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**LANGUAGE, RELIGION AND CIVIC IDENTITY**

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***Abstract***

The language of communication is one of the most powerful factors in the formation of ethnic identity. It results from the fact that language frames arise in phylogenesis from the interaction of the ethnic group with its natural and social environment. Language, thus, is the bearer of patterns of behaviour, cognitive and value orientations, as well as axiologically significant attitudes. By the material of the pilot sociological survey of students of higher educational institutions of Rostov-on-Don, the authors establish the strength of the connection between the language of communication and ethnic and religious identity. To achieve this goal, the authors, firstly, analyse the reaction of students from different ethnic groups to the natural expansion of the Russian language in their family communication, and, secondly, establish the value of the observed Renaissance of religious ideology for the process of ethnic consolidation, reconstruction and modelling of ethnic and civil identity. The analysis shows that the language of interethnic communication is one of the key factors in the formation of national identity. In addition, the study established that religion is an equally relevant factor in the formation of ethnic and inter-ethnic identities, the understanding of the dogmas of which is carried out through the language of communication, primarily within the family. General conclusion of the study: in a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional community, the language of inter-ethnic communication is the fundamental factor of the civil identity formation, and there is a consolidating influence of the religion of the dominant ethnic group in the state.

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## 1. Introduction

The conception of Edward Sapir known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has received much deserved and undeserved criticism (Sapir, 1921; Sapir, 1993; Whorf, 1956). Its most rational part presents the idea that the language of communication, acquired from childhood, limits, on the one hand, the possibility of our sensory perception of reality, and on the other hand – the possibility of translating images of reality and understanding its objective connections to the level of logical, verbal structure of thought. In other words, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has the two aspects of consideration – ontogenesis and phylogenesis.

In ontogenesis, the acquired language by its speech structures imposes restrictions on cognitive processes, forcing the thought to obey the frames of speech (Van Dijk, 1981). This is due to the difference between the perception resulting from the impact of objective reality on our senses and the feeling of this impact. The reason is that not everything that is perceived by the senses reaches the level of awareness. One of the powerful mechanisms that eliminates the "excess" is the language of communication, which may lack words to refer to the received sensory experience. Thus, the language simply does not allow the speakers to feel all the multi-coloured variety of perceptions, coming into conflict with them. This can be clearly seen in the example of children's creativity. A child knows from the words of adults that the grass is green and the sky is blue, and this is the reason to colour the grass green and the sky blue in his drawing. Only educational processes aimed at the development of feelings and senses result in their balance with the perception, and, in the end, a professional artist is able not only to see with the eyes, but also to understand and depict various colours and shades that really exist, in fact, only in the form of reflected or emitted electromagnetic waves.

In phylogenesis, speech structures are formed under the influence of the environment – the natural and social environment, which, in the end, also sets the framework of mental and practical activities. This "linguistic choke" (Strugatsky & Strugatsky, 2001, p. 127), preventing from verbal reproduction the entire complex of the images, results from the lack of language concepts necessary to transmit the received sensory experience of revelation. In other words, the perceived and the realized experiences are different, and they do not coincide. The perceived is censored by consciousness, which is formed in a substantial part by language and culture. The perception sifted through the sieve of consciousness acts as feelings that ignore a large part of the information received by the senses. In turn, the language affects the thought processes: a person essentially thinks and acts as the speech models prescribe to him (Lukichev, 2017, pp. 148-149). As a result, the forms given by ready speech structures, formed on the basis of the previous experience of reproduction of real processes in speech, are not able to convey the sensory experience that was understood individually and is not appropriate to the general use.

In this phylogenetic approach, the hypothesis of Sapir-Whorf draws the connections between the natural conditions of existence of the ethnos as the native speaker's grammatical features and vocabulary composition. To prove this the scholars usually give an example of the Eskimo language, in which there are several dozen words to denote the features of snow and the peculiarities of precipitation. It should be added that socio-economic and general social conditions also have a significant impact on the conceptual system and language practice. Thus, in the Arabic language, for example, there are more than three hundred words denoting a camel depending on the breed, colour, habits and course. In addition, each word keeps explicitly or implicitly its own etymological layers revealed by the speakers, it has the specifics of

psychological settings, as well as patterns of language, its frames containing typical patterns of behaviour, assimilated by individuals along with the acquisition of language. This ensures, in diachronic terms, the transfer of social experience by inheritance from generation to generation, i.e. the mental connection between the generations. In its present state, the language provides synchronization of mental processes of individuals in the population, and, in fact, is one of the powerful factors of the phenomenon of ethnic identity.

## 2. Problem Statement

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis can be evaluated as unconditionally true when it comes to considering the relationship of language and thinking from the point of view of ontogenesis. Specifically, it is reliable when it studies the influence of language structures acquired by an individual on thought processes, the patterns of behaviour, attitudes to activity, the value orientations and axiological aspects of the worldview as a whole.

When considering the relationship of language, reality and thinking from the phylogenetic point of view, in our opinion, it is inevitable to involve the concepts of theme and rheme of speech situation with their spread to the situation in general including its constituent episodes and events. The continuous and at the same time discrete flow of events of objective reality is subordinated to a certain structure so that it splits into a number of situations, each of which has its own "theme", and "rhema" of each of them is formed by a sequence of the event process. Thus, the reflection of reality in the consciousness builds thought processes in accordance with the perception of the situational-event structure of social life involving individuals interacting with each other and with the surrounding world and estimated as subjects of cognitive activity. As a result, human thinking has the same characteristics of "theme" and "rheme" as objective reality. In turn, a verbalized thought reports a given situation-event structure in the speech, and it actually presents the statement as the theme and rheme of a current speech situation.

In other words, speech structures are a reflection of mental processes occurring in the neural structures of the human brain under the influence of perceived reality. Thus, the structure of the real situation, reflected in the perception, is the basis for the structure of the statement, and the dynamics of the real situation is reflected in the mental processes, which, in turn, are reflected in the logic of the language of thought (Chomsky, 1965; Chomsky, 2001; Chomsky, 2006).

Since each word of the language vocabulary exists in a certain semantic field, this word contains behavioural attitudes and carries an axiological load. Of course, patterns of behaviour are acquired for the most part due to non-linguistic impact, i.e. as samples with the purpose of action and ways to achieve the goal. Their positive (when the target is reached) or negative (when the target is not reached) emotional intensity fixes or taboos the ways of achieving the goals. However, the second signal system reinforces and strengthens the patterns of behavioural activity with approval and encouragement or censure and condemnation. Thus, speech is directly involved in the confirmation and actualization of the psychological attitudes of speakers and serves as a trigger for each of them, acting as its external stimulus, or, at very least, it every time actualizes the subconscious processes associated with the presence of a particular psychological setting.

The factors typical of the ontogenesis of personality no less determine the transfer of the cultural code in phylogenesis. The vocabulary of the language and its grammar, handed down to the next generations, retransmit the whole set of patterns of behaviour and value orientations. Thus, language and speech practice are the basis of the synchronized mentality of the ethnic group and the basis of ethnic identity for the population as a whole and its constituent individuals.

This was well understood in the XIX century, when the concept of ethnos was not yet introduced into scientific circulation, but the word "language" was used as a synonym for the concept of "people". To support this idea it is enough to recall "the invasion of the army with twelve languages", as it was called then the invasion of Napoleon in Russia, and the words of A. S. Pushkin – "...i nazovuet vsyak sushchii v nei yuazyk ..." (I will be called in any language existing in the country). In fact, it is obvious that there is a close connection between language and ethnicity. However, such clarity is lost when a multi-ethnic community using the language of the dominant ethnic group in a given state is in the focus of the research (Shepel, 2013). If we take into account the confusion in political terminology with the concept of "nationality" (Podshibyakina, 2016), using as a synonym the term "ethnos" referring it to the concept of national (in the sense – civil) identity (Semenenko, 2011), the complexity of the issue is incredibly increasing. At the same time, ethnic identity can merge, in the case of an individual belonging to the dominant ethnic group, with the national identity, and can diverge from it to the state of intrapersonal and social conflict (Guboglo, 2003).

The problem becomes even more complicated when religious identity is also involved in the analysis, which, along with language, is a powerful factor in the formation of the ideas of people about their belonging to an ethnic group and nation (Shaov, 2009). Accordingly, the question in this case is connected with the language mechanisms of mental processes, since the postulates and dogmatic provisions of religion, as well as its proposed ideological attitudes, moral guidelines and value orientations, for the most part are transmitted and perceived at the speech level. In addition, the language itself is permeated with religious ideas. It is not even that it contains idiomatic expressions, but that any statement in the form of a sentence has its subject, mentally endowed with the quality of animation. The items of objective reality, getting their names in thinking and saying, become logical subjects and, thus, they become animate.

### **3. Research Questions**

Unfortunately, the recognition of language practice and religion as the most significant factors in the formation of ethnic identity is mostly of a theoretical nature and is rather accepted as an axiom than as provisions that need to be supported by empirical material. This also applies to the analysis of the correlation of identities of different levels, including civil national identity, which is formed on the basis of the interaction of representatives of diverse ethnic groups and confessions. Apparently, in these matters, it is necessary to use such quantitative methods of empirical analysis, which make it possible to obtain statistically significant results for the formulation of appropriate conclusions. Moreover, in a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society, which is the Russian society, the language of intra-family communication acquires a special significance in the formation of the corresponding identities as it concentrates their intersecting planes into a single whole.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to establish the strength of the connections between the language of communication, ethnic and religious identity, and the objectives are: 1) to determine the ethnic reaction to the natural expansion of the Russian language in intra-family communication of representatives of different ethnic groups (for example, students studying in higher educational institutions of Rostov-on-Don); 2) to establish the value of the observed Renaissance of religious ideology for the process of ethnic consolidation, reconstruction and modelling of ethnic and civil identity.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In the course of a pilot sociological study conducted in Rostov-on-Don, along with other obtained data, there were the results of particular interest in this perspective. Students of higher educational institutions including the Southern Federal University (SFU), Don State Technical University (DSTU), Rostov State Medical University (RostSMU) took part in the survey. The number of respondents covered by the survey was equal to 300, which gave the overall sample with 95% of reliability deviation of the study results from the public opinion of the general population by no more than  $\pm 5.7\%$ . This, of course, is higher than the level accepted in sociology, but is acceptable for the level of pilot research.

#### **6. Findings**

The survey showed that communication at home in the family in Russian (84.0 %) is generally correlated with the total number of ethnic Russians in educational institutions of Rostov-on-Don, caught in the sample (75.3 %). The difference of 8.7% is set by representatives of other ethnic groups of the Russian Federation, integrated for several generations in the Russian culture. They are mainly Greeks and Armenians of Rostov region, who preserve their ethnicity, but for the most part they have switched completely to the Russian language even in family communication. This category is also supplemented by those who have difficulty in determining their ethnicity.

Table 01 represents the observed frequencies underlined in the main font, the upper index on the left is the percentage in the column, the lower index on the right is the percentage in the row, the Arial font indicates the expected frequencies under the observed frequencies. The table shows that in 60% of cells the expected frequency is less than 5. Moreover, it is not possible to reduce the number of cells with the expected frequency of less than 5 to the level required for statistical analysis to less than 20% by excluding any categories of respondents from consideration (separately row and column, and simultaneously row and column). The reason is that both questions were open, grouping by ethnic and linguistic taxons was carried out after the collection of information. As a result, although the overall picture corresponds to previous studies on universities of the Rostov region (Abrosimov, Lukichev, & Marchenko, 2013; Vnukova, 2016; Potseluev, Konstantinov & Lukichev, 2016), but in the cells of the conjugation table, there is a low number of representatives of ethnic groups of the North Caucasus and other nationalities of the Russian Federation, and the same situation in the languages of family communication.

**Table 01.** Languages of communication in families of respondents

Language of intrafamily communication	Nationality				Total
	Russians	Ethnic groups of the North Caucasus	Other nationalities of the Russian Federation	difficult to answer	
the Russian language	<sup>98.2</sup> <sub>222</sub> <sup>88.1</sup> 189.8	<sup>33.3</sup> <sub>7</sub> <sup>2.8</sup> 17.6	<sup>33.3</sup> <sub>6</sub> <sup>2.4</sup> 15.1	<sup>48.6</sup> <sub>17</sub> <sup>6.7</sup> 29.4	<sup>84.0</sup> <sub>252</sub> <sup>100</sup>
the languages of the North Caucasus	<sup>0</sup> <sub>0 8.3</sub>	<sup>42.9</sup> <sub>9</sub> <sup>81.8</sup> 0.8	<sup>0</sup> <sub>0 0.7</sub>	<sup>5.7</sup> <sub>2</sub> <sup>18.2</sup> 1.3	<sup>3.7</sup> <sub>11</sub> <sup>100</sup>
other languages of the Russian Federation	<sup>0.4</sup> <sub>1</sub> <sup>7.1</sup> 10.5	<sup>4.8</sup> <sub>1</sub> <sup>7.1</sup> 1.0	<sup>44.4</sup> <sub>8</sub> <sup>57.1</sup> 0.8	<sup>11.4</sup> <sub>4</sub> <sup>28.6</sup> 1.6	<sup>4.7</sup> <sub>14</sub> <sup>100</sup>
the native language and the Russian language	<sup>0.4</sup> <sub>1</sub> <sup>12.5</sup> 6.0	<sup>14.3</sup> <sub>3</sub> <sup>37.5</sup> 0.6	<sup>16.7</sup> <sub>3</sub> <sup>37.5</sup> 0.5	<sup>2.9</sup> <sub>1</sub> <sup>12.5</sup> 0.9	<sup>2.7</sup> <sub>8</sub> <sup>100</sup>
difficult to answer	<sup>0.9</sup> <sub>2</sub> <sup>13.3</sup> 11.3	<sup>4.8</sup> <sub>1</sub> <sup>6.7</sup> 1.1	<sup>5.6</sup> <sub>1</sub> <sup>6.7</sup> 0.9	<sup>31.4</sup> <sub>11</sub> <sup>73.3</sup> 1.8	<sup>5.0</sup> <sub>15</sub> <sup>100</sup>
Total	<sup>100</sup> <sub>226</sub> <sup>75.3</sup>	<sup>100</sup> <sub>21</sub> <sup>7.0</sup>	<sup>100</sup> <sub>18</sub> <sup>6.0</sup>	<sup>100</sup> <sub>35</sub> <sup>11.7</sup>	<sup>100</sup> <sub>300</sub> <sup>100</sup>

This makes it difficult to statistically analyse the data collected and hence to draw possible conclusions, although the intersection of issues is so interesting that it would be irrational not to consider it. Here are the reasons: according to Table 01 – 33.3 % of representatives of ethnic groups of the North Caucasus in intrafamily communication use only Russian, and another 14.3% use it along with their native language; the same applies to the representatives of other ethnic groups of the Russian Federation; 33.3% of representatives use only Russian when communicating with other members of their family and 16.7% use it along with their native language. At the same time, the Cramer coefficient shows a strong relationship between the variables:  $V = 0.555$  at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.000...$  However, since the Cramer coefficient is based on the criterion  $\chi^2$ , and its application is impossible due to the condition – no more than 20% of the cells with the expected frequency of less than 5, we can not be certain to trust the result. Other methods of analysis should be used to ensure the accuracy of the data collected and the results obtained. Among these techniques there is Fisher's exact test. It has the advantage that it does not rely on  $\chi^2$ , and therefore does not provide for the above conditions. However, in view of the fact that it is not often used in applied sociology, its essence, apparently, needs to be explained.

The exact Fisher criterion is not without limitations for its use. First, it requires the table to be a Latin square consisting of no more than four cells (2×2). Secondly, it does not use large numbers, the factorial of which is difficult to calculate "manually", but it does not limit the size of the sample for its representativeness, since even a small group of respondents accurately reflects the existing situation.

The essence of Fisher's exact criterion is that, as mentioned above, a conjugacy table consisting of four cells is constructed (table 02):

**Table 02.** Fisher's exact test

	Variable x		Total
Variable y	A	B	A+B
	C	D	C+D
Total	A+C	B+D	A+B+C+D

The probability that there is no connection between the variables is equal to:

$$Q = \frac{(A+B)!(C+D)!(A+C)!(B+D)!}{A!B!C!D!(A+B+C+D)!},$$

where "!" is a sign of the factorial of a number representing a sequential product of increasing numbers. For example,  $5! = 1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 = 120$ .

If the obtained value  $Q < \alpha$  at a given level of significance  $\alpha$  (usually taken  $\alpha = 0.05$ ), it can be argued that the probability  $P = 1 - \alpha$  there is a connection between the variables.

Thus, for the adequate analysis of table 01, it is necessary to divide it into parts, and to consider the most significant aspects. It appears that the sufficient data for comparative analysis are the following:

- the intersection of the two parameters of the variable "nationality" - "Russians" and "other nationalities of the Russian Federation" (= "ethnic groups of the North Caucasus" + "other nationalities of the Russian Federation") - with the two parameters of the variable "the language of intrafamily communication" - "the Russian language" and "other languages of the Russian Federation" (= "languages of the peoples of the North Caucasus" + "other languages of the Russian Federation") (table 03);
- the intersection of two response positions of the variable "nationality" - "ethnic groups of the North Caucasus" and "other nationalities of the Russian Federation" - with the response positions of the variable "language of intra-family communication" - "the Russian language" and "the native language" (= "languages of the peoples of the North Caucasus" + "other languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation") (table 04);
- the intersection of the response positions of the variable "nationality" - "ethnic groups of the North Caucasus" and "other nationalities of the Russian Federation" - with the response positions of the variable "the language of intrafamily communication" - "the native language" (= "languages of the peoples of the North Caucasus" + "other languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation") and "the native and the Russian language" (table 05).

**Table 03.** Nationality and language of intrafamily communication (option a)

Language of intrafamily communication	Nationality		Total
	Russians	Other nationalities of the Russian Federation	
the Russian language	222	13	235
other languages of the Russian Federation	1	18	19
Total	223	31	254

$$Q = \frac{235! \times 19! \times 223! \times 31!}{222! \times 13! \times 1! \times 18! \times 254!} = 0.0000\dots$$

The result of the calculations, however, only means that there is a close connection between ethnic identity and language. This conclusion could be considered trivial, if not ... it is directly due to the huge predominance of the number of ethnic Russian respondents, and this just reduces the value of Q to zero. Therefore, it is necessary to refer to the other two tables.

**Table 04.** Nationality and language of intrafamily communication (option b)

Language of intrafamily communication	Nationality		Total
	Ethnic groups of the North Caucasus	Other nationalities of the Russian Federation	
the Russian language	7	6	13
the native language	10	8	18
Total	17	14	31

$$Q = \frac{13! \times 18! \times 17! \times 14!}{7! \times 6! \times 10! \times 8! \times 31!} = 0.283.$$

There is no connecton between variables. This may be due, of course, to the fact that the Russian language does not set the parameters of ethnic identification for non-Russian peoples of the Russian Federation, as it is difficult, or even almost impossible, to assume that the native language does not affect it.

**Table 05.** Nationality and language of intrafamily communication (option c)

Language of intrafamily communication	Nationality		Total
	Ethnic groups of the North Caucasus	Other nationalities of the Russian Federation	
the native language	10	8	18
the native and the Russian language	3	3	6
Total	13	11	24

$$Q = \frac{18! \times 6! \times 13! \times 11!}{10! \times 8! \times 3! \times 3! \times 24!} = 0.351.$$

And in this case, it is necessary to state the lack of communication, and there is a supposition that the result was influenced by the presence of the Russian language along with the native ones in the variable "language of intrafamily communication". However, it is noteworthy that the lack of communication is more expressed than even in the case of using only the Russian language in family communication. This could mean the erosion of ethnic identity, and it is stronger when the speakers use two the languages simultaneously than when only one language of family communication is spoken, even when it is the Russian language. This means that in the previous case it was possible to assume the presence of a parallel

factor that prevents the erosion of ethnic identity even when using only the Russian language in intrafamily communication.

Therefore, another experiment is to be conducted.

**Table 06.** Nationality and language of intrafamily communication (option d)

Language of intrafamily communication	Nationality		Total
	Ethnic groups of the North Caucasus	Other nationalities of the Russian Federation	
the languages of the North Caucasus	9	0	9
the native and the Russian language	3	3	6
Total	12	3	15

$$Q = \frac{9! \times 6! \times 12! \times 3!}{9! \times 0! \times 3! \times 3! \times 15!} = 0.044.$$

The connection between the variables is observed at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Thus, with probability  $P = 0.95$  it should be admitted the simultaneous influence of the Russian language along with the native ones on the formation of ethnic identity (and presumably, also of national identity in the sense of civil or national identity) of the peoples of the North Caucasus and other ethnic groups of the Russian Federation, contrary to the conclusion reached above. However, the method of "Fisher's exact criterion" does not indicate what exactly this influence is, whether it has a positive (in terms of strengthening ethnic identity) or negative (in the sense of its weakening) influence. Another table will help to resolve this issue (table 07).

**Table 07.** Nationality and language of intrafamily communication (option e)

Language of intrafamily communication	Nationality		Total
	Ethnic groups of the North Caucasus	Other nationalities of the Russian Federation	
the languages of the North Caucasus	9	0	9
other languages of the Russian Federation	1	8	9
Total	10	8	18

$$Q = \frac{9! \times 9! \times 10! \times 8!}{9! \times 0! \times 1! \times 8! \times 18!} = 0.0002...$$

The value of  $Q = 0.0002$  shows a close connection between the use of the native language in family communication and ethnic identity, which, however, is slightly weaker than the same connection in ethnic Russians ( $Q = 0.0000...$ ).

The comparison of the obtained results makes it possible to admit:

- 1) as in the case of the Russian language and ethnically Russians, the native languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation directly and strongly influence ethnic identity, but this connection is still less ( $1 - Q$ ) than the connection between the Russian language and Russian ethnicity. The design of tables 06 and 07 gives the opportunity to specify the direction of this impact: the use of only the native language in intrafamily communication strengthens ethnic identity –  $Q = 0.0002\dots$ , i.e.  $p \approx 1.0$ ; the use of the Russian language along with it weakens it- $Q = 0.044$  ( $P = 0.956$ );
- 2) when comparing tables 05 and 06, it is necessary to exclude the assumption about the influence of the Russian language on the lack of connection between the language of intrafamily communication of the representatives of the peoples of the Russian Federation and their ethnic identity, i.e. to recognize the presence of such a connection;
- 3) the use of only the Russian language in intrafamily communication by the representatives of the peoples of the Russian Federation weakens their ethnic identity, as well as the use of the Russian language along with their native one.

However, the data of this sociological study gives the possibility to analyse another aspect: the connections between the language of intrafamily communication and confessional identity, and the latter, in turn, with ethnic identity (table 08).

Table 08 shows that, due to the openness of the questionnaire on the respondent's religion, 70% of the cells have an expected frequency below 5, which means that the methods of analysis using the criterion  $\chi^2$  are not suitable in this case. Therefore, the study applies the same way as before when considering the connection of language with ethnic identity.

**Table 08.** Language of communication in families of respondents of different confessions (beliefs)

Language of intrafamily communication	Confession						Total
	Christianity	Islam	Belief in magic	Atheism	Faith in God without belonging to any confession	Difficult to answer	
the Russian language	<sup>92.4</sup> <u>170</u> <sub>67.7</sub> 155.0	<sup>32.0</sup> <u>8</u> <sub>3.2</sub> 21.1	<sup>80.0</sup> <u>8</u> <sub>3.2</sub> 8.4	<sup>94.4</sup> <u>17</u> <sub>6.8</sub> 15.2	<sup>94.1</sup> <u>32</u> <sub>12.7</sub> 28.6	<sup>59.3</sup> <u>16</u> <sub>6.4</sub> 22.7	84.2251 <sub>100</sub>
the languages of the North Caucasus	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 6.8	<sup>40.0</sup> <u>10</u> <sub>90.9</sub> 0.9	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 0.4	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 0.7	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 1.3	<sup>3.7</sup> <u>1</u> <sub>9.1</sub> 1.0	3.711 <sub>100</sub>
other languages of the Russian Federation	<sup>2.2</sup> <u>4</u> <sub>30.8</sub> 8.0	<sup>12.0</sup> <u>3</u> <sub>23.1</sub> 1.1	<sup>10.0</sup> <u>1</u> <sub>7.7</sub> 0.4	<sup>5.6</sup> <u>1</u> <sub>7.7</sub> 0.8	<sup>2.9</sup> <u>1</u> <sub>7.7</sub> 1.5	<sup>11.1</sup> <u>3</u> <sub>23.1</sub> 1.2	4.413 <sub>100</sub>
the native language and the Russian language	<sup>2.2</sup> <u>4</u> <sub>50.0</sub> 4.9	<sup>12.0</sup> <u>3</u> <sub>37.5</sub> 0.7	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 0.3	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 0.5	<sup>2.9</sup> <u>1</u> <sub>12.5</sub> 0.9	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 0.7	2.78 <sub>100</sub>
difficult to answer	<sup>3.3</sup> <u>6</u> <sub>40.0</sub> 9.3	<sup>4.0</sup> <u>1</u> <sub>6.7</sub> 1.3	<sup>10.0</sup> <u>1</u> <sub>6.7</sub> 0.5	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 0.9	<sup>0</sup> <u>0</u> 1.7	<sup>25.9</sup> <u>7</u> <sub>46.7</sub> 1.4	5.015 <sub>100</sub>
Total	<sup>100</sup> <u>184</u> <sub>61.7</sub>	<sup>100</sup> <u>25</u> <sub>8.4</sub>	<sup>100</sup> <u>10</u> <sub>3.4</sub>	<sup>100</sup> <u>18</u> <sub>6.0</sub>	<sup>100</sup> <u>34</u> <sub>11.4</sub>	<sup>100</sup> <u>27</u> <sub>9.1</sub>	<sup>100</sup> <u>298</u> <sub>100</sub>

In case of taking into account only the two columns of primary interest in the variable "Confession" ("Christianity" and "Islam" and the three positions "Russian language", "other languages of the Russian Federation" ("languages of the peoples of the North Caucasus" + "other languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation"), "the native and the Russian language" in the variable "language of family communication", it is possible to build the two tables 2x2 (table 09 and table 10).

**Table 09.** Confession and language of intrafamily communication (option a)

Language of intrafamily communication	Confession		Total
	Christianity	Islam	
the Russian language	170	8	178
the native language	4	13	17
Total	174	21	195

$$Q = \frac{178! \times 17! \times 174! \times 21!}{170! \times 8! \times 4! \times 13! \times 195!} = 0,000...$$

Due to the very large number of Christian respondents for the "Fisher's exact criterion", the connection between language and religion is very strong, and, accordingly, the connection between Russian ethnic and Christian (in fact, Orthodox) confessional identity is strong. But this was noted in the XIX century, when in demographic studies of all Orthodox in Russia were referred to Russian, regardless of whether it was ethnically Russians, Zyryans, Khants or Kets. The density of the ethno-confessional Russian-Orthodox connection is such that even the current Aleuts living in Alaska in the United States, remaining Orthodox, continue to consider themselves Russian.

Based on the comparison of the two Tables 03 and 08, it is necessary to conclude that there is a close connection between the ethnic and religious identification of the Russian and Orthodox population of the Russian Federation. On the other hand, some dissonance is caused by the data presented in Table 10:

**Table 10.** Confession and language of intrafamily communication (option b)

Language of intrafamily communication	Confession		Total
	Christians (except ethnic Russians)	Muslims	
the native language	4	13	17
the native and the Russian language	4	3	7
Total	8	16	24

$$Q = \frac{17! \times 7! \times 8! \times 16!}{4! \times 13! \times 4! \times 3! \times 24!} = 0.113...$$

Since  $Q > \alpha = 0.05$ , it cannot be confidently stated that there is a sufficiently close connection between the confessional identity and the language of intrafamily communication – the native language or

the native and the Russian language – as well as in the case of the intersection of the reciprocal positions of Table 05, where the relationship between ethnic identity and the use in intrafamily communication of only Russian or Russian along with native was not found.

However, there is a close connection between the ethnic and religious identity of respondents who indicated their confessions (table 11).

**Table 11.** Confession and ethnic groups

Ethnic group	Confession		Total
	Christians (except for Russian)	Muslims	
Ethnic groups of the North Caucasus	1	19	20
Other ethnic groups of the Russian Federation	4	3	7
Total	5	22	27

$$Q = \frac{20! \times 7! \times 5! \times 22!}{1! \times 19! \times 4! \times 3! \times 27!} = 0.009...$$

Because the value of  $Q < \alpha = 0.01$ , with reliability  $\gamma = 0.99$  it is possible to argue that the representatives of ethnic groups of the North Caucasus and other ethnic groups of the Russian Federation (ethnic Russian were excluded from the consideration) there is quite a strong link between ethnic and religious identity.

Thus, there is no connection between the language of intrafamily communication of the representatives of the peoples of the Russian Federation in the parameters – "native language" or "native and Russian language", on the one hand, and ethnic identity on the other (table 05 –  $Q = 0.351$ ). Moreover, there is no reliable connection between the language of intrafamily communication of the representatives of the Russian Federation ethnic groups in terms of parameters – "native language" or "native and Russian languages", on the one hand, and confessional identity, on the other (table 10:  $Q = 0.113$ ). But confessional status is firmly linked to ethnic identity.

## 7. Conclusion

All together, this means that the Russian language is used only as the language of intrafamily communication (or as such, along with the native language) by almost half of the representatives of ethnic groups of the Russian Federation who are not actually Russian (table 03:  $33.3\% + 14.3\% = 47.6\%$ ). The collected data can be trusted with reliability not less than  $\gamma = 0.95$ . However, in relation to the general population studied in this sociological research, the data obtained concern not only the students themselves, but they also can be extended to their parents and relatives, i.e. the general population can be expanded. Then it turns out that at least a third of the population of Russia, not belonging to ethnic Russian, uses mainly Russian in intrafamily communication. This means that there is a tendency of acculturation of ethnic groups of the Russian Federation, due to the originality of Russian culture and the Russian language, as well as concepts that reflect the technical and cultural development of the modern world. This is an

objective process in which the Russian language acts not only as a language of interethnic communication, but also acquires the features of the "first", acquired from childhood, the language of intrafamily communication. However, there is an opposed process, as the strengthening of religious identity is a factor of preservation and reproduction of ethnic identity, and the strengthening of the role of the religious factor is a reaction to the natural process of its erosion, which is equally true of the ethnic Russian population, as well as all other nationalities of the Russian Federation. In particular, the Renaissance of Orthodoxy in recent decades has served as a means of strengthening Russian ethnic identity and consolidation of the ethnic group. On the other hand, the strengthening of the role of Islam in the life of ethnic groups for whom it is a traditional religion, regardless of its direction (Shi'ism or Sunni) and belonging to the madhhabs, is a way of preserving ethnic identity.

Obviously, the same can be said about other ethnic groups: for the Armenians of the Russian Federation, in particular, in the Rostov region, the commitment of The Armenian Apostolic Church is a way of preserving the ethnic identity, as for the Kalmyks, the same way is the strengthening of the importance of Buddhism. Generally speaking, the religious Renaissance observed today in Russia, in all its manifestations, is a natural connection into a single complex of ethno-confessional identity in the conditions of acculturation and erosion of ethnic identity itself, the preservation of which is possible only through the strengthening of the confessional identity (Gorshkov, 2014).

At the same time, the research data reveal another problem. Among ethnic Russians who speak other languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, we have only 0.4% of respondents. Of course, based on mathematical methods of analysis, we have the right to say that this is a random variable, and in the general population, it can be larger and smaller, it is more likely to be smaller. However, as subject to acceptance of the expected frequency (table 03: 10.5 is 3.5%), and provided the deviation in the whole sample from the general  $\pm 5.7\%$ , we get the most (but incredible, given the practical knowledge of the general population) only  $3.5\% + 5.7\% = 9.2\%$ . However, even such a figure should be considered extremely small, reflecting, to put it mildly, the lack of attention of the dominant ethnic group in this state to the culture, customs and languages of a multinational country. Consequently, this inevitably increases the effect of the religious factor of ethnic consolidation of small nations. This fact does not contribute to the minimization of social tension if ethnic and religious conflicts arise. The factor of consolidation of the Russian society and strengthening of national (civil) identity should be the knowledge of numerically predominant titular ethnoses of different (or at least one) languages of the peoples living in Russia, and they should be studied in schools and universities together with foreign languages.

The obtained result of the analysis can be extrapolated to other territories, the representatives of which are not included in the sample or are present in it in an insufficient number for representativeness. In particular, it can be argued that the Church schism with the formation of the self-proclaimed Kiev Patriarchate was, on the one hand, a reaction to the unsuccessful attempt to create a Ukrainian "Newspeak" and the natural process of replacing the little Russian dialect with the literary Russian language, and on the other hand, an attempt to use the confessional factor as a means of artificial construction of Ukrainian national identity on the basis of Galician nationalism. We are talking about an attempt to construct a civil nation based on an imaginary parochial identity. The fact that Galician identity is used as a reference point follows from the slogans of ethno-nationalist movements. However, no one has been able to combine

polyethnic motives and local mono-ethnic identity in the construction of civil identity without resorting to the identity of the images of the external and internal enemy, which inevitably generates extreme forms of ethno-nationalism up to neo-Nazism.

Thus, the overall result of the analysis can be formulated as follows: in modern conditions it is impossible to consider ethnic identity in theoretical terms, independently of religious identity, which should be considered as a factor of preserving and/or constructing national identity, and in practical terms – it is impossible to prevent the collapse of the sectarian denominations, prone to outbursts of nationalism and xenophobia (Gontsovsky, 2014), including the conflicts on religious grounds. On the other hand, the analysis of linguistic realities can no longer be carried out without reference to ethnic and religious identity.

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