

**LANGUAGE AS A CONSOLIDATING FACTOR OF ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE
RUSSIAN GERMANS**

***A LINGUAGEM COMO FATOR DE CONSOLIDAÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE ÉTNICA
DOS ALEMÃES RUSSOS***

***EL LENGUAJE COMO FACTOR CONSOLIDADOR DE LA IDENTIDAD ÉTNICA DE
LOS ALEMANES RUSOS***

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ABSTRACT: The article aims at identifying the attributes of ethnic identity and ethnic concepts of minority groups living in the territory of the Russian Federation, in particular, the Russian Germans living in the city of Glazov and the Vyatka-Kama region. The relevance of the study is determined by the need to understand and to study the shared characteristics of the ethnic identity of the German ethnic group: national self-awareness, preservation and revival of the ethnic culture and traditions, language preservation. The materials of the research are the tape recordings of unprepared German and Russian speech which were made during dialectological and ethnographic expeditions to Glazov. The speech of three informants is analyzed in the study. Nine main parameters of the ethnic identity are examined in relation to the Russian Germans of Glazov: common history, common territory, religion, living environment, family background, folklore, behavior standards, mentality of the ethnic group, and the common language. The language is described in more detail in the study. The results of the study suggest that the ethnic identity of the Russian Germans in question is a changing dynamic category. In our opinion, the language is the most important consolidating factor of the cultural integrity of an ethnic group, an instrument for sharing culturally important information and experience; so it is one of the core parameters of ethnic identity of the Russian Germans living in Glazov. This article will be of interest to researchers in the field of German dialectology and German speech islands.

KEYWORDS: German ethnic group. Characteristics of ethnic identity.

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RESUMO: O artigo tem como objetivo identificar os atributos de identidade étnica e conceitos étnicos de grupos minoritários residentes no território da Federação Russa, em particular, os alemães russos residentes na cidade de Glazov e na região de Vyatka-Kama. A relevância do estudo é determinada pela necessidade de compreender e estudar as características comuns da identidade étnica do grupo alemão: autoconsciência nacional, preservação e revivificação da cultura e tradições étnicas, preservação da língua. Os materiais da pesquisa são as gravações em fita de discurso alemão e russo não preparados, feitos durante expedições dialetológicas e etnográficas a Glazov. A fala de três informantes é analisada no estudo. Nove parâmetros principais da identidade étnica são examinados em relação aos alemães russos de Glazov: história comum, território comum, religião, ambiente de vida, antecedentes familiares, folclore, padrões de comportamento, mentalidade do grupo étnico e a língua comum. A linguagem é descrita com mais detalhes no estudo. Os resultados do estudo sugerem que a identidade étnica dos alemães russos em questão é uma categoria dinâmica em mudança. Em nossa opinião, a língua é o mais importante fator de consolidação da integridade cultural de uma etnia, um instrumento de compartilhamento de informações e experiências culturalmente importantes; portanto, é um dos parâmetros centrais da identidade étnica dos alemães russos que vivem em Glazov. Este artigo será de interesse para pesquisadores no campo da dialetologia alemã e das ilhas de fala alemãs.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Grupo étnico alemão. Características da identidade étnica.

RESUMEN: El artículo tiene como objetivo identificar los atributos de la identidad étnica y los conceptos étnicos de los grupos minoritarios que viven en el territorio de la Federación de Rusia, en particular, los alemanes rusos que viven en la ciudad de Glazov y la región de Vyatka-Kama. La relevancia del estudio está determinada por la necesidad de comprender y estudiar las características compartidas de la identidad étnica del grupo étnico alemán: autoconciencia nacional, preservación y renacimiento de la cultura y tradiciones étnicas, preservación del idioma. Los materiales de la investigación son las grabaciones en cinta de habla alemana y rusa sin preparación que se hicieron durante las expediciones dialectológicas y etnográficas a Glazov. En el estudio se analiza el discurso de tres informantes. Se examinan nueve parámetros principales de la identidad étnica en relación con los alemanes rusos de Glazov: historia común, territorio común, religión, entorno de vida, antecedentes familiares, folclore, normas de comportamiento, mentalidad del grupo étnico y el idioma común. El idioma se describe con más detalle en el estudio. Los resultados del estudio sugieren que la identidad étnica de los alemanes rusos en cuestión es una categoría dinámica cambiante. En nuestra opinión, el idioma es el factor de consolidación más importante de la integridad cultural de un grupo étnico, un instrumento para compartir información y experiencias de importancia cultural; por lo que es uno de los parámetros centrales de la identidad étnica de los alemanes rusos que viven en Glazov. Este artículo será de interés para los investigadores en el campo de la dialectología alemana y las islas de habla alemana.

PALABRAS CLAVE: etnia alemana. Características de la identidad étnica.

Introduction

One of the characteristics of the modern society is intensive globalization associated with the problems of intercultural contacts. The changes in the social structure and urbanization have a considerable impact on interethnic relations and ethnic identity. The issues of ethnic identity and its characteristics are actively discussed by both Russian and foreign scientists in the fields of ethnology and ethnolinguistics. Our interpretation of these concepts is based on the ideas of such outstanding Russian and foreign researchers as Arutyunov (2000), Abdulatipov (2000), Bardzini (2000), Bromley (2008), Haas (1996), Mead (2008), Riggs (1996; 2008), Tishkov (2008) and others. We define ethnic identity as a cultural and genetic program developed because of the centuries-old ties and community development, it is the result of socialization and formation of a specific human environment (ABDULATIPOV, 2000, p. 52).

Material and methods

The study aims at analyzing the peculiarities of ethnic identity of a minority group of people living in the territory of Glazov. This minority group is the Russian Germans. The goals are to study the linguistic situation of the Russian Germans, as well as to study the facts of objectification of their linguo-cognitive picture of the world and cultural adaptation, and to identify the prospects of their development. To achieve the goals, the following methods were used: field research; collecting sociolinguistic data using questionnaires and interviews; socially differentiated analysis of the linguistic material including observing the functioning of the Russian German language in various communicative situations. These methods make it possible to describe the specified phenomena with a greater degree of verifiability.

According to the aim and objectives of the study, we identify the following factors (parameters) characterizing the ethnic identity of the Russian Germans of Glazov, namely 1) common history, 2) common territory, 3) common religion, 4) living environment, 5) family background, 6) folklore, 7) behavior standards, 8) mentality of the ethnic group, 9) common language.

Parameters of Ethnic Identity of the Russian Germans of Glazov

The Russian Germans of Glazov are a specific ethnic community that is not an indigenous ethnic group. At present it consists of 176 people, according to the All-Russia

population census of 2010 (in 2002 there were 260 people). The decrease in the number is mainly due to the so called “natural decline” of the older age group and the internal migration of the population (OREKHOVA; OBUKHOVA, 2010).

It should be noted that Germans had not lived as an integral ethnic group on the territory of the Udmurt Republic (in particular in the city of Glazov) until the 20th century, unlike compact German settlements that had existed in Ukraine, the Volga region, Transcaucasia, St. Petersburg province, Siberia and Central Asia. Then, in the middle of XX century, some settlements of Russian Germans started to appear in the territory of the Udmurt Republic as well⁶.

The ethnic Germans living in the city of Glazov are the descendants of the so-called special settlers who were deported to the Udmurt Republic from Ukraine, the Volga region, and Azerbaijan in 1942-1947 to work at industrial enterprises in the forestry and peat industries under control of the special commandant's office (OREKHOVA *et al.*, 2014, p. 1533). At present, ethnic identity of the Russian Germans of the city of Glazov is still revealed in everyday life to some extent, but recently it has been especially vividly manifested in the sphere of intellectual culture, mostly seen in the desire and attempts to preserve the native language (dialect) (BAYKOVA, 2017).

In the next part of the article, we will describe all the parameters of ethnic identity of the Russian Germans of Glazov. The study began in 2007 and it continues at present. The language of this ethnic group will be analyzed in more detail.

Common history. Russian Germans living in the city of Glazov have great respect for their own past, especially their family history. At the same time, they do not perceive this past as a collection of cold facts and dates, but as deep-seated personal issues. The Volga region still retains its significance and attractiveness for them as a historical cradle of the Russian Germans; they consider it a “lost” homeland and an alternative to leaving for Germany (KURSKE, 2011). The common history parameter is, in our opinion, an important characteristic of ethnic identity of the Russian Germans, since the events of the middle of XX century, namely deportation, the labor army, special settlements, a ban on leaving for the homeland, and subsequently moving to Germany on a massive scale: all these events have shaped ethnic identity of the Russian Germans of Glazov.

⁶ By comparison, 1,735 ethnic Germans lived in the territory of the Udmurt Republic according to the official data of the 2002 population census. Apart from Glazov, there are similar groups (on account of ethnicity and history) in the village of Uva, in Igrinsky and Balezinsky districts, in the cities of Sarapul, Votkinsk, Mozhga and, of course, in Izhevsk, where the Republican Center for Revival of the Culture of Russian Germans of the Udmurt Republic called “Wiedergeburt” (Revival) and the governing body of the regional branch of the German National Cultural Autonomy are located.

As for the parameter of ethnic identity identified as *common territory*, it seems not to be valid in the conditions of an urban, ethnically heterogeneous environment. As it is mentioned above, the ethnic Germans of Glazov do not belong to the indigenous population of Russia.

Common religion can be regarded as a strong ethno-consolidating factor. However, decades-old, state-imposed atheism has largely destroyed religious beliefs and consciousness. The Evangelical Lutheran Church has survived and carries on its activities in some large regional centers of the Udmurt Republic, while in smaller cities and settlements it is not institutionalized. It should be stated that Lutheran confession continues to remain the most wide-spread among the Russian Germans only thanks to the older generation of Germans who constitute the “ethnic nucleus” and still exert a noticeable influence on younger age generation.

The *living environment* is also ethnically specific. The Russian Germans of Glazov keep their homes clean, neat, well-kept, and cozy, and they tend to follow the traditional home decorating style.

Family background or marriages have their own specific characteristics. 95% of the Glazov Russian Germans have mixed marriages; singlehood is extremely rare. The German families usually have two or more children; a divorce is very uncommon.

As for *folklore*, the Russian Germans of Glazov are well familiar with German proverbs, sayings, fairy tales and fairy-tale characters, folk songs. As for the German folk tunes, they have undergone significant changes under the influence of the Russian language: from polyphony to unison singing and open sound; they have become more melodious.

The *behavior standards* are to a certain extent correlated with the parameter of *mentality* of the ethnic group. The Glazov Germans demonstrate such qualities as being hardworking, responsible, efficient and rational, the ability to empathize, willingness to offer assistance in a difficult life situation to relatives and friends regardless of their ethnicity.

Common language. The material for this study is the tape recording of speech of 3 Russian German speakers (a total of 6 hours) made during dialectological and ethnographic expeditions in 2015-2016 to the city of Glazov. They are representatives of the older generation (HILKES, 1989, p. 69; MANYKIN, 1992. p. 5) born before 1933; they have a fairly good knowledge of their native language (dialect), therefore, when collecting the linguistic material, we deliberately focused on elderly people expecting them to have a higher level of linguistic competence.

It is advisable to analyze how this age group use the language system in the context of the most important historical events of the specific time period, as these events influenced the speech behavior of ethnic Germans significantly. This fact should be taken into account when one describes the linguistic characteristics of this ethnic group. In our case, it is the linguistic behavior of the older generation informants. Hilkes (1989), Manykin (1992), Moskalyuk (2000) adhere to a similar point of view.

The main identifying feature of speech behavior of the representatives of the older age group is that most of them speak both the literary German language and one of the variants of the existing dialects. It should be noted that language (dialect) competence of this age group is quite different. The study has revealed that ethnic Germans of the older age group are from 70 to 90 years old: LVY⁷ (born in 1924), KHB (born in 1935), SAG (born in 1938); they were raised and brought up in a relatively homogeneous German ethnic environment. German is their mother tongue, and they had a possibility to communicate in German at least in their families with their parents and immediate relatives from an early age. The informants had lived with their parents in German settlements in the territory of the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and Azerbaijan before the deportation period, which suggests active use of the German spoken language in all spheres of everyday life.

As it is mentioned above, we selected 3 representatives of the older generation group as the most prominent dialect speakers, conventionally representing 2 main groups of idiolects (dialects) – southern (High German) and northern (Low German). This conclusion was made based on predominance of southern or, on the contrary, northern dialect linguistic phenomena that were characteristic of their speech. Thus LVY (born in 1924) and SAG (born in 1938) are the Low German dialect speakers, KHB (born in 1935) is a High German speaker. However, it should be noted that the collected dialect material demonstrates a mixed nature of the idiolects, that is, the speech of the informants has the features of both High German and Low German dialects. Their speech behavior is inconsistent in the way they use one or another phenomenon of a particular dialect; they sometimes choose to use a kind of a “middle” variant refusing from specific dialect features. This is primarily due to the initially mixed nature of the dialects of both the mother colonies and daughter ones, as well as an extremely wide geographical range of German dialects spoken in the settlement (SCHIRMUNSKI, 1926; 1929; 1931). Let us consider the most vivid features of the High

⁷ The abbreviations (LVY, KHB, SAG) stand for the family name, first name, and patronymic of each informant.

German and Low German dialects that are either the same or different in the German dialects spoken by the informants.

The methods of auditory, comparative, statistical, and computer analysis were used to study the linguistic material. According to the results, the following features characterizing the German dialects of Glazov can be described:

1) The second consonant shift changes (*/p, t, k/*):

a) Germ. *[p]* → OHG, MHG *[ff]*

(LVY) – verkauft [*fərkaof*], angerufen [*angəru:fən*]; (KHB) – fünfundvierzig [*fifunfi:rtsiç*], früher [*frī:er*].

b) Germ. *t* → OHG, MHG *33 (ss)*

(LVY) – groß [*gr'ɛ:s*], interessant [*interesant*], Großeltern [*gro:seltərn*]; (KHB) – Großmutter [*grosmər*]; (SAG) – besser [*b'es'ər*], heißt [*hais*].

c)) Germ. *k* → OHG, MHG *hh (xx)*

(LVY) – nicht [*niç*]; (KHB) – wenig [*v'en'iç*], danach [*nax*]; (SAG) – fünfundvierzig [*fifunfi:rtsəç*], mache [*midəmaxə*].

2) The change of Germ. *[b, d, g]* → OHG *[p, t, k]*:

the change of *[d]* → OHG *[t]* characteristic of High German Dialects:

(LVY) – zweiundzwanzig [*tsvəiuntsantsiç*], zwei [*tsvai*];

(KHB) – Großeltern [*gro:seltərn*];

(SAG) – Schwester [*j'vester*], alte [*altə*], jetzt [*jet's*], Freizeit [*frəitsəit*].

The speaker (LVY) sometimes uses the consonant *[d]* which is characteristic of Low German dialects: Plattdeutsch [*pl'adoit*], Vater [*fadər*].

3) Pronunciation of the Middle High German */g/* as the voiceless fricative */x/ç/ [x/ç]*:

(LVY) – Gorkovskji Rayon [*xor'kovski rajon*]; im Krieg [*im kri:ç*]; achtunddreißiger Jahr [*axtundraisçəə ja:ə*]; abliegen [*aplijən*]. This phenomenon of *[g]* → *[x/ç]* is not observed in the speech of other informants.

4) The use of the fricative *[ç]* in the suffixes *-ig/-zig*, which is a specific feature of High German dialects (Schirmunski, 1929; Ström; Schirmunski, 1926/1927):

(LVY) – zweiundzwanzig [*tsvəiuntsantsiç*]; (SAG) – fünfundvierzig [*fifunfi:rtsəç*], achtunddreißiger [*axtundraisçəə*]; (KHB) – wenig [*v'en'iç*].

5) Palatalization of consonants:

(LVY) – gestern [g'estərn], schon [ʃ'on], groß [gr'ɛ:s], Plattdeutsch [pl'adoitʃ]; (SAG) – gesehen [g'əze:ən], immer [im'er], der Krieg [d'e: k'ri: k'], Deutschland [d'oitʃ'l'ant], sie [z'i:]; Schwester [ʃ'vestər]; (KHB) – wenig [v'en'ic]; besser [b'es'er].

6) The change of post-vocal combinations of consonants /st/, /rst/, /rs/ → /št/, /ršt/, /rš/: (LVY) – gestorben [gəʃtorbm], verstehst [fərʃte:s], Schwester [ʃ'vestər]; (SAG) – Mensch [m'enʃ], Schwester [ʃ'vestər], sterben [ʃterb'ən].

7) The assimilation-type change of the consonant combination /nd/nt/ → /n/:

(LVY) – Plattdeutsche sind die [pla:doitʃə sī: di:], verstehst du das? [fərʃte:s das]; (SAG) – und dort [undort]; und dann [undan], was ich mit dem mache [vas ic midəmaxə]; (KHB) danach sind wir [nax zən vir]; Mama fortgefahren sind [mama fortkfarən sət].

8) The transition of the Middle High German long vowel /ī/ to the diphthongs /əi/, /ae/:

(LVY) – zweiundzwanzig [tsvəiuntsantsic], ein [əin]; (SAG) – Freizeit [frəitsəit], meinen [mīnən]. However, the realization of the MHG *ī* in the speech of the informant (SAG) lacks consistency.

MHG *iu* is pronounced in Glazov idiolects as the broad variant [ai]:

(LVY) – Deutsche [daitʃə], neun [nain], Neujahr [naija:r];

(SAG) – heulen [hailən].

The speech of the informant (SAG) retains the features of Low German dialects: *eu* [oø] → [ū]: befreundet [bəfründət]. Broadening of the diphthong [ae] → [oi] is also observed in the speech of the informants: (LVY) – zweiundfünfzig [tsvoiuundzibtsic], zwei [tsvoi];

9) Contraction of the MHG narrow diphthong /ie/ to the long vowel /ī/:

(LVY) – Gebiet [gəbi:t], Krieg [kri:ç]; (KHB) – fünfundvierzig [fifunfi:rtsic], Kassierer [kasi:r].

10) Delabialisation of the MHG vowels / ü /, /ō/ [ü, ö] → /ī/, /ē/ [i, e]:

(KXB) – dreiundvierzig [draəunfiftsic], fünfundvierzig [fifunfi:rtsic], früher [frī:er]; (SAG) – fünfte [fīnstə], fünfundvierzig [fifunfi:rtsəç], früher [frī:ər]; schön [ʃē:n].

11) Broadening of the MHG vowels /i/ → /e/, /u/ → /o/:

(KHB) – wir sind in Kasachstan [ver zin in kazaxstan], muß immer mit der Mama [mes imər mit der mama:]; (SAG) – sie [zə]. It should be noted that broadening of vowels does not occur in the speech of the informants consistently.

12) Narrowing and labialisation of the stressed MHG vowel /ā/ > /ō/:

(SAG) – waren [vorən]; abends [obən]; (KHB) – Jahre [jo:ər]. This phenomenon does not occur in the speech of the informants consistently either. The main features of the consonant and vowel systems are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – The main features of the consonant and vowel systems of the German dialects of Glazov

	LVY	SAG	KHB
	speaker of the Low German dialect	speaker of the Low German dialect	speaker of the High German dialect
second consonant shift:			
[p] → [f]	+	+	+
[t] → [s]	+	+	+
[k] → [h]	+	+	-
transition of [d] → [t]	+/-	+	+
consonant palatalization	+	+	+
transition to fricatives [g] → [x/ç]	+	-	-
use of the fricative [ç] in the suffixes -ig/-zig	+/-	+/-	+
pronunciation of the consonant s as [ʃ] in the consonant combinations sn/ sm/ sl/ sp/ st/ sw	+	+	+
assimilation-type changes in the consonant combinations nd/nt	+	+	+
diphthongisation of the MHG [ī] → [əi]/ [æ]/ [ai]	+	+/-	+/-
contraction of the MHG narrow diphthong /ie/ to the long vowel /ī/	+	+	+
delabialization of the MHG vowels / ü /, /ō/ [ü, ö] → /i/, /ē/ [i, e]	-	+/-	+/-
broadening of the MHG vowels /i/ → /e/, /u/ → /o/	-	+/-	+/-
narrowing and labialization of the MHG vowel /ā/ → /ō/	+	+/-	+/-

Source: Prepared by the authors

It should be noted that the above features are quite consistent in the Glazov German dialects.

The foreign language environment, namely, the Russian language as the language of everyday communication, has a strong interfering influence on German at all levels: the syntax is simplified (word order is not always observed, the syntactic rules are violated), blending of declinable nouns and adjectives takes place. The interlingual interference is observed at the phonetic, morphological and syntactic levels, and, according to our study, is characterized by the following phenomena:

- 1) no glottal stop (Knacklaut) in the speech of all the informants;
- 2) weak fricatives [tʃ] and [ts];

- 3) a greater degree of palatalization: *gestern* [g'estern], [gr'ø:s],
- 4) pronunciation of the voiced variant *z/s* instead of [ʃ] in the initial position: *drei Schwester* [drai zɛstɛr],
- 5) articles in front of nouns are omitted: *das var kolxoz rotə fanə*, *das var ze:r ʃve:rəs ja:r*.
- 6) the use of the Russian words when speaking in German: *der kolxoz var nach dm kri:k, tam haben doitʃə gəvont...*;
- 7) loan translation of the Russian lexico-syntactic patterns containing numerals: *unt varən ʃon in pavlodar und völtən əm nointsenhondərtfinftsic*

It should be noted that the Russianization of the German national minority can be explained by the fact that, firstly, this ethnic group is not a language island where there are more possibilities to resist the influence of a foreign language environment; secondly, the region under consideration is characterized with ethnic diversity, where the use of the Russian language is absolutely necessary as it is the main means of communication (*cf.* Baykova).

Conclusion

The survey of the Russian Germans living in Glazov was aimed to analyze ethnic identity of this minority group. The results of the study make it possible to suggest that all the parameters of ethnic identity are quite important. The Russian Germans of the city of Glazov share similar memories of deportation, the labor army, the hardships in the post-war period. The emotions pass on to the generation of children and grandchildren who are interested in their family history and try to study and preserve their native language, folklore, and try to learn about their family values and traditions and strengthen them. As for the ethnic language, this parameter is one of the most sustainable ethnic characteristics that are affected by socio-economic or political factors to a much lesser degree. The language reflects the history of a people, their unity, social and cultural development. Thus, the language is the most important consolidating force of the cultural integrity of an ethnic group; it is a tool for transmission of culturally important information and experience.

The study results support the idea that ethnic identity is a dynamic, changing category. Certain distinctive characteristics are manifested due to objective reasons, such as the political system, the government ethnic policy, territory administration; as well as subjective reasons: a desire to preserve one's language, culture, values and traditions.

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