

Duristap sóileshish: Kazakh Language vs. Kazakh Dialects.

WLL 499: Capstone Project

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## Abstract

A language is a tool of communication, which can be expressed by spoken, signed and written symbols among members of social group or culture. It is often that language has different features among speakers of the same language, for example, when the speakers of the same language use different grammatical features in the speech or when they do not understand some words that are used by others. For example, in the Kazakh language “Duristap sóileshish<sup>1</sup>”. These situations are expressed as variations or dialects of the language. This study aims to shed light on the Kazakh language and its regional variations all around Kazakhstan. The goal of this study is to investigate the phonological differences between these variations, to find out the unique features of speech that belong to speakers that live in specific regions of Kazakhstan. The analysis of variations is based on phonological differences of dialects and opinions of people about the regional variations of Kazakh language. The significance of this work is that it would contribute to the discussion and studies about Kazakh dialectology. This research is important because it will discover the opinions of Kazakhstani citizens about the Kazakh language. In order to know what people think of whether the language has dialects or no and what are the attitudes of people towards variations of the language. It will try to answer questions about the number of dialects of the Kazakh language. This research will reveal phonetic features of speakers of Kazakh language from different regions of Kazakhstan and based on these features will try to categorize people by the regional dialects.

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<sup>1</sup> It is a marker of regional variation that is spoken on the Western regions of Kazakhstan. The translation from Kazakh means, “Speak correctly”. It can be heard when the Kazakh person is not speaking correctly and mixing Kazakh speech with Russian words

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## **Introduction**

A language is a tool of communication and every natural language has own system with regular rules, including lexical, phonological and grammatical features (Rickford, 2002, 1). In spite of the fact that languages are systematic, there is a variation among speakers of the same language. The most significant variations within the language are reflected in lexicon, phonology, grammar and language use. This variation is called dialect (Rickford, 2002, 2). Variations of the language may be regional, social and stylistic too. Overall, this research is going to explore the Kazakh language and its dialects. According to different sources, the variation of Kazakh language is based on regional, tribal structure, social features and the number of dialects varies between two to five.

The aim of this research is to define the standard dialect of Kazakh language in comparison to other regional varieties based on phonological features. This research will try to answer these main questions, “What are the dialects of Kazakh language?” “Which dialect is the standard one?” “What are the phonological differences between dialects?” There are several regional varieties of Kazakh language and one of them is accepted as an official Kazakh language. The hypothesis of this research is that there is one standard dialect, which is accepted as an official Kazakh language and there are differences between dialects in terms of phonology, lexicon and grammar.

The significance of this work is that it would contribute to the discussion and studies about Kazakh dialectology that was performed by linguists Sarsen Amanzholov, Zhumat Doskarayev and Nygmet Sauranbayev. Mainly, this research will contribute to a discussion of the contemporary situation of Kazakh dialectology. This research is important for the Linguistics, especially in terms of dialectology because Kazakh dialectology needs more deep analysis and research than it has at the current moment. The research needs both funding and publication so that the current knowledge and information about the Kazakh language will be renewed.

## **Literature Review**

### **Dialect vs Language**

What is a dialect? The dialect among non-linguists is associated with low class and low-status forms of language. It was considered as a non-standard form and sometimes it doesn't have a written form. However, in this project, I will consider a dialect as a language that has not been nominated for the title of a language (Fromkin., Rodman., and Hyams., 2018). Both languages and dialects are codes that used in daily life. Language tends to be defined by linguists as standardized code, while dialect is vernacular code that is not standardized (Rickford, 2002). That is why variations are regarded as dialects of a language. Therefore, dialect is a subdivision of a language. There are several examples of dialects like the Parisian dialect of French language or Scottish dialect of the English language. In order to understand dialects as subdivisions of a language, it is necessary to check the mutual intelligibility. If speakers of different language varieties can easily understand each other, it means that these are mutually intelligible dialects (Fromkin., Rodman., and Hyams., 2018). However, this concept and the definitions of dialect and language are much more complex and incomplete. There are cases when languages are considered to be different languages, but still, they are mutually intelligible. For instance, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian are different languages, however, speakers of these languages easily understand and communicate with each other (Fromkin., Rodman., and Hyams., 2018). It would be possible to consider these languages as a single one if it wasn't the matter of the political, historical, social and cultural aspects. On the other hand, when two language varieties are not mutually intelligible they are in fact two different languages. Even, if there are cases when two dialects are not mutually intelligible, it means that they are not dialects, but two different languages. For instance, Mandarin and Cantonese are not dialects, as it is commonly believed, but languages because of their mutual unintelligibility.

## **Dialect and Accent**

One of the essential terms in the dialectology is the variety. In order to talk about dialects of the languages or differences among these dialects, the term variety is used. For example, there are several varieties of English like Scouse English (Scots) or Welsh English. The more specified term *accent* is used. The accent is a manner in which the speaker talks, pronounces, a variety that is phonetically/phonologically different from other varieties. There are two meanings of accent: (1) a more generic sense of local variety in pronunciation, which is generally equated to dialect; (2) a more specific linguistic term with a sense of a particular phonetic/phonological feature – pitch accent, which could be either individual (when speakers of the same dialect differ between each other because of high/low pitch accents) or a group feature (when the whole group of speakers act in the same manner with the same high/low pitch accent and represent “dialect-like” variety). As an example of the first meaning of the accent can be English accents like American or British accents. As for the second meaning of the accent, one of the bright examples of various pitch accent systems is a Japanese accent. Pitch is the height of the sound. Talking about accent in modern dialects of Japanese, all dialects are spoken with melodies or with a specific pitch pattern (Ramsey, 1979). In most dialects of Japanese, these patterns vary from word to word. These varieties called accenting dialects because pitch pattern is the part of the spelling. There are three accenting dialects the Tokyo-type, the Kyoto-type and the Kagoshima-type (Ramsey, 1979). The accent is an important variety; however, dialect is a type of variety, which is focused not only on phonetic differences but also on grammatical, lexical, morphemic, syntactic and contextual differences. First of all, language is a tool of communication and every natural language has own system with regular rules, including lexical, phonological and grammatical features (Rickford, 2002). The most important variations within language are reflected in lexicon, phonology, grammar and language use.

## **Dialect continuum/ Linguistic Geography**

There are two concepts of dialect, Geographical and Social dialect continuum. As it follows from the name, the Geographical dialectal continuum is about the map of dialects. It refers to a variety of dialects in different regions. To be precise, it is the spread of linguistic variety on a geographical map. The further we are from the starting point, the region with one dialect, the larger the difference between linguistic varieties (Chambers, 1998). It means that distance between regions plays an important role in the differentiation of the varieties of language. On the other hand, the Social dialectal continuum is about the division of social classes by linguistic varieties (Chambers, 1998). It is a sociolect or variety of language that is closely correlated with social groups like social class, an ethnic group or an age group. For instance, it can be observed in England that high-class people tend to speak Cockney English, while low-class people are speaking Northern Irish. Dialects may correlate with social status in people`s minds. Another example is the linguistic history of Jamaica where the high-status British speak English and African slaves speak Jamaican Creole (Chambers, 1998). In order to understand it better, it is necessary to think about the concept of Sociolect continuum. Sociolect continuum concept considers a particular sociolect across different levels of speech. The studies found three main levels of speech of particular sociolect. They are the acrolectal level, the mesolectal level and the basilectal level. Basically, each level corresponds to the socioeconomic classes, high, middle and low respectively (Manes and Wolfson, 1985). The basilectal level is about the most colloquial form of speech, the mesolectal level is about the most common type of speech form that is used by the majority of speakers and the acrolectal level is about the form of speech that is used by elite and the best educated and most wealthy group of speakers (Manes and Wolfson, 1985).

## **Kazakh language**

The Kazakh language is in Turkic language family and a member of the Kipchak branch. The Kipchak branch consists of Kazakh language and other languages like Karakalpak, Nogai and Karagash form the Kipchak-Nogai subgroup. The Kazakh language was formed during the XIV-XVII centuries as the language related to the nomadic Turkic and Mongolian tribes that were on the territory of modern Kazakhstan in the era of the collapse of Golden Horde. In the middle of the XVII century, the Kazakh language separated from other languages of the Kipchak-Nogai subgroup. The Kazakh language is spoken in such countries as Kazakhstan, Northern China, Uzbekistan, Iran, Mongolia and Turkey (Etnologue, 2018). It is important to mention that the majority of people in Iran speak Persian (Farsi), Mongolic languages are spoken in Mongolia and only a small minority of people speak Turkic languages. The knowledge and current information about the Kazakh language are superficial; mostly linguists' ideas are based on previous research like works of Kazakh linguists Sarsen Amanzholov and Nygmet Sauranbyaev that confirm the findings of orientalists and Turkologists. The language is changing and previous works are becoming old and may become inaccurate. Kazakh dialectology in comparison to other spheres of linguistics was less developed and was the latest in terms of its research. Discussion of the scientific problems of Kazakh dialectology, investigations of dialect and speech (govor<sup>2</sup>) started after the 1940s (Sagybayeva, 2002).

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<sup>2</sup> Rus: speech, subdialect

## **Dialects of Kazakh language**

The first people that made a significant contribution to this field of the area were Sarsen Amanzholov and Zhumat Doskarayev. Their works consisted of the dialectological dictionary, classification of Kazakh dialects and the foundation of literary language. Sarsen Amanzholov was the first linguist that decided to explore the linguistic geography/dialect continuum of the Kazakh language. The linguist decided to focus on five important features of Kazakh people's origin. First, it was decided to investigate the ethnic or tribal composition of Kazakh people. The second point was an investigation of the ethnic belonging to the ancient tribes like Argyn, Naiman, Alshyn, etc. (Amanzholov, 1959). The last point was to focus on the origin of three zhuz like senior, middle and junior clans. The last point was about the rise of the language in comparison with the origin of a speaker. After the investigation of all these points, it was decided that there are three dialects of Kazakh language: **Southern, Western and Northeastern** (Amanzholov 1959).

The regions of **Southern dialect** are oblasts of Almaty, Zhambyl and Southern Kazakhstan; it also, includes the southern regions of Taldykorgan and Kyzylorda cities (Sagybayeva, 2002). The regions of **Western dialect** are oblasts of Western Kazakhstan, Guryev and Aktobe; some regions of western Kostanay and regions of northern Kyzylorda (Sagybayeva, 2002). The regions of **Northeastern dialect** are oblasts of Akmola, Pavlodar, Semey, Kokshetau, Karagandy, Eastern Kazakhstan and Northern Kazakhstan; some regions of Taldykorgan and Kostanay (Sagybayeva, 2002).

The fact of the existence of dialects of Kazakh language was a matter of debate and questions because of insignificant differences between dialects. However, later it was acknowledged by researchers that the Kazakh language has separate dialects. The homogeneity of Kazakh language is explained by the high mobility of its speakers through the territory of Kazakhstan and neighboring countries. These dialects are defined in terms of regions, but not in terms of tribal structure.

Western dialect appeared because of local disunity and tribal association of the local Kazakhs over the centuries and incorporated a number of words from Tatar, Oguz, Bashkir and Nogai languages. According to Sarsen Amanzholov, the speakers of Western dialect, a large tribal association called “alshyn<sup>3</sup>” in ancient times wandered in areas near the Aral and Caspian seas along the Ural and Or rivers. These tribes were isolated from the speakers of other dialects for a long time and were part of the Nogai Horde until the 17th century. The key feature of Western dialect that its speakers use archaic features of Kazakh language, which disappeared from other dialects.

The speakers of the Southern dialect live in the southern and southeastern regions of Kazakhstan and adjacent areas of China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The Southern dialect formed on a basis of the languages of tribal associations like Kanly<sup>4</sup>, Usuns<sup>5</sup>, Dulats<sup>6</sup> and Jalayirs<sup>7</sup>. The Southern dialect was heavily influenced by the Uzbek language due to the dominance of the Kokand Khanate on these lands for several centuries, however, in turn, influenced individual dialects of the Uzbek and Kyrgyz languages (Doskarayev 1961). The so-called widespread phenomenon the “Uzbekization” process led to changes in the speech of the speakers of this dialect. The Southern dialect has four main govors like Syrdarya, Shymkent, Chui and Semirechye. The Syrdarya govor has specific words about fishing and rice growing, while Shymkent is full of vocabulary related to gardening and cotton growing and was significantly influenced by Uzbek language. The Chui govor was highly influenced by Kyrgyz language and Semirechye was influenced by Kyrgyz and has words related to animal husbandry, agriculture and gardening.

The basis of modern Kazakh literary language is the Northeastern dialect, which appeared as a result of local disunity and tribal association of the local Kazakhs. This dialect is

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<sup>3</sup> General name of the three main branches of Junior zhuz

<sup>4</sup> An ancient turkic tribe of Senior Horde

<sup>5</sup> The oldest tribe among all tribes of all Hordes, belongs to Senior Horde

<sup>6</sup> The closest relative of Usuns, belongs to Senior Horde

<sup>7</sup> The representative of all tribes of Senior Horde

accepted as a modern Kazakh literary language because such outstanding Kazakh enlighteners of the 19th century as Abai Kunanbayev and Ibrai Altynsarin wrote their works in it (Amanzholov 1959). This shows that Kazakh people acknowledged the works of these people and their language/dialect. Due to territorial remoteness, unlike other dialects, the Northeastern dialect was less affected by the Arabic and Persian languages, however, sometimes individual words of other dialects penetrate the literary language to denote new terms that have no analogs in the Northeastern dialect (Amanzholov 1959). That is why the Northeastern dialect is accepted as an official Kazakh language while other dialects of Kazakh language differ from it in terms of lexical, phonological and grammatical aspects.

However, there is also another opinion about the Kazakh language and its dialects. Linguists Zhumat Doskaraev believed that the Kazakh language is divided into two dialects: **Southeastern** and **Northwestern** (Sagybayeva, 2002). The regions of **Southeastern dialect** are oblasts of Southern Kazakhstan, Zhambyl and Almaty; also, the southwestern regions of Taldykorgan oblast (Sagybayeva, 2002). The regions of **Northwestern dialect** are oblasts of Western Kazakhstan, Guryev, Aktobe, Kostanay, Karagandy, Celinograd, Pavlodar, Northern Kazakhstan; also, some western regions of Kyzylorda oblast and some northwestern regions of Semey oblast (Sagybayeva, 2002).

Overall, there are several theories about dialects of Kazakh language. According to Sarybayev and Nakysbekov there are four dialects in the Kazakh language: **Western**, **Southern**, **Eastern** and **Central-northern** (Sagybayeva, 2002). The regions of **Southern dialect** are oblasts of Almaty, Taldykorgan, Zhambyl and Shymkent, the eastern region of Kyzylorda and the Kazakh speaking regions of Uzbekistan (Sagybayeva, 2002). The regions of **Western dialect** are oblasts of Mangystau, Guryev, Kyzylorda, Oral and Aktobe; some regions of western Kostanay and the Kazakh speaking regions of Turkmenistan, Karakalpakstan, Orenburg and Astrakhan (Sagybayeva, 2002). The regions of **Central-northern dialect** are oblasts of Northern Kazakhstan, Celinorgad, Kokshetau, Karagandy, Zhezkazgan,

Torgay, Kostanay, Pavlodar and the Kazakh speaking regions of Russia (Sagybayeva, 2002).

The regions of **Eastern dialect** are oblasts of Semey, Altay and the Kazakh speaking regions of Mongolia (Sagybayeva, 2002).

Another Kazakh linguist Nygmet Sauranbayev contributed to the development of Kazakh dialectology. The linguist focused on the origin of differences among the dialects of Kazakh language and the general description of dialects that tightly corresponds to a language history in his works. According to Sauranbayev, differences of dialects emerged after the XV century when the Kazakh language was a unifying language for Kazakh tribal associations (Sagybayeva, 2002). Turkic tribes and other ethnic groups that were on Kazakh lands. The connection, kinship and split up with these tribes affected the nature of Kazakh language too. That is why the description of differences among dialects and the spread of dialects do not correspond to the classification of tribal structures. However, it is not correct to exclude completely the factor of connection between language and the tribes. However, the emergence of contemporary Kazakh language is interconnected with the loss of tribal language signs that were observed between the tribes of Senior, Middle and Junior Hordes (Sagybayeva, 2002).

Another major factor that needs to be considered is the mixture and the split of tribes with other ethnic groups. Therefore, it is not possible to classify the dialectal differences in association with tribal structures. The permanence of the dialectal description and differences in all stages of the language history development is not possible. The dialectological signs of the language change because of economic, social situations and relations with other ethnic groups (Sagybayeva, 2002). The differences among dialects of Kazakh language is the result of social and cultural changes that occurred historically among people of local regions of Kazakhstan.

## **Research Questions**

These major findings in Kazakh dialectology show the variety of opinions about dialects of Kazakh language. This context prompts these research questions, “What are the dialects of Kazakh language?” “Which dialect is the standard one?” “What are the phonological differences

between dialects?” The hypothesis of this research is that there is one standard dialect, which is accepted as an official Kazakh language and there are other local dialects which show differences between dialects in terms of phonology, lexicon and grammar. The important issue and the primary purpose of the study is to investigate and analyze the original data. The secondary aim of the study is to verify the existing theory that is the closest to the reality of dialects of Kazakh language.

## **Methodology**

The methodology of this research is based on collecting data from people of different regions of Kazakhstan. The main idea of the methodology is to investigate the speech of different speakers by focusing on phonetics/phonology and tempo. The revealed phonological differences are seen as auxiliary in order to find out which of the theoretical works about Kazakh language dialects is the most reliable. In order to conduct this research, it was necessary to ensure that participants were from Eastern, Western, Northern, Central and Southern regions of Kazakhstan. There are 30 participants who are native speakers of the Kazakh language. The only information collected from the participants is their Age and Place of origin.

There are three methods in this research that are necessary in order to answer the main questions.

The first method is based on the book “**Frog, where are you?**” by Mercer Mayer. It is a wordless story in 24 pictures that was widely used previously for investigating the development of discourse structures and complex syntax in child language acquisition. Later it was used as a tool of eliciting narrative descriptions with second language learners. The procedure occurs individually with every participant where they need first to look carefully at the pictures and then create a story. This method allows to investigate the speech patterns of the speaker from different perspectives. It is possible to analyze not only phonemic features but, also, lexicon and grammar of the speaker. That is why this method is very useful and important for this research.

The second method is a **qualitative interview**. The purpose of the interview is to find out the opinion of people about dialects of Kazakh language. Whether they believe that the Kazakh language has dialects, their attitudes towards these variations among speakers of the same language (positive/negative). Part of the idea was to avoid the use of the word “dialect”, in order to allow participants freely articulate their opinions, so that participants were able to come to their own conclusions. People may have a negative association with the word “dialect” and may deny the existence of dialects in Kazakh language.

The third method is the **tempo of the speech**. This method allows us to find out the tempo/speed of the speech of the speaker. The participant needs to produce spontaneous/improvised speech, which is recorded on Dictaphone. Later, the number of words produced in 1 minute is calculated. This method helps to reveal the fastest and the slowest speakers of the Kazakh language, in other words, to identify if there are regional differences in the tempo of speech. It was decided to look at the tempo of the speech because this feature can be easily detected and analyzed. The tempo of the speech is one of the brightest features that describe the speech of the speaker.

The analysis of collected data is based on recording the speech of participants and then transcription of it. Two things are taken into consideration and are the main focus of the analysis, phonemic features and tempo. Phonemic features and differences are detected after the transcription of recordings. The tempo is also found out in the recordings. The speed of the speech is calculated by the number of words that the respondent produced during one minute. The qualitative interview allows to find out the opinion of the society about dialects of Kazakh language. Therefore, analysis is both quantitative and qualitative.

## **Results and Data analysis**

There were 30 participants, 15 males and 15 females, aged 18-25 years old who participated in this research. All of them are native Kazakh speakers. The participants were from the following regions of Kazakhstan, Akmola oblast, Almaty oblast, Zhambyl oblast, South

Kazakhstan oblast, Kyzylorda oblast, Karaganda oblast, East Kazakhstan oblast, Pavlodar oblast, North Kazakhstan oblast, Kostanay oblast, Aktobe oblast, West Kazakhstan oblast, Atyrau oblast and Mangystau oblast. Here is the information about speakers who participated in this research and their places of origin.

**Table 1. Number of the speakers and information about the origins of speakers**

Regions of Kazakhstan	Speakers
Akmola oblast	Speaker #24, Speaker #23, Speaker #13
Almaty oblast	Speaker #28, Speaker #25, Speaker #11, Speaker #4
Zhambyl oblast	Speaker #27, Speaker #15
South Kazakhstan oblast	Speaker #26, Speaker #16, Speaker #7
Kyzylorda oblast	Speaker #1
Karaganda oblast	Speaker #22, Speaker #6
East Kazakhstan oblast	Speaker #20, Speaker #18, Speaker #17, Speaker #3, Speaker #2
Pavlodar oblast	Speaker #21
North Kazakhstan oblast	Speaker #19
Kostanay oblast	Speaker #10
Aktobe oblast	Speaker #14, Speaker #9
West Kazakhstan oblast	Speaker #30, Speaker #5
Atyrau oblast	Speaker #12, Speaker #8

Mangystau oblast	Speaker #29
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### The results from the method “Frog, Where Are You?”

The data analysis from the method “Frog, Where Are You?” revealed some differences between the lexical and grammatical features of the speakers from different regions. For example, the Kazakh words **айқай** and **айғай** meaning ‘shouting’. These are two variants of the same word and participants are using them based on their preferences. It was found out that the verb **айқайлап** was used by the speakers #16, #14, #26, #29, #4, #8, #12, #7, #22 and **айғайлап** was used by the speakers #2, #3, #6, #5, #23, #30, #19, #11, #20. **Айқайлап** was used mostly by the speakers of Western and Southern regions, while **айғайлап** was used mostly by the speakers of the Northern and Eastern regions. It may be not a regional trend but still, it is a feature that needs attention. I will focus mostly on phonetic features and differences in the speech of the speakers. For example, in both words, **айғайлап** and **айқайлап**, speakers from Western regions pronounced them **ајваләп** and **ајқаләп**, while others were pronouncing **ајвајлар** and **ајқајлар**. Therefore, it is possible to say that there is phonetic feature identifies the speakers of the dialect of Western regions.

### Phonetic analysis #1

Here is the sentence from the narration of one of the speakers with a highlighted word, which met in every speech-event of the speakers.

*Содан екеуі терезені ашып **шығып**, қайдасың деп айқайлап іздеп жатқан кезде ит басындағы банкасымен бірге терезеден құлап кетеді.*

“Later, these two opened the window and while he was shouting and looking for the frog, the dog with a jar who **climbed** on a window falls from it.”

The Kazakh word **шығып/шығу** (the infinitive form) means to exit/to climb and it is often used in a different context in the sentence. The word **шығу** is pronounced differently among various speakers, which is represented in the table below.

**Table 2.**

The speaker and specific form of <i>шыгу</i>	Phonetic transcription
Speaker 1- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 2- <i>шығады</i>	çəкəдə
Speaker 3- <i>шығып</i>	təкəp
Speaker 4- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 5- <i>шығып</i>	çəp
Speaker 6- <i>шығып</i>	çəp
Speaker 7- <i>шығады</i>	çəкəдə
Speaker 8- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 9- <i>шығып</i>	çəк
Speaker 10- <i>шығады</i>	çəкəт
Speaker 11- <i>шығады</i>	çəкəдə
Speaker 12- <i>шығып</i>	çəк
Speaker 13- <i>шығады</i>	çəкəдə
Speaker 14- <i>шығып</i>	çəк
Speaker 15- <i>шығады</i>	çəкəдə
Speaker 16- <i>шығады</i>	çəкəт
Speaker 17- <i>шығып</i>	təкəp

Speaker 18- <i>шығады</i>	çəkadə
Speaker 19- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 20- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 21- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 22- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 23- <i>шығады</i>	çəkadə
Speaker 24- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 25- <i>шығады</i>	çəkadə
Speaker 26- <i>шығады</i>	çəkat
Speaker 27- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 28- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 29- <i>шығып</i>	çəкəp
Speaker 30- <i>шығады</i>	çəkadə

The most vivid difference in pronunciation features is represented by the speakers #3 and #17 who pronounce the word *шығып* tɛəvəp, while the majority pronounced çəкəp. Speakers #14, #12 and #9 pronounced it as çəv and speaker #5 pronounced çəp. Another key difference is visible is the pronunciation of the word *шығады* by the speakers #26 and #16 who pronounce them çəkat, while others were pronouncing them çəkadə.

Based on these differences, speakers #3 and #17 can be grouped as representatives of a dialect that is spoken in the Eastern regions of Kazakhstan. The speakers #14, #12 and #9 are represent phonetic features that belong to the dialect of Western regions. I think that speaker #5 can represent it too because the speaker also reduced the number of sounds produced in the

word. The speaker shortened it too, as did speakers #14, #12 and #9 did it. As in the case with the words **айғайлап** and **айқайлап**, speakers from Western regions pronounced them **ајваләр** and **ајқаләр** and shortened it. It appears that one of the features of the speech of the representatives of the dialect of Western regions is shortening word pronunciation.

### Phonetic analysis #2

Here is another sentence from the narration of one of the speakers with a highlighted word, met in every speech-event of the speakers.

*Сөйтiп, араның ұясының қасында тесiкте құмырсқаның ұясына ұқсайтын жерден де бала құрбақаны iздейдi.*

“The boy was looking for his **frog** in the anthill near the beehive”

Frog in the Kazakh language is **құрбақа**; however, there are other variants like **тарбақа**, **бақа** or **көлбақа**. **Құрбақа** and **тарбақа** are synonyms, they are frog types that can be found both at land and in water. While **бақа** and **көлбақа** are frog types that can be found only in water or near the water.

**Table 3.**

The speaker and specific form of <i>бақа</i>	Phonetic transcription
Speaker 1- <i>құрбақа</i>	qʊɾbæqɑ
Speaker 2- <i>бақа</i>	bæqɑ
Speaker 3- <i>бақа</i>	bæqæ
Speaker 4- <i>құрбақа</i>	qʊɾbæqɑ
Speaker 5- <i>бақа</i>	bɑqɑ
Speaker 6- <i>бақа</i>	bæqɑ
Speaker 7- <i>құрбақа</i>	qʊɾbɑqɑ

Speaker 8- <i>κῡρβακα</i>	qurbæqa
Speaker 9- <i>βακα</i>	bæqa
Speaker 10- <i>βακα</i>	bæqa
Speaker 11- <i>βακα</i>	baqa
Speaker 12- <i>βακα</i>	bæqa
Speaker 13- <i>βακα</i>	baqa
Speaker 14- <i>βακα</i>	baqa
Speaker 15- <i>κῡρβακα</i>	qurbaqa
Speaker 16- <i>κῡρβακα</i>	qurbæqa
Speaker 17- <i>βακα</i>	bæqa
Speaker 18- <i>βακα</i>	baqa
Speaker 19- <i>βακα</i>	baqa
Speaker 20- <i>βακα</i>	bæqa
Speaker 21- <i>ταρβακα</i>	tarbaqa
Speaker 22- <i>κῡρβακα</i>	qurbaqa
Speaker 23- <i>βακα</i>	bæqa
Speaker 24- <i>βακα</i>	bæqa
Speaker 25- <i>κῡρβακα</i>	qurbaqa
Speaker 26- <i>κῡρβακα</i>	qurbæqa
Speaker 27- <i>βακα</i>	baqa

Speaker 28- <i>бақа</i>	baqæ
Speaker 29- <i>бақа</i>	baqa
Speaker 30- <i>бақа</i>	bæqæ

There are differences in the pronunciation of the words *бақа* and *құрбақа*. *Бақа* and *құрбақа* pronounced as baqa and qurbaqa by speakers #29, #27, #19, #18, #14, #11, #5 and #25, #22, #15, #7 respectively. Other speakers pronounced it as bæqa. Some rare cases like bæqæ, baqæ and qurbæqa are present too. The word choice between *бақа* and *құрбақа* is also important. The majority is using *бақа* and only speakers #26, #25, #22, #16, #15, #8, #7, #4 and #1 are using the word *құрбақа*.

Based on these differences, speakers #26, #25, #22, #16, #15, #8, #7, #4 and #1 can be grouped as speakers of the dialect of South Kazakhstan regions.

**Table 4. Tempo of the speech**

Regions of Kazakhstan	Speakers
Akmola oblast	94 words per minute
Almaty oblast	86 words per minute
Zhambyl oblast	72 words per minute
South Kazakhstan oblast	97 words per minute
Kyzylorda oblast	85 words per minute
Karaganda oblast	83 words per minute
East Kazakhstan oblast	88 words per minute
Pavlodar oblast	68 words per minute

North Kazakhstan oblast	70 words per minute
Kostanay oblast	65 words per minute
Aktobe oblast	113 words per minute
West Kazakhstan oblast	94 words per minute
Atyrau oblast	83 words per minute
Mangystau oblast	77 words per minute

### **Analysis of the tempo of the speech**

The data is gathered from each speaker (from beginning, middle and end of the story) so that the data is more accurate. The number of words produced in one minute and its average per region was calculated. Akmola oblast, Karaganda oblast, Kostanay oblast, Pavlodar oblast, North Kazakhstan and East Kazakhstan oblast together conditionally form Northeastern dialect with 78 words per minute of average speech tempo. While West Kazakhstan oblast, Aktau oblast, Atyrau oblast and Mangystau oblast together are conditionally part of Western dialect with 91.75 words per minute of average speech tempo. The last Southern dialect conditionally formed from South Kazakhstan oblast, Almaty oblast, Zhambyl oblast and Kyzylorda oblast with 85 words per minute of average speech tempo. The overall result demonstrates that the speakers of a Western dialect are speakers with the highest speech tempo among all Kazakh dialect speakers. Second is the speakers of Southern dialect and the last one is the speakers of Northeastern dialect.

### **The results of Qualitative Interview**

**Table 5.**

	Kazakh	50%
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The language that is used mostly	Russian	50%
The language that was dominant in childhood	Kazakh	90%
	Russian	10%
Kazakh language is different in different regions	Yes	83.3%
	No	16.7%
Kazakh language that is strange or different	Yes	86.7%
	No	13.3%
Hearing different Kazakh language	It is funny	6.7%
	It is offensive	3.3%
	It is unpleasant	23.3%
	It is OK	66.7%
Attitude towards dialects	Positive	20%
	Neutral	60%
	Negative	20%

### **Analysis of Qualitative interview**

The data that was gathered from the Qualitative interview show that the Kazakh language was dominant among young people aged 18-25 in their childhood and family (90%), while Russian was not so popular (10%). However, later the use of the Russian language increased and half of the participants use Russian on a daily basis and another half still mostly uses the Kazakh

language. 83.3% of participants believe that there are differences in the Kazakh language in different regions, and 86.7% of them had experience of Kazakh language that can be characterized as strange or different. Almost all of the participants stated that they had an experience when in conversation in the Kazakh language they could understand from which region a person is based on how they spoke. Mostly, participants easily understand if a person is from Western or Southern regions. They provided examples of verbs with distinct suffixes. For example, speakers from Western regions often add suffix *шuuu* to infinitive form of the verb in their oral speech, while speakers from Southern regions often add suffix *сай*. The Kazakh verb *шық* in Western dialect would sound as *шықшuuu* and in Southern dialect as *шықсай*. Mostly people divided regional variations of Kazakh language based on regions like North, South, East, West and Centre. Participants believe that there are regional variations and dialects of the Kazakh language. However, their attitude towards them varies, 66.7% of participants feel okay about experiencing regional variations, however, 23.3% of them hear different Kazakh language variety as unpleasant. In rare cases, participants feel offended and some of them find variations funny. Overall, 60% of participants are neutral towards existence of dialects of Kazakh language, while the remaining are divided equally being positive (20%) or negative (20%) about it.

### **Discussion and Limitations**

This research is not the one that allows me to make big conclusions about how many dialects are in the Kazakh language, however, at this stage, at least it demonstrates that there are indeed differences between the speakers of Kazakh language, which can be used to categorize speakers into regional groups and regional varieties of the language (dialects). The phonetic features that were found out in this research allow having probably three groups of speakers. One group is the speakers of a dialect of Western regions with its vivid phonetic features. Another group is the speakers of the dialect of Eastern regions with their own phonetic differences. The third group of speakers may be representatives of the dialect of Southern regions.

There are limitations to this research too. One of them is, of course, a small number of participants. In order to make research of this kind, it is necessary to have a larger number of participants. Other limitations are the pressure of time and the situation in the country, which do not allow taking interviews from people face-to-face and improving the data that was gathered. The data too can have limited validity if the speaker was born in one place and lived a long time in another place. It may affect the speech patterns of the speaker significantly, which in turn changes his speech and the data gathered for the research.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, this research tried to uncover some cases of the dialectology of the Kazakh language. It was possible to find out that there are dialects of the Kazakh language. In spite of the fact that I was only able to analyze just a very small number of features, my early results show that there are at least three dialects of Kazakh language. The research demonstrated several differences among the speech of speakers including grammatical, lexical and phonetic features of the language. Based on these differences it is possible to conclude that there are dialects of Western, Eastern and Southern Kazakhstan regions. There can be more dialects and it needs more research to discover them and to prove the findings of this research too.

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This project represents my own original work in accordance with Nazarbayev University's

Student Code of Conduct

Signature: Kairat Askhat Yerzhanuly