

CHANGES IN THE ETHNO-CULTURAL IDENTITY OF DUNGANS OF UZBEKISTAN (IN THE EXAMPLE OF THE DUNGAN LANGUAGE)

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the role of language as a fundamental issue in the understanding of ethno-cultural identity of the Dungans, one of the special diasporas in Uzbekistan. The national language has always been relevant, especially in a small number of nations. That is why national language is considered as the most important issue in a small number of nations compared to other nations. Among these few nationalities, the Dungans of Uzbekistan are also trying to preserve their national language. Today's problems of the Dungans of Uzbekistan related to the national language and the scientific basis of their solution are also described in this article.

Keywords: national language, diaspora, identity, ethnocultural identity, Dungans, dialect, Gansu, Shaanxi.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a unique means of communication for people. Language helps to shape not only people but also society. Language is the basis of culture and helps people to classify, think, summarize and conclude objective facts. Language is also a carrier of cultural transmission, which people use to disseminate information, express their experiences and feelings. Knowing and feeling the national language is considered one of the characteristics of each national group, and it is often considered a distinguishing feature of different nationalities.

METHODS

There is a nation in the world that has its own language and strives not to lose it. The existence of the national language directly ensures the longevity of the nation. The main function of language is communicative function, and the rest of its functions revolve around this function. For example, constructive - shaper of individual and community thinking; cognitive - storage and transmission of information; emotional-expressive - expression of intuition and emotions, and has various tasks in the field of various other disciplines. As mentioned above, they all revolve around the communicative task. In addition, language has another function that is necessary for this study, and this is the defining function, that is, the function used to determine who

a person is from the language he speaks. This is one of the main signs of identity. In this study, the second function of the language - identification is considered.

In the science of ethnology and the meaning of identity in general, it is possible to see the uniqueness of each by comparing one person with another person or one group with another group. Such differences and their presence in a community prevent this community from merging with other communities. This principle can also be applied to ethnic groups.

RESULTS

One of the main requirements for the identification of ethnic communities is the correct distinction between "ours" and "outsiders". Language is one aspect that clearly shows this difference. Members of the community must know the language of the community they belong to and respect it as their mother tongue. Therefore, language has a great role in clarifying ethnocultural identity.

Language is important in the formation of ethnic groups. Language is the main factor for ethnic units to communicate freely with each other, communicate, express and understand their feelings, and establish economic and cultural relations (Jabbarov, 2008, p. 4). Language determines the specific ethnocultural character of some peoples.

DISCUSSION

Ethnographic scientists L.P. Loshuk and V.I. Kozlov believes that language is an important condition for the formation of ethnic unity, and it is not only an ethnic factor, but also an ethnic sign (Loshuk, 1987, p. 26-28), some scientists say that language is only an ethnic sign, without including language in the ethnic factor (Kozlov, 1969, p. 4).

Among ethnic symbols, the awareness of ethnic identity is one of the most important. Ethnographer V. Mardovin says that the language of the ethnos and the unity of its identity is an important factor that unites this community as a nation (Marvodin, 1947, p. 89). To prove his point, it can be said on the example of the Dungans that they have united around the Dungan language and culture and have preserved their identity to this day. A crisis of ethno-cultural identity can be observed in the groups that have forgotten their language (Dungans of the Fergana Valley). In the situation before the Dungans moved to the territory of Central Asia, that is, when they lived in the territory of China, they were distinguished from the surrounding culture by religion. And at this time, language was not, and could not be, a boundary between differences.

The reason is that in a certain period of the life of the Dungans, the determining function of the language in maintaining their identity did not work. That is, when they lived with the Chinese, the language and culture were the same, and the main difference was religion. In 1862-1877, as a result of the Dungan uprising against the tyranny of the Qing Empire and its defeat, they left their country and entered Central Asia, and

they encountered a new cultural environment. And now in this new cultural environment, the most important of their distinguishing features were the language and cultural characteristics specific to China. Because for them, the religion that is a marker in China cannot be a marker here. Because the population of Central Asia consists mainly of Muslims. Thus, in the new space, the language became the leader of the most basic conditions of the identity of the Dungans and was now seen as the main marker.

Although it has been more than 140 years since the Dungans began to migrate to Central Asia, most of them have preserved their language without losing it. During the first decades of migration, most Dungans had very few speakers of any language other than their own. The reasons for this can be explained as follows:

- *firstly*, feeling very alienated in front of a completely alien society;
- *secondly*, the fact that they lived densely and had little contact with the surrounding population;
- *thirdly*, since the main occupation of the population is farming, the main time was spent in field work and there was little need to get into wide contact with the general public;
- *fourthly*, lack of cooperation with the local population;
- *fifthly*, due to the difficult political situation after the Russian Empire and the October Revolution, little attention was paid to public education.

Even on the eve of the Second World War, among the Dungans, there were very few people who knew the Russian language. According to older Dungans, during the war, a person who knew the Russian language was seen as a rare person (Ortikov, 2021, p. 517). Educated Dungans certainly mastered other languages, but this was very rare.

The fact that the population is limited to only the Dungan language depends on their location and place of origin, and the Dungans of Shaanxi are mostly densely settled in settlements and have very little contact with the surrounding population. However, it was easy for Dungans from Hansu or Salars who were integrated into Dungans in Uzbekistan to know or learn the Uzbek language. This is because even before they moved to this area, they lived next door to the Uighurs in Gansu and spoke their language, meaning they were already bilingual. Therefore, the location of the Hanseatic Dungans is also scattered, and they mostly go to the places required by their profession. Due to familiarity with the local culture, he did not separate himself with the population with a certain limit. That is why this group of Dungans is the most prone to become Uzbek today.

Before the beginning of the Second World War, a period of serious changes began in the Soviet Union in public education and especially in the cultural life of the Dungans, among whom the first highly educated people began to emerge. Almost all of them learned Russian and other local languages, and were fully involved in social

life, which began to affect their language. The beginning of the World War slowed down the cultural processes that had begun. The cultural upsurge that began in the 1930s slowed down, and every opportunity was spent on war. However, this war acts as a catalyst for the Dungan nation to become bilingual. Because the war served for the cohesion and unification of the peoples of the Soviet Union. The law of social life "uniting to defeat the common enemy" came into play, and all allied nations acted as one.

Although the Dungans are a very small number compared to the population of the Soviet Union, they worked tirelessly for the development of their homeland during the war and during the socio-economic and cultural revival that followed. These processes created an opportunity to learn the languages of Russian and other allied nations. This period of struggle united not only the Dungan people, but also other peoples as one nation, and it was a time when many people learned the Russian language. This period can be said to be the first stage of Dungan bilingualism.

The revival of economic development after the war paved the way for Dungans to learn Russian as well. Due to the consistent post-war education of the former Union, the Dungans, like other peoples of the Union, were widely involved in public education, and because of this, they often began to communicate in Russian. Because, in schools attended by Dungans, all classes are conducted in Russian, except for Dungan and foreign languages. This allowed the new generation of Dungans to systematically learn the Russian language. As a result of learning the Russian language and improving other cultural knowledge through it, the interest and desire for the Russian language increased among the Dungans. In addition, the Russian language served as a common language of communication for the Dungans and many other peoples of Central Asia. Such factors quickly made Russian a second language among the Dungans.

Currently, the Dungans of Central Asia are at least bilingual. After the migration of the Dungans to Central Asia, their linguistic development was different. As mentioned above, language played an important role in the settlement of Dungans throughout Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan. The part of them who know the Uyghur language - Dungans from Gansu came to Tashkent city and various cities of Fergana valley, especially Andijan. The Uyghurs also played a role in their settlement in these areas. The region of Uzbekistan where the Shensi Dungans live densely is the Orta Chirchik district of the Tashkent region, and the best preserved place of the Dungan language is this region. The Russian language is considered the second language in this region, and the middle-aged and older people almost do not know the Uzbek language well. The reason is that both their educational language and social

language are directly related to the Russian language. Here Dungans speak a mixture of Russian and Dungan. He communicates with his children in Dungan language.

Dungans from Hansi and Shensi live in Tashkent city. Hansuls are the majority here. If the Dungans of Tashkent city are classified by language, they can be put in the second place. Undoubtedly, the Dungans of Orta Chirchik district of Tashkent region take the first place. Dungans in the city of Andijan and other regions of the Fergana valley can be included in the third place. The Dungans of the city of Tashkent kept their language relatively because they were in constant contact with the Dungans of Orta Chirchik district and the kinship ties were not broken. Dungans of Tashkent city communicate in Uzbek, Russian and partially Dungan languages, unlike Dungans of Orta Chirchik district. The main language of communication here is Uzbek, and they maintain good neighborly relations with the local Uzbeks.

And among the Dungans of Andijan, the language has not been preserved at all. Only some words (*yeye*- grandfather, *nene*- grandmother), names of things (*jozi*- table, *kozi*- chopsticks for eating, *jambi*- hand towel) have been preserved. In addition, in the city of Andijan, it can be seen that some Dungan language words (*lozi* or *lazi*- hot pepper, *kozi*- table) have been adopted into the language of local Uzbeks (Ortikov, 2021, p. 519).

The same process continues in the life of the Dungans who live in the territory of the Republics of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, in addition to Uzbekistan, in Central Asia. The independence of these countries and the declaration of their national language as the state language had a serious impact on the Dungans and their colloquial language. According to their location, Dungans learn local Turkic languages and communicate through them.

Dungan neighborhood of Middle Chirchik district, which is a densely populated area of Uzbekistan's Dungans, consists of Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Dungans, and this place serves as a cultural center for Dungans of Uzbekistan. The Dungan language is best preserved in this neighborhood. Preservation of language is also relative. Because the Dungans of Uzbekistan only have oral speech, and according to the respondents, they do not understand some Dungan words when they talk to the Dungans of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan. They explain the reason for this with the lack of literary language. In Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, there are Dungan schools in areas where Dungans live, where the main subjects are taught in the Dungan language. In addition, literature in the Dungan language is also published. With this, there is also a written literary language, which is considered one of the main factors in the preservation of this language.

After the independence of Uzbekistan, education in schools began to be conducted mainly in the Uzbek language, which is considered the state language. As a result,

classes are conducted in the Uzbek language at the 42nd general secondary school located in Dungan neighborhood of Oтра Chirchik district. That is why Dungan youth, unlike their parents, can freely communicate in Uzbek.

Bilingualism is a positive phenomenon on the one hand, but on the other hand, it can lead to forgetting one's mother tongue. In 1878, a group of rebels entered the city of Osh. After some time, a certain part of them will move to the Dzhambul region of Kazakhstan. The rest will settle in the village of Kyzil Sharq (former collective farm named after K.O. Toshirov), 15 km from Osh, Kyrgyzstan. About 3,000 Dungan people live there. Apart from their anthropology and their insistence that they are Dungan, they are fully Uzbeks, speaking a fully Uzbek-Andijan dialect. Customs and traditions are all Uzbek. The same process was observed in the Dungans of Andijan who lived in the neighboring area with them.

The conducted field research and collected data show that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, although there were people here who knew the Dungan language, they were not fluent in the language. Mixed marriages are very free here, and there are many observed marriages with Uighurs, Dungans, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. During a scientific expedition to this village in 2019, a woman who spoke the Dungan language was met. She also came from Tashkent as a bride 30 years ago. In his memoirs, he says, "When I tried to teach my children Dungan when they were young, my mother-in-law and father-in-law strongly opposed it. I could not go against their opinion. I gave up and could not teach my children our language. I am very sorry for what I did today. No matter what happens, I have to teach them the language. Alas, it is too late for that now. I speak Dungan with my relatives from Tashkent. If I don't talk to them, I will probably forget about them" (Ortikov, 2021, p. 521).

Another important point is that, unlike the Dungans of other regions, these Dungans hardly communicate in Russian. Because Uzbeks are the people with whom they communicate the most. In addition, the majority of the population of Osh and Andijan, the cities they communicate with, are Uzbek-speaking. At the same time, the above-mentioned Dungans from Gunsu have a tendency to learn the Uzbek language, and the main part of those who moved to this region moved from the area of the city of Kulja (Guldja) of Gansu province. The population of this region is the majority of Uighurs and Dungans of the Fergana Valley. The main language here is Uzbek, and Uzbek is spoken in Dungan families as well.

In the early 1980s, the Ministry of Public Education of Kyrgyzstan sent teachers of the Dungan language to teach children in schools, so that the Dungans could recover their mother tongue. However, this government-wide event did not produce the expected results. The informants, who were students at that time, said that the children had no interest in this language at all. Although the children were not interested, their

parents also had a cold attitude towards learning the Dungan language (Ortikov, 2021, p. 521).

When the respondents were asked about the reason for this attitude towards language learning, they said: "The Uzbek language was formed as our mother tongue. In fact, we know that Dungan is our mother tongue, but we have no desire to learn it. "Learning that language is as difficult for us as learning a foreign language," they answer.

When asked why the Dungan language disappeared, it was observed that almost all the answers were the same. That is, parents did not teach their children their own language, as a result of generational change, the Dungan language was completely forgotten within two or three generations. This village is the only group where Dungans live densely, but have completely forgotten their language.

Even in areas where the Dungan language is preserved, its future is at risk. Because the Dungan language has been preserved in the form of an island in the Central Asian region, and strong local languages in the surrounding environment are an obstacle to its development. Serious efforts should be made to preserve and develop it.

Currently, in the Dungans of Uzbekistan, the preservation of the Dungan language is provided by teaching children, and in the Republics of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the Dungan language is taught in schools. However, based on the current situation, the power of this method does not give the expected result. First of all, the organization of Dungan language teaching courses creates various difficulties. These difficulties are on the one hand due to the lack of national financial resources, factors related to teachers, for example, books and textbooks for Dungan language courses are not guaranteed, which has a negative impact on Dungan language classes. Secondly, the learning process is not given enough attention. There is not enough interest and motivation to learn the Dungan language (Marvodin, 1947, p. 189). That is why the training courses do not achieve the expected result. Many students only learn a few words by the end of the course. They are not interested in learning the Dungan language in depth and consider it useless. Therefore, Dungan language teaching is low even in areas with Dungan schools.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this research on the Dungan language and its current state, the following conclusions were reached:

1. The Dungan language is the primary factor in the ethno-cultural identity of the Dungans of Uzbekistan. Because there is a crisis in the ethno-cultural identity of the groups of Dungans of Uzbekistan who have forgotten their national language;

2. The language of the Dungans of Uzbekistan is preserved only as an oral language, which further shortens the life of the national language;

3. The future of the Dungan language is worrisome, and if practical work is not carried out to preserve it, in the near future, as a result of the exchange of 2-3 generations, this language will be completely forgotten and an ethno-cultural identity crisis will occur, just like the Dungans of the Fergana Valley.

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