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# The revival of the Shor literary language

**Irina Nevskaja**

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This article is devoted to the present-day sociolinguistic situation in Mountain Shoriya (Kemerovo Region, South Siberia, Russia). The Shors, who speak one of the Siberian Turkic languages, are the indigenous population of Mountain Shoriya. Their language has survived in spite of unfavourable circumstances such as its literary tradition being interrupted for half a century. At present, the Shors are trying to restore social functions to the language. The Turcological traditions at the Novokuznetsk State Pedagogical Institute have facilitated (and even instigated) the revival of the Shor literary language.

This article touches upon the history of literary Shor and of Shor language research in Novokuznetsk, and analyses recent developments in Shoriya: The revival of Shor as a language taught at school, and of written Shor. Special attention is paid to problems facing Shor Turcologists who have provided the revival process with a scientific foundation.

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## 1. General information

The Shors are one of the minor indigenous Turkic peoples of Siberia. In the former USSR there were slightly over 16,000 Shors. According to the 1989 census, 12,585 of them lived in Kuzbass (Kemerovo Region), in South-Western Siberia (*Itogi* 1989: 42). According to Johannes Benzing's classification, Shor belongs to the Aral-Sayan group of North Turkic, alongside Khakas, Altay and Tuvan (Benzing 1959: 1-5). Karl Heinrich Menges distinguishes the Central-South-Siberian group (also called Abakan or Khakas), comprising Shor and Khakas with their dialects (Menges 1959: 5-11). Both classifications agree that Shor is close to Khakas, Altay and, to a lesser degree, Tuvan.

The Shors inhabit Mountain Shoriya, the northern part of the Sayan-Altay mountain region. The ethnonym which was introduced by Wil-

helm Radloff at the end of the nineteenth century and came to be used officially, was originally the name of one of the Turkic family clans or tribes (*sööks*) which spoke rather similar Turkic dialects. The Turks of Altay also used the term “Shor” for the Turkic-speaking population of the Kondoma (Shor *Qondum*), Mrassu (Shor *Pras*) and Tom (Shor *Tom*) river basins.<sup>1</sup> At that time, this population did not have a collective native name. The ethnonym spread as the official and native name of this ethnos in the mid-1930’s, during the nascent national consolidation of the Turkic Sayan-Altay ethnic groups. Earlier, in official documents, the native population of Mountain Shoriya was referred to as “Smith Tatars” (Russian *kuzneckie inorodcy, kuzneckie tatory*), since they were considered to be skilful smiths. They were also named after the place where they lived (Tom, Kondoma, Mrassu Tatars: Russian *černevye tatory, mrasscy, kondomcy, verxotomcy*), or according to the name of their *söök* (the Abas, the Shors, the Kalars, the Kargas, etc.: Russian *abincy, šorcy, kalarcy, kargincy*).

The ethnic group evolved from various Turkic and non-Turkic sources. The ethnonym *aba*, the name of one of the Töläs *sööks*, is encountered in Chinese sources dating from 603 (Pritsak 1959: 630). The Shors are considered to be Turkicised Ob-Ugrians: Linguistic, ethnographic and anthropological research shows the presence of an Ob-Ugric substratum in the ethnos. Shor toponymy contains many Ket names (e.g. the river names ending in *+zas / +sas*), indicating that the region was inhabited earlier by Kets.

Many questions of Shor ethnic history have not yet been solved. As a separate nation with its own identity and national sentiment, it developed within the Turkic-speaking population of this region during the last three centuries. The Shor ethnologist Valerij Kimeev delineates three periods of its ethnic history (Kimeev 1994: 4-6):

<sup>1</sup> Shor language examples are presented in phonemic transcription based on the *Fundamenta* system (Deny et al. 1959: xv). For the transliteration of publications in Shor, we use the Cyrillic transliteration alphabet for non-Slavonic languages used by German libraries. For the transliteration of Russian words and citations, we use the international scholarly system employed by linguists specializing in Russian and Slavonic studies (System III) (Shaw 1967).

1. The formation of territorial ethnic groups of Shors within the administrative ethnic territory (Russian *Kuzneckij uezd*), from the beginning of the seventeenth until the beginning of the twentieth century.
2. National and cultural consolidation in the framework of an autonomous national district (*Gorno-šorskiy nacional'nyj rajon*), 1926-1939. At that time, the processes of national development were very intensive. The most important contributing factors were the development of the literary language, school instruction in Shor and the spread of literacy among the Shor population.
3. From the early 1940's until very recently, the survival of the Shor nation within the conditions of the active spreading of the dominant Russian culture. During these years the Shors lost their literary language and were at the brink of total assimilation.

## **2. The sociolinguistic situation in Shoriya in the late 1980's**

The rapid industrial development of the area in the twentieth century almost destroyed the traditional Shor way of life and had a profound influence on the area. The massive influx of mainly Russian-speaking migrants set assimilation processes into motion which threatened not only the Shor language but also the very existence of the Shor nation.

Beginning in the 1950's, the following new economic and social factors emerged:

- Small farms were merged, and many Shor villages disappeared; people, in search of work, had to move to cities (where the assimilation processes moved even faster).
- The rural population was reduced, the urban population in Mountain Shoriya grew.
- Schools in small Shor villages were closed.
- Shor boarding schools were opened (these were primary and secondary educational institutions in big villages and industrial centres, where Shor children lived apart from their families during the academic year and were instructed in Russian).

As a result, by the end of the 1980's, Shor came to have an inferior social status: It was not a written language, nor a language of school education. Furthermore, its transmission to younger generations had almost stopped, and the number of speakers had dramatically diminished. The language competence of speakers had declined, especially that of urban

Shors (only 3% could speak Shor fluently in 1986, versus 20.1% in 1976), while their competence in Russian increased.<sup>2</sup> In 1989 only 59.4% of the Shors considered Shor to be their mother tongue, versus 76.6% in 1970. The number of Shors who regarded Russian as their mother tongue had increased from 24.4% to 39.1% (*Itoigi* 1989: 42).

We thus see that people preferred to give up their mother tongue. The history of the Shor literary language is important for the analysis of the factors leading to this situation.

### 3. The history of the Shor literary language in brief

Shor could be called one of the “oppressed languages” of the former USSR. During the twentieth century alone, the Shor language lost its literary tradition twice.

The first time was just after the October Revolution, when the church schools founded by the Altay missionaries were closed. The Russian Orthodox Church had begun Christianising the indigenous peoples as soon as Siberia became part of the Russian Empire. The Altay Mission founded in 1828 spread its influence throughout the territory of Mountain Shoriya, Mountain Altay, and the Minusinsk Region, where Turkic-speaking indigenous Siberian peoples (Altays, Shors, Teleuts, Kumandus) lived. The founders of the Altay Mission, Father Makarij (Gluxarev) and Father Stefan (Landyšev), established new methods of missionary work among aboriginal peoples, including the study of their languages, outlook, traditions and beliefs.

The Altay missionaries preached in the native languages of Siberia’s native peoples. They devised methods for translating Christian literature into Altay, Shor, Teleut, and Kumandu. These translations were made with the help of priests who were themselves indigenous. They were based on their deep knowledge of Siberia’s mythological traditions and languages. The Altay missionaries published books in the native languages of the Siberian people, founded primary and secondary schools

<sup>2</sup> The results of a recent sociolinguistic study appear in Patruševa (1994). They are somewhat doubtful. According to our observations, the number of urban Shor speakers is much larger. In our opinion, Patruševa’s data reflect the attitude of urban Shors to their mother tongue: People did not want to acknowledge that they spoke Shor.

and religious tertiary schools, where they trained national priests and teachers for Shor schools.

The first Shor alphabet was devised by the Altay missionaries in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was based on the Cyrillic alphabet (plus *ö, ü, ŋ* and *i*), and was very economical (only 26 characters) and scientifically well grounded.<sup>3</sup> Its creation was preceded by long scientific research conducted by the linguists of the Altay Mission. Their results were presented in *Grammatika altajskogo jazyka* ("Altay language grammar"), published in Kazan' in 1869. The Mission published the first Shor alphabet book *Šorskij bukvar' dlja inorodcev vostočnoj poloviny Kuzneckogo okruga. Šor kižileri balalaryn mičikke ürgetče* ("Shor alphabet book for the natives of the eastern half of the Kuznetsk District. Teaching Shor people's children to write") in 1885, and two religious books: *Svjaščennaja istorija na šorskom narečii dlja inorodcev vostočnoj poloviny Kuzneckogo okruga* ("The holy history in the Shor dialect for the natives of the eastern half of the Kuznetsk District") (Kazan' 1883), and *Ukazanie puti v carstvie nebesnoe na šorskom narečii. Tegridiņ čarygynga kirčeņ čoldy ködüšče* ("Showing the way to the Garden of Eden in the Shor dialect. Showing the way leading to heaven's light") (Kazan' 1884).

One of the first primary schools in Shoriya was opened in the village of Kuzedeevo by the well-known missionary and linguist Vasilij Verbickij, who taught at this school. By the time of the October Revolution, there were schools in all the larger villages. In the northern part of Shoriya, about 40% of the population was literate. Shor was the language of school teaching, written communication, and literature. The Shor literature of the time was sparse; there were only Shor translations of religious literature, and original works. Most of the latter seem to have been lost: We have only one poem in Shor. It was written by Ivan Štygašev, the first Shor writer, who studied in the Kazan' Theological College and in 1885 published a book in Russian which contained this one Shor poem. After 1917, with the outbreak of the revolution and civil war, all schools were closed, and the literary tradition hence interrupted.

At the time of the Soviet cultural revolution of 1927, a new Cyrillic-based Shor alphabet was created. Between 1929 and 1939, the pan-

<sup>3</sup> An analysis of the Shor alphabets appears in Nevskaja (1990) and Nevskaja (1993).

Turkic alphabet *janalif*, based on Latin, was used. From 1939 on, the Cyrillic script was once more promulgated.

In 1927, the Shor national district was formed. Though the district was short-lived (it was annulled in 1939), this was an important period for the development of the Shor literary language. It was taught at schools, a considerable number of books in Shor were published (more than 150 titles) and the language, folklore and ethnology of the Shors were studied intensively.

However, the tragic events of 1937-1945 had a devastating effect on the culture of the Shors. In 1942 the last issue of the Shor language newspaper *Қызыл Шор* ("Red Shoriya") was published, and all the Shor schools closed. For the next half century, the Shor language was no longer written or taught at schools. Its functional sphere became minimal: It was only used at home for everyday topics. All other cultural needs were met by Russian, which was the language of education, literary works and the mass media, as well as administrative, political, and economic relations. During this period, several generations of urban Shors grew up with at best minimal competence in Shor.

At present, history is giving the Shor language a chance (probably its last one) to become a literary language. The steady growth of Shor national sentiment and political activity, the Shors' interest in their national culture and language, and changes in the country as a whole can contribute to this. We hope that what we are now witnessing in Shoriya might be the beginning of a fourth period in its history: A period of ethnic and linguistic revival.

The revival of literary Shor began with the publishing of Shor textbooks, the training of Shor language teachers, and the teaching of Shor at schools and in Shor language circles.

#### **4. The revival of Shor at schools**

In 1988, a Chair of Shor Language and Literature was created at the Novokuznetsk State Pedagogical Institute (NGPI). The first head was Andrej Čudojakov. The same year, a Shor department was established in the Faculty of Philology and teacher training began in Shor language and literature. A year later, teachers of different subjects, Shors themselves, began to teach Shor in a number of schools. They were graduates of a two-year course training leaders for Shor language circles. The course was organised in Novokuznetsk by Alisa Esipova. The Shor alphabet book and textbooks for the primary years were written by Nadežda

Kurpeško (Kemerovo) and members of the department. In 1994 the first graduates of the national department (five people) began to work at schools in the Kemerovo Region. At present, about 20 teachers of Shor work at schools in the Tashtagol and Mezhdurechensk districts of Mountain Shoriya, in cities and villages alike. Some schools which were closed 10-30 years ago resumed teaching; some schools were rebuilt.

#### 4.1. Turcology in Novokuznetsk

During the 50 crucial years of Shor language history, the collecting, compiling and describing of material still available has not stopped. Shor language research has been carried out mainly by foreign-language lecturers at the Novokuznetsk State Pedagogical Institute under the guidance first of Andrej Dul'zon (Tomsk), then of Elizaveta Ubrjatova (Novosibirsk), and at present Maja Čeremisina and Natal'ja Širobokova (Institute of Philology, Siberian Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences). The NGPI offered scientific seminars on Shor at the Chair of Foreign Languages, headed first by Mixail Abdraxmanov, then by his successor Elektron Čispijakov. He was the first Shor linguist, a doctor of science and one of the founders of the Turcological school in Novokuznetsk. Shortly before *perestroyka* (1975-1985), he taught Shor at the Shor language seminar organised for the members of the department. His aim was to attract linguists (Germanicists by training) to Shor language research, thus continuing the tradition founded in Siberia by Radloff. In class, Čispijakov used the manuscript of his Shor language textbook (which was not published until 1992, after the author's death). Almost all the participants in the seminar became Shor language researchers.

When in the late eighties we witnessed the awakening of Shor national sentiment and the desire to restore social functions to the language, there were already people (among them also Shors) qualified to cope with this task. When the Shor Department was opened, the core research group consisted of Favzija Čispijakova, Irina Šencova, and Nina Šavlova. Beside the Shor Department, there were two other groups of Turcologists at the Chair of Foreign Languages: In Novokuznetsk (Elektron Čispijakov, Alisa Esipova, Irina Nevskaja, Natal'ja Mixailova), and in the regional centre of Kemerovo (Nadežda Kurpeško). All three groups worked closely together.

The Shor Department was headed by Andrej Čudojakov, a well-known Shor folklorist, who collected Shor folklore for more than 40



years until his death in 1994. He prepared a volume of Shor heroic epics, which is to appear this year in the series *Pamjatniki fol'klora narodov Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka* ("Folklore of the peoples of Siberia and the Far East"), published by the Institute of Philology, Siberian Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Novosibirsk).

The first years of the department's existence were difficult yet productive ones. The teaching of Shor and the training of language teachers demanded academic plans and programmes, as well as the writing and publication of elementary school and university textbooks in Shor. All the linguists dealing with Shor took part in this work.

Initially, the most important task facing such linguists was to provide the revival process with a scientific foundation: To create a modern Shor orthography, choose a standard dialect, and establish literary norms.

#### **4.2. The modern Shor alphabet**

The revival of the Shor written language was based on an orthography put forward by Elektron Čispijakov. It was discussed many times by linguists both in Novokuznetsk and in the Academy of Sciences.

By 1988, the Shor language had had several writing systems, the best of which was the one developed by the Altay missionaries. The Cyrillic alphabet used before 1942 contained notorious characters rendering combinations of the consonant [j] and a vowel. They were used not only in Russian borrowings, but in native Shor words as well, which made morpheme identification more difficult and broke down one-to-one phoneme-grapheme correlations. In addition, this alphabet did not have characters for many specific Shor sounds. The Missionary alphabet, in contrast, was logical and economical. It was based on the principle of *one grapheme for one phoneme*. Consequently, not all allophones and their phonetic realisations were rendered by separate characters. This was fully justified in a period when the entire Shor population spoke Shor and only a few people spoke Russian. At present, the situation has reversed; many young Shors have to study Shor almost as a foreign language. Therefore, it was necessary to make the new graphic system as close to a phonetic transcription as possible, so that students of Shor could easily identify the graphic and phonetic shapes of a word and avoid mistakes in reading and writing.

The new Shor alphabet proposed by Čispijakov eliminated the *j*-characters in native words and early Russian borrowings fully assimilated in the language. Several new characters were introduced for specific Shor

sounds, such as uvular allophones of the phoneme /k/. But neither phonetic nor phonemic principles were fully applied: Not all voiced allophones have separate graphemes. E.g. *ɣ* denotes both voiced and non-voiced allophones of the corresponding phoneme, and *ʒ* denotes both a separate phoneme and one of the allophones of /k/. The grapheme *ä* proved to be unnecessary: Modern authors do not use it. It was meant to render a front wide vowel whose phonemic status is unclear. It may be an allophone of /a/ or /e/, a dialectal variant of one of them, or a separate phoneme.<sup>4</sup> That means that an improvement of the Shor writing system requires further phonological and phonetic research of the Shor language system.

### 4.3. The standard dialect

The Shor language has always had a rich system of rather distant dialects and subdialects. The main dialects are Mras and Qondum. The names of the Shor dialects go back to the names of the rivers. Shors speaking the Mras dialect live in the basin of the river Mrassu (Shor *Mras* or *Pras*). The Russians apparently adopted the word combination *Mras su* (or *suy*) ‘water, river’ > *Mrassu*, which literally means Mras-river as the river’s name. The Russian name of the dialect is *mrasskij* where the first *s* is a part of the root and the second *s* belongs to the suffix *+sk+* which forms adjectives from nouns, mainly from geographical names, i.e. *kemerovskij* from Kemerovo, *moskovskij* from Moskva. The traditionally used dialect name Mrass (Pritsak 1959: 630) may have appeared due to back-formation since the suffix *+k+* also exists in Russian: *kuzneckij* from *kuznec* ‘smith’. The name of the Kondoma dialect also goes back to the Russian name of the river Kondoma (Shor *Qondum*).

We prefer to use the Shor river names for the names of the dialects: Mras and Qondum.

The Mras and Qondum dialects differ in a number of phonetical, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features, e.g. the Old Turkic *-d-* is reflected as *-y-* in Mras and as *-z- ~ -s-* in Qondum: Mras *ayaq* > Qondum *azaq* ‘leg’. The labial harmony is more consistent in Mras. The present-tense marker which goes back to the analytical aspectual form

<sup>4</sup> A preliminary description of the Shor consonant and vowel phoneme systems is found in Borodkina (1977) and Pospelova (1977).

with the auxiliary verb *čat-* 'lie, live' is *-ča* in Mras and *-čyr* or *-čyt* in Qondum:

	'I go'		'He / she / it goes'
Mras:	<i>men parčam</i>		<i>ol parča</i>
Qondum:	<i>men parčadym / parčarym</i>		<i>ol parčyr</i>
	(from:		(from:
	par-yp čad-yr-ym;		par-yp čad-yr
	go-gerund lie-aorist-1.p.sg)		go-gerund lie-aorist)

In Mras, the construction with the gerund *-ArdA* expresses co-occurrence of two events which are not localized on the time axis: *ol kel-erde ...* 'each time when he came / comes / will come ...'; in Qondum, this construction has the meaning of co-occurrence of two events in the future: 'when he will come'.

The Mras *em* 'house' corresponds to the Qondum *üġ* or *üy* 'house' (for more details see Čispijakova (1991)).

Certain factors resulted in a rapid divergence of dialects in the second half of the twentieth century. They include: The absence of super-dialectal literary norms in the unwritten period, the mobility of the language system itself (especially the verb), and rapid processes of contraction at morpheme junctions (different in the two dialects, see the above given examples). The dialect distance complicated the choice of a standard dialect.

In the 1930's, the Mras dialect was chosen as the standard. It was spoken by a large part of the population in northern Shoriya (which was also more economically and culturally advanced), and by most of the Shor intelligentsia. By the late eighties, the situation was different: Northern Shoriya (the lower reaches of its major rivers, the Qondum and the Mras rivers) had become a conglomeration of industrial centres, a large industrial megalopolis, in which the Shors were a minority. The compact Shor population which had preserved the language and the national culture lived in the south, in the upper reaches of these rivers. They spoke the Qondum dialect and the upper-Mras subdialects of the language. Nevertheless, the lower-Mras variety of the language was again chosen as the basic one, the reasons being, first, because it continued a literary tradition (it was the literary language of the thirties), and second, it preserved original, non-contracted, affix formatives of grammatical categories to a greater extent. But the sociolinguistic situation had

to be taken into account, and the proposed literary norms were not very strict: Some Qondum dialect forms were included alongside Mras ones.

#### 4.4. Literary norms

Creating literary norms was an important task for Shor linguists. There were many problematic questions concerning Shor orthography:

- How to represent long vowels and consonants: Long segments have a tendency to be shortened in speech so that they sound like short ones. (It was decided to render long vowels and consonants by reduplicating the corresponding graphemes.)
- How to render complex verbs: whether to write them as one graphic word or as a word combination. (It was decided to render them as a combination of two graphic words, as is traditional in Shor.)
- How to render combinations of nouns with postpositions and particles. (It was decided they should be written separately unless the particle appears inside a word form, as in *sarna-b-oḵ-ča-m* [sing-GER-PARTICLE-PRS-1] ‘but I am singing already’.<sup>5</sup>

In practice, all these rules are violated: Complex verbs are written as one word, long vowels and especially long consonants are not reduplicated, particles are written together with nouns, while case affixes are sometimes written separately.

Elektron Čispijakov’s work *The graphics and orthography of the Shor language* became the basis for school and university textbooks, for the revival of Shor literature. The book was published in 1992, after the author’s death, but it was used by all Shor linguists long before.

#### 4.5. A modern alphabet book

An important milestone in the history of the teaching of Shor was the publication of the modern *Shor alphabet book* in 1990. It was written by Nadežda Kurpeško, who at present holds the chair of the Association of

<sup>5</sup> The Shor present-tense marker goes back to an analytical aspectual form consisting of the *p*-gerund of the main verb and an auxiliary existential verb *ča-* ‘to live, to lie’ (see also 4.3). Its formation is quite recent, taking place within the last century. The fact that a particle can enter such a word form proves that it was formerly a combination of two graphic and phonetic words.

Shor People; she wrote several textbooks and teachers' manuals for Shor and Teleut primary schools. Shor language teachers began to use this alphabet book as soon as it was published, without waiting for the whole cycle of school textbooks to appear or for the first trained teachers of Shor to graduate from the institute. The social demand was so great that it was impossible to wait several years.

#### 4.6. Shor teachers

Most of the first teachers of Shor were graduates of the two-year post-graduate course in Shor language circle leader training. The course was organised at the Novokuznetsk State Pedagogical Institute by Alisa Esipova. The students, who were themselves Shors, were teachers of different subjects and already spoke Shor. They completed four one-month sessions in Novokuznetsk during the winter and summer holidays, and individual study the rest of the time. They were trained in teaching methods, Shor grammar, Shor geography, history and ethnology, psychology, music, and child psychology. They had ethnographic field practice as well. When the need arose, they were prepared to teach Shor. Many of them still work as Shor language teachers today.

Primary school teachers were (and still are) another source of Shor teachers. They were well acquainted with the methods of early-stage language teaching, since their first speciality was Russian-language teaching.

Beginning in 1993, the graduates of the Shor Department of the NGPI started teaching Shor at schools in Shoriya.

The systematic instruction of Shor at schools began in 1990. But we must also mention some earlier attempts, such as Esipova's. She taught Shor at meetings of the Club of Shor Youth, which she organised in 1986 in Novokuznetsk. Irina Šencova also wrote lessons in Shor, which were published in the newspaper *Krasnaja Šoriya* in Tashtagol.

#### 4.7. Textbook publishing

In response to the social demand, Shor linguists were writing and publishing Shor textbooks for schools and institutes.<sup>6</sup> The published literature falls into three groups: (1) school textbooks; (2) textbooks for uni-

<sup>6</sup> A list of published books is to be found in the section "Recent publications on Shor".

versity students; (3) textbooks for adults studying the language on their own.

Among the published school books, there are, beside the *Shor alphabet book*, textbooks for the second and third grades, and *The Russian-Shor and Shor-Russian learners' dictionary*, *A grammar of the Shor language* by Mixail Amzorov. Textbooks for the fourth and fifth grades have been written but not yet published.

Generally speaking, these school textbooks are modelled on native-language textbooks. Exercises and texts are meant for a person who already speaks the language. This is often not the case in Shoriya. There are, of course, short dictionaries in each textbook. But learning a language anew with the aid of such textbooks is not easy. It is also necessary to create Shor textbooks for those who have to study it as a foreign language.

Especially needed now are textbooks for university Shor courses. Some Shor department students do not speak Shor well.<sup>7</sup> For them the Shor academic course should be longer. However these students already bear a double load at the institute: They are trained to become teachers of both the Russian and Shor language and literature. Therefore, the number of academic hours devoted to studying Shor cannot be so great. Consequently, good textbooks, intensive methods and technology should be used.

In 1988, we had only Dyrenkova's *Shor grammar* and *Shor folklore* which were published in 1940-1941 and reflect the language of that time. The Turcologists at Novokuznetsk had to carry out intensive scientific research of all language levels and of the folklore, and then write textbooks for students. Textbooks on phonetics, dialectology, folklore, a learner's dictionary, and a chrestomathy have already been published. In addition, there is a textbook on the Shor verbal system (Nevskaja, forth-

<sup>7</sup> The situation is different for students who speak Shor. They often have problems with Russian and should have additional courses in Russian. As a rule, such students come from far-away villages where they could not be well trained in all subjects because of a lack of teachers. These students have many problems with theoretical subjects and with foreign languages. Their family situation, too, is often problematic. Finally, the government stipend for students is not sufficient. Many students cannot cope with all these difficulties and give up.

coming), and a full bibliography of Shor literature (Esipova & Nevskaja, forthcoming).

These textbooks can be used by people wishing to study Shor. But there are also textbooks specially devised for adults: Čispijakov's book mentioned above, a Shor-Russian phrase book (Amzorov & Šencova 1992), and finally a textbook written by Šencova and Dmitrij M. Nasilov (1994). All these textbooks received an eager welcome.

### 5. The revival of written Shor

The Shor people have preserved their rich folklore throughout the history of their nation. The revival of written Shor was supported by this epic tradition, and by the joint efforts of outstanding representatives of the Shor and Russian people, who believed in the future of the Shor language and culture.

In the early 1990's, short publications in Shor began to appear from time to time in local newspapers, mainly in the newspaper *Gornaja Šorija* (published in Tashtagol). The first booklet in Shor (with Russian translations) was the youth (manuscript) magazine *Elim*, written and published by students and teachers of the Shor Department of the NGPI. Its first issue appeared in 1992, the second in 1993. Also in 1992, the first collection of poems by a young Shor poet, Nikolaj Belčegešev, *Tuğan čer – tağlyğ Šor*, was published in Novokuznetsk. Two years later, the collection of poems by Gennadij Kostočakov, *Ala tağlarym*, appeared. By this time, there were several people writing verse and short stories in Shor, among them Andrej Čudojakov. In 1995, a Shor literary reader was published. It was composed of major original works by Shor authors, beginning with the first Shor poet's, Ivan Štygašev's, verse. In 1996, another collection of poetry written by a young Shor poet, Lubov' Arbačakova, appeared in Mezhdurechensk. Finally, at the Gorno-Altaysk Conference of the Union's Section of Turkic Peoples (1996), Gennadij Kostočakov, Nikolaj Belčegešev, and Lubov' Arbačakova were nominated for membership in the Union of Writers of Russia.

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