Russian and Tatar Languages in Official Internet-Resources

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the study of official segment of national, Tatar, internet sector. Two parts can be distinguished there: Theoretical and practical. The first part provides the definition of minority Internet, which underlines its dichotomous nature, the websites of Tatnet (Tatar internet), proceeding from the functional purpose of digital resources; the segments are provided (official, media, cognitive, social), the types of relations between the language contents are distinguished (main, parity, slightly inferior, secondary, nominal). The practical part contains the results of complex linguistic monitoring of 317 websites of official segment of national Tatar Internet, that took place in June of 2014; it provided a conclusion, that, at present, the status of Tatar language in the Internet-space is out of line with the status of state language of the Tatarstan Republic and needs more efficient support measures and the purposeful policy, aimed at consolidation of its positions.

Keywords: Minority Internet, Ethnic Language, Language Content, Network Resource, Official Internet Segment, Informative, Tatar Language, Public Sector, Commercial Sector, State Language
JEL Classifications: D83, O33, O21, Z13

1. INTRODUCTION

The appearance of Internet in modern life resulted into the formation of global virtual space (Chugunov, 2002; Balzhirova, 2003; Perfilyev, 2003; Trofimov, 2004; Bondarenko, 2007; Goroshko, 2008; Shchipitsyna, 2009; Paramonov, 2009). According to the data of web-monitoring company Netcraft, by 2014, the number of websites reached 861 379 152, many of them contain important sociocultural and sociolinguistic information (Kondrashov, 2004). However, the modern science, until present, neither has elaborated general theoretical and methodological bases to study the national Internet, nor has started the development of categorial apparatus, required to study the developed new informative field.

The so-called "national" or "minority" Internet is one of the phenomena, generated by the global web. At present, the scientific use lacks either stable definition of "national" Internet, or clear idea of it, although we frequently face with such notions, as "Runet" or "Tatnet" in publicistic writing (Lebedev, 2008).

In this essay, we understand the "national Internet" as a combination of network resources, oriented at the audience at some or other degree of purposefulness, the significant share of which is constituted by people of one ethnic group. This definition involves the dichotomy: (a) The websites in the language of this nationality; (b) the websites in the other languages, oriented at the representatives of this nationality.

The level of "involvement" of ethnic language to the national Internet shows both functionality of ethnic language and its modern status (Pivneva, 2013).

The government of some European states, being aware of all importance of the language landscape of national Internet, corrected the implemented state language policy. The program of access to information in the Internet in French language has become one of new elements of France language policy (Kuralesina, 2011).

The use of local jurisdiction to global virtual space presents definite difficulties in control of language content in the Internet.

In French speaking province of Canada - Quebec, the debates between owners of commercial enterprises and local government about the circulation of local law, concerning the advertising in electronic resources, came to the Supreme Court, which, finally, obliged the websites of all commercial organizations, selling their products in Quebec, to use French in their electronic resources.

The government of national republics in Russian Federation pays less attention to the support and development of national languages in the Internet, what shows both the status of minority languages in Russia, and weak penetration of new information technologies to some regions of the country (Andrichenko, 2005; Morozova, 2011; and others).

The Republic of Tatarstan is at the cutting edge of information-developed regions of Russia. The origin of Tatar Internet or Tatnet is connected with the appearance of Internet-mailing TMG (Tatar e-Mail Group) in 1994, organized by migrant Tatars Iskander Agy and Renat Sukhov, living in New York. It was the first mailing to exchange the messages and files for the Tatars, living in different states of the USA and Turkey. The first official websites, where the Tatar language began to be used, appeared in 1995; the Tatar interface appeared later: The website of the Kazan State University named after V.I. Lenin and the server "Tatarstan in Internet." The Kazan State University became the creator of both websites. In October of 1996, the official website of the Kazan State University named after V.I. Lenin was included to the record book of Russian Internet as "the first correctly-structured (with national font) web-page in the minority language of Russia" (Sibgatullin, 2009).

In Tatarstan, in 2003, the Decree of reverse transcriptase (RT) President approved "The Bases of State Policy of the Tatarstan Republic in the Sphere of Computerization and Network for the period from 2003 to 2007," laying the foundation to the development of state sector of Tatnet for the next few years. At present, "The State Program of the Tatarstan Republic on Preservation, Study and Development of State Languages of the Tatarstan Republic for the Period from 2014 to 2021" is accepted and implemented; the study of Tatar Internet has become its important constituent.

However, until present, Tatar Internet, is one of the most developed minority Internets of Russia, has not become an object of scientific research. The first in time and single work, devoted to the description of development history of national segment of the Internet, is the work of Sibgatullin "Tatar Internet" (Sibgatullin, 2009).

In 2012, Makhmutov and Orekhov (Makhmutov and Orekhov, 2012) developed the scientific and methodological basis for scientific study of modern national Internet, based on which Makhmutov carried out the pilot study of Tatar minority Internet (Makhmutov, 2014) and obtained the first empirical data. In the same period, there appeared some works, that deal with the study of Tatar Internet from the viewpoint of involvement of Tatar Internet-users to online network (Gimadeeva, 2012), or through the prism of existence of Muslim mass media in Tatnet,

including the websites, devoted to Islam, as religion, and different Internet sources about Tatar culture (Garifullin, 2013a, 2013b). The last in time of issue is the article of Gladkova "Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Russian Cyber Space: Examining Four Ethnic Groups Online" (Gladkova, 2015), which presents the study of language and cultural diversity of Russian cyber space; general tendencies of development of Runet national segments are distinguished by the material of four ethnic languages (Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash and Chechen).

2. METHODS

We divided the Tatnet websites into several key segments, proceeding from the functional purpose of the electronic resources: Official, media, educational, social.

We understand the official segment as the network resources, created in order to present the state and commercial institutes and establishments in the Internet. In their turn, they can be divided into thematic sectors (institutional and municipal structures, educational and cultural institutions etc.).

We refer the network resources, aimed at communication of news relating information, to the media segment.

Educational segment is presented by the network resources, meant for getting the educational information and learning.

Social segment is constituted by the network resources, required for different social communications among the users.

Let us note, that the boundaries of these segments are quite conventional, and some websites, fulfilling different functions, can be referred to several sectors simultaneously.

The use of main languages (Russian, Tatar, English) in Tatar minority Internet provided an opportunity to distinguish the following types of correlations between the language contents: Main, parity, slightly inferior, secondary and nominal).

In case of the main type of correlation, key information is mainly presented in one language, in case of parity type, key information is equally presented in several languages. Slightly inferior type is characterized by the fact, that the major part of information is presented in one language, but, alongside with that, there are the materials, insignificant in volume, which are presented only in another language. Secondary type of correlation of language contents is understood as such type of correlation of different languages, when rather large volume of information is presented in one language, but, alongside with that, there are the materials, significant in volume, which are presented only in another language. In case of nominal type of correlation, only insignificant volume of information is presented in another language; usually, no more than one page.

Being supported by the data of these classifications, in June of 2014, we carried out a complex linguistic monitoring of 317 websites of official segment of national Tatar Internet.

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

To the state sector of official segment, we referred the websites of republican and municipal structures (123 websites, continuous sampling), state educational, scientific and cultural institutions (78 websites, continuous sampling) of the Tatarstan Republic. The commercial sector of official segment involves the websites of Tatarstan commercial companies and banks (20 largest commercial companies of Tatarstan, as per the top list of business online newspaper "Business Online," 10 largest Tatarstan banks, as per the website www.banki.ru, non-state higher educational institutions (9 websites, continuous sampling), industrial organizations of different property forms (80 websites, continuous sampling), entertaining agencies (9 websites of Kazan cinemas, continuous sampling). Let us note, that it is not all websites of commercial and state segment of Tatar Internet, but they belong to most important ones from the viewpoint of functional loading (Figure 1).

The websites of republican and municipal structures from 2006 are joined into one portal of Electronic Government of Tatarstan Republic. Despite the fact, that this portal is constantly being updated, Tatar language functionally continues to give way to Russian. For instance, the user can make use of government services only in Russian interface. However, for the last years, we observe positive changes in improvement of Tatar format of this
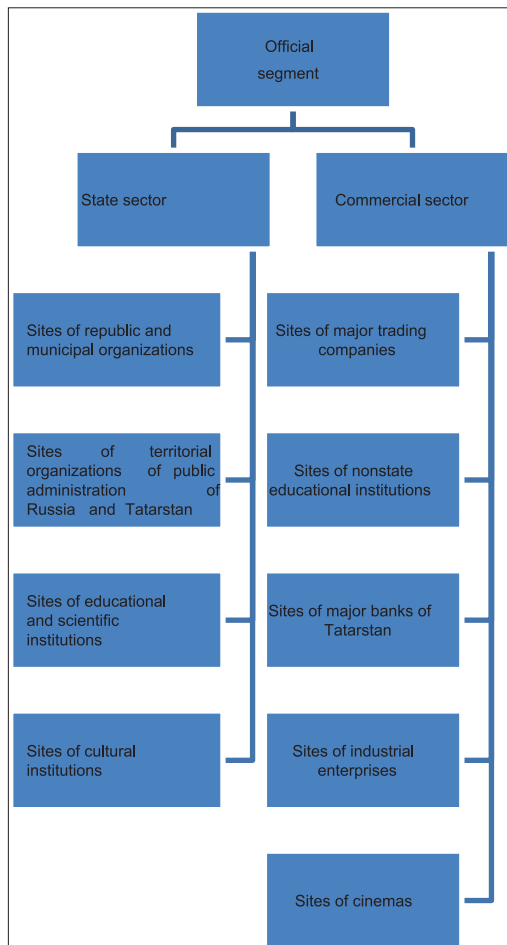
website. If 2 years ago, the news feed in national language was renewed belatedly, then, now this problem has been liquidated.

In the sphere of Tatar language use in the interface of their websites, the bodies of state administration of federal and republican subordination differ qualitatively (Figure 2). On the websites of territorial structures of bodies of state administration of RF in RT and other bodies of federal subordination, Tatar interface is practically absent everywhere. Excepted from this rule is the website of Ministry of Internal Affairs in RT, although here Tatar language is presented only in nominal volume, it even lacks the news feed.

Tatar language is presented in much better degree on the websites of structures and bodies of republican subordination. At present, the websites of this sector are being brought about one standard; their pages shall have both Russian and Tatar interface. The annual contests for the best website in Tatar are held.

At present, only 10 websites from 79 in the selected sphere do not have their own Tatar interface. They are mainly the electronic resources of some cities of RT, and also the website of Republican Fond of Revival of Historical and Cultural Monuments of RT.

On the majority of websites of structures and bodies of republican subordination, Tatar language is presented in secondary volume, giving way to Russian in number of informative tabs and the volume of provided information (Figure 3).

Practically on all electronic pages of municipal districts, such banners, as "Stop, corruption!," "Attention, businessmen," "Free legal assistance," "70th Anniversary of Great Victory" and different announcing, for instance, about coming Sabantuy, are presented only in Russian. The news information is renewed worse in many Tatar versions of websites, than in Russian ones, and somewhere there is no news feed in Tatar, for instance in the website of Yelabuga region.

Figure 1: Internet official segment

Figure 2: Usage of Tatar language on the sites of territorial organizations of public administration of the Russian Federation and the republic of Tatarstan and other organizations of federal subordination
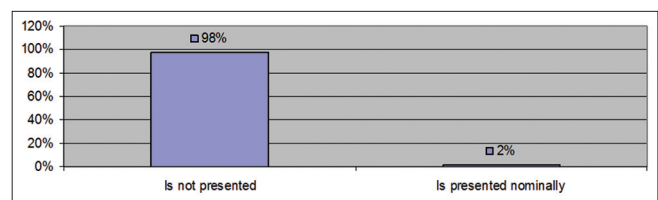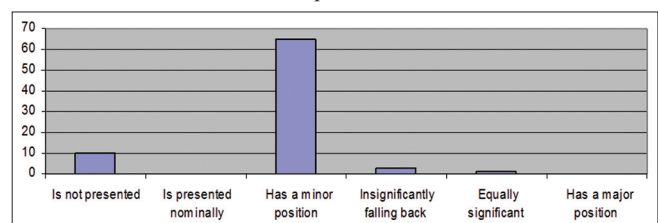

Figure 3: Usage of the Tatar language on the sites of organizations and institutions of republic subordination

In different regions of Tatarstan Republic, there is different attitude to presentation of information for Tatar language users in electronic resources. For instance, if the official portal of Apastovo region has only 4 tabs in Tatar, then, the website of Arsk region has 20 tabs.

Tatar language is presented in the website of President of RT to the better degree from all the websites of structures and bodies of republican subordination, where it is used equally with Russian.

Among 28 websites of state educational and scientific institutes, Tatar is presented in one or another volume only on 9, when, for instance, English is presented on 12 electronic resources (Figure 4).

Many universities prefer Chinese, Arabic, French, German languages, than the second state language in the Republic. Tatar interface has disappeared from the electronic resource of the Kazan Federal University. In the academic sphere, the Kazan centers of RAS, as well as the Academies of science of Tatarstan, including the Institute of Tatar language, Literature and Art, named after Ibragimov, ignore Tatar on their websites. There was no Tatar on the electronic resource of the Science Academy of Tatarstan Republic for a long time. It is present now, although in nominal volume. In November of 2013, this website made an attempt to introduce the news feed in Tatar, but it failed.

Significantly much attention to Tatar content in the Internet is paid by the Kazan State Medical University, the Almetyevsk State Institute of Petroleum, the Kazan State University of Culture and Art, the Povolzhsky State Academy of Physical Training, Sport and Tourism. However, Tatar plays the secondary role on the websites of these institutes.

If to consider virtual resources of national institutes, then, it turns out, that Tatar interface is presented on the websites of three museums from five, having their own websites. The electronic resources of State Art Museum and Yelabuga State Historical-Architectural and Art Reserve Museum are presented only in Russian. The website of the State Historical-Architectural and Art Reserve Museum "Kazan Kremlin" has only the news feed in Tatar, and the Tatar of the website of Bolgar State Historical-Architectural Reserve Museum is still being developed, and the news in Tatar are being renewed belatedly.

The website of National Museum of RT is developed in the best way in the museum sector for Tatar users, however, the volume of information in Tatar here gives way to Russian content. Some tabs can be read only in Russian, for instance, "Museum contests," or getting the information about the price of tickets and the museum opening hours.

More than half of 17 websites of theatre-spectacular institutes of Tatarstan Republic does not have the Tatar interface, despite the fact, that the official names of some theatres themselves presuppose the use of the second language of RT, in particular, first of all, it refers to the website of Tatar Academic State Opera and Ballet Theatre, named after Musa Jalil. There Tatar-speaking users can read the required information either in Russian, or in English. In secondary volume, Tatar language is presented on the websites of the Bugulma State Russian Drama Theatre and the Kazan State Circus. Parity use of two state languages of Tatarstan Republic is demonstrated by the electronic resources of the Tatar Theatre, named after G. Kamal, the Almetyevsk Tatar State Drama Theatre, the Naberezhnye Chelny State Tatar Drama Theatre, the Nizhnekamsk Tatar Drama Theatre. The websites of the Kazan Tatar Youth Theatre, named after Gabdulla Kariev and Menzelinsk State Tatar Drama Theatre, named after Sabir Amutbaev contain more information in Tatar, than in Russian.

From 19 websites of libraries and library resources of RT, only 5 of them have Tatar interface. The electronic resource of the National Library of Tatarstan Republic presents Tatar only in secondary volume: The news feed in this language is being renewed belatedly, the information banners in Tatar interface are presented only in Russian. Tatar language is presented to the better degree in the library sector on the electronic resources of the National Electronic Library of RT and the Central Library MBUK "Centralized Library System of Kazan."

Full statistics on usage of two state languages and English in the sector of national cultural institutes is presented in the following diagram (Figure 5).

If to consider the national Internet as a peculiar virtual space, having definite contours, then, the commercial sector of official segments is in boundary area, as a lot of websites of commercial companies can be oriented more likely at the outside audience, than the inside one, thus being the part of other national Internet. In the commercial sector of Tatar national Internet, such websites involve, first of all, the websites of engineering plants of the Tatarstan Republic. It is no surprise, that neither electronic resource of these industrial enterprises has the Tatar content. However, many websites of commercial segment are aimed at the inside customer, the significant share of which is

Figure 4: Usage of the Tatar language on the sites of State Higher Educational and Scientific Institutions
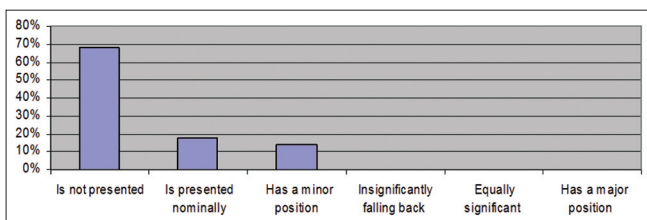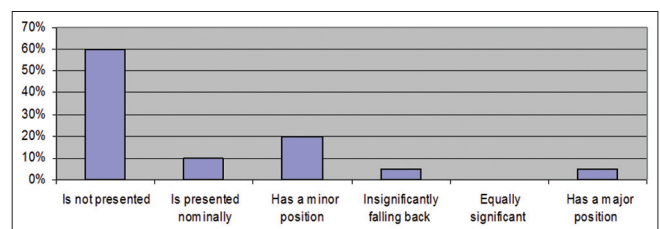

Figure 5: Usage of the Tatar language on the sites of State Cultural Institutions

presented by Tatar users. Here we can refer mainly the electronic resources of Tatarstan banks and commercial retail business, commercial educational institutions and regional offices of mobile communication providers, the plants of light industry and cinemas. Nevertheless, neither website has Tatar interface. Till present, the website of Beeline presented the exception in commercial constituent of official segment of Tatnet, which, obviously, used Tatar as a kind of marketing vehicle, however, soon the mobile operator refused from this idea. The English content is present on 41 from 137 electronic resources.

In whole, it is possible to state, that from 317 available and checked electronic resources of official segment of Tatar national Internet, Tatar interface turned out to be presented on 95 websites, constituting only one third of the general quantity, English is presented on 97 websites, Russian - on all (Figures 6 and 7). As a main language for information communication, Tatar language was used only on 2 electronic resources, Russian - on 305. We recorded the parity use of Tatar and Russian languages only in 5 cases.

4. CONCLUSION

Thus, complex monitoring of network resources of the official segment of Tatar Internet showed that the main language for information communication is Russian. To any extent, Tatar is presented less than on one third of websites, approximately equally with English. The weakest positions of Tatar are in commercial and state educational sectors of official segment of Tatar Internet. If we observe some positive changes in the state sector of official segment of Tatar Internet, that testify about the extension of functioning sphere of Tatar, then, in commercial sector, Tatar continues to stay fully ignored language; neither positive changes in this relation are noticed.

Thus, at present, the status of Tatar in the Internet-space does not correspond to the status of state language of RT and requires

Figure 6: Usage of the Tatar language on sites of the official segment in the Tatars internet
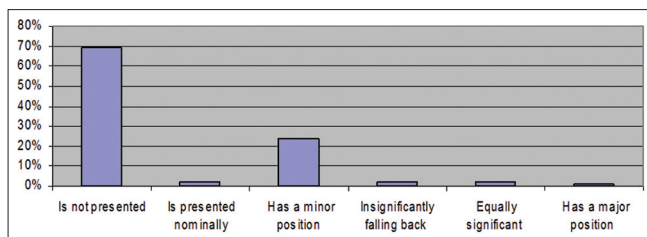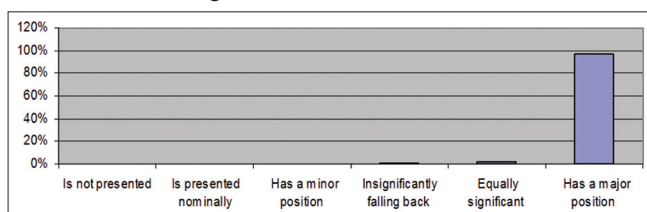

Figure 7: Usage of the Russian language on the sites of the official segment in the Tatars internet

more effective support measures and purposeful policy, aimed at the consolidation of its positions. As the main measures to strengthen the role of Tatar in network resources, we can suggest the following: (1) To oblige government agencies of Tatarstan Republic to have Tatar content on their Internet resources, sufficient for the Tatar-language user. (2) To develop the system of financial incentive for commercial institutes, registered in Tatarstan Republic and having the websites in both state languages. 3. To organize the occupational structures, promoting qualitative translation of content of virtual pages from Russian into Tatar.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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