

SCTMG 2020**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the
Context of Modern Globalism»****EXTRA-LINGUISTIC FACTORS IN FORMING RUSSIAN
CITIZENS' LINGUISTIC PERSONALITY IN A POLYETHNIC
ENVIRONMENT**

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Abstract

The paper is written in the context of research problems current in the contemporary scientific community, where one of the significant questions is the one of specifics in formation and development of linguistic persona in the modern Russia. The purpose of the paper is to consider extra-linguistic factors influencing the formation of linguistic personality in polyethnic Kabardino-Balkaria, which is actively developing on the way to active participation in the world of cultural globalization combined with preservation of centuries-long ethnic traditions, historical and natural heritage, co-existence of different languages and cultural types within a single spatial and temporal paradigm. The work emphasizes the idea that uniqueness of Kabardino-Balkaria related primarily to its polysubjectival nature, formed by decades of interactions of its title nations (Kabarda and Balkarians) with many other ethnicities, including Russians, which, had doubtless influence on the specificity of forming the linguistic persona from the standpoint of actualizing the importance of native and Russian languages in its linguistic fate. The empiric material presented here allows analyzing the trends in development of ethnic language policy in the republic; establishing degree of demand and knowledge of native and Russian languages among the members of the title ethnicities; understanding priorities and concepts in the modern cultural and communicative space; allows for conclusions that nowadays formation and development of the linguistic personality of a Russian citizen are determined by social needs in active cooperation and communication of people against the background of expanding inter-civilizational dialog in the global and integrational world.

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Keywords: Linguistic persona, extralinguistic factors, language policy, bilingualism, polyethnic space.



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1. Introduction

Anthropocentric paradigm that became a priority and a key factor at the turn of the 20th century determined a trend to shift attention of the modern philological community from the object to the subject of cognition, where the object is the linguistic system, and the subject is its creator, and then dogmatically stated the importance of the problem of language and personality (a speaking person – *homo loquens*), which allowed designing the vector direction of many modern studies.

Despite its relatively short existence in science, the term *linguistic persona* has strong positions in the modern philology, which is evident from the fact that there are more than one hundred types of the linguistic persona represented in research. However, in our opinion, on the one hand, globalization and integration which have currently taken a massive scale, and on the other hand, actualization of ethnic processes significantly influenced all the areas of human activity, conscious and thought of society as a whole and private individuals, which brings up a question of specificity in formation and development of a linguistic persona of a Russian citizen in the context of cultural and communicative space of the modern polyethnic Russia. We consider it is important to note that the concept of the “Russian citizen’s linguistic persona” is broader than the “Russian linguistic persona”, as it includes considerations for ethnic linguistic world view that exists in the consciousness of a speaker of an ethnic language on par with the Russian linguistic world view» (Vorozhbitova, 2017a).

2. Problem Statement

seventy ethnic groups living there, including title ethnicities of Kabarday and Balkars, which aspire to not only establish themselves in our multifaceted world with their ethnic characteristics, but also to form qualities necessary to obtain attributes of the Russian identity. Polysubjectival nature of Kabardino-Balkaria strengthens regional characteristics from the standpoint of its uniqueness, and also defines unpredictability of new multidimensional problems related to development of linguistic persona and necessity of resolving such problems. We assume that the problem of forming a modern linguistic persona of a Russian citizen in the polyethnic Kabardino-Balkaria, establishing extralinguistic factors influencing its formation are especially relevant in the modern conditions of relations between the global cultural-linguistic world and ethnic space, whose features manifest in the complex and controversial process of establishing the Russian national identity.

3. Research Questions

The paper is a component in the authors’ longstanding research activities, within the framework of which some problems of functioning of official languages of the republic were foregrounded and resolved, trends and factors in development of ethno-linguistic processes in the republic were revealed, the latter having doubtless influence over the peculiarities in development of linguistic persona in the polyethnic Kabardino-Balkaria (Bashieva, 2013; 2017).

Studying the features of the Russian citizen’s linguistic persona as exemplified in rather small Kabardino-Balkaria is a multifold and multifaceted problem, whose depth includes a multitude of fields of study of both static and dynamic nature. For instance, there are questions reflecting the features of

formation of the Russian citizen's linguistic persona in mono- and polyethnic space, specifics of speech behavior of various age groups, the role of education, family, culture, media and other factors in formation of the linguistic persona; each of those factors may be an object of research in its own right. However, the foundation of the problem is formed by understanding and acknowledgment that in the republic a certain type of the Russian citizen's linguistic persona develops that is characterized by a set of linguistic abilities reflecting both ethnic and common Russian features, thus providing fluency in two linguistic codes (ethnic and Russian) and allowing extending the linguistic and conceptual world view of a speaker. Acknowledgment of this important factor underlies value and significance of considering the principal influencing factors.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to establish and describe extralinguistic factors influencing the development of the Russian citizen's linguistic persona in a polyethnic environment in the conditions of modern cultural and communication space.

5. Research Methods

In order to achieve the stated goal, the paper uses the methods of sociolinguistic questionnaire, a descriptive method for results of the survey; the employed methods primarily contribute to solution of tasks related to problems of formation of the modern linguistic persona in both monocultural space and in the conditions of polyethnic and polycultural Russian Federation, especially in its extremely multilingual and polycultural region of North Caucasus.

6. Findings

The work presents some generalized commentaries and conclusions obtained from studying empiric materials, aimed at establishing the principal extralinguistic factors which according to our opinion significantly influence formation and development of the Russian citizen linguistic persona in Kabardino-Balkaria.

6.1. Ethnic and language policy as a factor in development of linguistic persona

Ethnic and language policy is a factor that influences the whole era, generation, and thus formation of personal cultural and linguistic competences. Linguistic and cultural development is subject to external factors, including legislation and political regimentation of linguistic and cultural life of the society. So, an ethnic-linguistic reform of the late 20th century in Russia was determined by increased attention of peoples to their languages and cultures, aspiration for their preservation and development, a willingness to legally formalize the status of official languages, differentiating the post-Soviet language policy from that of the previous period. In this context, in the modern Kabardino-Balkaria there are evident trends to preservation of centuries-old ethnic tradition, historic and natural heritage from co-existence of different cultural types and functioning of three idea spaces – Russian, Kabardian and Balkarian which have no structural-genetic links and thus, the influence of ethnic belonging onto the linguistic persona is stronger.

Consequently, it is evident that ethnicity is one of the most important indicators for the linguistic persona, while for modern scholars it appears more important to study interethnic relations, issues of tolerant co-existence of different ethnicities and to a lesser degree the role of ethnic factor in development of linguistic persona of a bilingual ethnic language-Russian speaker in formation of value preferences in the polycultural environment. Let us note that it is possible to consider various types of linguistic persona in the republic, in particular “linguistic persona of an ethnically-Russian citizen of Russia”, and ‘linguistic persona of a Russian citizen belonging to a non-Russian ethnicity’ (Vorozhbitova, 2017b). At that, it may become a prospective field of study, as ethnically-Russian inhabitants of the republic have formed a world view different from that of ethnic Russians living in the central part of Russia.

However, ethnic and language policy is aimed not only at the ethnic line of development, but at expanding the communication field where transformations related to globalization are actualized, e.g. economic development as a determinative factor in expanding personal language and linguistic activity with the help of a third, foreign language; global urbanization and urban linguistic interactions as a factor in development of socio-linguo-professional stratification in the modern society; labor and ethnic migration-related processes reflecting in the ethnic composition of population and its cultural and linguistic specifics as a result, etc.

Thus, the modern Kabardino-Balkaria is a dynamically developing republic that has a status of a cultural center in the North Caucasus Federal District, is one of the cultural centers of Russia with certain prerequisites for active participation in cultural globalization, while the factor of language policy and related trends witness to the influence of its consequences onto formation and development of the modern linguistic persona.

6.2. Mono- or polysubjectival nature of language communication as a factor in formation and development of the Russian citizen’s linguistic persona

Bilingualism is a landmark feature of a modern person; in Kabardino-Balkaria it is a typical phenomenon. However, a degree of the bilingualism is non-uniform in the republic, as despite the general polyethnic nature of the republic, populations may be ethnically compact, that is, either mono-subjectival or ethnically-diverse, polysubjectival. “Linguistic persona of a Russian citizen being developed in Kabardino-Balkar Republic is characterized as monolingual monocultural Russian linguistic persona if it is formed in areas of compact living of Russian population, or as bilingual monocultural if it is formed in a monoethnic environment (Kabardian- or Balkarian-speaking); alternatively, it may be bilingual/polylingual bicultural/polycultural if it is formed in a polyethnic environment” (Bezrozkova, 2013).

Thus, the polyethnic nature to a certain degree is formed in the aggregate, while in each particular case the linguistic communication is actualized in the conditions of monoethnic environment directory determining the trends in formation and development of linguistic persona. So, after conducting a study in a monoethnic Kabardian village of Lechinkay, we established that over 80% of respondents communicate in Kabardian language at home and thus the language of family education is exclusively their native Kabardian language. Interesting results were obtained in monoethnic villages of Nizhny Chegem and Yanikoy. 67% and 68% respectively marked their native Balkarian as the language at home, while the language of family education was stated as Balkarian by 84% of respondents in Nizhny Chegem and 81%

in Yanikoy. We understand that a small reduction in in-family use of native language in monoethnic Balkarian villages is explained by its territorial proximity to the capital of the republic for Yanikoy and to Chegem Falls (a popular tourist destination) for Nizhny Chegem. Thus, regular linguistic and social contacts with members of other ethnicities are also a significant factor for development of the modern linguistic persona in the republic. However, more often the languages of communication and education in the polyethnic space are usually Kabardian and Russian, or Balkarian and Russian. For example, in the villages of Chegem and Shalushka, where mixed population prevails, both native (Kabardian or Balkarian) or Russian languages are used for communication and in-family education by 60 and 64 % of respondents, respectively. We think it is important to emphasize that linguistic persona of a monoethnic space absorbs colossal ethno-cultural experience that allows speaker of the language to independently and contextually express their thought in their native language, as the dominant characteristics here are ethnic-cultural features of the communication environment; communication competences of the linguistic persona are activated as the ethno-cultural determinant exclusively in the mono-ethnic environment, oriented towards cultural traditions and ethnic stereotypes of behavior.

In this context, the authors are of opinion that polyethnicity and thus polycultural nature of linguistic environment is an essential condition for successful development of the linguistic persona as a subject operating various cognitive structures. We assume that in Kabardino-Balkar Republic, linguistic persona shall not have the status of monolingual monocultural personality, as it results in such negative consequences as narrowed knowledge paradigm, culture shocks, antagonism to “foreign” things and even inter-ethnic conflicts.

6.3. Proficiency in Russian and native language as a developmental factor of the Russian citizen’s linguistic persona

Linguistic persona that manifests its linguistic abilities in texts shall be proficient in the language to the maximum, so its use of language, the degree of proficiency in various linguistic means allows a person to attain certain communicative goals. Of course, now there are hardly any truly monolingual speakers of Kabardian or Balkarian in the republic, but the degree of proficiency in one’s native language and in Russian are often quite different. In this context, an important problem is a trend for so-called semi-lingualism among the members of the republic’s title ethnicities. Modern speakers of Kabardian and Russian, or Balkarian and Russian often do not feel any need for code switching, as independent of the communicative situation they use simultaneously lexical elements of both Russian and their native language, forming a communicative surrogate of their ethnic language and Russian, which becomes the norm in communication. At that, code switching and use of linguistic means limited to a single language are deemed an important criterion of bilingualism. The degree of proficiency in a certain language with a broad coverage of its functional spheres, application of language in certain conditions are determined by practical need, which provides social activity of the speakers. However, in linguistic persona developing within the polyethnic space, it seems that similar proficiency in both native and Russian prevail, as in the condition where two or more languages co-exist, the issue of command of the languages and code switching are more important than translating from one’s native language into Russian. Analysis of research results has shown that formation of linguistic persona influences command of both Russian and one’s native language. So, according to self-assessment, 100 % of respondents evaluate their

understanding of spoken Kabardian and Russian as excellent or good; 96.7 and 90.0 % of respondents think their level of proficiency in spoken and written language respectively is high; this is the very linguistic competence, which is self-assessed here. Capability of understanding spoken native and Russian languages witnesses to respondent's capability to listen lectures, radio and television transmissions, participate in dialogs and polylogs, comment on perceived information, while the skill of speaking and writing attests one's free and coherent expression of one's thought, the degree of formation of the communicative competence. The given values are related to choice of functional language on behalf of the respondents, as well as to their ethnic self-identity, however, there is a reduction in speakers of Kabardian and Balkarian, while it is insignificant (0.81%), correlating to the choice of language used at home. So, 41.32 % of respondents stated their native language as the language used at home, 53.72 % – native and Russian languages, 2,48 % – Russian only; for communication with their neighbors, 33.88 % selected their native language, native and Russian were chosen by 61.98 %, Russian only by 4.96 %; for communication with their classmates, 22.31 % selected native language, 3.31 % selected Russian, and 73.55 % selected both native and Russian, and 4.14 % selected Russian. For communication with friends 22.31 % prefer native language, 5.79 % prefer Russian, 71.07 % use both the native language and Russian. 20.66% of respondents expressed a willingness to learn their native language deeper, 9.09 % would like to speak better Russian, and 67.77 % would like to improve both languages, 2.48 % did not provide any answer. However, we assume that the fact that “in the era of broad language contacts, we may speak of the Russian linguistic persona as monolingual one” (Pakharenko, 2016) may be a start of an academic reflection.

Thus, the analysis results show that the linguistic persona being studied is, on the one hand, generally loyal to one's native language (Kabardian or Balkarian), and, on the other hand, to a deeper learning of Russian whether as the official language, lingua franca or native language (67.77 %). The answers provided attest that functional demand for the Russian language among the respondents goes beyond the teaching situation, need for the Russian language for a modern linguistic persona is defined by a need for a language of inter-ethnic communication, the language of politics, economics and culture. We are of the opinion that it relates primarily to functional capabilities of the languages, as the volume of social functions of both Kabardian and Balkarian languages in practice is the main barrier for their actualization of their functional potential, as the language vitality indicators are primarily the degree of its need in a certain sphere of public communication, speaker competence and sufficient level for inner structural development (Teunnikova, 2002).

6.4. Cultural and communication environment as a factor in formation of the modern Russian citizen's linguistic persona

The formative process of the linguistic persona is impossible outside the system of cultural values that define selection and use of certain cultural dominants during a communication activity; these dominants are intertwined with both ethnic and Russian national culture and influence the nature of interpersonal social interaction and full-scale orientation in the modern information realm. Interrelation of a given culture and a given language model the image of the linguistic persona, explicitly or implicitly projecting its fate onto cultural and communication space, which is a reflection of features of an epoch in the context of its priorities and concepts.

In the modern conditions, the cultural and communication environment where the linguistic persona is being formed is, in our opinion, determined by spiritual property of ethnicity, defined as a set of cultural heritage created in a language; philological level of education of a society, evaluated primarily on the basis of competences in command and use of native language and literature, Russian language and literature; universal, panhuman system of moral values defining spiritual landmarks of the society (the system of etiquette rules, moral codes, dominant ethnic constants, etc.); attention to religion (religiosity), spiritual origins (values, morals, stereotypes, customs, faith, superstitions, etc.); tolerance to a different culture and activity of using the listed items. Due to that, it is absolutely evident that the modern linguistic persona is being developed in the conditions of cultural and communication space, where there are current integrative trends, influencing cultural and linguistic interactions in the society; strengthening the value of the linguistic persona's belonging to the Russian world as a part of Russian national social and cultural community; activation of spiritual growth in culture and a need for command of a foreign language, currently still mostly limited to megapolises; an aspiration to preserve and develop ethno-cultural historical traditions with the elements of archaic attributes; a trend to religious revival, etc. An important factor defining specificity of the modern cultural and communication environment, according to A.B. Bushev is "...increased number of cultural contacts, their influence on the education system; open society, knowledge of both classical and mass cultures of foreign countries, influence of transnational professional subcultures (geek subculture), practice of the educational system in formation of empathy and understanding in inter-cultural dialog, realities of Internet-based communication..." (Bushev, 2010), which exerts a significant influence over the development of the modern Russian citizen's linguistic persona, including in the federal subject under consideration in our paper.

Thus, we think the problem of formation of the Russian citizen's linguistic persona is justified in the context of the cultural and communication space of the modern Russia as an essential aspect of ambivalent but evident process of consolidation of the Russian national identity and general trend for preservation of ethnic culture and language in Russia as a whole and in its individual regions. A wide range of components in the cultural and linguistic space of the republic available now, variety of cognitive patterns as models of knowledge and cognition, as a set of rules and criteria representing specific world view determine the process that structurizes the perceived information, which finds its reflection at the level of individual linguistic capabilities and competences.

7. Conclusion

The research has shown that formation of the Russian citizen's linguistic persona in the conditions of polyethnic environment is influenced, on the one hand, by growing ethnic consciousness, trends to preservation and revival of ethnic culture and traditions, on the other hand, by globalization, propagation of subcultures, etc. It starts at an early age; however, its formation is of conditional nature, as the linguistic persona is in constant development. In the modern Kabardino-Balkaria, there are both trends to preservation of traditional conservative upbringing, (in both urban and rural environment), and other, different norms of behavior and communication, prescribed by democratization of the modern society. Monoethnic linguistic persona and polyethnic linguistic persona as separate types of the Russian citizen's linguistic persona are developed under different conditions, thus revealing the mechanism of their

formation and development seems rather important for the theory of linguistic persona. Extralinguistic factors considered in the paper – ethnic and language policy, mono- or polysubjectival nature of local linguistic environment, command of Russian and native language, cultural and communication environment are understood as universal, actively participating in the interaction between the language and society, defining the development vector of the linguistic situation and thus specifics of personal thinking and world view, as tools aimed at correcting the integrative way of coexistence of various languages and cultures in the context of spiritual and ideological direction in formation and development of the modern linguistic persona.

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