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**QUESTIONS OF THE CHECHEN-RUSSIAN BILINGUISM IN
THE CHECHEN REPUBLIC**

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Abstract

This article explores the current state of the Chechen-Russian bilingualism in the Chechen Republic. Chechen-Russian bilingualism is defined as the main component of the language situation in the republic. The article pays special attention to state regulatory documents which determine the language policy in the republic: “The Law on Languages in the Chechen Republic”, “The Program for the Development of the Chechen Language (2008-2012), etc. Based on these documents, we consider that the long-term goal of the language policy of the Chechen Republic is the preservation and development of languages in the republic with the priority of optimal functioning of the Chechen and Russian languages as state languages. A brief comparative analysis of the distribution of the Chechen and Russian languages in the main functional areas is carried out. The currently relevant factor in the formation of a bilingual personality in early childhood is noted. This is the role of children's TV channels and the Internet. Chechen children often independently learn Russian spoken language under the influence of cartoons and entertainment videos. As a result of the study, the opinion is expressed that Chechen-Russian bilingualism at the legal level is positioned as one of the fundamental components of the language situation in the republic. Also, at the state level, trends in the future development of Chechen-Russian bilingualism are determined. One of the main tasks of language policy in the Chechen Republic is the balanced functioning of both state languages - Chechen and Russian.

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Keywords: Bilingualism, language situation, language policy, Chechen-Russian bilingualism.



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1. Introduction

The problems of bilingualism are of current interest for researchers, both native and foreign. Scientists of the Chechen Republic are no exception, and this is quite understandable, since we are talking about their native language. Based on a deep and comprehensive analysis of this problem, they associate it with the language situation in the Republic, which is a reflection of the language policy. Each language has not only its own areas of use, but also the difficulties that need to be resolved, so it seems to us that the relevance of this problem is undoubted.

2. Problem Statement

It is known that the language situation develops under the influence of language policy and depends on it, since the language policy is one of the most important factors in the formation of a language situation.

The main components of the current linguistic situation in the Chechen Republic are the distribution of the Chechen and Russian languages in various public spheres, as well as the state and development trends of Chechen-Russian bilingualism at the present stage. Recently, interest in the study of Chechen-Russian bilingualism in our republic has increased. Thus, a number of interesting works were published, among them are “Sociolinguistic analysis of the development of Chechen-Russian bilingualism” (Ovkhadov, 2007), “Russian language in the Chechen school” (Khalidov, 2009), “The linguistic state in the conditions of bilingualism” (Zherebilo, 2015), “The language situation in the Chechen Republic” (Ovkhadova, Shamilevoy, & Yakhyayeva, 2016) and others.

The primary task of language policy is the influence on the functional side and, through the regulation of the functional side of the language, the influence on the structural side. Language policy can be twofold. A well-thought-out, sensible language policy contributes to the development of a language, the expansion of its functions and the expansion of both the number and scope of its functions, while an ill-conceived language policy can lead to the destructive consequences in the functioning of the language.

Thus, the main purpose of language policy is to influence the functional and structural aspects of language. It can contribute to the development of language forms, and sometimes cause regression; expand and narrow the range of use of the language and its individual forms of existence.

3. Research Questions

To determine the key problems of Chechen-Russian bilingualism in the Chechen Republic (CR) at the present stage, it is necessary to answer the following questions:

1. What is the main purpose of language policy.
2. What political, social and demographic processes led to the current linguistic situation in the CR.
3. The role of Chechen-Russian bilingualism as a component of the language situation in the CR and its evolution at the present stage.
4. The legal basis regulating the functioning of languages in the CR.
5. The main areas of impact on the language competence of the population of the CR.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to study the current linguistic situation in the Chechen Republic and Chechen-Russian bilingualism in the conditions of a practically mono-ethnic Republic

5. Research Methods

The main research method used in the research process is a comparative analysis method.

6. Findings

The current linguistic situation in the Chechen Republic is the result of language construction in the Soviet Union, when the republic was a multinational republic.

In the post-Soviet period, the language situation in the republic has changed dramatically. This is due to the tragic events that took place in the republic in the 90s of the 20th century, which caused huge demographic changes. According to the All-Russian Population Census 1989, the Republic had the following number of inhabitants:

Chechens - 734501 people, Ingush - 163762, Russians - 293771, Armenians - 14824, Ukrainians - 12627, Kumyks - 9853, Nogai - 6884, Avars - 6276, Tatars - 5102.

In 2002, there were 1031647 people living in the republic, Ingush - 2914, Russians - 40664, Armenians - 424, Ukrainians - 829, Kumyks - 8883, Nogai - 3572, Avars - 4133, Tatars - 2134.

According to the 2010 All-Russian Population Census, the demographic condition changes dramatically: Chechens - 1206551, Ingush - 1296; Russians - 24382; Armenians - 514; Ukrainians - 829; Kumyks - 12,221; Nogai - 3444; Avars - 4864; Tatars - 1466.

We see how the demographic situation in the republic has changed. The modern Chechen Republic is practically a mono-ethnic region. According to the 2010 census, 1,268,989 people live in the republic, of which 1,256,551 (95.08%) are Chechens, 24,382 Russians are (1.92%), and 3% are from other nationalities. Within 8 years the number of the population of Chechen nationality has increased, and, on the contrary, the outflow of the population of other nationalities in the republic has almost doubled.

The same demographic situation has developed in the capital of the republic also. Out of the 271,573 people living in Grozny, Chechens are 93.73% (2,54558 thousand), Russians - 3.30% (8961), the remaining 3% are Kumyks, Ingushs, Avars, Lezgins and others.

It should be noted that with the exception of Grozny and several settlements of Shelkovsky and Naursky districts, all other settlements are almost mono-ethnic, in which only Chechen nationalities live.

The following factor affecting Chechen-Russian bilingualism is directly connected with the demographic situation - this is a large-scale migration of Chechens outside the republic, in connection with which there have been corresponding changes concerning the social base of the Chechen language, its functioning and contacts with other languages (Khalidov, 2009).

The language situation in the Chechen Republic is characterized by Chechen-Russian bilingualism and the distribution of social functions between these languages, which mainly determines the infrastructural state of the Chechen language (Khalidov, 2009). Despite the fact that the republic is practically mono-national, and according to population polls, everyone calls the Chechen language their

mother tongue, yet the Chechen language is not functionally the first language in the Chechen Republic. And this, despite the state status of this language.

In the sociolinguistic understanding, bilingualism is “the coexistence of two languages within the same speech group using these languages in their respective communicative fields, depending on the social situation and other parameters of the communicative act” (Yakhyayeva, 2007, p. 110).

We understand bilingualism as more or less fluency of a person’s spoken as well as written forms of two languages, which results in almost complete mutual understanding with other people in either of two languages (Zhikeeva, 2011).

By the scale of distribution Ovhadov (2007) identifies the following types of bilingualism: individual, mass, nationwide. According to the classification of Desheriev (1977) on the method of acquiring a second language, contact and non-contact types of bilingualism differ, and on the nature of interaction between carriers there are one-sided and two-sided types of bilingualism.

At present, the Chechen-Russian bilingualism is dominant in the republic, which functions stably in most spheres of life. Despite the fact that the Chechen language is the native language for the indigenous population of the republic, for bilingual Chechens it is not functionally the first language in the republic. When learning bilingualism, the question always arises about the native language of bilingual. Linguists interpret the definition of the concept of "native language" in different ways. Some scientists consider native language as a spoken since childhood, then most people recognize the language of national affiliation as their “native language”.

This opinion is confirmed by the results of the 1989 year census: 99.8% of Chechens considered Chechen as their mother tongue, i.e. language of their national identity.

In recent decades, residents of the Chechen Republic have increased interest in their culture, history and language. In this regard, a number of important laws regulating the use of state languages in the republic were adopted in the republic.

Thus, in 2007, the Law “On Languages in the Chechen Republic” was accepted by the Parliament of the Republic and approved by the Council of the Republic. According to the Law on Languages, the status of the state language has been given to the Chechen and Russian languages, which implies the performance of equal functions in all spheres of the republic’s life activity. The main objective of this document is the revival, preservation and development of the Chechen language in the territory of the republic. In Part 5, the Government of the Republic approves targeted programs for the preservation and development of languages in the Chechen Republic. In accordance with the law, every citizen of the republic is guaranteed the right to choose a language of education and training, as well as the choice of a working language at state meetings. Publication of printed materials, radio and television broadcasting is carried out in both languages. The Law “On Languages in the Chechen Republic” is a solid legal framework for the protection and further development of the Chechen language.

In the same year, linguists of the Academy of Sciences of the Chechen Republic published a project for the development of the Chechen language, the program of which was supposed to be implemented within 5 years, from 2008 to 2012. The main goal of the developed program was the implementation of a well-thought-out, scientifically purposeful and balanced national language policy, which had to be built in

accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic, federal and republican laws on languages (ChR Government, 2014).

The program was supposed to provide scientifically based planning of the activities of state authorities, educational, scientific and other institutions aimed at restoring the lost material values of the spiritual culture of the Chechen people, expanding the functions of the Chechen language, further research, and developing the literary language and culture of the Chechen people. Thus, without prejudice to the role of the Russian language as one of the state languages of the republic, the program is aimed at preserving and further development of the native Chechen language at the state level.

The developers of this project proposed to expand the functions of the Chechen language, since, in their opinion, the existing correlation of the functions of the Chechen and Russian languages does not allow the indigenous population to preserve and, moreover, develop their native language. In the second chapter of the project, special attention is paid to the place of the Chechen language in the field of education. A phased transition of the education system into the Chechen language, starting from elementary school, was proposed. Accordingly, the implementation of these activities requires the preparation of appropriate textbooks and teaching materials. The next stage was the implementation of training in the Chechen language and at the other levels of school and vocational education.

In 2014, another important document is being issued - the State Program of the Chechen Republic for the Preservation, Study and Development of the State Languages of the Chechen Republic and Other Languages in the Chechen Republic for 2015-2024. The main objective of this program is to create conditions for the preservation, study and development of state and other languages in the Chechen Republic; ensuring the optimal functioning of the Chechen and Russian languages as state languages of the Chechen Republic; consistent implementation of the Law of the Chechen Republic "On Languages in the Chechen Republic" (ChR Government, 2014). This document summarizes the work under the previous program and offers specific measures for the implementation of a promising program for the next 10 years. To implement the goals in the field of the Chechen language as a state, a number of important tasks were identified, such as raising the status of the Chechen language in the republican educational space; creating conditions for the study of the Chechen language as a state by the entire population of the Chechen Republic and the achievement of a balanced Chechen-Russian and Russian-Chechen bilingualism; comprehensive and deep scientific research of the Chechen language as the spiritual heritage of the Chechen people, including in the mainstream of linguistic approaches and taking into account the experience of developing world languages; training highly qualified specialists, scientific and pedagogical staff who will be able to speak the state languages of the Chechen Republic for priority sectors of the national economy, science, culture and education (ChR Government, 2014).

Thus, these regulatory documents take into account all factors that may affect the language situation in the republic. Although the previous programs were not fully implemented, nevertheless, the events held in the republic have had a certain impact on the process of formation and development of the linguistic personality.

An interesting fact is that nowadays children start using the second language in their early childhood. In this situation the media communication should not be underestimated. The crucial role in the process of transition from the native language to Russian is given to television and the World Wide Web. Through

children's entertainment channels, the younger generation fully immerses itself in another language environment and easily moves from one language to another. Another important factor is communication in the family. If in rural areas Chechens use the Chechen language in family life, then in most urban families parents prefer to communicate with children in Russian, since the second language is more accessible and understandable to children. Thus, if a few decades ago, the sphere of family and everyday life was the area where the oral form of the Chechen language dominated, today in this area the Chechen language is giving way to Russian.

The impact on the structural side of the language is carried out through factors related to the functional side: the media, literature, theater, etc.

Another powerful factor influencing the development of Chechen-Russian bilingualism in the republic is the educational sphere, since education at all levels of education is conducted exclusively in Russian. This circumstance determined both the popularity the the Russian language in the context of universal secondary education, and the quality of its assimilation (Ovhadov, 2007).

As in the Soviet period, in the republic secondary education is universally carried out in Russian. The Chechen language is studied both in urban schools and in rural schools as a subject of study. Below we give the number of hours allotted for teaching the Chechen language and literature, and the Russian language and literature in secondary educational institutions of the republic (table 01).

Table 01. Time allocation (hours) devoted to teaching the Chechen language and literature, and the Russian language and literature in secondary schools of the Chechen Republic

Grade	Chechen language and literature					Russian language and literature				
	2002-2003	2004-2005	2008-2009	2016-2017	2018-2019	2002-2003	2004-2005	2008-2009	2016-2017	2018-2019
1	8	5	8	3	3	5	5	5	6	6
2	6	6	6	4	4	7	7	7	7	7
3	6	6	6	4	4	7	7	7	7	7
4	6	6	6	4	4	7	7	7	7	7
5	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	9	8
6	5	5	5	6	4	6	6	6	10	9
7	5	5	5	5	4	6	6	6	7	6
8	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	6	5
9	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6
10	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	6
11	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	5
Total	58	55	58	47	44	62	62	62	71	72

As we see, the number of hours allocated to the study of the Russian language and literature, although not significantly, but exceeds the number of hours devoted to the Chechen language and literature.

Perhaps, it would be correct to equalize the hours given to both subjects, taking into account the equal rights of the two state languages.

In the republican universities, training is also fully conducted in Russian. The elective discipline "Chechen language" is given 18-36 hours per one semester. This is the only curriculum discipline taught in the Chechen language. Thus, it can be stated that the education sector plays a huge role in the formation of Chechen-Russian bilingualism in the Chechen Republic as a practically mono-ethnic region.

7. Conclusion

As we see, the dominance of the Russian language in almost all spheres of use leads to the fact that a significant part of the local population is not fluent in the literary form of the Chechen language. If in the rural areas, the younger generation is still proficient in the Chechen language due to the sphere of family and social intercourse, the urban population is more and more switching to a second language.

In the sphere of the public and political life of the republic, there is a tendency of transition from Russian to the Chechen language. If several decades ago this sphere was almost completely occupied by the Russian language, now this sphere is almost universally occupied by the spoken Chechen language in all its oral forms of existence - dialects, colloquial literary form (table 02).

We can also talk about expanding the function of the Chechen language on television and radio, which are a powerful tool for influencing the language competence of the population.

Table 02. The allocation of the functions of the Chechen and Russian languages in the main areas of activity of the republic

Chechen language	Russian language
Language of communication in the family	Language of communication in the family
	Language learning at school, in secondary and higher education
Television and Print Language	Television and Print Language
	Science language
Language of Culture	Language of Culture
Language of social and political life	Language of social and political life
	Official Language
	Language of Court of Justice

As for the press, it is difficult to talk about the preferences of the local population, since print publications are almost completely supplanted by television and the Internet. Therefore, the media cannot to some extent influence the formation of bilingualism in the republic.

The level and quality of the literary Chechen language proficiency today are greatly influenced by the Chechen theater and cultural events held at various venues of the republic. The Chechen population has always treated their folklore with love and trepidation, and is happy to attend the stagings of the Chechen national theater. The theater turned out to be the place where it is possible to preserve the literary Chechen language.

But at the same time, it is impossible to underestimate the high level of the Russian language knowledge by bilinguals in the republic. This undoubtedly increases the competitiveness of the Chechen population in our country, and also contributes to familiarizing the nation with the achievements of the modern world civilization and culture. “After all, bilingualism is not only the ability to speak two languages, it is also a special type of thinking that absorbs the cultural values of two civilizations (Ertymbaev, 2008).

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