Pre And Post Soviet's Language Policy

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Abstract: This paper i.e. Pre and Post Soviet's Language Policy which gives us an overview and different language policies are implemented in the Soviet Federation. In which discussed the historical background, the relations between the language and nationalism, how language is used for the promotion as an instrument for preventing inter- ethnic conflicts and for restoring the peaceful and balanced linguistic diversity. In which also discussed the pre Soviet language scenario in Central Asia, the russianization of central Asian languages and how bilingualism play a very important role in the Russian federation after the disintegration and also mention the present scenario of the linguistic situation in the Russia.

Keywords: Language, Nationalism, Russianization, Bilingualism, Disintegration.

I. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Process of language policy and language planning in Russian federation since 1991 cannot be understand as well explain without mentioning or discussing the historical situation of the former USSR. The revolution of October 1917 i.e. Russian revolution resulted in a transfer of power from the autocratic or dictator tsar Nicholas II to the party of Bolsheviks and the result was the establishment of the world's first socialist state. The revolutionaries who won the war inherited from the tsarist regime a politically, culturally and linguistically complex situation, with more than 100 million citizens speaking not less than 150 different languages. There might be possibility or opportunity to assert their independence that time of national upheavals presented the new soviet rulers with a serious threat. Protecting the federation of Russia from disintegration into a host of smaller entities was the major priority agenda of the new government. Besides that, also another important task was to spread the ideology of communism among the different peoples within the borders of the inactive Russian empire.

Different kinds of strategies were used to consolidate Bolshevik power in the fledging Soviet Union and to build the foundations of the communist society. Most important was the language policy that soviets adopted in dealing with the non-Russian nationalities. Recognizing the crucial role that language plays in nationality affairs the new regime instituted a number of significant steps to guide the development of the non-Russian languages in conformity with the overall goals of the communist party.

The History of Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union reflects a period of change for both Russia and the world. The terms Soviet Russia and Soviet Union are synonymous in everyday vocabulary, when referring to the foundations of the Soviet Union; Soviet Russia refers to the few years after the October Revolution of 1917, but before the creation of the Soviet Union in 1922.

After the 1917 revolution, authorities in the USSR decided to abolish the use of the Arabic alphabet in native languages in Soviet-controlled Central Asia, in the Caucasus, and in the Volga region including Tatarstan. This policy detached the local Muslim populations from exposure to the language and writing system of the Koran. The new alphabet for languages was based on the Latin alphabet and was also inspired by the Turkish alphabet. However, by the late 1930s, the policy had been rechanged. In 1939–1940 the Soviets decided that a number of these languages (including Tatar, Kazakh, Uzbek, Turkmen, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Azeri, and Bashkir) would use variations of the Cyrillic script.[2] It was claimed that the switch was made "by the demands of the working class."

II. LANGUAGE USED AS INSTRUMENT FOR PREVENTING INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS

Russian is an East Slavic language and an official language in Russia, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan. It is an unofficial but widely spoken language in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Estonia, the other countries that were once constituent republics of the Soviet Union and former participants of the Eastern Bloc. Russian belongs to the family of Indo-European languages and is one of the three living members of the East Slavic languages. Written examples of Old East Slavonic are attested from the 10th century onwards. An East Slavic Old Novgorod dialect, vanished during the 15th or 16th century, is considered to have played a significant role in the formation of modern Russian. Russian has notable lexical similarities with Bulgarian due to a common Church Slavonic influence on both languages, because of later interaction in the 19th–20th centuries, although Bulgarian grammar differs markedly from Russian. In the 19th century, the language was called "Great Russian" to distinguish it from Belarusian, called "White Russian" and Ukrainian, called "Little Russian".

The vocabulary, principles of word formations, and, inflections and literary style of Russian have been also influenced by Church Slavonic, a developed and partly Russified form of the South Slavic Old Church Slavonic language used by the Russian Orthodox Church. However, the East Slavic forms have tended to be used exclusively in the various dialects that are experiencing a rapid decline. In some cases, both the East Slavic and the Church Slavonic forms are in use, with many different meanings. Over the centuries, the vocabulary and literary style of Russian have also been influenced by Western and Central European languages such as Greek, Latin, Polish, Dutch, German, French, Italian and English, and to a lesser extent the languages to the south and the east: Uralic, Turkic, Persian, Arabic, as well as Hebrew.[4]

The standard form of Russian is generally regarded as the modern Russian literary language. It arose in the beginning of the 18th century with the modernization reforms of the Russian state under the rule of Peter the Great, and developed from the Moscow dialect substratum under the influence of the previous century's Russian chancellery language. Mikhail Lomonosov first compiled a normalizing grammar book in 1755; in 1783 the Russian Academy's first explanatory Russian dictionary appeared. During the end of the 18th and 19th centuries a period known as the "Golden Age", the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of the Russian language was stabilized and standardized, and it became the nationwide literary language; meanwhile, Russia's world-famous literature flourished.

Until the 20th century, the languages spoken form was the language of only the upper noble classes and urban population, as Russian peasants from the countryside continued to speak in their own dialects. By the mid-20th century, such dialects were forced out with the introduction of the compulsory education system was established by the Soviet government. Despite the formalization of Standard Russian, some nonstandard dialectal features in Southern Russian dialects are still observed in colloquial speech.

Stalin's *Marxism and the National Question* (1913) provided the basic framework for nationality policy in the Soviet Union. The early years of said policy, from the early 1920s to the mid-1930s, were guided by the policy of korenizatsiya ("indigenization"), during the new Soviet regime which sought to reverse the long-term effects of Russification on the non-Russian populations. As the regime was trying to establish its power and legitimacy throughout the former Russian empire, it went about constructing regional administrative units, recruiting non-Russians into leadership positions, and promoting non-Russian languages in government administration, the courts, the schools, and the mass media. The slogan then established was that local cultures should be "socialist in content but national in form." That is, these cultures should be transformed to conform to the Communist Party's socialist project for the Soviet society as a whole but have active participation and leadership by the indigenous nationalities and operate primarily in the local languages.

III. SOVIET LEADERS POLICY TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIAN LANGUAGES

Early national policy shared with later policy the object of assuring control by the Communist Party over all aspects of Soviet political, economic, and social life. The early Soviet policy of promoting as "ethnic particularism" and another as "institutionalized multinationality", had a double goal. On the one hand, it had been an effort to counter Russian chauvinism by assuring a place for the non-Russian languages and cultures in the newly formed Soviet Union. On the other hand, it was a means to prevent the formation of alternative ethnically based political movements, including pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. One way of accomplishing this was to promote some regard as artificial distinctions between ethnic groups and languages rather than promoting amalgamation of these groups and a common set of languages based on Turkish or another regional language.

The Soviet nationalities policy from its early years sought to counter these two tendencies by assuring a modicum of cultural autonomy to non-Russian nationalities within a federal system or structure of government, though maintaining that the ruling Communist Party was monolithic, not federal. A process of "national-territorial delimitation" was undertaken to define the official territories of the non-Russian populations within the Soviet Union. The federal system conferred highest status to the titular nationalities of union republics, and lower status to titular nationalities of autonomous republics, autonomous provinces, and autonomous provinces. In all, 50 nationalities had a republic; they held nominal control in the federal system. Federalism and the provision of native-language education ultimately left as a legacy a large non-Russian public that was educated in the languages of their ethnic groups and that identified a particular homeland on the territory of the Soviet Union.

By the late 1930s, there was a notable policy shift. Purges in some of the national regions such as Ukraine, had occurred already in the early 1930s. Before the turnabout in Ukraine in 1933, a purge of Veli Ibrahimov and his leadership in the

Crimean ASSR(Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics) in 1929 for "national deviation" led to Russification of government, education, and the media and to the creation of a special alphabet for Crimean Tatar to replace the Latin alphabet. Of the two dangers that Joseph Stalin had identified in 1923, bourgeois nationalism (local nationalism) was said to be a greater threat than Great Russian chauvinism. In 1937, Faizullah Khojaev and Akmal Ikramov were removed as leaders of the Uzbek SSR (Socialist Soviet Republics) and in 1938[7], during the third great Moscow show trial, convicted and subsequently put to death for alleged anti-Soviet nationalist activities.

After Stalin, a Russified Georgian, became undisputed leader of the Soviet Union, the Russian language gained greater emphasis. In 1938, Russian became a required *subject* of study in every Soviet school, including those in which a non-Russian language was the principal medium of instruction for other subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, and social studies). In 1939, non-Russian languages that had been given Latin-based scripts in the late 1920s were given new scripts based on the Cyrillic script. One likely rationale for these decisions was the sense of impending war and that Russian was the language of command in the Red Army.

Naming the Russian nation the *primus inter pares* was a total turnabout from Stalin's declaration 20 years earlier (heralding the korenizatsiya policy) that "the first immediate task of our Party is vigorously to combat the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism." Although the official literature on nationalities and languages in subsequent years continued to speak of there being 130 equal languages in the USSR, in practice a hierarchy was endorsed in which some nationalities and languages were given special roles or viewed as having different long-term futures.

IV. BILINGUALISM AND EDUCATION

Analysis of textbooks published in the USSR found that education was offered for at least one year and for at least the first class (grade) in 67 languages between 1934 and 1980. However, the educational reforms undertaken after Nikita Khrushchev became First Secretary of the Communist Party in the late 1950s began a process of replacing non-Russian schools with Russian ones for the nationalities that had lower status in the federal system or whose populations were smaller or displayed widespread bilingualism already. This process was guided by the principle of "voluntary parental choice." But other factors also came into play, including the size and formal political status of the group in the Soviet federal hierarchy and the prevailing level of bilingualism among parents. By the early 1970s schools in which non-Russian languages served as the principal medium of instruction operated in 45 languages, while seven more indigenous languages were taught as subjects of study for at least one class year. By 1980, instruction was offered in 35 non-Russian languages of the peoples of the USSR, just over half the number in the early 1930s.

In most of these languages, schooling was not offered for the complete 10-year curriculum. For example, within the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) in 1958–59, full 10-year schooling in the native language was offered in only three languages: Russian, Tatar, and Bashkir. Some nationalities had minimal or no native-language schooling. By 1962–1963, among non-Russian nationalities that were indigenous to the RSFSR, whereas 27% of children in classes I-IV (primary school) studied in Russian-language schools, 53% of those in classes V-VIII (incomplete secondary school) studied in Russian-language schools, and 66% of those in classes IX-X studied in Russian-language schools. Although many non-Russian languages were still offered as a *subject* of study at a higher class level (in some cases through complete general secondary school – the 10th class), the pattern of using Russian language as the main medium of instruction accelerated after Khrushchev's parental choice program got under way.

Pressure to convert the main medium of instruction to Russian was evidently higher in urban areas. For example, in 1961–62, reportedly only 6% of Tatar children living in urban areas attended schools where Tatar was the main medium of instruction. Similarly in Dagestan in 1965, schools in which the indigenous language was the medium of instruction existed only in rural areas. The pattern was probably similar, if less extreme, in most of the non-Russian union republics, although in Belarus and Ukraine schooling in urban areas was highly Russianized.

The 24th Party Congress in 1971 launched the idea that a new "Soviet people" was forming on the territory of the USSR, a community for which the common language – the language of the Soviet people – was the Russian language, consistent with the role that Russian was playing for the fraternal nations and nationalities in the territory already. This new community was labeled a people not a nation but in that context the Russian word *narod* ("people") implied an *ethnic* community, not just a civic or political community.

Thus, until the end of the Soviet era, a doctrinal rationalization had been provided for some of the practical policy steps that were taken in areas of education and the media. First of all, the transfer of many national schools (schools which are based on local languages) to Russian as a medium of instruction accelerated under Khrushchev in the late 1950s and continued into the 1980s.

Second, the new doctrine was used to justify the special place of the Russian language as the "language of inter-nationality communication" in the USSR. Use of the term "inter-nationality" rather than the more conventional "international" focused on the special *internal* role of Russian language rather than on its role as a language of international discourse. That Russian was the most widely spoken language, and that Russians were the majority of the population of the country, were also cited in justification of the special place of Russian language in government, education, and the media.

After examining the Soviet language policy in Central Asia, clearly proves that the intention of soviet federation is not only to sovietize but also to Russianize the Central Asian peoples. The attempt to Russianize the local languages and the growing fact of Russian-national bilingualism have been used as tools to advance the soviet's ultimate aim of absorbing the Central Asian into the Russian culture. After putting many efforts still the Russian and the local peoples in the Central Asian are still culturally distant from each other.

The events take place since 1991 in the Russian federation which is the soviet successor state prove that the absolute necessity of solving and protecting inter ethnic conflicts in order to ensure a at least minimum level of well-being in the local populations and to satisfy their relations. It is also necessary to guarantee a correct management of the ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity so as to protect the conflict both in the main as well the periphery of the Russian federation from multiplying, so now Russian federation also started to give preference to the minority and foreign languages in their curriculum.

V. PRESENT EDUCATION SCENARIO IN RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Russian Ministry of Education and Science publishes every year statistics on the languages which are used in schools. In 2014-2015 there is an absolute majority i.e.13.1 million or 96% of 13.7 million students of Russian federation used Russian language as a medium of education. Around 1.6 million or 12% students studied their non-Russian means native language as a subject. The most studied languages in Russian country are Tatar, Chechen and Chuvash with 347, 253, 107 thousand students respectively. The most studied foreign languages in 2013/2014 were students in thousands i.e. English (11,194.2), German (1,070.5), French (297.8), Spanish (20.1), Chinese (14.9), Arabic (3.4), Italian (2.9) and others (21.7).

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