



Dmitry GORENBURG

**TATAR LANGUAGE POLICIES
IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE:
WHY SOME REVIVALS
FAIL AND SOME SUCCEED**




Introduction

For minority nationalist activists at the dawn of perestroika, the decline of titular languages was one of the most pressing problems facing their republics. By the late 1980s in the urban areas of most Soviet republics, minority languages had been largely supplanted by Russian.¹ Members of minority ethnic groups used the Russian language in public more than they used their “native” languages. To some extent, this was the case at home as well, especially among younger cohorts.² The fear of continuing language shift was one of the main mobilizing factors in the nationalist movements that developed in virtually all ethnic regions of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s.³ While

¹ I use the term minority to refer to the groups’ status within the Soviet Union as a whole. Some of the groups comprised majorities of the population of “their” territorial homelands.

² Lenore A. Grenoble. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*. Boston, 2003. P. 193-197.

³ Dmitry P. Gorenburg. *Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation*. New York, 2003.; Mark R. Beissinger. *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. New York, 2002.



D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

the political success of these movements varied greatly, all of the former union republics of the Soviet Union and a majority of the former autonomous republics undertook language revival programs after independence. This occurred even in those regions where former Communist elites retained power in the 1990s.⁴

In this article, I seek to examine the extent to which government-sponsored language revival programs are able to change the language-use situation in a region that is part of a large state with a different majority language. For this reason, I focus on Tatarstan, one of the ethnic republics that remained a part of Russia and did not become independent in 1991. Given its status as part of the Russian Federation and the even split between Tatars and Russians in the republic population, Tatarstan presents a good case for examining the extent to which government efforts to revive a language can succeed in a situation where another language continues to be widely spoken and is perceived by a large part of the population as more prestigious and more useful than the language being revived.

I examine the process of language revival in Tatarstan in the context of the eight-stage Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) devised by Joshua Fishman.⁵ This scale measures the extent to which intergenerational language transmission has been disrupted by looking at the extent to which the threatened language is used in various private and public contexts. GIDS stages 6-8 address the extent to which a language continues to be spoken in the home. Stage 5 addresses literacy, stage 4 focuses on compulsory education, stage 3 on the work environment (including interaction with speakers of the majority language), and stages 1-2 include the use of the language in government and media.

The first section of the article examines the extent to which a language shift had occurred in Tatarstan at the end of the Soviet period. The second section traces the efforts of the Tatarstan government to revive the language, while the third section addresses the extent to which these efforts were successful in reversing the Tatar to Russian language shift. Finding that these efforts have not been as successful as cultural activists and government language planners had hoped, I make a preliminary effort to examine possible causes of the success or failure of language revival programs in

⁴ Dmitry P. Gorenburg. Regional Separatism in Russia: Ethnic Mobilisation or Power Grab? // *Europe-Asia Studies*. 1999. Vol. 51. No. 2. Pp. 245-274.

⁵ Joshua Fishman. *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon, UK, 1991. Pp. 87-109.



minority ethnic regions by comparing language revival in Tatarstan to similar but far more successful programs in Spain.

***Status Quo Ante: the Language Situation in Tatarstan
at the Dawn of Perestroika⁶***

When the Tatar nationalist movement was being established in 1988-89, the members of the Tatar cultural elite that served as its founders primarily blamed the Soviet government for the decline of Tatar culture and language. They noted that the Tatar language was being used less than at any time in modern history, pointing out that the number of books and newspapers being published in Tatar annually in the late 1980s was lower than the number published in 1913. Furthermore, they noted that Tatar had been virtually excluded from the public sphere in Tatarstan. It was not used in government (except in a few rural districts), on public transport, or in higher education. While the Tatar-language primary and secondary education system that had been established in the 1920s continued to function, it had largely been relegated to rural areas; virtually all Tatar children in urban areas were being educated in Russian. Tatars were expected to use Russian in public, especially where Russians were present, such as in stores, on the street, or on public transport. In many cases, Tatars speaking the Tatar language among themselves while riding on a bus or walking along the street were told by passing Russians to stop using that language in public. The combination of state policy aimed at reducing the spheres in which the Tatar language was used and of the potential that someone speaking Tatar in public might face condemnation from passersby ensured that the Tatar language would rapidly disappear from the public sphere and would also be used less often in private settings.

⁶ In this article, I focus on the extent to which the Tatar language was used in various contexts at various points in time. I do not examine the extent to which the language had incorporated borrowings from Russian, nor do I examine the phenomenon of code-switching among Tatar-speakers. Suzanne Wertheim has done excellent work on these topics. See: Suzanne Wertheim. *Language Ideologies and the 'Purification' of Post-Soviet Tatar* // *Ab Imperio*. 2003. No.1. Pp. 347-369; Idem. *Linguistic purism, language shift and contact-induced change in Tatar*. University of California, Berkeley, 2003. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Available at <http://ling.northwestern.edu/~wertheim/>; Idem. *Islam and the Construction of Tatar Sociolinguistic Identity* // B. Forest, J. Johnson and M. Stepaniants (Eds.). *Religion and Identity in Modern Russia: The Revival of Orthodoxy and Islam*. London, 2005. Pp. 106-123.



D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

Although Soviet censuses continued to show that the Tatar language retained a dominant position among ethnic Tatars, the reality was more complicated. While 96.6 percent of Tatars living in Tatarstan claimed Tatar as their native language in the 1989 census, a decrease of only one percent from the previous census in 1979, it has been widely recognized in Soviet censuses that the response to the native language question usually represented simply a restatement of the respondent's ethnicity.⁷ Thus the extent to which Tatars had come to use the Russian language in various contexts is better analyzed through sociolinguistic surveys, a number of which were carried out in Tatarstan in the mid-1980s and early 1990s. These surveys provide us with the status quo ante that shows both the extent to which the concerns of Tatar activists were valid and the extent to which the Tatarstan government was successful in reversing linguistic assimilation through the language revival program described in section two of this paper.

Taken as a whole, these surveys show that while the Tatar language remained dominant in Tatar-populated rural districts, a large number of urban Tatars had switched to Russian as their primary language of communication, both at work and at home. Thus a 1990 survey showed that about 10 percent of urban Tatars considered both Russian and Tatar to be their native languages,⁸ while 4 percent claimed Russian and the remaining 86 percent Tatar. The same survey showed that while 97.4 percent of rural Tatars could speak, read, and write Tatar fluently, only 65.1 percent of urban Tatars had the same level of facility with the Tatar language. By comparison, 84 percent of urban Tatars were fluent in Russian. Another 23.3 percent of urban Tatars said that they were fluent speakers of the language but could read and write it only with difficulty. As for the rest, 7.8 percent noted that they spoke Tatar only with difficulty, 2.7 percent could understand but did

⁷ Throughout the paper, the term "native language" refers to the Russian term *rodnoi iazyk*, which does not necessarily imply actual ability to speak the language. Native language, as used in this context, is often simply a statement of the respondent's linguistic identity, which usually (but not always) mirrors his/her ethnic identity. Brian Silver. *The Ethnic and Language Dimensions in Russian and Soviet Censuses* // Ralph S. Clem (Ed.). *Research Guide to the Russian and Soviet Censuses*. Ithaca, NY., 1986. Pp. 70-97.

⁸ Researchers from the Tatarstan Institute of Language, Literature and History conducted the survey discussed in this paragraph. They surveyed 1000 Russian and 1000 Tatar respondents from 12 cities and towns throughout Tatarstan. A second survey examined language use among 800 Tatars in Kazan. For more on the methodology of the surveys, see: Z. A. Iskhakova. *Dvuiazychie v gorodakh Tatarstana (1980-90-e gody)*. Kazan, 2001. Pp. 9-10.

not speak the language, and the final 1.1 percent said that they did not know any Tatar whatsoever. The number of Tatar speakers was even lower in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, as compared to other urban areas in the republic. In Kazan, just over half of the respondents said they were fully fluent in Tatar, and almost 30 percent were unable to speak the language or spoke it only with difficulty.⁹

Given that most Tatars worked in ethnically mixed environments and few Russians spoke Tatar, it was not surprising that Tatars tended to use Russian or to mix languages in the workplace. However, Tatars tended to speak Russian at work even when conversing with other Tatars (Table 1). Furthermore, Russian had become the dominant language among urban Tatars in most private contexts as well. As shown in Table 1, although urban Tatars continued to speak Tatar with their parents, Russian played a much bigger role in other contexts, particularly when speaking with children. Furthermore, 46.5 percent of Tatar children spoke Russian exclusively among themselves, while only 19.4 percent spoke Tatar. The rest used both languages.¹⁰ The survey also showed that even Tatars who spoke Tatar at home and at work received information from Russian sources. Again, in

TABLE 1. LANGUAGE USE AMONG URBAN TATARS, BY CONTEXT (1990)

	With parents	With spouse	With pre-school-aged children	With older children	At work with Tatars	Reading newspapers	Watching TV
Tatar	72.9	57.8	32.5	26.2	29.1	14.1	9.8
Both	18.2	22.1	36.6	40.7	36.0	36.3	75.6
Russian	8.6	19.9	30.8	33.0	34.8	49.6	14.6

Source: Z. A. Iskhakova. *Dvuzazychie v gorodakh Tatarstana (1980-90-e gody)*. Pp. 42-44, 50.

TABLE 2. LANGUAGE USE AMONG KAZAN TATARS, BY CONTEXT (1990)

	With parents	With spouse	With pre-school-aged children	With older children	At work with Tatars	Reading newspapers	Watching TV
Tatar	66.8	52.0	30.7	24.8	26.0	11.1	9.8
Both	20.6	22.0	33.7	38.6	32.6	30.9	69.2
Russian	12.6	26.0	35.6	36.6	41.4	58.1	21.1

Source: *Idem*. Pp. 59, 62.

⁹ *Ibid.* Pp. 39-40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Pp. 43.

D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

the capital city of Kazan, the position of the Tatar language was slightly weaker in all contexts compared with other cities in the republic (Table 2).

The extent to which urban Tatars used Tatar or Russian depended on several factors, including the language in which they were educated, their age, and their place of birth (urban versus rural). Surveys conducted in several cities in the mid-1980s show the extent to which these factors affect the use of Tatar in various settings.¹¹ Language of education was a particularly important factor. Whereas over half of Tatars educated in the Tatar language used it exclusively with their Tatar friends, just over a third of those educated in both languages and only about one-seventh of Tatars educated in Russian did so. Similarly, respondents educated in Tatar were almost five times more likely to speak Tatar at work than those educated in Russian (Table 3). Younger Tatars were more likely than older ones to use the Russian language in various personal contexts, including speaking with parents, spouses, and children.¹² Similarly, Tatars born in rural areas were 2.5 times more likely to speak Tatar both with friends and at work than those born in the city.¹³ At the same time, the length of time a person had lived in the city did not seem to have an appreciable effect on the likelihood of using the Tatar language in various contexts.¹⁴

TABLE 3. LANGUAGE USE AMONG URBAN TATARS
BY LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION (1985)

Language of education	Tatar			First Tatar then Russian			Russian		
	Tatar	Both	Russian	Tatar	Both	Russian	Tatar	Both	Russian
Language used									
With friends	50.9	45.6	3.5	36.8	60.5	2.6	13.7	61.8	23.6
At work	36.7	53.3	9.7	31.8	54.4	13.2	7.5	63.4	28.9
Listen to radio	5.4	90.3	4.2	1.0	94.2	4.8	0	73.1	26.8
Read literature	16.9	81.0	8.0	6.6	76.9	16.0	1.5	24.5	67.9
Read newspapers	6.6	86.3	7.1	0	76.3	23.6	0	32.5	67.5
Write letters	56.9	33.7	4.3	40.4	45.7	13.8	5.9	24.5	65.4

Source: N. Kh. Sharypova. *Kultura russkoi rechi u tatar*. Pp. 114-116.

¹¹ Unfortunately, the authors of the survey did not use modern statistical methods, so it difficult to determine how these factors correlate with each other or which ones might show statistical significance in a multivariate regression. N. Kh. Sharypova. *Kultura russkoi rechi u tatar*. Moscow, 1989. See pp. 68-75 for a discussion of this survey's methodology.

¹² N. Kh. Sharypova. *Kultura russkoi rechi u tatar*. Moscow, 1989. Pp. 80-84.

¹³ Idem. Pp. 85-86.




¹⁴ Idem. Pp. 87-96.

Obviously, factors such as age, language of education, and place of birth are all highly correlated, given that the availability of Tatar language education had declined over time during the late Soviet period and had always been more widely available in rural areas, and that younger Tatars are somewhat more likely to have been born in the city than their elders, given the low proportion of Tatars in urban areas prior to the 1960s. While the available information does not allow one to determine the relative significance of these factors, it is clear that some combination of native language education, rural origin, and age explains a great deal of the variation in language use among urban Tatars.

In terms of the GIDS scale, Tatar was almost entirely unused in stages 1-3. In urban areas, government services were not available in Tatar.¹⁵ Even in Tatar villages, where village council meetings often used the Tatar language, official records and correspondence with other government agencies took place in Russian. There were a number of Tatar newspapers and a minimal level of Tatar television and radio broadcasting, but these were of relatively low quality and were designed to appeal to a rural audience. Tatar was also rarely used in the industrial and service economy, in which prevailing language norms ensured that the presence of any non-speakers of Tatar would require Tatar-speakers to shift to Russian even in private conversations.

As of the late 1980s, it was gradually losing ground in the areas of intergenerational language transmission (stage 6), widespread literacy (stage 5), and use in lower education (stage 4). At the same time, Tatar had clearly not reached GIDS stages 7-8, in which intergenerational language transmission is almost entirely lost. In rural areas, the language was secure in all three intermediate stages: Tatar language education was available through the high school level guaranteeing literacy, and the combination of native language education and a predominantly Tatar linguistic environment ensured intergenerational language transmission. Given the almost total elimination of Tatar language education from urban areas, Tatar had largely disappeared from stage 4 there. Tatar literacy (stage 5) was still common among older urban residents, who had either received their education in Tatar in the 1970s or earlier or had migrated to the cities from rural areas. Finally, the oral transmission of Tatar to younger generations in urban areas,

¹⁵ The occasional Tatar-speaking government employee could reply to questions in Tatar, but given that almost all Tatars spoke Russian, such situations occurred rarely if at all.





D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

while not completely eliminated, was in great danger, as about one third of Tatars spoke Russian exclusively with their children and almost half of Tatar youth never spoke Tatar among themselves.

The survey data discussed in this section thus show that prior to the commencement of Tatarstan's language revival program, the Tatar language was relatively secure among rural Tatars, but in decline among Tatarstan's urban population. More urban Tatars were fluent in Russian than in Tatar and even those who spoke Tatar fluently were at least as likely to use Russian to speak to their coworkers and their children. The future of the language also seemed relatively bleak, as urban Tatar children were being educated almost entirely in Russian and spoke Russian almost exclusively among themselves.

The Tatarstan Language Revival Program and its Implementation



Given the extent to which Russian had displaced the Tatar language, Tatar cultural and political elites were united in their desire to reverse the decline in the use and status of the Tatar language. The republic's leaders took concrete measures to spur the revival of Tatar, including expanding the reach of Tatar education, mandating the equal use of Tatar in government, and promoting Tatar language use in the public sphere. In terms of the GIDS language revival scale, most of the revival effort was focused on stages 4 and 5 (education and literacy) and stages 1 and 2 (use in government and media). Relatively little effort was devoted to ensuring language revival in private business (stage 3). Both Tatar and Russian inhabitants of the republic by and large accepted this program, although some Russian activists expressed concern about the potential for discrimination based on language knowledge.

The Revival of Tatar Education

The government's efforts to revive the Tatar language were initially focused on increasing the number of Tatar children who received their primary and secondary education in Tatar. While the percentage of Tatar children being educated in Tatar language schools had been as high as 70 percent as recently as 1970, by 1990 it had dropped to 24 percent, and was only 3 percent in urban areas. Sociolinguistic studies of language use in Tatarstan had showed that Tatar children educated in Russian were far less likely to be fluent in Tatar than their Tatar-educated peers and tended to speak Russian in most contexts.¹⁶ For this reason, Tatar leaders decided

¹⁶ N. Kh. Sharypova. *Kultura russkoi rechi u tatar*. Moscow, 1989.



that if they wanted to ensure the survival of Tatar as a language of mass communication in the republic, restoring Tatar-language education had to be their top priority. After the republic's declaration of sovereignty in 1990, the proportion of Tatar children educated in Tatar-language schools grew at a rate faster than at any time since the establishment of mass public education in the 1920s. Between 1990 and 2001, the proportion of Tatar students who study all subjects in Tatar increased from 24 percent to 49.3 percent and this continues to rise. The fastest increase, from 28.5 to 41 percent, occurred between 1992 and 1994. Whereas by the end of the Soviet period, Tatar schools were virtually nonexistent in urban areas (only 3 percent of urban students were educated in Tatar in 1990), by 1995 28 percent of them were receiving a Tatar language education.¹⁷ The change in Kazan is particularly striking: over half of Tatar students were receiving education in Tatar by 1998.¹⁸ While many new Tatar schools were opened in cities during the 1990s, a large part of the increase in the percentage of Tatar children attending Tatar-language schools is the result of the establishment of mixed Russian/Tatar language schools through the creation of Tatar-language streams in what were previously purely Russian language schools. Similar changes occurred in education for younger children; 70 percent of Tatar children attended Tatar language preschools and kindergartens in 1999, up from 23.5 percent in 1992.¹⁹

At the same time, Tatar officials responsible for education were not fully satisfied with the increase in Tatar language education. Some complained that just over half of Tatar schoolchildren continued to attend Russian-language schools. The greatest challenges to increasing Tatar-language education included a dearth of qualified teachers with the necessary knowledge of the Tatar language and a lack of Tatar-language textbooks. In both cases, math and science were particularly affected.²⁰ Furthermore, officials complained about the difficulty of convincing parents to send children to Tatar language schools, because many parents believed that their


¹⁷ Republic of Tatarstan Ministry of Education Data.

¹⁸ F. G. Akhmadeev. Problemy realizatsii zakonodatelstva Respubliki Tatarstan o iazykakh v g. Kazani. // *Iazykovaia Situatsiia v Respublike Tatarstan: Sostoianie i Perspektivy*. Part 1. Kazan, 1999. Pp. 49.

¹⁹ I. G. Khadiullin. Realizatsiia Zakona 'O iazykakh narodov Respubliki Tatarstan' v obrazovatelnykh uchrezhdeniiakh // *Iazykovaia Situatsiia v Respublike Tatarstan: Sostoianie I Perspektivy*. Part 1. Kazan, 1999. P. 62.

²⁰ Kh. G. Aminova. Podgotovka pedagogicheskikh kadrov dlia uchrezhdenii natsionalnogo obrazovaniia respublik // *Ibid.* Pp. 97-101.





D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

children's career prospects would be damaged by an insufficient command of the Russian language.²¹

Officials believed that the only way to change this perception was to expand Tatar-language higher education. Prior to 1991, higher education in Tatarstan functioned almost exclusively in Russian (the Kazan Pedagogical Institute's Faculty of Tatar Philology being the only exception). Graduates of Tatar-language schools were at a disadvantage in having to pass entrance exams in Russian to gain admission to these universities. After the republic's language law was passed in 1992, students applying to Russian-language universities were allowed to take their entrance exams in Tatar, largely resolving this problem. However, Tatar leaders still sought to expand the range of instruction offered in Tatar.

The opening of the Tatar State Humanities Institute in 1996 provided an impetus for other universities to offer instruction in Tatar. In the following years, all pedagogical institutes and most other universities opened sections with instruction in Tatar, although only about 10 percent of the total number of students was enrolled in these sections. In Kazan, university-level instruction in Tatar remained limited to the Tatar department of the Pedagogical Institute, and the Tatar and Journalism departments of Kazan State University. Furthermore, instruction in the sciences and in technical fields remained almost entirely the domain of Russian language instruction, with only a few exceptions at three or four universities, including the Kazan Architectural Construction Academy. As of 1998, only about 1,000 students were being educated in Tatar in technical and scientific fields. Tatar academics and cultural elites hope that the eventual establishment of a Tatar State National University will eliminate this gap by establishing a high quality university providing a complete education in the Tatar language in any field. The Tatarstan parliament ordered in 1997 that such a university should be established by 2000.²² However, given the lack of funding and the extent to which higher education is controlled by the central government in Moscow, such a university is unlikely to be established in the near future.²³

²¹ F. Sagdeeva. *Problemy kultury tatarskoi rechi v usloviakh aktivnogo dvuiazychiia*. Kazan, 2003.

²² K. M. Minnullin, L. G. Sharifullina (Eds.). *Iazykovaia politika v Respublike Tatarstan: Dokumenty i materialy (80-90-e gody)*. Kazan, 1999. P. 49.

²³ G. Khasanova, K. Minnullin. *O iazykovoii politike v vysshem obrazovanii v Tatarstane* // *Ibid.* P. 326-337; G. G. Badrutdinova. *Problemy primeneniia tatarskogo iazyka v sfere nauki i vysshei shkoly* // *Problemy iazyka, literatury, i narodnogo tvorchestva*. Vyp. 2. Kazan, 2002. Pp. 115-118; L. K. Bairamova. *Tatarstan: Iazykovaia simmetriia i asimmetriia*. Kazan, 2001. P. 54.

Tatar officials and scholars have argued that Tatar will not achieve equal status with Russian in the republic as long as all Tatars speak the Russian language but virtually no Russians speak Tatar. To end this asymmetrical bilingualism, the Tatarstan government introduced Tatar language, literature, and history as required subjects in all of the republic's schools. Prior to 1993, virtually no non-Tatar schoolchildren studied the Tatar language. Study plans introduced at the time by the Ministry of Education called for four to five hours per week of Tatar language instruction in all grades in all Russian-language schools. Tatar-language schools were to devote seven hours per week to Tatar in early grades and four hours per week in high school. All schoolchildren in the republic were furthermore required to devote one hour per week in grades 5, 8, and 9 to the history of Tatarstan and its people.²⁴ The implementation of these plans was to be overseen by assistant directors for national education, who were assigned to each Russian-speaking and mixed Tatar-Russian school in the republic.²⁵




Once introduced, the Tatar language requirement quickly became part of the curriculum in almost all republic schools. By 1995, 92 percent of schoolchildren in Tatarstan were studying the Tatar language. This number went up to 98 percent by 1998 and has since reached 99.1 percent.²⁶ The main limitation on extending Tatar language instruction to all Russian language schools proved to be a shortfall in qualified teachers of Tatar language and literature. Many of the teachers initially sent to teach Tatar in Russian-language schools were not qualified as language teachers, but were simply teachers of other subjects who happened to speak Tatar. The quality of instruction in many of these schools in the early years of the program consequently left much to be desired. The government recognized the problem and estimated that the introduction of mandatory Tatar language classes in all of the republic's schools required the training of almost 5,000 additional teachers. Although the increase in the number of Tatar language sections in the republic's pedagogical institutes and other institutions of higher learning covered most of this shortfall, the problem was not expected to be completely resolved until 2005.²⁷

²⁴ Vestnik Ministerstva Narodnogo Obrazovaniia Respubliki Tatarstan, August 1993. Pp. 10, 51-55.

²⁵ Katherine E. Graney. Education Reform in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan: Sovereignty Projects in Post-Soviet Russia.// Europe-Asia Studies. 1999. Vol. 51. No. 4. Pp. 617.

²⁶ Bairamova 2003, 183.

²⁷ Kh. G. Aminova. Podgotovka pedagogicheskikh kadrov dlia uchrezhdenii natsionalnogo obrazovaniia respublik. P. 100.



D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

All of these innovations are based on principles that were first developed in the “Plan for the Development of Tatar Education” and then enshrined in the republic’s language and education laws. The education law describes the philosophy and purpose of Tatar ethnic education as follows, “The activity of Tatar ethnic educational institutions is directed toward the revival of individual ethnic consciousness, based on the priority of common human values. In Tatar ethnic educational institutions, education is based on the Plan for the Development of Tatar Education.” The formulation of this plan began as early as 1989. The Education Ministry approved it in 1991. Its basic principles state that the educational process must be based on the idea of Tatar national rebirth, that each child is part of the future of the nation, that education and ethnic upbringing are part of a single process, that education should occur in the child’s native language, and that a Tatar environment needs to be fostered in all Tatar schools. The plan calls for the creation of a special state fund for the development of Tatar schools, which should receive priority in funding until they reach the level of development of ethnic schools in the former union republics of the Soviet Union. The plan also provides for mandatory Tatar language instruction for Russian children.²⁸ This provision was codified in article 10 of the language law and article 6 of the education law, which require that Russian and Tatar be studied in equal measure in all schools and kindergartens in Tatarstan.²⁹

Because of the revival program, cultural activists and the government made significant progress in solidifying the Tatar language’s position in public education at the primary and secondary school level. The adoption and successful implementation of the requirement that all students attending public schools study the Tatar language was designed to ensure widespread basic literacy in the language (GIDS stage 5). Furthermore, whereas Tatar language education was almost entirely absent from urban areas in 1990, ten years later more than a third of ethnically Tatar children living in urban areas were receiving their education in Tatar. In this way, the government moved toward ensuring the widespread presence of Tatar education throughout Tatarstan (GIDS stage 4).

EXPANDING THE USE OF TATAR IN GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

After education, the most significant efforts in Tatar language revival were focused in large part on restoring (or introducing) Tatar language use in government and the media (GIDS stages 1-2). The legal basis for promoting

²⁸ Panorama. 1991. No. 8. Pp. 15-30.

²⁹ Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta Tatarstana. June 1992; Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta Tatarstana. October 1993.



the use of the Tatar language in the public sphere began with the adoption of a language law in July 1992. After heated argument, the parliament rejected the idea of making Tatar the republic's sole state language, instead giving it and Russian equal rights. Nonetheless, the law significantly increased the status of the Tatar language, requiring that the government conduct its business and publish its laws in Tatar as well as Russian. The courts, media, industrial enterprises, public transport, and scientific and cultural institutions were also required to use both languages in conducting their affairs and in interacting with the public. The law mandated the formulation of a program for the preservation and development of the Tatar language that was to include opening Tatar language kindergartens, broadening Tatar-language education, expanding Tatar publishing, television, and radio broadcasting, and translating important non-Tatar works of literature into Tatar and Tatar literature into Russian.³⁰

The implementation of this law began slowly. Many of the key provisions were designed to be implemented over a ten-year period. Some of the others foundered due to a lack of qualified specialists and financial problems. Nonetheless, a report on the law's implementation in Naberezhnye Chelny, Tatarstan's second largest city, found that the city government was conducting business in both languages, taking measures to expand Tatar-language education, and increasing access to Tatar language materials in city libraries. The picture looked far less rosy outside the state sphere. Most industrial and commercial enterprises, the report found, had made no effort to conform to the language law and were continuing to conduct business exclusively in Russian.³¹

To speed up implementation, the Supreme Soviet adopted the State Program for the Preservation, Study, and Development of the Languages of the Peoples of the Tatarstan Republic in the summer of 1994. Despite its name, this program is almost entirely devoted to the preservation, study, and development of a single language, Tatar. Of the 126 points in the program, 67 are devoted explicitly to Tatar. Another 26 do not mention Tatar but in light of existing conditions can be assumed to address it primarily. Only 33 points address all of the languages spoken in Tatarstan in equal measure and none address Russian exclusively.

The program addresses all aspects of language revival. Some of its most

³⁰ Law on Languages // *Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta Tatarstana*. 1992. No. 6. Pp. 3-10.

³¹ *Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta Tatarstana*. 1993. No. 6-7. Pp. 46-48.

D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

important recommendations include the creation of a list of professions that will require the knowledge of both state languages, a 15% salary bonus for workers in these professions who know both languages, the creation of facilities in places of work, study, and leisure for the study of Tatar, the expansion of Tatar-language education at all levels, the opening of a Tatar national state university, and the expansion of all forms of Tatar-language publication and media.³²

This program led to a rapid increase in the spread of Tatar throughout public life. Tatar language classes for adults were introduced in the republic's larger cities. These classes were primarily designed for Russians and Tatars with little to no ability to speak Tatar and were supplemented with newspaper columns and short television programs designed to assist people studying Tatar on their own. Synchronous translation became available for parliamentary debates. Bilingual street signs are now ubiquitous and public transport drivers frequently make announcements in both languages.³³ A 1998 law required all products sold in the republic to have descriptions and ingredients listed in both Russian and Tatar.³⁴ Several new Tatar-language journals and newspapers are now available, including children's periodicals. Radio and television broadcasting in Tatar has increased by several hours per week.³⁵ Traditional Tatar place-names are replacing Russian and Soviet ones throughout the republic.³⁶ The results of this campaign for a Tatar revival can be seen in an increase in the use of Tatar outside the home, both on the street in private conversation and at school and work.³⁷

At the same time, officials in charge of the language revival program remain dissatisfied with many aspects of its progress. They note that many decisions and laws are obeyed only superficially. While Tatar and Russian are supposed to have equal status in the conduct of government business, in reality all official documents are composed in Russian and are then translated into Tatar for publication. Although government workers and teachers

³² Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta Tatarstana. 1994. No. 8-9. Pp. 3-19.

³³ Interviews and personal observation during research trips in 1995, 1996, 1998 and 2002.

³⁴ K. M. Minnullin, L.G. Sharifullina (Eds.). *Iazykovaia politika v Respublike Tatarstan: Dokumenty i materialy (80-90-e gody)*. Kazan, 1999. P. 55-56.

³⁵ R. A. Iusupov. *Gosudarstvennye iazyki i razvitie narodov Respubliki Tatarstan // Tatarskoe vozrozhdenie: epokha i lichnosti*. Kazan, 2000. Pp. 211.

³⁶ F. G. Garipova. *Toponimy: sviaz proshlogo i nastoiashchego // Mezhnatsionalnye otnosheniia v respublike Tatarstan*. Kazan, 1993. Pp. 214.

³⁷ Personal observation and N. Kh. Sharypova. *Problema izucheniia tatarskogo iazyka v respublike // Ibid*. P. 194.



who speak both Russian and Tatar receive a 10-15 percent salary increase, few Russians have chosen to learn Tatar as a result. Most of the facilities for adult learning of the Tatar language that were opened in the early 1990s have closed due to lack of interest and most Russians think that the salary bonus is just a way for the government to favor ethnic Tatars (most of whom are bilingual) over Russians.³⁸ Commercial enterprises have made few efforts to ensure the availability of Tatar speakers for contact with customers who would prefer to speak Tatar. But despite the officials' frustration with the slow pace of some aspects of Tatar language revival, both the status and the range of functions of the language are much higher than they were fifteen years ago.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TATAR LANGUAGE REVIVAL PROGRAM

Efforts to increase the status of the Tatar language and to stem the decline of its use among the Tatar population received broad support among both Tatar and Russian inhabitants of the republic. Furthermore, a large number of ethnic Russians in Tatarstan quickly came to support the notion that they should make an effort to learn the Tatar language.

Not surprisingly, support for ensuring the continued use of the Tatar language was very strong among Tatars. Surveys conducted during the 1990s showed that approximately 80 percent of Tatars believed that Tatar children should study the Tatar language in school. A similar share of the Tatar population wanted their own children to be able to speak Tatar. At the same time, most Tatars accepted the dominant role of the Russian language in their society and sought only to give the Tatar language a similar status, rather than elevating Tatar at the expense of Russian. Only about 20 percent thought that Tatar should be the sole state language in the republic, whereas about 72 percent believed that there should be two state languages. Just under 90 percent thought that all state workers should be able to speak both Tatar and Russian, while over 90 percent thought the president of the republic should speak both languages.³⁹ The consensus for bilingualism among the Tatar population made the language revival program an easy sell among the republic's titular inhabitants.

³⁸ F. A. Ganiev. *Tatarskii iazyk: problemy i issledovaniia*. Kazan, 2000. Pp. 364-365.

³⁹ G. F. Gabdrakhmanova. *Iazykovoe iskliuchenie: prichiny i formy proiavleniia // Iazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: Etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoi situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*. Kazan, 2002. Pp. 110-147; Z. A. Iskhakova. *Funktionalnoe vzaimodeistvie tatarskogo i russkogo iazykov v sovremennom Tatarstane // Iazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: Etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoi situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*. Kazan, 2002. Pp. 13-41.



D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

Tatar politicians were more concerned about potential opposition toward the Tatar language revival among the ethnic Russian population, who had for decades gotten by without learning any Tatar and who had seen the introduction of anti-Russian language policies in the Baltic states even before the break-up of the Soviet Union. But while some Russian activists did oppose efforts to introduce the mandatory study of Tatar in Russian schools and spoke out about the potential consequences of mandatory bilingualism in certain professions, the vast majority of Tatarstan's Russian population accepted the policy of two state languages promulgated by the republic's government. This change of opinion came early in the revival process. Thus, support among Russians for the study of both languages in school rose from 13 percent in 1990 to 61 percent in 1993 and has hovered around the 60 percent mark ever since. A 1997 survey showed that 70 percent of urban Russians and 92 percent of rural Russians wanted their children to learn to speak Tatar.⁴⁰ About 43 percent of urban Russians surveyed in 1990 wanted to learn Tatar themselves and a similar percentage believed that Russians should be able to speak Tatar in a 2001 survey. Acceptance of official bilingualism has also reached high levels, with over 70 percent of Russians supporting the idea that state workers must speak both Russian and Tatar, according to surveys carried out in 1993 and 2001.⁴¹

TATAR LANGUAGE REVIVAL IN THE GIDS FRAMEWORK

Given the high levels of support among both Russians and Tatars for bilingualism in the republic, it is not surprising that the government was able to implement a fairly extensive language revival program during the 1990s. Compared to the status of the language at the dawn of perestroika, the government and cultural activists made significant progress in reviving the Tatar language. Prior to the adoption of the revival program, Tatar was almost unused in government, higher education, or linguistically mixed work environments, and had a fairly limited presence in local media (GIDS

⁴⁰ This percentage has declined in subsequent surveys to 60 percent among the entire Russian population in 1999 and 50 percent in 2001. Z. A. Iskhakova. *Funktsionalnoe vzaimodeistvie tatarskogo i russkogo iazykov v sovremennom Tatarstane*; G. F. Gabdrakhmanova. *Iazykovoe iskluchenie: prichiny i formy proiavleniia*.

⁴¹ An even higher percentage, 77 percent in 1993 and 83 percent in 2001, believed that the president of the republic should speak both languages. Z. A. Iskhakova. *Funktsionalnoe vzaimodeistvie tatarskogo i russkogo iazykov v sovremennom Tatarstane*; *Ibid. Iazyk kak faktor stabilnosti i konfrontatsii // Aktualnye voprosy Tatarskogo iazykoznaniiia*, vypusk 2. Kazan, 2003. Pp. 112-119.



stages 1-3). It was also retreating in education (stages 4-5) and in intergenerational language transmission (stage 6). The revival effort focused in large part on restoring or introducing Tatar language use in government and the media (stages 1-2) and in education (stages 4-5): the hope was that these efforts would increase Tatar language use and stop the erosion of intergenerational language transmission. The revival program was quite successful in reversing language shift in those areas on which it directly focused and in changing popular attitudes toward greater support for the use of Tatar in various contexts.

However, greater support for bilingualism and even an increase in the range of functions of the Tatar language did not necessarily translate into changes in linguistic behavior among members of either ethnic group. In the next section, I will examine the extent to which this language revival program has succeeded in its primary aim of increasing the proportion of the population that knows Tatar and actively uses it in various contexts.

The Failure of GIDS Stage 6 Revival: Continuing Decline in Tatar Language Use among Tatars

Despite government officials' successes in implementing a language revival program during the 1990s, the percentage of Tatars using the Tatar language continued to decline throughout this period. Low levels of language competence and use were particularly endemic among younger Tatars, indicating the continuing erosion of intergenerational language transmission, especially in urban areas. The proportion of Tatars who considered Tatar to be their native language remained relatively unchanged at 88.3 percent, including 96.4 of rural and 84 percent of urban Tatars.⁴² At the same time, a 2000 survey showed that one-fifth of Tatar youth considered both Russian and Tatar as their native languages, while 72 percent listed only Tatar and the remaining eight percent listed only Russian.⁴³ Given the likelihood that

⁴² Unlike the 1990 survey, the 2001 survey did not give "both Tatar and Russian" as a response option. Without this option, the percentage of respondents who listed Russian as their native language increased from 3.9 to 8.8, while those who listed Tatar increased from 85.7 to 88.3 percent. This survey was based on a representative sample of the adult population of Tatarstan. Z. A. Iskhakova. *Funktsionalnoe vzaimodeistvie tatarskogo i russkogo iazykov v sovremennom Tatarstane*. P. 28.

⁴³ This survey sample included 1000 inhabitants of Tatarstan aged 15-29. R. I. Zinurova. *Rol rodnogo iazyka v protsesse etnicheskoi sotsializatsii molodogo pokoleniia v Respublike Tatarstan // Iazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: Etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoii situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*. Kazan, 2002. Pp. 94.



D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

survey questions about native language significantly overstate language competence due to the connection between language and ethnicity, the percentage of Tatars that consider Tatar to be the language they speak best may be a better measure of the extent of ability to speak Tatar. A 2000 survey of Tatar youth showed that only 20.5 percent of Tatars under age 30 speak Tatar better than they speak Russian. An additional 42.9 percent declared that they speak both languages equally well, while 36.6 percent claimed greater fluency in Russian than in Tatar.⁴⁴

Speaking ability among Tatars had, if anything, declined in the years since the start of the language revival program.⁴⁵ While complete 2001 data for urban Tatars is not available, published results from this survey indicate that only 58.8 percent of urban Tatars are completely fluent in the Tatar language, as compared to 65.1 percent in 1990. A similar decline is registered among rural Tatars, of whom 91.6 percent considered themselves able to speak, read, and write in Tatar in 2001, as compared to 97.4 percent in 1990.⁴⁶ The use of Tatar also continued to erode during the 1990s: the percentage of Tatars using the Russian language at work increased from 35 to 43.5 percent, while the percentage of respondents who used either Tatar or both languages declined. The percentage of urban Tatars using Tatar exclusively

TABLE 4. PRIMARY SPEAKING LANGUAGE (2001 SURVEY)

	Urban		Rural	
	At home	At work	At home	At work
Tatar	36.1	9.6	89.8	69.5
Both	37.1	41.5	4.8	13.8
Russian	24.3	43.5	3.0	12.0

Source: Z. A. Iskhakova. *Funktsionalnoe vzaimodeistvie tatarskogo i russkogo iazykov v sovremennom Tatarstane*. P. 31.

⁴⁴ Idem. P. 94.

⁴⁵ Some of this decline may be attributed to the aging of the population. Older urban residents with high Tatar competence who have died since 1990 have been replaced by younger generations with less competence in Tatar. This phenomenon cannot explain the entire decline, however. Furthermore, if language revival efforts had been successful, the youngest generations would show higher levels of Tatar competence, compensating for the deaths of the oldest generations. See the data on Catalonia, below, for an example of this process at work.

⁴⁶ Z. A. Iskhakova. *Funktsionalnoe vzaimodeistvie tatarskogo i russkogo iazykov v sovremennom Tatarstane // Iazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: Etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoi situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*. Kazan, 2002. P. 30.

at home also declined, from 48 percent in 1994 to 36 percent in 2001, while the proportion using Russian increased from 22 to 24 percent and those using both languages went from 30 to 38 percent. Tatar language use declined even among rural Tatars, who went from 98.6 percent Tatar speaking at home in 1994 to 89.8 percent in 2001. At work, the decline was even steeper, from 92 percent in 1994 to 69.5 percent in 2001 (Table 4).

After ten years, the increase in Tatar language education for ethnic Tatars has not had an appreciable impact on Tatar language use among Tatar youth. The majority of Tatars under age 30 use Russian when speaking with friends and when reading, while use in the home is almost evenly split between Tatar, Russian, and both equally (Table 5). Given that surveys in the mid-1990s showed more than half of Tatar youth speaking Tatar at home, it appears that Russian is continuing to make inroads among Tatar children in both rural and urban areas.




**TABLE 5. PREFERRED LANGUAGE AMONG TATARS
UNDER AGE 30 BY CONTEXT (2000)**

	At home	With friends	Reading
Tatar only	20.7	6.9	3.9
Mostly Tatar	15.6	8.7	4.5
Tatar and Russian equally	35.9	37.2	35.0
Mostly Russian	19.1	32.4	29.7
Russian only	8.7	14.6	26.4

Source: R. I. Zinurova. *Rol rodnogo iazyka v protsesse etnicheskoj sotsializatsii molodogo pokoleniia v Respublike Tatarstan*. Pp. 99, 104, 106.

The Tatar linguistic revival program has not been entirely fruitless in affecting language knowledge and use in Tatarstan. The introduction of mandatory Tatar language classes for all schoolchildren has been effective in increasing Tatar language knowledge among that part of the population that does not study in Tatar schools. Surveys show a substantial increase in the number of Russians with at least some knowledge of the Tatar language, although the total number of Russians fluent in Tatar is still quite tiny. The total percentage of urban Russians with at least some ability to speak Tatar almost doubled, from 6.2 percent in 1990 to 12.3 percent in 2001. The percentage of urban Russians who can understand Tatar but cannot speak it also increased, from 12.1 to 16.8 percent.⁴⁷ The extent of Tatar

⁴⁷ G. F. Gabdrakhmanova. *Iazykovoe iskluchenie: prichiny i formy proiavlennii // Iazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: Etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoi situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*. Kazan, 2002. P. 121.



D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

language knowledge is even greater among Russian youth, of whom 22 percent can speak Tatar at some level and an additional 21 percent can understand Tatar but do not speak it.⁴⁸ This is not surprising, given that few Russians have studied Tatar in the last fifteen years outside of school.

The increase in knowledge of Tatar among Russians thus appears to be the direct result of the language revival program. Prior to the 1990s, most Tatarstani Russians had no opportunity to learn Tatar, since it was not offered in Russian schools and the government did not encourage its study. The language revival led to a huge increase in the opportunities available to Russians for Tatar language study. Furthermore, some Russians have sought to learn some Tatar because they believed that knowing the language would benefit their career prospects.⁴⁹ In other words, given the minuscule number of Russians who spoke Tatar prior to the start of language revival, the benefits of being one of the early adopters of the Tatar language were sufficiently high that a number of Russians learned the language once the opportunity to do so presented itself. However, Russians who have learned Tatar rarely use it in public contexts, except when they want to keep information secret from Russian monolinguals. Most of them also have a fairly low level of linguistic competence.⁵⁰ The Russians who have learned Tatar in the last fifteen years have done so largely for pragmatic reasons and this knowledge has not led to changes in their linguistic behavior.

Why failure? A Comparative Explanation

The virtual impossibility of enacting policies that directly impact individual language choices is the greatest difficulty faced by language revival programs. While the goal is usually to increase the number of speakers and the range of contexts in which these speakers use the endangered language, language revival policies focus on improving the status of the language by increasing its use in government, education, the media, and the workplace. The hope is that if people have more opportunities to learn the language and feel that

⁴⁸ Ibid. P. 121.

⁴⁹ Most Tatars who rarely used the Tatar language nonetheless knew it sufficiently well to get a job that required some knowledge of both languages, so this new incentive did not significantly change their calculus in deciding which languages to study.

⁵⁰ Unfortunately, little survey or observation data is available on the extent of Tatar-language competence among Russians in Tatarstan for the last decade. My conclusions are based on informal personal observations during repeated visits to the region from 1995 to 2002.



the language is undergoing a revival, they will be more likely to learn it and to use it.

The primary goals of Tatarstan's language revival program were to ensure that Tatar language use increased in the public sphere and that the next generation of Tatars continued to use the Tatar language as their primary means of communication. The program proved to be moderately successful in expanding the use of Tatar in the public sphere but unsuccessful in reversing the trend toward a decrease in Tatar language knowledge and use among ethnic Tatars. The majority of the resources devoted to cultural issues in Tatarstan during the 1990s were devoted to expanding education in the Tatar language at all levels, increasing the use of Tatar in government offices and in the public sphere, and replacing Russian language signs with bilingual ones throughout the republic. Increasing knowledge of Tatar among the republic's Russian population was a secondary goal that did not receive nearly as much attention. The Tatar language classes for adults that were started in the early 1990s disappeared almost immediately. Plans to require members of certain professions to speak both languages remained incomplete for over a decade. Tatar language classes were made mandatory for all schoolchildren, however. And this last effort proved to be the only part of the Tatar language revival program that had an appreciable impact on language use and knowledge patterns in the republic a decade after the revival began.

How do the results of Tatarstan's language revival program compare with those in other parts of the world? While a full comparative study is outside the scope of this article, some preliminary comparative observations from Spain may help us explain why language use and knowledge in Tatarstan has continued to decline despite the significant improvement in the language's status and range of functions.

The Spanish cases of Catalonia and Euskadi (the Basque Country) are particularly relevant. Spain, like the Soviet Union, was for several decades a repressive state that sought to replace regional languages with the national language. To this end, Castilian Spanish was the only language allowed in the classroom and in government during the Franco period. Also, like in the Soviet Union, wealthy minority regions attracted large numbers of immigrants, most of whom belonged to the majority linguistic group. In both cases, immigration largely stopped at the beginning of the democratization period. Finally, as in Russia, the end of the dictatorship allowed regional cultural and political leaders to enact linguistic revival programs beginning in the late 1970s, which were particularly far-reaching in Catalonia and Euskadi.



D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

The 1983 Catalan language law required Catalan school instruction for a minimum of two subjects and encouraged all schooling to gradually shift to instruction in Catalan. The ability to pass a Catalan language exam became a high school graduation requirement for all students. Schooling was not segregated by ethnicity or mother tongue; all children in a particular neighborhood studied together. Furthermore, Catalan immersion programs were started in predominantly Castilian neighborhoods. These programs could be implemented despite the constitutional requirement that all children be guaranteed an opportunity to be educated in their native language because Castilian-speaking parents wanted their children to learn Catalan and were willing to enroll them in Catalan-speaking schools.⁵¹ The language revival program also extended to the government and the media. Whereas in the late 1970s very few civil servants could speak Catalan, by the mid-1980s Catalan became the exclusive language in parliament, all laws were written in Catalan, and regional government officials always spoke Catalan in public. The government began a serious effort at providing language-training courses for civil servants, although Castilian continued to be used in regional branch offices of the central government, as well as in the army, police, and judiciary.⁵² At the same time, the government established Catalan-language television and expanded Catalan radio broadcasting.⁵³

The 1997 language law went even further, stating that all official forms and documents would be issued only in Catalan, and would be made available in Castilian only upon request. Admission to the Catalan civil service required oral and written fluency in Catalan. Firms receiving subsidies from the regional government were required to interact with that government exclusively in Catalan. Finally, Catalan language quotas were introduced for film, radio, and private television broadcasting.⁵⁴ The focus throughout the two decades of language revival implementation was on ensuring the freedom of Catalan-speakers to use Catalan in any and every context, even if measures to ensure this freedom were taken at the expense of the rights of Castilian monolinguals to employment in government, education, and the media.

⁵¹ Jude Webber, Miquel Strubell i Trueta. *The Catalan Language: Progress Toward Normalization* // The Anglo-Catalan Society Occasional Publications. 1991. Vol. 7.

⁵² Miquel Siguan. *Multilingual Spain*. Amsterdam, 1993. Pp. 154-156.

⁵³ Clare Mar-Moliner. *The Teaching of Catalan in Catalonia* // *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 1989. Vol. 10. No. 4. Pp. 307-320.

⁵⁴ Elisa Roller. *The 1997 Llei del Catala: A Pandora's Box in Catalonia?* // *Regional & Federal Studies*. 2001. Vol. 11. No. 1. P. 46.

The results of the Catalan language revival program in increasing language knowledge and use were impressive and appeared quickly after the commencement of the program. The ability to understand Catalan increased from 81 percent in 1981, to 90 percent of the population in 1986, and to 95 percent of the population by 1996. Speaking, reading, and writing abilities rose more gradually (Table 6). The impact of the education program on knowledge of Catalan is shown by the high rates of Catalan knowledge among 15-29 year olds, who were 15 percent more likely to know Catalan than 30-44 year olds and 27 percent more likely than 45-64 year olds.⁵⁵ Overall use of Catalan has also increased, with linguistically mixed couples now four times more likely to raise their children in Catalan or bilingually than solely in Spanish.⁵⁶

TABLE 6. LINGUISTIC ABILITY IN CATALAN (PERCENT)

	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Understand	81	90.3	93.8	95.0	94.5
Speak	64	64.0	68.3	75.3	74.5
Read	61	60.5	67.6	72.4	74.3
Write	32	31.5	39.9	45.8	49.8
Don't understand	19	9.4	6.2	5.0	5.5

Source: *Catalan census data*. See: <http://www.idescat.net/en/poblacio/poblensling.html>

While the Basque region was even wealthier than Catalonia, it was more similar to Tatarstan, since the Basques had a lower status than immigrant Castilians. Furthermore, the Basque and Castilian languages were completely unrelated. Both of these factors made the linguistic environment in Euskadi prior to the start of the revival program quite similar to that found in Tatarstan. In 1975, only 40 percent of the native-born Basque population understood Basque, while 30 percent could speak it.⁵⁷ The language revival program in the region was not as extensive as that of Catalonia. While all schools were required to teach the Basque language, it initially became the language of instruction only in a minority

⁵⁵ Miquel Strubell. *Catalan a Decade Later* // Joshua A. Fishman (Ed.) *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective*. Clevedon, UK., 2000. P. 276.

⁵⁶ Idem. P. 278.

⁵⁷ Robert P. Clark. *Language and Politics in Spain's Basque Provinces* // *West European Politics*. 1981. Vol. 4. No. 1. Pp. 85-103.

D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

of schools.⁵⁸ While new civil servants were required to pass a Basque language exam, the government essentially continued to function in Castilian, with the exception of the language and culture departments (Siguan 1993, 217-18). Despite the limits of the language revival program in Euskadi, about half of respondents in a 1986 survey thought that knowledge of Basque helped in finding work, while almost two-thirds thought that Basque speakers had better jobs than Castilian monolinguals (Fishman 1991, 173).

Although the initial linguistic situation was not very favorable for Basque and the linguistic revival program in Euskadi was not as extensive as that of Catalonia, Basque language knowledge and use has nevertheless increased substantially in the region over the last two decades. The percentage of the population who consider themselves Basque-speakers has increased from 21.6 percent of the population in 1981 to 32.3 percent in 2001. Partial speakers also increased, from 14.5 percent to 23 percent, during this time period (Table 7). Most interestingly, the percentage of respondents who declared Castilian to be their mother tongue and who considered themselves fluent in Basque increased from 4.7 percent in 1986 to 14.6 percent in 2001. This shows that the Basque language is, for the first time, beginning to make some inroads among the Castilian immigrant community. The use of the Basque language among those fluent in it has also increased, although to a smaller extent. Surveys using direct observation of language use show that the percentage of the population using Basque in their everyday communication has increased from 7.6 percent in 1989 to 10 percent in 1997. Furthermore, the highest values and fastest rates of increase in Basque-language use were found among children and young adults.⁵⁹

TABLE 7. BASQUE LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE (PERCENT)

	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Basque-speakers	21.6	24.6	26.3	30.9	32.3
Partial speakers	14.5	17.4	19.8	19.7	23.1
Spanish monolinguals	64.0	58.0	53.9	49.4	4.6

Source: *Basque census data*. See: <http://www.eustat.es/bancopx/spanish/indice.asp>

⁵⁸ In 1986, 20 percent of public schools taught entirely in Basque, and an additional 16 percent taught some subjects in Basque. Basque language education did become dominant over the next decade, and by 1998, 45 percent of schools taught entirely in Basque, while a further 28 percent taught in both languages. David Lasagabaster. Bilingualism, Immersion Programmes and Language Learning in the Basque Country // *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 2001. Vol. 22. No. 5. P. 411.


⁵⁹ *Idem*. P. 405.



How can we explain the success of efforts to reverse language shift in Catalonia and Euskadi, and the failure of similar efforts to stem the decline in language knowledge and use in Tatarstan? Scholars of Catalan sociolinguistics have attributed the success of the Catalan linguistic revival program to several factors. They argue that, most importantly, the Catalan language benefited from the high social status of Catalan-speakers in the region. Because Catalonia was one of the wealthiest regions in Spain, it attracted a large number of Castilian immigrants and by 1975 about half of its population was made up of Castilians. However, native Catalans dominated its economy, whereas the immigrants tended to hold positions in unskilled labor and other low-status occupations. Even though Castilian was the primary language in most workplaces, learning Catalan was therefore seen as a pathway to social mobility and most Castilian-speaking parents were happy to have their children learn Catalan. Furthermore, the Catalan and Castilian language are closely related, reducing the costs and time required to learn Catalan. Given the status benefits of learning Catalan and the relative ease with which the language could be learned, it is perhaps not surprising that Catalan revival policies succeeded in reversing the language shift. Furthermore, the Catalan government engaged in a public campaign to encourage Castilian-speakers to learn Catalan, emphasizing that to be Catalan one simply had to learn the language and accept the identity of belonging to the region. This open identity, combined with the ease of learning Catalan for Spanish-speakers and the status and economic advantages of speaking the official language, meant that there were high incentives and low costs for Spanish-speakers to learn Catalan.

Explaining success in the Basque case is somewhat more challenging. Virtually none of the favorable factors present in the Catalan case apply to Basque. The language is quite difficult for Spanish speakers to learn and the Basque identity is largely closed to immigrants, since it is based primarily on ethnic descent rather than region and language. The percentage of Basque speakers in the region is much lower than the percent of Catalan speakers in Catalonia (or even Tatar speakers in Tatarstan), and since the linguistic revival program in the region was not as far-reaching as Catalonia's, there were fewer economic incentives to learn Basque. Yet the rates of Basque language knowledge have been increasing, both among ethnic Basques and among Spanish immigrants. The main factor appears to be the increase in the language's status in the region. For Basques, the ideology of nationalism and ethnic revival has led to a renewed focus on maintaining Basque culture,





D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

including the language. For non-Basques, the recognition that Basque is the official language of the Basque Country has, in some cases, led to a willingness to learn it. This is especially true for younger non-Basques, who are increasingly exposed to the Basque language in their schooling.

Do the Spanish cases help us shed light on the reasons for the continuing decline of Tatar language use? Tatarstan shares some characteristics with both Spanish regions. First, the continuing pressure of the dominant Russian linguistic environment is the cause of the continued decline of Tatar language use among Tatars, and especially among urban youth. Although the revival program has increased the visibility (and audibility) of Tatar in public places, most of Tatarstan's cities are still predominantly Russian-speaking zones. In large part, this is the result of simple demographics. Most of the larger cities are predominantly Russian, and Russians comprise over 50 percent of the population in Kazan. In addition to the ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking Slavs, a minority of urban Tatar adults are linguistically Russified. Altogether, about two-thirds of Tatarstan's urban population speak Russian as their primary language. This Russophone linguistic environment cannot be changed in a relatively short period of time by measures such as the introduction of Tatar language street signs and the publication of republic legislation in Tatar. The expansion of Tatar language education for children may have some impact in the long run, but it affects neither the Russophone Tatars who are already out of school nor the 50 percent of Tatar children who are still being educated in Russian language schools.

Furthermore, the Tatar case shares most of the difficulties faced by Basque. It is in a different language family from Russian, and therefore quite difficult for Russians to learn. Tatar identity is based on ethnicity and is not open to Russian assimilation. Given the continuing dominance of Russian in both government and private employment, economic incentives for learning Tatar are quite low. It appears that the main difference between Tatar and Basque is that the status of Tatar vis-à-vis Russian has not increased greatly since the language revival began. Outside of the numerically small cultural elite, Tatar continues to be viewed by urban Tatars as a language most suitable for use in the home or the village, rather than in high culture, science, and government.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Z. A. Iskhakova. Funktsionalnoe vzaimodeistvie tatarskogo i russkogo iazykov v sovremennom Tatarstane // *Iazyk i etnos na rubezhe vekov: Etnosotsiologicheskie ocherki o iazykovoi situatsii v Respublike Tatarstan*. Kazan, 2002. Pp. 13-41.



These findings suggest that success in reversing language shift depends greatly on the extent to which cultural activists are able to increase the status of the endangered language vis-à-vis the newly dominant language. Language revival programs are unlikely to change linguistic behavior when they are undertaken in an environment where the language being revived remains subordinate to and less prestigious than another language. They may, however, encourage some members of other ethnic groups to learn the language for pragmatic reasons, such as to improve their employment prospects or to increase their status with the ruling ethnic group that is undertaking the language revival program.

SUMMARY

В статье Дмитрия Горенбурга разбирается вопрос о том, насколько проводимые по инициативе и при поддержке правительства программы языкового возрождения способны изменить лингвистическую ситуацию в регионе, входящем в большое гетерогенное государство с отличным (от титульного регионального) языком большинства. В поисках ответа автор обращается к исследованию языковой политики в одном из регионов Российской Федерации – Татарстане, население которого почти поровну разделено на татар и русских. Татарстан, таким образом, позволяет увидеть, в какой степени правительственные усилия по возрождению татарского языка могут быть успешными в ситуации, когда население продолжает широко пользоваться русским языком и рассматривать его как более престижный и полезный.

Основной целью политики возрождения в Татарстане татарского языка являлось расширение его использования в публичной сфере и воспитание поколения, которое бы считало татарский основным языком в ежедневных коммуникациях. Автор оценивает успех этой программы сдержанно: она привела к расширению публичной сферы использования татарского языка, но не сломала тенденцию к сокращению числа грамотных татарофонон и этнических татар, общающихся между собой преимущественно по-татарски. Проводя сравнительный анализ между типологически схожими ситуациями в разных регионах и странах, Горенбург показывает, что успех

D. Gorenburg, *Tatar Language Policies in Comparative Perspective...*

правительственной политики возрождения языка в значительной степени зависит от того, насколько местные культурные активисты способны повысить статус “ущемленного” языка, иначе у правительственных программ нет шансов изменить лингвистическое поведение населения. Однако даже в этом случае усилия правительства могут стимулировать представителей нетитульных этнических групп изучать титульный язык по прагматическим соображения (карьерным, статусным).