How to Express Your Emotions with One Word:

The Versatile Role and Sociolinguistic Aspects of the Speech Markers *Ema* and *Eba*

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1.0 Introduction

1.2 Background

To begin with, in multilingual societies, the interaction of languages often leads to the emergence of unique linguistic features, especially in informal speech. In Kazakhstan, a country with more than 130 nationalities, Kazakh speakers often use elements of Russian in their everyday communication. The reason for this lies in the history of Kazakhstan before it gained independence. According to Muhamedowa (2009: 333-335), since Kazakhstan's annexation to the Russian Empire in the 18th–19th centuries, Kazakhs maintained close ties with the Russian population, which led to significant borrowing of Russian vocabulary, as Russian remained the main language in society for almost two centuries. Similar information was found by Smagulova (2006: 315). She states that in the early 1950s, the Kazakh language was subjected to severe oppression: Kazakh schools, university departments, newspapers, and magazines were closed, so that the number of publications in Russian began to exceed the number of materials in Kazakh significantly. That is, in 1999, out of 1,301 publications, 867 were in Russian (Smagulova 2006: 307–315). The Kazakh language still retains the consequences of the past.

It should be mentioned that code-switching among bilingual Kazakhs occurs unconsciously (cf. Muhamedowa 2009: 333). Code-switching is a technique of switching from one language or dialect to another language depending on the social situation or context of communication (Morrison 2024). In other words, Kazakh speakers use Russian words unconsciously. One of the cases is using Russian speech markers (also known as Discourse Markers). Discourse markers, performing specific functions, can be adopted, reflecting the pragmatic norms of another language, similar to borrowing other lexical units (Hlavac 2006: 1871). Such markers as *ema* and *eba* are organically woven into speech and often remain unconscious to speakers, even though they differ from traditional Kazakh expressions, reflecting the deep penetration of the Russian language into the everyday communication of many Kazakh-speaker.

The idea for this study came from daily interactions where everyday conversations freely combined Kazakh and Russian, which made me curious about how bilingual speakers express their feelings through language, especially through informal markers such as *ema* and *eba* that are widely used in Kazakhstan. My personal experience also shows that *eba* is ruder than *ema* because it reminds the Russian swear word *eb*t.* Thus, this study explores the pragmatic functions and sociolinguistic significances of *ema* and *eba*. In particular, the study focuses on their multifunctionality and locus in different communication methods like text messages and daily conversations. It also includes prosodic analysis, an examination of demographic patterns. Additionally, the usage frequency and Russian influence in everyday Kazakh speech will be taken into consideration. This project combines survey data, text, audio, and video sample analysis. Using these elements, the study will answer questions about their communicative roles and sociolinguistic significances.

1.2 Main Analytic Focus

Overall, this paper will be written in the field of discourse analysis, especially the functions of *ema* and *eba* within Kazakh-Russian bilingual communication. Although the discourse markers in Indo-European languages have been extensively investigated, their functions in Kazakh remain underexplored. For example,

(1)	*Barlïɣ-ï-nïŋ*	*storis-tar-ï*	*birdey*	*ɣoy*	*ema*	
	All-POSS3-GEN	story-PL-POSS3	same	PTCL	SPM	

‘Oh my god, everyone's stories are the same.’

Here, the person expresses his surprise and complaint, indicating that most people uploaded the same kind of Instagram stories and he wasted his time by watching them. The speech marker in this example appears at the end, so the person wanted to convey his observation first and then express his emotion with this marker. As for the example of using *eba*:

(2)	*Eba*	*on*	*minut-ta*	*rum-ɣa*	*žet-e-min*	*ba?*
	SPM	ten	minute-LOC	room-DAT	reach-PRES-1SG	Q

‘Well, will I get to the room in ten minutes?’

In this example, the person wrote a rhetorical question to express his concern about not having enough time to get to the room and sign up for the upcoming presentation. Also, the speaker placed the marker in the initial position because he was so shocked by the information and worried about his chances of signing up for a convenient time. So, he tried to show that this was a bad situation by placing it at the beginning of the sentence. The use of *eba* instead of *ema* also shows the seriousness of the problem, because its original form is the Russian swear word *eb*t*.

The previous examples of *eba* and *ema* indicate that they can have various functions and appear in different positions. Each of these markers is essential for the speakers, as people use them to express their various emotions, attitudes toward a proposition, and even their annoyance about the issue being discussed.

Thus, this study will fill that gap, contributing to three areas:

(1) Linguistic Pragmatics and Prosody: analyzing how bilingual Kazakh speakers use *ema* and *eba* to manage conversation and express emotion improves our understanding of discourse markers. The main aspect of this analysis is studying the influence of intonation on the function of these markers;

(2) Sociolinguistics and Identity: examining how these markers vary across social groups, shedding light on language's role in social identity;

(3) Language Contact: exploring how bilingualism affects language structure with *ema* and *eba* in communication. In the circumstances of bilingualism in Kazakhstan, these markers reflect the mixing of Kazakh and Russian elements, enhancing the Kazakh language with new forms of expression.

By addressing these unexplored aspects, this study will contribute to understanding discourse markers in Kazakh and advance the broader fields of discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and bilingualism studies.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are linguistic elements that encourage communication by controlling the speech and clarifying the speaker's intentions. The general definition was given by Deborah Schiffrin. She claimed that discourse markers are contextual cues that assist in developing and understanding discussions either in specific interactions or the overall dialogue (Schiffrin 1987). The American linguist Bruce Fraser further found that discourse markers are words or phrases, often conjunctions, adverbs, or prepositional phrases, that indicate a connection between the discourse segment, S2, and the preceding one, S1 and represented it as a formula <S1. DM+S2> (Fraser 1999: 931 & 938). These definitions show the main purpose of speech markers and the structure they create. The most recent one, proposed by Ludivine Crible (2018: 35), states that discourse markers are considered a type of pragmatic markers, including linking elements and speech expressions distinguished by syntactic non-compulsory and multifunctionality. This definition shows that they are pragmatic elements with many functions. Thus, one can see that there is no precise definition of the term “discourse markers.” Yael Maschler and Deborah Shiffrin (2015: 192) claimed that although no agreement exists on identifying and defining discourse elements, they are the most important linguistic elements to study. Therefore, further research on this topic is necessary.

1.3.2 Discourse Markers in Bilingual Speech

In bilingual speech, discourse markers are especially significant because they often reflect the interaction between two linguistic systems. Research in Hebrew-English bilingual contexts demonstrates how speakers use discourse markers to signal code-switching, manage bilingual identity, or conform to the informal norms of both languages (Maschler 1994: 353). It was also found that the speech marker *so* is used in spoken register of Zimbabwean English (henceforth ZE) more often than in British English (thereafter BE) and that it demonstrates the influence of language interaction. Chapwanya and Nel (2023: 43) suggested a possible reason for the more frequent use of

so by saying that in Shona, the word *saka* serves as its analogous and this can be explained by the language contact between two languages. Additionally, in Hong Kong, where both English and Chinese are spoken, English learners prefer such markers as *but, I think, because,* and *yes,* while native British speakers use more informal variants like *cos, well, you know*, and so on (Fung & Carter 2007: 428). So, it was found that in bilingual society, people prefer using more formal variants of speech markers. But it is not always like this. My paper shows how, in the Kazakh language, people use colloquial versions like *ema* and *eba,* while Russian speakers tend to use *e moe* and *eb*at*.

1.3.3 Pragmatic Multifunctionality of Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are naturally multifunctional and perform roles that vary depending on the context and the speaker's intentions. Fraser (1999: 950) divided discourse markers into categories, such as those that create clear connections between segments and those that unite topics. This classification inherently shows the further functions of speech markers. Fung and Carter (2007: 435) also mentioned that markers help organize speech and mark shifts between subjects and thought processes, including rephrasing, self-correction, and evaluating the listener's perception. Thus, no one can ignore the role of these linguistics units. Moreover, according to Fung and Carter (2007: 435), speech markers are important, helping both native speakers and learners to shape discourse into interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive varieties. For example, *y'know* indicates a shift that invites the listener to participate, whereas *I mean* reflects the speaker's focus on the speech's content (Schiffrin 1987: 309). This highlights how markers play a crucial role in providing contextual cues, helping both the speaker and hearer navigate the conversation's flow, contributing to the overall structure of the dialogue. The scholar Uta Lenk, who conducted a comparative corpus analysis of speech markers in spoken British and American English, emphasized that *however* is used to close digressions related to the central topic, while *still* ends subjective statements within objective narratives, and both of them serve to link parts of the

discourse that are either non-close or not directly related to the topic (Lenk 1998:256). It means that both of them help manage the conversation progress.

It should be noted that Dr. Schiffrin (1987: 111–127) identifies that one speech marker can have several functions. For instance, the speech marker w*ell* can be used to ground the speaker in a conversation when their reply does not entirely match the expectations established by the previous statement and enables the speaker to change focus or separate from other aspects of the discussion, helping to navigate different parts of the conversation. The multifunctionality can be also demonstrated by evidence that the marker *because* helps to objectively explain the topic, convey subjective cognitive understandings, and justify speech acts (cf. Crible 2018: 42). Furthermore, the common used marker *oh* signals a division in the perception of subsequent words relative to previous ones (also see Bolden 2006; Fox Tree & Schrock 1999, as cited in Gyudish et al. 2024: 2) and indicates an important memory, initiate the interlocutor to comment on forgotten information (Guydish et al. 2024: 4, 7). All of these examples support the view that speech markers help structure conversations, improving coherence and making them easier to follow.

Multifunctionality can be found in bilingual context too. It was discovered that *so* and *well* have different functions in ZE and BE. For example, in the ZE corpus, the functions of *so* (including indicating a result, emphasizing a main idea, summarizing or offering an example, and serving as a speech act marker for inquiries and appeals) were more common, whereas the ‘suggested outcome’ role appeared more frequently in BE (Chapwanya & Nel 2023: 44). As for the *well*, its roles associated with phrase finding, paraphrasing, transitioning to the central narrative, selecting indirect and direct answers, and expressing an opinion were more prevalent in BE, while its quotative function was more common in the ZE corpus (Chapwanya & Nel 2023: 44). So, this study found that both of the speech markers perform several functions which differ across registers and languages. Similar patterns are expected in Kazakh-Russian bilingualism, where discourse markers like *ema* and *eba* are likely influenced by both linguistic systems and serve different communicative functions.

As for the Russian language, it has been established that the speech marker *nu* has various functions. According to Galina Bolden (2016: 49–73), when the speaker uses only *nu* it serves as a sign to continue the speech and it is used after a part that suggests further speech development. So, one of its roles is that it acts as an encouragement to the speaker to further develop his/her thoughts. These studies provide a theoretical framework for analyzing discourse markers across languages, highlighting their polyfunctionality and context-dependent usage. She also argues that one of the previous researches found five different functions of *nu* such as Urging the listener to respond; Conveying personal feelings and enhancing emotional impact; Highlighting a stated viewpoint, Communicating dissatisfaction, disagreement, rejection, hesitation, and so on; Serving discourse functions like to conclude. Thus, this speech marker has more than one function. But, even though other researchers have studied it, more information could still be uncovered over time. Therefore, as I mentioned in the previous section, I want to contribute to this field by exploring Kazakh speech markers.

1.3.4 Sociolinguistic Variation in Marker Use Across Demographics

Discourse markers are not used consistently because their frequency and functions vary depending on factors such as age, gender, and social group. Ayşe Altıparmak focused on Turkish speech markers *şey* ‘uh’, *yani* ‘I mean’, and *işte* ‘you know’ and found that with age, the use of speech markers *yani* and *işte* in spontaneous speech increased, but there was no large difference in the frequency of *şey*. For example, the use of *şey* increased from 20.7% to 32.4% in spontaneous speech. As for the other markers, *yani* was used by children in 0.8% of cases, while 43.2% of instances were used by older adults; only 19 tokens of *işte* were found in child speech, while 147 tokens out of 341 were found in older adults’ speech (Altıparmak 2022: 748). So, relatively speaking, the frequency of *şey* did not increase sharply. Secondly, the frequency of use of these discourse markers varies across the four age groups according to their different functions. For instance, in spontaneous speech, children aged 4-8 did not use *yani* as a boundary or self-repair marker, whereas people aged 33-50 used this marker for that functions (Altıparmak 2022: 748). In

addition, people aged 18–23 used *işte* the least as a boundary marker, emphatic marker, and marker of unwillingness, while its emphatic function was the second most commonly used in children's speech (Altıparmak 2022: 753). As can be seen, children use fewer discourse markers for conversations, and their use of markers becomes more advanced with age. This demonstrates how the frequency of marker use varies depending on their function, revealing differences in communication styles between age groups. Another example is that according to Fung and Carter (2007: 425), Hong Kong secondary school students aged 17 to 19 who are intermediate to advanced English learners rarely used discourse markers, with 52.2% of the 23 markers (*and, but, I think, yes, so, like, because, yeah/yeh, or, okay/OK, just, oh, you know, I mean, now, see, really, say, sort of, well, right, actually, cos*) selected being less commonly used (Fung & Carter 2007: 425). It means that Hong Kong students used a more limited variety of speech markers than British speakers. Thus, the presence of bilingualism also influences the frequency of discourse markers. I can say that my paper also highlights the differences in the use of the discourse markers *ema* and *eba* across age groups and their usage in conversation.

1.3.5 Sentence Position and Discourse Marker Function

The position of a discourse marker in a sentence often influences its function. Ludivine Crible (2018: 89) argues that discourse markers are usually located at the beginning of utterances, but their positional distribution relies on the specific language, register, and unit type. The initial position is the most characteristic for using discourse markers, and their frequency in English and French is exceeding 40 cases per thousand words. Discourse markers were often located at the beginning of utterances, indicating their role in initiating and ending themes or attracting interlocutors' attention (see Fung & Carter 2007, as cited in Guydish et al. 2024: 2). But, from a cross-linguistic perspective, Crible (2018: 89) identifies that there is a significant interval in the use of final speech markers between English and French: in French, they occur about three times more often. It can be seen that the data highlight differences in the placement of discourse markers between languages, showing that positional preferences in English and French do not always match.

Marianne Mithun (2020: 27) also notes that discourse markers' positions and functions differs across languages. English discourse markers like *so, well* and *okay* often appear at the beginning of a sentence and that Japanese discourse markers *-ne, -sa* and *-yo* are often placed at the end of sentences to indicate various functions. This idea supports that different languages structure their discourse markers differently. She also proposed that the placement of discourse markers *kati'* (shortly *ki)'* is not random but is determined by their functions and grammaticalization process, which explains their secondary position in sentences. Grammaticalization is the process through which grammar is formed (Heine & Stolz 2008). It means that the structure of discourse markers can sometimes change over time. For example (these glossed examples are from the book),

(3) *Wa'katià:tawi'te'* *ki'* *ni'* *nì:'i,* *shiorhón'ke.* (Mithun 2020: 29)

I.put.a.sweater.on SPM too myself this.morning

"I put on a sweater myself too this morning."

Here the position of *ki* after the predicate shows its function of connecting speech. Also see:

(4) *Né:* *ki'* *ronwana'tónhkhwa.* (Mithun 2020: 35)

that SPM they.called.him.with.it

"That's what they call him."

where *ki'* is positioned after the changed topic, providing coherence and showing that the sentence is related to the prior speech. In Example (3), the speech marker maintains coherence, connecting new information to the previous one. In the second case, *ki'* shows a change in topic, so it helps to the flow of conversation. This proves that the position of speech markers depends on their functions. Moreover, the placement of *ki'* in Example (4) marked a shift in topic.

(5) *É:so'* *ki'* *ní:se'* *tehsahthénno'ks,* *wáhe'?.* (Mithun 2020: 44)

much SPM you you.ball.hit.balls TAG

"You play a lot, don't you?"

However, in (5) the unmarked position of *ki'* indicates that it has become a standard part of the sentence, linking the speech without emphasizing its location. Thus, an analysis of the locus of

ki' within the sentence shows that its modern secondary position results from grammaticalization rather than arbitrary, as illustrated by examples of evolution from marked to unmarked positions. Hence, it can be said that the functions of discourse markers change depending on their positions. Another example is a Japanese speech marker *toiuka* that were used to express difficulty moved from being used in volitional verb sequences to the single-*toiuka* construction, after which its position moved to the right periphery (RP) and left periphery (LP), where it began to perform various discourse functions such as clarification, improving, and expressing disagreement (cf. Tanno 2017: 70). This data confirms that *toiuka* had structural and functional changes, reflecting the diachronic modifications.

I also want to see if there are any changes in the function of the sentences with the change in the locus of *ema* and *eba.*

1.4 Research Questions

(1) What are the primary linguistic functions of *ema* and *eba* in informal Kazakh communication?

This question aims to identify the pragmatic functions that *ema* and *eba* play in informal speech. Studying these markers in texts and oral speech reveals their role in organizing discourse and demonstrating the speaker's viewpoint, which will further show their multifunctionality.

(2) What is the relationship between prosody and the functional variation of these discourse markers?

Prosody (intonation, stress, and tone) affects the function of discourse markers. For example, the rising intonation on *ema* can convey surprise or questioning and the falling intonation might express dissatisfaction. Thus, examining intonation patterns in recordings can help us understand how prosody shapes meaning and makes these markers versatile across contexts.

(3) How frequently and by what demographic groups are *ema* and *eba* used in everyday communication among bilingual Kazakh speakers?

The frequency of use of *ema* and *eba* and factors such as age are important for understanding their sociolinguistic features. The study covers how often and which groups use them more often. The analysis of demographic data will allow us to know how *ema* and *eba* reflect the linguistic practices of different groups in the bilingual society of Kazakhstan.

(4) What patterns of sentence positioning for *ema* and *eba* emerge across different communication contexts?

The position of *ema* and *eba* in a sentence, at the beginning, middle, or end, is also an important factor. This study examines their placement in written and spoken language to understand how position affects the pragmatic role of markers.

(5) How have Russian discourse markers influenced the use of the Kazakh markers *ema* and *eba*?

Because of bilingualism, Russian has significantly influenced Kazakh speech, including informal discourse markers. The study compares the functions of *ema* and *eba* with those of Russian markers to assess the impact of language contact on Kazakh discourse.

2.0 Method

2.1 Materials and Procedure

I used three different methods in order to explore the role and use of the Kazakh speech markers *ema* and *eba*, namely natural communication data, videos/audios from social networks, and an online questionnaire.

The first is natural communication data. I used 25 text messages to determine the pragmatic functions of these discourse markers since the text messages will provide real examples. As a result, it was useful to determine their roles and locus. To do so, I had to use the search engine in Telegram and WhatsApp messengers. This will help me quickly find the text I need. The keywords are *ema* and *eba* both in Latin and Cyrillic. Then, I will manually categorize those conversations based on the pragmatic functions and the position of the speech markers in the sentence. I chose these two apps because both are popular in Kazakhstan. WhatsApp is popular among the older generation,

while Telegram is common among the younger generation, including students at our university. So, this method somehow helps to identify the ages of the speakers. There were participants of different ages and genders, as well as nationalities. Since I did not include any information about their identity and intended to explore the functions of speech markers, I cannot give exact information about the subject. Also, I did not need any consent forms because I blurred the username and the profile photo of the users.

The next material is 14 videos from social networks in which the speaker uses at least one of the speech markers, *ema* and *eba.* Unfortunately, there is no method for selecting such videos, so I have to download them when I see them. This type of natural communication data will be used to clearly identify the functions of speech markers by demonstrating the intonation used, as different intonations and pronunciations suggest different meanings and roles. It also shows their arrangement in sentences. Since I did not use their identities and people have uploaded their personal videos to the internet, it is considered a public source, so I did not need their consent to use the videos. Moreover, I can use the ages of famous bloggers to answer my research question: *How frequently and by which demographic groups are used in everyday communication among bilingual Kazakh speakers?* After finding the videos, I use a transcription tool to convert them into audio for Praat analysis in order to identify the pitch level and observe how different intonations are created. Finally, as there is no a specific tool, I will manually transcribe the videos using the Jefferson Transcription System to capture the speakers' intonation. As one can see, anyone who posts videos on social networks can become a participant. However, most participants will likely be from Kazakhstan, as Kazakh speakers in other countries do not use the markers *ema* and *eba.*

I used the Leipzig Glossing Rule to provide a standardized way to present linguistic examples, making them easy for readers to understand. This format shows precisely how *ema* and *eba* function in sentences and the meaning of the sentences. So, the rule improves clarity and makes it easier for others to follow my study.

An IREC approval was necessary since I conducted an online survey to identify the ages of the participants, who use these speech markers. I chose this method to gather data on how frequently, in which contexts, and for what purposes people use *ema* and *eba.* The survey also analyzes the sociolinguistic aspects of my topic, such as the age and gender of the speakers. This is my primary quantitative method. However, this method can also be considered qualitative, as I include some open-ended questions to collect data on people's attitudes toward these speech markers. I used Qualtrics to conduct a questionnaire as it is simpler than Google Forms. I have also learned some unique features of this tool, such as the translation system, which helps translate all the English questions into Kazakh so that the older generation can complete the questionnaire. I shared my online survey via Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram. I cannot work with children, so my participants must be 18 years old or older. Another restriction for participants is that they must be fluent in Kazakh or at least have some knowledge of Kazakh grammar, as my primary focus is on bilingual speech.

Summary:

Methodology	**Research Questions**
Text messages	What are the primary linguistic functions of *ema* and *eba* in informal Kazakh communication? How frequently and by what demographic groups are *ema* and *eba* used in everyday communication among bilingual Kazakh speakers? (*slightly*) What patterns of sentence positioning for *ema* and *eba* emerge across different communication contexts?
Videos	What is the relationship between prosody and the functional variation of these discourse markers? What patterns of sentence positioning for *ema* and *eba*

	emerge across different communication contexts? How frequently and by what demographic groups are *ema* and *eba* used in everyday communication among bilingual Kazakh speakers? (*slightly*)
Survey	What are the primary linguistic functions of *ema* and *eba* in informal Kazakh communication? How frequently and by what demographic groups are *ema* and *eba* used in everyday communication among bilingual Kazakh speakers? How have Russian discourse markers influenced the use of the Kazakh markers *ema* and *eba*?

Table 1: My Methodology and Research Questions

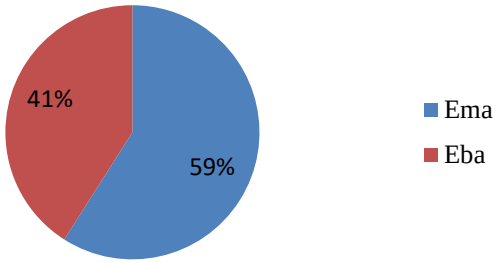
2.2 Coding

As I already mentioned, I used an online survey to create a profile of participants, showing their age, gender, and frequency of use of speech markers *ema* and *eba.* Thus, the responses do not need to be categorized because this methodology allows me to identify general trends in demographics and speech marker usage without requiring a detailed qualitative analysis of individual responses. However, all the examples collected from the text messages and video will be divided into several categories based on the pragmatic functions of speech markers, their locus, and the sentence type, whether negative or not. The main functions I would like to consider, based on my experience as a native speaker, are: 1) Expressing Surprise, 2) Expressing Negative Emotions, 3) Introducing New Topic, and 4) Other Functions.

I will also classify the examples containing these two markers based on their position in the sentences. It is expected that there will be three main categories: 1) Sentence-initial, 2) Sentence-final, and 3) Standing alone as a response. I categorized them manually. The data is stored in an Excel spreadsheet to efficiently organize, categorize, and filter the information.

3.0 Results

My dataset includes 25 tokens from text messages and 14 tokens from video and audio materials. Only sentences containing these two markers were analyzed to focus on their functions, and for context, additional sentences were sometimes included. This part contains only some of the glossed examples; the Appendices section includes all of the analyzed examples (Appendix A: The Spreadsheet of Written and Spoken Examples; Appendix B: The Glossed Examples; Appendix C: Transcriptions of Spoken Examples with Jefferson's Notation).

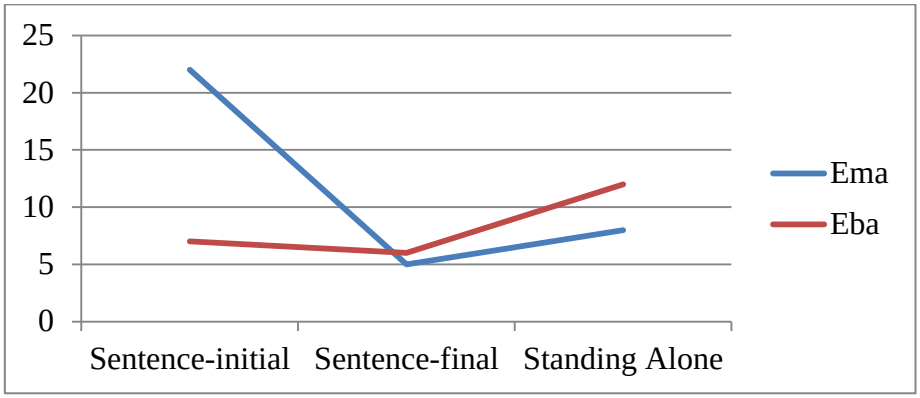


Pie Chart 1: The frequency of Ema and Eba

It should be noted that *ema* is used more often than *eba* (see *Pie Chart 1*) with 59% of the cases being *ema* and 41% being *eba*, the breakdown would be 36 cases of *ema* and 25 instances of *eba* which indicates a strong preference for *ema* in Kazakh speech. This may be because of the fact that *eba* is ruder than *ema.*

3.1 Locus Analysis

Ema and *eba* were used in three different positions: sentence-initial, sentence-final, and standing alone as a response. Sentence-initial examples are those in which *ema* and *eba* appear as the first word or immediately after other discourse markers. Sentence-final examples are those in which discourse markers are the last word, with no other words or phrases following them. Standing-alone examples are those that occur on their own as a response to the speaker's words or without any other words that form a phrase or sentence.



Line Chart 1: The Locus of Ema and Eba

An interesting case was identified in their positional patterns. It can be seen that people use *ema* and *eba* alone 55% more often than at the end of a sentence (See *Line Chart 1*). It should be noted that in Spoken Example (39[1], henceforth SE), two speakers used *eba* nine times not as a response, but as a reaction to what they saw. This can be proven by their gestures and the frames showing a beach view. If we remove them, both markers were used equally often alone as a response. Also, in SE (23), the speaker used *eba* three times at the end of the sentence. Therefore, at first glance, one might conclude that *eba* is less likely to begin a conversation in spoken discourse (only 21% of cases). But, if we skip these nuances, we can say that both e*ma* and *eba* are most often appear at the beginning of a sentence. For example, 65% of text messages and 60% of spoken examples started with *ema,* while in text messages, *eba* occupies this position 50% of the time. This fact proves the idea proposed by Ludivine Crible that discourse markers are usually located at the beginning of utterances. In both spoken and written language, these markers are used less frequently at the end of a sentence. Notably, 14% examples with *ema* and 24% cases of *eba* can be found as a discourse closure. So, speakers place *eba* at the end more often. Moreover, initially, I did not think there would be any cases of *ema* and *eba* standing alone, but it turns out that this usage is more common than the sentence-final category.

Overall, Kazakh speakers use *ema* and *eba* at the beginning of the sentence, as a discourse organizer, to express their immediate reaction, to catch the listener's attention or to shift the topic.

[1] can be found from Appendix C

That is why they are common in everyday conversation. Even though there are few instances, in some situations, people use *ema* and *eba* as closing phrases with emotional weight. This is common when one tries to convey the information rather than their emotion toward it. In addition, cases where these speech markers stand alone are used to convey several functions as a response to the speaker's words, which will be discussed later.

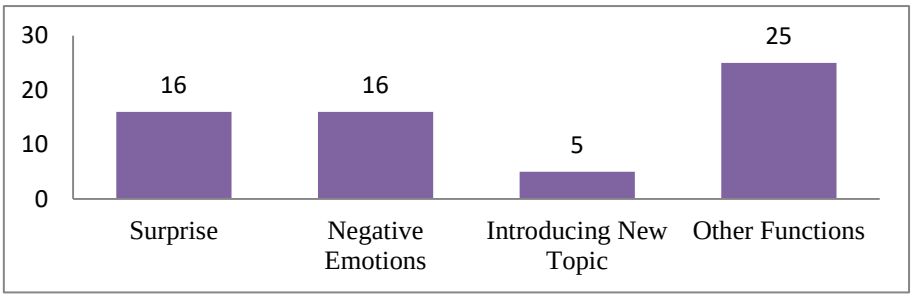
3.2 Pragmatic Function Analysis

The dataset shows that Kazakh speech markers *ema* and *eba* performed several pragmatic functions (See *Bar Chart1*). Firstly, they can indicate surprise, in which these markers signal unexpectedness or react to unpredictable situation. Secondly, it can express negative emotions. That is, the statements expressed by the markers can convey negative emotions like annoyance and anger. I have found two different negative emotions. People used *ema* and *eba* to express their complaints about events they did not like or found uncomfortable. Sometimes, these speech markers were used to show concern about stressful events or events with negative consequences. Thirdly, the speech markers can introduce new topic, serving as an introductory phrase, either to introduce a topic or to change it. This may occur when something suddenly happens to the speaker. In such cases, they may change the topic to express what they are experiencing at that moment. Finally, the speech markers can denote excitement and shock. While expressing excitement, these markers demonstrate speaker's enthusiasm or overwhelming emotions like amazement towards the propositions. While implying shock, they show speaker's other overwhelming emotions like strong doubtfulness or disbelief, which vastly differs from surprise.

Moreover, in the questionnaire, someone said he used them to validate a friend's emotions. Generally, it depends on the context, but usually, *ema* has a positive effect on the conversation. Someone even differentiated two speech markers by saying that *ema* for casual situations, while *eba* for more emotional situations. Another person has shown the same vision by responding "they expand the emotional respond." Moreover, someone wrote "In most cases, I use these markers when I am surprised by something I see or I hear from the interlocutor. These words themselves can

be used as exclamations expressing above-mentioned information. Most often, these markers are effectively to pursue the attraction of people, with different phonetic alternations of them (e.g. prolongation in pronouncing or shortening of them).” So, this paper has some spoken examples to deeply analyze the pragmatic functions of *ema* and *eba.*

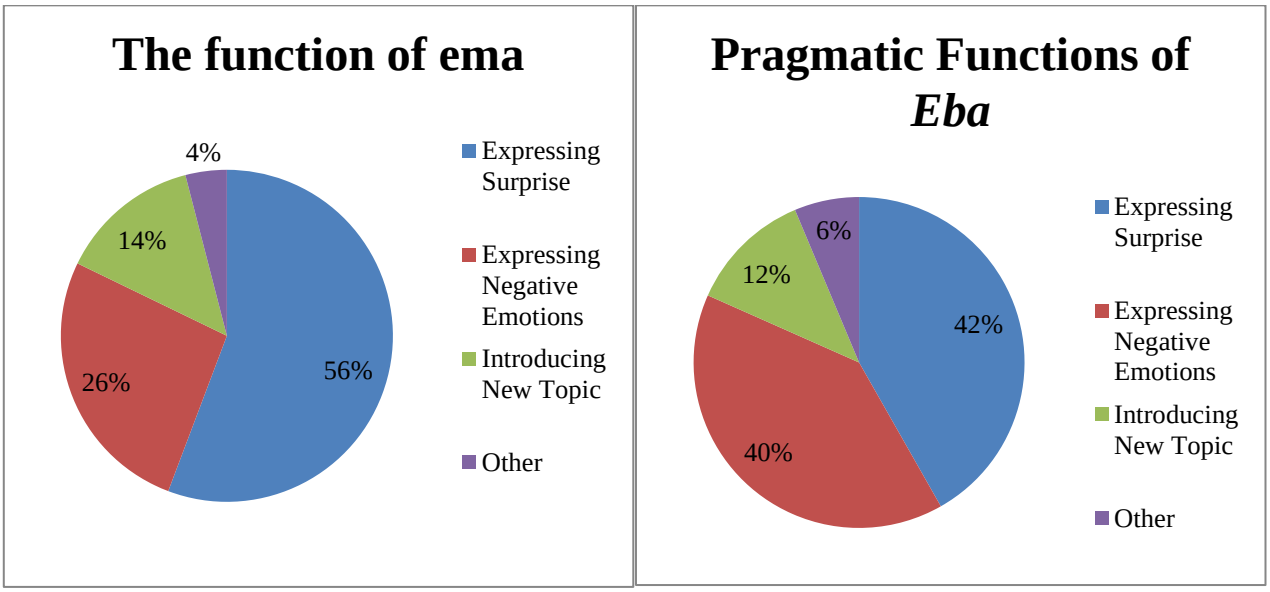
Even though I have 61 examples, one of them have two different functions, resulting in a total of 62 occurrences across the four functions.



Bar Chart 1: Functions of Ema and Eba

As one can see, the speech markers are equally used to show surprise or to express negative emotions, as both functions account for almost 51%. Speakers do not use it much to change the topic, as this function accounts for only 9% of the cases. It is also clear that the most frequently occurring functions relate to the emotion of shock.

As for the survey, people chose the pragmatic functions of *ema* and *eba*. I have received the following result:



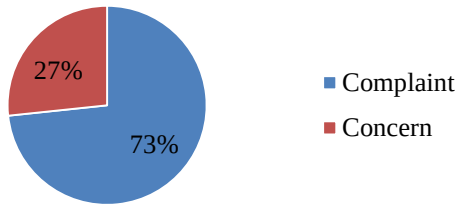
Pie Chart 2: Pragmatic Functions of the Discourse Markers (Survey)

The majority of the respondents chose the "Expressing surprise" option for both markers, while they believed that "Expressing negative emotions" was more suitable for *eba*. There is also one comment from an informant: "*Ema* is used to express positive reinforcement, for example, *ema, what a beautiful girl*." Regarding *eba*, some people wrote: "*Eba* is a feeling of disappointment" and "surprise at something negative."

These functions will be discussed in more detail in the following subsections. Overall, this emphasizes the flexibility of markers in conversation.

3.2.1 Negative Emotion

I have found two different negative emotions, complaint and concern. The usage distribution is shown as follows:



Pie Chart 3: Distribution between two negative emotions

Speakers used *ema* and *eba* to express their complaints about events they did not like or found uncomfortable. Sometimes, these speech markers were used to show concern about stressful events or events with negative consequences. These two are the main negative emotions, but others like sadness, disappointment, anxiety, etc. can be expressed additionally. They prove that *ema* and *eba* are multifunctional speech markers.

Generally, 11 out of 15 cases were used to express a complaint (See *Pie Chart 3*). Example (1) above is one of such instances. The most interesting point here was the fact that two speakers used *ema* to express their displeasure as in:

(6)	*-Ema*	*fotka-lar*	*öš-ip*	*qal-dï*	*de-y-di*
	SPM	photo-PL	disappear-CVB	AUX-PST.3	say-PRES-3

gugl *disk-pen* *birge.*

google disk-with together

‘Oh my god, the photos got deleted along with Google Drive’

-Ema!

SPM

‘Oh my god!/ How sad!’

This is a dialogue between two people. The first speaker mentioned that he saw their friend at the university and expressed complaint and frustration that their friend told him the photos were deleted with the Google Drive account. The second speaker also showed his disappointment by using *ema.*

Another one is Example (7), where a person was asked to include additional information about the students in the brochure, which has already been done.

(7) - *school* *and* *year* *of* *study* *žaz* *dey-di*

school and year of study write say-PST3

‘They are asking to write the school and year of study’

2nd *year,* *ssh*

2nd year, ssh

‘2nd year, SSH’

- *oy* *emaa*

SPM SPM

‘Oh no’

So, the person informed the second speaker that someone had asked him to list the students’ school and course of study, giving the example in the second message. He complained as he did not expect this after finishing all the work. So, he used another discourse marker *oy* to show his unexpectedness, placing *ema* at the end. The similar pattern was found in:

(8) *aaa* *ema* *erteŋ* *bos* *emes* *eken-min* *ɣoy*

INTERJ SPM tomorrow free NEG COP-1SG PTCL

‘Ah no, it turns out I’m not free tomorrow’

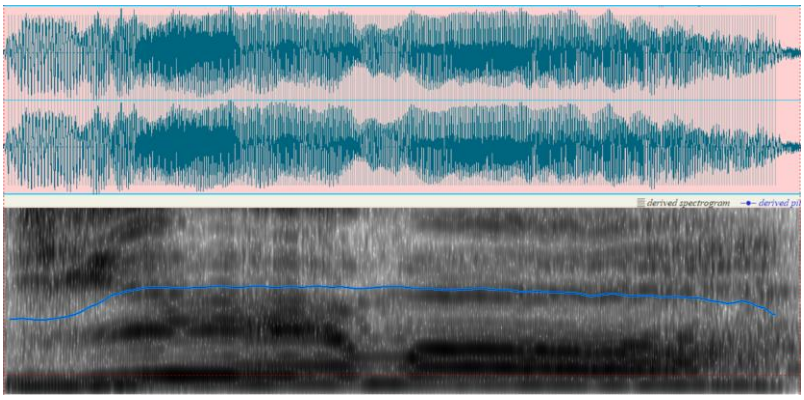
Here, a person suggested congratulating their friend on his past birthday tomorrow without delaying it further. Then, he realized that he would not be free on that day. So, the speaker used the interjection a*h* and then the speech marker *ema* to complain about this unforeseen circumstance.

SE (9) shows the intonation of the marker *ema* in expressing complaint:

(9) *öy sen ba ne žïndï ema*

INTERJ you Q what crazy SPM

‘Hey! Is that you? Crazy. Oh my god.’



Picture 1: Intonational Analysis of ema in SE (9)

The slight rise followed by a gradual decline in pitch (blue line) means that the speaker starts with emotional involvement but completes with a tone of displeasure. Its mean pitch is 220.62 Hz. It is evident that a higher pitch is typically associated with women. However, the speaker is male in this case, so this high pitch indicates that the marker is used for expressive purposes. Complaints are often associated with frustration or dissatisfaction, which can lead to a rise in pitch. Since the tone of voice is raised but remains within a moderate range, the complaint likely expresses frustration rather than aggression, making it a softened complaint rather than a confrontational one.

Eba shows different pitch contour. In SE (10), person used this marker to scold the door for making scary noises:

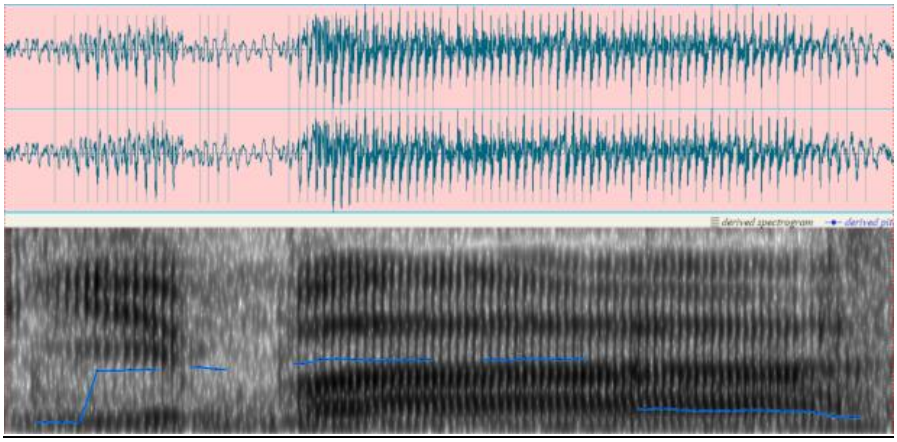
(10) *ey,* *onday* *zvuk* *šïγar-ma=šï* *ey* *esik,* *eba.*

INTERJ such sound produce-NEG-IMP.PTCL INTERJ door SPM

Oybay, *ema* *de-di-m.*

Oh my god SPM say-PST-1SG

'Hey, don't make such a sound, door. Oh f**k.'



Picture 2: Intonational Analysis of Eba in SE (10)

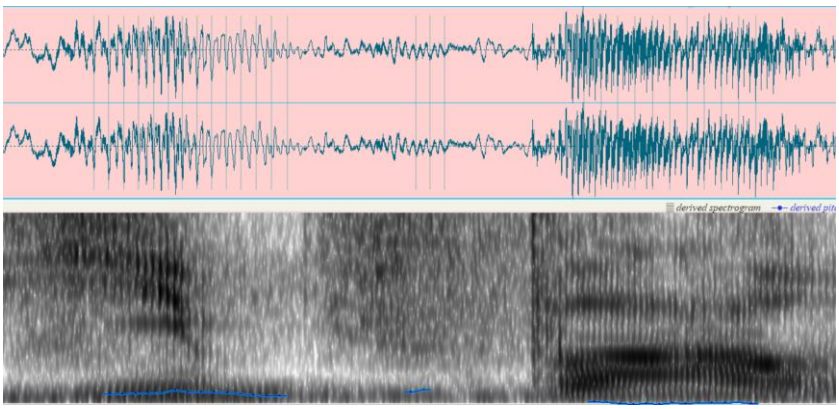
The mean pitch, 191.97 Hz, is a lower pitch sound with a lower frequency that indicates more serious and disapproving tone. It has lesser emotional purposes than the previous example. The less intent waveform indicates a composed complaint rather than a heated outburst, aligning with expressing disapproval toward an object without strengthened emotion.

Similarly, SE (11) uses *eba* for the same purpose and has this spectrogram:

(11) *eba,* *qayt-ïp* *kel-di-m* *γoy* *osï* *žer-ge.*

SPM return-CVB come-PST-1SG PTCL this place-DAT

'Oh f**k, I came back to this place.'



Picture 3: Intonational Analysis of eba in SE (11)

The mean pitch is 134.65 Hz. This indicates some emotional activation and little disappointment about returning to the same place once more rather than severe irritation. The spectrogram shows acoustic energy mainly in the lower range, which indicates a serious tone. The quieter beginning of the wave creates a sighing effect, reflecting exhaustion, while the increasing intensity in the second part emphasizes the speaker's growing frustration.

Interestingly, in text messages, people do not use *eba* for the purpose of expressing complaint.

As it was discussed earlier, Example (2) shows expressing the person's concern. From Example (12) also speaker's concern can be seen:

(12) - *Irtyš* *kp͡ts* *köter-il-ip* *ket-ip-ti.*

Irtysh completely rise-PASS-CVB go-EVID-3

'The Irtysh has completely risen.'

Biz *suw-dïŋ* *astïna* *ket-pe-y-miz* *ɣoy?*

We water-GEN under.POSS3.DAT go-NEG-PRES-1PL PTCL

'We won't end up underwater, will we?'

- *Ema!*

SPM

'Oh my god!'

Here, the second person responded to the first sentence by showing concern about the changing water level of Lake Irtysh. This message was written in May 2024, when there were floods in Kazakhstan, so the second speaker expressed concern and anxiety about this dramatic change.

SE (13) has one case of *eba* and two cases of *ema*, each with a different function. Only *eba* was used to express concern and fear about the situation:

(13) *-art-ïŋ-da* *üš* *adam* *tur-sa* *büytip.*

back-POSS2.SG-LOC three person stand-COND3 like.this

'If three people were standing behind you like this'

- *eba*

SPM

'Oh f*ck'

- *Ema, palata nop-noviy bol-ip ket-se. Mä, derzko* [2] *γoy.*

SPM room INTENS-new become-CVB AUX-COND INTERJ audacity.ADV PTCL

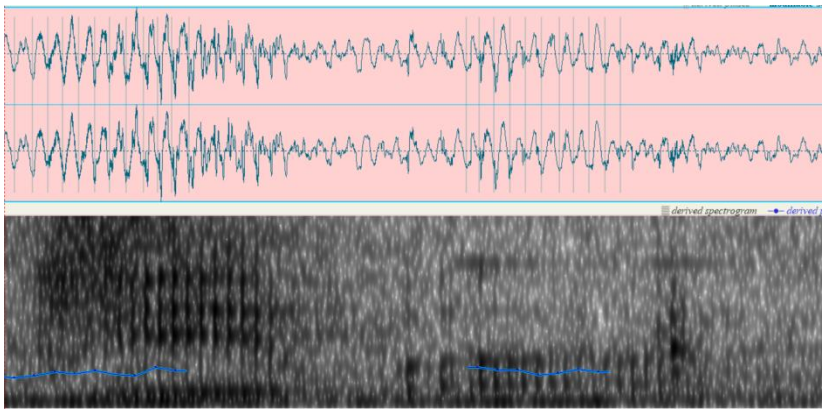
'Hey, what if the ward becomes brand new? Damn, that is cool.'

- *Ema mïna-nïŋ üstin qara-sa-ŋdar=ši*

SPM this-GEN above.POSS3.ACC look-COND-2PL=PTCL

'Oh my god, you guys should look up at this.'

In this video, three friends explored an abandoned hospital that was previously used for COVID-19 patients. One boy, named Tlekzhan, proposed what if there is someone behind Daryn, to which the second replied *eba* to show his concern about this scary assumption. The PRAAT analysis is:



Picture 4: Intonational Analysis of Eba in SE (13)

The pitch is below 100 Hz (86.88 Hz), which indicates the concerned or cautious reaction. At a lower pitch than in the complaint examples, the speaker expresses calm concern or uneasiness

[2] The Russian word *derzko* can be translated into English as "boldly," "defiantly," or "audaciously." However, in this context, the speaker expresses admiration if the room is suddenly renovated.

rather than anger, and the minimal change in pitch suggests a thoughtful tone. Also, the waveform reflects the flat intonation which proves the calmness.

The same instance, with two cases of *ema* and one case of *eba*, can be found among the text message examples. However, in this case, the second *ema* serves the same function of expressing concern. In Example (14), someone mentioned that in an anthropology class, one professor mocked another person by citing him.

(14) *-Ema žan.*

SPM soul

'Oh my god, darling.'

"we can be scientists and drink coffee" de-di prof antro-da.

say-PST.3 professor anthropology-LOC

'The professor said "We can be scientists and drink coffee" in anthropology class.'

*Ema **-qa žan-ïm aš-ïp ket-ti*

SPM **-DAT soul-POSS1SG hurt-CVB AUX-PST.3

'Oh my god, I felt sorry for ***.'

-Eba

SPM

'Oh, f*ck'

As a result, the speaker is worried about him because the situation is worsening, and more people are starting to hate him. This can be proven by the phrase 'I felt sorry for ***.' Other two speech markers (the first *ema* and the last *eba*) are the examples of conveying surprise.

3.2.2 Expressing Surprise

One interesting thing is that *eba* is not widely used for this purpose; I have found only one instance of this case. In (14), as I discussed earlier, the person initially used *ema* to express surprise about the situation he faced during the lecture. Then, his interlocutor replied using *eba*, expressing his surprise that even professors were showing their discontent:

People mainly represented their surprise towards particular situation mostly using *ema.* For example, in Example (15), this marker was used to describe surprise when one employee returned to work after a month of absence due to health problems.

(15) - *Erteŋ* *već́er*

Tomorrow noon

'Tomorrow for the evening shift'

- *Ema*

SPM

'Wow'

This conversation in Russian also shows the same function of *ema* used alone:

(16) - *Èto* *ril* *ili* *fejk?*

this real or fake

'Is this real or fake?'

- *Fišing* *žb*[3]

phishing def

'Definitely phishing.'

- *Ema* *genial'no*

SPM genius

'Oh my god, that's genius.'

In this example, the first person sent a screenshot of their email with an interesting offer, but someone else said it was phishing and not a real message. As a result, he went to the site and received a warning message from the IT department. He was surprised by their creativity and work to prevent them from becoming victims of phishing in the future.

[3] It is a short form of "definitely", which in Russian is *železobetonno* (lit. "ferroconcrete")

What distinguishes Example (17) from all the other examples is that it was written in caps, which shows the person's strong emotion, surprised by the fact that someone replied to his friend. This can also be proven by other exciting words like *top* and *oh*:

(17) -*** *žawap* *ber-di.*

*** answer give-PST.3

‘*** has replied.’

- *Ooooooo,* *EMAAA,* *tooop.*

INTERJ SPM top

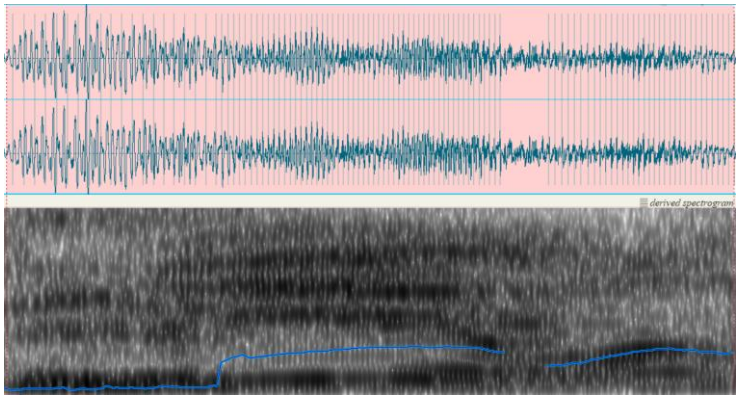
‘Ooo, oh my god, top!’

As mentioned, speech markers in SE (13) have different functions. In the last sentence, *ema* expresses Akzhol’s surprise regarding the room’s ceiling, which was rushed:

(13) - *Ema* *mïna-nïŋ* *üstin* *qara-sa-ŋdar=ši*

SPM this-GEN above.POSS3.ACC look-COND-2PL=PTCL

‘Oh my god, you guys should look up at this.’



Picture 5: Intonational Analysis of the Last Ema in SE (13)

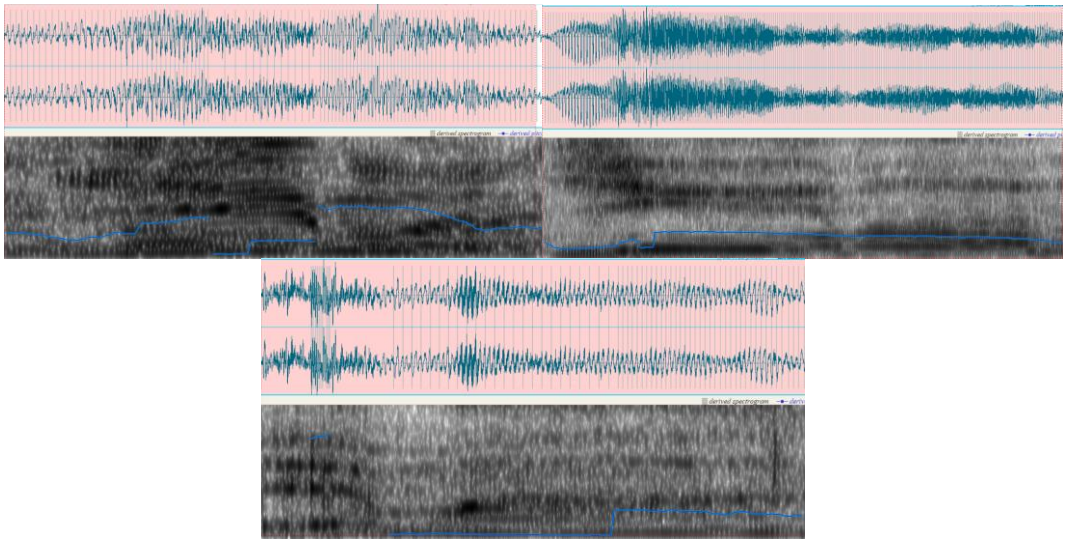
The strong amplitude at the beginning proves that the person expressed his surprise. This sudden beginning suggests a spontaneous reaction, consistent with the emotional tone of surprise. The frequency of 167.85 Hz is above neutral speech frequencies, also indicating an emotion typical of surprise.

SE (18), in contrast, has three cases of *ema* with one function—expressing surprise and astonishment. However, their spectrograms differ from each other as they were expressed by different people:

(18) - *ema* *djiygiy,* *mïna-nï* *ɣara-ŋdar* *qan.*
SPM guy-PL this-ACC look-IMP.2PL blood
'Oh my god, guys, look at this – blood.'

- *ema* *mïna-nï* *ɣara*
SPM this-ACC look
'Oh my god, look at this'

- *ema*
SPM
'Oh my god.'



Picture 6: Intonational Analysis of three ema in SE (18)

The first example has a higher pitch (213.78 Hz) as Tlekzhan was the first who saw the blood samples and was surprised. So, this pitch level shows the high level of surprising and slightly frightening. This can be proven by the fact that at the end he used *ema* one more time but with the lowest pitch (150.32), so he was expressed the most. With repeated exclamations, the speaker's tone sometimes drops, but the delivery remains energetic, maintaining a sense of intense surprise or just

amazement. As for the second case, the 171.85 Hz pitch and rise-fall contour indicate less surprise as it is a respond, not the initial reaction.

So, this dataset have shown that *ema* is widely used discourse marker by offering its three tokens in one conversation:

(19) - *... tur-dï-ŋ* *ba*

stand-PST-2SG Q

'... did you wake up?'

- *Iya* *žat-pa-dï-m*

yes lie-NEG-PST-1SG

'Yeah, I didn't go to sleep.'

- *Emaa* *a če*

SPM what

'Oh my god, why?'

- *Ema* *žaŋa* *žartï* *žol* *uyïqta-p* *šïq-tï-m*

SPM now half way sleep-CBV exit-PST-1SG

'Oh my god, I fell asleep halfway.'

Hz[4] *vsegda* *tak*

idk always like.this

'I do not know, it is always like this.' (reply to the 'Oh my god, why?')

- *Ema* *taksi* *ma?*

SPM taxi Q

'Oh, in a taxi?'

In this dialogue, *ema* placed at the beginning of the sentence in all cases, but the first and third instances of *ema* express the speakers' surprise. Initially, the first speaker is surprised that his conversation partner has not slept, and later, he is surprised to know his friend slept in a car,

[4] This is a short form of Russian phrase *h*y znaet*, which means "I do not know" or "Who the hell knows" (lit. "d*ck knows")

prompting him to ask whether he is traveling by taxi or his parents' car. As for the second case, which was written before the second speaker's response, "I do not know, it is always like that," he used *ema* to change the subject and introduce information about what had just happened.

3.2.3 New Topic

Another common function is to convert the conversation or to introduce a new topic. This may occur when something suddenly happens to the speaker. In such cases, they may change the topic to express what they are experiencing at that moment.

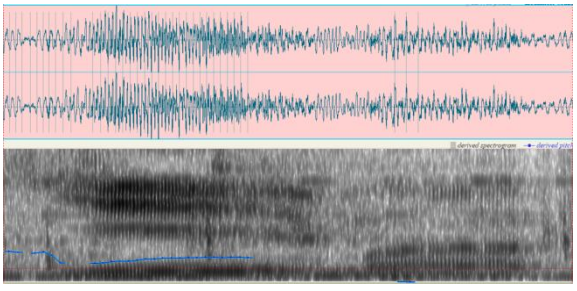
Although this feature was not used very often, 6 tokens out of 62, in some cases, people mainly used *ema* to change the topic of conversation. For example, in (19), as discussed earlier, the speaker mentioned that he did not sleep last night and then changed the topic by introducing that he had slept in the car using *ema*. Moreover, if we go back to Example (6), one can see that at first, the speaker mentioned that he saw someone at the university who does not study there and then changed the topic using *ema* by indicating that the 'illegal' person said the photos were deleted along with the Google account. So, in this case, *ema* have two different functions.

As for the intonation, SE (13) shows this picture:

(13) - *Ema, palata nop-novïy bol-ïp ket-se. Mä, derzko* [5] *γoy.*

SPM room INTENS-new become-CVB AUX-COND INTERJ audacity.ADV PTCL

'Hey, what if the ward becomes brand new? Damn, that is cool.'



Picture 7: Intonational Analysis of the First Ema in SE (13)

[5] The Russian word *derzko* can be translated into English as "boldly," "defiantly," or "audaciously." However, in this context, the speaker expresses admiration if the room is suddenly renovated.

As mentioned, the first case of *ema* was used by Tlekzhan with a different function — to change the topic and proclaim another scary suggestion about the room. The mean pitch of 108.7 Hz indicates that the speaker is calm. Constant amplitude and gentle changes in blue line indicate that the speaker maintains an even tone throughout the sentences without the jumps common in strong emotional reactions.

Additionally, in another text message, Example (20), the person was initially discussing one topic when one of them shifted the conversation to mention that he saw someone who reminded him of Pavel Durov, the owner of Telegram. After that, he returned to the original topic and provided information based on what his interlocutor had written.

(20) * The first speaker replies to himself on one topic *

- *Telefon-men*	*söyles-ken-i-n*		*i*	*audio*	*žaz-ïp*
phone-with	speak-PTCP-POSS3-ACC		and	audio	write-CVB
otïr-ɣan-ï-n	*esti-gen-min.*				
AUX-PTCP-POSS3-ACC	hear-PTCP-1SG				

‘I heard him talking on the phone and recording audio.’

- *Ema*				
SPM				

‘Oh my god’

Seksi	*Durov-qa*	*uqsa-ytïn*	*muwžik*	*kör-di-m*
sexy	Durov-DAT	resemble-PTCP	man	see-PST-1SG

‘I saw a sexy guy who looks like Durov.’

Prjam	*ekew-i-niŋ*	*dawïs-tar-ï*	*unison*	*bol-dï*
exactly	both-POSS3-GEN	voice-PL-POSS3	harmony	COP-PST.3

ɣoy

PTCL

‘Their voices were exactly in unison.’

Usually, to change the topic, *ema* or *eba* at should be placed the beginning of a sentence. Similarly:

(21) - ... *Maga- ɣa* *tüs-ken* *be?*

...Masters-DAT drop-PTCP Q

'was … accepted into graduate school?'

- *Ia*

yes

'Yes.'

- *Ema* *qïz-dar*

SPM girl-PL

'Oh my god, girls.'

Qas-ïm-da *seksi* *mužik* *tur*

side-POSS1SG-LOC sexy man stand.3

'A sexy guy is standing next to me.'

Ema *sïn-dï-m.*

SPM break-PST-1SG

'Oh my god, I fell in love.'

Two cases of *ema* appear at the beginning of a sentence, but they serve different functions. As one can see, the speaker initially looks for information about the other person, and then starts a new topic by saying that he saw a guy and fell in love, again using *ema* but to express her excitement about that person.

3.2.4 Other Functions

In addition to these main functions, *ema* and *eba* were used for other purposes, such as expressing shock or excitement. In text messages, there is only one case, but in spoken examples, one can find five tokens of *eba* from two different examples that express the speaker's excitement.

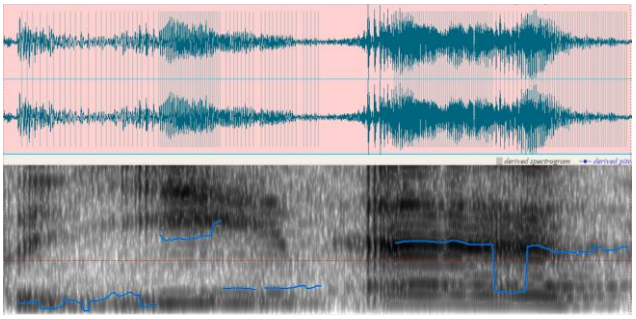
(22) *... aydana red-tiŋ* *padkast-ï* *šïɣ-ïp-tï* *eba*

… Aidana Red-GEN podcast-POSS.3 release-EVID-3 SPM

energiya *uš-ïp* *ket-ti* *ɣoy* *srazu*

energy fly-CVB go-PST.3 PTCL immediate.ADV

'… Aidana Red's podcast popped up, oh my f**king god. My energy immediately soared…'



Picture 8: Intonational Analysis of ema in SE (22)

Excited speech often has more amplitude fluctuations, reflecting emotional energy. Groups of peaks appear with lower intensity between them, showing that the person spoke with enthusiasm. The amplitude also rises and falls with the speaker's excited intonation. The mean pitch, 233.55 Hz, demonstrates excitement or happiness, as speakers naturally raise their pitch when passionate.

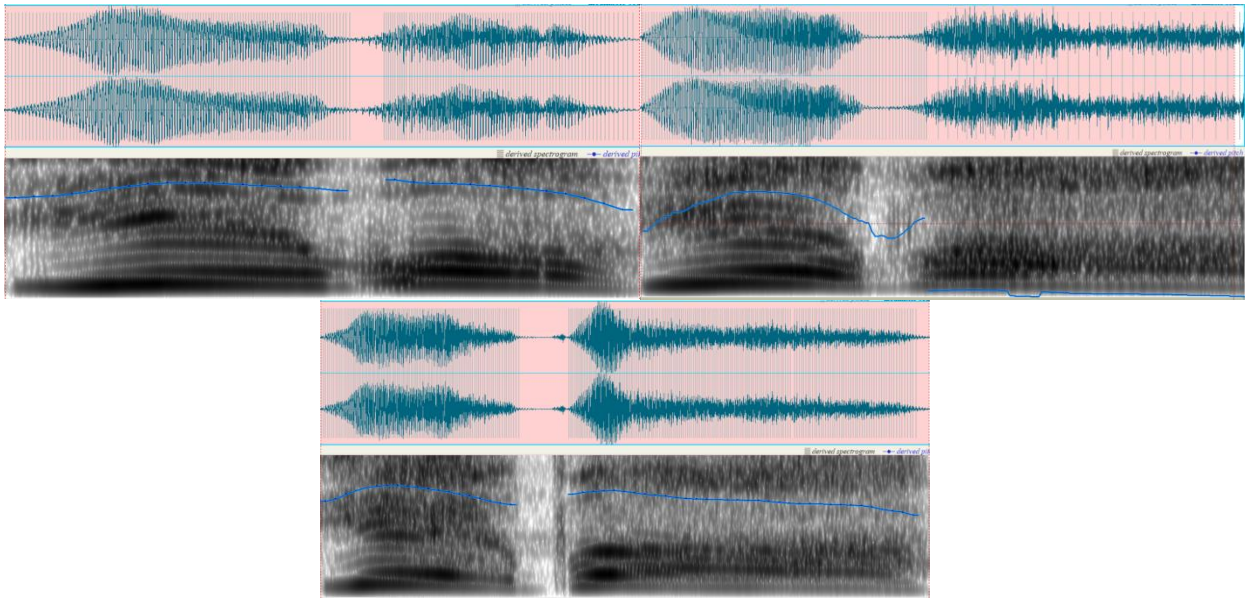
SE (23) has four cases of *eba* and the last three of them show the speaker's excitement. Originally, a boy hoped to get a Mercedes (probably from a game), but he was so surprised when he received an even cooler car. He called it "NNN's car." NNN (@nnnurdaylet) is a Kazakh Instagram blogger (influencer) known for owning expensive cars, deliberately damaging them for content, and gaining more likes.

(23) *eba,* *mïnaw* *nnn-niŋ* *mašina-sï,* *eba, eba, eba.*

SPM this NNN-GEN car-POSS3 SPM SPM SPM

'Oh f**k, this is NNN's car, oh f**k, oh f**k, oh f**k.'

Their graphs are shown as follows:



Picture 9: Intonational Analysis of three Eba in SE (23)

The pitch of the first token is extremely high – 397.83 Hz. It is often expressed in screams, squeals, or very enthusiastic reactions. Therefore, this type of excited utterance is often characterized by a sudden rise in tone or a blue tone line that starts high and continues at a raised level, reflecting strong positive emotions. The other two tokens followed by this prove that this person was too excited. Their average frequency is 239.54 Hz and 253.94 Hz respectively. These values show the continued excitement.

So, people can use this discourse marker for various purposes. For example, the dataset showed that among them, shock expression is also a common target using *ema* and *eba*:

Examples (24) and (25) contain *eba* to express the shock.

(24) - **screenshot* 47k*

- *ebaaa*

SPM

'Wow'

(25) - *Mïna-nï* *nege* *eki* *data-men* *šïγar-γan-sïŋdar*

this-ACC why two date-with release-PTCP-2PL

'Why did you release this with two dates?'

Raz-moroz-ka

NEG-freeze-NOM

‘Defrosting.’

- *Ox* *eba* *men* *ɣoy* *mïnaw!*

INTERJ SPM I PTCL this

‘Oh f*ck, that’s me!’

In example (24), the speech marker is used alone to show shock that the state scholarship has been increased to 47,000 tenge, whereas in example (25), the situation is bad. The employee mislabeled the product. There should be three dates: the production date, the date the product was removed from the refrigerator, and the expiration date. However, the employee only listed the defrosting date and the expiration date. If there had been a check, the restaurant would have been fined, so the person who made the error expressed his shock with sentence-initial *eba* and interjection *oh* before it. Even, in the survey someone said that when his close friend had broken up with her boyfriend, he used *eba* to express his surprise. His friend realized that he was deeply shocked.

As for Example (27), someone told a story that happened during an exam, which shocked the interlocutor, who did not expect this kind of “gossip”.

(27) - *Bä* *bir* *qïz-dï* *šïɣar-ïp* *žiber-di* *kžs*[6] *midka-dan*

SPM one girl-ACC remove-CVB AUX-PST.3 seems midterm.exam-ABL

‘Wow, looks like the girl got kicked out of the exam.’

- *Ema* *a* *če* *tak?*

SPM ah what so

‘Oh my god, why?’

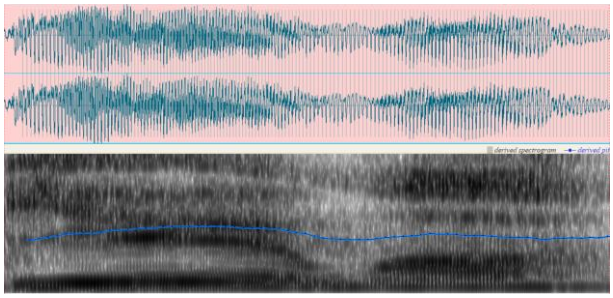
SE (28) shows the use of *ema* in expressing shock:

(28) *Ema!*

SPM

[6] This is a Russian word *kažetsya*; it can be translated as *it seems*

‘Oh my god!’



Picture 9: Intonational Analysis of ema in SE (28)

In this excerpt, Aboo (Abulkhaiyr) was shocked when he entered the completely dark room. Even though the overall pitch of 161.83 Hz is not as high as some extreme exclamations, the contour shape can still convey shock.

Example (29) has both *ema* and *eba* that express shock:

(29) - *Eba* *üy-ge* *birdeŋe* *ber-ip-ti* *ɣoy.* *Men-de* *žoq.*

SPM house-DAT something give-EVID-3 PTCL I-LOC non-existing

‘Oh my f*cking god, s/he gave a homework. I did not do it (lit. ‘I do not have it’)’

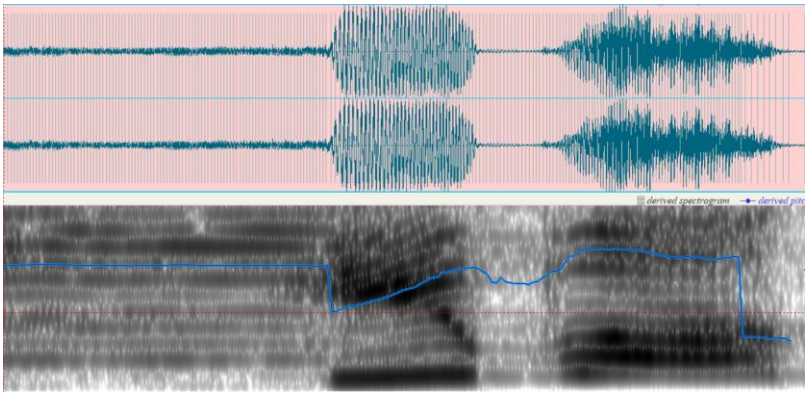
- *Ema* *ne* *ber-di?*

SPM what give-PST.3

‘Oh my god, what was it? (lit. ‘What did s/he give?’)’

The first person used *eba* to inform that the professor gave them homework, but he did not have it. His interlocutor was also in shock, as he had no idea about the homework. However, he was not as shocked as the first speaker because he used *ema*. In general, *eba* is more used for this purpose.

SE (23) & SE (30):



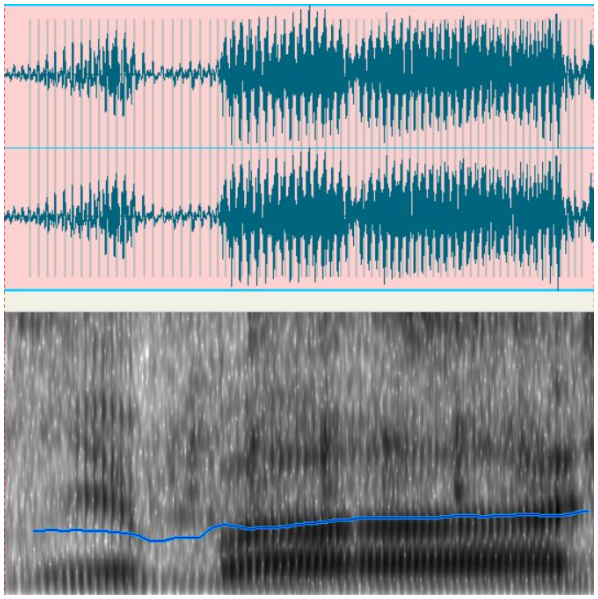
Picture 9: Intonational Analysis of the first Eba in SE (23)

A frequency of 403.34 Hz usually indicates very strong emotions such as shock, surprise, or even excitement. The pitch contour (blue line) also shows a sharp jump from near 0 Hz (silence) to around 400 Hz, indicating a shock or disbelief.

The next one is the different case. The actor named Zhalgas shared their Instagram pages and asked to reach 10,000 followers, but the subscribers reacted with a middle finger emoji. In response, Madiyar commented on the situation, saying that the followers were trolling them, which he found funny:

(30)	*Eba,*	*sen-der*	*ne*	*eken-siŋder*	*ɣoy,*	*iyä.*	*Biz-ge*	*prikol-dï*
	SPM	you-PL	what	COP-2PL	PTCL	yes	we-DAT	joke-ACC
usta-p		*tasta-p*		*žatïr-sïŋdar*		*ɣoy,*	*iyä.*	
hold-CVB		AUX-CVB		AUX-2PL		PTCL	yes	

‘Oh my f*cking god, you guys are something else, huh. You guys are making a joke on us, right?’



Picture 10: Intonational Analysis of eba in SE (30)

Instead of a dramatic expression, the speaker's shock because of unexpectedness is conveyed mockingly (100.96Hz). The absence of a sharp peak in the wave also indicates that the person's speech is controlled and corresponds to a neutral emotional tone. So, this is "That is unexpected but funny" rather than "Oh my god, what is this!"

3.3 Negative Sentences

The use of *ema* and *eba* in negative constructions allows us to better understand how these speech markers express emotional reactions in informal Kazakh communication. *Ema* occurs more frequently in negative constructions, accounting for 5 out of 7 negative examples in both textual and conversational contexts. It is predominantly found in sentence-initial position, where it expresses complaint or shock. In Example (8) above, the person conveyed that he is not free on the day he proposed. It was mentioned that the primary function of *ema* here is to express a complaint. In Example (31), the person again expresses his resentful complaint using *ema*, but this time it is located at the end of the sentence:

(31)	*Kuxnja-lar-men*	*ne*	*vezet*	*qoy*	*ema*
	kitchen-PL-POST	NEG	luck.PRES	PTCL	SPM
	'We have no luck with kitchens, oh my god.'				

In this message, the person is trying to convey that a mutual person they do not like came into the kitchen, and because of this, he complained, saying, “We have no luck with kitchens.” So, here the person emphasized his unfortunate and resentful experience using negative construction.

This is completely different example:

(32)	*če za-p.*	*B*ya*	*men-de onday*		*naziktik*	*žoq*	*qoy*	*eba*
	what-th	sh*t	I-LOC	like.that	softness	NEG	PTCL	SPM

‘What the-, sh*t, I do not have that kind of softness f*ck.’

Here, the speaker used *eba* to convey her shock about a photo that someone sent to a group chat. She was shocked that the person in the photo looked too feminine, and she is not that soft. So, negative sentence helps to convey a disbelief.

As for the intonational analysis, SE (10) is an example of a negative sentence that uses *eba* to complain about a situation. In that example, Akzhol tried to complain about the door making a scary noise, saying, do not do that.

Overall, in negative sentences, *ema* and *eba* demonstrate their pragmatic multifunctionality. While *ema* is more common and multifunctional, often softening complaints, whereas *eba* is more intense and usually emphasizes shock, especially when it appears at the end of a sentence. This shows how bilingual Kazakh-Russian speakers use them to manage communication and express emotions.

3.4 Sociolinguistic Aspects of *Ema* and *Eba*

Kazakh speech markers *ema* and *eba* are not only markers with different functions that help in discourse but also have sociolinguistic value, indicating the speaker's age and bilingual identity. This part of the paper examines their frequency of use, the demographic aspects of the speakers, and their relationship to the impact of Russian in Kazakh-Russian bilingual societies.

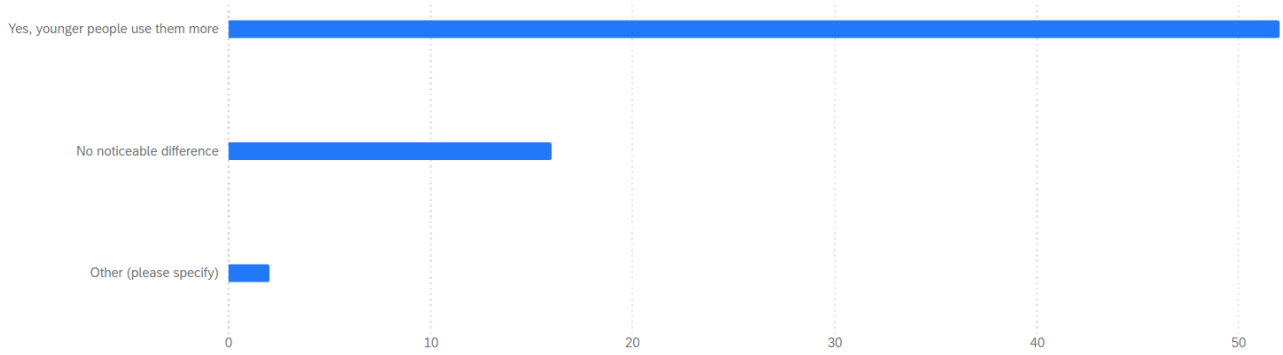
3.4.1 The Demographic Aspects of the Speakers

My participants came from five different age groups: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and 56 and older. Most of the responses came from people aged 18-25, while only one respondent was over 56.

QID2 - Please enter your age.	Percentage
18-25	66%
46-55	16%
36-45	10%
26-35	7%
56 and above	1%

Table 2: Participants' age range

Interestingly, it has been found that older people do not use these markers more often than younger people. This can be proven as follows:

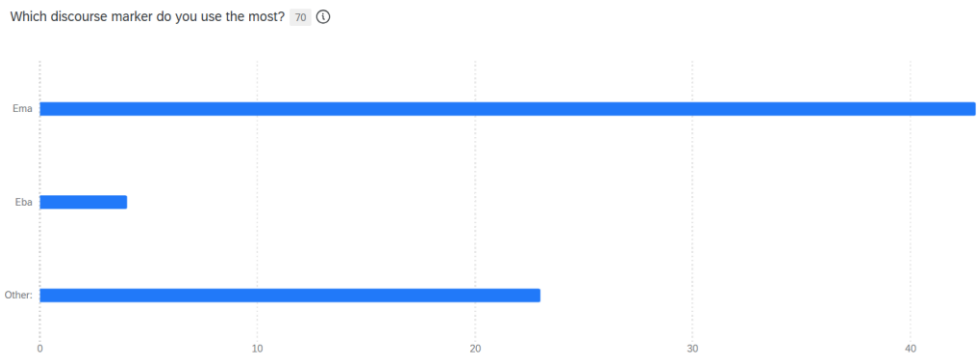


Bar Chart 2: Have you noticed differences in how different age groups use ema and eba?

More than 70% of respondents said that younger people use *ema* and *eba* more often. One person indicated that the main users are representatives of Generation Z and millennials and 56 years-old respondent wrote "My children use them to convey surprise." All video and audio materials, with the exception of SE (39), are made by young people. BayGuys members (SE 39) were born around 1996. Text messages are also taken from group chats of students of different ages.

3.4.2 The Frequency of Use of *Ema* and *Eba*

The questionnaire also confirms the fact that *ema* is a widely used marker:



Bar Chart 3: Frequency of use of discourse markers

According to Bar Chart 3, people chose "Other" option more than *eba*. Examples are *both* (*2), *fuu*, *dee*, *mässaɣan, žalpï, eee*, and *yo mayo*. The option "Neither" was found four times and one of them contained the information "I do not use them, but my children do." This confirms the previous idea that the younger generation mainly uses these markers in their speech.

How often do you use the following discourse markers? ↑	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Ema	20	22	10	18
Eba	5	11	12	42

Table 3: Frequency of use of discourse markers

This table also shows that people tend to avoid using *eba* instead of *ema*, making it the most used speech marker.

Allocate 100 points to reflect the importance of these speech markers in yo...	Average
Ema	37.77
Eba	14.09

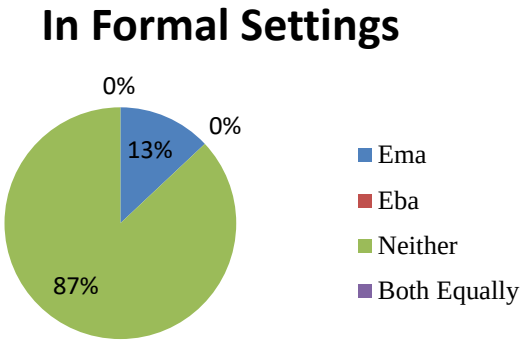
Table 4: Allocate 100 points to reflect the importance of these speech markers in your daily communication

As for Table 4, respondents consider *ema* more important than *eba*, so most of them ranked it first:

Rank the following speech markers based on how frequently you use them.	1	2
Ema	61	9
Eba	9	61

Table 5: Rating of these speech markers

As for situational use, in formal settings people try not to use them:



Pie Chart 4: Which discourse marker do you feel is more appropriate in formal conversations?

In this question, 9 people chose that *ema* can be used in formal conversations. However, I found a contradiction in a matrix question:

Rate the appropriateness of using "Ema" in different contexts.	Never appropriate	Rarely appropriate	Sometimes appropriate	Often appropriate	Always appropriate
Casual conversation	16	7	16	19	12
Formal speech	57	9	4	0	0
Narratives	27	22	13	8	0
Explanations	35	11	20	4	0

Rate the appropriateness of using "Eba" in different contexts.	Never appropriate	Rarely appropriate	Sometimes appropriate	Often appropriate	Always appropriate
Casual conversation	22	12	17	15	4
Formal speech	61	4	5	0	0
Narratives	38	22	8	0	2
Explanations	36	21	10	0	3

Table 6: Assessing the appropriateness of using ema and eba in different contexts

In these matrix questions, 15 people chose that *ema* could be used in some way in formal speech; but as for *Pie Chart 4*, the number should be 9. Although they had not chosen *eba* in the previous multiple choice question, 9 people later decided to consider that they could use this marker

in formal conversation. Overall, the number of "Never Appropriate" is higher in the Formal Speech variant than in the others.

In which situations do you use these markers? ↑	Informal conversations with friends	Informal conversations with family	Online chats or Social media	Workplace or School	Public speaking	I do not use
Ema	58	17	45	8	1	10
Eba	47	5	28	4	3	15

Table 7: Different Situations

Oddly enough, in this question, three people chose to use *eba* in public speaking, while only one person chose *ema*. But in the previous questions, the number of *eba* was relatively small. An interesting case is that only five people indicated that they could use *eba* in conversation with family. In contrast, the percentage of using *ema* for the same purpose is relatively high.

All these responses show that *eba* is not widely used. A possible reason for this is that it is considered rude since its main associated word is a Russian curse word. For instance, someone wrote this: "In my speech, I consider the variant *eba* more similar to Russian curse word, therefore I use them very rarely only among close friends." As for *ema*, another person explained: "I tend to use *ema* more because it feels more appropriate than its alternative [*eba*]." Another example is: "I frequently use *ema* unintentionally, just because it became the part of my daily conversations. But I never actually use this word in front my family and parents, only friends, even not with the people I've met for the first time. I never use *eba*, because this is a curse word for me." Another good-written example is "*Ema* sounds very *mambet*[7]-like, so I don't use it. However, I did use this word back in school because everyone said it. Considering *eba*, well, it's one of the basic swear words, so I use it only with friends, but not with parents, in public, or in society." It also should be noted that someone called *eba* "a vulgar expression, often used as slang for shock or intensity." Even, in SE (10), the speaker's instant correction by saying "I said *ema*" shows that he regrets using the rude word *eba* since he is a famous person.

[7] *Mambet* is often a derogatory term in Kazakh-speaking contexts, usually referring to someone considered as rural or uneducated.

Thus, those who said they use them in public speaking could have been older people who did not know the meaning of these markers, or those who filled out the questionnaire without reading it properly.

3.4.3 Russian Language Influence

For the question "A Russian word associated with *ema*" more than 80% people answered *yomayo*. Other options were: *ošalet', e* tvoyu mat', "daaa?; kstati; wow; kapets," "emat', yolki palki," nichego sebe, yapashamat'*[8]*, ofiget'*. *Kstati* translates as *by the way*, so sometimes people use these speech markers to change the topic. As for *eba*, almost 90% responses were *e*at'* or "curse word." Other options are: "*da nu na*ig, ne mozhet byt'*." One person wrote that *ema* is *e*at' but without cursing*. Someone suggested that *pipets* means *ema* and *p*zdets* means *eba*, while someone else indicated that *ema* is the same as *o*iget'* and *eba* is the same as *o*uet'*. These words also go together and the second version is ruder than the first one. Also, a few people wrote that they do not have any idea about the Russian language alternatives.

QID23 - In your opinion, how much has the Russian language influenced the use of speech markers like "Ema" and "Eba" in your conversations?	Percentage
Not at all	29%
Slightly influenced	9%
Moderately influenced	30%
Strongly influenced	13%
Completely influenced	9%
I don't know	11%

Table 8: Russian Language Influence

61% of the participants believed that the Russian language somehow influenced the widespread use of *ema* and *eba* in conversation, while 29% thought that Russian had no influence. Participants were asked the questions, I. "How has Russian influenced the way you use *ema* or *eba*

[8] Censored or 'kazakh' version of *e* tvoyu mat'*("motherf**king")

in your speech?" and II. "What do you think these speech markers reflect about Kazakh informal communication?" Some good responses are:

I. "In everyday life, I get used to add some words from Russian and *ema* also got into the list of these words."
"I primarily speak Russian, and I use this word in my Russian speech. I always thought this word [*ema*] was a modified version of *eba*. I do not think it has a Russian equivalent."
"Moderately [influenced]. I usually use *ema* when I speak Russian."
"Russian slang has influenced these expressions, with *eba* coming from a Russian expletive and *ema* being a softened Kazakh variant used to express surprise or emotion."
"It didn't influence. It was my Kazakh fiends who used these words and I knew the words from them."
"Words with Russian roots."
"It did not influence at all"
"I use them in Kazakh and Russian sentences"
"I don't personally use these words, but I guess they came from the Russian language"
"I never thought about it"
"It seems like *ema* is a Kazakh word and *eba* is a Russian word"
"I suppose *eba* stems from a popular cussing word, but I don't know about *ema*'s origin, so I can say that at least the latter was influenced by Russian language"
II. "In my personal opinion, although these markers are based on Russian slang/curse word *eb*t'*, through the small changes in pronouncing them by Kazakh youth they became the Kazakh slang words. My small observation makes me think that Kazakh people use these markers more often than Russians. All of these facts show that majority of informal communication in Kazakh is based on Russian informal speech but with huge and unique assimilation of it under the Kazakh speaking manner."

"I have never thought about the role and the meaning of these words, but thinking about it now I guess it can shorten our emotional reaction to some news. The speech markers *ema* and *eba* reflect the strong influence of Russian slang in Kazakh informal communication, highlighting the country's bilingualism. They are commonly used to express emotions like surprise, excitement, or frustration, especially among younger generations and on social media. The softened version *ema* shows how borrowed words are adapted to Kazakh pronunciation. Overall, these expressions add a playful and casual tone to conversations, making them a key part of modern youth slang."
"Maybe they reflect that despite using Russian words in our speech, we make them unique by adapting them to our own language and culture."
"Kazakh language sort of "domesticates" Russian words (Russians usually say the whole version of *eb*t'*). I think these words also show how young people around KZ share the same slang? And the level of intelligence/group maybe (I noticed that young boys usually use it)"
"We often use filler words from Russian more than from our native language."
"This is not something came from other languages, but rather something that we Gen Zs created to express our feelings deeper"
"For example, such speech markers contribute to the emergence of multiple dialects. In my opinion, *ema* is used more in the Northern and Eastern regions, while *eba* is more commonly heard in the Southern regions."
"we mix Russian and Kazakh words in our speech, a lot of slang words come from Russian language"
"*Ema* is a unique speech marker which reveals joviality and companionship of Kazakhs. *Eba* reflects one of the Russian negative impacts: curse words."
"We often use Russian words and pronounce them not as they meant to be pronounced."
"I always thought that *ema* is a shortened form of the Russian *yo-mayo*. It would mean that Kazakh informal communication was heavily influenced by integration of some words from the Russian

language”
"they are most probably Russian by origin, but more often used by Kazakh speakers. Also maybe there’s a sound change b -> m, that often occurs in Turkic languages (like Kazakh мен and Turkish ben)"
“I think now this word belongs to Kazakh language.”
“We really do use Russian cuss words more than in our native language”
“We use Russian curse word to keep our beautiful Kazakh language clean from bad words”
“They are very popular filler words (didn’t notice them in the speech of people from Russia)”
“I am not sure but I feel these markers are more natural and its closer to me as Kazakh speaker”
“I think it’s a specific characteristic of a dialect of Russian spoken in Kazakh, something like *sotka* (a phone)”

Table 9: Russian Language Influence

As one can see, many people believe that the Russian language has influenced the creation of these markers in Kazakh-Russian bilingual speech. So, we cannot ignore this fact. Thus, it is evident that when people use them, they engage in code-mixing, as they are potentially using a Russian-derived word.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Conclusion

In this study, I tried to investigate the use of Kazakh speech markers *ema* and *eba* in different settings. Five research questions were answered across the paper. As a result, I have found that *ema* and *eba* are not just markers that organize discourse in text or face-to-face communication, but also are valuable linguistic elements that provide meaningful data about two languages, Kazakh and Russian, because they originated from the Russian language and show its influence on the Kazakh language and how Kazakhs use these markers.

First of all, it was found that they serve different functions depending on the context and intonation. In most cases, speakers show their surprise or negative emotions like complaint and

concern. *Eba* conveys shocking emotion and *ema* is mainly for indicating surprise. It also was found that in some cases, *ema* and *eba* can be used in introducing new topic and showing excitement about a particular situation. Secondly, younger generations tend to use *ema* and *eba* in different situations but most of them understand that these are not official words to use in public settings. The reason for this is that, they come from the Russian words *yomayo* and *eb*t'*, which are not usually used in public speaking. This fact, in turn, proves that the Russian language has influenced Kazakh informal communication, since people still use code mixing and sometimes even code switching.

Overall, this paper contributes to the subfields of discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. Unlike Indo-European languages, the Kazakh discourse markers and their sociolinguistic roles are still unexplored, so this study tried to fill these gaps by using corpus-based evidence, presenting an understanding of intonational changes, pragmatic multifunctionality, and code-switching in bilingual speech. As for the social context, it shows the influence of the Russian language, demonstrating how Russian linguistic items influenced Kazakh colloquial styles in the post-Soviet time.

4.2 Theoretical Implications

This paper has several implications. Firstly, the token numbers were too small. I only used 25 examples of text messages, 14 examples of spoken example, and 70 responds of questionnaire. They might be insufficient to draw a valuable conclusion. Also, someone said that he did not notice them in the speech of people from Russia. Therefore, it is difficult to say that the Russian language had a great influence without taking into account the opinion of the Russian-Kazakh population living in Russia. In addition, some Kazakh people can be skeptic about Russian language and its widely use in Kazakhstan. The last implication is about survey tool. I used Qualtrics because it was convenient to conduct the survey in two languages, but it was inconvenient to see the results. I could not see each response individually because not all of them provided written responses. This is why the fact that *ema* and *eba* are more common among young people was concluded based on only

one question and other external factors such as video and audio recordings of speakers and student chats.

4.3 Future Direction of Research

Based on the limitations, it should be noted that, this study could benefit from including speakers from Russia in the survey. By doing this, one can be sure whether the words *ema* and *eba* come from Russian or not, since Russian people will express their opinion on the questions "How has Russian influenced the way you use *ema* or *eba* in Kazakh speech?", "What do you think these speech markers reflect about Kazakh informal communication?", and "A Russian word associated with *ema/eba*." Moreover, all samples should be increased to 100. This can help define all the pragmatic functions of *ema* and *eba* and define even more targets. Also, more people should fill out the survey because, thanks to this, we can confidently determine the age difference between users. Last but not least, Google Forms should be used as a tool. Because it shows the result as an Excel file, in which you can create filters and define statistics. In addition, it allows you to consider each answer separately, which is a handy feature.

5.0 Appendices

Appendix A: The Spreadsheet of Written and Spoken Examples

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HOHFgZp71JuwDuhaELyK4FPvkPNyj94X/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=105029468149757577453&rtpof=true&sd=true

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15qAmgRY2XGtwfuvxRJy5bh-nG_A78-OJ?usp=sharing

(Screenshots)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ezC5cPVgPrzEOhi81nq-0arm2VFBOfKS?usp=drive_link

(Video/Audio)

Appendix B: The Glossed Examples

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vGo8Bu1TVJ656hPyM_M-IAcCNCEca_FF/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=105029468149757577453&rtpof=true&sd=true

Appendix C: Transcriptions of Spoken Examples with Jefferson's Notation

https://docs.google.com/document/d/19tOekO2wp376bCRBwImvDyoHwcdUOLlS/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=105029468149757577453&rtpof=true&sd=true

Data Analyzed:

Category	**Ema (Text) (%)**	**Eba (Text) (%)**	**Ema (Video/Audio) (%)**	**Eba (Video/Audio) (%)**	**Total (%)**
Total Cases	26 (42.6%)	6 (9.8%)	10 (16.4%)	19 (31.2%)	61 (100%)
Position					
Initial	17 (65.4%)	3 (50%)	6 (60%)	4 (21.1%)	30 (49.2%)
Final	4 (15.4%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (10%)	5 (26.3%)	11 (18%)
Alone	5 (19.2%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (30%)	10 (52.6%)	20 (32.8%)
Pragmatic Functions					
Surprise	8 (30.8%)	1 (16.7%)	7 (70%)	0 (0%)	16 (26.2%)
Negative (Total)	11 (42.3%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (10%)	3 (15.8%)	16 (26.2%)
- Concern	2 (7.7%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.3%)	4 (6.6%)
- Complaint	9 (34.6%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	2 (10.5%)	12 (19.7%)
New Topic	4 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	5 (8.2%)

Other (Total)	4 (15.4%)	4 (66.7%)	1 (10%)	16 (84.2%)	25 (41%)
- Shock	3 (11.5%)	4 (66.7%)	1 (10%)	12 (63.2%)	20 (32.8%)
- Excitement	1 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (21.1%)	5 (8.2%)
Negative Sentences	6 (23.1%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.3%)	8 (13.1%)
Total "Alone" Cases	5 (19.2%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (30%)	10 (52.6%)	20 (32.8%)

Leipzig Glossing Key:

1	First person	INTERJ	Interjection
2	Second person	LOC	Locative
3	Third person	NEG	Negation
ABL	Ablative case	PASS	Passive
ACC	Accusative case	PL	Plural
ADV	Adverb(ial)	POSS	Possessive
AUX	Auxiliary	POST	Postposition
COND	Conditional	PRES	Present tense
COP	Copula	PST	Past tense
CVB	Converb	PTCL	Particle
DAT	Dative case	PTCP	Participle
EVID	Evidentiality	Q	Question particle
GEN	Genitive case	SG	Singular
IMP	Imperative	SPM	Speech Marker
INTENS	Intensifier	TAG	Question Tag

Jefferson's Transcription Key:

(( )); ( )	To indicate the physical movements, laughing; Incomprehensible speech
< >; > <	Speaking slowly; Speaking faster/quickly
° °; CAPS	Quiet voice; Louder voice
X(h)xx; $; #; (·h)	Speaking while laughing; Speaking while smiling; Creaky voice; Inhalation
–; [ ]; <u>Underlined</u>	Interrupted speech; Simultaneous speech; Emphasized speech;
↑; ↓; =	Rising tone; Lowering Tone; Contiguous utterances
(.), (0.2), etc.	Taking a pauses: short pause, 0.1 sec, etc.
, . ?	Stopping fall in tone; continuing intonation; rising intonation
….X__	Gaze direction: from nongaze to gaze, the gaze reaches, gazing at someone

6.0 References

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