

# N. A. Nazarbayev and Peculiar Features of Ethnic Language Processes in Kazakhstan

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## I. INTRODUCTION

*"We will be respectful of culture and language of all people groups living in Kazakhstan" – N. A. Nazarbayev*

**Abstract**—The report focuses on such an important indicator of the nature and direction of development of ethnic and cultural processes in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as ethno linguistic situation. It is shown that, in essence, on the one hand, expresses the degree of the actual propagation and the level of use of the languages of the various ethnic communities. On the other hand, reflects the important patterns, trends and prospects of ethno-cultural and ethno-demographic processes in the Republic.

It is important to note that the ethno linguistic situation in different regions of Kazakhstan, due to its more dynamic and much more difficult to demonstrate a much greater variety of options when compared with the ethnic situation in the country. For the two major ethnic groups of the republic – Kazakh and Russian language ethno differentiating retains its value, while for the other ethnic groups observed decline in the importance of this indicator.

As you know, the language of international communication in the country is Russian. As the censuses of population, the Russian language in many areas of Northern, Central and Eastern Kazakhstan becomes a means of ethno linguistic development for most of the non-Russian population. This is most clearly illustrated by the Germans, and the Slavic ethnic groups. In this case, the Russian language is not just a means of international communication for a number of ethnic groups, and ethnic groups, it becomes a factor of ethnic self-expression.

The value of the Kazakh language as their mother tongue for the other groups of the population is small. More clearly it can be traced only to the Turkic-speaking population of the republic – Uzbeks, Uighurs, Tatars, Turks, etc. The state Kazakh language is a means of international communication in the Western and Southern Kazakhstan, with a predominance of the Kazakh population.

The report shows that the most important factor in the development of ethno-linguistic and ethno-cultural processes is bilingualism. Comparative analysis of materials census shows, first, on the increase of the proportion of bilingual population among Kazakhs and Russian, and second, to reduce the proportion of bilingual population of other ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan, and third, a higher proportion bilingual population among residents than rural residents, regardless of their ethnicity. Bilingualism is mainly of a "national Kazakh", "national Russian" or "Kazakh-national" or "Russian-national" character.

The President N. A. Nazarbayev said that the Kazakh language is the most important factor in the consolidation of the people of Kazakhstan. He therefore called on government and other state and local representative bodies fully develop the state language, to create all the necessary organizational, material and technical conditions for free and open learning the state language by all citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**Keywords**—Ethnos, ethno cultural processes, ethnolinguistic situation, mother tongue, bilingualism.

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As experience of mankind, accumulated over hundreds of centuries, shows, the issue of language is a complex phenomenon in a society and in a state.

The problem of language is one of the most important in the spiritual life of our country. Everyone knows that the language of the people is its greatest asset, because language is one of the attributes that reflect the nature of a nation and of a people. Language is a national valuable property, a tool which, throughout a person's conscious life teaches him or her art and knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and how to be an active citizen of society. Moreover, taking culture of language to a higher level is our duty, as language is a means of all actions and communication of people. As a source of spiritual wealth that does not lose its historical value, language has always represented and continues to represent a national valuable asset and precious legacy of our ancestors. Therefore, language is a phenomenon that has a huge impact on establishment of inter-ethnic culture; it is considered to be an indicator of development process of Kazakhstan's culture. In a language context in the Republic of Kazakhstan, based on the use of multilingualism and strengthening solidarity as well as mutual understanding of people groups, language should become a tool that serves to strengthen political stability based on intercultural and poly-lingual relations and interethnic concord [1].

Adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan on August 30, 1995 has helped the transition into a new period of inter-ethnic relations development in the country. On July 11, 1997, the Law "On languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan" had been published, and then a new democratic surge in the language policy occurred. Article 6 of the Law states: "Every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall have the right to use their native language, to freely choose their language of communication, education, training, and creative work. The State provides favorable conditions for studying and development of languages of the people groups in Kazakhstan. In areas which are densely inhabited by ethnic communities, their languages can be used in holding activities and event [2].

In general, the above Law can be called a major step in democratization of the language policy. The Law is not only of particular importance for a large or local nation, but also has a high political and economic, cultural and social importance in the lives of all ethnic groups and peoples living

in our republic. The essence of the law is first of all in solving the question of language from the point of view of democracy, in the formation of linguistic rights, and secondly - in preservation and prosperity of each nation and its culture in a multicultural society, and in the increase of activity and functioning of languages of ethnic people groups.

In this regard, the above Law requires equal development, operation and use of all languages. Preamble of the Law states: "This Law establishes legal basis for the functioning of languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan, responsibilities of the state in creating conditions for learning and development thereof, and provides for equal respect to all languages used in the Republic of Kazakhstan, without exception" [3].

At the Assembly of Nations of Kazakhstan President in his speech about languages offered the following: "Cultural education should contribute to the establishment of general public cooperation with the education system of national and cultural centers, mass media, and publishing industry. This facilitates many purposes, such as development of languages of all the people of Kazakhstan, improvement of the national education system, improvement of mass media activities, strengthening of legal framework for protection of national culture. In the recent time, we have been planning to adopt a language development program. This program must fully take into account the ability and potential capabilities of students and set specific objectives, based on a solid material and technical base. To that end, the state will encourage citizens' proficiency in two or more languages [4].

A man cannot know all languages in the world; however, knowing their mother tongue is the duty of every citizen. In this regard, recall the following lines of poetry by K. Myrzaliev: "Know all the languages, but respect your mother tongue".

From the address of N. A. Nazarbayev to the people of Kazakhstan, "Kazakh language is our spiritual core. Our task is to develop it, using it actively in all spheres. We must bequeath modern language to our descendants, in which our noticeable imprint would also be harmoniously added to the experience of many generations of our ancestors. This is a task that every self-respecting man must complete on by own.

The state, for its part, is doing a lot to strengthen the position of the state language. We need to continue implementation of a set of measures to promote Kazakh language.

You are aware of our policy - by 2025 95% of people in Kazakhstan must speak Kazakh language. All the conditions are being created right now in order for that to happen.

Even today more than 60% of school students are learning in the official language and all schools teach it. This means that if a child goes to school this year, in ten or twelve years we will have a whole new generation of Kazakhstani people, who all speak Kazakh language.

Thus, by 2025 Kazakh language will prevail in all spheres of life and become the language of universal communication. Our sovereignty and our independence will at last acquire that which binds the nation and cements it – the mother tongue. If every Kazakh sought to speak their native language, our language would have long ago gained the status specified in the Constitution. We forget that when we talk about Kazakh language, we must first start with ourselves. We repeat once again: let a Kazakh speak with another Kazakh in Kazakh. Only then will Kazakh language become the language of general use for all people of Kazakhstan [5].

According to the census of 2009, Tables I and II present the data on proficiency of different ethnic groups in Kazakh language (apart from the Kazakhs):

TABLE I  
ETHNIC GROUPS' PROFICIENCY IN KAZAKH LANGUAGE IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN [6]

Ethnic Groups' Proficiency in Kazakh Language in the Republic of Kazakhstan (a)							
Ethnic Groups	Total number	Including those speaking the language					
		Number of people			Percentage		
		Understand spoken language	Read fluently	including: including: Write fluently	Understand spoken language	Read fluently	including: including: Write fluently
City Residents							
Russians	3183429	806486	278859	200124	25.3	8.8	6.3
Uzbeks	307740	293904	228221	189884	95.5	74.2	61.7
Ukrainians	299351	64298	21446	15578	21.5	7.2	5.2
Uighurs	166368	155900	117306	101113	93.7	70.5	60.8
Tatars	173949	126218	69557	58569	72.6	40.0	33.7
Germans	146657	36270	15327	11601	24.7	10.5	7.9
Koreans	81754	35521	11564	8580	43.4	14.1	10.5
Turks	69660	63362	35743	30232	91.0	51.3	43.4
Azeri	62899	51103	31160	27198	81.2	49.5	43.2
Belarusian	60020	11379	4033	2906	19.0	6.7	4.8
Dungans	32211	16021	6951	5166	49.7	21.6	16.0
Kurds	26498	20533	11362	9822	77.5	42.9	37.1
Tadjiks	23388	20905	14602	11584	89.4	62.4	49.5
Poles	28972	6052	2752	1908	20.9	9.5	6.6
Chechen	23573	13296	6079	5051	56.4	25.8	21.4
Kyrgyz	17605	16313	12455	11021	92.7	70.7	62.6
Other ethnic groups	132213	55736	25957	20963	42.2	19.6	15.9

We felt it necessary to provide information about work on the development of the official language in several regions of Kazakhstan. Language policy in Akmola Region is implemented in accordance with the regional activities schedule, approved by regional akimat decree dated

September 21, 2011; target works are being carried out in 4 main areas.

In 2011 a share of population that speaks the state language in the region was 51%, in 2012–53.4%; it is expected that by the year 2015 it will amount to 64.8%, and by 2016 – to 68.3 %.

TABLE II  
ETHNIC GROUPS' PROFICIENCY IN KAZAKH LANGUAGE IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN [6]

Ethnic Groups' Proficiency in Russian Language in the Republic of Kazakhstan								
Ethnic Groups	Total number	Including those speaking the language			Percentage			
		Understand spoken language	Number of people including: Read fluently including: Write fluently	Understand spoken language	Read fluently	including: Write fluently		
City Residents								
1, 2013 publications.waset.org/16065.pdf	Russians	2344049	600272	207382	145609	25.6	8.8	6.2
	Uzbeks	125421	117862	88452	73940	94.0	70.5	59.0
	Ukrainians	171067	40578	13007	9108	23.7	7.6	5.3
	Uighurs	72996	65628	46926	39471	89.9	64.3	54.1
	Tatars	131373	93803	49932	41363	71.4	38.0	31.5
	Germans	75053	20168	8234	6058	26.9	11.0	8.1
	Koreans	68653	29292	9590	7028	42.7	14.0	10.2
	Turks	19518	16610	8975	7518	85.1	46.0	38.5
	Azeri	31043	24020	14765	12705	77.4	47.6	40.9
	Belarusian	32501	6798	2279	1572	20.9	7.0	4.8
	Dungans	6326	4556	1827	1401	72.0	28.9	22.1
	Kurds	5663	4320	2191	1836	76.3	38.7	32.4
	Tadjiks	4432	2913	1557	1283	65.7	35.1	28.9
	Poles	12767	3345	1310	926	26.2	10.3	7.3
	Chechen	11585	6257	2810	2262	54.0	24.3	19.5
	Kyrgyz	12028	11036	8185	7114	91.8	68.0	59.1
	Other ethnic groups	87153	35945	15999	12690	41.2	18.4	14.6

To date, there are 16 districts, 2 municipal and 1 regional state language teaching centers functioning in Akmola Region; in 2012 such centers have also opened in Enbekshilder, Esil, Zharkyn and Astrakhan Regions and in the city of Kokshetau.

In the region, under state social procurement, services are rendered in teaching Kazakh language to members of ethno-cultural associations. Through this project, each year 120 people of other nationalities have the opportunity to learn the state language. "Accelerated learning of the state language using Innovative technologies and interactive teaching methods" Project is being implemented in this area.

All necessary conditions for learning native language by representative of each ethnicity are created in the region; 41 ethno-cultural associations in the region operate along this line. To date, 200 children (Kazakh, Russian, Polish, German, Korean, Ingush, Tatars and Armenians) are learning in 8 departments at Shanyrak language teaching center.

Share of documents in Kazakh language in every institution is the main issue under attention of language development directorate. In 2011, this figure throughout the region was 86.6%, and in April 2012 it reached 87.5%.

Wide promotion of language in the mass media is one of the main directions of language policy. There are 38 periodicals published in the region; 12 of them are only published in Kazakh and 10 - in two languages. More than 30 columns in these publications are aimed at promoting and teaching the state language.

The majority of residents of **Kostanai Region** are Russian-speaking; therefore local authorities primarily emphasize the increase in the number of educational institutions in Kazakh language. The following data proves that today the number of pre-school institutions in the state language has grown by 5.7%, and of general educational institutions - by 5.1%; the number of children learning in the native language has increased from 48% (5-6 years ago) to 59.1%.

Moreover, there is dynamics of increase of the numbers of people willing to learn the state language observed in the region. There is state support in preservation of other languages of peoples of Kazakhstan provided in the region. Sunday schools students in ethno-cultural centers are learning 9 languages (Korean, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Hebrew, German, Armenian, Polish, Greek and Tatar languages). Scientific practices of the centers are closely related to the work of Scientific and Methodological Board, established on the basis of the regional center. Methodical Association meetings are regularly held at the center; materials of methodical association are issued in the form of a collected volume [7].

As for **Atyrau Region**, 86 of 116 kindergartens provide education in Kazakh, 1 - in Russian and 29 in both languages. There are 137 Kazakh, 5 Russian schools; and in 55 schools educational process is conducted in 2 languages. There is an increasing interest in the adult population in learning the state language. The official language is widely used in the mass media. Generally, there are 51 published media operating in

the region: 16 of them are in Kazakh language, 7 – in Russian, 23 Kazakh and Russian, and 5 – in three languages.

In order to implement Triunity of Languages cultural project, in order to improve the quality of English teaching in the districts of the **West Kazakhstan Region**, efforts have been commenced to engage expatriate experts. At the moment, works are carried out annually to explore the level of national education and teaching of state language in pre-school educational institutions of the region, teaching Kazakh language in Russian-language schools and schools with mixed languages of teaching [8]. Apart from the national language, conditions are created for the development of languages, cultures and traditions of all ethnicities and peoples living in Kazakhstan.

Due to the existing historical facts, Kazakh-Russian bilingualism has been largely dominating in Kazakhstan society. Scholar B. Hasanov believes about socio-linguistic situation in the modern independent Kazakhstan, “Language policy of Kazakhstan is valuable. Therefore, in our country there is a new higher form of bilingualism occurring - sovereignty bilingualism” [9].

From the President’s address on bilingualism, it is obvious to everyone that proficiency in Russian language is a historical advantage of our nation. One cannot ignore the fact that it is through the Russian language that for more than one century people in Kazakhstan have been acquiring additional knowledge, broadening their horizons and social circle both within the country and abroad. The basis of modern scientific terminology are words taken from the Latin language, and in this age of information technology almost every day English language invades languages of the world through new words and concepts. And we must keep up with these processes” [5].

In recent times, “Kazakhstan has been becoming a social space for trilinguism”. Everyone clearly understands that this is a test coming from the goal of entering the group of fifty most competitive countries in the world, and hopes that this will not prevent the use of the state language. The President's Address to the people of Kazakhstan from 2007 clearly indicates the place and the status of the three languages and clearly defines their functions: “I suggest that we begin a step-by-step implementation of Triunity of Languages cultural project. Kazakhstan should be seen around the world as a highly educated country, with a population that uses three languages. They are: Kazakh – the official language, Russian as the language of international communication and English - the language of successful integration into global economy” [9].

Scientist N. Ualiuly expressed his opinion about this as follows “... The first step is to lay the three pillars of the state language (management, information activities in the field of science and education). In the languages triunity formula, first of all, it is necessary to resolve this issue; the state language must be at a high level. All public representatives of Kazakhstan have acknowledged that the Kazakh language is the language of an ethnicity that forms the state, its indispensable pillar; therefore the Kazakh language has received a constitutional status. Thus, the state should first of

all take responsibility to the international community for its destiny”. Generally, the more languages a person speaks, the more opportunities he or she has. The fact that our sovereign state has taken a triune language policy as a basis and a landmark for the future is the requirement of today's information-oriented society and time, which always dictates its own terms [9].

The words of the President N. A. Nazarbayev, “As I have said before, new generation of Kazakhstan people must be fluent in at least three languages - Kazakh, Russian and English. In Europe, multilingualism is a normal occurrence, and we absolutely must come to that. I urge all parents to educate their children in three languages. This is important for their future”, have become a platform for introduction of multi-language and bilingual education model [10]. Government-sponsored program of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the use and development of languages for 2011-2020 gives great importance to education of a multicultural individual who respects cultures and traditions of the people living in our country, and is fluent in three languages. The state program focuses on the study of languages. In the process of learning of language subjects, students are introduced to the features typical of each nation and every language; they fully realize the diversity of national norms of each language, as well as the fact that they cannot be assessed or compared; each citizen is understanding of these features, specific to languages and understands the importance of developing a sense of respect for other nationalities. Yet many attach importance to learning languages of other ethnicities and forget that their native language is the Kazakh language. As our President said, “let a Kazakh speak with another Kazakh in Kazakh”.

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