

opción

Revista de Antropología, Ciencias de la Comunicación y de la Información, Filosofía,
Linguística y Semiótica, Problemas del Desarrollo, la Ciencia y la Tecnología

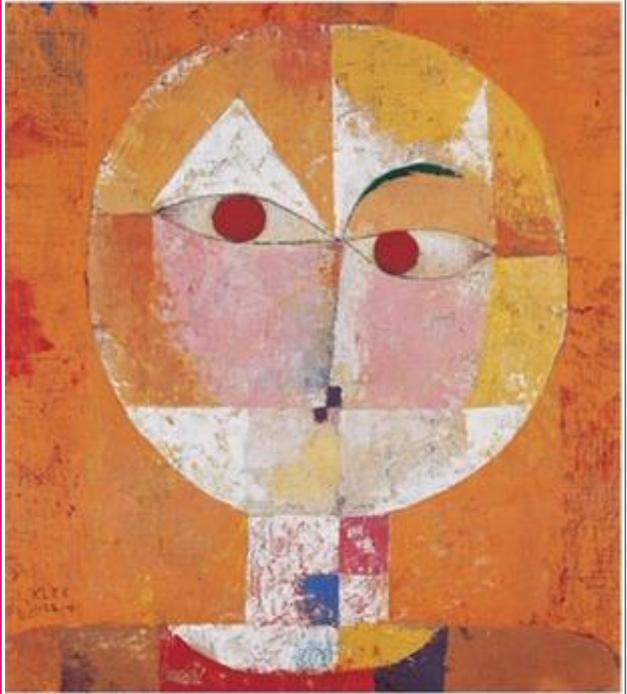
Año 35, 2019, Especial N°

23

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

ISSN 1012-1537/ ISSNe: 2477-9385

Depósito Legal pp 198402ZU45



Universidad del Zulia
Facultad Experimental de Ciencias
Departamento de Ciencias Humanas
Maracaibo - Venezuela

The role of the Russian language in the determination of Kazakh students

Ainur A. Baimurzina¹

¹Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050040, al-Farabi Avenue, 71,

baimurzina.ainura@yandex.ru

Aigul B. Amirbekova²

²Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050010, Kurmangazy St., 29

Amirbekova.Aigul@yandex.ru

Almagul A. Khabiyeva³

³Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, 050010, Kurmangazy St.

Khabiyeva.Almagul@yandex.ru

Gaukhar O. Abitova⁴

⁴M. Auezov South Kazakhstan State University, Shymkent, Republic of Kazakhstan, 160012, Taukekhan ave.

Abitova.Gaukhar@yandex.ru

Abstract

The article examines the role of the Russian language in the language identity of Kazakhstan students, in the context of the country's ethnolinguistic diversity and the continued dominance of the Russian language. The data collection method consisted of a mass survey and the data were analyzed statistically. The findings demonstrate that proficiency in specific languages and language choice are factors of socialization of Kazakh university students. In conclusion, the government of multinational and multi-confessional Kazakhstan should maintain and develop the existing balanced language policy: to develop and support all languages of the peoples of Kazakhstan along with the state language.

Keywords: Language, Russian, Identity, Youth, Kazakhstan.

El papel de la lengua rusa en la determinación de los estudiantes kazajos

Resumen

El artículo examina el papel del idioma ruso en la identidad lingüística de los estudiantes de Kazajstán, en el contexto de la diversidad etnolingüística del país y el dominio continuo del idioma ruso. El método de recolección de datos consistió en una encuesta masiva y los datos fueron analizados estadísticamente. Los resultados demuestran que el dominio de idiomas específicos y la elección de idiomas son factores de socialización de los estudiantes universitarios kazajos. En conclusión, el gobierno de Kazajstán multinacional y multiconfesional debe mantener y desarrollar la política lingüística equilibrada existente: desarrollar y apoyar todos los idiomas de los pueblos de Kazajstán junto con el idioma del estado.

Palabras clave: idioma, ruso, identidad, juventud, Kazajstán.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a multi-ethnic country, Kazakhstan is committed to creating conditions for tolerant communication: from the first steps of state-building, the Law on Languages was given a multicultural orientation. Noting the need to expand the social functions of the Kazakh language as the state language, the Law on Languages and the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan provide for the development of other languages among the people of Kazakhstan. Russian, which is the language of pervasive, quasi-official use in the Republic of Kazakhstan and retains the status of the language of international communication, is used widely to interact with other peoples and

cultures in the post-Soviet space. Other languages are spoken to express national identity and the preservation of cultural, ethnic, and national and cultural characteristics among the peoples of Kazakhstan.

The preservation of the original cultures of all the peoples living in Kazakhstan in the context of globalization is becoming a necessary condition for maintaining social consolidation. One component that has a powerful impact is language. Consequently, language planning and language policy in multinational countries, including Kazakhstan, should be carried out with interethnic and interreligious harmony and civil unity. Including the use of the state language to develop and support the languages of other nationalities. This is important for Kazakhstan, as it develops and implements strategic, political, and socioeconomic objectives toward the modernization of the country. The key role of young people as a social group in fulfilling these tasks is becoming increasingly obvious.

Having consolidated the achievements of 20 years of independence, Kazakhstan intends to confidently move toward the goal of becoming one of the 30 developed countries of the world in the third decade of the 21st century. In these circumstances, great hope and responsibility are placed on young people, who will carry the baton of creative affairs of the older generation, raise the bar of national competitiveness even higher, ensure Kazakhstan's prosperity and world recognition in the XXI century (NAZARBAYEV, 2012).

Indeed, the young people of Kazakhstan—a generation that differs from other groups of the population on health, intellectual activity, and mobility levels—lead an active lifestyle, are engaged in self-education, quickly learn new technologies, develop the necessary skills for self-realization, and participate in international volunteer organizations. The processes taking place among today's youth are integral to resolving the more general social problems of Kazakhstan's society.

Student youth comprise a social group of a certain age, engaged in humanities and sciences education and vocational training in secondary and higher education. They will occupy niches in the fields of professional and managerial activities. The perspectives and values of this age group are of practical and theoretical interest because they characterize a certain sociocultural section of society (GAFFAR ET AL., 2019).

Student youth, as the most active part of modern society, are particularly interesting, because they are preparing and searching for new social roles as they form their attitudes, interests, and worldviews. Of particular importance is their self-expression of individuality, on the one hand, and their belonging to certain subcultures, on the other. There are nonlinguistic markers or tools of identity, such as clothing, shopping preferences, and more. And one of the important instruments of such self-identification is language, which is also a tool for the

realization of creative needs (KALASHNIKOVA & KALASHNIKOV 2014; ROHAETI, 2019).

1.1. SETTING OF THE PROBLEM

The main objectives of the study were determined by the need to obtain information on these aspects of the language situation: (1) the level of educational attainment of young people in the state, (2) their use of Russian and other languages, (3) the social preferences for the use of languages in various spheres of life, and (4) the nature of sociolinguistic preferences of the young population. This article emphasizes the role of the Russian language in language identity, as an excerpt from broader data concerning all languages in Kazakhstan.

Like most post-Soviet states, Kazakhstan has experienced a drastic change in the cultural, ideological, and political of its educational curricula. Today, it is difficult to find a monolingual person, especially among young people. For residents of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the issue of bilingualism is manifested primarily in National-Russian bilingualism. Citizens in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries were given the opportunity to upgrade the role of national languages, to preserve Russian language as a language of regional communication, science, culture, and actively explore other languages and to enter the global arena, as part of the transformations, in economic and social

conditions, the establishment of a new state, and freedom to express ethnic identities.

Since independence, a new generation has focused on values other than those from the Soviet period, in part creating a new language situation. Nevertheless, most researchers recognize that, although the state-sanctioned Kazakh language is legally assigned the functions of consolidating the people, the Russian language functions de facto in accordance with the law on an equal basis, and it retains its position as a language of ethnic interaction. In this regard, the article analyzes the role of the Russian language in the language identity among Kazakh student youth. The results can be used in language planning and policy by the Republic of Kazakhstan.

2. METHODOLOGY

A written sociolinguistic survey was used for data collection between September 15 and 30, 2017, on the topic of the linguistic identity of Kazakh youth. It queried the linguistic characteristics of participants in three areas: knowledge of languages, use of languages, and attitude toward languages. The sample included students of three to four courses in the Department of Philology and World languages at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Researchers took the participants' consent for this survey and informed them that their

answers would be used only for scientific aims. Their identities were kept confidential. In total, 250 people submitted questionnaires. Of that total, 30.5 % were in their 3rd year and 69.5 % in their 4th year; 39.2 % were men and 60.8 % of women. The sample included 60.8 % identifying as Kazakhs; as Russian, 35.2 %; as other nationalities, 4 %. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 24 years. The data collection method consisted of a mass survey. The data were analyzed statistically, as described below.

Experimental research is based on the following theoretical principles: identity is expressed in social behavior, and identity choice is rational. The basic definitions of the research are as follows: the language of communication is the language most used in important areas of youth activity, mother tongue is the first and naturally learned language. These may or may not be the same language or dialect. The questionnaire begins with a greeting:

Dear participant! The Department of General Linguistics and European Languages of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and the Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics conduct a survey to study the language identity of student youth. Please give exact answers to the questions below. The form is confidential. Your answers will be used only for scientific purposes. We sincerely thank you for participating in the study.

The questionnaire consisted of the following parts: the passport part contains questions about age, gender, nationality, and place of residence; attitude toward the native and/or state languages; language selection; and knowledge of language/languages. Of these, five were open and six were closed questions. The authors developed the questionnaire based on the sociolinguistic research questionnaire, *New linguistic identity in a transforming society: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan* (SULEIMENOVA ET AL., 2005; ARAÚJO ET AL, 2018).

3. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The questionnaire responses show that 57.2 % of respondents consider their native language to be Kazakh; 40.8 %, Russian; and 2 %, other languages. The main language of communication is Russian, although there is a tendency to reduce its use. 10 % of respondents who chosen Russian as their native language also indicated the Kazakh language in response to the question, what language do you use at work/among friends?

In general, 90 % of the respondents use Russian to work on the Internet, 72 % use Russian in state institutions and banks, and 60 % choose Russian to watch TV and listen to the radio. These results indicate a wide prevalence of the Russian language among working

and reading young people. The distribution of respondents' answers to the question of what languages do you prefer for education for yourself, your children/grandchildren? are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Percent of responses to the question, what language do you prefer for education (for yourself, your children/grandchildren)?

Languages	% of all respondents
Kazakh	85,2
Russian	80,8
English	76,4
other languages (write)	-
difficult to answer	0,8

Students' answers to the question do you agree with the opinion that knowledge of this language is necessary? are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Percent of responses to the question, do you agree with the opinion that knowledge of this language is necessary?

Languages	Agree	Disagree	Difficult to answer
Kazakh	241		9
Russian	232	6	12
English	232	2	16
Chinese	102	51	97
Arabic	73	145	32

Data analysis shows that most students are willing to learn the second and third languages. 88 % of Kazakh respondents agree that it is necessary to know the Russian language, and 98 % of the Russian respondents think that it is necessary to know the Kazakh language.

Students understand the need for knowledge of the state and Russian languages, as well as learning foreign languages. For example, 93 % of all respondents consider it necessary to speak English, and 41 % of respondents express a desire to speak Chinese. Arabic was popular in the responses of respondents (KARAULOV, 2006).

Respondents were asked about their level of language proficiency. Russian was marked by all respondents, regardless of nationality, as the language of communication. This is especially true for those who identify as Russian. For the rest of the respondents, Russian was combined with an ethnic language, e.g., Russian and Kazakh, Russian and Uzbek. Kazakh and Russian students answered the question about the degree of proficiency in the following way: 92 % of Kazakh respondents claim that they know Russian well, while 66 % of Russian respondents indicate that they know Kazakh well. Some 81 % of all respondents noted, it is equally convenient to communicate with people in Kazakh and Russian languages (NAZARBAYEV & NURSULTAN, 2018).

Importantly, Russian dominates as the language of choice, despite the multiethnic and multilingual abilities of respondents (SHALGIMBEKOVA, 2013). We intend to continue this research on the roles of English, Kazakh, Russian, and other commonly used languages in the identity-forming processes of Kazakh university students; and 2) the roles of these languages in the identities of state institution workers (HUMBOLDT, 1985).

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

From our results and the results of perennial sociolinguistic studies by Kazakhstani scientists, it is possible to say that the language identities of the youth of Kazakhstan are formed from Kazakh-Russian bilingualism, secondly, speakers of predominantly Russian, National-Kazakh-Russian bilingualism. To the question, what languages do you prefer for education? 85.2 % of respondents indicated the Kazakh language; the Russian language indicates that 80.8% of the English language indicated 76.4 % of the respondents. These results show a significant role of the Russian language in the education of Kazakhstan, as well as the positive promotion of the policy of trilingual education.

In the process of globalization, all countries become interdependent. Therefore, we cannot develop without bilingual, multilingual, and multicultural education. In Kazakhstan, a unique policy of trilingualism is pursued, aimed at mastering three languages at once: Kazakh, Russian, and English. It should be noted that the Russian language essentially coexists and competes with the English and Kazakh languages. Also, it is necessary to emphasize that it competes with the English language in the field of information dissemination and education because a language choice in working with information and education determines the importance of that language and the scope of the active functioning of the language (SULEIMENOVA, 2010; HARIADI ET AL, 2019).

The relevance of multilingualism has become apparent in Kazakhstan. The requirement of a multilingual policy is necessary for the expansion of the political, economic, scientific, and cultural relations of Kazakhstan with various countries of the world. Russian language plays an important role in the above processes. It is well known that bilingualism is of interest to other languages and cultures while maintaining a positive ethnocultural and linguistic identity. And the Russian language serves primarily as an instrument of communication and as a symbol of the unity of many nationalities living peacefully in Kazakhstan. Therefore, in order to preserve peace and avoid inter-ethnic conflicts in the multinational environment of Kazakhstani youth, it is necessary to preserve and develop knowledge of the Russian language. To the question, which of the following statements about languages apply to you? Participants chose among the following answer choices:

- 1) I try to use Kazakh as often as possible.
- 2) I answer in Kazakh if anyone addresses me in Kazakh.
- 3) I answer in Kazakh if anyone addresses me in Russian.
- 4) I answer in Russian if anyone addresses me in Russian.
- 5) I answer in Russian if anyone addresses me in Kazakh.

6) I do not like it if anyone speaks Kazakh in the presence of those who do not know Kazakh.

7) I do not like it if anyone speaks Russian in the presence of those who do not know Russian.

8) I feel uncomfortable when anyone addresses me in Kazakh.

9) I feel uncomfortable when anyone addresses me in Russian.

10) It is equally convenient for me to communicate with people in Kazakh and Russian.

Various answers were received, including the options that I feel uncomfortable when they address me in Russian and I answer in Kazakh if they address me in Russian. But 84 % of respondents replied that it is equally convenient for them to communicate with people in Kazakh and Russian. And 86 % of respondents said that they answer in Russian if anyone addresses them in Russian. Also, 78 % replied that they do not like it if anyone speaks Kazakh in the presence of those who do not know Kazakh and 80 % noted that they do not like it if anyone speaks Russian in the presence of those who do not know Russian. We think that these results show the tolerance of Kazakh University youth, and how tolerant they are to speakers of other languages and how successful is the language policy.

In the language policy of the country, special attention is paid to trilingualism. And the Russian language is one of the main components of this policy. The message of the former President explicitly states: The people will be wise in raising offspring, taking care of their health, education, and worldview. They will be equally fluent in Kazakh, Russian and English ... He will be a patriot of his country, known and respected throughout the world, and the implementation of this policy can be seen in education. Since, today, some of the disciplines will be taught in the state language, part in Russian and part in English.

The results of our research are in line with many previous works. One makes the following statement (Zharkynbekova et al., 2015):

Clearly, during the period of the Soviet Union, the ethnolinguistic vitality of Russians was higher and characterized by obvious features of ethnocentrism, as demonstrated by the demographic power of Russians, their political power, and the policy of Russification. And today, the degree of proficiency in the Russian language is high. The interventions aimed at maintaining and promoting Russian reflects its high demand.

As determined by Soviet language policy, the Russian language was the predominant vehicle for both interethnic and intraethnic communication in Kazakhstan. The study of language priorities within

the framework of a different language policy and a different sociolinguistic paradigm, especially in the field of education, is a significant indicator of the effectiveness of the language policy implemented in the country. It is aimed primarily at the revival of the Kazakh language, as well as the preservation of the general cultural functions of the Russian language and the redevelopment of the languages of the peoples of Kazakhstan.

The understanding of language preferences among students will contribute to intentional language planning and more effective implementation of language policy, considering existing and emerging opportunities and problems in the implementation of new directions, will help to identify ways to maintain the language balance in the country (SHALGIMBEKOVA, 2013).

Language identity is formed in the process of socialization. A core element of personal development, language identity marks us indelibly; however, it often remains unnoticed and taken for granted. Certain shifts in or threats to this identity invariably arouse our attention, and it becomes important to understand the reason for those changes, whether they manifest themselves immediately or gradually. Shifts in linguistic identity become particularly noticeable in instances when we are faced with another, alien identity. This is partly due to the fact that language identity has, in addition to communication, also symbolic nature. In part, this follows from a feature of the language,

that it codes knowledge that belongs exclusively to one's own group and no other.

It follows that the Russian language in the contexts of use of Kazakh youth, especially in the formation of linguistic identity, plays a significant role, as a medium of interethnic communication, but its prevalence also originates in the historical realities of Soviet policies, including language policies in the educational system that were imposed on the population for several.

5. CONCLUSION

Since knowledge of several languages in our globalizing world is considered a necessary skill, knowledge of Russian, an official language of the United Nations and a world language, is an advantage for the youth of Kazakhstan. Globalization processes in recent decades have changed the nature of language identity. Intensive processes of mixing and blending of cultures make it urgent to preserve the diversity of languages. The proportion of people who consider themselves to be representatives of not one but two or more ethnic cultures, perceiving and/or using several languages as their native language, is increasing. The increasing social mobility of the population makes such groups more numerous.

These changes in society can lead to a crisis of linguistic identity. Any crisis of identity is its loss, which adversely affects the individual. That is why it is so important to prevent the crisis of linguistic identity. In this regard, the government of multinational and multi-confessional Kazakhstan should maintain and develop the existing balanced language policy: to develop and support all languages of the peoples of Kazakhstan along with the state language, including the language of international communication—Russian.

REFERENCES

- ARAÚJO, C., HENRIQUES, P. R., & MARTINI, R. G. 2018. “Virtual Learning Spaces Creation Based on the Systematic Population of an Ontology”. **Journal of Information Systems Engineering & Management**, 3(1), 07.
- GAFFAR, V., YUNIAWATI, Y., & RIDWANUDIN, O. 2019. “A Study of Outdoor Recreation Motivation and Activity Preferences”. **Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University**. Vol. 54, No. 3. <http://jsju.org/index.php/journal/article/view/297>
- HARIADI, B., SUNARTO, M. J., SUDARMANINGTYAS, P., & JATMIKO, B. 2019. “Hybrid Learning by Using Brilian Applications as One of the Learning Alternatives to Improve Learning Outcomes in College”. **International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning**, 14(10).
- HUMBOLDT, W. 1985. **Language and Philosophy of Culture**. Translated by M. I. Levina, O. A. Gulyga, A. V. Mikhailov, S. A. Starostin, M. A. Zhurinskaya. Progress. p. 349. Moscow. Russia.
- KALASHNIKOVA, A., & KALASHNIKOV, A. 2014. “On the issue of the formation of modern youth jargon”. **Bulletin of the Moscow State University of Culture and Arts**. Vol. 6, N^o 62: 222–225. Russia.

- KARAULOV, Y. 2006. **Russian Language and Linguistic Personality**. 5th ed. Moscow: Kom-Kniga. Russia.
- NAZARBAYEV, A., & NURSULTAN, K. 2018. "Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan". About languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan (with amendments and additions as of 05.24.2018). N^o 151. *Zakon.kz*, May 24. http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1008034#pos=0;0. Kazakhstan.
- NAZARBAYEV, N. 2012. "Strategy Kazakhstan-2050: A New Political Course for the Established State". *Adilet.kz*, December 14. <http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/K1200002050>. Kazakhstan.
- ROHAETI, E. E. 2019. "Building Students' Hard and Soft Skills through Innovative Teaching Approaches to Mathematics". **Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University**. Vol. 54, No. 5. <http://jsju.org/index.php/journal/article/view/366>
- SHALGIMBEKOVA, K. 2013. **The Russian language functioning in Kazakhstan's linguistic space on the example of the Kostanay region**. Bulletin of the Chelyabinsk State University. Philology. Study of Art. Vol. 73, N^o 1: 153–157. Russia
- SULEIMENOVA, E. 2010. **Dynamics of the language situation in Kazakhstan**. pp 125. Almaty. Kazakhstan.
- SULEIMENOVA, E., SHAIMERDENOVA, A., & SMAGULOVA, Z. 2005. **New Language Identity in a Transforming Society: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan**. Almaty: Kazakh University. Kazakhstan.
- ZHARKYNBEKOVA, S., AIMOLDINA, D., & AKYNOVA, A. 2015. "Cultural and language self-identification of ethnic minority groups in Kazakhstan". **Sociolinguistic Studies**. Vol. 9, N^o 2-3. Spain.



**UNIVERSIDAD
DEL ZULIA**

opción

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
Año 35, Especial No. 23 (2019)

Esta revista fue editada en formato digital por el personal de la
Oficina de Publicaciones Científicas de la Facultad Experimental
de Ciencias, Universidad del Zulia.
Maracaibo - Venezuela

www.luz.edu.ve

www.serbi.luz.edu.ve

produccioncientifica.luz.edu.ve