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Language Situation in Kazakhstan in the Modern Period: Ideology, Policy and Planning

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Abstract

This article presents the overall analysis of the contemporary language situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The principle of objectivity is the central approach of this article that considers historical phenomena and processes in details taking into account all contradictions. As a result, the authors would agree with those scholars who have a positive prognosis on language policy in Kazakhstan and affirm that all aims will be attained in the future. It is concluded that affirmative results of language policy are maintenance of balance

between improvement of the state language status and compliance of other languages' rights in multiethnic Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Language, Policy, Kazakhstan, State program, Russification.

Situación lingüística en Kazajstán en el período moderno: ideología, política y planificación

Resumen

Este artículo presenta el análisis general de la situación del lenguaje contemporáneo en la República de Kazajstán. El principio de objetividad es el enfoque central de este artículo que considera los fenómenos y procesos históricos en detalle teniendo en cuenta todas las contradicciones. Como resultado, los autores estarían de acuerdo con aquellos académicos que tienen un pronóstico positivo sobre la política lingüística en Kazajstán y afirman que todos los objetivos se alcanzarán en el futuro. Se concluye que los resultados afirmativos de la política lingüística son el mantenimiento del equilibrio entre la mejora del estado del idioma estatal y el cumplimiento de los derechos de otros idiomas en Kazajstán multiétnico.

Palabras clave: Lenguaje, Política, Kazajstán, Programa estatal, Rusificación.

1. INTRODUCTION

The language situation is a context of practical use of language in society. Its origins and development are determined by various circumstances including interactions of language and non-language factors such as social, political, economic, psychological, historical, geographical ones. The social-political situation of present-days Kazakhstan requires adequate language policy for the poliethnic

population and takes into account peculiarities of lingual, demographical, and political situation in the country. Designing of sufficient state language policy assumes appropriate assessment of substantial language situation.

Despite state and public efforts, the state status of the Kazakh language is not implemented completely at the present time. In our mind, the rationale is that now this status is declared officially only and it is not supported by the workable mechanism provided its broad studying and use in Kazakhstan. Communication functions of dominated languages in Kazakhstan are the following: the Kazakh language is 20-25%, the Russian language is 75-80%, and other languages are no more than 5%.

After 1991 the language situation is complicated in Kazakhstan and historical researches are focused on domestic political parts of the government such as national, educational, religious, informational, and language policies. To study all of these policies let to analyze regulation issues of social relations in different spheres. Defining language policy as a separate research object allows not only to manage language relations but also to develop some holistic view on the political system of the state.

As a result, the necessity of this research is the importance of language policy studying as one of the means of power implementation in contemporary states. It is also necessary to note that this inquiry is determined by a comprehensive analysis of a

sophisticated process of language reforms in Kazakhstan in its political aspects. This analysis provides to develop data of generalizing researches on the political system studying modern Kazakhstan. The conceptual idea of the inquiry is that language policy is the most important part of national state policy defined preservation of statehood.

Political aspects of language relations development are studied insufficiently in contemporary Kazakh historiography that justifies the current research. Presently there are varied academic publications that analyze language situations, language ideology, and language policy in Kazakhstan. The majority of scholars maintain that study and development of the state and native languages in Kazakhstan, their use in different social spheres demonstrate the most significant agency of democratization as well as their fundamental, national and professional demands (KAZAKPAEV, 2009).

The present language situation in Kazakhstan requires an objective study of language processes in different regions of the country and building of optimal language environment taken into account the actual spreading of the state language and its practical capabilities to expand its social functions (NYSANBAEVA, 2003).

2. METHODOLOGY

The principle of objectivity is the central approach of this article that considers historical phenomena and processes in details taking into account all contradictions and let to analyze all data in the

complex. Using the principle of objectivity social and political factors affected language policy implementation are included in this analysis. This principle also helps to study various data from different sources.

The fundamental basis of research methodology is the historical principle in human sciences that considers the development and changes of processes and situations from a historical perspective. Additionally, such generalized methods as analysis and synthesis as well as specific-historical methods included descriptive, problematic-chronological, and structural ones are used in this paper to do the whole and objective inquiry (ZHANGAZY, 2011).

The conceptual idea of this paper is the cultural-historical or civilizational interpretation of the historical process. It explains that social behavior is only partly controlled by their material interests and social status. Most probably, it is determined by religion, age, gender, education, and others. This conceptual approach helps to consider language issues from advanced positions. In particular, the preliminary conclusions of the article take into consideration some circumstances of the language situation in independent Kazakhstan meant that derussification and gradual moving to the domination of the state language in Kazakhstan should be step by step, loyal, and taking into account national linguistic legacy of the Soviet past (FIERMAN, 2010).

3. RESULT

According to the Republic of Kazakhstan's Law, the state language is Kazakh and requirements to the state language and its status are basic parameters of the state language functioning which the Kazakh language should approximate gradually to (PHILLIPSON, 1992).

There are two State programs on functioning and the development of languages in Kazakhstan for 2001-2010 and 2011-2020 are accepted to boost the implementation of the Republic of Kazakhstan's Law on languages. The recent state program for 2011-2020 has the following key aims: increment of the adult population speaking Kazakh to 20% in 2014, to 80% in 2017, and to 95% in 2020. The key indicator of knowing the Kazakh language is taken a special linguistic examination entitled Kaztest. Regarding high school graduates, they should know the state language on B1 (intermediate) level and their amount is expected to 70% in 2017 and their total coverage to 2020. Concerning state media, increasing of Kazakh content is planned to 53% in 2014, to 60% in 2017, and to 70% in 2020. Transparency and public acceptance to open discussions decision making of onomastic committees and public satisfaction by their work should be increased gradually to 60% in 2014, to 75% in 2017, and to 90% in 2020. Terminological fund of Kazakh language is planned to order and extend to 20% in 2014, to 60% in 2017, and to 100% in 2020.

In regard to other languages in Kazakhstan, the program aims to cover 90% of the adult population to learn Russian; it also intends to study native languages by ethnic groups at national-cultural associations to 60% in 2014, to 80% in 2017, and to 90% in 2020. Concerning the English language, it is expected that the amount of population who start to speak English is increased to 10% in 2014, to 15% in 2017, and 20% in 2020. According to trilingual policy to know Kazakh, Russian and English languages, it is planned that parts of the population with three languages will grow slightly to 10% in 2014, to 12% in 2017, and to 15% in 2020 (PAVLENKO, 2007).

In recent times there are debates on accepting of Latin alphabet in Kazakhstan if that decision is expedient and perspective for the society. Adherents of the Latin alphabet indicate the contemporary experience of Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan that moved to the Roman alphabet straightway after the Soviet collapse. The process of alphabet changing in these countries encounters some problems. First of all, these problems include moral issues meant the loss of Soviet legacy as well as communication difficulties with other ethnic groups in different countries and so on. Secondly, moving to the Latin alphabet demands huge funds for education, translation of printed materials written in Cyrillic alphabets and other problems. Kazakhstan can impact the same problems, so the government and society should be prepared for these changes (CORDOVA et al, 2019).

The most significant argument of alphabet modification is that Latin typing facilitates to study foreign languages and Kazakh

language in particular. New textbooks written in the Latin alphabet can encourage Russian-speaking citizens to study the Kazakh language using Latin scripts. Furthermore, knowing Kazakh through the Latin alphabet would help them to learn foreign languages based on the Roman alphabet that primarily means the English language.

Opponents of the Latin alphabet consider this process as an infringement of the Russian language's right which has statuses of official language and the language of interethnic communication. In our mind, this status of the Russian language is compelled due to the majority of Kazakh citizens do not speak Kazakh in the present times. In perspective, when the population of Kazakhstan will speak Kazakh, the Kazakh language would be both the official language and the language of interethnic communication. It is known that in the early Soviet period different ethnic groups in Kazakhstan perceived the Kazakh language as the language of interethnic communication.

All Kazakhs of that period spoke Kazakh, so Germans, Koreans, Poles, Russian and others also spoke Kazakh. The Russification process resulted in contrary phenomenon when Kazakh-speaking citizens have to speak Russian to communicate with others. We would like to note that the process of Kazakhization should be gradual due to the multinationality of Kazakhstan. On the other hand, Kazakhization can be aimed at the growth of nationalism and reducing of Russian-Soviet legacy in many parts of intellectual and cultural heritage. Another negative consequence of alphabet changing can be the growth of the number of illiterate people who could not study Latin script.

Some opponents of the Latin alphabet suggest moving to Arabic script to survive the Islamic heritage of Kazakhs. Changing the Arabic alphabet to Latin one among Turkish language nations of the USSR in the late 1920s can be understood as the purpose of different states to modernize Islamic countries and to reduce the religious influence in societies. Akhmet Baitursynov, the most significant Kazakh linguist in the 1920s, was against of Latin alphabet and he insisted on keeping of Arabic script for the Kazakh language. He claimed that changing the alphabet from Arabic to Latin can result in the loss of the ancient cultural heritage of Kazakh and other Turkish-language nations. Baitursynov suggested improving Arabic graphics and he enhanced Arabic script and orthography of the Kazakh language in 1912, particularly, singarmo alphabet and singarmo orthography. Baitursynov's orthography was created in 1924 as the result of studying and selecting of Kazakh language's sounds. Baitursynov advocated his opinion to keep Arabic script and to reform Arabic writing in the Soviet period.

The Kazakh expert Timur Kozyrev maintains that successful changing of the Cyrillic alphabet to Latin one for the Kazakh language can be positive to strengthen Kazakhstan's sovereignty and to develop an independent political identity of Kazakh citizens.

It can be told that language loyalty and language behavior of Kazakh citizens are developed in social processes managed by language policy as a part of the state domestic policy. The status of Kazakh language as the state one stimulated the process of language

balance, regulated functional interactions between Russian and Kazakh languages, reestablished using the Kazakh language in the public sphere.

Nyissanbayeva claims that the main issue of further language policy development in Kazakhstan is the building of a positive language environment to define the functional ratio of languages when the state language has respectable placement. In fact, using of Kazakh and Russian languages is not accorded with this requirement. Practically, Kazakh and Russian languages have replaced each other in public communication and use in Kazakhstan. Presently it is possible to say that the level of Russian language using is on the level of state language usage meanwhile the Kazakh language has the status of official language. To change this situation, it is necessary to provide a wide state policy to develop the Kazakh language as the state one.

This problem emerged in the Conception of Republic of Kazakhstan's language policy of 1996 when the state status of the Kazakh language was not implemented in spite of necessary efforts. The main reason is that the state status of the Kazakh language is only declared without any tangible mechanisms guaranteed its widespread studying and using. Official documentation and office communication in the state language is peripheral. Kazakpayev affirms that unsatisfactory implementation of language policy is explained by the unfulfillment of the State programs on the language development of 1990 and 2001. He assumes that their many officials were appointed for the realization of these programs that in the end it was difficult to

define who of them were culpable for failure of language policy effectiveness.

Zhanghazy supposes three possible scenarios of state language development in Kazakhstan. The first perspective of the state language development is positive and implies that the major population in Kazakhstan will study the basic level of Kazakh language. It would be possible with effective implementation of language policy; the combination of tough requirements and auspicious conditions for mass education of Kazakh language; the role of civil society in spreading and popularization of the state language; the political willingness of President and his efforts to consolidate society; and alongside ethno-demographic dimensions.

The negative scenario of state language development assumes that the majority of the population in Kazakhstan will not improve their study of Kazakh language in 2020. It would be explained with the social and economic recession in Kazakhstan; tense political situation provoked by outside forces; ignorance of various socio-cultural factors by officials; ineffective fund using to develop language policy and corruption issues.

The last vision of state language's policy is balanced and presumed that young people aged 25 will study the basic level of Kazakh language to 2020. It could be told that the young generation of Kazakhstan is responsible to spread state language; coverage of defined social groups by studying the Kazakh language; limitation of

motivated mechanisms of education; and finiteness of financial and other sources (KHASANULY, 2001).

The expert opinion that the primary groups of language planning are children and young people can be considered positively. Obviously, the quantity of Kazakh language groups in pre-schools, schools, and universities is growing in recent years. According to data of republican sociological research of Comparative Social Researches Institute CESSI-Kazakhstan, 55.1% of respondents answered that their children should study the Kazakh language. This result can be explained that parents care about their children's future and desire that they will study the Kazakh language.

In our mind, the government should assist its citizens to provide them advanced learning of the state language. There are various laws and programs on state language development as well as designing of up-to-date educational and methodological literature to learn Kazakh effectively in present-days Kazakhstan. There is also sufficient funding for state language development but simultaneously there is no perspicuous mechanism of language policy implementation in Kazakhstan. It is important to note that there are a lot of positive features in Kazakh language development since 1991 included keeping balance of state language enhancement and language diversity of various ethnic groups in Kazakhstan.

It could be told that the language policy of Kazakhstan is mostly focused on revival and increasing of Kazakh language in the public

spheres that illustrate the domination of one-language policy. Such a policy would be explained with state-building and nation-building politics that aimed to unite Kazakh-language and Russian-language Kazakhs. Contemporaneously, language planning implies the development of bilingual and multilingual policies and support of Russian and other languages in Kazakhstan. This ambivalent language policy demonstrated the loyalty of ethnic minorities of Kazakhstan, maintaining of territorial integrity of the country, and keeping friendly relations with Russia and other bordered states. In other words, such language policy was helpful to prevent ethnic conflicts and unrest in newly independent Kazakhstan. Additionally, bilingual and multilingual policies promote Kazakhstan as a democratic country that honored the rights of ethnic minorities.

Moreover, the official policy encourages multilingualism when knowing of Kazakh, Russian and English will be supported in the country. On the one hand, this approach is progressive to help Kazakhstan to develop globally. On the other hand, the priority of English would be more significant in the future and even presently than the two other languages among citizens of Kazakhstan. Other countries have similar linguistic problems. PHILLIPSON (1992) claims to grow the English language worldwide and states that this process has an imperial context designed by English speaking individuals (PHILLIPSON, 1992). Studying the language picture in Kazakhstan, Pavlenko compares Kazakh and Russian languages and concludes that despite the state status of Kazakh and the official status of Russian, the last dominates among the population. FIERMAN

(2005) assesses the idea of multilingualism positively and simultaneously he distinguishes that Kazakh as the state language is low demand in the society (FIERMAN, 2008).

To sum up we would like to suggest some recommendations to implement successfully the language policy in Kazakhstan. Firstly, it is necessary to educate professional instructors on language teaching, particularly in Kazakh language teaching. Secondly, it is required to enhance the terminological ground of the Kazakh language. Thirdly, it is important to develop and keep languages of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan. Fourthly, it is also important to develop bilingualism of Kazakh and Russian languages as well as to develop three languages for new generations of Kazakhstan to know Kazakh as the state language, to know Russian as the language of interethnic communication, and to know English as the language of international communication. Fifthly, it is required to stimulate Kazakh-language state employees. Sixthly, it is necessary to promote the Kazakh language through bilingual literature and cinema. Finally, it is important to spread the Kazakh language in traditionally Russian-language regions of the country such as Northern, Central and Eastern Kazakhstan (SAVIN, 2000).

4. CONCLUSION

The majority of Kazakh and foreign scholars who research the language policy of present-days Kazakhstan have the following

opinions: firstly, the language policy aims to reinforce the political stability of multiethnic Kazakhstan. Secondly, the main purpose of the language policy of Kazakhstan has an implementation of the Kazakh language's state status, preservation of Constitutional functions of the Russian language as well as the development of other languages in Kazakhstan.

Thirdly, the Kazakh language is more available in different spheres in recent times. Fourthly, lack of the Kazakh language in everyday family life could be explained by limited official attention to language issues in family institutions. The revival of the Kazakh language also can be interpreted with being of the national leader who supports the Kazakh language deliberately. The Kazakh President took into consideration internal and external dimensions which could result in misbalance between Kazakh and Russian languages. Fifthly, domestic migration from rural areas to urban ones also affects language dynamics in Kazakhstan. Finally, the language policy of Kazakhstan is complex and includes elements of language revival, multilanguage policy, internationalization, and one-language policy. As a result, the rate of Kazakh speaking people is increased due to some positive outcomes of the language policy in Kazakhstan.

The authors of this paper attempted to define the basic features of contemporary language situations focused on present language policy in Kazakhstan. Modern language policy in Kazakhstan is centralized and regulated by the government that includes the system of mandatory actions. It can be told that this policy is perspective due

to its effect on changing the current language situation in Kazakhstan. It can be also added that language policy is democratic due to it includes the population's interests. It is necessary to distinguish the international aspects of language policy in Kazakhstan. Despite preferences to Kazakh language development, simultaneously it is possible to evolve not only Russian but also languages of other ethnic groups in Kazakhstan.

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