

Title: Multilingual Education in the Russian Federation, A Case Study: Tuvan Language Education in the Republic of Tyva

Author: Joan F. Chevalier, United States Naval Academy

The Russian Federation is a multiethnic and multilingual state with over 150 languages spoken within its borders. Throughout Russia, language contact has typically resulted in linguistic and cultural assimilation with local ethnolinguistic groups shifting to the Russian language. Given growing concern worldwide about the number of languages threatened or facing extinction, the status and future of multilingual education within Russia is a primary concern. During the 1990s, multilingual education programs featuring instruction in local languages were revamped and revived in many areas within Russia. This paper focuses on evolution of bilingual education in the Republic of Tyva in South Siberia. The Tuvan language, an Altai-Sayan Turkic language spoken by a population of 235,313 ethnic Tuvans residing in the Russian Federation in South Siberia in the Republic of Tuva (Vserossiiskaia perepis' 2002), is often cited as one of the few local languages in Russia that exhibits high levels of intergenerational transmission (Martan-ool 2000:485–500; Borgoiakova 2002). This paper seeks to identify the pressures increasingly coming to bear on Tuvan language programs and to evaluate both local factors influencing language education and the effects of federal educational reforms. As this paper will argue, while support for multilingual education may remain high at the local level, recent educational reforms instituted at the federal level have raised uncertainty about the future of multilingual education in the Russian Federation. This paper is based on data obtained from field research conducted in Kyzyl, Tyva in 2008. Data are drawn from extensive interviews with teachers and Ministry of Education personnel in Kyzyl, as well as archival materials, including ministry records and regional periodicals.

Works Cited:

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