

The Role and Significance of Language in Forming the Concept of “Homeland” Associated with the Ideas of Nationality

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into a unique aspect of Turkestan's late 19th and early 20th centuries, where strengthening cooperation and relations among ethnic groups led to developing and enriching their respective languages. The focus is on the social factors that influenced the development of national languages, particularly the role and significance of language in activating the concepts of “nation” and “homeland.” This study sheds light on the desire for a common linguistic unity among the Turkic peoples within the Russian Empire, the efforts to realize national identity, and the issue of national statehood in Turkestan.

Keywords: National language, nation, homeland, jadidism (modernism), Turkic ideas, Turkestan, development, independence, enlightenment.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of “homeland,” formed in Europe and associated with nationality, penetrated Central Asia's societies, that is, Turkestan, at the beginning of the 20th century. At this time, in Turkestan, dependent on the Russian Empire, a process of renewal of thinking took place due to the revival of ideas for development. Therefore, along with the selection of the European development model as a “model of development” by the jadids,

there was a need for a new system of concepts formed in Europe, particularly the concept of "homeland" related to nationality, to enter the intellection of the people of Turkestan. During these processes, the concepts of "homeland" and "nation" were renewed in ideation. The formation of the new concepts of "homeland" and "nation" followed the development goals and fully reflected the ideas of independence of the jadid enlighteners, who started fighting for development and independence.

Homelands are an integral component of nationalism. Based on this, the homeland is recognized as a nationalist form of territoriality (Shelef 2022). Territoriality is an attempt "to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area" (Sack 1986: 19). The designation of some land as "the homeland" is a specific form of territoriality engendered by the idea that a particular group of people (the "nation") ought to control a specific territory because that land is part of who the people are (Penrose 2002; Shelef 2020a). A new homeland seems to be a territorial symbol of collective identity. The idea of nationalism, pushed earlier, connects the nation's fate and the region. Of course, a thesis will appear explaining why a certain territory rightfully belongs to the nation and how the nation has reached its current territorial situation. Its application in practice is seen in the unification of different ethnic groups based on common similarities, especially in the increased attention in this education to subjects such as history, ethnography, geography, and natural science, and in the emphasis on the promotion of a single culture, a single language, and a single territory. Similarly, the comprehensive development and rapprochement of different ethnic groups and their aspiration to achieve complete unity is a new stage in the emergence of the national state movement. At the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century, we observe the process of strengthening cooperation and relations in the economic, political, and cultural life of ethnic groups in the land of Turkestan under colonial conditions. This, in turn, causes the languages of different ethnic groups to develop further and enrich each other. In this regard, the issues of

"language and society" and "language and nation," that is, social aspects of the development of languages, require in-depth research. The lack of research on this issue shows that the topic is actual. We will consider the genesis and improvement of the concepts of "homeland" and "nation" from the most active artistic concepts, in connection with the influence of the conditions of the time, the place and importance of language in it, on the example of the works of jadid writers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To study the role and importance of language in 20th-century Uzbek jadidic literature and press, in particular, the most active artistic concepts, "homeland" and "nation," creative examples, and journalistic works of jadids were analyzed. Cultural-historical, sociological, and comparative-typological analysis methods were used to study the problem.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The concept of "homeland," associated with nationalism, intensified in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries and became the main tool for promoting the ideas of independence of modernism (jadidism), which emerged as a social, political, economic, and cultural movement in the territory of Turkestan, a colony of the Russian Empire, in the early 20th century. So, "homeland" is attributed as a form of territoriality in the context of nationalism, and it also involves the identification of a certain population living within a specific territory as a nation. In other words, the formation of a nation within a certain defined territory depends on the distinctive characteristics of the population living in that territory. Territoriality, or the connection to a territory, is discussed here. An article titled 'Milliyat' (Nationality), published in the newspaper *Tarjimon* in 1908 provides information about theories regarding the nation.

According to the article, the "unity of religion and nation" theory in Islam has not been confirmed in real life. Although Iranians and Turks became Muslims, they did not become Arabs,

and each nation maintained its language and customs. There are two theories of nationality in the West: according to one, a nation consists of a group of people who speak the same language, and the characteristic of nationality is language; according to the second, the nation is a collection of people who want to be part of the nation, that is, the characteristic of the nation is the desire to belong. An example is the "nation" (Swiss), created by the passion and willingness of people who speak three languages and believe in two distinct sects. The author says about the states emerging in the West based on these "nation" theories: "We should not forget that in recent times, the territory of states is emerging as the territory of nationalities. The most important events of the 19th century were the union of Germany and Italy, the independence of Greece, Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria, the revolution in Austria, and the uprising in Poland. All of them are based on the dream of generalization of the states' territories and the nationality's territory" (Saufas 1908). The great Ottoman Empire, which unites many people under the "Islamic Nation," is disintegrating due to the nationalism formed in the West, and various people within it are trying to escape from under the "Islamic flag." They are striving for ownership (independence) of their territories by demanding national rights. This is why rebellions are increasing in the Ottoman state.

These correspondences show that Turkestan intellectuals paid attention to ethnic elements in their views of the nation in contrast to the traditional concept. In particular, this is reflected in the common aspiration of the intellectuals of all Turkic peoples in the Russian Empire for "language unity", which is the main factor in forming the "nation". These attempts are also seen in the debates about the press and literature being in a single language in mutual education sharing and the education being conducted in the Turkic people's language. Enlightenment reformers insisted that education should be conducted in the mother tongue. Since the beginning of the 20th century, this issue has become an urgent problem.

Speeches on the issue of "common language" first appeared in the Russian Muslim press at the end of the 19th century. Ismail Gasprinsky paid special attention to this. Under the slogan "Unity

in language, thought and work", he dreamed that they would become enlightened by uniting all Turkic peoples through the single literary language of the *Tarjiman* (Translator) newspaper. By the beginning of the 20th century, debates about "common language unity" revived among the Turkic peoples of Russia. First, Ismail Gasprinsky highlights the issue of the unity of the Turkic language. He stated that three things in the world — "religion," "language", and "science" — are sacred, and it was necessary for Turkic people who believe in the same religion to have a common language to be enlightened. He also refuted the opinions of those who had a negative attitude towards the issue of the linguistic unity of the Turkic people in Russia. In particular, Ilminsky said about the *Tarjiman* newspaper: "Imagine this newspaper as a chain stretched from Bakhchysarai to the city of Omsk in Siberia. This chain that unites and conquers so many different categories is "Tarjiman". In response to this objection, Gasprinsky says, "This newspaper is published in Turkish, close to the 'Ottoman' dialect, it was opened only to spread education, and Russian Muslims are loyal to Russia and good friends of Russians. However, they want to use their rights and achieve progress" (Gasprinsky 1905). Of course, such serious attempts and wishes began to spread and reverberate in all the colonial regions within the Russian Empire. Colonial societies have taken essential steps toward self-realization. This opened the way for the spread of Turkish ideas among the Turkic people. The process emerged due to the realization of the nation's identity and increased attention to its language and history. In the press and literature, views on a single language and the nation's history were revived. Such actions led to the concept of "nation" and "homeland" acquiring a new meaning.

Discussions about a common language have increased in the press. From the beginning of the 20th century, newspapers, theaters, and pamphlets began to be published in the "Turkish language" in Azerbaijan. According to "Tarjimon," the Turks of Azerbaijan were divided into two sects - Sunnis and Shiites - and gained love and alliance under the shadow of being the people of the Qur'an. It even reached the Turks in Iran through literature, and they were proud of it. Lately, however, there have been

reports about the Turks in Iran engaging in Persian conversations and their literature being in Persian. Nevertheless, wherever Turkic people are, it is emphasized that firstly, they need to communicate, read, and write in their own language. It is said that Turkic people in various regions feel proud of the necessity of learning Russian in Russia, Persian in Iran, and Chinese in China according to their needs. The beginning of education in Persian for Turks in Persian territories was seen as their right. It is emphasized that the language and literature of any people should not be attacked, and if this happens, it will be an injustice (Persian or Turkic 1907). On the one hand, this situation, which is related to the common language, shows that Turks look at each other as brothers (meaning the importance of ethnic identity) and promote positive conditions in social life; this indicates a positive outlook. From another aspect, it also indicates that Turks are proponents of guiding others along a path of respect without encroaching upon other peoples' language, literature, or overall social and cultural life. Such positive attitudes and outcomes serve as a source of encouragement and inspiration for progressive-minded individuals among all Turks, facilitating their attainment of goals with even greater possibility and determination. Since ancient times, starting from the beginning of the century, there have been active efforts among the intellectuals of Turkestan to promote linguistic unity among the intelligentsia.

Turning to the Turkic language and its history, Behbudi notes that the Persian and Turkic languages have been used side by side in Turkestan. He says that the interest of the Turkic people in their language is increasing and that there is a need for a certain selection of convenient dialects for all Turks. He says that the Crimean, Caucasian, and Ottoman dialects have easier and lighter meanings for Turkestans than the Kazan dialect, and the literary language of Turkestan is complex due to the mixture of Persian and Arabic words. He noted that the Northern Turkic dialect is heavily influenced by Russia. Touching on the language perspective of the modern schools of Turkestan, he notes that in the Muslims of All Russia, Russian Turkestan and Samarkand, "Usuli Savtiya" schools were created in Turkic

language, and all teachers, masters, and assistants received information through the "Tarjiman" language, which is understandable for all Turkic peoples. Emphasizing the wide scope of the use of the Ottoman language in Turkey, "Turkish language and literature is a source of inspiration for Russian Muslims. The press is a witness to this," he says (Behbudi, 1909). Of course, these actions resulted from efforts aimed at uniting the Turkic peoples of Russia around one language in the first decade of the 20th century, which continued gradually in the following years.

The officials of Tsarist Russia always resisted the processes of national unity occurring in the country and tried to keep it under control. Gasprinsky noticed the government's policy of separatism towards the Turkic people. Enlightenment expressed his reaction to this policy through his speeches in the press. He points out that the Russian government's views on the non-unification of Turkestan Muslims and other Muslims in Russia and their opposition to it are futile and ineffective. Emphasizing that the unity of Muslims in the Russian state is "religious, historical, physical," he expresses his view that Muslims have their own opinions and that the purpose of their unity is only to be enlightened (Gasprinsky 1908). Nevertheless, although the Russian government tried to ban the activities of jadid schools in the country, the jadids did not stop their educational efforts.

At the beginning of 1911, the State Duma adopted a resolution regarding the language of instruction in Russian-native schools. According to this resolution, following the statement that "local literary languages do not exist in Turkestan," all subjects in Russian-native schools would be taught entirely in Russian. This significant resolution related to school education was the main topic of discussion in all newspapers, especially in "Tarjimon". Gasprinsky criticized the decree and urged to point out that the Turkic peoples, with their current and wide-ranging Chigatay language, demonstrate that it is one of their oldest languages, and emphasized that "a nation that has produced great scholars in all fields of knowledge cannot be without a literary language." Gasprinsky confirmed his views by citing Alisher Navoi's "Mukhamatul-lugatain" (Gasprinsky published this work

of Navoi in 1902 under the title "Mukhokamai lug'atayn". Mir Alisher Nevai. *Mükalamai lugatayn*. Publisher Ismail Gasprinskiy. – Bagçeseray: Matbaai Tarjimon 1902) as an example, showing that in this work, the Turkic language is presented as a literary language, even surpassing the Persian language in some places. Gasprinsky accused the Turkestans of causing the issue to be discussed in this way. He emphasized that their lack of action and haste to protect their interests is why they issued discriminatory Orders like the above (Gasprinsky 1911).

After the October Manifesto of 1905, almost everyone living in Russia began to demand the abolition of various restrictions by the state in their favor. But, as Gasprinsky writes, "Turkestanis do not hear anything, do not behave as if they are completely cut off from this world. Why don't they have problems at all? If so, why is the silence? As far as we know, waqf (an Islamic endowment of property to be held in trust and used for a charitable or religious purpose), educational, religious, and other institutions need reform; Turkestan is still "under martial law". Such urgent issues should be on the agenda as the most important issues that should be discussed by the people of Turkestan. Gasprinsky emphasizes ignorance as the main reason for Turkestan's inaction (Ishmael 1906). As you can see, Gasprinsky not only defended the interests of the Muslim population of Turkestan but also called on the Turkestans to take practical action and demand their rights from the government (Abdirashidov 2014).

It was stated in the press that love for religion and nation is obligatory for every person, and the protection and preservation of religion and nation should be based on love for the mother tongue. It was emphasized that when a nation loses its love for its mother tongue, the loss of its religion and nation is also emphasized, and attention is drawn to the importance of language in relation to religion and nation (Zakhiri 1914). Likewise, it was acknowledged that everyone should be able to understand everything in their mother tongue easily and quickly. However, the inability to understand things in a foreign language was recognized as the reason for not enjoying it, emphasizing the importance of the mother tongue in education (Muzaffarzade

1914a). Indeed, in 1914, the country's dignitaries made significant efforts due to active initiatives. A new announcement regarding the language issue in Muslim schools was declared: "The Commission of the Majlis has discussed the language issue in Muslim schools extensively. Finally, the name 'Turk-Tatar' has been accepted" (Announcement 1914).

The great merit of Jadid enlighteners is that they consider education in the mother tongue in schools, the teaching of national literature, and the basics of the Muslim religion to be decisive issues. They supposed the mother tongue and national literature to be the main means of preserving the nation's identity.

Muzaffarzade admitted that the mother tongue is the only helper in protecting a person's love for religion and the nation. He emphasized that Muslims were mistaken for education and upbringing, that knowledge should be studied from both secular and religious perspectives, and that the role of the mother tongue is essential.

Additionally, in articles such as Aulani's 'Hifzi lison' (Language protection) (Aulani 1914), Muzaffarzada's 'Cultural Ladder' (Muzaffarzade 1914b), and Muharram's (Namangani) 'The Language Issues' (Muharram 1915), they expressed their opinions about the need to pay attention to the mother tongue, education in the mother tongue, and language being a matter of life and death.

CONCLUSION

During this period, it was realized that the national language is a symbol of the nation and homeland, the basis of the national spirit, that the development of the language is closely related to the development of the society, and it was promoted as a means of realizing the national identity. This way, the attitude towards the national language has changed and improved. During this period, due to the attention paid to the language, national education was also launched. It was ensured that every Turkestan could speak his native language, think in his native language, and express his thoughts in his native language. The language was recognized as a national pride. Language was considered the

basis of national unity and an important legality in its formation. As observed in the above processes, language has complex socio-political meanings manifested in certain contexts. Semiotic processes such as practice, manifestation, ideology, and activity provide clear information about how social identities emerge through language.

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