

EDN: PGFHSK  
УДК 81'27

## Stages of Language Shift, Broad Diglossia and Speakers' Types

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Received 06.07.2022, received in revised form 16.03.2023, accepted 25.04.2023

**Abstract.** Diglossia, language prestige and inter-generational transmission often come into question when discussing a language shift and language vitality. The paper discusses the concept of a language shift and reviews the causes for its development. The paper proposes a new method for classifying the types of a language shift in terms of changes occurring in domains, levels of language competence, types of speakers, language prestige and language loyalty. The idea that lies behind the proposed classification of changes is that it is the 'work' of broad diglossia that comes into force as a trigger for all stages of language changes. The proposed method was tested on materials from questionnaire surveys that were conducted among speakers in Tatarstan, Kalmykia, Dagestan, and Primorye in 2021. The following indicators were considered: the functioning of national languages in the formal and informal domains, speakers' attitudes, the changes in the types of speakers over time. The functioning of languages in different generations is also studied. Based on the material obtained, a conclusion is made about the stages of the language shift for the reviewed languages and the influence of broad diglossia in each case.

**Keywords:** language shift, language vitality, broad diglossia, types of speakers, domains of communication, language prestige.

Research area: sociolinguistics.

The reported study was funded by RFBR and DFG, project number № 21–512–12002 НННО\_a “Prognostic methods and future scenarios in language policy – multilingual Russia as an example”.

Citation: Kirilenko S. V. Stages of language shift, broad diglossia and speakers' types. In: *J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. soc. sci.*, 2023, 16(6), 962–972. EDN: PGFHSK



## Стадии языкового сдвига, широкая диглоссия и типы говорящих

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**Аннотация.** Диглоссия, языковой престиж и межпоколенная передача языка часто рассматриваются в контексте обсуждения языкового сдвига и жизнеспособности языков. В статье анализируется понятие языкового сдвига, рассматриваются причины его появления и развития. Предложен новый метод классификации типов языкового сдвига с точки зрения изменений, происходящих в сферах коммуникации, уровнях языковой компетенции, типах говорящих, языковом престиже, языковой лояльности. Идея, которая лежит в основе предлагаемой классификации изменений, заключается в том, что именно воздействие широкой диглоссии является триггером для всех стадий языковых изменений. Предложенная методика была апробирована на материалах анкетных опросов, проведенных в Татарстане, Калмыкии, Дагестане и Приморье в 2021 г. Рассматривались следующие показатели: функционирование национальных языков в официальной и неформальной сферах, восприятие языка говорящими, изменение типов говорящих с течением времени. Также изучается функционирование языков в разных поколениях. На основании полученного материала делается вывод о стадиях языкового сдвига для рассматриваемых языков и воздействии широкой диглоссии на их функционирование.

**Ключевые слова:** языковой сдвиг, языковая жизнеспособность, широкая диглоссия, типы носителей, сферы коммуникации, языковой престиж.

Научная специальность: 5.9.8 – теоретическая, прикладная и сравнительно-сопоставительная лингвистика (филологические науки).

Исследование выполнено при финансовой поддержке РФФИ и Немецкого научно-исследовательского сообщества в рамках научного проекта № 21–512–12002 ННИО\_а «Методы прогнозирования и будущие сценарии развития языковой политики (на примере многоязычной Российской Федерации)».

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Цитирование: Кириленко С. В. Стадии языкового сдвига, широкая диглоссия и типы говорящих. *Журн. Сиб. федер. ун-та. Гуманитарные науки*, 2023, 16(6), 962–972. EDN: PGFHSK

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### Introduction

The problem of determining the level of vitality of a language and identifying measures that contribute to the preservation of its viability has become an important research area at the present time. According to the Ethnologue (EGIDS), out of 7151 languages of the world, about 40 % are currently endangered, they have less than a thousand speakers. Many languages

are considered to be either extinct or are used only as a second language.

The viability of a language depends on a combination of factors. First of all, it is determined by the social need of the language community for this language: “If the language of the community does not serve the needs of that community, and express all the interests of its people, there is a serious danger of division and

ultimate dissolution of the community” (Eckert, 1980: 1063). Other important factors include the attitudes of the speakers and the prestige of this language variety, language loyalty, the presence of another dominant language in official domains of communication, as well as demographic, geographical, institutional and other parameters. Factors affecting the viability of languages are described by various researchers (Mikhalchenko, 2010: 43, Mackey, 2006: 67–73, Fishman, 1991). They comprise the growing influence of globalization on the level of linguistic security of languages, and the influence of sociocultural factors and the peculiarities of the current language situation in terms of the socio-communicative load of languages. Even if the language is used in school education, this can also be a catalyst for its probable disappearance in the future: “availability of school transmission risks further neglect of home transmission” (Dorian, 2010: 35). However, the main factor influencing the probable extinction of the language is still the language shift: “today, the most common cause of language death is not population death, but language shift” (Routledge Companions, 2006: 201).

### Theoretical framework

A language shift is a term introduced by J. Fishman (Fishman, 1964) to denote the inability of a language community to maintain the use of its language in the circumstances of competition from another language that is more powerful or numerically stronger in the regional and / or social plan (A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics, 2012: 182–183). In the “Dictionary of Sociolinguistic Terms”: this term is presented as “the process and result of the loss of an ethnic language by an ethnic group” (Dictionary of Sociolinguistic Terms, 2006: 276–277). Generally speaking, it is the disruption of intergenerational transmission of language that is the most important factor for the emergence of a language shift (Routledge Companions, 2006: 201).

A language shift is a significant subject of study in the field of social linguistics. W. Mackey studied the speed of the processes of language changes occurring as a result of a language shift. It is argued that the speed, na-

ture and direction of language changes are determined by the contact languages themselves, the language communities that use them, and the language environment (Mackey, 1991). N.B. Vakhtin describes the conditions necessary for the emergence of a language shift and the factors that negatively affect the viability of languages. It is argued that direct violence/coercion and choice are the main factors influencing the language shift (Vakhtin, 2001: 13). The work of J. Wendel and P. Heinrich (Wendel et al., 2012) describes a typology of shifts considered through the concept of language ecology, where relationships within a language community are presented in the form of language ecology. Language shifts are categorized into stable types (emergent ecologies, multilingual ecologies) and competitive types of language communities (replacement ecologies, exploitation ecologies, glocalizing ecologies). N. Ostler provides an overview of the language shifts that have occurred in history, substantiates the ways in which a language shift appeared and the extent of its impact on the language (Ostler, 2011).

A language shift can occur as a result of conscious language planning activities, as a consequence of changes in language policy. It can also be brought about due to natural processes in the language community. The process of language shift is subjective for each language, although many of the causes for this process are similar. The study of the causes and triggers of the language shift is the subject of many sociolinguistic studies: both the causes of the shift themselves (the influence of political power and socio-economic changes) and the processes of the shift are studied (i.e. the changes in the spheres of language use). It is noted that family circle and religious communication are often the last strongholds for the survival of endangered languages (A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics, 2012: 174–175). The gender factor may be one of the reasons for the language shift (Gal, 1979; Mugaddam, 2021). The main causes of language shift are changes in the structure of the language community and changes in the social expectations of speakers. The triggers of a language shift can be natural disasters that sharply reduce the number of

speakers (earthquake, fires), and anthropogenic factors of a catastrophic nature (war, famine, disease). The latter phenomenon is also called “geolinguistic shift” (Mackey, 2006: 68).

In the works of sociolinguists, some sociolinguistic parameters are specified as the ones that can lead to the fact that a “vulnerable language” goes into the category of “disappearing” and/or becomes “dead” in the future: the size of the ethnic group, the age composition of the speakers, the prestige of the language, the language of child-rearing, the domains of communication where these languages are used, etc. The problem of identifying the possibility of a language shift is that the identified factors do not allow such forecasting or determining the main indicators (Vakhtin 2001: 14). In this regard, this paper examines two sociolinguistic factors: the emergence of extended diglossia and the changes in the domains of communication and speakers' types, in order to study the interrelationship of these factors on the probability of a language shift in a language community.

### Methodology

According to the definition of J. Fishman, in the process of a language shift, the number of speakers decreases with each generation: “process whereby intergenerational continuity of the heritage language is proceeding negatively, with fewer ‘speakers, readers, writers, and even understanders’ every generation” (Fishman, 1991: 1). By and large, the process of loss by a language community of its language or a language shift occurs gradually. J. Fishman considered it describing changes in three generations of speakers (*ibid.*). The example provided below is, of course, an isolated case. A language shift occurs only if the described phenomenon is extensive among a substantial number of members of a linguistic community. So, the first generation does not consider it important to teach their children their native language (here and henceforward ‘first language’), but, on the contrary, in every possible way helps their children learn another language (let’s conditionally designate it as the ‘second language’). As a rule, the ‘second language’ is the language of the dominant linguistic com-

munity, which has greater prestige and wider scope of institutional demand. In the third generation, speakers consider the ‘second language’ to be their mother tongue. They cannot communicate in the ‘first language’. However, they understand certain phrases and may know some speech turns in the ‘first language’.

Based on the classical approach to the language shift, it is possible to reconsider it from the point of changes in the speakers' types and communication domains (see table 1) and provide an overview of the relevant changes which take place in four stages of a language shift.

At the first stage of a language shift, the ‘first language’ functions in a full scope in all or most domains of regulated and non-regulated communication. A majority of speakers are fluent speakers with a good command of language. The language speakers show high levels of language loyalty and language prestige. At the same time, a ‘second language’ appears in the speech community and among speakers, and there can be observed the influence of such a phenomenon as broad diglossia. “Broad diglossia, refers to situations where two different languages (rather than a classical and modern form of the same language) show a complementary relationship found in diglossia” (A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics, 2012: 82). Diglossia is characterized by the following perception of two language variants: high and low varieties. The former variety is considered to be more powerful and positive, while the latter variety is considered to be less worthy. Diglossia, according to P. Eckert, is a dangerous phenomenon for the ‘first language’: “I will maintain that diglossia can be not only the very means of elimination of vernacular languages, but also a serious threat to the self-image and solidarity of the community” (Eckert, 1980: 1054–1055). As a result of the broad diglossia’s influence, a number of younger semi-speakers can appear in the community.

At the second stage, some second-generation speakers become semi-speakers. Semi-speakers, while possessing a high level of competence in the ‘second language’, can still communicate relatively fluently in their parents’ language, mainly in non-institutional domains and family environment: “they all

share, however, a good mastery of the socio-linguistic norms of the language, behaving appropriately in environments of ethnic language use, capable of producing greetings, short standard answers, joining in songs and laughing at the humour" (Grinevald, 2003: 65). At the same time, there can be observed some loss of prestige and a reduction in the functional use of the 'first language'. Some second-generation speakers become consequently unbalanced bilinguals, with considerably different levels of competence in both languages. Third generation speakers, in their turn, become partial speakers with a significantly decreased level of language competence. That happens due to the extensive influence of broad diglossia on the language life of the community, which makes younger speakers opt for the 'second language' even in the area of day-to-day communication.

During the third stage, along with the changes in the domains of communication and levels of 'first language' competence, all third-generation speakers can be called passive bilinguals (or partial speakers, ghost speakers) in relation to their competence in the 'first language'. Some of them, however, may be called semi-speakers and they are mostly found in the elder generation. Passive bilinguals mostly have passive speech competence, due to the fact that in childhood they were brought up in a language community where they had the opportunity to listen to the spoken language of the 'first language'. Broad diglossia makes second-generation speakers and even some elder-generation speakers opt for the 'second language' in most communicative acts. Levels of language loyalty and prestige are neutral or low, some language attitudes towards a 'first language' can become even partially negative (see stage 3 in the table 1 for better detail).

Stage four is the final stage of the language shift. Broad diglossia disappears in the speech community as 'the second language' becomes the only language in the community. Some last speakers have subtle knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. The 'first language' vanishes.

### Case studies and Discussions

In 2021, questionnaire surveys were conducted among speakers in Tatarstan, Kalmy-

kia, Dagestan, and Primorye. The aim of the surveys was to specify the domains of communication and the scope of communication areas for the languages and their speakers. A great number of qualitative indicators were analyzed, some of them are relevant for the present study, namely:

- the level of proficiency in the native language and its use in everyday life;
- communicative domains of use of the native language (communication in the formal sphere, with family, friends, in public transport, in institutions of the service sector);
- language attitudes and language prestige;
- the importance of intergenerational transmission in the speakers' attitudes.

By and large, some results from the surveys are illustrative for the four stages of the language shift (see Table 1). The survey data for the first three stages of language shift were specially selected among young respondents (people aged 18–30) in order to be able to determine their views of the existing language situation as speakers of the third generation (youngsters). Speaking in the terms specified in table 1, the 'first language' is the national language, the 'second language' is the Russian language. During the surveys there was no possibility to assess the knowledge on the CEFR level. This point is subject to further research. Therefore, the language competence level was estimated according to subjective attitudes of speakers as 'fluent', 'rather good knowledge', "I do not speak well" and 'I do not speak' the national language.

### A. Case study and discussion: the Tatar language

Generally speaking, the language situation with the Tatar language is relatively stable. It has a considerable number of speakers – over 4 million people according to the census 2010. It is the official language of the Russian Federation. The Tatar language is used as a language of teaching at schools. Levels of language prestige and loyalty are high. Most speakers are fluent elder speakers and fluent younger speakers.

In October 2021, 192 people took part in the survey in the republic of Tatarstan, city of

Table 1. Stages of the language shift for the 'first language'

Language shift	Intergenerational transmission and the levels of language competence in the 'first language' based on CEFR scale*	Language use in the domains of communication	Speaker types**	Influence of broad diglossia on language attitudes
stage 1	grandparents and parents – level 'C'; youngsters – level 'B'	all or most domains of communication	fluent elder speakers; fluent younger speakers or younger semi-speakers	high levels of language loyalty and language prestige; broad diglossia manifests itself in the language life of the community
stage 2	grandparents – level 'C'; parents – level 'B' or 'A'; youngsters – level 'A'	partial use in the institutional domains of communication; broad use in spheres of everyday communication	fluent elder speakers; younger semi-speakers or unbalanced bilinguals; partial speakers;	high and neutral levels of language loyalty and language prestige; both high and changing attitudes; extensive influence of broad diglossia on the language life of the community
stage 3	grandparents – level 'B' or 'A'; parents – level 'A'; youngsters – none or some phrases	little or no use in the institutional domains of communication; partial use in the domain of everyday communication; broad or partial use in the domain of family communication	semi-speakers; passive bilinguals; partial speakers ghost speakers	moderate or low levels of language loyalty and language prestige; neutral or partially negative attitudes as a result of broad diglossia
stage 4	grandparents – level 'A'; parents – none or some phrases; youngsters – none	partial or no use in the sphere of family communication	passive bilinguals; partial speakers; ghost speakers; last speakers	extremely low levels of language loyalty/language prestige; negative attitudes; disappearance of diglossia

\* CEFR scale is a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment

\*\* a detailed description of speaker types can be found in the article 'Speaker types' (Kirilenko, 2021)

Kazan, 183 of them were young people aged 18–30. All of them marked the Tatar language as their native language. Incidentally, some of them also marked the Russian language as their mother tongue.

Some indicators, however, show that the Tatar language can possibly be undergoing the first stage of a language shift according to the data gathers in our research. Most of the respondents marked that their proficiency in the Tatar language as 'fluent' (76,5 %) or 'good' (16,4 %) (the others marked 'bad' or 'no answer'). The answers to the level of fluency in particular skills areas for the Tatar language

are lower than the same figures for fluency in the Russian language. The data provided below includes only answers 'fluently'.

Fluency was marked for the following parameters by the following respondents:

- how well do you understand speech in Tatar – 84.2 %;
- how well can you speak Tatar – 76.5 %;
- how well can you read in Tatar – 80.3 %;
- how well can you write in Tatar – 77.6 %.

The same indicators for fluency in the Russian language, the answers 'fluently' were 90 % or higher.

As for the domains of communication, it is possible to say that some changes in the domains of use have already taken place. In order to study in a better detail the domain of formal communication in terms of use for the Russian and Tatar languages, the following indicators were studied (see below). In the list, the figures for 'both in Russian and Tatar' or 'no answer' are not included, with the aim to make the difference more visible.

– in what language do you usually watch TV 48.6 % (in Russian) and 18.6 % (in Tatar);

– in what language do you usually listen to the radio 33.9.6 % (in Russian) and 38.3 % (in Tatar);

– in what language do you usually watch materials on the Internet 54.6 % (in Russian) and 12.6 % (in Tatar);

– in what language do you usually read educational or professional literature 41 % (in Russian) and 26.8 % (in Tatar);

– in what language do you usually address shop assistants 57.4 % (in Russian) and 13.7 % (in Tatar);

– what language do you usually communicate in public institutions 59.6 % (in Russian) and 15.3 % (in Tatar).

Speaking of the domain of informal communication, most speakers speak Tatar at home. However, 21.3 % use both Russian and Tatar and 16.9 % – only Russian (and 1.1 % – no answer). Interaction between the grandparents and parents of the respondents is also mostly in Tatar, with 65.6 % and 63.4 % respectively. On the other hand, some grandparents (15.8 %) and parents (16.9 %) use only Russian in family communication.

Therefore, it is quite clear that broad diglossia has some influence on the Tatar language community, primarily on the levels of proficiency in the language and domains of use. And it is possible to talk about the first stage of the language shift for the Tatar language.

## **B. Case study and discussion: the Avar language**

Overall, 178 people took part in the survey in the republic of Dagestan, city of Makhachkala, 87 % of them were young people. Data were collected among the speakers of Dargin, Agul,

Lezgi, Tabasaran, Kumyk, Bezhta, Lak, Rutul and Chamalin languages. Answers of young speakers of the Avar language were selected and analyzed through SPSS program, as being illustrative for the second stage of the language shift. The number of young speakers of the Avar language in the survey amounts to 69 people.

Of the 69 speakers of the Avar language, 73.9 % (51 people) noted that in everyday life communication takes place both in 'Russian and the national language'. The number of speakers 'in most cases in Russian' and 'only in Russian' was 11.6 %, and 'in most cases in the national language' communicate only 2.9 % of speakers. The rest of the respondents answered that they communicate only in Russian. To the question "How do you assess your level of proficiency in the national language in general?" fluency was indicated by 73.9 %, 'rather good knowledge' of the national language was indicated by 14.5 % of the Avars, 'I do not speak well' and 'I do not speak' – only 10.4 %. No answer – 1 person.

The question 'What language(s) do you know how to write better' showed that about 60 % of Avars can write better in Russian, and 26 % of Avar speakers can write better in the national language. The rest of the respondents gave a mixed assessment or found it difficult to answer.

Regarding the prestige of the language, about 70 % of respondents marked the question 'What language do you think is now prestigious to speak in the Republic of Dagestan: [In the national language]' as 'prestigious' and 'rather prestigious'. 'Rather not prestigious' and 'not prestigious' – about 20 % of respondents, the rest of respondents found this question difficult to answer. As it turned out, the linguistic prestige of the Russian language among speakers is higher than the linguistic prestige of national languages. So, to the question, 'Is it prestigious now to speak Russian?', 92 % answered positively. The influence of 'broad diglossia' is visible on the collected data. The level of prestige of the 'second language' (Russian language in our case) is higher.

In the informal sphere of communication, according to the questionnaire answers, it is obvious that the Russian language dominates

in communication with friends: the choice 'in Russian' was made by 36 speakers of the Avar language, which is 52 % of the total number of respondents. Only the national language is spoken with friends by 23 % of Avars.

In the family sphere of communication, the situation is slightly different, the data on communication in the family in the national language is slightly higher among Avar speakers. At home, 48 Avar speakers communicate with their families in the national language, which is 69.5 % in percentage terms. 14 % of Avars communicate only in Russian in the family circle.

During the survey, a control question was also asked: 'In the locality where you live, how many people, in your opinion, use languages other than Russian? [With family, friends]', in order to confirm the received data. 'Significantly more than half' and 'almost all' were answered by 36 Avars (52 %).

To identify differences in language use among young people, middle and elder generations, questions were asked regarding the language of communication between parents and grandparents. Due to the fact that the data were selected only among respondents aged 18–30, they are subjective. But at the same time, there is no reason not to trust them. The survey showed that the situation of communication between parents and between grandparents is similar. Communication between parents: 65 % of Avars communicate with each other in the national language; among grandparents, the indicators are 70 % for the speakers of the Avar language.

Concerning the domains of formal communication, data on the use of the language by speakers in public institutions, universities and schools were analyzed. About 60 % of respondents answered that Avar is practically not used in these institutions. The rest answered that in the locality where they live, 'about a half' (20 % of answers) or 'significantly more than half of the people' (15 % of answers) speak languages other than Russian. The rest of respondents gave no answer. Talking of communication at work or at school, the data show that about 70 % of Avars communicate in Russian, about 15 % communicate 'in Russian and the national

language', and about 10 % communicate in the national language. Three respondents found it difficult to answer.

The question 'How important is it to you that your children speak your native language?' elicited an unambivalent response. About 90 % of Avar speakers answered 'important'.

Based on the materials of the study, it can be concluded that the Avar language is currently, according to the subjective assessments of the respondents, is at the second stage of the language shift. Most of the respondents indicated a fluent or fairly good command of Avar, but 60 % of them can write better in Russian. Although the number of Avar speakers in different generations is practically the same, most communication takes place in the Avar language in the family circle. 2.56 % of speakers stated that communication in most cases takes place 'only in the national language', which is also an alarming symptom. Another important indicator is that though Avar is predominantly spoken in family and everyday communication, in communication with friends this figure drops three times, from about 70 % to just over 20 %. Although the latter indicator may not indicate a decrease in loyalty to the language among friendly communication, but is due to the multinational composition of the republic, i.e. multinational composition of the linguistic community of friends. The symbolic perception of the language as an ethnic component is high and the Avars realize the importance of intergenerational transmission. At the same time, there is another alarming indicator: approximately 60 % of respondents believe that a person can identify himself with a certain nationality if he does not speak the language of this nationality.

### **C. Case study and discussion: the Kalmyk language**

Overall, 99 people took part in the survey in the republic of Kalmykia, city of Elista, 81 of them were young people aged 18–30 years old. Answers were selected and analyzed through SPSS program, being illustrative for the third stage of the language shift.

Of the 81 young speakers of the Kalmyk language, about 90 % of people noted that in



everyday life their interpersonal communication takes place 'in most cases in Russian' and 'only in Russian'. Both in 'Russian and the national language' was marked by 8 people, which makes around 10 % of answers.

The question "How do you assess your level of proficiency in the Kalmyk language in general?" fluency was indicated by 2 people (2.5 %), 'rather good knowledge' of the national language was indicated by 19 people – 23.5 % of the Kalmyks, 'I do not speak well' and 'I do not speak' – 58 people (71.6 %). No answer – 2 respondents. Most of the respondents stated that their writing skills in the Russian language are better than in Kalmyk language (81,5 % of the answers).

Regarding the prestige of the language, about 80 % of respondents marked the question 'What language do you think is now prestigious to speak in the Republic of Kalmykia: [In the Kalmyk language]' as 'prestigious' and 'rather prestigious'. 'Rather not prestigious' and 'not prestigious' – about 9.8 % of respondents, the rest of respondents (8 people) found this question difficult to answer.

Considering the formal spheres of communication, it is possible to say that the Russian language is used mostly everywhere. The figures for communication in Russian for institutions, schools, universities, etc. were around 80 % or higher. In the informal sphere of communication, according to the questionnaire answers, it is obvious that the Russian language dominates in all informal spheres of communication: the choice 'in Russian' was made regarding the interaction with friends by 85,2 % of respondents and 70,4 % for family communication. The survey showed that the language of communication between parents and between grandparents is different. Communication between grandparents: 49.4 % of Kalmyks communicate with each other in the Russian language; among parents, the indicators are 67.9 % for the speakers of the Russian language. As for the interaction in the national language it is 29,6 % and 9,9 % respectively. The other said that both languages are used or gave no answer.

The question 'How important is it to you that your children speak your native language?'

elicited an ambivalent response. About 48 % of Kalmyks speakers answered 'important' and 25 % – 'unimportant'; others gave no answer (21 people).

Generally speaking, it is quite obvious that the level of proficiency in the Kalmyk language is low among the surveyed youngsters. Although some respondents noted that they can read and write in their national language, since most of them (71 %) stated that generally they do not speak Kalmyk well, their ability to read and write in Kalmyk is moderate. In informal sphere Russian language dominates with approximately 75 % of surveyed participants. Although Kalmyk language is spoken by about a third of grandparents in the family circle, with the second generation this figure drops by three times. In the formal sphere Russian language dominates almost with little or no competition form the Kalmyk language. The level of loyalty among youngsters towards the Kalmyk language is high as around 80 % of them answered that it is 'rather prestigious' to speak Kalmyk. On the one hand, the respondents insist that it is prestigious to speak Kalmyk, most of them do not do so. Moreover, only around half of them considers it important for their children to know the national language, that can be a clear sign of the fact that it is 'broad diglossia', that makes the speakers subconsciously opt for the Russian language in most domains. All in all, it can be summarized that Kalmyk language speakers are going through the third stage of the language shift.

#### **D. Case study and discussion: the Tazy language**

Nine people took part in the survey in Mikhailovka village, Olginsky district, Primorsky Krai in April 2021. All of them stated their ethnicity as Tazy people and their native language as the Tazy language; some of them also marked the Russian language as their mother tongue.

Among nine people only four of them have 'some' or 'almost no command' of the Tazy language. The question 'How well do you speak your native language?' was marked by only two speakers as 'good enough', the rest answered 'badly' or 'cannot speak the lan-

guage'. The answers to the question: 'If you do not know the language of your ethnic group, are you doing something to learn it?' in most cases received a negative answer.

Everyday communication among speakers is in Russian. Of the 9 respondents, all of them noted that in their everyday life communication takes place in 'Russian'. The question 'How important is it to you that your children speak your native language?' received an unambivalent response. All respondents answered 'not important'. The question whether it is prestigious to speak the Tazy language was either mostly skipped by the respondents or marked as 'not prestigious'.

By and large, according to the received data from the survey, it is clear that the Tazy language is currently on stage four of the level shift. "The prospects for the preservation and development of the Tazy language are not optimistic, even though the Tazy people live compactly and continue to consider themselves as Tazy ethnic group, they have lost their ethnocultural and linguistic components" (Bitkeeva et. al.: 71). Today, the

Tazy language has only a symbolic function, helping to maintain the ethnic identity of this small group of people. Therefore, it can be stated that the Tazy language is on the brink of extinction.

### Conclusion

All in all, the problem of language shift is subject to further research since this field of linguistics is quite substantial and controversial. The importance of studying the factors influencing language shift lies also in the fact that indicators of a language shift can turn into the indicators of an emerging language conflict. Besides, a reverse language shift is a very rare occurrence, due to the fact that the decreasing social need for language is almost impossible to reverse. According to the results of the described study, it can be undoubtedly stated, that broad diglossia, as a sociolinguistic factor, has a significant influence over speakers making them more and more often opt for the more prestigious language in communication. So, broad diglossia is a considerably powerful factor in a language shift.

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