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Estonian Tatar families navigating between four languages

• Maria Iqbal, University of Tartu

ACTIVITIES

When you lose a language, you lose a culture, intellectual wealth, a work of art.

Kenneth Locke Hale (2001)

Abstract: *This article presents some aspects of the family language policy of Estonian Tatars, the parents' strategies for maintaining the Tatar language and the variety and value of these micro-level language support efforts. In the interviewed families both parents and children see the maintenance of Tatar as beneficial and the children appreciate that they are raised multilingually. Some scholars claim that Russification of the so-called "third ethnicities" in Estonia still continues, but the results of the current research reveals that this is not the case. Still, Russian is present in many domains due to the fact that the Tatar parents often were schooled in this language and have a poor command of Estonian; now Estonian is preferred as an instruction language for the children. During the Soviet period between the 1940s and the end of the 1980s, the Tatar language carried also a religious meaning and Russian was referred to as the language of the non-believers. Today the main motive for young people to speak Tatar is to maintain the communication with their family and relatives.*

Keywords: *Tatar language, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, Estonia, education, family language policy*

Dört dil arasında gezinen Estonya Tatar aileleri

Özet: *Bu makale, ebeveynlerin Tatar dilini sürdürme stratejilerine odaklanarak Estonya Tatarlarının aile dili politikasına ışık tutmaktadır. Bu çalışma, bu tür ailelerin mikro düzeyde yapılan girişimlerinin çeşitliliğini ve değerini göstermek için Estonya'da bulunan birçok topluluktan birine genel bir bakış sunmaktadır. Görüşmelerin yapıldığı ailelerde, ebeveynler ve çocuklar Tatar dilini sürdürmenin faydalı olduğunu görmekte ve çocuklar çok dilli yetiştirilmelerini takdir etmektedirler. Estonya'da sözde üçüncü etnik grupların Ruslaştırılmasının durmadığı iddia edilmişti. Mevcut araştırma sonucunda*

durumun bu şekilde olmadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Ebeveynlerin Rusça eğitim almış olmalarından ve Estonca'yı iyi bilmemelerinden dolayı Rusça hâlâ birçok alanda mevcuttur. Ancak Estonca artık çocukların eğitim dili olarak tercih edilmektedir. Sovyet döneminde Rusça inanmayanların dili olarak anıldığından Tatarca din bir anlam da taşıyordu. Günümüzde gençlerin Tatarca konuşmaktaki ana sebepleri aileleri ve akrabaları ile ilişkilerini muhafaza etmektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Tatar dili, toplumdilbilim, çok dillilik, Estonya, eğitim, aile dili seçimi

Introduction

The presence of several of the current ethnolinguistic groups in Estonia are the result of Russian imperial and Soviet colonial policies. There is one common denominator from this common past in all former Soviet republics: contacts between Russian and the other languages. It is now employed by researchers for analyses on multilingualism, among others (Verschik 2008: 299). Post-Soviet societies possess many qualities not found elsewhere and they are sometimes described as sociolinguistic experiments (Pavlenko 2008: 276) or a language laboratory (Verschik 2010). From the 1990s onwards the minorities were influenced by de-Russification policies (Pavlenko 2008) aiming at removing the threat of Russian to their languages. On the other hand several non-Russian minorities in Estonia have been involved in the process called “third-country Russification” or “Estonian Russification” (Rannut & Rannut 2010; Aidarov & Drechsler 2013). In addition, globalisation has introduced an expanded use of English (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun 2008).

Today there is an urgent need for research on the small minorities in Estonia. They have not been investigated as closely as the Russians (compare Viikberg 2000). The maintenance of a minority language can be problematic: there might be no tradition of passing on the language or the minority language use was not important or allowed. The Tatars are one of the groups in Estonia requiring more study, but they have succeeded in keeping their language and the tradition of transmitting it to the next generations. The language is an essential part of their identity, socialisation and cultural background. Speaking either Kazan Tatar or Mishar Tatar is an expression of their “Tatarness” (Klaas 2015; see also article by Lepa, in this issue).

In the Republic of Estonia (1918–1940) the Mishar Tatars could freely develop their cultural life as they wished, but after the annexation by the Soviet Union and until the end of the 1980s this was not

possible. The community became almost invisible to the public eye, yet continued the religious and language practices in the private sphere (Abiline & Ringvee 2016; Ahmetov & Nisamedtinov 1999; Lepa 2020). Currently Tatars are known to live in Tallinn, Maardu, Kohtla-Järve and Narva. According to statistics, there are 1,934 Tatars in Estonia today, of whom 1,027 are in Tallinn (Statistics Estonia 2017); only 806 persons speak Tatar as their mother tongue (Statistics Estonia 2011).

Most Tatars participate in events and meetings organised by the Estonian Islamic Centre in Tallinn, which is a focal point for Tatar culture and language in the country. The Tatars in the Ida-Virumaa region have a local imam who leads prayers and provides religious guidance. The Christian and Muslim Tatars are here connected by the Narva Tatar Cultural Society, a centre where Tatar history and traditions have been taught as well (Jorma 2016: 268). The Estonian Tatars participate in Tatar transnational networks and cooperate among others with organisations and institutions in Tatarstan for cultural events such as *Sabantuy*, which in the summer of 2019 took place in the Old Town of Tallinn and gathered Tatars from all over Europe. Estonian Tatars also take part in the annual World Congress of Tatars and the All World Tatar Youth Forum.

Today the Estonian Tatars navigate between at least four languages. Tatar is usually the language spoken at home and the means for communication with relatives and the older generations. Russian is used in several domains, since the older family members were schooled in this language. Estonian is the official language, required in dealings with public offices and for certain professions (teachers, doctors, etc.). Estonian is also the present school language. English is acquired at school, through media, internet and other sources.

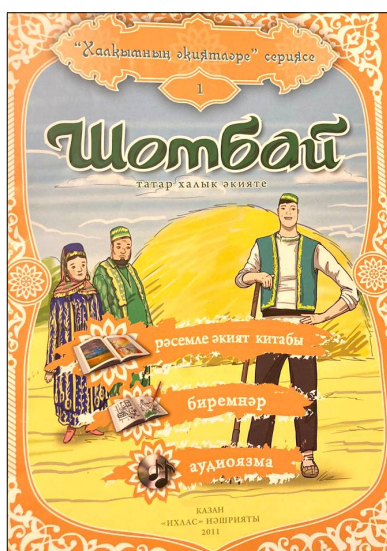
The Estonian Tatars possess more complex linguistic backgrounds than the majority Estonians and this influences their language practices and language management. Küün (2011) found that the families of minority pupils in elementary schools in Estonia (Russian, Lithuanian, Tatar and Ukrainian) maintain their home language chiefly for communication with their family and grandparents, but without writing it. Research about how Estonian Tatar families deal with their languages and how they build their Family Language Policy (FLP) is very scarce (compare Iqbal 2019). Studies about the Tatar language in Estonia are also extremely few (compare Nurmekund 1975).

Research about family language policy and language choice in Tatarstan shows that ethnic Russians prefer studying English (foreign language) to Tatar (second language), and also ethnic Tatars prefer Russian and English to Tatar (Suleymanova 2009; Wigglesworth-Baker 2015 and 2016; compare Safina 2020; Cashaback 2008; Wertheim 2002). Moreover, teachers often require parents to communicate with the children in Russian to improve the academic performance (Alexandrov et al. 2012; Tovar-

García 2017). Tovar-García and Alòs i Font (2017) show a different perspective: children who used the Tatar language only at home and were oral bilinguals with Russian had high academic achievements both in Humanities and Science classes. They were less likely to get poor grades in subjects such as Russian language and literature, mathematics and physics. The Tatar home language had neither a “bad” influence on the educational achievement nor was it a potential threat to other language skills.

Tatar family patterns in the diaspora are another important field for research related to the FLP. Only a few studies of language policy in the Baltic Sea region exist: Latvia (Poggeschi 2004) and Lithuania (Ramoniene 2013). The Estonian Tatar family patterns vary from core family to households with up to three generations under one roof. Although the father of the family is the official provider, the mother is often working or involved in projects. The older generation is also active: they organise and participate in Tatar events and help their grandchildren to acquire Tatar language skills.¹

Family Language Policy



This article presents the FLP of four Estonian Tatar families using Bernard Spolsky’s (2004) language policy model: 1) language ideology or belief, 2) language management and 3) language practice. They are independent yet interconnected elements. According to Spolsky, ideology involves what is *appropriate* and *prestigious* in language. The management is any intervention or attempt aiming at change in language use; it includes planning. Practice means how the users speak and write, but it largely depends on the frame of communication; the users, groups, families, companies and others. Which languages are intended to be used and with whom depend on the situation and spheres (family, school, region, workplace, religious associations, etc.). The decisions of the language users must be based on their own attitudes, preferences and the type of language policy they are

employing. All three elements identified by Spolsky influence the political, social, demographic, religious, cultural, psychological, bureaucratic and other spheres in human societies.

1 The illustrations in the article are used to demonstrate the books and materials used in the Tatar language teaching in Estonia. The photos were kindly shared by the informants (mothers of the Ansar and Emir families).

Language policy (LP) and planning is a field initially derived from sociolinguistics and language-in-society studies (Kaplan & Baldauf 1998: 358). A rather different understanding of LP considers it a “legally backed mechanism to organise, manage or manipulate language behaviours” (Bulajeva & Hogan-Brun 2010: 80). LP is increasingly seen as the sociocultural appropriation of policy, the ways that “normative policy discourse get[s] negotiated into some politically and culturally viable form” (compare Brown 2013).

How parents and children communicate and how language is acquired, learned and practised in the family domain is reflected in the FLP (see King & Fogle 2013). FLP deals with the parents’ decisions about family language and which language(s) they teach to the children (Fogle 2012: 83). FLP is a complex, chaotic and non-hierarchical system. Each domain within the sociolinguistic ecology has its variety of LP and each LP influences and is influenced by all the other domains (Spolsky 2012: 3). Spolsky (2019) also recognises the impact of activists, language enthusiasts and others who want to change language practices and who work with language through self-management.

In Estonia there have been two strands of FLP research: the first focuses on Estonian families in the diaspora and how they maintain their language. The second analyses people who have settled in Estonia and started a family (see Doyle 2013; Hallaste 2015; Szmolka-Andreson 2015; Kaasik 2016; Verschik & Doyle 2017). This research has focused mainly on the Estonian language maintenance in mixed families (Doyle 2016 and 2018).

In this study a wide range of methods have been used for analysing FLP: observation, structured and semi-structured interviews with groups and individuals, and open-end questions in questionnaires. For investigating FLP one of the most efficient ways to collect information is to analyse primary data from questionnaires, and on the basis of this information conduct semi-structured interviews. This way allows for asking follow-up questions if something is left unnoticed. Informants are more likely to speak on sensitive topics than writing about them (Schwartz 2010), and this method has been proven effective also for this study.



Objectives and methods

During the interviews, the following questions were focused on:

- 1) How do Estonian Tatars highlight the importance of maintaining the Tatar language?
- 2) What other languages do they speak and for what purposes (in which domains)?
- 3) What are their language management strategies for their multilingual children?
- 4) What are the attitudes of the Tatar youth towards Tatar and other languages?

The Tatar community in Estonia is small; it is possible to start research only through the snowball method by first locating a few families willing to be studied. They gave references to other families. Many families refused, saying for instance that one of the spouses did not want to be interviewed. The Tatar families were contacted through the Islamic congregation in Tallinn, the only exception being the third family which includes only one family member who was contacted through private channels.

Before the actual interview sessions, parents from the families who agreed to take part in the research received a questionnaire form which they were asked to fill in and send back. This was a preparatory step to gather the demographic data (name, place of birth, education, birth date, etc.) and give the ten informants an opportunity to get acquainted with the topics which would be discussed during the sessions.

The informants were from the capital Tallinn and Harju county nearby. The questionnaires were sent in Russian and Estonian, but only one of the participants chose to be interviewed in Estonian; the rest of the interviews were conducted in Russian with occasional code-alternation in Tatar in order to clarify a point by examples and verbal expressions.



The set of questions was semi-structured and modified from the original Catalan language questionnaire of the European project *Globalization and family and social plurilingualism in medium-sized language communities (MSLC) in Europe* (GLOBLINMED; compare Boix-Fuster & Torrens 2011).

The survey was customised and paraphrased (for instance avoiding the question why) to fit into the research objectives and to cover more aspects of the language practice. Some irrelevant issues for Estonian Tatars like the subject of attending church were left out.



In January, February and December 2019 interviews were conducted in a setting chosen by the informants (their home, video or phone call). The interviews were recorded and yielded a total length of 392 minutes (almost seven hours). The shortest interview lasted for 21 minutes with a minor and the longest 83 minutes. As the families shared sensitive information, subject to data protection laws, the recordings cannot be deposited at any public archive without the informants' consent. The data was stored on a personal computer and an additional copy was made on a portable hard drive. After the interviews these recordings went through a simple transcription process.

The main topics were coded and the interview transcript tagged when certain recurring topics were mentioned. The keywords for coding were for instance languages (Estonian, Tatar, Russian, English, etc.), environments (school, work, home, etc.) and networks (school friends, people from the mosque, colleagues, etc.). During the coding process, the quotes to describe the aspects, like “not so often”, “daily”, “barely”, “actively” and so forth were underlined. The frequency determined which aspects are more and which are less influential.

Participants

To protect the families and their identities, the names of the families and the informants are anonymised. The names chosen for members of the same family have the same first initial to make the analysis easier to follow. The aggregate data of the research participants can be summarised as follows:

Table 1. Informants: Pseudonyms, roles, age, mother tongue, place of birth and residence, education

Family	Informant	Age	Main language	Place of Birth	Place of Residence
Ansar	Alisa (mother)	49	Tatar	Udmurtia (in Estonia since 1977 due to parents' work migration)	Harju county
	Artur (father)	51		Tatarstan (in Estonia since 1990 after marriage)	
	Alsu (daughter)	14		Harju county, Estonia	
Din	Dana (mother)	37	Tatar	Orenburg province (in Estonia since 1995 after marriage)	Tallinn
	Damir (father)	47		Tallinn, Estonia	
	Dani (son)	14			
	Dinara (daughter)	12			
Roza	Rezeda (daughter)	23	Russian (mother Estonian Russian, father Russian Tatar)	Tallinn, Estonia	Tallinn
Emir	Elina (mother)	30	Tatar	Tallinn, Estonia	Harju county
	Eduard (father)	28		Tatarstan (in Estonia since 2014 after marriage)	

The majority of the parents in this study graduated from university. Ansar, Din and Emir families chose Russian as the interview language and some Tatar was used for certain expressions. The children from all the families except for Rezeda are attending the Tatar Sunday school, events and Arabic language classes organised by the Tatar community.

Alisa and Artur from the Ansar family met in Tatarstan at an event where Artur was one of the organisers. Two months after their first meeting they got married. Alisa lived with Artur's family for two and a half years until they decided to move to Estonia. They have three children: in addition to the daughter who was present and also interviewed, the oldest son (27) lives in Tatarstan and the younger son (25) studies in Turkey. Both sons had attended Russian-language school. In their childhood they used less Tatar, but growing up they started missing it. The oldest son left for Tatarstan where he also continued his studies. The other son received a governmental scholarship from Turkey for his university studies. Alisa explained proudly that "he is a polyglot, knows Arabic, Russian, Tatar and English".



Dana and Damir from the Din family met during their university studies in Saudi Arabia. Dana's family decided to emigrate from Russia due to increasing Russian chauvinism which affected many families (Rannut & Rannut 2010; Klaas 2015). Damir's parents had moved to Estonia earlier and he was born there. Both are Tatars with different yet similar childhoods. Dana travelled a lot due to her father's work: she has lived in regions across Russia and Syria, and before locating to Estonia for some years in Saudi Arabia.

They have five children. Dana and Damir both went to Russian-language schools, but Damir said he was "studying and learning, yet still feeling like an alien". All their children attend Estonian school or kindergarten; their son Dani studies in Estonian and German. Both parents are active members of the

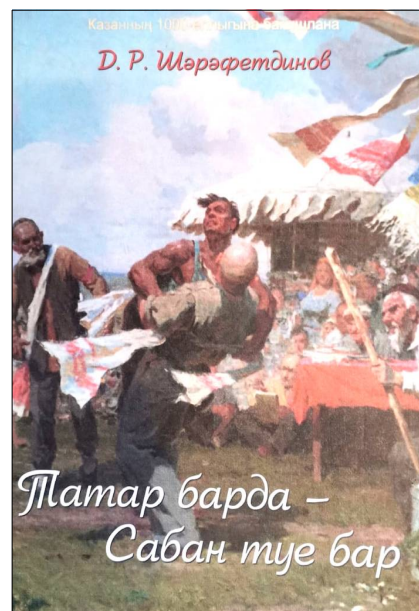
Islamic Congregation, fluent in Arabic, Tatar and Russian, and they have also studied English and Estonian.

The father of Rezeda in the Roza family is deceased (he was born in Tatarstan in 1956), but she knew about his background: “[Father’s] both parents were Tatars, Tatar natives; he was very multilingual, [he spoke with] his acquaintances and friends in Russian and studied Estonian when he came here, the communication was quite alright. I was very small when I knew him, but I’ve been told that he tried to bring the Tatar language into our family. When he was alive we communicated more with his relatives and [then] we were obliged to speak only in Tatar, and my Mum had to speak it, too.”

Rezeda chose Estonian for her interview language; it made her feel more comfortable: “Even if news and social media are [used by me] in Russian, when it’s about some sort of scholarly materials, then [I prefer] in Estonian, which is somehow easier for me to read, because I am ‘used’ to study in Estonian.”

From this family only Rezeda was interviewed. Her mother is Russian, born in Estonia in 1960. Rezeda has a brother who is 35 years old. Both children associate themselves with their father’s Tatar roots and keep contact with his relatives on distance. The son considers himself a Tatar Russian. Rezeda had studied at the university and at the time of the interview she had a full-time job.

Elina and Eduard are both Tatars. They met at an All-World Tatar Youth Forum. Elina spoke frequently Russian with her family and studied at a Russian-language school. She felt shy to speak Tatar in front of her friends, but the family consistently spoke Tatar to her. The acknowledgement of Tatar and more active use came only in her late teenage years. The Emir family have a daughter (4 years old) and a son (1,5 years). The daughter is still mixing the two languages. According to Elina, the daughter first started Tatar language acquisition and then she was exposed to Russian at the nursery, but after she changed the nursery, she now understands Estonian as well. Their son is now in an Estonian kindergarten. The Emir family lived during the first years of their marriage in a village in Tatarstan and they moved to Estonia only in 2017. The interview with this couple was conducted in Russian, and Tatar was used for specific examples of what kind of things are discussed at Tatar social events or what Tatar words the toddlers prefer.



Transmitting the language

Family language. Elina explained: “My husband is thinking in Tatar, for him it’s innate.” He was born in a village in Tatarstan and learned only Tatar at first. Later “there was Tatar school, but all the main subjects were in Russian”. Her husband grew up using Tatar as his main language, in contrast to Elina who grew up in a more multilingual environment. For him it is natural to communicate with the children in Tatar.

Grandparents. When one or more older relatives live together with the young family and exclusively communicate in their language, the children receive the chance to learn and practise the language daily. Dana’s mother is living with them and speaks only in Tatar with her grandchildren.

Involvement. An important factor for maintaining the Tatar language is to use it daily. However also other Turkic languages can function as triggers for children and create the receptive multilingualism phenomenon (Riionheimo et al. 2017: 117). Dana and her children regularly speak Tatar between themselves and also with other Turkic language speakers at social gatherings, or with friends who are not Tatar but speak a Turkic language: “And here we are, sitting with my friends, one of them is Kumyk, another Kazakh, and everything is great, we perfectly understand each other; [then] they say something to my children and the kids understand them very well.”

Motivation. Actively engaging children to communicate and think in Tatar in different situations and environments is important also outside the home. Extracurricular activities like the Sunday schools offer a chance to use the language with others. According to Damir, the parents “have to motivate and in no way be an obstacle, and not feel sorry for the additional expenses, time or energy.” He also quoted an old Tatar proverb: “If you know the language, you know the secret.”

Limiting external influences. The Ansar family had two sons before their daughter was born. They learned from the experience that if they do not limit the use of Russian within their household, their daughter will learn less Tatar. Alisa explained: “After our daughter was born and people came to visit, we told all relatives, grandparents, aunts and their children that they should not speak in Russian.” Artur added: “When their kids [cousins] came to visit, they enriched their [Tatar] language as well, and now they are grown and very grateful to us!”

Honouring the heritage. Eduard pointed out the importance of maintaining the Tatar language simply because it is there: “It is necessary to pay attention to native languages in order to keep the variety of peoples and cultures of the world. But it is also important to learn foreign languages to develop it.”

Attitudes

Educational language. The Ansar family has experienced both Russian and Estonian schools as the medium for their children's education. They gave preference to Estonian over Russian, understanding that it will be more beneficial for the children's careers to be proficient in Estonian, because they live in Estonia. The Din family children Dinara and Dani go to an Estonian-language school with German as second language. The other children also attend an Estonian kindergarten. The Din family children communicate with each other in Tatar and Russian, they write messages in a mix of Tatar and Russian, attend Arabic lessons and the Tatar language school for Tatar language lessons.

Prestige. The question of Mishar Tatar versus literary (Kazan) Tatar is very important in Estonia. Alisa commented that there are no grammar books written for Mishar, while there are several for Kazan Tatar. There is in fact a lack of Mishar grammars for the education of children and therefore Mishar Tatar might appear less prestigious than Kazan Tatar.

Attitudes towards Russian. Dana mentioned that a negative attitude existed among Tatars against the use of Russian in Soviet times, at least in the Orenburg province where she was born. It was referred to as the "non-believers' language" and elderly Tatars avoided using it: "Grandma used to say: 'Don't speak in the *Kafir* language.' She meant Russian. Nowadays in the Caucasus and other [regions with autonomous] republics there are many languages, but in the old times it was just one language – Turkic, and it was called the Muslims' language."

How far speaking "Muslim" was used as a term in Estonia remains to be researched, but in Finland it was used (see Jonasson 2017). Artur used a figurative speech to describe his attitude towards Russian and why he does not like it: "Russian has the ability to sneak in through any cracks."

Youth attitudes. Surprisingly, Dani said during the interview: "I think [in the future after ten years] I will be speaking most of all Russian and English." He understood the benefits of the languages which he is learning, but in order to simplify his future, he would go for the two languages. He was not sure about his career choice yet, so this plan was motivated by social media and the languages in the surrounding society.

Alsu had a clearer view about the future: "At school Estonian and at home Tatar. I want to go to the Health Care College." She already had a plan after high school graduation which helped her to be more certain about her language choices.

Strategies

Avoiding alienation. Damir stated that they do not want their children to feel like aliens in Estonia. Language plays an important role: “We agreed in the very beginning, it was a conscious decision to enrol our children in an Estonian kindergarten and then in an Estonian-language school, so that they would feel comfortable in the environment into which they were born and are living in. Also so that they won’t have such problems like we [the parents] have, due to our insufficient command of [Estonian]; we are studying it but still feel like foreigners. They [the children] don’t have that feeling, I think, they don’t feel like it’s a foreign language.”

Home language versus society language. Only the Ansar family intentionally corrects their informal speech and talk exclusively in Tatar at home. They chose this strict tactic in order to keep up their daily communication in Tatar, which the family referred to as Mishar but also Kazan Tatar for literary purposes. Dana explained: “I would say Tatar is an everyday language and a dialect for us. But with the sisters² we talk in Tatar and Russian.”

Conscious language choice. According to Dana, her children consciously choose Estonian for their communication outdoors and in public, explaining their choice as “they want to be understood by others”. The Din children study German and English at school and Arabic language in special classes. Possibly their choice of public language is influenced also by their efforts to adapt or at least not to stand out in the surrounding society.

Switching languages. Using Tatar together with other language(s) turns out to be the most frequently used strategy among the Estonian Tatars, because of the influence from the surrounding society and the limited number of people knowing the language.

Elina and Eduard spoke English as a secret language when their elder daughter was small. Soon she started learning English from cartoons, however. Elina explained: “We switch sometimes to English with my husband to hide something from the kids, like when I want to make my daughter go to sleep, and then she suddenly responds: *Нет! Я не хочу sleep!* [Russian: No! I don’t want to sleep!]”

2 The informant refers to the Islamic term “sisters” for (female) friends or acquaintances who practice Islam and meet with the family at the mosque and during congregational events. This connotation is derived from the *Qur’an* which instructs that “the believers are but brothers” (49:10).

Conclusions

The Tatars in Estonia make conscious choices to keep their language alive and they look for opportunities to use their language in different social settings, for example attending Sunday school and meeting with other Turkic language speakers, or having a grandparent living in the same house. They find ways to practice and use Tatar daily, although the families tend to switch to Russian to explain specific issues which may not be easily translated or understood in Tatar.

Both parents and children in the four families claimed that they benefited from being multilingual and they felt more connected with the world in general. The parents try to maintain the Tatar language, motivating and encouraging the children to speak and use it, creating proper conditions and a positive learning environment for their children. Due to the weak command of Estonian among several of the parents, they often use Russian, but give their children a chance for a better future and potentially more career opportunities by preferring Estonian as school language. This would indicate that the previous Russification tendency has started to decrease among the Estonian Tatars.

Today the social environment and also schools in Estonia are increasingly multilingual and language switching occurs almost automatically. All families mentioned the necessity of the Estonian language and also Russian, but some added the need to learn foreign languages. Interestingly, all except one family noted the importance of Tatar culture and language maintenance. In the case of mixed families the Tatar language skills are often weaker. The interviews show however that all informants can deal with Estonian society and language.

Determined to keep up the language, the Estonian Tatars send their children to the weekend Tatar language kindergarten and school. They are also actively searching for additional language materials to support the learning. Different opportunities are created to keep the children interested in the language and motivated to continue learning it both in speech and in writing. The children are also educated in Tatar traditions and culture. All activities support the improvement of their language skills and their multilingualism.

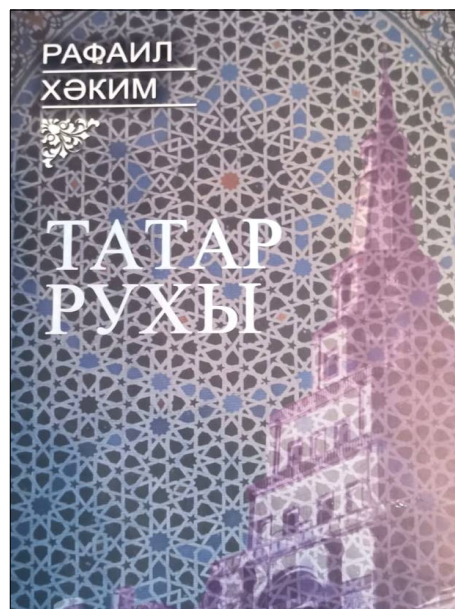
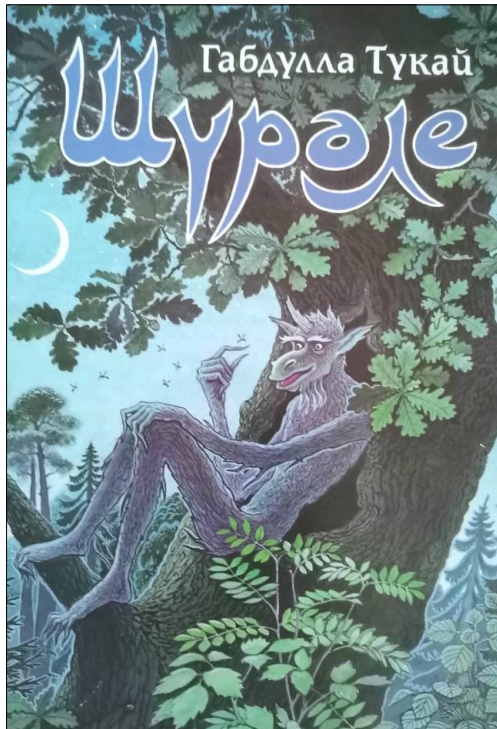


Table 2. Languages spoken by the informants at home, work or school, in their spare time, using social media and other domains

Informant	Home	Work/School	Spare time	Other domains
Alina (mother)	Tatar	Tatar	Tatar, Russian	Sunday school (teaching)
Artur (father)	Tatar	Russian, Estonian	Tatar, Russian	Social media
Alsu (daughter)	Tatar	Estonian, Russian	Russian, Estonian, Tatar, English	Sunday school, social media
Dana (mother)	Tatar and Russian	Russian, Estonian, English, Arabic	Russian, Tatar, Arabic	Islamic centre, Sunday school, social media
Damir (father)	Tatar and Russian	Russian, Estonian, English, Arabic, Tatar	Russian, Tatar	Islamic centre, social media
Dani (son)	Tatar and Russian	Estonian, Russian, German, English	Russian, Tatar	Sunday school, Islamic centre
Dinara (daughter)	Tatar and Russian	Estonian, Russian	Russian, Tatar	Sunday school, Islamic centre
Rezeda (daughter)	Russian	Estonian, Russian	Russian, English	Social media
Elina (mother)	Tatar and Russian	Tatar	Tatar, Russian, English	Sunday school (teaching), social media
Eduard (father)	Tatar	Russian	Tatar, Russian, English	Islamic centre, social media

When it comes to research there is still much to do. More interviews with a much larger number of informants and also the older generation need to be carried out. Recording different situations and spontaneous interaction is also necessary. There is a big community of Tatars in Ida-Virumaa County which has not yet been studied; some different language practices compared with the region of the capital Tallinn can be observed there. Many informants said that the Estonian Tatar dialect is different from the standard Tatar and even from the Mishar dialect spoken in Russia; a linguistic analysis based on comparisons could confirm or dismiss this observation. In addition to linguistic analyses also other fields need to be covered to provide a more complete picture of the language practices, among them historical, social, educational, and also the Tatar multilingualism should be mapped out.



Privacy Statement

The names in this article are not the original names of the informants; they have been anonymised. The informants' data is used with their permission exclusively for the stated purposes of this article and will not be made available for any other purpose or to any other party.

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**Tele barnıñ yulı bar,
här telneñ üz hikmäte bar.
Languages open the way;
each has its own wonder.
*Tatar mäkale / proverb***