

Background of Tatar Investigation

To give some background to this website on the pronunciation and meaning of Tatar names, mention should be made of the original project (Lawson & Zavyalova, 2009. The cultural and language effects of the influence of Russian on West Siberian Tatar names. *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Toronto (Canada), August 17-22, 2008, York University, Toronto, Canada* (pp. 637-649) from which this onomasticon of Tatar names developed.

That investigation examined how political, economic, and cultural forces might affect a minority indigenous people speaking a different language (in this case, West Siberian Tatar in Tomsk, Siberia and the surrounding area). West Siberian Tatar is a non-written language. What this specific investigation focused on was naming patterns and their change. The hypothesis tested whether naming patterns in villages (where the dominant first language is Tatar) compared with naming patterns of Tatars who have gone to the city (many of whom have Russian names) might give a measure of how far Russification of Tatars has gone. For this question, we measured the number of Tatars who adopted Russian given names as opposed to continuing to use their original Tatar names. The results showed that while 5% of the Village Men changed to Russian names, 22% of the City men did, more than four times as many.

A second question was whether the influence of Russification was greater for men or for women. While some might have predicted that the city-dwellers might have changed more, it came as a surprise that women in both communities were almost twice as likely to adopt Russian given names. We found that 10% of the Village Women changed their names but that 35% of the City Women did. While it was to be expected that the City Sample would change to Russian names more than the Village Sample, it was not expected that the City Women would change more than the City Man, 35% vs. 22%.

The collection of names derived showing the name's language origin, meaning, significance, and frequency seemed to us to have interest for the scholarly world. While it is true that many of Tatar city-dwelling respondents had adopted new mostly Russian-oriented names, our focus for this aspect was on their original given names used in the Tatar-speaking community.

In addition, it seemed of interest to show the spelling of the name in the Roman and Cyrillic alphabets, the pronunciation of the name in BBC-NYTimes style, the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) style, the language of origin, and the meaning. To this description, we added the pronunciation of the name by a native speaker.

Names that people carry are a window on the language, culture, religion, nationality, patriotism, and personality of the family. Often, these factors are combined. Thus, in Eastern Europe under Soviet domination, religious names declined but patriotic names increased. Some cultures have naming patterns that direct the pattern of naming children after grandparents and other relatives. While there are cultures that honor living relatives by naming children after them, other cultures will only honor deceased relatives. The broader question for the project upon which this report was derived is how language and customs in a minority culture are being absorbed or modified by the dominant culture.

Several investigations have examined patterns of naming in different countries :

- Azerbaijan: Lawson, Alakbarli & Sheil. (In Press). Azeri Naming Patterns, 1900-2001. *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Onomastiche, Pisa, 28 agosto - 4 settembre 200, II*, 117-128.
- China: Li & Lawson. Generation names in China: Past, present, and future. *Names*, 50(3), 163-172. 2002;
- Estonia: Lawson & Seppo, Estonian naming patterns, 1887-1991. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Name Society, January 5, 2006, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- Latvia: Lawson & Balode, 1998. (1998). Latvian naming patterns, 1880-1991. *Proceedings of the 19th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Aberdeen, Scotland, August 4-11, 1996. Volume 3*, pp. 244-249. Complete report available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 424 771
- Lithuania: Lawson & Butkus, 1998-1999. Lithuanian patriotic names 1878-1991. *Onoma*, 34, 249-263.
- Russia: Lawson, Glushkovskaya, & Sheil. 2007. Russian naming patterns, 1874-1990. *Congress Acts. 21st International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Uppsala, August 19-24, 2002, 3*, 193-206.

These studies have shown the influence of the factors mentioned above (language, culture, religion, etc.) and the effect of the time period.

The Tatars of West Siberia

The 2002 Russian census reported over five million Tatar speakers in Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, China, and Finland. About four and one-half million are Tatars, descendants of the Turkic-Mongolian peoples of the Ural-Altai region. The area that this investigation is focused on is Tomsk at the entrance to Western Siberia. The population for the region is about 950,000. The Tomsk Oblast (region) has a continental climate, with an average temperature in January of -5.8°F and an average temperature in July of 75.2°F. The average annual temperature is 29.7°F.

Tatars make up about 2% of the population or about 20,000 people, and are mostly Sunni Muslims. Some live in villages, some live in the city of Tomsk itself. Siberian Tatars speak a slightly different language than other Tatars, a Uralic-influenced Turkic dialect. Tomsk, one of the most important cities in Siberia, was founded by Russian Czar Boris Godunov in 1604, but had an indigenous Tatar population. The Russian and Tatar populations have long been in interaction which is one of the reasons why Tomsk was selected for this study.

Most Tatar city residents and villagers, who work in a kolkhoz, have a double naming pattern, one for the Russian-speaking community, the other for use in the family. As is evident from the conversations with respondents, many Tatars, in the course of time, began to forget their Tatar names and started to use their Russian names even in the family. It was one of the main goals of this investigation to determine the extent of these patterns.

In short, the purpose of this is to demonstrate the given names currently used by a minority indigenous people speaking a different language (in this case, West Siberian Tatar in Tomsk, Siberia and in the area surrounding) than the majority population.

Onomastics is an interdisciplinary field that has major components of linguistics, language, anthropology, psychology, and other disciplines. It is difficult to assign its place among the major academic disciplines. Yet, because it does have a multidisciplinary approach, it can investigate problems that a single discipline cannot. The situation in Russia is one of these.

The past one hundred years has seen a great deal of turmoil and change in Russia and the vast number of peoples and cultures that it has controlled from the Czarist period until the present. Political and religious pressures have been shown to reflect how parents name their children. This naming of children is an indicator of the various pressures that cultures and families have been subjected to in parts of Russia especially those areas where Russian was not a first language. In these areas, russification was a major political and language pressure.

Naming Traditions of the West Siberian Tatars

The birth of a child in a Tatar family has been traditionally followed by numerous ceremonies to make the baby healthy and to defend him/her from evil powers. The most important ceremony is the naming rite - "isem kushu" in Tatar. The naming rite is usually carried out within a week after the birth. It is believed that the quicker a baby gets the name, the stronger and healthier he/she will be. A nameless baby is believed to be liable to the evil eye.

At the ceremony, men and women, join at both sides of a long table where the festive dinner is served. The baby is put on a pillow in front of the mullah who asks for the name the parents want to give the child. Then, the mullah offers up a prayer and pronounces the name of the baby three times.

As is customary the first rights to propose a name lie with the elder members of the family: the grandparents. If neither of the grandparents nor the parents have any ideas for a name, it is the mullah himself who names the child. Tatar tradition is to give the children in each family names beginning with the same consonant, e.g., Zaituna, Zakir, Zagrifa.

Siberian Tatars never give babies the names of deceased relatives. This is to disturb either those who have died or those who are living. The names of the deceased were given, if at all, only after several generations have passed.

The names that the West Siberian Tatars have used over the historical period of their existence can be divided into the following categories:

1) The old ones: names from Arabic, Persian, or Turkish which are often compound names with the suffixes -abd- (faith), -din- (religion), -ulla-(God) such as Abdulla, Hainutdin, Kallimulla and many derivatives from the name of Mohammed.

2) The new ones: names originated from Turkish, Iranian, and Tatar which can be combinations of several words of different languages or different names such as Musagitdin, Saidgafar.

3) The newest ones: names originated from Tatar, Russia and European languages. Usually they are modified old names where some letters were added to make them more beautiful, or some European names like Rudolf, Albert and so on. Tatars also are inclined to invent new names for their children and they usually use some words or word-combinations from Arabic, Persian and Tatar that sound beautiful. Another trend for young Tatar parents is to invent new names by changing inflections or initial letters of old names (Elmira → Ilmira, Nail → Fail).

At present, there is a variety of names used by the Tatar population of Tomsk region. As in other cultures, the choice of a name is influenced by place of residence, social position, and religious identification. From preliminary interviews and conversations with respondents, it has become evident that city residents with higher social position and stronger religious identification are inclined to use old Muslim names or to invent original names with beautiful semantics (e.g., Alsu) or to use the names of geographical points, planets and flowers (e.g., Mars (the planet), Nil (Nile River), Venera (Venus), Liliya (lily), while village residents with strong religious identification prefer old compound names usually taken from the Koran or after their ancestors (e.g., Abdulla, Fatima). City residents and village residents with lower social position. With weak or no religious identification usually choose the newest, popular monosyllabic or disyllabic names such as Ravil, Nail, Ruslan, etc.

When discussing the naming traditions of the West Siberian Tatars, we cannot avoid mentioning the consequences of their close co-existence with the Russian population. This close co-existence has brought about a significant shift within the Tatar naming system. Some of the first signs of assimilation (russification) are revealed in the Tatar naming system since a name serves as an important factor of socialization. Traditionally, the Tatar naming system included the first name, the Arabic particles -*ibne-*, *bine-* or Tatar ones -*uli-ugli* for males and the Arabic particle -*binte-* or the Tatar particle -*kyzi-* for females, and the name of the father, Abdulla Ibne Akhmet, Tujbika Kyzi Gabdulla. Therefore, historically, Tatars did not have family names. The function of a family name was performed by a patronymic name or a nickname.

By the middle of the 19th century, however, the Tatar naming system was modified according to the Russian naming pattern. Family names were then usually derived from the name of the father and acquired the Russian inflections *ov-ova* or *vich-vna* like classic Russian family names and patronymic names.

However, this was not the only change in the Tatar naming system. With the formation of the Soviet Union a greater percentage of Tatars, influenced by social circumstances, left their communities and became city residents which made them interact closely with the Russian population. Children had to go to Russian schools. Adults had to work with Russians. According to the politics of the USSR, Soviet citizens should not be different in any particular. This produced a rising tide of attempts to adjust to a new society in which Russians were the overwhelming majority. Thereby, being forced to live in two cultural worlds, West Siberian Tatars had also to use two languages and two naming patterns. Only Tatar intellectuals managed to resist the temptation of being like Russians. They understood that the only way to save their national and personal uniqueness was to remain Tatar and Muslim. But many Tatars began also to acquire Russian first (given) names and patronymic names. These names followed the accepted form of Russian names. A Russian first name generally would have the same initial letter as the Tatar name, e. g., Minulla → Mikhail. The same was also true of the patronymic name, e.g., Nurulloviç - Nikolaevich. Over time, this rule of thumb was not always followed, and Russian names began to be chosen upon the criteria of frequency or personal preferences.

Recent Tatar History

Although historically, the Tatars lived in or around small villages and practiced occupations related to farming, cattle breeding, hunting, and fishing, at present farming is the most important occupation for villagers. With the development of the first Siberian cities such as Tomsk, villagers began to engage in trading and villagers brought furs and hay to Tomsk and sold them in the markets. Later the Tatars took on another role: transportation of goods for city merchants. The importance of this occupation is reflected in the Emblem of the City of Tomsk: a white horse on a green field.

During the Soviet years, separate private farms were forced to unite into kolkhozes and all the Tatar villages of Tomskaya Oblast became Soviet kolkhozes. Their duty was to provide cities with crops, meat, and vegetables. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one group of Tatar villagers re-established private farms, while another group organized commercial farming cooperatives or firms engaged in food production such as Tatar bakeries or canning. Villagers also worked in seasonal jobs such as harvest gathering, building construction, and many others.

Russification

Russification refers to the situation where non-Russian communities adopt the Russian language or other characteristics whether they do so voluntarily or not. As mentioned previously, Russian Czar Boris Godunov ordered the establishment of a fort on the Tom River in 1604. Early in the 19th century, Tomsk became a regional center. In 1830, gold was discovered there sparking further development. Russia used Tomsk (as well as other locations in Siberia) for years to handle its dissidents: by the middle of the 19th century a fifth of the Tomsk population was exiles. Tomsk became an educational center around 1900 with the establishment of three universities—Tomsk State University, Tomsk Polytechnic University, and Tomsk State Pedagogical University.

Russian has been the language of administration in West Siberia ever since the Russians took over in 1604. The indigenous peoples in the various regions have stood in an asymmetric relationship with the Russians and the Russian language. The Tatars had to learn Russian but the Russians did not learn Tatar. This has been the same story whether it was Estonian in the Baltics (Armstrong, 1968; Asparturian, 1968; O'Connor, 2007; Sawczuk, 1977; Sultan, 1968) or Tatar in Siberia. In more recent history, the Soviets gave lip service to the concept that all languages were equal. In practice, it was Russian that was dominant. All schoolchildren had to learn Russian, for example. There are several aspects to the question of russification including one point that a nationality moving from one nationality district to another could continue language instruction in its original language.

Tatar city residents are more assimilated to the Russian way of life because they have had to work closely with the Russian population. Most Tomsk Tatars live in so-called Tatarskaya Sloboda, a Tatar region within the city. The balance of urban Tatar residents are scattered all over the city and mingled with the Russian population. The range of occupations of Tatar city residents varies depending upon the level of education of an individual. There is a layer of Tatar intellectuals with higher education who are engaged in politics or medicine, or who teach in schools and universities. A larger proportion of Tatar city residents who have finished high school or vocational school or no school at all are mainly engaged in unskilled labor. Most common occupations are workers, cleaners, drivers, shop assistants.

As interviews have shown, there is a considerable difference between city and village residents in such aspects as national self-consciousness, religious identification, and language.

The West Siberian Tatars have a rich national culture of which the Tatar language is a significant part. The language of the West Siberian Tatars contains a considerable layer of common Turkic vocabulary supplemented with loan words from Arabic, Persian, Mongol, Russian, and other languages. The West Siberian Tatars can be considered trilinguists since they speak their own conversational language along with Russian and Kazan Tatar dialect. The Kazan dialect is accepted as the literary standard. It used to have Arabic transcription but later on took a Cyrillic one.

Currently, the West Siberian Tatars are concerned about preserving their folk conversational language which has never had a written form. Over the years, it has had no officially published grammar and rules, and has been passed down orally. The national language politics of the Soviet Union were aimed at the internationalization and the creation of the unique language of the Soviet State - Russian. Therefore, the folk language of the West Siberian Tatars took a position of a disregarded language and was considered by some Soviet scholars as an inferior language in comparison with the Kazan Tatar dialect. In the past, the native speakers have had to be shy or reticent about speaking their native language. The question of the liquidation of the West Siberian Tatar folk language was most acute. At least one generation among the West Siberian Tatars consider Russian their native language and have absolutely no idea of Tatar.

However, no total russification of the Tatar population of West Siberia took place under the Soviets. The folk language is still spoken by a significant proportion of the Tatar population but is still considered a despised social dialect without any written form. Written samples of this language can only be seen in academic theses and linguistic publications. A Soviet theory of the consolidation of socialistic nations had a destructive effect on the folk dialect of the West Siberian Tatars as well as on many other nationalities that used to be in parts of the Soviet Union. Any dialect was considered a deviation from the official language literary standard and therefore was to be extirpated.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, government authorities and Tatar intellectuals have raised the question of the revival of the folk conversational language of the West Siberian Tatars. In 1991, the Law of National Languages of the Russian Federation was passed. This law initiated the program of the revival and preservation of the Siberian Tatar languages which includes: opening Tatar schools where education should be given in a national language or dialect, working out an alphabet of the language, publishing a grammar of the language, and creating a national mass media outlet in Tatar.

From our visits to Tatar villages we understand that villagers tend to keep their original Tatar language in the face of Russian language, social and economic influences, while those Tatars who have moved to the city are significantly less likely to keep Tatar as a first language.

Earlier, we mentioned that names and naming patterns represent a window on a culture. Our observations suggest that measuring naming patterns in the villages might give us a measure of how far russification of Tatars who have gone to the city has gone. In addition to evaluating naming patterns, we are also interested in the language skills and experiences the two groups have had. Our goal in this report is to show the wealth of West Siberian Tatar given names, their meaning, and pronunciation.