are accredited in the country. According to the paper of M. Mardon who refers to Olim Salimzoda, head of the Committee on International Relationships, Public Associations and Information of the lower chamber of the Parliament of Tajikistan, the Russian language is used in Tajikistan without any limitations

(Mardon & Abdullo, 2016). Although Tajik is the only state language, documents may be accepted by state institutions in both languages. Russian is used in legislation, and the business sector of the republic functions mainly in the Russian language.

According to the data of the official statistics organ – the Presidential Agency for Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan – as of the beginning of 2015, the population numbered 8 million 352 thousand people. The results of census of 2010 show quite a small number of the Russians in Tajikistan – thirty-five thousand, which is not more than 0,5% of the population of the country (Population of Tajikistan, 2016). As compared to 2000, the Russian population of the republic decreased 7-fold while the figure of the knowledge of Russian – by 1,8 times only. This must be due to Russian being a second mother tongue for 3 thousand 182 Tajiks (the data of 2010 census). Russian still is a native language for a part of the population, especially for those living in large cities like Dushanbe and Khujand.

Meanwhile, a survey of the Eurasian Monitor agency conducted in 2015 has shown that a quarter of the young Tajiks aged under 25 do not speak Russian and that on balance the use of Russian in the official events and in daily life reduced by half as compared to 2000. However, 70% of the young citizens of Tajikistan demonstrate a need of studying Russian realizing that their current knowledge level is quite poor. The data on Tajikistan show the highest proportion of the population of all surveyed countries who believe learning of Russian at schools of the country should be expanded. This demonstrates the people's dissatisfaction with the conditions and virtual absence of opportunities to study Russian in their country (Mardon & Abdullo, 2016).

Educational aspect

A snap poll of students of the Russian-Tajik (Slavonic) University conducted in 2016 confirmed the existence of interest for the Russian language and culture in the young people: 79% of the respondents prefer reading literature in Russian, 84% - watch and listen to TV and radio programs in Russian. Currently knowledge of the Russian language is a relevant objective for Tajik-speaking young people. 97% of the respondents believe the knowledge of Russian to be in demand as of today and it is necessary to study this language.

The necessity of knowing Russian is explained by the interest in getting an education in Russia. According to the data of Avesta.tj information agency that refer to Sh. Zukhurov, speaker of the Assembly of Representatives of the Parliament of the RT, while in October 2012 it was 4,7 thousand citizens of Tajikistan who studied at higher educational institutions of Russia,

November 2016 saw over 15 thousand of them (Avesta, 2016). Every year, the Tajik-speaking young people go to study at the best higher education institutions of Russia under the approved quotas. For instance, over 200 graduates of secondary schools of Tajikistan study at military higher education institutions of the Russian Federation at the expense of the budget of Russia annually, in order to train the personnel for border-security troops of Tajikistan (Alieva, 2011). In 2016, 3426 quotas were allocated to citizens of Tajikistan for studying in Russia along the line of the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad and Humanitarian Cooperation (Interfax, 2017), with 5702 applications submitted for the quotas.

The interest in getting education in Russian in Tajikistan itself has not gone down. At all Tajik-speaking schools, they have Russian as a compulsory subject beginning with grade two. In 2007, schools of the republic had 1777 classes with the Russian language of teaching (44315 students, that is 2,6 % of the total number of schoolchildren) (Usmonov, 2014, p. 82). The quantity of those willing to study Russian is growing. So, according to the data of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, at the end of 2014-2015 academic year, the quantity of children studying at the Russian classes amounted to 59 thousand, which is about 3,5 thousand higher as compared to 2013-2014 academic year. With regard to this, for these new learners, due to the lack of teachers of Russian, neither additional Russian schools nor additional Russian classes were opened, so the schoolchildren have to study at overcrowded classes. In connection to this, the fact described in the work by R. Kudratov (2017) seems curious: in 1942, the citizens of Leningrad being under siege managed to send through the blockade 15 thousand copies of textbooks in Russian that had been prepared shortly before the war (Kudratov, 2017, p. 23).

Some 28 % of the total number of students of higher education institutions of Tajikistan were taught in Russian in 2007/2008 academic year (Usmonov, 2014, p. 82). While until recently the only higher education institution with teaching in Russian has been the Russian-Tajik (Slavonic) University, now there are branches of Moscow higher education institutions (M. Lomonosov MSU, Moscow Power Engineering Institute, Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys). Groups taught in Russian have been launched at the most prestigious Tajik-speaking higher education institutions – Tajik National University, Technical University, and Medical University.

According to the data of Rossotrudnichestvo, as of September 1, 2017, about 30 educational institutions teaching in the Russian language function in the republic, with over 17 thousand people being educated in them (the Russian State News Agency).

S.A. Nikolskiy, while identifying the role of the Russian language, supposes that "...a gradual refusal from Russian as a means of intercultural communication can deprive the peoples of post-Soviet countries of the access to the world masterpieces translated into Russian for a prolonged period of time" (Nikolskiy, 2010, p. 37). Thus, an instantaneous refusal from Russian as from a part of the unpopular past will result in the problem of access to the world cultural values. The Russian language and the Russian culture remain an important means of integration into the world civilization even now. Meanwhile, using an international communication language has to be combined with keeping the mother tongue as the basis of national identity.

Conclusion

The Republic of Tajikistan is a multilingual country where people speaking in languages of different genetic groups and structural types live. The ethnolinguistic landscape of the modern Tajikistan is characterized on the one part by a high extent of linguistic diversity and on the other part – by three ethnoses, the Tajik, Uzbek and Russian ones, prevailing. Hence the linguistic situation is concentrated with these communication partners. While Tajik has the state language status, Russian is the language of International communication, which renders these languages a special importance in the communicative space of Tajikistan. The Tajik language is the fundamental factor for the development of national consciousness and unity of the state. The keeping of the sphere of functioning of the Russian language is ensured and supported by Tajikistan's pursuit of integration processes and maintaining the united cultural and educational space with the Russian Federation.

The Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Yaghnobi languages, the languages of Pamir peoples also have to get favorable conditions for being preserved and developed. For this, they have to be included into the system of education in the regions having the said communities.

On the one hand, this may result in higher importance of the ethnic languages, which contradicts the objective of creation of the united nation. However, on the other hand, choosing the ethnic languages for primary education can well be a compromise for the national issues and for solving the ethnic conflicts. The consistent educational work to explain the particularities of languages and cultures of the national and ethnic minorities is essential, and so are overcoming

the negative stereotypes of perception thereof, overcoming the alienation, and the promotion of tolerance. Multilingualism can be seen as a resource for the dynamic development of the society of Tajikistan.

The anti-discriminatory policy in the sphere of language will allow saving the territorial integrity, loyalty of the ethnic minorities of the country and creating a positive image of the democratic state in the eyes of the global community.

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