

# RUSSIAN FEDERAL CENTER AND REPUBLIC TATARSTAN: SOME ASPECTS OF RELATIONS

M.Kh. Farukshin<sup>1</sup>  
R.M. Giniyatullin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kazan Federal University  
E-mail: Midkhat.Farukshin@kpfu.ru, ramilginiyatullin@mail.ru

## ABSTRACT

The article deals with some problems that have arisen in the relationship between the Federal center and the Republic of Tatarstan, their background. They relate to the national statehood of the Tatars, the situation with the Tatar language and national education. This is the problem associated with the denial of the sovereignty of the Republic, which means the emasculation of national statehood, as a state without sovereignty does not happen. Other problems in the relationship between the Russian center and the Republic of Tatarstan are disagreements over the conclusion of a separate agreement between the authorities of both levels and the preservation of the name "President" in the designation of the head of the Republic. Especially strongly affects the national consciousness and even the fate of the Tatar nation, the state of the Tatar language and its study in the education system: the Russian authorities have banned the translation of the Tatar language graphics from Cyrillic to Latin, the exclusion of the national-regional component from the Federal educational standard, the excessive centralization of educational policy, the lack of a Federal standard for the study of the state languages of the republics. The political elite of Tatarstan is not able to resist the pressure from the Federal center and is forced to surrender one position after another, showing external loyalty.

**Keyword:** nation, nationhood, the subjects, of the surveys, the problem of the status of the Federation, the national language, a national education agreement in the Federation, the Republic of Tatarstan.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the relations between the Federal government and the Republic of Tatarstan there are two groups of problems: on the one hand, these are problems common to all subjects of the Russian Federation in their relations with the center, on the other – these are problems relating to national statehood and the language of the Tatars. The second group of problems is considered here. They are debatable among the Tatar public. The problems of the status of the national statehood of the Tatar people, the preservation of the Tatar language and its study in the education system have become particularly acute.

## 2 METHODS

The analysis of relations between the Central Russian authorities and the authorities of the Republic of Tatarstan is based on a comparison of the positions of the two levels of government and management on issues that are in the focus of attention of the Tatar public. In addition to the comparative method, the paper uses the normative method required in the analysis of legislative acts and legal acts of the constitutional court. The method of content analysis of documents related to the research topic was also used.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There has been a lot of debate in and around Tatarstan about whether republics within the Russian Federation have sovereignty. According to the official view expressed by the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, these republics do not have sovereignty (see The decision of the court 27.06.2000 No. 92-O). The Tatarstan political elite holds a different opinion, keeping in the current Constitution of Tatarstan the provision that "the sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan is expressed in the possession of the fullness of state power (legislative, executive and judicial) outside the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the powers of the Russian Federation on the subjects of joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan and is an integral qualitative state of the Republic of Tatarstan" (article 1).

The court's denial of the sovereignty of the Republic was a serious problem for ethnic identity, but the inherent property of the latter is sovereignty. The main thing here is that the denial of the sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan, albeit limited, is tantamount to the denial of the national statehood of the Tatars, because hardly anyone in their right mind can understand what kind of statehood is without sovereignty? The Tatars, the second (after the Russians) in terms of the number of the **nations** living in Russia, have no other historical homeland and national statehood, except Tatarstan.

It is hardly reasonable to deny that the Tatar people have the right to self-determination in the form of creating their own statehood within the Russian Federation. Once the people had their statehood, which was destroyed as a result of external aggression by the Russian state during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. In our time, there was a considerable number of Russian nationalists, not only dreaming, but also offering to abolish the **Republics**, existing within the Russian Federation.

Another problem has affected relations between the Republic and the Federal centre is the Treaty. In addition to the Treaty, the governments of the Russian Federation and Tatarstan signed 12 agreements on the delimitation of powers in the management of various spheres of life.

Unlike act № 73 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, where the subjects of jurisdiction and powers of the Federation are determined by the residual principle, the 1994 Agreement for the first time listed the powers of the RT on specific subjects of jurisdiction. The signed **treaty and agreements** gave the Republic quite broad powers, which other subjects of the Russian Federation did not have.

Agreements between the governments of the Russian Federation and Tatarstan were concluded for a period of 5 years, and they quickly ceased to exist. A different fate awaited the **treaty**. The fact is that in the early 2000s, due to the course of strengthening the "vertical of power", the 1994 agreement with the broad and exclusive powers of the

Republic of Tatarstan, which has always been considered by the Russian authorities as a forced compromise, was completely unacceptable for the center. To abandon the old Treaty and at the same time not to excite once again the public mood in the country, the Russian authorities agreed to take a compromise solution - instead of an indefinite Treaty in 1994 to agree to conclude a minor Treaty in 2007 for a ten-year period. Thus, the Federal center has achieved a reduction in the status of the Republic, and the Tatarstan elite has received at least some agreement that would distinguish the Republic among other subjects of the Russian Federation.

With the expiration of the **treaty** in 2007 in Tatarstan there was a question of either its extension or the conclusion of a new contract. The desire of the authorities of Tatarstan to get a new agreement was not understood by the Russian center, obviously, for two reasons: (1) the center did not want to somehow distinguish Tatarstan from other regions, to create the appearance that some subject of the Federation has special rights in comparison with other subjects. At the same time, the center followed the constitutional principle of equality of all subjects of the Federation; (2) with this step, the center wanted to discourage all other regions that referred to the Tatarstan example, the temptation to conclude any separate agreements with the Russian Central government, although the possibility of concluding them is provided in the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

In addition, the Moscow Kremlin took into account the completely changed conditions in which the current relations between the center and the regions are built. The agreement, signed in 1994, was concluded in the context of the economic crisis of Russia, legal confusion, territorial disunity, loss of control of the country, the threat of loss of the integrity of the state. It was mainly the result of the fact that the Central government was relatively weak, confused, infected with the "Chechen syndrome", so it made concessions. At that time, there were also many uncertainties about the distribution of competencies and powers between the levels of government.

Nowadays the picture is radically different. And, of course, the **Center** had no desire to enter into any separate contractual relations with the Republic.

Obviously, the Tatarstan authorities, not without influence from the center, did not put forward **officially** a proposal to conclude, renegotiate or extend the existing contract. So, in the Address of the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan (Parliament of the Republic) to the Russian President deputies asked "to form the special Commission for development of offers on legal questions", without having mentioned a **word** about the contract. Even the VI world Congress of Tatars (August 2017) adopted a figure of silence regarding the Treaty, which once again suggests the existence of an order from above not to touch on this topic. It is characteristic that even in his annual address to the state Council of the Republic of Tatarstan on September 21, 2017, the President of Tatarstan did not mention the topic of the new Treaty, apparently considering it closed to him by the presidential administration. Moreover, the President said that the Treaty is only a form, and most importantly - the content of Federal relations. However, the fact that these relations in Russia go into oblivion, he prudently kept silent.

The political establishment of Tatarstan essentially has no instruments of influence or pressure on the Russian center of power. The latter has a large number of resources of pressure and coercion of the regions - legislative, financial and economic, personnel, power, information.

The population of Tatarstan tacitly agreed that there is no agreement and there will be no more. It have a feeling, which, of course, required sociological confirmation, that he was not interested in the question of the Treaty. It is concerned about completely different problems, and above all the problem of survival. In the conditions of the deepest social stratification, the government, of course, cannot count on the support of the population in carrying out important political and socio-economic actions.

Another question that is being discussed in the Republic and on which the positions of the ruling circles of Tatarstan and Russia are diametrically opposed is the legality of using the word "President" in the title of the head of the Republic. The fact is that since the formation of post-Soviet Russia, the heads of many republics within the Russian Federation have been called Presidents.

In 2010 Ramzan Kadyrov, head of the Chechen Republic, refused the word "President" in the title of his post and said that there should be one President in Russia. This initiative was supported by the State Duma of the Russian Federation. On December 21, 2010 she included in the Federal law "On the General principles of the organization of legislative (representative) and Executive bodies of the government of subjects of the Russian Federation" the amendment according to which the name of the position of the head of the subject of the Federation "can't contain the words and phrases making the name of the position of the head of state - the President of the Russian Federation". In other words, the republics within the Russian Federation were forbidden to call their top officials presidents and were offered to make appropriate amendments to the Constitution of these republics, for which the term was established – until January 1, 2016. Tatarstan elite ignored this legislative provision and agreed to keep the word "President" in the title of the head of the Republic until 2020, when the term of office of the current President of the Republic of Tatarstan expires.

Issues of sovereignty, the conclusion or renegotiation of the Treaty, the preservation of the name "President" in the designation of the post of head of the Republic is not so much affect the interests and even the fate of the Tatar nation, as the state of the Tatar language and its study in the education system. After all, the national language is the most important marker of ethnic identity and a factor determining the further existence of the nation.

The decision of the Russian authorities to exclude the national-regional component from the Federal educational standard (Federal law No. 309 of 5 December 2007) does not seem to be correct, which does not allow to officially include in the curriculum, for example, a course on the history of the native land (on the history of the Tatar people).

Powers in the field of educational policy in Russia are so centralized that, as noted by ethnologists from the Institute of history of the Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan (ANT), "the powers of regional education authorities to independently approve the approximate curricula and issue regional programs and textbooks, including in the state languages of the republics, have been eliminated. The educational process began to be regulated by Federal state educational standards, which until now lack competence in the field of the native language. Final attestations in secondary education institutions are conducted exclusively in Russian" [1,8,9].

The question of the graphic basis of the Tatar language became a controversial issue both at the national and all-Russian level. Previously, it is necessary to remember the story of the attempt to translate the Tatar language from Cyrillic to Latin script. The tragic fate of the Tatar language was, in particular, that in Soviet times in a short

historical period twice changed its graphical basis: from - Arabic to Latin (1927), from Latin to Cyrillic (1938). According to Russian experts, the translation of native languages of non-Russian ethnic groups from Latin to Cyrillic opened "a half-century period of limitation of the sphere of functioning of native languages in education" [2, 10,11]. Cyrillization of the Tatar language opened the doors for Russification of the Tatar population.

Both times changes in the graphic basis of the Tatar language took place at the initiative of the governing circles. In 1999, the proposal to abandon the Cyrillic alphabet and move to the Latin script came from the Republic itself. The state Council of the Republic of Tatarstan made a proposal to abandon the Cyrillic alphabet and move to the Latin alphabet, securing such a transition by law. It was justified by the experts by the fact that the Latin alphabet is more consonant with the sound system of the Tatar language, expand the possibilities of using the language in the Internet space, increase interest in the language and its study, especially by young generations.

However, the Russian authorities strongly opposed the translation of the Tatar language into Latin. In 2002 the state Duma adopted an amendment to the Federal Law "On the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation", which categorically approved a single for all languages of the peoples of Russia graphics – Cyrillic, regardless of whether it corresponds to the sound system of a language or not. It is noteworthy that in all three cases (in 1927, 1938, 2002) no one was interested in the opinion of the Tatar people — a native speakers. In all three cases, the decision was imposed forcibly **from above**. In all three cases, the final decision was made by people who have nothing to do with the Tatar people or their language. All this was a manifestation of, at least, disrespect for the language and its specific carrier — the people.

The approach of the authorities to such a sensitive ethnic issue as the language of the people was very unacceptable. Unfortunately, no one offered to know the opinion of the native speaker — the Tatar people. This could be done through a referendum or at least through a broad and reliable sociological survey among the Tatars.

The final method of decision adopted in this situation — the method of legislative coercion – was objectionable. The adopted amendment to the law on languages literally forces all non-Russian peoples to use only Cyrillic as the graphical basis of their languages.

In legal terms, the position of the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan in its appeal to the constitutional Court of Russia was impeccable. Of course, it is unlikely that there were naive people in the Republic who believed in a politically unbiased court decision. Nevertheless, based on the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Republican Parliament clearly proceeded from the nature of Federal relations, pointing out that the establishment of the graphical basis of the alphabet as an organic part of the state language of the Republic, within the meaning of articles 68 (part 2), 71, 72, 73 and 76 (parts 4 and 6) of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, does not belong to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation, nor to the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and its subjects, and, therefore, in this matter, the Republic have full state power; the choice of the graphical basis of the alphabet of the state language is the power derived from the constitutional right of the Republic to establish its state languages, and, accordingly, is the exclusive competence of the republics themselves. The provision contained in the Federal law on the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation that the graphical bases of the alphabets of the state languages of the republics are established by Federal laws violates articles 68 (parts 2 and 3), 73 and 76

(parts 4 and 6) of the Constitution of the Russian Federation and means an unlawful invasion of the competence of the subjects of the Russian Federation, which have the right to carry out their own legal regulation in this area, including the adoption of laws and other regulatory legal acts.

The principles on which this problem should be solved democratically are extremely simple: the first — should not politicize the issue of language; the second — his professional word had to say specialists — linguists, writers, playwrights, etc.; the third — in a civilized society the last word in addressing such issues should belong to the native speaker — in this case, the Tatar nation.

Of course, state independence creates the most favorable conditions for the preservation and development of national languages. The former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have translated or are translating their languages into Latin. But these are independent nations and states.

However, in all circumstances, the responsibility for the state of the language lies first and foremost with the people themselves. It is pointless to look for reasons for the decline in the functional role of the national language in external circumstances.

On the basis of the Russian constitutional norm, the Tatar language is declared a state language in the Republic of Tatarstan. Is it necessary for everybody to study it all? Until recently, it was compulsory for all students in Tatarstan schools, which caused a mixed reaction among parents, primarily parents of students of Russian nationality. But even some Tatar parents consider it unnecessary for their children to learn their native language at school. Many Russian-speaking parents complained to the President of the Russian Federation, the Government, the Ministry of education and science of the Russian Federation and asked to cancel the mandatory study of the Tatar language in schools.

Opponents of the mandatory study of the Tatar language received serious help in the person of the President of Russia. In his speech at the meeting of the Council on interethnic relations in Yoshkar-Ola on July 20, 2017 Putin said that knowledge of the state Russian language is obligatory for all, and the state languages of the republics do not seem to exist at all. "Learning these languages is a right guaranteed by the Constitution, a voluntary right. Forcing a person to learn a language that is not his native language is as unacceptable as reducing the level and time of teaching Russian. I would like to draw special attention to this by the heads of regions of the Russian Federation." Following this, General Prosecutor Office was instructed to check and report before November 30, 2017, how the voluntary nature of the study of national languages in the republics is observed, and to suppress the facts of coercion in this case.

As a result of the pressure of the Central government, the study of state languages in the republics became voluntary and optional. In the Republic of Tatarstan the time for learning the Tatar language in schools was reduced to 2 hours per week and necessarily on a voluntary basis.

As it's known, the constitutional court of the Russian Federation of 16.11.2004 №16-P recognized that the normative provision contained in the legislation of the Republic of Tatarstan, "establishing that the Tatar and Russian languages as the state languages of the Republic of Tatarstan in educational institutions and institutions of primary and secondary vocational education are studied in equal volumes", does not contradict the Constitution of the Russian Federation. However, bureaucratic diligence led to the fact that even the voluntary study of the Tatar language was reduced to two hours a week.

#### 4 SUMMARY

In the solution of the problems highlighted in the article, was created a deadlock situation. The Central Russian government is not concerned about their decision and, moreover, puts certain obstacles. For its part, the political elite of Tatarstan does not have at its disposal any tools of counteraction or pressure on the Russian center. She is forced to surrender one position after another, while showing external obedience. The way out of the impasse is either the consent of the Russian authorities to solve the problems of concern to the Tatars, or the collective speech of the Tatar people in defense of their language and national culture. Neither is likely in the foreseeable future.

#### 5 CONCLUSIONS

Thus, in General, the attitude of Kazan to the Federal government is certainly loyal. There are no prerequisites and even hints of separatism. At the same time, the above-mentioned problems were the subject of disagreements between the political establishment of Tatarstan and the Central Russian authorities. On the one hand they show the desire of the ruling circles of the Republic of Tatarstan for greater independence, on the other hand, these differences show that not all the processes and aspirations currently taking place in Tatarstan are acceptable for the Russian center of power, which explains its negative attitude towards them.

#### Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Borisova N. V. Language territorial regimes in ethnic federations. Bulletin of Perm University, 2016, № 4.
- [2] Borisova N. V. Politicization of language and language policy in ethnic territorial regions //World economy and international relations, 2016, volume 60, № 1, Pp. 67-75
- [3] State languages of the Republic of Tatarstan: plurality of measurements. Monograph. - - Kazan: publishing house "Artifact", 2015.
- [4] Russian education in the transition period. Stabilization and development programme. The Ministry of education of the Russian Federation. — M.,1990
- [5] Mowbray J. Ethnic Minorities and Language Rights: The State, Identity and Culture in International Legal Discourse // Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism. 2006. Vol. 6. № 1. P. 2-29.
- [7] Nizamova L. R. Ethnic Tatars in contention for recognition and autonomy: bilingualism and pluri-cultural education policies in Tatarstan //Nationalities Papers, 2016, vol. 44, No. 1, p. 71-91
- [8] Sohrabi, M. (2017). The Relationship between Non-Financial Innovative Management Accounting Tools and Risk and Return of Iranian Stock Market Listed Companies. Dutch Journal of Finance and Management, 1(2), 40. <https://doi.org/10.29333/djfm/5816>

- [9] da Mota Silveira, H., & Martini, L. C. (2017). How the New Approaches on Cloud Computer Vision can Contribute to Growth of Assistive Technologies to Visually Impaired in the Following Years?. *Journal of Information Systems Engineering & Management*, 2(2), 9. <https://doi.org/10.20897/jisem.201709>
- [10] Parrot, M. A. S., & Leong, K. E. (2018). Impact of Using Graphing Calculator in Problem Solving. *International Electronic Journal of Mathematics Education*, 13(3), 139-148. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iejme/2704>
- [11] Abishov, S., Polyak, D., Seidullaeva, G., & Kermeshova, Z. (2018). Meaning of fiction in formation of students identity. *Opción*, 34(85-2), 186-204.