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Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies
Working Paper Series

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Spring 2002

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Funding for the publication of this working paper comes from the Carnegie
Corporation of New York.

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More than a decade after the fall of the Soviet Union, transitional post-Communist Russia continues to be fertile ground for investigations of ethnic identity and investigations of the struggle to retain linguistic and cultural integrity in an assimilating society. In this paper, I will be examining the sociolinguistic context, language ideologies, and linguistic performance of Tatar, a Turkic language currently spoken in Tatarstan by one quarter of its four million residents.[1] Additionally, I will examine the role that language plays in ethnic self-identification and nationhood. Using data gathered during ten months of fieldwork in Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan,[2] I will demonstrate that Tatar identity, in particular as constructed through linguistic performance, is inextricably linked with orientation towards or away from Russian language and culture, such that the integrity and cultural "purity" of post-Soviet Tatars — thought by many to be necessary for the survival of the Tatar language, culture, and nation — is equated with their de-Russification. De-Russification, or the removal (or "purification") of salient Russian influence, is expressed in various ways by Tatars in present-day Tatarstan — for example, by choices in attire, food and alcohol consumption, and sexual mores — but in this paper my focus will be exclusively on purification and de-Russification as expressed in linguistic performance.

[1] And by several million speakers scattered elsewhere throughout the territories of the former Soviet Union.

[2] This fieldwork was made possible by grants from the International Research and Exchange Board and the Academy for Educational Development.

Tatar in the context of endangered language theory

Campbell and Muntzel (1989) defined a basic typology of language death situations: (1) sudden death, where all of a language's speakers suddenly die or are killed (e.g., Tasmanian); (2) radical death, where as a result of severe repression and genocide, remaining speakers of a minority language shift immediately to the dominant language in order to avoid a potentially life-threatening ethnic identification (e.g., some languages of El Salvador); (3) gradual death, with a gradual shift to the dominant language via extensive contact (this is the vast majority of language death situations, and is the typological category for most of the languages of Russia); and (4) bottom-to-top death, where the language remains only in ritual contexts (e.g., Mayan languages of southern Mexico that are used only in religious ceremonies). Of these, the third, gradual death — a multi-generational language shift with at least one bilingual generation, but frequently more — is the most useful for studying the factors and symptoms of minority language shift and maintenance. Although studies in endangered language theory usually involve clearly moribund languages, where the shift to the dominant language is nearly complete, I was interested in studying an earlier stage of language endangerment, one that may have a chance of reversing. Although there are more than one million speakers of Tatar in Tatarstan alone, absolute number of speakers is no guarantee of a language's health, as proven in this century by the spectacularly fast reduction in the number of speakers of such languages as Breton and Navajo, to name just two.

Tatar can potentially be classified as a case of the third type of language death in Campbell and Munztel's typology: gradual death with a multigenerational language shift involving at least one bilingual generation. The most salient evidence on the streets of Kazan, besides the proportionally low amount of Tatar heard there, is the quite common sight of mixed conversations where a parent or grandparent addresses a child or teen in Tatar, and that teen or child responds in Russian. Florian Coulmas has suggested that language death, with the exception of cases of absolute genocide, is more appropriately called "language

suicide," since the language dies with the complicity of its speakers (Coulmas 1992). For this reason, the focus of my fieldwork was language choice and performance among college-age Tatar youth, since today's youth language is tomorrow's normative language, and it is the linguistic choices being made today that will decide the fate of the Tatar language in the future.

Tatar has been under significant stress from Russian since the fall of the Kazan Khanate in 1552. Intensification of this stress during the Soviet period seemed to have triggered a shift from what is known as stable diglossia, where two languages co-exist and are used for different purposes, to encroaching diglossia, where one language loses functional domains to another, often with the ultimate result of complete language shift. However, since the fall of the Soviet Union and the declaration of Tatarstan's autonomy, the ethnically Tatar government has been legislating "promotive" language policies, encouraging the use of Tatar and the expansion of its functional domains: for example, Tatar is now one of Tatarstan's two official languages; Tatar language study is a compulsory subject in primary and secondary school; and government workers are rewarded a 15 percent bonus in pay for demonstrating a sufficient level of Tatar competence.

Although the current political and overall climate is more conducive to the use of Tatar than in the Soviet era, there is evidence of continuing language shift: this evidence takes the form of the functional domains where Tatar is and is not used, external and internal language attitudes towards Tatar, and linguistic performance of Tatarphones, both in language choice and in style shifting to accommodate audience and setting.

Language Attitudes, Internal and External

For many Russians, and also for many urban Tatars, modern-day Tatar is dismissed as "merely a kitchen language." I somewhat informally tested language attitudes almost every day of the ten months I was in Tatarstan: merely speaking Russian with an accent (or, later in my

fieldwork, speaking Tatar with an accent) was usually enough to cause my interlocutor to ask where I was from and what I was doing in Kazan. When people learned that I was there to learn and study Tatar, the universally asked question was simply, “Why?”

In general, the Russians I spoke with were dismissive of Tatar as in any way meriting study, although there were notable exceptions. It was repeatedly asserted to me that Tatar was just a “kitchen” language, or the “language of peasants.” Some Russians seemed merely indifferent to the existence of the Tatar language, telling me things like, “I’ve lived in this city 45 years, my whole life, and I don’t think I know even one word of Tatar.” Other Russians were less inattentive and would comment on the frequent language switching between Russian and Tatar that is quite common for Kazan Tatars of all ages. This behavior is often interpreted not as code-switching (switching between languages in one conversation, even in one sentence), a linguistic phenomenon that is quite normal in bilingual speech communities, but rather as incomplete knowledge of or incompetence in Tatar — an interpretation probably due to the monolingualism of the majority of Kazan’s Russians. One (monolingual) Russian said to me: “Those teenagers, they can’t say everything they want to say in Tatar, so they have to use Russian words in order to express themselves. They don’t know how to really speak Tatar.” Other Russians will openly express more negative attitudes towards Tatar, particularly now that pro-Tatar language policies have brought mandatory Tatar language classes to primary and secondary schools. Several people, parents of school-age children, complained to me at length about the mandatory teaching of Tatar in the schools, as well as the teaching of Tatar literature which was apparently coming at the expense of the Russian canon. They deemed the language and literature teaching to be “useless,” “a waste of time,” and “taking up time that should be used to teach ‘real’ things.”

Internal language attitudes, which is to say, those of Tatars themselves, varied widely among those people with whom I interacted, and there seems to be a correlation with age and

with Tatar proficiency.[3] Older and proficient speakers usually reacted to my attempts to speak and ask about Tatar with delight. However, many city Tatars, particularly those under 30, seemed to regard the Tatar language with embarrassment, as is common for members of a minority community undergoing language shift. Once I had reached a reasonable level of competence in Tatar small-talk, I would attempt to use Tatar with all new acquaintances under the age of 30 who had self-identified or been identified to me as Tatar. The response of many was of embarrassment, usually expressed by nervous laughter, a hand over the face, an inability to look me in the eye as I spoke to them in Tatar, and an unwillingness to speak Tatar in front of their peers. I received this response both from young Tatars whose close social networks were almost entirely Russian and from young Tatars whose close social networks were almost entirely Tatar.

By contrast, Tatars under 30 who are actively engaged in Tatar culture and politics, particularly those belonging to Tatar cultural organizations, reacted incredibly positively, almost overwhelmingly so, to my attempts to learn and speak Tatar. Several, upon acquaintance, immediately took it upon themselves to offer to meet with me regularly and help me with my studies so that I would learn to speak well. This was true of the Tatar intellectual and cultural elite in general, among whom the Tatar language has "covert prestige" (Trudgill 1972) and is a deeply emotional topic. For example, two young women whom I met in the club (both approximately 20 years old) informed me on separate occasions that hearing me speak Tatar made them want to cry, although they weren't sure why. Fieldworkers on other low-prestige or endangered languages have described similar experiences, where speaking just a few words of the minority language causes tears to well up in the eyes of their interlocutors — but the interlocutors in question are always grandmothers, and never college students.

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[3] A precise correlation can only be made after further fieldwork.

Functional Domains of Tatar

Where in Kazan is Tatar spoken, and when, if ever, is it useful to speak it? Before all else, it is important to note that there is a distinct asymmetry between Russian use and usefulness and Tatar use and usefulness. The Soviet Union was famous for its asymmetry of bilingualism, where minorities learned the dominant language and Russians did not: Tatarstan is no exception. A 1989 census showed that 1.1 percent of the republic's Russians spoke Tatar, while 77 percent of Tatars spoke Russian (Walker 1996).[4] Tatar was declared to be one of the republic's two official languages in Tatarstan's declaration of sovereignty, ratified on August 30, 1990, and since 1992 the predominantly ethnically Tatar government has been introducing pro-Tatar language policies, with *de facto* goal of undoing the damage done by Soviet language policies.

In Kazan, the main functional domains for Tatar are as follows: Tatar is the home language for some, particularly for those whose parents moved to Kazan from a village sometime in the last 30 years. Tatar can also be the language of education. By the end of the Soviet period, only 12 percent of Tatar children were in schools where Tatar was the medium of education, and the vast majority of these schools were not in urban regions. For years, the Tatar department of Kazan State University was not-so-affectionately nicknamed "the *kolkhoz*" (collective farm), due to the overwhelmingly rural origins of its students. Prior to 1990, the proportion of rural to urban students in the department was approximately 95 percent to 5 percent. Today the department's students are approximately half rural and half urban, and it is claimed by the dean of the Tatar department that this change is due to the increase in the availability of Tatar-medium education in the cities (Iskändär Gïlyazov, personal

[4] This statistic implies that 23 percent of the republic's Tatars were monolingual in Tatar in 1989. Based on (admittedly) anecdotal evidence gathered just eleven years later, I find that number to be rather high. I personally never encountered any monolingual Tatars, even in villages, and never heard of any monolingual Tatars under the age of 80.

communication). In Kazan, parents often have a choice of school and can send their children to schools where Tatar is the medium of education (often in conjunction with other languages, in particular Turkish and English) or where Russian is the medium of education. However, according to Lotfullin (2000), there are presently five times more Russian-language schools and teachers than Tatar-language schools and teachers in Kazan. In rural areas, there may be no choice of school, and thus no choice of language of education. In Kazan at the university level, there are currently five places where one can study in Tatar: (1) Islamic University (Tatar as non-native language is taught there, with students at all levels of proficiency); (2) the Tatar department of the Pedagogical Institute; (3) the Tatar department of Kazan State University; (4) one group (out of four) each year in the Journalism department of Kazan State University; and (5) several departments in the Tatar Humanities Institute, which was founded just a few years ago and is still quite small. The majority of students in Kazan who are studying in Tatar are training to be teachers (for primary, secondary, and university-level education), philologists, and journalists. All other education at the university or institute level is conducted in Russian. In addition, students in one of the above departments will take "general" courses, such as sociology, history of Russia, or economics, in Russian.

Tatar, while present in the media, is once again asymmetrically represented — the vast majority of news and entertainment is available in Russian only. There are four radio stations that broadcast in Tatar: (1) Radio Dulkïn, the "traditional" Tatar station, broadcasts in Tatar only; (2) Radio Kurai, which aims at a younger audience, periodically plays Russian music and allows DJs to switch into Russian occasionally; (3) Tatar Radiosï, which began broadcasting in August of 2001, plays music in Tatar, Russian and English, with DJs speaking set phrases in all three languages; and (4) Bolgar FM, a government station, which broadcasts twelve hours of Tatar programs daily in three hour slots — the other twelve hours are Russian-language programming. Additionally, another government station broadcasts several hours a day in Tatar, including broadcasts of *Azatlyk* (Freedom), the Tatar version of

Radio Free Europe. This station cannot be found on regular radios.[5] All the remaining stations, approximately eight, broadcast in Russian only and do not play Tatar music, although they will play American, European, and Turkish music.

On television, there is one government-run Tatar station that broadcasts only six hours a day, and of these six hours typically only about three are in Tatar. The other local station, *Efir*, now offers three Tatar-language programs a week, and two of them are brand new.

The majority of newspapers and magazines found in the city are in Russian. Some newspapers will put out both Russian and Tatar versions, but it should be noted that these different versions will have completely different editorial staffs and almost completely different content. Reading *Tatar Ile* (Tatar Country) in Tatar is not the same as reading *Tatarskaya Kraya* in Russian. Not only are there fewer newspapers printed in Tatar than in Russian, in part because press from outside the Republic is in Russian only, but these papers are also in general quite difficult to find. Most neighborhoods in Kazan have a series of outdoor wooden bulletin boards where newspapers are posted, so that those people who can't afford to buy them can read them anyway. The newspapers are usually grouped in threes or fours, and the proportion of Russian to Tatar papers is usually three to zero, four to zero, or four to one. In addition, it can be difficult to find a place to buy a Tatar newspaper: they are not available at the newsstands at the Kazan train station or bus station, and the prominent newsstands and kiosks downtown also do not carry them.[6] Tatarphones know via word of mouth where the few downtown kiosks that sell Tatar newspapers are located, but more usually they subscribe to the papers and have them delivered. The same is true of Tatar magazines: they must be

[5] Every apartment and house is furnished with the kitchen "government radio," a one-channel radio that plays a government station (until perestroika, the only option for radio).

[6] As detailed in a 1999 editorial entitled *Tatar ilendäge kiosklarda nigä tatar gazetalarï yuk?* (Why are there no Tatar newspapers in the kiosks of a Tatar country?) (Mirsäyetov 1999).

purchased by subscription, and, without exception, all of the city newsstands that sell magazines have only Russian-language magazines.

Finally, a note on quality. While Tatar language magazines[7] appear to be on a par with Russian-language magazines, Tatar television programs and Tatar newspapers are, in general, of significantly lower quality than Russian television and newspapers. I know many people who actively participate in Tatar culture (philologists, theater workers, club members) who refuse to read the Tatar press (or, for that matter, to teach in the Journalism Department of Kazan State University) because the standards are so low, and who instead get their news from a Russian-language newspaper (although perhaps one written mostly by and for Tatars, such as *Vostochniy Ekspress* (The Oriental Express)). Others will not watch Tatar-language television programs, with the exception of the news on Tatar Republic Television (TRT), which is the exact Tatar-language equivalent of its Russian counterpart. I have seen people turn away from a television playing a Tatar show in embarrassment, saying, "Please turn that off, I can't stand to watch it."

The asymmetry of Tatar and Russian proportions is even more pronounced in daily public activities in the city. The public domain appears to be a Russian-only one, and Tatars will often accommodate and speak Russian when in public spaces or engaged in activities in the public realm. Although Tatar is an "official" language, many Tatars feel that this officialness is *de jure* only, and there is a sense that people are only "playing Tatar," which is to say, presenting only enough Tatar to give an appearance of compliance and language equality (cf. e.g. Makhsimova 2000 and Fättakh 1998). For example, there is legislation requiring equal public signage, but this legislation is not enforced.[8] The main signage for businesses and

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[7] And there are four main ones, three of which are continuations of Soviet-era magazines: *Kazan Utlarï* (The Fires of Kazan), a literary journal; *Suyembike*, a woman's magazine; and *Yalkïn* (Flame) a children's/teen's magazine. The new kid on the block is *Idel* (Volga), a youth-oriented literary journal.

[8] The television show *Gorod* (City) on the local channel *Efir* did a not-terribly-serious 10-minute exposé of this lack of compliance in April of 2001. The reporter went from store to store showing Russian-only signage and price tags, and asked mostly indifferent clerks for explanations and justifications, to no great effect.

government buildings is usually bilingual, with precedence given to neither language: the description of the store's business and the office hours are always found in both Russian and Tatar. However, with the exception of places under government jurisdiction, such as the post-office or library, or government-run stores, such as breadstores or the *Tsentralniy Universalniy Magazin (TsUM)*, the city's main department store, all other signage within a public establishment will usually be in Russian. Price tags, sale signs, descriptions of merchandise, elaborations on working hours, policy signs — these are all in Russian only. In addition, purchases are made in Russian only. The same is true of transportation: the main bus and tram signs, describing the route, the price of a ticket, and the fine for avoiding a ticket are in both Tatar and Russian, but all other signage is in Russian. Transactions on public transportation are also in Russian only, and on several occasions I saw or heard of Tatars attempting to transact business in Tatar who were scolded by Russophone conductors or tram drivers. Additionally, the following situation is a common one: two salespeople are speaking Tatar behind the counter in a store, and two Tatars walk up to the counter, also speaking Tatar. The conversations pause, the official transaction is made in Russian, and then both Tatar-language conversations resume. The one major exception to this rule of accommodation to Russian in public space is the downtown produce market, the *Kolkhozniy Rynok* (Collective Farm Market), which is one of the few public spaces where Tatar is consistently spoken. However, this was explained to me as follows: that market is the cheapest market in Tatarstan, with the widest selection of goods. Tatar-dominant villagers, that is, people who prefer to speak Tatar and have a higher level of Tatar competence than Russian, travel into the city in order to shop there. The economic force they represent is sufficiently powerful to make learning market Tatar desirable for workers there: not only do the Uzbek, Tajik and Azeri sellers transact business in both Russian and Tatar with their customers, but also it is possible to find Russians who are making efforts to speak and understand some Tatar.

In addition to the periodic benefits of expressed solidarity, Tatar knowledge can, in fact, be economically advantageous, in great part due to *de jure* language policies. For example, government bureaucrats who demonstrate sufficient knowledge of Tatar receive a 15 percent increase in salary, giving rise to the recent production of many 50-page pocket Russian-Tatar work-related dictionaries with such titles as *Russko-Tatarskiy Slovar' — Minimum dlia Rabotnikov Lesa* (The Russian-Tatar Dictionary — Minimum for Forest Workers) and *Kratkiy Russko-Tatarskiy Slovar' dlia Rabotnikov ZAGSa* (A Short Russian-Tatar Dictionary for ZAGs Workers).[9] However, the professions where one is able to use Tatar as the medium of work are rather limited, and disproportionately tilted towards cultural production and the media[10] — the theater, music, television, radio, magazines, and education, both secular and religious.

Despite the fact that there are indeed professions and places where knowing Tatar can be seen as economically advantageous for an individual, there is a sense among Tatarphones that they are "under siege" from Russian cultural and linguistic pressures. In the Tatar press, one finds almost weekly articles and letters to the editor expressing this siege mentality: *Shovinistlar berläshä, ä bez haman yoklïybïz* (Chauvinists are uniting, and we are permanently sleeping) (Äkhmätjanov 1994); *Bez, tatarlar, yäshibez äle!* (We Tatars, we live after all!) (Galimullin 1995); *Telebezne, dinebezne saklïyk!* (Let's save our language, our religion!) (Mäjitov 1996). There is a derogatory name for Tatars who have assimilated to Russian culture: "Mankorts," a name taken from a novel by Chingiz Aitmatov, a near equivalent to the phrase "Uncle Tom" as used among African-Americans. I first heard the term in a bar, when someone in the group I was with spotted an acquaintance of hers sitting with his Russian girlfriend and friends. "Mankort!" she muttered, and when asked for an explanation,

[9] ZAGs is the acronym of the Bureau of Records.

[10] Where salaries are, in general, quite low: higher-than-average salaries are not found in the arts or education, but in business, particularly in businesses with Western connections, and in these jobs Tatar knowledge is generally not an advantage.

she said, “Mankorts, they are Tatars who don’t know their own language or history, their own traditions. They don’t understand or respect their ancestors.” In keeping with the metaphor of the Tatar nation and culture under siege, Mankorts are perceived and referred to as “traitors” who have “defected to the other side.”

“Pure” and “Impure” Tatar

Before examining the conception and expression of “pure” Tatar, I should discuss some of the “impure” Tatar that Kazan’s Tatarphones are surrounded by daily, since this “tainted” Tatar is the backdrop against which “pure” Tatar is set. Examples of poorly-translated or simply grammatically incorrect Tatar include:

- programs at the opera, ballet, and symphony;
- street signs and signs for bus and tram stops;
- signage at museums and galleries;[11]
- Tatar language teachers at the elementary and secondary level who are unable to speak grammatically;[12]
- Tatar musicians and singers who compose songs without knowing Tatar[13] or who sing with Russian accents;
- University lecturers and professors who do not have a fully developed formal register or educational vocabulary.[14]

[11] My first week in Tatarstan, I visited an art and culture museum in downtown Kazan. As I stood looking at 19th century leather boots, the man next to me began agitatedly complaining (in Russian) to the museum guard about all the grammatical mistakes in the Tatar museum signage. She told him that he should be thankful that there were exhibit signs in Tatar at all, that years ago everything had been in Russian, and that while there were probably many mistakes, it was better than having no Tatar at all.

[12] Not all of them, by any stretch, but at least three whom I personally encountered, who made very basic mistakes when speaking Tatar with me, including using the absolute case for pronouns with postpositions that require pronouns in the genitive case (e.g., *min öchen* instead of *minem öchen*).

[13] See Jälilova 2000.

[14] There are stories, perhaps apocryphal, of Tatar philologists who are forced to consult with village-born secretaries on questions of vocabulary and style, but more easily observed is the inability to speak about one’s profession or field of specialization using Tatar only.

In newspaper articles and letters to the editor, the misuse and disuse of the Tatar language is a constant theme, both from philologists and other language professionals (e.g., poets), and from ordinary citizens. These letters and articles often focus on two of the more salient aspects of Russian interference: pronunciation of Tatar sounds and spelling of Tatar words. Tatar has seven phones (sounds) that are not found in Russian: three vowels (the front vowels commonly transliterated as *ä*, *ö*, and *ü*) and five consonants (a velar nasal, as found in English 'si**ng**'; *h*; *j* as in English '**j**ob'; *q*, a post-velar version of the phoneme *k* that is pronounced further back in the throat because of its adjacency with back vowels; and γ, a post-velar fricative version of the phoneme *g*, also found adjacent to back vowels or in borrowings from Arabic, pronounced much like French *r*).[15] Gallämov (1998) devotes an entire article to the mispronunciation of *h* as *kh* (its closest Russian equivalent, the final sound in the name 'Bach'), as do Kärimi (1999) and Mazhar (1996). An editorial in the monthly language supplement *I Tugan Tel* (O Native Language) that appears in the weekly cultural newspaper *Mädäni Jomga* rails at the mispronunciation of Tatar names that have Tatar-specific sounds, particularly family names that are now used as street names and tram stops in Kazan: for example, *h* is mispronounced as Russian *kh, ö* is mispronounced as Russian *u*, and *ä* is mispronounced as Russian *a* (*Mädani Jomga* 2000). Other letters and articles focus on spelling errors. Äydi (1999) calls to the reader's attention spelling mistakes made by academics writing in one of the leading newspapers in the city. Khujamät (1999) tells of a prominently displayed billboard in downtown Kazan advertising an international company: the billboard says "good work" in several European languages, one of them Tatar. However, while the phrase is spelled correctly in all the other languages, in the Tatar version there are two spelling errors — there are six letters in total, and two of them are wrong. In a letter to the editor, one Kazan resident writes, "I walk around and see lots of mistakes in how Tatar is written in store and street names. Russian words are written correctly, but why in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, are

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[15] In the Cyrillic alphabet devised for Tatar, these sounds are represented by the letters ә, ө, ү, ң, h, ж, and къ respectively.

Tatar words written incorrectly?" She details several obvious mistakes found in her neighborhood, and concludes, "Someone who can't show that they can write names in two languages maybe needs to research his/her correct spelling" (Fatïykhova 1998).

Set against this backdrop of "impure" Tatar, the discourse of purity so prevalent in the Tatarphone community becomes increasingly comprehensible. What do speakers of Tatar have in mind when they invoke the ideal of "pure" Tatar? It seems to boil down to this: pure Tatar is Tatar, spoken in any domain and in any register, without any salient Russian interference.[16] I will illustrate with two anecdotal examples. The first is a comment made to me by a young science professional in his mid-30s who seems dedicated to speaking as little Russian as possible — in all the months I knew him, I never heard him say one Russian word, and he once reprimanded me for speaking Russian with a young Tatar woman who works in the library, saying to me, "She's a Tatar girl, with a good Tatar name, you should speak Tatar with her, and not Russian."[17] He brought up the concept of pure Tatar with me when were discussing a Finnish Tatar who had grown up in Helsinki and was visiting Kazan for a short time — this Finnish Tatar's home language growing up in Finland had been Tatar, the Mishar dialect, and he spoke only a few words of Russian, even after months in Kazan. My friend remarked: "Do you know why I love to hear [him] speak? Because there is not even a hint of Russian, he uses only good Tatar words, the words we all used before the revolution.[18] Hearing him talk, it is like music to my ears." This comment was particularly interesting

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[16] I say "salient" here because there is often Russian interference that people aren't catching, in particular calques/syntactic influence.

[17] The woman in question is a Russian-dominant bilingual and will not speak Tatar with patrons, although it is clear that she understands them. When addressed in Tatar, she will respond in Russian, and most patrons will accommodate and switch to Russian with her – the only exceptions I ever saw were a few people over 60 and this particular person.

[18] The Helsinki Tatar population emigrated from Russia approximately 100 years ago. Before the 1930s, the majority of borrowings in Tatar were from Arabic and Persian; Stalin's linguists and "language developers" replaced many of them with Russian borrowings, along with the shift to the Cyrillic alphabet. Although this Finnish Tatar was not using any Russian borrowings, he was often using their "archaic" Arabic equivalents.

because ordinarily the Mishar dialect is considered extremely low-prestige and somehow lacking the "richness" of Middle Volga/Kazan Tatar dialect: the lack of Russian interference, perhaps in combination with the prestige associated with Finland, seemed to supersede the stigma associated with the Mishar dialect.

The second example also involves a decidedly pro-Tatar young male, a 30-year historian and increasingly observant Muslim, who has studied Arabic in Eastern Africa for several years and even changed his name because his original name, although common among Tatars since the 1930s, is borrowed from English and thus wasn't sufficiently Tatar for him — his new name is both traditionally Tatar and explicitly religious. After hearing me interviewed on a Kazan radio program, he requested that our mutual friend introduce us, and when we met, he spent several minutes telling me what his impressions of me had been while listening to me speak Tatar on the radio. For him, the most prominent aspect of my Tatar was its lack of Russian influence: I had apparently sounded to him like a "young Tatar village girl" who had been "protected" from Russian and Russians, as if I had lived a clean village life and had never spoken a word of [presumably unclean] Russian. Several people with whom I became acquainted after my radio interviews told me that they had interpreted my accent as native, albeit a speaker of a different dialect,[19] but this man was the only one to explicitly relate my lack of Russian accent to impressions of pure Tatar girlhood. This idealization of village life, and of the village as protected enclave of Tatardom, is quite a common one, particularly noticeable in Tatar-language comedies and musicals produced in Kazan theaters (Faller 2001). After learning that I was studying and recording Tatar, person after person would invite me to visit their village[20] so I would be able to hear pure Tatar as spoken in all-Tatar villages

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[19] I should note that it is not that my Tatar is, or was at the time, anything like that of a fully competent native speaker. While my accent is good, my intonation patterns are wrong, my syntax is limited, and my speech not without grammatical errors. People's willingness to perceive me as a native Tatar says less about my fluency, and more about their lack of exposure to any accent in Tatar other than Russian as well as the Tatar-language (in)competence of many young Tatars.

[20] If the hosts were city-born, the invitation would be to the village where their closest relatives live.

where Tatar is spoken all day, every day,[21] far away from the "corrupt" city and "street language." Even a Russian cab driver one day suggested to me that if I really wanted to learn Tatar, I should head to the village: "You're not going to hear any real Tatar here," he said.

Purification Movements

With "pure" Tatar as an explicit ideal for many, it is no surprise to find both public and personal means of purification, with the de-Russification of Tatar as an either explicit or implicit goal.[22] I will briefly describe two public purification movements, those of orthographic and lexical reform, and then turn to the personal level.

Orthographic Reform

The purification movement that is currently most conspicuous and politically topical is Tatarstan's recently begun shift from the current Cyrillic alphabet (which includes six Tatar-specific letters) to a Latin-based alphabet, the fourth alphabet in a period of less than 100 years. The new alphabet was ratified in September of 1999, and the ten-year transition period began with street signs and school programs in the fall of 2001. This orthographic reform is an increasingly sensitive topic,[23] especially with political and legislative opposition coming from Moscow since the fall of 2001.[24] The official justification for the new alphabet is that it

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[21] In point of fact, young people in villages do not speak only Tatar all day every day, as became immediately apparent upon my visits.

[22] When explicit, sentiments can be expressed as straightforwardly as in these article titles: *Telebezgä chistalïk ingsen* (May purity sink into our language) (Usmanov 1997); *Telebez där'yasï saf bulsïn* (May the river of our language be pure) (Äsrarov 1999).

[23] A significant percentage of people I interviewed opted to skip all questions relating to the transition to the new alphabet.

[24] The legal status of the transition to the new alphabet is changing almost daily in the spring of 2002, and is now being reported not only in Tatarstan's press but also nationwide in Russia.

"more accurately represents the special characteristics of the Tatar language," and will allow "entry into the system of world communication" (Shäymiyev 1999). Supporters of the transition to the new alphabet explicitly refer to language purity as part of their justifications: for example, one letter to the editor — given the title of *Latin älifbasï telne chistartïrmï?* (Will the Latin alphabet clean the language?) — ends this way: "Unfortunately, over the years, the Russian alphabet as used has done great injury, without end, to the purity of the Tatar language. Because of the lack in this alphabet of four letters that are necessary to the Tatar language, our language continues to degenerate from year to year" (Galiev 1998). To be frank, it is not clear to which four letters Galiev is referring: due to the six additional letters in the Cyrillic alphabet for Tatar, all phonemes are represented, and the only two sounds that do not have associated letters, [q] and [γ], are sub-phonemic, which is to say, they are sounds that are conditioned by their surrounding environment — and when linguists devise spelling systems, sub-phonemic sounds are traditionally *not* assigned separate letters. Also unclear is how the new Latin-based alphabet will aid Tatar's entry into worldwide communication, more specifically, the internet, one of the stated aims of the change. The new Latin-based alphabet has eight letters not found in English, Spanish, French or German, and two letters not found in Turkish. Therefore, new computer fonts will need to be devised for the new alphabet, and users of the new alphabet will not be able to easily interact using existing computer programs until those fonts are widespread. In point of fact, supporters and opposition alike also perceive the new alphabet as a political statement of pan-Turkic solidarity and a move away from Russia and Russian culture above all else.

Lexical Reform

The second public language purification movement, significantly less politically sensitive, is the ongoing lexical reform by Tatar language planners and language professionals. Soviet linguists, when engaged in modernization and lexical development of the Soviet Union's more than 200 languages (under the aegis of Lenin's policy), were working towards a goal of

transitioning monolingual speakers of minority languages to Russian bilingualism (Moskovich 1989). In the 1930s, Soviet linguists replaced most of the Arabic and Persian loanwords in Tatar with Russian loanwords, such that half of the entries in today's standard Tatar-Russian dictionaries (e.g., Ganiev 2000) are Russian borrowings. Present-day Tatar language planners have three main options for the development and modernization of Tatar: (1) return to the Arabic or Persian loanword that was used up until the 1930s; (2) attempt to find a relic form used before or contemporaneously with a loanword; and (3) coin new terminology using native Turco-Tatar stock (for recommendations on this course of action see in particular Shamsutdinova 2000, Väliev 2001, and Minhaj 1993). The course of action chosen most often has been the first one: a return to the Arabic and Persian loanwords of the past. This use of what is referred to as "new/old" Arabic borrowings can be confusing, problematic, and even controversial. For example, one journalist friend of mine had the term *khäer-khalïk* (benevolence, goodwill) inserted in one of her articles: when reading this article while she sat nearby, I asked her what the word meant, as I had never encountered it, and she admitted to me, with some embarrassment, that she herself did not know. Use of such reintroduced terminology can cause confusion and hostility on the part of readers, as seen in this letter to the editor from February of 2001 (Iskändärova 2001):

> *Min Tatar tügel, akhrïsï* (I am not a Tatar, it would seem)
>
> In the Tatar newspapers and journals that are published these days, I continually encounter words that I just do not know. For example: *näfasät* [moment], *manzara* [spectacle, sight], *wäzgïyat'* [situation], *tokkata* [?], *ik'tisad* [economics], and others. They aren't in any dictionary…Also, if there are Tatar terms available, skip the Russian words. For example, *problema* [problem], *predpriyatie* [business, enterprise], *faktor* [factor], *sotsiologia* [sociology] and others. All right, there aren't translations for words like *kibernetika* [cybernetics] and *kompyuter* [computer], but for the Russian words written above, there are Tatar terms after all.
>
> N. Iskändärova
> Tüben Kama

Ms. Iskändärova's complaints are somewhat self-contradictory — the "Tatar terms" that would be used in lieu of the Russian borrowings listed in her letter would actually be, for the

most part, Arabic and Persian borrowings. Many Tatars express dissatisfaction with all available options: Russian loanwords make the language "impure," but using archaic Arabic loanwords can seem inappropriately formal or even pretentious, while coining new terminology from native stock gives results that feel artificial. However, other Tatars, in particular religiously observant Tatars or members of the Kazan intelligentsia, perceive Arabic loanwords as part of their pre-Soviet heritage, and thus part of "pure" Tatar.

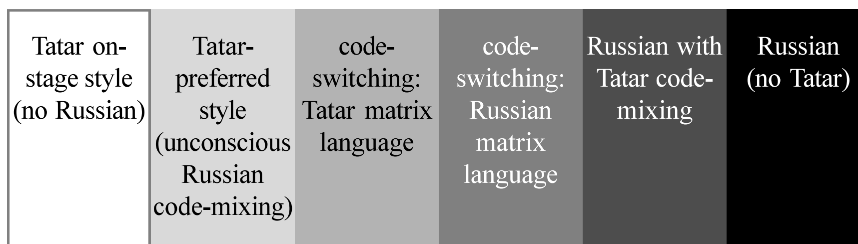
Individual means of de-Russification

There are two personal methods of de-Russification, which are not purification movements but rather choices made at the individual level — the first related to naming practices, and the second found in linguistic performance. A recent trend is to remove Russian suffixation, added mostly in the last century, from both Tatar family names and patronymics. There are several ways to re-Tatarize names (cf. Minhaj 1994, 1996), but the most common is to simply remove the -*ov/ev* (male) and -*ova/eva* (female) family-name suffix, and to replace the -*ovich/evich* (male) or -*ovna/evna* (female) patronymic suffixes with *ulï* (his-son) and *kïzï* (his-daughter) respectively, such that a man by the name of Aydar Ramilovich Nuriyev would then be called Aydar Ramil ulï Nuri, even if his name remains in the Russified version on his passport and other official documents.

While this de-Russification of personal names is still relatively uncommon, the second individual means of de-Russification — style shifting and the purification of speech — is nearly ubiquitous. Before I describe this style shifting and purification of speech, it is best to clarify the terminology in question. Although the terms style shifting, code-shifting, and code-mixing are sometimes used interchangeably, I am using them here to delineate three distinct linguistic phenomena. Following Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1989), code-switching is used to represent linguistic performance where speakers switch between languages at the level of the phrase or higher, such that part of a sentence will be in the first language and the other part will be in the second, or several sentences in a row will be in the first language, after

which the speaker will switch to the second (and perhaps back to the first again later in the utterance). Code-mixing, on the other hand, is the insertion of an isolated word or idiomatic expression in one language into a sentence that is otherwise completely in the other. Finally, style shifting is used in the sense of Bell (1984) without specific reference to bilingualism or use of multiple languages in a single utterance: it is simply a move from one way of speaking to another in order to produce linguistic performance that is appropriate to the audience, topic, and setting at hand. In Figure 1 below, I show the six major styles produced by urban Tatar bilinguals, who will shift from one style to another, depending upon the circumstances: in this particular sociolinguistic system, the various styles are in fact related to language mixing.

Figure 1. Continuum of styles and language mixing for urban Tatar bilinguals



Purification of Tatar is expressed in what I call "Tatar on-stage" style, which is often found in the public sphere in formal registers, particularly when people are aiming for a high literary standard (*ädäbi tatar tele*), but can also be found in informal register in private conversations. In "Tatar on-stage" style, speakers will de-Russify their Tatar to the best of their ability.[25]

Tatar-preferred style is always produced informally, and is found in private conversations where Tatar has been in some way established as the preferred language of communication: for example, this is the main style of intergenerational family communication in Tatar-speaking homes, both urban and rural. In Tatar-preferred style, the level of language awareness and

[25] I am focusing here on the lexical level, not on phonetics, phonology, or syntax.

verbal hygiene (Cameron 1995) is lower than in Tatar on-stage style, and although speakers believe themselves to be speaking "pure" Tatar, they actually are unconsciously inserting certain kinds of Russian words. These code-mixed words are not standard borrowings, and all have one thing in common: they are used to organize, structure, and comment upon discourse (for a more complete examination of Tatar-preferred style and code-mixing, see Wertheim (forthcoming)). These unconsciously inserted words, such as *potomu chto* 'because,' *no* 'but, however,' *dazhe* 'even,' and *pochti* 'almost', are found in Tatar-preferred style only: in Tatar on-stage style, the level of verbal hygiene is so high that they are not allowed to "sneak through."

Tatar on-stage style can be found at:

- Tatar cultural events. For example, the master of ceremonies for a concert or cultural event will always be in Tatar on-stage style, usually aided by a prepared script from which he or she reads. Participants in these events will also use Tatar and Tatar only onstage,[26] which can sometimes cause problems less-competent or less-prepared speakers, whose speech in Tatar on-stage style will be neither fluent nor entirely grammatical.
- Radio and television interviews. Also, when listeners call into radio stations for requests, they will often shift into cleansed Tatar, particularly when calling the more traditionally oriented stations.
- Political speeches, particularly speeches televised from the floor of the republic's parliament.
- Speaking publicly at explicitly Tatar social events.
- Speaking with or for investigators of Tatar language and culture.

Even Russian-dominant bilingual speakers, who are not fully competent in Tatar, will attempt to completely de-Russify their speech when it is called for by setting and audience, which can lead to ungrammatical, and sometimes incoherent, speech. However, the requirements of appropriate linguistic performance, and of construction of ethnic identity through language, supersede those of fluid and articulate communication.

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[26] For example, in the spring of 2001, I attended a concert of a Tatar singer and accordionist who had the number one Tatar hit at the time. When onstage and when speaking with me (and other "fans") backstage, he spoke in Tatar only, but when talking with his band members, he and they freely code-switched between Tatar and Russian until the curtain went up again.

Conclusions

Linguistic performance, particularly speech carefully cleansed of salient Russian influence, plays a significant role in the construction of Tatar identity: this performance can be both for outsiders, such as fieldworkers or unknown members of large audiences, and for insiders, such as members of a small social network (e.g., a Tatar social club). Broadly speaking, Tatar identity appears to be defined in opposition to Russian, such that the focus is less on what Tatars *are* and more on what they are *not* — and what they are not is Russian. In this context, with an oppositional definition, the "pure" Tatar individual comes to mean the "de-Russified" Tatar individual, one who has removed Russian influence from his or her life (even if he or she has retained Arabic or Persian influences). This purification can be seen in various choices made in daily life, such as for clothing (with an explicit goal of modesty for women) and for food and alcohol (including the avoidance of both alcohol and pork products), but its most consistent, continuous, and unconscious expression is found in linguistic choices and performance.

De-Russification is bound up in the Tatars' ongoing struggle to resist religious, cultural, and linguistic assimilation into the Russian majority. Tatar discourse on language is often either symbolic of, or explicitly related to, discourse on nationhood, with the hope that through preservation of the integrity and distinctiveness of the language, the integrity and distinctiveness of the nation can also be retained. As the Tatar saying goes, "*Tugan teldä — millät yazmïshïï*" (In a native language is the fate of a nation).

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