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Linguocultural Attitudes of the Female Migrants in the Republic of Tatarstan

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Abstract: The topicality of the subject under consideration is determined by the necessity of investigations of the issues related to adaptation of the labor migrants in the host society which is of the social, economic, political and cultural importance to the modern Russian society in whole and the Republic of Tatarstan in particular. Reference to the surveys of the female migrants is related to the recorded processes of feminization of migration flows, increase in the number of the female migrants in the structure of population of the Republic of Tatarstan. The necessity of investigation of the adaptation strategies of migrants relating to their integration in the new cultural environment arises. The objective of the study performed consists in analysis of the linguocultural competences of the female migrants in the Republic of Tatarstan. The materials being analyzed were obtained with the use of the mass survey method as well as resume and polystructural interview. As the result of systematization of the data obtained, the linguocultural competences of the female migrants with respect to the Russian and Tatar languages were analyzed, the attitudes of the female migrants as to improvement of the own linguocultural competence were considered, the effect of the linguocultural attitudes on the process of adaptation of the female migrants in the host society was identified. The conclusion as to the effect of the linguocultural competence of female migrants on the nature of their social contacts and successful adaptation in the host society was drawn. The materials of the study may be useful to ethnologists, social and cultural anthropologists, political experts as well as representatives of authorities administering the issues of migration policy inter-ethnic interaction.

Key words: Migration, feminization, linguistic competence, adaptation, monoethnic community, polyethnic community

INTRODUCTION

Topicality of the issue under consideration: In the modern world, the labor migration is of exceptional economic, social, political and cultural importance. Transport accessibility, development of capitalistic relations and openness of borders have become the prerequisites for enforcement of the right of any person to movement and change of lifestyle. Today the labor migration is one of the main channels of social mobility. Migration processes occupy one of the central positions in the agenda of the government policy, mass media and academic symposia. Migration has become not only a part of the everyday and professional life of people but has also formed a wide range of challenging issues the investigation and solution of which appears to be rather promising.

Review of the studies on the subject: Traditionally, it was thought that only men arrive to earn money and women remain to be the 'secondary' or dependent migrants (Tyuryukanova, 2000). In the perception of the host majority the image of an average migrant is drawn exclusively as a man. For a long time, the female migrants have been recognized as 'invisible workers'.

Referring to investigation of the female migrants is related to transformation of the structure of migration flows: if a few years ago there were really men that primarily arrived to earn money then during the recent years the number of the female labor migrants increased significantly.

According to the experts' estimates, women make 25-30% of the labor migrants, i.e., about 1.5-2 million people (Ilimbetova, 2013). These are primarily immigrants from the countries of the near abroad and former USSR: the CIS-states prevail in the structure of countries of the migrants' origin (about 3/4 of the overall labor migration to Russia) (CIS, 2011a). According to the figures provided by the Center for Migration Studies collected during the year 2010, 30.2% women arrived from Uzbekistan, 9.0% from Kazakhstan, 13% from Kirgizia, 14% from China, 13% from Ukraine (Abashin, 2007). Women employed in Russia belong to the economically most active age group: from 20-50 years (CIS, 2011b).

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A lot of studies are dedicated to the causes and forms of the female labor migration as well as to consequences and risks resulting from the change of domicile and civil status. Speaking of challenges related to the female migration, the researchers lay special emphasis on human trafficking, labor slavery, physical abuse, dignity violation and discrimination (Korchagin, 2010). Besides when leaving their country women face the problems of losing the career and pension support, emotional detachment of relatives and family breakdown (Grishunina, 2011).

Since, migration including the labor and female one exists not only in the legal but also in the illegal-quasi-legal forms the investigation thereof is hindered: the simple statistical estimation of the number of female migrants and description of the their primary socio-demographic features (age, marital status, educational level, etc.) are sometimes impossible (Chudinovskikh, 2004).

The process of feminization of migration flows may be considered as kind of challenge to the host party, since the female migration is followed by a number of factors (for example, higher rate of informal employment, ethnic-cultural practices) that may affect the structure of the society as such.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Purpose and objectives of the research: The objective of the study is the comprehensive analysis of the linguo-cultural attitudes of the female migrants in the Republic of Tatarstan. Solution of the general research problem suggests coverage of the following range of issues:

- Analysis of the respondents' competence in respect of the Russian and Tatar languages
- Identification of the respondents' attitude towards improvement of the linguistic competence in respect of the Russian and Tatar languages
- Characteristics of peculiarities of the social contacts of the female migrants within the context of their linguo-cultural attitudes

Theoretical and empirical methods: The study is based on methodological principles of polyparadigmatic approach. Within the context of our study, the two provisions of the F. Bart theory are the fundamental ones: firstly, the conclusion that the determinant for membership in a group is the socially-assigned factors based on the phenomenon of categorical attribution and not the 'objectively' existing cultural differences. Secondly, the ethnic categories both during identification as such and during the process of referring the others to the specific ethnic groups take into consideration not only the total of the objective differences but only those of them perceived by the individuals themselves as relevant ones.

The study is based on analysis of empiric materials collected during 2013-2014. The information was collected primarily using the methods of observation, polystructured and resume interview. The results of the mass survey among the female representatives of diasporas were also used. Presentation of the material obtained is based on the principles of the so-called 'thick description', i.e., the analysis alternative using the terms of informants.

Research framework: Within the frameworks of the study 300 female migrants from among the Uzbek, Kirgiz, Azerbaijan and Tajik population of the Republic of Tatarstan were surveyed. Also 20 interviews with the diaspora representatives were held.

RESULTS

Characteristics of the subject of the study: Those surveyed were divided into two age groups from 18-30 years (50.7%) and from 31-50 years (49.3%). Half of respondents of the Kirghiz nationality are nor married yet, 25% are married in the lawful manner; another 25% are registered with the civil registry office and according to the religious canons.

About 30% of all women surveyed have been living in Tatarstan for 3-5 years. About 25% of respondents noted that they had been living in the republic for a longer period from 5-10 years. A slightly smaller number of those surveyed has been staying on the territory of the republic for a relatively short period from 1-3 years. About 5% of respondents noted that they were born in Tatarstan and have been staying on its territory for their whole life.

About 60% of the female migrants surveyed stated, they were not going to change the domicile. Most of those have been living in Tatarstan for 3-10 years. About 20% of respondents noted they were going to leave the republic. Most of those have been staying on the territory of Tatarstan for 1-5 years.

From an interview, 'I have not thought before I would go to Russia, live there was not thinking about that at all. In Turkmenistan, I delivered children and did not think it would turn out that way. At that time, we were living and working here but we thought we would go away, go away and now you can see already 18 years here' (Uzbek woman, 55 years).

Striving for change of domicile is demonstrated more by female representatives of the Kirghiz and Azerbaijan nationalities. About 30% of them stated, they were going to leave the republic. On the contrary, those surveyed among the Uzbek and Tajik population want to stay in Tatarstan. More than a half of them stated, they were not going to leave the republic in the nearest time.

Linguo-cultural competences of female migrants: From the perspective of the linguo-cultural competence of those surveyed the severest adaptation issues are experienced by the Uzbek women among whom there are a lot of respondents stating they master their national language only. The number of respondents mastering their national as well as the Russian and Tatar languages is higher among the Kirghiz and Tajik. The number of respondents mastering any Foreign language beside the Russian and Tatar ones makes one fifth among the Kirghiz and one tenth among the Azerbaijan and Tajik women.

At the same time in their subjective estimates, the female migrants evaluate the level of their linguo-cultural competence in respect of the Russian language as rather high. This is peculiar mostly to the Kirghiz women 84.3% of which state that they speak, read and write in the Russian language fluently. Also the Azerbaijan (60%), Tajik (48.6%) and Uzbek women (31.1%) evaluate their knowledge of the Russian language as good. The item 'speak fluently, read and write a little' was chosen by 63.3% of the Uzbek, 20% of Azerbaijan, 30% of Tajik and 5.7% of Kirghiz women. The item 'speak only' indicative of the low level of skills in the Russian language was chosen by 18.6% of the Tajik, 11.4% of Azerbaijan and 7.1% of the Kirghiz women.

The study of the linguo-cultural attitudes among the male migrants conducted in 2013 also demonstrated that the level of the linguistic competence significantly differs among representatives of different ethnic groups. Thus, most of the Azerbaijan and two thirds of Tajik people surveyed speak of mastery of the Russian language ('speak, read and write fluently') whereas three fourths of the Uzbek people surveyed master the Russian language at the level of the spoken speech only. Every second Azerbaijanian and every third Tajik have skill in the spoken Tatar language. Every second Uzbek understands the Tatar language (Titova *et al*., 2013a).

The level of proficiency in the Tatar language is assessed by the female migrants much more ultimately. Significant amount of those surveyed (66.7% of the Uzbek, 55.7% Kirghiz, 40% Azerbaijan and 31.4% Tajik women acknowledge that their knowledge of the Tatar language is limited to the level 'I understand but don't speak'.

From a depth interview: 'I have been living in Kazan for not so long yet. Here I am taken for a Tatar woman. I understand some Tatar but cannot respond. I answer in Russian; they think I am a Tatar. I am not taken for a Tajik woman at all' (Tajik woman, 21 years).

Every tenth Kirghiz and Tajik and one fifth of the Azerbaijan women note that they speak, read and write in the Tatar language fluently. The statement 'speak fluently, read and write a little' was picked by 18.6% of the Kirghiz and 15.7% of Azerbaijan women. The statement 'speak only' was picked by one fifth of those surveyed among the Azerbaijan and Tajik women and every tenth among the Kirghiz women.

Attitudes towards improvement of the linguo-cultural competence among the female migrants: Although, most of women surveyed think highly of their level of competence in the Russian language, every second among the Uzbek and Azerbaijan women and every third of the Tajik and Kirghiz women surveyed want to improve the knowledge of the Russian language and are ready to do their best for that. Every fifth among the Azerbaijan and Tajik and every tenth of the Kirghiz women surveyed note that they would like to improve their proficiency in the Russian language but they don't have such a possibility.

However, the materials obtained during the depth interviews permit drawing the conclusion that the wish to improve the linguo-cultural competence stated by respondents mostly features the declarative character.

'It took some time to cope with the Russian language because immigrants from Uzbekistan have little interest in the Russian. We had to go to school to take classes once or twice a week. But, I did not as it is not interesting. Russian what for? What is most important a woman wants to earn money for a normal life. The severest problem for a woman here will be to find an apartment (an Uzbek woman).

One third of women surveyed among the Uzbek, Azerbaijan and Tajik and one fourth of the Kirghiz women state they are ready to do their best in order to improve their skills in the Tatar language; one fifth of the Kirghiz and about one fourth of the Azerbaijan and Tajik women note that they would like to improve their knowledge of the Tatar language but do not have such a possibility. From an interview: "I And how did you learn the Tatar language?

P: At the market. I don't know some words but can communicate somehow. We learnt the Russian at the kindergarten. Then, we spoke Russian well. We can read, talk. But books, I can only read a little as we read book rarely (an Uzbek woman, 55 years).

Although, in the groups surveyed there are a lot of respondents proclaiming their wish to improve their competence in the Tatar language, in general, the study shows that in the consciousness of respondents knowledge of the Russian language is more important in terms of successful integration in the host society.

From the depth interview: 'I: In which language you talk to grandchildren? I: In the Uzbek, they are little yet, when they grow up and go to school, we will study Russian. The time will show how it will be, I have not thought before I would go to Russia, live there was not thinking about that at all. In Turkmenistan I delivered children and did not think it would turn out that way. At that time, we were living and working here but we thought we would go away, go away and this is how it turned out to be' (an Uzbek woman, 55 years).

Peculiar features of social contacts of the female migrants: The analysis of the linguo-cultural competences of respondents shows that among the female migrants surveyed the attitude of mastering and everyday use of the national language primarily prevails. The situation established in the linguo-cultural sphere suggests communicating primarily in the national language within the mono-ethnic community which significantly narrows the range of social contacts of the female migrants.

Although, the female migrants think highly of the level of their linguo-cultural competence in the Russian language in the course of the survey about one fourth of the Uzbek and Tajik women surveyed, over one third of the Azerbaijan women and each tenth of the Kirghiz women reported that they experienced difficulties while communicating with the local population. The female migrants believe the poor knowledge of the host society language to be the main cause hindering communication with the local population. The study recorded that the number of the female migrants experiencing challenges while communicating with the local population does not depend on the duration of staying within the republic and is about the same in the groups staying on the territory of the republic for the term >5 years from 5-10 years and over 10 years which is indicative of the low adaptation potential among the groups under investigation and the absence of need for inter-ethnic communication.

At the same time, the materials obtained during the depth interviews prove that the obstacle for integration in the host society is not only lack of knowledge of the Russian language but the initial attitudes of the female migrants for doing menial works. The female migrants oriented towards menial work do not have motivation for improvement of their linguo-cultural competence which in its turn narrows their social contacts and hinders integration in the host society.

The female migrants that have poor knowledge of the Russian and Tatar languages note that in case of necessity to interaction with representatives of the local population they firstly ask their nearest relatives for help which proves the previous assumption that the social contacts of respondents are primarily restricted to the family circle.

Let's note for comparison that according to the survey in 2013 conducted among the male migrants, two thirds of the Tajik and three fourth of Uzbeks surveyed reported that their friends help them to communicate with the local population; each seventh Azerbaijanian and each tenth Uzbek is assisted by his colleagues. One fifth of the Azerbaijanian respondents believe, they do not need anyone's help for communication with the local population, among the Tajik respondents such answer is met twice as rarely, among the Uzbeks almost never (Titova *et al*., 2013b).

In the depth interviews, the respondents mentioned the negative response of representatives of the host population caused by lack of knowledge of the Tatar language by migrants: "Well, I am confused with the Tartars. This is why, when I start speaking Russian the ethnic Tartars start cursing me. Why do you put the head kerchief on if you don't know the Tartar. Why do you live here at all if you don't know the Tartar. When I try to explain I am not a Tartar they say it doesn't matter. You live in Tatarstan, you must know the Tartar. If you ask them in Russian they will not pay any attention to you at all (an Uzbek woman, 21 years).

In general, the existence of the pronounced social distance between the host population and migrants from the Central Asia may be stated: "Migrants arrived to Tatarstan thinking that this is a Muslim republic and get disappointed. They (the Tartars) do not take them for blood brothers. In this sense, they take the Crimean Tatars for brothers and not the migrants from the Central Asia' (from an expert's interview).

In the depth interviews, the Azerbaijanian respondents demonstrated more efficient integration strategies consisting in better knowledge of the Russian and Tatar languages, orientation towards leaning them by children.

DISCUSSION

Investigation of the causes and forms of labor migration of women as well as its consequences and risks following the change of the domicile and civil status remains to be the topical subject for research.

The process of increase in the migration flows may be considered as kind of challenge to the host party, since the migration is followed by a number of factors (for example, higher rate of informal employment, ethnic-cultural practices) that may affect the structure of the society as such.

Summary: Despite the declared high level of proficiency in the host society language most of respondents prefer communicating in the national language, the low level of the linguistic competence in host society languages and the wish to improve the linguo-cultural competence stated by respondents mostly features the declarative character. The situation established in the linguo-cultural sphere suggests communicating hinders the successful adaptation of the female migrants and creates pre-requisites for restriction of their social contacts to the frameworks of the ethnic community.

CONCLUSION

In terms of the linguo-cultural competence of those surveyed the severest issues relating to adaptation in the host society are experienced by the Uzbek female migrants. They demonstrate low level of skills in the Russian language which along with the high level of intragroup consolidation causes problems in communication with representatives of the host population.

The number of the female migrants experiencing difficulties when communicating with the local population does not depend on the duration of staying within the republic and is about the same in the groups staying on the territory of the republic for the term >5 years from 5-10 years and over 10 years which is indicative of the low adaptation potential among the groups under investigation and the absence of need for inter-ethnic communication. Most of the female migrants are oriented towards menial works and do not need to improve the linguistic competence in the Russian language.

More efficient integration strategies are demonstrated by the Azerbaijanian women which is expressed in better knowledge of the Russian and Tatar languages, more pronounced orientation towards learning of the host society languages by children as well as the relatively slight social distance to the local population (the Tatars).

The female migrants that have poor knowledge of the Russian and Tatar languages note that in case of necessity to interaction with representatives of the local population they firstly ask their nearest relatives for help which proves the previous assumption that the social contacts of respondents are primarily restricted to the family circle.

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