

DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0696
УДК 81'272; 81'23

Changing Attitudes Toward Indigenous¹ Languages in Russia: Some Evidence from the North

Erzhen V. Khilkhanova*

*Institute of Linguistics of the RAS
Moscow, Russian Federation
Buryat State University
Ulan-Ude, Russian Federation*

Received 24.06.2020, received in revised form 18.09.2020, accepted 14.12.2020

Abstract. The purpose of this article is to show the changing dynamics of attitudes toward indigenous languages in the USSR and the Russian Federation. Since language attitudes have rarely become a special object of investigation in Russian sociolinguistics, the article dwells on theoretical issues of language attitudes studies. Then the author briefly describes attitudes to indigenous languages in the USSR and in the Russian Federation and their close correlation with the state language policy. As an argument confirming the change in language attitudes, the author brings results of a psychosociolinguistic experiment conducted in the Republic of Buryatia in 2013. More explicit and detailed argumentation is provided using the case of languages of peoples of the North focusing on boarding schools for northern peoples in Russia and Finland. The author comes to the conclusion that Finland has switched to practical measures to preserve and develop the Sámi language, while in Russia the corresponding changes can be observed only at the level of attitudes to indigenous languages, and the majority of languages of the peoples of the North are in different stages of language shift. Generally, the article concludes about two opposite trends in Russia: one towards the policy of centralization and support of the state (Russian) language, another one is seen in the gradual change of language attitudes towards greater tolerance and appreciation of linguistic diversity and in the increase in language activism.

Keywords: language attitudes, indigenous languages, minority languages, language policy, boarding schools, the North, Russia, the USSR, Finland, psychosociolinguistic experiment.

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¹ The term 'indigenous' is used according to the ILO Convention No. 169 providing objective and subjective criteria for identifying the indigenous peoples (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989). Following these criteria, most of the small languages of the Russian Federation, and definitely languages of the peoples of the North, which are the focus in this article, can be defined as indigenous languages. Since the speakers of these languages represent the demographic minority in the country and their functions are limited in comparison with the state Russian language, they are also designated here as 'minority languages'. Therefore, the concepts of 'indigenous languages' and 'minority languages' are used here as synonymous.

* Corresponding author E-mail address: erzhen133@mail.ru
ORCID: 0000-0001-9369-343X

Research area: philology.

Citation: Khilkhanova, E.V. (2020). Changing attitudes toward indigenous languages in Russia: some evidence from the North. *J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. Soc. Sci.*, 13(12), 1937–1951. DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0696.

Introduction

The history of language contacts and indigenous languages has its own dynamics closely linked with the history of the respective country and the ideology prevailing at that time. It is known that approximately until the middle of the 20th century most countries pursued (to various degrees) discriminatory policies toward indigenous languages (hereinafter – IL). As a result, only between 1950 and 2010, 230 languages disappeared out of 2,500 languages listed in the UNESCO Atlas of Endangered Languages [UNESCO Atlas]. However, since the second world war period, the need to support multilingualism and linguistic diversity has been recognized in Western European countries (Smokotin, 2010: 4). The adoption of a number of documents starting with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, entered into force in 1976) and a number of other documents became the legitimate basis and starting point of the new ideological paradigm built on the recognition of the values of a multilingual and multicultural society. Since that time, the movement for the preservation and revitalization of IL begins to grow.

Today, opposite trends coexist in this area: on the one hand, the decline and disappearance of IL continues due to the inertia of past years, the dominance of official and state languages on the “linguistic market”, the absence of agency and marginalization of indigenous communities themselves, and a number of other reasons. On the other hand, a change in attitudes towards IL, a growing language activism are visible in many countries including Russia. The *purpose* of this article is to show the changing dynamics of attitudes toward indigenous languages in the USSR and the Russian Federation; in more detail, this dynamics will be shown on the example of languages of peoples

of the North, in particular within the system of northern boarding schools. Since language attitudes have rarely become a special object of investigation in Russian sociolinguistics, the article also pursues a *theoretical* and *methodological goal*: to determine *what* language attitudes are, *how* they were considered in Russian (Soviet) and Western science, and *whose* attitudes toward IL are to be distinguished.

Theoretical framework:

Language attitudes studies

Language attitudes (attitudes toward languages) are well studied in Western linguistics, but they received limited attention in Russian linguistics. For example, in the *Slovar’ sotsiolingvisticheskikh terminov* (Dictionary of sociolinguistic terms, 2006) language attitudes are placed within the dictionary entry “social attitudes,” and their definition speaks of manifestations of language attitudes and nothing is said about the psychological component that constitutes the attitudes’ essence.

An exception to this is a series of works by the Georgian Soviet psychologist Dmitrii Uznadze (1961; 2001) who interpreted language attitudes in light of his own theory of attitudes where the latter are the mediating link in the triad “stimulus-attitudes-reaction.” The language attitudes, according to Uznadze, are in fact the Humboldt’s “internal form of language.” As evidence, the author states: “Bilingual children . . . already in the second year try to speak one language with their mother, and another language with the nanny who speaks the other language. What is interesting here that children rarely confuse . . . words and forms of each of these languages, which they do not yet know very well. Both of these observations clearly prove that the beginning of the process of speech is preceded by some state, which causes the action of the forces necessary to speak in this particular language. It

must be assumed that in this case the speaker undergoes in advance some specific change of integral nature manifested in an attitude to act in a certain direction; after that, it is clear that he is expanding his activity in this one direction, that is, speaks in one particular language. In short, in these observations everywhere we deal with language attitudes” (Uznadze, 2001: 393).

Uznadze proved the existence and action of language attitudes by experiments and observation, but his interpretation of language attitudes as an internal form of language does not focus on the social aspect. He also did not provide a clear procedure for analyzing language attitudes; as a result, his concept of language attitudes was not developed further.

In contrast to Uznadze’s theory, in social psychology the three component structure of attitudes (later transferred to language attitudes) was most prevalent. The widely recognized interpretation of language attitudes belongs to Wallace Lambert (1967) and includes three components: cognitive (knowledge), affective (evaluations and emotional reactions), and conative (readiness for action). The consensus existing in the scientific community regarding the structure of language attitudes compensates for the absence of their generally accepted definition. This is illustrated, for example, by the following variants: language attitudes are “the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others” (Crystal, 1997: 215); “assessments that speakers make about the relative values of a particular language” (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 109). As we can see, the affective component prevails in the above definitions; meanwhile, language attitudes contain both knowledge and intention to act, that is, cognitive and conative components.

Colin Baker stresses the importance of attitudes in the discussion of bilingualism. Attitudes are learned predispositions, not inherited, and are likely to be relatively stable; they tend to persist. However, attitudes are affected by experience; thus, attitude change is an important notion in bilingualism. Attitudes vary from favor to disfavor and are complex constructs (Baker, 1988: 112–115).

The object of language attitudes is often controversial: is it only a language or anything related to a language? Although some scientists tried to strictly confine to the study of attitudes toward the language itself, it was shown that often language attitudes are, in fact, attitudes toward speakers of a particular language (Baker, 1988; Chambers, 2000; Fasold, 1984: 148).

This article relies on the broader interpretation of language attitudes, which includes various verbal and nonverbal behaviors concerning language/s. In that case, language attitudes are not only attitudes toward languages and their speakers, they also underlie all decisions about language, so that any language policy both on individual and societal levels is basically directed by someone’s language attitudes. Further developing Uznadze’s theory and utilizing methodological findings of Western linguistics, I interpret language attitudes as the most influential subjective factor that directs verbal and cognitive activity at the preverbal stage of thought formation and speech planning. Particularly, in a bilingual situation unconscious language attitudes subsequently result in certain verbal behavior, language choice, and language assessments.

Finally, speaking of attitudes towards IL, it is necessary to distinguish whom they belong to. Here, the main division runs along two lines, which can conditionally be called (1) insiders vs. outsiders and (2) professional linguists vs. “ordinary” people.

In the first case, the person’s belonging to the national majority (outsider) or minority (insider) plays the decisive role. For outsiders, it is likely that they will share a nonpartisan, “neutral”¹ position or the position of a “statist”, i.e. a person interested in the integrity of the state, which may be threatened by separatist tendencies coming from regions and national minorities. The vast majority of insiders² in-

¹ I believe that there are no “objective”, socially neutral studies – any scientific work (at least in the field of the humanities) reflects the author’s position and the values he/she shares.

² The term “insiders” and “outsiders” was used by J. Fishman in relation to the connection of language and ethnic identity: insiders are members of a particular ethnic group, outsiders are those who do not belong to them. Among the group members, the relationship between language and ethnicity is regarded positively, especially if the group has a developed sense of

cluding not only the intellectual elite but also the rest of the population almost inevitably take the position of defenders of cultural and linguistic diversity and expect the state to observe linguistic rights and create conditions for their realization, especially if there were periods of repressive state and language policy. If the state neglects the interests of the minority, hidden or overt opposition of the central government may form in its ranks. In principle, it is the desire to avoid this that guides European States whose language policy is based on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. In terms of outsiders and insiders, the state language policy, which is based on certain language attitudes, is, of course, the position and view of an outsider in relation to IL.

Speaking about language attitudes and views of the second category (professional linguists vs. “ordinary” people) one should bear in mind the greater heterogeneity of these groups than in the first case. The contrast between professional linguists and “ordinary” people is based on the fact that many linguists consider the disappearance of living languages as a loss of an empirical material (see, for example: Plungian, 2018), which entails a decreased ability to understand the structure of natural languages and penetrate the great mystery of language and speech. Accordingly, linguists are concerned about preserving linguistic diversity, albeit for specific scientific purposes. However, not everyone shares these views among the linguists’ community: quite common are the views that the disappearance of languages is an inevitable, natural and irreversible process, and the modern trend of language development will inescapably lead to unification and a sharp reduction in cultural and linguistic diversity. This point of view is supported, for example, by J. Edwards, who is very skeptical of the possibility to preserve small languages in the modern world and casts doubt on the need to protect them (Edwards, 1994: 142-144).

Most “ordinary” people who do not belong to the category of insiders are most often

ethnic identity. The ethnic group members, the “insiders”, as a rule, regard ethnicity as an inborn, primordial, and essential characteristics of people, while the impartial “outsiders” tend to interpret it in constructivist terms (Fishman, 1999: 160).

indifferent to the problems of other languages. The monolingual part of the population (often constituting the majority) usually does not notice the existence of linguistic problems in their country (like a healthy person does not recall his/her health) (Alpatov, 2000b: 197). However, as already mentioned, this group is heterogeneous: there are both positive and negative views on the problems of multilingualism and IL.

Attitudes to indigenous languages in the USSR and in the Russian Federation: a brief overview

Attitudes to indigenous languages always closely correlate with the state language policy. This does not mean a direct correlation: despite the significance of the state language policy, this and other external factors do not play an exclusive role in the decline or revitalization of indigenous languages. Here we should not underestimate the importance of internal factors including the sense of ethnic identity and community language attitudes that may play a critical role in the survival of IL. The dominant position of the state or official language does not necessarily imply the loss of IL, although these issues are certainly interrelated. The sociolinguistic literature provides ample evidence of situations where an IL has not only survived, even in unfavorable socio-political conditions, but has also developed (for instance, Māori in New Zealand or Sámi in Norway and Finland). If the state does not provide sufficient support for IL, the result can be either *coexistence* of the state and IL or *displacement* of the indigenous language. In the latter case, internal factors including the sense of ethnic identity, attitudes and beliefs of the language community about their language may play a critical role in the survival of IL.

In the Soviet Union, attitudes towards IL went through various stages: at first they were determined by the language policy of the Soviet government until the 1920s and early 1930s, which was built on the principles of internationalism and indigenization (‘korenizatsiya’). It is still considered one of the most democratic and effective, albeit “undoubtedly utopian”

(Alpatov, 2000a: 197) ethnolinguistic policies in the world practice.

Its opposite was the Soviet language policy after the Second World War aimed at promoting the Russian language as a language of interethnic communication. In 1958, school reform was launched, which led to a significant expansion of the use of the Russian language. In many regions, school systems that functioned in local languages, especially in the RSFSR, were canceled. Significantly less literature began to be published in IL, and the new media, radio and television were mostly Russian-speaking. Only in the national Soviet republics did the languages of the peoples of the USSR still retain their significance as languages of governance and culture (Zamyatin et al., 2012: 49). As a result, in the postwar period the prestige of IL fell in indigenous communities themselves, and national-Russian bilingualism and Russian monolingualism intensified. In terms of attitudes towards minority languages, these two periods – 1920s – early 1930s and the end of 1930s – the end of 1980s – signify two poles, with plus and minus signs, respectively. These periods are well known and described in a huge number of works, so I will not dwell on them in detail.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, on the eve of and after the collapse of the Soviet Union against the backdrop of the political and economic crisis there was a mobilization of ethnic consciousness, a surge of ethnic nationalism and regionalism. During this period, laws on languages were adopted in almost all national republics of the Russian Federation giving the languages of the titular nations the status of state languages. Thus, post-Soviet Russia, with some delay, found itself in line with the global trends of the “explosion of ethnicity”, “ethnic revival” that began in the last decades of the 20th century and continues to this day. The hidden dissatisfaction with the Russification policy was until the early 1990s as well, but only the weakening of state pressure gave national minorities a chance to declare their rights to preserve and develop their languages and cultures. As stated in (Borgoiakova, 2018: 61), “in general, we can say that at the end of the last century <...> a new language policy

vector was formulated. It contrasts with the past attitude to indigenous languages, the level and nature of its reflection or non-reflection in legislation.” As a result, certain changes have been made in terms of improving the situation with IL, especially in the national republics of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Sakha (Yakutia), and others.

Although the “parade of sovereignties” in the 1990s created a ‘window of opportunity’ for the official recognition of languages in the national regions in Russia, the central government currently interprets the official status of regional languages as a challenge for their agenda of nation-building. This is because the constitutional recognition of official languages in national republics can be understood as an element of institutionalized ethnicity, which remains as a potential resource for political mobilization (Zamiatin, 2018). Russia’s entry into a new round of nation-building, in which the Russian language and the Russian ethnic group play an important role in strengthening the state unity (see, e.g., *Strategiia gosudarstvennoi natsionalnoi politiki...*, 2012), is explicitly reflected in amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation. The revised paragraph 1 of the Article 68 sounds now as follows: “The state language of the Russian Federation throughout its territory is the Russian language as the language of a state-forming people who are a member of the multinational union of equal peoples of the Russian Federation” (*Konstitutsia Rossiyskoy Federatsii...*, 2020). This statement is seen by many citizens as contradictory, as it places one language and ethnic group above others (in fact, as *primus inter pares*), while affirming their equality. At the same time, the state is trying to maintain inter-ethnic harmony and inter-linguistic balance, which is also set in the new version of the Constitution (see articles 68, paragraph 3 and article 69, paragraph 2) and in measures such as the establishment of the Foundation for Preservation and Study of Native Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation and the Institute of Native Languages.

In language policy terms, introducing in 2001 the Unified State Exam in Russian only, and amendments in 2018 to the Federal law

“On Education in the Russian Federation” signify the recent trend toward favorisation of the Russian language. The most important and long disputed amendment to the law on education is related to Article 11: “Federal state educational standards and educational standards provide for the possibility of obtaining education in the native language from the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, the study of the state languages of the republics of the Russian Federation, the study of the native language from the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, including the Russian language, at the *choice* [emphasis added] of students, parents (legal representatives) of underage students (until they receive basic general education)”. The Unified State Exam excluding non-Russian languages and introduction of the voluntarism principle in the study of languages of the peoples of Russia in school has a number of negative impacts on the vitality of IL.

The ambivalence of the state ethnolinguistic policy is well reflected in the conclusion of the Council of Europe’s Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities for the Russian Federation, adopted on February 20, 2018: “Russian society continues overall to be characterised by a climate of appreciation for ethnic diversity. The Russian Federation has maintained a flexible and pragmatic attitude to the scope of application of the Framework Convention. The country’s immense variety of ethnic groups, languages and religions is still largely perceived as an asset and multiple identities as natural. However, official minority policies are framed in a way that appears to emphasise the significance of the Russian ethnicity and language as the core of an overarching all-Russian national identity” (Advisory Committee, 2018).

In terms of language policy, this ambivalence (common to many states, though) results in the continued decline of indigenous languages, on the one hand, and in change in attitudes towards them both on the part of indigenous minorities and the Russian majority, on the other hand. Here I would like to refer to the data of the field sociolinguistic study, which the author of this article conducted in 2004-2006

on the territory of ethnic Buryatia³ of the Russian Federation. One of the research findings was that the Buryat ethnic community views the Buryat language as an important element of ethnicity combined with a personal unwillingness to learn it and teach it to their children (Khilkhanova, 2009: 336-337). This is the third of four approaches, or attitudes toward minority languages distinguished in sociolinguistic literature that include: (1) a negative assessment of the language; (2) indifference when people have no interest in the language and, accordingly, in its support; (3) a general positive assessment – consideration of a language as an important element of ethnicity in combination with personal unwillingness to learn it; (4) a personal positive assessment – consideration of a language as the main cultural value and putting this position into practice (Smolicz & Secombe, 1998: 13).

These findings apply not only to the Buryat ethnic group, but also to many other minorities in Russia (see, for example: Alpatov, 2018; Vakhtin, 2001; Borgoiakova and Guseinova, 2017). The gap between the symbolic and real (practical) levels of language attitudes and speech behavior is quite typical and recorded in different countries of the world (Alpatov, 2000b: 204; Educational Provision through Minority Languages, 2015).

More than 10 years have passed since the aforementioned study, and now we can state that, although parents still tend to transfer the responsibility for mastering IL from themselves to the education system (Babich, 2019), today not only in ethnic Buryatia, but throughout Russia we observe the fourth approach – the attitude to language as the main cultural value and the practical implementation of this position. According to our data and findings of other scholars (Alòs i Font, 2019; Reportazh o l-m zasedanii..., 2020), the number of grassroots initiatives in Russia is growing, people begin to learn IL and initiate various projects aimed at their preservation and promotion.

³ In contemporary Mongolian Studies, the term ethnic Buryatia stands for three regions in the Russian Federation where Buryats compactly live: the Republic of Buryatia, the former Ust'-Ordynsky Buryat autonomous district (from 1.1.2008 part of the Irkutsk region), and the former Aginsky Buryat autonomous district (from 1.3.2008 part of the Chita region).

Since language attitudes are a cognitive phenomenon, another argument confirming their change is the result of a psychosociolinguistic experiment conducted by the author of this article in the Republic of Buryatia in 2013 using the Verbal Guise Technique (for more information about the experiment, see: Khilkhanova, 2019). In this experiment I hypothesized that, despite the rise in the symbolic status of minority languages in Russia, members both of majority (Russian) and minority (Buryat) ethnic groups may retain unconscious attitudes about the low status and prestige of minority language and the high status and prestige of the majority language inherited from the Soviet time. Such attitudes can be manifested in higher ratings of majority language speakers on the social achievements scale, which includes education, success, and so on. And vice versa, if the attitudes toward a particular language are associated with attitudes toward speakers of that language, speakers with insufficient command of the Russian language might be subconsciously graded low on the social achievements scale. To find this out, I compared the evaluations of accent-free native speaking in Buryat and Russian languages as well as non-native speaking in these languages with an accent.

The study revealed the greatest unanimity shown regarding features such as “educated,” “progressive,” and “successful” (in that order), that both Buryat and Russian evaluators attributed to speakers in the Russian language. This partially confirms the hypothesis outlined above by showing how the mass consciousness of residents of this Siberian region perceives and reproduces the position of the Russian language in the country: only good command of Russian provides access to education and gives chances for success.

Generally, however, the experiment did not confirm the assumption that unconscious attitudes about low status and prestige of minority (Buryat) language are retained by both ethnic groups. On the contrary, both Russians and Buryats demonstrated a good deal of wisdom and tolerance by frequently choosing the response “does not apply to the speaker” and refusing to evaluate speakers based on their voices. Both Buryat and Russian languages –

in fact, their speakers – are evaluated highly positively, and negative characteristics are rejected by the listeners as not inherent to the speakers. Speaking with an accent (again, the speakers themselves) receives more reserved estimations than native speaking, no matter in what language, Russian or Buryat. How this difference between perception of native and non-native speaking can be explained? I think the reason is that the mass consciousness perceives native speaking as something natural and commendable, while non-native speaking marked with an accent is subconsciously associated with the violation of a norm, as something wrong.

Therefore, we can conclude that attitudes about the high status of one language variety do not necessarily imply the existence of attitudes about the low status of another language variety, even if it is a minority language. Today people in the Republic of Buryatia obviously believe that languages spoken in the republic (and their speakers) deserve respect, regardless of any external factors such as status or number of speakers.

Dynamics of changing attitudes to minority languages (the case of languages of peoples of the North in the context of boarding school system)

The previous section briefly examined the attitudes towards IL in the USSR and in the Russian Federation closely linked (especially in the Soviet period) with the state language policy. In addition, psycholinguistic arguments were presented confirming the change of language attitudes in Russia (at least in one region) in the last decade.

However, the thesis of changing language attitudes needs explicit and more detailed argumentation showing what was before and what we have now; only then the positive dynamics becomes obvious. For this purpose, I took the case of languages of peoples of the North, as these languages suffered particularly severe discrimination in previous periods of world history in all countries where they were spoken: the USA, Russia, Finland etc. For the sake of a more detailed analysis, I will focus

on one of the most dramatic pages in the history of languages of peoples of the North – the school system for northern peoples (boarding schools). To make the dynamics of changing attitudes towards IL more evident, the Russian case will be compared with boarding schools for northern peoples in Finland.

In Finland, the peoples of the North are represented by the Sámi. The Sámi live in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia and make up about 70 thousand people, with half living in Norway, 17,000 in Sweden, 5,000 in Finland and about 2,000 in Russia (Vasil'ev, 2014: 88). When the Law on Compulsory Education entered into force in 1946 in Finland, Sámi parents were obligated to send their children to boarding schools. Boarding schools almost managed to wipe out all Sámi languages: the children spent nine months a year away from home in an environment in which speaking Sámi was forbidden. Reetta Toivanen writes that in her interviews, men 50 to 60 years old openly wept when they told of their experiences in these schools (Toivanen, 2015: 98). They had been forbidden to speak their mother tongue (the only language they knew) even with their siblings⁴.

In Russia, the situation with boarding schools had been exactly the same since the late 1950s (see Liarskaya, 2003, 2006; Vakhtin, 2001; Afanas'eva, 2018), when education in Soviet schools became universal and compulsory, and from that moment on children in the North, regardless of the will of their parents, were (sometimes even forcibly) taken to a boarding school, where they were supposed to spend 9 months a year during 8-10 years. The situation was aggravated by the prevailing attitude to the culture of the indigenous population at that time, which was perceived not just as different and strange, but wild and not completely human (Liarskaya, 2006: 244). In particular, with regard to language, non-mastery of the Russian language was assessed as the inability to “speak like a human”, that is,

the concepts “the human language” and “the Russian language” were almost complete synonyms (Liarskaya, 2006: 245). In exactly the same way, Russians were inclined to treat ethnic names. In the monograph by N.B. Vakhtin, examples are given that in the district registry offices “there were numerous cases of refusal to record a child under a non-Russian name saying that there was no such name, this was not a human name” (Vakhtin, 2001: 240-241).

More than half a century had passed since then. Have the language policy, language attitudes and traditions of intergroup communication regarding IL changed? Yes, they have.

Today in Finland, the situation with the Sámi languages can be assessed as quite good. With the Language Act (1992), it became possible for the first time to register one of the Sámi languages as one's mother tongue. In 2009 only 1,789 persons had done this. Although it is not a reliable indicator on mother-tongue speakers, as many people have simply not wanted to change their previous registration (Toivanen, 2015: 98), but already gives some information about the number of speakers. Many activists, already as adults, began to study Sámi languages and teach them to their children. In many cases, parents possessed only the passive linguistic competence, that is, they understood the language but did not speak it. Therefore, children were taught the language by grandparents. Language thus “skipped” through a generation (Zamyatin et. al., 2012: 72).

Since 1997, the “language nest” technique has been widely used in Finland. In pre-schools in the Sámi region of Finland where this system is used, children speak Sámi exclusively. In the Inari-Sámi and Colt-Sámi schools in the zero, first and second school grades education is also conducted only in the Sámi languages, then, gradually, some subjects begin to be taught in Finnish. In the more widespread Northern Sámi language practically all subjects from the zero to the ninth grade are taught in regular schools and even in gymnasias (Pasanen, 2013). According to Annika Pasanen, the head of the “language nests” program in the Sámi region, children have the opportunity to learn the language in kindergarten and then at school, even if they do not have an opportunity to learn it at

⁴ Both the Finnish and the Russian (described below) experience of sending Aboriginal children to boarding schools coupled with a ban on speaking their native language are not unique, but rather typical. This was also the case in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

home. Since the Sámi language is the language of instruction, it is the language of communication as well, not just a study subject (Pasanen, 2011). For most Sámi, this is predominantly an oral language, only the youngest generation with the opportunity to study the Sámi language at school can write or read it.

In Russia, the situation with the languages of the peoples of the North is not so favorable. In the collective monograph “The North and northern people. The current situation of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of Russia” (2012), which features the results of the project “The influence of modernization processes on the traditions of the indigenous peoples of the North and Siberia of the Russian Federation (20th – beginning of the 21st century)” we read: “The situation with the native languages of the peoples of the North is unambiguously assessed as a crisis and can serve as an indicator of the general socio-economic ill-being of the indigenous peoples of the North” (Funk, 2012: 51). In even more negative terms, namely, as “catastrophic” is this situation assessed for the overwhelming majority of the indigenous minorities (including children) of the Russian Federation by A. L. Arefiev in his monograph “Languages of Minor Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East in the Education System: History and Present” (Arefiev, 2014: 437).

For example, one of the goals of the national project “Education” and a number of other programs and projects was the preservation and development of languages of minor indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East. However, according to experts, these goals have not been achieved. As A.L. Arefiev put it, “We have to admit that more than half of children, adolescents and youth from indigenous peoples of Russia do not currently speak the languages of their ancestors, and this indicator decreases. This is largely due to the lack of a linguistic environment and native speakers in the places of compact residence of minor indigenous peoples of the North, as well as due to a decrease in the motivation of parents and children to study their native languages: for the most part they do not see any practical sense in this” (Arefiev, 2014: 156).

Thus, we see that the actual situation with the languages of the peoples of the North is quite sad. However, speaking about this, it is necessary to take into account the size of the country and the collective nature of the concept “peoples of the North”, since it includes both relatively numerous (Nenets, Evenks) and extremely minor peoples (Kereks, Enets, Taz people), and their language situations are quite different. So, while the Yamal Nenets, despite the prolonged intense pressure from the boarding schools, demonstrate a high preservation of their language and culture, adherence to the traditional way of life, and traditional occupations have a high level of prestige (Liarskaya, 2003: 23), the majority of native languages of the peoples of the North are in different stages of language shift.

The only area where a positive change has occurred is the attitude to IL. Now, it is hard to imagine a situation where children would be punished for speaking their native language. According to classification of the history of northern schools by E. Liarskaya, the period from the mid-1980s to the present is characterized by softening of the conditions set in the previous period, appearance of new programs and new forms of education and less consistent and rigid execution of the law on universal schooling. At this time the state stopped managing school education strictly, and the policy towards school education in the Far North ceased to be unified: there appeared possibilities for independence at the local level. What is especially important is that in this period the changes happened not top-down, but bottom-up (Liarskaya, 2013: 161).

In the mid-1980s people began to discuss openly the “problems of boarding schools” and the consequences of their existence. The point of view was expressed both by the local population (and this was for the first time) and by teachers and scientists. The majority agreed that because boarding schools tear children away from their families, they are unacceptable, and it is better to refuse them if there is any possibility and to replace them by ordinary day schools, to restore small-sized schools in settlements or to resurrect the experience of nomadic schools. Where boarding schools re-

mained for certain reasons (this happened in Yamal), the attitude towards them changed radically, even on the part of Russian teachers. Boarding schools are now officially perceived not as a neutral means to education, as they were in the 1920s, and not as a progressive form of teaching, as they were in the 1960s, but rather as a necessary evil. If it is impossible to avoid them, all efforts should be made to minimize the consequences (Liarskaya, 2013: 166).

Thus, we can conclude that the times of open coercion and humiliation are in the past; however, the comparison of languages of the peoples of the North in Russia and Finland shows that Finland has switched to practical measures to preserve and develop the Sámi language (Zamyatin et. al., 2012: 72; Pasanen, 2011), while in Russia the corresponding changes can be observed only at the level of attitudes to indigenous languages, both on the insiders' and outsiders' part (see also Liarskaya, 2013; Dudeck, 2013).

Results and Discussion

In the previous sections, we examined the dynamics of changes in language attitudes, starting with the attitudes underlying language policy of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and early 1930s. That policy, although short-lived, was enlightening in its spirit and ahead of its time. It was followed by the post-war "Russification" period, while in Western Europe after the Second World War there was a change of ideological orientations in relation to linguistic diversity. Russia joined this trend after the collapse of the USSR in the period of "mobilized linguisticism" of the 1990s.

At the moment we observe two opposite trends in Russia: on the one hand, the state apprehending the ethnic separatism pursues a policy of centralization and puts emphasis on supporting the state (Russian) language. On the other hand, there is a gradual change in language attitudes towards greater tolerance and appreciation of linguistic diversity as well as increase in language activism aimed at protection and promotion of IL.

Some evidence about changing language attitudes is provided by a psychosociolinguistic experiment conducted in one of the Siberian

regions – the Republic of Buryatia. The experiment revealed that today phonetically authentic (native) speaking in two main languages of the region (Buryat and Russian) is perceived in a more positive way than phonetically inauthentic (non-native) speaking in the same languages. In other words, speaking in one's native language is perceived as something good and natural, no matter what language is involved. It is hard to say if the experiment results can be extrapolated to other bi- and multilingual communities in Russia. Nevertheless, at least in the Republic of Buryatia the experiment revealed tolerance and attitudes about the high value of languages in general and Russian language in particular. Both attitudes are present at the same time in the mass consciousness of the region's dwellers.

The changes in language attitudes described in this article are noticed by many linguists. At the international conference "Linguistic Forum 2019: Indigenous languages of Russia and beyond" both linguists, language activists and indigenous community members for the first time spoke not only about language losses, but also about possibilities and actions to preserve or revitalize indigenous languages of Russia (Linguistic Optimism 2019). According to the director of the Institute of Linguistics A.A. Kibrik, "at least there is a historical chance, and we must use it" (Kibrik, 2019).

In conclusion it should be mentioned that a change in attitudes towards linguistic diversity in Russia and in the world occurred when many IL could no longer be saved. Therefore, today the issues of documentation of endangered languages are so relevant that one of the publications raises the issue of "dying to be counted" (Dobrin et. al., 2007). The authors see here evidence of the 'collectibles' paradox: as languages become 'more singular and worthy of being collected', they 'acquire a price and become a commodity and their singularity is to that extent undermined' (Dobrin et. al., 2007: 64).

As can be seen from the previous section, many languages of the peoples of the North in Russia are on the way to extinction, despite the change in attitudes toward these languages and northern boarding schools. In order for these

positive language attitudes to enter the practical phase, the joint efforts of the state (from the outside) and the indigenous communities themselves (from the inside) are necessary.

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Смена установок по отношению к языкам коренных народов в России (на примере языков народов Севера)

Э.В. Хилханова

Институт языкознания РАН

Российская Федерация, Москва

Бурятский государственный университет

Российская Федерация, Улан-Уде

Аннотация. Цель данной статьи – показать динамику изменений в отношении к языкам коренных народов в СССР и Российской Федерации. Поскольку языковые установки редко становились специальным объектом исследования в российской социолингвистике, в статье рассматриваются теоретические вопросы интерпретации и принадлежности языковых установок. Автор кратко описывает отношение к языкам коренных народов в СССР и Российской Федерации и его тесную связь с государственной языковой политикой. В качестве аргумента, подтверждающего изменение языковых установок, автор приводит результаты психосоциолингвистического эксперимента, проведенного в Республике Бурятия в 2013 году. Более подробно тезис о позитивной динамике в области отношения к миноритарным языкам аргументируется на примере языков народов Севера и системе школьного образования на севере (школах-интернатах) в России и Финляндии. Автор приходит к выводу, что если Финляндия перешла к практическим мерам по сохранению и развитию саамского языка, то в России соответствующие изменения можно наблюдать только на уровне отношения к языкам коренных народов, в то время как большинство языков народов Севера находится на разных стадиях языкового сдвига. В целом, в статье делается вывод о двух противоположных тенденциях в России: одна направлена на политику централизации и поддержки государственного (русского) языка, другая проявляется в постепенном изменении языковых установок в сторону большей толерантности и признания языкового

разнообразия и росте языкового активизма, направленного на защиту и продвижение языков коренных народов.

Ключевые слова: языковые установки, языки коренных народов, языки меньшинств, языковая политика, школы-интернаты, Север, Россия, СССР, Финляндия, психосоциолингвистический эксперимент.

Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.