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Rethinking language shift: Instrumental and integrative attitudes in language transmission

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Abstract
Instrumental and integrative language attitudes play an important role in understanding the viability of languages. The present study investigates these attitudes among speakers of five titular languages of the Russian Federation (Ingush, Tatar, Tuvan, Chechen, and Yakut). This study aims to identify how age-related shifts in attitudes and usage impact language vitality within distinct sociolinguistic contexts. It investigates whether younger speakers of five autochthonous languages in the Russian Federation demonstrate patterns of language shift or language maintenance, focusing on the role of instrumental and integrative language attitudes across generations. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey and contextualized within the existing language ecologies, including societal, political, and institutional conditions. Contrary to expectations drawn from classical models of language shift, younger respondents (ages 18–25) displayed strong loyalty to their languages, actively using them in home and peer settings alongside Russian. These findings suggest that, in supportive sociolinguistic environments, youth can serve as active agents of language maintenance. Integrative attitudes were strong across all age groups, and Russian–titular language bilingualism is widely practiced, particularly in peer interactions, reflecting both symbolic attachment to autochthonous languages and the benefits of practical bilingual communication. Instrumental attitudes further revealed that languages were primarily maintained in culturally symbolic or informal contexts, while multilingual competence, including Russian and international languages, was valued for social mobility, particularly among younger cohorts. The research data also confirm that the respondents exhibit sustainable, ecologically conditioned patterns of bilingual practices. Overall, this study contributes to the sociolinguistic understanding of language use in multilingual contexts by revealing patterns of instrumental and integrative motivations across generations.
Keywords: *instrumental language attitudes, integrative language attitudes, intergenerational transmission of language, language vitality, autochthonous language, language of interethnic communication*

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Переосмысление языкового сдвига: инструментальные и интегративные установки в межпоколенческой передаче языков

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Аннотация
Инструментальные и интегративные языковые установки играют важную роль в понимании жизнеспособности языков. Настоящее исследование рассматривает эти установки на материале пяти титульных языков Российской Федерации (ингушского, татарского, тувинского, чеченского и якутского). Целью исследования было выявить, какие тенденции наблюдаются среди молодых носителей пяти языков коренных народов Российской Федерации — к языковому сдвигу или сохранению родного языка и какую роль в этом играют инструментальные и интегративные языковые установки в разных поколениях. Данные были собраны с помощью анкетного опроса и интерпретированы с учетом существующих языковых экосистем, включая социальные, политические и институциональные условия. Вопреки ожиданиям, основанным на классических моделях языкового сдвига, молодые респонденты (18–25 лет) продемонстрировали высокую приверженность своим родным языкам, активно используя их в сферах домашнего и дружеского общения параллельно с русским языком. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что в существующих социолингвистических условиях молодое поколение способно внести вклад в сохранение языка. Было выявлено, что интегративные установки весомы во всех возрастных группах, а двуязычие «русский–титульный язык» широко практикуется в сфере дружеского общения, что отражает символическую привязанность к коренным языкам, а также практическую пользу двуязычного общения. Инструментальные установки также продемонстрировали, что коренные языки преимущественно сохраняются в культурно-символических или неформальных контекстах, в то время как полиязычная компетенция (русский и международные языки) важна для социальной мобильности, особенно среди представителей молодого поколения. Полученные данные также подтверждают, что у респондентов наблюдаются устойчивые экологически обусловленные модели билингвальной компетенции. В целом, данное исследование способствует социолингвистическому пониманию практик использования языка в многоязычных контекстах и выявляет закономерности инструментальных и интегративных установок в разных поколениях.

Ключевые слова: *инструментальные языковые установки, интегративные языковые установки, межпоколенная передача языка, жизнеспособность языка, коренной язык, язык межэтнического общения*

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1. Introduction

The linguistic repertoire of an individual should be understood not as a fixed construct, but as a dynamic and evolving entity, shaped by a range of extralinguistic factors. In the contemporary sociolinguistic landscape, this evolution is driven by various forces, including population mobility, interlingual contact, the influence of dominant or global languages, and the need for effective communication within diverse educational and professional domains. As Vladimir M. Alpatov observes, individuals have to navigate a tension between two opposing imperatives: the articulation of personal or community identity and the necessity of mutual intelligibility (Alpatov 2014: 11). In most cases, the imperative for comprehensibility prevails, thereby complicating efforts to preserve linguistic diversity in the modern world. As a consequence, "the world is becoming more and more monotonous" (Kibrik 2021: 508). Languages do not simply vanish; they fade through complex, gradual processes that frequently begin with a weakening of intergenerational transmission.

In multilingual societies such as the Russian Federation, where 154[1] living languages coexist with the dominant Russian language, the sustainability of languages largely depends on the motivations of their speakers. While institutional support, socio-economic conditions, and language policy set the structural stage for language vitality, speaker attitudes — instrumental and integrative — mediate how these forces are experienced and acted upon in everyday life. This study explores that interaction in five distinct sociolinguistic ecologies of the Russian Federation.

In this context, the research model proposed in this paper, drawing on Gardner and Lambert's (1972) classical concepts of instrumental and integrative language attitudes, offers a framework for understanding the sociolinguistic forces that shape language transmission. Instrumental attitudes are motivated by practical benefits, such as access to education, employment, or upward mobility. Integrative attitudes, on the other hand, reflect a desire to connect with one's ethnolinguistic community, maintain heritage, and affirm cultural identity. Although the study does not aim to compare the languages, the observed differences in attitudes and transmission outcomes are best understood in light of each language's unique sociolinguistic ecology. This article examines how these two types of language attitudes, shaped by the sociolinguistic ideology of each language, are associated with patterns of intergenerational language transmission. Here, the sociolinguistic ecology refers to the interconnected social, institutional, and attitudinal factors that affect language use and transmission across generations. To understand the impact of these factors,

[1] Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences. *Languages of Russia*. Retrieved from https://jazykirf.iling-ran.ru/list_2022.shtml (accessed May 22, 2026).

this study analyzes language attitudes in the context of the sociolinguistic conditions documented through field data. Focusing on five autochthonous languages in the Russian Federation — Ingush, Tatar, Tuvan, Chechen, and Yakut — the research investigates how speaker attitudes shape patterns of bilingual language use across three generations. By addressing the understudied role of language attitudes in multiethnic contexts of modern-day Russia, this article contributes to broader debates in sociolinguistics concerning language maintenance, shift, and identity.

Grounded in this framework, it was assumed that younger participants (18–25 years old) would demonstrate a lower inclination to use their language in daily life, favoring Russian or global languages instead. Their language attitudes were expected to be more pragmatically oriented — driven by instrumental motivations such as education and employment—potentially leading to a decline in proficiency and a shift away from indigenous language use (Baker 2011). Conversely, it was anticipated that older respondents (aged 40–65) would exhibit stronger connections to their native language; therefore, being more integratively oriented. This group was more likely to have been socialized into their autochthonous language through family interactions, particularly since their grandparents often had limited proficiency in Russian and primarily spoke the native language[2]. During the childhood years of this age group (approximately 1960–1980), it was common for children to be cared for by their grandmothers, who typically retired between ages 50 and 55 and played a significant role in raising their grandchildren. Moreover, those in the younger part of this group (aged 40–50) attended school in the 1990s, when there was relatively greater institutional support for autochthonous language instruction[3], contributing to more sustained exposure and use. The middle group (26–39 years old) was expected to occupy an intermediary position between the younger and older cohorts, both in terms of language use and attitudes. As such, their attitudes were expected to reflect a mix of integrative and instrumental motivations.

This study aims to investigate how instrumental and integrative language attitudes influence the intergenerational transmission of the studied languages. Specifically, it examines the differences in language attitudes and bilingual

[2] People in Russia who are currently aged 40 to 65 were born between 1960 and 1984. This means their grandparents were likely to be born between 1900 and 1934. In the early 20th century, rural autochthonous communities in the national republics of the USSR had limited access to Russian-language education, particularly before the 1930s.
For example, data from the 1926 Soviet Census illustrates that among ethnic Tatars, only 32.569 men and 32.336 women lived in urban areas, while a significantly larger number — 509.622 men and 589.812 women — lived in rural villages (Census, 1926: 65). The vast majority of these individuals reported Tatar as their primary language.

[3] Since approximately the 1990s and up until 2018, the study of the languages of Russia's ethnic groups –such as Tatar, Sakha (Yakut), and others — was regulated by the authorities of the national republics. This policy mandated the compulsory study of the official language of the republic in which a school is located, regardless of the students' ethnic background or the preferences of their parents.

language use across three age groups in order to assess whether younger speakers demonstrate tendencies toward language shift or language maintenance within their sociolinguistic environments. It addresses the following research questions: (1) What are the patterns of actual language use across domains and generations? (2) What integrative and instrumental attitudes do speakers demonstrate toward their native languages and Russian? (3) How may age-related differences affect the languages' maintenance?

2. Overview of the studied languages: Status and usage

Russia is a federal state comprising various administrative divisions, including national republics. These republics are established based on the traditional territories of specific ethnic groups. In these republics, titular[4] languages hold official status alongside Russian. However, the sociolinguistic ecologies of these languages vary.

Chechen and Ingush belong to the Nakh-Daghestanian language family, while Tatar, Tuvan, and Yakut are part of the Turkic language family. Tatar, Tuvan, and Yakut are employed to a limited extent in formal domains of communication alongside Russian, while Ingush and Chechen are used insignificantly in such contexts, primarily serving semi-formal and informal communicative purposes. All the languages are incorporated into educational curricula at both school and university levels. The languages are allotted four or five lessons per week at the primary level and three or two lessons per week at secondary and higher levels. The majority of students study the languages at the primary level, with a smaller proportion continuing at the secondary level and only a few pursuing it in high school; the study of the national language is optional, and the decision to include it in a pupil's education is made by the parents. Universities offer programs focused on teacher training and language studies. Additionally, they are represented in various media outlets, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, and educational materials. Furthermore, these languages are visibly present in the linguistic landscape, appearing on street signs and other public signage. In summary, the languages under consideration currently do not possess the full functional status of state languages within their respective Republics. They remain subordinate to the Russian language, particularly in official contexts as well as in secondary and higher education.

- **The Ingush language** — GIDS Stage 4 (educational use)[5] — has the status of the state language of the Republic of Ingushetia, Russian Federation. Geographically, the Republic is situated on the northern slopes of the central portion

[4] The term 'titular language' refers to the language of the titular nation — an ethnic group whose name corresponds to the name of the national-territorial entity.

[5] This GIDS classification is based on the author's analysis of data provided by the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, with the reported domains and functions of language use matched to the corresponding GIDS stages. (n.d.). Languages of Russia. Retrieved from https://minlang.iling-ran.ru/en (accessed July 8, 2025).

of the Greater Caucasus Range and the adjacent smaller ranges. Out of a total population of 517.186 Ingush people in Russia, 333.151 individuals reported knowledge of the Ingush language, and approximately 98.0% of those who reported knowledge of Ingush also reported using it in everyday life (Census 2020). The demographic prominence of the Ingush language, comparable to that of Russian, is largely attributed to the mono-national composition of the Republic, where the primary ethnos is the Ingush people. Functionally, the Ingush language is now classified as possessing moderately developed functions, albeit with adequate linguistic resources (Barakhoeva et al. 2024; Sigauri 2016).

- **The Chechen language** — GIDS Stage 2 (provincial) — has the status of the state language in the Chechen Republic, Russian Federation. Chechnya is situated in the central region of the northern slopes of the Greater Caucasus. Out of a total population of 1,674,854 Chechens in Russia, 1.493.748 individuals reported knowledge of the Chechen language, with approximately 97.8% of those who reported knowledge of Chechen also reported using it in everyday life (Census 2020). The preservation of linguistic competence and the strong communicative utility of the Chechen language is supported by its high demographic capacity, compact settlement patterns, and the mono-ethnic composition of the republic's population (Ovkhadov 2007). Most of the population actively use Chechen in daily life, in both urban and rural areas (Ovkhadov 2022). The Chechen language is more prevalent in informal and semi-formal spheres of communication, family interactions, daily life, and domains connected to the community's ethnocultural heritage (Navrazova et al. 2019; Bitkeeva et al. 2024: 36).
- **The Tatar language** — GIDS Stage 6a (vigorous) — has the status of the state language in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation. Tatarstan is situated in the center of the East European Plain, part of the Volga Federal District. Out of a total population of 4.713.669 Tatars in Russia, 3.261.155 individuals reported knowledge of the Tatar language, with approximately 89.5% of those who reported knowledge of Tatar also reported using it in everyday life (Census 2020). The Tatar language is a functionally developed and highly resilient majority language, supported by its extensive social reach, multifunctionality, and elevated public status as the state language of the Republic of Tatarstan (Mustafina 2012, Moskvitcheva et al. 2023). In Tatarstan, official legislation and regulations are enacted in Tatar, the language is used in media broadcasts, and it serves as a medium of instruction in schools and institutions of higher education (Khilkhanova 2022).
- **The Tuva language (Tuvinian) —** GIDS Stage 6a (vigorous) — has the status of the state language in the Republic of Tuva, Russian Federation. Tuva lies at the geographical center of Asia, in southern Siberia. Out of a total population of 295.384 Tuvinians in Russia, 252.953 individuals reported knowledge of the Tuvan language, and 98.0% of those who reported knowledge of Tuvan also reported using it in everyday life (Census 2020). The relatively compact settlement of speakers, the substantial demographic presence of the Tuvan population, and the prevalence

of rural communities create favorable conditions for the preservation of the language. These factors also contribute to its widespread and intensive use across nearly all domains apart from the formal ones where Tuvan has limited use. The formal domains were historically first served by Mongolian, and later Russian. The Tuvan language is one of the few titular languages of the Russian Federation that currently possesses both significant functional capacity and demographic vitality (Tsybenova 2019).

- **The Yakut language** –between 3–4 GIDS Stages (institutional) — has the status of the state language of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russian Federation. The republic is located in the northeast of the Asian part of Russia. Out of a total population of 478.409 Yakuts in Russia, 377.722 individuals reported knowledge of the Yakut (Sakha) language, and approximately 96.1% of those who reported knowledge of Yakut also reported using it in everyday life (Census 2020). The language is actively used in both rural and urban settings, with its stability supported by several key factors: high levels of linguistic competence, strong linguistic self-identification, and increasing demographic and communicative influence (Danilov 2026: 486–512). These dynamics are further reinforced by ongoing rural-to-urban migration, the process of urbanization, globalizing and unifying trends, the adoption of modern digital technologies, and the influence of linguistic and political factors (Ivanova 2021[6]).

3. Theoretical framework

The vitality of an autochthonous language is most effectively safeguarded in regions of compact residence[7] of its speakers, where they have opportunities to use their language across a range of social situations with varying degrees of formality. Such an environment, however, is somewhat idealized and thus rarely encountered in contemporary contexts of modern-day Russia as approximately three-quarters of the population of the Russian Federation reside presently in ethnically diverse urban agglomerations. Consequently, Russian dominates as the primary medium of interethnic communication. Although compact language communities still exist in some rural areas, such settlements are rare. Nonetheless, a significant number remain, particularly in the southern and northern regions. However, the dispersed nature of these communities often limits speakers' access to immersive linguistic environments, making it difficult to maintain regular use of their autochthonous languages. In such settings, a tension, described by Giles's Accommodation Theory (1973, 1977), emerges between convergence — where minority language speakers

[6] Ivanova, Nina I. 2021. *Iazykovaia situatsiia v Respublike Sakha (Iakutiia): Iakutskii iazyk v usloviiakh iazykovoi neodnorodnosti (etnosotsiopsikholingvisticheskii aspekt) [Language situation in the Republic (Sakha) of Yakutia: The Yakut language in conditions of linguistic heterogeneity (ethnosociopsycholinguistic aspect)].* Doctoral dissertation. Kazan Federal University, Russia. (In Russ.).

[7] A geographic area or locality where communities live in significant numbers and maintain their cultural, social, or linguistic distinctiveness.

adjust their speech to align with the dominant linguistic norm — and maintenance strategies aimed at preserving their indigenous languages. Researchers also pointed to the "tensions between top-down state management and bottom-up language practices" (Bergelson & Grenoble 2026:278) in those environments. Those overlapping tensions further highlight the complexity of multiethnic spaces.

The intergenerational transmission of autochthonous languages in urban areas typically begins to decline by the second generation, with the third generation often possessing little proficiency in their ancestral language. This trend exemplifies a broader phenomenon of language attrition across generations, as described in Canagarajah's (2008) three-generational model of language shift, which was developed in the context of Tamil migrants in the West. Although the socio-political dynamics differ, both scenarios reflect a common challenge in which the family "has to negotiate its linguistic responsibilities with other social and economic pressures" (Canagarajah 2008: 170–171). Furthermore, contemporary parents in Russia increasingly prioritize their children's acquisition of at least one international language, such as English or Chinese. This shift places additional strain on the maintenance of autochthoncous languages, as younger generations often lack the time, motivation, or resources to invest in their preservation.

This intergenerational pattern aligns with Fishman's GIDS model, which illustrates how language transmission weakens across generations and signals stages of language disruption. While GIDS and related models (Krauss 1997) provide a structuralist lens on language endangerment, there are works that emphasize the importance of ideologies and attitudes in language maintenance (e.g. Hornberger 2002, Grenoble & Whaley 2006). Such perspectives argue that language loss is not only a structural process but also a sociopsychological one, shaped by how speakers perceive and value their own language. These attitudes are significant — UNESCO highlights them in its 2003 report 'Language Vitality and Endangerment', among the nine key factors influencing language vitality — specifically, *community members' attitudes toward their own language*. Structural models provide an essential framework for understanding language shift, yet they tend to underrepresent the motivational dimensions of speaker behavior. This gap is particularly evident in cases where speakers' attitudes toward their native language become conflicted, often due to emerging doubts about its value, and the future of such languages may become uncertain: "in linguistically diverse countries, speakers frequently express ambiguous attitudes towards languages that are less powerful in society; on the one hand, speakers view these languages as a vital expression of cultural heritage; on the other hand, they often perceive them as economically, educationally, and politically ineffective and inferior" (Deumert 2011).

This research builds on Gardner and Lambert's (1972) foundational work on instrumental and integrative orientations, along with subsequent studies (e.g., Baker 1992, Spolsky 2004), which demonstrate that language beliefs and ideological orientations influence not only second-language acquisition but also the

maintenance of functionally second languages. Notably, understanding such attitudes is essential — especially when viewed through the framework of language ecologies, which conceptualize languages as dynamic systems that "evolve, grow, change, live, and die in relation to other languages and also in relation to their environment" (Hornberger 2002: 33). The study maintains that instrumental and integrative value of an autochthonous language can, to some extent, support its intergenerational transmission, albeit within a limited functional scope.

2.1. Instrumental and integrative language attitudes

Language attitudes refer to the reciprocal behavioral and evaluative predispositions of speakers toward both their own and other languages, as well as different language varieties. They are generally categorized into two primary dimensions: pragmatic or instrumental, and individualistic or integrative (Baker 1992). Contemporary linguistic research has predominantly examined these attitudes within the context of second language acquisition, emphasizing the cognitive and affective factors involved in foreign language learning (Gardner 2010, Gardner 2012), while comparatively little attention has been paid to sociolinguistic contexts.

Autochthonous languages often lose ground in official domains but retain both instrumental and integrative value for speakers, which supports their preservation. Instrumental language attitudes are associated with pragmatic benefits such as social recognition, career advancement, socioeconomic status, and personal achievement Gardner et al. (1972: 14) define these attitudes as reflecting "a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a language." Similarly, Lasagabaster (2005: 1694) notes that the primary goal of instrumental attitudes is not necessarily integration into the target linguistic group but rather the attainment of social acknowledgment and economic benefits. As instrumental attitudes are directly linked to personal success, they necessitate the perception of a language as prestigious. These attitudes emphasize the social and economic advantages that a language offers, while language prestige, in turn, reflects the value attributed to it. The interplay between these concepts is evident in how speakers perceive a language's role in achieving practical goals, which in turn influences whether they regard it as prestigious.

Instrumental attitudes are predominantly pragmatic, focusing on the tangible benefits of language acquisition and use. Practical applications of an autochthonous language within a community significantly impact its likelihood of transmission. Although autochthonous languages often struggle to compete with dominant or international languages in terms of economic utility, certain localized instrumental benefits still exist. For example, if proficiency in the autochthonous language is necessary for employment, higher education, or accessing scholarship funds, these practical benefits can create a tangible motivation for its continued use and survival. In contrast, integrative language attitudes are social and interpersonal in nature, with the concept of sociability serving as a defining characteristic. These attitudes

pertain to social and cultural identity, encompassing the desire to establish connections with a linguistic community and preserve its heritage. As Lasagabaster (2005: 1693) asserts, integrative attitudes "reflect a desire to identify with a language and its culture." When speakers exhibit strong integrative attitudes toward a language, they are more likely to make a conscious effort to preserve and transmit it to future generations. This phenomenon is particularly evident in communities that regard their language heritage as a fundamental aspect of their cultural identity.

3. Data and methods

This study examines the influence of instrumental and integrative language attitudes on the maintenance and intergenerational transmission of autochthonous languages in the Russian Federation. The study analyzes speaker perspectives across five language communities, with a focus on generational differences among older (40–65), middle-group (26–39), and younger (18–25) cohorts. The aim is to identify how age-related shifts in attitudes and usage impact language vitality within distinct sociolinguistic contexts.

3.1. Sample and linguistic context

The study included a sample of 306[8] speakers of five autochthonous languages: Ingush (72 participants), Tuvan (45 participants), Tatar (54 participants), Chechen (78 participants), and Yakut (57 participants). The selected languages were chosen because they demonstrate comparatively high levels of ethnolinguistic vitality and remain actively used across both private and public domains. The sample was evenly divided into three age groups, aged 18–25 (n = 102), 26–39 (n = 102), and 40–65 (n = 102). The data from selected republics do not represent the full diversity of language situations; therefore, the findings should be interpreted primarily in relation to communities with comparatively strong language maintenance.

The data used for this analysis was extracted from a larger research project conducted in various republics of the Russian Federation between 2021 and 2023. The study was carried out through fieldwork conducted by the Research Center on Ethnic and Language Relations of the Institute of Linguistics of RAS. Data collection was conducted through anonymous online questionnaires (in Russian), distributed with the assistance of researchers working in the respective republics. For the present analysis, respondents were selected on the basis of their reported knowledge of the five languages under study and their age group. The responses were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 23.

[8] The data used for this analysis was extracted from a larger research project conducted in various republics of the Russian Federation between 2021 and 2023 which contained bigger numbers of answers (from 100 to 400 in each of the five republics). Expanding the sample size for the present research to bigger numbers was not feasible, as the oldest age group (40+) typically comprised only around 25 respondents or fewer.

3.2. Research methods and focus

The research was structured around three key aspects:

— **domains of language use** of the participants: the autochthonous language and the code-mixing;

— **intergenerational differences in language attitudes** — analyzing disparities between the age groups to determine how these differences may influence language use and transmission patterns;

— **perceptions of instrumental and integrative values** — examining how speakers perceive their language in terms of its practical and identity-related significance, contributing to the overall stability of its vitality;

To assess the instrumental value of autochthonous languages, participants were asked questions related to:

— status: the status of the titular language was analyzed; a four-point scale was used: prestigious, rather prestigious, rather not prestigious, and not prestigious[9].

— social recognition: a question assessing whether knowledge of the titular language is regarded as a requirement for residents of the community.

— achievement and career advantages: which language provides greater opportunities for education, employment, and success in life?

Integrative attitudes, particularly in the context of intergenerational transmission, were examined using the following questions:

— role of family language environment: "Can a language survive in the family domain only?".

— language identity and cultural affiliation: examining attitudes to language and its relationship to ethnic identity.

— desire for children's linguistic affiliation.

Incidentally, the role of the family language environment requires further elaboration. If the majority of respondents affirm that language preservation is primarily a familial responsibility, this suggests a strong commitment to safeguarding linguistic heritage. It also implies that speakers prioritize exposing their children to their autochthonous language as a means of maintaining cultural identity. A belief in parental responsibility for language transmission, rather than reliance on schools or government policies, reflects a high degree of language loyalty. Consequently, families that actively pass down their language within the home environment tend to exhibit a stronger sense of cultural belonging and identity.

A central focus of this study was the assessment of the respondents' perceptions regarding diachronic shifts in the use of their native language. Therefore, only participants aged 40 and above were included in this part of the

[9] For the purpose of analysis and to simplify interpretation, responses on the four-point scale ('*Prestigious,' 'Rather prestigious,' 'Rather not prestigious,' 'Not prestigious'*) were merged into two broader categories: 'Prestigious' (combining the two positive options) and 'Not prestigious' (combining the two negative options).

survey, as individuals younger than 40 lack firsthand experience of the 1990s, which could make their responses less reliable. Additionally, all respondents were given the opportunity to comment on the perceived positive and negative influences affecting their language in recent history. This question was optional, and some participants chose to provide additional remarks, offering qualitative insights into contemporary language dynamics.

4. Results

4.1. Language use across communicative domains

Clear differences in language use are found across the studied age groups, ethnic communities, and communicative domains (Table 1). The home domain remains the primary context for autochthonous language maintenance; by contrast, Russian-language prevalence and higher rates of bilingualism are characteristic of institutional and public settings. Among younger respondents, Tuvan youth show balanced bilingualism across domains; Chechen and Ingush youth use their native languages at home but shift toward Russian/bilingual use publicly; Tatar and Yakut youth maintain stronger native language use. The middle group generally reproduces the same sociolinguistic patterns: home remains central for native language use, while professional settings favor bilingualism. Tatars retain native language use professionally, while Yakuts show increasing bilingualism in formal settings. Older respondents demonstrate the highest level of language maintenance. Among speakers of Yakut and Ingush, intergenerational and peer-group communication favors the heritage language; however, workplace usage exhibits a general decline across both communities. Tuvans display high functional bilingualism; Chechen, Tatar, and Yakut speakers show moderate or higher bilingual use in formal settings; Ingush maintains high native use with limited code-mixing.

Table 1

Domains of language use* *(in %; each percentage is calculated independently on a 100% basis)*

	Home		Friends		Work / Education	
18–25						
Ingush | Ingush and Russian	58.3	25.0	37.5	37.5	12.5	29.2
Tatar | Tatar and Russian	68.4	26.3	36.8	42.1	47.4	26.3
Tuvan | Tuvan and Russian	46.7	46.7	46.7	46.7	26.7	46.7
Chechen | Chechen and Russian	73.1	11.5	42.3	46.2	19.2	50.0
Yakut | Yakut and Russian	63.2	21.1	42.1	31.6	31.6	42.1
26–39						
Ingush | Ingush and Russian	91.7	8.3	58.3	20.8	45.8	16.7
Tatar | Tatar and Russian	31.6	5.3	36.8	0	26.3	10.5
Tuvan | Tuvan and Russian	46.7	53.3	46.7	53.3	6.7	66.7
Chechen | Chechen and Russian	61.5	11.5	46.2	19.2	30.8	30.8
Yakut | Yakut and Russian	47.4	26.3	42.1	31.6	10.5	57.9
40–65						
Ingush | Ingush and Russian	75	4.2	62.5	8.3	20.8	8.3
Tatar | Tatar and Russian	52.6	10.5	52.6	10.5	36.8	26.3

Table 1 continued

	Home		Friends		Work / Education	
Tuvan | Tuvan and Russian	66.7	26.7	53.3	40.0	6.7	66.7
Chechen | Chechen and Russian	73.1	11.5	57.7	26.9	30.8	42.3
Yakut | Yakut and Russian	63.2	5.3	63.2	10.5	47.4	5.3

** Only the responses relevant to the present analysis ("in the autochthonous language" and "in the autochthonous language and Russian") are presented in the table; the remaining responses ("in Russian" and "difficult to say") are not displayed. Each percentage is calculated form the total number of respondents in the respected language and age group.*

4.2. Instrumental attitudes

Attitudes revealed a complex relationship between symbolic prestige and perceived practical value (Table 2). In most cases, titular languages are associated with identity and social belonging, although the perceived instrumental value varies. Middle group participants generally rate the titular language as slightly more prestigious, the same is true for younger respondents, especially Chechens and Yakuts. However, a decline in prestige is observed among Tuvans and, to a lesser extent, Tatars. Older respondents, especially Ingush and Yakuts, show stronger agreement on its prestige. Chechens consistently regard their language as prestigious across all age groups. Similar patterns are observed in perceptions of language as a social obligation. Across all ages, Ingush and Tuvan respondents widely agree that speaking the native language is a social obligation, with similar views among Chechens. Tatars, especially youth, show the most uncertainty. Overall, younger respondents are slightly more likely to view native language use as obligatory. At the same time, respondents clearly distinguished between symbolic and instrumental language value. Russian is seen as essential for opportunities, especially by Ingush and Yakuts. Younger and middle groups value a mix of native, Russian, and international languages. Older respondents favor native and Russian, also recognizing multilingualism. Overall, in all groups bilingualism and multilingualism are seen as key to success. Very few respondents regarded the titular language alone as sufficient for achieving success. Notably, this position was slightly more common among older participants, reflecting greater perceived value. This supports the "grandmother factor" (Dorian 2014), suggesting older generations, reengage with native language use later in life.

Table 2

Instrumental attitudes, %

Prestige of the titular language*					
18–25	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
prestigious	62.5	68.4	53.3	96.1	84.2
not prestigious	16.8	31.6	40.0	3.9	10.5
26–39	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
prestigious	75	68.4	60	84.6	84.2
not prestigious	16.7	21.1	33.3	11.5	0

Table 2 continued

40–65	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
prestigious	83.4	47.4	33.3	92.3	100
not prestigious	8.3	31.5	46.7	7.7	0
Social recognition: knowledge of the titular language is a requirement*					
18–25	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
yes	100	73.7	93.3	96.2	84.2
no	0	21.1	0	0	0
26–39	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
yes	91.7	68.4	93.3	84.6	68.4
no	8.3	10.5	0	3.8	0
40–65	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
yes	100	68.4	93.3	92.3	78.9
no	0	10.5	6.7	7.7	5.3
Language use for achievement and career advantages					
18–25	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
titular only	4.2	0	6.7	7.7	0
Russian only	16.6	22.2	13.3	11.5	52.7
titular + Russian	25	25	6.7	7.7	10.5
multilingual**	54.2	52.8	73.3	73.1	36.8
26–39	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
titular only	4.2	5.3	0	3.8	5.3
Russian only	29.2	10.5	13.3	19.2	42.1
titular + Russian	20.8	36.7	33.3	30.8	10.5
multilingual**	45.8	47.5	53.4	46.2	42.1
40–65	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
titular only	4.2	5.3	6.7	7.7	5.3
Russian only	29.2	15.7	20.0	15.4	31.6
titular + Russian	33.3	47.5	60.0	19.2	26.3
multilingual**	33.3	31.5	13.3	57.7	36.8

** Neutral and non-response categories are omitted for readability.*

*** The titular, the Russian language and one international language.*

4.3. Integrative attitudes

Family-based language transmission remains strong among North Caucasian groups, whereas younger respondents in other communities increasingly recognize the importance of institutional support for language maintenance (Table 3). Younger generations, particularly Tuvans and Tatars (about half of the answers), show greater reliance on institutional support for language maintenance, indicating a recognition of the limitations of home-based language transmission, while Ingush and Chechen prioritize the strong family role; this tendency was especially pronounced among middle group and older participants, reflecting a continued reliance on familial transmission within North Caucasian communities. Tuvan and Tatar respondents were divided, while Yakuts displayed the highest rate of uncertainty among the younger and middle groups, choosing neutral responses. The views on language and national identity show divergencies: while younger and middle group Ingush in greater numbers strongly link language loss with a loss of nationality, older generations are more divided. Among other groups, there is

moderate or low association between language and identity across all age groups that may stem from a historically higher degree of bilingualism and integration into Russian-speaking society. Regarding the language transmission to children, the preference for bilingualism among younger groups highlights the increasing role of Russian as a dominant language while still valuing the titular language. This pragmatic approach suggests a desire for maintaining cultural heritage without limiting socioeconomic mobility. Older and middle-group respondents, conversely, especially among Ingush and Tatars — exhibit a stronger preference for monolingualism in the titular language.

Table 3

Integrative attitudes, %

a language can be preserved through family only*					
18–25	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
yes	87.5	42.1	46.7	84.6	52.6
no	8.3	36.8	53.3	15.4	21.1
26–39					
yes	66.7	31.6	40.0	69.3	36.8
no	33.3	68.4	46.7	26.9	26.4
40–65					
yes	75	36.8	46.7	57.7	73.7
no	25	63.2	40.0	38.5	21.1
switching to another language means a loss of national identity*					
18–25	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
agree	66.7	21.1	40.0	34.6	42.1
disagree	12.5	47.3	40.0	30.8	42.1
26–39					
agree	83.3	31.6	53.3	53.9	47.4
disagree	12.5	36.8	26.7	26.9	21.1
40–65					
agree	33.3	21.1	26.7	57.7	47.4
disagree	50	57.8	46.6	19.2	31.5
language for the children to speak*					
18–25	**Ingush**	**Tatar**	**Tuvan**	**Chechen**	**Yakut**
titular only	29.2	36.8	26.7	26.9	21.1
titular + Russian	37.5	63.2	60.0	61.5	57.8
Russian only	29.2	0	6.7	7.8	21.1
26–39					
titular only	79.2	47.4	6.7	53.8	15.8
titular + Russian	12.5	0	79.9	23.1	52.6
Russian only	8.3	52.6	6.7	23.1	31.6
40–65					
titular only	70.8	63.2	20.0	46.2	47.4
titular + Russian	8.3	10.5	73.3	42.3	31.5
Russian only	20.9	26.3	6.7	11.5	15.8

** Neutral and non-response categories are omitted for readability.*

4.4. Perceived language change over time

Respondents' assessments revealed both positive and negative tendencies (Table 4). Across most ethnic groups, participants reported some degree of expansion in the public visibility and use of autochthonous languages. This perception was particularly strong among Tatar respondents, two-thirds of whom identified noticeable progress in language development. At the same time, the majority of Ingush and Tuvan residents polled indicate a decline in the use of their titular language. The Chechen respondents' survey data shows a rather divided pattern, with a third reporting a decline and another third reporting an expansion. A considerable proportion of Chechen and Yakut respondents across all surveyed cohorts expressed difficulty in providing an answer to the question. Overall, the findings point to uneven trajectories of language maintenance across the republics. While some republics like Tatarstan may have made notable progress in promoting their titular language, many others, particularly Tuvan, are facing significant challenges in that.

Table 4

How do you assess the situation of your titular language in your republic in the 1990s compared to the present day?, %

40–65 years old	Ingush	Tatar	Tuvan	Chechen	Yakut
titular language expanded	29.2	57.9	13.3	38.5	36.8
titular language declined	62.5	15.8	66.7	30.8	42.1

** Neutral and non-response categories are omitted for readability.*

4.5. Intergenerational variation in language practices and attitudes

Inferential statistical analysis revealed intergenerational differences in language practices and attitudes for some groups, while others remained largely stable (Table 5). The strongest generational variation was observed among Tatar and Ingush respondents. For both, statistically significant differences emerged in language use across specific domains, particularly informal and home settings (e.g., $p = 0.003$ for Tatar with friends; $p = 0.025$ for Ingush at home). These patterns were mirrored in integrative attitudes, where younger and older generations differed on matters such as language identity (e.g., $p = 0.002$ for Ingush) and children's language preferences ($p < 0.001$ for Tatar). The findings suggest ongoing intergenerational renegotiation of language practices and linguistic values. In contrast, Tuvan and Chechen showed no significant variation across age groups in either language use or attitudes, suggesting cross-generational stability in both behavioral and ideological domains. Yakut displayed borderline significance in several areas (e.g., $p = 0.050$ for language use at work; $p = 0.09$ for language prestige), hinting at emerging generational shifts. An important exception was found in Tuvan instrumental attitudes, where younger and older speakers significantly differed on which language offers the best career opportunities

($p = 0.03$). This finding points to observations of changing perceptions of linguistic capital among younger speakers.

Table 5

Inferential statistical analysis: summarized table with the breakdown into 3 age groups

Language	Context	Context details	χ^2	df	p-value
Ingush	domains	friends	6.59	4	0.159
		work/education	10.85	4	**0.028**
		family	11.11	4	**0.025**
	instrumental	status	3.51	4	0.48
		social recognition	4.11	2	0.13
		career advantages	2.92	6	0.82
	integrative	family environment	6.19	4	0.19
		language identity	16.69	4	**0.002**
		children's language	16.62	6	**0.01**
Tatar	domains	friends	15.411	4	**0.003**
		work/education	5.893	4	0.207
		family	14.902	4	**0.005**
	instrumental	status	5.41	4	0.25
		social recognition	3.05	4	0.55
		career advantages	6.109	6	0.41
	integrative	family environment	10.22	4	**0.04**
		language identity	1.96	4	0.74
		children's language	29.07	4	**0.00001**
Tuvan	domains	friends	0.191	4	0.996
		work/education	3.667	4	0.453
		family	3.118	4	0.538
	instrumental	status	3.12	4	0.54
		social recognition	3.00	4	0.56
		career advantages	13.69	6	**0.03**
	integrative	family environment	2.39	4	0.67
		language identity	2.36	4	0.67
		children's language	3.19	6	0.79
Chechen	domains	friends	7.809	4	0.099
		work/education	2.605	4	0.626
		family	3.795	6	0.704
	instrumental	status	3.19	4	0.53
		social recognition	5.69	4	0.22
		career advantages	8.89	6	0.18
	integrative	family environment	4.92	4	0.29
		language identity	3.63	4	0.49
		children's language	11.27	6	**0.08***
Yakut	domains	friends	7.286	8	0.506
		work/education	15.518	8	**0.050***
		family	8.212	6	0.223

Table 5 continued

Language	Context	Context details	χ^2	df	p-value
	instrumental	status	7.85	4	**0.09***
		social recognition	3.83	4	0.43
		career advantages	4.09	6	0.66
	integrative	family environment	6.84	4	**0.14***
		language identity	2.49	4	0.65
		children's language	8.51	6	0.20

**marginal or borderline*

4.6. Historical narratives of language and cultural change

In response to the open question, "*What historical events have negatively or positively influenced the current state of the titular language and culture*?", participants identified a diverse range of political, educational, and sociocultural developments.

4.6.1. Instrumental Factors

The respondents identified institutional support that contributed to language vitality. Among Ingush participants, the establishment of the Republic of Ingushetia in 1992 was viewed as a pivotal moment as it facilitated the introduction of native-language instruction in schools. A subset of respondents expressed unreserved optimism regarding the linguistic situation. One participant asserted, "*Everything is positive*," while another underscored the bilingual competence of the community, stating "*Ingush are fluent in both Ingush and Russian*." Participants from other republics — Tuva, Chechnya, Tatarstan, and Yakutia — expressed similar sentiments, noting that the formation or reassertion of their republics in the early 1990s enabled parallel developments in language education. Similarly, Yakut respondents referred to the reforms of 1991–1993, which introduced national educational frameworks. These reforms were described as "*critical steps forward*," *"the adoption of the new educational system concept had a positive impact",* with frequent mentions of Yakut-language instruction. At the same time, some respondents noted concerns, stating that "*there was a forced attitude toward the Yakut language; people of other nationalities were made to speak Yakut*." This referred to the fact that since 1990s non-Yakut schoolchildren of Yakutia — such as Russians, Evenki, Buryats, and others — were required to learn the Yakut language. In the Chechen context, participants emphasized the positive effects of the presence of Chechen language and literature in school curricula: "*Young people, on average, have a good command of the Chechen language*".

A shared concern across all groups centered on education. For example, Ingush respondents pointed to a recent significant reduction in instructional hours in both schools and universities, as well as the absence of a standardized exam, which they viewed as delegitimizing the language in formal domains. It is important to note that the other four languages have a Basic State Examination in the respective language at the end of secondary school, and a significant number of students

choose to take it. Similarly, Tatar participants lamented that urban instruction in the Tatar language only emerged in the 1990s. Current educational practices were frequently criticized as insufficient and there was widespread concern about a lack of trained teachers and innovative pedagogical approaches: "*there are few classes of Tatar language studies at schools, and the lessons are not interesting*". This quote reflects both structural shortcomings and a perceived failure to emotionally engage younger learners — a critical factor for intergenerational transmission. One Tuvinian observed, "*parents started choosing Russian, not Tuvan after 2018*." This shift followed a 2018 amendment to the law, which gave parents the right to choose their children's native language of instruction. Where children previously obligatory received three lessons per week in Tuvan, more parents are now opting for Russian instead. They prefer to use those additional class hours to better prepare their children for the Unified State Exam in Russian, which is required not only to graduate from school but also to gain admission to university. Yakut and Tuvan respondents echoed similar concerns, linking educational neglect with broader societal trends: "*lack of a supportive environment for language use*", indicating that societal reinforcement is weak. In Yakutia, respondents noted that speaking Yakut in public was actively discouraged until the 1990s, underlining the effects of previous assimilationist policies. Beyond education, technological and media pressures were widely cited as threats to language maintenance. One Ingush participant lamented: "*the Internet, television, and lack of language upbringing in the family [are] to blame*". Similarly, Chechen and Tuvan speakers described the "*excessive use of smartphones*" and the influence of global entertainment as contributing to the erosion of native language use among children. Additionally, globalization and modernity were cited as contributing factors to language decline, with respondents mentioning "*traveling abroad*," "*people began to learn more about the world*," and "*the influence of modernity forces us to use more of the Russian or a foreign language*."

4.6.2. Integrative factors

Integrative factors reveal a complex interplay of factors, articulating the role of language in shaping intergenerational continuity. Some respondents offered emphatic statements, such as: "*One must never forget their native language under any circumstances*". Yakut speakers highlighted "*cultural distinctiveness* ("*samobytnost'*)", pride in Yakut literature, and a sense of cultural self-image, rooted in language. Ingush and Chechen respondents, while acknowledging the 1944 deportation and 1990s war trauma, emphasized resilience and cultural integrity: linguistic preservation was seen as crucial. Respondents from across all communities highlighted the language shift among children and youth, particularly in urban areas, expressing concern: "*parents aren't teaching children their native language*." For the Ingush and Chechen communities, this trend was tied to broader cultural assimilation. One Ingush speaker noted regretfully: "*parents believe it is better for their children to acquire Russian from birth, assuming they will naturally*

learn Ingush later — and this is sad", reflecting a widespread belief in passive bilingualism, which rather leads to language attrition. Technology and globalization were near-universal concerns. As one respondent from Tuva put it: "*We, like all people, are catching up with the global flow… social networks and information flow [are to blame].”* Another respondent from Chechnya observed: "*Due to the influence of modern civilization, the Chechens speak the Chechen language less*", linking language use with broader patterns of modernity and cultural loss. A recurring theme was the disconnect between generations. Young parents were often described as failing to pass on cultural values and language: ''*it all depends on young parents who do not tell their children about traditions and culture*."; "*people have begun raising their children exclusively in Russian from an early age. I don't support this. One must know their native language!*" These quotes reflect not just concerns about linguistic loss but also erosion of intergenerational continuity. Overall, the survey highlights both positive aspects — such as fluency in native languages, respect for cultural heritage, and beneficial educational reforms — and concerns regarding the future of autochthonous languages. While some encouraging trends were noted, including governmental efforts to enhance language education and a general awareness of the importance of languages, respondents also expressed significant apprehension about their long-term viability.

5. Discussion

5.1. Language loyalty and actual language use

A particularly noteworthy finding is the unexpectedly strong language loyalty exhibited by younger respondents: they demonstrated a clear commitment to maintaining their titular languages alongside Russian, challenging prevailing assumptions in the sociolinguistic literature that youth in minority-language communities tend to shift rapidly toward dominant languages under social and economic pressures. The research results reveal high levels of language use in home and peer settings, comparable to the middle and older generations. This stands in contrast to models of language shift, such as those proposed by Fishman (1991) and Dorian (1981), which suggest that youth in multilingual contexts abandon their heritage languages. For instance, Dorian (1981: 103) recounts the poignant question, "Why would they be so proud [of Gaelic] and not speak it?" — highlighting the disconnect between symbolic pride and actual language use among younger speakers. In contrast, the present study finds that young respondents not only consider their autochthonous languages prestigious but also actively use them in informal domains.

Similarly, Grenoble and Whaley (2006: 24) observe in the context of language revitalization, "among young members there is often a lack of motivation, or even resentment, because the local language does not seem to offer any obvious rewards." However, the data suggest the opposite: many young participants viewed bilingualism as a valuable asset rather than a burden, considering language proficiency a necessity and expressing a clear intention to transmit it to their (future)

children. This articulates a vision of bilingual identity in which Russian and their autochthonous languages coexist, each fulfilling different roles. This orientation toward dual-language maintenance implies the presence of a supportive sociolinguistic environment that complicates dominant narratives of generational language shift in globalized contexts.

5.2. Integrative and instrumental attitudes

Integrative attitudes towards the considered titular languages are relatively strong across all age groups. However, the widespread use of Russian — alone or in combination with the titular language — is notable, even within home environments. Despite reported use of autochthonous languages in 50–70% of home interactions, Russian continues to be actively employed alongside them. This pattern becomes even more pronounced in peer communication, suggesting that integrative attitudes, while present, are not sufficient on their own to prevent ongoing language shift. Respondents across age groups in open-ended questions recognized the limitations of home-based language transmission, acknowledging that sustaining their languages requires external support, particularly through education and institutional reinforcement. At the same time, while many young respondents expressed a strong commitment to multilingualism, this ambition presents practical challenges, as the addition of a third language may reduce the domains available to the autochthonous language.

Middle-group and older respondents displayed a stronger overall attachment to their native languages. They emphasized the importance of bilingual proficiency — specifically in both the titular language and Russian, as essential for personal and social success. In contrast, proficiency in international languages was seen as relatively less important by these groups compared to their younger counterparts. Incidentally, approximately one-third or more of older respondents reported having observed an expansion of their mother tongue since the 1990s. While this represents a modest proportion, it offers evidence that titular languages have experienced some degree of revitalization over recent decades.

When asked about their intention to transmit their autochthonous language to the next generation, respondents overwhelmingly expressed support. However, attitudes toward language and identity revealed some divergence. In response to the question of whether losing a language equates to losing one's national identity, responses were divided among younger and older groups, with roughly equal proportions answering "yes" and "no" across the five language communities studied. This indicates a growing acceptance of the idea that national identity can be retained independently of linguistic knowledge, a perspective that may contribute to gradual language erosion. In contrast, approximately two-thirds of middle group respondents affirmed that language loss constitutes a loss of national identity, viewing the role of language as a core element of cultural identity.

Instrumental attitudes influence language behavior: the use of titular languages in the workplace remains limited, suggesting that their application is largely restricted to culturally symbolic or formal contexts, reflecting a certain shift toward

strategic bilingualism. Notably, prestige perceptions tend to increase with age among Ingush and Chechen participants but decrease among Tatar and Tuvan groups, indicating diverging sociolinguistic trajectories. Across all age groups, there is a consistently high acknowledgment of the titular language as a social requirement, though the strength of this belief is lower in middle and older Tatar and Yakut respondents, suggesting a continued recognition of the symbolic function of native languages. In terms of language utility for achievement and career advancement, a strong preference is seen for multilingual competence, especially among younger and middle groups who favored combinations involving the titular, Russian, and an international language.

5.3. Continua of bilingualism across age groups

Many societies are shaped by a monolingual ideology, privileging the dominance of a single national language and viewing bilingualism as transitional. These ideologies exert pressure on minority language speakers, particularly youth, to shift toward the dominant language, often resulting in language loss. In contrast, the findings of the present study reveal that respondents from the studied language communities perceive bilingualism — rather than monolingualism — as an ideal communicative practice. This divergence may stem from specific historical and policy contexts in the Russian Federation that have promoted the coexistence of titular languages alongside Russian.

The ecological model of the continua of bilingualism, as developed by Hornberger (1990), conceptualizes it as encompassing "any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages" (p. 213). From a sociolinguistic perspective, this model highlights the multidimensional nature of bilingual practices. Bilingualism is most sustainable when it is not restricted to a specific age cohort but instead maintained intergenerationally — when speakers of all age groups continue to use and transmit their autochthonous languages alongside the dominant language.

In the present study, chi-square (χ^2) analysis was conducted to examine age-related patterns in language use across domains (Table 5). For most language groups, results suggest relatively stable patterns of language use across age groups. Notably, respondents from Tuvan, Chechen, and Yakut communities exhibited few statistically significant age-related differences across domains, indicating that patterns of language use are being sustained across generations. In contrast, Tatar and Ingush respondents exhibited significant age-related variation, suggesting that language-use patterns may be shaped by language-specific and extralinguistic factors. As shown in Table 1, age correlates with shifts in language use for these two language groups, while others maintain consistent bilingual patterns across generations.

In sum, the findings support the ecological view of bilingualism as a dynamic and socially embedded phenomenon. The respondents' orientation toward bilingualism, both practical and symbolic, suggests that the existing sociolinguistic environment may foster the vitality of the autochthonous language.

6. Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of language attitudes and use in multilingual contexts by revealing patterns of instrumental and integrative motivations across generations. Crucially, the findings challenge dominant sociolinguistic assumptions that minority language youth inevitably shift toward dominant languages. Instead, many young respondents actively maintain their autochthonous languages and embrace bilingualism as both a practical resource and a marker of identity. The evidence of sustained bilingual language use across age groups, particularly in communities like Tuvan, Chechen, and Yakut, underscores the potential for intergenerational language transmission even within dominant-language environments. One possible explanation for this tendency may lie in the normalization of bilingual practices within these communities, where the use of Russian does not necessarily imply rejection of the titular language. The findings highlight the importance of supportive sociolinguistic conditions and institutional reinforcement in fostering language vitality and suggest that bilingualism, when culturally and contextually embraced, can serve as a stable model for minority language communities. These findings should, however, be interpreted within the limits of the present sample and its focus on communities with comparatively strong language maintenance.

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