RUSSIAN JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS

2026 Volume 30 No. 2

LANGUAGE POLICY IN MULTIETHNIC COUNTRIES

Guest Editors

Mira B. Bergelson & Lenore A. Grenoble

Founded in 1997
by the RUDN University

Научный журнал

Издается с 1997 г.

Издание зарегистрировано Федеральной службой по надзору в сфере связи, информационных технологий и массовых коммуникаций (Роскомнадзор) **Свидетельство о регистрации** ПИ № ФС 77-76503 от 02.08.2019 г. **Учредитель:** Федеральное государственное автономное образовательное учреждение высшего образования «Российский университет дружбы народов имени Патриса Лумумбы»

DOI: 10.22363/2687-0088-2026-30-2

RUSSIAN JOURNAL OF LINGUISTICS

ISSN 2687-0088 e-ISSN 2686-8024

Publication frequency: quarterly.
Languages: Russian, English.
Indexed/abstracted in Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection (ESCI), RSCI, DOAJ, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory: http://www.ulrichsweb.com, Electronic Journals Library Cyberleninka, Google Scholar, WorldCat.

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- to cover scholarly activities of the Russian and international academia.

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E-mail: **lingj@rudn.ru**

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4 выпуска в год.
Языки: русский, английский.
Входит в перечень рецензируемых научных изданий ВАК РФ.
Включен в каталог периодических изданий Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection (ESCI), RSCI, DOAJ, Ульрих (Ulrich's Periodicals Directory: http://www.ulrichsweb.com).
Материалы журнала размещаются на платформе РИНЦ Российской научной электронной библиотеки, Electronic Journals Library Cyberleninka, Google Scholar,WorldCat.
Подписной индекс издания в каталоге агентства Роспечать: 36436.

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Правила оформления статей, архив и дополнительная информация размещены на сайте: **http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics**.

Электронный адрес: **lingj@rudn.ru**

Подписано в печать 15.06.2026. Выход в свет 28.06.2026. Формат 70×108/16.
Бумага офсетная. Печать офсетная. Гарнитура «Times New Roman».
Усл. печ. л. 22,4. Тираж 500 экз. Заказ № 556. Цена свободная.
Отпечатано в типографии ИПК РУДН: 115419, Москва, Россия, ул. Орджоникидзе, д. 3

Printed at the RUDN Publishing House: 3, Ordzhonikidze St., 115419 Moscow, Russia,
+7 (495) 952-04-41; e-mail: publishing@rudn.ru

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LANGUAGE POLICY IN MULTIETHNIC COUNTRIES
ЯЗЫКОВАЯ ПОЛИТИКА В ПОЛИЭТНИЧЕСКИХ СТРАНАХ

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 275–309
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-50145
EDN: CHGMKZ

Introductory article / Вступительная статья

Language policy in multiethnic countries: Current trends

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Abstract
This introductory article surveys current theoretical and methodological trends in language policy research in multilingual and multiethnic societies, with particular attention to the post-Soviet space and the Russian Federation. Drawing on structural, critical, ecological, and urban sociolinguistic approaches, the paper traces the evolution of language policy scholarship from early language planning models to contemporary frameworks emphasizing multilingualism, globalization, social inequality, and linguistic revitalization. The discussion integrates key concepts such as language management, linguistic markets, speech accommodation, superdiversity, and decolonial critiques of the "native speaker" paradigm. Particular attention is paid to the tensions between top-down state management and bottom-up language practices, especially in urban multilingual settings and endangered language communities. The growing role of language documentation and revitalization is also examined, highlighting current initiatives in Russia aimed at preserving linguistic diversity through scientifically grounded and community-centered approaches. Finally, the paper introduces the contributions to this special issue, which collectively explore language policy, identity, multilingual education, language maintenance, and revitalization across a range of global and local contexts. Together, the volume demonstrates that multilingualism is a normative social condition requiring flexible, multi-scalar, and socially responsive policy frameworks.
Keywords: *language policy, multilingualism, superdiversity, linguistic marketplace, minority languages, revitalization*

For citation:
Bergelson, Mira B. & Lenore A. Grenoble. 2026. Language policy in multiethnic countries: Current trends. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 275–309. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-50145 EDN: CHGMKZ

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Языковая политика в полиэтнических странах: современные тенденции

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Аннотация
В данной вводной статье рассматриваются современные теоретические и методологические тенденции в исследованиях языковой политики в многоязычных и полиэтничных обществах с особым вниманием к постсоветскому пространству и Российской Федерации. Опираясь на структурный, критический, экологический и урбанистический подходы в социолингвистике, авторы прослеживают эволюцию исследований языковой политики — от ранних моделей языкового планирования к современным концепциям, акцентирующим внимание на многоязычии, глобализации, социальном неравенстве и языковом возрождении. В статье интегрируются такие ключевые понятия, как управление языком, языковой рынок, речевая аккомодация, сверхразнообразие и деколониальные критики концепта «носитель языка». Особое внимание уделяется сложностям, возникающим между государственным управлением языковой сферой «сверху» и языковыми практиками сообществ «снизу», особенно в условиях городского многоязычия и среди носителей исчезающих языков. Также рассматривается возрастающая роль языковой документации и ревитализации, включая современные инициативы в России, направленные на сохранение языкового разнообразия посредством научно обоснованных и ориентированных на сообщества подходов. В заключение представлены статьи данного специального выпуска, посвященные вопросам языковой политики, идентичности, многоязычного образования, поддержания и возрождения языков в различных глобальных и локальных контекстах. В совокупности материалы выпуска демонстрируют, что многоязычие является нормальным состоянием современного общества и требует гибких, многоуровневых и социально ориентированных моделей языковой политики.
Ключевые слова: *языковая политика, многоязычие, сверхразнообразие, языковой рынок, миноритарные языки, ревитализация*

Для цитирования:
Bergelson M.B., Grenoble L.A. Language policy in multiethnic countries: Current trends. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 275–309. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-50145 EDN: CHGMKZ

1. Introduction

Language policy serves as a primary instrument for managing the inherent diversity of the modern global world. Our contemporary multilingual and multicultural world demonstrates that the diversity dominating cities and organizations is fundamentally rooted in communication between various sociocultural, ethnolinguistic and even occupational groups. These interactions,

grounded in specific cultural contexts, often involve conflicting interests where linguistic choices can result in collaboration, conflict, or a complex manifestation of both. In multiethnic countries and regions, the necessity for informed policy-making spans the entire geographic and social spectrum, from metropolitan hubs to small towns and rural areas. The principles of crafting a reasonable and efficient language policy must account for the multiple identities of its actors, identities that are not merely linguistic or ethnic, but also regional, local, and shaped by mobility, migration status, and professional or educational backgrounds (Alpatov 2000, Ricento 2006). Contemporary language policy is no longer a monolithic, top-down state project of engineering national identity. Rather, it is a multi-scalar site of struggle where official ideology meets the neoliberal commodification of language and the organic, often resistant, multilingualism of urban spaces. For these reasons, issues of language policy and management remain at the epicenter of modern sociolinguistic inquiry (Alpatov 2015, Savva 2024, Spolsky 2021).

This special issue on language policy in multilingual, multicultural, multiethnic and superdiverse contexts is organized around questions raised in the papers delivered at the Sociolinguistic sessions of The First Eurasian Congress of Linguists that took place in Moscow on 9–13 December, 2024. The aim of this volume is to bring together studies of specific linguistic situations and practices, particularly regarding the support of endangered and minority languages, with comprehensive theoretical and methodological reflections on multilingualism. Current trends in research on language policy, language management, language ecology and attitudes are represented in the papers in the present volume, along with the case studies of multilingual education, language maintenance, and construction of ethnic and linguistic identity.

In this introductory paper we review core global theoretical paradigms with specific case studies, from the post-Soviet space and beyond. The key focus is on synthesis of structural, critical, urban, and ecological approaches to language planning and management. In Russia, research on the management of linguistic diversity is currently in its most active phase. The *Decree on Foundations of National Language Policy*, rooted in constitutional guarantees for the protection of languages and cultures, was recently signed by the President of the Russian Federation (Ukaz No. 474, 2025), and State Duma is working (as of May 2026) on the Federal Law on Languages of the Russian Federation (Federal Law). Thus, this issue arrives at a critical juncture.

While the state and its institutional structures remain the indisputable primary actors in policy making, the implementation of policy is most conspicuous in the school system. In the schools, teachers and administrators function as de facto policy makers, though their powers are dependent on the parents' language ideologies. Simultaneously, an essential group of stakeholders includes the language communities themselves, whose cultural and linguistic support activities provide the "bottom-up" counterpart to state directives (Pavlenko 2008, Matras & Robertson 2015). Modern theoretical approaches to language policy and planning

demand the analysis of maximally broad contexts, where relevant factors include geography, climate, resources, demography, technology, and even systemic issues such as corruption or global health crises (Spolsky 2021, Ricento 2000). This expansion effectively grows the pool of stakeholders to include complex networks of human and non-human actors.

2. The evolution of language policy research

The study of how societies manage their linguistic repertoires has evolved from a technocratic problem-solving approach to a critical inquiry into power, identity, and globalization. This section synthesizes the trajectory of the field through its foundational literature. The following narrative traces the evolution of language policy (LP) research from its early origins to contemporary critical and urban frameworks. A historical perspective allows us to catch the transition from 19th-century "one nation, one language" ideals to the complex management of minority and endangered languages in the 21st century. It is accompanied by the paradigm shift from classical *language planning* to *language management* and *critical language policy*.

Initially, the term language planning was introduced by Uriel Weinrich in 1957 (see Lo Bianco 2010), establishing the initial framework for language planning. Kloss (1969) introduced a fundamental distinction between *corpus planning*, which targets the internal structure and vocabulary of a language, and *status planning*, which addresses its standing and function within society. This binary remains a primary tool for analyzing the structural mechanics of language laws. Rubin and Jernudd (1971) advanced an early rationalist perspective, framing language as a strategic national resource to be managed much like any other economic asset. Their approach emphasized goal-oriented planning designed to optimize communication for national development. Fishman (1974) expanded the discipline into the sociology of language, explicitly linking linguistic planning to broader patterns of social change and communal identity. He argued that language management is deeply intertwined with how ethnic and national groups define themselves. Related is *Communication Accommodation Theory* (CAT), which explains how individuals psychologically adjust their speech patterns in multiethnic interactions. In its early development, CAT focused on how, when and where speakers change their speech patterns to accommodate to their interlocutors (Giles 1973, Giles et al. 1973, Coupland 1984). This theory provides a micro-level understanding of the structural approach, highlighting the tension between personal practice and official status.

Integrating language planning with comprehensive social theory, Cooper (1989) moved the field beyond state-centric models. He emphasized that non-state actors and grassroots social movements are often the primary drivers of linguistic transformation. Building on this momentum, Tollefson (1991, 2013) founded *Critical Language Policy* (CLP), asserting that state-led planning is rarely neutral and often serves to reproduce social inequality and state power. His critical approach questions who truly benefits from language reforms, particularly in

polyethnic societies. Bourdieu (1991) introduced the theory of *Social Capital*, which treats language as a form of symbolic power within a competitive market. This perspective is essential for understanding why speakers may prioritize globalized languages over state languages based on their perceived economic value. Fishman (1991) later introduced the *Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale* (GIDS) as a framework for *Reverse Language Shift* (RLS). This became a cornerstone of the ecological approach, providing a roadmap for preserving endangered and minority languages against dominant linguistic forces. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) brought a human rights focus to the field by highlighting the *linguistic genocide* caused by exclusionary educational policies. Her work argues for the legal necessity of linguistic human rights to protect the heritage of marginalized groups. Pennycook (2001) utilized critical applied linguistics to critique the role of global English as a tool of post-colonial dominance. He argues that the spread of English is a politically charged process that often marginalizes local knowledge and indigenous codes. The *Continua of Biliteracy* was developed in Hornberger (2003) to analyze the diverse ecological niches where minority languages can coexist with dominant ones. This model helps researchers understand how educational policy can either restrict or empower multilingualism. Spolsky (2004, 2009) revolutionized the field with the theory of *Language Management*, proposing a triad of *linguistic practices*, *beliefs* (ideology), and explicit *management*. His framework is a primary tool for analyzing how laws correlate with, or diverge from, actual daily usage. Shohamy (2006) exposed the *hidden agendas* of language policy, focusing on how high-stakes testing acts as a gatekeeping mechanism. She demonstrated that standardized assessments are frequently used to enforce linguistic hierarchies and exclude specific social groups. Blommaert (2010) analyzed sociolinguistics under the pressures of globalization, shifting the focus to urban *superdiversity* and multiscalar communication. His work provides the foundation for the urban approach, treating the city as a dynamic site where globalization transforms traditional policy. Wright (2016) traced the historical trajectory of language policy from 19th-century nationalism to the current neoliberal era. Her work highlights the shift from ideals of "one nation, one language" toward a globalized market where language is increasingly treated as a commodity (see also Muth 2017 and the special issue of the Russian Journal of Linguistics 2017, 21(3), dedicated to the commodification of Russian).

3. Theoretical frameworks: Actors, scales and contexts

If the history of the field shows us what happened, theory explains why it continues to happen and how different variables (state power, community identity, and economic pressure) interact. The gap between a historical timeline and abstract theoretical models is bridged by some pivotal concepts (Johnson 2013). For example, in Richard Ruiz's (1984) seminal framework of *Language Orientations,* he argues that how a state sees language determines its policy. The motivations behind any language policy fall into three categories, or what Ruiz calls

orientations, a term that highlights how states align themselves with them to shape the direction of policy:

• Language-as-Problem: Seeing language diversity as a threat to national unity or a barrier to economic progress (e.g., the historical 'Americanization' schools or early Soviet 'Russification').

• Language-as-Right: Focusing on legal protections for minorities to use their tongues in courts and schools (e.g., the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages).

• Language-as-Resource: Viewing multilingualism as a cultural and economic asset for the whole country (e.g., modern Singapore or Luxembourg).

To understand the current state of affairs of language situations in multiethnic countries, we must analyze the correlation between legislative intent and sociolinguistic reality. This section explores the structural foundations of language policy through several key theoretical lenses, summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. **Theoretical Frameworks in Language Policy**

Approach	Key Question	Analytical Focus
Structural	How do laws correlate with actual practice?	The ratio between official state language status and its functional use in business/private sectors
Critical	Who benefits from language reform?	Elite bilingualism versus the linguistic isolation of rural or marginalized regions
Ecological	How can linguistic diversity be preserved?	Support mechanisms for indigenous and minority languages

3.1. Language management theory (LMT) and the Spolsky triad

At the heart of the structural approach is the interaction between three components as defined by Spolsky (2004):

- *Language Practices*: The actual habits of the population (e.g., code-switching in post-Soviet urban centers).
- *Language Beliefs* (Ideology): The values assigned to languages (e.g., the symbolic status of the state language vs. the utility of a *lingua franca*).
- *Language Management*: Explicit efforts by the state to influence the other two components through laws and education.

The utility of these three components can be illustrated by turning to Singapore, where the linguistic situation can be presented in this frame as follows:

1. Management: The state mandates four official languages (English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil) and runs the "Speak Mandarin Campaign."
2. Ideology: English is the language of "bread" (the economy), while the others are languages of "heart" (culture).
3. Practice: Despite management, many citizens speak Singlish (a creole).

The clash between management (speak Mandarin) and practice (Singlish) perfectly illustrates Spolsky's tension (Spolsky 2009).

3.2. Theory of language dynamics and socialization

This approach models the competitive 'survival' of languages in polyethnic states. Language policy functions through *Language Socialization* (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986), a theory which focuses on both socialization through language use and socialization to use language. Educational systems and family units may reproduce or resist official language hierarchies. This happens primarily within the school system, where children are conditioned into specific linguistic hierarchies. However, the *Theory of Language Dynamics*, which studies languages as a complex adaptive system (De Bot et al. 2007) states that rather than existing static structures, language is a system that changes over time, which suggests that these hierarchies are unstable. When the state's management conflicts with the *social capital*, the economic value of a language (Bourdieu1991), speakers often adapt their practices toward the more "valuable" code, regardless of official status.

3.3. Speech accommodation and adaptation

The theory of *Speech Adaptation* (or *Accommodation*) provides a micro-level view of power mechanics analyzing how individuals adjust their speech in multiethnic interactions (e.g., the use of lingua franca in professional settings) (Giles 1974, 2016, Giles et al. 1973). In polyethnic states, speakers engage in *convergence* or *divergence* to signal solidarity or social distance.

Hybrid models are used to describe situations where official policy and factual dominance coexist in a state of permanent tension. It is often seen in the urban metropole where global influences complicate state engineering (Sassen 2001, Vertovec 2007). There, official bilingualism exists alongside the dominance of one language, and adaptation becomes a survival strategy for navigating the linguistic market (Bourdieu 1991, Giles 2016).

Centrifugal Models is a term that comes from work in political science, associated with Sartori's (1976) seminal work on political parties. Centrifugal models are used to explain how different forces may push parties to a more extreme position, or they may drive a wedge between centralized forces. In linguistics, these models can be used to illustrate how users may move away from a standardized linguistic norm to a more local variety, or to favor one language over another. For example, active nationalization and the systematic displacement of former *lingua francas* can act as centrifugal forces, as in the post-Soviet space where national languages are aggressively promoted over use of Russian as a language of wider communication (Smagulova 2008, Smagulova & Madiyeva 2021). Case studies of active nationalization further include the shifting role of Russian in the Trans-Caucasus and the Baltics.

4. Critical and socio-economic perspectives: Linguistic market vs documentation and revitalization

This section points to the tension between language as a tool of state power and language as a resource for community identity. While *Critical Language Policy* (CLP) exposes how state structures reproduce inequality, the *Neoliberal Approach* analyzes how market forces dictate the so-called value of a language. In the context of endangered languages, it means that the focus shifts from mere state planning to active documentation and revitalization efforts. The *Social Capital* theory (Bourdieu 1991, 1986) examines language as a form of symbolic and economic capital. The *Neoliberal Approach* looks into how market value dictates language choice, often undermining efforts to revitalize indigenous or minority codes.

The focus shifts from language planning on the issues of power and inequality, especially in education. The main thesis of all critical approaches is that language policy is never neutral; it always serves the interests of the dominating groups and societies. The marginalization of local codes by global languages (first and foremost English, but other languages as well) is often described as *linguistic imperialism*. (See the articles in Tollefson & Milans 2018.) From the perspective of migration and human rights, this takes the form of institutional exclusion through the language testing as a filter to the labor market or citizenship (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). These topics are in the center of the most heated discussions in modern scholarship.

Under the critical framework, language documentation is not a neutral scientific act but a political one. Documentation as resistance challenges the notion of linguistic genocide (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000) by validating the existence of marginalized codes. This approach is manifested as *Decolonizing the Archive* (Senier 2014): documentation serves to counteract the historical *invisibilization* of minority groups in multiethnic states (Hughes-Watkins 2018), and the *Power of Recognition*, when researchers codify an endangered language, provides the community with the symbolic tools necessary to claim linguistic human rights. The power of recognition in endangered language work is a multifaceted, interdisciplinary tool that operates at the intersection of linguistics, psychology, politics, technology, and social justice (Sallabank 2011). It refers to the formal or informal acknowledgement of a language's worth, legitimacy, and right to exist, which can profoundly influence its revitalization and vitality

4.1. Ecological approaches, documentation and revitalization

The term *language ecology* reflects the main idea of this approach: viewing languages as part of a fragile ecosystem requiring protection. This influential line of scholarship (starting with Haugen 1972) states that languages are not just tools for communication, but biological and cultural resources that store unique ecological knowledge. Mühlhäusler (1996) highlights how the spread of colonial ‘killer languages’ disrupts local environments by erasing the traditional names and

management practices tied to indigenous landscapes. Thus, strategies supporting endangered languages may be compared to efforts to save endangered biological species, and both aim at maintaining diversity of the world. In this connection, Fishman (1991, 2001) introduced the concept of *Reverse Language Shift* (RLS) in the sense of defining strategies for supporting endangered languages. Drawing on global cases including the Circumpolar North (Grenoble 2018, 2025, Vakhtin 2005), the focus of this approach is concentrated on the *role of agency*, namely on the issues of how speaker communities navigate state management to reclaim linguistic identity. Language policy serves here as an instrument for healing historical traumas.

A functional divide between *documentation* vs. *revitalization* emphasizes a critical distinction between these two processes. If documentation is often an academic-led effort to preserve the linguistic data for future generations, then revitalization is more a social effort to restore intergenerational transmission and functional language use in daily life. Documentation fieldwork with the remaining speakers of endangered languages, elicitation techniques for collecting vocabulary and writing a grammar are supplemented with collecting various discourses and organizing them in the data corpora. (For more information and discussion, see Austin 2016, 2021, Bowern 2008, Chelliah & de Reuse 2011, Gippert et al. 2006, Grenoble & Whaley 2006, Himmelmann 1998, Kibrik 1977).

Revitalization of languages is a much broader and less academic approach that involves informed specialists, language activists and others who could benefit from the state, top-down involvement based on rigorous programs (King 2001, Olko & Sallabank 2021, Zuckermann 2020). Still, the first and main role is played by the language community itself. (See also Perlin 2024 and a review of his book in this volume.)

4.2. Systematic revitalization: The Russian experience

The theoretical framework of modern language policy in Russia is based on the necessity of active institutional management. The comprehensive *Program for the Preservation and Revitalization of the Languages of Russia* proposed by the Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences (Kibrik 2021) argues that the natural course of linguistic evolution in the 21st century, driven by mass media, urbanization, and global economic integration, tends toward the loss of minority languages. The central idea of the Program is to boost intergenerational language transmission wherever feasible. Three necessary conditions for language revitalization include engaging local activists, administrative and financial support, and the scientific validity of the methodology (Kibrik 2021).

Building upon the ecological traditions of Fishman (1991) and Hornberger (2003), Kibrik (2021) emphasizes that documentation is only the first step. His approach advocates for a move from archive-centered linguistics to speaker-centered revitalization, to the programs and community-led initiatives that bypass traditional top-down management.

This approach is shared by the authors of this special issue: survival of a language depends not only on the number of speakers but on its sociolinguistic health, which requires scientifically grounded, systemic studies, monitoring and appropriate intervention based on research. The success of revitalization depends on whether these languages can move beyond being 'museum pieces' (documentation) and regain *social capital* in the modern linguistic market (Hinton et al. 2018).

Languages are rapidly becoming extinct worldwide. Russia is no exception to this trend. According to a recent assessment, there are 150 to 160 languages of Russia.The work of the Scientific Center for Language Preservation at the Institute of Linguistics (RAS) represents a significant structural response to these global trends within the Russian and post-Soviet space (2024). The *Linguistic Diversity of Russia* project at the Center focuses on the systematic assessment of language vitality across Russia's polyethnic landscape. This involves sociolinguistic monitoring, identifying the specific stages of language loss according to updated disruption scales, implementing revitalization models (such as the *language nest model*). Much attention is paid to the propagation of the value of multilinguality among the general public.

Documentation serves as a primary effort for many endangered languages because it provides a corpus of data required for modern pedagogical materials, ensuring that minority languages can be socialized in contemporary urban and digital environments.

5. Urban linguistics and global perspectives

Urban centers represent the most volatile sites of language policy, where tension between top-down *language management* and bottom-up *language practices* is visible. While state policies often aim for homogenization, the modern metropolis functions through *superdiversity* (Vertovec 2007), creating linguistic realities that frequently bypass official legislation. The city is reframed not as a recipient of state policy, but as a dynamic linguistic lab where global migration, historical legacies, and local agency collide. As outlined in the *Urban approach*, the city is not merely a geographic location but a dynamic agent where new linguistic variants, such as *New Russian* or *New Uzbek*, emerge in response to globalization and urban hybridity. Different global metropoles — New York, Moscow, Manchester, Montreal and others — respond to the superdiverse reality be it official bilingualism or factual dominance, the emergence of new urban dialects, or code-switching practices (King & Carson 2016).

The myth that Moscow, a capital city of a highly centralized country, is a monolingual center is challenged in Bergelson and Zoumpalidis (2024) revealing a complex "hidden" diversity driven by migration from Central Asia and the Caucasus. The city acts as a site of *speech accommodation* where migrant languages persist in private and semi-public spheres despite an official Russian-only policy

environment. In the city, the titular language often loses its traditional markers and becomes a metropolitan version, hybridized and modernized.

Different aspects of urban multilingualism are illustrated in a variety of cities (see Hussain et al. 2025, Leontovich & Kotelnikokva 2022, Pavlenko 2017, Pütz 2020, Zoumpalidis & Şimşek 2025, and others). New York represents the global peak of linguistic diversity (Perlin 2024). The city's social networks allow speakers to maintain mother tongues that lack official support in their countries of origin. *Regulated* vs. *Organic Multilingualism* can be illustrated by the Montreal and Manchester cases. Montreal represents the top-down interventionist model. Quebec's linguistic laws attempt to strictly manage the linguistic landscape to ensure the dominance of French (Heller 2003, Levine 1990). However, the everyday urban dynamics of Montreal remains stubbornly bilingual, illustrating the limits of state management when faced with the economic capital of English. Manchester presents an organic model of multilingualism (Matras 2024, Matras & Roberston 2015). Its diversity is not a problem to be managed, but a functional system where community languages are integrated into public services and local identity, creating a resilient social capital for immigrant communities. The city fosters a hybrid linguistic environment where the organic use of multiple codes in the urban landscape naturally resists state-mandated monolingual ideals.

Superdiversity and global patterns, language commodification and public signage can be further demonstrated in the cases of Melbourne, Hamburg (Clyne 2006, Duarte & Gogolin 2013), Tashkent and Almaty (Smagulova 2008). In the first two metropolitan cities, the sheer number of linguistic variables makes traditional minority rights frameworks obsolete. Cities like Tashkent and Almaty occupy a unique middle ground. They experience centrifugal nationalization (the push for Uzbek or Kazakh) while simultaneously acting as hubs for global English and the lingering functional dominance of Russian as an urban *lingua franca*. Smagulova (2008) calls this "elite bilingualism," when the metropolitan identity is marked by the ability to navigate between Russian (the old lingua franca), Kazakh (the state symbol), and English (the global neoliberal commodity). This new multilingualism is not about ethnic roots, but about urban mobility.

The common thread across these metropolises is their diverse linguistic landscapes that allows for reading the city as a text through signage, advertisements, and digital presence. Ultimately, the city transforms the core question of language policy from a search for legal correlation to an analysis of how urban dynamics redefine the *value* and *utility* of languages in a globalized market. Another common feature is the emergence of "new" language variants forged in the globalization context (see Shaibakova et al. 2023, Proshina 2026).

6. The problem of "native language" and "native speaker"

Since the beginning of the 20th century and even earlier, the ultimate goal of studying foreign languages has been to achieve a level of language proficiency that matches that of a native speaker. The concept of native speakers was once a solid

and unquestionable category. However, in today's globalized world, this approach, known in English as native-speakerism, is quickly becoming outdated as it "suppresses the freedom of thought and expression as fundamental human rights" (Hino 2021: 528) and does not allow one to express one's self. Things changed when urbanization and mass migrations of the 20th and 21st centuries led to creation of the new diasporas and emergence of the next generations (2nd and 3rd) of the migrants. The category of native speaker lost its 'purity' and homogeneity as the very term *native language* could be redefined as mother tongue (=the first language a person acquired in childhood), the language one speaks at the highest proficiency level, the language used in the majority of context and practices, and the language of the group a person identifies with. These four basic criteria defining the native language (*origin, competence, function, identification*) are often not harmonized and conflict with each other. So, sociolinguistics could no longer use this term as a prototypical category, relying instead on models based on one criteria only (Guermanova 2024).

Scholars working within the *Critical language policy* (CLP) approach have long questioned how the *native speaker* ideal is used to reinforce social hierarchies. Tollefson (1991**)** founded the CLP framework, arguing that language planning, including the promotion of specific "native standards," reproduces social inequality and state power. The same kind of critique targeted the concepts of *mother tongue* and *native language*, arguing that these terms are often ideologically loaded constructs rather than neutral descriptions of linguistic reality. This view was expanded by Blommaert (2010). Analyzing sociolinguistics under globalization, he critiqued traditional views of the native speaker by highlighting how individuals navigate complex urban environments using diverse linguistic repertoires that do not fit neatly into single-language categories. Wright (2016) traced the historical shift from 19th-century nationalism, which relied heavily on leveraging the concept of a mother tongue as a symbol of the nation-state, to a neoliberal era where language is increasingly treated as a marketable commodity. Pennycook (2001) analyzed the role of global English within the critical applied linguistics framework, arguing that Western academic traditions have used the concept of native language to maintain post-colonial dominance over local and indigenous codes.

6.1. Decolonial and epistemological critiques

The recent volume *Insecurities in Language Policy and Planning* (Makoni et al. 2026) offers a sustained critique of the taken-for-granted categories that have long structured the field, such as the term "(native) speaker." In this view, language policy and planning are entangled with colonial histories of standardization that have contributed to processes of control and exclusion. Gafaranga (2026) suggests that researchers should consider suspending use of the term *language* as a fixed analytic category altogether, using it only when it is explicitly invoked by the speakers themselves. Karlander and Salö (2026) trace the origins of *semilingualism*,

a concept often used to pathologize those whose linguistic practices do not align with idealized "native" norms, exposing its ideological roots as a deficit model.

Still, if we deconstruct the *native speaker* or the *named language* too far, we might inadvertently support a market-style linguistic chaos where only the most powerful languages (English or Russian) survive. Critics of the neoliberal/anticolonial turn in sociolinguistics often argue that terms like *translanguaging* or the *deconstruction of named languages* can act as a *neoliberal trap*: by claiming that boundaries between languages do not exist, we risk stripping minority groups of the very tools (standardized, "pure" languages) they need to claim legal rights and state protection.

7. Mapping the special issue: From global scapes to local practices

The ten articles in this issue form a scholarly mosaic, sequenced to seamless transition from overarching theoretical and ideological frameworks to granular empirical analyses of sociolinguistic cases. The articles directly address the preceding theoretical issues, bridging the gap between historical legacies and current trends.

The volume opens with **Camiel Hamans**, who explores the social feasibility of accommodating minority languages within national structures. By analyzing the historical emergence of national standards — from the linguistic ideologies of the French Revolution to German Romanticism — Hamans warns against "linguistic essentialism." He argues that the violent disputes seen in places like Spain and Belgium can only be mitigated through an anti-essentialist approach characterized by diversity and tolerance.

Complementing this, **Konstantin Zamyatin** provides a critical analysis of the current efforts to conceptualize linguistic diversity within the Russian legislative framework. Drawing on participant observation and discourse analysis of official drafting processes, Zamyatin reveals the inherent difficulties in operationalizing "preservation" when official definitions remain broad. His work highlights the tension between the symbolic inclusion of diversity in policy goals and the practical needs of language activists on the ground.

The critical importance of methodology and institutional data is addressed by **Gulnara Gabdrakhmanova** and **Nikolai B. Vakhtin**. They offer a rigorous critique of the 2020–2021 Russian Census, using Haugen's ecology of language framework to demonstrate how technical and terminological shortcomings can distort our understanding of language endangerment. Their analysis of ten indigenous languages in Yakutia shows that census data can produce 'ghost' increases or decreases that do not reflect the actual sociolinguistic health of these communities.

Lenore Grenoble further expands the theoretical horizon by applying Appadurai's (1996) *Scape theory* to a comparative study of Greenland and Yakutia. By examining the interplay of ethnoscapes, technoscapes, and mediascapes, Grenoble demonstrates that language policy cannot be successful if it ignores global

flows of people and technology. Her research emphasizes that indigenous languages must find a 'digital niche' to survive in an era where 98% of the population is interconnected via the internet.

The volume then transitions into the complex world of identity negotiation. **Dionysios Zoumpalidis** and **Mira B. Bergelson** provide an in-depth life-history analysis of Sakhalin Koreans across four generations. Their work shows that language shift is not a simple linear process toward Russian. Instead, families develop strategic repertoires involving "kitchen Korean" and symbolic ties to popular culture to navigate a century of the Japanese colonial displacement and adaptation to the political and social demands of the Soviet era.

The role of the educational system, which is a key site of policy implementation, is examined by **Dick Smakman** in the context of the Netherlands. Smakman highlights the disconnect between the inclusive rhetoric of international bodies (UNESCO, EU) and the "language-as-problem" orientation found in Dutch classrooms. His study illustrates how the exclusion of heritage languages (Turkish, Arabic, Polish) from the curriculum reinforces educational inequities.

The next two papers address specific cases of language contact and hybridity. **Mariya Yu. Nekrasova** examines the persistence of Ukrainian lexical elements in Sevastopol. Her functional analysis shows that despite shifting political boundaries, Ukrainian remains a pragmatic and emotional resource in everyday speech, used for everything from sarcastic interjections to self-identification of the locals vs. newcomers. Finally, **Víctor Lara Bermejo** challenges the status of Llanito in Gibraltar. Based on extensive fieldwork, he argues that Llanito is not a distinct variety or language, but rather a manifestation of code-switching in a society rapidly moving toward English monolingualism, illustrating the final stages of language shift.

This special issue concludes with a final paper on multilingualism in Yakutia by **Igor A. Danilov**, who investigates the "symbolic power" of Northern minority languages. Danilov identifies a paradoxical trend: as the communicative functionality of languages like Yukaghir or Even declines, their symbolic value as markers of ethnic identity increases. This "symbolic revitalization" poses a challenge for policy-makers who must decide whether to support language as a tool for communication or as a vessel for heritage

8. Conclusion: Toward a multi-scalar model where multilingualism is the norm

Collectively, these papers demonstrate that language policy in the post-Soviet space and elsewhere reveals a fundamental tension that mirrors global shifts: the conflict between state efforts to manage national identity and the organic reality of human communication. While regional nationalization efforts often demonstrate global patterns of securitization, the actual practices of speakers tell a different story.

Language policy involves continuous interaction and compromises between different processes. In reality, multilingualism is not an 'insecurity' to be solved,

but the normal state of affairs for both individuals and the societies that unite them. As demonstrated through the theory of social capital and speech accommodation theory, individuals naturally navigate multiple discourse communities, shifting between codes to build solidarity and access economic opportunities. Whether in the hidden multilingualism of Moscow or flourishing of the many languages of New York, linguistic practices are governed by a multi-scalar logic that transcends top-down engineering.

By integrating the critical, structural, urban, and ecological approaches, we move away from deficit models like semilingualism. Instead, we recognize that society is held together not by a single standardized code, but by the dynamic interplay of diverse linguistic repertoires. The modern multiethnic countries, with their centrifugal models of nationalization and their complex urban hybrids, provide essential data for a world increasingly defined by superdiversity and neoliberal commodification of language. The studies presented here serve both as a record of our current multilingual reality and a roadmap for managing the complex ethnic and linguistic landscapes of the 21st century.

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1. Введение

Языковая политика служит основным инструментом управления многообразием, присущим современному глобальному миру. Наш современный многоязычный и многокультурный мир демонстрирует, что в основе многообразия, доминирующего в городах и организациях, находятся коммуникативные взаимодействия между различными социокультурными, этнолингвистическими и даже профессиональными группами. Это взаимодействие, погруженное в конкретные культурные контексты, часто связано с конфликтующими интересами. В результате языковой выбор может привести к сотрудничеству, конфликту или сложному проявлению того и другого. В полиэтничных странах и регионах необходимость принятия обоснованных решений в области языковой политики охватывает весь географический и социальный спектр — от мегаполисов до небольших городов и сельской местности. Принципы разработки разумной и эффективной языковой политики должны учитывать множественные идентичности ее участников, не только языковую или этническую, но и региональную, местную, а также формируемые мобильностью, миграционным статусом и профессиональным или образовательным опытом (Алпатов /Alpatov 2000, Ricento 2006). Современная языковая политика более не является монолитным, централизованным (top down) государственным проектом по формированию национальной идентичности. Скорее, это многоуровневая площадка борьбы, где официальная идеология сталкивается с неолиберальной коммерциализацией языка и органическим, зачастую протестным, многоязычием городских пространств. По этим причинам вопросы языковой политики и управления остаются в эпицентре современных

социолингвистических исследований (Алпатов /Alpatov 2015, Savva 2024, Spolsky 2021).

Этот специальный выпуск, посвященный языковой политике в многоязычных, поликультурных и полиэтничных контекстах сверхразнообразия, организован вокруг вопросов, поднятых в докладах, представленных на социолингвистических сессиях Первого Евразийского конгресса лингвистов, состоявшегося в Москве 9–13 декабря 2024 г. Цель этого тома — объединить исследования конкретных языковых ситуаций и практик, в частности, касающихся поддержки исчезающих и миноритарных языков, с всесторонними теоретическими и методологическими исследованиями многоязычия. В представленных статьях отражены современные тенденции в исследованиях языковой политики, управления языком, языковой экологии и языковых идеологий, а также тематические исследования многоязычного образования, сохранения языка и формирования этнической и языковой идентичности.

В вводной статье мы рассматриваем основные глобальные теоретические парадигмы на конкретных примерах из постсоветского пространства и за его пределами. Основное внимание уделяется синтезу структурных, критических, урбанистических и экологических подходов к языковому планированию и управлению. В России исследования в области управления языковым многообразием в настоящее время находятся в наиболее активной стадии. Недавно Президент Российской Федерации подписал Указ об основах национальной языковой политики, основанный на конституционных гарантиях защиты языков и культур (Указ № 474, 2025), а Государственная дума (по состоянию на май 2026 г.) работает над Федеральным законом о языках Российской Федерации (Федеральный закон). Таким образом, данный выпуск актуален и выходит в критически важный момент.

Хотя государство и его институциональные структуры остаются бесспорными главными действующими лицами в процессе принятия политических решений, реализация языковой политики наиболее заметна в школьной системе. В школах учителя и администраторы фактически выступают в роли лиц, принимающих политические решения, хотя их полномочия зависят от языковой идеологии родителей. Одновременно с этим важной заинтересованной стороной являются сами языковые сообщества, чья культурная и языковая поддержка обеспечивает противовес снизу (“bottom up”) государственным директивам (Pavlenko 2008, Matras & Robertson 2015). Современные теоретические подходы к языковой политике и планированию требуют анализа максимально широкого контекста, где к существенным факторам относятся география, климат, ресурсы, демография, технологии и даже системные вопросы, такие как коррупция или глобальные кризисы в здравоохранении (Spolsky 2021, Ricento 2000). Эта широта фактически увеличивает число заинтересованных сторон, включая в них сложные взаимодействия человеческих субъектов и природных и общественных факторов.

2. Эволюция исследований в области языковой политики

Изучение того, как общество справляется с языковыми различиями, эволюционировало от технократического проблематизирующего подхода к критическому исследованию политики власти, идентичности и глобальных процессов. В этом разделе дается общая траектория развития этой области исследований через призму основных работ, заложивших ее фундамент. Мы прослеживаем эволюцию исследований в области языковой политики (ЯП) от ее истоков до современных критических и урбанистских концепций. Историческая перспектива позволяет нам проследить переход от идеалов «одна нация — один язык» XIX в. к сложному управлению языками меньшинств и исчезающими языками в XXI в. Этот переход сопровождается сдвигом парадигмы от классического языкового планирования к языковому управлению и критической языковой политике.

Первоначально термин «языковое планирование» был введен Уриэлем Вайнрихом в 1957 г. (см. Lo Bianco 2010), заложившим основу для языкового планирования, Kloss (1969) ввел принципиальное различие между корпусным планированием, которое нацелено на внутреннюю структуру и лексику языка, и статусным планированием, которое рассматривает положение и функцию языка в обществе. Эта бинарная оппозиция до сих пор остается основным инструментом анализа структурных механизмов законов о языке. Rubin & Jernudd (1971) развивали эти рационалистические взгляды, рассматривая язык как стратегический национальный ресурс, которым следует управлять так же, как и любым другим экономическим активом. Их подход подчеркивал целеориентированное планирование, направленное на оптимизацию коммуникации для национального развития. Fishman (1974) привнес в дисциплину социологию языка, явно связав лингвистическое планирование с более широкими моделями социальных изменений и идентичности. Он утверждал, что управление языком тесно связано с тем, как этнические и национальные группы определяют себя сами. С этим связана теория коммуникативной адаптации (CAT), которая объясняет, как люди неосознанно корректируют свое речевое поведение в межэтнических взаимодействиях. На ранних этапах своего развития CAT фокусировалась на том, как и в каких ситуациях говорящие изменяют свои речевые модели, чтобы адаптироваться к собеседникам (Giles 1973, Giles et al. 1973, Coupland 1984). Эта теория обеспечивает микроуровень в структурном подходе, высвечивая противоречия между индивидуальными практиками и официальным статусом.

Объединяя языковое планирование и общую социальную теорию, Cooper (1989) вывел данную область за пределы государственноцентричных моделей. Он подчеркивал, что негосударственные субъекты и низовые социальные движения часто являются основными движущими силами языковой трансформации. Опираясь на этот импульс, Tollefson (1991, 2013) разработал критическую языковую политику (CLP), в рамках которой утверждается, что государственное планирование редко бывает нейтральным и часто служит для

воспроизведения социального неравенства и государственной власти. В его критическом подходе задается вопрос о том, кто действительно выигрывает от языковых реформ, особенно в полиэтничных обществах. Bourdieu (1991) предложил теорию социального капитала, которая рассматривает язык как форму символической власти на конкурентном рынке. Эта перспектива необходима для понимания того, почему носители языка могут отдавать приоритет глобализированным языкам перед национальными, основываясь на их предполагаемой экономической ценности. Fishman (1991) позже представил шкалу градуированного межпоколенческого нарушения (GIDS) в качестве основы для обратного языкового сдвига (RLS). Она стала краеугольным камнем экологического подхода, предложив дорожную карту для сохранения исчезающих и миноритарных языков и их защиты от воздействия доминирующих языков. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) добавила в эту область исследования акцент на права человека, введя термин «языковой геноцид» (лингвоцид), вызванный дискриминационной образовательной политикой. В своей работе она доказывает юридическую необходимость языковых прав человека для защиты наследия маргинализированных групп. Pennycook (2001) использовал критическую прикладную лингвистику для критики роли глобального английского языка как инструмента постколониального доминирования. Он утверждает, что распространение английского языка является политически заряженным процессом, который часто маргинализирует местные традиционные знания и индигенные языки. Hornberger (2003) представил «континуум двуязычия» для анализа разнообразных экологических ниш, где языки меньшинств могут сосуществовать вместе с доминирующими языками. Данная модель помогает исследователям понять, как образовательная политика может либо ограничивать, либо расширять возможности многоязычия. Spolsky (2004, 2009) произвел революцию в этой области, предложив теорию управления языком, включающую триаду лингвистических практик, убеждений (идеологии) и эксплицитного управления. Его концепция стала основным инструментом анализа того, соотносятся ли законы и правила с реальным повседневным использованием языка или расходятся с ним. Shohamy (2006) обнажила скрытые цели языковой политики, сделав фокус на том, как тестирование, результаты которого имеют важные последствия для индивидуума, действует в качестве механизма контроля. Она продемонстрировала, что стандартизированные оценки часто используются для укрепления иерархии языков и исключения определенных социальных групп. Blommaert (2010) проанализировал социолингвистику в условиях глобализации, сместив акцент на городское сверхразнообразие и многоуровневую коммуникацию. Его работа закладывает основу для урбанистского подхода, рассматривая город как динамичное место, где глобализация трансформирует традиционную политику. Wright (2016) проследила историческую траекторию языковой политики от национализма XIX в. до современной неолиберальной эпохи. Ее работа подчеркивает переход от идеалов «одна нация — один язык» к глобализированному рынку,

где язык все чаще рассматривается как товар (см. также Muth 2017 и спецвыпуск журнала Russian Journal of Linguistics 2017, 21 (3), посвященный коммодификации русского языка).

3. Теоретические основы: действующие лица, масштабы и контексты

Если история данной области показывает нам, что происходило, то теория объясняет, почему это продолжает происходить и как взаимодействуют различные переменные (государственная власть, идентичность сообщества и экономическое давление). Разрыв между исторической хронологией и абстрактными теоретическими моделями преодолевается с помощью определенных ключевых положений (Johnson 2013). Например, в основополагающей концепции языковых ориентаций (Ruiz 1984) утверждается, что то, как государство воспринимает язык, определяет его политику. Мотивации, лежащие в основе любой языковой политики, делятся на три категории, или, как называет их Руис, *ориентации* — термин, указывающий на то, как государства выбирают ориентиры, чтобы сформировать направление политики:

- язык как проблема: восприятие языкового разнообразия как угрозы национальному единству или препятствия экономическому прогрессу (например, исторические школы «американизации» или ранняя советская «русификация»);
- язык как право: акцент на защите прав меньшинств на использование своего языка в судах и школах (например, Европейская хартия региональных языков или языков меньшинств);
- язык как ресурс: рассмотрение многоязычия как культурного и экономического актива для всей страны (например, современный Сингапур или Люксембург).

Для понимания текущего положения дел в языковой сфере в полиэтничных странах необходимо проанализировать отношения между законодательными устремлениями и социолингвистической реальностью. В этом разделе мы рассматриваем структурные основы языковой политики с помощью нескольких ключевых теоретических подходов, обобщенных в таблице 1.

Таблица 1. **Теоретические основы языковой политики**

Подход	**Ключевой вопрос**	**Аналитический фокус**
Структурный	Как законы соотносятся с реальной практикой?	Соотношение между статусом официального государственного языка и его функциональным использованием в деловом/частном секторах
Критический	Кому выгодна языковая реформа?	Элитное двуязычие vs. языковая изоляция сельских или маргинализированных регионов
Экологический	Как сохранить языковое разнообразие?	Механизмы поддержки языков коренных народов и меньшинств

3.1. Теория управления языком (LMT) и триада Спольского

В основе структурного подхода лежит взаимодействие трех компонентов, как их определил Spolsky (2004):

• языковые практики: фактические привычки населения (например, переключение кодов в постсоветских городских центрах);

• языковые убеждения (идеология): ценности, присваиваемые языкам (например, символический статус государственного языка по сравнению с полезностью языка межнационального общения);

• управление языком: целенаправленные усилия государства по влиянию на два других компонента посредством законов и образования.

Проявление этих трех компонентов можно проиллюстрировать на примере Сингапура, где, используя эту рамку, языковая ситуация может быть представлена следующим образом:

• управление: в государстве установлены четыре официальных языка (английский, китайский (мандарин), малайский и тамильский), а также проводится кампания «Говорите на китайском языке» (Speak Mandarin Campaign);

• идеология: английский — это язык «хлеба» (экономики), а остальные — языки «сердца» (культуры);

• практика: несмотря на действия властей, многие граждане говорят на сингапурском диалекте английского языка (креольском диалекте Singlish).

Столкновение между управлением (говорить на китайском языке) и практикой (сингапурский английский) прекрасно иллюстрирует противоречие, описанное Б. Спольски (Spolsky 2009).

3.2. Теория динамики языка и социализации

Этот подход моделирует конкурентное «выживание» языков в полиэтничных государствах. Языковая политика функционирует через социализацию языка (Scheiffelin & Ochs 1986), теорию, которая фокусируется как на социализации посредством использования языка, так и на социализации для использования языка. Образовательные системы и семейные ячейки могут воспроизводить официальные языковые иерархии или сопротивляться им. Это происходит в основном в школьной системе, где дети приучаются к определенным иерархиям языков. Однако существует теория языковой динамики, которая изучает языки как сложную адаптивную систему (De Bot et al. 2007). Вместо того, чтобы быть статичной структурой, язык представляет собой систему, которая меняется со временем, что предполагает нестабильность иерархий. Когда государственное управление вступает в конфликт с социальным капиталом, экономической ценностью языка (Bourdieu 1991), носители языка часто адаптируют свою практику к более «ценному» коду, независимо от официального статуса.

3.3. Аккомодация и адаптация в речи

Теория адаптации (или аккомодации) речи предлагает микроуровневое представление о механизмах власти, основанное на анализе того, как индивиды корректируют свою речь в межэтнических взаимодействиях (например, использование лингва франка в профессиональной среде) (Giles 1974, 2016, Giles et al. 1973). В полиэтничных странах говорящие используют конвергенцию или дивергенцию, чтобы сигнализировать о солидарности или социальной дистанции.

Гибридные модели применяются для описания ситуаций, когда официальная политика и фактическое доминирование сосуществуют в состоянии постоянной дисгармонии. Это часто наблюдается в крупных городах, где глобальные факторы усложняют государственное управление (Sassen 2001, Vertovec 2007). В этих случаях официальное двуязычие существует наряду с доминированием одного языка и адаптация становится стратегией выживания на языковом рынке (Bourdieu 1991, Giles 2016).

Термин «центробежные модели» заимствован из политологии и связан с основополагающей работой Sartori (1976) о политических партиях. Центробежные модели используются для объяснения того, как различные силы могут подталкивать стороны к более экстремальным позициям или вбивать клин между силами, ориентированными на централизацию. В лингвистике эти модели могут использоваться для иллюстрации того, как пользователи отходят от стандартизированной языковой нормы, предпочитая ей локальные варианты или отдают предпочтение одному языку перед другим. Например, активная национализация и систематическое вытеснение бывших языков межнационального общения могут выступать в качестве центробежных сил, как, например, на постсоветском пространстве, где национальные языки активно продвигаются для замещения русского как языка широкого функционала (Smagulova 2008, Smagulova & Madiyeva 2021). Примерами активной национализации является изменение роли русского языка в Закавказье и странах Балтии.

4. Критические и социально-экономические перспективы: языковой рынок против документации и возрождения

В этом разделе мы обращаем внимание на противоречие между языком как инструментом государственной власти и языком как ресурсом для формирования идентичности сообщества. В то время как критическая языковая политика показывает, как государственные структуры воспроизводят неравенство, неолиберальный подход анализирует, как рыночные силы определяют так называемую ценность языка. В контексте исчезающих языков это означает, что акцент смещается с простого государственного планирования на активные усилия по документированию и возрождению языка. Теория социального капитала (Bourdieu 1991, 1986) рассматривает язык как форму символического и экономического капитала. Неолиберальный подход исследует,

как рыночная ценность определяет выбор языка, часто подрывая усилия по возрождению коренных или миноритарных языков.

В центре внимания при этом подходе оказывается не языковое планирование, а вопросы власти и неравенства, особенно в сфере образования. Главный тезис всех критических подходов заключается в том, что языковая политика никогда не бывает нейтральной; она всегда служит интересам доминирующих групп и обществ. Маргинализация местных кодов глобальными языками (прежде всего английским, но и другими тоже) часто описывается как лингвистический империализм (см. статьи в Tollefson & Milans 2018). С точки зрения миграции и прав человека, это принимает форму институциональной изоляции посредством языкового тестирования как фильтра для рынка труда или гражданства (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). Эти темы находятся в центре самых острых дискуссий в современной науке.

В рамках критического подхода документирование языка — это не нейтральный научный акт, а акт политический. Документирование как сопротивление бросает вызов понятию языкового геноцида (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000), подтверждая и узаконивая существование маргинализированных кодов. Этот подход проявляется в деколонизации архива (Senier 2014): документирование противостоит исторической невидимости меньшинств в полиэтничных государствах (Hughes-Watkins 2018), а сила признания, когда исследователи кодифицируют исчезающий язык, предоставляет сообществу символические инструменты, необходимые для отстаивания языковых прав человека. Сила признания в работе с исчезающими языками — это многогранный, междисциплинарный инструмент, который действует на стыке лингвистики, психологии, политики, технологий и социальной справедливости (Sallabank 2011). Он относится к формальному или неформальному признанию ценности, легитимности и права языка на существование, что может глубоко повлиять на его возрождение и жизнеспособность.

4.1. Экологические подходы, документирование и возрождение

Термин «языковая экология» отражает основную идею этого подхода: рассматривать языки как часть хрупкой экосистемы, нуждающейся в защите. Это влиятельное направление исследований (начинающееся с работы Haugen 1972) утверждает, что языки — это не просто инструменты коммуникации, а биологические и культурные ресурсы, хранящие уникальные экологические знания. Mühlhäusler (1996) обращает внимание на то, как распространение колониальных «языков-убийц» нарушает местную среду, стирая традиционные названия и жизненные практики, связанные с местными ландшафтами. Таким образом, стратегии поддержки исчезающих языков можно сравнить с усилиями по спасению исчезающих биологических видов, и обе эти стратегии направлены на сохранение разнообразия мира. В этой связи Fishman (1991, 2001) ввел концепцию обратного языкового сдвига (RLS), описывая стратегии поддержки исчезающих языков. Опираясь на глобальные примеры, включая циркумполярный Север (Vakhtin 2005, Grenoble 2018, 2025), данный

подход стремится к сосредоточению на роли субъектности, а именно на вопросах того, как языковые сообщества взаимодействуют с государственным строительством для восстановления языковой идентичности. Языковая политика здесь выступает инструментом для исцеления исторических травм.

Функциональное разделение между документированием и возрождением подчеркивает важнейшее различие между этими двумя процессами. Если документирование часто представляет собой академическую инициативу по сохранению языковых данных для будущих поколений, то возрождение — это скорее социальная инициатива по восстановлению межпоколенческой передачи и функционального использования языка в повседневной жизни. Полевые исследования по документированию с оставшимися носителями исчезающих языков, методы сбора лексики и составления грамматики дополняются сбором различных дискурсов и их организацией в корпуса данных (для дополнительной информации и дискуссии см. Austin 2016, 2021, Bowern 2008, Chelliah & de Reuse 2011, Gippert et al. 2006, Grenoble & Whaley 2006, Himmelmann 1998, Kibrik 1977).

Возрождение языков — это гораздо более широкий и менее академический подход, который включает в себя информированных специалистов, языковых активистов и всех тех, кто мог бы внести вклад в государственное, централизованное участие, основанное на основательно проработанных программах возрождения (King 2001, Olko & Sallabank 2021, Zuckermann 2020). Тем не менее, первостепенную роль в этом процессе играет само языковое сообщество (См. также Perlin 2024 и обзор его книги в этом томе).

4.2. Систематическое возрождение: российский опыт

Теоретическая основа современной языковой политики в России базируется на необходимости активного институционального управления. Комплексная программа сохранения и возрождения языков России, предложенная Институтом языкознания Российской академии наук (Kibrik 2021), утверждает, что естественный ход языковой эволюции в XXI в., обусловленный влиянием средств массовой информации, урбанизацией и глобальной экономической интеграцией, ведет к утрате языков меньшинств. Центральная идея программы — способствовать межпоколенческой передаче языка везде, где это возможно. Три необходимых условия для возрождения языка включают в себя привлечение местных активистов, административную и финансовую поддержку, а также научную обоснованность методологии (Kibrik 2021).

Опираясь на экологические традиции (Fishman 1991, Horberger 2003), А.А. Кибрик (Kibrik 2021) подчеркивает, что документирование — это лишь первый шаг в сохранении исчезающих языков. Предлагается переход от лингвистики, ориентированной на архивы, к возрождению, ориентированному на говорящих, к программам и инициативам, возглавляемым сообществами, которые не зависят от традиционного управления сверху вниз.

Авторы данного выпуска разделяют этот подход: выживание языка зависит не только от количества носителей, но и от его социолингвистического

здоровья, которое требует научно обоснованных, системных исследований, мониторинга и соответствующих активных мер, основанных на знаниях, полученных в результате исследований. Успех возрождения зависит от того, смогут ли эти языки выйти за рамки статуса «музейных экспонатов» (документации) и восстановить свой социальный капитал на современном языковом рынке (Hinton et al. 2018).

Языки стремительно исчезают по всему миру. Россия не является исключением из этой тенденции. По последним оценкам, в России насчитывается от 150 до 160 языков. Работа Научного центра сохранения языков при Институте языкознания РАН представляет собой значительный конструктивный ответ на эти глобальные тенденции на российском и постсоветском пространстве. Проект «Лингвистическое разнообразие России», разработанный в Центре (2024), фокусируется на систематической оценке жизнеспособности языков в полиэтническом ландшафте России. Это включает в себя социолингвистический мониторинг, выявление конкретных стадий утраты языка в соответствии с обновленными шкалами нарушений, внедрение моделей возрождения (в частности, таких как модель «языкового гнезда»). Большое внимание уделяется распространению ценности многоязычия среди широкой общественности.

5. Городская лингвистика и глобальные перспективы

Большие города представляют собой наиболее уязвимые места реализации языковой политики, в них наблюдается напряженность между директивным управлением языком и практикой языкового развития снизу-вверх. В то время как государственная политика часто направлена на создание гомогенности, современный мегаполис функционирует благодаря сверхразнообразию (Vertovec 2007), создавая языковые практики, которые часто обходят официальное законотворчество. Большой город уже не может восприниматься просто как объект или адресат государственной политики, но является динамичной лингвистической лабораторией, где сталкиваются глобальная миграция, историческое наследие и локальные акторы. Как демонстрирует городская лингвистика, город — это не просто географическое место, а динамичный агент, где новые языковые варианты, такие как «новый русский» или «новый узбекский», возникают в ответ на глобализацию и городскую гибридизацию. Различные глобальные мегаполисы — Нью-Йорк, Москва, Манчестер, Гамбург, Монреаль и другие — реагируют на сверхразнообразную реальность, будь то официальное двуязычие или фактическое доминирование, появление новых городских диалектов или практики переключения кодов (King & Carson 2016).

Миф о том, что Москва, столица высокоцентрализованной страны, является моноязычным центром, опровергается в (Bergelson & Zoumpalidis 2024), вскрывающей сложное «скрытое» многообразие, обусловленное миграцией из Центральной Азии и Кавказа. Город выступает в роли места языковой адаптации, где языки мигрантов сохраняются в частной и полуобщественной

сферах, несмотря на официальную политику, ориентированную исключительно на русский язык. Кроме того, в городе титульный язык часто теряет свои традиционные маркеры и становится столичным, гибридизированным и модернизированным вариантом.

Разнообразные аспекты городского многоязычия можно продемонстрировать примерами из разных мегаполисов (см. Hussain et al. 2025, Leontovich & Kotelnikova 2022, Pavlenko 2017, Pütz 2020, Zoumpalidis & Şimşek 2025 и др.). Нью-Йорк демонстрирует пик языкового разнообразия (Perlin 2024). Социальные сети города позволяют носителям языка сохранять родные языки, которые не имеют официальной поддержки в странах их происхождения. Регулируемое и органическое многоязычие можно проиллюстрировать на примерах Монреаля и Манчестера. Монреаль демонстрирует модель вмешательства сверху вниз. Языковые законы Квебека пытаются строго управлять языковым ландшафтом, чтобы обеспечить доминирование французского языка (Heller 2003, Levine 1990). Однако повседневная городская динамика Монреаля остается упорно двуязычной, что иллюстрирует ограниченность государственного управления перед лицом экономического капитала английского языка. Манчестер — это органическая модель многоязычия (Matras 2024, Matras & Robertson 2015). Его многообразие — это не проблема, требующая управления, а функциональная система, в которой языки местных сообществ интегрированы в государственные услуги и местную идентичность, создавая устойчивый социальный капитал для иммигрантских общин. Город способствует формированию гибридной языковой среды, где органичное использование множества кодов в городском ландшафте естественным образом противостоит навязанным государством моноязычным идеалам.

Сверхразнообразие и глобальные закономерности можно дополнительно продемонстрировать на примерах Мельбурна, Гамбурга (Clyne 2006, Duarte & Gogolin 2013), Ташкента и Алматы (Smagulova 2008). В первых двух мегаполисах огромное количество языковых переменных делает традиционные концепции прав меньшинств устаревшими. Такие города, как Ташкент и Алматы, занимают уникальное промежуточное положение. Они переживают центробежную национализацию (стремление к узбекскому или казахскому языку), одновременно выступая в качестве центров глобального английского языка и сохраняя функциональное доминирование русского языка как городского лингва франка. Смагулова (2008) называет это «элитным двуязычием», когда идентичность мегаполиса определяется способностью перемещаться между русским (старым лингва франка), казахским (государственным символом) и английским (глобальным неолиберальным товаром). Это новое многоязычие связано не с этническими корнями, а с городской мобильностью.

Общим звеном, объединяющим эти мегаполисы, является разнообразие языковых ландшафтов, позволяющее воспринимать город как текст посредством вывесок, рекламы и цифрового присутствия. В конечном итоге город трансформирует ключевой вопрос языковой политики, перенося его из

поиска правового обеспечения в анализ того, как городская динамика переопределяет ценность и полезность языков на глобализированном рынке. Еще одной общей чертой является появление «новых» языковых вариантов, сформировавшихся в контексте глобализации (см. Shaibakova et al. 2023, Proshina 2026).

6. Проблема «родного языка» и «носителя языка»

Начиная с начала XX в. и даже раньше изучение иностранных языков ставило перед собой конечную цель — достижение уровня владения языком, соответствующего уровню носителя языка. Концепция носителей языка когда-то была прочной и неоспоримой категорией. Однако в сегодняшнем глобализованном мире такой подход, получивший в английском языке название *native-speakerism,* быстро устаревает, поскольку он «подавляет свободу мысли и самовыражения как базовые права человека» (Hino 2021: 529), не дает возможность выразить своя «я».

Ситуация изменилась с урбанизацией и массовыми миграциями XX и XXI вв., которые привели к созданию новых диаспор и появлению следующих поколений (второго и третьего) мигрантов. Категория носителя языка утратила свою «чистоту» и однородность, поскольку сам термин «родной язык» мог быть определен по-разному: как родной язык (=первый язык, усвоенный человеком в детстве); язык, на котором человек говорит на самом высоком уровне владения, лучше всего; язык, используемый в большинстве контекстов и практик, или как язык группы, с которой человек себя идентифицирует. Эти четыре основных критерия, определяющие родной язык (происхождение, компетенция, функция, идентификация), часто не согласуются и противоречат друг другу. Таким образом, социолингвистика больше не могла использовать этот термин в качестве прототипической категории, полагаясь вместо этого на модели, основанные только на одном критерии (Guermanova / Германова 2024).

Ученые, работающие в рамках подхода критической языковой политики (CLP), давно ставят вопрос о том, что использованием идеала «носитель языка» лишь навязывает социальную иерархию. Tollefson (1991) в рамках концепции CLP утверждал, что языковое планирование, включая продвижение конкретных «стандартов носителя языка», воспроизводит социальное неравенство и власть государства. Аналогичная критика была направлена и против понятия «родной язык», так как утверждалось, что эти термины часто являются идеологически нагруженными конструкциями, а не нейтральными описаниями языковой реальности. Эта точка зрения была расширена в (Blommaert 2010). Исследуя влияние глобализации на социолингвистику, он критиковал традиционные представления о «носителях языка», описывая то, как люди ориентируются в сложных городских условиях, используя разнообразные языковые репертуары, которые не вписываются в категории «одноязычности». Wright (2016) проследил исторический сдвиг от национализма XIX в., который в значительной степени опирался на использование

концепции родного языка как символа национального государства, к неолиберальной эпохе, где язык все чаще рассматривается как товар, который может быть выставлен на рынке. Pennycook (2001) в рамках критической прикладной лингвистики анализировал роль глобального английского языка, утверждая, что западные академические традиции использовали концепцию родного языка для поддержания постколониального господства над местными и коренными языками.

6.1. Деколониальная и эпистемологическая критика

В недавно вышедшей монографии «Неуверенность языковой политики и планирования» (*Insecurities in Language Policy and Planning*) (Makoni et al. 2026) предлагается последовательная критика общепринятых категорий, которые долгое время определяли эту область, таких как термин «носитель языка». С этой точки зрения, языковая политика и планирование тесно связаны с колониальной историей стандартизации, которая способствовала процессам контроля и исключения. Gafaranga (2026) предполагает, что исследователям следует вообще отказаться от использования термина «язык» как фиксированной аналитической категории, применяя его только тогда, когда он явно упоминается самими носителями языка. Karlander & Salö (2026) прослеживают истоки полуязычия, концепции, часто используемой для патологизации тех, чья языковая практика не соответствует идеализированным нормам «родного языка», и вскрывают идеологические корни модели языкового дефицита.

Тем не менее, если встать на путь чрезмерной деконструкции понятия «носитель языка» или самого понятия «такой-то язык», мы можем, сами того не желая, поддержать языковой хаос рыночного типа, где выживут только самые влиятельные языки (английский или русский). Критики неолиберального/антиколонального поворота в социолингвистике часто утверждают, что такие термины, как транслингвизм или деконструкция понятия «язык», могут стать неолиберальной ловушкой: утверждая, что границ между языками не существует, мы рискуем лишить меньшинства тех самых инструментов (стандартизированных, «чистых» языков), которые им необходимы для отстаивания своих прав и государственной защиты.

7. Траектория выпуска: от глобальных ландшафтов к местным практикам

Десять статей в этом выпуске образуют научную мозаику, выстроенную таким образом, чтобы произвести плавный переход от всеобъемлющих теоретических и идеологических рамок к детальному эмпирическому анализу социолингвистических ситуаций. Статьи напрямую затрагивают рассмотренные выше теоретические вопросы, преодолевая разрыв между историческим наследием и современными тенденциями.

Открывается выпуск работа **Камиля Хаманса**, который исследует возможности социума по включению языков меньшинств в национальные структуры. Анализируя историческое формирование национальных стандартов от

языковых идеологий Французской революции до немецкого романтизма, — Хаманс предостерегает от «лингвистического эссенциализма». Он утверждает, что ожесточенные конфликты, наблюдаемые в таких странах, как Испания и Бельгия, могут быть смягчены только посредством анти-эссенциалистского подхода, характеризующегося разнообразием и толерантностью.

Следуя этой линии в области языковой политики, **К.Ю. Замятин** предлагает критический анализ современных попыток концептуализации языкового многообразия в рамках российского законодательства. Опираясь на включенное наблюдение и дискурсивный анализ официальных процессов разработки законопроектов, автор выявляет сложности, присущие операционализации понятия «сохранение», когда официальные определения остаются слишком широкими. В статье подчеркивается противоречие между символическим включением многообразия в политические цели и практическими потребностями языковых активистов на местах.

Определяющее значение методологии и институциональных данных рассматривается **Г.Ф. Габдрахмановой** и **Н.Б. Вахтиным**. Они предлагают строгий критический анализ Всероссийской переписи населения 2020–2021 гг. и используют концепцию «экологии языка» (Haugen 1972), чтобы показать, как технические и терминологические недостатки могут искажать наше понимание ситуации с исчезающими языками. Их анализ данных по десяти коренным языкам Якутии показывает, что данные переписи могут создавать «фиктивный» рост или падение, которые не отражают фактическое социолингвистическое здоровье этих сообществ.

Статья **Ленор Гренобль** расширяет далее теоретическую рамку, применяя теорию «ландшафтов» (Appadurai 1996) к сравнительному исследованию Гренландии и Якутии. Изучая взаимодействие этноландшафтов, техноландшафтов и медиаландшафтов, Л. Гренобль демонстрирует, что языковая политика не может быть успешной, если она игнорирует глобальные потоки людей и технологий. Ее исследование подчеркивает, что коренные языки должны найти «цифровую нишу», чтобы выжить в эпоху, когда 98 % населения взаимосвязано посредством Интернета.

В следующих статьях фокус внимания перемещается на связь между языком и формированием идентичности. **Д. Зумпалидис** и **М. Бергельсон** проводят углубленный анализ нарративов о жизненном пути корейцев Сахалина в четырех поколениях. Их работа показывает, что языковой сдвиг не является простым линейным процессом движения в сторону русского языка. Вместо этого семьи разрабатывают стратегические репертуары, включающие «корейскую кухню» и символические связи с популярной у молодежи современной корейской культурой, что позволяет адаптировать столетний опыт, включивший в себя вынужденное переселение в период японской колонизации и приспособление к политическим и социальным требованиям советской эпохи.

В контексте Нидерландов **Дик Смакман** рассматривает роль системы образования, являющейся ключевым звеном в реализации языковой

политики. Он подчеркивает несоответствие между инклюзивной риторикой международных организаций (ЮНЕСКО, ЕС) и ориентацией на «язык как проблему», характерную для голландских учебных заведений. Исследование показывает, как исключение из учебной программы херитажных языков (турецкого, арабского, польского) усиливает неравенство в образовании.

Следующие две статьи посвящены конкретным ситуациям языкового контакта и гибридизации. **М.Ю. Некрасова** исследует устойчивую сохранность украинских лексических элементов в Севастополе. Ее функциональный анализ показывает, что, несмотря на изменение политических границ, украинский язык остается прагматическим и эмоциональным ресурсом в повседневной речи, используемым для разных целей: от саркастических междометий до самоидентификации местных жителей и противопоставления себя приезжим. В статье **Виктора Лара Бермехо** оспаривается статус языка льянито в Гибралтаре. Основываясь на обширных полевых исследованиях, автор утверждает, что льянито не является отдельной разновидностью или вариантом языка, а скорее представляет собой переключение коммуникативных кодов в обществе, быстро движущемся к англоязычному монолингвизму, что иллюстрируют заключительные этапы языкового сдвига.

Этот выпуск завершается статьей **И.А. Данилова**, посвященной многоязычию в Якутии, в которой он исследует «символическую силу» языков северных меньшинств. Автор выявляет парадоксальную тенденцию: по мере снижения коммуникативной функциональности таких языков, как юкагирский или эвенский, их символическая ценность как маркеров этнической идентичности возрастает. Это «символическое возрождение» ставит перед политиками задачу определиться с тем, что следует поддерживать — язык как инструмент коммуникации или как средство сохранения культурного наследия.

8. Заключение: на пути к многомерной модели, в которой многоязычие является нормой

В совокупности статьи выпуска показали, что языковая политика на постсоветском пространстве и в других регионах выявляет фундаментальное противоречие, отражающее глобальные изменения: конфликт между усилиями государства по управлению национальной идентичностью и органической реальностью человеческого общения. Хотя региональные усилия по внедрению национальных (государственных, или официальных) языков часто выглядят как глобальные модели обеспечения безопасности, реальная практика носителей языка может отражать иную картину.

Языковая политика — это непрерывное взаимодействие и компромиссы между различными участниками процесса. В действительности многоязычие — это не «нестабильность», которую нужно искоренить, а нормальное, нормативное, положение дел как для отдельных людей, так и для обществ, которые их объединяют. Как показывают теория социального капитала и теория речевой адаптации, люди естественным образом ориентируются в

многочисленных дискурсивных сообществах, переключаясь между кодами для укрепления солидарности и доступа к экономическим возможностям. Будь то скрытое многоязычие Москвы или цветущая сложность множества языков Нью-Йорка, языковые практики регулируются многоуровневой логикой, которая выходит за рамки директивного управления.

Интегрируя критический, структурный, урбанистический и экологический подходы, мы отказываемся от моделей языкового дефицита, или «полуязычия». Вместо этого мы признаем, что общество держится вместе не на едином стандартизированном коде, а на динамичном взаимодействии разнообразных языковых репертуаров. Современные полиэтничные страны с их центробежными моделями национализации и сложными городскими процессами гибридизации являются источником данных, чрезвычайно важных для мира, все более характеризуемого сверхразнообразием и неолиберальной коммерциализацией языка. Представленные в выпуске исследования служат как отражением нашей современной многоязычной реальности, так и дорожной картой для управления сложным этническим и языковым ландшафтом XXI в.

Acknowledgments

Bergelson's research leading to these results has received funding from the Basic Research Program at HSE University within the project "Language, literature and culture in historical and social perspective" (HSE-BR-2025-031).
Grenoble's work on this project was supported by the Russian Science Foundation, RNF # 25-78-30006, "Languages and Cultures of the Peoples of the North and the Arctic of the Russian Federation: Comprehensive socio-humanitarian research (on the basis of big data)".

Credit authorship contribution statement

Mira Bergelson: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Writing — Original Draft, Writing — Review & Editing. **Lenore Grenoble:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Writing — Original Draft, Writing — Review & Editing.

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* Включён в перечень иностранных организаций, деятельность которых признана нежелательной на территории России.

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Article history:
Received: 06 March 2026
Accepted: 12 May 2026

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 310–330
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47400
EDN: CICOTC

Research article / Научная статья

Possible peaceful existence of national and minority languages

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Abstract
This study examines whether it is socially feasible for a country to accommodate minority languages alongside a national language without this leading to tensions, violence or separatist movements. The aim of this article therefore is to discuss and clarify the relationship between national languages and minority languages, so that there is sufficient social space and appreciation for minority languages without detracting from the importance of a national language. This study comprises a review of the literature, beginning with the period in which national standard languages emerged and were codified, and culminating in the conviction that a country should be monolingual and that minority and regional languages should be eradicated. Particular attention is paid to the linguistic ideas of the French Revolution and German Romanticism. The violent consequences of such a policy of linguistic essentialism are illustrated by examples of the language disputes in Spain and Belgium. Next, again based on a review of the literature, the study examines the late 20th century response at (Western) European level to the violent actions of oppressed linguistic minorities. It emerges that a solution is sought in a specifically anti-essentialist approach, characterized by inclusiveness, diversity and tolerance. This approach is proving successful. The results show that a policy less focused on centralization and standardization can provide space for minority languages without detracting from the status of the national language, thereby preventing potential tensions and violent actions. The article therefore concludes with a plea to promote an approach, which emphasizes diversity and therefore tolerant attitudes.
Keywords: *minority languages, language endangerment, European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, linguistic essentialism, language policy*

For citation:
Hamans, Camiel. 2026. Possible peaceful existence of national and minority languages. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 310–330. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47400 EDN: CICOTC

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Возможность мирного сосуществования национального языка и языков меньшинств

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Аннотация
В данном исследовании рассматривается вопрос о том, насколько социально возможно для страны сосуществование языков меньшинств с национальным языком без риска возникновения напряженности, насилия или сепаратистских движений. Цель статьи — обсудить взаимосвязь между национальными языками и языками меньшинств, возможность обеспечения достаточного социального пространства для языков меньшинств без умаления при этом важности национального языка. Исследование включает обзор литературы, начиная с периода возникновения и кодификации национальных стандартных языков, кульминацией которого явилось убеждение в том, что страна должна быть моноязычной, а языки меньшинств и региональные языки должны быть искоренены. Особое внимание уделяется идеям Французской революции и немецкого романтизма. Последствия политики лингвистического эссенциализма иллюстрируются примерами жестоких языковых споров в Испании и Бельгии. Далее, также на основе обзора литературы, рассматривается реакция Западной Европы конца XX в. на насильственные действия угнетенных языковых меньшинств. Показано, что решение следует искать в антиэссенциалистском подходе, который характеризуется инклюзивностью, разнообразием и толерантностью. Этот подход оказывается успешным. Результаты показывают, что политика, в меньшей степени ориентированная на централизацию и стандартизацию, может обеспечить пространство для языков меньшинств, не умаляя при этом статуса национального языка, тем самым предотвращая потенциальную напряженность и насильственные действия. Статья завершается призывом к продвижению подхода, который подчеркивает важность языкового разнообразия и, следовательно, толерантное к нему отношение.
Ключевые слова: *миноритарные языки, угроза исчезновения языков, Европейская хартия региональных или миноритарных языков, лингвистический эссенциализм, языковая политика*

Для цитирования:
Hamans C. Possible peaceful existence of national and minority languages. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 310–330. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47400 EDN: CICOTC

1. Introduction

This contribution discusses the often-difficult relationship between national and regional or minority languages. History shows how the emergence of national languages frequently implied a depreciation of other language varieties spoken in the same territory. Moreover, emancipation of minority languages often entails a movement, violent or otherwise, against the standard language and the dominant culture associated with it. This article aims to examine whether national and minority languages can coexist peacefully, and what is required for this to happen.

It should be noted that this contribution focuses primarily on Western Europe and is written from a Western European perspective.

In this paper, the terms national, official and standard language will be used interchangeably, although they are not always complete synonyms. A national language is a language that is associated with a nation. An official language is a language that is legally recognized as the language of a country. A standard language is a language which has become standardized by law or by a standardizing body and therefore meets certain social and linguistic norms. Usually, an official language is also a national language and meets standardization requirements. As the differences are irrelevant to this article, the terms are used interchangeably.

This theoretical study begins with a brief explanation of the emergence of national languages in Western Europe, followed by a summary of nationalistic philosophical ideas about the relationship between language and nation and the connection between this idée fixe and beliefs about nation building. This jumble of thoughts and assumptions is known as linguistic essentialism, which assumes a one-to-one relationship between people, nation and language. In the next section, the focus shifts to the emancipation of regional and/or minority languages. A few examples are used to illustrate how this process has unfolded and is still continuing. In this context, we will briefly outline the European policy measures that have been taken to strengthen the position of minority language groups, which in today's social and economic reality are generally multilingual. From there, we will move on to the reality of individual and societal multilingualism, the acceptance of which can offer the possibility of a peaceful coexistence of national and minority languages, whereby both forms can be given sufficient room and uniqueness. In short, this article can be seen as an argument against linguistic essentialism. It addresses the following research questions: (1) how national languages have established their status and what this has meant for the status of other languages spoken in a country; (2) what the consequences have been of the resulting inferior status of non-national languages; (3) how these negative consequences can be addressed without undermining the status and importance of the national language(s).

2. The emergence of national languages

The idea of a national language is a recent phenomenon in the history of Western Europe. For centuries, no one thought or spoke about a national language. People spoke the vernacular of their village, city or region, and Latin was used for formal communication beyond the borders of their own region. The constitutional structure was also much less centralized and well organized than it is today. Europe used to be an unstable patchwork of kingdoms, principalities, bishoprics, early republics, duchies, counties, small states, and towns, all with their own authority structure, power, culture, and dialect. There was still no question of overarching national languages nor of central governments. Up to the Renaissance, Latin was the language in which official correspondence took place, in which scholars communicated, and in which the Roman Catholic Church and its believers prayed

and preached. However, from the 14th century different vernaculars started claiming their own place.

According to Anderson (1991: 37–46), the invention of the printing press and subsequent print capitalism changed society and introduced the concept of the national language of an imagined community and subsequently of a nation. Printed books require a standardized language and since printed books were aimed at a greater circulation than manuscripts and were also meant to reach a bourgeois audience, the language could not be Latin any longer. The dialects that were used in writing till then started to be organized into broad fields of communication and exchange and in a way became 'national' languages, Anderson claimed.

This view has been strongly criticized by among others Silverstein (2000) and Wogan (2001). Silverstein calls Anderson's concept of imagined communities an example of a specific Whorfian world view. His idea of a homogeneous language is as much imagined as is community, he criticizes Anderson. Wogan stresses that the western ideology of language sees literacy as its central symbol of national identity. According to Wogan, it is school-literacy which is deeply associated with the nation; however, school-literacy is a product of the 19th century. Consequently, the standardizing of vernaculars in the Renaissance is not the moment that the debate about the relation between language and ethnicity or nation started.

This does not mean that there was no interest in the mother tongue as an expression of a growing national consciousness before the 19th century. Van de Haar (2018) discusses the interest for the mother tongues Dutch and French in the Low Countries in the 16th century. She concludes that the multilingual situation of the Low Countries favoured the discussion about the question which language to use. The open interest in other languages stimulated the care for one's own, native, language. In addition, Protestantism with its emphasis on the translation of the Bible in the different mother tongues and its aim of enabling people to read the translated texts themselves had a positive influence on literacy and consequently on the interest and care for the native languages from the 16th century.

In other regions of Europe, one comes across a similar picture. In Italy the 'questione della lingua', the problem which regional variant of Italian to choose, kept scholars and writers busy till 1525, when Pietro Bembo managed to settle the issue in favour of archaic Tuscan. The founding of the Academia della Crusca in 1582/1583, which aimed at publishing an Italian dictionary based on this variety set the standard for the later national language (Perceval 1995: 150, Richardson 1995: 155). Burke (2004: 65) claims that the printing of Dante's treatise on the eloquence of the vernacular in 1529 set off a chain reaction in Europe, beginning in the 1540s. From then onwards till the middle of the 17th century every few years a new book was published which advocated the special qualities of another language: Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch, Polish, English, and German.

In France, King Francis I issued the *Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts* in 1539, by which he called for the use of French instead of Latin in all legal acts. Within a few decades a number of French grammars and dictionaries were compiled and

published. The names of the 16th century printers and scholars, father and son, Robert and Henri Estienne became household names in French grammatical studies (Kibbee 1995: 161–166). In Germany the Bible translation by Martin Luther, published between 1522–1534, eloquently advocated the right of the German vernacular. His contribution to the development of standardised German is sometimes even referred to as the birth of the language itself. (Lobenstein 2022).

In England the *Book of Common Prayer* 1549 did the same for English (Kelly 1995: 423). Also, the King James Bible had a major influence on the development of a common English language, but this translation appeared much later, in 1611. In the Netherlands the publication of the *Twespraeck van de Nederduitsche letterkunst of vant Spellen en de Eygenschap der Nederduitschen Taals* 'Dialogue about the Grammar of Dutch or about the orthography and the qualities of the Dutch Language' by a literary society in 1584 had a similar effect (Van der Wal & Van Bree 1992: 186– 188).

However, all these discussions were restricted to the literate members of the society. Neither the standardized chancery dialect of France nor the supra-regional German of Luther could be prescribed. The 'educated' vernacular remained the written language of a small elite. In addition, the debate was about the status of the 'national' vernacular compared to Latin and about which norms and standards were to be established for the different vernaculars, not about the priority of a national language above its dialects or about the assumed unifying power of a spoken and written national language.

> From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, the links between language and nation become increasingly close and we find more and more examples of the idea that 'one language' should join the traditional trinity of 'one king, one faith, one law' (*un roi, une foi, une loi*). In 1768, King Carlos III of Spain decreed that there should be one language and one currency in his kingdom (Burke 2004: 164).

A heated debate about these issues started around the turn of the 18th and 19th century.

3. The emergence of an essentialist view

3.1. The German discussions

> In fact, from the times of John Locke (1632–1704), Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714–1780), Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791) and, perhaps more famously, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744– 1803) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) onward, the intrinsic relationship between language and nation has formed a stable element of both metalinguistic and nationalist discourse. The key cultural position of language during the rise of cultural nationalism and the formation of modern European nation-states led to intensified interest in the study of the 'national' language and literature (…). (Rutten and Van Kalmthout 2018: 10–11).

The debate about the intrinsic relation of language and nation is often seen as an exclusive German debate. However, as the names of Locke and Condillac in this quotation show, the idea that there is a direct relation between language and nation is not a specific German phenomenon nor is it a 19th century invention. However, the debate peaked in the divided Germany of the late 18th and 19th century. That is why we are focusing on the debate as it has unfolded in Germany.

In Germany, which was still not a nation state in this period, but a scattered country, a cultural gathering of principalities, small states, towns, and regions bound together by a common language, and thus more a *Sprachnation* (Gauger 2010: 117) or *Kulturnation* (Meinecke 1907) than a real nation, the philosophers Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and especially Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) claimed that there was a special one-to-one relation between nation and language. Herder, the father of romantic nationalism, is the instigator of this school of thought (Leerssen 2011: 156, Labrie 2012: 16/17 & 142–147). Herder introduced the term *Volksgeist* 'national spirit' and in this spirit language played an essential role, since it was the language that united all German speaking peoples and made them a *Volk*, 'one people'. Thinking along these lines, language is the soul of the nation (Labrie 2012: 145). In his *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* 'Treatise on the origin of language' (1772), an essay about the first human language, Herder claimed that the different languages are necessary to keep together the different tribes in which groups of human beings lived. A one-to-one relation between *Sprache* 'language' and *Volk* 'people' is an immediate consequence of this view. The intrinsic relation between language and nation became commonplace in German thinking at the time. Wilhelm von Humboldt strongly articulated this idea in an often-quoted statement from 1797 that has almost achieved proverbial status: 'Language is the spiritual exhalation of the nation' (Edwards 2009: 205). He also claimed that 'the concept of a nation must be based chiefly upon language' (Schaefer 2010: 5).

A few years after Herder passed away, the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, one of the main figures in German idealism and one of the founders of German political nationalism, presented a series of lectures in Berlin: *Reden an die Deutsche Nation* 'Addresses to the German Nation' (1807/1808). In these lectures, which he delivered in a French-occupied Berlin, he made an appeal to the German nation to unite. Germans shared a common language and consequently they should use their patriotism to unite the country, they should form one nation.

When Jacob Grimm (1785–1863), the father of German linguistics, had to open the first Germanist gathering in 1846 he stressed the special relation between *Volk*, people, and *Sprache*, language, again.

> Let me start with the simple question: what is a people? And respond with just as simple an answer: A people is the epitome of human beings who speak the same language. For us Germans this is the most innocent and at the same time proudest declaration (Grimm 1847: 11)

A few words later Grimm calls it a natural law that not rivers or mountains define boundaries between peoples, but language. The statistician Richard Böckh (1824–1907) even went one step further and claimed in his *Der deutschen Volkszahl und Sprachgebiet in den europäischen Staaten* (1869), 'The Germans' number and linguistic area in European states', that nationality is defined by the language of the individual (Leuschner 2018). The famous German linguist Georg von der Gabelentz (1840–1893) echoed the same idea when he equaled language community and nation (McElvenny 2018).

The emphasis of Herder, Fichte, Grimm, and their followers on the relation between nation-state and language made it almost impossible to have an eye for diversity. It was the national language that was celebrated, not regional variants, dialects, or deviant minority languages. The underlying assumption was, and quite often still is, that the world is divided into homogeneous ethnic communities, nations, all with their own homogeneous languages (cf. Blommaert & Verschueren 1992).

The 'ethnolinguistic assumption' (Blommaert, Leppänen & Spotti 2012: 3) that there is an intrinsic relation between language and nation, or in an even stronger form that language may be equated with ethnicity or nation, is based on an essentialist concept of language.

3.2. The influence of the French Revolution

As said before, the debate about language and nation is not an exclusive German phenomenon. In France, too, the status of the various languages and language varieties spoken in the country was subject of a serious debate, albeit from a completely different perspective. In post-revolutionary France, leaders realized that a large proportion of the French population was unable to follow political debates and therefore could not participate in the new revolutionary democratization process. This was because they did not speak and understand French, but rather Occitan, Breton, Basque, Flemish, Alsatian or Picard, for example. The dreamed equality of all citizens, which was one of the aims of the Revolution, was in jeopardy. Therefore, all dialects and other varieties should be eradicated and should be replaced by the language spoken in the democratic people's assembly, French (Grégoire 1794). This marked the beginning of a French education policy that prevailed until recently and sought to eliminate all language varieties except standard French (Van der Elst & Van Rootselaar 2004).

Since the French culture was the most prestigious culture in the 19th and early 20th century in most parts of Europe, this French ideological position was followed widely. Dialects, regional, and minority languages were considered retarded and did not need any protection. To the contrary their use should be contested, at least at school. At some secondary schools in the southern provinces of the Netherlands, for instance, it was forbidden to speak the local dialect till the 1930s (Hamans 2015: 60). Except for the use of Frisian, it took until 1975 before the first non-standard

language, the dialect of the city of Kerkrade, got a formal role at a Dutch school (Hagen, Stijnen & Vallen 1975).

This attitude towards dialects was not confined to cultures that looked up to French civilization.

> Native American children had to wash their mouths with soap when they were heard speaking their native language; similar forms of punishment were administered to Aboriginals in Australia and Africans in the colonial empires. The Finnish Sámi people had Finnish as their official medium of instruction until 1995 (…). (Blommaert, Leppänen & Spotti 2012: 4).

While the French revolutionaries and their successors aimed at emancipating the individual citizens, the goal of German philosophers, philologists and other scholars who propagated the ethnolinguistic assumption was the emancipation of the nation, of the collectivity of people who share a language. Just as the French culture was dominant in Europe, so German philosophy, philology, linguistics, and science was leading in the 19th and first half of the 20th century in Europe. The ethnolinguistic assumption thus found its way into nationalist movements all over Europe and beyond and became a strong weapon in the hands of nationalist independence movements and often still is.

3.3. The myth of national homogeneity

The two examples discussed here show how a national language ideology came up in the wake of the 18th century and how this ideology became predominant. The 19th and first half of the 20th century is the time in which uniform, standardized national languages were promoted. Apart from a romantic interest in dialects as testimonies of earlier stages of the language or as part of folklore, which gave rise to a new discipline, dialectology, there was no real interest in other language variants than the prestigious national languages. In this era of nationalism, a linguistic homogeneity myth (Watts 2012) prevailed in Western Europe and was considered not only as plausible but even as universally valid. Nations were or should be homogeneous, which implied that the people as well as their language should be homogeneous. The national language should only consist of a uniform *Kultursprache* 'language of (bourgeois) culture' with standards and norms and without variation; and secondly, next to this 'Kultursprache' there was no room for other languages or language varieties. This necessarily led to conflicts in regions where another language than the promoted and dominant national language was spoken. In the next section two of the most discussed language conflicts will be presented.

4. Protests by non-standard language speakers

4.1. Autonomy movements in Spain

The unification of Spain has a long history. Informally, it began with the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469, which brought

the most important parts of the country together in the hands of the royal couple. This was followed by the completion of the so-called Reconquista, or 'reconquest (of the occupied territories)' with the fall of Granada in 1492, which brought an end to Islamic rule on the Iberian Peninsula. However, it was not until 1716, at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, that the formerly independent regions such as Aragon, Valencia and Catalonia were formally united with Castile to form the Spanish kingdom through the Nueva Planta decrees (Platt Parmele 1898/2006). However, a political entity is by no means necessarily a linguistic entity, if that is even desirable. The ideals of the Enlightenment, which in France led to the Revolutionary pursuit of a single language, also reached Madrid, and the Spanish king Charles III therefore sought to establish a single language for his entire empire, both on the Iberian Peninsula and overseas. By means of decrees dictated in 1768 and 1779, king Charles III in Spain established Castilian (Spanish) as the mandatory education language across his whole empire forbidding likewise any other languages.

> [T]he Bourbons [the ruling Spanish royal family] prohibited the use of languages other than Spanish in public administrations and schools in the lands of the Crown of Aragon (mainly the Kingdom of Aragon, the Principality of Catalonia, the Kingdom of Valencia, and the Balearic Islands), and this prohibition was recommended for the church, too (Ferrer i Gironès 1985).
> Prohibiting the use of any language other than Spanish, via Royal Decree of June 23, 1763, signed by Charles III of Spain in Aranjuez; the persecution of schools that used any language other than Spanish; and Spain's interference in linguistic matters in all aspects of life was carried out over the three following centuries (Calafat 2017: 158–174).

> The minutes of a meeting of the Palma City Council on June 24, 1801 discuss Charles IV's prohibition of performing theatrical arts in Catalan: in no theater in Spain may pieces be performed, sung, or danced in a language other than Spanish, and they must be interpreted by actors and actresses native or naturalized to these kingdoms, as directed by Madrid in the Royal Order of December 28, 1799 (Calafat 2019: 6).

Such widespread suppression of a distinct regional identity and language was bound to meet with resistance, not only in Catalonia, but also in the Basque Country and Galicia. That is why the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936) sought a different path. It was the leftist leadership of this government that introduced the first statutes of autonomy for some regions in which the special place of their different languages was recognized.

> In the second half of the XIXth century, a growing regional cultural and literary romanticism appeared, also in the regions where a vernacular language was spoken. At the same time, a social and cultural recognition of the specific identities of the territories concerned developed and triggered a process towards a new and different territorial organisation. The political battles, and

> above all the civil wars of the XIXth and XXth centuries prevented a harmonious convergence of the two positions. During the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1936), a statute of autonomy was approved by the Spanish Parliament for Catalonia in 1931 and for the Basque country in October 1936. In Galicia the process was not completed owing to the dramatic events of the 1936–1939 Civil War. (Experts' Report, Spain 2005: 5).

However, when the Franco regime seized power in 1939, the process of recognition of (linguistic) minority rights stopped abruptly. The unity of the country became the main goal again. Autonomy was anathema. Anything which could be interpreted as an expression of minority rights was oppressed.

> With the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931, Catalonia recovered a degree of autonomy unknown since 1714. In the dispensations of the 1932 Republican Constitution, the *Generalitat* [the regional government] promoted the use of Catalan for education, administration, communications and culture; in short, Catalan for a time enjoyed a relatively normalised status of which it was to be violently deprived by the outcome of the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939. The years of the Franco regime (1939–1975) were a period of severe repression — cultural genocide even, in the early stages — the effects of which only began to be countered as the regime slowly loosened its grip on affairs during the 1960s. (Webber & Strubell 1991:15)

It was not only Catalan and Catalonia that were oppressed by the Franco regime, although 'the Catalan language became a principal scapegoat for the ills afflicting Spain as a whole' (Webber & Strubell 1991:15). Franco's 'White Terror' (1936–1945) persecuted anyone who deviated from the norm: Catalan, Galician, and Basque nationalists, homosexuals, freemasons, intellectuals, protestants, atheists, liberals, and socialists (Graham 2005: 136). The oppression of minorities and their languages lasted till the end of Franco's regime in 1975 and the first democratic elections two years later. Oppression must be taken literally. The Catalan leader Lluis Companys was tortured and executed in 1940 (Tomàs White 2020). Distribution of books printed in Catalan was forbidden. Priests who spoke Galician to a foreigner were banished to small remote hamlets in the mountains, as the Dutch geologist Kroonenberg (2014: 290) experienced. The Basque linguist Itziar Laka told how her grandmother had to spend a night in jail, since she had dared to speak Basque in public to an acquaintance from a village who did not speak Spanish (Hamans 2015: 62). During the Franco regime, Spain believed in the dogma of *homogeneism* (Blommaert and Verschueren 1991), which is a view of society in which differences are seen as dangerous and centrifugal. The recent controversies between the region of Catalunya and the central Spanish government shows that the dogma or, maybe better, the dream of homogeneism is still alive in some more conservative circles.

The effect of the Franco policy was the rise of protest movements. In the Basque country, for instance, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna 'Basque Homeland and Freedom', ETA, was founded in 1959. The protests of the Eta were not limited to

verbal statements. In the almost fifty years of ETA resistance more than 800 people got killed (Winkels 2017). The protest from the side of the Catalonian and Galician autonomy movements was of a less terrorist character, although these groups also committed bomb attacks. The Catalan movement Terra Lliure or TLL 'Free Land' was active between 1978 and 1995. Between 1979 and 1992, TLL committed almost 150 bomb attacks (Segura Julian 2017: 45), fortunately without many victims. The Galician Loita Armada Revolucionaria, LAR, 'Revolutionary Armed Struggle', and its predecessors and successors not only aimed at autonomy or independence but also had an extreme leftist signature. Their 137 attacks registered from 2005 to 2013 have left six wounded and one premeditated death (Cabrera 2024).

The internal conflicts in Spain were not exclusively linguistic in nature, but the prohibition of their own language played an enormous role in the struggle of minorities for autonomy. After Franco's death in 1975 the new democratic government led by social-democrats took a different direction and consulted with representatives of minority movements, which led to a new constitution (1978) in which Article 2 granted a certain autonomy to nationalities and territories that make up the country (cf. Devolution 2014). This new approach led to a 'result [which] is widely viewed as a success today. Since the end of the Franco era, Spain has been largely peaceful, stable, and democratic' (Devolution 2014: 19). However, in 2010 the Spanish Constitutional Court, in which conservative Spanish nationalists are still in the majority, rejected a new Catalan statute for autonomy after four years of deliberation. This statute was approved by the Catalan Parliament in 2005, the Spanish Congress in 2006, and subsequently ratified by a majority vote in a referendum. However, the conservative nationalist Partido Popular which adheres to a centralist view of homogeneism inherited from Franco's regime, appealed, and the appeal was upheld by the Court (Nationalia 2010). The ruling of the Court met with opposition in Catalonia and led to a reinforcement of separatist ideas, creating new unrest and political turmoil, that has still not been definitively resolved.

4.2. The Belgian language dispute

Belgium became independent in 1830. Before that, the country had been under Austrian rule for a long time, then under French rule for a few decades after the French Revolution, and subsequently it was part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for a short time. With independence came an official language, French. However, a great deal of the population did not speak and understand this language. In the south of the country, French and varieties of French were the daily language, whereas in Flanders the majority spoke different Dutch dialects, usually called Flemish. French, however, was the language of prestige in the whole kingdom. That is why the higher social classes in Flanders also spoke French. Quite often they even gave up their local, Flemish, dialect completely. French became the only accepted language in government and in the army, and thus also became the language of education.

Already in 1840, a group of prominent people from Flanders protested the hegemony of French. They started a petition in which they asked for recognition of Dutch in education, administration, and court in Flanders. They did not opt for a Flemish national language because there was no standard language in the Flemish regions. Insofar as there was a standard used by the more educated, it was Dutch. The francophone prime minister Rogiers, however, answered that a monolingual Belgium, with French as its official language, was a necessity. The protesters did not accept this and continued to fight for the recognition of Dutch which they considered the standard language covering their dialects and for equal rights for the speakers of Flemish. This led to the victory of a Flemish coalition in the local Antwerp elections of 1866. Consequently, Dutch became the language of the local administration in this city (Hamans 2016: 48–51).

This success of the Flemish Movement, however, did not change the national language situation. In 1860 two Flemish workers were sentenced for murder and beheaded after a completely French-speaking court trial. Even their lawyers spoke French only. A year later it turned out that the two were innocent. Twelve years later, a monolingual Dutch-speaking labourer wanted to declare the birth of his son. He only knew Dutch, so he wanted to fulfil his duty in Dutch, which turned out to be impossible. He was even fined by the court. As can be imagined, this incident sparked much commotion. Protest marches and riots were the result. The government reacted with a first language law in 1873.

The law did not end the language conflicts, especially not because the Frenchification of public and social life in Flanders continued. French remained not only the language of the elite but also a language with a superior status. Therefore, everybody in Flanders who wanted to make a career had to learn French. Unfortunately, the top of the Roman Catholic Church in Belgium also was francophone and did not support the case of Dutch. In those days, Belgium was still predominantly Roman Catholic. The leader of the Belgian Roman Catholic Church, cardinal Mercier, still claimed in 1906 that Dutch was not a language of science and therefore never could become a language of higher education.

Despite all improvements in legislation, it took till 1968 that the University of Leuven, which is in the Dutch speaking part, accepted Dutch as the language of education. A protracted and violent student revolt was necessary before French was abolished as the first language of education. Still, not all language conflicts are solved. There are still problems and sometimes protest marches, violent protests and resistance, and political conflicts (Hamans 2016: 48–51).

5. A European treaty in favour of minority languages

5.1. The background of the treaty

Spain and Belgium are not the only two European countries where a language problem or language conflict manifests itself. Minority languages or regional languages occur practically everywhere in Europe, and elsewhere. Very often,

speakers of such languages feel disadvantaged, even though the modern school system almost always makes them bilingual, i.e. speakers of the national language and of their own minority or regional language.

In the Netherlands, for example, there is a Frisian-speaking minority that has had to campaign for a long time to gain any recognition. In Germany, there is a small Slavic minority, the Sorbs, living in the east of the country, but Germany also has a Danish-speaking minority in the north, where Germany and Denmark share a border. Low German, the language spoken in the northern part of the country, also has a lower status than the official language High German. France, which does not officially recognise or accept any minority or regional languages, still has minorities who speak Breton, Alsatian or Occitan and there exist several regional organisations fighting for the recognition of their language. In northern Italy, there have been quite a few problems, and even violent confrontations, in Alto Adige, where German is spoken alongside Italian. In Poland, the Kashubian minority is best known. Slovakia has a significant Hungarian-speaking minority in its eastern part. In Hungary, there live different Roma minorities with their own languages, and in Scandinavia, the Sami are an indigenous group with their own languages. And so on.

Because minority languages or regional languages are spoken in virtually all European countries and because almost all national governments, due to their focus on centralisation and uniformity, appeared to be unable to come up with solutions to the feelings of inferiority or discrimination experienced by speakers of non-standard languages, parliamentarians who were members of the Assembly of the Council of Europe took the initiative in the second half of the 1950s to draw attention to the position of non-national languages. Their hope was that a supranational body could be helpful in finding solutions.

The Council of Europe is not an institution of the European Union, EU. The Council is based in Strasbourg, was founded in 1949, and now has 46 member states. The work of the Council concentrates on the state of law, democracy, and human rights. It is therefore not at all surprising that the rights of (linguistic) minorities were studied and discussed in committees of this Council. One of the first initiatives was Resolution 136 on the 'Position of national minorities in Europe,' adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in October 1957. The resolution was preceded by a report drafted by the Belgian socialist and former minister of justice, Henri Rolin (1891–1973). The report and the resolution did not deal with linguistic rights specifically but required attention to the rights of 'population groups conscious of belonging to a national minority in which another Member State is interested', such as the Danish speaking minority in Germany or the German speaking minority in Denmark. The Resolution had hardly any effect. Therefore, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendation 285, in which a committee of experts was asked in 1961 to draft an article which would guarantee several rights to national minorities. However, the Assembly was again not successful in its endeavors. The Committee of Ministers of the Council opposed the

initiative of the Assembly to introduce specific (linguistic) rights for minorities. Fortunately, the opposition of the ministers did not end the debate, although it took years before a positive result could be achieved. In 1989 the Assembly adopted Recommendation 928 on 'Educational and cultural problems of minority languages and dialects in Europe' in which the Assembly encouraged the Committee of Ministers to consider implementation of measures that would protect linguistic diversity. This recommendation was a result of a report by the Catalan socialist Alexandre Cirici I Pellicer (1914–1983).

These and many other initiatives, mostly taken by parliamentarians who came from areas where minority problems caused outbursts, led to the adoption of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992. The Charter, a supranational treaty to protect and promote traditional minority languages in Europe, became into force in 1998.

5.2. The Charter

The charter is a European agreement concluded by national governments. They sign the treaty drawn up by the Council of Europe and commit themselves to certain efforts. The Charter is a treaty with two aims: a. to protect and promote regional and minority languages as a threatened aspect of Europe's cultural heritage and b, to enable speakers of a regional or minority language to use that language in private and public life. This means that national governments commit themselves to recognising, protecting and promoting the use of minority and regional languages spoken within their territory. They must do this by introducing appropriate legislation, but also by allocating budgets to achieve these goals. In addition, they must, of course, take measures to eliminate the disadvantages or discrimination suffered by speakers of these languages.

The Charter covers those minority and regional languages that are traditionally spoken within a country's territory. This excludes languages spoken by recent immigrant groups, but dialects of the standard language are also not covered by the treaty. Non-territorial languages, such as Yiddish or the languages of the Roma, that are spoken across national borders, and less widely used official languages, as for instance Swedish in Finland fall within the scope of the Charter.

The reason that languages of newcomers are excluded is that the Charter focusses on cultural heritage. However, reluctance to include the political reality of migration in the agreement cannot be ruled out either. It is unfortunate that the Charter excludes dialects of the national language, as they too deserve protection. The reason for this is probably that it is difficult to determine whether a so-called dialect of the standard language is a different variety next to the language or rather a social or local variant of the standard language and thus part of the different registers of this standard language. Since the Charter does not define what constitutes a language and what constitutes a dialect, and since it is left to national governments to determine which minority or regional languages they consider

falling within the scope of the Charter, this approach already contains a potential conflict. Arbitrariness or political arguments may come into play.

An example of this is the refusal of the Dutch authorities to recognize the language of Zeeland, the southwestern most part of the country as a regional language, whereas some years before the languages of the eastern provinces and of Limburg, the southeasternmost part were recognized on the basis of similar arguments. The reason for this refusal was that the Dutch Language Union, a partnership between the Netherlands and Flanders in the field of language, was now involved in the assessment.

The Belgian position, that the Charter jeopardised the hard-won equilibrium between the Flemish-speaking and French-speaking communities, now influenced the assessment of Zeeland's application. In fact, the Language Union wanted no language variant spoken within the Dutch language border to be regarded as a separate language, but only as a dialect of Dutch. The unspoken assumption here was that any other language variety spoken on Flemish-Belgian soil could, at most, be classified as a dialect of standard Dutch (Hamans 2015: 64–72).

6. Fear of bilingualism

Belgium has never signed or ratified the Charter, even though it is a member of the Council of Europe. This is a consequence of the Belgian language dispute. In Belgium, it has taken a great deal of effort and many intermediate steps to reach a situation in which the language conflicts are in balance and therefore manageable. Hence, the great fear among Belgian administrators that a single small change could cause the whole house of cards to collapse and reignite the language conflicts.

In the past, Belgian citizens had the personal choice of which language they wanted to use and in which they wanted to be addressed, French or Dutch. That is why so many social climbers in Flanders, the so-called *Franskiljons*, opted for French. This principle of personality has been abandoned and replaced by a principle of territoriality. The territoriality principle says that the place where citizens live determines which language must be used in official communication. And it is the number of citizens who speak a particular language that determines which language area a place belongs to. Where the majority speak Flemish, all official communication is in Dutch; where the majority speak French or German, the official language is French or German. In this way, a clear language boundary could be established, except in and around Brussels (Hamans 2016: 50–51).

However, there are a few villages in the Voerstreek region, not far from French speaking Liège, but part of the Belgium province of Limburg, where Dutch is the official language, which has been the scene of a fierce language dispute that has even influenced national politics. Only because of the number of Dutch speakers the region has been allocated to the Dutch speaking part of the country.

The then secretary of the Dutch Language Union, Flemish sociolinguist Koen Jaspaert, explained why he and the Flemish authorities were strongly opposed to the Charter. A possible Belgium's accession to the Charter could mean that, as in

the Netherlands, the language of Limburg — the Limburg region stretches across both countries — would have to be recognized as a separate regional language. The implication would be, in his opinion, that speakers of Limburgish could no longer be counted as Dutch speakers. In that case, he believed, the number of Dutch speakers in the Voerstreek region could decline to such an extent that the area would have to be reallocated to the French-speaking part of Belgium (Hamans 2015: 68). In terms of language war, this would mean a loss.

This view stems from a misunderstanding, namely that of the monolingual speaker. Jaspaert put it in so many words: "one can only have one mother tongue" (Hamans 2015: 68). This may sound plausible, given that one can also only have one mother. After all, if the mother tongue is Limburgish, it can no longer be Dutch, and the number of speakers of Dutch decreases. However, the text of the charter does not mention mother tongue. Moreover, Jaspaert and the Flemish authorities may have been misled by the metaphorical term mother tongue. In multilingual cultures in New Guinea, for example, it is not unusual for a father tongue or another second or even third language to be spoken alongside the mother tongue, in which the children also grow up (De Vries 2007: 3–4). They are therefore bilingual or multilingual from an early age.

However, it is even more likely that this view is a consequence of 19th-century linguistic essentialism, which continued to exert its influence well into the 20th century. This idea of one people, one nation, one language, can lead to the preconception that citizens of a state not only all speak or must speak the same language, but also only one language, apart from foreign languages learned later in life. Moreover, linguistic essentialism presupposes absolute uniformity and homogeneity and therefore is a sad misunderstanding that may have had its value in the emerging nationalism of the 19th century, but which is disastrous in relation to the recognition of the diversity of people and languages.

The Charter advocates the recognition of diversity and distinction, but does not present itself as a means or, even less, as a call for separation or secession, as some adversaries of the treaty claim. On the contrary, where national governments are invited to recognize, protect and promote the linguistic diversity of their country, this automatically implies that this should be done within the framework of the state. The Charter therefore implicitly calls for the recognition of multiple identities and thus also of multiple linguistic identities, thus of multilingualism. Of an area, of a group, but also, where applicable, of individual speakers. Opposed to the compelling ideal of uniformity and homogeneity, the Charter presents the reality of difference and is thus primarily a plea for accepting otherness, and therefore for tolerance.

7. Discussion

The challenge is clearly to compare the status and impact of the Council of Europe Charter with the Program for the Preservation and Revitalization of the Languages of Russia (Kibrik 2021). However, these are incomparable matters. The

Charter is a political treaty drafted by legal experts, whereas the Russian Program is an action program drawn up by linguists. This means that the Charter focuses much more on the rights of speakers of minority languages, whereas the Program explicitly focuses on language preservation. Although the Charter is an internationally recognized legal document, its provisions can hardly be enforced due to the Council of Europe's lack of authority.

Consider, for example, the Hungarian government's lukewarm response to the Council's experts' criticism that Hungary continues to enroll children of Roma origin, whose mother tongue is not Hungarian, in schools for children with disabilities. Even after repeated warnings, this did not change, despite Hungary being the second-fastest country to ratify the Charter. (Hamans 2024: 271–274). Once implemented with state support, the Program of the Linguistic Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences will not suffer from such powerlessness, given the centralized state authority that characterizes Russia, in contrast to the Council of Europe.

Although the Charter offers dozens of opportunities and guidelines for supporting regional minority languages, it lacks the emphasis that the Program correctly places on intergenerational transmission. On the other hand, the Charter's focus on the use of minority languages in the media, and the implicit recognition that follows from this, is an aspect that would not be out of place in the Program. Both texts have one thing in common, and that is their emphasis on diversity and the role that language plays in a person's identity: 'Linguistic diversity is among the most important humanitarian legacies of humankind.'(Kibrik 2021: 508) and '(…) linguistic identity makes up an important part of one's personal identity' (Kibrik 2021: 513).

8. Conclusion: Multilingualism as a way out

Contrary to what 19th-century nationalist thinking traditionally teaches us, and as reinforced by the current xenophobic political climate, it is not the monoculture of a national language per community that is the norm, but rather the exception (Gallagher 2020). In African families, it is quite normal that three or more languages are spoken, just as in New Guinea. Cultures and countries where multilingualism is commonplace can be found all over the world. Countries with only one language, apart from dialects, are the exception rather than the rule. Young people in Western cultures often speak English in addition to their mother tongue, and since the introduction of compulsory education in the 19th century, every Westerner speaks the standard language of their country in addition to their home language and often to the language of the street or jargons or slang. In short, we do not need to look to exotic cultures to convince ourselves that monolingual speakers and cultures are exceptional. That is why the solution for the recognition of minority languages must be sought in abandoning the fiction of a monolingual culture with an official, national language that is standardized according to strict norms. Kibrik (2021: 520/521) is right to challenge the myth of monolingualism: '(…) any normal

individual, including small children, may have command of more than one language.'

Accepting diversity, and thus tolerance for different (linguistic) behaviour, is not the only solution. Languages are also threatened with their survival by economic or social factors. Endangered languages will not suddenly flourish if mankind, following the example of the countries of the Council of Europe, abandons its aversion to and depreciation of minority languages. Much more will have to be done. The European Charter lists a large number of legal, educational and economic measures that can be used and indicates how the use of mass communication can be helpful in defending, protecting and promoting minority languages, but before protection and promotion can be addressed, acceptance will first be required. In contrast to the still too frequent pursuit of uniformity, and thus the eradication of differences and (linguistic) diversity, an atmosphere of openness and tolerance must be promoted. This is not only a task for governments, but also for linguistics and, above all, for linguists. There is more to be done than documenting dying languages; linguists must publicly advocate for the preservation of diversity and thus emphasize the normality of multilingualism. In this way, there can be room for the coexistence of national and minority languages within nations, groups and individuals, with sufficient room for both national and minority languages and allowing both to retain their uniqueness.

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Article history:
Received: 30 October 2025
Accepted: 12 February 2026

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 331–351
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47451
EDN: CJZMPV

Research article / Научная статья

Maintenance and revitalization of the languages of Russia: Problems in research and practice

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Abstract
Some years ago, "the preservation of linguistic diversity" was included among the official language policy goals in Russia. The goal is difficult to conceptualize and operationalize for practical purposes by the given broad official definition of "linguistic diversity" and by a lack of the official definition of the "preservation". Meanwhile, the goal is pursued as practical activity by language policy practitioners and language activists as well as applied research by scholars. In this context, understanding of what the actors present as its achievement is, therefore, both a practical and scientific problem. The aim of the paper is to analyze academic and official discourses and practices in order to understand how scientific experts in interaction with public officials conceptualize and operationalize the preservation of linguistic diversity in Russia and what they do in practice. The research material consists of texts of official documents, oral discussions by participation of experts and officials during the drafting and approval of their draft versions, and ethnographic data. The material was collected and interpreted drawing on participant observation and discourse analysis. The results show that the unresolved theoretical problem of interdisciplinary causes also problems in applied research. Due to the underdevelopment of the research program on language policy in Russia, applied research is currently carried out mainly within the framework of language revitalization, which, however, is hardly able to provide effective solutions in a country with a state-centric political culture. In practice, efforts at revitalization and documentation replace work on maintaining languages. The study argues that without high-quality scientific expertise in the socio-political sphere of language use, language policy and language revitalization remain ineffective also as a practical activity.

Keywords: linguistic diversity, language preservation, language maintenance, language revitalization, language policy, Russian Federation

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For citation:
Zamyatin, Konstantin Yu. 2026. Maintenance and revitalization of the languages of Russia: Problems in research and practice. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 331–351. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47451 EDN: CJZMPV

Сохранение и ревитализация языков России: проблемы науки и практики

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Аннотация
Несколько лет назад «сохранение языкового многообразия» было включено в число официальных целей языковой политики России. Однако из-за широкого официального определения «языкового многообразия» и отсутствия официального определения «сохранения» эту цель сложно концептуализировать и операционализировать на практике. При этом к ее достижению в практической деятельности стремятся как практики политики и языковые активисты, так и ученые в рамках прикладных исследований. В этом контексте понимание того, как участники процесса представляют себе достижение этой цели, является одновременно практической и научной проблемой. Цель данной работы — проанализировать академические и официальные дискурсы и практики, чтобы понять, как научные эксперты во взаимодействии с политиками и чиновниками концептуализируют и операционализируют сохранение языкового многообразия в России и что они делают на практике. Материалом исследования послужили тексты официальных документов, устные обсуждения с участием экспертов и должностных лиц при составлении и согласовании версий их проектов и этнографические данные. Материал был собран и проанализирован с использованием включенного наблюдения и дискурсивного анализа. Результаты показывают, что нерешенность теоретической проблемы междисциплинарности обуславливает проблемы в прикладных исследованиях. В связи с недостаточной развитостью исследовательской программы по языковой политике в России, прикладные исследования в настоящее время проводятся в основном в рамках языковой ревитализации, которая, однако, вряд ли способна предложить эффективные решения в стране с государственно-центричной политической культурой. На практике усилия по ревитализации и документации заменяют работу по сохранению языков. В исследовании утверждается, что без высококачественной научной экспертизы по использованию языков в социально-политической сфере языковая политика и языковая ревитализация остаются неэффективными и как практическая деятельность.
Ключевые слова: *языковое разнообразие, сохранение языка, поддержание языка, языковая ревитализация, языковая политика, Российская Федерация*

Для цитирования:
Zamyatin K.Yu. Maintenance and revitalization of the languages of Russia: Problems in research and practice. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 331–351. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47451 EDN: CJZMPV

1. Introduction

In new matters, research offers policymakers innovative methods to find solutions, make decisions, and bridge good practices and policies. For that reason, it is interesting to study a case of such application of scientific research to the real-life problems, namely language preservation, when researchers participate in drafting official documents, thus, trying to fit their ideas and values into the public discourse to persuade decision-makers. In this article, I will analyze what expertise the Russian academic community could offer and what influence applied science had on the practice of language policy and revitalization, as measured against international experience, which should allow to advance in our understanding of how it is theoretically possible to achieve the preservation of languages, and what kind of agency is necessary for this.

The aim of the paper is to analyze academic and official discourses and practices of the preservation of linguistic diversity in order to understand the role of applied research and expertise in its achievement. The material consists of texts of written documents, oral discussions in their draft versions, and ethnographic observations. I collected and interpreted the research data on discourses and practices through participatory observation of expert work and advancing applied research pursued in the Russian academia under the umbrella of language maintenance and language revitalisation in the interaction with public officials during the process around drafting of the "Concept of State Language Policy of the Russian Federation" (hereafter — Concept) and the "Program of the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences for the Maintenance and Revival of the Languages of Russia" (hereafter — Program).

I directly participated in the practice of language policy in 2021–2023, taking part in a group of experts from the Institute of Linguistics in the advancement of the Draft Concept and also in preparing the text of the Draft Program. The study combines discursive and ethnographic analytical techniques to ensure triangulation of data and identify the gap between what they say and what they do for language preservation. Two documents were selected for the analysis not only because of the accessibility of the field and data but also because they represent two key processes of policymaking: policy formation and adoption ("language policy") in regard to the Concept and implementation ("language planning") in regard to the Program, in which the academic community attempted to make an input.

This article discusses some results of this applied work and is organized into three sections: in the next — second section it discusses the role of science for practice in general and in the third section its role in Russia in particular, followed by discussion in the fourth section. The study addresses in the subsections the following research questions:

- What is the state of research on language preservation in Russian and world science?
- What tools applied research offers to its practitioners?

- How “language preservation” is understood in Russia in theory and practice?
- What and why hinders the practical implementation of preservation goals?

2. Research and practice of language preservation

2.1. Interdisciplinary research and the practical task of maintaining and revitalizing languages

The reduction of linguistic diversity and the disappearance of languages is a complex intergenerational social process that is currently taking place with varying intensity throughout the world and is one of the consequences of modernization. Countries differ both in the degree of population diversity and in their reactions to its change. In societies with deep social cleavages, the demand for preserving diversity is usually higher than in societies characterized by high social cohesion. Language preservation can be understood both as the state of preservation of languages and as an activity that ensures the preservation of this state. In accordance with the degree of population diversity, and sometimes in spite of it, countries have historically developed strategies for managing diversity aimed at preserving or reducing existing social differences in society.

The management of linguistic diversity can also correspond to different types of policies (Kloss 1998). At the present stage of history, most developed countries in Europe confirm their commitment to preserving linguistic diversity. In practice, the corresponding policies often prove ineffective because they are mostly ambivalent. On the one hand, states are by default interested in promoting a single common language, but, on the other hand, they are forced to take into account the risk of deepening social cleavages and to respond to the demand of communities for the preservation of languages, the value of which has been recognized in international human rights standards. Often, the resulting policy of compromise symbolically supports the coexistence of many languages at the level of discourses, but promotes the dominant language at the level of instrumental policy practices.

In such conditions, the task of maintaining and revitalizing languages is non-trivial, because the success of such efforts depends on many variables characterizing both the society itself and the position of the state with respect to diversity. Science plays a leading role in finding answers to new challenges, since it is capable of finding ways to solve such a problem. However, contemporary science is only just approaching the answer to the public demand for the preservation of languages, which has become increasingly universal in recent decades in the context of globalization and simultaneous regionalization and localization.

While fundamental science accumulates new scientific knowledge, applied science applies scientific knowledge and methods in practice to solve problems and tasks in the real world. Applied scientific research is aimed at obtaining new knowledge for the purpose of its practical use to solve various social problems. The

result of applied research is not only new theories and methods, but also forecasts and recommendations for practitioners. In addition, research scientists themselves can participate or be involved in practice as experts. Expert activity is a special type of professional activity, for the implementation of which special knowledge about the object and subject of expertise and the corresponding professional skills for their application in practice are necessary.

In order to meet the challenges of the complexity of social and political processes, scientific research takes on an interdisciplinary character. The trends of language shift, i.e. the transition to another language, and the threat of language extinction were first noticed in the scientific communities of linguists and sociologists. Since the second half of the last century and to this day, an extensive literature on endangered languages has appeared in Western academia, studying primarily the sociological factors of language "withering". Sociolinguists and sociologists of language study the issues of the relationship between language and society, moving towards each other, respectively, from the perspectives of language and society. In an applied vein, they write about "language extinction" ("language death"), "language shift", "reverse language shift", "language preservation", "language maintenance", "language spread", "language revival", or "language revitalization". In other words, on the basis of the study of sociolinguistic processes, modernist goals for changing social realities began to be put forward that envisaged intervening in the areas ("domains") of language use in both the public and private spheres (Fishman 1991).

From these origins, depending on whether they took a top-down or bottom-up approach, scholars initiated the development of two interdisciplinary research programs, i.e. research directions, which were typically pursued by different scientific communities. The first followed the path of revitalizing endangered languages, carried out within the framework of applied linguistics, although interdisciplinary issues were also addressed from the outset (Ferguson 1971, Rehg & Campbell 2018). However, linguists often consider sociolinguistics to be a part of applied linguistics, and the latter, in turn, a section of linguistics. While linguists focus on languages and applied linguists focus on language learners, sociolinguists focus on ideologies and the social meaning that learners attribute to these languages (De Korne 2021). In addition, sociolinguistics as a theoretical and methodological framework attempts to promote social change and development in communities (Farfán & Ramallo 2010). However, communities are often not understood as "language communities" in the terms of sociolinguistics, but rather as "communities of practice". In other words, sociolinguistics in its applied aspects is closer to pragmatics and linguistic anthropology than to linguistics proper.

The second is called "language policy and planning". Some linguists and sociolinguists still consider, I would say mistakenly, language policy and planning to be part of applied linguistics or sociolinguistics. The reason is that often representatives of a certain scientific community, for example linguists, do not see the phenomena that are beyond the "accessibility space" of their academic

discipline, because the latter is an institutionalized form of this very "epistemological community", which separates it from other such communities (Merton 1973). A striking example of the lack of a transdisciplinary perspective is the use of the concept of "language policy", in which linguists pay attention to the adjective that denotes specificity, and do not see the generic concept of "policy". Given the centrality of the relationship between language and power, since the establishment of this direction, language policy has been studied by political scientists and legal scholars, since it is the political choice of languages and their status that often predetermine their future. To this day, language policy research is primarily a public policy research within political science, which makes a key contribution to the interdisciplinary project of "language policy and planning" (Gazzola et al. 2023).

It thus seems obvious, but remains insufficiently articulated in the scientific discourse, that policy "from above" and practice "from below" turned out to be the fields of study of different interdisciplinary research programs, dominated by different specialists — linguists and political scientists — and which focused on different research objects — people, social groups, societies and states. In my view, however, the humanities-based program, which focuses on understanding people and small groups "from below," lacks anthropologists and ethnologists, while the social sciences-based program, which studies society and political structures "from above," lacks qualitative research and a normative perspective. As I will demonstrate below, this situation has created problems not only for applied research, but also for the practice of language policy and revitalization.

2.2. Theoretical and applied aspects of language policy and language revitalization

Traditionally, language policy was considered as a policy "from above", from the state, that is, state policy aimed at changing or preserving a language within the borders of a country or region by regulating the use of languages in the official sphere (Gazzola 2023). In recent decades, it has also become common to talk about the plurality of policy actors and "language policy from below", from the communities and activists, implemented through public activity outside the official sphere (Johnson 2023). For this reason, "policy from below" is often characterized as "language activism" in the sense of politics (De Korne 2021).

At the same time, in my opinion, it is impossible to draw a clear distinction between policy and politics without taking into account the context of the political system of a particular country. Usually, the development of the public sphere indicates a plurality of policy actors in countries with a developed civil society, which allows us to talk not just about state policy, but about public policy. In contrast, in some countries, such as modern Russia, the idea of the state as the guiding force of society ("nation") remains the cornerstone of political and administrative culture (Peters et al. 2022), which allows us to talk about their "state-centricity".

Language policy "from above" is shaped in practice by politicians and implemented by public officials. Accordingly, it is studied as a state or public policy primarily by political scientists. Within the framework of the "ethnographic turn", the importance of studying language policy "from below", that is, from the perspective of "people in politics", is also discussed. However, it is worth remembering their different, official and public, roles. The decisions of politicians are expressed in policy and are studied by political science and its subdiscipline of public policy, while the decisions of individuals are expressed in practices and are studied by sociolinguistics (Gazzola et al. 2023). In the latter case, ordinary people act as activists and participate in language activism. Moreover, if for activists from among ordinary people this is a practical activity, then for linguists and other scientists it is both a practical and scientific-applied activity on the practical application of their knowledge. To study such activities of activists, including activists from among researchers, a research program on "language revitalization" is developed.

Scientists not only study political, social and psychological realities within the framework of fundamental science, putting forward theories of language policy and revitalization, but also try to apply scientific results in practice, that is, they are engaged in applied science. Numerous studies, mostly of a practical and applied nature, have appeared, including attempts to reverse the processes of language extinction (Hinton et al. 2018). Moreover, in the course of their research, scientists can not only help language activists, that is, be an intermediate link between science and practice, but also engage in language activism themselves, that is, act as language activists, seeing their mission in language revitalization. Various forms of activism by scientists are possible, including supporting and expanding existing initiatives and networks, (re)producing a positive view of language and culture, and directly participating in or offering active measures and tangible products (De Korne 2021).

Thus, as in the case of language policy, language revitalization is also not only a practical but also a scientific activity within the framework of applied linguistics, although here the boundary between research and practice is rather blurred. Relatively arbitrarily, scientists divide studies into those that are essential for practice, which include language documentation, bilingualism research, sociology of language choice, linguistic anthropology, and others, and those that are directly related to language revitalization, which include language change studies in the context of revitalization, multilingual education, research on psychological factors, language policy studies, etc. (Hinton et al. 2018). These lists show that language policy studies and language revitalization studies are connected and intersect.

Language revitalization can also be understood as both a state and an activity, that is, a process aimed at giving new "vitality" to a language whose use is declining. If the use has ceased altogether, this activity is usually called "language revival". In English two other concepts — "maintenance" and "preservation" — are in use to denote efforts at preserving languages. While there is no agreed

definition, language maintenance usually refers to the ongoing effort to keep a language alive and in use, and language preservation often involves more formal strategies and initiatives to protect a language from disappearing and in that is close to revitalization. Further, the goal of revitalization is to increase the relative number of language speakers and expand the number of domains in which languages are used. This is different from language maintenance, which in this context is interpreted as maintaining the number of speakers and the number of language domains. Regarding the mechanism, revitalization almost always requires a change in the community's attitude to the language, while maintenance is aimed at protecting the community from the imposition of external views on it (Grenoble & Whaley 2005).

In an effort to transfer the ideas of language revitalization to Russian soil, researchers tend to forget that a favorable political environment and an appropriate language policy are a prerequisite for the success of revitalization. As comparative studies of attempts at language maintenance and revival in relation to "small" and "medium"-sized languages in different countries show, for example Hebrew, Northern and Inari Sami, Welsh and Cornish, Catalan and Basque, Hawaiian or Maori, the efforts of activists are crowned with success quite rarely and only if they are supported by appropriate language legislation and a functioning mechanism of language rights (Zamyatin et al. 2012).

Furthermore, even under favorable legislative framework, efforts of language activists alone are necessary but not sufficient. The experience of implementing the language policies of the republics in the post-Soviet period shows that policy "from above" is not enough due to its limitation to the official sphere, and to achieve results in language maintenance the work of language policy practitioners must be combined with the "bottom-up" practical efforts of activists from the communities themselves. In addition, language policy at the center in a complex state can limit language policy at other levels of government (Zamyatin 2014). Moreover, good practices at the "bottom" have to be conceptualized and operationalized to take decisions for their multiplication on the larger scale of policy. However, I also found in my applied work (Zamyatin 2024a, 2024b) that, it is difficult to integrate the diverging approaches "from above" and "from below", because so far their work remains without solid scientific and conceptual grounds, more about which is in the next section.

3. Applied Research and Practical Activity of Drafting the Program on the Maintenance and Revival of Languages

3.1. Program's envisaged format

To become state policy, language issues, including the issue of language preservation, are to be incorporated into official documents. The 2020 presidential

instructions[1] after the 2019 session of the Presidential Council on the Russian Language demanded, among other measures, drafting of the "Concept of State Language Policy of the Russian Federation" and ordered the Government to "provide financial, legal and organizational support" both"for the development and implementation of the Program of the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences for the Maintenance and Revival of the Languages of the Indigenous Peoples of Russia" and "for the development, formation and functioning of the "National Vocabulary Fund" on the basis of the Vinogradov Russian Language Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences", and in another provision the instruction "to develop and approve the state program of the Russian Federation "Support and Promotion of the Russian Language Abroad".

The initiated process of drafting of the Concept and also the Program provided a chance for developing and implementing the task of the preservation of linguistic diversity by participation of scientific experts, because, despite the prevalence of symbolic policy and other political obstacles, the threshold for the Program's approval was lower at the time. However, when the political leadership presented the demand for expertise in shaping language policy, there were no agency in charge of language policy and no obvious centers of competence in either the government structures or the academia that could offer expertise for drafting the document. This suggests that the reason for the failure to use this window of opportunity is not only in the political realm, but also in the inability of the scientific community to develop a blueprint for language preservation that could persuade politicians and be functional for policy practitioners.

The reason for this is that in Russia, the research program on language revitalization has been developing, while the research program on language policy remains underdeveloped, which is manifested, for example, in the absence of relevant scientific institutional structures. The lag in the development of studies is caused by both the absence of a corresponding tradition — there was no political science in the USSR — and the continuity in the policy practice itself, according to which language policy until recently was still considered as part of nationalities policy. The unresolved problem of interdisciplinarity predetermines the limited influence of Russian applied science on the practice of language policy. The marginal scientific impact, in turn, is expressed in the lack of institutionalization of language policy as a separate direction of state policy and a separate branch of public administration (Zamyatin 2023a).

While the legal basis for drafting the Program was created in the presidential instructions, the issues about its format and scope remained unspecified, whether this is "a state program" as another strategic document or a "scientific program" and, thus, what kind of activities it envisages, whether it refers only to corpus

[1] List of instructions following the meeting of the Council under the President of the Russian Federation on the Russian Language, which took place on November 5, 2019 [Electronic resource], March 1, 2020. URL: http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/assignments/orders/62918 (date accessed: 12 August 2025).

planning or to all types of language planning in relation to other languages of the peoples of Russia. When proposing the Program's title for the inclusion into the presidential instructions, the Institute of Linguistics did not specify the format and, instead, added its own name to the title to remain in control of its drafting but also, at a later stage, of implementation in practice, i.e. as of a state program.

Language planning is the activity of implementing language policy. According to the classic work on language policy and planning by R. Cooper, of the types of language planning, the only one that can be related to the practical work of linguists is corpus planning, i.e. such activities as creating new terms, alphabets or rules, as well as compiling a list of languages, which can also be done under the auspices of "linguistic documentation". Planning the status of languages, including their functions and domains of their use in society, and their use in the field of education for the dissemination of language knowledge and skills is carried out by practitioners of policy and education, i.e. politicians, civil servants, school principals, teachers, etc. (Cooper 1989).

Regarding the support for the initiative of the Vinogradov Russian Language Institute, which is the language regulator for Russian, it is clear that this refers to planning the corpus of the Russian language. By analogy, the task to the Institute of Linguistics also envisaged rather a scientific program directed at corpus planning, even though oriented towards research into language revitalization. In a similar way, the format of the Program was interpreted in the correspondence between the Institute of Linguistics, which was developing its text, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, which supervised this activity on behalf of the Government. The Ministry expected only "methodological recommendations" as a result of the Program work, that is, it did not recognize itself as the "government procurer" of such a Draft Program. In other words, there was no "interested party" in the Government — a ministry or department that could act as the "government procurer" of the Program.

Another issue that remained undecided was whether the Program should have applied to all "languages of Russia" but Russian as the only safe language, to "the languages of the peoples of Russia", or only towards those usually smaller languages that did not enjoy support at the regional level, because since the early 1990s most republics and autonomous districts regularly approved their programs of the maintenance and development not only of their titular languages, including state languages of republics and official languages of autonomous districts, but usually also traditionally used minority languages (Zamyatin 2014).

The initiators of the Program intended to cover all non-Russian languages, that is, not only "minor" but also "middle-sized" languages, and translated its initial title "Programma sokhraneniya i vozrozhdeniya korennykh yazykov Rossii" as "Program for the preservation and revitalisation of indigenous languages of Russia" (Kibrik 2021, Gruzdeva 2022). Earlier, these were the Russian linguists who actually advocated for the inclusion of the formula of "the preservation of linguistic diversity" into the constitution and legislation and advocated for the concept of

"languages of Russia" instead of "languages of the peoples of Russia". This is a double-sided change, because, on the one hand, the concepts allow including also dialects and vernaculars but, on the other hand, are less concrete for the purpose of implementation than the formula of "the maintenance and development of the languages of the peoples" that is in use in legislation.

One concept "sokhranenie" is used in Russian for both "maintenance" and "preservation", but the distinction is also topical in dealing with linguistic diversity in Russia, where "middle-sized" languages and "minor" languages can be posited on a continuum of different types of their situations. Russian is the state language of the whole country and the dominant language; "middle-sized" languages typically include 37 state languages of republics and more than 35 languages of national minorities; "minor" languages include more than 30 languages of "small-numbered indigenous peoples" and other small languages. I argue that in the Russian realities "middle-sized" languages still function and usually are in need of "maintenance" and "minor" languages often are disappearing and in need of "preservation", "revitalization" and "revival".

To give more terminological nuances, it is further Russian specifics that since the late 1980s, the concept of "language revival" did not imply revival "from scratch", but by analogy with the concept of "national revival" and along with the concepts of "maintenance and development of languages", it was used to describe policy "from above" (Zamyatin 2014). For this reason, the later concept of "language revitalization" is often contrasted with them and usually interpreted as the activity of language activists, language activism coming "from below", although occasionally it was also used as a synonym for language revival. However, the times changed, and currently there is hardly any public discourse on language revival left.

The Draft Program was developed on the basis of the Program Concept[2], which does not explicitly indicate the meaning of distinguishing two separate aspects of "the preservation and revitalisation" in the title but these are different from the traditional legal formula for naming programs, "the maintenance and development". Therefore, I think that it is more accurate to translate the concepts "preservation and revitalization" in the title as "maintenance and revival", precisely because the Program was intended to cover also middle-sized languages, while "revitalization" ("revitalizatsiya") is not the same as "revival" ("vozrozhdeniye"). Language maintenance and revival are two types of activities that, in essence, coincide with the perspectives of two research programs discussed in the previous section — language policy and planning and language revitalization.

Such a combination of "top-down" policy and "bottom-up" efforts could have become a strength of the Draft Program. However, in practice, I argue that this was also one of the reasons for the failure to achieve its approval. Such a dualism of

[2] Concept of the Program for the Preservation and Revival of the Languages of Russia, approved by the Advisor to the President of the Russian Federation V. I. Tolstoy on August 13, 2020. Not published.

goals has no basis in the current legislation. If "preservation of linguistic diversity" is an official and potentially feasible goal of the state nationalities policy and language policy, then the goal of "language revival" is not set within the framework of the current policy. The issue of "language revitalization" is not on the political agenda, because "linguistic diversity" is stated to include only "functioning", that is, "living" languages. The revivalist goal is difficult to justify pragmatically and even more difficult to operationalize and implement. In view of this, in the context of limited resources inherent in any policy, it is unlikely that the goal of language revitalization will become part of state policy in the foreseeable future. It is unlikely that the state will allocate the necessary resources to revive "dead" and "dying" languages today.

Furthermore, the proposed approaches of the Program Concept do not correspond to the goal of "maintenance of languages". The idea was that the proposed approaches should correspond to the types of language situations of "medium-sized languages" or "minor languages" and, in the latter case, depend on whether they are considered "definitely endangered", "severely endangered" or "critically endangered" according to the criteria of the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. "Changing social practices, increasing the prestige of the language, primarily in everyday communication" is proposed as an approach to solving the problems of "medium-sized languages" and "minor languages", the language nest method for "endangered" "minor languages", and linguistic documentation for "minor languages" "on the verge of extinction" (Kibrik 2021, Gruzdeva 2022).

The goals and approaches were determined mainly by linguists who look at the issue of language maintenance from the perspective of revitalization, that is, as work "from below". Such a formulation of approaches primarily implies language revitalization, while planning the status and in the field of education is not set as a task here. While the focus on prestige planning could have potentially been a strong point of the Draft Program, one can strive based on these approaches in terms of language planning for the goal of "language revival", but not "language maintenance". The latter can be systematically implemented only through the activities of government bodies and public institutions. The very approach to solving the problem through the development of a state program is an example of an approach "from above". And rightly so, because in a country with a state-centric political culture, the problem of preserving languages can only be solved within the framework of a state program developed on the basis of research into language policy and implemented under supervision of a ministry or department. Without this, the Draft Program just remained a piece of paper not taken by authorities into their work and the respective government task was removed in 2024 from the control on implementation.

3.2. Program's envisaged content

Having the format of state program in mind, we with a colleague of mine compiled the initial Draft Program that was based on an analysis and selection of the best practices from measures listed in the programs for the maintenance and development of languages of the republics of Russia and structured according to the types of language planning. I left the team after realizing that, especially after the change in policy priorities since 2022, there is no prospect of the draft ever becoming a state program. The work on the Draft Program continued mainly by linguists, who considered it rather as a pretext for advancing the research program of language revitalization in Russian science. In substantial parts, the work was carried out as a one-off action on the principle of "stone soup", that is, on the basis of the expertise of invited specialists — lawyers and economists, but without politicians. As a result, the final product was not supported by high-quality expertise. Essentially, the final Draft Program is not based on the template for a strategic document and is also impassable for factual errors that begin from its proposed title.

Specifying the title of the Draft Program, in the final version the concept "revival" was changed to "development" to comply with the legislation. Further, the concept "indigenous peoples" was dropped from "languages of the indigenous peoples of Russia" leaving "languages of Russia" instead of legally correct "languages of the peoples of Russia"[3]. Another error in the title was the selection of the concept "federal program" in an attempt to present it as a state program, which is an existing but unfit form. In view of these controversies, it is not so much the text of the Draft Program itself that is interesting in a scientific sense, but the framing of the problem of language preservation in the Program Concept produced by the community of Russian linguists.

Since language revitalization research in Russia develops as a borrowing from the international scientific agenda, accordingly, the goals and approaches were taken from there. The goals corresponded to the approaches depending on the language situation and envisaged the maintenance of "middle-sized languages", the revitalization of "endangered" "minor languages" and the documentation of "minor languages" "on the verge of extinction". Theoretically, it is possible to interpret these types of activities as three successive stages of a comprehensive approach: first, languages are documented "for the purpose of revitalization", then they are revived, and then maintained. This classification of three types or areas of activity implies that language documentation and revitalization are not actually language maintenance.

In part of language documentation, the title of the Draft Program did not include such direction, but it was highlighted as a separate type of activity and was

[3] See Final Draft "Federal Program for the Preservation and Development of the Languages of Russia" dated September 9, 2024 [Electronic resource]. URL: https://iling-ran.ru/languages_of_russia/federal'naja_programma_soxranenija_jazykov_2024.pdf (date of access: 12 August 2025).

also included in the name of the new structural division that was created in the Institute of Linguistics specifically for the task of drafting the Program. Further, it was argued that the task of documentation is to be pursued for the purpose of revitalization, that is documentation in its applied aspect is not revitalization. Documentation could, under certain conditions, be considered preliminary work for revitalization, if we mean data collection for the purpose of sociolinguistic study. Indeed, language revitalization is closely related to documentation, but revitalization is rarely the main goal of documentation; rather, such a goal is linguistic research itself (Austin & Grenoble 2007).

My observation is that in practice linguists are rather interested in documenting languages because it allows them to collect personal materials for their own linguistic research. The key problem here is that descriptive (field) linguistics distances itself from speakers, and in the worst case, establishes exploitative relations with them when it treats them as objects and means to an end. For example, there is a practice that is called "parachute" or "helicopter research", when foreign researchers conduct fieldwork in third world countries, and complete the research at home without any further interaction with local colleagues and communities (on the problems of decolonization of linguistics, including during revitalization, see Hudley et al. 2024).

Similar practices also take place in Russia, when metropolitan scholars go to regions. It is characteristic that the work on documentation and revitalization is concentrated in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and only partly in Novosibirsk and Tomsk. Today, the desire to "give something back" to communities and to promote empowerment of their participants is widely recognized as an important ethical principle in endangered language research (Hinton et al. 2018). In language revitalization, such interactions involve balancing power relations between researchers and those being researched in an attempt to agree on priorities for reversing language shift (Fishman 1991). A clear consideration of the skill set that a particular linguist brings to a community and what the community can gain from such a relationship is crucial to avoiding conflict situations (Pine & Turin 2017).

In part of language revitalization, the specific tasks of applied work on the Program were not based on newly collected field data, but, in essence, were reduced to systematization of available data and creation of a database of the best foreign and Russian practices "on revitalization of languages" for the purpose of their adaptation for use in Russia. Of these, it was proposed to use for the revitalization of "medium-sized" and "minor" languages in Russia the internationally known and tested methods, respectively, of "language nest" and "master — student" (for more details on the methods, see Zamyatin et al. 2012). However, these methods are unadaptable, because the authorities repeatedly on different occasions stated that these "foreign" methods cannot be used in the Russian education system for political and legal reasons (see Zamyatin 2024a). Thus, the work on language revitalization is carried out only at the level of linguistic activism of researchers who are guided not by scientific, but by "everyday knowledge", because it is not in

their sphere of expertise and specialization. Modern knowledge is socially distributed, and each area of knowledge has its own special semantic field, which distinguishes the corresponding specialty or profession and the techniques of its reproduction.

In part of language maintenance, this task had to be achieved in view of the drafters through "popularization" of languages in state-wide information campaigns. Indeed, one of the main principles of the language policy of most countries, including Russia, is non-interference by the state in the freedom of use of languages in the private sphere. This means that only tools are available for encouraging, but not mandatory use of other languages than Russian as the state language of Russia. However, popularization of languages without a scientific justification in the program theory of the connection between policy inputs and outputs in the form of a system of performance indicators, a lot of resources can be spent on non-obvious results, as usually happens with advertising. Systemic prestige planning can only be done as part of a "state program", which would provide not only the corresponding organizational, regulatory and financial instruments, but also carefully selected information policy instruments (Gazzola 2023).

This brings us back to the issue about policy actors, including the role of scientific experts. Today prestige planning is the most relevant area of sociolinguistic research. The development of methodological recommendations in the framework of the "scientific program" also would have required the appropriate expertise. Prestige is primarily a category of social, economic and managerial sciences. Raising prestige is a matter of status planning, that is, a task for interdisciplinary research at the macro level and the "state program". Applied research support here could be effective only from the perspective of language policy research. Limiting the scope of work on language preservation to "everyday communication" and efforts "from below" by definition cannot be a solution to the problem of language maintenance. A conscious information impact at the level of symbolic policy could become an essential mechanism. Humanities knowledge could play a key role in understanding discourse and its role in the reproduction of power relations: discourse structures the existing social order and the interactive order that supports it, and it is very difficult to change.

This concerns also scholarly activism. In order to engage in activism, one needs agency, which is practically non-existent today beyond the state. Despite the rhetoric about the "participation of civil society institutions" in implementing policy, in practice, the authorities do not welcome independent initiatives "from below". Activists are dependent on the authorities and their language policy. Activism is possible only if the authorities allow, or rather, order and finance certain activities. The work of several self-organized activists will not change anything — what can change is the officially sanctioned systemic activity of organizations or activity within other institutional forms of language policy. In order to know how

to achieve political results in such a system, it is necessary to study the applied aspects of political science.

In these conditions, developing a draft of an official document is more than developing a text. The real text of a working document can only appear as a result of negotiations between experts and other actors, that is, when it collides with real politics in its struggle for limited resources. For this to happen, systematic practical work on preserving languages and promoting this task on the political agenda should be provided by a transdisciplinary "epistemic community". By forming such a community, experts unite in a network based on shared values and knowledge regarding the problem, being representatives of different disciplines — in this case, anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists, as well as research economists and legal scholars. They also should form a community of practice to ensure the creation and maintenance of an environment for the production and transfer of knowledge and skills.

In practice, an academic discipline in the Russian academy, for example linguistics, is sustained by a respective disciplinary community that functions as a corporation uniting academic institutes in the main cities but within its academic boundaries, which becomes an obstacle to interdisciplinarity. Academic corporations pursue their own interests, first of all, in finding additional funding, when seeking assignment for governmental tasks even for topics beyond the scope of their academic expertise necessary for achieving a societal impact. Corporations function as hierarchical structures, in which leadership spreads funds in solidarity not to effectively fulfill the task but to sustain the community, members of which evaluate work also beyond their competence but approve each others' results. The desire for harmony or conformity within a corporation contributes to groupthink and leads not only to the lack of Mertonian skepticism, thus, violating one of the basic rules of the scientific method, but also to flawed recommendations for decision-making. The culture of groupthink is also the typical reason for the failure of large government projects, when such flaws come to surface, like the one on drafting the Program.

Scientific experts have agency when they advise authorities on a problem or even propose solutions. The demand of the state for the development of the Draft Concept and Draft Program by the scientific community was the recognition of such agency. However, experts have agency to the extent that they are authoritative in the eyes of politicians and officials, because they can create a high-quality product and advance it. The Draft Program was produced, if to cite a testimony from the oral discourses of linguists, with a narrow vision of work, which can be expressed in the conditional maxim: "we will write the Program as we see it, and let them think about how to implement it". However, the maximalism of demands put forward, not only for the preservation but also for the revival of languages, and documentation, does not help the cause, but justifies the mere symbolic policy of the authorities, who limit themselves to minimal support, because "it is impossible to preserve everything" anyway. Behind the seemingly ethically impeccable

demand for "everything at once" there is not the interest of the cause, but a corporate interest. This is the result of such a "cycle of show". Linguists may be sincerely interested in preserving languages and driven by the motivation of not only taking from community, but also giving, yet too often they lack the knowledge and skills how to do it. The theory of "small deeds" at the micro-level of revitalization legitimizes the practice of government technocrats in purely symbolic support like printing individual book titles with small circulations, developing table games, counting expeditions and focusing on "minor languages". All this the government reports as the work on language preservation.

4. Discussion

Agency as the ability of people to act and achieve a social effect can be exercised both through policy "from above" and through activism "from below". In recent decades, the states intensified their policies in order to change their linguistic situations, which often are a response to language activism. At the same time, even when policies symbolically support language preservation, they often lack mechanisms to pursue material results. Comparative studies show that successful attempts to preserve and especially revive languages are always ensured by appropriate language legislation and a functioning mechanism of language rights. Without creating a favorable socio-political macro- and micro-level environment, the existing social structure continues to predetermine social processes, that lead to a shift to the dominant language, and significantly limits the agency of policy practitioners and language activists. The policy "from above" is crucial, because if it does not substantially support the preservation of languages, then it thereby becomes an element of the social structure that significantly limits the effect of activist efforts "from below".

International science has advanced in understanding the possibilities and consequences of influencing language processes. Yet, the problem of interdisciplinarity in the study of language, society and power has not yet been resolved. Policy "from above" and practical activity "from below" have become areas of study for two separate interdisciplinary research programs, pursued by different epistemic communities. In Russia, sociolinguistics is interpreted broadly, when every topic connected to language, including language policy and planning, is counted under linguistics, and, thus, also in its applied aspect, done by linguists. Language revitalization and language documentation are the subdisciplines of linguistics and also the applied activities pursued by scholars in applying their knowledge. At the same time, measures of state support for "maintenance" and "development" are directed not at languages per se but at individuals, communities and societies, and, thus, are not the topic of (socio)linguistics, but of the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, political science.

In Russia, in the conditions of underdevelopment of the research program of language policy and planning, linguists mostly do applied research on the problem of language preservation and suggested to look for solutions in the research

program of language revitalization that was imported from international research. The underlying assumption is the plurality of actors of language policy that not only the state but also institutions of civil society and even individuals have agency. However, one should remember that agency in societies is distributed unevenly. This imported assumption does not take into account the Russian realities, because of a lack of understanding of how the political system works. Specifically, power in Russian society still mainly comes down "from the top down" as political and managerial decisions within the framework of state policy and public administration. An analysis of Russian official discourse in the policy documents also shows that language policy is still conceptualized and pursued as "state-centric." In this setting, the program of language revitalization is unable to propose effective solutions to language preservation.

Therefore, the unresolved theoretical problem of interdisciplinarity leads to a lack of high-quality scientific expertise in language preservation at the applied level, for which reason language policy and language revitalization as a practical activity also remain ineffective. The authorities express their commitment to the preservation of linguistic diversity and their demand for the "scientific-conceptual justification" of policy. However, these statements are to be understood as discursive actions of symbolic policy. This does not mean that the policy is just a smokescreen but only that it reinterprets contested symbols and embeds them into discourses to formulate official narrative. Potentially, even when the state is the main policy actor, scientific community as part of civil society can influence inputs also of symbolic policy.

In practice, government structures also demand for scientific-conceptual justification in the process of policy formation, but officials do not perceive scientific experts on language revitalization seriously due to inadequate supply of expertise to political realities. In this article, I provided some evidence of the inadequacy of scientific expertise that eventually manifested itself in the inability to use the opportunity to advance the cause for language preservation to be included in the Concept and to achieve the approval of the Program. The bureaucracy and the academia could not harmonize their discourses on the problem when drafting the Concept. Officials tried to fulfill the formal requirement for policy's harmonization with the scientific counterparts, but were provided with unprocessable expertise and ignored it. Notably, the failure of harmonization has not become an obstacle for the further approval of the Concept (Zamyatin 2023b).

What the Russian case can teach scholars and practitioners of language preservation? The lesson for academia is that it should preserve modesty. In order to influence policy, one must understand how it is formed, in terms of process, format and content. The applied knowledge and practical skills of language revitalization remained unclaimed as the scientific experts had limited awareness of the practice of language politics as a public policy, like the existing formal requirements for the development of drafts of strategic documents, and were unable

to formulate their vision as policy input in the language of political discourse, to conduct negotiations, etc.

In terms of the content proposed as policy input, the Draft Program envisaged the goals and approaches of language documentation, revival and maintenance that did not reflect the existing legislation and policy practice. Among the types of language planning to be a practical work for the language maintenance and revival, only corpus planning and composing the list of languages is done by linguists, which goes under the label of "documentation". However, documentation in its applied aspect is not revitalization. It could be counted as preliminary work, but by the lack of resources this should not be in the priorities, because it is not revitalization, and especially documentation should not substitute revitalization. Crucially, what lacked was a vision for language maintenance.

The lesson for policy practitioners is that the task of preserving languages must be solved, as is being done in the case of promoting the dominant language, primarily at the level of state policy of both the country as a whole and its regions and municipalities, and not only at the level of language activism. Grassroots work must not replace policy "from above" in the case of any community larger than a village. Moreover, joint efforts will be effective only if they are based on scientific research into language policy and language revitalization. Without qualified scientific justification and grounded only in the current political situation, policy practitioners take their political decisions that turn out to be not only ineffective, but also potentially and actually conflict-generating.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I examined the interrelation between research and practice and explored the potential contributions of the research directions "language policy and planning" and "language endangerment and revitalization" to solving the practical problem of language preservation. I identified similarities and differences between the studies of language policy and language revitalization in their theoretical and applied aspects, as well as their partial overlap. These two interdisciplinary research programs are being brought to Russia, but at a different pace, and have to be adapted to the Russian political realities.

Studying the Russian case, I analyzed discourses and practices of drafting the official documents that reveal the current broad understanding of language preservation that impedes its practical implementation. Despite the rhetoric in support of the preservation of linguistic diversity both in the official and scientific discourses, the practical actions are not scaled up to the task, which is the evidence of the non-sufficient expertise and the current limited role of applied research work in its achievement. I demonstrated how, at the present stage, the lack of distinction between two research programs results in substitution of language maintenance by language revitalization and documentation.

Acknowledgements

The research leading to these results has received funding from the Basic Research Program at HSE University (HSE-BR-2025-031) and the Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences (FMNE-2025-0014).

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Article history:
Received: 03 December 2025
Accepted: 12 February 2026

Bionote:

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 352–374
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47384
EDN: CKPXVR

Research article / Научная статья

Language ecology of minority languages of Sakha (Yakutia) in the mirror of the All-Russian Census 2020–2021

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Abstract
This study applies the framework of the ecology of language, defined by Einar Haugen as the study of interactions between a language and its environment, to evaluate the reliability of population census data for sociolinguistic analysis. Focusing on the 2020–2021 Russian Census, the paper investigates its usefulness in describing language situations among indigenous minorities in the north-east of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). The study adopts a qualitative and critical analytical approach. First, general features of the census are assessed, including coverage completeness and the clarity and adequacy of terminology used in ethnic and linguistic categories. Second, the broader sociolinguistic context—particularly language endangerment in north-eastern Russia—is examined. Finally, selected census data are analyzed for ten indigenous languages: Aleut, Aliutor, Chukchi, Dolgan, Even, Evenki, Eskimo, Itel'men, Koryak, and Yukaghir. The analysis reveals inconsistencies in census outcomes, including unexpected increases and decreases in reported speaker populations across several languages. These fluctuations do not consistently align with established trends in language vitality or decline, raising questions about data reliability. The findings suggest that census responses are shaped more by speaker attitudes, identity, and self-perception than by actual language use or proficiency. Consequently, while the census provides valuable insights into sociocultural identification, it is less effective as a precise instrument for measuring linguistic vitality. This underscores the need for complementary methodologies in assessing minority language situations.

Keywords: *Russian 2020/21 Population Census, indigenous languages, Yakutia (Sakha) Republic, language as identity marker*

For citation:
Gabdrakhmanova, Gulnara F. & Nikolai B. Vakhtin. 2026. Language ecology of minority languages of Sakha (Yakutia) in the mirror of the All-Russian Census 2020-21. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 352–374. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47384 EDN: CKPXVR

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Лингвистическая экология миноритарных языков Республики Саха (Якутия) в зеркале Всероссийской переписи населения 2020–2021 годов

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Аннотация
Данное исследование использует концепцию экологии языка (Haugen 1971, 1972) как изучение взаимодействия языка с его средой для оценки надежности данных переписей населения в социолингвистическом анализе. Сосредотачиваясь на Российской переписи 2020–2021 г., статья исследует ее применимость для описания языковой ситуации среди коренных малочисленных народов на северо-востоке Республики Саха (Якутия). В исследовании используется качественный и критико-аналитический подход. Сначала рассматриваются общие характеристики переписи, включая полноту охвата населения, а также ясность и адекватность терминологии, применяемой в этнических и языковых категориях. Далее анализируется более широкий социолингвистический контекст, в частности проблема исчезновения языков на северо-востоке России. Наконец, проводится анализ отдельных данных переписи по десяти языкам коренных народов: алеутскому, алюторскому, чукотскому, долганскому, эвенскому, эвенкийскому, эскимосскому, ительменскому, корякскому и юкагирскому. Анализ выявляет несоответствия в результатах переписи, включая неожиданные увеличения и сокращения численности носителей ряда языков. Эти колебания не всегда согласуются с установленными тенденциями жизнеспособности или угасания языков, что ставит под сомнение надежность данных переписи. Полученные результаты показывают, что ответы респондентов в большей степени отражают языковые установки, идентичность и самоощущение, чем реальное использование языка или уровень владения им. Таким образом, несмотря на ценность переписи для изучения социокультурной идентификации, она менее эффективна как точный инструмент измерения жизнеспособности языков, что подчеркивает необходимость использования дополнительных методологических подходов при изучении миноритарных языков.
Ключевые слова: *Всероссийская перепись населения 2020/21 года, языки коренных народов, Республика Якутия (Саха), язык как маркер идентичности*

Для цитирования:
Gabdrakhmanova G.F., Vakhtin N.B. Language ecology of minority languages of Sakha (Yakutia) in the mirror of the All-Russian Census 2020-21. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 352–374. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47384 EDN: CKPXVR

1. Introduction

In the mid-nineteenth century, many countries around the world began conducting population censuses in ways that closely resemble modern practices. It was during this period that censuses were first defined as large-scale state

registration exercises covering all citizens of a country or its individual territories. In Russia, the first steps towards conducting censuses in this modern form were taken in the 1860s. At that time, one-day censuses were carried out in major cities such as St Petersburg, Moscow, and Kharkov. On 28 January 1897, the first scientifically organised population census was conducted across the Russian Empire (with the exception of Finland). For the first time, the population of the entire country was counted on a universal basis. However, the census questionnaire did not include a question on ethnic (then referred to as "tribal") affiliation (Neudachin 1905: x). Such information could only be inferred from responses to questions on native language and religion, and no guidance was provided on how the term "native language" should be interpreted.

The inclusion of the question "your native language" in the questionnaire was an innovation for characterizing the country's citizens. The question about the native language in one form or another was required to be asked by census takers in all subsequent (Soviet) censuses, beginning in 1926; in the instructions for the 1926 census, the definition was as follows: "The native language is recognized as the one that the respondent has the best command of or usually speaks" (Vsesoyuznaya... 1928: 5). Beginning with the 1926 census,[1] census takers were also required to ask questions about ethnicity (*национальность*)[2] while post-Soviet censuses, due to the abolition of recording ethnicity in passports, became the only all-Russian statistical source of information about the ethnic and linguistic affiliation of citizens. Therefore, the census data was important for government agencies responsible for planning and implementing ethnic and language policy at the national and regional levels as well as for researchers — ethnographers, sociologists and (socio)linguists (Sotsial'noe i natsional'noe 1972, Etnografiia perepisi-2002, Sotsial'noe neravenstvo 2002) and many others.

The scientific study of censuses has been approached from a variety of perspectives: examining their instrumental function and their role in nation-building (Anderson 2001: chapter 10); considering them as a form of power capital (Tishkov 2003: 11); and analysing them as a means of constructing social groups (Krasnopolskaya & Solodova 2016: 69) or shaping ethnic identities through census procedures (Varshaver 2022: 201, Tishkov 2023). Attention has also been given to the subjective influences on census data, including the role of census takers (Farakhutdinov & Khairullina 2022) and respondents' own understandings of ethnicity (Filippova & Guerin-Paz 2015).

[1] It was preceded by two less successful and far from complete attempts: the 1920 census, which yielded few practical results due to wartime, territorial instability and population mobility, and the 1923 urban census, the main goal of which was to determine the social, rather than national or linguistic, composition of the country's population (see about them, as well as about the first Russian census of 1897, Vorobyov 1957: 3–16; for a comparison of language data from Russian censuses, see: Vakhtin 2001: 43–87).

[2] There is always confusion about translation of the Russian word *национальность* because its meaning is not the same as that of the English *nationality*; here we translate it as *ethnicity*.

In world practice, censuses have long been considered the most reliable source of information on the composition, distribution and occupation of the population. This was explained by the comprehensiveness of the survey, standard methods and tools (Kitchin 2017: 113). However, in the modern world, the attitude towards the quality of census data is ambiguous (see on possible approaches to ensuring the quality of censuses (Gabdrakhmanova & Alos-i-Font 2024)[3]. The quality of census data is influenced by such factors as the number of people who did not answer a particular question, the validity of the answers, data bias by region, urban-rural area, age of respondents, similarity in the distribution of answers obtained by different methods (Myagkov & Zhuravleva 2011: 33–34). The quality of data on the issue of language and ethnicity is also influenced by such objective factors as the state of these languages and the stability of ethnic self-determination.

The aim of this study is to assess the quality of the results of the Russian Population Census 2020–2021 (hereinafter RPC-2020). The focus is less on the accuracy of the statistics themselves and more on the extent to which they reflect linguistic and ethnic characteristics, both across the Russian Federation as a whole and, in particular, with regard to the languages of the indigenous peoples of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

Accurate information about the linguistic situation is particularly important for minority languages with decreasing number of speakers. This applies to almost all the languages of the indigenous minorities of Northern Siberia and the Far East, and especially to those of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). Most of these languages are characterised by what is commonly termed "language shift" (Vakhtin 2001, Spolsky 2004, 2009, Grenoble 2021), particularly among urban youth (Ignatyeva 2022: 178). Language shift is a situation in when speakers gradually switch to another language, often losing proficiency in their original one. Without reliable data on the state of these languages — above all, accurate figures for the number of active and passive speakers — no language policy aimed at their preservation can be effective. In such circumstances, efforts to slow down, halt, or reverse the process of language shift are unlikely to succeed.

As one of the many authors assessing the prospects of the 2020 census prior to its implementation observed, "Population censuses are the only source that allows us to reliably estimate the range and number of peoples of the Russian Federation, determine the number of speakers of various languages, and clarify the educational, social, and demographic characteristics of ethnic groups" (Vorontsov 2020: 94). In this paper, we argue that this claim is, at best, questionable.

Our analysis follows the approach of "ecology of language" proposed by Einar Haugen (Haugen 1971, 1972: 356–339). There are several approaches to how "ecology of language" can be understood (e.g. Troshina 2020: 9–10, Kravchenko 2025); in this paper we understand "ecology of language" as a relationship between languages and their environments: how languages interact with each other, how

[3] Some scholars even claim that the days of the population census as we know it are numbered (Thorvaldsen 2017).

they are used by all types of speakers, and how their well-being is affected by social and political factors. We limited our analysis to the languages of the northeast — the languages of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and adjacent regions, namely: Aleut, Alyutor, Dolgan, Itelmen, Kerek, Koryak, Chukchi, Evenki, Even, Yupik (Eskimo) and Yukaghir. One can expect that the situation with other languages of the indigenous peoples of the North will be similar.

In the first part of the article, the results of the RPC-2020 are assessed against several of the criteria outlined above, drawing primarily on responses to the questions "What is your ethnicity (*национальность*)?", "What is your native language?", "Do you speak Russian?", "What other languages do you speak?", and "Which languages do you use in everyday life?" (for details, see Gabdrakhmanova & Alos-i-Font 2024). The second part provides an overview of the current sociolinguistic situation of the languages of the indigenous peoples of north-east Asia, while the third part analyses the RPC-2020 results in relation to these languages.

2. Analysis of the 2020 Russian Population Census data quality indicators

2.1. Population coverage by the Census

According to surveys conducted prior to the RPC-2020, 85% of respondents stated that they intended to take part in it, while 8% of Russian citizens reported that they did not plan to participate [4]. The actual participation rate was estimated at 57%, falling to 48% among those aged 18–24 (Farakhutdinov & Khairullina 2022: 69). The number of individuals who did not provide information about themselves is unusually high. This can be attributed primarily to the absence of visits from census enumerators, poor organisation of the census takers' work, and the recruitment of students with little experience of engaging with diverse groups. Additional factors include public indifference towards the census, driven by declining trust in the authorities and inadequate information provision, as well as the broader epidemiological situation associated with COVID-19 (ibid: 72–73).

Experts also link the low participation rate in RPC-2020 to the fact that, under the Federal Law *"On the Russian Population Census"* (25 January 2002, No. 8-FZ), the census is defined as a voluntary exercise. As a result, there is no legal liability for non-participation. Twenty years ago, residual expectations from the Soviet period — when participation in censuses was effectively mandatory — helped to ensure 93% population coverage in the 2002 census (Polyan 2004). This effect has since dissipated. Amendments to the 2010 Census Law [5] allowed population data to be supplemented with administrative records, a move criticised

[4] Russian Population Census 2021. VTsIOM. URL: https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/vserossiiskaja-perepis-naselenija-2021 (accessed: 23.06.2025).

[5] Federal Law of November 28, 2009 No. 293-FZ "On Amendments to the Federal Law "On the Russian Population Census"; Federal Law of July 27, 2010 No. 204-FZ "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation".

by experts due to the difficulty of verifying data completeness (Zakharov & Vishnevsky 2010: 14). In cases where individuals were absent or refused to respond, it became sufficient to record basic information such as age and sex from registration databases. This increased the risk of both double counting and the imputation of missing data by enumerators (Andreev 2012).

The 2020 RPC was also the first census in Russia to introduce a fundamentally new method of data collection, allowing citizens to complete census forms online via the Unified Portal of State Services (Gosuslugi.ru). Although 41% of respondents indicated prior to the census that they intended to use this option[6], only 29% of actual participants ultimately did so.

With regard to ethnicity and native language, there is considerable regional variation in population coverage in RPC-2020. This is partly explained by the proportion of individuals not residing at their registered address and by non-response to questions on ethnicity[7] (for example, ethnicity is not recorded in three million electronic entries where language information is present)[8].

2.2. Overall response rate and non-response

Table 1 presents the dynamics of missing responses to questions on ethnicity and language across the last three Russian censuses. With the exception of the ethnicity question, the number of non-respondents is not explicitly reported in published census data. Instead, negative responses are combined with non-response, as no data are available to distinguish between these categories. This issue is particularly evident in responses to the question on proficiency in Russian. According to the 2002 census, 97.6% of the population spoke Russian; in 2010, the figure was 96.2%, while in RPC-2020 it fell to 91.3%. Taken at face value, this would imply that the number of people who do not speak Russian increased by 2.4 times compared with 2010. However, this figure is clearly unreliable, as the proportion of non-respondents significantly exceeds the proportion of citizens who genuinely lack proficiency in Russian (Gabdrakhmanova & Alos-i-Font 2024: 33).

In 2002, individuals “undecided about their ethnicity” were concentrated mainly in Moscow, St Petersburg, and the Moscow region (1 million out of 1.5 million). By 2010, similar patterns had emerged in additional ten regions (each with over 100,000 such cases) (Bogoyavlensky 2012: 5), and by 2020 this extended to 16 constituent entities of the Russian Federation[9]. Experts suggest that

[6] Russian Population Census-2021. VTsIOM. URL: https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/vserossiiskaja-perepis-naselenija-2021 (accessed: 06/23/2025).
[7] Population Census 2020 // Demoscope Weekly. November 30 — December 14, 2021. No. 923-924. URL: http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2021/0923/perep01.php#2 (accessed: 06/23/2025).
[8] Kazakova D. When we saw the loss of 600 thousand Tatars, we were also surprised: Rosstat suggests looking for them in “non-answers”. Business online. URL: https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/584255 (accessed: 23.06.2025).
[9] In Russian, this is “subjects of the federation”; the term refers to constituent entities of the Russian federation, the highest level of political division.

this increase reflects a growing reluctance among citizens to self-identify in terms of ethnicity or language, as these are increasingly viewed as private matters (ibid.: 5).

Demographers and statisticians have long recognised that certain questions are inherently sensitive and unlikely to elicit candid responses. In the Soviet census of 1937, for example, questions on religion and social status were considered problematic. As Elena Semenova notes, "The inclusion of questions on religion and social group membership in the 1937 census contradicted classical statistical principles, since such questions, affecting personal interests, often produced unreliable answers" (Semenova 1994: 16). Today, questions on ethnicity and native language appear to have acquired a similar sensitivity.

More broadly, "the accuracy of enumeration is unattainable where public trust is lacking. Given widespread scepticism towards the census, even the threat of criminal penalties for non-participation cannot ensure reliable results. Many individuals will simply avoid enumerators. […] Leading statisticians as early as the 1920s advocated excluding sensitive questions from census forms, particularly those affecting respondents' personal interests" (Zhiromskaya & Kornilov 2020: 36).

As Table 1 shows, the share of missing information was growing between the 2002, the 2020, and the 2020 censuses.

Table 1. **The share of missing information on national and language issues in the Russian Population Census of 2002, 2010 and 2020, people, %[10]**

	2002		2010		2021	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
The entire population	145 166 731	100	142 856 536	100	147 182 123	100
Those who did not specify…						
ethnicity	1 460 751	1	5 629 429	3.9	16 594 759	11.3
proficiency in Russian	2 593 399	1.8	5 361 643	3.8	12 905 881	8.8
knowledge of languages other than Russian	1 420 544	1	4 544 001	3.2	12 056 452	8.2
native language	—[11]		4 544 578	3.2	16 638 532	11.3

The results of the RPC-2020 appear to be much less reliable than in previous censuses, and are difficult to compare with them due to insufficient consideration of various types of "non-responses". Their share was 16.5% (answers: "no ethnicity", "ethnicity not specified", "refusal") and is comparable to the share

[10] Russian Population Census 2002. Volume 4. Ethnic Composition and Language Proficiency, Citizenship. Rosstat. Available at: http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=17 (accessed: 23.06.2025). Russian Population Census 2010. Volume 4. Ethnic Composition and Language Proficiency, Citizenship. Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm (accessed: 23.06.2025). Results of the 2020 Russian Population Census. Volume 5. Ethnic Composition and Language Proficiency. Rosstat. Available at: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020/Volume5_National_composition_and_ownership_of_languages (accessed: 23.06.2025).

[11] The question was not asked.

of non-responses to questions about knowledge of languages (Gabdrakhmanova & Alos-i-Font 2024: 33).

2.3. Data shift by region and by urban-rural parameter

Let us consider this issue using the census statistics by Republic (constituent entities of the Russian Federation) (Table 2).

Table 2. **The share of missing information on ethnic and language issues of the 2020 RPC for the Republics of the Russian Federation, %[12]**

	Not specified…					
	ethnicity		native language		language proficiency	
	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
For the Russian Federation as a whole	14.0	3.3	14.2	2.8	10.3	1.8
Kabardino-Balkarian Republic	3.6	1.4	6.1	0.7	0.8	1.1
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	2.1	0.9	3.5	0.8	1.4	0.9
Republic of Adygea	14.8	5.6	14.8	3.8	12.4	3.0
Altai Republic	11.3	3.9	11.5	3.8	10.5	3.1
Republic of Bashkortostan	2.0	0.9	2.9	0.6	0.8	0.5
Republic of Buryatia	10.6	1.9	10.5	1.8	8.8	1.3
Republic of Dagestan	2.0	1.1	15.1	1.3	7.7	3.1
Republic of Ingushetia	4.6	2.4	5.8	3.1	6.4	6.2
Republic of Kalmykia	8.3	1.5	9.8	1.3	7.4	1.3
Republic of Karelia	13.9	2.2	13.2	1.9	12.0	0.5
Komi Republic	**28.2**	**2.9**	**27.4**	**2.4**	**25.6**	**1.6**
Republic of Crimea	11.8	4.4	10.9	3.7	7.0	2.2
Republic of Mari El	12.3	2.5	13.1	3.1	10.0	1.5
Republic of Mordovia	5.5	2.0	6.0	1.1	3.3	0.4
Republic of Tatarstan	3.1	0.8	3.6	0.6	2.5	0.6
Republic of Tuva	10.1	1.6	9.7	0.8	9.8	1.6
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	21.8	0.7	22.6	0.8	20.4	2.3
Republic of North Ossetia-Alania	9.2	0.5	11.6	0.8	8.2	0.8
Republic of Khakassia	26.1	3.2	25.9	3.1	24.0	1.5
Udmurt Republic	20.8	2.2	20.4	1.9	19.3	1.1
Chechen Republic	0	0	1.7	0.9	1.4	1.5
Chuvash Republic	13.6	2.0	13.6	2.1	9.9	1.3

The most striking are figures from Komi Republic where the share of people with missing information on their ethnicity was 22.5%. In five republics it exceeded 10%, in seven — from 6.2 to 9.5%, in 15 — less than 4.6%. On average, the share of people who did not indicate their ethnicity in the census forms was twice as low in Komi (5,7%) as in the country as a whole. The share of "non-responses" for native language was 6.6% (in the Russian Federation — 11.3%), proficiency in languages other than Russian — 5.2% (8.2%). For comparison: in the Ulyanovsk

[12] Results of the 2020 VPN. Volume 5. National composition and language proficiency. Rosstat. URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020/Volume5_Nacionalnyj_sostav_i_vladenie_yazykami (date accessed: 23.06.2025).

region, 15.9% of the population do not have data on their ethnicity, 15.5% on their native language, 12% on their language proficiency; in Moscow, the corresponding figures are 22.7, 23.8, 15.3%. The statistics on ethnicity and language among city dwellers is thus less reliable than among rural dwellers. The distribution of "non-responses" on language proficiency by age gives a different picture for the four age groups (Gabdrakhmanova & Alos-i-Font 2024: 33). For the age groups 10–19 years and over 60 years, the share of non-responders is lower than the national average (6.9% in both cohorts versus 8.2% on average for the population). On the contrary, for the age cohort 20-39 years, the situation is the opposite (9.5% of non-responders). The general trend is common for all regions, but there are also some differences: for example, in Moscow, where the share of non-responders is significantly higher than the national average, the differences by age group are not so manifest[13].

2.4. Validity of answers

The increase in the number of "non-responses" and their uneven distribution do not explain all the differences in the results of the RPC-2020 compared to the 2010 RPC. In 2010, 15.6% of the population in Moscow who indicated language proficiency claimed to know English (Borisovich 2017: 32). In 2020, this figure was 5.8%, although the number of people who indicated language proficiency in the two censuses remained virtually unchanged (around 11 million). Has the population begun to understand differently what proficiency in English means? Is the population less willing to admit knowledge of English? Or were different criteria used during the 2020 census to determine the number of "those who indicated language proficiency"? The lack of answers to these questions makes it impossible to compare the dynamics of multilingualism between the two most recent censuses. In addition, in 2010 respondents in Moscow who answered questions about knowledge of languages claimed to know an average of 1.23 languages per person; in 2020, this figure was 1.1. It seems highly unlikely that Muscovites have become less knowledgeable of languages, especially English, over the past 11 years (Gabdrakhmanova & Alos-i-Font 2024: 35).

2.5. Question-answer uncertainty

In Russian censuses, ethnicity and native language are recorded based on the respondent's answers. Ambiguity in the meaning of the terms may have resulted in uncertainty when providing the answers. Some of the RPC-2020 participants perceived the question about ethnicity as a question about their identification with an ethnic group, while others perceived it in the national sense (206,081 people

[13] Results of the 2020 VPN. Volume 5. Table 12. Language proficiency by population of different age groups. Rosstat. URL: https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Frosstat.gov.ru%2Fstorage%2Fmediabank%2FTom5_tab12_VPN-2020.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK (accessed: 23.06.2025).

claimed their ethnicity was "Russian citizens", another 652,387 people indicated it as "RF"). Some experts explain the emergence of supra-ethnic self-identification through the decreasing significance of ethnic identity[14], while others emphasize that national identity must be included as an option into the census form due to its growing significance in contemporary Russia (Tishkov 2023: 202).

It appears that the question about the native language was not clear enough for some of the RPC-2020 respondents. The existing ambivalence of this term in public perception is shown by the results of a sociological survey in 2019 by the N.N. Miklouho-Maclay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, conducted in different regions of the country. According to the survey, a fifth of the respondents found it difficult to explain the meaning of the term "native language", while the opinions of the rest were distributed between "language of constant use", "language of childhood, family, relatives", "ethnic language" (Stepanov 2019: 143). At first glance, this problem can be solved by census questions on proficiency in Russian and other languages of the peoples of Russia and foreign languages. However, when answering these questions, the respondents are free to decide what level of knowledge is necessary for proficiency in the language. The question on the use of languages introduced in the RPC-2020 is of the same nature. Is passive use of language sufficient? Or is it necessary to speak it on a daily basis? Is a school teacher of a foreign language considered a daily user of a language if he or she uses it exclusively in the teaching process? The lack of clarification of the census question makes it difficult to interpret the answers (see below for more details).

2.6. Data processing

The RPC-2020 recorded 1,658 names of nationalities in Russia. The column "other nationalities" included the answers of 109,891 respondents. Among the ethnonyms, there are responses of children from mixed families (Russian-Greeks, Sakhalyars[15]), "new" ethnic communities (Rusich, Soviet, Old Believer, Orlovtsy, Zemlyanin[16]), different names of one ethnic community (Bashkirts — Bashkirs — Bashkort — Bashkurt), obsolete self-names of ethnic and tribal communities (Yuits). The information background created by lobby groups before and during the RPC-2020 prompted people, under pressure, to revise their self-identification or

[14] Kolebakina-Usmanova E. "Identified themselves as Russians": Rosstat explained the "loss" of 590 thousand Tatars // Business online. URL: https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/583782 (accessed: 23.06.2025).

[15] *Sakhaliar* (Rus. *сахаляр*) — colloquial name widely used in the Sakha Republic for children of mixed descent (mixed marriages: Yakut / Russian, other non-Yakut ethnicities / Yakut, etc).

[16] *Rusich* (*русич*) is a mythical name of a Slavic tribe used by some right-wing groups as an alleged ethnonym for the ancestors of today's Russians. *Orlovtsy* are those who live in the *Orlov Region* (*Orlovskaya Oblast'*). *Zemlyanin* means Earthling.

switch to a more neutral status[17]: this is what happened, for example, in the Astrakhan region where some Tatars were "counted" as Nogais[18].

The analysis of the data is complicated by the option of indicating a second ethnicity, while only the first answer is taken into account in the published results. The exception was the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation, for whom "one should take into account all persons who indicated the corresponding ethnicity as any (first or subsequent) answer to the question on ethnicity".[19] The desire of some experts to identify multiple ethnic and linguistic identities of Russians, which was embedded already in the 2002 Russian Population Census and fully used in the RPC-2020 (Etnografiya… 2003, Stepanov 2001), is assessed by some researchers as an unsuccessful attempt to use an expensive census for scientific experimentation (Polyan 2004). At the same time, according to some estimates, the number of those in Russia who can indicate dual ethnicity and two or more native languages during the census ranges from 7 to 20 million people (Stepanov 2019: 153).

The list of nationalities of Russia used in processing the RPC-2020 includes 194 items and practically repeats the tools of the 2002 and 2010 censuses. In the list of ethnicities used in the 2002 Russian Population Census, independent subgroups were identified in some ethnic groups, but this principle was not used consistently (Iskhakov 2002); this selective approach was retained in the RPC-2020 which recorded 372 languages, including 155 languages of the peoples of Russia. This list also includes non-existent languages: European, Asian, Central Asian, that of the CIS, Northern, Finno-Ugric, Canadian, Swiss, Monegasque, Senegalese, Cameroonian, Polynesian, etc. A programming language was recorded, the speakers of which believe that they can speak it (apparently due to the peculiarities of the census instructions[20]). The number of "new" languages increased from 10 in 2010 to 45 in 2020. The largest new "Dagestani" language (19 thousand responses) is a mystery for specialists[21]. Some languages are combined into one: Catalan and Spanish, Languedoc and French, Gascony and Basque. RPC-2020 recorded people who can speak (not just read!) Latin, Ancient Greek, Ancient Egyptian, Avestan, Polovtsian, Old Church Slavonic, and the Etruscan language that still remains undeciphered. Such absurdities are less common in data on native languages, although Gabonese, Latin, and Old Church Slavonic are also recorded there.

[17] Kolebakina-Usmanova E. "Identified themselves as Russians": Rosstat explained the "loss" of 590 thousand Tatars. Business online. URL: https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/583782 (accessed: 23.06.2025).

[18] "The enemy was the COVID pandemic": how VKT explained the "loss" of 600 thousand Tatars. Business online. URL: https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/579311 (accessed: 23.06.2025).

[19] Russian Population Census 2020. Methodological notes. Rosstat. URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom5_Metodolog_VPN-2020.docx (accessed: 23.06.2025).

[20] Russian Population Census 2020. Methodological notes. Rosstat. URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Tom5_Metodolog_VPN-2020.docx (accessed: 23.06.2025).

[21] Kazakova D. When we saw the loss of 600 thousand Tatars, we were also surprised: Rosstat suggests looking for them in "non-answers". Business online. URL: https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/584255 (accessed: 23.06.2025).

To conclude this section, a number of inaccuracies and contradictions are found in the resulting statistics of the RPC-2020 regarding the national and linguistic composition of the population of the country. The census turned out to be significantly less reliable than previous Russian censuses, and therefore its results must be handled with caution in scientific and analytical work, as well as for implementation of state ethnic and language policy.

3. "Minority languages" and language shift

For the languages of the indigenous peoples of the North of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as the Languages of the Peoples of the North, LPN), the problem of "language shift" is extremely acute: the transition from one language to another is common not at the level of individual speakers, but at the level of the entire language community, which, as is known, inevitably leads to the complete loss of language, or "language death" (Grenoble 2021). The speed of the process is very fast: if at the end of the 20th century most of the LPN languages still had a chance to survive (see Vakhtin 2001 for details), today the situation is completely different: for all LPN languages, intergenerational transmission has been interrupted, the language is actively used by the oldest generation at best, but even if they use it, it is in a simplified language with strong Russian interference.

The authors of the project "Languages of Russia"[22] distinguish ten levels of language preservation ("vitality statuses", in their terminology): from "extinct" (1A) to "prosperous" (4B). Of this set, only the first five levels are relevant for LPN, see Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. **Vitality statuses (reference)**

Label	Status name	Description
1A	disappeared	The last active speakers died in the 20th century.
1B	asleep	The last active speakers died in the 21st century
1C	falling asleep	Regular communication does not occur
2A	interrupted	Intergenerational transmission has been interrupted throughout the entire territory
2B	intermittent	Intergenerational transmission is maintained within a small area, which is an insignificant part of the entire community range.
3A	localized	Persisting in a limited range; intergenerational transmission persists
. . .		
4B	prosperous	A majority language with stable intergenerational transmission and provided with a developed language infrastructure
(R)	*index*	*Only data on the language within Russia are taken into account*
-	*index*	*Possibly should be classified into the previous group*
+	*index*	*There are actions in relation to language that allow it to be classified into the following group*

[22] This project supported by Russian Science Foundation and led by Yu. Koryakov aims at compiling a complete list of the languages of the Russian Federation; see: https://jazykirf.iling-ran.ru/

Table 4. **Indigenous languages in Yakutia by degree of vitality**

Language	Status	Comment
Yakut	3B	Given for comparison
Minor languages of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and Adjacent Territories		
Dolgan	2B	
Chukchi	2B-	
Koryak	2A	
Northern Yukaghir	2A	
Alutor	2A-	
Naukan Eskimo	2A-	
Chaplino Eskimo	2A(R)-	
Itelmen	1B	
Southern Yukaghir	1B+	
Aleut	1B(R)	The last speaker died in 2021
Kerek	1B	By 2005, there were no speakers left

Formally, the languages of the indigenous minorities of the North are taught in schools in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). However, pupils often lack motivation to study these languages, most teachers do not speak them fluently, and lessons frequently amount to little more than the rote memorisation of vocabulary (see Table 5). In this situation, the functions of the disappearing languages change radically. As sociological surveys show, for a considerable number of the Russian population, the term "native language" has acquired the meaning of the language of ethnicity, and not the language they spoke in childhood (Drobizheva & Ryzhova 2015: 17).

There is a notable relationship between processes of ethnic revival and language shift, which renders the concept of "language proficiency" particularly ambiguous (Vakhtin 2010: 415). A paradox emerges: on the one hand, the community requires its language as a key marker of ethnic identity; on the other, only a small proportion of its members are actually able to speak it. In such circumstances, communities adopt a compensatory strategy: individuals claim to have a good command of the language, even though they do not use it in everyday communication. As a result, "language proficiency" proves not merely to be a matter of degree (i.e. speaking better or worse), but also one in which assertions that individuals or their fellow villagers "know their native language" may in fact signify the opposite — that they do not speak it at all. In this way, the language loses its communicative function and comes to be used primarily as a marker of ethnic identity.

One of the authors of the present article once called this extreme state of language "a demo version": members of the community demonstrate to the researcher their alleged ability to speak the language, while in reality the language is no longer used for communication and exists only in its symbolic function. This is, of course, an extreme case, but to some extent it is present everywhere where a language is classified as endangered, that is, where a situation of language shift can be identified (Vakhtin 2006). These processes are also recorded by other researchers; cf. the description of the situation with the Yupik (Eskimo) language

of the village of Novoye Chaplino (south-eastern Chukotka), where there are practically no fluent native speakers of the language left, but the residents nevertheless constantly insert individual Eskimo words and common phrases into their Russian speech, thereby demonstrating their commitment to the language. "Bringing Yupik words… into a conversation allows local people not only to express their attachments but, more importantly, to feel connected, both with each other and with past experiences, to feel that they "belong" (Mourgunova-Schwalbe 2022: 195).

Table 5. **Number of schools and schoolchildren where LPNs were taught in 2024 in Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)[23]**

	Number of schools		Number of schoolchildren	Of these, type of education programme			Comments
				primary	general	secondary	
	2023	2024					
Dolgan	1	0	6	0	4	2	for 2023 only
Chukchi	4	3	41	14	25	2	
Even	7	21	530	206	263	58	
Evenki	9	25	358	120	226	12	
Yukaghir	3	2	52	18	26	8	

It is obvious that in a situation of language shift the concept of "language proficiency" is blurred; the last section of this article is devoted to describing the consequences of this for the adequacy of census results.

4. Russian Population Census 2020 and minor languages of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

The documentation of languages is at the heart of the modern approach to linguistic diversity. "Only a thorough situational analysis of languages and specific linguistic ecosystems can guarantee the development of policies that can successfully protect linguistic diversity".[24] In this regard, the question of the source of accurate and reliable data on languages and language situations becomes important. Are the data we have on the languages of the Russian Federation in general and on the languages of the indigenous peoples of northeast Asia in particular reliable enough? And if not, from what sources can reliable data be obtained?

In the 2020 Census data release,[25] all information on the minority languages of the North-East is concentrated in Volume 5 "National Composition and Language

[23] Portal of the indigenous peoples of the North "Ilken": https://ilken.ru/2023/11/28/sostoyanie-obrazovaniya-kmns-v-yakutii/ (accessed: 06/23/2025).
[24] See: World Atlas of Languages — https://en.wal.unesco.org/world-atlas-languages (accessed: 23.06.2025).
[25] See: https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/56580 (accessed: 23.06.2025)

Proficiency", in four tables[26]. Table 6 summarizes the data from these four tables for the languages listed above.

Table 6. **Summary data for the four tables of the RPC-2020**

Census 2020/2021	Population of the Russian Federation by native language[27]	Indigenous peoples of the North by native language[28]	Indigenous peoples of the North by use[29]	Indigenous peoples of the North by language command[30]
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Aleut	136	135	91	109
Alutor	168	182	164	174
Dolgan[31]	-	298	74	404
Itelmen	808	783	356	489
Koryak	4164	4123	2024	2549
Chukchi	8526	8619	1615	2485
Even	7208	6956	3724	4954
Evenki	8724	8559	3311	5488
Eskimo	816[32]	810	90	168
Yukaghir	516	512	235	330

The discrepancies between the data obtained in response to different questions for the same language are striking. Of course, some discrepancies, like those between columns 1 and 2 (the population of the Russian Federation by native language and indigenous peoples by native language) may be regarded as insignificant (for Aleut 136 and 135, i.e. less than 1%, for Koryak 4164 and 4123, i.e. exactly 1%, etc.); these discrepancies can be explained by recording, calculation and other types of errors.

The situation is different with other columns of the table where the discrepancies are systematic. In all cases, the number of those who named a language as their native language (*column 3*) is significantly, sometimes several times, greater than the number of those who "use" this language (*column 4*) — from

[26] *Table 6*: Population by Native Language; *Table 18*: Proficiency in Languages of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation; *Table 19*: Use of Languages by Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation; and *Table 20*: Population of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation by Native Language. Information on language proficiency and use in everyday life was obtained from the answers to the questions "What other languages (besides Russian) do you speak?" and "Which of them do you use in everyday life?" Information on native language was obtained from the answers to the question "Your native language".

[27] VPN-2020, Volume 5, table. 6: Population by native language.

[28] VPN-2020, Volume 5, Table 20. Population of indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation by native language. See below for details

[29] In Russian, *ispolzovanie*, "using"; VPN-2020, Volume 5, Table 19. Use of languages by indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation

[30] In Russian, *vladenie* can mean "possession" or "command"; VPN-2020, Volume 5, Table 18: Proficiency in languages of the indigenous minorities of the North.

[31] Only Dolgans of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) are shown.

[32] Plus one person indicated Yuitsky, another name for the Eskimo language.

33% Aleut to 90% Eskimo. The number of those who "command" the language (*column 5*) is always somewhat higher than the number of those who "use" it (from 87% Eskimo to 6% Alutor).

How can such a discrepancy be explained? Why is the number of respondents who "command" the language is significantly higher than that of who "use" it, and at the same time both figures are significantly lower than the number of those who call this language their native language? Who are these approximately 300 Itelmens who called Itelmen their native language, despite the fact that they do not "command" it or "use" it? The answer to this question is more or less clear: for respondents, the phrase "our native language" does not mean the language they have known since childhood (that is, this is not their "mother tongue"): this is their "language of ethnic self-identification", or the titular language, that is, the language whose name matches the name of the ethnicity (for more details, see: Belikov 1997, 1999, Belikov & Krysin 2002).

It is harder to understand the discrepancies between columns 4 and 5. Who are these approximately 500 Koryaks and approximately 750 Chukchi who have "command" of their titular languages but do not "use" them? Do these figures conceal a situation in which people know their titular language and could speak it, but have no one to do so with? Or does "command" here again mean the feeling that the titular language belongs to a person regardless of whether they actually speak it or not? These and other questions cannot be clarified without special research.

It is interesting to compare the data on the languages of the indigenous minorities of the North in the 2020 census with the data of the two previous censuses — 2002 and 2010 (Table 7). If a comparison of the 2002–2010 data shows a steady *decrease* in the number of people who called a specific LPN their native language, the 2020 census demonstrates a paradoxical *increase* in the number of those who called these languages their native language. This, of course, does not mean that the language shift has stopped and the number of speakers of indigenous languages is growing rapidly. The increase in the number of those who called a language their native language indicates a change in the meaning of the phrase "native language".

It should be noted, finally, that the 2020 census materials contain interesting data on the relationship between language and ethnic identity. Tables 8 and 9 provide data on the ethnicity of people who speak a particular LPN [33]: the second column shows numbers of those whose ethnic identity matches the name of the language, the third column shows the numbers of all the others who indicated proficiency in this language.

The lists of respondents of different ethnicities shown in the third column who reported their knowledge of the LPNs that are not their title languages require a comment. Among them, there are obvious errors, random or frivolous answers (three people of Vod (northwest European part of the Russian Federation) ethnicity

[33] VPN-2020, Volume 5, tables 18 and 19.

who speak the Aleut language; one Nenets, who speaks several languages of the indigenous peoples of the North; etc.). There are isolated proficiencies (one Koryak who speaks Aleut, one Chukchi who speaks Itelmen). Finally, there are different names of ethnicity (some call themselves Alyutors, some — Koryaks, the same is true for the pairs Itelmen-Kamchadals, Evens-Orochi-Uilta). If we exclude these cases, one sees that the languages fall into two groups (Table 9).

Table 7. **Comparison of data on the indigenous peoples of the North by native language in three censuses**

	Census of the Russian Federation 2002: Indigenous minorities by native language[34]	**Census of the Russian Federation 2010: Indigenous minorities by native language[35]**	**Census of the Russian Federation 2021/22: Indigenous minorities by native language[36]**
Aleut	175	45	135
Alutor	40	25	182
Itelmen	385	82	783
Dolgan (RF)	4865	1054	5346
Koryak	3019	1665	4123
Chukchi	7742	5095	8619
Even	7168	5656	6956
Evenki	7584	4802	8559
Eskimo	410	508[37]	810
Yukaghir	604	370	512

Table 8. **Proficiency in the languages of the indigenous minorities of the North**

Language	**Number of "title" speakers**	**Speakers of the language of other ethnicities**
Aleut	105 Aleuts	3 Vod, 1 Koryak
Alutor	11 Alutorians	163 Koryaks
Itelmen	455 Itelmens	25 Kamchadals, 8 Koryaks, 1 Chukchi
Kerek	1 Kerek	
Koryak	2205 Koryaks	202 Chukchi, 59 Evens, 39 Itelmens, 22 Kamchadals, 17 Alyutors, 4 Evenks, 1 Nenets
Chukchi	2308 Chukchi	71 Evens, 39 Yukaghirs, 20 Eskimos, 19 Koryaks, 15 Chuvans, 5 Nanais, 4 Alutors, 1 Nenets, 1 Ulchi, 1 Evenki
Evenki	5394 Evenks	74 Evens, 6 Kets, 3 Dolgans, 3 Selkups, 1 Nanai, 2 Nenets, 2 Negidals, 1 Udege, 1 Chukchi, 1 Enets
Even	4645 Evens	118 Evenkis, 72 Yukagirs, 63 Chukchi, 35 Koryaks, 7 Kamchadals, 3 Orochis, 3 Nanais, 2 Nenets, 2 Itelmens, 1 Vepsian, 1 Dolgan, 1 Selkup, 1 Uilta
Eskimo	160 Eskimos	7 Chukchi, 1 Even
Yukaghir	300 Yukaghirs	24 Evens, 5 Chukchis, 1 Nenets

[34] https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Russia_in_order_of_the_number_of_speakers.
[35] Ibid.
[36] VPN-2020, Volume 5, Table 20. Population of indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation by native language.
[37] Another 4 people indicated *the Yuit* language, and another 5 indicated *the Sireniki language*.

Table 9. **Proficiency in the languages of indigenous minorities of the North by representatives of "their own" and "foreign" ethnicities**

The language is spoken mainly by "our own people"		
Aleut	105 Aleuts	
Itelmen	455 Itelmens + 25 Kamchadals	8 Koryaks
Eskimo	160 Eskimos	7 Chukchi
Yukaghir	300 Yukaghirs	24 Evens, 5 Chukchi
The language is spoken by representatives of several ethnicities		
Dolgan	4701 Dolgans	20 Nganasans, 13 Nenets, 25 Evenkis, 2 Evens
Koryak	2368 Koryaks + 28 Alutors	202 Chukchi, 59 Evens, 39 Itelmens, 22 Kamchadals, 4 Evenkis
Chukchi	2308 Chukchi + 15 Chuvans	71 Evens, 39 Yukaghirs, 20 Eskimos, 19 Koryaks, 5 Nanais, 4 Alutors
Evenki	5394 Eveniks	74 Evens, 6 Kets, 3 Dolgans, 3 Selkups
Even	4645 Evens + 3 Orcs	118 Evenkis, 72 Yukaghirs, 63 Chukchi, 35 Koryaks, 7 Kamchadals, 3 Nanais

It should be noted that the upper part of the table contains the languages of groups that were traditionally sedentary or semi-sedentary hunters (maritime or land-based), while the lower part contains the languages of reindeer-herding groups. Thus, the Chukchi language is reported to be spoken by representatives of all groups except the Aleuts, with whom the Chukchi never had contact; the Even language is reported to be spoken by everyone except the Aleuts and Eskimos, and so on. It is known that the languages of reindeer herders (for example, the Chukchi) served as a common language for the entire region: the Eskimos living in the eastern part of the Chukchi nomadic area got the word about, for example, the annual Anyui fairs on the western edge of the area through communication with the Chukchi (Bogoraz 1934: 53 ff., Menovshchikov 1969). It is interesting that the VPS-2020 confidently records the remnants of this multilingualism, when (former?) reindeer herding peoples turn out to be speakers of languages that are more or less spoken by all their neighbours, both (former?) nomads and (former?) sedentary hunters and fishermen, while the languages of the latter are known only to themselves.

It is not important whether eight Koryaks actually speak Itelmen or 39 Itelmens speak Koryak: what is important is that in response to the census taker's question, these people preferred to stress that they know not only their own language and Russian, but also the language of their neighbours.

5. Conclusion

This paper set out to assess the quality of the results of the Russian Population Census 2020–2021, both for Russia as a whole and, in particular, with regard to the languages of the indigenous peoples of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia).

The findings are as follows.

1) At the national level, the 2020 census was the first large-scale attempt to incorporate administrative (register-based) data into census inputs. Further critical analysis is required for each census variable, including those relating to ethnicity

and language. This is especially important given the sensitivity of ethnic and linguistic relations in a country characterised by a wide range of ethnic communities.

2) The census data on the languages of indigenous minorities in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and neighbouring areas allow for a number of interesting observations concerning the relationship between ethnic and linguistic self-identification, as well as the significance of historical language contact and multilingualism for present-day populations. However, the 2020 census data cannot be used uncritically. Taking at face value the reported numbers of people "commanding" or "using" a given language, or those identifying a particular indigenous language as their "mother tongue", carries a considerable risk of error in the formulation of practical language policy in the region. In other words, the census offers limited value for research in language ecology, language policy, or the revitalisation of endangered languages.

3) Fieldwork evidence indicates that, for instance, there are far fewer than 109 Aleut speakers, 168 Eskimo speakers, or 330 Yukaghir speakers if "speaking" is understood as the ability to communicate rather than merely recalling a small number of words.

4) A key practical implication for language maintenance and revitalisation is that census data alone are insufficient and cannot provide a reliable picture of language use or endangerment. Detailed, localised information is required — concerning specific languages, in particular villages, and among distinct communities. Such data can only be obtained through regular fieldwork conducted in close collaboration with local researchers and their networks. Encouragingly, colleagues in the Sakha Republic have begun this work in 2025 as part of the RSE project "Languages and Cultures of the Peoples of the North and the Arctic of the Russian Federation".

Acknowledgements

The work of Nikolai Vakhtin was supported by RSF, project "Languages and Cultures of the Peoples of the North and the Arctic of the Russian Federation: Comprehensive socio-humanitarian research (on the basis of big data)" (Agreement No 25-78-30006 of 22.05.2025).

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Gulnara F. Gabdrakhmanova: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing — Original Draft. **Nikolai B. Vakhtin:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing — Original Draft, Writing — Review & Editing, Funding Acquisition.

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Article history:
Received: 29 October 2025
Accepted: 12 February 2026

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 375–395
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-49253
EDN: CLWGNE

Research article / Научная статья

From Greenland to Yakutia: Grounding language policy in multilingual practices in the Arctic

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Abstract
Urbanization is a global trend, and even remote, sparsely populated areas like the Arctic are undergoing massive migrations into cities, radically changing the language ecologies for local languages. The present study aims to understand the interrelations between different components of the language ecology, and to develop a theoretical framework for future analyses. Two Arctic regional cities, Nuuk, the capital of semi-autonomous Greenland, and Yakutsk, the capital of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), are analyzed as case studies in the analysis. This study relies on participant-observation fieldwork, focused interviews on language attitudes and language proficiency, and a survey of existing documentation (official surveys, records, policies, and media reports) on language policies and their implementation in both regions. Interviews were conducted in multiple trips to both regions from 2019–2025. Observational data documenting changes in language behavior and attitudes dates from 2008 in Greenland, and from 2017 in Yakutsk, to the present. Attitudinal and usage data comes from sociolinguistic surveys, in-depth sociolinguistic interviews, informal discussions, and participant-observation in Nuuk and Yakutsk. Applying Appadurai's (1990, 1996) scape theory to these differing language ecologies reveals the complex and interconnected nature of factors contributing to language usage, and the necessity of a multifaceted approach to implementing policies to foster language vitality.
Keywords: *multilingualism, language shift, migration, urbanization, scape theory, globalization, language policy*

For citation:
Grenoble, Lenore A. 2026. From Greenland to Yakutia: Grounding language policy in multilingual practices in the Arctic. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 375–395. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-49253 EDN: CLWGNE

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От Гренландии до Якутии: языковая политика, погруженная в многоязычные практики в Арктике

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Аннотация
Урбанизация — это глобальная тенденция, и даже отдаленные, малонаселенные районы, такие как Арктика, переживают массовую миграцию в города, что радикально меняет языковую экологию местных языков. Настоящее исследование направлено на обоснование взаимосвязей между различными компонентами языковой экологии и разработку теоретической основы для будущих анализов. В качестве примеров для анализа рассматриваются два арктических региональных города: Нуук, столица полуавтономной Гренландии, и Якутск, столица Республики Саха (Якутия). В данном исследовании используется смешанный подход, включающий полевую работу методом включенного наблюдения, фокусированные интервью об отношении к языку и уровне владения языком, а также анализ существующей документации (официальные опросы, записи, политические документы и сообщения СМИ) по языковой политике и ее реализации в обоих регионах. Интервью проводились во время многочисленных поездок в оба региона в период с 2019 по 2025 г. Данные наблюдений, документирующие изменения в языковом поведении и отношении к языку, охватывают период с 2008 г. в Гренландии и с 2017 г. по настоящее время в Якутске. Данные об отношении к языку и его использовании получены из социолингвистических опросов, углубленных социолингвистических интервью, неформальных дискуссий и включенного наблюдения в Нууке и Якутске. Применение теории «ландшафтов» Аппадураи (Appadurai 1990, 1996) к этим различным языковым экосистемам выявляет сложный и взаимосвязанный характер факторов, влияющих на использование языка, и необходимость многогранного подхода к реализации политики, направленной на повышение жизнеспособности языка.
Ключевые слова: *многоязычие, языковой сдвиг, миграция, урбанизация, теория «ландшафтов», глобализация, языковая политика*

Для цитирования:
Grenoble L.A. From Greenland to Yakutia: Grounding language policy in multilingual practices in the Arctic. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 375–395. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-49253 EDN: CLWGNE

1. Introduction

National language policies generally address the use, development and status of language(s) as spoken within the boundaries of a single nation state. Such policies are often construed as static and unresponsive to the demands of globalization, as they operate under outdated ideologies that ignore increasing mobility, superdiversity and digital interconnectedness, features that characterize the modern world. Mobility, the movement of people, capital, ideas, technology, and knowledge, is the central and most visible feature of globalization. While mobility

has always existed historically, it has intensified in modern times, revealing both the opportunities and deep contradictions of globalization (Khondker 2023). This mobility has a deep impact on language ecologies and linguistic practices, and we have yet to understand how it affects local languages. In the Arctic in particular, where overall populations are relatively small, and cities are small compared to those located in the south (Nyseth 2017), research is needed to understand how these mobilizations affect language practices, in particular in urban settings, as increasing portions of the world's population move to cities. The present study aims to understand how language policies and language ecologies shape language use and language shift in Greenland and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) through the lens of mobility and globalization and, using these case studies as a springboard, to develop a theoretical framework for future analyses. At first glance this might appear to be an awkward comparison: Greenland is a large island where the majority population is Indigenous Inuit, a group that comprises 88% of the total population which numbers some 58.000. The Sakha Republic, in contrast, is part of the continuous land of the Russian Federation and the majority population is a Turkic group, the Sakha people, who comprise 52% of the population, which is considerably larger than in Greenland, at approximately 1.000.000. The two regions are in fact comparable, and are undergoing comparable demographic changes which, in turn, lead to language shift. Although language policies in both areas are intended to protect and support usage of the local languages, they are nonetheless giving way to majority languages due to a combination of factors.

Focusing on the two capital cities in each region, Nuuk and Yakutsk, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do the sociolinguistic ecologies of Greenland and Yakutia compare, particularly with respect to multilingualism, migration, and urbanization, and how do these factors contribute to language shift?

2. What roles do global and local forces, conceptualized through Appadurai's (1990, 1996) scape framework of ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, ideoscapes, and financescapes, play in shaping language practices in each region?

3. What factors drive the increasing use of dominant and global languages (Danish, Russian, and English) over local languages (Kalaallisut and Sakha) in different social domains?

The analysis can provide keys as to how language policy be grounded in real-world multilingual practices rather than idealized or top-down assumptions.

The structure of this article is as follows. To understand the complex nature of these changing ecologies, I first provide an overall account of the current status of the local languages in each region (Section 2.1 and 2.2), and then a background discussion of the relevant language policies in Greenland and Yakutia (Sections 2.3 and 2.4, respectively). Section 3 provides the theoretical framework for the analysis in terms of Appadurai's (1990, 1996) scape theory, which is followed by a discussion of methods (Section 4). Results are provided in Section 5 and discussion in Section 6, which is followed by a conclusion (Section 7).

2. Sociolinguistic framework

2.1 Language usage in Greenland and Yakutia

Greenland (*Kalaallit Nunaat*) is a semi-autonomous region with domestic affairs run by its own Self Rule Government since 2008. The majority population is Indigenous Inuit, or locally known as *kalaallit* (singular *kalaaleq*) in the local language, *Kalaallisut*. Kalaallisut (or Greenlandic) is an Inuit language spoken by an estimated 50.000 people. This figure is based on an assumption that people born in Greenland are likely to speak the language, although in fact it is probably lower, as there is some early language shift. Kalaallisut is widely used in private spaces, is spoken in the home, and children learn it as a first language. Legally the use of Kalaallisut is guaranteed in all public domains, at least on paper. Yet there are a number of pressures that act against its actual usage, notably in the capital Nuuk, which is home to over one-third of the country's population of 56.542 (*Statistics Greenland*: 2025[1]), and it is under pressure in all of Greenland's cities, to varying degrees. Despite its relative autonomy, Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark, and Danish is dominant for some sectors of the population, particularly in Nuuk. Demographically Greenland's population is increasingly diverse, with emigration of local Greenlanders to Denmark and beyond, resulting in a decline in Kalaallisut L1 users, coupled with an ongoing influx of permanent immigrants and temporary workers. Climate change has only increased immigration in recent years.

Determining which percentage of the population considers itself to be Kalaaleq, and which Danish is complicated. Census data does not include information about ethnic identity, but rather citizenship. Since citizens of Greenland are citizens of Denmark, and the largest number of immigrants to Greenland are also Danish citizens, tracking ethnicity is complicated and there are no precise figures.

One proxy is place of birth since the majority of births in Greenland can be assumed to be to Greenlanders (not ethnic Danes). As seen in Table 1, just over 88% of the population of Greenland was born there, suggesting that the total number of ethnic Greenlanders is in the neighborhood of 88%.[2] Table 1 also shows the distribution of residents not born in Greenland, which on the national level is 12%, but is nearly twice as high in the capital Nuuk (21.0%); numbers rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

Language knowledge and usage is complicated to assess. In Greenland there is no census or survey data on language; the fact that Greenlanders are citizens of Denmark[3] complicates the picture. Birthplace can serve as a general proxy, because there is an overall correlation (although not an absolute correspondence) between language and place of birth: people born in Greenland are more likely to speak

[1] Demographic data for Greenland as of 01 January 2025 from Statistics Greenland (2025) unless otherwise noted.

[2] World Factbook 2024 puts the number at 88.1% of a total population of 57.751.

[3] Statistics Greenland does track citizenship, and some 96% of all residents are Danish citizens. Somewhat less than 0.5% are citizens of other Nordic countries.

Kalaallisut in the home, and those born outside of Greenland—even to two Inuit Greenlander parents—less likely. The picture is further complicated by variation in Greenland. Kalaallisut is the standard language based on West Greenlandic; the Inuit varieties spoken in parts of northern Greenland (*Avanersuarmiutut*) and in East Greenland (*Tunumiisut*) are sufficiently different to be considered distinct languages by many linguists. (See Dorais 2010: 1–54) for a discussion of classification issues of the Inuit languages.) The data in Table 1 suggest that somewhere in the neighborhood of 12% of the population may not speak Kalaallisut and this figure doubles in Nuuk. The likelihood of hearing or using another language is much higher in the capital than other locations, as confirmed by both personal experiences and the reports from consultants.

Table 1. **Population by birthplace, 01 January 2025**

Population	Number	Percentage, %
Total, Greenland	56.542	100.0
Born in Greenland	49.738	88.0
Outside of Greenland	6.804	12.0
Total, Nuuk	19.903	100.0
Born in Greenland	15.722	79.0
Outside of Greenland	4.181	21.0

Source: Statistics Greenland, https://stats.gl

2.2. Language usage in Yakutia

In contrast to Greenland, the All-Russia census, conducted every 10 years, does provide information about ethnicity of the population and respondents' first language. The total population in Yakutia has been consistently growing over the last decade; as of 01 January 2025, it had reached 1.007.058.

Table 2 provides the ethnicity as self-declared in the 2020–2021 census for all groups comprising greater than 1% of the population along with the autochthonous groups of Yakutia, with percentages rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent for the larger groups.

Both Dolgan and Chukchi live in higher concentrations outside of Yakutia, in Taimyr and the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, respectively, but the greatest number of Yukaghir live here.

Of course, ethnic affiliation and language usage do not necessarily coincide; see Table 3 for language data. Furthermore, the census does not recognize mixed ethnicity, but there are many mixed marriages. This ideology affects individual views of identity, and it is common to have people declare themselves to belong to a single ethnic group but note that their parents belong to different groups, especially if specifically asked.

In contrast to Statistics Greenland, language usage is tracked by the All-Russia census; Table 3 gives information about Russian and local (autochthonous) languages, and immigrant languages with 2000 or more native speakers. The figures for ethnicity (Table 2) and language usage (Table 3) do not correspond for two

reasons: (1) a significant number (152.863) census respondents did not give information about language and/or ethnicity; (2) some ethnic groups speak a language other than their ethnic (ancestral) language. This is clearly seen for Indigenous minorities, who greatly outnumber the speakers of their languages.

Table 2. **Ethnic population of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), 2020–21**

Population by ethnicity	Number	Percentage, %
total 2020	949.280	100.0
Sakha	469.348	55.2
Russian	276.986	32.6
Evenki	24.334	2.9
Even	15.627	1.6
Kyrgyz	13.233	1.3
others[4]		
Dolgan	2147	0.22
Yukaghir	1510	0.15
Chukchi	709	0.07

Source: National make-up of the population of the Russian Federation, *All-Russia Census 2020–2021* Vol 5, tab 1.

Table 3. **Language usage in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) & Yakutsk, 2020–2021**

Language	Yakutia	Yakutsk & environs	Yakutsk only	Environs
Sakha	474.162	137.300	126.181	11.119
Russian	320.935	85.717	80.352	5.365
Kyrgyz	9.907	7.682	7.630	52
Tadzhik	5.148	4.065	4.028	37
Buryat	4.115	747	691	56
Even	3.810	478	446	32
Evenki	3.712	506	472	34
Armenian	3.363	2.352	2.343	9
Chinese	2.842	2.842	2.840	2
Uzbek	2.821	1.761	1.754	7
Ukrainian	2.419	423	405	18
Yukaghir	450	70	67	3
Chukchi	389	9	9	–
Dolgan	298	39	38	1
Unknown	152.863	126.966	126.276	690
Total	842.823	245.962	229.167	16.795

Source: All-Russia Census 2020–21, Vol 5, tab 7 for Yakutia; tab 9 for Yakutsk and environs

Based on the data in Table 3, 56% of the population of Yakutia sees Sakha as its native language, and 38% — Russian. The percentage is roughly the same for Sakha in the capital and its environs; Russian dips to 35%. Across Yakutia, the remaining percentages are miniscule: only 0.01% consider Kyrgyz their native tongue. But in Yakutsk these ratios change because the majority of immigrants live in the capital. All immigrant languages in Table 3 (Kyrgyz, Tadzhik, Buryat, Armenian, Chinese,

[4] Others are, from largest to smallest, Ukrainian, Buryat, Tadzhik, Tatar, Armenian, Chinese, and Uzbek. Together they comprise approximately 3.5% of the total population.

Uzbek and Ukrainian) combined come to a total of 19.449, or 7.9%. Moreover, Table 3 provides only the largest immigrant groups and, importantly, we see that a full third of all census respondents in Yakutsk did not provide language information.

In addition, the numbers for the Indigenous languages are certainly inflated, as people equate native (*rodnoj*) language with ethnicity, rather than with proficiency (Danilov 2025). While all census data are problematic, the 2020 All-Russia census is particularly difficult to interpret, due in large part to the fact that it was conducted during the covid-19 pandemic; see Gabdrakhmanova & Alos-i-Font (2024) and Gabdrakhmanova & Vakhtin (*this volume)*. The actual presentation of the data is also confusing in places. Volume 5, tab 7 gives the data of respondents according to ethnicity and language use. A total of 120 languages is listed for Yakutia; 156 people are cited as speaking another language.

Despite these many caveats, Table 3 provides a general picture of which language people in Yakutsk, and more generally in Yakutia, see as their primary, first language.

2.3. Language policies in Greenland

Language is a central part of ethnic and national identity in Greenland. There is deeply held belief in Greenland that in order to be a real Kalaaleq, you must speak Kalaallisut. This Kalaaleq identity is constructed in contrast to the Other, with the Other being defined as Danes and Danish (Gad 2019), and further in terms of the contrast between Kalaallisut-speaking Greenlanders on the one hand, and Danish-speaking Greenlanders on the other (Gad 2005, Kleemann-Andersen 2020). This is the result of a long-standing tug-of-war between Denmark and Greenland over control of the country. Although Greenland was officially decolonized by Denmark in 1953, this date actually marks the beginning of a campaign of assimilation. A core component was the introduction of Danish-language education at all levels of formal schooling; as a result, children quickly learned, and shifted to, Danish. Language shift was a major impetus in the push toward more self-control that resulted in the Home Rule Government, established by the Home Rule Act of 1979. The Home Rule act simply stated that Kalaallisut is the main language (Danish *hovedsproget*), but also stated the need to teach Danish thoroughly, and granted the use of both languages in the public sphere. Home Rule was superseded by the institution of the Self-Government Act of 2009[5] which gives Greenland self-autonomy in all areas except foreign affairs and defense, which remain with Denmark. One result of this autonomy was the passing of the Language Policy Act of 2010, which establishes Kalaallisut as the national language of Greenland. It also grants the right of Danish speakers to use Danish, and Kalaallisut speakers to use Kalaallisut, as well as the right to use English or other languages as needed. In this way the Language Policy Act ratifies the importance of Kalaallisut but recognizes the multilingual nature of Greenland society. Moreover, the language of instruction in the secondary schools and in higher education is often Danish, in large part because of a lack of qualified

[5] For more details on Greenland's path to Self-Government, see Akrén (2022).

teachers who are fully proficient in Kalaallisut. In the workplace, the presence of even just one Danish speaker can mean that the language used is Danish. This illustrates that although Kalaallisut is the legal national language, Danish is still required in many domains. The Language Policy Act also provides an opening for English usage in society. (Faingold 2023 provides a succinct overview.)

This tug-of-war about languages is central in political discourse, commonly referred to as the language debate. A central part of the debate is the position of Kalaallisut vis-à-vis Danish, whether a one-nation-one-language view is appropriate in Greenland, and knowledge of Kalaallisut is essential for identifying as a Greenlander. Gad (2019) examines the language debate in the Greenland Parliament and the newspapers *A/G* and *Sermitsiaq* for the time period 2002–2016. Many voiced an opinion that Greenlanders (Kalaallit) need to know Kalaallisut (Gad 2019: 488–491). At the heart of the debate is a question of the position of languages other than Kalaallisut in Greenland. Even before the institution of the Self-Rule Government, the public began debating the role of English in society. In 2002, the idea was that English would be an important language for modernizing and internationalizing the country, and could be used alongside, or even instead, of Danish. In 2016 the debate shifted to viewing Danish, like Kalaallisut, as a potential obstacle to internationalization of the country (pp. 503–504).

As this discussion suggests, the question of the position of English in Greenland has been a matter of debate for over 20 years. In that time, there has been an increase in immigrants to Greenland by people from outside of Scandinavia, that is, by people less likely to arrive already speaking Danish or another closely related language that would facilitate acquisition of Danish. In addition, the last 20 years have seen a rapid increase in internet and cell phone accessibility: 0.2% of the population had access to broadband in 2003, compared to 29.6% in 2021. Overall internet access increased to 69.5% in 2019. Moreover, the data show that there is an average of 1.2 mobile phones per person in Greenland in 2024, versus 1.1 per person in the US (*World Data* 2024). Taken together, these changes have provided important inroads for English in Greenland and have changed the language debate, together with the debate about possible policy solutions. This leads to the question of how these changes affect actual language usage, and whether demographic changes in Greenland society are reflected in Greenlanders' linguistic repertoires and the way they use them.

2.4. Language policy in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

As a part of the Russian Federation, language usage in Yakutia is governed both by federal law and local law. Russian is the official national language of the Russian Federation. The Constitution of the Russian Federation also allows the republics to instate their own language laws and policies within their territories. Article 46[6] of the Constitution of the Republic of Sakha makes both Russian and Sakha the official languages of the Republic, and the languages of the local, autochthonous peoples are official in those areas where they live compactly. Languages with this status are

[6] https://constitution.garant.ru/region/cons_saha/chapter/363aa18e6c32ff15fa5ec3b09cbefbf6/

clearly defined in Article 5 of the Language Law of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) of 16 October 1992 № 1170-XII, (with further modifications, most recently in 2016): Chukchi, Dolgan, Even, Evenki and Yukaghir all enjoy this official status and right to use and development.

The policies are clearly formulated in these laws. As in Greenland, in the Sakha Republic the actual execution of the policies is less clear, but at least on paper, these rights are guaranteed. Article 9 guarantees the stable development of bilingualism in Russian and a local language, and supports multilingualism in the Republic's languages as desired by its citizens. Yakutia's language law makes the importance of **locality** explicit: the five named minority languages have official status in those regions where the ethnic populations live (Article 6) guaranteeing their development, although there are inherent challenges to reaching this goal. Yakutia encompasses a huge territory, and there are significant dialect differences across all its languages, making it problematic to implement a standardized language curriculum. This is not to argue for the linguistics necessity of a unified standard language, but this is the attitude that governments generally adopt, and Yakutia is no exception. Because it is part of the Russian Federation that has a strong standard ideology, this is hardly surprising. Moreover, the Indigenous minorities "fully function" in only 7 villages in Yakutia: Evenki in Iengra (Neryungri ulus) and Tyanya (Olekminsk ulus); Even in Andryushkino (Nizhnekolymsk ulus), Berezovka (Srednekolymsk ulus), and Topolinoe (Tomponsk ulus); Chukchi in Kolysmskoe (Nizhnekolymsk ulus) (Sharina 2022: 36). Speakers of Indigenous languages in all of these villages are currently shifting to the majority languages, Sakha and/or Russian, for daily communication. So, although the Language Law legislates their use on the same level as the 2 majority languages, in practice this does not happen.

2.5. Summary: Greenland vs. Yakutia

In both territories, the subnational entity is situated with regard to the larger national unit. The political status of Greenland differs from that of the Sakha Republic: Greenland is moving toward independence from Denmark. This difference in political status is reflected in language laws, with Kalaallisut (Greenlandic) the official language of Greenland, and Danish may be used in official, administrative purposes. Where it comes to education, the situation is complicated. The Prime Minister of Denmark's office notes that "[t]he question of educational instruction in Danish is not governed by the Self-Government Act, but it is assumed that the Self-Government authorities must ensure provision of education in Danish and other relevant languages that would enable Greenlandic youth to pursue further education in Denmark and other countries" (*Office of the Prime Minister of Denmark* 2025).

In terms of educational policies, in Greenland education is technically conducted in Kalaallisut by law, but Danish is often used, for two key reasons. First, if there are children who do not speak Kalaallisut in a class, the language of instruction is often shifted to accommodate them. This is particularly frequent in Nuuk, which has the highest population (numerally and percentage-wise) of

residents who are not Kalaaleq. Second, there is a shortage of qualified teachers who are capable of conducting classes in Kalaallisut. And a switch to Danish in the classroom sometimes happens due to purely practical constraints or rather, as accommodation to even a single Danish speaker. But there is also a clear ideology that children need to learn Danish for further education in Denmark, and in fact many children spend a year abroad studying before they have graduated from high school.

In contrast, there is no such political movement in the Sakha Republic where both Russian and Sakha are official; the need for Russian is not contested and in fact is necessary to pass the Unified State Exam (*edinnyj gosudarstvenny ekazamen*), a mandatory nationwide test that both certifies graduation from secondary school and serves as an entrance exam for higher education. Russian is unquestionably the national language. The Language Law of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) effectively promotes bilingualism: Sakha (and the Indigenous autochthonous languages) may be developed and used *alongside* Russian. It is not a replacement strategy. Practical constraints play a role here too, as in Greenland: the law states that parents have the right to send their children to Sakha-immersion schools but there is a shortage of such schools.

3. Appadurai's theory of scapes and language usage

Appadurai's (1990, 1996) framework of *scapes* provides a powerful tool for analyzing the linguistic dynamics in both Greenland and Yakutia. Appadurai notes that there are "brute facts" that any ethnographer must face, facts which have to do with "the changing social, territorial and cultural reproduction of group identity" (p. 48), a claim that captures the dynamic nature of language ecologies and social identity that we find in both Greenland and Yakutia today. This dynamicity grounds the interaction of locality and the forces of globalization in these two areas. Language usage is locally anchored: it is constructed in the here-and-now of interaction. At the same time, in the modern world locality is not only a spatial construct, but also a relational one and a digital one. Appadurai's approach is anchored in the tension between local identity and global belonging. Greenland aims to be part of the global economy while Yakutia seeks global partners in terms of development across sectors.

The scape framework identifies 5 different scapes for conceptualizing how culture moves across national boundaries: *ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, ideoscapes*, and *financescapes*:

- *Ethnoscapes* have to do with the flow of people, including both internal and external migrants, temporary visitors (such as tourists, guest workers), refuges, students, and how their movement shapes cultural and linguistic ecologies (landscapes), or imagined worlds in Appadurai's view. Crucially, ethnoscapes encompass not only cross-border migration but also internal mobility, the movement of people within national or regional territories that is often overlooked in language policy discussions.
- *Mediascapes* involve the dissemination of information and cultural narratives through media. More specifically, they include both the electronic

technology that makes this distribution possible, as well as the images created by this media. For Appadurai, writing in the 1990s, media included newspapers and magazines, television and film. In the modern context they must be extended to encompass social media, streaming platforms, and algorithmically curated online content, all of which now constitute the primary media environment for younger speakers in both Greenland and Yakutia. The rapid expansion of technoscapes in today's world has had a major impact on mediascapes; the two operate in tandem.

- *Technoscapes* refer to the distribution of technology, particularly the infrastructure (such as broadband networks, mobile connectivity, digital devices) that enables or constrains access to media and communication. In remote regions, the rapid recent expansion of connectivity has made technoscapes a decisive factor in language ecology, opening pathways to dominant-language content that previously did not exist.
- *Ideoscapes* encompass political and cultural ideologies that circulate globally and locally, including discourses about nationalism and identity. Ideoscapes involves values about language, identity, modernity, and belonging, that travel across populations alongside people, media, and capital. In language contexts, this includes beliefs about which languages are prestigious, useful, or authentic, as well as top-down policy ideologies about territorial language rights and national identity.
- *Financescapes* refer to flows of economic capital and the hierarchies of value they produce. In language contexts, financescapes connect labor migration to language shift, and shape individual decisions about which languages are worth investing in learning.

These five scapes do not operate independently. They are, in Appadurai's framing, fundamentally disjunctive: they move at different speeds, reach different populations, and produce contradictory effects. A technoscape that brings broadband internet to a rural Sakha community simultaneously creates a new mediascape dominated by Russian-language content, which reinforces an ideoscape in which Russian is associated with the modern and the global. This kind of cascading interaction is precisely what makes language shift in globalized contexts so difficult for policy to address: the causes are structural and multi-scalar, not reducible to any single domain.

Applying the scape framework to Greenland and Yakutia serves two purposes. First, it provides an analytical vocabulary for the empirical findings in Section 5, allowing the diverse pressures on Kalaallisut and Sakha to be examined in relation to one another rather than in isolation. Second, and more broadly, it situates these two Arctic cases within a theoretical account of how globalization operates at the local level, one that is sensitive to the particularity of each context while enabling genuine comparison. The framework is especially well suited to the Arctic, where the intersection of Indigenous language politics, resource-driven migration, rapid digital integration, and shifting national and subnational governance creates precisely the kind of disjunctive, multi-scalar dynamics Appadurai's model was designed to capture.

4. Data and methods

Research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach combining participant-observation fieldwork, focused interviews on language attitudes and proficiency, and a review of existing documentation, including official surveys, records, policies, and media reports, concerning language policy and its implementation in both regions. Interview data were collected during multiple fieldwork trips to both regions between 2019 and 2025. Observational data on shifts in language behavior and attitudes extend from 2008 in Greenland and 2017 in Yakutsk to the present. Attitudinal and usage data derive from sociolinguistic surveys, in-depth interviews, informal discussions, and participant-observation conducted in Nuuk and Yakutsk.

Focused, in-depth sociolinguistic interviews were conducted in Nuuk in 2023 with 14 participants, identified by snow-balling technique or through responses a post on Facebook seeking participants. The interviews included in the present article were conducted in English, by two American researchers (Lenore Grenoble and Jessica Kantarovich), and a Greenlander Siisi Jensen) attended many of the sessions. All participants completed a brief interview with basic questions about their language background and then performed some linguistic tasks. Many became engaged with the interview questions and spoke at length. The participants are primarily women (12 women, 2 men) owing in large part to the fact that we sought out participants through contacts at Ilisimatusarfik, the University of Greenland. The university student population is overwhelmingly female, approximately 98%. Participants were born in the years 1973–2002, so that the oldest was 50 and the youngest 21 years old at the time of recording.

In addition, analogous sociolinguistic interviews have been conducted since 2020 by the team at the Arctic Linguistic Ecology Lab at the M.K. Ammosov North-eastern Federal University in Yakutsk. (Preliminary interviews were conducted by Lenore Grenoble, Jessica Kantarovich and Albert Ventayol-Boada in 2017 and 2019.) Over 1000 respondents were interviewed in 2020–2023, but the present analysis draws on only a subset of these interviews. In the present study, the analysis of interview and participant-observation is qualitative, not quantitative.

Although the interviews are not presented in detail here, they provide confirmation of assessments gathered through participant-observation and casual conversations with residents and visitors in both Greenland and Yakutia. In addition to the interviews, participants in Nuuk and Yakutsk completed two linguistic tasks: (1) a picture-based elicitation task and (2) a narration after viewing a short cartoon film. These experiments are not relevant to the present study, as they collected linguistic data only, and the results are not given here. But these tasks did spark deeper conversations with some consultants who discussed the use of language and their own ideologies in depth, and these remarks help shape our understanding of the situation in Greenland and Yakutia today.

Finally, teachers at the high school in Nuuk (GUX Nuuk[7]) were interviewed on two separate days in November 2022 and observed three classes. One was conducted entirely in Kalaallisut, one in English, and one primarily in Kalaallisut with mixing of Danish to accommodate students with limited Kalaallisut proficiency. Informal interviews and participant observation were conducted in both capitals, Nuuk 2022–2025 and Yakutsk 2019–2025, with a focus on workers in service industries and shopping areas and markets, as these areas are often staffed by migrants.

5. Results

Across both regions, the findings reveal a consistent gap between formal language policy and actual language practice. Although both Greenland and Yakutia have legal frameworks explicitly promoting Kalaallisut and Sakha, respectively, those languages increasingly operate within ecologies dominated by national and global ones. In Greenland, English is displacing Danish as the primary lingua franca; in Yakutia, Russian is the language of interethnic communication, and shift away from Sakha is most visible among younger generations.

5.1. Ethnoscapes: Mobility and multilingual subjectivities

The movement of people through and within both regions is the most visible driver of changing language ecologies. Four types of mobility are relevant: outmigration, internal migration, immigration, and short-term temporary movement.

Outmigration has had different historical trajectories in each region but produces convergent effects. In Yakutia, the break-up of the Soviet Union triggered a large exodus of ethnic Russians and immigrant workers, leaving a smaller but more ethnically Sakha population (Grenoble 2020, Heleniak 2017). In Greenland, outmigration is ongoing: many teenagers spend a year in Danish boarding schools, and higher education abroad is common. Net migration stood at −485 in 2024, and the number of Greenland-born residents declined from 50.425 in 2005 to 49.738 in 2025. If current trends continue, the total population is projected to fall below 50.000 by 2050 (*Greenland in Figures* 2025: 6).

Internal migration from smaller settlements into the capitals is driven by labor markets and, increasingly, climate change. Interviews in Greenland document high levels of within-country mobility: some young people had lived in six or seven towns by the age of 20, and 12 of 14 interview respondents had parents born in different towns. In Yakutia, movement from rural Sakha-speaking villages into Yakutsk reshapes both the city's demographic composition and the language repertoires of those who arrive.

Immigration is closely tied to labor demand. Foreign nationals comprise 4.5% of Greenland's population, with the largest groups from the Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. Statistics Greenland describes this dynamic directly: the country's

[7] http://guxnuuk.gl/. I am grateful to Alliaq Kleist Petrussen who arranged these visitations.

demand for labor requires immigration to continuously offset emigration (2025: 7). Non-European laborers more than doubled between 2020 and 2025, from 450 to 947 (*Greenland in Figures* 2021: 19, 2025: 19), and they are concentrated in Nuuk and in service sectors with high public contact, such as hotels, restaurants, and retail. In 2025, 38.5% of hotel and restaurant workers came from Denmark or abroad (348 of 903); the proportion in retail is untracked but likely comparable.

Short-term and seasonal visitors compound these effects. Tourists and seasonal workers arrive speaking Danish, English, or Russian and have little practical incentive to acquire Kalaallisut or Sakha. Tourism is growing sharply in both regions. In Greenland, hotel guest numbers rose from 96.222 in 2018 to 153.874 in 2024, driven in part by doomsday tourism, with visitors seeking landscapes before they change irrevocably (Dawson et al. 2015). An international airport opened in Nuuk in 2024 with direct flights from Denmark, Iceland, and the United States, and numbers are expected to rise further. In Yakutia, tourist arrivals in the first eight months of 2025 reached 184.187, a 16.3% increase over the same period in 2024 (*Yakutsk MID*, October 2025). The majority arrive from elsewhere in the Russian Federation, making Russian the operative lingua franca.

Tourism also reshapes the linguistic labor market: English-speaking Greenlanders are in demand in the tourist industry, increasing both the domains where English is required and its social and economic value.

Urbanization is the cumulative result of all these movements. Nuuk and Yakutsk are growing faster than any other settlements in their respective regions, and both are environments where local languages are systematically disadvantaged. At least 21% of Nuuk's population was born outside Greenland and does not speak Kalaallisut; the actual figure is higher, since not all native-born Greenlanders are Kalaallisut speakers. In Yakutia, one third of the entire population lives in Yakutsk, and only one third of Yakutsk residents consider Sakha their first language (Table 3). Russia has the highest urbanization rate in the Arctic at 88% (Badina 2020: 7), and the trend extends beyond the capital: even in rural northeastern Sakha, indigenous populations are consolidating into larger, more central settlements (Kuklina & Krasnoshtanova 2017).

5.2. Mediascapes: The circulation of linguistic and cultural representations

Both regions have meaningful local-language media infrastructure. In Greenland, KNR (*Kalaallit Nunaata Radioa*) broadcasts radio and television in Kalaallisut across two channels, and a small but active film industry has produced roughly one feature film per year since 2009. Facebook is the dominant social platform, and Kalaallisut is its preferred language, though users frequently mix in Danish or English. Yakutia has more extensive resources, reflecting its larger population: two Sakha-language radio stations, two main Sakha-language television channels (*NVK Sakha* and *Yakutiya 24*), a children's channel (*Tooku*), and a well-developed film industry operating since the founding of Sakhafilm in 1992.

Yet these resources are outweighed by the volume of content available in dominant languages. For online video, games, and popular music, Kalaallisut and

Sakha content is negligible compared to what is available in Danish, English, and Russian. Survey data from Yakutia illustrate the pattern clearly: among respondents aged 18–30, 56% receive news primarily via social media and 54% via Telegram, while only 4% read print. Moreover, 58% of all respondents prefer to receive information in Russian, rising to 69% when the medium is the internet, while only 17% prefer Sakha (Gavril'ev 2024). Media experts in Yakutia are pessimistic: seven of nine surveyed believed Sakha-language content is more likely to decrease than increase over time (Gavrilyev & Podoynitsyna 2024). Demand and supply are both insufficient.

5.3. Technoscapes: Infrastructures and affordances

Rapid expansion of internet access in both regions has been a major structural shift. In Greenland, 69.5% of households had internet access at the start of 2025, up from 20.7% in 2008 (*Digital 2025*: Greenland; *Greenland in Figures* 2010). In Yakutia, 98% of the population had internet access in 2024, compared to 60.4% in 2014 (*Sakha (Yakutiya) Stat* 2025; *CEIC Data* 2021).

In principle, this connectivity could support grassroots production of local-language content. In practice, it has primarily served as an entry point for dominant-language media. Parents in both regions report that their children acquire English and Russian through online video platforms rather than through local-language content. In Russia, the blocking of YouTube has been offset by domestic equivalents such as RUTUBE, VKVideo, which reproduce the same dynamic with Russian content. Greater connectivity translates, in the current media environment, into greater exposure to the languages that dominate it.

5.4. Ideoscapes: ideologies and values

In both regions, a strong ideological link between language and ethnic identity persists: to be a genuine Kalaaleq or Sakha is widely understood to require speaking the corresponding language. As elsewhere, a commonly held belief is that to be a real, authentic representative of an ethnic group, one must speak the language, Kalaallisut or Sakha. Such beliefs are strong among ethnic Greenlanders or Sakha, and play a key role in language maintenance and sustainability.

That commitment, however, coexists with a competing ideology: that national and global languages are more practical, particularly for economic advancement. Among immigrant populations in both regions, this view is dominant. It is reinforced by a secondary belief—widespread but rarely examined—that Kalaallisut and Sakha are simply too difficult for outsiders to learn, making acquisition not worth attempting. The practical consequence is a near-complete absence of L2 learning resources and classes, which in turn makes the belief self-fulfilling. The point is illustrated by a conversation in Yakutsk with an Uzbek cab driver who advised me not to bother learning Sakha—too hard, and not worth it. When asked how this could be so, given that he himself speaks Uzbek, another Turkic language, he said the two were mutually unintelligible. The linguistic observation is accurate; what the

exchange revealed was the underlying ideology: Sakha has neither the practical value nor the learnability that would warrant the effort. Comparable attitudes are commonly encountered in Greenland.

5.5. Financescapes: Economic drivers

A full analysis of the economic dimensions of language shift exceeds the scope of this study, but the broad contours are clear. Labor-driven immigration is itself a product of financescapes: economic inequalities draw workers from Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and elsewhere into Greenland and Yakutia in search of better conditions. Once present, immigrant workers have strong incentives to acquire Russian or Danish, both languages with broad geographic portability. And they have little incentive to invest in Kalaallisut or Sakha, which offer limited returns outside their home regions. Focus groups in Yakutia further show that the availability of Sakha-language internet content varies by economic zone, with commercially marginal regions producing less (Gavrilyev & Podoynitsyna 2024). At the upper end of the prestige hierarchy, English's dominance in IT and global professional contexts makes it an attractive investment across both regions, adding another dimension of pressure on local languages.

6. Discussion

The five-scape framework reveals that language shift in Greenland and Yakutia is not reducible to any single pressure, but emerges from the interaction of demographic, technological, economic, and ideological forces operating simultaneously across local and global scales. What the comparison makes visible is a structural pattern: each scape amplifies the others. Ethnoscapes bring speakers of dominant languages into contact with local ones, creating multilingual settings in which the languages with the broadest reach—Russian, Danish, and English—tend to prevail in public and commercial domains. Mediascapes and technoscapes extend that reach further, ensuring that speakers in even remote areas are immersed in content that is overwhelmingly in those dominant languages. Financescapes then attach material incentives to this linguistic hierarchy, making proficiency in national and global languages not merely convenient but economically necessary. Ideoscapes close the loop: as dominant languages become more present and more rewarded, prevailing beliefs about their utility and prestige reinforce individual choices that cumulatively accelerate shift.

Two findings from the data deserve particular emphasis. First, urbanization functions as an intensifier rather than an independent cause. Nuuk and Yakutsk are not simply locations where shift is happening; they are settings in which all five scapes converge with unusual density. The demographic concentration of non-local speakers, the concentration of service industries staffed by migrants, the greater connectivity and media exposure, and the concentration of higher-education and employment opportunities, all in one place, make the capitals qualitatively different environments from rural areas, even as rural areas are themselves undergoing

change. Second, the convergence of outcomes across two regions with very different political arrangements, a semi-autonomous territory moving toward independence and a federated republic within a centralized state, suggests that language policy alone, however well-designed, cannot counteract these structural forces. Both Greenland and Yakutia have substantive legal protections for local languages; both show accelerating shift. The gap between policy provisions and lived language practice is not primarily a failure of political will but of analytical framework: policies designed around territorial stability, and bounded domains cannot keep pace with the fluid, mobile, digitally connected realities the scape analysis exposes.

7. Conclusion: Changing language ecologies and future steps

The comparative analysis of Greenland and Yakutia points toward a broader theoretical argument about what language policy must do differently if it is to be effective in contemporary Arctic and, indeed, global urban contexts. The central finding is that local languages are being marginalized not because speakers have abandoned them as markers of identity—in both regions, Kalaallisut and Sakha retain deep symbolic importance—but because the conditions of everyday life increasingly demand languages with wider functional reach. This distinction matters for policy. The conventional response to language shift is to strengthen formal protections: legislate official status, mandate language instruction, fund media production. Greenland and Yakutia have done all of these things. What they have not done, and what current policy frameworks are poorly equipped to do, is engage with the translocal flows that reshape language ecologies from outside the reach of any single jurisdiction. Immigration from the Philippines, Thailand, and Central Asia, social media content consumed by children, or the economic calculus of seasonal workers who arrive speaking Danish or Russian and have no practical incentive to acquire Kalaallisut or Sakha are not addressable through national or subnational legislation alone.

A more productive policy orientation would begin from the multilingual realities speakers actually inhabit rather than from idealized monolingual or stable-bilingual norms. Several implications follow. Language-in-education policy needs to reckon with the fact that classrooms in Nuuk and Yakutsk are increasingly diverse, and that the presence of even a single non-Kalaallisut or non-Sakha speaker often shifts the entire instructional register. Rather than treating this as an aberration to be managed, policy could develop pedagogical approaches that work with multilingual classrooms as the norm. Similarly, language planning for digital and media domains requires sustained investment in locally produced content that competes not merely on the grounds of cultural authenticity but on quality, accessibility, and relevance to younger users.

The scape framework developed here offers a diagnostic tool for this kind of policy thinking. By mapping which scapes are most actively driving shift in a given context and how they interact, language planners and communities can identify the leverage points that are most tractable. For example, in Greenland and Yakutia, ideoscapes may be the primary target: the persistent belief among immigrant

workers and even among some Kalaallisut/Sakha speakers that the language is too difficult or not useful enough to learn forecloses acquisition before it begins, and this belief is susceptible to change through community-level engagement and visible demonstrations of their economic and social value.

These suggestions are necessarily preliminary. The present study is limited by its qualitative, case-study design, and future research should pursue larger-scale comparative work across other Arctic cities to test whether the convergence observed here holds more broadly. Quantitative longitudinal data on language use across domains, generations, and migration trajectories would allow more precise modeling of which scape interactions drive the fastest shift and which interventions show the most promise. Participatory action research conducted in close collaboration with local speakers and policymakers would bridge the gap between analytical diagnosis and effective implementation. What the present study contributes is a framework: the argument that language ecologies in the contemporary Arctic are translocal systems, and that policies adequate to their complexity must be designed accordingly.

Acknowledgements

Work in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) was supported by the Russian Science Foundation, RNF # 25-78-30006, "Languages and Cultures of the Peoples of the North and the Arctic of the Russian Federation: Comprehensive socio-humanitarian research (on the basis of big data)". I am grateful for their support. Interviews were conducted together with Jessica Kantarovich, and Siisi Jensen, and Albert Ventayol-Boada, who have contributed to the conceptualization of this project. I would like to thank the consultants who participated in the interviews, and the many other people in Greenland who contributed to this discussion and our understanding of the language ecologies. Special thanks to Camilla Kleemann-Andersen, Tikaajaat Kristensen, and Ivalu Mathiassen, whose advice helped formulate open-ended questions for the consultants.

Ethics statement

Research on this project was approved by the Institutional Research Board at the University of Chicago with protocol #IRB17-1362. All speakers gave oral consent prior to being interviewed and were given the opportunity to modify, omit or add questions as they chose.

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Article history:
Received: 27 March 2026
Accepted: 15 May 2026

Bionote:

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 396–416
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47541
EDN: CMPZZE

Research article / Научная статья

Language policies and realities in Dutch classrooms

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Abstract
This study examines the gap between the multilingual realities of today's classrooms and the continued dominance of monolingual norms in national education systems. The situation in the Netherlands is used as a case study to show a broader point. Although classrooms are becoming more linguistically diverse, immigrant and heritage languages remain marginalised, which contributes to unequal opportunities and exclusion. The purpose of this literature-based study is to show how national language policies shape classroom practices and teacher attitudes, and to assess whether these policies support inclusion or reinforce linguistic marginalisation. The material used consists mainly of international and Dutch peer-reviewed academic publications on multilingualism, language policy, and (multilingual) education, including empirical and comparative research across different national and international contexts. In addition, it includes key theoretical works as well as policy- and practice-oriented publications from governmental and international organizations, together providing a solid academic and policy foundation for research on multilingualism, education, and social justice. Special attention is given to how the ideas behind Dutch language policy influence fairness in education. The main findings show that Dutch education policy strongly prioritises Dutch as the only legitimate language of schooling. Immigrant languages such as Turkish, Arabic and Polish are largely absent from curricula, assessment, in-class communication and teacher training. Many teachers still view students' home languages as obstacles to learning. Although translanguaging and other inclusive strategies have been shown to improve participation, understanding, and students' sense of belonging, their use remains limited and inconsistent because of institutional barriers and dominant language ideologies. Overall, the study demonstrates that linguistic inequality is reproduced by policy choices and their underlying ideologies and prejudices. The study suggests that meaningful inclusion requires coordinated reforms in teacher education, curriculum design, assessment practices, and language ideology. When linguistic diversity is treated as a resource, national policies can help create more equitable classrooms that value all students' linguistic backgrounds.

Keywords: *multilingual education, language policy, linguistic inequality, monolingual ideology, educational equity, translanguaging*

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For citation:
Smakman, Dick. 2026. Language policies and realities in Dutch classrooms. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 396–416. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47541 EDN: CMPZZE

Языковая политика и реалии в нидерландском образовании

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Аннотация
В данном исследовании рассматривается разрыв между многоязычной реальностью современной школы и сохраняющимся доминированием моноязычных норм в национальных системах образования. Ситуация в Нидерландах используется в качестве тематического исследования для демонстрации более общих вопросов. Несмотря на то, что студенческая аудитория становится все более многоязычной, языки иммигрантов остаются маргинализированными, что приводит к неравным возможностям. Цель статьи — показать, как национальная языковая политика формирует практику в образовании и отношение к ней преподавателей, а также оценить, способствует ли эта политика инклюзии или усиливает языковую маргинализацию. Исследование основано на анализе литературы по многоязычию, языковой политике и (многоязычному) образованию, включая эмпирические и сравнительные исследования в различных национальных и международных контекстах. Кроме того, материалом послужили ключевые теоретические работы, а также документы правительственных и международных организаций, что в совокупности обеспечивает прочную научную и политическую основу для исследований в области многоязычия, образования и социальной справедливости. Особое внимание уделяется тому, как идеи, лежащие в основе нидерландской языковой политики, влияют на справедливость и равенство в образовании. Основные выводы исследования показывают, что голландская образовательная политика в значительной степени отдает приоритет голландскому языку как единственному легитимному языку обучения. Языки иммигрантов, такие как турецкий, арабский и польский, в значительной степени отсутствуют в учебных программах, оценке знаний, общении в аудитории и подготовке преподавателей. Многие преподаватели по-прежнему рассматривают родные языки учащихся как препятствие для обучения. Хотя, как показывают исследования, транслингвизм и другие инклюзивные стратегии улучшают участие, понимание и чувство принадлежности учащихся, их использование остается ограниченным и непоследовательным из-за институциональных барьеров и доминирующих языковых идеологий. В целом исследование демонстрирует, что языковое неравенство воспроизводится политическими решениями и лежащими в их основе идеологиями и предрассудками. В исследовании отмечается, что для эффективной инклюзии необходимы скоординированные реформы в подготовке учителей и преподавателей, разработке учебных программ, практике оценки знаний и языковой идеологии. Когда языковое разнообразие рассматривается как ресурс, национальная политика может помочь создать более справедливые образовательные учреждения, которые ценят языковое наследие всех учащихся.

Ключевые слова: *многоязычное образование, языковая политика, языковое неравенство, моноязычная идеология, равенство в образовании, транслингвизм*

Для цитирования:
Smakman D. Language policies and realities in Dutch classrooms. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 396–416. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47541
EDN: CMPZZE

1. Introduction

Managing multilingualism in the classroom presents clear challenges, but evolving language policies also create opportunities to promote greater equity and inclusion in education. Research has shown that multilingual education supports cognitive flexibility, empathy, and academic achievement, particularly when minority and heritage languages are meaningfully incorporated into the curriculum. In such contexts, students are better able to develop strong identities and sustained connections to their communities. These benefits are increasingly recognised by governments, municipalities, schools, and educators through national policy initiatives, although the degree to which these policies translate into inclusive classroom practices varies considerably across contexts. In today's globally mobile and culturally diverse societies, multilingualism is therefore best understood not as an exception, but as a defining educational condition.

1.1. What the literature says

Several studies highlight the importance of aligning language policies, institutional practices, and individual beliefs to support multilingual education. Putjata (2021) demonstrates that teachers' language beliefs operate across policy, institutional, and personal levels and are subject to change, suggesting that challenging monolingual norms requires coordinated action at all three levels. Similarly, Yelenevskaya and Protassova (2021) show that despite curricular reforms, teaching practices often continue to prioritise an idealised mastery of a single target language, overlooking students' linguistic backgrounds, local sociolinguistic realities, and labour market needs. Focusing on English and Russian, they argue that social, cultural, and educational factors are equally relevant across different pedagogical traditions. At the family level, Ivanova and Zabrodskaja (2021) find that generally positive attitudes toward Russian as a heritage language strongly shape family language policies and children's proficiency, but also that long-term language maintenance depends on broader societal and institutional support beyond the family domain.

Educational language policy determines which languages are valued, taught, and permitted, reflecting broader societal ideologies and power structures. In multilingual classrooms, such policies can either foster inclusion or reinforce marginalisation (Groff et al. 2023). In the Netherlands, Dutch has long been prioritised as the sole language of instruction. Frisian receives limited legal protection in Fryslân, but other minority and heritage languages are largely overlooked or play a marginal role in classrooms. Even Frisian's status suffers from weak implementation and diminished curricular goals (Bayat et al. 2023). Teacher

discourses further shape classroom practices. Interviews with Dutch secondary school teachers reveal a prevailing "language-as-problem" mindset, where home languages are viewed as hindrances. Nonetheless, some educators acknowledge the pedagogical value of students' mother tongues, suggesting a gradual shift toward more inclusive approaches (Groff et al. 2023).

Recent studies highlight the advantages of multilingual pedagogies in primary education. A systematic review of 34 studies by Veerman, Doolaard, & Van der Veen (2025) revealed that techniques such as translanguaging and cross-linguistic scaffolding improve vocabulary development, metalinguistic awareness, and student wellbeing. Despite these findings, Dutch classrooms show limited uptake due to insufficient training, resources, and institutional backing. Teachers often prioritise exam standards that implicitly favour dominant-language proficiency. International comparisons expose the limitations of the Dutch approach. Countries with robust multilingual policies — such as bilingual education and heritage language support — achieve better outcomes for minority students (Lekhala 2024). These successful models demonstrate that inclusive language policies can bridge linguistic divides, promote global citizenship, and preserve cultural heritage. For the Netherlands, this entails moving beyond assimilationist frameworks and embracing students' full linguistic repertoires through coordinated efforts among policymakers, educators, and communities.

1.2. Research questions and operationalisation

This text examines how different countries respond to the realities of multilingualism in education, with a particular focus on how national language policies shape practices at the school level. It aims to examine how national language policies influence classroom practices and teacher attitudes, and to determine whether these policies promote inclusion or perpetuate linguistic marginalisation. The analysis in this article draws on peer-reviewed research, key theory, and policy publications on multilingualism and education, focusing on the role of language policy in educational fairness.

Special attention is given to the Netherlands as a case study, exploring how Dutch schools address the linguistic diversity of their pupils.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do monolingual ideologies in Dutch language policy conflict with multilingual classroom realities?
2. What are the effects of excluding immigrant and heritage languages from formal education in the Netherlands?
3. How do teacher beliefs about students' home languages shape educational inequality?
4. Why is translanguaging not sustainably implemented in Dutch schools?
5. Why do Dutch language policies often fail to translate inclusive aims into classroom practice?

To address these questions, the study uses a qualitative synthesis of existing research, including policy analyses, classroom studies, and international comparative work. It brings together findings from teacher interviews, case studies, and earlier research on multilingual approaches such as translanguaging, as well as analyses of legal and curricular documents.

The paper is structured as follows. This introduction (Section 1) is followed by key definitions and presents two influential models that conceptualize language policy (section 2). This is followed by a brief overview of selected countries to illustrate how national policies are implemented in classrooms (Section 3). The next part (Section 4) focuses on the Dutch context, analysing how language policy is translated into practice in linguistically diverse classrooms. In the conclusion (Section 5), the research questions are repeated and answered.

2. Key definitions and language policy models

This section outlines key definitions, conceptual frameworks, and models that inform the study of language policy, with particular attention to linguistic rights, language ideologies, and educational equity.

2.1. Key concepts in language policy and education

Language policy refers to the explicit or implicit decisions made by governments, institutions, or communities to regulate language use, status, and acquisition within a society (Spolsky 2004). These decisions manifest in formal legislation, educational frameworks, and informal practices that shape linguistic hierarchies and access to language resources. Within this context, *minority languages* are those spoken by numerically smaller groups that often lack institutional support or official recognition. These include both *indigenous languages*, such as Frisian in the Netherlands, and immigrant languages like Turkish and Arabic. A specific subset of minority languages, *heritage languages*, are typically acquired at home by children of immigrant families and are not dominant in the wider society (May 2015).

Closely related are *linguistic rights*, which refer to the entitlements of individuals and communities to use, maintain, and develop their languages in both private and public spheres. These rights are often divided into *tolerance-oriented* rights — permitting private use of minority languages — and *promotion-oriented* rights, which actively support their public use, particularly in education (May 2015). The latter is crucial for fostering equitable access to learning.

Another central concept is *language ideology*, which encompasses the beliefs and assumptions about language that influence policy and practice. In many European contexts, including the Netherlands, dominant ideologies tend to privilege monolingualism and standard language norms, thereby marginalising linguistic diversity (Aldeeb 2023).

Finally, *educational equity* refers to the fair distribution of linguistic/educational opportunities and resources. It involves addressing systemic

disadvantages faced by students who speak minority or heritage languages. Language policy plays a pivotal role in either mitigating or perpetuating these inequalities (May 2015).

2.2. Language policy models

Two rather traditional models are discussed below, which contemporary sociolinguists still draw ideas from: the models by Einar Haugen (1966) and Bernard Spolsky (2004). These theories are usually indirectly relevant for policies within a classroom or school context. They are at the basis of the treatment of multilingualism amongst learners in classroom settings.

One of the foundational models in language policy research is Haugen's (1966) model of language planning, which distinguishes between four stages: selection, codification, elaboration, and implementation. This model provides a framework for understanding how languages are standardised and institutionalised.

- *Selection* involves choosing which language or variety will be used in official domains.
- *Codification* refers to the development of norms for spelling, grammar, and usage.
- *Elaboration* expands the language's functions to new domains, such as education or science.
- *Implementation* ensures that the planned changes are adopted through policy and practice.

In the Dutch classroom, this model helps explain why Frisian has a more established presence than immigrant languages: it has undergone all four stages of planning, supported by regional and national institutions. In contrast, immigrant heritage languages often remain at the margins, lacking codification and institutional support (Wang 2024).

Spolsky (2004) offers a more sociolinguistically grounded model, emphasizing the interplay between three components: language practices, language beliefs (ideologies), and language management (explicit policy). This framework is particularly useful for analysing the gap between policy and practice in multilingual classrooms.

In this theoretical framework, *language practices* refer to the actual language use in schools and communities, *language beliefs* encompass the ideologies held by teachers, parents, and policymakers, and *language management* includes formal policies and regulations. In Dutch classrooms, for example, language practices may include students using Turkish or Arabic among themselves, while language beliefs among teachers may discourage such use. Meanwhile, language management often remains silent or restrictive regarding these languages. Spolsky's model thus highlights the need to align policy with both practice and ideology to achieve meaningful change (Spolsky 2004).

2.3. Haugen and Spolsky's models in the classroom

In light of Haugen's and Spolsky's frameworks, effective language policy in schools must move beyond monolingual norms and embrace linguistic diversity. Embracing varieties as positive entities, or welcome guests, can be seen as a tool towards unification in countries, and may be used to emphasise the special role of the national language without denigrating or ignoring smaller languages. This requires not only formal recognition of minority and heritage languages but also active support in classroom practices. Policies should encourage multilingual pedagogies, provide resources for codification and elaboration of underrepresented languages, and challenge deficit ideologies. Without alignment between beliefs, practices, and management, immigrant languages remain excluded, reinforcing social inequities. A responsive policy acknowledges students' linguistic repertoires as assets, fostering inclusion and identity affirmation. Such an approach transforms schools into spaces of linguistic justice and educational equity.

In multilingual and multiethnic societies, the integration of minority and heritage languages into mainstream education presents both significant challenges and transformative opportunities. These dynamics are particularly visible in the classroom, where institutional structures, ideological orientations, teacher preparedness, and community involvement collectively shape the educational landscape.

3. Language policy in multi-ethnic societies

This section examines how language policy in education influences the treatment of linguistic diversity in classrooms. It explores the tension between inclusive ideals and monolingual practices, with a focus on the Netherlands. Drawing on international frameworks and comparative examples, it highlights the challenges of translating policy into equitable educational practice.

3.1. Global frameworks and national realities

Language policy in education is crucial for managing linguistic diversity, yet inclusive approaches often face institutional and ideological resistance. In the Netherlands, Dutch remains the dominant language of instruction, sidelining home languages such as Turkish and Arabic. This reflects broader monolingual norms embedded in curricula and assessment, which limit the recognition of students' linguistic repertoires. Linguistic human rights offer a critical lens to assess such exclusion, highlighting the educational and emotional costs of language deprivation. Although international frameworks like UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage promote linguistic inclusion, their impact is often constrained by national priorities and political will.

Supranational organisations such as the EU and UNESCO advocate for multilingual education and mother tongue instruction as tools for equity and inclusion. Their frameworks encourage member states to support minority

languages and integrate multilingual pedagogies. However, the success of these frameworks depends on national adaptation. Many education systems continue to operate under monolingual norms, especially in centralized contexts where top-down decisions fail to reflect local linguistic realities. Bridging the gap between policy and practice requires integrating planning models with rights-based and ideological perspectives, alongside investment in teacher training and curriculum reform to support the linguistic diversity present in today's classrooms.

Globally, multilingual education is gaining recognition for its cognitive, social, and emotional benefits. Research shows that multilingualism enhances executive control, metalinguistic awareness, and resilience to cognitive conflict. It also fosters empathy, cultural understanding, and identity development among students from diverse backgrounds. These benefits are especially relevant in multiethnic societies, where inclusive language education can serve as a tool for integration and empowerment. However, the implementation of multilingual pedagogies remains uneven. Teachers often lack the training, resources, and institutional support needed to apply inclusive strategies effectively. Many educators perceive linguistic diversity as a challenge rather than a resource, and classroom practices frequently default to monolingual instruction. Bridging this gap requires not only policy reform but also investment in teacher education, curriculum development, and community engagement.

In sum, while supranational organisations provide valuable frameworks for inclusive language policy, their impact is contingent on national commitment and local implementation. The Netherlands, like many other countries, faces the challenge of translating these principles into meaningful classroom practices that reflect and respect the linguistic diversity of its pupils.

To better understand how national governments respond to these supranational frameworks — and how language policy is enacted in practice — it is instructive to examine a range of country-specific approaches. The following section offers comparative insights into how multilingual education is implemented across five different national contexts.

3.2. Comparative perspectives

Five countries illustrate diverse approaches to multilingualism in education, each shaped by distinct historical, political, and sociolinguistic contexts. These cases reveal how national language policies influence the inclusion — or exclusion — of linguistic diversity in classrooms, and how these policies affect the treatment of pupils with different language backgrounds: Canada, Belgium, Sweden, Russia, and South Africa.

Canada officially supports English and French, but the inclusion of Indigenous languages remains uneven. While the Indigenous Languages Act (2019) affirms the right to language revitalisation, implementation varies by province. Some schools offer immersion programs in Indigenous languages, but many treat them as symbolic or extracurricular, limiting their educational impact (Dagenais 2013). The

gap between policy and practice reflects broader tensions between multicultural ideals and institutional inertia (Cummins & Early 2011). Belgium recognizes Dutch, French and German as official languages, but immigrant languages receive little formal support. In Flemish schools, Dutch dominates, and multilingual pedagogies are rare. Although pilot projects in Brussels promote plurilingualism, mainstream education often maintains monolingual norms, reinforcing assimilationist tendencies (Lochtman 2018). Teachers frequently lack training to engage with students' home languages, which are often perceived as obstacles rather than assets (Leman 1999). Sweden has a long-standing policy of mother tongue instruction (MTI), introduced in 1977. Today, MTI is offered in over 160 languages across most municipalities. The policy is grounded in a "language-as-resource" orientation, promoting additive bilingualism (Aktürk-Drake 2024). However, implementation challenges persist, including teacher shortages, limited curricular integration, and varying local commitment (Oral & Lund 2021). These limitations affect how effectively students' linguistic backgrounds are supported in practice. Russia presents a contrasting case of linguistic centralisation. Although over 180 languages are spoken, recent reforms have reduced regional autonomy in language education. The 2018 amendment to the Federal Law on Education made minority language instruction optional, accelerating language shift (Bitkeeva & Kaplunova 2021). Russian is promoted as the sole unifying language, and minority languages are increasingly marginalised in schools (Suleymanova 2018), leading to a classroom culture that discourages linguistic diversity. South Africa officially recognises 11 languages and promotes mother tongue instruction in early education. However, English dominates from Grade 4 onward, and implementation of multilingual policy is hindered by resource constraints and societal preferences (Heugh 2013). Despite constitutional support, the gap between policy and practice remains wide, particularly in under-resourced schools (Ogbonnaya & Els 2024).

Together, these cases demonstrate the varied ways in which national language policies respond to supranational ideals and local linguistic realities. They underscore that while linguistic diversity is increasingly valued in principle, its realisation in classroom practice is uneven. Political will, institutional capacity, teacher training, and societal attitudes all shape how language policy is enacted. Comparative studies show that successful multilingual education requires not only inclusive policy frameworks but also sustained investment in implementation, monitoring, and community engagement (Mouboua et al. 2024, Gempeso & Mendez 2021).

4. National policies playing out in the Dutch classrooms

The Netherlands is internationally recognised for its cultural and linguistic diversity, shaped by centuries of migration, regional variation, and evolving educational frameworks. In light of growing attention to minority and heritage languages in Dutch classrooms, a nuanced understanding of the national linguistic landscape is essential.

4.1. The current situation

Dutch society is characterised by significant demographic diversity. According to Statistics Netherlands (CBS), approximately one in four residents has a migration background, with substantial communities originating from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname, and the former Dutch Antilles. More recent migration has introduced speakers of Arabic, Polish, Kurdish, and Somali, contributing to the multilingual nature of Dutch classrooms.

Research by Bredtmann, Otten, and Vonnahme (2021) indicates that while linguistic diversity does not adversely affect academic performance in core subjects such as language and mathematics, it may complicate social integration, particularly in highly heterogeneous classroom settings. These findings highlight the need for inclusive language policies that acknowledge and support students' linguistic repertoires.

Beyond immigrant languages, the Netherlands also accommodates regional languages such as Frisian — officially recognised and supported in the province of Fryslân — and dialects like Limburgish and Low Saxon. Frisian benefits from curricular inclusion and limited institutional backing, whereas other regional and immigrant languages remain largely absent from formal educational planning.

4.2. Historical development of Dutch educational language policies

The trajectory of Dutch language policy is closely linked to nation-building efforts in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The standardisation of Dutch, through the work of Siegenbeek (1804) and Weiland (1805), laid the foundation for a centralised education system aimed at promoting linguistic unity and national identity (Rutten, Krogull & Schoemaker 2019). This monolingual orientation positioned Dutch as the exclusive medium of instruction, marginalising minority and regional languages.

Throughout the 20th century, this monolingual focus persisted, with limited exceptions for Frisian. The 1950s saw its introduction as a subject in primary education and, later, as a medium of instruction in select schools. In contrast, immigrant languages remained peripheral, despite increasing linguistic diversity resulting from post-war labour migration and decolonisation. Initiatives such as OALT (Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen) in the 1980s and 1990s briefly supported instruction in immigrant languages, but were eventually discontinued due to shifting political priorities and concerns about integration (Yagmur 2004). These developments reinforced the dominance of Dutch and curtailed efforts to institutionalise linguistic pluralism in education.

4.3. Current legal and policy frameworks

Language policy in Dutch education is shaped by a combination of constitutional provisions, national legislation, and curricular guidelines. Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution guarantees freedom of education, allowing schools to

define their pedagogical and ideological orientation. However, this autonomy is bounded by national standards set by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), which outline core objectives for all schools. Dutch is designated as the primary language of instruction, with limited legal provisions for minority languages. Frisian remains the only regional language with formal curricular status, supported through agreements between the national government and the province of Fryslân. Other minority and heritage languages are excluded from core objectives and are rarely integrated into school curricula.

Recent policy developments have introduced 'burgerschapsonderwijs' (citizenship education), aimed at fostering democratic values, social cohesion, and cultural awareness. While this framework acknowledges diversity, it does not explicitly promote linguistic inclusion. Critics argue that without concrete support for minority languages, citizenship education risks reinforcing assimilationist norms (Kuiken & Van der Linden 2013). Additionally, the rise of English-medium instruction in higher education has sparked debate over the status of Dutch and the accessibility of education for Dutch-speaking students. Legal discussions continue regarding the balance between internationalisation and the protection of the national language (Edwards 2020).

Despite these challenges, interest in multilingual pedagogies is growing. Pilot projects and research initiatives have explored translanguaging, mother tongue support, and culturally responsive teaching. However, these practices remain peripheral and are not yet embedded in national policy frameworks.

4.4. Minority and heritage languages in the Dutch classroom

The linguistic diversity present in Dutch classrooms reflects the country's multicultural composition, especially in the urban areas. Pupils speak a wide range of home languages, including Turkish, Arabic, Polish, Berber, and Sranan Tongo, alongside regional languages such as Frisian and Limburgish. Yet, the policies governing their recognition and use in education remain inconsistent and contested. While Frisian benefits from formal support and curricular integration, immigrant languages are largely excluded from official educational frameworks.

This disparity reveals a deeper ideological divide. Frisian, as a co-official language in Fryslân, is protected under national and European legislation and receives institutional support in teacher training, curriculum development, and assessment. In contrast, immigrant languages are often viewed through a deficit lens — as transitional or problematic — rather than as valuable resources for learning and identity development (Groff et al. 2023). This reflects a broader "language-as-problem" orientation in Dutch educational discourse, where linguistic diversity is seen as a challenge rather than an asset (Groff et al. 2023).

The gap between policy and practice is particularly evident in mainstream public schools. While some international and bilingual schools adopt inclusive approaches, most maintain a Dutch-only norm. Teachers report limited guidance and training on how to incorporate students' home languages into classroom

activities, and school-level policies rarely acknowledge linguistic diversity beyond Dutch and English (Op het Veld & Duarte 2025). As a result, students' linguistic repertoires are underutilised, and their cultural identities remain insufficiently recognised.

Nevertheless, case studies show that some educators are beginning to challenge these norms. In linguistically diverse classrooms, teachers who adopt resource-oriented approaches — such as translanguaging or multilingual scaffolding — report increased student engagement and improved learning outcomes (Op het Veld & Duarte 2025). However, these practices are still the exception and often rely on individual initiative rather than systemic support.

Supranational frameworks, such as those promoted by the EU and UNESCO, have influenced Dutch discourse on multilingualism. Yet, their impact on classroom-level implementation remains limited. As Kuiken and Van der Linden (2013) note, national autonomy in education often dilutes European ambitions for linguistic inclusion.

4.5. Regional languages vs. immigrant languages

The contrast between the treatment of Frisian and immigrant languages highlights the unequal status of minority languages in Dutch education. Frisian, spoken by approximately 61% of the population in Fryslân, enjoys legal protection under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and is included in the national curriculum for schools in the region (Riemersma et al. 2023). It is taught as a subject and may be used as a medium of instruction in both primary and secondary education. However, even within Fryslân, implementation is uneven: fewer than one-third of primary schools and 45% of secondary schools meet all attainment targets for Frisian education.

In contrast, immigrant languages such as Turkish, Arabic, and Berber are not formally recognised within the education system. These languages are often associated with integration challenges and rarely viewed as cultural assets. Teachers and policymakers frequently adopt a "language-as-problem" orientation, focusing on the perceived barriers posed by linguistic diversity rather than its potential to enrich learning environments (Groff et al. 2023).

This disparity reflects broader ideological and political dynamics. Frisian is considered part of the national heritage, while immigrant languages are framed as foreign and temporary. Consequently, students who speak immigrant languages are less likely to see their linguistic identities affirmed in school, which can negatively affect their academic engagement and self-esteem.

4.6. Multilingualism in Dutch education

The Netherlands is a linguistically diverse country with nearly 19 million inhabitants and a reputation as a liberal democracy. Despite its multicultural reality, Dutch education remains firmly rooted in monolingual norms. While national

discourse increasingly acknowledges diversity — including linguistic diversity — the practical implementation of inclusive language policies often lags behind. This tension between rhetoric and reality reveals an educational landscape in which multilingualism is both recognised and restricted. Frisian, the second official language of the Netherlands, enjoys legal protection under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and is taught in schools in the province of Fryslân. This institutional support reflects the country's official bilingual status, though it is geographically limited. In contrast, immigrant languages such as Turkish, Arabic, and Berber lack formal recognition and are excluded from the national curriculum. Their presence in classrooms is managed informally and inconsistently, depending largely on individual schools' attitudes and discretion (Bayat, Kircher & Van de Velde 2023). Historically, initiatives such as OALT (Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen) provided instruction in immigrant languages, but these were phased out in the early 2000s due to political concerns about integration and national unity (Driessen 1996). Since then, policy has focused almost exclusively on Dutch language acquisition, with little institutional support for maintaining heritage languages. Although the Dutch Constitution guarantees freedom of education (Article 23), national curricular standards prioritise Dutch as the primary language of instruction. Frisian remains the only minority language with formal curricular inclusion, and even this is inconsistently implemented. Immigrant languages, despite their prevalence in urban areas, are largely absent from official educational frameworks. Recent studies show that while policy frameworks emphasise Dutch, classroom practices vary. Some teachers make informal accommodations for students' home languages, but these efforts are rarely supported by clear guidelines or resources (Duarte & Op het Veld 2025). Groff et al. (2023) found that many educators perceive students' home languages as barriers rather than assets. Although some experiment with translanguaging and inclusive strategies, these remain isolated efforts without systemic backing. Ultimately, the Netherlands provides formal recognition to some minority languages but prioritises Dutch in practice. Bridging the gap between policy and classroom reality requires not only legal reform but also ideological shifts and institutional support that empower educators to embrace the full linguistic repertoires of their students.

4.7. Case studies and examples from Dutch schools

Empirical research provides valuable insights into how minority and heritage languages are treated in practice in the Netherlands. A recent study by Duarte and Op het Veld (2025) examined inclusive education in bilingual schools in the Netherlands. The researchers conducted interviews with teachers and surveys with students at culturally diverse secondary schools offering bilingual education (BE). While BE programs primarily focus on Dutch and English, some schools made efforts to include students' cultural backgrounds in classroom discussions. However, students reported that their home languages were rarely acknowledged or used in instruction. Another case study by Groff et al. (2023) analysed teacher discourses in Dutch high schools. Interviews with 55 teachers revealed a dominant

monolingual ideology, with most educators emphasizing Dutch proficiency and expressing discomfort with linguistic diversity. Nevertheless, some teachers recognised the pedagogical value of students' home languages and experimented with translanguaging strategies. These practices, though limited, suggest a potential shift toward more inclusive approaches. The Mercator Regional Dossier on Frisian education (Riemersma et al. 2023) offers a comprehensive overview of Frisian's status in Dutch schools. Despite legal frameworks and dedicated funding, many schools fail to meet Frisian attainment targets. The Taalplan Frysk 2030 aims to improve Frisian education by phasing out exemptions and promoting a continuous learning pathway. This initiative demonstrates how targeted policy can support minority language maintenance, though similar efforts are lacking for immigrant languages. These case studies highlight the complexity of implementing inclusive language policies. While some schools and educators are innovating, systemic barriers — such as lack of training, resources, and institutional support — limit the impact of these efforts. Moreover, the absence of formal recognition for immigrant languages perpetuates their marginalisation.

4.8. Language policy in the Dutch classroom

Language policy in the Netherlands is a strategic and structural effort to align educational practices with students' linguistic needs. Below are findings from empirical studies to explore how language policy is implemented and experienced in Dutch classrooms. Recent practice-oriented research into language policy in Dutch schools reveals a fragmented and inconsistent implementation. Bais, Faber, and Megens[1] found that only 18% of teachers at Krimpenerwaard College could correctly identify the national reference levels for language proficiency. While 62% acknowledged the importance of language skills, just 21% felt personally responsible for fostering language development. According to the SLO (2025), Dutch schools typically adopt either a narrow or broad approach to language policy. Broad language policy involves cross-curricular collaboration and shared responsibility among teachers. The SLO reports that 74% of schools with a broad policy have appointed a language coordinator, indicating a formal and institutional commitment to language development. In teacher education, the integration of language-oriented subject teaching ('Taalgericht Vakonderwijs', 'TVO') remains limited. Kuiper (2021) found that only three out of thirteen teacher education programs had structurally embedded TVO in their curricula. The main barriers to implementation included lack of time (35%), insufficient expertise (40%), and inadequate policy support (25%). Attitudes toward multilingualism in education also present challenges. Nederlof and Smit (2018) reported that 43% of teachers held negative views, while only 22% expressed positive attitudes. Despite this, multilingual students consistently outperformed their monolingual peers on tasks requiring creative thinking, although they tended to score lower on standardized

[1] Bais, S., L. Faber & M. Megens. 2013. *Taalbeleid in Het Voortgezet Onderwijs*. Universiteit Utrecht.

language assessments. Van der Borden and Lafleur (2022) examined pedagogical practices in multilingual classrooms and found that students who were allowed to use their home language felt 30% more recognized. Moreover, the combined use of TVO, NT2 (Dutch as a second language), and translanguaging strategies led to increased classroom participation and improved language skills. Together, these studies illustrate that language policy in the Netherlands is evolving but remains complex and unevenly implemented. Effective policy requires structural embedding in curricula, targeted professional development, and a shift in teacher attitudes toward multilingualism. Recognizing students' linguistic repertoires as valuable contributions to the learning process is essential for fostering inclusive and effective education.

4.9. A monolingual tradition with regional exceptions

The Netherlands is characterised by a strong tradition of Dutch monolingualism in education. While Frisian is recognised as a minority language and included in the curriculum in the province of Fryslân, immigrant languages such as Turkish, Arabic, and Berber are largely excluded from formal education. Historical programs like OALT (Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen) once provided instruction in immigrant languages but were discontinued in the early 2000s due to political shifts and concerns about integration (Driessen 1996).

Recent studies show that while Dutch policy emphasises linguistic assimilation, classroom practices vary. Teachers occasionally accommodate students' home languages informally, but these efforts lack institutional support and are not part of a coherent national strategy (Bayat, Kircher & Van de Velde 2023). The result is a gap between policy and practice, with limited recognition of linguistic diversity beyond Frisian.

4.10. Language diversity as resource or problem

Groff, Zwaanswijk, Wilson, and Saab (2023) examine how Dutch high school teachers perceive and respond to linguistic diversity, and how these perceptions shape language policy implementation. In a context where nearly 25% of the population has a migration background (CBS 2020), classrooms are increasingly multilingual. The authors conducted semi-structured interviews with 55 teachers from various schools in a large Dutch city, analyzing discourse patterns related to students' backgrounds, home languages, and school policies.

Findings reveal that many teachers are uneasy with categorizing students by migration background, recognizing the problematic nature of insider-outsider distinctions. A dominant "language-as-problem" orientation emerged, with home languages often viewed as obstacles to learning. Teachers frequently promoted Dutch-only norms, even during informal moments such as breaks. Nevertheless, some educators acknowledged the pedagogical value of students' home languages, noting improved comprehension and engagement when translanguaging was permitted.

Quantitative data showed that 78% of teachers prioritized Dutch acquisition as the main goal of language policy, while only 22% valued the maintenance of home languages. Concerns were raised that allowing other languages might hinder Dutch learning or cause confusion. The study applies Ruiz's (1984) framework of language orientations — language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource. Most teachers aligned with the first, though a minority embraced inclusive practices. Groff et al. advocate for teacher education programs to address language ideologies and promote additive multilingualism. They call for explicit policies that support linguistic diversity and challenge deficit discourses in Dutch secondary education.

5. Conclusion

Using the Netherlands as a case study, this study addresses the persistent gap between the didactic and sociolinguistic realities of contemporary classrooms and the continued dominance of certain national policies and unwritten cultural norms. The study draws on a qualitative synthesis of policy documents, classroom research, teacher interviews, and comparative studies. Five problems have surfaced as elaborations on each of the five research questions. These are discussed below, and corresponding solutions are presented.

The first research question was: 'How do monolingual ideologies in Dutch language policy conflict with multilingual classroom realities?'. Educational language policy in the Netherlands illustrates a fundamental problem, as it remains largely grounded in monolingual norms despite the multilingual realities of contemporary classrooms. Linguistic diversity is treated as exceptional rather than structural, resulting in a persistent mismatch between policy and practice. Research on language policy shows that such misalignment persists when ideological orientations are not brought into line with actual language use in institutions (Spolsky 2004). A key solution therefore lies in explicitly recognising multilingualism at policy level as a normal condition of schooling and in adopting pluralist language policies that reflect sociolinguistic realities rather than nationalist assumptions (May 2012). A more general attitudinal solution would be to present multilingualism as a bonus rather than as a problem (Smakman, Ansah & Anderson 2026).

The second research question, 'What are the effects of excluding immigrant and heritage languages from formal education in the Netherlands?', pointed to a closely related problem concerning the institutional exclusion of immigrant and heritage languages from formal education. Dutch education policy continues to position Dutch as the sole legitimate language of instruction, assessment, and teacher education, while widely spoken languages such as Turkish, Arabic, and Polish remain absent. Addressing this problem requires structural curricular and assessment reform that legitimises these languages within the education system. Extensive research demonstrates that additive multilingual models support both academic achievement and identity development (Cummins 2000), while education

systems that integrate minority languages into formal structures show stronger long-term equity outcomes (Heugh 2015).

The problem underlying the third research question, 'How do teacher beliefs about students' home languages shape educational inequality?', revolves around deficit-oriented teacher attitudes toward multilingual pupils. Many teachers have been socialised into viewing students' home languages as barriers to learning, which restricts pedagogical innovation and reinforces inequality. This problem can be addressed through teacher education that foregrounds language awareness, multilingual pedagogies, and critical reflection on language ideology. García and Kleifgen (2018) argue that reframing multilingualism as a pedagogical resource is central to inclusive education, while Hélot (2006) shows that shifts in teacher beliefs are closely linked to training and institutional discourse.

The fourth research question asked, 'why is translanguaging not sustainably implemented in Dutch schools?'. A key problem is that even when inclusive practices such as translanguaging are known and occasionally applied, they remain fragmented and unsustained. This is largely due to institutional constraints and monolingual structures in teacher preparation and curriculum design. Research on translanguaging stresses that such practices must be embedded system-wide rather than treated as individual classroom strategies (García & Wei 2014). When supported at policy, curriculum, and assessment levels, translanguaging becomes sustainable and enhances participation, comprehension, and learner belonging (Velasco & García 2014).

Finally, a broader structural issue is captured in the fifth and final research question: 'Why do Dutch language policies often fail to translate inclusive aims into classroom practice?'. Indeed, language policy frequently remains symbolic rather than effective. National frameworks articulate inclusive aims but lack concrete mechanisms for implementation, thereby placing responsibility on individual educators without sufficient institutional support. Studies of language policy implementation show that meaningful change depends on linking policy intent with classroom practice through clear guidelines, resources, and professional development (Hornberger 2005). Menken (2008) further demonstrates that without such support, top-down language policies fail to produce equitable outcomes, underscoring the need for coordinated institutional investment.

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Article history:
Received: 09 December 2025
Accepted: 12 March 2026

Bionote:

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 417–441
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47476
EDN: CMUSCT

Research article / Научная статья

Four generations, three languages, one island: Language shift and identity negotiation among Sakhalin Koreans

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Abstract
This article investigates language shift and identity negotiation among four generations of Sakhalin Koreans, drawing on 44 life-history interviews conducted in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. The study aims to reveal the patterns and strategies used by speakers of highly endangered languages via complex analysis of the contexts of unbalanced bilingualism. It examines how Korean, Russian, and Japanese have accumulated distinct ideological meanings across a century of displacement, colonial rule, Soviet assimilation and post-Soviet transformation. The analysis demonstrates that language shift in this community does not follow a linear path toward Russian, but instead reflects patterned strategies developed within families to maintain heritage connections while adapting to institutional and social pressures. First-generation multilingual repertoires illustrate the historical layering of linguistic resources; second-generation speakers navigate the closure of Korean-medium schools by developing 'kitchen Korean' as a functional domestic code; third-generation speakers rely on symbolic and receptive ties to Korean; and fourth-generation speakers engage with heritage largely through popular culture and transnational mobility aspirations. Across these trajectories, identity emerges as a negotiated and historically situated process rather than a fixed category. Speakers draw on available linguistic and cultural resources to position themselves within overlapping layers of belonging (ethnic, regional, national, and transnational). The findings highlight the durability of heritage identities even under conditions of linguistic assimilation and contribute to broader debates on multilingualism, diaspora identity, and the long-term dynamics of language maintenance and loss in minority communities. The study contributes to understanding how identity negotiation operates in contexts marked by multiple displacement experiences and shifting political arrangements.
Keywords: *language shift, language ideologies, language and identity, Sakhalin Koreans*

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For citation:
Zoumpalidis, Dionysios & Mira B. Bergelson. 2026. Four generations, three languages, one island: Language shift and identity negotiation among Sakhalin Koreans. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 417–441. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47476 EDN: CMUSCT

Четыре поколения, три языка и один остров: языковой сдвиг и конструирование идентичности у корейцев Сахалина

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Аннотация
В данной статье проводится комплексный анализ процессов языкового сдвига и конструирования идентичности среди четырех поколений сахалинских корейцев на основе 44 биографических интервью (life-history interviews), проведенных в Южно-Сахалинске. Целью работы является выявление паттернов и стратегий, используемых носителями языков, находящихся под серьезной угрозой исчезновения, в условиях несбалансированного билингвизма. В исследовании рассматривается, как корейский, русский и японский языки приобретали специфические идеологические значения на протяжении столетия, отмеченного депортациями, колониальным правлением, советской ассимиляцией и постсоветскими трансформациями. Анализ показывает, что языковой сдвиг в данном сообществе не является линейным процессом перехода на русский язык. Напротив, он отражает структурированные семейные стратегии, направленные на сохранение связей с культурным наследием в условиях адаптации к институциональному и социальному давлению. Мультилингвальный репертуар первого поколения иллюстрирует историческую многослойность языковых ресурсов; представители второго поколения, столкнувшиеся с закрытием корейских школ, выработали «кухонный корейский» в качестве функционального домашнего кода; третье поколение опирается на понимание и символические связи с корейским языком; четвертое же поколение взаимодействует с этническим наследием преимущественно через массовую культуру и стремление к транснациональной мобильности. В рамках этих траекторий идентичность предстает не как фиксированная категория, а как динамичный, исторически обусловленный процесс. Носители используют доступные языковые и культурные ресурсы для самоопределения в рамках пересекающихся уровней принадлежности (этнического, регионального, национального и транснационального). Результаты исследования подчеркивают устойчивость этнической идентичности даже в условиях языковой ассимиляции и вносят вклад в дискуссии о мультилингвизме, диаспоральной идентичности, а также в изучение долгосрочной динамики сохранения и утраты языков в миноритарных сообществах. Работа позволяет углубить понимание механизмов конструирования идентичности в контекстах, характеризующихся перемещением населения и сменой политических установок.
Ключевые слова: *языковой сдвиг, языковые идеологии, язык и идентичность, сахалинские корейцы*

Для цитирования:
Zoumpalidis D., Bergelson M.B. Four generations, three languages, one island: Language shift and identity negotiation among Sakhalin Koreans. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 417–441. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47476 EDN: CMUSCT

1. Introduction

Language shift among diaspora communities rarely follows predictable patterns. What appears as straightforward assimilation often hides complex negotiations between heritage language maintenance, institutional pressures, and individual agency (Albury & Schluter 2021). The Sakhalin Korean community presents a particularly interesting case for examining these dynamics, shaped as it has been by successive waves of displacement, colonial experience, and political transformation across nearly a century.

The Sakhalin Island, positioned between Russia and Japan in the North Pacific, has served as home to ethnic Koreans since the early twentieth century. Unlike other Korean diaspora communities that emerged through voluntary migration, Sakhalin Koreans experienced multiple layers of forced migration and institutional reorganization. Japanese colonial authorities initially brought Koreans as manual laborers during the 1920s and 1930s in southern Sakhalin which, at the time, was under Japanese rule. Following Japan's defeat in World War II in 1945, these communities found themselves under Soviet administration, subject to new language policies, new language ideologies and new assimilationist strategies. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the consequent post-Soviet period opened up new possibilities for transnational connections with South Korea while consolidating Russian as the dominant societal language.

This socio-historical complexity makes Sakhalin an ideal site for examining how language shift intersects with identity negotiation across multiple generations of Sakhalin Koreans. The community's linguistic repertoire spans three languages, each carrying distinct ideological weight: Korean functions as a heritage language tied to ancestry and cultural continuity; Japanese persists in memory as the language of colonial subjugation; Russian operates as the language of institutional legitimacy, prestige and modernity.

Recent scholarship on language and identity in multilingual contexts has moved beyond simple models of language loss or maintenance to examine the strategic ways speakers employ linguistic resources across different social contexts (see García & Wei 2014). Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) influential framework for understanding identity negotiation in multilingual settings proves particularly relevant here, as it emphasizes how speakers actively navigate between imposed identity categories and self-determined positioning.

The present study draws on 44 interviews conducted in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk during September 2021 to examine language shift and identity negotiation among four generations of Sakhalin Koreans. The research addresses three interconnected research questions:

1. How do different generations of Sakhalin Koreans negotiate their ethnolinguistic identities through strategic use (or avoidance) of Korean, Russian and Japanese linguistic resources across family, institutional and community contexts?

2. What ideological meanings do Sakhalin Koreans attach to their trilingual repertoire, and how do these meanings shape intergenerational family language policies and transmission patterns?

3. How do institutional changes, particularly the early 1960s closure of Korean-medium schools and the 1990s establishment of cultural centers, influence language shift trajectories and identity construction strategies?

2. Historical background

2.1. The Japanese colonial period (1905–1945)

Japanese control over southern Sakhalin began following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, when the Treaty of Portsmouth of 5th September 1905 awarded Japan territorial rights of southern Sakhalin. The island, known to Japanese administrators as 'Karafuto', became a site of intensive resource extraction and colonial settlement (Din 2013). Korean migration to Sakhalin during this period occurred through multiple channels, creating a heterogeneous population with varying legal statuses and economic positions. Early settlements of Koreans, mostly from southern provinces of Korea, established small communities engaged in agriculture, fishing, and petty trade. The largest influx of the Korean population took place in the 1930s and early 1940s when Japanese colonial authorities intensified resource extraction efforts. Labor recruitment campaigns and later, during the WWII, forced labour migration, brought thousands of Korean workers to Sakhalin to perform hard manual labour in coal mines, timber operations, and construction projects (Pak Syn Y 2007). The Japanese authorities pursued the policy of cultural assimilation. Thus, the schools opened on the island followed the Japanese system, and instruction was conducted in Japanese.

2.2. Soviet period of integration (1945–1991)

In 1945, as a result of WWII the entire Sakhalin (and four Kuril Islands) became part of the Soviet Union. Dozens of thousands of Koreans stayed behind along with the ethnic Japanese. Repatriation of all of them, at that time — Japanese subjects — was part of the political agreement between Japan and the Soviet Union where Japan was obliged to evacuate all its citizens. Most of the Japanese people and some Koreans left in 1945. Since Korea became independent, and stopped being part of Japan, Sakhalin Koreans were, technically speaking, no longer part of this agreement. The agreements stopped to work for both the Japanese and Soviet sides. Initially, the Soviet Government planned to repatriate Koreans back to their native land, but repeatedly postponed the plan because of the potential manpower shortage for Soviet Russia (Park & Balitskaya 2015: 84, cited in Yusupova 2022).

Political divisions after the Korean war also contributed to the situation. For political reasons, the Soviet government would not allow the Sakhalin Koreans to return to South Korea, where they were from, but instead promoted their relocation to North Korea. Thus, the Korean population of Sakhalin, which numbered by that moment around 23 thousand, was left behind with a strange status of non-citizens, without a right to leave the island and some other restrictions (Din 2015). Korean tradition of hard work made them a valuable workforce, especially at the scarcely populated island of Sakhalin. They were paid relatively well for their work, but found themselves trapped in the middle of political, ideological and economic controversies.

Another controversy came from the fact that thousands of people who were needed in the Sakhalin economy were hard and experienced workers but they did not know Russian. They and their children had to learn Russian, become literate and integrate in Soviet society without becoming full-fledged citizens. Very soon, in spring of 1946, 2300 Korean children started attending 27 primary and secondary schools. Instruction was held in Korean using the Japanese pedagogical system. In spite of the shortages and simply lack of the teaching materials and qualified teachers, the number of the Korean schools continued to grow and did the work they were created for: teach the Korean population Russian and adjust them, especially the younger people, to life in the Soviet Union. Russian language was taught from 3 to 12 hours a week and Korean three hours every day (Kuzin 2011: 253).

The main problems were that less than qualified local teachers who often spoke Japanese better than Korean were seconded by the Koreans from the continent who were returning to the Primorsky Krai after forced evacuation in the 30-ies. Some of them, returning from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were happy to teach in Sakhalin, but originating from the northern parts of Korea, their language differed from that of the Sakhalin Koreans who in most cases came from the southern parts. Still, up to 1963–64 when instruction in Korean stopped, the Korean youth was getting primary and secondary education in their language, and Korean theater and newspapers and magazines in Korean were actively instilling Soviet values onto the Korean community (Din 2014). Almost all of this was terminated in the early sixties. The language and cultural policies targeted for assimilation.

By that time, Korean young people could get permission to continue education outside Sakhalin. The citizenship issue became even more complicated, as the Soviet authorities were no longer pushing the Sakhalin Koreans to adopt the North Korean citizenship and started to grant Soviet citizenship (though it was a very complicated process). Still the majority of the older generation born outside of Sakhalin kept their status of non-citizens and hoped to get back to their homeland and relatives.

2.3. Post-Soviet transformations (1991-present)

The next wave of the revival of Korean in Sakhalin schools took place in the last Soviet years. The collapse of the USSR signified a relief of assimilation policies, and many ethnic minorities living in the post-Soviet territories began regaining and reconsidering their ethnic and cultural identities, which led to a heightened interest in minority languages. The Korean language was introduced as an optional class at one Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk school with the help of the Korean specialists from both Koreas that visited the island (see Yusupova 2022).

In the early 1990s, the Korean language was already taught at 12 schools around Sakhalin. Strong ties with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea were established that helped to create instructional materials and train future teachers of Sakhalin schools at South Korean universities (Kuzin 2010). At that time there still was intergenerational transmission of the language from grandparents who studied Korean at schools before 1963 to their grandchildren. This transmission was interrupted when the so-called 'first generation' started to leave the island after the Korean Republic eventually agreed to repatriate those Koreans who were born before August 15, 1945. This was a long and painful political and social process that led to the second wave of family separation. Not all of the representatives of the first generation left. While in 1993 about 15,000 Koreans expressed their wish to return to Korea (of those less than 4,000 left), in 1997 there were less than 5,000 of them (Pak Syn Y 2024).

But it also heightened the interest towards studying Korean among the younger generation triggered by the new opportunities to visit South Korea, work and get education there. Not the least part of this was and still is the interest in the modern Korean mass culture among the youth. The success of Korean TV series, fashion and style were very visible all over the world at the beginning of the 21st century.

The last 25 years saw quite a lot of changes and contradictory trends. The repatriation program officially ended in 2015, and by that time some representatives of the 'second generation' were also allowed to the program to take care of their elderly parents. As of today, the Korean population of Sakhalin is around 30,000 people of which half reside in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Less than 25% of Sakhalin Koreans speak the language at least to some extent.

3. Theoretical considerations

3.1. Identity as performance and negotiation

In this study we rely on Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) theoretical framework, which conceptualizes the idea that identity is something that speakers actively construct through discourse and language use rather than possess as a fixed attribute. Drawing on poststructuralist insights about the performative nature of identity, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) argue that multilingual speakers engage in ongoing negotiations between different identity positions, some imposed by dominant institutions and others claimed through individual or collective agency.

The negotiation aspect of their framework emphasizes that identity construction occurs within asymmetrical power relations that privilege certain identity positions while marginalizing others. Speakers cannot freely choose any identity they prefer, rather, they work within constraints established by dominant ideologies, institutional arrangements, and historical contexts. However, these constraints do not determine identity outcomes. Speakers retain agency to resist, subvert, or creatively reconfigure available identity categories, though such resistance may carry social costs. Central to their framework is the distinction between four types of identities that speakers may encounter.

1. **Imposed identities** are those that are assigned (imposed) by institutions or dominant groups. These identities are often imposed without regard for personal preferences or self-understanding. Additionally, these identities typically reflect power relations and may serve to justify exclusion, discrimination, or differential treatment.

2. **Assumed identities** are those that speakers accept and internalize. These identities may align with imposed categories or represent forms of resistance to dominant expectations.

3. **Negotiable identities** are those that speakers can actively construct and modify through discourse and practice, often by combining elements from different identity traditions or creating new hybrid categories. These identities represent the creative dimension of identity work, demonstrating how speakers exercise agency within structural constraints.

4. **Non-negotiable identities** are those that speakers experience as fixed or essential, often related to family history, physical appearance, or core values that resist modification through discourse or practice. These identities may be positive or negative but are experienced as unchangeable aspects of self-understanding (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004: 19).

For Sakhalin Koreans, imposed identities have shifted across historical periods, from Japanese colonial subjects to Soviet nationalities to Russian minorities. Assumed identities reflect strategic acceptance of these categories when they serve speakers' goals. Negotiable identities emerge through creative combinations of ethnic, national, and regional elements. Non-negotiable identities include physical appearance, family ancestry and historical memory that persist regardless of linguistic competence or cultural adaptation.

3.2. Language ideologies and symbolic capital

Identity negotiation is deeply intertwined with language representations and social attitudes, which serve as symbolic components defining the vitality of a language within a community (see Moskvitcheva et al. 2023). Understanding identity negotiation among Sakhalin Koreans requires attention to the ideological meanings attached to different languages within this community's social contexts. Language ideologies, that are beliefs about languages and their speakers that reflect broader social and political arrangements, shape how speakers understand and

evaluate their linguistic resources (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994). Similarly, in research on post-Soviet heritage language communities, language ideologies are shaped by a complex interplay of political, social, and economic factors that either hinder or facilitate the maintenance and transmission of heritage languages across generations (Zabrodskaja & Ivanova 2021). In the Sakhalin Korean context, three distinct ideological configurations have emerged around Korean, Russian, and Japanese.

Korean functions as heritage language ideology, associated with ancestry, cultural authenticity, and moral continuity across generations. This ideology persists even when Korean competence declines, allowing speakers to maintain ethnic identification through symbolic rather than functional language use. Russian operates through modernity ideology, positioned as the unmarked language of contemporary life, institutional participation, and social mobility. This ideology naturalizes Russian dominance while obscuring the historical processes through which this dominance was established. Japanese carries trauma ideology, associated with colonial subjugation, cultural suppression, and historical violence. This ideology effectively excludes Japanese from positive identity constructions despite its potential utility for regional economic connections.

These ideological configurations create complex symbolic capital arrangements that speakers must navigate strategically. Following Bourdieu (1991), linguistic resources function as symbolic capital when they provide access to social recognition, institutional legitimacy, or community belonging. However, the value of different linguistic resources varies significantly across contexts and audiences.

4. Data and methodology

The research material was obtained through interviews with Sakhalin Koreans during fieldwork. The fieldwork was conducted in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the administrative center of Sakhalin Oblast and the place with the largest number of ethnic Koreans on the island, during September 2021. It took place within the framework of the 'Rediscover Russia' programme, which included 10 second year students enrolled in the MA program in Language Policy and two HSE professors. The programme was financed by the Higher School of Economics. The timing proved fruitful for several reasons. September coincided with Korean cultural festivals and Sabantuy at a local park, providing opportunities to observe community gatherings and meet participants in culturally meaningful contexts. The month also marked the beginning of the academic year, facilitating access to educational institutions and younger participants through university connections.

The primary recruitment strategy involved a 'friend-of-a-friend' technique that began with contacts provided by the Korean Cultural Center and expanded through participant suggestions. This approach proved effective for accessing participants across different age groups and social networks while building trust through personal connections. Supplementary recruitment occurred through spontaneous encounters in public spaces, particularly during cultural events and community

gatherings. These encounters often produced more informal interviews that captured different aspects of language use and identity performance than scheduled interviews in institutional settings.

Interview locations varied according to participant preferences and practical considerations. Private homes provided intimate settings for family-focused discussions, while institutional venues such as the Korean Cultural Center, Sakhalin State University, and Korean-language media offices offered contexts where public Korean identity was more explicitly performed.

The final sample included 44 participants representing four generational cohorts based on the classification system used by Japanese and South Korean Red Cross organizations during repatriation programs.

First generation participants (born before August 15, 1945) experienced Japanese colonial rule during their formative years and witnessed the transition to Soviet administration as adults. This cohort includes both voluntary migrants who arrived during the early colonial period and forced laborers who were transported to Sakhalin. Their language repertoires typically include Korean as a heritage language, Japanese as a colonial language, and Russian as a language of Soviet integration.

Second generation participants (born 1945–1965) experienced childhood during the early Soviet period when Korean-language education was still available, but reached school age during or after the 1964 closure of Korean schools. This cohort navigated the transition from Korean to Russian as the primary language of education and social mobility. Their experiences provide crucial insights into how families adapted language practices to changing institutional arrangements.

Third generation participants (born 1965–1985) grew up entirely within Russian-dominant educational and social environments but maintained varying degrees of connection to Korean heritage through family networks and cultural activities. This cohort came of age during the late Soviet period and experienced the post-Soviet opening to South Korea as young adults, creating opportunities for heritage language revival and transnational identity exploration.

Fourth generation participants (born 1985–present) represent the first cohort to grow up with access to Korean cultural resources and transnational connections from childhood, but also the most linguistically assimilated into Russian-dominant environments. Their experiences show how heritage identity construction occurs when linguistic competence is minimal but cultural resources are available.

Our sample achieved a reasonable gender balance (23 women, 21 men) and included participants from various educational and occupational backgrounds. Educational levels ranged from secondary school completion to advanced degrees, while occupations included students, teachers, cultural workers, business owners, retirees, and various professional categories. This diversity proved important for understanding how language practices and identity negotiations may vary across different social and life circumstances.

Semi-structured life-history interviews were conducted in Russian, lasting between 20 and 90 minutes (average 45 minutes). All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and subsequently transcribed. The interview guide focused on language learning experiences, family language practices, identity constructions and community belonging across participants' lifespans. Questions (see Appendix 1) were designed to elicit narratives rather than categorical responses, allowing participants to construct their own interpretations of their linguistic trajectories and identity negotiations. All real names have been substituted with pseudonyms.

5. Results

The analysis of interviews reveals systematic patterns of language shift across four generations, though these patterns reflect complex negotiations rather than simple linear assimilation. Each generation developed distinctive strategies for managing multilingual resources that reflect both historical constraints and individual agency.

5.1. First generation: Multilingual survival strategies

First-generation participants, born before 1945, experienced their school years under Japanese colonial administration and retain the most complex multilingual repertoires within the community. Their language practices reflect the historical layering described in Section 2, with Korean functioning as the primary home and/or heritage language, Japanese as a remembered colonial language, and Russian as a language of later Soviet integration.

Korean remains the strongest language for most first-generation speakers, though their competence reflects the regional and social varieties they acquired during childhood rather than standardized forms promoted in contemporary South Korea. Many participants describe their Korean as 'village Korean' or 'home Korean', emphasizing its domestic and community-based character.

AV, a first-generation participant, illustrates the typical linguistic trajectory of her age-cohort when describing her childhood language environment:

(1)

MB: *(...) Скажите, а когда вы росли, дома вы разговаривали на корейском?*
AV: *Да, на корейском. Японский знала — все забыла. Корейский. Потом в школу ходила — корейский, русский там.*
MB: *А японский забыли?*
AV: *Да, я маленькая была, лет 4-5.*
MB: *Но вы же родились здесь — откуда японский-то был?*
AV: *А японцы здесь жили!*
MB: *Потому что японцы здесь жили?*
AV: *Японцы, да*.

[MB: (…) Tell me, when you were growing up, did you speak Korean at home?
AV: Yes, Korean. I knew Japanese, I forgot it all. Korean. Then at school, Korean and Russian there.
MB: And you forgot Japanese?
AV: Yes, I was little, about 4–5 years old.
MB: But you were born here, where did the Japanese come from?
AV: The Japanese lived here!
MB: Because the Japanese lived here?
AV: Japanese, yes.]

This account captures several important patterns. Korean appears as the unmarked home language, requiring no special explanation or justification. Japanese is acknowledged as a former competence but dismissed as forgotten, reflecting both the traumatic associations of colonial education and the lack of contexts for Japanese use in post-1945 Sakhalin. Russian enters through schooling, positioned as an additional rather than replacement language during her childhood.

The same participant's account of intergenerational transmission reveals how first-generation speakers understood their role in language maintenance during the early Soviet period:

(2)

Дочка у меня старшая понимает чуть-чуть, разговаривает. А младшая… ну, понимает, но не знает всего. Ну они врачом работают.
[My elder daughter understands a little and speaks, and the younger one... understands but does not know everything. Well, they work as doctors.]

This description suggests that first-generation parents expected their children to maintain some Korean competence, even as Russian became the primary language of education and social mobility. The distinction between 'understands' and 'speaks' indicates recognition that passive competence might be sufficient for family communication while acknowledging that productive competence was becoming more difficult to maintain, especially in light of the higher instrumental value and growing influence of the Russian language on career building.

First-generation accounts also reveal the crucial role of grandparent-grandchild relationships in language transmission during the transitional period. Several participants describe arrangements where grandparents provided childcare while parents worked, creating intensive Korean-language environments for young children before they entered Russian-dominant schooling. However, these transmission arrangements proved temporary. The same participants who describe successful Korean transmission to grandchildren also acknowledge that this competence was typically lost once children began formal schooling and reduced their contact with Korean-speaking elders.

Japanese competence among first-generation speakers presents a more complex pattern. While most participants claim to have 'forgotten' the Japanese language, the interviews reveal fragmentary retention of vocabulary, phrases, and

cultural knowledge that suggests more persistent competence than the informants initially acknowledged. This apparent contradiction can be seen as a reflection of the traumatic associations of Japanese language learning during the colonial period rather than actual complete language loss.

Additionally, one first-generation participant recalled the disciplinary context of Japanese language education:

(3)

Братья, в школу пойдет, японский язык выскакивает, указкой получали. Били их, мальчиков.
[The brothers went to school and if Japanese slipped out, they were hit with a pointer. The boys were beaten for Japanese.]

This memory illustrates how Japanese competence became associated with physical punishment and cultural suppression in post-1945 Soviet Sakhalin, creating negative ideological associations that persisted for decades after the colonial period ended.

Russian acquisition among first-generation speakers frequently occurred primarily through adult education and at workplace interaction rather than childhood education and/or socialization.

(4)

L: *Я, этот… японский школу три году ходила, японский. Девять лету было, сорок пятого года. И мне шесть лет, папа умерла. Поэтому мы вот так, тяжело жили.*
M: *А братья, сестры были?*
L: *Брата старший была. Ну, чуть-чуть старше. Вот так жили, и школу я бросила, все — потому что маму помочь надо*.
[L: I went to this em… a Japanese school for three years, Japanese. I was nine years old, in 45. And when I was six, my father died. So we lived like that; it was hard.
M: Did you have brothers or sisters?
L: I had an older brother. Well, a little older. That's how we lived, and I left school because I had to help my mother.]

The above interview excerpt shows incorrect case marking (*девять лету* instead of the correct *девять лет*), gender agreement mismatches (*папа умерла* instead of *папа умер*), and other inaccuracies indicating that Russian was acquired primarily through adult schooling and/or workplace use, with residual optionality in morphology and agreement, and a code that functions as a 'learned' rather than a medium in which a speaker has a high competence.

The linguistic repertoires of first-generation speakers thus reflect the historical complexity of their experiences, with each language carrying distinct ideological associations and functional specializations. Korean functions as the language of heritage and family authenticity, Japanese as a traumatic memory of the Japanese colonizers, and Russian as a practical necessity for Soviet integration, even with often limited language competencies.

5.2. Second generation: Language shift and 'Kitchen Korean'

Second-generation speakers (born 1945–1965) experienced the most dramatic institutional changes, particularly the 1964 closure of Korean-medium schools. The informants' accounts reveal creative adaptation strategies that maintained heritage connections while accommodating Russian-dominant education. This generation developed what participants frequently termed as 'kitchen Korean', a domestic register that preserved intergenerational communication at home (domestic-related topics while adapting to institutional constraints). The concept of 'kitchen Korean' emerged mostly in second-generation interviews, representing a strategic response to institutional language policies. As one participant explained:

(5)

> B: *Мы жили с бабушкой и дедушкой, да. Бабушка, она вообще не говорила, почти что, по-русски, и мы ей должны были отвечать по-корейски. То есть такой язык, который, я говорю, "кухонный", мы знали и могли отвечать. (...) И дома мы говорили по-русски. Когда мы ездили в Углегорск к другой бабушке, там уже немножко смешанная была речь. Но тоже, в основном, все русский — бабушка-то по-русски понимала, она нам говорила по-корейски, мы ей по-русски отвечали. Ну что тут такого?*
> [B: We lived with our grandparents, yes. My grandmother hardly spoke Russian at all, so we had to answer her in Korean. In other words, we knew that "kitchen" Korean and could reply in it. (…) And at home we spoke Russian. When we went to Uglegorsk to visit my other grandmother, the speech there was a bit mixed. But still, mostly everything was in Russian— the grandmother understood Russian: she would speak to us in Korean, and we would answer her in Russian. Nothing unusual about that!]

This interview excerpt shows several important patterns in second-generation language practices. The term 'kitchen language' suggests a register that was functional for basic domestic communication but lacked the vocabulary and grammatical complexity necessary for out-of-home or professional contexts. The arrangement described here is Korean for grandmother-directed interaction, Russian for general household communication, which represents a common compromise that allowed families to maintain intergenerational communication while adapting to Russian-dominant social environments. The distinction between 'kitchen Korean' shows how institutional language policies created hierarchies between formal and informal language varieties as well as strictly distinct spheres and places of use. As Kibrik (2021) notes for endangered languages in Russia more broadly, school-based support may complement heritage maintenance, but it cannot fully substitute for sustained intergenerational transmission in the home.

What is of interest is that the same informant's characterization of this language use arrangement as "Nothing unusual about that" indicates how second-generation speakers normalized complex bilingual practices as ordinary household pragmatics rather than conscious heritage maintenance strategies. This

normalization may have facilitated the gradual shift toward Russian dominance by reducing the ideological significance of language choice within family contexts.

Second-generation participants also experienced the 1963–64 closure of Korean-language schools as a remarkable turning point in their linguistic trajectories. GI, a second-generation participant, provided a concise timeline of this institutional change:

(6)

> *Корейский язык у нас преподавали в школе до 64 года — в 64 году по понятным причинам, так скажем, корейский язык перестали преподавать, а потом 90-е годы, 93, 92 год, начали снова изучать как дополнительный язык, курсы*.
> [Korean was taught in our schools until 1964, then for obvious reasons it was stopped, and in the 1990s, around 1992 to 1993, it started again as an optional subject, courses.]

The phrase *по понятным причинам* ("for obvious reasons") in this account reflects how community members understood the school closure as part of broader political pressures and ideological reorientation rather than educational policy decisions. This may suggest that second-generation speakers accepted this institutional change as inevitable, even if they regretted its consequences for Korean language maintenance.

Second-generation participants frequently describe their Korean competence in terms of functional limitations that reflect the restricted contexts in which they used the language. Many characterize their Korean as sufficient for family communication but inadequate for formal or professional contexts, acknowledging gaps in vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. These functional limitations reflect the broader pattern of domain restriction that characterizes heritage language maintenance in immigrant contexts. As Korean became increasingly confined to family and community contexts, speakers had fewer opportunities to develop the specialized registers necessary for formal communication, creating a cycle of functional reduction that made Korean less useful for younger generations, and hence language transmission.

However, second-generation speakers also demonstrate creative strategies for maintaining Korean competence despite institutional constraints. Several participants describe self-directed learning efforts, including reading Korean-language materials, participating in cultural activities, and seeking out Korean-speaking conversation partners within the community.

5.3. Third generation: Symbolic Korean and strategic bilingualism

Third-generation participants, born between 1965 and 1985, grew up entirely within Russian-dominant educational and social environments but maintained varying degrees of connection to Korean cultural heritage and (limited) language input through family networks and cultural activities. Their language practices

reflect the use of Russian as the primary language of social interaction while Korean persists in restricted domains and in increasingly symbolic forms. Most third-generation participants describe themselves as Russian-dominant speakers with limited Korean competence, often characterized as passive/receptive understanding.

In the group interview, three third-generation Korean participants described their relationship with Korean in terms that emphasize passive understanding over active production:

(7)

R1: *Везде одинаковые истории. Вот в корейских семьях нашего поколения*.
R2: *Мы учили в школе русский язык. Поэтому мы в совершенстве владеем русским. То есть вот да*.
I: *А вот в самом детстве не помните родители с вами на корейском разговаривали?*
R1: *Родители разговаривали на корейском. Мы все понимаем. Мы как собаки понимаем, но сказать ничего не можем. Какие -то там отголоски остались, конечно. Иди, открой дверь сходи там.*
I: *Да это такое*.
R3: *В обиходе то, что было*.
I: *Да*.
I: *А сложно сочиненные предложения нет*.
R3: *Или когда поесть позовут*.
[R1: Everywhere, the stories are the same. In Korean families of our generation, too.
R2: We studied Russian at school. That's why we speak Russian perfectly. Yes, that's right.
I: And in early childhood, do you remember if your parents spoke Korean with you?
R1: Our parents spoke Korean. We understand everything. We understand like dogs, we understand, but can't say anything. Some echoes remain, of course. Like "Go open the door", "Go there".
I: Right, that kind of thing.
R3: Everyday phrases that were used.
I: Yes.
I: But no complex sentences.
R3: Or when they called us to eat.]

This is reminiscent of second-generation 'kitchen Korean' where the language was used for limited purposes at home, for simple functions for food or other domestic spheres, but the children had only passive knowledge of it, i.e. understanding Korean of their parents/grandparents but not being able to utter anything in the language (comprehension without production), but respond in Russian, the only language they were fluent in.

Similarly, when VS (born 1967) was asked if his friends and/or relatives speak Korean, he argues along these lines that:

(8)

I: *А ваши друзья ровесники корейцы как, по-вашему, они говорят по-корейски? Или ваших ровесников всё-таки уже нет?*
VS: *И, да, редко-редко между словом между так между словами могут использовать, но в основном русский язык.*
[I: And your Korean friends of the same age, do they speak Korean, in your opinion? Or are there none of your peers left anymore?
VS: Well, yes, very rarely, between words, here and there, they might use something in Korean, but mostly they speak Russian.]

Third-generation informants also demonstrate creative strategies for engaging with Korean heritage despite limited linguistic competence. Many describe participating in Korean cultural activities, learning Korean songs or dances, or studying Korean history and culture through Russian-language materials. These cultural engagement strategies reflect the availability of new resources for Korean heritage exploration that emerged during the post-Soviet period. Korean cultural centers, university programs, and media outlets created opportunities for heritage engagement that did not require advanced Korean language competence, allowing third-generation speakers to construct Korean identity through cultural rather than linguistic means.

Along these lines, another third-generation informant continued:

(9)

Мы ходим в корейский центр на праздники, на традиционные танцы. Моя дочь там учит корейские песни. Дело не в том, чтобы говорить идеально, а в том, чтобы оставаться на связи.
[We go to the Korean center for holidays, for traditional dancing. My daughter learns Korean songs there. It's not about speaking perfectly, it's about staying connected.]

This account demonstrates how cultural engagement can substitute for linguistic competence in heritage maintenance strategies. The phrase "it's not about speaking perfectly" suggests a pragmatic approach to ethnic identification that emphasizes cultural participation over linguistic authenticity.

The Russian competence of third-generation speakers reflects their complete integration within Russian-dominant educational and social environments. Most participants describe Russian as their natural language of thought and expression, requiring no conscious effort or translation from other linguistic systems. This Russian dominance extends beyond functional competence to include cultural and ideological identification with Russian society and values. Many third-generation participants describe themselves as Russian in cultural terms while maintaining Korean ethnic identification, illustrating the complex relationship between linguistic competence and cultural identity in multilingual contexts.

5.4. Fourth generation: Heritage awareness and popular culture

Fourth-generation participants, born after 1985, represent the most linguistically assimilated age-group within the Sakhalin Korean community. Most

of the participants describe themselves as monolingual Russian speakers with minimal Korean competence, typically limited to a few words, or phrases, learned from grandparents and/or cultural activities.

At the same time, however, fourth-generation speakers demonstrate complex awareness of their Korean heritage and often express interest in learning more about the Korean culture and consequently, language. This heritage awareness often reflects the availability of Korean cultural resources that emerged during their childhood and adolescence in post-soviet Sakhalin island, including Korean popular culture, educational programmes, and transnational connections with South Korea.

NS, a fourth-generation participant described his relationship to Korean heritage and language in these terms:

(10)

I. *А вы по-корейски говорите?*
N. *пару слов знаю, выражений, там, счёт до 20-ти знаю. Ну вот, просто не учили. Если бы учил, сейчас многие моё поколение, они сами обучаются, а у меня просто времени не хватало на это. Сейчас…*
I. *Угу. А почему вот ваше поколение обучается?*
N. *А, многие хотят в Корею уехать. Вот уже, наверное, человек 10 у меня уехали, кто-то закончил школу всё, в этом году, в позапрошлом. Ну, просто в Корее как бы очень культура такая развитая и все хотят отсюда, особенно наше поколение корейцев.*
I. *Молодое поколение?*
N. *Да. Ну и все хотят вот, сейчас разрешают поколение бабушки, им разрешают сейчас переехать, если они здесь родились и у них родственники там были. Ну, переехать туда, им жильё дадут, всё обеспечат, и мы можем как кровные родственники тоже туда переехать, младшее поколение.*
[I: And do you speak Korean?
N: I know a few words and expressions, I can count up to twenty. But we simply didn't learn it. If I had studied, maybe… Now, many people of my generation are learning on their own, but I just didn't have the time for it. Now…
I: Uh-huh. And why is your generation learning it now?
N: Ah, many want to move to Korea. Around ten people I know have already gone, some finished school this year or last year. It's just that Korea has such a developed culture, and everyone here wants to leave, especially our generation of Koreans.
I: The younger generation?
N: Yes. And now they allow people of our grandparents' generation to move, if they were born here and had relatives there. They can move there, get housing, be provided for, and we, as their blood relatives, can also move, the younger generation.]

This interview excerpt highlights the link between language revival and migration motivation, for many diaspora youth, learning Korean is not only about heritage nostalgia but also, and primarily about mobility capital, a ticket to

opportunity in the homeland of their ancestors. In this sense, Korean begins to function as a commodified linguistic resource, not only a marker of ethnic belonging, but also a form of symbolic capital connected to education, migration, employability and access to South Korea. This resonates with Muth's (2017) discussion that in the contemporary global context, the shift towards neoliberalism has led to the commodification of linguistic forms, where language functions as symbolic capital and a "semiotic product" within wider markets and mobility tendencies.

At the same time, EL confirming Nikita's words, started learning Korean herself by watching Korean-language channels from South Korea via satellite TV:

(11)

EL. *Да. Да. Во-первых, здесь несколько каналов. Я больше смотрю корейские каналы. Там очень, ну, там, мелодрамы всякие разные, да, сериалы, поэтому мне интересно.*
I. *Ну, вы всё понимаете, когда смотрите?*
EL. *Практически да. Правда вот вижу… С техническим там назначением, допустим, более уже унифицированные такие слова, выражения есть, вот как бы. А так в обиходе вот так если в семейном, в житейском, мне как бы всё понятно. Первый раз я, когда начала смотреть корейские сериалы или фильмы, ну, это было, исторические такие фильмы были. Так я начала понимать только с третьего раза.*
[EL: Yes, yes. First of all, there are several channels here. I mostly watch Korean ones. There are lots of, well, all kinds of melodramas and series, so it's interesting to me.
I: And do you understand everything when you watch them?
EL: Almost everything, yes. Although, when it comes to technical terms, there are more standardized words and expressions now. But in everyday, family, or day-to-day speech, I understand everything. The first time I started watching Korean dramas or films, they were historical ones, I only began to understand from about the third time.]

EL's description shows fluency in Korean primarily acquired through media exposure, showing that entertainment can function as informal language learning. The reference to Korean popular culture indicates how transnational media creates new possibilities for heritage engagement that do not require family-based language transmission. The acknowledgment of Korean ethnic identity despite the limited Korean competence suggests that heritage identification can persist across generations even when language transmission fails.

The expressed interest in learning Korean together with practical constraints reflects the complex relationship between heritage identity and linguistic competence among fourth-generation speakers. While many express curiosity about Korean language and culture, few have the time, resources, or social support necessary for serious language learning efforts. Fourth-generation participants also demonstrate awareness of the historical trajectory that led to their linguistic assimilation, often expressing regret about the loss of Korean competence within

their families while acknowledging the practical reasons for this shift. This historical consciousness suggests that language shift is understood as a collective rather than individual phenomenon, reflecting broader social and political forces rather than personal choices.

The Russian competence of fourth-generation speakers represents complete Russian native-speaker proficiency across all domains and registers. Most participants describe Russian as their only natural language of expression, with no conscious awareness of translation or code-switching processes that might indicate underlying multilingual competence. However, some fourth-generation participants demonstrate subtle influences from Korean cultural patterns in their Russian language use, including cultural references that reflect their heritage background. These influences typically operate below the level of conscious awareness and may not be recognized by speakers themselves as markers of Korean identity. In other words, Korean identity has persisted through various symbolic and cultural means that demonstrate the complex relationship between language and identity in multilingual contexts (see also Hornberger & Wang 2008).

6. Discussion

The extension of Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) identity negotiation framework to the Sakhalin Korean context shows how identity construction operates across extended historical periods through both individual and collective processes. The four-generation span documented in the present study reveals that identity negotiation is not merely a synchronic phenomenon occurring within individual lifespans, but rather involves cumulative processes that span multiple generations and sociopolitical and historical transformations.

The concept of 'imposed identities' proves particularly relevant for understanding how external political changes create new identity categories that communities must navigate strategically. The transformation from Japanese colonial 'forced migrants' working mainly as manual labourers to Soviet citizens to Russian minority group highlights how imposed categories change across historical periods, requiring ongoing adaptation. However, the persistence of 'сахалинские корейцы' (Sakhalin Koreans) as a self-designated category demonstrates how communities can maintain coherent collective identities despite changing external impositions and ideological realities.

The data extends theoretical understanding of 'negotiable identities' by documenting how speakers construct hybrid categories that transcend binary ethnic-national frameworks. The emergence of regional identity markers like 'местный' (local) and institutional categories like 'сахалинские корейцы' (Sakhalin Koreans) demonstrates the creative potential of identity negotiation processes. These hybrid constructions challenge essentialist identity frameworks while showing how speakers can construct coherent positions that acknowledge multiple aspects of their social identity (Albury & Schluter 2021, Banki & Adhikari 2024). The hierarchical distinctions documented between Sakhalin Koreans, recent North

Korean migrants and mainland Russian Koreans illustrate how regional belonging creates new forms of authenticity claims and community boundaries. These findings contribute to recent research on diaspora identity construction by showing how local belonging can strengthen rather than weaken ethnic identification, creating multiple layers of community membership that reflect specific historical circumstances (see also Brubaker 2005, Anthias 2009, Ermak 2025).

The analysis of language ideologies reveals how Korean, Russian and Japanese carry distinct symbolic meanings that persist across generations despite changing patterns of linguistic competence. Following Woolard and Schieffelin's (1994) framework, these ideological configurations seem to function as cultural representations of the intersection of language and social life that mediate between linguistic practices and social structures. The persistence of Korean as heritage language ideology, Russian as modernity ideology, and Japanese as trauma ideology demonstrates the durability of symbolic associations even when functional language use changes significantly. This finding contributes to recent research on language ideologies by showing how symbolic meanings can outlast linguistic competence itself, continuing to influence identity construction processes across multiple generations (see Cavanaugh 2020, Woolard 1998).

The symbolic capital arrangements documented in this study illustrate Bourdieu's (1991) insights about how linguistic resources function as forms of cultural capital that provide access to social recognition and institutional legitimacy. However, the Sakhalin Korean case reveals the complex ways that symbolic capital operates in multilingual diaspora contexts where different languages carry value in different social domains. The limited convertibility of Korean linguistic capital outside heritage community contexts demonstrates how symbolic capital arrangements reflect broader power relations while creating opportunities for community-internal recognition and belonging (Norton 2000, Darvin & Norton 2015, Piller 2016).

The concept of 'kitchen Korean' provides a significant contribution to understanding how heritage languages survive institutional pressures through domain restriction and functional adaptation (see also Pavlenko 2001). This finding challenges models of heritage language maintenance that assume comprehensive preservation across all social domains is necessary for successful intergenerational transmission (Fishman 2001, King et al. 2008). Instead, the 'kitchen Korean' phenomenon demonstrates how families can maintain meaningful heritage language use through strategic domain restriction that aligns with available linguistic resources and social and political circumstances (see also Inan & Harris 2025). This adaptive strategy allows for intergenerational communication and cultural transmission while acknowledging the practical constraints imposed by Russian-dominant institutional environments, especially after the closure of Korean-medium schools in Sakhalin.

The documentation of asymmetrical bilingual patterns across generations contributes to recent research on family language policy by showing how heritage

language maintenance can occur through receptive competence rather than productive fluency (Spolsky 2012, Melo-Pfeifer 2015). The metaphor of 'understanding like dogs' captures the complex emotional dimensions of heritage language relationships that persist despite limited speaking ability, suggesting that heritage language connections may be more resilient than traditional measures of linguistic competence would indicate.

The role of Korean popular culture consumption in fourth-generation identity construction represents an innovative finding that contributes to understanding how diaspora communities maintain heritage connections through transnational cultural flows rather than traditional family transmission patterns. The extensive 'consumption' of Korean dramas, music, and digital content documented among younger participants shows how contemporary cultural resources can supplement (or even replace) traditional heritage language learning.

This finding aligns with recent research on digital diaspora communities and transnational identity construction, demonstrating how globalized cultural resources create new pathways for heritage engagement that do not require formal language learning or traditional cultural transmission (Park & Wee 2012). The preference for contemporary Korean culture over traditional heritage practices suggests that effective heritage language revitalization efforts may need to align with contemporary cultural interests rather than focusing exclusively on historical preservation.

7. Conclusion

In this study we examined language shift and identity negotiation among four generations of Sakhalin Koreans, revealing complex strategies for managing multilingual resources within changing sociopolitical and ideological contexts. The findings show that language shift in the Sakhalin Korean community involves complex negotiations between cultural heritage maintenance, social mobility, and personal autonomy. The processes of identity construction across four generations highlight how communities maintain integrity despite changing external political and social circumstances. The emergence of hybrid identity categories like 'Sakhalin Koreans' shows the need for the creation of a local regional identity and its negotiation while revealing how regional belonging becomes embedded within ethnic identity. Additionally, we believe the research contributes to a broader understanding of how multilingual diaspora communities may construct sustainable identity(ies) that acknowledge both historical heritage and contemporary realities. Moreover, the concept of 'kitchen Korean' language provides significant insights into heritage language maintenance through family language use and home domain restriction, and functional adaptation. While this study offers deep insights, its focus on Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk presents a limitation; future research could explore the experiences of Sakhalin Koreans in other geographic locations to provide a more comprehensive picture.

Additionally, the role of Korean popular culture 'consumption' in fourth-generation identity construction represents a modern and innovative way for heritage engagement that, in a way, supplements traditional family transmission policy. This finding has important implications for heritage language revitalization efforts, suggesting that effective programs must acknowledge diverse forms of heritage connections including all types of media and social networks rather than just giving priority to traditional linguistic competence.

Lastly, language loss and cultural assimilation of the Sakhalin Korean community is far from simple and as such it highlights how language communities, especially in diaspora contexts, can develop innovative social and linguistic arrangements that reflect their specific historical period of strategic adaptation while maintaining connections to both heritage and contemporary cultural resources. Thus, the significance of this research extends beyond the specific case of Sakhalin Koreans to broader theoretical questions in sociolinguistics. The study contributes to understanding how identity negotiation operates in contexts marked by multiple displacement experiences and shifting political arrangements. Empirically, the research provides detailed documentation of language practices within a community that has received limited scholarly attention from the standpoint of sociolinguistics, despite its unique socio-historical position.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Dionysios Zoumpalidis: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis, Writing — Original Draft, Writing — Review & Editing. **Mira B. Bergelson:** Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing — Original Draft, Writing — Review & Editing.

Acknowledgements

The study was implemented in the framework of the Basic Research Program at HSE University (HSE-BR-2025-031). We would also like to express our gratitude to Aigul Yusupova for the annotated corpus of interviews, to Yulia Din for the recruitment of participants, and to all the students who participated in fieldwork and assisted in data collection. Last but not least, we would like to thank all our Sakhalin Korean informants for sharing their personal life histories with us.

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Article history:
Received: 05 December 2025
Accepted: 12 April 2026

Bionotes:

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 442–465
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47787
EDN: COOUOX

Research article / Научная статья

Lexical interference between Ukrainian and Russian in the speech of Sevastopol residents

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Abstract
This article examines the persistence and functions of Ukrainian lexical elements in the Russian-language speech of Sevastopol residents against the backdrop of shifting language policies and political transformations. The research problem arises from an observable paradox: although Ukrainian was widely resisted as a language of everyday communication during the period when Sevastopol belonged to Ukraine, elements of Ukrainian vocabulary nevertheless became embedded in local speech through prolonged exposure to media, education, and bureaucratic discourse. After 2014, when Ukrainian disappeared from official domains, some of these lexical elements continued to be used in everyday interaction. Over time, however, these traces have begun to fade, making it important to document them as residual linguistic phenomena. The aim of this study is to systematize the Ukrainian lexical elements present in the Russian speech of Sevastopol residents and to identify their sociolinguistic functions. The data were obtained through surveys and interviews, on the base of which a corpus of approximately 150 Ukrainian words and expressions was compiled. The corpus was analyzed using the methods of thematic classification, and functional-pragmatic analysis in order to determine patterns of distribution and communicative motivation. The results demonstrate that even language policies that fail to produce large-scale language shift can leave lexical residues in everyday speech. Ukrainian expressions persisted as tools of communicative efficiency, emotional expression, quotation, irony, and group identity. The study contributes to sociolinguistic theory by emphasizing that language policy outcomes must be evaluated not only through institutional indicators but also through everyday linguistic practices, where ideology, habit, and memory intersect.
Keywords: *Ukrainian language, Russian language, language policy, language ideology, lexical persistence, identity*

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For citation:
Nekrasova, Mariya Yu. 2026. Lexical interference between Ukrainian and Russian in the speech of Sevastopol residents. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 442–465. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47787 EDN: COOUOX

Украинско-русская лексическая интерференция в речи жителей Севастополя

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Аннотация
В данной статье исследуются устойчивость и функции украинских лексических элементов в русскоязычной речи жителей Севастополя на фоне смены языковой политики и политических трансформаций. Исследовательская проблема возникает из рассматриваемого парадокса: несмотря на то, что повседневное общение на украинском языке в период, когда Севастополь входил в состав Украины, вызывало широкое сопротивление, элементы украинской лексики все же укоренились в местной речи благодаря длительному воздействию медиа, образования и бюрократического дискурса. После 2014 г., когда украинский язык полностью исчез из официальных сфер, некоторые из этих лексических элементов продолжали автоматически использоваться в повседневной коммуникации. Однако со временем эти следы начали исчезать, поэтому важно зафиксировать данные остаточные языковые явления. Цель настоящего исследования — выявить и систематизировать украинские вкрапления в русской речи севастопольцев, а также описать их социолингвистические функции. На основе анализа данных, полученных с помощью опросов и интервью, был составлен корпус из 150 украинских слов и выражений. Для анализа корпуса и определения моделей употребления и коммуникативной мотивации использованы методы тематической классификации и функционально-прагматического анализа. Результаты демонстрируют тот факт, что даже языковая политика, которая не приводит к масштабному сдвигу в языке, может оставлять лексические следы в повседневной речи. Украинские выражения сохранились как инструменты коммуникативной емкости, эмоциональности, цитирования, иронии и групповой идентичности. Исследование вносит вклад в социолингвистическую теорию, подчеркивая, что результаты языковой политики должны оцениваться не только через институциональные показатели, но и через повседневные речевые практики, где пересекаются идеология, привычка и историческая память.
Ключевые слова: *украинский язык, русский язык, языковая политика, языковая идеология, лексическая устойчивость, идентичность*

Для цитирования:
Nekrasova M.Yu. Lexical interference between Ukrainian and Russian in the speech of Sevastopol residents. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 442–465. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47787 EDN: COOUOX

1. Introduction

The study of language functional and regional characteristics has become a central concern across sociolinguistics, anthropology, and political science. Language variability in a given historical moment is no longer seen merely as surface change; rather, it is treated as evidence of a language's cognitive vitality, adaptive potential, and social reach across strata and space. Contemporary scholars argue that shifts in vocabulary, distribution and function reflect not only internal linguistic dynamics but also changing socio-cultural environments and political projects that redefine what counts as legitimate speech.

Two closely intertwined concepts organize much of the recent works on the politics of language: language policy and language ideology. Although often used together, these concepts highlight distinct levels of analysis. *Language policy* refers to institutionalized decisions and measures (legal, administrative, educational) that regulate the status, domains, and uses of one or more languages in a territory (Barakos 2016, Shmidt 2006, Spolsky 2019). *Language ideology* designates the system of beliefs, values, and representations about languages shared by social groups, which shape perceptions of prestige, authenticity, and belonging (Seargeant 2009, Silverstein 1979, Woolard 1998, 2021). Crucially, a third phenomenon — *language activity* (or grassroots language activism) — links the two: bottom-up practices and campaigns that transform ideological commitments into social pressures and, potentially, into policy change (Combs & Penfield 2012, De Korne 2021, Du Plessis 2006, Nurutdinova, Khanova & Mustafina 2022).

One of the most striking recent examples of language policy failure is the attempt to impose Ukrainian in Sevastopol during the first decade of the 21st century (prior to 2014). The city's response illustrates how historical identity, local ideology, and deliberate forms of language activity can render top-down language engineering ineffective. Sevastopol's particular trajectory helps explain this resistance. Founded in 1783 as a naval base by Catherine the Great, the city developed a distinctive political and cultural orientation. As one of the key southern Russian ports, it inevitably attracted communities of different ethnic groups and a variety of linguistic influences. During the Soviet period, however, Sevastopol preserved the special administrative status of a closed military base, with Russian as the sole official language. Although Crimea as a whole was transferred to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954 due to Khrushchev's territorial reorganization, Sevastopol maintained a unique civic profile and a population whose everyday linguistic behavior remained predominantly Russian. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Crimea became part of independent Ukraine, and the new state began enforcing its language policy.

Throughout stable historical connections mixed varieties of Russian and Ukrainian appeared in some regions. Well known "*surzhyk*", commonly defined as a hybrid or mixed speech combining elements of Ukrainian and Russian, has been stigmatized in both Ukraine and Russia: in Ukraine, as a "chaotic, destructive hybrid" undermining the literary norm of the state language, and in Russia, as

evidence of incomplete assimilation or linguistic interference (Del Gaudio 2015: 216). However, Sevastopol's residents broadly rejected Ukrainian in daily speech, preserving Russian as the language of communal life. The state's attempts at imposed language change therefore produced limited behavioural change and, importantly, became one of the grievances that fed political realignment in 2014. Since that year, the Ukrainian language has almost completely disappeared from Sevastopol's public sphere (television, advertising, signs, documentation), however, some Ukrainian words continue to be used in colloquial speech by the city residents.

The case shows how policy, when unanchored in local ideology and practice, can fail — and how such failure can have deep political consequences. At the same time, traces of such policies can reshape local language ideology and yield unpredictable outcomes. The relevance of this research stems from Sevastopol's position under constant political and scholarly scrutiny, yet with insufficient coverage of its internal linguistic dynamics. Because the city is perceived internationally as a contested territory, accounts of its language situation are often framed through geopolitical narratives rather than empirical observation. This study addresses that gap by tracing how, despite resistance to imposed Ukrainization, certain Ukrainian words became embedded in everyday communication, and how in the post-2014 period these remnants tend to disappear. Sevastopol thus emerges as a unique case where linguistic processes are better understood not as instruments of politics, but as consequences of geopolitical transformations. The immediate aim is to identify frequent lexical items of Ukrainian origin in the everyday speech of Sevastopol residents and to analyze the historical, social, and ideological motives behind their continued use.

Research questions

Which Ukrainian lexical elements persist in the everyday Russian-language speech of Sevastopol residents?

Which thematic domains show the highest degree of lexical retention?

What communicative and pragmatic functions do Ukrainian-origin lexical items perform in everyday speech?

What sociocultural factors contribute to the persistence of these lexical elements despite changes in language policy?

2. Theoretical framework

Definitions of language policy vary depending on disciplinary approach, yet they generally converge on two central claims. At its core, language policy can be understood as a system of state regulation in the sphere of language and education, encompassing a set of principles, practices, and institutional mechanisms designed to address language-related issues within a society (Sokolovskiy & Filippova 2018). In this sense, language policy is not limited to abstract declarations but involves deliberate planning aimed at organizing the functional distribution of languages across social domains. Such planning typically includes the allocation of languages

to specific spheres of communication — public administration, education, political activity, and social institutions — reflecting broader patterns of social organization (Kanevskiy 2015, Spolsky 2019).

A further important theoretical dimension concerns the relationship between formal regulation and lived linguistic practice. Language policy operates not only through administrative decisions but also through the interaction between language use, cultural expectations, and institutional authority. As a result, policy outcomes depend on how official norms are interpreted and enacted within everyday communicative environments rather than on legal prescriptions alone (Combs & Penfield 2012). This complexity is reinforced by the multilevel nature of governance: language policy is shaped simultaneously by central, regional, and local authorities, whose interests and priorities may diverge significantly (Borisova 2021). Consequently, language policy also includes decisions concerning the symbolic and functional status of languages, the maintenance of dominant codes in key public domains, and the management of linguistic diversity through the regulation of minority or regional languages (Barakos 2016, Shmidt 2006).

Beyond its formal definition, language policy is not purely a technocratic endeavor. It intersects with broader projects of nation-building, socio-economic agendas, and political struggles (Blommaert 2010, Shmidt 2006, Spolsky 2019). Consequently, policy involves not only the state but also a plurality of actors, including parliamentary elites, administrative bodies, educational institutions, expert communities, civil society organizations, and grassroots groups. This multiplicity of participants reflects the complex nature of policy implementation, where formal decisions are interpreted and negotiated across different institutional and social levels (Spolsky 2019). In the Russian scholarly tradition, this diversity of actors has been emphasized as a key factor shaping policy outcomes, particularly through the role of non-state participants such as journalists, migrants, and non-governmental organizations, who influence how official measures are practically used (Sokolovskiy & Filippova 2018).

Scholars have also conceptualized language policy outcomes as ranging along a continuum from constructive to destructive models. Constructive measures are designed to expand the domains of minority or regional languages, for example through bilingual schooling, official recognition, or targeted media support. Switzerland provides a paradigmatic example: the recognition of German, French, and Italian as equal official languages, supported by federal institutional arrangements, has enabled the maintenance of linguistic pluralism under stable political conditions (Tyuleneva 2023). By contrast, destructive measures aim at linguistic unification and the reduction of diversity. The historical French project of linguistic standardization, initiated in the early modern period and intensified in the nineteenth century, marginalized regional languages such as Breton and Occitan, demonstrating how legislation and education can be mobilized for national consolidation with long-term sociolinguistic consequences (Gulinov 2011).

Ukraine's post-1991 trajectory provides a more recent example. The adoption of Ukrainian as the sole state language was intended to consolidate national identity, but in predominantly Russian-speaking regions the policy often provoked resistance. In Sevastopol, for instance, schools were formally required to shift to Ukrainian, yet in practice they struggled: there were too few competent teachers, and parents resisted reorienting children's education. As a result, what emerged was not full Ukrainianization but a situation of receptive bilingualism: residents passively understood Ukrainian, partly due to its presence on television and in print, but continued to use Russian as their active, communal language. This mismatch between state instruments and local practices illustrates how policy without adequate social grounding may lead to unintended outcomes (Csernicskó 2011).

Language ideologies constitute another crucial component of the theoretical framework, complementing the institutional dimension of language policy. They refer to systems of belief, value, and representation that communities hold about languages and their speakers. In sociolinguistic theory, ideologies are commonly understood as interpretive frameworks through which speakers rationalize and justify language use. These function as a bridge between linguistic practices and structures of political and economic power, shaping how people perceive prestige, legitimacy, and social hierarchy (Blommaert 1999, Seargeant 2009, Silverstein 1979, Woolard 1998). Ideologies also tie closely to historical memory, identity narratives, and geopolitical affiliations. Together, these factors influence where particular languages end up within public discourse and collective consciousness (Barakos 2016, Shmidt 2006, Tyuleneva 2023).

One needs to distinguish language ideology from language attitudes, though the two are related. Language ideology refers to broad, often institutionalized systems of belief about language. Attitudes, by contrast, involve more immediate cognitive-affective dispositions — that is, knowledge, evaluation, and behavioral intention (Seargeant 2009). This distinction helps explain why language behavior varies from one community to another. Research on language attitudes identifies three interrelated components: the cognitive (awareness and knowledge of a language), the affective (emotional evaluation and perceived prestige), and the conative (intention or willingness to use a language in communication) (Khilkhanova 2022). Both ideology and attitudes play a decisive role in shaping policy outcomes, since formal regulations become effective only when they resonate with speakers' perceptions and motivations.

This distinction helps explain situations in which formal policy measures do not result in observable shifts in language use (Seargeant 2009). For example, in Sevastopol many residents had a good passive knowledge of Ukrainian, acquired through schooling and regular exposure to television and public communication. At the same time, emotional attitudes and everyday language habits were largely oriented toward Russian, which was closely tied to daily interaction and local identity. As a result, Ukrainian words occasionally appeared in colloquial Russian, most often as ironic insertions, expressive elements, or memorable phrases, rather

than as a basis for a broader shift in language use. This situation shows that lexical borrowing can occur without deeper changes in overall language behavior.

Instead of viewing language processes as a simple linear chain (policy → practice), recent research tends to describe them as a dynamic interaction between institutional regulation and social perception. Language ideologies provide the normative and perceptual background through which policy initiatives are interpreted, contested, or reinterpreted, while policy itself contributes to the reshaping of ideological repertoires through education, administrative procedures, and media discourse (Barakos 2016, Woolard 2021). Within this framework, models linking language prestige, domains of use, and policy regimes become particularly relevant. Where a language is perceived as prestigious and widely used in public domains, policy tends to reinforce its position. Conversely, where prestige is limited and use is restricted to symbolic or private contexts, policy interventions are less likely to achieve sustained behavioral change (Tyuleneva 2023).

This model can be applied to the current case. Formally, Ukrainian occupied the official status of the state language, yet in Sevastopol, the ideology clashed with its instruments. The city's residents could passively follow Ukrainian-language news or films, but when cinema screenings were mandated exclusively in Ukrainian, audiences simply stopped attending. Here, the issue was not comprehension (understanding was high), but hearing familiar films dubbed into Ukrainian provoked irony or even ridicule. Another example lies in bureaucratic practice. Official documents in Sevastopol were issued in Ukrainian, and residents became adept at navigating Ukrainian terminology in paperwork, often with a dose of humor, while maintaining Russian as their everyday language. Such cases illustrate how policy instruments may persist on paper while being reinterpreted through local ideological frames.

The practical channel through which ideology exerts pressure on policy is commonly conceptualized as language activism. It has been defined as purposeful action aimed at influencing language practices and institutional arrangements (Combs & Penfield 2012). Researchers describe activism as encompassing diverse forms, including the production of educational materials, public advocacy, media initiatives, and institutional lobbying (De Korne 2021, Du Plessis 2006). In many international contexts, activism has supported the revitalization of minority languages, as seen in regions such as Wales or Catalonia, where sustained social engagement led to significant policy adjustments. In the Russian Federation, initiatives related to Tatar and other minority languages have similarly combined grassroots activity with legal advocacy (Nurutdinova et al. 2022).

In Sevastopol, however, activism assumed a markedly different form. Rather than organized campaigns aimed at promoting a particular language, local responses were primarily expressed through everyday communicative choices. This pattern can be described as negative activism — a form of implicit resistance in which speakers do not openly challenge policy but gradually neutralize its practical effects by continuing to use their preferred language in daily interaction. Such

behavior did not abolish policy formally, yet it limited its effectiveness by preventing its full reproduction in routine communicative practice.

Comparative research identifies different regime logics of language policy. Ethnic-federal pluralism, exemplified by Switzerland, recognizes multiple official languages tied to territorial units and sustains them through federal guarantees. Unitary monolingualism privileges a single national tongue, as in the French case, where centuries of state standardization marginalized regional varieties. Mixed or incremental regimes fall in between: the United Kingdom's gradual accommodation of Welsh after centuries of marginalization demonstrates how activism and shifting ideology can transform policy over time (Tyuleneva 2023). Ukraine attempted to shift from a de facto bilingual reality toward a unitary monolingual regime. In Sevastopol, this abrupt transition clashed with entrenched local ideology, producing not integration but polarization. Taken together, these theoretical perspectives offer a framework for analyzing the Sevastopol case. They illuminate how policy instruments, ideological commitments, and everyday practices interact to shape linguistic outcomes. They also clarify why official Ukrainization measures failed to produce sustained language shift, leaving behind instead a stratum of Ukrainian lexical borrowings embedded in Russian speech.

3. Data and methods

The study uses a corpus-based approach to examine how Ukrainian lexical elements persist in everyday Russian speech among Sevastopol residents. The methodology combines quantitative processing, thematic classification, and functional-pragmatic analysis — in order to identify distribution patterns of Ukrainian-origin items and the communicative factors behind their use. This setup makes it possible not just to list specific lexical units, but to interpret them within actual everyday communication practices. The empirical material comes from semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire survey conducted via Yandex Forms. The interviews collected information on individual language biographies, attitudes toward Ukrainian lexical elements, and perceived communicative functions.

Yandex Forms ensured broad survey accessibility and anonymity across different demographic groups. This qualitative component allowed the study to capture personal experiences, intergenerational transmission patterns, and the emotional or symbolic meanings that speakers attach to Ukrainian expressions. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions, providing a basis for quantitative measurement and qualitative interpretation alike. Lexical material was processed by compiling a corpus of Ukrainian-origin words and expressions reported by respondents. Frequency of occurrence was calculated for each item, resulting in a structured inventory of the most recurrent borrowings in the everyday Russian speech of Sevastopol residents. Statistical processing was carried out using the analytical tools built into the Yandex platform.

The study involved 157 respondents with varying demographic characteristics: age groups (18–23, 24–35, 36–45, 46–60, and over 60), education levels (secondary, vocational, higher, and postgraduate), and a balanced gender distribution. Importantly, the study did not directly measure levels of bilingualism or multilingual competence of the respondents. However, according to historical and sociolinguistic context of Sevastopol, it can be assumed that the respondents are Russian-speaking with passive familiarity with Ukrainian. This can be explained by the general linguistic situation of Sevastopol, which is characterized by a predominantly Russian-speaking environment. The population is ethnically diverse, with Russians forming the majority (70-80%). As a result, Russian functions as the primary language of everyday communication, while Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar are present only in limited and regionally specific contexts (Kashirina 2019).

The main stratifying variable was length of residence in Sevastopol. Respondents indicated whether they had lived in the city for less than ten years or more than ten years. This criterion was used to distinguish long-term residents from those who moved to Sevastopol after its reintegration into the Russian Federation in 2014. Given the city's significant demographic transformation (its population increasing from approximately 380,000 before 2014 to around 550,000 by 2024) this variable was essential for differing linguistic environments. The final analytical sample consisted of 109 long-term residents, while responses from 48 newcomers were excluded from the core analysis to ensure focus on the stable linguistic environment of the city. This decision was motivated by the need to focus one relatively stable language community and the fact that more recent arrivals are likely to have been socialized in different linguistic environments, which could affect the presence and functions of Ukrainian lexical elements in their speech.

The questionnaire contained the following components:

1. Sociodemographic information (age, gender, education).
2. Length of residence in Sevastopol (less/more than 10 years).
3. Language behavior: whether respondents use Ukrainian words or expressions in everyday Russian speech.
4. Most frequently used Ukrainian word or phrase (open-ended).
5. Other Ukrainian words or expressions that respondents recall using.
6. Attitudinal questions: personal reflections on the role of Ukrainian lexical items in communication, whether they are used deliberately or unconsciously, and emotional associations with these borrowings.

All lexical material obtained from the survey and interviews was compiled into a corpus of approximately 150 Ukrainian-origin words and expressions. These ranged from single lexical items such as *дякую* ('thank you'), *гарно* ('nice, beautiful'), and *мряка* ('drizzle, mist') to more elaborate idiomatic utterances such as *Душа бажає свята* ('The soul longs for celebration'), and *Ці руки нічого не крали* ('These hands have not stolen anything'). Such expressions were not isolated borrowings but represented a relatively stable stratum within the local speech

community's linguistic repertoire. The construction of the corpus involved normalization of spelling and functional variants. For example, *шо* and *що* were counted as variants of the same lexical item ('what'), while context-dependent uses of *до побачення* (neutral 'farewell' versus sarcastic dismissal) were categorized as one lexical unit with multiple pragmatic functions. This normalization ensured that the corpus reflects both the variety and functional range of Ukrainian lexical elements in Sevastopol speech. It should be noted that the corpus cannot be reduced to a simple list of 'loanwords'.

Thematic classification was used to group lexical items into semantic domains based on their communicative function and lexical meaning. The biggest thematic groups identified is 'etiquette formulas', which includes several subcategories, such as greetings, farewells, expressions of gratitude, and forms of address. Their inclusion within a single category is explained by their shared role as standardized units of interaction rather than lexemes with independent semantic development. Functional-pragmatic analysis was then applied to examine the operation of these units in actual communicative contexts. The focus at this stage was on their pragmatic functions, including the maintenance of social contact, expression of emotional attitude, evaluation, ironic usage, and the marking of group affiliation. The combination of thematic and functional analysis made it possible to identify not only patterns of lexical distribution, but also the communicative factors underlying their use.

At the same time, certain limitations of the study should be taken into account. The relatively small sample size constrains the extent to which the results can be generalized, while self-reported linguistic data may be affected by recall bias and limited awareness of actual speech practices. In addition, the heterogeneity of migrant groups within the respondent pool introduces additional variability, complicating the identification of strictly local usage patterns. Nevertheless, the integrated use of corpus compilation, thematic classification, and functional-pragmatic analysis provides a coherent methodological basis for studying the persistence of Ukrainian lexical elements in Sevastopol speech. This approach allows for the description not only of the lexical items themselves, but also of their functional role and the mechanisms supporting their continued use in everyday communication.

4. Results

The obtained corpus provides an insight into how language policy, sociocultural change, and everyday communicative practice interact. A key observation emerging from the data is that lexical persistence does not depend on linguistic similarity between Russian and Ukrainian. Instead, it reflects a combination of habitual usage, communicative convenience, media exposure, and shared cultural memory. Some expressions survive because they perform essential communicative functions, while others persist due to their expressive force or symbolic associations. As a result, the corpus reveals not only which Ukrainian-

origin items remain in circulation, but also how they are hierarchically organized within everyday speech. The analysis presented below focuses on several interconnected dimensions of lexical persistence, beginning with frequency patterns that identify the most stable elements of the corpus and continuing with subgroup, thematic, and functional analyses that illuminate the social and pragmatic conditions supporting their continued use.

4.1. Frequency analysis

Frequency analysis was used to identify the lexical items that demonstrated the greatest stability within everyday speech. The results showed that a relatively small group of expressions accounted for a disproportionately large number of occurrences across survey responses. These highly recurrent items function as routine communicative formulas that speakers often produce automatically, without deliberate attention to their linguistic origin or stylistic value. However, the analysis also revealed that even the most routine expressions are not pragmatically fixed. The same lexical item may function as a neutral formula in one context and as an emotionally or evaluatively marked utterance in another.

The frequency distribution of expressions revealed a clear hierarchy of use (see Table 1). Three items dominated across demographic groups: *Що це таке? / Шо* (‘what is this?’), *Дякую* (‘thank you’), and *До побачення* (‘goodbye’). Together, they accounted for nearly 60% of all mentions in the survey, confirming their centrality to the communicative repertoire.

Table 1. **Top 10 most frequent expressions**

Rank	Expression	Frequency	Share, %
1	*Що це таке? / Шо* (‘what is this?’)	38	35
2	*Дякую!* (‘thank you’)	32	29
3	*До побачення!* (‘goodbye’)	18	17
4	*Це занадто!* (‘that’s too much’)	11	10
5	*Хай буде / Нехай буде* (‘let it be’)	9	8
6	*Указівка* (‘instruction, directive’)	7	6
7	*Будь ласка* (‘you’re welcome’)	6	6
8	*Нема за що* (‘don’t mention it’)	6	6
9	*Мряка* (‘drizzle, mist’)	3	3
10	*На добраніч* (‘good night’)	3	3

These expressions occupy different pragmatic niches. *Що це таке?* (‘what is this?’) is used not only as a literal question but also as a versatile exclamation expressing surprise, irritation, or playful irony.

(1) *Скажи мне, пожалуйста, що це таке? Ты что натворил?* (‘Tell me please, what this is. What have you done?’)

Дякую (‘thank you’) served as the default form of gratitude, often used automatically in routine interactions,

(2) — *Я принес то что ты просил* (‘I’ve brought what you asked for’).
— *О, дякую* (Well, thank you).

До побачення (‘goodbye’) retained both its neutral and sarcastic functions.

(3) — *Разрешите рассказать вам о нашей новой акции* (‘Let me tell you about our new promotional offer’).
— *До побачення* (‘Goodbye’).

The dominance of these three items indicates that Ukrainian lexical traces have been naturalized into the most basic communicative acts of questioning, thanking, and leave-taking.

Items such as *Це занадто* (‘that’s too much’) and *Хай буде / Нехай буде* (‘let it be’) held important stylistic and identity functions. While less frequent, they were used with marked expressive intent. They were often used to dramatize a situation or underscore its significance.

(4) — *Пять тысяч рублей за эту сумку?! Це занадто!* (‘Five thousand roubles for this bag? That’s too much!’)
(5) — *Посмотри, что ты здесь написал! Но хай уже буде так!* (Look what you’ve written here, but let it be like this’)

Words like *указівка* (‘instruction, directive’), *зрада* (‘betrayal’), *перемога* (‘victory’), used ironically, were less frequent overall but strongly loaded in terms of social meaning.

(6) — *У нас очередная зрада* (‘We’re having another failure).

At the margins there were rare lexemes such as *паляниця* (‘a kind of bread that became a shibboleth of Ukrainian identity’), *автівка* (‘car’, colloquial), and *горілка* (‘vodka’) occurred only once or twice. The use of *паляниця* is notably symbolic, because its correct pronunciation served as a quick and often decisive test to identify someone as Ukrainian. The ability to say it correctly distinguished Ukrainians from others. The presence of these items in the corpus demonstrates the symbolic dimension of Ukrainian lexicon.

4.2. Subgroup analysis

A closer look at demographic subgroups revealed important patterns. Age emerged as a strong factor. Younger respondents (18–23 years old) frequently used humorous or meme-like expressions such as *шо воно гоне?* (‘what nonsense is this?’) or words with a playful sound pattern, such *пацюк* (‘rat’). These lexical units circulate as stylistic play. Middle-aged respondents (36–45 years old) were more likely to employ ironic bureaucratic terms such as *указівка*, reflecting their lived experience under Ukrainian state administration. Older respondents (above 60) often reproduced quotations from television or public signage, such as *Душа бажає свята* (‘The soul longs for celebration’) or *Як я вас розумію* (‘I know how you feel’), demonstrating the long-term impact of media exposure.

Gender differences were less pronounced but still observable (see Table 2). Among all respondents, women constituted approximately 65% (71 out of 109), while men accounted for about 35% (38 out of 109). Female respondents tended to use more terms of politeness, endearment and emotional reaction: *на добраніч* (‘good night’), *ти мий малісінький* (‘you are my tiny one’), *ти моє сонечко* (‘you are my sunshine’), *моя радість* (‘my honey’) as well as humorous and exasperated phrases like *погода сплюндрилась* (‘the weather has worsened’) or *щоб тебе підняло та гепнуло* (‘May you be lifted and dropped’), while male respondents were slightly more represented in ironic or dismissive categories: *сказився* (‘lost his mind’), *дурень* (‘fool’), *непотріб* (‘scoundrel/villain’).

(7) — *Назначили нового начальника отдела, но он совершенный непотріб* (‘The new manager was appointed, but he is absolutely incompetent’).

Table 2. **Ukrainian words/phrases mentioned by the respondents of one gender**

Gender	Ukrainian word/phrase
Female only	*Моя радість* (‘My joy’), *Коханочка* (‘Sweetheart’), *Ти моє сонечко* (‘You are my sunshine’), *Яка несподіванка* (‘What a surprise’), *Так отож* (‘Same here’), *Мряка* (‘Dreary weather’), *Хай вам щастить* (‘Good luck to you’), *Щоб тебе підняло та гепнуло* (‘May you be lifted and dropped’), *Смачного* (‘Enjoy your meal’), *На добраніч* (‘Good night’), *Ні за що* (‘It’s nothing’), *Прошу* (‘Please’), *Погода сплюдрилась* (‘The weather has gone bad’), Гарбуз (‘Pumpkin’), *Ти мій малесенький* (‘You are my tiny one’), *Свара* (‘Quarrel’), *Маємо, що маємо* (‘We have what we have’)
Male only	*Дурень* (‘Fool’), *Непотріб* (‘Scoundrel’), *Сказився* (‘Lost his mind’), *Шо воно гоне?* (‘What nonsense is it?’), *Не хай* (‘Let it be’), *Отака фігня, малята* (‘That’s how it is, kids’), *Зачекайте, Тримайте* (‘Wait, hold this’), *Майбутнє* (‘Future’), *Картопля* (‘Potato’)

These patterns suggest that female respondents appear to favour expressions associated with interpersonal warmth and politeness, whereas male respondents more frequently employ evaluative or ironic vocabulary, indicating differing communicative styles within the same linguistic repertoire.

4.3. Thematic classification

The 150 items were organized into twelve thematic groups (see Table 3). This classification demonstrates the breadth of semantic fields.

The distribution of lexical items across thematic groupsshows that etiquette formulas including *дякую* (‘thank you’), *нема за що* (‘don’t mention it’), *будь ласка* (‘you’re welcome’), *привіт* (‘hello’), and *до побачення* (‘goodbye’) reflect the conventionalized dimension of everyday communication. The predominance of this group indicates that Ukrainian lexical elements are most strongly preserved in routine communicative contexts that require standardized interactional responses. Because such formulas are repeated daily and often used automatically, they tend to remain stable across generations. Many respondents associated their persistence with the influence of television and advertising slogans of the 1990s–2000s, when Ukrainian-language expressions were widely present in mass media.

Table 3. **Thematic classification of corpus items**

№	Thematic group	Examples	Number of items
1	Etiquette formulas (greetings, farewells, gratitude, requests, apologies)	*До побачення* (‘Goodbye’), *Бувай* (‘Bye / take care’), *Доброго дня* (‘Good afternoon’), *Доброго ранку* (‘Good morning’), *На добраніч* (‘Good night’), *До зустрічі* (‘See you’), *Побачимо* (‘See you later’), *Па-па* (‘Bye-bye’), *Привіт* (‘Hello’), *Бувайте* (‘Goodbye’ — polite/plural), *Гарного дня* (‘Have a nice day’), *Гарного вечора* (‘Have a nice evening’), *Хай вам щастить* (‘Good luck to you’), *Побачимось* (‘See you’), *Будь ласка* (‘Please / you’re welcome’), *Нема за що* (‘Don’t mention it’), *Прошу* (‘Please’), *Смачного* (‘Enjoy your meal’), *Дякую* (‘Thank you’), *Ні за що* (‘Not at all’), *Немає за що* (‘Don’t mention it’), *Дякую вам* (‘Thank you’ — formal), *Перепрошую* (‘Excuse me / sorry’), *Прошу дуже* (‘You’re very welcome’), *Зрозуміло* (‘I see’), *Слухаю уважно* (‘I’m listening carefully’), *Люди добрі* (‘Good people’), *Пан / Пані* (‘Sir / Madam’), *Друзі мої* (‘My friends’), *Ти моя радість* (‘You are my joy’), *Моє сонечко* (‘My sunshine’), *Мій малесенький* (‘my little one’)	32
2	Interrogative expressions	*Що це таке?* (‘What is this?’), *Шо?* (‘What’), *Що це було?* (‘What was that?’), *Шо воно гоне?* (‘What nonsense is this?’), *Ну й що?* (‘So what?’), *Та що ти кажеш?* (‘Really?’), *Що трапилось?* (‘What happened?’), *Що ти робиш?* (‘What are you doing?), *Чи що?* (‘or what?’)	9
3	Emotional expressions	*То таке* (‘It is what it is’), *Хто зна що* (‘Who knows’), *Отака фігня, малята* (‘That’s how it is, kids’), *А пахне як* (‘What a smell!’), *Любов — це таке почуття* (‘Love is such a feeling’), *Це занадто* (‘That’s too much’), *Це спокуса* (‘This is tempting’), *Так отож* (‘Exactly’), *Хай буде* (‘Let it be’), *Нехай буде* (‘Let it be’), *Не хай* (‘Let it be’), *Як я вас розумію* (‘I understand you so well!’), *Душа бажає свята* (‘The soul longs for celebration’), *Оце так* (‘Wow!’), *Шкода* (‘What a pity!’), *Щоб тебе підняло та гепнуло* (‘May you be lifted and dropped’), *Хай вам щастить* (‘Good luck to you!’)	16
4	Evaluative expressions	*Гарно* (‘Nice’), *Дуже гарно* (‘Very nice’), *Файно* (‘Great’), *Погано* (‘Bad’), *Несперечливий* (‘Indisputable’), *Непотріб* (‘Worthless person’), *Несерйозливий* (‘Not serious’), *Потихеньку* (‘Slowly’), *Обережно* (‘Carefully’), *Добре* (‘Good’), *Смачний* (‘Tasty’), *Смачненький* (‘Tasty’ — diminutive), *Невдобно* (‘Inconvenient’), *Цікаво* (‘Interesting’), *Сказився* (‘Lost his mind’), *Серйозно* (‘Seriously’), *Набридло* (‘Fed up’), *М’якенька* (‘Soft’ — diminutive), *Дурень* (‘Fool’), *Гарний хлопець* (‘Handsome boy’), *Гарна дівчина* (‘Pretty girl’), *Батьківська фігура* (‘Father’s copy’), *Маємо що маємо* (‘We have what we have’) *Мертві бджоли не гудуть* (‘Dead bees don’t buzz’),	24
5	People	*Хлопець* (‘Boy / young man’), *Друзі* (‘Friends’), *Батько* (‘Father’), *Дитина* (‘Child’), *Коханочка* (‘Darling’), *Малюк* (‘Baby’), *Підлітки* (‘Teenagers’)	7
6	Time and quantity	*Цілодобово* (‘24 hours’), *Декілька* (‘Several’), *Листопад* (‘November’), *Жовтень* (‘October’), *Зараз* (‘Now’), *Вчора* (‘Yesterday’), *Сьогодні* (‘Today’), *Іншим разом* (‘Another time’), *Наступного разу* (‘Next time’), *Спробуй ще* (‘Try again’)	10
7	Objects, food, household items	*Цукерки* (‘Sweets’), *Автівка* (‘Car’), *Паляниця* (‘Traditional bread’), *Горілка* (‘Vodka’), *Буряк* (‘Beetroot’), *Цигарки* (‘Cigarettes’), *Картопля* (‘Potato’), *Огірочки з пухирцями* (‘Bumpy cucumbers’), *Гарбуз* (‘Pumpkin’), *Пацюк* (‘Rat’), *Хлібчик* (‘Bread’ — diminutive), *Ковзанка* (‘Skating rink’), *Хата* (‘House’), *Сорочка* (‘shirt’), *Вишиванка* (‘Embroidered shirt’), *Глечик* (‘Jug’), *Тарілка* (‘Plate’), *Рахунок* (‘Bill’)	18

End of Table 3

№	Thematic group	Examples	Number of items
8	Actions and processes	*Підрахуй* (‘Count’), *Не розумію* (‘I don’t understand’), *Указівка* (‘Instruction’), *Зачекай / Зачекайте* (‘Wait’), *Йдемо до дому* (‘Let’s go home’), *Тримайте / Тримай* (‘Take it’), *Дзвони* (‘Call’), *Заходь* (‘Come in’), *Слухаєм уважно* (‘Listen carefully’), *Пошукай* (‘Look for it’), *Не біжи так шустро* (‘Don’t run so fast’), *Пишатися* (‘Be proud’)	12
9	Nature and phenomena	*Мряка* (‘Drizzle’), *Погода сплюндрилась* (‘The weather has worsened’), *Розвиднилось* (‘It cleared up’), *Дощик* (‘Rain’ — diminutive), *Хмарка* (‘Cloud’ — diminutive)	5
10	Politics and public life	*Зрада* (‘Betrayal’), *Перемога* (‘Victory’), *Прапор* (‘Flag’), *Указівка* (‘Directive’), *Ці руки нічого не крали* (‘These hands have not stolen anything’), *Підпис / Дата* (‘Signature / date’), *Незалежність* (‘Independence’), *Потужними рядами та колоннами* (‘In powerful rows and columns’), *Маємо що маємо* (‘We have what we have’), *Українська мова* (‘Ukrainian language’), *Влада* (‘Authority / power’), *Голосування* (‘Voting’)	12

The second-largest group consists of evaluative expressions, including *гарно* (‘nice’), *файно* (‘great’), *погано* (‘bad’), *добре* (‘good’), and *набри́дло* (‘fed up’). These lexical items are often preferred due to their brevity and perceived expressiveness. Respondents frequently indicated that such words are easier to pronounce and, in their perception, ‘sound softer’ or, in some cases, ‘more expressive’ than their Russian equivalents. This perceived phonetic and stylistic advantage contributes to their continued use in everyday speech, particularly in emotionally marked or evaluative contexts. Emotional expressions, including *це занадто* (‘that’s too much’), *шкода* (‘what a pity’), *оце так* (‘wow’), represent another important group. These units add humour and irony to everyday speech.

A substantial portion of the corpus consists of lexical units related to everyday life and expressive communication. Names of food products and household items, such as *цукерки* (‘sweets’), *картопля* (‘potato’), *буряк* (‘beetroot’), and *паляниця* (a type of traditional bread), illustrate how Ukrainian vocabulary has become integrated into daily domestic routines. Some of these, like *буряк*, are common in southern regions as a result of long-term language contact, which accounts for their established place in local speech. Others, such as *паляниця*, carry added symbolic weight and can function as markers of cultural identity. Interrogative forms like *що це таке?* (‘what is this?’), *шо?* (‘what?’), and *що трапилось?* (‘what happened?’) form a stable part of spontaneous spoken interaction. Though interrogative in form, these expressions often serve pragmatic purposes, functioning as emotional or rhetorical responses rather than requests for information.

Several thematic groups reflect intermediate levels of lexical entrenchment. Action- and process-related words, including *підрахуй* (‘count’), *зачекай* (‘wait’), *тримайте* (‘take it’), as well as terms of time and quantity such as *жовтень* (‘October’), *декілька* (‘several’), and *цілодобово* (‘24 hours’), show how Ukrainian vocabulary has taken root in bureaucratic and institutional settings, especially through official documentation and administrative communication.

Political and public-life units, such as *зрада* (‘betrayal’), *перемога* (‘victory’), *прапор* (‘flag’), and *незалежність* (‘independence’) reflect the continued influence of political discourse and media narratives. These words are often used ironically or evaluatively, suggesting that their function frequently goes beyond literal meaning and enters the realm of social commentary. The smallest thematic groups consist of references to people, nature, and natural phenomena. Such vocabulary appears to survive mostly in specific contexts rather than as part of routine interaction.

Overall, this thematic classification demonstrates that Ukrainian lexical elements penetrate multiple layers of everyday communication, from intimate family interactions to public slogans, from consumer vocabulary to political critique. The predominance of etiquette formulas and evaluative expressions indicates that the most stable elements are those associated with frequent social interaction and the expression of personal stance. In contrast, smaller thematic domains suggest more limited but still meaningful areas of lexical persistence. This distribution supports the broader observation that the survival of Ukrainian lexical items in Sevastopol speech is closely connected to their communicative usefulness, frequency of repetition, and emotional or symbolic resonance within everyday discourse.

4.4. Functional categorization

While thematic classification mapped the semantic fields of the corpus, functional categorization provided insight into the pragmatic motivations behind lexical choice. Five overlapping categories were identified: capacity of utterance, negative assessment, emotional impact, quotations, and self-identification.

4.4.1. Capacity of utterance

The first category highlighted the communicative efficiency of Ukrainian words. Many were shorter, phonetically lighter, or stylistically more natural than their Russian equivalents. For example, *добре* (‘good/well’) competes with Russian *хорошо* but offers a more compact form and is perceived as easier to articulate in rapid speech. The same refers to *гарно* (‘nice, beautiful’), which is simpler than *красиво*; *смачного* (‘bon appétit’) is far more idiomatic than the cumbersome Russian formula *приятного аппетита*. Similarly, beverage descriptors *газована/негазована вода* (‘carbonated/non-carbonated water’) are more practical than *с газом/без газа*. Another noteworthy example is the expression *це спокуса* (‘this is temptation’). On the one hand, it is shorter and phonetically smoother than the Russian *это искушение*; on the other hand, in comparison with the Russian variant it often carries a subtle negative shade, suggesting not only temptation in a neutral sense but temptation with a malicious undertone.

These examples demonstrate that speakers frequently prioritize economy and convenience of expression, integrating Ukrainian words not out of ideological

loyalty but out of pragmatic calculation. In fast-paced oral exchanges, a single-syllable saving or a more idiomatic phrase becomes a powerful factor in lexical choice. Such items persist because they fit seamlessly into spontaneous conversation and routine interaction, illustrating how the principle of communicative efficiency can drive outcomes in situations of language contact.

4.4.2. Negative assessment

The second category demonstrated how Ukrainian lexicon is mobilized for irony, criticism, or dismissive evaluation. A prominent example is *указівка*, used not in its neutral sense of 'instruction' but specifically to mock absurd or authoritarian orders.

(8) *Нам спустили очередные указивки* ('We've received another set of instructions from above')

Choosing the Ukrainian form, speakers add a layer of irony that Russian *инструкция* lacks. Other items, such as *дурень* ('fool') or *кішка* ('cat'), serve as euphemistic substitutes for stronger insults, allowing speakers to vent frustration without crossing into obscenity.

(9) *Ну сколько можно тебе говорить, что предложение начинается с большой буквы! Ты у меня дурень?!* ('How many times do I have to tell you that a sentence begins with a capital letter! Are you a fool or what?!')

The farewell *до побачення* ('good bye') enters this category when deployed sarcastically as a dismissal equivalent to 'get lost' (see example 3). Political terms such as *незалежність* ('independence') and *пишатися* ('to be proud') can also be used ironically to critique exaggerated nationalism.

(10) *Они просто пышаются своими достижениями! Мне кажется, это уже выходит за нормы приличия.* ('They just boast about their achievements. It seems to me this goes beyond the limits of propriety')

An additional subgroup in this category includes words in which Ukrainian phonetic form resembles Russian obscene or near-obscene vocabulary. These are expressions like *підпис*, *дата* ('signature and date'), *спізнився* ('came late'). In such cases, even neutral words may trigger sarcasm, ridicule, or dismissive reactions because of unintended associations. Respondents emphasized that this phonetic overlap reinforced negative connotations and contributed to the ironic flavor of Ukrainian borrowings in Russian speech. Thus, negative assessment illustrates how Ukrainian words function as stylistic tools of distancing and resistance, enabling speakers to critique authority, mock pretension, or express disapproval. Their persistence reflects not communicative necessity but the symbolic potential of language play, where sound associations and cultural stereotypes amplify irony.

4.4.3. Emotional impact

The largest category revealed the affective power of Ukrainian language. Respondents frequently emphasized that certain words 'sound stronger', 'carry more warmth', or 'feel more heartfelt' than Russian equivalents. This perception was especially strong for terms of emotion, intimacy, or elevated style. Core examples include *Що це таке?* ('what is this?'), whose intonation may convey surprise, irritation, or playful teasing, and *слухаю уважно* ('I'm all ears'), often used ironically to dramatize concentration. Words such as *натхнення* ('inspiration'), *бажання* ('desire'), and *майбутнє* ('future') were valued for their poetic resonance and perceived stylistic richness. Terms of endearment like *сонечко* ('my sunshine'), *моя радість* ('honey'), and *мій малесенький* ('my little baby') offered affective nuance not easily captured by Russian alternatives, which were often judged as colder or more prosaic.

(11) *У меня сегодня было надхнення и я убрала всю квартиру.*
('I've been highly inspired to clean the entire flat')

For many speakers, these items evoked childhood, family warmth, or cultural intimacy, strengthening their emotional weight in daily interaction. This category shows that Ukrainian words are not merely historical residues but active resources for emotional expression. Their continued use reflects not only linguistic habit but also the symbolic and stylistic depth they add to speech, serving as markers of sincerity, intimacy, or playfulness depending on context.

4.4.4. Quotations

The fourth category traced the influence of Ukrainian media and public signage. During the 1990s and 2000s, Ukrainian-language commercials, transport announcements, and television programs flooded the Crimean linguistic landscape. Many phrases from these sources entered everyday speech as quotable references. A specific feature of this process was the ubiquity of translated international advertising. The same commercial for global brands was broadcast across different countries in multiple languages, yet for Sevastopol residents the Ukrainian versions became the ones entrenched in memory. Similarly, many Russian products were advertised in Ukrainian, creating parallel advertising environments: identical imagery but different linguistic codes. As a result, Sevastopol audiences internalized the Ukrainian wording, and even when Russian equivalents were available, the Ukrainian phrases often sounded more familiar and more 'authentic' in local usage.

In addition to commercial slogans, the corpus recorded quotations from Ukrainian political discourse. Iconic statements by politicians, often perceived as pompous or implausible, became the object of irony. By repeating them in everyday conversation, speakers highlighted their distance from official rhetoric while simultaneously demonstrating shared cultural memory.

Examples include advertising expressions like

(12) *Душа бажає свята* ('The soul longs for celebration') = *Душа желает праздника*.
(13) *Як я вас розумію!* ('I know how you feel') = *Как я вас понимаю!*
(14) *А пахне як!* ('What a smell!') = *А запах!*

as well as the well-known quotation from a Ukrainian politician

(15) *Ці руки нічого не крали* ('These hands have not stolen anything')

These phrases persist as humorous or nostalgic allusions. For many respondents, reproducing such quotations was less about Ukrainian identity than about playful intertextuality, irony, and the evocation of collective memory. Their persistence demonstrates how media saturation can leave lasting linguistic imprints even in contexts where the promoted language is not the dominant medium of daily life.

4.4.5. Self-Identification

The final category highlighted the symbolic role of Ukrainian lexicon in marking group boundaries. After 2014, Sevastopol saw a large influx of newcomers from mainland Russia who, from the point of view of the locals, demonstrated their superiority to the residents. Long-term residents often distinguished themselves from these migrants, sometimes perceiving them as "colonists." Using Ukrainian expressions in general became a way to signal belonging to "old Sevastopol." Ukrainian words thus functioned as identity markers, reinforcing in-group solidarity and contrasting long-term residents with outsiders. Furthermore, in some cases, respondents noted that such self-identification could be directed towards Sevastopol residents who, holding negative attitudes towards Ukraine and its government, transferred this sentiment to the language. After the reunification with Russia, these individuals deliberately avoid using Ukrainian words to distance themselves from their past. Thus, Ukrainian lexicon transformed into a symbolic code of authenticity, illustrating how language ideologies shape and sustain lexical practice.

5. Discussion

The results of this study provide a comprehensive picture of how Ukrainian lexical items continue to circulate in the speech of Sevastopol residents despite profound shifts in language policy and political affiliation. At the core of this finding lies the recognition that language contact and lexical borrowing are not mechanical processes imposed from above, but deeply social practices, shaped by ideology, identity, memory, and everyday pragmatics. Ukrainian words and expressions, though stripped of their former institutional support after 2014, persist as part of the communicative repertoire of Sevastopol. They survive in functions

ranging from the pragmatic to the symbolic, proving that language policy is never the sole determinant of linguistic outcomes.

As can be seen, Ukrainian lexical items among Russian speakers in Sevastopol can no longer be reduced to the legacy of Ukrainization policies. Instead, they have developed into multifunctional resources serving diverse communicative goals. For some speakers, they offer a capacity of utterance — shorter, simpler, or more idiomatic forms that ease conversation. For others, they are vehicles of negative assessment, providing irony and critique where Russian alternatives would sound flat or overly neutral. Many respondents highlighted the emotional resonance of Ukrainian words, suggesting that they carry an affective charge that enriches discourse. Still others drew on Ukrainian expressions as quotations, recycling slogans and media fragments from the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Finally, a significant subset of expressions has been re-contextualized as tools of self-identification, marking belonging to "old Sevastopol" and distinguishing residents from newcomers after 2014.

The persistence of Ukrainian words in Sevastopol also points to the role of language in regional differentiation. Even in the absence of official support — or in the presence of overt rejection — Ukrainian expressions have become part of the city's local identity. This phenomenon resonates with observations from other peripheral or historically contested regions. Research on North-East Scots, for example, has shown that speakers of this regional variety regard it as 'a significant part of an insignificant identity' (Loester 2017: 344). The same formulation aptly captures the situation in Sevastopol; despite the region's marginality within the Ukrainian state before 2014 and its contested status thereafter, Ukrainian lexical elements have become emblematic of local belonging, distinguishing long-term residents from newcomers who arrived after the political shift.

The present findings also contribute to a broader theoretical discussion concerning how identities are discursively constructed through language. A key theoretical insight in this field is that identity is produced, reproduced, transformed, and even dismantled through linguistic means. One influential framework distinguishes between the content level (what speakers talk about), the communicative level (how they speak), and the metalinguistic level (how they evaluate language itself) (Dubrovskaya 2015). This framework proves highly applicable to the Sevastopol case. At the content level, what is said — the semantic fields covered by identity-relevant vocabulary — provides the raw material for self-definition. At the communicative level, code-switching into Ukrainian signals a mixed cultural identity. At the metalinguistic level, our respondents explicitly evaluated Ukrainian words as 'softer,' 'easier to pronounce,' or 'more heartfelt' than their Russian equivalents. In other words, what was once a political index became an icon of private affect (Gal 2016).

The findings of this research contribute to ongoing debates in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and language policy studies. First, they challenge the notion that language policy alone determines linguistic outcomes. Instead, policies

interact with ideologies, activism, and identities, producing results that may diverge dramatically from official intentions (Gumperz 2008, Malinowski 2018). Second, they demonstrate the importance of examining not just structural changes (such as shifts in official language use) but also the micro-level practices of everyday speech. It is at this level that language ideologies are most visibly enacted and reinterpreted (Combs & Penfield 2012, Woolard 2021).

Third, the Sevastopol case illustrates how regional differences can emerge within a broader national framework. Even when Ukrainian language policy failed at the institutional level, it succeeded in shaping the linguistic environment in ways that produced lasting traces. These traces now differentiate Sevastopol residents from newcomers, embedding Ukrainian elements within the city's linguistic identity. Such processes highlight the dynamic interplay of language, identity, and politics in contested regions (Volvach 2019). Finally, the research underscores the multifunctionality of language itself. Words and expressions are not static symbols but flexible tools that speakers adapt to shifting circumstances. A single Ukrainian phrase can be pragmatic, affective, ironic, or symbolic depending on its use. This adaptability explains why Ukrainian lexicon persists in Sevastopol: it offers speakers not only communicative efficiency but also expressive versatility and identity signaling.

6. Conclusion

In sum, the corpus of 150 Ukrainian expressions documented in this study was examined to address the main objective of the research, namely to identify the persistence, thematic distribution, and communicative functions of Ukrainian lexical elements in the everyday Russian-language speech of Sevastopol residents. These items have survived beyond the reach of official policy, repurposed by speakers to meet practical needs, express emotions, critique authority, recall cultural references, and mark local belonging. The overlap of thematic domains and functional motivations reveals the complexity of linguistic persistence: what begins as policy residue becomes an active resource in everyday life.

The results also provide answers to the research questions formulated in the study. First, the analysis identified a stable core of frequently used lexical items that function as routine communicative formulas. Second, thematic classification revealed that the most extensive domains include etiquette formulas, evaluative expressions, and emotional expressions, indicating that Ukrainian-origin elements are concentrated primarily in areas of everyday interpersonal communication. Third, functional-pragmatic analysis demonstrated that these lexical items persist not only because of historical exposure but also because of their communicative efficiency, emotional resonance, and stylistic flexibility. Success or failure of language policy cannot be measured solely by institutional compliance. Instead, it must be assessed in terms of the lived experiences of speakers, whose practices reveal the enduring power of language to adapt, persist, and signify in ways that escape official control. Sevastopol's linguistic landscape exemplifies this paradox:

Ukrainian as a state project failed, but Ukrainian as a layer of everyday speech continues to thrive in altered, multifunctional forms.

At the same time, the study highlights the transitional nature of the current linguistic situation. Considering the facts that the population has now doubled due to Russian-speaking arrivals from the mainland, and the new generation is growing up in a monolingual environment, the phenomenon described in this work will soon cease to be registered in the speech of Sevastopol residents. Therefore, it is important for it to be documented to understand significant sociolinguistic processes. Such documentation contributes to a better understanding of ongoing sociolinguistic transformation and the long-term consequences of language contact and policy change. Thus, the study contributes to the broader field of sociolinguistics by demonstrating that lexical persistence is shaped not only by institutional forces but also by communicative routine, cultural memory, and emotional practice, providing a framework for future research on language retention in post-policy multilingual environments.

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Article history:
Received: 28 December 2025
Accepted: 12 March 2026

Bionote:

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 466–485
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-45854
EDN: CQEWUB

Research article / Научная статья

Llanito: Neither language nor emerging variety

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Abstract
This paper addresses the so-called *Llanito*, a type of Spanglish spoken in the British colony of Gibraltar. *Llanito* has been repeatedly defined as a linguistic variety, outcome of the contact between Spanish and English, and scholars support this claim by providing a list of words and referring to the identity feelings shared among the population. However, the data obtained from a fieldwork campaign suggest another reality. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that the so-called Llanito is nothing more than the label applied to the process of code-switching, which has not resulted in the emergence of a new variety. By means of a compilation of spontaneous voice messages, semi-conducted interviews and free conversations, I have recorded the speech of 22 people, from both sexes, different generations and various educational backgrounds. The results state that *Llanito* cannot be considered a language or an emerging variety, for it deals with a process of code-switching within an unstable bilingual society that heads for English monolingualism. In fact, current Gibraltar exhibits all the stages of this evolution, each of which is embodied by a different generation. Despite the vindications regarding the cultural, linguistic and historical heritage that *Llanito* is said to represent, social mobility turns out to be the reason why speakers gradually dismiss Spanish and tend to become English monolinguals, making thus *Llanito* reduce the younger the individual is. Moreover, the affirmation that *Llanito* is a language or a variety lacks empirical support, since it is impossible to determine the lexicon, as well as the phonetic and grammatical structure, that characterise it. The results contribute to disentangling the complexity of Spanglish in its different manifestations and to shedding more light to the study of linguistic variation.
Keywords: *Llanito, linguistic variety, code-switching, Spanish, language contact, Spanglish*

For citation:
Lara Bermejo, Víctor. 2026. Llanito: Neither language nor emerging variety. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 466–485. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-45854 EDN: CQEWUB

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Льянито: ни язык, ни зарождающийся вариант

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Аннотация
В статье исследуется льянито — разновидность спанглиша (смешения испанского и английского языков), распространенная в Гибралтаре, Британской заморской территории. Льянито часто определяется как языковой вариант, возникший в результате контакта испанского и английского языков. Исследователи поддерживают данное мнение, опираясь на список специфичной лексики и чувство идентичности населения этого региога. Однако данные, полученные нами в ходе полевых исследований, указывают на иную реальность. Цель статьи — показать, что льянито следует воспринимать как обозначение процесса переключения кодов, который не привел к появлению нового варианта. Материалом исследования послужили записи спонтанных голосовых сообщений, полуструктурированные интервью и свободные беседы, что позволило скомпилировать речь 22 человек, обоих полов, разных поколений и с различным уровнем образования. Результаты исследования показывают, что льянито нельзя считать ни языком, ни зарождающимся вариантом, поскольку он связан с процессом переключения кодов в нестабильном двуязычном контексте, свидетельсвующем о движении к монолингвальному англоязычному сообществу. Современный Гибралтар демонстрирует все этапы этой эволюции, каждый из которых представлен отдельным поколением. Несмотря на утверждения отом, что льянито представляет собой часть культурного, языкового и исторического наследия, использование льянито молодым поколением сокращается. Причина того, почему жители Гибралтара постепенно отказываются от испанского языка и становятся англоязычными монолингвами, лежит в социальной мобильности. Более того, утверждение о том, что льянито является языком или языковым вариантом, не имеет эмпирического подтверждения, поскольку невозможно определить лексику, а также фонетическую и грамматическую структуру, которые его характеризуют. Результаты исследования помогают разобраться в сложностях спанглиша в его различных проявлениях и способствуют изучению языковой вариативности.
Ключевые слова: *льянито, языковой вариант, переключение кодов, испанский язык, языковой контакт, спанглиш*

Для цитирования:
Lara Bermejo, Víctor. Llanito: Neither language nor emerging variety. *Russian Journal of Linguistics.* 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 466–485. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-45854
EDN: CQEWUB

1. Introduction

Since the 1960s and 1970s, studies on code-switching have increasingly occupied a prominent place within contrastive linguistics. Although a substantial number have focused on contact between English and Spanish in the United States, there is also no shortage of works addressing the mechanics of code-switching in societies where languages other than English and Spanish are intermingled. One of the areas that has attracted particular scholarly attention is Gibraltar, since, in addition to uniting English and Spanish, the literature has repeatedly asserted that

the combination of the two languages has given rise to a new variety, known as Llanito, in homage to the popular demonym used to refer to Gibraltarians (Levey 2008).

Analyses of Llanito have steadily accumulated over the past few decades. From Moyer's (1992) thesis to more recent articles — which approach Gibraltarian linguistic reality from discursive, pragmatic, and identity-based perspectives, almost all authors have argued that Llanito constitutes a linguistic variety (Lipski 1986, Levey 2008, among others). However, none of those defending this claim has systematically codified the linguistic structure of such a variety, nor provided a set of phonetic, grammatical, or lexical features by which it may be characterised. What seems to exist is a repertoire of words considered specific of such a region, together with the repeated assertion that Llanito alternates between Spanish and English, is restricted to informal contexts, and, in recent times, is evidently in decline.

Despite the assumption that Llanito represents a linguistic variety, the aim of this article is to argue and demonstrate the opposite. In other words, the so-called Llanito is nothing more than the label applied to the process of code-switching attested on the Rock, which has not resulted in the emergence of a new variety. To this end, the following section provides a brief overview of previous research on Gibraltar and Llanito, before outlining the theoretical framework, corpus, and methodology of the present study. I then present the data from my research, followed by an analysis and discussion which support my hypothesis that Llanito does not, in fact, constitute a variety. Finally, I conclude with a summary of my findings and a bibliography.

2. Gibraltar and Llanito

The enclave of Gibraltar, situated on a small peninsula to the east of the province of Cádiz (Spain), in the Bay of Algeciras, has been a British Overseas Territory since the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), following the War of the Spanish Succession. From that time onwards—and despite various military and diplomatic attempts to recover it—English rose to the status of the prestigious language, relegating Spanish to a diglossic position, associated with informal, colloquial, oral contexts, or with a social class distinct from that of the administrative, military, and social elite of the colony. Nonetheless, this assertion requires nuance or, at the very least, appropriate historical contextualisation.

According to Moyer (1992), the establishment of English as the official and administrative language remained precisely that: it did not entail the widespread proficiency and usage of English among the Gibraltarian population, who continued to employ Spanish as their vehicular language, in contrast to the elite, who adopted English as a marker of dominant social class. Population exchanges across the frontier were continuous, such that—aside from a small group of Britons arriving from Great Britain or descending from the ruling classes (army, government, civil service)—the majority of the population were, above all, Spanish-speaking.

The two centuries following the transfer of Gibraltar into the British were homogeneous in this respect, yet the situation began to shift after the Second World War. The post-war period, extending to the present day, established compulsory education well into adolescence, delivered in the official language and promoted as a pathway to social mobility. Every Gibraltarian, regardless of status, received their academic instruction in English as the single option available.

Moyer (1992) and Kramer (1986) identify this turning point as the beginning of Spanish decline on the Rock and the true point of departure for Llanito as a linguistic reality. The latter half of the twentieth century was characterised by a population predominantly bilingual in English and Spanish, with English acquired through schooling, except among those classes for which it had always been a native tongue. Indeed, this stratum remains monolingual in English, whereas the rest of the population command both languages to a comparable degree—although this balance has gradually decreased over the years in favour of an increasingly monolingual English-speaking population, or one with only passive competence in Spanish (Lipski 1986, Kellermann 2001, Levey 2008, Feijóo Rodríguez 2015). The closure of the border also contributed to the decline of Spanish, as argued by Moyer (1992) and Mariscal Ríos (2014), since it further reinforced the rise of English as a political response to that event.

Kramer (1986) contends that demographic cycles and educational policies have been decisive in determining the predominance of one language over another. Thus, in his view, British control of Gibraltar did not entail the triumph of English over Spanish, which persisted as the majority language despite the influx of populations from various parts of the Mediterranean. With regard to social perception, Moyer (1992) rejects the notion that Spanish was under diglossia, maintaining instead that both Spanish and English could occur in numerous social functions of a similar nature. English was restricted solely to the administrative sphere, while even the mixture of English and Spanish was positively evaluated as an expression of local identity. However, Moyer did find class-based distinctions: the lower the social status, the greater the likelihood of using Spanish or engaging in code-switching. Register also played a role, with Spanish more likely to appear in informal contexts, while code-switching seemed to enjoy a form of covert prestige.

The demographic and linguistic-policy shifts outlined above underpin the arguments of Goria (2021) and Rodríguez García (2024), who claim that Gibraltar moved from a system of diglossia—lasting until the Second World War—to one of dilalia (a type of weak diglossia), following the frameworks of Auer (2005) and Berruto (2005). Thus, during the period from the British conquest of the Rock until the mid-twentieth century, Gibraltarian society developed a diglossic dynamic in which British English functioned as the prestigious variety and Spanish as the informal variety. Yet English was confined largely to extremely formal and administrative domains, and to a very small elite of Britons from Britain. At present, according to these authors, Gibraltar exhibits a situation of dilalia, whereby British

English remains the most prestigious variety, but Gibraltarian English and Spanish occupy an intermediate position, beneath which Llanito emerges. The main distinction between dilalia and diglossia lies in the difficulty, in the former, of determining which contexts favour each option or of establishing a clear functional and structural separation between the most prestigious variety and the others. In the absence of certainty regarding the pragmatic constraints when selecting a variety, code-switching emerges naturally, fostered by the looseness of rules, the interlocutor, the topic, or the degree of communicative informality.

The situation described by Moyer (1992) has led scholars to conclude that Gibraltar possesses a new linguistic variety known as Llanito: a manifestation of Spanish–English bilingualism that also functions as an identity marker for those who take pride in local culture and its linguistic diversity, as is reflected in the various types of press publications that highlight this distinctive feature (García Caba 2022). Nevertheless, the growing hegemony of English has prompted the emergence of associations advocating for the preservation of Llanito, to the extent that *Gibraltareños por una Sociedad Multilingüe* has even proposed a specific orthography. These groups also draw attention to the decline of Spanish.

3. Theoretical framework

The emergence of a new linguistic variety is a complex process, resulting from several possible scenarios (e.g. Kerswill 2010, Proshina 2026), among which are pidginisation, creolisation, and koineisation. Code-switching situations, however, fall outside this contingency, although they may occur at certain preliminary stages prior to the establishment of new varieties. In what follows, I shall briefly describe the first three, before focusing primarily on the dynamics of code-switching in order to understand what is taking place in Gibraltar.

3.1. Pidgin, creole and koiné

The emergence of new languages or varieties generally derives from three distinct linguistic processes: pidginisation, creolisation, and koineisation. In the first case, it deals with a language created *ex novo* for fulfilling the communicative needs of speakers of mutually unintelligible languages when interacting. Creoles, by contrast, may be explained by two factors: either they are the offspring of pidgin speakers, who stabilise the enormous variability inherent in pidgin, or they are varieties in which a hegemonic colonial language provides the lexical base, while the local language supplies the grammatical and phonetic strategies. Whereas pidgins do not contain established linguistic rules—displaying, as emphasised, high variability according to their speakers—creoles do exhibit systematicity and linguistic regularity (Matras 2009, Holm 2010).

A different process is koineisation, which results from the contact of speakers of mutually intelligible varieties who ultimately generate a new variety, again involving simplification. This process may also stem from migratory dynamics, but

in either case Kerswill (2010) argues that three stages are required for its completion: first, a phase of great variability; second, a stage dominated by the following generation, which begins to systematise some usages over others; and third, a subsequent generation, which generalises certain usages, eliminates others, and thus brings to an end the high variability observed in earlier stages.

In the scenarios outlined, the emergence of a new variety always entails—except in the case of pidgin—a stage of extreme variability, chaos, and arbitrariness in the selection of linguistic forms over others, even within the same speaker. This circumstance is also observable in code-switching; hence, in what follows, I shall examine what distinguishes the three processes described from the phenomenon of code-switching.

3.2. Code-switching

Code-switching refers to the alternation, within a single utterance, of at least two languages (this is the definition I will follow throughout). At first sight, this phenomenon arises in a speaker whose command of those languages may be considered bilingual; however, the development of code-switching within an individual or a society can be understood as encompassing four phases, which are not necessarily chronological. In other words, code-switching may manifest itself in four distinct forms: insertion, congruent lexicalisation, alternation, and back-flagging (Muysken 2020).

The first involves the occasional inclusion of lexical items from one language within an utterance produced in the other. The subsequent two forms entail the exchange of more than one juxtaposed constituent between the languages involved across the sentence. Back-flagging, by contrast, is restricted to the incorporation of discourse markers, interjections, or connectors from one language into spontaneous speech in the other. Muysken (2013) has systematised the functioning of code-switching from a theoretical perspective, proposing a series of rules or tendencies to help determine which phase of the phenomenon is at play, or to distinguish between code-switching and simple borrowing from one language into another. This author also accounts for these phases in relation to a series of social parameters, which I summarise in Table 1.

Table 1. **Phases of code-switching (Muysken 2013)**

Factors	Strategies	Outcomes
Unequal power, (post)colonial settings, low proficiency	L1	Insertion
Relaxed language norms, close-knit network, high bilingual proficiency, little typological and/or lexical distance, long contact	L1/L2	Congruent lexicalisation
Political competition, high bilingual proficiency	Universal principles	Alternation
Shift in second or third generation	L2	Back-flagging

Based on Table 1, it is possible to observe that, depending on the linguistic, historical, or social characteristics of the society in which two languages are used simultaneously, a different outcome arises in the dynamics of code-switching.

The case of Gibraltar refers to that of a bilingual territory. Nonetheless, as Romaine (2010) points out, bilingual societies range from those that develop relatively suddenly, through those that are dynamically bilingual until one language eventually disappears, to those that may be considered stable. In the latter, the coexistence of two languages can result in a situation where each is assigned different functions within society. Thus, one may encounter a diglossic arrangement, in which one language is considered prestigious and the other less so. In other cases, where bilingualism is subject to sociolinguistic factors, language choice may depend upon the type of interlocutor, the age, or the gender of the speaker.

Unstable bilingual societies are those that, having had a widely used language, transition to a different one that subsequently becomes the new dominant language. During such a transformation, there is an intermediate phase in which speakers are bilingual in both, but, as the model predicts, this period does not extend over time as it does in stable societies; it simply emerges as a transitory stage in the shift from one dominant language to another. Questions surrounding this process have centred on whether there is always an interval of code-switching, which groups accelerate the shift from one language to another, whether it entails the reduction of structures in the receding language, and to what extent the changes are socially evaluated within that community.

This trajectory may culminate in the disappearance and eventual death of the receding language in favour of the other. This last circumstance—gradual language death—entails a period in which speakers are bilingual in the two competing languages. However, according to Romaine (2010), this bilingual phase is always temporary and constitutes a preliminary stage leading to the triumph of a new monolingualism, represented by the language that has prevailed.

4. Data and methodology

The data obtained for this research are the result of fieldwork conducted in Gibraltar between November 2023 and May 2024. Oral and spontaneous extracts were collected by means of three combined methods: semi-structured interviews, free conversation, and the reception of spontaneous audio messages from WhatsApp, thereby ensuring the informants' spontaneity. Altogether, I compiled 22 recordings, amounting to twelve hours, from three different generations, both sexes and varying educational levels.

All the recordings were transcribed and, in order to preserve the anonymity of the informants, the examples provided are labelled with an alphanumeric code designed to reveal the speaker's complete sociolinguistic profile. The system uses the following categories: M (male), F (female), –30 (young), 30–60 (middle-aged), +60 (elderly), L (low educational background) and H (high educational

background). The concatenation of these labels makes it possible to identify the profile of the speaker responsible for a given utterance. For instance, if an example is tagged M30–60H, this indicates that the utterance was produced by a middle-aged man with a high educational background.

5. Results of the analysis

The fieldwork data reveal divergent phases in the linguistic mixture that takes place between Spanish and English. Three clearly defined stages may be distinguished, depending on the speaker's generation, each of which reflects a different type of code-switching: insertion, alternation together with congruent lexicalisation, and back-flagging. That segment of the population born prior to the closure of the frontier resorts to insertion, whereas those born during Gibraltar's period of isolation tend to favour alternation and congruent lexicalisation. Individuals born in the 1990s and, mainly, in the 2000s, display a preference for back-flagging.

Furthermore, the generation characterised by insertion has Spanish as their L1, while their acquisition of English corresponds to the learning of an L2. By contrast, their descendants possess both languages as L1 in most cases, while those who favour back-flagging have reversed the situation of previous decades, with English as their L1 and Spanish emerging as an L2, or as a language with only passive or very limited competence. Naturally, the sociolinguistic factor is also relevant: the higher the social class, the lower the probability of retaining Spanish as part of the linguistic repertoire across any of the generations.

(1) Y como habéis visto, esto Gibraltar, es lo que llamamos *a melting pot*, ¿no? Gente de todas partes que han venido, oleadas de gente. (M60L)
[And as you have seen, this is Gibraltar, what we call a melting pot, no? People from everywhere, many people.]

(2) Y viene con un acento muy, muy, muy pijo. *Posh*, *very posh*. Y entonces, en una ocasión dijo "yo soy del pueblo, aunque hablo así en inglés, pero soy llanito, soy del pueblo". El pobre, quería identificarse con el pueblo, pero con ese acento no… (M60L)
[And he comes with a very, very, very posh accent. Posh, very posh. And then, on one occasione, he said "I am from the people, alhough I speak English like this, but I am Llanito, from the people". Poor man, he wanted to identify himself with the people, but with that accent…]

(3) Hay unas listas de espera de… cerca de 800 y pico de personas. Entonces, pues… Han hecho este sistema, que le llamo *fifty-fifty.* (M60L)
[Here there is a waiting list… nearly 800 people or so. Then, they have created tis system, I call it fifty-fifty]

(4) Hola. Mira, ¿tú tienes el número de teléfono de [NP], *by any chance*? H60N
[Hi, look, do you have the phone number of [proper name], by any chance?]

(5) Estaban todas muy, muy *laid out*. (M60L)
[They were all very, very laid out.]

(6) Son dos, son *pictures*. Son las primeras que hizo [NP] en color. (M60L)
[These are two, two pictures. They are the first ones [proper name] took in colour.]

(7) Está con una costilla que la tiene *fractured* de un golpe que se dio, y está con la pierna también, que está fastidiada con la pierna. Eh… Tú… si tú puedes *this week*, esta semana creo que no va a ser posible, a ver si podemos… yo le pregunto luego a ella. (F60H)
[She has a rib, a fractured rib because she beat herself, and her leg is also working badly. If you can this week, this week I think it is not possible, let's see, I'll ask her later.]

Examples (1–7) demonstrate that the base language and L1 is Spanish, into which English words are occasionally inserted. These shifts are not conditioned by grammatical category or by the absence of a corresponding lexical item in one of the languages. Rather, they are mere oscillations prompted by the speaker's linguistic competence in the two languages coexisting in their repertoire. Since Spanish is the dominant language and English was either acquired at a very late stage or retained only as a passive variety, the insertions are generally readjusted to the phonological system of the L1. Although this cannot be verified in writing, all English usages produced by these informants were articulated with the characteristic pronunciation of Western Andalusian. Thus, for example, *a melting pot* was pronounced with rhotacism (*merting*) and with aspiration and loss of final consonants /t/ and /g/: *a mertin po*.

These same informants also display the strongest Hispanophone features when speaking English, since they acquired it as an L2. However, it is possible to identify certain borrowings from English into Spanish, which are not to be confused with the insertions occurring during code-switching. Such borrowings are typically lexical in nature, for instance *panqueque* instead of *tortita* (from *pancake*) or *escarte* instead of *rodapié* (from *skirting*). By contrast, no influence of English is observed on the morphosyntax of the Spanish they speak.

The generation born between the 1960s and 1980s, on the contrary, behaves in line with the rules established for alternation in code-switching. Switching from one language to the other is constant, not limited to lexical insertions, and, in addition to observing semantic shifts in Spanish through contact with English, I have also detected modifications in syntax, attributable to the process of congruent lexicalisation described by Muysken (2013).

(8) ¿Qué pasa [NP]? Soy el [NP]. ¿Cómo estás llevando el *confinement, brother?* Yo lo llevo *really bad, man,* se me está haciendo *very heavy.* Esta ha sío *mi muy primera vez* que me he tenío que queá tanto tiempo *at home.* Yo no quiero salí pa na porque estoy *very scared,* pero esta mañana he hecho *wake up* más temprano de lo que suele ser y *estaba supuesto de ir a Morrison's* pa hacer *shopping.* (M30-60H)

[What's up, [proper name]? It's [proper name]. How are you coping with the confinement, brother? I'm dealing with it really bad, man, it's becoming very heavy. This has been my very first time I have had to be so long at home. I don't want to go out at all, because I'm very scared, but this morning I woke up earlier than usual and I was supposed to go to Morrison's to do some shopping.]

(9) No sé si vuelvo *three* o no, [NP], pero el *redline* era… *Border a… Poland*. Tos los países alrededor de *Ukraine* eran *borderline red*. Si algo pasaba *across the borderline red* o *on the borderline red, the rest of the world would have to join in*. (M30-60H)
[I don't know if I'm flying back three or not, [proper name], but the redline was… Border a… Poland. All the countries around Ukraine were borderline red. If something happened across the borderline red or on the borderline red, the rest of the world would have to join in.]

(10) *What a beautiful day in Gibraltar*. Gracias a Dios por esta playa que tenemos tan bonita. *And I'm looking out here*, *you see*, *this is where*, *this is where the proposed marina will start*, *you see*, *from there*, donde está el *massive development*, *and then it goes all the way around* una manga, ahí, *right*?, y ahí va a estar el *new hotel* […]. Venga, *Gibraltar*, *join Catalan Bay* y los caleteños *who we love. No to the marina* (F30-60L0
[What a beautiful day in Gibraltar. Thanks God this beautiful beach we have. And I'm looking out here, you see, this is where, this is where the proposed marina will start, you see, from there, where there is the massive development, and then it goes all the way around a land extension there, right?, and there will be the new hotel […]. So, Gibraltar, join Catalan Bay and caleteños who we love. No to the marina.]

The three excerpts above, drawn from three different informants aged between 40 and 55, perfectly illustrate the two stages of code-switching that commonly overlap: congruent lexicalisation and alternation. It is pertinent to recall that the former entails changes in the syntax of one language under the influence of the other, or the morphological hybridisation of the two languages in contact. This is precisely what occurs in (8), where the speaker produces an English syntactic construction while speaking Spanish: *estaba supuesto de ir a Morrison's* (literally 'I was supposed to go to Morrison's'). Instead of opting for the impersonal construction with reflexive *se* (*se suponía que iba a ir a Morrison's*: lit. 'it was supposed that I was going to Morrison's'), the speaker has adopted the Anglo-Saxon passive form, which is ungrammatical in any Spanish variety. Similarly, the same informant reproduces the analytic superlative modelled on English, producing *mi muy primera vez* (literally 'my very first time') instead of the normative strategy by means of the suffix *–ísimo* attached to the lexeme.

The remainder of the utterances (from this speaker as well as from the other two) abound in alternation, with Spanish as the dominant language—except in the last case, where English predominates. Switching may occur at any point, whether

at the beginning of a sentence (main or subordinate), within a phrase; or even inside a phrase between tightly coalesced elements.

This section of the population, from which the passages are taken, is bilingual in Spanish and English, though it is more precise to state that the vast majority have Spanish as their L1, acquired at home from birth, and English as their L2, learned spontaneously in the street and once integrated into the educational system. By contrast, the younger generation displays a different type of code-switching, more in keeping with what is termed back-flagging, embodying precisely the opposite behaviour of the older speakers. In this group, the hegemonic language is English and, from time to time, elements of Spanish are added. Unlike insertion, however, the resources introduced tend to be collocations, discourse markers, conjunctions, and similar items.

(11) This is porridge. This is a well-known brand that actually sells very good porridge, *¿vale?* (F-30H)
[This is porridge. This is a well-known brand that actually sells very good porridge, ok?]

(12) *Por supuesto*, [NP]. You're one step ahead. (F-30H)
[Of course, [proper name]. You're one step ahead.]

(13) I'm sick, *no estoy muy Catholic* today. (F-30H)
[I'm sick, I'm not very Catholic today [meaning to be ill]

(14) We loved a lot about it, *pero* I didn't mean it. (F-30H)
[We loved a lot about it, but I didn't mean it.]

Examples (11–14) attest the stage known as back-flagging, since the informants base their discourse on English, into which they occasionally introduce conjunctions, as in (14), discourse markers and connectors, as in (11–12), and even collocations—although in (13) part of the collocations is already in English, with the adjective *Catholic* pronounced in Received Pronunciation (RP).

This younger generation, however, is to some extent divisible into two. Whereas those born in the 1990s possess only a passive knowledge of Spanish and rarely produce it (unless they belong to the lower social classes), those born in the present century have not acquired Spanish at all and, according to the testimony of teachers and compatriots, may even ask at secondary school how to say words such as *car* in Spanish.

The occurrences discussed above clearly bear witness to the trend towards which Spanish appears to be heading, while also revealing the arbitrariness involved in language choice at each instance of code-switching. In the following section, I shall argue why Llanito cannot be regarded as a linguistic variety and the extent to which phenomena attested in other geographical contexts are replicated in Gibraltar.

6. Discussion

The excerpts presented in the previous section are further evidence of code-switching, as exemplified by other scholars in their respective studies on the

Gibraltarian linguistic situation. When the utterances recorded by Moyer (1992) are compared to those analysed by other academics, as well as with the data supplied in this article, it becomes clear that the so-called Llanito can only be classified as code-switching, and not even as an incipient creole or independent variety.

Firstly, it is impossible to determine the syntactic structures, morphology, or lexicon of which it consists. In none of the stages described is it possible to systematise which option corresponds to which reality, or which linguistic configuration is appropriate for conveying a specific grammatical function. In other words, it is impossible to know whether the entity corresponding to the lexeme *table*, for example, would in Llanito be realised by the Spanish word *mesa*, the English option, or some hybrid of the two. Nor is it possible to predict whether a noun phrase would be constructed with a Spanish article and an English head noun, or vice versa. The arbitrariness of speaker choice prevents from treating this as a concrete variety with its own grammatical rules.

Likewise, each informant displays diverse linguistic behaviour, since the hybridisation typical of congruent lexicalisation—for instance, *estar supuesto de* (‘to be supposed to’) plus infinitive—is not shared by all individuals, nor is it systematic. Even local associations that advocate for the promotion of Llanito cannot agree on how it should be represented orthographically. As a matter of fact, the lexicographical works that exist are devoted to cataloguing a number of fossilised words that are supposed to be only used on the Rock, with no equivalent in English or Spanish. Such is the case with *meblis* (‘marbles’), *panqueques* (‘pancakes’), and similar examples, which merely indicate borrowings rather than code-switching. Yet those same lexicographical sources cannot determine, for instance, which term corresponds to the entity *table* in Llanito.

The high degree of variability observed could be related to one of the stages in the creation of a new variety, as discussed in earlier sections. However, this possibility cannot in itself be classified as a variety; rather, it represents a preliminary stage before a new variety becomes established. Historical developments interrupted the expected outcome of such variability, since successive generations gradually shifted towards monolingualism favouring English, which became hegemonic and, at times, exclusive. The process attested in Gibraltar is typical of a contact zone, where one language enjoys greater prestige than another and thereby enters into competition.

Table 1, reproduced from Muysken (2013), is fully borne out, since each phase of code-switching corresponds to a sociolinguistic factor that mirrors Gibraltarian reality. Thus, in the stage of insertion, it is possible to observe that, apart from the local English-speaking elite, the wider population had Spanish as their L1, with English competence being passive, limited, or functioning as an L2, within a (post)colonial framework. In the subsequent two stages, there are long contact, relaxed norms, close-knit social networks, and bilingual competence, sharpening the tension between the vehicular language (Spanish) and the minority but prestigious one (English). In the later stage of back-flagging, a reversal in the

competing languages is witnessed: English becomes the L1, while Spanish shifts to L2 status and is used by most speakers only passively or in a very limited way. At this point, it deals wih a change fostered by the second or third generation, which leave unstable bilingualism in favour of monolingualism (in this case, English).

In short, the most characteristic phase of code-switching in Gibraltar—the one involving alternation and congruent lexicalisation, and which has underpinned claims that Llanito constitutes a new linguistic variety born of English–Spanish mixing, in the manner of Spanglish—is in fact simply a stage of great variability or volatility in speakers' utterances, as a consequence of their high competence in both languages. It could indeed represent a prototypical stage in the development of a koine, for the generation engaging in such apparently chaotic and arbitrary alternations typically precedes that which consolidates certain usages, dismisses others, and thereby stabilises a new variety, often characterised by paradigmatic simplification. It is this latter case that does systematise lexicon, morphology, pronunciation, and syntactic structures—so only once evolution reaches this point can we speak of a new or distinct variety.

In Gibraltar, however, historical events disrupted this trajectory and instead aligned with the classic development of a code-switching situation. Here there is an unstable bilingual societiy, characterised by a period of linguistic contact and bilingualism of limited duration, before tipping into monolingualism, invariably in the language of prestige. Unlike stable bilingual societies, where both languages coexist—though often each becomes specialised for different domains—unstable societies eventually abandon bilingualism altogether after several generations.

This distinction is crucial, transcending the identity-related feelings and attitudes that speakers themselves may express about their bilingualism, since the (un)conscious preference for monolingualism responds to the prestige of the selected language, or to the social mobility associated with it. In this sense, it must be emphasised that, in the specific case of Gibraltar, political disputes were not the decisive factor undermining the survival of Spanish, although they may have accompanied the process. Rather, the key factor was the sweeping social transformation brought about in Western countries by the end of the Second World War.

On the one hand, had the political climate been the trigger for the increasingly homogeneous rejection of Spanish, this would have occurred much earlier in the Rock's history, since the conflict dates back to the cession of the territory to the British Crown. Furthermore, had Franco's dictatorship and its policy of isolating the colony through the closure of the border generated a negative attitude towards speaking Spanish, we would expect to find evidence of such rejection during that period. Yet the generations born throughout the years of friction between Gibraltar and the dictatorship are highly competent in both languages, with Spanish still serving in many cases as the L1. In fact, it is only from the 1990s onwards that a marked decline in Spanish competence becomes apparent—a trend that varies with the speaker's social class, but which, broadly speaking, is attested across the region.

I therefore insist that the true reason—or at least the central motive—for the linguistic paradigm shift must be attributed to social mobility (one of the reasons, together with the identification of *lingua franca*, that lies behind the expanding usage of English in Russia, Korea, Japan or China (see Kirkpatrick 2020, Lovtsevich & Sokolov 2020, Proshina & Nelson 2020 among others). The introduction of compulsory education (exclusively in English) and the possibility of economic and professional advancement through it constituted a profound social transformation, since mastery of the prestigious language enabled access to universities in Britain and to highly qualified positions. Testimonies from my informants support this claim, as corroborated by the following excerpts.

(15) H2: Sí, sí, sí. Hay un dicho que dice "accent defines the man". (M60L)
[Yes, yes, yes. There is a saying which states "accent defines the man".]
H1: ¿Es un dicho de inglés?
[Is that an English saying?]
H2: Sí, sí. Abres la boca y ya te ponen, te definen. (M60L)
[Yes, yes, you open your mouth and they define you.]

(16) M1: Y en el patio, si hablabais en español ¿os reñían?
[At the courtyard, if you spoke in Spanish, did they tell you off]
H2: Nos regañaban, sí, nos reñían, sí. Porque lo que querían era que los niños aprendieran inglés, el español estaba… era secundario, ¿no? (M60H)
[They told us off, they scolded us, yes. Because they wanted kids to learn English, Spanish was secondary.]

(17) H1: No se ha hecho a… a cosa hecha, ha evolucionado así [...] Pero, siempre se hablaba el español en casa […] Y… después de la II Guerra mundial los que tenían carrera, los que habían ido a la universidad a estudiar, eran los hijos de papá, los hijos de los que estaban bien adinerados. […] A partir de los años ochenta […] todos los estudiantes que… aprobaban sus estudios de bachillerato y les ofrecían una plaza para estudiar cualquier asignatura, cualquier licenciatura en las universidades de Inglaterra y del norte de Irlanda con una beca. […] Y, entonces, se ha hablado más inglés. (M60H)
[It wasn't on purpose, it has evolved like this [...] But, at home, you always spoke in Spanish […] And after WWII, those with a degree, with a university degree, were rich […] From the 1980s […] all the students that passed high school were offered a fellowship to study any degree in England and northern Ireland. […] And then, from that moment English has been spoken more and more.]

(18) H2: Ah, vale, vale, vale. Entonces, entonces, [NP], la gente como tu, como tu… tus nietas, eh… cuando van a España, eh, simplemente tienen una competencia pasiva, ¿no? Entienden, pero, salvo en algún caso, no pueden hablarlo como lo hablas tú o lo hablo yo.
[Ah, ok, ok, ok, then, then, [proper name], people like you, like you, your granddaughters, when they go to Spain, they simply have a passive

competence, don't they? They understand, but they cannot speak it as you can or I can.]'

The well-known Spanglish, to which the literature has made continuous reference by coining a term to designate the linguistic hybridisations characteristic of Hispanics in the United States, is no more a linguistic variety than Llanito—that is to say, neither can be considered one. In both cases, what we encounter is a process of code-switching which, depending on the generation, is situated at one stage or another. This is corroborated by studies carried out in various parts of the United States with a strong Hispanic presence (see for instance Solzhenitsyna (2014)), since the degree of hybridisation—and therefore of so-called Spanglish—varies based upon the same parameters. For instance, if we turn to the linguistic reality of Miami, we observe that the base language for recent arrivals or for groups with a low level of English proficiency is Spanish, into which English words are sporadically inserted. However, such vocabulary does not replace the equivalent Spanish words, but rather alternates with them. Moreover, it may affect any type of lexical-content word (De Jongh 1990).

(19) Las conoci a ellas ahi en el bildin
'[I met them there at the building.]

(20) Estoy en estanbai
[I'm on standby.]

Examples (17–18), taken from De Jongh (1990), replicate what has been observed in Gibraltar: insertions phonetically adapted to Spanish, which serves as the L1. The descendants of these generations, fully educated within the United States system, are bilingual in both languages, with such a high level of competence that each may be regarded as native. This group produces alternation and congruent lexicalisation, shifting between Spanish and English across entire sentences, without the phonetic influence of Spanish on their English (a feature that could still be found among those who engaged solely in insertion) (De Jongh 1983, 1990).

(21) El piloto, I don't know if you got any guy que es, pues gran piloto. Tú sabes, que ... who would hacer la cosa así, con un piloto. Pero la cosa es lo siguiente: El vuelo sale desde el punto que uno quiere que salga. It comes con un flight plan, entra-pam, pam. Aterriza en [...], pasa Customs, y de ahí sale pa' donde uno (unintelligible). Vaya, a typical flight
'The pilot, I don't know if you got any guy who is, well a good pilot. You know that... who would do this so, with a pilot. But the thing is this: the flight departs from the place one wants it to depart. It comes with a flight plan, enters-pam, pam. It lands on [...], passes Customs, and then you go where (unintelligible). So, a typical flight'

(22) El avión está lisiado
'The plane is leased'

Examples (19–20), again taken from De Jongh (1990), confirm code-switching in a speaker highly proficient in both English and Spanish, together with congruent lexicalisation manifested in the morphological adaptation of lease (‘to rent’) to a Spanish structure.

Later generations, though possessing Spanish at a more passive level than their predecessors, yet still demonstrating high competence, tend to opt for monolingual discourse in English, even in contexts where Spanish is understood and prompted. This group makes only minimal use of this language, limiting themselves to collocations or highly sporadic lexical items (Zurer-Pearson & McGee 1993, Portes & Schauffler 1996). However, the linguistic reality of Miami (and of other areas of the United States) displays an important peculiarity that distinguishes it from Gibraltar: the Floridian city continuously receives new Hispanic migration, so that the intergenerational development from insertion to back-flagging—with Spanish as L1 until its reversal with English as L1—is repeated with each new wave of Spanish-speaking arrivals settling in the United States (Carter & Lynch 2015). By contrast, Gibraltar does not receive continuous migration, since Spanish workers who cross the border do so daily and immediately return to Spain. The development of code-switching in Gibraltar has thus unfolded over several decades within the native population, culminating in a form of unstable bilingualism that has given way to monolingualism and the near extinction of Spanish. In Miami, however, each new arrival of Hispanic migrants initiates the evolution of code-switching (both linguistically and socially), causing the city never fully become a monolingual space nor crystallise into a separate variety.

I stress that neither Spanglish nor Llanito constitute new varieties generated from the combination of Spanish and English. Were this the case, they would have developed a specific grammatical structure, selected certain lexical items at the expense of others across the entire lexicon, and privileged some phonetic usages over others. Instead, in both cases, the alternation of words remains arbitrary; the grammatical structures of each language are respected—except during the stage of congruent lexicalisation (and even then only exceptionally and unsystematically); the pronunciation of each language is maintained (apart from the insertions characteristic of the first stage of code-switching); and, eventually, a tendency towards monolingualism emerges. In short, the ideal of Llanito and Spanglish often referred to by the bibliography corresponds to that attested in the generation with high bilingual competence and, therefore, to the stage of alternation and congruent lexicalisation. This is a short period, witnessed only in that generation, which disappears as the following one reaches adulthood, has children, and monolingualism becomes established—always, of course, favouring the prestigious language of the country of residence, namely English, both in the United States and in Gibraltar.

My fieldwork observations corroborate the argument put forth in these pages. On more than one occasion during spontaneous interactions, I have witnessed awkward moments in which a grandfather spoke to his grandson in Spanish and the

child replied exclusively in English, without uttering a single word in the other language. When pressed to respond in Spanish, the grandson vehemently refused to comply with his relative's demand. Likewise, when speaking with parents concerned about the decline of Spanish and of what they interpret as Llanito identity, insofar as it permitted the mixing of both languages, they reported that their children—despite visiting the other side of the frontier for the day, eating there, having a second home, or knowing that Spanish is one of the world's most widely spoken languages—remain reluctant to learn it. Moreover, these parents asserted that, on social media, their children and grandchildren immediately dismiss videos that appear or are suggested in Spanish, choosing instead to focus exclusively on those in English.

The evidence presented suggests that Spanish is on the path to extinction in Gibraltar. Nonetheless, the findings have also served to displace clichés about the causes of its decline, for it is the language of prestige that has ultimately prevailed, following the same trajectory already documented in comparable contexts.

7. Conclusions

The so-called Llanito, so often regarded as Gibraltar's own linguistic variety born of contact between Spanish and English, is in reality a case of code-switching within an unstable bilingual society transitioning towards English monolingualism, given that English represents both the prestigious language and the vehicle of social mobility. Although the considerable variability displayed in one of the most iconic phases of code-switching resembles the volatility observed in processes of koineisation or creolisation, the fact that it is impossible to establish the linguistic norms by which the so-called Llanito might be governed leads to the conclusion that it cannot be considered a linguistic variety. Furthermore, historical developments on the Rock have prevented the formation of a new variety, since the generations following those marked by such variability have progressively abandoned their parents' linguistic practices, embracing English monolingualism with increasing determination.

As with Spanglish, linguistic hybridisation represents merely a preliminary phase before the triumph of one of the contact languages at the expense of the gradual disappearance of the other. This is precisely what has occurred among Spanish speakers in the United States, and what has also taken place in Gibraltar since the Second World War, when the introduction of compulsory education in the official language provided access to social mobility through English. Although instances of different tendencies can still be documented in the British colony, these correspond to divergent phases of code-switching, as different generations may still be observed within this process. Nonetheless, even if social class nuances are taken into account, the dominant trend on the Rock is towards English monolingualism, notwithstanding the identity-related sentiments speakers may express about the code-switching (but not linguistic variety) they refer to as Llanito.

The results contribute to disentangling the complexity of Spanglish in its different manifestations and to shedding more light to the study of linguistic variation.

Acknowledgements

This article is the result of the research project titled *The Spanish in the Strait of Gibraltar and Maghreb (SPAGHREB)*, with reference CSN2022-135195, funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and by the EU "Next Generation EU"/PRTR.

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Article history:
Received: 12 September 2025
Accepted: 12 March 2026

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 486–512
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47379
EDN: CXLMMV

Research article / Научная статья

Languages of indigenous minorities of the North: Between assimilation and revitalization

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Abstract

The languages of Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North of Russia are under the most serious threat. At the same time, population censuses record an increase in the number of those claiming to speak ethnic languages against the background of ongoing language shift, which raises the question of the nature of this phenomenon and its significance for the future of minority languages. The aim of this study is to investigate whether the languages spoken by the indigenous peoples in the North of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) are at risk of being lost or have the potential for revival. The materials comprised data from the All-Russian Population Censuses of 2010 and 2020, results of local sociolinguistic studies, and field research (2022–2024). The methods employed included comparative analysis of census data, critical juxtaposition of statistical and expert assessments, and sociolinguistic questionnaire surveys. The study revealed a discrepancy between the declared and actual language proficiency in censuses This may reflect the phenomenon of increasing symbolic power of languages while their communicative power declines. Indigenous languages of the North not only interact with Russian, but also with the Yakut language, which has historically served as a lingua franca in the region. The Evenki language demonstrates territorial heterogeneity of language processes: from predominantly symbolic functioning in Yakut-speaking Evenki communities to relative preservation in villages of Southern Yakutia, where intergenerational transmission has been weakened. We find that youth with actualized ethnic identity demonstrate high language loyalty regardless of actual language proficiency. The emergence of "new speakers" and the development of local language initiatives is interpreted as evidence of the transformation of symbolic power into practical action. The study revealed the transition of the languages of Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North: from uncontrolled assimilation to conscious attempts at language revival. The success of this revival might depend on the ability to transform the increased symbolic power of languages into actual communicative practices.

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Keywords: *languages of indigenous minorities of the North, language shift, symbolic power of language, revitalization, Evenk language, Sakha Republic (Yakutia)*
For citation:
Danilov, Igor A. 2026. Languages of indigenous minorities of the North: Between assimilation and revitalization. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 30 (2). 486–512. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47379 EDN: CXLMMV

Языки коренных малочисленных народов Севера: между ассимиляцией и ревитализацией

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Аннотация
Языки коренных малочисленных народов Севера России находятся в критическом состоянии. Большинству из них угрожает исчезновение. При этом переписи населения фиксируют увеличение числа заявляющих о владении этническими языками на фоне продолжающегося языкового сдвига, что ставит вопрос о природе данного явления и его значении для будущего миноритарных языков. Цель исследования — определить, находятся ли языки коренных малочисленных народов Севера в Республике Саха (Якутия) под угрозой ассимиляции или демонстрируют потенциал к ревитализации. Материалами послужили данные Всероссийских переписки населения 2010 и 2020 гг., результаты локальных социолингвистических исследований, а также полевых работ, проведенных в 2022–2024 гг. Применялись методы сравнительного анализа переписных данных, критического сопоставления статистических и экспертных оценок, социолингвистического анкетирования. Выявлено расхождение между декларируемым в переписях и реальным владением этническими языками, что отражает феномен усиления символической мощности языков при снижении их коммуникативной мощности. Определено, что специфика полилингвальной ситуации Якутии заключается во взаимодействии языков коренных малочисленных народов Севера не только с русским, но и с якутским языком, который исторически выполняет роль lingua franca в регионе. Детальный анализ эвенкийского языка показал территориальную неоднородность языковых процессов: от преимущественно символического функционирования в якутоязычных эвенкийских сообществах до относительной сохранности в селах Южной Якутии. Выявлено, что молодежь с актуализированной этнической идентичностью демонстрирует высокую языковую лояльность независимо от реального владения языком. Появление «новых говорящих» и развитие локальных языковых инициатив интерпретируется как свидетельство трансформации символической мощности в практическое действие. Исследование свидетельствует о переходе языков коренных малочисленных народов Севера от неконтролируемой ассимиляции к осознанным попыткам языкового возрождения, успех которых будет зависеть от способности преобразовать возросшую символическую мощность языков в реальные коммуникативные практики.
Ключевые слова: *языки коренных малочисленных народов Севера, языковой сдвиг, символическая мощность языка, ревитализация, эвенкийский язык, Республика Саха (Якутия)*

Для цитирования:
Данилов И.А. Языки коренных малочисленных народов Севера: между ассимиляцией и ревитализацией. Russian Journal of Linguistics. 2026. Vol. 30. № 2. P. 486–512. https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-47379 EDN: CXLMMV

1. Введение

По оценкам лингвистов, в мире существует около 7000 языков, и по меньшей мере половина из них может исчезнуть в ближайшие поколения (Austin & Sallabank 2011: 1). В Российской Федерации данная проблема особенно остро стоит в отношении языков коренных малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока (далее — КМНС), которые находятся под наиболее серьезной угрозой исчезновения (Kibrik 2021: 511) и характеризуются как слабо перспективные с точки зрения прогноза их дальнейшего развития (Биткеева и др. 2019: 13). Из сорока коренных народов Севера, официально признанных малочисленными согласно Распоряжению Правительства РФ №536-р от 17.04.2006 г., большинство сталкивается с резким сокращением числа носителей своих языков. Глобализация, доминирование крупных языков, внутренние социальные и экономические процессы в местах компактного проживания КМНС, исторические и др. факторы оказывают негативное влияние на витальность миноритарных языков. Так, Институт языкознания РАН фиксирует разнообразную, но в целом неблагоприятную картину: статус витальности языков КМНС варьируется от полностью исчезнувших (например, южномансийский, сойотский, хандэйский) до сохраняющихся в ограниченном употреблении в сельской местности (например, ненецкий, северно-хантыйский) (Коряков и др. 2023: 14–17).

Вместе с тем последние десятилетия характеризуются активизацией процессов этнического возрождения среди коренных народов России, что находит отражение в росте этнического самосознания и интереса к родным языкам и культурам. Данный тренд фиксируется как в переписных данных — через увеличение числа людей, заявляющих о владении этническими языками и признающих их родными (Ханова и др. 2024: 62), так и в появлении многочисленных локальных инициатив по языковой ревитализации. Возникает закономерный вопрос: отражает ли рост деклараций о владении языком улучшение языковой ситуации или это преимущественно символический феномен? И если последнее, может ли усиление символической мощности языка стать ресурсом для его ревитализации?

Данное исследование обращается к языковой ситуации КМНС в Республике Саха (Якутия). Выбор региона обусловлен несколькими причинами. Во-первых, Якутия — многонациональный регион, где особый статус имеют языки пяти КМНС: долган, чукчей, эвенков, эвенов и юкагиров. Региональный закон «О языках в Республике Саха (Якутия)» (1992) закрепляет за ними

статус официальных языков в местах их компактного проживания, а закон «О статусе языков коренных малочисленных народов Севера Республики Саха (Якутия)» (2004) устанавливает правовые и социальные гарантии, способствующие их сохранению и развитию. Во-вторых, Якутия представляет собой уникальный регион для наблюдения за этноязыковыми процессами, поскольку здесь языки КМНС находятся в сложной ситуации взаимодействия не только с русским языком, как это часто бывает в других регионах, но и с якутским, обладающим значительным влиянием как государственный язык республики наряду с русским. В-третьих, территориальная протяженность республики и дисперсное расселение КМНС создают условия для значительной вариативности языковых ситуаций — от полностью якутоязычных сообществ, где языковой сдвиг завершился не позднее XIX в., до сел с относительной сохранностью этнических языков.

Цель настоящей статьи — определить, находятся ли языки КМНС Якутии под угрозой ассимиляции или демонстрируют потенциал к ревитализации. Для достижения указанной цели мы ставим следующие исследовательские вопросы:

1. Каково текущее состояние языков КМНС в Якутии по данным переписей населения и локальных социолингвистических исследований?

2. Насколько декларируемое в переписях владение языками соответствует реальной языковой компетенции носителей?

3. Какова территориальная специфика языковых процессов у эвенков Якутии — народа с наибольшей численностью среди КМНС региона?

4. Какую роль играет этническая идентичность в формировании языковых установок и может ли она стать ресурсом для языковой ревитализации?

Для ответа на поставленные вопросы мы используем комплексный подход, сочетающий анализ данных Всероссийских переписей населения (далее — ВПН) 2010 и 2020 гг. с результатами локальных социолингвистических исследований и полевых материалов, собранных в 2022–2024 гг. в различных районах Якутии. В качестве основного кейса рассматривается положение эвенкийского языка в регионе, что позволяет детально проанализировать как общие тенденции, характерные для языков КМНС, так и специфику локальных контекстов. Особое внимание уделяется роли этнической идентичности молодежи как потенциального ресурса для воспроизводства языка.

Несмотря на то, что экстраполяция выводов, полученных на примере эвенкийского языка, на другие языки КМНС требует осторожности, можно предположить наличие общих тенденций, обусловленных, в частности, единой политикой в отношении языков КМНС и схожими социально-экономическими условиями их функционирования. Мы рассматриваем Якутию как микромодель сложных этноязыковых процессов, происходящих с языками коренных малочисленных народов Севера в современной России.

2. Материалы и методы

Эмпирическую базу исследования составляют данные из нескольких источников. Первичным источником количественных данных послужили материалы ВПН-2010 и ВПН-2020, содержащие информацию о численности КМНС, владении языками, определении родного языка и использовании языков в повседневной жизни. Существенным методологическим изменением ВПН-2020 стала возможность указания нескольких родных языков (в отличие от ВПН-2010, где можно было указать только один), а также введение нового показателя — использования языка в повседневной жизни. Признавая методологические проблемы и неточности переписных данных, выявленные многими исследователями, см. напр.: (Габдрахманова, Алос-И-Фонт 2024: 36), мы тем не менее опираемся на переписную статистику как на единственный источник данных с полным охватом населения. При критическом подходе к интерпретации статистические данные сохраняют свою ценность для выявления общих тенденций и долгосрочных трендов в этноязыковых процессах.

Вторым источником данных послужили результаты локальных социолингвистических исследований, проведенных различными авторами в местах компактного проживания КМНС Якутии, которые позволили оценить степень соответствия переписных данных реальной языковой ситуации. Привлекались также результаты полевых исследований, проведенных в 2022–2024 гг.[1] в различных районах проживания эвенков в Республике Саха (Якутия). География исследования охватила 10 населенных пунктов в 8 районах: Алданском (с. Хатыстыр), Анабарском (с. Саскылах), Булунском (с. Таймылыр), Мирнинском (с. Сюльдюкар), Нерюнгринском (с. Иенгра), Олекминском (с. Тяня), Оленекском (с. Оленек), Усть-Майском (сс. Кюпцы, Петропавловск, Эжанцы). Выбор населенных пунктов определялся необходимостью охватить различные типы языковых ситуаций: от якутоязычных эвенкийских сообществ в Северо-Западной Якутии, где языковой сдвиг завершился не позднее XIX в. (Анабарский, Булунский, Мирнинский, Оленекский районы), до сел в Южной Якутии с относительной сохранностью эвенкийского языка (сс. Иенгра, Тяня, Хатыстыр). Особое внимание уделялось Усть-Майскому району в Юго-Восточной Якутии как промежуточному случаю между двумя регионами.

Общее количество участников опросов составило 548 чел. различных возрастных групп. Для анализа связи этнической идентичности с языковыми установками была сформирована целевая выборка из 234 молодых эвенков, проживающих в селах Якутии. Респонденты были разделены на две группы по типу языковой среды проживания: 137 чел. из якутоязычных эвенкийских сообществ в Северо-Западной Якутии (сс. Оленек, Саскылах, Сюльдюкар,

[1] Использованы результаты исследований, проводимых ИГИиПМНС СО РАН в рамках проекта «Организация и проведение мониторинга функционирования языков коренных народов Республики Саха (Якутия)» (рук. к.ф.н. Н.Е. Захарова), реализуемого в рамках государственной программы Республики Саха (Якутия) «Сохранение и развитие государственных и официальных языков в Республике Саха (Якутия) на 2020–2024 годы».

Таймылыр) и 97 чел. из сел с относительной сохранностью эвенкийского языка в Южной Якутии (сс. Иенгра, Тяня, Хатыстыр)[2].

В ходе полевых исследований использовались структурированные анкеты, включавшие вопросы о владении языками (этническим, русским, якутским), уровне языковой компетенции (свободное владение, разговорный уровень, знание отдельных слов и фраз), сферах использования языков (дома, на работе, в тайге/на стаде, в селе), межпоколенческой передаче языка (общение с бабушками/дедушками, родителями, супругами, детьми), языковых установках и желании передать язык следующим поколениям. Для молодежной выборки включались вопросы об актуализации этнической идентичности («никогда не забываю о своей национальности» vs «редко задумываюсь об этом») и отношении к необходимости знания родного языка и культуры.

Анализ данных включал несколько этапов и подходов. Проводилось сопоставление показателей переписей 2010 и 2020 гг. по численности КМНС, владению языками, определению родного языка и использованию языков. Рассчитывались темпы прироста/убыли по каждому показателю, анализировались соотношения между декларируемым владением и использованием языков. Для эвенков Якутии проводился детальный анализ переписных данных в разрезе районов и отдельных населенных пунктов, что позволило выявить территориальную специфику языковых процессов и идентифицировать районы с различной концентрацией носителей языка. Переписные показатели владения и использования языков систематически сравнивались с данными социолингвистических обследований конкретных населенных пунктов, что позволило оценить степень расхождения между заявляемым и реальным владением языком и выявить феномен символической мощности языка. В молодежной выборке проводилось сопоставление степени актуализации этнической идентичности с отношением к необходимости знания родного языка и культуры. Анализ, проведенный отдельно для двух типов языковых сред (якутоязычные сообщества vs сообщества с относительной сохранностью эвенкийского языка), позволил выявить влияние языковой среды на формирование языковых установок.

Исследование имеет ряд методологических ограничений, которые необходимо учитывать при интерпретации результатов. Во-первых, ВПН содержат методологические проблемы, связанные с субъективным характером самоопределения языковой компетенции. Респонденты могут по-разному интерпретировать вопросы о владении и использовании языка, что приводит к

[2] Использованы результаты исследований, проведенных ИГИиПМНС СО РАН в рамках проекта «Ресурсы идентичности, языка и культуры коренных малочисленных народов Севера Республики Саха (Якутия): современное состояние, локальный и глобальный контекст трансформаций» (рук. к.и.н. В.Б. Игнатьева), реализованного в рамках «Программы фундаментальных и прикладных научных исследований РАН, связанных с изучением этнокультурного многообразия российского общества и направленных на укрепление общероссийской идентичности, 2020–2022 гг.» по поручению Президента РФ В.В. Путина (№ Пр-71, п. 6 от 16.01.2020 г.).

расхождению между заявляемыми в переписи и реальными показателями. Изменение методологии между ВПН-2010 и ВПН-2020 (возможность указания нескольких родных языков, введение вопроса об использовании языка) затрудняет прямое сопоставление некоторых показателей. Во-вторых, полевые исследования охватили не все населенные пункты компактного проживания эвенков в Якутии. Дисперсное расселение эвенков в республике и значительная территориальная удаленность мест их проживания друг от друга не позволили провести сплошное обследование всех сообществ. В-третьих, выводы, полученные на примере эвенкийского языка, не могут автоматически экстраполироваться на другие языки КМНС Якутии без учета их специфики. Каждый язык характеризуется уникальной историей языковых контактов, демографической ситуацией и локальными факторами. В-четвертых, полевые исследования проводились в ограниченный период (2022–2024 гг.), что не позволяет зафиксировать динамику изменений в реальном времени. Языковая ситуация может меняться быстрее, чем это фиксируется в исследованиях.

Несмотря на указанные ограничения, применение триангуляции методов — сочетание анализа переписных данных, результатов локальных исследований и полевых материалов — позволяет получить достоверную картину языковой ситуации и выявить основные тенденции этноязыковых процессов у КМНС Якутии.

3. Результаты

За межпереписной период 2010–2020 гг. численность четырех из пяти КМНС в Якутии выросла: юкагиры увеличились на 18,5 %, эвенки — на 16,3 %, долганы — на 12,9 %, чукчи — на 6,1 %. Численность эвенов, напротив, сократилась на 12 %. Таблица 1 представляет сравнительные данные переписей 2010 и 2020 гг. по демографическим и языковым показателям КМНС Якутии.

Число владеющих этническим языком за межпереписной период изменилось следующим образом: у долган — рост с 96 до 404 чел. (в 4,2 раза), эвенков — рост с 1179 до 2781 чел. (в 2,4 раза), эвенов — сокращение с 3350 до 3045 чел., у чукчей — сокращение с 272 до 189 чел., юкагиров — сокращение с 289 до 267 чел. Вместе с тем показатель по признанию этнического языка родным демонстрирует увеличение числа у всех пяти народов: у долган — в 5,6 раза, эвенков — в 2,7 раза, юкагиров — в 1,5 раза, чукчей — в 1,3 раза, эвенов — в 1,2 раза. В целом, доля КМНС Якутии, признающих этнический язык родным, выросла с 12,7 % в 2010 г. до 20,3 % в 2020 г. Напротив, доля признающих родным якутский язык сократилась с 72,9 до 66,1 %.

В ВПН-2020 впервые был включен вопрос об использовании языков. Соотношение использующих этнический язык к владеющим им составило: у эвенов — 78,0 %, юкагиров — 73,8 %, чукчей — 67,2 %, эвенков — 45,1 %, долган — 18,3 %. Отметим, что в 2020 г. 64,7 % представителей КМНС владели якутским языком, а 61,1 % активно его использовали. Установлено, что

за межпереписной период количество владеющих якутским языком среди КМНС сократилось на 12,6 %.

Таблица 1. **Демографические и языковые показатели КМНС Якутии по данным переписей населения 2010 и 2020 гг., кол. чел.[3]**

Table 1. **Demographic and linguistic indicators of indigenous minorities of the North in Yakutia according to the 2010 and 2020 population censuses, number of persons**

Показатель/язык		Долганы		Эвенки		Эвены		Чукчи		Юкагиры	
		2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Количество		1906	2151	21008	24442	15071	13260	670	711	1281	1518
Владение	Этнический	96	404	1179	2781	3350	3045	272	189	289	267
	Русский	1637	1981	18964	23127	13677	12566	670	704	1239	1479
	Якутский	1775	1886	16874	16478	11503	8044	69	126	634	709
Родной язык	Этнический	53	295	1346	3666	3089	3774	287	374	306	444
	Русский	59	89	2536	2997	2003	1418	333	245	563	535
	Якутский	1792	1765	17016	17550	9848	7926	44	87	400	505
Использование	Этнический	-	74	-	1253	-	2376	-	127	-	197
	Русский	-	1828	-	20475	-	11594	-	699	-	1465
	Якутский	-	1776	-	15564	-	7621	-	105	-	657

Таблица 2. **Демографические и языковые показатели эвенков Якутии в районном разрезе по данным переписи населения 2020 гг., кол. чел.[4]**

Table 2. **Demographic and linguistic indicators of Evenks in Yakutia by district according to the 2020 population census, number of persons**

Район	Кол-во эвенков	Владение языком:			Использование языка:		
		Эвенк.	Русск.	Якутск.	Эвенк.	Русск.	Якутск.
Алданский	2130	460	2037	1896	76	2015	1864
Анабарский	1074	4	997	1026	0	972	942
Булунский	2097	14	2057	1461	11	1929	1113
Жиганский	2624	536	2506	2160	19	2380	2070
Мирнинский	577	38	560	407	24	544	380
Нерюнгринский	1241	805	1222	72	773	1216	57
Олекминский	1194	305	1147	1044	15	1086	1033
Оленекский	3566	22	3136	1801	15	1251	1787
Усть-Майский	2105	186	2060	1423	118	2046	1344

Табл. 2 представляет демографические и языковые показатели эвенков Якутии в разрезе районов по данным ВПН-2020. Так, в шести районах (Анабарский, Булунский, Жиганский, Мирнинский, Оленекский, Усть-Майский), в которых проживают якутоязычные эвенки, 800 чел. заявили о владении эвенкийским языком, 187 чел. — о его использовании. Наибольшее число

[3] Источник: Территориальный орган Федеральной службы государственной статистики по Республике Саха (Якутия). URL: https://14.rosstat.gov.ru/folder/39638 (дата обращения: 15.02.2025).

[4] Включены районы с поселениями, входящими в перечень мест традиционного проживания эвенков согласно Закону Республики Саха (Якутия) от 10.07.2003 № 59-З N 121-III «О перечне коренных малочисленных народов Севера и мест их традиционного проживания и традиционной хозяйственной деятельности в Республике Саха (Якутия)».

владеющих зафиксировано в Жиганском районе (536 чел.), но об использовании заявили только 19 чел. Второе место по абсолютному числу эвенков, заявляющих о владении и использовании этнического языка, занимает Усть-Майский район.

По данным ВПН-2020, 8,8 % усть-майских эвенков владеют эвенкийским языком, 5,6 % — используют его. Социолингвистическое обследование, проведенное в 2024 г. в трех национальных эвенкийских сельских поселениях данного района, охватило 145 эвенков, из которых 10 чел. (6,9 %) заявили о владении эвенкийским языком. Уровень владения распределился следующим образом: свободно владеет 1 чел., разговорный уровень имеют 3 чел., а 6 чел. — знают отдельные слова и фразы. Еще 43 респондента (29,7 %) знают отдельные слова и фразы, но не указали владение эвенкийским языком. Согласно данным обследования, самой распространенной формой контакта с этническим языком является прослушивание песен на эвенкийском языке (4,8 % респондентов). При этом зафиксировано, что 60,7 % опрошенных эвенков выражают желание, чтобы их дети и внуки владели эвенкийским языком.

Таблица 3. **Демографические и языковые показатели эвенков Южной Якутии в разрезе районов и сел[5] по данным переписи населения 2010 и 2020 гг., кол. чел.**
Table 3. **Demographic and linguistic indicators of Evenks in Southern Yakutia by districts and villages according to the 2010 and 2020 population censuses, number of persons**

Район *(в том числе село)*	**Эвенки**		**Владеющие эвенкийским**		**Использующие эвенкийский**
	2010 г.	**2020 г.**	**2010 г.**	**2020 г.**	**2020 г.**
Алданский	2073	2130	н/д	460	76
в т.ч. в с. Хатыстыр	*1026*	*1154*	*38*	*412*	*28*
Нерюнгринский	1123	1241	н/д	805	773
в т.ч. в с. Иенгра	*816*	*837*	*620*	*768*	*749*
Олекминский	1234	1194	н/д	305	15
в т.ч. в с. Тяня	*399*	*417*	*82*	*284*	*2*

Табл. 3 представляет данные по Южной Якутии (Алданский, Нерюнгринский, Олекминский районы). Выявлено, что по данным ВПН-2020, носители эвенкийского языка в соответствующих районах практически полностью сконцентрированы в следующих селах: в с. Иенгра проживает 768 из 805 владеющих языком по району (95,4 %), в с. Тяня — 284 из 305 (93,1 %), в с. Хатыстыр — 412 из 460 (89,6 %). По сравнению с ВПН-2010 число заявляющих о владении этническим языком эвенков увеличилось во всех трех селах: в Иенгре — в 1,2 раза, в Тяне — в 3,5 раза, в Хатыстыре — в 10,8 раза.

[5] Здесь и далее используются неопубликованные данные ВПН-2020 по населенным пунктам. Источник: База данных «Этно-языковой состав населенных пунктов России», составленная к.ф.н. Ю.Б. Коряковым. URL: http://lingvarium.org/russia/index.shtml (дата обращения: 24.08.2024). Автор выражает благодарность Ю.Б. Корякову за предоставленную возможность использовать данные до их официальной публикации.

Если переписные данные отражают общие тенденции, то результаты полевых исследований 2022–2023 гг. позволяют уточнить реальную языковую компетенцию и языковое поведение эвенков в сс. Иенгра и Тяня. Так, в Иенгре эвенкийским языком владеют 81 % опрошенных нами эвенков (свободно — 58,8 %, на разговорном уровне — 19,1 %, знают отдельные слова и фразы — 22,1 %). В Тяне владеют 64,7 % (свободно — 27,3 %, на разговорном уровне — 29,1 %, знают отдельные слова и фразы — 43,6 %). Основными сферами функционирования эвенкийского языка остаются традиционные виды деятельности. В тайге и на оленеводческих стадах язык используют 50% опрошенных эвенков Иенгры и 28,2 % эвенков Тяни, в то время как в селе — только 42,9 и 16,5 % соответственно. Межпоколенческая передача языка демонстрирует нисходящую динамику: с бабушками и дедушками на эвенкийском общаются 46,4 % респондентов-эвенков в Иенгре и 32,9 % в Тяне, с родителями — 35,7 и 23,5%, с супругами — 15,5 и 7,1 %, с детьми — 26,2 и 4,7 %.

Относительно молодежной выборки получены следующие результаты. В селах с относительной сохранностью эвенкийского языка значительно больше молодежи с выраженной этнической идентичностью (69 % против 53 % в якутоязычных сообществах). Среди молодых эвенков с выраженной этнической идентичностью в якутоязычных сообществах 81 % считают необходимым знать родной язык и культуру. В селах Южной Якутии данный показатель ниже — 76 %. При этом, даже среди тех, кто редко задумывается о национальности, 68 % признают важность знания языка (против 51 % в якутоязычных сообществах). В якутоязычных сообществах 14 % молодежи со слабой этнической идентичностью считают язык неважным, в селах Южной Якутии — только 8 %.

4. Обсуждение результатов

Как отмечают исследователи, сокращение численности эвенов частично объясняется процессом этнической реидентификации: многие люди, ранее записанные эвенами из-за терминологической путаницы, восстанавливают свою «паспортную» эвенкийскую идентичность (Филиппова 2023: 250). Положительная демографическая динамика большинства КМНС связана как с высокой рождаемостью в северных сообществах, так и с процессами этнического возрождения, начавшимися после распада Советского Союза (Филиппова, Гнатюк 2017: 63). Однако за этими обнадеживающими демографическими показателями скрывается картина языкового сдвига.

Юкагиры. Переписные данные требуют важного уточнения. Юкагирская языковая семья представлена не одним, а двумя самостоятельными языками — тундренным и лесным юкагирским. Различия между ними настолько значительны (уровень лексических совпадений составляет лишь 74 %, существуют различия в фонетике и морфологии), что они не являются взаимопонятными и должны рассматриваться как отдельные языки (Курилов 2022: 65, Пупынина, Мордашова 2022: 58). Реальная языковая ситуация оказывается

значительно более критической, чем следует из переписи. По данным М.П. Лукиной, в 2015 г. этническим языком владели лишь 50 чел. среди тундренных юкагиров и менее 10 — среди лесных (Лукина 2023: 151). По современным оценкам специалистов, ситуация еще более ухудшилась: носителями тундренного юкагирского языка можно назвать около 40 чел., причем самому младшему уже около 40 лет, а лесного — не более 5 чел. старше 60 лет (Курилова 2023: 74). Еще более тревожную картину описывает П.Е. Прокопьева, которая оперирует понятием «истинных носителей языка», насчитывая лишь около 20 чел. для тундренного и 5 — для лесного юкагирского языков, почти все из которых люди пожилого возраста (Прокопьева 2024: 68).

К этому следует добавить, что на момент написания данной статьи из пяти носителей лесного юкагирского языка четверо проживают в Магаданской области, что фактически сводит число носителей в Якутии к одному человеку (со слов П.Е. Прокопьевой, л.с.). В классификации Института языкознания РАН тундренный юкагирский язык получил статус «прерванного», а лесной — «засыпающего» языка (Коряков и др. 2023: 79), что указывает на критическую степень языкового сдвига в обеих группах. Столь значительное расхождение между переписными данными (267 владеющих) и экспертными оценками (максимум 45 человек, причем «истинных носителей» еще меньше) объясняется разными подходами к (само)определению языковой компетенции: перепись фиксирует субъективные декларации, тогда как исследователи опираются на объективные критерии владения языком.

Чукчи. Как и в случае с юкагирами, реальная языковая ситуация может существенно отличаться от переписных данных. М.Ю. Пупыниной в ходе экспедиций 2014 и 2016–2017 гг. в с. Колымское, месте компактного проживания чукчей в Якутии, было зафиксировано всего 40 говорящих на чукотском языке, причем в это число включены даже те, кто способен породить лишь несколько связных фраз. С учетом носителей в районном центре Черский (как правило, выходцев из Колымского), общее количество владеющих чукотским языком во всем Нижнеколымском районе оценивается примерно в 60–70 чел., включая представителей других народов. Исследователь подчеркивает, что переписная оценка 2010 г. (272 чел.) «скорее всего, завышена» (Пупынина 2018: 117). Учитывая дальнейшее сокращение числа владеющих языком к 2020 г. (до 189 чел.), из которых 127 заявили об использовании языка, можно предположить, что количество «полноценных» носителей чукотского языка в Якутии в настоящее время существенно меньше даже этих заявляющих использование. Критическое состояние языка подтверждают и сами чукчи. Как отмечает Дж. Кантарович, чукотские информанты в Якутии указывают, что самым молодым свободно владеющим языком чукчам уже за 50 лет, а среди более молодого поколения сохраняют некоторые языковые навыки лишь те, кто продолжает жить в селах и заниматься оленеводством вместе с родителями (Kantarovich 2020: 214).

Эвены. Число владеющих этническим языком составляет 23 % от числа эвенов региона в 2020 г. При этом, по результатам исследования 2018 г., количество владеющих этническим языком среди эвенов Якутии составляло 16,6 % (Sharina & Kuzmina 2022: 36). Обращает на себя внимание практически полное совпадение приведенных данных с переписным показателем использования языка — 17,9 %. Отметим, что эвены демонстрируют рекордное среди КМНС Якутии соотношение использующих язык к владеющим (78 %), что позволяет предположить, что в их случае переписной вопрос об использовании языка дает более реалистичную картину языковой компетенции, чем вопрос о владении. Вместе с тем текущая языковая ситуация требует уточнения, однако дисперсное расселение эвенов в 13 районах Якутии и значительная территориальная удаленность мест их проживания друг от друга (Филиппова, Шарина 2025) затрудняют проведение регулярного мониторинга. Как пишет С.И. Шарина, устная эвенская речь сохраняется в сс. Андрюшкино Нижнеколымского, Березовка Среднеколымского, Себян-Кюель Кобяйского и Тополиное Томпонского районов (Шарина 2022: 36). Согласно ВПН-2020 в указанных населенных пунктах людей, владеющих эвенским языком, насчитывается: в Себян-Кюеле — 659 чел., в Тополином — 400, в Березовке — 242, в Андрюшкино — 182. В сумме это составляет около 1500 чел. — примерно половину от общего числа владеющих этническим языком эвенов в Якутии по переписи, что может указывать на завышенность статистических данных. В остальных населенных пунктах количество владеющих языком людей ограничивается либо представителями старшего поколения, например, в Верхнеколымском районе не более 10 чел., в Усть-Янском — 39 чел. по данным 2017 г. (Кузьмина 2017: 124), либо единичными переселенцами из основных языковых центров как, например, носители из Себян-Кюеля, проживающие в с. Кустур Эвено-Бытантайского района (Vinokurova et al. 2022: 170). Л.А. Гренобль и Б.Я. Осипов отмечают, что эвенский язык устойчиво функционирует в сс. Березовка и Себян-Кюель — изолированных друг от друга селах (Grenoble & Osipov 2023: 13). В Березовке абсолютное большинство респондентов используют эвенский язык дома, а на работе многие совмещают его с русским. Витальность языка здесь остается относительно стабильной, хотя у некоторых представителей молодого поколения владение этническим языком определяется как пассивное (Осипов, Хабаровская 2025: 139). В Себян-Кюеле все опрошенные способны общаться на эвенском языке, однако младшая возрастная группа (10–20 лет) испытывает трудности с развернутым повествованием на родном языке. Несмотря на это, эвенский язык в данном селе сохраняет многофункциональность и относительно высокую демографическую мощность, хотя его низкая конкурентоспособность за пределами села снижает интерес молодежи к его изучению (Захарова 2023: 39). В целом, несмотря на то что эвены лидируют среди рассматриваемых народов по абсолютному числу лиц, владеющих этническим языком (3045 чел.), критический анализ выявляет, что переписные данные по этому показателю не отражают

реальной языковой ситуации. В частности, качественные изменения в языковой компетенции молодежи остаются за рамками статистического учета.

Долганы. Если у рассмотренных выше народов наблюдается сокращение числа носителей, то ситуация с долганами представляет собой особый случай. Число владеющих этническим языком достигло около 19 % от общей численности долган в Якутии. Необходимо отметить, что долганский язык получил статус самостоятельного языка лишь в 1979 г., до этого рассматриваясь как диалект якутского языка, причем в Республике Саха (Якутия) правомерность этого решения до сих пор остается предметом дискуссий (Барболина и др. 2016: 145). В данном контексте особенно показательно, что долганы Якутии испытывают существенные затруднения в определении границ между долганским и якутским языками. Исследование в с. Юрюнг-Хая, единственном населенном пункте компактного проживания долган в Якутии, выявило, что респонденты характеризуют свой язык как «отдельные слова», «похожий на якутский», «смешанный язык» или даже «диалект якутского языка». Только переселенцы из Таймыра четко различают долганский и якутский языки (Grenoble et al. 2024: 265). Выявленная неопределенность языкового статуса напрямую влияет на автооценку уровня владения языком. По данным социолингвистического опроса в Анабарском районе, свободно владеют долганским языком 11,4 % респондентов, еще 18,9 % владеют на разговорном уровне, а 28,4 % вообще затруднились ответить на вопрос о владении языком (Захарова, Захарова 2022: 50). То есть активных носителей языка насчитывается около 30%, что превышает переписные 19 %. Данное расхождение подтверждает, что условность границ между долганским и якутским языками создает трудности для определения реального количества долган, владеющих этническим языком. Вероятно, четырехкратный рост числа владеющих этническим языком за межпереписной период объясняется как раз неопределенностью языкового статуса: респонденты могли по-разному интерпретировать вопрос о владении долганским языком в зависимости от своего понимания его соотношения с якутским. При этом лишь 18,3 % декларирующих владение языком фактически его используют, что является минимальным показателем среди всех КМНС Якутии и может свидетельствовать о том, что многие респонденты, заявившие о владении долганским, в действительности используют якутский язык или его смешанные с долганским формы. Правомерность полученного вывода подтверждает рекордный среди исследуемых народов показатель использования якутского языка долганами — 82,6 %, при том, что долганский используют всего 74 чел. (3,4 %).

В целом, переписные данные фиксируют примечательную картину относительно якутского языка: 64,7 % представителей КМНС владеют им, причем 61,1 % активно его используют. Минимальный разрыв между декларируемым владением и использованием (менее 4 %) свидетельствует о функциональности якутского языка в языковом репертуаре КМНС Якутии, которая опирается на многовековую традицию: исторически якутский язык выполняет роль

lingua franca в регионе. Еще в начале XX в. исследователи фиксировали, что коренные народы региона активно использовали якутский язык для общения как с самими якутами, так и между собой (Патканов 1906: 172), что свидетельствует о его давней интегрирующей функции в поликультурной среде Якутии.

Несмотря на сохраняющуюся функциональность якутского языка, динамика последних лет вызывает обеспокоенность. Сокращение количества владеющих якутским языком среди КМНС отражает общее ослабление позиций якутского языка в республике, затрагивающее и самих носителей — саха. Так, исследования Н.И. Ивановой демонстрируют постепенное снижение языковой компетенции: среди молодежи саха она уменьшилась примерно на 5 % с 2007 по 2021 г. при росте доли пассивного владения (Иванова 2023: 103). В детской среде ситуация еще более критична — полноценным владением родным языком характеризуется лишь 47,55 % детей саха, что в два раза ниже показателей взрослого населения и указывает на развивающийся языковой сдвиг (Никитина 2025: 64).

Ослабление коммуникативных позиций якутского языка происходит на фоне позитивных этноязыковых сдвигов, что проявляется в существенном росте показателей прямой языковой идентификации КМНС Якутии. Повышение доли выбирающих этнический язык в качестве родного документирован и для титульного народа Якутии: лонгитюдные исследования среди саха показывают стабильность прямой этноязыковой идентичности при сокращении признания родным неэтнического языка (Иванова 2022: 92). Данные изменения отражают более широкий тренд: сравнительный анализ данных переписей выявляет общую закономерность для всех коренных народов России — статистически значимый рост «коэффициента эмотивности», то есть признания этнического языка родным среди не владеющих им лиц, что исследователи интерпретируют как усиление символической мощности миноритарных языков в контексте актуализации этнической идентичности (Ханова и др. 2024: 62).

Выявленная тенденция роста символической мощности этнических языков при одновременном снижении их функциональности позволяет по-новому взглянуть на обсуждавшееся выше существенное расхождение между декларируемым в переписи владением этническими языками у КМНС Якутии и результатами конкретных социолингвистических обследований. Усиление эмоциональной связи с языком своего народа мотивирует респондентов заявлять о владении им даже при ограниченной языковой компетенции.

Эвенки. Прежде чем перейти к анализу, важно отметить региональную специфику эвенкийского языка в России. Как отмечает Н.Б. Вахтин, степень сохранности и распространения эвенкийского языка в значительной мере зависит от региона, что позволяет отнести его к «особым случаям» (Вахтин 2001: 180). Современные исследования показывают еще большую степень не-

однородности: витальность эвенкийского языка может существенно различаться не только между регионами, но и внутри одного региона, варьируясь на локальном уровне по пяти категориям — от «начала языкового сдвига» до «исчезнувший» (Казакевич и др. 2022: 37). Вместе с тем в Якутии наблюдается увеличение числа эвенков, указывающих на владение этническим языком и признающих его родным, что прослеживается и на общероссийском уровне (Данилов 2025: 207). В этом мы усматриваем усиление символической мощности этнического языка. Для значительной части эвенков родной язык становится важным маркером этнической принадлежности независимо от реального уровня владения им. Данный феномен подтверждается и локальными исследованиями, фиксирующими расхождение между этноязыковой идентичностью и фактическими языковыми компетенциями (Данилов и др. 2024: 357).

ГИС-исследования показывают, что эвенки региона сконцентрированы в Северо-Западной и Южной Якутии (Филиппова 2023: 253). При этом данные табл. 2 демонстрируют существенные различия между этими двумя зонами по степени сохранности эвенкийского языка. В Северо-Западной Якутии (Анабарский, Булунский, Жиганский, Мирнинский, Оленекский районы) и Усть-Майском районе в Юго-Восточной Якутии, где переход эвенков на якутский язык был зафиксирован еще в середине XIX в. (Сирина 2012: 98), ВПН-2020 показывает, что 800 эвенков заявили о владении эвенкийским языком, а 187 чел. — о его использовании. Среди районов с исторически якутоязычными эвенкийскими сообществами особенно выделяется Жиганский район, национальный эвенкийский статус которого, по-видимому, играет ключевую роль в формировании позитивного отношения к этническому языку и усилении его символической мощности в сознании жиганских эвенков (Danilov 2025: 246). Хотя в Анабарском и Оленекском национальных районах пока не наблюдается столь выраженной динамики (4 и 22 чел., владеющих языком, соответственно), последние инициативы свидетельствуют о растущем внимании к языковым вопросам. Так, в Оленекском районе 2023 и 2024 гг. были объявлены Годами эвенкийского языка, учреждена премия «Мой родной эвенкийский язык» для поддержки семейных практик сохранения и развития языка[6]. В 2025 г. молодой учитель эвенкийского языка А.В. Андреева из Оленекского района стала дипломантом Всероссийского конкурса «Лучший учитель родного языка и родной литературы»[7]. Приведенные примеры

[6] Источник: Распоряжение Главы МР «Оленекский национальный эвенкийский район» №160-р от 26.02.2024 «О мерах социальной поддержки в МР «Оленекский национальный эвенкийский район» в Год семьи в Российской Федерации, Год детства в Республике Саха (Якутия), Год эвенкийского языка в Оленекском национальном эвенкийском районе». URL: https://mr-olenek.ru/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/rasporyazhenie-o-merah-soczialnoj-podderzhki-v-gs-rf-gd-rsya-geya-oenr-2.pdf (дата обращения: 09.02.2025).

[7] Источник: Александра Андреева обладатель Диплома в специальной номинации Ассамблеи народов России Всероссийского профессионального конкурса «Лучший учитель родного языка и родной литературы — 2025» // МКУ «Оленекское районное управление образования»

указывают на формирование институциональной поддержки языка, которая может усилить уже наметившиеся позитивные тенденции.

Безусловно, среди владеющих и использующих эвенкийский язык в якутоязычных сообществах есть не только декларирующие это символически, но и реальные носители. Поскольку практически во всех якутоязычных селах ведется факультативное преподавание эвенкийского языка в школе, там работают учителя, чаще всего «новые говорящие» из числа уроженцев этих же сел, получившие специальное языковое образование на кафедре северной филологии СВФУ им. М.К. Аммосова или в Институте народов Севера РГПУ им. А.И. Герцена. Полевые исследования также показывают, что в школах работают учителями эвенкийского языка местные уроженцы, получившие в 1990-х гг. педагогическое образование в Якутском педагогическом колледже № 2 или Колледже народов Севера в п. Черский по специальностям «дошкольное образование» и «учитель начальных классов».

Другую группу, вероятно, составляют носители языка, переехавшие по трудовым или семейным обстоятельствам из сел с относительно устойчивым функционированием эвенкийского языка. В этом ключе показателен пример Мирнинского района. В сс. Сюльдюкар и Тас-Юрях, где проживают потомки брагатских эвенков, которые из-за малочисленности и обособленности не упоминаются при перечислении современных локальных групп эвенкийского народа (Боякова 2024: 58), перепись фиксирует всего по 2 чел., заявляющих о владении эвенкийским языком. При этом основная часть владеющих языком в данном районе, фиксируемая переписью, сконцентрирована в промышленных городах: Мирном (13 чел.) и Удачном (12 чел.). Учитывая высокую интенсивность миграционных потоков в Мирнинском районе (Томаска 2022: 207) и то, что такие потоки обычно направлены именно в промышленные центры, можно с высокой вероятностью предполагать, что это приезжие носители эвенкийского языка из других районов республики и регионов страны.

Вместе с тем обе описанные группы реальных носителей остаются немногочисленными. Подавляющее большинство заявивших о владении и использовании эвенкийского языка в якутоязычных сообществах делают это скорее на символическом уровне. Показательны в этом отношении данные по Усть-Майскому району, который занимает второе место после Жиганского по абсолютному числу эвенков, заявляющих о владении и использовании этнического языка. Социолингвистическим обследованием выявлены 4 чел. со свободным и разговорным уровнем, которых можно отнести к описанным выше группам реальных носителей (учителя и приезжие), то остальные случаи, составляющие большинство, представляют собой именно символическое заявление о владении этническим языком. Кроме того, совпадение доли лиц, слушающих песни на эвенкийском языке (4,8 %), с долей, лиц заявивших об использовании языка в переписи (5,6 %), позволяет предположить, что под

МР «Оленекский эвенкийский национальный район» РС(Я). URL: https://uoolenek.obr.sakha.gov.ru/news/front/view/id/3343212 (дата обращения: 12.09.2025).

«использованием языка» респонденты переписи понимают не повседневную речевую практику, а участие в этнокультурной деятельности, что может включать как пассивные формы (прослушивание песен), так и активное вовлечение — исполнение песен, танцев, театральных постановок на эвенкийском языке в рамках художественной самодеятельности.

Вместе с тем символическое функционирование эвенкийского языка не следует недооценивать. Как справедливо отмечают исследователи, «символическое измерение является важной составляющей любой языковой ситуации» (Москвичева и др. 2023: 710). Именно символическая мощность языка формирует позитивные установки в отношении его ревитализации и передачи следующим поколениям. Так, 60,7 % опрошенных в Усть-Майском районе эвенков выражают желание, чтобы их дети и внуки владели эвенкийским языком. Таким образом, символическая мощность может стать основой для возможной ревитализации языка, несмотря на произошедший языковой сдвиг. В этом контексте примечательно, что именно Усть-Майский район дал целую плеяду активистов языкового возрождения, «новых говорящих». Так, В.Г. Исаков исполняет эвенкийский эпос (нимнгакан) и переводит его на якутский язык; его сын А.В. Исаков издает газету «Илкэн» и ведет одноименный интернет-портал на эвенкийском языке; М.П. Дьяконова координирует деятельность ассоциации эвенков Якутии по сохранению языка и культуры; А.Е. Куличкина создает молодежные культурные проекты через ансамбль «Гиркилэн»; Н.А. Апросимов разрабатывает инновационные образовательные технологии для изучения эвенкийского языка с использованием искусственного интеллекта, включая мобильное приложение «Ayana». Их успешная деятельность, возможно, служит примером для земляков и частично объясняет высокую языковую лояльность усть-майских эвенков.

Напротив, в Южной Якутии сохранились села с относительно устойчивым функционированием эвенкийского языка — Иенгра (Нерюнгринский район), Тяня (Олекминский район) и Хатыстыр (Алданский район) (Андреева и др. 2020: 118). Важно отметить, что они различаются по типам двуязычия: в Иенгре преобладает эвенкийско-русское двуязычие при минимальном использовании якутского языка, тогда как в Тяне и Хатыстыре распространены якутско-эвенкийский и якутско-русско-эвенкийский типы двуязычия (Стручков 2009: 22). Данные по ним представлены в таблице 3. Согласно локальным социолингвистическим исследованиям, с. Иенгра демонстрирует наиболее стабильную ситуацию среди трех сел. В 1992 г. 76,7 % эвенков Нерюнгринского района владели этническим языком (Аргунова 1992: 44), но к 2023 г. ситуация ухудшилась: эвенкийский используется преимущественно при общении носителей с высокой языковой компетенцией между собой и с пожилыми людьми, среди школьников и молодежи владеют единицы (Имеева-Кысылбаикова, Игнатенко 2023: 238). В с. Хатыстыр языковой сдвиг произошел раньше, чем в с. Иенгра. Уже в 1992 г. все опрошенные представители интеллигенции в возрасте 30–50 лет не владели родным языком, только 20 %

понимали эвенкийскую речь, 30 % знали отдельные слова (Мыреева 1993: 72). В настоящее время эвенкийский язык в Алданском районе функционирует как язык культурного наследия, основными носителями которого остаются представители убывающего пожилого населения. Среди молодежи и людей среднего возраста практически не осталось носителей (Биткеева и др. 2024: 56). С. Тяня занимает промежуточное положение. К концу прошлого столетия во всех возрастных группах имелись лица, свободно владеющие эвенкийским языком, хотя молодые люди до 40 лет чаще испытывали затруднения в общении (Винокурова 1997: 38). В 2019 г. было установлено, что разговорный эвенкийский сохраняется среди представителей старшего поколения, число которых уменьшается. У населения младше 60 лет язык сохраняется только в семьях, занимающихся традиционным хозяйством: оленеводством, охотой, народными промыслами (Захарова 2019: 174).

Переписные данные показывают, что усиление символической мощности языка проявляется и в данных селах. Интересно, что наибольший прирост наблюдается в с. Хатыстыр, где фактическая языковая компетенция утрачена в наибольшей степени, что демонстрирует обратную зависимость: снижение владения языком сопровождается ростом его символической мощности и, как результат, увеличением числа людей, заявляющих о владении им в переписи. Вместе с тем в данном селе рост символической мощности языка подкрепляется реальными попытками его ревитализации. На рубеже XX–XXI вв. в селе активизировались усилия по возрождению эвенкийского языка через образовательные и культурные инициативы, а в последние годы наблюдается дальнейший рост интереса родителей и молодежи к изучению языка, несмотря на объективные ограничения в виде якутоязычной среды и отсутствия системного языкового образования (Степанова 2022: 214). Показательны инициативы местных языковых активистов: Дж.В. Сидоров, ныне Глава поселения, в 2010 г. создал студию «Тунгус-рекордс», выпускающую современные песни на эвенкийском языке в различных жанрах — от рэпа до традиционных мелодий[8]; В.Д. Прокопьев, выучивший язык в 50 лет, организовал WhatsApp[9]-группу для изучения эвенкийского языка[10]; педагоги детского сада А.Ф. Павлова и М.М. Прокопьева разработали трехъязычную игру для обучения эвенкийскому языку дошкольников, которая тиражирована республиканским издательством «Айар»[11]; уроженка села, «новый» говорящий Ю.Г. Степанова

[8] Источник: Спиридонова И.Е. Премьера эвенкийской песни «Хуктывун в Хатыстыре» // Портал коренных народов Севера «Илкэн». URL: https://ilken.ru/2025/03/14/premera-evenkijskoj-pesni-huktyvun-v-hatystyre/ (дата обращения: 30.06.2025).

[9] Принадлежит компании Meta, признанной экстремистской и запрещенной в России.

[10] Источник: Спиридонова И.Е. Великтон Прокопьев: путь к родному языку // Портал коренных народов Севера «Илкэн». URL: https://ilken.ru/2025/02/13/velikton-prokopev-put-k-rodnomu-yazyku/ (дата обращения: 30.06.2025).

[11] Источник: Спиридонова И.Е. Традиции и обычаи предков в авторских эвенкийских играх // Портал коренных народов Севера «Илкэн». URL: https://ilken.ru/2025/09/29/tradiczii-i-obychai-predkov-v-avtorskih-evenkijskih-igrah/ (дата обращения: 30.06.2025).

возглавляет молодежный совет эвенков Якутии «Геван», который также реализует языковые проекты[12], и др. Таким образом, резкое увеличение деклараций о владении языком отражает не только символическую переоценку, но и активные процессы языковой ревитализации.

Если обратиться к с. Тяня в Южной Якутии, то согласно переписи, эвенкийский язык в данном селе используют всего 2 чел., что резко контрастирует с данными по другим эвенкийским поселениям. Возможно, жители Тяни, где языковой сдвиг происходит позднее, чем в якутоязычных эвенкийских сообществах, более остро ощущают сокращение функциональности этнического языка и, сравнивая с прежней языковой ситуацией, не считают современное ограниченное употребление полноценным использованием. В якутоязычных же поселениях, где эвенкийский язык утрачен давно, любое его использование воспринимается как значимое. Кроме того, данные по общению с детьми показывают критическое положение эвенкийского языка в Тяне, где передача следующему поколению практически прервана. В этих условиях важную роль может сыграть проект «Эвэды умук» по методу «языкового гнезда», запущенный в с. Тяня в 2024 г. по инициативе автора проекта, д.ф.н. А.Н. Варламова. Проект реализуется администрацией села совместно с Ассоциацией эвенков Якутии под руководством к.ф.н. М.П. Дьяконовой при финансовой поддержке компании «Нордголд»[13]. Первые результаты уже заметны: школьники села стали призерами XII Международной олимпиады по языкам и культурам тунгусов России и Китая «Турэн-2025»[14].

Таким образом, даже в условиях снижающейся языковой компетенции и функциональности эвенкийского языка, его символическая мощность возрастает. Если приведенные выше конкретные примеры языкового активизма можно оценивать как результат мобилизации этнического самосознания (Хилханова 2020: 773), то важно понять, как эти процессы преломляются в сознании молодого поколения. Молодежь представляет особый интерес не только потому, что именно она определит судьбу языка в ближайшие десятилетия, но и в силу того, что молодые когорты сегодня составляют наиболее многочисленную группу среди КМНС (Игнатьева 2022: 8).

Установлено, что в Южной Якутии значительно больше эвенкийской молодежи с выраженной этнической идентичностью, что вполне ожидаемо: относительно живая языковая среда естественным образом поддерживает

[12] Источник: Юлия Степанова: «Мы — мост между поколениями» // Новостной портал КМНСОЮЗ-NEWS. URL: https://news.kmnsoyuz.ru/news/45624 (дата обращения: 22.07.2025).
[13] Источник: Дьяконова М.П. Языковое гнездо — от теории к практике // Официальный информационный интернет-портал Ассоциации КМНС Республики Саха (Якутия). URL: http://yakutiakmns.org/archives/22202 (дата обращения: 30.06.2025).
[14] Источник: Дьяконова М.П. Языковое гнездо помогает сохранить эвенкийский язык: четверо школьников из села Тяня успешно выступили на олимпиаде «Турэн-2025» // Портал коренных народов Севера «Илкэн». URL: https://ilken.ru/2025/09/24/yazykovoe-gnezdo-pomogaet-sohranit-evenkijskij-yazyk-chetvero-shkolnikov-iz-sela-tyanya-uspeshno-vystupili-na-olimpiade-turen-2025/ (дата обращения: 25.09.2025).

этническое самосознание. Вместе с тем выявленное различие между долями лиц с выраженной этнической идентичностью, считающих необходимым знать родной язык и культуру, в Северо-Западной (81 %) и Южной Якутии (76 %) указывает на разную природу отношения к языку в двух типах сообществ. В якутоязычной среде язык становится символом идентичности. Молодежь, осознающая свою эвенкийскую принадлежность, но не имеющая возможности слышать, использовать язык в повседневности, наделяет его повышенной символической мощностью. Язык превращается в идеал, в то, что «должно быть», чтобы оставаться «настоящим» эвенком. В селах с относительной сохранностью языка отношение более прагматичное. Язык — это пока еще повседневная реальность, а не абстракция. Поэтому даже среди тех, кто редко задумывается о национальности, существенно большая половина респондентов признает важность знания этнического языка, чем в якутоязычных сообществах. Языковая среда формирует установки независимо от степени этнической рефлексии. Данные также показывают, что полное обесценивание языка и культуры встречается относительно редко в обоих типах сообществ. Таким образом, даже в условиях завершенного языкового сдвига сохраняется общая установка на ценность этнического языка, хотя относительная функциональность языка в селах Южной Якутии создает дополнительный барьер против индифферентности.

В целом, наши данные подтверждают тесную связь между этнической идентичностью и отношением к языку: чем более актуализировано этническое самосознание молодежи, тем выше интерес к этническому языку и культуре. Данная закономерность прослеживается независимо от языковой среды проживания, что позволяет с осторожным оптимизмом смотреть на перспективы языковой ревитализации. Если усилия по укреплению этнической идентичности молодого поколения будут успешными, они смогут создать социальную базу для возрождения языка, даже в условиях его давнего сдвига.

5. Заключение

Целью данного исследования было определить, находятся ли языки коренных малочисленных народов Севера в Республике Саха (Якутия) под угрозой ассимиляции или демонстрируют потенциал к ревитализации. Основные результаты исследования показывают, что языки КМНС Якутии находятся в критическом состоянии: прервана межпоколенческая передача, число реальных носителей критически мало, функциональность языков ограничена традиционными сферами. Однако одновременно наблюдается рост символической мощности языков — увеличение числа признающих их родными (с 12,7% до 20,3% среди КМНС), высокая доля желающих передать язык детям, появление языковых активистов и «новых говорящих». Анализ связи этнической идентичности с языковыми установками молодежи выявил, что актуализация этнического самосознания является значимым фактором формирования позитивного отношения к языку.

Полученные результаты позволяют охарактеризовать современный этап как переходный — от неконтролируемой ассимиляции к осознанным попыткам языкового возрождения. Успех данного перехода будет зависеть от способности трансформировать растущую символическую мощность языков в реальные коммуникативные практики через создание институциональной поддержки, формирование сообществ «новых говорящих» и укрепление этнической идентичности молодого поколения.

Финансирование

Исследование выполнено в рамках государственного задания № 075-00619-26-00 на 2026 г., проект НИР № 124022000071-9

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Article history:
Received: 28 October 2025
Accepted: 12 April 2026

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 513–517
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-50150
EDN: DANTXE

Review of Matras, Yaron. 2024. *Speech and the City: Multilingualism, Decoloniality and the Civic University*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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Urban multilingualism is no longer a marginal topic within sociolinguistics. It now occupies a central place in discussions of migration, citizenship, public space, institutional access, language policy, and the changing role of universities in society. In this respect, Yaron Matras' *Speech and the City: Multilingualism, Decoloniality and the Civic University* continues a line of inquiry that has treated the city not simply as a background for linguistic diversity, but as a sociolinguistic formation in its own right. Recent urban sociolinguistics increasingly conceptualizes cities as dynamic spaces shaped by migration, mobility, linguistic visibility, institutional regulation, and everyday practices (Smakman & Heinrich 2018, Zoumpalidis & Bergelson 2024). Matras' book aligns with this research trajectory, yet distinguishes itself by adopting a more explicitly civic and institutional focus. Its central concern is not only how multilingualism is lived in the city, but how it can be publicly narrated, institutionally supported, celebrated, appropriated, and, at times, resisted.

The book is based on the author's extensive research in Manchester, especially through the *Multilingual Manchester* project, but it is not simply a case study of one British city. Rather, it reflects on the responsibilities and contradictions of academic engagement. The title captures the breadth of the argument: 'speech' refers not only to language practices, but also to *voice, visibility, recognition*, and *participation* in civic life. Matras conceptualizes the city as more than a mere geographical setting, in other words, it is a site where competing understandings of belonging are produced, national discourses that treat multilingualism as a problem confront urban narratives that frame linguistic diversity as a shared *civic resource*. The book consists of eight chapters, which guide the reader from "Linguaphobia"

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and "The City as Multilingual Utopia" to questions of knowledge, access, heritage, public celebration, advocacy, and the limitations of the civic university.

The opening chapter, "Linguaphobia", sets the political and ideological frame for the whole book. Matras examines British debates surrounding Brexit and 'English first' rhetoric and the ways in which languages other than English become charged with suspicion in public discourse. The chapter emphasizes that the issue is not solely communicative. The presence of other languages is represented as a challenge to national cohesion, and, at times, security, even when the actual evidence does not support claims about widespread inability to communicate in English. In this sense, "linguaphobia" is not a fear of communicative breakdown, but a fear of pluralism becoming visible in public space. This argument gives the book its polemical angle: multilingualism is treated not as a form of diversity, but as the terrain on which citizenship, belonging, and power are negotiated.

Chapter 2, "The City as Multilingual Utopia", develops the counterpoint to this national monolingual narrative. Here Manchester is discussed as a city in which a different understanding of multilingualism becomes visible. Matras draws on the notion of multilingual utopia not as an abstract ideal of harmonious diversity, but as a practical orientation toward urban life. The chapter starts from the public emergence of Manchester as a 'city of languages' and then complicates the very act of counting languages, numbers such as 100 and 200 languages can be politically powerful, but they also simplify multilingual repertoires, partial competences, and overlapping varieties. The city is not described as a set of neatly bounded language communities, but as a space of encounters, shifting repertoires, diaspora identities, institutional provisions, and complex everyday forms of linguistic contact. The book engages with broader debates on globalization, superdiversity, and metrolingualism (see Blommaert 2010, Vertovec 2007, Pennycook & Otsuji 2015, Zoumpalidis & Şimşek 2025), but Matras' emphasis is slightly distinct. He is less interested in multilingualism as a descriptive label and focuses his attention on civic action that can emerge when multilingualism is publicly recognized.

Chapters 3 and 4 move from conceptual to institutional aspects. In "(Re)claiming Knowledge" (Chapter 3) Matras reflects on decoloniality, participatory research, linguistic citizenship, and the role of universities in producing knowledge with communities. Matras' discussion is grounded in his own experience of working with Romani organizations and later with multilingual communities in Manchester. This biographical element is important here, as it raises a question regarding the relationship academic research establishes with the people whose languages, practices, and histories it studies. The chapter's value lies in its refusal to reduce decoloniality to mere curriculum expansion; instead, it frames decoloniality as a fundamental question of authority, i.e. who defines the object of research, who is entitled to speak as an expert, and how knowledge can be produced in reciprocal relationships with communities rather than extracted from them. The fourth chapter, "Access and Agency", continues this line through a discussion of multilingual provisions in public services. Drawing on *Multilingual Manchester's* work with public service providers, Matras shows how multilingualism enters

everyday institutional life through interpreting and translation in health care, policing, libraries, local authorities, and community services. The chapter's strength lies in its attention to institutional actors. Practitioners are depicted not merely as implementers of top-down policy, but as active agents who make decisions, interpret needs, develop routines, and sometimes revise their assumptions in response to evidence. Multilingualism becomes civic not only when it is celebrated symbolically, but when it is built into access to services and the everyday functioning of urban institutions, and this is what the chapter traces.

Chapter 5, "Heritage and Skills", addresses the hierarchies in public discussions of multilingualism, that is languages associated with migrant and minority communities are often treated as heritage or private family practice (frequently referred to as 'heritage' or 'community' languages) while foreign languages taught in schools and universities are seen as useful skills. Matras challenges this separation. The chapter shows how home languages can be understood not as obstacles to integration but as *resources* for education, identity negotiation, intergenerational continuity, and civic participation. The point has particular force in the British context, where public debate persistently separates the so-called 'useful' languages for diplomacy or trade from the languages already present in the country through migration. Matras demonstrates that the languages present in the city are not peripheral to language education. On the contrary, they are part of the city's linguistic infrastructure, even when official institutions fail to recognize them as such.

In "Celebration and Citizenship" (Chapter 6) Matras examines public celebrations of multilingualism, including 'Language Day' events and the branding of Manchester as 'a city of languages'. Matras points out that public celebration requires organization, resources, institutional support, and symbolic framing. It can produce recognition, and it can also become part of city branding. Thus, Matras shows that such events can create a language narrative in which multilingualism is not merely tolerated, but becomes part of local belonging. Celebration is thus linked to citizenship as it creates the conditions for speakers and communities to *claim* public space through language.

The final two chapters shift the focus from the city to academia. Chapter 7, "Academia and Advocacy", is concerned with what happens when sociolinguistic knowledge enters public debate. Matras discusses the 2011 Census question on 'main language' and the campaign to change the wording for the 2021 Census. This discussion is particularly interesting because it shows how a seemingly technical matter of questionnaire design carries a strong ideological charge. A question that asks respondents to identify one 'main language' assumes a monolingual norm and fails to capture the *lived reality* of multilingual citizens residing in a multilingual city. Matras does not present advocacy as a smooth extension of research. On the contrary, he shows that public engagement can create tensions within universities, especially when advocacy conflicts with institutional policies or managerial interests.

The final chapter, "The Mirage of the Civic University", gives the book its most critical institutional argument. Matras asks whether universities that brand themselves as civic are actually prepared to support the kinds of reciprocal, community-oriented, and politically engaged work that such branding implies. His answer is cautious, and at times openly sceptical. The neoliberal university may welcome diversity when it enhances reputation, student recruitment, employability, local branding, or impact metrics. It is less comfortable when civic engagement disrupts hierarchies, questions managerial control, or insists on the co-ownership of knowledge. This is where the book's three main themes: multilingualism, decoloniality, and the civic university, come together most visibly. Matras shows that the celebration of linguistic diversity can be appropriated by the very institutional structures that limit its transformative potential.

The book has several considerable strengths. First, it connects urban sociolinguistics to public engagement without treating engagement as a secondary or applied extension of 'real' research. The *Multilingual Manchester* project is not presented simply as an empirical source, but as an attempt to create a different kind of relationship between researchers, students, practitioners, local institutions, and communities. Second, the book gives a persuasive account of how a city language narrative can be produced. The constant references to Manchester as a city of many languages are not taken at face value, Matras reconstructs the work through which such a narrative is produced, circulated, stabilized, and then partly appropriated. Third, the book is honest about the limits of university-based civic work. Many discussions of public engagement remain optimistic. Matras instead asks what happens when engagement becomes inconvenient, when decolonial language meets managerial control, and when 'diversity' becomes part of institutional self-promotion.

Some limitations follow from the same qualities that make the book original. Its argument is deeply anchored in Manchester and in the author's own long-term involvement in the *Multilingual Manchester* project. This gives the book depth, authority, and a valuable insider perspective, but it also means that the comparative dimension remains more implicit than systematic. Readers interested in a broader typology of multilingual cities might desire a more sustained comparison with other urban contexts. Another point concerns genre. The book combines sociolinguistic analysis, political critique, institutional history, memoir, and advocacy. This hybrid form mirrors the entanglement of knowledge, experience, and civic action that the book examines, an appropriate if occasionally disorienting choice. At the same time, readers expecting a conventional empirical monograph with a more detached 'author' voice may find some chapter parts unusually personal or polemical. Yet this is less a weakness than a condition of the book's argument, that is, Matras writes from within the field of action that he analyses.

Speech and the City is an important book for scholars of multilingualism, urban sociolinguistics, language policy, linguistic citizenship, and university-community engagement. Researchers interested in decolonial approaches to language will also find it valuable, particularly as it demonstrates both the promise and the difficulty

of translating such approaches into institutional practice. Matras' main achievement is to show that multilingualism in the city is not only a matter of repertoires, signs, or demographic data. It is also, and primarily, a matter of public voice, access, recognition, civic resources, and the right to participate in defining what the city is. The book therefore extends urban sociolinguistics from the study of linguistic diversity in cities to the study of how cities can become arenas for civic struggles over language, belonging, and knowledge.

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Review history:
Received: 16 December 2025
Accepted: 20 April 2026

Bionote:

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Russian Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2687-0088 (Print), ISSN 2686-8024 (Online)

2026 Vol. 30 No. 2 518–524
http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics

https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-50096
EDN: DBSLUX

Рецензия на книгу: Perlin, Ross. 2024. *Language City: The Fight to Preserve Endangered Mother Tongues in New York*. First edn. New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press

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Книга Росса Перлина с первых страниц подкупает искренностью автора, поскольку она представляет собой не набор статистических данных и не отчет ученого: это честный рассказ жителя Нью-Йорка о жизни обычных людей и их языков — со всеми трудностями, которые сопровождают существование человека с миграционной историей в огромном мегаполисе. Росс Перлин взял на себя практически неосуществимую задачу — описать языковое разнообразие Нью-Йорка — и блестяще с ней справился. Нью-Йорк за свою историю стал домом для миллионов трудовых, политических и религиозных мигрантов, беженцев, людей, обращенных в рабство, искателей приключений и лучшей доли со всех континентов и самых отдаленных уголков Земли. Этот город в отношении языкового разнообразия выделяется даже на фоне пестрой истории США — страны, которая и основана была переселенцами из Старого Света.

Что же позволило автору решиться на столь грандиозную задачу, как описание языковой ситуации чуть ли не самого многоязычного города в истории человечества, где проживают носители почти семисот языков, то есть представлена примерно десятая часть всех языков планеты? Росс Перлин — не отстраненный наблюдатель, а активный участник нью-йоркских языковых процессов: уже более 10 лет он является содиректором уникальной организации — Альянса защиты исчезающих языков (Endangered Language Alliance, ELA https://www.elalliance.org/), некоммерческой организации, основанной в 2010 г. Дэниэлом Кауфманом для документации языков меньшинств и поддержки их носителей, проживающих в Нью-Йорке. Хотя эта организация

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тесно связана с университетской наукой, ее главной целью является не научное изучение языков, а ответ на потребности языковых сообществ и отдельных носителей. ELA связывает в единую сеть сотни очень разных людей, объединенных интересом к своим языкам и языкам соседей, совместными усилиями они стараются сделать так, чтобы мегаполис стал «парником, а не могилой» для бытующих в нем языков.

В предисловии автор делится своей личной языковой историей — каким образом он, моноязычный носитель американского английского, родившийся и выросший в Нью-Йорке, заинтересовался языковым разнообразием родного города.

В Части I, «Тысяча естественных экспериментов», автор рассказывает об истории ELA, о деятельности этой организации и многоязычии ее сотрудников. Он обращает внимание читателя на языки, которые не имеют никакого статуса, не преподаются в школе, у многих из них нет даже словарей и грамматических описаний. Однако с лингвистической точки зрения любой из этих языков обладает потенциалом выразить все те же смыслы, что и любой из так называемых «языков-убийц» — высокостатусных языков, вытесняющих менее престижные и «выгодные» с точки зрения экономических возможностей малые языки. Каждый из этих идиомов является вместилищем исторической и культурной памяти какого-то народа, существенным для самоидентификации его носителей. Увы, прогнозы лингвистов довольно пессимистичны: языки исчезают очень быстро, и в обозримом будущем мы можем лишиться половины имеющегося языкового разнообразия, ведь всего 4% населения Земли говорит на 96 % языков, тогда как большая часть планеты общается на одном из крупных мировых языков (Crystal 2000).

Таким образом, ситуация, зафиксированная и задокументированная сейчас — языковое гиперразнообразие Нью-Йорка, уже никогда не повторится, ведь в городской среде языки исчезают еще быстрее (Vertovec 2007, Blommaert & Ben Rampton 2015). Чтобы хоть как-то приблизиться к реальной языковой ситуации, которая игнорируется официальными переписями населения, организация ELA ведет свою неформальную перепись и отмечает на карте районы Нью-Йорка, связанные с тем или иным языковым сообществом — рестораны, храмы, этнические центры и др. (ENA, May 10, 2026)[1]. По подсчетам ELA, из порядка семи сотен языков, представленных в мегаполисе, около 40 % составляют языки Азии, около 25 % — языки Африки, меньше 20 % — языки Европы и обеих Америк и небольшой процент — Океании и Тихоокеанского региона.

Несмотря на то, что основу книги составляют личные языковые истории, автор дает для них достаточно масштабный исторический контекст. Частные явления и отдельные факты, которые автор берет из своего опыта общения с носителями разных языков, встраиваются в общий социолингвистический

[1] URL: www.languagemap.nyc

портрет города. Росс Перлин последовательно рассматривает прошлое, настоящее и будущее языков Нью-Йорка.

Часть II, «Прошлое», рассматривает Нью-Йорк в четырех аспектах, раскрываемых в четырех очерках: как город-порт для национальных меньшинств, как город выживших, как город коренного населения Америки и как глобальный микрокосм.

Нью-Йорк возник как многоязычный порт и миграционный хаб, где с самого начала сосуществовали европейцы, индейские племена, религиозные беженцы, рабы и многочисленные иммигрантские сообщества. Языковые меньшинства изначально определяли социальную, экономическую и культурную жизнь города. Голландское поселение Новый Амстердам, основанное в 1624 г., стало плавильным котлом для людей разных национальностей и языков. Голландский язык выполнял роль языка межнационального общения, однако наряду с ним использовались ленапе, африканские языки, португальский или португальский креол, немецкие диалекты, французский и другие европейские языки. После завоевания города англичанами и переименования в Нью-Йорк в 1664 г. начался длительный переход к доминированию английского языка. Особый «нью-йоркский» английский сформировался как результат контакта разных языков, диалектов и социальных групп. Автор рассматривает массовые миграции XIX в., когда в порт Нью-Йорка прибыли большие группы ирландцев, немцев, галисийцев, бретонцев, носителей итальянских диалектов и др. (Rosenwaike 1972), и приходит к выводу, что Нью-Йорк формировался как город не просто иммигрантов, но именно языковых меньшинств, которые искали там убежища. Новоприбывшие расселялись в городе по языковому принципу, получая от своих земляков поддержку и возможность постепенно освоиться на новом месте. Однако при этом не формировалось закрытых моноэтнических анклавов: к началу XX в. типичный квартал Нью-Йорка мог включать как уже родившихся в США, так и многочисленных иммигрантов из европейских стран и Канады.

В XX в. Нью-Йорк стал «последним прибежищем» для представителей сообществ, переживших геноцид, этнические конфликты, депортации, рабство, насилие, изгнание и политические катастрофы. Разные языковые группы — армяне, понтийские греки, черкесы, калмыки, крымские татары, сефарды, рома, афроамериканцы, носители карибских креольских диалектов и многие другие, выжившие после катастроф в своих странах, строили заново жизнь в Нью-Йорке, принося в город свои языки, культуру и память о травмирующих событиях. Автор подчеркивает, что разные сообщества не существовали изолированно, но постоянно контактировали и влияли друг на друга. При этом сохранение языка рассматривалось как один из важнейших признаков выживания сообщества.

Под заголовком «Коренной мегаполис» рассматривается история коренных народов Америки, языки которых с точки зрения витальности находятся в еще более уязвимом состоянии, нежели языки пришельцев с других

континентов. Тем не менее в Нью-Йорке представлены как североамериканские сообщества коренных народов, так и аборигенные народы Карибского бассейна, Мексики, Гватемалы, Эквадора и других регионов Латинской Америки. После вытеснения ленапе за пределы города история присутствия коренных народов в нем долгое время оставалась скрытой и неописанной. Однако сейчас наметился подъем движения за возрождение культуры и языков коренных народов: в книге приводятся примеры некоторых сообществ и организаций, занимающихся этими вопросами.

Заключительный очерк второй части, «Глобальный микрокосм», рисует картину Нью-Йорка как города, максимально отражающего мировое языковое разнообразие, сформированное многочисленными волнами миграции. Нью-Йорк рассматривается как глобальная языковая модель, в которой сосуществуют языки Европы, Азии, Ближнего Востока, Карибского бассейна и Африки: примерно половина жителей Нью-Йорка разговаривает дома на языке, отличном от английского.

Значительная часть книги посвящена влиянию миграционного законодательства США на языковую ситуацию. Автор показывает, что законы 1882, 1917, 1921 и особенно 1924 г. резко ограничили иммиграцию, прежде всего из Азии и Южной и Восточной Европы. Это привело к тому, что Нью-Йорк из города первого поколения мигрантов постепенно стал городом второго и третьего поколения, а многие языки и культуры начали слабеть без постоянного притока новых носителей. В противоположность этому закон 1965 г. снова открыл США для масштабной иммиграции, после чего Нью-Йорк еще более глобализовался: если раньше город был прежде всего европейским многоязычным центром, где были представлены практически все европейские языки и диалекты, то после 1965 г. он стал также азиатским, латиноамериканским, карибским, ближневосточным, южноазиатским и африканским языковым пространством.

Автор последовательно описывает разные языковые зоны города, в частности китайское, корейское, японское, филиппинское сообщества, сообщества носителей тюркских и иранских языков, арабских диалектов, выходцев из Южной Азии, носителей креольских языков на английской основе и многочисленных африканских. Эти сообщества не являются однородными с языковой точки зрения — внутри каждого есть своя диалектная, социальная и функциональная структура. Никакие группы при этом не имеют большинства: даже в этнических кварталах доля «основного» этноса едва ли достигает 15 %, обычно это 5–10 % от общего числа жителей. Нью-Йорк может быть домом для всех, поскольку, по сути, он не является родным домом ни для кого. Таким образом, Нью-Йорк действительно можно рассматривать как глобальный микрокосм, но не в упрощенном туристическом смысле. Это не просто набор «этнических кварталов», а сложная система многоязычных миров, где языки ценятся или, наоборот, презираются, сохраняются, смешиваются,

взаимодействуют между собой, вытесняются, получают новую видимость или исчезают.

Присутствие в Нью-Йорке непропорционального количества языковых меньшинств, часто переживших травматический опыт этнических и других конфликтов в своей стране, сформировало политическую, культурную и экономическую способность города к толерантности и терпимости, поэтому языковое суперразнообразие является ключевым ресурсом для разных аспектов жизни мегаполиса.

Часть III, «Настоящее», посвящена историям шести разных людей, языковых активистов, носителей исчезающих языков. Эти люди так или иначе связаны с Альянсом по защите исчезающих языков (ELA). Каждый очерк называется по имени главного героя.

Расмина — самая молодая носительница бесписьменного тибето-бирманского языка секе, распространенного в нескольких деревнях в Непале. Численность носителей секе — примерно 700 человек, из них больше сотни живут в одном здании в Бруклине (автор называет такие поселения «вертикальной деревней»). В очерке подробно описывается языковая ситуация в «вертикальной деревне 380», судьбы и языковые истории ее жителей, а также кропотливая работа по документации секе.

Хусния, носительница ваханского языка, переехавшая с Памира, каждый новый этап своей жизни начинает с нового языка. Наряду со своим родным ваханским в детстве она выучила шугнанский, рушанский, бартангский, в школе училась на таджикском, от соседей выучила киргизский. Русский язык был необходим, чтобы получить высшее образование и более престижную работу, а английский Хусния осваивала в Нью-Йорке. В очерке она рассказывает о своей драматичной судьбе, в которой отразилась история памирских народов на стыке веков, и своем непростом пути в Нью-Йорк. В ELA Хусния занимается записью и разбором фольклорных текстов на ваханском. Она составляет сборник сказок и колыбельных для детей, мечтая о том, что среди множества языков, унаследованных из родных мест, найдется место и для малых языков Памира.

Борис, писатель и журналист, рожденный после холокоста в Советской Молдове и живущий в постсоветском Бруклине, верит, что светская литература на идише позволит молодым носителям и дальше сохранять свой язык. Вообще говоря, ортодоксальная хасидская община в Бруклине является крупнейшим поселением носителей идиша, где идиш является основным языком. Это достигается за счет высокой степени закрытости традиционного религиозного сообщества, члены которого живут в своем замкнутом мире и общаются на идише больше, чем на английском. Из-за высокой рождаемости количество носителей даже растет, и около 99 % носителей идиша относятся именно к хасидам. В кругу же обычных ньюйоркцев херитажный идиш играет символическую роль и не является полноценным языком общения.

Ибрахима, языковой активист из Гвинеи, также полагается на письменное слово, продвигая письменность нко, разработанную в 1949 г. гвинейским ученым Сулейманом (Соломана) Канте. Эта письменность, специально созданная для группы языков манден (Выдрин 2011), объединит более 40 млн человек в Западной Африке, а также большие диаспоры носителей в Гарлеме и Бронксе.

Ирвин, носитель науатль, языка ацтеков и исторического лингва франка на территории современной Мексики, как и многие другие, заинтересовался языком своего детства уже много позже, после переезда в Нью-Йорк. Сотрудничая с ELA, он считает язык важной частью самоидентификации, хочет передать его своему сыну и сделать что-то нужное для сохранения своего языка в мегаполисе.

Карен, исследователь и хранительница ленапе, языка, распространенного на территории нынешнего Нью-Йорка до прихода европейцев, пытается вернуть в мегаполис историческую память о нем. Хотя единственный престарелый носитель ленапе живет в Канаде, Карен со своими коллегами героически пытаются возродить ленапе, несмотря ни на какие трудности.

В Части IV, «Будущее», автор подводит итоги и описывает свое видение дальнейшей судьбы «современного Вавилона». Автор подчеркивает, что современное суперразнообразие возникло не благодаря какой-то продуманной языковой политике, а в результате случайного стечения исторических факторов. Официальной поддержки языков в мегаполисе практически нет: целенаправленные действия городских властей очень ограничены, и в основном все вопросы решаются усилиями самих иммигрантских сообществ. Нью-Йорк, возможно, достиг пика своего языкового разнообразия, но в дальнейшем оно может сократиться из-за ряда факторов: иммиграционной политики США, социального неравенства, жилищного кризиса, экономических проблем, языковой дискриминации, а также в результате естественной утраты малых языков во втором и третьем поколении в городской среде из-за их низкого престижа, отсутствия экономической и социальной «выгоды» от владения ими, давления доминирующих языков, занятости носителей и их отрыва от традиционного образа жизни.

В заключение автор пишет, что языковую жизнь большого города невозможно поймать. Однако естественный исторический эксперимент Нью-Йорка показывает, что долгое совместное проживание людей, говорящих на разных языках, не увеличивает, а уменьшает количество конфликтов и дает людям возможность принять разницу в культуре, религии и языках как норму. Возможно, даже несмотря на существующие вызовы, угрозы и конфликты, из всех городов мира Нью-Йорк максимально приблизился к тому, чтобы создать полноценную языковую инфраструктуру, где люди имеют возможность и право пользоваться своими родными языками.

Книга Росса Перлина не является чисто академическим трудом, хотя она содержит все необходимые элементы научного исследования и является

предлагает глубокое описание языкового суперразнообразия Нью-Йорка. Она выходит далеко за рамки наблюдений и экспериментов, как и сам автор не остается в роли наблюдателя, а становится активным участником языковой жизни Нью-Йорка со всеми ее вызовами, противоречиями, сложными и запутанными отношениями в языковых сообществах, языковыми активистами и обычными жителями «современного Вавилона», которые желают сохранить и передать следующим поколениям языки своих предков.

Финансирование

Исследование поддержано проектом FMNE-2025-0006 «Исследование языков мира и языковых ареалов: типологические, корпусные и полевые данные», выполняемом в Институте языкознания РАН.

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Review history:
Received: 16 March 2026
Accepted: 20 April 2026

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