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THE STATE LANGUAGE POLICY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ETHNIC MINORITIES'
EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

ЯЗЫКОВАЯ ПОЛИТИКА И ЕГО ЭФФЕКТ НА РАБОЧИЕ И ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫЕ
ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ ЭТНИЧЕСКИХ МЕНЬШИНСТВ

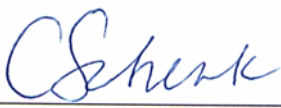
ТІЛ САЯСАТЫ ЖӘНЕ ОНЫҢ ЭТНИКАЛЫҚ ТОПТАРДЫҢ ЖҰМЫС ПЕН ОҚУ
МҮМКІНДІКТЕРІНЕ ӘСЕРІ

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By Aizhan Kakenova

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List of Acronyms

RK Republic of Kazakhstan

Abstract

When Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, the primary goal was to maintain civil peace and stability. However, the new regime also understood that it was essential to introduce Kazakh culture, traditions, and language into the system. To promote the Kazakhization process, the government proposed language as the most important instrument to reach its strategic goal. Therefore, the government introduced the state language policy aimed at the promotion of the Kazakh language.

In this thesis, I investigate the effect of the state language policy on the ethnic minorities' opportunities in regards to their education and employment. My study demonstrates that one of the effects of the state language policy is a rising number of the Kazakh-language speaking population in society. Ethnic minorities argue that fluency in the state language positively contributes to their well-being. There are ethnic minorities who face significant obstacles in getting a job due to lack of fluency in the state language and they acknowledge the importance of the state language on their socio-economic success in Kazakhstan. Another effect of the Kazakhization law is on ethnic minorities' education. Ethnic minority parents understand that proficiency in the state language will contribute to future success of their children. Therefore, the state language policy motivates parents to send their children to Kazakh language schools. Hence, my argument is as follows: First, I argue that ethnic minorities who speak Kazakh can successfully integrate to the job market whereas ethnic minorities who do not speak Kazakh cannot integrate into the job market. Second, I argue that ethnic minority parents send their children to Kazakh-language schools to ensure that their children can integrate into the job market in the future.

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Chapter 1 Kazakhization Process and Ethnic Minorities

With the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, successor states had the dual task of forming the state and building the nation. Since the states of the former Soviet Union were composed of multiethnic polities, a major goal for the transition was “to find formulas and mechanisms for preventing conflicts, and building improved governance over complex societies” (Tishkov 1994). An essential task for former Soviet Kazakhstan was also to redefine the state as a civic community where every citizen has equality of rights and opportunities guaranteed by the state law and state policies. To guarantee equality of opportunities and rights every citizen, the government adopted the 1995 constitution. This constitution lays a foundation for a fair community where every citizen has a right to live, to work, to choose the language of communication, education, instruction, and creative activities (Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2017).

In 1991 when Kazakhstan declared independence, the government prioritized the integration of all ethnic groups to preserve stability. While the government in Kazakhstan tries to preserve equality of opportunities and rights for all individuals, it is also important to preserve and to promote the language, culture, traditions, and history of the Kazakh nation. Therefore, one of the main policy directions of independent Kazakhstan was “development of the culture, language, and traditions of the Kazakhs without suppressing other ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan” (Nourzhanov and Saikal 1994, 225). To promote the language, culture, traditions, and history of the Kazakh nation, the government introduced the Kazakhization process. Kazakhization is a process directed at the revival and promotion of the Kazakh language, culture, traditions, and history and this process is realized through state policies and projects (Masanov,

Karin, Chebotarev, and Oka 2002). One of the core components of the Kazakhization process is the state language policy which “can be understood as the state language policy, directed at the revival, the strengthening, development and promotion of the Kazakh language in economic, political, and socio-cultural spheres of life in Kazakhstan” (Masanov, Karin, Chebotarev, and Oka 2002).

Therefore, in this thesis, I want to investigate the influence of the state language policy on ethnic minorities and my research question is: “How does the state language policy affect ethnic minorities’ opportunities in Kazakhstan?” To proceed with the research question, the next sections identify research puzzle, analyze existing literature, and outline the organization of the thesis.

Research Puzzle: The Effect of the State Language Policy on Ethnic Minorities’ Opportunities in Kazakhstan

The Republic of Kazakhstan declared independence in 1991 and became home for 126 registered ethnic groups (Suleimenova and Smagulova 2005). Since independence, the image of multiethnic harmony has become a key component of the Nazarbayev regime. In the annual meetings of the Assembly of People, Nazarbayev portrays Kazakhstan as a home for harmony and peace. For example, in the March meeting at the Assembly of People, Nazarbayev claimed that:

Besides our ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, we have maintained peace and stability in our country. Kazakhstan is home to over 140 ethnic groups and 17 religious groups. Civil peace and interethnic harmony remain a key value for us (Inform.kz 2017).

But regardless of such statements of the president, it is important to emphasize that the government has introduced Kazakhization process which aims at promotion of the Kazakh language, traditions, culture, and history (Smith 1998; Zhanarstanova and Nechayeva 2015).

Back in the mid-1990s, the government realized the importance of preserving Kazakh language and culture for the future without suppressing languages and cultures of other ethnic groups. To foster Kazakhization process, the government started with the state language policy. One of the initial language policies was to introduce the *Law on Languages* in 1997 that requires proficiency in the state language to work in particular positions in the job market (Olcott 2005). Another recent language policy aimed at the promotion of the Kazakh language is KAZTEST exam. The exam is required for individuals who want to work in government-controlled organizations and companies. Zhanarstanova and Nechayeva (2015) argue that by favoring the Kazakh language, the government gives advantage to the Kazakh-speaking population and motivates the non-Kazakh speaking population to learn the Kazakh language. Therefore, the goal of my study is to investigate influence of the language policy on ethnic minorities' opportunities in Kazakhstan. Specifically, I am interested in understanding how the state language policy aimed at the promotion of the Kazakh language affects ethnic minorities' employment and education opportunities in Kazakhstan.

This thesis investigates the effect of the language policy on ethnic minorities' opportunities in regards to education and employment. It is important to specify that my thesis studies only ethnic minority groups. In my study, I investigate the effect of the language policy on ethnic minorities because I want to demonstrate that ethnicity of Kazakhstan's citizen is not the driving factor in the integration process. When Kazakhstan declared its independence, the non-Kazakh population that spoke Kazakh language fluently was only 1.5 percent (Masanov

2009). Therefore, it is crucial to focus on ethnic minorities because it helps to control for the effect of the ethnicity and to isolate the effect of the language fluency. My goal is to demonstrate that ethnic minorities are able to integrate if they speak the state language fluently. As a result of this study, my argument is two-fold: First, I argue that ethnic minorities who speak Kazakh can successfully integrate to the job market whereas ethnic minorities who do not speak Kazakh cannot integrate into the job market. Second, I argue that ethnic minority parents send their children to Kazakh-language schools to ensure that their children can integrate into the job market in the future.

In the next section, I analyze literature on ethnic minorities and their integration process. It is true in the literature that fluency in the state language is a crucial factor which positively influences integration in the job market (Hermansen 2012, Wong, Duff, and Early 2011, Hakuta, Butler, and Witt 2000, Porter 1995, Gans 1992, Olsen 1988).

Ethnic Minorities and Integration

From a broad perspective, integration refers to a process “by which individuals become accepted to the new society” (Penninx 2013). In other words, integration is the condition where newcomers or immigrants are accepted by the receiving society. In the integration process, the receiving society introduces policies and regulations to which newcomers conform in order to be accepted and to live successfully in the new society. However, it is also important to define that adaptation is one of the components of the integration process (Penninx 2013). Adaptation as a process refers to a process of change and adjustment to new environmental conditions (Berry et al. 2002). According to Penninx, adaptation is one of the driving factors that lead to successful

integration of the newcomers to the society because by adapting to the new norms and rules, immigrants make one step forward for their integration.

When Kazakhstan declared independence in 1991, ethnic minorities alongside with ethnic Kazakhs faced new environment: under the Soviet Union, the rules of the game were different where the Russian language was de jure the language of the Soviet people. But with independence, the Kazakh language became the state language. The literature on immigrants can potentially explain what has happened to the citizens in Kazakhstan: with independence and with introduction of the new rules and regulations, citizens in Kazakhstan had to meet the needs in the society by learning the new language. To find good job opportunities in the government sector, ethnic minorities started to learn the state language and send their children to the Kazakh language schools to ensure that they are fluent Kazakh-language speakers. This situation in Kazakhstan is somewhat parallel to what immigrants face when they enter the new society: they also face new rules and they also need to meet the needs in the new society to be successful.

While there are scholars (Zhou and Bankston 1998, Wilson 1987) who take time and socio-economic factors as the most important predictors of immigrants' successful integration to the new environment, in Gordon's view the primary factor that affects whether immigrants are able to integrate is language. Gordon (1964) argues that immigrants start their integration process to the new society through culture and language. If ethnic minorities are able to integrate culturally, then they can proceed to structural and economic adaptations. However, Gordon does not control for the effect of the age of immigrants on the success or failure of the integration process. There are social scientists (Heine 2008, Cheung, Chudek and Heine 2010) who find that for younger generations (children under the age of 15) it is easier to integrate into the new

society than for the older generations: “People are better able to identify with a host culture the longer their exposure to it, but only if this exposure occurs when they are relatively young”.

In the literature, scholars (Porter 1995, Gans 1992, Olsen 1988) argue that for adults it is more difficult to integrate into the new host society while for young individuals it is easier to find favorable conditions for successful integration. One of the primary reasons for younger generations to successfully integrate is because children often lack meaningful psychological and emotional connections to their “old” world (Gans 1992, Portes 1995). Therefore, for children, it is more comfortable to affiliate themselves with the new residence and to consider this new residence not as a foreign country but rather as a place of reference (Portes 1995). Shapiro (1999) also argues that children do not share emotional ties with their original homeland. Therefore, they do not face significant obstacles such as depression, anxiety, and stress during integration to the new country. But for older generations, it is harder to integrate since they do not only face new living economic and social environment but most importantly their cultural habits including language and lifestyle are subject to change (Shapiro 1999). Hermansen (2012) emphasizes the impact of age on the successful integration. He finds that those ethnic minorities who are able to learn the host language are more successful during the integration process and are able to find favorable opportunities faster. However, his study shows that younger individuals are more successful because they are more proactive in mastering the new language in contrast to the adults. Scholars (Paulsten 1978, Copley 1978, Rumbaut 1998) also argue that learning the language of the host community always serves as a positive tool for integration in the future. Learning the language of the host society has become a significant part of the integration process and defining factor whether the ethnic minority is able to integrate (Hermansen 2012, Hakuta, Butler, and Witt 2000). There are scholars (Wong, Duff, and Early

2011) who argue that younger generations are able to successfully integrate into the new environment quicker than adults because they are more flexible and proactive in learning the new languages.

The literature demonstrates that in the new environment for the ethnic minorities it is usually hard to proceed with the integration process. In the case of Kazakhstan, ethnic minorities who were fluent Russian-speakers are now required to become fluent Kazakh-speakers to work in the state-owned and state-controlled entities. The literature also identifies that the older generations are less successful in integrating to the new environment than the younger generations (children aged 15 and under). While this literature focuses on immigrants' adaptation to the new host environment, this literature can explain Kazakhstan's case. When immigrants live in the host society, they face new language practices and they learn the language of the host community to succeed. The same tendency is observed in Kazakhstan's case: while previously under the Soviet Empire Russian language was de jure required everywhere, now people in Kazakhstan learn the Kazakh language to integrate. In the next section, I will outline the way the thesis is organized to investigate specifically the effect of language policy on the ethnic minorities' employment and education opportunities.

Thesis Organization: From Explaining Kazakhization to Its Effect on Ethnic Minorities

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows: chapter two outlines the scope of this research, its methodology, and the consideration of ethics. To investigate the research question, I study the effect of Kazakhization's component – the language policy – on ethnic minorities' opportunities. Chapter two, in addition, provides sampling strategy of respondents and outlines ethical considerations. Chapter three continues with the analysis of the main

independent variable - the language policy. The main goal of this chapter is to analyze elements of the language policy. First, I will analyze the *Law on Languages* in the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted in 1997 that requires proficiency in Kazakh to work in the state-controlled and state-owned organizations. Second, I will analyze the 2005 State Program for the Development and Functioning of the State Language for 2011-2020 in Kazakhstan that aims at improvement of the quality of the Kazakh-language publishing, and of the vocabulary of the Kazakh language. Third, I will investigate the 2010 program “KAZTEST” that requires non-Kazakh fluent candidates for positions in the state-controlled and state-owned entities to attend at least 30 hours of Kazakh language instruction in the local centers and to pass the Kazakh language exam in order to be employed.

Chapter four continues with the analysis of the languages preferences in Kazakhstan. This chapter analyzes how the state language policy has affected the rise of the Kazakh-language speaking population. Chapters five and chapter six analyze influences of the language policy on ethnic minorities in regards to their employment and education. Chapter five analyzes the effect of the Kazakhization law on the employment opportunities, starting with the literature review followed by a discussion of how the state language policy affects ethnic minorities’ integration to the job market. My argument is that those ethnic minorities who speak Kazakh fluently are able to more successfully integrate into the job market. To demonstrate my argument, I discuss the results of interviews. While chapter five analyzes the effects of the Kazakhization’s language component on the job sector, chapter six turns to address the education system. In particular, chapter six demonstrates that ethnic minority parents send their children to the Kazakh-language schools because parents want to ensure that their children speak Kazakh fluently. In parents’ view, children who speak fluently the state language will successfully integrate into the job

market in the future. Chapter six continues with an analysis of the educational system in Kazakhstan and investigation of respondents' interviews. Chapter six combines the findings from previous chapters to demonstrate the effect of the state language policy on ethnic minorities' opportunities. In addition, chapter six provides my personal insights of this study and shows potential implications for future studies.

Chapter 2 Studying the Impact of the State Language Policy on Ethnic Minorities' Opportunities

This thesis studies the effect of the state language policy on ethnic minorities' opportunities in three regions of Kazakhstan. Kazakhization's language component refers to a set of the state laws and policies aimed at promotion and development of the Kazakh language in the political and socio-economic life in Kazakhstan. To investigate the research question, this study analyzes the effects of the state language policy on ethnic minorities' employment and educational opportunities. I focus only on citizens of Kazakhstan. According to the official statistics, the population of Kazakhstan has following numbers:

Table 2.1 Ethnic Composition of Kazakhstan, 2016

Ethnicity	Number of pop
Kazakhs	11,244,547
Russians	3,644,529
Uzbeks	548,841
Ukrainians	289,724
Uighurs	256,295
Tatars	202,934
Germans	181,754
Turks	107,944
Koreans	107,169
Azerbaijanis	103,514
Dungan	66,209
Belarusians	58,062
Tajiks	44,738
Kurds	43,974
Chechens	32,695
Polish	31,938
Bashkir	16,885
Others	185,195

Source: Ministry of Social Protection, Department of Social and Demographic Statistics (2016)

Data: Since the goal of this study is to understand the effect of the Kazakhization's language policy on ethnic minorities across Kazakhstan, I have used various techniques including interviews and analysis of official documents. I have conducted interviews in three cities of Kazakhstan (i.e. Karaganda, Shymkent, and Aktobe) to reveal variation among respondents. First, to analyze the state language policy, it is important to analyze the rules and regulations within the country about languages. For this purpose, I analyze the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan as well as official documents including the Language Law, the State Language Policy, the State Language Program, and the Concept for the Formation of State Identity of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Additional data comes from the state ministries and agencies such as Ministry of Economics of RK, Ministry of Social Development and Healthcare, Ministry of Education, and Migration Police. I have also used the annual report of Ministry of Social Development and Healthcare to have a demographic composition of Kazakhstan.

The primary source of data collection was in-depth semi-structured interviews with different actors, including ethnic minorities (who hold Kazakhstan's passport), prosecution officers, journalists and experts in the field of multiethnic relations. The total number of interviews is 112.

I had a chance to interview Kazakhstani two experts on interethnic relations, via Skype. Both of them work in a state institute that provides research and analytical information to policy makers. Their studies focus on interethnic relations, ethnic minorities, and their rights in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan. One of the experts has Ph.D. in multicultural studies and the second expert has Ph.D. in political science, both from Western universities.

Finally, I interviewed ordinary citizens in three regions of Kazakhstan. I recruited respondents on the main streets of the cities: i.e. most-visited places such as railways stations and

shopping and entertaining centers. The primary strategy to recruit respondents was purposive sampling because I chose respondents based on my personal judgements: it was important that respondents vary by their ethnicity because I am studying the effect of the state language policy on ethnic minorities and I excluded ethnic Kazakhs. The first destination to start interviews was Central Kazakhstan, Karaganda City. Interviews took place in Bukhar Jyray Street, including City Mall, TSUM, and Absolute Malls. Interviewing respondents were selected for the study by the judgement of the researcher in the main streets. While ten people declined to give an interview, 30 ethnic minorities 30 people agreed to answer questions (see Table 1.2).

Table 2.2 Respondents in Central Kazakhstan, Karaganda City

Russians	Chechens	Tatars	Tajiks	Uzbeks	Kyrgyz
12	5	5	3	2	3

In West Kazakhstan, the interview process took place in Mega Center Aktobe, and in the railway station. However, in Aktobe I was able to find only four Russian men and one Azerbaijani in the streets. Therefore, I contacted my friends who helped me to find local ethnic groups. After contacting my friends, I was able to interview 15 people who belong to various ethnic groups.

Table 2.3 Respondents in West Kazakhstan, Aktobe City

Russians	Azerbaijanis	Armenians	Turks	Uzbeks	Kyrgyz
4	4	4	3	2	3

Before traveling to South Kazakhstan, I received contacts for 15 people who belong to such ethnic groups as Turks, Kurds, Tajiks, Russians, and Uzbeks by contacting friends and relatives. However, I have also interviewed people in Mega Planet Mall. A total number of interviewed people is 25.

Table 2.4 Respondents in South Kazakhstan, Shymkent City

Russians	Azerbaijanis	Kurds	Turks	Uzbeks	Kyrgyz	Tajiks	Chechens	Uighurs
5	2	3	4	3	3	3	1	2

I have used in-depth interviews as the main research method because they have allowed me to explore and to understand opinions of ethnic minorities on the language issue.

Ethical considerations: Since this study required involving human subjects in the process of research, the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee had to provide approval. All the respondents were informed and introduced to the study in the oral and written forms. Human subjects involved in this study realized their participation on a voluntary basis. Written informed consent ensures that participation was voluntary. Moreover, participants were able to withdraw or stop the interview at any time they find necessary. Employment of audio recorder was used only after permission of respondents. Raw materials including audio files and transcripts were stored securely for the period of study specified by the Institutional Research Ethics Committee.

Chapter 3 What is the Kazakhization's Language Policy?

Under Soviet rule, until the 1980s, Kazakh language was not recognized as the official language but remained the native language for ethnic Kazakhs. Therefore, the level of fluency in the Kazakh language by the non-Kazakh population was insignificant and remained around 1.5 percent (Masanov 2007). Instead, Russian was the official language and the language of interethnic communication. 72.8 percent of Kazakhstan's non-Russian population and 64.1 percent of Kazakhstan's Kazakh population were fluent in the Russian language under the Soviet regime (Masanov 1996). In this way, when Kazakhstan gained independence, the Kazakh language was not widely spoken, and only 35 percent of the population were fluent. Among the 35 percent of Kazakh-language speakers, 1.6 percent were ethnic minority groups. Therefore, the government introduced the Kazakhization process to promote language, culture, and traditions of the Kazakh nation. But the government aimed to incorporate the Kazakh language into the system gradually in order to escape potential problems such as social alienation of the non-Kazakh speaking population.

Kazakhization is a process that targets promotion of Kazakh language, history, literature, culture and lifestyle across Kazakhstan and this process is realized by the state laws and policies (Masanov, Karin, Chebotarev, and Oka 2002). The language policy aimed at the promotion of Kazakh language is one of the core components of Kazakhization process. To ensure development and promotion of the state language, the government introduced a set of language laws and policies. One of the initial laws to promote Kazakhization was the *Law on Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan*, adopted in 1997, that requires proficiency in Kazakh to work in

state-controlled and state-owned organizations. Another language program to ensure Kazakhization is the 2005 State Program for the Development and Functioning of the State Language for 2011-2020 in Kazakhstan that aims at improvement of the quality of the Kazakh language publishing, and of the vocabulary of the Kazakh language. One of the latest programs to promote Kazakhization is the 2010 program “KAZTEST” that requires non-Kazakh fluent candidates for the positions in the government to attend at least 30 hours of Kazakh language instruction in the local centers and to pass the Kazakh language exam in order to be employed in the government sector. These three language programs are the major components of the state language policy that aim to develop the Kazakh language. Chapter three starts with the literature on the language policy and its potential effect on the citizens. It is followed by the analysis of three components of the state language policy.

Governments and Language Policy Preferences

The policies and the law governments adopt are manifestations of their intentions and objectives (Walt et al. 2001, 90). Theodoulou (1995, 1) claims that laws proposed by governments are signals of their intentions and goals. However, she stresses that it is important to distinguish between what governments intend to do and what they actually do. In other words, Theodoulou (1995, 15) points out that within the poor-structured governments adopted laws and policies do not always come into force. Therefore, it is always important to consider that the state laws and policies are explicit demonstrations of what government wants and intends to accomplish. In this way, language policy has become an important aspect of the state policy because the language has always been recognized as the social instrument for communication, societal identity, and social solidarity. According to Laitin (2000, 144), language is “not only a means of communication, but it is the most significant marker of identity and through its

pragmatics, a cultural institution”. Lo Bianco (1987, 1) has clearly stressed out the importance of language as a social instrument in society and stated that language is “a code for the unique experiences of different cultural groups”. Therefore, language as a social instrument is perceived as a valuable resource for societal stability and requires governments’ systematic planning and organization (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997, Ruiz 1984, Ingram 1979, Jernudd and Das Gupta 1971).

Language as a state policy has started to be investigated only since the 1960s with the significant rise of the autonomous or independent states as a result of the decolonization process (Eastman 1983, Fishman 1982, Hornberger 1998). When states gain independence, language planning and language directions are one of the crucial aspects that governments consider because language significantly affects political unity and integration within the new society (Eastman 1983). In multiethnic societies, language policy is often managed carefully because language is a social instrument that can break down a society or hold a society together. Kelson (1971, 21) also argues that if the language policy is carried out in accordance with all people’s sensitive cultural aspirations, the state language policy promotes multicultural unity because language is “a uniquely powerful instrument in unifying diverse population and involving individuals and subgroups into the national system”.

After independence, multiethnic and multicultural governments face a serious task of forming language policy. What is important during this policy formation is “to address effectively language-related issues with respect to attaining individual, group, and societal languages need as well as gearing nation’s social, economic, cultural, and linguistic development” (Diallo 2005, 49). Therefore, in a multiethnic society, one of the important factors that can produce potential problems at the societal level is the language preferences adopted by governments’ laws (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). With independence, language policy makers

usually end up with a struggle to define which languages people are to be promoted: “should the languages of colonization be promoted? Should the former colonial languages move out in order to free local languages and cultures from colonial legacies? Should the languages of the people be given more space, power, and prestige? Or should the core groups’ language be given more prestige and authority?” (Grimas 2000). When states gain independence, new rules and policies reshape environment. Therefore, for ethnic minorities’ successful adaptation, states attempt to introduce new rules and policies that will accommodate ethnic minorities’ interests and desires (Diallo 2005, 50).

In the literature, scholars identify the period when the states become independent: specifically, scholars highlight this shift from the colonial language education system to the new language education system (Fanon 1952; Wa Thiong’o 1986; Mazrui 1986). For example, when African colony, Senegal, became an independent country, the aim of the new government was to wipe out imperial legacy and the immediate way was to destroy colonial language through introduction African native languages into the schooling system (Fanon 1952). Diop (1996) also argues that the new independent states often try to revive their cultural and national symbols by developing indigenous languages. He (1996) finds that introduction of the indigenous language into the education system signals the state’s intentions to restore culture and tradition.

Eastman (1983) argues that if in a multiethnic community governments account for linguistic differences they ensure that subgroups have an emotional attachment to their own culture and language. Linguistic or cultural intolerance produced by the host societies are powerful factors that negatively affect minorities’ successful adaptation and integration to the new environment (Ozolinis 1993). However, there are governments which often fail to establish language policies in accordance with the needs and desires of minorities. Those communities

where people are forced to speak particular language essentially produce discrimination (Woolard 1994, Urciuoli 1995). Wang and Phillion (2009) argue that multiethnic societies where ethnic minority groups have opportunities to speak their mother languages are more equal. However, Woolard (1994, 311) argues that in a multiethnic community it is desirable if people choose the language of communication, based on the social significance of language. But there are studies (Lucy 1997; Bailey 2000) which show that in a multiethnic community people are usually forced by the institutions to speak a particular language. For example, Lucy (1997, 301) argues that “the inclination of the speaker to involve language categories in thought may be affected and in some instances forced by institutionalized practices”. People can be forced to favor one language over other languages because of state preferences and policies (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). In the case of Kazakhstan, the state institutions favor the Kazakh language over others (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). Since Kazakhstan declared independence, the government promotes the Kazakh language in order to support Kazakhization process. The literature on language policy and preferences demonstrates that in general language policy formation and language policy adoption is an important aspect of the state policy. One of the primary reasons for its importance is the fact that language serves as a social instrument for unity and integration in every state. Scholars also identify that the period of transition after independence is important because this period shapes states’ language policy portfolios. In the transition period, to promote integration, governments propose language laws that meet desires of all ethnic groups. Taking into consideration literature review on the language policy, the next sections analyze the state language policy in Kazakhstan and focus on three core components of the language policy.

On Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan

When Kazakhstan declared its independence, it faced the significant challenge of creating one nation. With complex ethnic and linguistic composition, the primary task for the government was to consolidate peace and stability. However, the government policy did not meet the interests of the significant proportion of the Russian-speaking population because the initial 1992 *Law on the Languages* recognized Kazakh as the only official language and Russian as the language of interethnic communication (Everett-Heath 2003, 187). This law did not provide Russian language official status and undermined the prestige of the most widely spoken language. One of the negative consequences of the 1992 Law was massive demonstrations by Russian-speaking population in North and Central Kazakhstan “demanding equal status for the Russian language” (Kulzhanova 2012, 10). Demonstrations motivated the government to amend the *Language Law* in 1996 to make Russian language de jure equal to Kazakh language but still recognized as the language of interethnic communication. While this law was welcomed by the Russian-speaking population, Kazakh intelligentsia criticized this law and argued that the Kazakh language is not only the state language but it seeks to become a language of interethnic communication in the near future (Dave 2007, 100). Kazakh intelligentsia and their interests were crucial for Nazarbayev because this group of people supported his ongoing tenure in the position of the President (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). To satisfy Kazakh intelligentsia, the government nullified previous laws on languages and proposed a new *Law on Languages* in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1997. While the content of the new *Law on Languages* remained similar to the previous law, there are several major aspects that were introduced to highlight the importance of the Kazakh language over others: first, *On Languages* claims that learning the Kazakh language is the duty of every citizen in Kazakhstan. Second, *On Languages* requires fluency and proficiency in the state language to work in the state-owned and state-controlled

organization. According to the *On Languages*, “development of the Kazakh language is ensured by the State Program, providing priority of the state language and staged transfer of documents management to the Kazakh language. The list of professions, specialties, and positions, for which the knowledge of the state language is necessary and according to the qualification requirements, is determined by the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (On Languages No. 151-I). Third, *On Languages* requires the documentation in executive, legislative and in other governmental bodies to be in the state language.

These three articles within the *Law on Languages* demonstrate the importance of Kazakh language. Zhanarstanova and Nechayeva (2015) show that *Law on Languages* limits non-Kazakh speaking population access to the job sector in the government-owned and government-controlled entities, including Ministries, National Companies, National Banks and National Libraries. According to an expert:

The Kazakh language is not only becoming popular, but it has already become a requirement to work in the government institutions (e.g. Ministries, Parliament or Administration of the President) and in the state-owned companies. Ethnic minority individuals who fluently speak Kazakh can work for the government, but their number is not significant.¹

According to this academic expert vacancies in the government sector require fluency in the state language. Those individuals who speak Kazakh regardless of their ethnic background can be hired. However, it is obvious that those individuals who do not speak the state language fluently will not be able to apply for those positions in the government where the Kazakh language is a requirement. Therefore, it signals the importance of the *Law on Languages* in the ability of individuals to get employed. The next section analyzes the 2005 State Program for the

¹ Interview with the academic expert, Astana, March 10, 2017.

Development and Functioning of the State Language for 2011-2020 in Kazakhstan. The goal of this program is to improve the quality of the Kazakh-language publishing as well as a lexicon of the Kazakh language.

The 2005 State Program for the Development and Functioning of the State Language for 2011-2020 in Kazakhstan

Another crucial component of the language policy is the State Program for the Development and Functioning of the State Language for 2011-2020 in Kazakhstan adopted in 2005. It is important to note that the foundation for the 2005 State Program was the 1996 State Language Concept approved by the President and the Languages Committee. According to this concept, it was necessary to “work out a strategy to preserve and develop language in the transition period, defining the tasks for creating conditions for developing Kazakh as the state language” (Masanov, Karin, Chebotarev and Oka 2002; Khliupin 2000). While the government adopted various projects and programs to develop the Kazakh language, the most important program was the 2005 State Program. The ultimate goal of the 2005 state program is to increase a proportion of the Kazakh speaking population by 2020 so that the 95 percent of the adult population (aged 21 and more) in Kazakhstan is fluent in the state language. While this policy seemed unrealistic, according to the Ministry of National Economy and Statistics, the proportion of the Kazakh-speaking population has reached 82 percent (2016).

To realize this program, the Ministry of Education has been working on the improvement of the methodology of the Kazakh-language teaching system in the kindergartens, schools, and universities. Therefore, books on new techniques and methods of teaching the Kazakh language have been published and distributed to the kindergartens, schools, and universities. Second,

within the framework of the 2005 state program, there was a significant increase in the number of cities, villages, historical places, and resorts that were renamed into the Kazakh language. Third, the 2005 state program dictates the importance of developing a unified form of testing proficiency in the state language and establishing unified language centers across the Kazakhstan. This unified form of testing was introduced by the government in 2010 and called as KAZTEST. The primary reason for the government to introduce KAZTEST is to test whether individuals speak Kazakh. By introducing KAZTEST, the government can control not only fluency in the state language but also to ensure that approved list “of occupations, specialties, and positions requiring state language proficiency in a certain volume in accordance with the qualification requirements” are accessible only to Kazakh-speakers (Aksholakova and Ismailova 2013). KAZTEST is based on the techniques implemented in the international language tests such as IELTS, DALF/DELF, and TOEFL that has listening, reading, grammar, and writing sections. As in international standard, KAZTEST demonstrates your level of proficiency (A1, A2, B1, B2, and C1) in Kazakh.

While this test is obligatory to work in the government-led and government-controlled entities, it has also become a requirement to enter master and doctoral studies in Kazakhstani universities. The government also established language educational centers where people who want to learn Kazakh and work for the government can study on a free base. In these centers, individuals not only have access to free classes provide but they have also an opportunity to read books and listen to music in the Kazakh language. It is important to highlight that by introducing KAZTEST, the government supports those who want to speak Kazakh by providing free classes at these centers. However, during my interviews, ethnic minorities did not know about the presence of these centers. Then, I have decided to call and to receive information about these

centers. I have called 3 centers (in Astana, in Almaty, and in Karaganda). I have talked to the managers at these centers. Managers assisted me and provided all the necessary information. The problem with these centers can be that the government does not adequately pay attention to the promotion of these centers. Therefore, for the government, it would be a good idea to start revising about potential mechanisms to popularize not only Kazakh language but rather the means through which people can learn this language.

Conclusion

In this section, I have analyzed what the Kazakhization's language component is. Kazakhization is a process aimed at the promotion of Kazakh language, culture, traditions, and lifestyles in Kazakhstan where language policy is one of the core components aimed specifically at developing the state language. To promote the Kazakh language, the government has introduced *Law on Languages* as well as adopted the State Language Program and KAZTEST exam. The Kazakhstan's language policy focuses on promotion of the Kazakh language in the job market. Those individuals who speak Kazakh language fluently can find good job opportunities in the government-owned and government-controlled entities. Therefore, ethnic minorities who are fluent Kazakh-speakers can also integrate to the job market. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate how the state language policy affects rising number of the Kazakh-language speaking population.

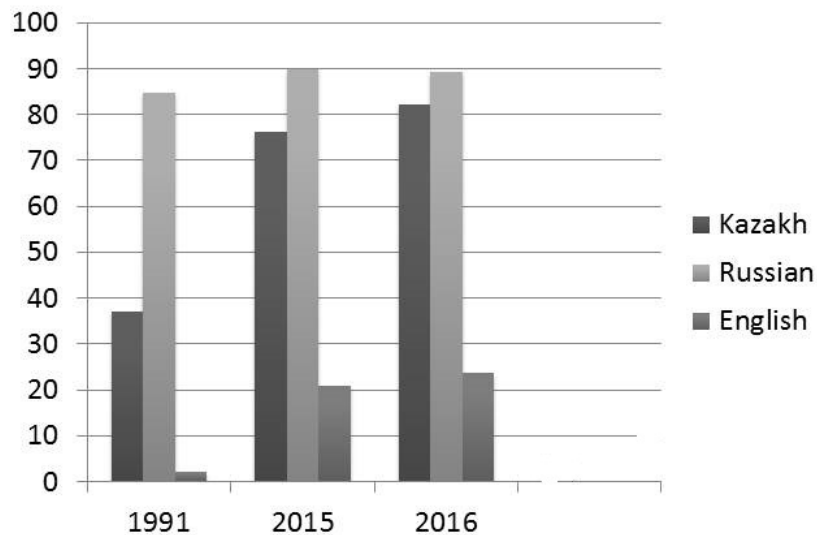
Chapter 4 Language Preferences in Kazakhstan

Language is recognized as an important instrument of friendship and peace within the multiethnic community (Grimas 2000). In this chapter, I analyze the language breakdown in Kazakhstan and demonstrate language trends in Kazakhstan since independence. According to the Ministry of National Economy and Statistics (2016), the percentage of the population that is Kazakh-speaking has increased significantly from 35 percent in 1991 to 82.3 percent in 2016 while the Russian-speaking portion of the population has increased insignificantly from 84.8 percent to 89.4 percent. In addition, the proportion of the population who speak English has also increased from 2 percent in 1991 to 23.7 percent in 2016. Figure 4.1 demonstrates a significant rise in the amount of Kazakh-speaking population. One of the potential explanations for this rise can be the state language policy that motivates people to learn Kazakh. According to an expert, there is a significant rise in the proportion of the Kazakh-language speaking population for two reasons: first, the government has introduced policies that require fluency in the state language to work in particular job sectors as well as the state language has become a requirement for students to be enrolled at the master and doctoral studies at the local universities. Second, since independence, the government promotes the Kazakh language by adopting specific language programs which aim to support Kazakh-language schools and universities (i.e. free books and materials in the state language).

The popularity of the Kazakh language signals that people in Kazakhstan are learning the state language. I also agree with the expert that significant rise in the proportion of the Kazakh-language population can be attributed to the state language policy that aims to promote the Kazakh language in political and socio-economic life in Kazakhstan. Information about language

preferences is crucial to unpack my argument because by demonstrating a significant rise in the proportion of the Kazakh-language speaking population, this study actually shows that people who want to succeed in the Kazakh community learn the official language.

Figure 4.1 Languages in Kazakhstan



Source: Ministry of National Economy and Statistics (2016)

Time and Language

Fierman (2006) argues that in Kazakhstan, the state language policy has been a gradual process that started several years after independence. He argues that the Nazarbayev administration started to promote the state language since 1997. It continued Kazakhization by promoting other language policies in 2005 and in 2010 aimed at restoration of the Kazakh language. Therefore, the effects of the Kazakhization's language policy were not apparent in the

mid-2000s but rather its effects are recent. For instance, 41-year-old Armenian man from West Kazakhstan claimed that in the early years of independence, the Kazakh language was not necessary but with the introduction of the KAZTEST, the situation has become different:

I speak Kazakh fluently. I have reasons for it. When I arrived in Kazakhstan in 1996, everything was so different. People were more open and friendlier. I did not even think of learning Kazakh. But as time went, I saw more and more Kazakhs who told me to learn the Kazakh language to become a full member of this society. After working for small private companies, I decided to work for the Ministry in 2005. It was not an easy process to be hired but I received a job offer from the Ministry. After five years, head of my department told me that I need to provide certificate about proficiency in the state language. I was surprised and told her that I do not speak Kazakh. Within twenty days I had to quit my job. This is a severe reality.

Another respondent 31-year-old Kyrgyz woman from Central Kazakhstan also stated that four years ago she did not speak Kazakh but as a result of problems, she had to learn Kazakh:

I am fluent in the Kazakh language. Four years ago when I submitted my documents to local akimat, I was not hired because of lack of proficiency in the Kazakh language. I literally failed KAZTEST. Then I have attended Kazakh language courses. Now I speak Kazakh very well.

These responses demonstrate that time plays a significant role in understanding the effects of Kazakhization's language policy. While in the early independence years, fluency in the state language was not one of the most important factors that affected people's integration into the job market, with the introduction of the state language policy aimed at promotion of the Kazakh language, fluency in the state language has become important in people's access to the job market. Therefore, the effects of the language policy are more manifest today that it was before.

How does the state language policy affect you?

To understand the effect of the state language policy on ethnic minorities' opportunities, I conducted interviews with 74 ethnic minorities. During interviews, I asked following questions:

“Are you fluent in the Kazakh language? If you are fluent in Kazakh, why did you learn it? If you are not fluent in the Kazakh language, have you ever encountered any problems because of your lack of proficiency in the state language?” It was interesting to find out that generally ethnic minorities state that fluency in the Kazakh language affects their well-being.

I have found that the state language policy actually affects ethnic minorities' opportunities and their well-being in Kazakhstan. Ethnic minorities claim that lack of proficiency in the state language limits their success. For instance, 20-year old Chechen man from South Kazakhstan learns the state language because he wants to receive a grant at the local university:

I am learning the Kazakh language because today there is a significant need in this language. Kazakh language has become popular and widely spoken language. For example, I want to continue my studies. Therefore, to enter master's degree at the local university, I need to be fluent Kazakh speaker.

Another respondent from Central Kazakhstan, 22-year-old Kyrgyz woman told me that she is learning Kazakh language because she wants to ensure that she can easily communicate in the state language:

I have been learning Kazakh language for about four years. This language is quite hard to learn but I am sure that fluency in the state language is very important. One of the main reasons for me to learn the state language is that I want to understand what people are talking about, and to communicate with those who speak Kazakh.

31-year-old man from West Kazakhstan learns the state language policy because it is becoming more and more popular every year:

When I was little boy, nobody spoke Kazakh. But today I see more young people who speak Kazakh fluently and who are learning this language. Therefore, I am also learning this language.

Another respondent 26-year-old Uzbek man from South Kazakhstan is also learning the state language because it has become modern and widely-spoken language:

I remember when I was school boy, everyone tried to be fluent in Russian because it was modern. But now there is a different tendency. To speak Kazakh has become modern. This is one of the main reasons for me to learn the state language.

These interviews demonstrate that people acknowledge rising popularity of the Kazakh language in the society. Therefore, people are prone to learn and to speak Kazakh language. Rising number of the Kazakh-language speaking population is an evidence for the rising popularity of the state language.

Conclusion

When Kazakhstan declared its independence, the percentage of the Kazakh-language speaking population was only 35 percent. However, today the proportion of the Kazakh-language speaking population has increased dramatically to 82.3 percent. I think that this number is significant evidence that signals rising popularity in the state language. This number also signals that people are learning and trying to speak the state language. In this chapter, I have demonstrated various respondents' answer for why they are learning the Kazakh language. One of the most stated reasons for people to learn the state language is because of the rising popularity of the Kazakh language in the society. In the next sections, I will provide in detail possible explanations for the rising number of the population speaking the state language.

Chapter 5 The State Language Policy and Employment Opportunities

The State Language Policy limits opportunities of ethnic minorities who do not speak Kazakh. According to Karin and Chebotarev (2002), the government has produced language laws in a way that favor Kazakh-speaking population (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). For example, interviewed ethnic minorities claim that the state language policy affects their employment opportunities: 39-year-old Tajik woman from South Kazakhstan stated that: “I wanted to work in the Department of Civil Engineering here in Shymkent. But they did not hire me. You know why? One of their reasons is that I am not fluent in Kazakh to process all documentation and communication in the state language.”

In chapter five, I analyze the effect of the state language policy on the employment opportunities of ethnic minorities in detail. Specifically, my argument is that those ethnic minorities who speak the state language are able to more successfully integrate into the job market by working in good positions. But those ethnic minorities who do not meet the requirements written in the state language policy are not able to integrate into the labor market and cannot work in their desired positions in the government sector. To demonstrate my argument, I will provide evidence from interviews with ethnic minorities and experts. Second, this chapter provides greater details about the government sector and demonstrates why the government sector is regarded as prestigious in Kazakhstan.

Labor Market and Ethnic Minorities

The evidence in the literature on language policies demonstrates that fluency in the host-country language positively affects earnings of the people (Dustmann and Van Soest 2002).

Proficiency in the host-country language is a prominent factor of potential success of ethnic minorities. Altonji (1995) finds that at least two years of studying host-country language is associated with 4 percent wage premium. In their study, Shields and Price (2002) also examine the effect of the English language ability on ethnic minorities' occupational success. They argue that the higher the level of English language ability of ethnic minorities, the greater the success in the occupational sector. Another quantitative study by Bleakley and Chin (2004) examine the adult labor market outcomes of ethnic minorities migrating after and before the age of 12 (when learning new language becomes harder). Their findings suggest that those individuals migrating before the age of 12 are more successful in learning a new language and have better positions in the labor market in contrast to those individuals who migrated after the age of 12.

While previously mentioned studies examined the general understanding of the host-language, study adopted by Fry and Lowell (2001) investigate that understanding spoken English is the most important language skill that affects the ability of ethnic minorities to succeed in the employment sector. In their study, Fry and Lowell (2001) demonstrate that the first impression comes from the actual interview where ethnic minorities shall show a good level of understanding and speaking the host-country language. Ferrer, Green, and Riddell (2006) find that literacy rates (reading and writing) have a significant impact on ethnic minorities' success.

Scholars (Bishaw and Semega 2008; Kim 2007) argue that wage disparity along the ethnic lines is also a significant problem. For example, Maume (2004) argues that ethnic minorities on average receive 30 percent less than majority groups' cohorts. Kaufman (2002) analyzes three possible reasons to explain why ethnic minorities have problems in obtaining occupational success: 1) ethnic minorities have weaker language skills; 2) ethnic minorities choose jobs that are most popular among their ethnic communities; 3) potential employers engage in ethnic-based

stereotyping. Interestingly, Kaufman finds that the third factor is the most popular reason for discrimination in the job sector. However, Ho and Dinov (2013) argue that unfavorable economic environment within the country or region can result in the lack of good jobs. As economists suggest the principle economic motivation for individuals is to have adequate and equal access to economic opportunities, to secure their wealth and to enjoy economic benefits (Weede 1996; Gartzke 2007; Ho and Dinov 2013). Individuals who live in economic stability, economic opportunities are more equally distributed (Hegre et al. 2001; Ward et al. 2005). However, when the state is under economic decline and instability, it usually leads to increase in the unemployment rate.

Scholars who study Kazakhstan's system (Karin and Chebotarev 2002; Kulzhanova 2012; Zhanarstanova and Nechayeva 2015) argue that the Kazakh language has become important in the labor market. With independence, the government has been attempting to restore the Kazakh language by facilitating Kazakhization (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). The revival of the Kazakh language in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan limits employment opportunities of those who do not speak the state language (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). To understand the effect of the state language policy on employment opportunities, in the next section I analyze what type of jobs requires fluency in the state language and demonstrate why these jobs are considered to be prestigious in Kazakhstan.

The Job Market and Kazakh Language

According to the *Law on Languages* in the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted in 1997, it is necessary to be fluent and proficient in the state language to work in the government structure. The *Law on Languages* outlines specifically places where the fluency in the state language is a

necessary requirement to work. It is important to outline that the government structure where the Kazakh language is a requirement divided into three categories: law enforcement institutions, administrative institutions, and executive institutions. Law enforcement institutions include the following organizations: prosecutor's offices, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, regional departments of internal affairs, Committee of National Security, police, customs service, national and regional courts. Administrative institutions include administration of the President, Office of the Prime-Minister, Parliaments, and national library. Executive institutions include all ministries, regional and local akimats, national banks, state-owned funds, and state-owned companies.

These organizations require potential employees to have a good level of the state language and to provide good results of KAZTEST exam. In particular, potential employees need to demonstrate B2 level in the state language to work in the government. In Kazakhstani society, the government sector is considered to be desirable for two reasons. According to an expert, the government sector is desirable place to work because in the government structure salary is paid monthly without any delays. Second, the government structure is regarded as desirable because people can build a career in the government and have an image of the "white collar".

Interviews demonstrate that the state language policy affects ethnic minorities' opportunities in the government sector. For instance, in her interview a 50-year-old, Turkish woman from South Kazakhstan argued that: "It's very difficult to be employed in state institutions or national companies because proficiency in the Kazakh language is required. It is necessary to pass the test to show proficiency in the Kazakh language". In the next section, I will analyze interviews and provide evidence that those individuals who learn the state language can

integrate to the labor market and find desirable jobs in the government sector but those individuals who are not willing to study the state language cannot access governmental labor market.

Ethnic Minorities and Their Employment Status

According to the state language policy in Kazakhstan, fluency in the Kazakh language positively affects individuals' integration into the government labor market. To understand whether the state language policy that requires fluency in the Kazakh language, measured by KAZTEST, affect ethnic minorities' opportunities, during interviews with respondents, I have asked the following questions: "Do you have a job? Do you find your job good or bad for you? If this job does not meet your desires, what are the main factors that limit your ability to find better options in the employment sector?" As a result of analysis of interviews, I have found that there are mainly two categories of people. First, there are respondents who argue that the Kazakh language is an important factor that helps to integrate into the labor market. Second, there are respondents who argue that lack of proficiency in the state language is one of the strongest factors that impede their integration into the job market in Kazakhstan.

Interestingly, a significant proportion of interviewed individuals are not satisfied with their employment status and hope to find better employment opportunities in the future. After thorough analysis, I have found that 44 out of 73 respondents mentioned in their interviews that the Kazakh language is an important factor and defining factor that shapes people's employment opportunities in the government structures including companies and ministries. For example, 55-year-old Uzbek man from West Kazakhstan argued that to succeed in our society, Kazakh language has become one of the crucial conditions:

My great-grandfather moved to live in Kazakhstan in the 1930s. In the Soviet era, it was easier - everyone was given the same conditions. After independence, everything became more complicated. Now we struggle. For example, even to work in the akimat, you need to pass Kazakh language test to show your level of Kazakh...

Another respondent 23-year-old Chechen man from Central Kazakhstan claimed that the Kazakh language is becoming necessary requirement. Because he did not speak Kazakh fluently, he was not able to get a good position in the Karaganda mining company:

Today Kazakhstan is no longer a place where the Russian language dominates. Today all privileges are given to those people who speak Kazakh. I know it myself. My father promoted me to the position of senior engineer in the local mining company and he wanted to give bribe to the director of this company. But they refused to take me because as they say all the documentation process is in Kazakh language and now everyone is required to take a test to work there.

This case demonstrates that due to lack of fluency in the state language, this young man was not able to integrate into the labor market and to be employed. 55-year-old Turk man from South Kazakhstan shared his work experience and he agreed that the Kazakh language is a necessary condition to be employed but also to stay at the given position:

When I was 45, nobody asked me to learn and to speak Kazakh. Now my boss forces us to speak Kazakh because of these new rules and regulations. This is very new and stressful for people of my age. I am afraid that if I do not pass KAZTEST well, I will be fired. This is strange, yes?

60-year-old Azerbaijan man from South Kazakhstan claimed that in the near future the Kazakh language will become essential because everything will be in the state language:

For all my life I worked in the local state-owned enterprise as a senior specialist. Can you imagine that? But as these new rules came about language, my life has become stressful because I had to learn it. I think in the near future everything will be in Kazakh.

These above-mentioned cases demonstrate that respondents are not fluent Kazakh-language speakers. Since they are not fluent in the state language, they find it hard to integrate into the

labor market and face problems in the job sector. Respondents acknowledge that fluency in the Kazakh language significantly influences whether an individual can find and keep a good job or not. There are respondents who provided life experiences and demonstrated that proficiency in the state language positively affected their employment opportunities. For example, 50-year-old Chechen man from Central Kazakhstan described his life experience and argued that fluency in the state language helped him to build a career and to become a successful citizen:

I moved to Karaganda in late 1999. That year was so different from what we have now in Kazakhstan. Absolutely different. At that time I worked in bazar with my brothers. We sold fruits and vegetables. In five years, our store was expanded and we opened our small shops in the city. I went to the University, received my degree. In 2010, my good friend became head of internal affairs department in Karaganda and asked me whether I want to work with him. I thought he was joking because he knew I had a good business. But after several days, he called me once more. I agreed. At that time there was no KAZTEST exam but rather there was an interview in the HR department. They tested my knowledge in the law and asked several questions in Kazakh. Since I worked in bazar, my speaking was very good. Last year I officially passed this exam again. I know a lot of people who failed to pass KAZTEST and were fired from their positions. Therefore, I think that younger generations and everyone who wants to work for government must learn Kazakh.

50-year-old Chechen man from Central Kazakhstan has demonstrated that with the fluency in the state language, it is possible to integrate to Kazakhstani labor market. 31-aged Kyrgyz woman from South Kazakhstan also provided her life experience to demonstrate that fluency in the state language allowed her to work at the local state university:

After I graduated Kyzylorda State University, the dean of my school asked me whether I want to work at the university. I agreed. I prepared my documents. However, when they asked whether I am fluent Kazakh language speaker, I was honest and told that I do not speak Kazakh. In one year, I learned Kazakh language and successfully passed the exam. Now I am working the office of Rector. It is good position with good salary.

This young Kyrgyz lady's story is evidence to demonstrate that the language is important predictor for ethnic minorities' ability to integrate into the labor market. As 31-year-old Kyrgyz

woman from South Kazakhstan stated that “speaking Kazakh will make you better”. This tendency is becoming popular among ethnic minorities because they understand that language is important factor. Moreover, there are respondents’ stories that clearly demonstrate how fluency in the state language allowed them to integrate into the labor market. Another respondent 26-year-old Azerbaijan man from West Kazakhstan argued that today fluency in the state language is important factor that helps to stay in the position:

I know people who worked in the government but they did not learn the Kazakh language. When administration introduced KAZTEST, and they started to check whether “white collars” speak Kazakh, these people who failed to pass this exam were fired. I think it is fair and good motivation for people to learn the Kazakh language.

Today fluency in the state language has become crucial factor that shapes peoples’ ability to find good jobs in prestigious organizations. Interviews demonstrate that ethnic minorities who do not speak the Kazakh language are not able to integrate into the job market but ethnic minorities with fluency in the state language are integrating successfully. It is important to highlight that those ethnic minorities who speak the state language can integrate into the government sector and can find desirable jobs because they pass the KAZTEST and show required results in this test. First, these findings show that the state language policy is working. Second, these findings reveal that ethnic minorities can prosper in Kazakhstan if they are prone to integrate by learning the state language.

Conclusion

Chapter five has provided the list of organizations where proficiency in the state language is a requirement to work. This list includes prestigious organizations where people can build careers and earn stable income. Interviews demonstrate that the state language policy aimed at promotion of the Kazakh language actually affect employment opportunities. The state language

policy that requires people to speak Kazakh and to pass KAZTEST exam affect ethnic minorities. This analysis shows that those individuals who are not fluent in the state language cannot find good jobs while ethnic minorities who are fluent Kazakh-language speakers are able to integrate into the labor market for two reasons. By demonstrating that language is actually important factor that affects ethnic minorities' job opportunities, this chapter shows that ethnic minorities are able to integrate if they speak the state language and they have equal access to the job market. Therefore, this evidence shows that ethnicity of ethnic minorities does not affect their integration but rather the language plays crucial role in the integration process. In particular, interviews reveal life experiences of ethnic minorities who speak Kazakh and are able to integrate to the labor market successfully. Thus, ethnic minorities have equal access to the labor market and their ethnic background does not affect them.

I believe that since ethnic minorities who speak Kazakh fluently can access and can potentially work in the government sector, then the state language policy is working. Moreover, the state language policy itself motivates people to learn the state language in order to be employed in the government sector and to earn stable income. Chapter five has shown that language as an independent factor plays significant role on employment opportunities. Therefore, I am able to demonstrate that ethnic minorities regardless of their ethnicity can integrate into the Kazakhstani job sector and can have good employment opportunities if they learn the state language and show their commitment to this society. In other words, language is significant factor that can explain flexible integration of ethnic minorities into the system.

Chapter 6 The State Language and Educational Opportunities

The primary goal of the state language policy is to promote the Kazakh language. The state language policy is one of the key components of the Kazakhization process that aims to promote the Kazakh language in all spheres in Kazakhstan. Since, as the previous chapter showed, the state language policy affects employment opportunities, it is also important to understand how the state language laws affect educational opportunities. Therefore, in chapter six I will investigate whether the state language policy affects what type of schools ethnic minority children tend to attend.

In Kazakhstan, the government provides alternatives for parents: in Kazakhstan, children can attend public Kazakh-language schools or minority language schools. Minority language schools are public schools where education is provided in the language spoken by a certain ethnic group (i.e. Tajik, Uzbek, etc.) According to the interview results, a significant proportion of ethnic minority parents send their children to the Kazakh-language schools. Therefore, chapter six unpacks my argument that ethnic minority parents send their children to the Kazakh-language schools because they want to ensure that their children can adequately integrate into the labor market and can have good employment opportunities in the future. To demonstrate my argument, the next section proceeds with an analysis of the literature and is followed by analysis of the educational system in Kazakhstan.

Ethnic Minorities and Education

The language of education has become one of the crucial aspects that parents consider when they live or arrive at the host community. Scholars (Fishman 1989; Pattanayak 1981 and

Khatoon1980) argue that those children who receive knowledge in the language of the host environment are more prone to identify themselves with the host community. Paulsten (1978) argues that learning the host society language at the school enables ethnic minorities' children to improve their chances of successful post-graduate employment. Cropley (1983) also finds it important for children to study the language of the host society to foster their adaptation process. However, scholars (Landers 2002; Gardner and Desrochers 1981) also argue that those governments that provide legal grounds for ethnic minorities to learn their languages, as well as the language of the host community, facilitate a faster integration of ethnic minorities (Allport 1954; Tropp and Pettigrew 2005). To promote equality, local authorities need to adopt policies and programs that favor not only the major group but also minority groups in the society (Tropp and Pettigrew 2005; Wright, Aron, and Tropp 2002).

However, Eriksen (1992) argue that governments leave a room for other languages in a multiethnic community to ensure that minority languages are not “neglected or systematically discriminated by the state”. He argues that those governments which provide alternative language schools for ethnic minorities demonstrate tolerance of the state to linguistic diversity. In other words, if governments provide ethnic minorities with a right to choose which schools to attend (i.e. host-society language schools or minority language schools), they demonstrate tolerance and respect to these ethnic groups. For example, minority language education helps “to educate the minority group’s children by using their mother language as a cognitive and affective instrument to make sense of their world, and sometimes as a way to improve their fluency of the host society language” (Garcia et al. 1985).

Berry (2005) argues that establishment of minority language schools can be problematic because ethnic minorities will not be able to quickly integrate into the host communities. His

study shows that those governments which prioritize major language facilitate quicker adaptation of ethnic minorities because by learning the language of the host community, ethnic minorities and their children have better chances to earn money and to go to the university. Cropley (1983) also argues that minority language schools do not allow proper integration and adaptation for ethnic minorities' children. Instead of communicating with their peers, ethnic minority children are isolated from the social reality as a result of being allocated in the minority language schools. This literature is important to explain the case of Kazakhstan. According to Karin and Chebotarev (2002, 49) in Kazakhstan, there are minority language schools but these minority language schools are not popular among ethnic minorities. They find that minority language schools are not popular among ethnic minorities not only because they lack good infrastructure but because there is more need to learn Kazakh. My study also finds that while ethnic minority language schools are present in Kazakhstan, ethnic minority parents prefer to send their children to Kazakh-language schools because they want to ensure their children speak the state language.

I have analyzed literature on immigrants who arrive at the new society and face a problem of choosing which type of school their children need to attend to succeed in the new society. One of the main reasons to focus on this literature is because this literature can explain the case of Kazakhstan. Under the Soviet patronage, a population in Kazakhstan was obliged to attend Russian schools and to speak Russian fluently to be successful in the society. However, with the fall of the USSR, the new rules were introduced where the official language became the Kazakh language. While the process of introduction of the Kazakh language to the system has been gradual, today there is a significant need to study and to speak Kazakh in order to integrate successfully into the Kazakhstani society (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). Therefore, a literature on immigrants where immigrants are more prone to send their children to the schools where their

children can learn the language of the host society helps to explain what is going on in Kazakhstan today. One of the main reasons to focus on the literature on immigrants and their children in the host society is similarity to what has happened to the ethnic minorities and their children in the independent Kazakhstani society. Under the Soviet rule, parents sent their children to the Russian schools to ensure that their children can speak the state language. However, with independence, Kazakh language had become new state language. Therefore, parents started to send their children to the Kazakh language schools to ensure that their children meet the requirements of the new society to find desirable job opportunities in the future. The same tendency is observed when immigrants enter new society: they send their children to those schools where children can learn the language of the host environment to make sure that in the future these children can integrate into the labor market.

The literature finds that for ethnic minorities it is strategic to send their children to those schools where they can learn the state language in order to facilitate integration and to ensure their future success. In Kazakhstan, despite the presence of minority language schools where ethnic minorities' children can study in their mother languages (i.e. Uzbek, Uighur), Kazakh-language schools are becoming more popular (Karin and Chebotarev 2002). The next section analyzes the contemporary educational system in Kazakhstan.

Contemporary Educational System in Kazakhstan

According to the Ministry of Education, in Kazakhstan 98.6 percent of all schools are state-owned schools where education is free of charge. As stated in the report of the Ministry of Education (2016) “educational system includes all children in the education system and provides them with equal opportunities to enjoy its benefits”. Law on Education defines inclusive

education as “a process that ensures equal access to education for all learners, taking into account their special educational needs and individual possibilities” (Ministry of Education 2015). In an interview, one of the experts claimed that “Access to education is equal to everyone, no matter you are Russian, Kazakh, Tajik, or Chinese. The main prerogative of secondary education is to build human capital, to give children equal access to high-quality education and to create necessary conditions for their personal and professional development”. Therefore, in Kazakhstan, every child has equal access to secondary education (Constitution of the RK 2017).

According to the Ministry of Education, 1, 792, 223 students attend Kazakh-language schools (Ministry of Education 2015). Table 6.1 demonstrates the number of Kazakh, mixed languages, and minority languages schools in Kazakhstan. It can be observed that the Kazakh schools are popular while minority languages schools except Russian languages school are not.

Table 6.1 Language of Education in Schools in Kazakhstan

Language of Education	Number of schools	Number of students
Kazakh	3,777	1,792,223
Russian	1,262	832,173
Mixed languages ²	2,088	75,580
Uzbek	16	80,655
Uighur	13	15,067
Tajik	4	4,009

Source: Ministry of Education of RK (2015)

² Mixed languages schools are those types of schools where students study both at the state language and other minority language.

During his interview, an expert claimed that the government has established these schools to signal its respect to the ethnic minorities residing in Kazakhstan:

For the government, it is necessary to create the most favorable environment for children. In fact, this will facilitate successful socialization of children of other ethnicities with their peers.³

Since 1991 the number of students in Kazakh schools significantly increased from 1,008,100 to 1,757,700 students in 2011 while the number of students educated in Russian schools declined from 2,027,200 students in 1991 to 721,400 students in 2011 (Central Asia Monitor 2015). According to an expert from the Ministry of Education, on average the number of Kazakh schools increase by 15 per year schools while the number of Russian schools has been steadily declining. One of the main reasons for the increasing number of students in the Kazakh-language language is the state language policy. With the adoption of the state language laws and programs oriented at the promotion of the Kazakh language, today there is a significant rise in the need to learn Kazakh. For example, the 1997 *Law on Languages* states that it is a requirement to speak Kazakh fluently to be accepted to the governmental job sector. The 2010 KAZTEST was specifically introduced to test abilities of people who want to work in the government (administrative, executive, and law enforcement positions). The state language policy aimed at the promotion of the Kazakh language significantly shape the behavior of the people in Kazakhstan where parents are more prone to send their children to the Kazakh-language schools to ensure that in the future they can meet this requirement written in the law as well as to successfully pass the KAZTEST exam. This paragraph seems extremely redundant given previous discussions. It seems like you're simply repeating information without expanding

³ Interview with the expert from the Ministry of Education, Astana, April 5, 2017

the discussion, providing nuance, or even stating the information in a fresh way that is relevant to the education system.

During an interview with an expert, he stated me that the government significantly finances Kazakh schools because there is a rising interest in the Kazakh language:

Our government has produced the State Language Program. This program is called KAZTEST. One of the goals of this program is to increase the number of people fluent in Kazakh. To reach this goal, the government spends a significant share of the educational budget to improve the quality of Kazakhs schools as well as to build new Kazakh schools. Today people are less interested in Russian schools because Kazakh is becoming more important and more popular.⁴

Taking into consideration my argument that ethnic minority parents prefer to send their children to the Kazakh-language schools to ensure their children successfully integrate into the job market in the future, in the next section I will analyze interviews with respondents.

Ethnic Minorities Parents and Their Views

It is important to understand which schools ethnic minority parents choose for their children. Therefore, during interviews with 73 ethnic minorities I have asked following questions: “In which language do your children study? Why? Are your children able to study in their native language?” One of the most important findings was that significant share of respondents send their children to the Kazakh-language schools because these parents understand that fluency in the Kazakh language will positively contribute to their socio-economic stability in the future.

For example, 55-year-old Uighur woman from South Kazakhstan stated that her grandchild attends Kazakh-language schools because fluency in the state language will help them in the future to integrate into the labor market:

⁴ Interview with the academic expert, Astana, March 15, 2017

My grandchild is studying in local Kazakh school. Fluency in the Kazakh language will positively contribute to her future. Tomorrow when she graduates the school, she will be able to apply her documents to the national universities and to find good job at the ministries.

23-year-old Chechen man from South Kazakhstan argued that his son attends Kazakh schools and by attending Kazakh school, he positively contributes to his future:

My son attends Kazakh school. I am sure that by attending Kazakh school instead of other schools, he will be better off in the future. Now everywhere the Kazakh language is required.

Another respondent 32-year-old Armenian woman from West Kazakhstan stated that her children attend the Kazakh school because in the Kazakh schools they can learn Kazakh and in the future pass all the requirements to work in the government:

My son and daughter attend Kazakh school. I know that to work in the government or other sectors, the government created KAZTEST. Everything becomes more complicated. Therefore, for my kids, it is strategic to go to Kazakh schools.

Another respondent 39-year-old Tatar woman from Central Kazakhstan claimed that she has sent her children to the Kazakh-language schools because she wants to ensure her children are fluent Kazakh-language speakers and they will be able to become successful in the future:

In Karaganda, there is a significant number of the Kazakh-language schools. My kids attend Kazakh school because in the near future I think that the Kazakh language will be a requirement everywhere. Therefore, for them to be flexible and to integrate into the society, a language will be the key instrument they will use.

Respondents generally agreed that the proficiency in the Kazakh language is important for the future of their children and grandchildren. One of the main reasons for the importance of the state language is that fluency in the state language will positively affect future integration of their children into the labor market. Ethnic minority parents understand that the state language policy aimed at the promotion of the Kazakh language supports Kazakh-language speakers. For example, parents who want their children to work in the desirable institutions as ministries send their children to the Kazakh-language schools to ensure that their children speak the state language and in the future, they are able to integrate into this labor market. First, parents understand the importance of sending their children to the Kazakh-language schools: to send your children to the Kazakh-language schools imply that your children will be able to meet the requirements of the state language policy because they learn, and speak the state language. Second, fluency in the state language will allow ethnic minority children to apply their documents to work in the desirable positions in the future.

Conclusion

Chapter six has demonstrated that in Kazakhstan there is a rising number of students attending Kazakh-language schools while the number of students attending Russian schools has been declining. This finding is important because it shows that the state language policy aimed at the promotion of the Kazakh language is working. This tendency is the result of the rising number of the Kazakh-language speaking population because more and more parents send children to the Kazakh-language schools to ensure that their children speak Kazakh and integrate to the labor market in the future. Second, analysis of the education system in Kazakhstan also shows that on average, the number of Kazakh schools increases while the number of Russian

schools declines. This finding is also crucial: the government builds new Kazakh-language school because the number of the student increases. Third, in their interviews, parents acknowledge that fluency in the state language will improve socio-economic chances of their children in the future. Therefore, despite the fact that ethnic minorities have access to minority language schools, they prefer Kazakh-language schools. Out of 76 interviewed respondents, 43 respondents believe that learning the Kazakh language is a good option for their child's success in the future. Therefore, these parents prefer sending their children to Kazakh-language schools where students learn Kazakh language and gain knowledge in the state language as well.

In the interviews, ethnic minority parents state that the most important factor that affects future of their children is fluency in the state language. In general, respondents acknowledge that to work in a good position in the government or other institution, fluency in the state language is a requirement. This requirement significantly impacts future of their children. Therefore, my argument that the ethnic minority parents send their children to the Kazakh-language schools to ensure that their children are able to integrate to the labor market is true. In the next chapter, I will provide concluding remarks and possible implications of this study.

Chapter 7 Concluding Remarks: Does the State Language Policy have a real effect on Ethnic Minorities' Opportunities?

When Kazakhstan became an independent state, the principle goal was to preserve intercultural dialogue and peace (Laurea 2004). While it was strategically important to sustain internal peace in Kazakhstan, the new regime understood the importance of reviving the importance of the Kazakh nation in Kazakhstan. One of the initial steps to the Kazakh culture and traditions was to restore usage of the Kazakh language. Therefore, the government introduced the state language policy aimed at promotion and development of the Kazakh language (Masanov, Karin, Chebotarev, and Oka 2002). My goal was to investigate the effect of the state language policy on ethnic minorities' opportunities. To study the effect of the state language policy, I had the following argument to test:

First, ethnic minorities who speak the state language fluently are able to integrate into the labor market. Second, ethnic minority parents send their children to the Kazakh-language schools to make sure that their children can be flexible in integrating into the labor market in the future.

To investigate this puzzle, I have started with an analysis of what the state language policy is. As a result of an analysis, I have determined three core components of the state language policy: the 1997 Law on Languages, the 2005 State Program for the Development and Functioning of the State Language for 2011-2020 in Kazakhstan, and the 2010 KAZTEST program. The core underlying principle of these three determinants is to ensure the development of the Kazakh language as well as to ensure the promotion of the Kazakh language in all spheres of life in Kazakhstan. For example, the 1997 *Law on Languages* requires proficiency in the state language to work in the government-owned and government-controlled entities while the 2005 State Program was introduced to boost the number of high-quality books and materials of learning the

Kazakh language. The 2010 KAZTEST was introduced to test fluency of the state language for potential candidates who want to work in the government-owned and government-controlled entities. These three determinants make up the state language policy because these three are the most fundamental and the most profound contributions to the language policy since independence.

My interest was how such state language policy aimed at the revival of the Kazakh language actually affects ethnic minorities' opportunities. Specifically, how the state language policy affects their employment and educational opportunities. In chapter five, I have provided the job sector in Kazakhstan that requires fluency in the state language. This job sector includes desirable institutions such as ministries, banks, and companies. Then, I analyzed interviews with ethnic minorities. One of the main findings of this chapter is that those ethnic minorities who speak the Kazakh language are able to integrate into the labor market and to work in the good positions in the administrative, executive, and law enforcement institutions. But those ethnic minorities who do not learn the state language are not successful. With the introduction of the KAZTEST exam, for potential employers, it is easy to test whether potential candidates are able to speak Kazakh language fluently. Therefore, those ethnic minorities who successfully pass the KAZTEST and show proficiency in the state language are able to integrate and to work in the preferred institutions.

Generally, respondents argue that the Kazakh language is an important factor for their children and their future integration into the labor market. Interviews show that the state language policy has affected the behavior of ethnic minorities: respondents claim that Kazakh is an important requirement for their ability to get desirable positions and respondents are willing to accept the new rules by studying language and also by sending their children to the Kazakh-

language schools. In chapter six, I tested the effect of the state language policy on educational opportunities. Respondents are motivated to send their children to the Kazakh-language schools in order to ensure that their children are fluent Kazakh speakers. In parents' understanding, fluency in the state language will positively affect future of their children because they will be able to meet requirements written in the state language laws and to integrate to the job sector in the future. Therefore, I was able to demonstrate the validity of my statement that ethnic minority parents prefer to send their children to the Kazakh-language schools to ensure that their children are able to integrate to the employment sector. It is also important to note that this study shows that for ethnic minorities to be successful in the job market their ethnicity does not affect them but fluency in the state language is the strongest factor. Interviews demonstrate that those ethnic minorities who are fluent in the state language are able to find good positions and have fair and equal access to the labor market.

One of the potential implications of this study is the effect of the Kazakhization process on the ethnic Kazakh majority. It can be argued that Kazakhization process aimed at the promotion of the Kazakh language, culture, history, and traditions positively affect ethnic Kazakhs because the system within Kazakhstan supports Kazakh values and support ethnic Kazakhs. However, while it may be true, it is important to point out that the state language policy is not always applied to ethnic Kazakhs who do not speak Kazakh language fluently. There are circumstances where ethnic Kazakhs who do not speak the state language fluently can use informal mechanisms such as relatives and networks to be employed in the desirable positions in the government. At the same time, ethnic minorities who do not speak Kazakh are not able to work in the government because they usually do not have such informal mechanisms. Therefore, in the

future studies, it will be possible to bring both ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic minorities and to understand the effect of the state language policy on these groups.

These interviews with 73 ethnic minorities provided another reality of Kazakhstan. The Kazakh language is becoming important instrument employed by the government to increase the significance of the Kazakh culture and traditions in Kazakhstan. Respondents claim that lack of fluency in the state language potentially leads to various problems in the labor market. Therefore, the state language is one of the driving factors that force them to learn Kazakh and to send their children to the Kazakh-language schools. Therefore, this study has demonstrated that the state language policy has been changing the behavior of ethnic minorities where these minorities are accepting the new rules. Although this research is carefully studied, I am aware of its shortcomings. First, the number of the respondents is insignificant, 73 ethnic minorities might not represent the majority of an ethnic population. Second, it was difficult to obtain information since there is a limited number of studies that investigate the Kazakh language and its effects. For the future studies on Kazakhization, I would focus on increasing the number of respondents. In conclusion, this research has attempted to understand the effect of the state language policy on ethnic minorities' opportunities. This study shows that the state language policy is working in Kazakhstan: there are more and more people who are willing to study the state language to ensure their success and success of their children as well.

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