

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES OF KAZAKHSTANI YOUTH: THE VALUE OF KAZAKH  
IN THE CONTEXT OF A CHANGING LINGUISTIC MARKETPLACE

ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ ЖАСТАРДЫҢ ТІЛДІК ИДЕОЛОГИЯЛАРЫ: ӨЗГЕРМЕЛІ  
ЛИНГВИСТИКАЛЫҚ НАРЫҚ ТҮРҒЫСЫНДАҒЫ ҚАЗАҚ ТІЛІНІҢ ҚҰНДЫЛЫҒЫ

ЯЗЫКОВЫЕ ИДЕОЛОГИИ КАЗАХСТАНСКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ: ЦЕННОСТЬ  
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ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОГО РЫНКА

by

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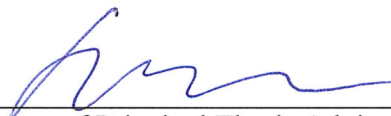
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**ON**

**The 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.**



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## Abstract

The issue of the statuses and use of Kazakh and Russian languages has been a topic of disputes and discussions on both public and private levels since Kazakhstan obtained its independence. During the years when Kazakhstan was a part of the Soviet Union the Soviet authorities deliberately promoted Russian language and culture and displaced the local language from public domains. As a result, Russian language acquired an important place in everyday lives of the people and was a *lingua franca* for the population. Thus, Russian was perceived as a prestigious language whereas Kazakh lost its value.

The primordialist notion of language and ethnicity, i.e. one language - one people was used by nationalists to empower Kazakh language after Kazakhstan gained independence. Kazakhstani authorities utilized Kazakh as a symbol of Kazakhstani identity and a tool for preserving Kazakh culture and traditions. It has been 25 years of promotion of Kazakh language. The population of Kazakhstan reports having positive attitude to Kazakh language and the number of children studying in Kazakh-medium schools increased during the years of independence from about a million people in 1991 to approximately 1.57 million in 2011 (Altynbekova, 2011; Fierman, 2006). However, they are not only positive attitudes to the language and schooling in this language that affect the choice of language in communication.

This paper focuses on language ideologies of contemporary Kazakhstani young people based on fieldwork conducted in the new capital city of Astana. The Kazakhstani younger generation has complex language ideologies regarding the value of Kazakh, Russian, and English which affect young people's use of languages in different contexts. Russian is not likely to lose its value in the near future, while the current trends promise an increase in popular support for the use of Kazakh.

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### Note on Transliteration

Throughout the paper for the purposes of transliterating Kazakh and Russian words and expressions into Roman script I have used the system of transliteration of the United States Library of Congress. However, it should be mentioned that I left names of geographical places in the official designations used by the Kazakhstani government (e.g. Esil, not Esīl). The names of public figures, celebrities, and other persons' names were transliterated in simplified forms that are usual for the popular use (e.g. Ualikhan, not Uālikhan). The third point concerns the names of authors, papers, and journals which were left in that version of transliteration as they appear in print. Another exception of transliteration in the paper is citations of other academic sources where the terms are cited in a way they have been printed even if they are transliterated in a way different from the system of transliteration of the Library of Congress. In these cases I left Kazakh and Russian terms and names intact.

When I transliterated Russian into Roman script the following table was applied:

Vernacular	Romanization				
а	a	к	k	х	kh
б	b	л	l	ц	ts
в	v	м	m	ч	ch
г	g	н	n	ш	sh
д	d	о	o	щ	shch
е	e	п	p	ъ	"
ё	ë	р	r	ы	y
ж	zh	с	s	ь	'
з	z	т	t	э	è
и	i	у	u	ю	iü
й	ī	ф	f	я	ia

In transliterating Kazakh from Cyrillic into Roman script I have used the following table:

Vernacular	Romanization				
а	a	к	q	ф	f
ә	ǎ	л	l	х	kh
б	b	м	m	һ	h
в	v	н	n	ц	ts

Г	g	ң	ng	Ч	ch
Ғ	gh	О	o	Ш	sh
Д	d	Ө	ò	Щ	shch
Е	e	П	p	Ъ	"
Ё	ë	Р	r	Ы	y
Ж	zh	С	s	І	ī
З	z	Т	t	Ь	'
И	i	У	u	Э	è
Й	ī	Ү	ū	Ю	(iu)
К	k	Ү	ù	Я	(ia)

## Note on Translation

In this paper the excerpts of the interviews are given in two variants: in their original language(s) which is followed by an English translation. I decided to leave the excerpts in their original language in Cyrillic script for the purpose of convenience for the scholars of linguistics and sociolinguistics possessing knowledge of these languages to get a better understanding of the usage of language and code-switching by the research participants. This practice would give an opportunity for the reader to see the exact language and word-choice and, therefore, provide a better basis for the analysis of the data. In the original versions all languages are given in plain text.

In the English translations of the interview excerpts I make a distinction between Kazakh, Russian, and English languages for the wider circle of scholars and general population to see the richness of language choice. Thus, throughout the paper in cases of English translations words and sentences that were originally expressed in Kazakh are underlined, in Russian – italicized, and those which were in English are given with bold font. Thus, those individuals who are not proficient in any of these languages will be able to see the language-choice made by the research participants in their interviews.

One more point I would like to add is the transcription conventions that were used in the interview excerpts:

[...] - material omitted;

... - clear pause.

## **Language Ideologies of Kazakhstani Youth:**

### **The Value of Kazakh in the Context of a Changing Linguistic Marketplace**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Statement of the Problem**

During Soviet times the authorities implemented the policy of uniting the peoples of the constituent states by creating a common Soviet identity that was mostly concentrated on Russian language as the language of the peoples of the Union (Grenoble, 2003, pp. 26-27; Khazanov, 1995, pp. 12-15). Russian language has been deliberately promoted by the Soviet authorities with the purpose of suppressing any nationalistic sentiments among the non-Russian peoples. Due to the displacement of local languages from public domains and enforcement of Russian-medium education Russian became widespread in the constituent countries of the Soviet Union and became a lingua franca for the population (Khazanov, 1995, p. 13).

Despite the fact that the official rhetoric of the Soviet policy was establishment of Russian as a lingua franca, on the ground the local languages and cultures were suppressed. Social advancement and career promotion could not take place without knowledge of Russian and, therefore, Russian was regarded as the language of elite and educated people (Khazanov, 1995, p. 15; Laitin, 1998, p. 65). Due to the enforcement of Russification policy the prestige of indigenous ethnicities and their native languages dropped significantly. Among the consequences of the language policy of the Soviet Union was also the urban-rural divide in language use. As ethnic Slavs migrated to the urban areas of the Soviet republics the urban population was more Russified in comparison to the villages. Kazakh became considered as a “backward” and “less developed” language of people of rural background (Dave, 2004, p. 120).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union Kazakh language was used by the authorities of Kazakhstan in the process of nation-building as a symbol of Kazakhstani identity (Dave, 2004, p. 123). In order to change the linguistic regime the government adopted laws, decrees, and programs to elevate the political and social status of Kazakh (Fierman, 1998; Smagulova, 2008). The language which during the years of the Soviet Union lost its value and had low status in comparison to Russian became the only state language of Kazakhstan with Russian given the status of official language in 1997. The authorities argued that Russian can be used on a par with Kazakh in state institutions and local administrative agencies but reserved the “de jure status as state language” for Kazakh (Dave, 2007, p. 101). However, the political status given to a language does not simultaneously determine the social value of the language (Woolard, 1985).

Kazakh language has been promoted for 25 years. The population of Kazakhstan reports having a positive attitude to Kazakh language (Smagulova, 2008, p. 467) and the number of children studying in Kazakh-medium schools increased during the years of independence from about a million people in 1991 to approximately 1.57 million in 2011 (Altynbekova, 2011, p. 295; Fierman, 2006, p. 106). However, the use of language does not only depend on the positive attitudes to the language (Atkinson & Kelly-Holmes, 2016; Selleck, 2016; Woolard, 2005). In some cases, people do have positive attitudes to their ethnic languages but in a wider community negotiate their identities and choose to use another language. In multilingual contexts ideologies of language and identity might come into conflict regarding what language should be spoken by particular individuals and in what context (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

Kazakh is perceived as an authentic language that finds its value in its relationship to the Kazakh ethnic community and expression of essential Self. The ideology of authenticity was formed by political, social, and historical arrangements that linked language with ethnic

identity of the people. This link was utilized by the nationalities policy of the Soviet Union and then was used by the nationalizing policy of Kazakhstan after independence. Here the concept of authenticity emerges as a political category and (re)produces the people's ideologies that perceive language to be indexical of identity. On the other hand, Russian is the hegemonic language that provides wider access to informational, educational, and economic resources and remains the dominant language of communication in various domains (Jankowski, 2012; Smagulova, 2008; Suleimenova, 2009).

In this study I analyze the transformation of the linguistic marketplace in Kazakhstan and concentrate on the current language attitudes and practices. Particularly, I study competing language ideologies of Kazakhstani young people and how ethnic Kazakh young people articulate social values of Kazakh and Russian languages. Kazakh possesses value as a symbol of cultural authenticity but it is practicality and economic competitiveness that cause Russian language to be more attractive for the younger generation, which is evident from this language being predominantly used in social interactions in most contexts in Astana.

In this case language ideology is understood as “the system of linkages between social values and particular linguistic forms” (Bilaniuk, 2009, p. 337). Under the “linguistic market” I mean the concept proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1991) where the linguistic market is a field where various linguistic products are endowed with a certain value due to dispositions among the people that are constructed by institutions. The author refers to institutions not as some particular organizations but rather a set of social relations that endows the speaker with authority to perform in a way that other people perceive the utterance as acceptable in these circumstances (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 8-9). However, it is not only institutions that affect the value of language. We should also consider the cultural system of ideas (Irvine, 1989, p. 255) and community norms on solidarity (Woolard, 1985, p. 743).

I argue that Kazakh young people have complex language ideologies regarding the social value of Kazakh where the new discourse is in conflict with the earlier one. The majority of the ethnic Kazakh population considers Kazakh to possess authentic value, i.e. ethnic language is believed to be indexical of identity and reflecting the spirit of the nation. Further, the knowledge of Kazakh language has economic value because Kazakh is an advantage on the job market. Governmental institutions as well as private companies set up requirements on linguistic competencies for many job positions. Increasingly, speaking Kazakh is even considered cool by some young people. However, then there is the issue of how a person speaks. The young people in my study expressed an opinion that Kazakh is generally valued when it is pure, correct, and literary Kazakh. This point also has another side: that those who are not confident in their knowledge of Kazakh prefer to use Russian as it is less problematic.

When a state promotes a language purely on the basis of authenticity and imposes it forcefully on individuals the language becomes associated with “conflict and suffering” (Woolard, 2005, p. 23). By studying the sociolinguistic situation in Catalonia the author argues that the promotion of Catalan by the Catalonian authorities was impeded by the concerns of the young people that they were forced to make an identity choice by speaking this or that language. The author analyzed a new campaign undertaken by the Generalitat in Catalonia in 2005 which shifted the rhetoric on Catalan toward playfulness and joy.

Woolard argues that a language has to be perceived as “natural”, “everyday”, and “modern” in order to be used by the population (Woolard, 2005, p. 24). The task is rather ideological than political. This means that elevation of the political status of a language does not necessarily make the people perceive it as authoritative and legitimate, i.e. hegemonic language. The campaign brought ideological changes among the population by moving away

from anxieties and suffering toward playfulness and leisure (Woolard, 2005, p. 23). Thus, the people were not afraid or ashamed to speak the language with deficiencies.

This is particularly topical for the young people as they perceive the value of a language differently from the older generation (Moore, 1988, 1993; Rampton, 2005; Woolard, 2005). For the young people it is not the authenticity of language that is a primary determinant of value assigned to their speech. The language is seen as a set of words, a commodity that is possessed and displayed (Moore, 1993, p. 217). It is also worth mentioning that young people value the practicality of a language more than the older speakers and this is what drives them in making a language choice (Rampton, 2005; Woolard, 2005). In contrast, the older generation has more stable identities and affirms social authority through the symbolic value of the language. It should be noted that ideological work on changing attitudes to Kazakh language among the Kazakhstani young people to perceive it as modern and pragmatic is still in process.

Concerning the structure of the thesis, I first start with a discussion of the theoretical framework on the concepts of language ideology and linguistic market in chapter 1. Then, in chapter 2 I turn to the analysis of the policy of the Soviet Union and growing authority of Russian on the territory of Kazakhstan. Further, I show that despite the hegemony of Russian in political and social space Kazakh was maintained as a part of cultural heritage. The sociolinguistic situation changed due to the Gorbachev era reforms and, further, due to the nationalizing policy undertaken by the authorities of independent Kazakhstan after the collapse of the Soviet Union which is reflected in chapter 3. It was also due to the authority of Kazakh as a “language of solidarity” (chapter 4) that affected the ideology of the young people on the use of Kazakh. In the last chapter I talk about the elevating social value of Kazakh among the young population and issues on the ground.

The current paper analyzes the Kazakhstani linguistic marketplace and competing ideologies of young people toward the Kazakh language. The results of the study might be of importance for conducting comparative studies between the post-Soviet states and beyond as well as for encouraging the use of Kazakh language. According to the findings of my study the value of Kazakh language is increasing and more and more people would like to speak it. However, there are purist attitudes that can be met among the population that impede the use of Kazakh by those people who are not confident in it. For the sake of those individuals in the end of the thesis I draw an example of how ordinary people can help and encourage the new Kazakh speakers.

### **Methodology**

I conducted the research on language ideologies of Kazakhstani young people in Astana. The city was given the status of capital in 1997. Due to the history, present status, and infrastructural and economic development of Astana the population of the city is more ethnically and socially diverse than the population of other regions of the country (Koch, 2013, p. 139).

The city played an important role under Soviet rule when it was called Tselinograd and became home to people of various ethnicities. During the 1950s Tselinograd was a center of the Soviet Virgin Lands campaign (Khazanov, 1995, p. 158; Koch, 2013, p. 138). This campaign was an initiative aimed at cultivation of the vast swaths of the Kazakhstani steppe (*tselina* meant virgin soil). In order to implement the initiative the authorities encouraged migration of peasants and workers from other parts of the Soviet Union. Thus, during the 1950s more than a million people from all parts of the Soviet Union came to Tselinograd which transformed Kazakhstan (particularly its northern and eastern parts) into a multiethnic society (Dave, 2007, p. 59; Khazanov, 1995, p. 158).

However, after Kazakhstan gained independence representatives of non-Kazakh ethnic groups emigrated. If in the last census of the Soviet Union that took place in 1989 the overall population of Kazakhstan was about 16 million (out of which 6.7 million were ethnic Kazakhs), in 1999 there were almost 15 million people (7.9 million Kazakhs) (Arslan, 2014, p. 104). If we consider the demographic situation of Astana, there were 281 252 people (49 798 Kazakhs) in 1989 and 319 324 people (133 585 Kazakhs) in 1999 (Arslan, 2014, p. 105).

After Astana became the capital of the country there were mainly two groups of migrants to Astana: migrants from other Kazakhstani cities who usually had higher or special education and some qualifications, and migrants from rural areas who usually did not have higher education (Zabirova, 2002, p. 94). These groups were also linguistically and culturally different due to the legacy of the Soviet Union where the urban areas were more linguistically and ethnically Russified (Zabirova, 2002, p. 94). Thus, the socio-cultural appearance of Astana transformed due to the changes in the ethno-demographic structure of the city's population.

Nowadays Astana is a city with a population of more than a million people. Due to its status as a capital of Kazakhstan and developing economic center the city hosts the Kazakhstani government agencies, private businesses of various sizes as well as international companies. People from other parts of Kazakhstan and near and far abroad visit, work, or study in Astana. Therefore, it is an ideal place to study the linguistic marketplace and language ideologies of the young people. In Astana one can find people of different social and educational backgrounds and, consequently, relevant data for the present research.

## **Methods**

The data for this study were collected mainly during my fieldwork in summer and fall 2016 through the means of semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant

observation. The use of interviews was motivated by this qualitative method giving the possibility to obtain both information and individual's point of view (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 138; Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 3). Therefore, during the in-depth interviews I asked the research participants' background, opinion, beliefs, and experiences connected with Kazakh, Russian, and other languages.

I had an interview guide in three languages (Kazakh, Russian, and English) that included core topics to be covered but I tried to accommodate to every interviewee's opinion and experiences. In the interview guide they were all open-ended questions for the research participants to give explicit and detailed responses. Along the way I used explanatory and clarificatory probes that provided a deeper content to the data (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 150). Among the advantages of interviewing is the possibility for the research participants to bring some new knowledge that has not been thought about. The interviewees were free to raise issues they were concerned with and made great contribution to the study.

Another qualitative research method used in the current study to obtain triangulation was participant observation. Participant observation was chosen in order to observe the behavior of the young people in usual context. What people report they do and say they believe in can differ from what people do on the ground (Baker, 1992, p. 12; Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 13). This is particularly an issue in the study that is concerned with language ideologies. People could report those things that they believe they are expected to say. Therefore, participant observation data was intended to complement the in-depth interviews.

I also used *The Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q): Assessing Language Profiles in Bilinguals and Multilinguals* (Marian, Blumenfeld, & Kaushanskaya, 2007). This language proficiency questionnaire was utilized in order to identify language profiles of the research participants and compare the language profiles with

the information on language preference and use given by the interviewees during the in-depth interviews. Mainly, the data on language proficiency and experience obtained from the interviews correlated with the questionnaire results. However, the level of knowledge of the languages was not the focus of my study and I rather concentrated on the ideas and beliefs of the young people.

### **Sampling**

In the research I used purposive sampling considering age, national affiliation and ethnic identity of people to be my interviewees. However, when I conducted participant observation I considered the linguistic practices of the community which included individuals of different ethnic identities, i.e. not only Kazakh. Therefore, in the study while I focus mainly on language ideologies of young people who identify themselves as ethnic Kazakhs I also touch upon the general Kazakhstani young population.

The interviewees had to be Kazakhstani nationals under 35 years old who identify themselves as ethnic Kazakhs. Ethnic Kazakhs are mostly bilingual in comparison with the representatives of other ethnic groups and nationalist sentiments call Kazakhs to be loyal to their culture and language (Smagulova, 2008, p. 453). Thus, it would be relevant to study the representatives of this ethnic group. Particularly, I take young people because they were raised during the years of independent Kazakhstan. These individuals were raised at the time of implementation of the nationalizing policy of the state and empowerment of Kazakh.

Usually I just approached people who seemed to fit the abovementioned criteria at the research sites asking them to devote some time for an interview. I interviewed 13 individuals who were from 18 to 33 years old. There were 6 male and 7 female interviewees. The research participants were mainly undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals who live in Astana. However, if we consider the place of origin they come from different regions of Kazakhstan which gives diversity to the sample. When asked about the

language that was utilized as the medium of education at primary and secondary school the research participants differed in the responses with 6 individuals studying in Russian-medium, 3 people in Kazakh-medium and 4 people in mixed-medium schools. The latter group had Kazakh, Russian, English, and Turkish as mediums of instruction which differed depending on the subject.

At first, I spoke Russian, and asked the language in which they wanted to have an interview offering them the possibility to conduct it either in Russian or Kazakh. Only one interview was conducted in Kazakh as chosen by the research participants. The research participants had generally positive attitude to the use of the both Kazakh and Russian languages. When I asked them in what language they wanted to give the interview those who were fluent both in Kazakh and Russian languages said that it was no difference for them. However, I think I should take into consideration the moment that I asked them in Russian and when I said they had to pick the language themselves they picked Russian. Russian is the less marked choice in most public contexts in Astana, and it was more dominant choice in the settings where I conducted my research. There was only one research participant who said that as we were both ethnic Kazakhs we had better use Kazakh during the interview.

What concerns my knowledge of Kazakh and Russian languages I could say that Russian is the language I know the best. It should be mentioned that the first language that I acquired in childhood was Kazakh. However, I went to a Russian kindergarten, studied in a Russian-medium school and the language of instruction during my bachelor studies was Russian and English. At the same time, Kazakh classes were compulsory for everybody during all these years.

I am aware of the fact that asking the interviewees to take part in the study in Russian might have affected those interviewees who have Kazakh as their dominant language but made a decision to accommodate to me. However, when during the interviews they

reported to have studied in Kazakh and having Kazakh as their dominant language I offered them to switch into Kazakh assuring them that that was fine with me. I also tried to establish good rapport with the research participants in order for them to feel comfortable and to be more open with me.

It should be mentioned that there was some code-switching between Kazakh, Russian and even English in most of the interviews. That is why for the purposes of convenience and better analysis of the data I provide the interviews in their original version as well as provide their English translation. The interviews were audio-recorded with consent of the research participants and later transcribed and analyzed.

### **Research Sites**

Particularly, in order to conduct the research I visited my first research site which was an anti-café during summer 2016. Anti-café's have emerged in Astana only several years ago. I considered an anti-café as a promising site due to its concept that attracts mainly young people. Anti-café's do not usually have loud music, thus, giving an opportunity for communication. I expected the people to be not that busy with food as at ordinary café's so that I could approach the customers and ask them to devote some time to me. Particularly, I expected to find interviewees for my study as well as conduct observation of the social interactions in this place.

Such places provide space for people to meet be it for business or leisure but are different from ordinary café's. At anti-café's people pay on an hourly basis<sup>1</sup> and are free to engage in whatever they want (board games, co-working, meetings, entertainment, and even conferences and presentations). Anti-café's provide drinks and snacks that are included in the price. Usually anti-café's have free internet access and media projectors that make them a perfect place for group works.

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<sup>1</sup> Usually one pays around 700 - 1.200 tenge per hour, 2.500 - 4.000 tenge per day for one person. It is convenient for young people who need access to internet and some room for study, work, or leisure.

The anti-café that I chose was located on the bank of Esil (or in Russian – Ishim) river. It was visited by people who walk along the river and consequently could provide customers that would give me an interview. They had a discount for students all summer long and offered unlimited time on the summer terrace for the cost of one hour. The anti-café had a big room where one could find tables and accessible snacks, drinks, and board games. This room was often rented for holding various events such as master-classes, birthdays or corporate celebrations, interest clubs, etc. Another room was of medium size. There was a PlayStation console and sofas where the customers could play games. In the third room the owners had a media projector with speakers. This space was usually occupied by people who attended language courses, master classes, formal meetings, etc. When the room was not occupied by some formal events the customers could watch TV, movies, or cartoons.

Another research site that I chose for my study in order to recruit interviewees was the public space at university, for which I chose three major universities located in Astana. They were Nazarbayev University, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, and S. Seifullin Kazakh Agro technical University. The chosen universities have students from different regions of Kazakhstan and, consequently, were suitable for my study. These universities were also chosen because they are state-funded institutions and the majority of the students have scholarships. This fact ensured that the sample was of various economic and social backgrounds. The three universities provide education and conduct research in various areas that also gives diversity to my sample.

I conducted participant observation attending the Nomad debate club at Nazarbayev University during the fall 2016 semester. Overall I spent around 20 hours at the debate club. The meetings took place twice a week on the campus of the university and usually each session lasted for 1.5 - 2 hours. Participants of the debate club had freedom to choose the language in which they wanted to take part at the debates: English, Russian, or Kazakh. The

choice of language was made every meeting and was fully voluntary. Due to regular meetings the participants knew each other quite well. The debates covered various topics of politics, social and legal issues with examples drawn not only from Kazakhstan but from the whole world.

At the beginning of every meeting all participants gathered in one room. They first discussed the news and upcoming events in Russian and then divided into groups according to the chosen languages. Overall at every meeting there were around 40-50 people and after the division into groups there were around 8-10 debaters in each group. It happened to me a couple of times that the debaters asked me to join because they missed a person who would make the number of the participants in a group appropriate for a session. I took part at the debates when I was asked to do so but usually I preferred to conduct observation of the debates. I took field notes both during participant observation in the debate club and anti-café as well as during interviews with the research participants.

## **Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework**

### **Language Ideology and Linguistic Marketplace**

The scholars of linguistic anthropology argue that language use and beliefs are more than just about language and are dependent on the issues of identity and relations of power in societies (Blackledge, 2000; Kroskrity, 2000; Woolard, 1998). In societies that are multilingual and heterogeneous language ideologies of people are in constant construction and reconstruction. Indeed, language itself is not only a historical but a social-historical construct which is the product of complex conditions that made the given form legitimate whilst delegitimizing other forms (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 4). In the same way, linguistic forms in a particular society are perceived with different levels of authority formed by political, social, and historical arrangements. The language employed by a homogenizing state becomes dominant which gives perception of other codes being inferior to the dominant language.

Bourdieu (1991) draws a relation between linguistic practices and symbolic power, i.e. “prestige and honour” (p. 14). The author employs the concepts of “linguistic habitus” and “linguistic market” to explain the symbolic domination of a particular linguistic product in the given relations of power. Linguistic habitus is a set of dispositions that were learned by a person during socialization, i.e. inculcated from childhood, and which guide an individual on the norms of acting in the society (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 12). According to these dispositions agents make assessments of what value this or that linguistic product has in the market. As utterances possess certain value according to “particular contexts or markets” it is these markets that determine the value of linguistic products (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 18).

Pierre Bourdieu calls the perception of the symbolic power as misrecognition of it by the subjects: “symbolic power is an ‘invisible’ power which is ‘misrecognized’ as such and thereby ‘recognized’ as legitimate” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 23). It should be noted that in order for symbolic power to be successful both sides (i.e. dominated and dominant) have to

believe in the legitimacy of the power (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 23). In this process the policy of the state is decisive in the formation of the linguistic inequality as the official language becomes regarded as the norm of communication in official and public places (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 45).

Thus, only when the making of the ‘nation’, an entirely abstract group based on law, creates new usages and functions does it become indispensable to forge a *standard* language, impersonal and anonymous like the official uses it has to serve, and by the same token to undertake the work of normalizing the products of the linguistic habitus (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 48).

Bourdieu argues that this is done through political institutions that are able to impose the language as the dominant one (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 49). Particularly, the education system is the tool that makes a chosen code legitimate in the eyes of the population.

However, Woolard (1985) argues that linguistic domination is not uncontested and draws attention to the concepts of status and solidarity (p. 739). A linguistic form that is perceived as authoritative or hegemonic in a given society is regarded to possess a power of status whereas the value of vernacular varieties or languages between the members of a community that opposes the value of the dominant linguistic form is termed as a power of solidarity. Therefore, symbolic domination of a language does not only depend on the institutional support and schools but also on community memberships (Woolard, 1985, p. 744). There is social pressure to use the right language in the community and when there are deviations from the norm the community applies sanctions (Woolard, 1985, p. 744). Woolard argues that it is “critical to understand that these vernacular practices are productive, not merely reproductive, that they arise not from a mere bending to the weight of authority, but are paradoxically a creative response to that authority, mediated by the oppositional value of solidarity” (Woolard, 1985, p. 745). Thus, the value of solidarity contributes to the maintenance of the vernacular linguistic forms against the dominant language.

Another point is that it is not only political institutions that give authority to a language. Irvine (1989) argues that there is a need to take into account the cultural system of ideas that define the relation between the linguistic forms and social groups that they index.

Where these alternants index social groups and roles, I would suggest that their contrasts might have some connection with a cultural ideology of role relations - such as, whether the roles they mark are thought of as essentially autonomous, defined independently of one another, or as dependent and complementary; whether a role is thought to be part of a person's basic identity, thus applying to all situations and governing what other roles he/she may take on; and whether, in principle, the roles (or groups) are exclusive and sharply bounded, as opposed to allowing degrees of participation, or mobility and shifting among them (Irvine, 1989, p. 252).

This cultural system is formed by ideas about the history of the community and relationship between the groups (Irvine, 1989, p. 253). Thus, when a language is regarded as a part of the group's identity it would have legitimacy in the eyes of the members of this group. In contrast, if a language is associated with an opposite identity it will be regarded as alien. The author provides an example of language ideologies of the Wolof villagers. While both Arabic and French cannot be regarded as the Wolofs' authentic language, Arabic has legitimacy and authority in their community due to the religious affiliation of the villagers (Irvine, 1989, p. 254). French, the colonial language, is in contrast non-Wolof. The villagers' language ideologies perceived Arabic as something belonging to Wolof while French was completely alien and foreign.

However, "ideas about language were likely to shift if there were some major change in the social situation" (Irvine, 1989, p. 255). This is evident from the changing attitudes to French. When Senegal gained independence the authorities improved political and economic relations with France. Then, the Senegalese authorities proclaimed French as a Senegal's official language. Therefore, the ideologies of the people changed and they no more considered French "unlearnable and unspeakable" (Irvine, 1989, p. 255).

Contestation of symbolic domination apart from the value of solidarity could also be explained in a wider socio-political context (Gal, 1993, p. 355). When a language is promoted

on the basis of ideological equation of language and social group this symbolic association can be resisted by denying this particular equation. Opposing ideas reconceptualize links between language and social groups by providing grounds “for the authority of a language other than state support or group solidarity” (Gal, 1993, p. 339).

Susan Gal studied the historic transformation of linguistic marketplace in a German - Hungarian town of Transdanubia and language ideologies in the community. She argues that there are linguistic practices of resistance to the dominant ideas where the symbolic associations between language and social group are matters of contestation. In Gal’s study the first attempt of opposition was restricting access of outsiders to the issues of language and identity (Gal, 1993, p. 348). Thus, individuals tried to withhold information. Another form of contestation was denial and questioning of the equation of language and nationality by refusing the minority role (Gal, 1993, p. 350). The people said that speaking German or its dialect does not automatically imply that the speaker is a minority group member. And the third form of opposition was reevaluation of the authority of German and Hungarian on the European level: where Hungarian is a state language of Hungary but, nevertheless, is less powerful than German (Gal, 1993, p. 352). Therefore, language ideologies in a community are heterogeneous and constantly changing to serve people’s claims in different situations (Gal, 1993, p. 356).

## Chapter 2 The Linguistic Marketplace in the Soviet Union

### Policy of the Soviet Union

Russian language had presence on the territory of the Kazakh steppe in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. in the times of imperial Russia. Due to integration of the steppe and Turkestan region in the empire there emerged a new Kazakh aristocracy (Olcott, 1995, p. 104). Some of the graduates of the new Russian-Kazakh schools and their followers became prominent intellectuals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Shoqan Ualikhan, Ybyrai Altynsarin, and Abaï Qunanbaiuly) (Olcott, 1995, p. 105). There were also dual-language newspapers like *Kirgizskaia Stepnaia Gazeta* that were published for the Kazakh audience (Olcott, 1995, p. 107). However, Russian did not become the language of symbolic domination during the period of imperial Russia because of the negative sentiments that were the result of the Russian imperial colonial policy. Representatives of Kazakh intelligentsia, poets and writers who wrote in Kazakh, voiced their criticism of the colonial power and coercion. Particularly, they played a great role in uniting Kazakhs as a community and preserving “their language, culture, and history” (Olcott, 1995, p. 118). The most prominent individuals of this group were Alikhan Bokeikhan (1866-1937), Mirzhaqyp Dulatuly (1885-1935), Akhmet Baitursynuly (1872-1937), and Sultanmakhmut Toraihyruly (1893-1920) (Olcott, 1995, pp. 115-118).

The policy of the Soviet Union aimed at uniting a multiethnic society into Soviet people (*Sovetskii narod*) by employing language as a powerful tool (Grenoble, 2003, p. 26). The nationalities question (*natsional'nyi vopros*) was the central issue with which the Soviet authorities had to deal with as they had numerous peoples with different ethnic, religious, and linguistic affiliations (Hirsch, 2005, p. 5). Upon the research of Soviet ethnographers and local elites the Soviet authorities divided the territory into administrative regions. “Any people defined by a language constituted a ‘nationality’ (*natsionalnost*), which was granted

an administrative status in keeping with its level of development” (Roy, 2000, p. 64). In order to unite the peoples in a supranational country, the policy of the USSR relied on an ideological base of building socialism and Russification of the peoples of the Union (Grenoble, 2003, p. 41).

The authorities of the Soviet Union relied on cultural forms, particularly language, as a central component in defining cultural identity of the peoples. This could be explained in terms of essentialism – a position based on the assumption that “those who occupy an identity category (such as women, Asians, the working class) are both fundamentally similar to one another and fundamentally different from members of other groups” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 374). Cultural essentialism and linguistic differences were interpreted as reflections of the essence of national identity and spirit of the *Volk* (people) (Bauman & Briggs, 2000, p. 173). According to Herder’s language ideology, a language plays a crucial role in national identity of the people. The language of each nationality is argued to manifest its culture and traditions rooted in the history (Bauman & Briggs, 2000, p. 174). Thus, Herder’s language ideology has some political implications: establishment of a viable polity has to be based on common traditions and language that would bear these traditions and unite the peoples (Bauman & Briggs, 2000, p. 198).

The case of the Soviet Union is complicated as the language policy was changing over time and the true goals were complex. The Soviet authorities promoted Russian language but at the same time claimed support for the other languages while pursuing the “internationalist” initiatives in the early 1930s. Whatever were the true motives of the authorities the result is evident from the actual use of the languages in various domains (Grenoble, 2003, p. 27). The language policy of the Soviet Union had particular effect in Kazakhstan in comparison to other Central Asian states due to the territorial proximity of Kazakhstan and Russia and the demographic share of Slavs as well as other nationalities on

its territory.<sup>2</sup> Russian became the lingua franca on the territory of the Soviet Union and was regarded as more prestigious due to the opportunities for education and upward mobility and the indigenous languages and cultures were, in contrast, downgraded (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, p. 52).

### **Nationalities Policy**

In the Soviet Union the term “nationality” (*natsional’nost’*) was employed instead of the western term “ethnicity” for identification of one’s ethnic group and it is still utilized in this meaning. After the classification of the nationalities the Soviet authorities needed to divide the Central Asian Muslims into national groups in order to “strengthen their respective identities” (Roy, 2000, p. 55). Overall according to the list of nationalities formed by the authorities there were more than 100 ethnic groups that were then incorporated into one Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, 14 Soviet Socialist Republics, 20 Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, eight Autonomous Regions, and ten National Territories (Roy, 2000, p. 65). One of them was the Kazakh SSR.

The nationalities policy was implemented in order to lock people into ascribed ethnicities to control the peoples of the Soviet Union. The notions of nationality and language always went together and it was reflected in the censuses that were carried out in the Soviet Union every ten years (Roy, 2000, p. 55). While the term “native language” was used in the Soviet censuses there was ambiguity with the term in the sense that it could be interpreted by the respondents differently (Grenoble, 2003, p. 28). Thus, the respondents usually associated this term with the language of family and hereditary language whereas one’s family language could differ from that in which the one is the most fluent (Grenoble, 2003, p. 29).

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<sup>2</sup> According to the 1959 census: out of 9.295 million people there were 2.787 million ethnic Kazakhs; 1970 census: 13.009 million people – 4.234 million ethnic Kazakhs; 1979 census: 14.685 million people – 5.289 million ethnic Kazakhs; 1989 census: 16.463 million people – 6.531 million ethnic Kazakhs (Khazanov, 1995, p. 265).

Furthermore, the censuses were the political tools to construct nationalities of people as the Soviets defined the categories themselves (Grenoble, 2003, p. 38).

It should be noted that while in the censuses the respondents were meant to self-determine their nationality the ethnic affiliation of a person was actually fixed by the nationality of the parents (or one of the parents when the family was mixed) that was written in the passport (Kozlov, 1982, p. 264). Therefore, the ethnic affiliation could not be changed even if the individuals identify themselves differently. Kozlov argues that such policy of strict ethnic affiliation created obstacles in determining the actual identities of citizens and “distorted the development of ethnic processes, particularly the processes of ethnic assimilation and international integration” (Kozlov, 1982, p. 264). Thus, it could be argued that the nationalities policy of the USSR was contradictory. On the one hand, it aimed at promoting acculturation but, on the other hand, restricted ethnic assimilation by restricting the change of official nationality for individuals who would like to do that (Khazanov, 1995, p. 17). Therefore, what the nationalities policy did in fact was support the hierarchy of nationalities that did not lead to the implementation of the Soviet objectives but on the contrary, facilitated nationalism (Khazanov, 1995, p. 17).

Another crucial point in the Soviet policy was promotion of internal migration. Migration of Russians, in fact, originated during the rule of the Russian Empire. In the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century about 1.5 million colonists arrived in Kazakhstan. Due to the Russian colonization, forced sedentarization and failed uprisings the ethnic Kazakh population in the country decreased dramatically in the 1920s (Khazanov, 1995, p. 157). The demographic situation was further exacerbated by the policy of collectivization and famine that followed afterwards in the early 1930s. As the result, according to various estimates there were between 1.5 and 2 million deaths with around 1.3 million of them being ethnic Kazakhs (Khazanov, 1995, p. 158). With the continued influx of non-indigenous

peoples the number of Russians started to exceed that of Kazakhs in the country toward 1939. Then, the Soviet authorities also pursued the policies of industrialization and the Virgin Lands campaign that brought even more Russians and other Slavs to the territory of Kazakhstan. Leading up to the time of independence in 1991 Kazakhs constituted less than a half of the overall population (Khazanov, 1995, p. 266).

The Soviet authorities believed that they could solve the nationalities question, i.e. the formation of the common Soviet people, with education and enlightenment. The authorities proclaimed the equality of all languages in the USSR in the 1920s - early 1930s and provided school-education for many nationalities in their native languages (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, p. 53). However, *de facto* it was Russian which was used on the governmental and everyday social level. Russian was the common language between people of different nationalities “in an era of industrialization, common economic space, urbanization, a joint army, mass communication, and synchronized education” (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, p. 53).

At this period despite the alleged support of development of indigenous languages and cultures there were not many intellectual works in the indigenous languages. The Stalinist purges of the Kazakh political and cultural elites during the 1920s and 1930s deprived the society of the native intelligentsia. Due to the introduction of mass literacy the number of periodicals produced during the Soviet Union increased. Around 1940 there were “38 different newspapers and bulletins (13 in Kazakh) and 337 magazine titles (193 in Kazakh) published annually, with nearly 2 million copies in circulation each year” (Olcott, 1995, p. 195). Some pieces produced in local languages at this time were themselves “translations of Russian works, a literature that was ‘national’ but Soviet, and various didactic works” (Roy, 2000, p. 78).

What was implemented in reality is the establishment of Russian cultural domination whereas national cultures of other peoples were considered backward and inferior to the modern Russian one. Therefore, everyone who sought education and enlightenment had to go through Russian culture. In the Soviet period people who wanted to show themselves as educated and modern collected libraries of classic literature that was written in Russian. Therefore, the ideational centre of Soviet nationalism was concentrated on Russians and Russian culture.

The policy attempted to force the social, cultural, and linguistic unification of all nationalities in the USSR on the basis of Russian, or more accurately, Soviet-Russian culture. The pragmatic need to control such an expansive and variegated empire dictated the policy. In other words, the Soviet nationality policy in this period was defined by a desire to homogenize the country and to turn the Soviet Union from a supranational into quasinational state (Khazanov, 1995, p. 12).

### **Russification Policy**

The official goal of Soviet leaders was the eventual *sliyanie* (“merging the nations”), i.e. creation of a supranational community – the Soviet people, united under the common socialist ideology where various ethnic groups thrive and develop together. However, the Soviet authorities realized that achievement of this goal was not feasible in the near future and instead since the mid-1930s concentrated on “acculturation and linguistic Russification” of the non-Russian peoples of the USSR (Khazanov 1995, p. 12).

The first step of the Russification policy was the change of the Kazakh alphabet from Arabic to Latin and then to Cyrillic script in the end of the 1930s. The alphabet contained all of the Russian letters for the convenience of assimilation of loan words. The borrowing of Russian words was “encouraged in everything to do with ideology, administration (*vilayat* becomes *oblast* in the local languages from the 1930s), science, and even technology (*poyezd*, ‘train’, *samoliot*, ‘aircraft’). Even without being forced, Russian words penetrated into everyday life” (Roy, 2000, p. 78). At the same time, the change of the alphabet was done in order to block the population from the previous works written in Arabic

script from the fear of pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic sentiments among the Central Asian states. Therefore, the peoples were cut off from the cultural works produced before the change of the alphabet. The younger generation read only those works that were translated with the approval of the authorities.

By the late 1930s the Russian language was being vigorously promoted in schools, and the number of Russian schools in the provinces was being increased. During the Second World War the promotion of Russian and the Russian people as ‘the elder brother’ reached new heights, with Russian patriotic symbolism permeating Soviet propagandistic and ideological statements (Smith, 1996, p. 8).

Thus, people realized that in order to get a promotion they had to learn Russian. In 1938 Russian language became a compulsory subject in non-Russian schools on the territory of the Soviet Union (Fierman, 2012, p. 127). Although in 1959 the language of education could be chosen by parents they usually sent children to Russian schools as it was believed that the Russian schools provided better quality of education due to availability of textbooks and qualified teachers (Dave, 2007, p. 64). Schooling in Kazakh therefore was perceived as a “dead-end formula” because higher education was provided almost exclusively in Russian (Dave, 2007, p. 64). Moreover, the indigenous languages were replaced in social and administrative contexts on the territory of the Soviet Union by Russian as a *lingua franca* (Grenoble, 2003, p. 58; Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, p. 52). The indigenous elites and urban dwellers sent their children to Russian schools because Russian was prestigious and modern whereas Kazakh was regarded as a backward and rural language. Speaking Kazakh in an urban setting could be considered as a lack of culture or a sign of nationalism.

The result of the policy of the Soviet Union was asymmetric bilingualism where the indigenous nationalities learnt Russian for social mobility whereas the Russians did not feel the need to learn the local languages. Russian was a hegemonic language across all contexts and situations. Having Russian as the common language among the peoples of the USSR, however, did not provide rapprochement of the nationalities as the authorities hoped but

instead resulted in social and economic competition. “Although the Soviet nationality policy resulted in some degree of Russification, it failed to eliminate, and in some ways instigated, nationalism among the non-Russian peoples of the USSR” (Khazanov, 1995, p. 19).

In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev came to power and undertook the policy of *glasnost*’ (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring). The nationalities of the Soviet Union were given ideological liberalization and raised the issues of empowerment of the ethnic languages and cultures. The Baltic States were the first ones in development of national movements because they had urban population educated in the national languages who were devoted to the promotion of ethnic languages and cultures in these countries (Khazanov, 1995, p. 19). Kazakhstan, which was among the most Russified nations, was the last one to declare independence.

### **Kazakh and Cultural Heritage**

70 years of Soviet rule left major changes in the linguistic marketplace. The situation in Kazakhstan was that Russian became the language of status. It was not only forcibly imposed by the authorities but people were themselves willing to master Russian because of the authority associated with it. There was a shift from Kazakh to Russian language among the ethnic Kazakh population. Especially there were urban dwellers and elites who “began to know Russian better than their own language, and their best writers increasingly published in Russian or had their works translated into Russian” (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, p. 58). Kazakh, on the other hand, became the language of family and the means to maintain national culture.

In order to alienate Kazakhs from pro-Turkic and pro-Islamic influences the authorities devalued works that used Arabic script and favored local works written in Russian or in Kazakh literary language that used Cyrillic script (Dave, 2007, p. 45). This was the policy directed at satisfying the nationalities while building socialism: “National in form,

socialist in content” (Grenoble, 2003, p. 41). The government controlled both the content and the language in which the works were published and if the works were not religious or nationalistic in content they were approved.

Kazakh folklore which was present as oral literary tradition from generation to generation was maintained by the community (Olcott, 1995, p. 21). There were folk tales, songs, and poems about nomadic life and forces of nature that the nomads faced. Some of them were heroic tales or love stories, e.g.

heroic epics *Kobulandy-Batyr* (fifteenth-sixteenth century), *Er Sain* (sixteenth century), and *Er Targyn* (sixteenth century), all of which deal with fighting between Kazakhs and Kalmyks, and the lyric epics *Kozy Korpesh* and *Bain Sulu* (possibly from the fourteenth century), *Aiman* and *Sholpan*, and the most famous Kazakh love story, *Kiz-Jhibek* (Olcott, 1995, p. 21).

Kazakh folklore was indispensably linked with the Kazakh language and people told these stories to their children in Kazakh. Despite the policy of the Soviet Union Kazakh remained the language of Kazakh customs and traditions due to being used at weddings, funerals and various religious practices (Olcott, 1995, p. 197). Knowledge of Kazakh was necessary in order to implement the rites, give blessings and wishes.

The Soviet rule did not succeed in changing the social structure of division of Kazakhs (Olcott, 1995, p. xvi; Schatz, 2000, p. 499). The Kazakhs preserved their division into three hordes (*zhuz*): Small (*Kishi*), Middle (*Orta*) and Great (*Ulu*). Furthermore, each horde consisted of several clans (*ru*). This social structure of Kazakhs was formed approximately in the middle of 16th – middle of 17th centuries (Dave, 2007, p. 31-33; Olcott, 1995, pp. 10-12).

During the Soviet era, discussion of kinship was all but forbidden; preserving kin ties was definitionally “anti-Soviet tribalism” because the self-interested goals of these family networks were antithetical to the interests of the state. Even so, these family networks were preserved, especially among the Kazakhs of the Great Horde, whose family networks through accidents of history remained largely intact throughout the Soviet period (Olcott, 1995, p. xvi).

For traditional ethnic Kazakhs the essence of Kazakhness lay mainly in the kinship ties and lineage (*shezhire* or *shezhire*) because of the nomadic past (Olcott, 1995, p. xvi; Schatz, 2000, p. 499). During the years of the Soviet Union discussion of these ties was regarded un-Soviet but largely Kazakhs maintained their lineages and could name their seven grandfathers (Olcott, 1995, p. xvi; Yessenova, 2005, p. 673). The Kazakhs maintained their family lineages that differentiated their identity from other nationalities. It was due to the history where knowledge of one's lineage was an identification card to distinguish Kazakhs from the sedentary Sarts (Schatz, 2000, p. 499).

The abovementioned point resonates with the beliefs of some of the research participants who were raised in traditional Kazakh families. Several young people in the study perceived the ability to name one's seven grandfathers is a marker of Kazakhness. Thus, knowledge of one's *zhuz* (horde), *ru* (tribe), *shezhire* (ancestry), awareness of traditions, and customs could be regarded as essential constituents of ethnic Kazakh identity by contemporary young people.

## Chapter 3 The Linguistic Marketplace in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan

### Policy of the Nationalizing State

The issue of the statuses of languages became very topical after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It had to be determined what the Kazakhstani national identity was. There emerged two sides with different views on the issue: nation-statists and civic-statists (Fierman, 1998, p. 172). While nation-statists, justified by the years of oppression under the Soviet rule, pushed for the revitalization of Kazakh linguistic and cultural heritage that has to have a privileged status on its historical territory, civic-statists called for multilingualism and multiculturalism on the basis of the multi-ethnic content of the population. The civic-statists consisted of various ethnic groups with a common idea that the language policy should avoid discrimination on ethnic and linguistic basis.

The discourse of civic-statists largely meant the preservation of status quo where those people who have Russian as their dominant or even exclusive language would not feel the need for learning Kazakh. The share of the population that reported to be native speakers of Russian or to be fluent in Russian in the 1989 census made up 80 per cent (Fierman, 1998, p. 174). Without the large scale promotion of Kazakh the situation meant that Russian would remain the language of high prestige and knowledge of Kazakh would be restrained to the ethnic Kazakh population among which many shifted to Russian during the Soviet Union. According to Fierman (1998, p. 174) and Dave (2002, p. 2), despite that fact that almost all ethnic Kazakhs reported having proficiency in Kazakh in the 1989 census some of them possessed little or no knowledge of the ethnic language.

It is the legacy of the Soviet Union that people have firm beliefs of connectedness of a nation with its historical roots to a particular territory (Bohr, 1998, p. 139). With the dissolution of the Soviet Union the majority of urban Kazakhs living in the northern and eastern part of the country were Russophone and Russian was the *lingua franca* among the

population (Dave, 2007, p. 52). However, Kazakhstani identity had to be differentiated from the Russian one. On the assumption of the ideology present in the community, language, nationality, and territory had to coincide.

It was then that the nationalists became concerned with the erosion of Kazakh and called for its revival. The nationalists argued that Kazakh as the historical language should be proclaimed as the only state language whereas Russian is the state language of Russia. It was argued that language was the primary identification of a nation and “there is no nation without a language” (Dave, 2004, p. 130). The discourse was also that if the status quo remained and the two languages were the state languages, Kazakh language vitality was not enough to survive (Dave, 2004, p. 130). This discourse was then employed by political entrepreneurs to justify the policy of the state (Dave, 2007, p. 96).

Brubaker (1996) called the states that employed ethno cultural discourse in nation-building as “nationalizing” states:

The core nation is understood as the legitimate “owner” of the state, which is conceived as the state *of* and *for* the core nation. Despite having “its own” state, however, the core nation is conceived as being in a weak cultural, economic, or demographic position within the state. This weak position - seen as a legacy of discrimination against the nation before it attained independence – is held to justify the “remedial” or “compensatory” project of using state power to promote the specific (and previously inadequately served) interests of the core nation (Brubaker, 1996, p. 5).

Kazakhstani authorities employed Kazakh language as a “salient identity symbol, as well as a political instrument” in the process of nation-building (Dave, 2004, p. 123). Kazakh was proclaimed a state language which was reflected in the 1993 constitution and later in 1995 constitution as well. On the other hand, the authorities argued that Kazakhstan is a multilingual and multicultural state which supported diversity and prohibited discrimination. Russian was given the status of a language of “cross-national communication” and later changed to the status of “official” language (Fierman, 1998, p. 179). Russian was granted the right to be used “on a par” with Kazakh which was reflected in the 1997 law on languages.

While claiming to pursue the policy of internationalism, *de facto* the state conducted the policy of Kazakhization (Dave, 2004; Masanov, 2002; Schatz, 2000). The issue of languages in Kazakhstan was politicized and Kazakhization meant not only linguistic shift to Kazakh among the population of Kazakhstan but use of language as a tool for Kazakh ethnocentric policy. Thus, Kazakh language was utilized as a mechanism for the monopolization of ethnic Kazakh authority (Dave, 2007, p. 97; Masanov, 2002). First, there were Kazakh language and culture that were utilized as the determinants of national identity (Schatz, 2000, p. 493). The authorities argued that knowledge of Kazakh language was regarded the “duty of every citizen” which was reflected in the Law on Languages (1997). Kazakh language was supposed to contribute to the consolidation of the people of Kazakhstan.

Second, the policy concentrated the power in the hands of ethnic Kazakhs. As it was mostly ethnic Kazakhs who possessed knowledge of the state language the requirement of Kazakh meant promotion of ethnic Kazakh personnel in the offices. Foreseeing little future in the country due to the adopted nationalizing policy the representatives of non-titular nationalities emigrated. Between 1989 and 1999 there were around two million Russian language speakers who left Kazakhstan (Dave, 2004, p. 131). In general, the peoples of Kazakhstan perceived Kazakh language to be situated lower in the status hierarchy of languages. Therefore, the prospects of learning a non-prestigious language and assimilating downwards were not aspirational and motivating for the majority of ethnic Russians (Laitin, 1998, pp. 175-176). This is when the authorities revised the language policy and pursued a more liberal one by proclaiming Russian an official language.

Third, Kazakhstan was proclaimed to be a historical homeland of ethnic Kazakhs which was reflected in the constitution. The authorities of Kazakhstan conducted a policy that facilitated repatriation of Kazakhs who lived in neighboring countries. The ethnic migration

policy provided a quota system for return migrants (*oralmans*) in the form of housing opportunities and material provisions (Diener, 2005, p. 332). There were around half-million ethnic Kazakhs who returned to Kazakhstan. The influx of ethnic Kazakhs from abroad contributed to the nationalizing policy of the state as *oralmans* are usually Kazakh language speakers. Despite living outside of Kazakhstan for many years they nevertheless preserved the ethnic language and culture (Diener, 2005, p. 340).

However, it was not the knowledge and facility in Kazakh which was the defining factor. There were many ethnic Kazakh people who themselves lacked knowledge of their ethnic language (Dave, 2007, p. 53; Fierman, 1998, p. 174). Rather, proclaiming Kazakh as a state language had a symbolic meaning and was used as a marker to distinguish Kazakhstani identity. At the same time, while Kazakh was used as a political tool and marker to distinguish Kazakhstani identity, the ties with ethnic Kazakh identity were still strong.

During my research the interviewees assigned different value to Kazakh language: while for some of the interviewees the value was largely instrumental (i.e. language is a tool for communication and they value language for its functionality), others expressed an opinion that maintaining Kazakh is regarded essential in terms of preserving Kazakh culture:

Ну да, тогда бы мы стали терять культурное наследие, потому что у нас много текстов на казахском языке. И что с ними будет, если их никто не понимает? Допустим через лет 50 или 100-200 лет да когда все говорят на русском... тогда бы да. Это была бы катастрофа! У нас вот эти все традиции наши да, песни, все вот это, что наш народ копил много тысячелетий, оно бы все просто напросто пропало. (Interviewee 2)

*(Well, we would lose the cultural heritage because we have a lot of texts in the Kazakh language. And what will happen if no one understands them? Let's say after 50 years or after 100-200 years when all speak Russian, then it would be... yes. It would be a disaster! We have all our traditions, songs, all these things that our ancestors have saved for thousands of years; it would all just simply disappear.)*

It is worth mentioning that in the ideas expressed by Interviewee 2 above, the cultural heritage would become extinct without a language. However, the Interviewee does not take into consideration the fact that the change of the Kazakh script from Arabic to Latin

and then Cyrillic has already separated the new generations from that cultural heritage which was not approved by the Soviet authorities to be transliterated.

And, finally, for other individuals in the study the value of Kazakh goes further and the preservation of language and culture are seen as essential for distinguishing Kazakhstan as a sovereign and authentic country:

Потому что это наш язык. А без языка можно сказать, что без языка... самая главная причина, самый главный атрибут идентичности человека. То есть весь мир, все люди одинаковы, но вот есть какая-то принадлежность. Вот я бы мог бы родиться в России, Канаде, другой стране, и это и определяет. Без моего языка... мой язык это моя история, моя культура. [...] Если бы мы потеряли казахский язык... изменилось бы многое. Я думаю даже вплоть до исчезновения нации. (Interviewee 11)

*(Because it is our language. We can say that without language ... it is the main reason, the most important attribute of human identity. That is the whole world, all people are the same, but there is some sort of a membership. So I could have been born in Russia, Canada or other countries, and this is what defines. Without my language... my language is my history, my culture. [...] If we lose Kazakh language ... many things would have changed. I think even up to the disappearance of the nation.)*

Thus, we can observe that the majority of the interviewees perceive Kazakh language as representing the essence of Kazakh identity. They believe that Kazakh cultural heritage could be regarded authentic only through Kazakh language and, therefore, the maintenance of this language is vital. As it was mentioned before, cultural essentialism relies on a language which is regarded to manifest the character, traditions, and history of each nationality (Bauman & Briggs, 2000, p. 174). Thus, the discourse of the Kazakhstani nationalists that employed this concept affected the language ideologies of the population.

### **The Notion of “Mother Tongue”**

If in the past the people believed in a primordial link between language and nation now researchers argue that this equation is a “historical and ideological construct” (Woolard, 1998, p. 16). On the analysis of the literature on language contact and conflict, Woolard argues that the perception of a language as the “genius of a people” is still hegemonic

(Woolard, 1998, p. 16). Thus, in conformity with Herder's language ideology, absence of the distinct language could even "cast doubt on the legitimacy of a group's claim to nationhood" (Woolard, 1998, p. 17).

This ideology of equation of language to people is also present among the contemporary Kazakhstani young people. Kazakh language is a salient identity symbol and carries particular moral value for ethnic Kazakhs. The term "mother tongue" or "native language" (Kazakh - *ana tili*, Russian - *rodnoi iazyk*) is inextricably linked to a person's ethnic identity. Young people who identify as Kazakh generally identify Kazakh to be their native language. There can be various explanations for what the term "mother tongue" or "native language" means to them. Usually the reply of the young people in my study on the question why they regard Kazakh as their native language was that they identified themselves as ethnic Kazakhs and they were raised in a Kazakh environment.

The term "native language" is ambiguous and the meaning of this term is an ideological construct (LaDousa, 2010, pp. 602-603). It could be regarded in different ways: as a "speaker's first language (i.e. language of fluency) and his or her heritage language (i.e. language(s) of one's ancestors)" (Grenoble, 2003, p.28). Therefore, it is not obligatory that native language and ethnic identity have to coincide. However, in the Soviet Union there were censuses that formed the ideologies about the notion of mother tongue, i.e. one's heritage language was usually understood as one's native language and any deviation was considered as a sign of assimilation (Dave, 2002, p. 7). The 1999 Kazakhstani National Census then was also used to reinforce the link between language and ethnicity by asking about knowledge without elaboration of fluency in different domains (Dave, 2002, p. 15).

Along with the formal policy of the state on defining the statuses of languages and adopting language laws there were statements in mass media aimed at forming perception of the significance of Kazakh. People were reminded about the importance to know one's

“mother tongue”, educate children in this language, and revive Kazakh cultural heritage (Fierman, 2006, p. 111). For example, writer Temirkhan Medetbekov argued that “the Kazakh language space has receded more than the Aral Sea” (Fireman, 2006, p. 111) and another writer Yerbol Shaimerdenov suggested “May a Kazakh speak the state language with other Kazakhs” (Schatz, 2000, p. 494). At schools the children were instructed to respect their “mother tongue” and, therefore, inculcated the idea of a primordial link of the language and ethnicity. This factor gives ground for escalation of the nationalist discourse on the use of ethnic language by Kazakhs at least when they are communicating with their co-ethnics.

It should be mentioned that actual knowledge and/or preference in use of Kazakh are not the most salient defining factors for identification of one’s native language. Native language is regarded as a marker of ethnic and cultural identity of a person. Due to the fact that all the Kazakh traditions and customs are performed with the use of this language the young people link language with cultural identity. “The tradition, then, molds the worldview, the ways of life, the values, and the aspirations of a people, shaping the lives of children and adults alike” (Bauman & Briggs, 2000, p. 181).

Since the birth of a child traditional Kazakh families follow numerous customs that could be divided into several groups: customs of family formation (*qyz ūzatu, qūda tisu*, etc.), customs connected to raising a child (*shīldekhana, tūsau kesu*, etc.), customs of hospitality and meeting guests (*qonaq asy, toī dastarkhan*, etc.) among others. When a family holds some of these occasions they perform rites by giving *bata* (blessings), saying *arman-tīlek* (wishes), *ōlēng-zhyrlar* (songs - poems). Being raised in a Kazakh environment and being a member of various traditional occasions contributes to the formation of identity of a person.

At the same time knowledge of Russian is considered as a tool of communication rather than cultural affiliation as reported by the research participants. The Kazakh young

people in this study all agreed that Russian is a part of the history of Kazakhstan and is the language common to the multi-ethnic Kazakhstani population. Some of the individuals in my study assert their knowledge of the meaning of rituals, practices, and holidays typical for the Slavs and take part in their friends' occasions. However, Russian or Orthodox rituals are not usually practiced by ethnic Kazakh families. Therefore, the young people in this study do not identify themselves with Russian culture.

Ну говоря на русском, безусловно я считаюсь русскоговорящим азиатом. Вряд ли что то связывает меня с русской культурой что я знаю русский язык и все. Потому что... я не говорю что я против сжигания чучела на масленицу, потому что у меня друзья русские и я за эти вещи. (Interviewee 10)

*(Well, as I speak Russian of course I am considered a Russian-speaking Asian. It is unlikely that it connects me with the Russian culture that I know the Russian language and that is all. Because... I am not saying that I am against Maslenitsa<sup>3</sup> because I have Russian friends and I am for these things.)*

Another interviewee said:

Ну я себя связываю только с одной культурой все таки. С казахской культурой. Потому что даже если я знаю русский язык хорошо, разговариваю, владею им да, но я себя никак не связываю с русской культурой. Я даже как бы знать не знаю. Ну я конечно слышу у них там пасха и так далее, но я понятия не имею откуда они появились и для чего они существуют. [...] Я ассоциирую себя только с казахской культурой. Ну я думаю что вот эти вот традиции, они как то должны быть, такие как сундет той там, кырқынан шығару, тұсау кесу и так далее. (Interviewee 5)

*(Well, I associate myself with only one culture nonetheless. With Kazakh culture. Because even if I know the Russian language well, speak it, but I do not associate myself with the Russian culture. I do not even know. Of course I hear them having Easter and so on, but I have no idea where they came from and why they exist. [...] I only associate myself with Kazakh culture. Well, I guess that these traditions here, they somehow should be, such as like sundet toï, qyrqynan shygharu, tūsau kesu, and so on.<sup>4</sup>)*

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<sup>3</sup> Maslenitsa is an Eastern Slavic Orthodox celebration of Carnival, before Great Lent, that involves cooking thin pancakes and building the Maslenitsa effigy out of straw that is later thrown into a fire on Sunday of Forgiveness.

<sup>4</sup> The abovementioned terms are the names of Kazakh rites that are generally followed by ethnic Kazakh families. There are different types of rites for various purposes but particular these ones are performed with a child. Qyrqynan shygharu is performed on the 40<sup>th</sup> day since the birth of a child, sundet toï is feast held on the procedure of circumcision, and tūsau kesu is a ceremony of cutting bonds of a child performing his or her first steps. See Oktiyabrskaya & Suraganova (2012) for more information on Kazakh rites.

Then, the use of Kazakh language is believed to be linked to the inculcation of cultural values when raising a child:

Мне кажется, это те ценности, которые через язык передаются, воспитание, объяснение почему это почему то. На казахском это лучше передается. У нас много superstitions, это нельзя, то нельзя. И вот когда это объясняешь на другом языке, для других это звучит странно. Когда говоришь: Вот, қазақтарда ондай болған, сондай болған. Олай болмайды. Вот что казахи гостеприимные, уважение к старшим, қазақтарда бар қазақ өз орнын білу керек. Мне кажется это тоже через язык передается. (Interviewee 4)

*(I think these are the values which are transmitted through language, upbringing, giving explanation for why is this and why is that. In Kazakh it is better transmitted. We have many **superstitions**, this is not allowed, that is not allowed. And when this is explained in a different language, for others it sounds weird. When you say: Well, Kazakhs had this, had that. This is not allowed. That Kazakhs are hospitable, respect for elders, Kazakhs have [a notion] that every Kazakh should know “his/her place”. I think it is also transmitted through language.)*

Kazakh started taking more place in the lives of the Kazakhstani population, including urban dwellers (Fierman, 2009, p. 1218). From the Soviet legacy the urban population was predominantly Russian speaking and the share of Russian medium schools outnumbered Kazakh-medium schools in cities. The policy conducted by the state resulted in an increase of the share of Kazakh medium schools. According to Altynbekova (2011, p. 295) and Fierman (2006, p. 106) the overall number of pupils (in both urban and rural settings) who studied in Kazakh as the language of instruction went up from around one million people in 1991 to 1.57 million in 2011. The authors explain that the demographic changes of emigration of non-Kazakhs affected the statistics but there still was an increase of ethnic Kazakhs who were assigned to Kazakh-medium classes. Also, we should count the return migration of Kazakh diasporas that affected the change.

On the other side, it should be mentioned that an increase in Kazakh schooling does not necessarily mean an increase in the actual use of Kazakh. Despite the fact that in the 1999 census 99 per cent of ethnic Kazakhs reported knowledge of Kazakh, the majority of ethnic Kazakhs are more at ease using Russian for communication in many contexts (Dave, 2002, p.

2). Suleimenova (2011) argues that the share of those ethnic Kazakhs who use Kazakh as a native language in relation to the overall population of Kazakhs is still low (p. 10). Especially this is evident in regions with large non-Kazakh populations, i.e. in urban areas of northern and eastern part of Kazakhstan.

### “Trinity of Languages”

In 2007 the authorities of Kazakhstan expanded the linguistic framework of Kazakhstan by introducing the concept of “Trinity of Languages” (Melich & Adibayeva, 2014, p. 271). The concept was directed at promoting three languages: Kazakh, Russian, and English among the Kazakhstani population. President Nazarbayev stressed the importance of these languages both for individuals to be competitive on the job market and for the development of the country (Seitov, 2008). Thus, the official policy of the state became rather ideological and pragmatic directed at maintaining the balance between the state and official languages of Kazakhstan and promotion of English as a global language.

Due to Kazakh language being the language of state institutions and documentation had to be conducted in the state language, knowledge of Kazakh is essential if one would like to get a job in governmental organizations:

Казахский дает мне преимущество. Тоже даже устраиваешься на работу, читаешь requirements там да, нужно знание языков, русский, казахский будет плюсом. То есть когда я иду на интервью говорю вот... я проработала три месяца в HR и у меня спрашивали какие языки знаешь. Казахский был плюсом. (Interviewee 4)

*(Kazakh gives me an advantage. Even, for instance, to get a job. When you read the requirements, you see that they ask for language skills: Russian, Kazakh is an advantage. That is when I go to an interview and say that ... I worked in HR and I was asked what languages I know. Kazakh was an advantage.)*

On the other side, if one works in a non-governmental organization they do not feel much need for Kazakh. Even when one visits a state institution one could hear predominantly Russian speech not only during face-to-face communication but also in formal settings like meetings and press-conferences. However, people see symbolic value in facility in Kazakh,

e.g. greetings, pleasantries or phrases said in Kazakh which mark a person's Kazakhness (Dave, 2002, p. 15; Schatz, 2000, p. 495). The young people in my study reported attempts to use it more in everyday communication in public places in both formal and informal settings to greet or express gratitude. Especially, this concerns their communication with people of the older generation.

The state promotion of Kazakh affected mainly state institutions, state-funded media, and some official public domains, leaving "street, marketplace, schools or inter-personal domain" up to the individuals (Dave, 2007, p. 97). Therefore, the language of communication even outside of the Kazakh medium classes in mixed schools would more likely be in Russian (Fierman, 2006, p. 103). Russian still occupies a prominent place in higher education, science, print and electronic media, and popular culture (Masanov, 2002; Pavlenko, 2008; Jankowski, 2012). There is much greater availability of information in Russian language than in Kazakh and, therefore, there is a need to know Russian to keep up with the times. The Kazakhstanis perceive knowledge of Russian as important because this language is necessary in informational and inter-personal spheres.

Individuals can have disagreements on the value of Kazakh and Russian in Kazakhstan but the importance of learning English in the modern society cannot be denied (Dave, 2007, p. 111). The young people strive to acquire knowledge of English, which provides wider opportunities for education and occupation. It was due to the prestige of western education and job opportunities at international companies that made English an advantage for upward mobility. Therefore, courses of English are in demand in present day Kazakhstan.

English is also considered as an international language that provides opportunities to discover foreign countries and cultures. One could go travelling and be capable of communicating with the local population of English speaking countries. Therefore, English

has a great communicative value. Also it should be mentioned that English is prestigious among the young people due to popular culture. Songs, music videos, movies, cartoons, TV shows, etc. that are part of the popular culture are products made in English or have translations in English. Due to globalization and cultural exchange knowledge of English is becoming even more and more valuable. Some young people invest their time and money rather in studying English than go to Kazakh classes. For example, one of the interviewees in my study reported studying English but when I asked whether there are attempts to improve Kazakh the answer was that there are no aspirations to master the language except for job opportunities (Interviewee 9).

The language situation of Kazakhstan is somewhat similar to Ukraine among the other post-Soviet states. Both countries hosted a considerable number of ethnic Russians and were highly Russified (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 75). During the Soviet rule, Russian language became associated with educated and cultured people and considered the language of prestige and power while Ukrainian was viewed as a “limited, unrefined language” of people of peasant origin (Bilaniuk, 1997, p. 94). However due to the reforms on proclaiming Ukrainian as the sole state language and elevation of its status and use the language ideologies of Ukrainians toward the two languages changed. Now the people are concerned with the ideology of quality of Russian and Ukrainian languages and pure and correct language is considered of high value (Bilaniuk, 2009, p. 342). However, in Ukraine the relationship between cultural, ethnic/national identities and linguistic identities might be shifting (Wylegala, 2010). This might be due to similarities between Ukrainian and Russian languages and cultures whereas in Kazakhstan the link between ethnic identity and ethnic language is salient.

It is worth to be mentioned that we have to take into consideration the larger socio-political context that affects language ideologies of the people (Gal, 1993). As language

ideologies are subject to change according to the historical, political, and social arrangements the dominant ideas might be resisted. This is particularly evident from the change that occurred in language ideologies of the population in Ukraine where the language choice became again politicized after the Euromaidan protests in 2014 and the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine (Bilaniuk, 2016).

In contrast to the socio-political context in Ukraine the international relations between Kazakhstan and Russia are more stable. Along with the larger political situation the Kazakhstani official discourse concerning the languages in Kazakhstan is more pragmatic than that of Ukraine. Therefore, by the majority of the research participants in my study Russian language is perceived as a language that lies beyond the political and ethnic Russianness. The young people in my study believe Russian language to be a necessary part of the linguistic repertoire of a contemporary Kazakhstani citizen.

## Chapter 4 Kazakh as a “Language of Solidarity”

### Nationalist Language Ideology

In the contemporary world, the term “ethnicity” is not dead but on the contrary obtained salience among other identities of an individual. In the case of Kazakhstan, we can see the link between the language ideologies and people’s identities where the people equate the notions one language – one people and automatically regard their ethnic language as a mother tongue. This is particularly caused by the nationalist language ideology that was created as a response to the authority of Russian. This ideology received popular awareness among the population during the Soviet times. The nationalist language ideology discriminates against those who are not fluent in Kazakh language or do not follow national traditions by calling them *Shala Kazakh*. In a linguistic marketplace where one language possesses the authority of being a “language of power”, the language which is perceived as a language of indigenous culture becomes a language of solidarity among the members of the group and refusal to speak it entails sanctions (Hill and Hill, 1980; Woolard, 1985).

The term *Shala Kazakh* in translation from Kazakh means “an incomplete Kazakh” or “semi-Kazakh” (Zhanaev, 2010, p. 272). The term was used in this meaning since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By using this term people identified Russified urban individuals of Kazakh ethnicity who had an incomplete knowledge of the ethnic language. The term is still used by the people in this meaning and is usually familiar to the population of Kazakhstan.

Initially, the term *Shala Kazakh* had a different meaning. Bolat Zhanaev’s (2010) work on the origin, settlement, and life of *Shala Kazakhs* throws light on the emergence of the term. This work has references to archival documents that were collected in Almaty, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Tashkent. According to Zhanaev (2010, p. 272), one can see the first mention of the term *Shala Kazakh* in archives dated in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the

20<sup>th</sup> century. The term *Shala Kazakhs* referred to representatives of “dispersed socio-cultural groups of mixed ethnicity residing on the territory of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture of PRC’s Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region” (Zhanaev, 2010, p. 272). The author refers to archival and published resources and gives the description of origin, settlement, and life of *Shala Kazakhs*.

In the 1960s the phenomenon of *Shala Kazakh* which initially referred to a person of mixed ethnicity became used to label Russified Kazakhs who emerged due to the policy of the USSR (Zhanaev, 2010, p. 272). The nationalist language ideology in Kazakhstan presents a notion that ethnic Kazakhs have to know and speak Kazakh among themselves and family. The linguistic differentiation among *Nagyз* and *Shala Kazakhs* places labels onto ethnic Kazakhs on the basis of knowledge of ethnic language and adherence to Kazakh culture and traditions (Zhakupov, 2009, pp. 9-11). *Nagyз Kazakh* is a term opposite to *Shala Kazakh* which is used to refer to a traditional ethnic Kazakh who speaks Kazakh as native language and follows Kazakh traditions. Kazakh language, therefore, is perceived as a language of Kazakh ethnic identity and belongingness to the group.

Судя по разговорам, которые бывают у людей, шала казах это бывает человек, который не знает историю своего народа, язык может не знать или культуру. [...] Для меня нет разделения на национальности. Но исходя из того что я слышу и вижу, если человек хочет показать что он относится к какой то национальности, то он должен говорить на этом языке, затем он должен чтить традиции этого народа и должен в какой то мере знать историю этого народа и так далее. (Interviewee 12)

*(Judging by people’s conversations, Shala Kazakh is a person who does not know the history of his people, the language, or he may not be aware of culture. [...] For me, there is no distinction made on nationalities. But based on what I hear and see if a person wants to show that he belongs to some nationality he must speak the language, then this person should honor the traditions of this nation and should to some extent know the history of these people, and so on.)*

Kazakh nationalist language ideology involves the three semiotic processes identified by Irvine and Gal (2000): iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure. Irvine and Gal argue that different linguistic forms present in the community are perceived to index

social groups (Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 37). By noticing the differences in linguistic features speakers and hearers interpret and rationalize these variations and then create language ideologies to explain the meaning of these differences (Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 37). The authors argue that these three semiotic processes are common to many cases around the world.

The first semiotic process described by Irvine and Gal is iconization. Linguistic features that are typical for a particular social group become iconic representations of the social images of the people (Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 37). The features that index social groups become representative of their “nature and essence”, i.e. constructing a link between linguistic form and qualities of the group (Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 37). Thus, in the case of Kazakhstan we could argue speaking linguistic forms other than pure Kazakh in the eyes of the nationalist is the sign of being not a true Kazakh. By this I mean that the people who speak Russian to their co-ethnics or code-mix Kazakh and Russian languages are considered as *Shala Kazakhs*.

The second semiotic process is fractal recursivity. In this process the linguistic differentiation has a projection to some other level – “intra-group oppositions might be projected outward onto intergroup relations, or vice versa” (Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 38). The oppositions, like fractals in geometry might be reproduced repeatedly and create subcategories within opposing groups or categories “that include both sides but oppose them to something else” (Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 38). These oppositions provide individuals with resources to attempt to shift identities and roles.

In the Kazakhstani nationalistic language ideology linguistic practice has projection on allegiances of people and their loyalty to the homeland. By this I refer to beliefs among the nationalists toward those who use Russian in interpersonal communication. The nationalists believe a linguistic form to be connected with the dichotomy of Kazakhstani and

Russian allegiance and loyalty. Ethnic Kazakhs who lack Kazakh language proficiency and/or use are believed to be lacking loyalty to the homeland.

And finally, the third semiotic process – erasure, in which individuals and phenomena that do not comply with the ideological explanation “either go unnoticed or get explained away” (Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 38). The authors argue that language ideologies are totalizing visions and, therefore, those things that threaten the existing ideas have to be erased.

The nationalists ignore/erase the performance of Kazakh identities if they do not fit their vision of total commitment to speaking only Kazakh publicly. So the Kazakhness of someone speaking sometimes Kazakh, sometimes Russian, can be denied, subject to erasure. Also we could argue that the Kazakhstani nationalists take actions of those people who do something for the homeland out of consideration. The nationalists believe that *Shala Kazakhs* are not loyal to their nation and, therefore, do nothing good for the sake of their homeland.

Ну и, допустим, бывает часто там в автобусе или еще гденибудь там взрослые люди говорят там: Эй, қазақша сөйлендер! Не орысшалап жүрсіндер, сұмырай, надан там еще чтонибудь. Ну я тоже не думаю что это правильно. Ну там, например, я знаю очень много людей, которые кричат там: Қазақша сөйлеу керек, ұйту керек, сүйту керек. [...] Ну очень много бывает допустим я слышу часто там Баян Есентаеву там осуждают, что она там на казахском может не разговаривает, еще что то. Но с другой стороны, она единственная или одна из немногих, кто пытается как то продвигать казахский шоу бизнес. В принципе, все ее группы они поют и на казахском может, и на русском. Но как бы она продвигает именно казахстанский отечественный шоу бизнес. И я не могу сказать, что она ничего не сделала для продвижения именно казахской культуры. (Interviewee 5)

*(Well, for example, there are often some occasions in a bus or anywhere else. There are adults who say: “Hey, speak Kazakh! Why are you speaking Russian, foolish, ignorant”, or something else. Well, I do not think it is right. Well, like I know a lot of people out there who scream: “should speak Kazakh, should do like this, like that”. [...] Well, I often hear Bayan Yessentayeva being judged that she does not speak Kazakh, or something.<sup>5</sup> But, on the other hand, she is the only one or one of the few who are trying to promote Kazakhstani show business. Basically, all her music bands sing in Kazakh and Russian too. But she promotes the Kazakhstani domestic*

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<sup>5</sup> Bayan Yessentayeva is a Kazakhstani producer, TV hostess, actress, and singer.

*show business. And I cannot say that she has done nothing to promote exactly Kazakh culture.)*

The nationalistic language ideology and engagement in *Shala Kazakh* discourse is more typical for the older generation of ethnic Kazakhs. The interviewees usually associate this discourse with the elderly and therefore, feel the need to address the elderly in Kazakh. It might be that it is mainly the elderly who are concerned with the use of Kazakh while the young people, though understanding the authentic value of Kazakh, might prefer to use another language. As it was argued before, the young people in several studies saw the value of a language differently from the older generation. In general, the young people are not concerned with the authentic value of a language to the same extent as the elderly. For the young people the language is a collection of words that are possessed and displayed to affirm their social authority and reflect their multiple identities whereas the older generation utilizes symbolic value of the authentic language. Therefore, we can observe this difference in language ideologies in their linguistic practices in Kazakhstan.

### **Anxieties with *Shala Kazakh* Discourse**

Kazakh is promoted as the state language of Kazakhstan and it is said that every citizen has to master the language (Law on Languages, 1997). At the same time, ethnic Kazakhs experience more pressure to use Kazakh in comparison to the representatives of other ethnicities as Kazakh language is perceived to be a language of Kazakh ethnic identity. The belief was that first ethnic Kazakhs need to be on board with Kazakh, and maybe then other citizens might find themselves needing to learn it.

Kazakh language possesses authentic authority and is promoted as the “mother tongue” of ethnic Kazakhs. Therefore, Kazakh language was promoted as a proper language for the in-group use as a language of solidarity. In turn, those ethnic Kazakhs who lacked knowledge and/or usage of Kazakh were sanctioned (scolding or ridicule). Social pressure

applied by the nationalistic discourse resulted in anxieties among those who are not confident in their language.

Russians in Kazakhstan who did not speak Kazakh were often perceived as somehow understandable and excusable, at least for the time being. Russian-speaking ethnic Kazakhs, on the other hand, were regarded as traitors to the national cause. They were denounced as ‘asphalt Kazakh’ or *mankurty* (Kolstø, 2003, p. 122).

Nationalistically inclined individuals suggest that if a person is identified as ethnic Kazakh he or she is supposed to know and speak “their own” language. At the same time, if there are some individuals of non-Kazakh ethnicity who possess good knowledge of Kazakh it is usually seen as rather exciting, unusual, and curious. According to the 2009 national census around 25 per cent of ethnic Russians understand Kazakh whereas in 1999 their share was even less. Thus, when meeting or seeing a non-Kazakh person speaking Kazakh people ask questions regarding how the person mastered the language. The case is considered especially interesting when the person is a foreigner who either came to Kazakhstan or lives abroad but learned Kazakh language. These individuals are interviewed and their stories are published in newspapers and shown on television.<sup>6</sup> These stories then are also used for making those Kazakhs who lack competency in the ethnic language ashamed.

When I conducted participant observation in the debate club during the fall 2016 semester I noticed a tendency among the people there. According to my observations and response of a representative of the administration team the participants usually participated either in Kazakh and English or Russian and English leagues. However, there were only a few people who took part in both Kazakh and Russian leagues. Thus, the debaters usually pursued sessions in one of these languages which was dominant for them. In cases, where a Kazakh team lacked several persons the Russian language debaters refused to switch to the Kazakh league.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, in a newspaper *The Astana Times* <http://astanatimes.com/2016/10/how-kazakh-language-conquered-heart-of-south-korean-girl/>; TV Channel *Kazakhstan* [http://kaztv.old3.kaztrk.kz/kz/news/portal/page\\_11388\\_gabriel-makguair-kazaktyn-tasattyk-berui-kyzyktyr](http://kaztv.old3.kaztrk.kz/kz/news/portal/page_11388_gabriel-makguair-kazaktyn-tasattyk-berui-kyzyktyr)

In the beginning of sessions a representative of the administration team greeted the debaters and made announcements of news and upcoming events. The language of the general meeting was Russian. During the five weeks of my observations the speaker several times called people to take part in the Kazakh league saying that this was an opportunity to improve the knowledge of Kazakh. The speaker said that the debaters should not be worried if their knowledge of Kazakh was not very good. Thus, this was a strategy of the administration team of the debate club aimed at encouraging young people to speak Kazakh. They tried to make using Kazakh to be associated with joy and not with stress.

The language choice made by the young people in my study for communication with their peers was often Russian. Despite having good knowledge of Kazakh and taking part at debates in the Kazakh league it was almost exclusively Russian that was used in the common room. That is, those who used Kazakh between themselves for discussions and formal speech during the debates used Russian for casual talk when gathered in the same room with other debaters. The research participants used Russian more with their friends and peers due to this language being dominant for some individuals and it would be less problematic to use Russian.

The interviewees reported that there are instances of social pressure in the form of scolding or ridicule for the lack of knowledge in the “mother tongue” when an ethnic Kazakh speaks Kazakh not well enough. Here is an excerpt from an interview:

Я помню, что когда я была на волонтерстве, мы сидели в отеле и встречали там иностранных гостей и так далее. И я заметила, что весь персонал: охранники, портье, они все между собой разговаривают на казахском языке. И они ко мне подходили, что то спрашивали, ну я им естественно отвечала на казахском, а не на русском, то есть я, возможно, что то не так сказала, возможно там где то был ужасный акцент и они надо мной подшучивали: а откуда ты, с Алматы, а понятно, типа, поэтому так плохо разговариваешь. Вот такое было.  
(Interviewee 7)

*(I remember when I was volunteering we were in a hotel and welcomed foreign visitors and so on. And I noticed that the entire staff of the hotel: guards, porters, etc. were all talking in Kazakh. They came to me and asked questions and, well, of*

*course I responded to them in Kazakh rather than in Russian, and probably I said something wrong or maybe there was some terrible accent and they started joking and asking where I was from. I said Almaty and they were like oh, then it is clear, that is why you speak so badly. Like that.)*

Another interviewee expressed concerns over moments when she has to speak

Kazakh. She said:

Чтение, ну в казахском у меня письменный лучше. А когда я говорю, вот у меня могут спросить что-нибудь на казахском, я могу растеряться. Мне надо сначала подумать как это сказать или не могу сразу сказать что хочу. Не знаю даже. Мне кажется, у меня это вот то, что я теряюсь на каком-то психологическом уровне что ли. Что вот ты теряешься, когда тебя вживую спрашивают и из-за этого ты не можешь сразу нормально быстро правильно ответить. [...] У казахов есть такая манера смеяться, что кто то не знает казахского. (Interviewee 1)

*(Reading, well in Kazakh I write better than I speak. And when I speak, like, when I am asked about anything in Kazakh I get confused. I need at first to think how to say it or I cannot say right away what I wanted to. I do not even know. I think that the thing that I get confused I have it at some psychological level maybe. I mean that you get confused when you are asked and you cannot just quickly and correctly answer. [...] There is a thing that Kazakhs might laugh at someone who does not know Kazakh.)*

Kazakh is a compulsory class for every Kazakhstani student starting from the elementary school up until the end of studies. Upon graduation from school every student has to possess a certain level of knowledge in Kazakh to be able to pass an examination.

However, the methodology of Kazakh language teaching is perceived as unsatisfactory by being oriented at memorization and not on actual use. Moreover, people believe that ethnic Kazakhs have some innate prerequisites or links to their mother tongue. As it was reflected by one of the interviewees:

Даже в школах казахский язык преподносится не как что то новое ученикам, которые учатся на русском отделении, а как само собой разумеющееся. То есть учителя надеются, что в ученике из-за того что он казах, у него заложены предпосылки к языку, может какие то элементарные знания есть. И в надежде на это, они не приспособливают свои методики под тех учеников, которые возможно вообще не знают казахского языка. (Interviewee 7)

*(Even at schools Kazakh language is not presented as something new to students who are studying in Russian classes but as a matter-of-course. That is the teachers suppose from the fact that a student is Kazakh he has some prior knowledge for the language, maybe that he already has some basic knowledge. Therefore, in the hope*

*of this they do not adjust their technique to those students who perhaps do not know Kazakh language.)*

On the other side, Kazakh schools might also be linked with social pressure. This was said by a person educated in a Kazakh-medium school. The interviewee values Kazakh language and sees its maintenance as vital. However, she argues that in dealing with the language issues there should not be any radical measures.

В ситуациях, когда ребенок до 6 лет знал только русский, а тут его отдают в казахский класс это стресс, он от этого замыкается. Потому что он не до конца может изъясняться, в школе к нему отношение учителей тоже плохое, потому что ты не знаешь язык. Человек ходит такой с комплексами, недоразвитый. А все потому что сейчас нужно казахов отдавать в казахскую школу. А это портит человека. Вне школы он может, а в школах у нас как: казакша сөйле, казакша сөйле. (Interviewee 4)

*(In situations when a child knew only Russian and then his parents place him in a Kazakh-medium class it is stressful. He cannot properly express himself and, therefore, his treatment by teachers is bad because he does not know the language. The person then is stressed and feels inferior to others. And everything is because Kazakhs should be placed in Kazakh schools. And this ruins a person. He can speak Russian outside school and at school he is told: speak Kazakh, speak Kazakh.)*

Thus, the purist attitude to Kazakh present among the nationalistic people promoting Kazakh language in the Kazakhstani society makes this language associated with pressure and stress for those who are not confident in their language. Young ethnic Kazakhs in my study understand the value of Kazakh and knowledge of literate, beautiful Kazakh is generally seen as an advantage and an example to follow. More people among those individuals who I met or heard of during my fieldwork would like to speak Kazakh but there are anxieties associated with it. Pushing someone to speak Kazakh only on the assumption that this person is ethnic Kazakh does not bring changes to the perceptions and use of languages. On the contrary, the young people who feel insecure of their Kazakh or have an accent in it use Kazakh only when there is a necessity to speak particularly this language. Thus, in communication with peers the young people might be more inclined to use Russian that is perceived as functional and less problematic.

### **Kazakh as a Boundary Marker**

As I have mentioned earlier, Kazakh is the language that is perceived to have an essential moral value due to being a part of cultural heritage. The young people in this study see the importance of Kazakh in upbringing because the Kazakh values can be transmitted particularly with the use of Kazakh whereas use of other languages could distort the initial meaning. For example, Kazakhs are considered to be a hospitable nationality where every person has his or her allocated place when seated at the table. The first and most authoritative ones are elderly or the most important guests who are seated at the table's *tör* (head of the table). Each person has their turn in making toasts and at the end the most authoritative person is granted an honor to give *bata* (blessing). *Bata* is good wishes or blessings that were initially the wishes of the prayer. *Bata* is said in Kazakh after addressing Allah. Thus, the very knowledge of these practices is necessary for showing to be a group member.

Либо это то же самое, что, например, он казах вроде как, но когда ему говорят там взрослые когда приходят домой там: төрге шық. Он может не понимает где төр да и как туда пройти. Или, допустим, когда здоровается со взрослыми, ну там обычно подают две руки и говорят ас-салям алейкум и так далее уа-алейкум ас-салям. И вот они, допустим, может этого не знают или что. Ну или обычно, когда приходят взрослые люди, идут сначала к самому старшему и потом по уменьшающей. Ну вот эти некоторые детали они не знают и могут назвать его шала казах. (Interviewee 5)

*(This is the same as, for example, he is like a Kazakh but when he is told by adults when they come home: go to the head of the table. He cannot understand where the head of the table is and how to get there. Or let's say when greeting adults, well, people usually hold out two hands and say "as-salamu alaykum", "wa alaykumu s-salam" [Arabic: "peace be upon you" and "and upon you peace"], and so on. So they do not know that or something. Or usually when meeting adult guests you should go first to the oldest and then in decreasing age. Well, these are some parts people do not know and can be called Shala Kazakh.)*

In general, ethnic Kazakhs perceive the ethnic language to carry Kazakh traditional values. Specifically, this language is associated with the Kazakh ethnic identity and possesses legitimacy and authority due to its historical authenticity. Knowledge of Kazakh is

considered necessary for implementation and transmission of oral traditions, knowledge, rituals, songs, wishes, etc. that are considered an important part of a Kazakh's life.

В принципе, когда на тоях именно и на свадьбах, я разговариваю с родственниками и близкими либо когда говоришь тост, стараюсь говорить на казахском. Очень редко что я говорю на русском. Я не знаю. Так получилось, что с детства из-за того что я рос в Астане, здесь так сказать мало кто на казахском разговаривает и мне всегда говорили: қазақша айт, қазақша айт. И так пошло, что когда я говорю тосты или еще что-нибудь, я должен сказать это на казахском. Ну и для меня это привычно стало. То есть, это было привито родителями. (Interviewee 5)

*(When I am at feasts, at weddings and I talk to relatives and friends or when saying a toast I try to say it in Kazakh. It is very rare that I speak Russian. I do not know. It happened that due to the fact that I grew up in Astana and there are so few people who speak Kazakh and I have always been told: say it in Kazakh, say it in Kazakh. And since then, when I say a toast or something else I have to say it in Kazakh. Well, I got used to it. That is, it was instilled by my parents.)*

It is more appropriate at a Kazakh *toı* to give a speech in Kazakh as reported by the research participants. One would use Russian mostly in the case when one knows that the hosts of the occasion are Russian speakers. Therefore, the young people in the study would accommodate to their interlocutors but the default language in these situations is rather Kazakh. The use of this language in Kazakh cultural practices is seen essential by the research participants in expression of Kazakhness among the co-ethnics.

According to the interviewees, phrases expressed in Kazakh might give some “credibility” to the speaker and, consequently, greater value to the speech. They are usually those sayings and citations that refer to the cultural heritage and Kazakh values. The value of the phrases is based on solidarity of ethnic and national identities of the people.

Когда слушаешь великих людей, интервью людей, которые на руководящих должностях. У них всегда там есть какой то citation вот қазақтарда бар ғой: Ағасы бардың - жағасы бар, Апасы бардың... там ... я не помню. И вот когда они объясняют и говорят этот citation, это делает их немного credible в моих глазах. Это вдохновляет. (Interviewee 4).

*(When you listen to the speeches of prominent people or interviews of individuals who take senior positions, they always insert some **citation** in their speech, like Kazakhs have a saying: Those who have an elder brother have support, Those who*

*have a younger brother have... like ... I do not remember. And when they explain and say this **citation**, it makes them a little more **credible** in my eyes. It inspires.)*

Another point is the fact that during the process of the interviews the research participants tended to code-switch between Kazakh, Russian, and even English. While Russian is regarded as the most practical and functional language for the majority of the interviewees the reported speech and sayings originals of which are in Kazakh were reported in Kazakh. The cultural and traditional values expressed in these statements are perceived to be conveyed better in Kazakh than in Russian. Furthermore, these expressions are perceived to give legitimacy to the people and show their knowledge of the ethnic culture. As the interlocutor, i.e. I was seen as ethnic Kazakh and the research participants believed that I would understand the meaning of the statements because we share common cultural values.

Apart from Russian – Kazakh code-switching some of the research participants used a few English words in their speech. The interviewees who used English were individuals who studied abroad or in Kazakhstan and had English as the language of instruction. They were aware of me studying at Nazarbayev University in English. Their code-switching might be explained by the fact that they could not remember the right word in Russian or Kazakh and for the sake of convenience used the word that first came to their mind. On the other hand, these instances could be regarded as expressions of identity where the interviewees represent themselves through the language choice. English is perceived as a prestigious language that has high social value which gives more authority to the speaker.

## **Chapter 5 Language Attitude vs. Language Use**

### **Ideologies of Linguistic Authority**

Woolard (2005) makes a distinction between ideologies of linguistic authority: authenticity and anonymity. These ideologies serve as naturalization of the “relation between linguistic form and a state of society” (Woolard, 2005, p. 1). In the ideology of authenticity the relation is built on the value of a language to a given territory and people as reflecting their Self. The speech variety in this case is a bearer of identity and is socially indexical of an individual. Another ideological complex – anonymity – finds the authority to be in hegemonic languages. This ideology gives legitimacy to the popular languages that have no territorial or social roots in the society but may be ideologically transcended. Such “ideologies in the modern public sphere appear not to belong to any identifiable individuals but rather seem to be socially neutral, universally available, natural and objective truths. In a sense then, they are anonymous” (Woolard, 2005, p. 5). The example is Catalan, the ethnic language of the local minority population in Catalonia, and Spanish, the hegemonic language, that compete for authority.

Woolard argues that the policy in Catalonia on promotion of Catalan on the basis of its authenticity makes the language a marker of the user’s identity. The markedness of the language in its turn then constrains “the acquisition and use of Catalan as a second language by a larger population” (Woolard, 2005, p. 17). In choosing a language for use between Catalan or Spanish, then, the people perceived making an identity choice which some people could not make or wanted to maintain both of them. So the author argues that in order to be popularly used a language has to be perceived as a “‘natural, everyday’, ‘modern’ language” (Woolard, 2005, p. 24). The author describes the new initiative of the local authorities that was aimed at changing the language ideologies through mass-culture and media by showing

that this language is not connected with suffering. Speaking Catalan was shown as leisure and fun in order to eliminate anxieties.

The language situation in Ireland could be also taken into consideration. In Ireland the authorities engaged in Irish language revival as the population became increasingly English speaking. However, despite continuous promotion of Irish as an authentic language the policy has not succeeded much in increasing the use of Irish on the ground. There seems to be a “contrast between high levels of status and apparently positive attitudes, on the one hand, and, at the same time, generally low levels of use outside the domain of education” (Atkinson & Kelly-Holmes, 2016, p. 201). The studies suggest that there are ideological issues with the use of Irish as people have various anxieties. Atkinson and Kelly-Holmes argue that there are issues with the perception of Irish as lacking “functionality” and “everyday culture” to compete with other languages used in Ireland.

Kazakh language possesses value among the ethnic Kazakhs as an authentic language. It is perceived as “reflecting the Self” of the Kazakh people due to its connectedness to Kazakh history and cultural heritage. Kazakh maintained its authenticity during the Soviet Union but lost its value in public urban domains. With the promotion of Kazakh in political and social spheres after Kazakhstan gained independence the social value of the ethnic language was elevated.

At the same time, the use of Russian is widespread in many public urban contexts in the northern and eastern part of Kazakhstan. Russian remains the language that is perceived as modern and functional. Educated people are expected to have knowledge of Russian notwithstanding the language that was the medium of education at school and other educational institutions. It is due to the fact that Russian is perceived to be a hegemonic language because it is regarded to provide wider access to education, information, job

opportunities, and popular culture. Therefore, we can see the competing language ideologies that are present in the community and even within an individual.

### **Competing Language Ideologies**

As it was mentioned earlier, the young people are more concerned with the value of language in terms of prestige rather than with its authenticity than the older generation. Increase of popularity of Kazakh among the young people in public urban spheres is encouraged by Kazakh popular culture. Kazakh language media content and popular culture in Kazakhstan is still in the process of developing. There was a great progress in these domains with some high quality products and role models emerging on Kazakhstani media. An increasing number of public figures and celebrities use Kazakh in their works, social media, and give interviews in Kazakh.

Ну вот популяризация она сейчас идет через интернет, и вот вы заметили, что многие новостные порталы они свои статьи зачастую на казахском посят в том же Инстаграмме. Потом многие эстрадные исполнители, звезды они стараются свою личную страничку там на соцсетях вести чисто на казахском. Этим самым люди наверное чувствуют, что вот язык существует, он популярен. (Interviewee 7)

*(Well, popularization now goes through the Internet and you might have noticed that many news portals often post their articles in Kazakh in that same Instagram. Then, many singers, stars, they try to lead their personal pages on social networks purely in Kazakh. By this most people probably feel that here is the language, it is popular.)*

The public figures' use of Kazakh certainly raises the social value of the language among the young people. The most prominent individual producing Kazakh content who became popular among the urban younger generation is Galymzhan Moldanazar.<sup>7</sup> Usually Kazakh songs are perceived to have the same style of performance and music, lacking creativity and modernity. However, Moldanazar's songs made many young people believe that Kazakh songs can be modern, creative, and able to compete in quality with the foreign pop music products. There are posts about him on social media made by young people who

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<sup>7</sup> Galymzhan Moldanazar is a young Kazakhstani singer and musician, and leading singer of music band *Moldanazar*. Galymzhan Moldanazar became known to the Kazakhstani audience in 2013. The songs performed by him are all in the Kazakh language. For more information see Latypov (2013).

see his work exemplary and cool (Michelotti, 2016). Moldanazar and his songs then are regarded to serve as a motivation for learning and speaking Kazakh among the urban young people.

It should be mentioned that emergence of role models with good Kazakh could be inspiring or, on the contrary, arouse lack of confidence in one's own language.

Когда смотришь вот эти интервью Қарақат, Мақпал Жунусовой, они так хорошо владеют казахским, так говорят красиво, у меня аж мурашки действительно. И я чувствую потом, почему я не могу так свободно изъясняться до конца постоянно. И в такие моменты мне жаль. Он такой красивый, может и звучит для иностранцев грубовато, но какой язык, какое значение слово имеет. Даже не сравнить, шикарный язык. Такое можно донести, такое сказать. Особенно мне нравится, когда мужчины говорят на казахском, свободно и чисто. Потому что можно одним словом успокоить человека, объяснить, қазақша айттың, болды. Нежели на русском. На русском это все равно грубовато звучит. (Interviewee 4)

*(When you watch these interviews of Qaraqat, Maqpal Zhunussova, they have such good command of Kazakh, speak so beautifully that I have goosebumps, really.<sup>8</sup> And I feel then why I always cannot express myself so fluently. And at such moments I feel such pity. It is so beautiful and maybe it sounds rough for foreigners, but what language it is, what meaning a word carries. Cannot even compare, great language. You can convey such a meaning, such a speech. Especially, I like it when men speak Kazakh, fluently and purely. Because with one word it is possible to calm a person down, explain, said it in Kazakh, that is all. Rather than in Russian. In Russian it all the same sounds rough.)*

On the one hand, the emergence of role models who speak beautiful, correct and rich Kazakh increases the value of Kazakh in the eyes of my interviewees. Particularly, this makes the young people perceive Kazakh as a modern language that is used by people of high social status. On the other hand, there is a need to know whether it is seen as a functional and pragmatic language. Those who feel that their language is not that sophisticated might have limited use of Kazakh. Thus, these individuals are more confident in Russian and find it more convenient to use Russian, which is believed to have greater communicative value. During the fieldwork even those interviewees who studied in Kazakh medium classes expressed concerns over their language.

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<sup>8</sup> Qaraqat and Maqpal Zhunussova are Kazakhstani singers.

Kazakh speech is perceived to have a high social value when it is grammatically correct, unmixed, and an individual possesses extensive vocabulary. Otherwise, the speech has low value and the one who speaks it is seen as lacking education, culture or having a rural background. Therefore, a person could speak Kazakh but the issue is how a person speaks. The interviewees in this study think that there are not many people who can speak beautiful, literary Kazakh.

Ну я понимаю, что на данный момент, люди не могут осознанно относиться к казахскому языку. То есть население, которое уже выросло в казахской среде говорит на казахском языке, но опять-таки, о каком уровне казахского языка можно говорить в этой среде? Это все-таки скажем не литературный казахский язык. Чтобы говорить уже об осознанном скажем изучении, осознании его, это как раз таки нужно выходить за рамки этого языка. Мы вообще можем осознанно подходить к языку только когда мы выходим за рамки. (Interviewee 13)

*(Well, I understand that at the moment people cannot consciously perceive Kazakh language. That is, the population that has grown up in a Kazakh environment speaks Kazakh language, but again what could we say about the level of Kazakh in this environment? Let us say it is still not a literary Kazakh language. To say something about the conscious learning, its perception, this is still necessary to go beyond the language. We can consciously approach the language only when we go beyond.)*

There are concerns with an excessive introduction of new words into Kazakh vocabulary. Under Soviet rule Kazakh language lacked development. Therefore, after Kazakhstan gained independence there was work conducted on modernization and development of terminology for Kazakh to comply with the demands of modern use (Smagulova, 2008, p. 453; Suleimenova, 2011, p. 8). The interviewees expressed criticisms of new words that were created to replace international words that are seen as ridiculous or at least unnecessary. For example, among the words that were mentioned during my fieldwork were *kuisandyq* (piano), *dalap* (makeup), *qyltima* (balcony), etc. The arguments that the research participants mentioned were that these are international words that remain the same in English and Russian, therefore, they could be left the same in Kazakh.

Language ideologies are constructed and reconstructed due to everyday social acts (Bilaniuk, 2009; Gal, 1993). In the language situation in Kazakhstan we could say that political and social arrangements that took place after Kazakhstan obtained independence contested the previous value arrangement that had prevailed during Soviet time. Therefore, now what we see is a conflict over the value of languages that increases due to changes in the system. Nowadays, Kazakh has authority not only as a language of cultural heritage but speaking it increasingly could be considered cool. However, the issue now is how a person speaks.

The other side of the point is that some of the young people who are not very confident of their language speak Russian as less problematic and more pragmatic rather than Kazakh. It all starts from early childhood when cartoons and books are more interesting and of better quality in Russian than in Kazakh language (Jankowski, 2012, p. 31). The quantity of available information in Russian language in mass media and internet exceeds that in Kazakh (Fierman, 2012, p. 140; Laruelle, 2015, p. 325). Then, despite studying in the Kazakh – medium classes children speak Russian in face-to-face interactions. Therefore, young people in urban spaces perceive Russian as modern and practical. On the one hand, there are attempts to increase the popularity and use of Kazakh but nationalistically inclined people reproduce the language ideology by voicing purist attitudes toward those individuals whose knowledge of Kazakh is not very good. As a consequence, some people try to avoid speaking Kazakh language and the circle continues.

## Conclusion

The authorities of Kazakhstan constantly state the need to maintain multilingualism in the society. According to the objectives of the policy which is now promoted by the state every citizen has to master three languages Kazakh, Russian, and English that are crucial for the future of every individual in order to be competitive both in the Kazakhstani job market and in the globalizing world. Thus, the state has undertaken a pragmatic policy for the development of the state language, maintenance of Russian and learning English. This is not to say that the people's choices are limited to the abovementioned languages. The Law on languages (1997) provides freedom to the citizens to choose the language of communication, upbringing, education, and work. Thus, there are schools that provide education in the languages of various ethnic communities (Altynbekova, 2011, p. 295).

The role and value of Kazakh language that was denigrated during Soviet rule has improved considerably due to the promotion of Kazakh during 25 years of independence. This language is now used in the governmental institutions, state occasions, and education. Ideological work on changing the attitudes of the young people to Kazakh to perceive it as prestigious and modern is still in process. At the same time, Russian is used as a language of communication among the young people in various contexts.

Increasingly, the young people of Kazakhstan perceive the elevated value of Kazakh and more and more people would like to speak the language. However, there are negative consequences of the nationalistic purist attitudes present in the society that apply social pressure on those people of Kazakh ethnicity who are not fluent in Kazakh. The people's purist attitudes in the form of scolding and ridicule do not increase the use of Kazakh but, on the contrary, make those people who are not confident in their Kazakh avoid speaking it.

Among the young people in the capital of Kazakhstan there emerged leaders who claim the uselessness and, moreover, harmfulness of purist attitudes that people apply to

those individuals who speak imperfect Kazakh. The question they pose is where and how the young people who are not perfect in speaking Kazakh could practice their language if there are anxieties associated with the use of Kazakh in the society. Therefore, recently there was an initiative proposed by one fellow whose name is Arnay Ormash to hold meetings of *Shala Kazakh* young people to practice and improve their knowledge of Kazakh (Kruglova, 2017).

The initiator said (my translation):

Many people know Kazakh language but they are embarrassed to speak it because of poor pronunciation. Because there are always people who start ridiculing. This problem exists and because of this many people get stiff and do not speak Kazakh. Or there are those who do not know the language well enough (as cited in Kruglova, 2017).

The “*Shala Kazakh* club” was founded for the young people who are not confident in their language to practice Kazakh while getting to know other people, playing games, talking on various topics, i.e. practicing their Kazakh in the way of leisure. The first meeting of the club took place in February, 2017 at a café where the participants gathered to talk on the topic of traveling. Overall there were around 30 people who attended the meeting. The attendants could talk in accordance with their capabilities without anxieties to be scolded or ridiculed. It is worth mentioning that the participants of the meeting could be individuals with different ethnic identities, i.e. they were not exclusively ethnic Kazakhs who could be regarded to be *Shala Kazakhs*. The initiators welcomed individuals of various ethnic and social backgrounds who wanted to improve their knowledge of Kazakh.

It was said that there would be diversity in the places to hold the meetings of the club. The second meeting of the club consisted of a trip to the theater and self introduction of each participant to the auditorium right from the stage after the play (performed in Kazakh) ended. The third meeting was called to take place in a café where the participants would play various interesting games using only Kazakh. During the meetings there were a couple of people who knew Kazakh very well and could help the participants by reminding a word or

making some comments on the right use of the language. Thus, the *Shala Kazakh* club is aimed at giving a possibility to the young people to practice Kazakh without stress and at the same time improve their knowledge of Kazakh.

At the present time there are attempts undertaken by the public figures and artists to popularize the use of Kazakh language among the young people of Kazakhstan. These attempts are directed at increasing the social value of this language without utilizing the discourse on its authenticity. This is implemented through making high quality products for mass media, education, entertainment that would make the young people interested in Kazakh. Now more and more people would like to speak Kazakh.

On the other side, Kazakh is generally valued when it is correct, fluent, and with extensive vocabulary. There are some people among the population who scold or ridicule those individuals of Kazakh ethnicity whose Kazakh is not good enough. However, pushing too hard with the purist attitudes might create anxieties among those who are not confident in their language. A person might have a desire to speak the language but in cases when the knowledge of the language is limited he or she needs to learn and practice it. Thus, young individuals like those activists mentioned above or some of the interviewees and their friends who know Kazakh well treat the newly Kazakh speakers with understanding.

Based on the findings of my study it could be said that Russian is not likely to lose its value in the near future, while the current trends promise an increase in popular support for the use of Kazakh. Moreover, more and more people are learning other languages which are imperatives of the time. They are practicalities and economic competitiveness, not just authenticity that make the young people perceive the languages as attractive and authoritative. At the same time, pressure of the purist attitudes does not help much in promotion of a language.

What concerns the limitations of my study, I would like to mention that the research conducted in Astana cannot be generalized and applied to other regions of Kazakhstan. As it was mentioned earlier in the paper the territory of Kazakhstan is vast and heterogeneous. While the northern and eastern parts of Kazakhstan were more linguistically and ethnically Russified starting from the Soviet era and until today, the southern and western parts of the country largely maintained the language with a probable exception of Almaty (from the interview of a person who studied in Almaty). Another point that has to be taken into consideration is the urban – rural divide that was mentioned before.

The second thing that I would like to mention is that the practices that were observed and experienced by the participants of my study might not apply to all the people in the community. The issue of generalizability is always present because individuals have different language abilities, experiences, and perceptions. However, the research participants of my study came to Astana from various parts of Kazakhstan. Therefore, this fact could be regarded to contribute to the extent of the experiences.

The data and results of the present study might be of importance to the lay people who are interested in language issue. As the topic of languages in Kazakhstan is a very heated issue it would be relevant to know some of the opinions and concerns that the research participants have shared. Further, I could suggest that the results of the study might be useful for language policy makers and those implementing the policy directed at promotion of the languages both in Kazakhstan and abroad.

The case of Kazakhstan is unique in its own way and might be relevant to the scholarship on post-Soviet language policy and practices. As noted by Pavlenko (2013), after the post-Soviet states obtained independence such information on everyday language practices and influences that shape language maintenance and shift was missed. Thus, this

work might contribute to the future comparative studies on the changes in linguistic marketplaces in the post-Soviet successor states.

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