

Factors of difference in the language behavior of rural and urban Mari

Abstract The paper elucidates the factors of difference in the language behavior of rural and urban Mari, a Finno-Ugric people, living in the Mari El region (Russia). All conclusions are based on the results of fieldwork done in Mari El in 2016–2022. This included eight interviews (face-to-face, telephone) in the city of Yoshkar Ola and in villages in the Sovetskiy, Orshanka, and Novyi Toryal districts (Mari El). All factors were conventionally grouped into objective factors, i.e. those that do not depend on the participants themselves, and subjective factors, in which they make individual choices. Both groups of factors are strongly intertwined and mutually influence one another. The conclusions were supported by presumptions from previous research projects.

1. Introduction

According to Fishman et al. (1971), language choice, or language behavior, is the core value of any language policy, from the highest supranational policy to the level of the individual, i.e. when a person starts thinking about choosing one language or another (or sometimes both) in a communicative situation. In the course of one's lifetime, the languages of communication can change several times.

Language choice strongly depends on language policy, whether it be state or family. As determined by Spolsky (2004: 5), any language policy consists of three components: language practice, “the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire”; language management, defined as “any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice...”; and language ideology, indicating some beliefs about language and language use. As a rule,

the existence of all three components provides a language choice, but it is not a compulsory condition. For instance, in some cases, a language used by a family could also result from the absence of language management, or ideology, i.e. “a general sets of beliefs about language practices” (Spolsky, 2004: 14), can be sufficient for influencing people’s linguistic behavior, an aspect that is briefly elucidated in this paper.

The factors of language choice are various and they have been investigated extensively in the scientific world from various perspectives. Thus, Fasya & Sari (2021) outline a number of sociocultural factors in social interaction. These factors include (1) speech participants, (2) the speech situation, (3) speech goals, (4) speech points, and (5) speech norms, in which they review the impact of social factors (age, gender, social status, level of education) on speakers within a small community in Tanjungsari Market, Sumedang Regency (Indonesia). In accordance with Ervin-Tripp (1972), Groesjean (1982) suggests four factors of linguistic behavior, namely 1) participants, 2) situation, 3) content of discourse, and 4) function of interaction. Meanwhile, Ting (2010) considers the role of language planning in language choice in the context of friendship in Sarawak, Malaysia. Kittel et al. (2010) examine the socio-structural background in the choice of mixed language in Belarus. Trudell (2005) mentions that education in one’s native language could be essential for developing a minority-language movement to a greater extent, and for increasing the effectiveness of education.

In the present article I discuss aspects that could have some influence on the language behavior of Mari people. Indeed, it is not easy to find an umbrella term for all of these aspects, as some of them are elements of identity (e.g. territory, level of education, speech partners), while others are categorized as sociocultural factors of language choice (Fasya & Sari, 2021). However, in order to avoid overloaded terms, I prefer to label them conventionally as “factors” by justifying them as the strongest circumstances influencing the language behavior of Mari people.

Mari, a Uralic language of Russia, is evaluated as an endangered language (Atlas 2012). According to statistics, the number of Mari has been decreasing over the years (Lallukka 2024: 13) and the language

situation in Mari El (this people's home region) could be assessed as dismal. However, it is frequently stated that the Mari language, culture, and identity are better preserved in the countryside than in cities (Ivanov 2004; Sanukov 2011; Soloviev 2012). It is certainly the case that the lifestyle of Mari people, and thus their culture, are still strongly attached to rural areas due to the higher concentration and respective ethnic homogeneity of the population (Solovjov 2012). This argument could also be applicable to all Finno-Ugric peoples (Sanukov 2011), as well as to other minorities in Russia. However, as Lallukka (1990) states, the process of ethnic erosion is also evident in rural settings, and now thirty years after that researcher's conclusions we can witness it to a greater extent. This process manifests itself in a narrowing of the sphere of language use and a decrease in the number of native speakers. In the domain of the family, erosion shows itself through an increase in cases of code-switching, i.e. "when speakers switch backwards and forwards between distinct codes in their repertoire" (Bell 2014: 113), or a complete shift to a dominant language (Russian). Moreover, the general trend of rural exodus in Russia (Byčenko & Šabanov 2012; Nurmuxametova 2016) reinforces erosion of an ethnicity through its assimilation in urban areas (Lallukka 1990, 1997; Byčenko & Šabanov 2014).

The goal of this paper is to determine the factors of difference in the language choice of urban and rural Mari people by comparing their linguistic behavior in various settings. For this purpose, I apply a social and psychological approach. In particular, I analyze the sociolinguistic profiles, social and cultural environments of several Mari speakers (e.g. place of residence, level of education, etc.), and investigate which social factors have the most significant impact on their language stance and choice.

The research is based on the analysis of empirical data collected by the author during fieldwork in Mari El (2013–2014, 2016, 2021–2022).

The first part of the article provides some background information on the Mari people and the sociolinguistic situation in Mari El, by giving a brief history of the Russian context. The second part is dedicated to the research data, specifically describing methods of collecting material (interviews) and the description of sociolinguistic profiles

of the interview participants. The third part gives an account of the use of either language by rural and urban Maris with the justification of their language choice(s). In my conclusion, I explain why urban and rural Mari have different linguistic behavior and why urban Mari switch to the dominant Russian language and use it as a language of communication (one of the indicators of ethnic erosion).

2. The Mari people and their language

The Mari, as one of the Finno-Ugric peoples located in Russia, number 312,000 people¹ (Lallukka 2024). The homeland and the official territory of the Mari is the Republic of Mari El (Figure 1) with a population of 672,321, of which 45.4% are ethnic Maris and the other 54.6% represent Russians and other ethnic groups (NSVY 2022).

There are Mari diasporas in Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, and in recent decades labor diasporas have arisen in the Khanty-Mansiysk, Moscow, and Saint Petersburg regions (Popov 2013; Melnikov 2021). Mari people are also unevenly distributed all over Russia.

The official state languages of Mari El are Mari² and Russian. Despite its official status, the Mari language sees limited usage in the region: it is neither a language of instruction (though it is taught as a separate subject in 80% of schools) nor a language of business or administrative communication. Nineteen periodicals (KG 2022) and approximately 30–45 books (a total of more than 45,000 copies) are published annually in the Mari language (Čuksin 2009; Vasiutina 2009).

The Mari language is actively used on websites (such as MariUver³ and Respublika Mariy El) and social networks such as V Kontakte⁴ and Odnoklassniki⁵ (e.g. Mariy muro – mariy kumyl!; Mariytsy vsego mira! Objedinajtes!; Čeremisy...Mariytsy; Mariytsy!).

1. One should mention that the exact number of Mari in Russia currently is the subject of debate.

2. There are two literary standards, Meadow Mari and Hill Mari.

3. A Mari news blog (<<http://mariuver.wordpress.com>>).

4. A popular social network in Russia and former Soviet countries (<<http://vkontakte.ru>>).

5. A popular social network in Russia and former Soviet countries (<<http://odnoklassniki.ru>>).

There is Mari television but with limited broadcasting time (for television approximately 4.4 hours per week of news and programs are broadcast in Mari)⁶ and full-time radio broadcasting.



Figure 1. The Republic of Mari El on the map of Russia.

The official history of the Mari people within Russia goes back to the sixteenth century, when the territory of the Mari people was annexed by Tsar Ivan the Terrible⁷ to the Russian state (Sanukov 1992; Baxtin 2012). Until the second half of the nineteenth century, the Mari lived in relative cultural and ethnic isolation that prevented them from any active contacts with the majority Russian group (Sanukov 1992). However, the strengthening of governmental policies towards ethnic minorities in tsarist Russia (forced Christianization, the beginning of russification) and russification in the Soviet period (with the end of the 1930s as the starting point) resulted in closer contacts between the two different peoples. In 1990, the local Supreme Soviet announced the former Mari Autonomous Socialist Republic (as it was officially titled from 1936 to 1990) to be a republic with its own right to self-determination. This was also an era of fervent ethnic activism on the part of

6. Although Ehala & Vedernikova (2015) reported unlimited radio broadcasting time in the Mari language, the situation has changed, with a reduction in radio broadcasting in Mari.

7. Some subgroups of Mari were either forcefully annexed to Russian principalities much earlier (in the 9th–12th centuries) and underwent full ethnic assimilation, or voluntarily joined the Russian state, such as the Hill Mari subgroup during the 16th century (Baxtin 2012).

the Mari people, a period when they had an opportunity to influence regional politics in terms of ethnic issues (Sanukov 1996, 2011). However, for the last twenty years, political activity among the Mari has declined significantly, mainly due to various political stances taken by the local regional authorities (i.e. concentrating on other problems of the region than ethnic ones; ignorance of ethnic problems), which has manifested in a reluctance to support the Mari ethnic movement (Šamiev 2010; Knorre & Konstantinova 2013).

Despite official sources in Mari El regularly reporting on successful language policies in Mari El over the last fifteen years (Sbornik 2005; Švetsova 2008, 2012), the real situation regarding the Mari language is getting complicated, as one can conclude from Table 1. If one compares the statistical data, it can be seen that the knowledge of the Mari language among native speakers had decreased by 2.5% from 1989 to 2002. Moreover, three censuses (2002, 2010, 2021) indicated that for that twenty-year period this tendency has been ongoing, though the active ethnic movement among the Mari in the 1990s might have slowed it somewhat in the period before 2002.

1989	2002	2010	2020
86.7%	451, 033 (84.2%)	365,127 (76%)	258,722 (61.1%)

Table 1. Knowledge of native language by Mari living all over Russia (Sanukov 1996, VPN 2002, 2010, 2020).

According to researchers (Hint 1995; Ivanov 2004; Sanukov 2011), the current linguistic situation is mainly the result of Soviet language planning, which aimed to create a Soviet identity at the expense of linguistic and ethnic assimilation of the minority peoples within Russia. Thus, Russian policies manifested in the process of ethnic erosion of Finno-Ugric minorities, an erosion that slowed with the fall of the Soviet Union at the end of the twentieth century (Lallukka 1990), but at the very beginning of the new millennium increased again. In the case of the Mari, the most obvious indicator of this erosion is a gradual replacement of the Mari language by Russian in all domains (education, administrative services, mass media, etc.) and, finally, switching to majority Russian over generations.

3. Research data and data-collection methods

The study is based on qualitative data, including interviews that were conducted over six years. In order to obtain more detailed and objective information on language behavior, eight open-ended interviews were held within a six-year period: four in March 2016 in rural areas; and three interviews in summer 2021 and one in winter 2022 in an urban setting (Yoshkar Ola, Mari El). Out of these eight, five were telephone interviews, and the remaining three were face-to-face ones. Interviews contained 13 questions, of which 10 corresponded to the Subjective Vitality Questionnaire elaborated by Bourhis et al. (1981) and the last three questions (see the Appendix) were created by the author in order to obtain more detailed information on the given issue. In addition, content analysis was used in order to justify some aspects of language choice and draw conclusions.

The age of interviewees ranges from 24 to 57; they are all married and employed. All urban participants live in Yoshkar Ola, the capital of Mari El, and the rural interviewees are from villages located in the Noviy Toryal, Orshanka, and Sovetskiy districts. In terms of ethnic affiliation, they are all Mari and their levels of proficiency in the language vary from intermediate⁸ to advanced (native level). Regarding gender, two are male and six female. Prior to that, a one-way between-group analysis of variance (ANOVA) had shown no statistically significant difference in linguistic preferences of participants within a Mari family by gender.⁹ Therefore, it can be assumed that the predominance of female interviewees will not bias the objectivity of information on linguistic situations in the framework of research. The whole information on occupation and age was applied at the time of the interviews. For anonymity, the names of participants were changed with their consent.

8. As admitted by the interviewees themselves, they all spoke Mari and frequently used it in various situations.

9. The ANOVA analysis was conducted within a different project (ERMOS75), but based on the results achieved, it could be concluded that language choice is not significant in the context of gender.

	Gender	Age	Profession	Place of residence (Mari El)	Language of communication in family in which participant was born/raised	Language of communication in current family
Participant 1	Female	42	local shop assistant	Toshto Kreshyn village, Orshanka district	Mari	Mari
Participant 2	Female	26	nurse	Kundyshumbal village, Sovetskiy district	Mari	Mari
Participant 3	Female	57	pensioner	Shura village Novyi Toryal district	Mari	Mari, sometimes Russian (with children)
Participant 4	Female	36	shop assistant	Kugener village, Soveskiy district	Russian	Mari
Participant 5	Male	32	IT specialist	Yoshkar Ola	Mari, Russian	Russian
Participant 6	Female	39	cleaner	Diemino village, Kuzhener district	Russian	Russian
Participant 7	Male	24	driver	Yoshkar Ola	Predominantly Russian	Russian
Participant 8	Female	28	doctor	Yoshkar Ola	Russian	Russian

Table 2. Sociolinguistic profiles of participants.

4. Factors of difference

In the given chapter I analyze basic factors that influence interview participants' choice of language for communication in various domains. I classify those factors into objective ones, i.e. those that do not depend on the speakers themselves, and subjective ones, in which they made individual choices.

Concerning objective factors, only education and community were highlighted as most prominent in the context of the given topic. Undoubtedly, the language policies of Russia and Mari El and financial support of ethnic programs are more significant, but the intertwining

of objective factors with subjective factors often leads to investigating one in the context of the other.

4.1. Objective factors

4.1.1. Education

As stated above, the Mari language is taught as a separate subject in the majority of schools in Mari El (80%). At the same time, the ethnic educational program is declining, which firstly manifests in an increase in the number of schools rejecting the Mari-language teaching program. If we refer to statistics, in 2013 around 98% of schools provided teaching of the Mari language or related subjects (i.e. Mari culture, history of the Mari people) (Kuklina 2013), but by 2020 this number had dropped to 60% (Sistema 2020). Secondly, since 2010 the teaching of Mari has been optional. That means that it is parents who make final decisions on their children's studying of Mari either in a state program or a native program.¹⁰ Thus, the statistical data are evidence of an increasing number of Mari parents rejecting ethnic educational programs for their children. Third, in terms of teaching Mari, there is a high tendency to replace the native program by a state language program. This means that the rate of teaching Mari as a foreign language (state program) for Mari children is increasing at the expense of the native program (see Table 3). Undoubtedly, such an inclination cannot have a positive effect on the maintenance of a high level of knowledge of Mari, and of the Mari language itself.

10. "Native program" implies teaching a minority language and literature to native speakers in a more advanced program, while the term "state program" implies teaching a minority language superficially (i.e. as a foreign language).

	1993 (compulsory)	1998–1999 (compulsory)	2018 (optional)
Mari language and literature (native program) from years 1–11	3–5	3	2
Mari language (state program) from years 6–9	3	2	1
Mari language (state program) in years 10 and 11	2	2	1

Table 3. Ethnic educational program (teaching hours per week).

The data from Table 3 allow us to conclude that the frequency of teaching Mari under a foreign-language program and the content of such a program itself cannot have a positive impact on the level of knowledge of the Mari language, nor a positive influence on the ethnic self-awareness of the younger generation.

4.1.2. Community

There are a variety of research papers describing the mechanisms and effects of communities on the linguistic behavior of people living, working, and studying in different ethnic and linguistic communities. This particularly relates to the issue of the language choice of people from immigrant families (Romaine 1995; Curdt-Christensen 2013; Kopeliovich 2013). As described, their linguistic behavior resembles the situations when a person communicates with someone from the same ethnic group, i.e. they switch to their native language. This is mainly due to the high ethnic self-awareness of second-generation immigrants, caused partly by strong language management within families when parents use only their minority native language in communication with children. Therefore, it contributes to the maintenance of a psychological attachment to an ethnic culture and its attributes. However, the situation is different in the case of the Mari: investigation of language choice in the family domain has shown that sometimes it is community (not family) language management that determines the specific linguistic behavior of Mari people both in urban and rural areas (Vedernikova 2018). Two examples (opinions of interviewees from urban and rural areas) best illustrate the above-stated:

- (1) *Ялыште чыланат марий улыт, марла кутырат.... Ала-кузе, мо, сайын огеш чуч, рушла кутыраш тўнгалына гын... марла веле. Ялыште чылашт дене марла веле.*
'Everybody speaks Mari in our village. Somehow, hmm, it seems uncomfortable if we start speaking Russian... Only Mari. Everybody speaks Mari in the village.' (4F36v11)
- (2) *В городе марийский язык не нужен. Куда ни кинь, везде тут русские и даже марийцы по-русски все говорят. Так вот слушаешься за целый день русской речи, наговоришься, так и марийский язык начинаешь забывать. А потом уже и говорить не хочется.*
'The Mari language is not necessary in the city. Russians are everywhere around and even Mari people speak in Russian. Having heard plenty of Russian and spoken it, you start forgetting the Mari language. And later you don't want to speak it...' (5M32c¹²)

As one can summarize from these two excerpts, even within families people use the language that dominates over the community (or the majority) in which they live. Further investigation of the background of all the interviewees allowed us to suppose that people with such a linguistic standpoint usually did not have any language management within their families, so the community fulfilled that function (Vedernikova 2018).

4.2. Subjective factors

It is not only the community itself that plays such a pivotal role in terms of the linguistic behavior of Mari in urban and rural areas. Among the variety of reasons, one could point to the different values attached to Mari and Russian and the social roles of languages in certain spheres of society (Vedernikova 2018). Thus, based on the interviews, one could conclude that the use of Mari can mainly be justified by ethnic values that include:

11. 4 – participant's number, F – female, 36 – age, v – village.
12. 5 – participant's number, M – male, 32 – age, c – city.

1. Sense of ethnicity, or association of native Mari language with ethnic affiliation:

- (3) *Ме марий улына да марла кутырена... Марий ешыште шочынна... Омак умыло, молан марий-влак ике йочаиш дене рушла кутырат? Меже вет марий улына. Тидыже мемнан йылме...*

‘We are Mari and we speak Mari... We were born into Mari families... I really do not understand why Mari people speak Russian with their children. We are Mari. This is our language...’ (2F26v¹³)

One should mention that similar statements are rather frequent among Mari speakers. That also indicates the closeness of linguistic and ethnic identities for which ethnic values are strong.

2. Homeland, or association of one’s native language with the region one lives in (an indication of a regional identity):

- (4) *Марла кутырена. Марий Республикыште илена, марий ялыште илена. Мемнан йылмына. Кузе вес йылме дене кутырашыже?*

‘We speak Mari... We live in the Republic of Mari El, in a Mari village. This is our mother tongue. Why speak a different language?’ (1F42v¹⁴)

Interestingly, similar statements could be heard mainly in the countryside and it can therefore be said that they are typical of rural Mari. This confirms the fact of higher maintenance of ethnic values in rural areas (Ivanov 2003, 2004; Kalinin 2019)

The factors for the use of Russian by Mari people differ and are also characterized as objective and subjective. There are numerous papers that extensively elucidate the objective reasons for the use of dominant Russian by the Mari people and by other minority peoples in Russia (Ivanov, 2004; Liubimov 2020). This issue will therefore not be discussed in the given article. As for the subjective reasons, the

13. 2 – participant’s number, F – female, 26 – age, v – v.

14. 1 – participant’s number, F – female, 42 – age, v – v.

study and analysis of the qualitative material allowed us to conclude that the choice of Russian as the permanent language made by Mari individuals is based on the so-called pragmatic approach. The essence of this approach is a strong association of the Russian language with progress and profitability, while the Mari language was often called a relic or the language of the past.

- (5) *Мы не говорим по-мари́йски. По-руски разговариваем... Почему? А зачем он нужен? Русский больше нужен... Мари́йский – это уже прошлое. На нём только в деревнях с бабушками разговари́вать и всё.*
‘We do not speak Mari with our children. We speak Russian... Why? And why is it necessary? Russian is more necessary... The Mari language is already in the past. It is just to speak only with grannies in villages and that is all.’ (6F39v¹⁵)

One can conclude that ethnic values are strong among rural Mari, while the existence of such values among urban Mari could be problematic. Mainly, urban Mari select from a standpoint of profitable/unprofitable. That justifies the basic difference in the more frequent use of the Mari language in the countryside than in the city and vice versa (Kalinin 2019; Golyžbina 2020). It also confirms the different social roles of the two languages within Mari society (Vedernikova 2014a), which is one of the substantial reasons for the strengthening of the position of the Russian language over Mari in the Russian post-Soviet space. Another significant factor for the language choice of the Mari is the surroundings.

In the majority of scientific publications (Romaine 2000; Spolsky 2004; Bell 2014) concerning the linguistic behavior of native speakers in the presence of non-native speakers, one common feature is highlighted: as a rule, native speakers continue communication in their home language(s) in the presence of an outsider, i.e. a person of a different ethnic group.¹⁶ With regard to the Mari, however, the situation is different: the Mari usually switch to Russian in the presence of people from different ethnic groups. In answering the question “What

15. 6 – participant’s number, F – female, 39 – age, v – v.

16. Here the author also implies a person who does not speak their language.

languages do you speak with other Mari-speaking persons in the presence of a non-Mari speaker?”, all urban Mari respondents indicate the Russian language. That choice was justified by inconvenience, i.e. a desire not to make people feel uncomfortable:

- (6) *Ну, как-то неудобно разговаривать по-марийски, когда, например, тебя окружают люди других национальностей. Не поймут же, невежливо так.*
 ‘It’s awkward to speak in Mari when you are surrounded by non-Mari people. They will not understand and it’s not polite that way.’ (5M32c¹⁷)

Rural Mari respondents choose the Mari language as a means of communication in a similar situation, albeit with some reservations:

- (7) *Марла, тиде ең воктене веле шога гын... Але мемнан дене огыл. Мемнан дене гын, ну, тудын дене конешне, рушла, а эше вес марий дене марла. Южгунам кок йылмыге вигак понгартылат.*
 ‘In Mari, if he/she is just standing next to us but not with us. If not, then in Russian with that non-Mari speaker, but I will speak in Mari with other Mari people or in both languages.’ (4F36v¹⁸)

Similar responses came also from other rural Mari. As the majority of them admitted, switching from one language to another or the mixing of them was applied only in the case of necessity. It could be concluded that in the presence of other nationalities, usually urban Mari people switch to Russian, while rural Mari can limit themselves to language change at least.

Ethnic self-awareness as the third subjective factor of language choice for the Mari implies ethnic pride, divergence from one’s own ethnic group, and an individual stance toward ethnic issues. In the framework of a previous project, ethnic self-awareness was explored and evaluated as low (Ehala & Vedernikova 2015), which manifests in increasing cases of indifference on the part of Mari individuals

17. 5 – participant’s number, M – male, 32 – age, c – city.

18. 4 – participant’s number, F – female, 36 – age, v – v.

towards their ethnic group and language issues. Therefore, it causes a strengthening of the desire to abandon a native language and ethnic identity, and ultimately it brings assimilation.

Content analysis also allowed us to determine that ethnic self-awareness among rural Mari is higher than among urban Mari due to differences in the set of values that both groups attach to one or another language, as concluded before.

5. Conclusions

Language choice, or linguistic behavior, implies a choice of a language in specific communicative situations. The factors of difference in language choice between rural and urban Mari can be grouped into objective and subjective. Out of a number of objective factors (demographic situation, status of native population, institutional support, etc.) the author explored only two – education and community – as the most influential in the given context. It was determined that the reduction of ethnic educational programs followed by switching from compulsory to optional teaching has had a strong negative effect on the language choice. This is especially important for the change in the rate of language shift (from Russian) among Mari children in urban areas than in the countryside. The high effect of community on the language choice of urban and rural Mari (“because everybody around speaks this language”) is caused by the absence of clear language management within Mari families (Vedernikova 2018).

Among the variety of subjective factors, as the most significant the author indicated different values attached to Mari and Russian for which the social roles of two languages differ. Thus, rural Mari justify a higher rate of the use of their mother tongue (Mari) by 1) a sense of ethnicity, or the association of native language with ethnic affiliation (as for Participant 2), and by 2) the homeland, or association of one’s native language with the village (i.e. their place of residence, as for Participant 1). It is evident that these values are negligible for urban Maris, as the rate of Mari is much lower in their daily lives than Russian. Compared to rural ethnic populations, urban Mari approach the use of language(s) pragmatically. The third subjective factor, ethnic

self-awareness, was determined as low (Ehala & Vedernikova 2015), which manifests in increasing rates of linguistic, and further of ethnic, assimilation, as in the case of Participant 6.

One should mention that the issue of differences in the linguistic behavior of various social and ethnic groups is an extensive one and requires comprehensive study. Moreover, constant social and political changes cause the emergence of new factors that are subject to further investigation, the results of which, it is believed, will complement the given topic in the nearest future.

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Appendix

1. In what language do you speak with your parents?
2. In what language do you speak with your children?
3. In what language do you speak with your siblings?
4. In what language do you speak with your grandparents?
5. In what language do you speak with your friends?
6. In what language do you speak with acquaintances?
7. In what language do you speak with service staff?
8. In what language do you speak with your colleagues?
9. In what language do you speak with your neighbors?
10. In what language do you speak with your spouse?
11. In what language do you speak with another Mari-speaking person in the presence of a non-Mari speaker?
12. What is the main reason for speaking Mari/Russian in your family?
13. What are the attitudes of the family members to Mari and Russian?