

***Language Censuses and Monitoring as an Instrument  
of National Language Policy  
[Jazykovye perepisi i monitoringi kak instrument  
nacional'noj jazykovej politiki]***

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**Saint Petersburg: The Herzen State Pedagogical  
University of Russia. Pp. 344  
ISBN: 9785806427565 (hbk)**

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The book addresses linguistic censuses and monitoring, which provide reliable information about a nation's social and cultural characteristics. Special attention is given to international experience in solving key problems and issues related to shaping the linguistic landscape. The book offers detailed answers to three main questions: why language monitoring is carried out; how to take into account languages and their speakers; how to apply results of language censuses and monitoring to serve government purposes. The monograph presents the procedure and results of language censuses over the past two centuries. It is pointed out that, with regard to Russia and the post-Soviet space in the context of linguistic censuses, the term 'language' is modified by the adjective 'native' and is used in the word combination 'native language'.

Chapter 1, 'Questions on language in general censuses', focuses on the specificity of compiling questionnaires based on language censuses and monitoring. It is noted that questions in census forms vary and depend on specific

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cultural and historical conditions, and are interpreted along given ideological lines. It is emphasized that, in various countries, data collection and analysis of residents' language proficiency, as well as of public opinion regarding various language problems are carried out on a regular basis and are published in specialized journals and surveys, for example, in the EU statistical body 'Eurobarometer' (p. 20). There is a wide diversity in implementing language censuses and monitoring, which include face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, and email interviews (p. 20). Analysis of questions on language leads the authors to ascertain the following tendency: the use of an L1 term while simultaneously implying its cognitive function in a multilingual setting, i.e. an individual's proficiency in one or more languages. Thus, the authors emphasize the fact that until around the 1980s, the question of language was defined as 'a language in which a person thinks, the language he knows best' (p. 21).

Afterwards the phrase 'mother tongue' was replaced by the term 'language', although the wording of the question remained unchanged. Formulations aimed to separate the dominant language from dialects also proved to be problematic. The authors give an example of a linguistic census in Switzerland, in the course of which survey respondents answered questions in French, but did not consider it as the main language (p. 22). It is also pointed out that observation-based street surveys provide objective information about a mother tongue, as they lack the self-esteem element. In their study, the authors adhere to the following definition of a census – 'a population census is a complex statistical process for collecting demographic, economic and social information over a well-defined period of time, which characterizes either the entire population of a country or the population of a certain region' (p. 27). The monograph lists questions asked during the language census, including questions about population, i.e. whether the person is a local resident or a foreigner; age; place of residence; marital and financial status; educational level or literacy; proficiency in a language or languages, etc. From historical examples it follows that languages are a tool for regulating the political, economic and social situation in the state. For this reason, linguistic censuses and monitoring are carried out on a regular basis, helping to define areas of potential ethnically determined conflicts. The authors also emphasize the growing popularity of English across the globe and its use as the language of institutional interaction in the professional environment. The following statistics are given based on the example of Quebec (Canada), where people speak French along with English: 'For example, the use of English by workers in liberal professions and scientific and engineering personnel increased from 60.3 % to 62.8 %' (p. 69).

The authors of the book confirm the existence of four linguistic situations caused by diglossia under present-day conditions: social bilingualism, which is characterized by the fact that two languages are used in one community; use of a dialect or standard language by individuals within their community; use of a dialect or a standard language when the choice is determined not by the speaker's identity, but by the situation itself; dilalia, which is a special case of diglossia, when the majority prefers the standard language, thereby leading to dialect minorization (p. 105). The authors also point out cases of 'institutional bilingualism' (p. 106), based on the example of Switzerland, which refers to the right of citizens to choose an institutionalized language of communication – be it German or French. This is especially important in relation to children and the development of their 'bilingual language capital' (p. 106) – children choose a language regardless of their parents' language.

With regard to linguistic censuses and monitoring carried out in the Russian Empire, the USSR and the Russian Federation, the authors specify that it was the clergy that carried out censuses until 1918. Subsequently, censuses were conducted to create linguistic, ethnic and religious maps and draw up measures to use Russian as a language of interethnic communication. What is important is that the question of language was formulated based on linguistic consciousness, i.e. taking into account 'what language a person considers his native tongue' (p. 111).

According to the authors, it follows from the issue that a person must have one native language, the norm being a situation where language and nationality match; a deviation from the norm is considered to be a discrepancy between the native language and nationality, as well as inability to speak the native language (p. 111).

In modern Russia, censuses were carried out in 2002. In 2008, a pilot census was conducted to test the census technology, and in 2010, the regular All-Russian census of Population was held, which was conducted in Russian, enumerating individuals at the actual place of residence. Russian was the main language for 138 million (99.4 %) of those surveyed (p. 118).

Chapter 2, 'Special language censuses and monitoring', covers the issues of language meaning in the context of national identity and citizenship. The authors note the growth of bilingual and multilingual situations across the globe. At the same time, it is emphasized that a change in the institutional status of a language in some cases leads to a language shift, i.e. transitions from a minority language to a majority language and vice versa are about to take shape. However, it is argued that diglossia can result in a change of language: 'even if at the moment the balance of power between the two languages seems stable, it is a transitional state of relations between the majority and minority languages' (p. 123). At the

same time, language capital is viewed as an integral part of human capital, which is defined as ‘intelligence, health, knowledge, high-quality and productive work, and quality of life’ (p. 126). In other words, ‘human capital is the dominant factor to drive the stable economic growth’ (p. 127).

The community’s unifying factor is the language. It is for this reason that linguistic competence acquires special importance in every society. The language is mastered, according to the authors of the book, in two ways – through long-term contact with language and through special training (p. 132). Thus, language competence is provided by two institutions – the family and the school. In this case, the school becomes a market participant, language-wise; this means that it is economically unviable to provide competitive education services in one of the minority languages. Knowledge-driven economy proves that a language community prefers to speak a language that requires minimum cost, which raises the question of ‘ethno-linguistic viability’ (p. 137), i.e. when a language undergoes assimilation and eventually disappears, crowded out by more viable languages, or conversely, acquires significance, contributing to preserving cultural and historical heritage, thereby proving its vitality. For this reason, preference is given to languages that boost an increase in the value of language capital: ‘people invest in another language in the hope of obtaining a wide range of material and symbolic resources’ (p. 141).

The analysis of the linguistic situation in Russia leads the authors to identify four main trends, such as a decrease in the number of many ethnic groups of the Russian Federation; a decrease in the number of speakers of languages of the peoples of Russia; an increase in migrants from the CIS countries; the growth of people learning foreign languages (p. 150). The authors lay emphasis on supporting studies of minority languages drawing on the human rights concept. It is noted that the right to language is part of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Nevertheless, such an approach may, under certain circumstances, provoke an ethno-linguistic conflict, which may lead to a change of language in the future. The authors define three stages of language change: setting conditions under which it is possible to use the majority language to the detriment of the minority language; a situation of bilingualism, characterized by a fall in the number of minority speakers; gradual replacement of a minority language by a majority one (pp. 158–159).

To maintain a stable state of language in Russia a language education policy is being successively implemented. It is carried out along the following lines: teaching the native (mother) tongue; teaching a second language, and the language of the peoples of the Russian Federation; choosing the language of

instruction; choosing a foreign language to study; teaching the national language abroad (pp. 159–160). Thus, the authors come to the conclusion that the language model of a 21-century Russian speaker should be multivariant.

Chapter 3, ‘Monitoring the state and use of Russian and other languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation in the education sector’, analyzes the monitoring results (2018), whose purpose was to craft a set of measures ‘to further the development of language educational policy in terms of preservation and development of the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation’ (p. 170).

All constituents of the Russian Federation (federal subjects) took part in the monitoring. The monitoring results present data on state languages that exist along with the Russian language; languages that enjoy the status of a ‘native’ language; and K-12 languages. The languages of instruction in schools are highly constituent-specific. Thus, for instance, in the Republic of Buryatia, instruction of ‘general’ (K-12) education takes place not only in Russian, but also in Buryat, Ewenki, and Soyot. In the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area – Yugra, instruction is carried out in Khanty, Mansi and Nenets, etc. (pp. 310–311).

The authors emphasize that it does not suffice to know how many languages exist in a country to analyze the language state; scholars contend it is also important to know ‘how many people speak a particular language, how they are distributed on the territory, and what their actual state is’ (p. 315). This statement is in line with language viability and the category of its speakers. It is pointed out that an important parameter includes, but is not limited to, the number of speakers. The institutional status of the language, state financial backing, etc. are of the essence. Thus, despite the fact that many languages have a large number of speakers, they are classified as ‘minor languages’, for example, ‘Bengali (189 million speakers), and Shanghainese (77 million)’ (p. 315).

It is argued that the more functions a language performs, the higher its status, the higher its diffusion and, accordingly, its viability. Today, there are two types of language vitality – linguistic and sociolinguistic vitality. The former is construed as ‘a capacity for constant linguistic innovation’ (p. 316), and sociolinguistic vitality is defined as ‘the will (power) of the linguistic community to transmit its language or language variant to the next generations’ (p. 316).

In light of this, vitality is synonymous with the term ‘continuity of intergenerational language transmission’ (p. 316). The monograph also presents a typology of native speakers, which is inclusive of native fluent speakers; semi-speakers; terminal speakers; and rememberers (p. 317). However, a comprehensive assessment of language viability requires taking into account other parameters, including intergenerational language transmission, a change in domains of language use, the availability of appropriate materials for teaching the correct use

of a particular language, etc. Only on the basis of a set of various parameters it is possible to understand whether a particular language is endangered and may be lost. According to the authors of the monograph, the timely and scientifically grounded application of measures to protect languages will help to preserve linguistic diversity in Russia.

(Received and accepted 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021)