

## Ethno Linguistic Processes of the Kazakhs of Western Siberia

Arna Saparkalieвна Sarsambekova\*, Halil Borisovich Maslov and  
Zhanar Kabdushevna Esimova

*L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Mirzoyan str. 2, Astana,  
Republic of Kazakhstan, 010000*

*\*E-mail: saasz55@mail.ru*

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**ABSTRACT** The Kazaks of Western Siberia who are living in the border areas of Russia and Kazakhstan, were originally citizens of one state. Disintegration of the USSR changed territorially administrative border on interstate. The main aim of this paper to obtain current linguistic situation among Kazakhs of Western Siberia (Russia): they retain their language, bilingualism or assimilation kazakh language by russian language. The level of the Kazakh and Russian language knowledge by the Kazakhs of Western Siberia was considered through the age and the level of education parameters. The degree of use of the Kazakh or Russian language by the Kazakhs of Western Siberia was analyzed through the next spheres of communication: at work, with friends, neighbors, parents, spouse, children. Also we identified the language which respondents prefer to use when they watch and listen to TV, concerts and performances.

### INTRODUCTION

The last decade of the twentieth century was a difficult period for the people of the USSR. The Collapse of the USSR had the following consequences: formation of independent states, migration processes, which involved millions of former Soviet citizens, westernization and globalization, which at the level of everyday consciousness is seen as Americanization. These factors have affected all spheres of life of the former Soviet citizens. According to the opinion of Nurmagambetov and Aliyarov (2004) "Features of Americanization in the field of culture are as emphasis on quantitative characteristics (commercialization) and willingness-to-eat (operant), in maintaining a certain level of quality, as well as virtualization of cultural images. Thus, there is a new creation like a rational system that serves the old antithesis associated with traditional culture". Processes of globalization and westernization unify different cultures, creating a threat of extinction of ethnoses. People trying to resist leveling, sometimes even perceiving the established world order as the sunset of humanity, the end of the world, look for support in the fact that it is well understood, it is known and what they think is the eternal and immutable - in the culture of their ethnoses. Also this opinion is spread between Western scientists. For instance, Fishman (2001) wrote that "Globalization is the wave of the future, more than one recent newspaper head line (not to mention the received

popular wisdom) has announced and to some extent this is so. But globalization is both a constructive and a destructive phenomenon, both a unifying and divisive one, and it is definitely not a culturally neutral or impartial one. In our day and age, it is definitely the globalization of pan-Western (and pop-consumer culture in particular) that is the motor of language shift". Kazakhstan possesses the big territory with a low number of the Kazakh population. The government maintains the relations with Kazakhs who live in neighboring countries. Kazakhstan is interested as the Kazakh diaspora keeps the culture and ethnic identity in other countries (Mukanova 2014).

Contemporary process of ethnic consolidation, the formation of nations in political and civic sense (Russians, Kazakhs), search for a national idea in the two states also have an impact on modern ethnic processes. Kazakhs who were living on the territory of the RSFSR and the Kazakh SSR, currently are separated by the state borders, as a result, they are citizens of the two neighboring countries. These factors are causes of the relevance of this research.

### METHODOLOGY

Methodological basis of the paper are those general scientific principles of scientific knowledge as historicism and objectivity. "The principle of historicism examines the phenomena as processes in their occurrence, development and

transformation. Despite the fact that the real objective is achieved only very approximately, and is ideal for scientific work” (Brief Encyclopedia of Philosophy 1994), the researchers follow the principle of objectivity, tried to present the facts objectively. The main methods used specific techniques ethno-sociological research, the method of direct and participant observation, the method of scientific description. The complexity of the research object aroused need for an integrated application of various teaching tools and interdisciplinary approach. As the main method is applied in this paper method concrete historical analysis, and the authors used emny approach. The main source for this work is the materials of ethno linguistic surveys 2003-2006 years which were conducted by Kazak ethnographic expeditions. The field work was carried out: in the Altai Territory: Bigeldy aul and aul Shumanovka Burlin district; aul Baygamut Blagoveshenskiy district; auls Kerey and Mirabilite Kulundinskiy district; villages Rakity, Mikhailovsky, Malinovoe Lake and Nikolaevka Mikhailovsky district; city Slavgorod and aul Kvatovka Slavgorod district; in the Novosibirsk region: auls Amangeldi, Karasart and Tokpan Karasuk district; in the Omsk region: aul Baimbet number 5 Nazzyvaevskiy district; auls Alkul, Zhar Agach, Karaman, Karazyuk, Drobyshevo and Platonovka, district item Novovarshevka Novovarshevskiy District; auls Keribay and Tikhvinka Pavlogradskiy district; villages Odessa and Belostok, Odesskiy District; auls Sarat, Bas Agash, Karatal and Stepnoe Russian - Polyanskiy district; auls Medet, Dzhatargul and Sretenka Cherlaksy District; in Tyumen region: Golyshmanovo item, and Golyshmanovskiy district; village Eltcovo Kazan district.

The percentage of the Kazakhs in Western Siberia is 1.6%. The researchers interviewed 2176. In Golyshmanovo settlement, Slavgorod town and some rural areas of Western Siberia the survey has been a massive character, because the number of Kazakhs was negligible. In Omsk selection was determined according to statistical offices and household books data and village councils.

## RESULTS

The Kazakhs of Western Siberia use bilingualism. According to the opinion of Duranty (2012) “language is the most flexible and most

powerful intellectual tool developed by humans”. About 41.2% respondents have high level of the Kazakh language (all skills) knowledge. But this percentage is growing up, when we consider just speaking skill and it is 71.9%. The researchers assume it depends on school education of respondents. For instance, 17.2% answerers studied at schools in the Kazakh language of education; 75.4 % - in the Russian language; 6.2 % - in both languages; 1.2 % -illiterate. Some respondents highlighted that they finished primary school in Kazakh, but after that they had to go to Russian school because the Russian Federation could not offer full school education in the Kazakh language. It is also important to stress that the language environment of Western Siberia is Russian speaking environment. The Russian language is represented in all areas of communication, the media also broadcasts in Russian. The Kazakh language preempted to the household level. The proficiency of the Kazakh language increases with the age of respondents. The smallest data of the Kazakh language knowledge in Western Siberia is in the age group “before 25 years” and constitutes 19.5%. The greatest data of the Kazakh language proficiency is received in the age group “60 and over” and make up 68.2%. The researchers think, it is consequence of school education of respondents and language environment surrounding the Kazakhs of West Siberia. For instance, 23.7% of respondents of the age group “before 25 years” finished schools with the Kazakh language of education, while in the age group “60 and over”, the figure is 88.5%. As already mentioned above, the level of the “conversational” Kazakh language in Western Siberia is higher than the level of fluency. For instance, in the age group “before 25 years” the level of fluent Kazakh is 19.5%, and the level of “conversational” is 37.8%. There is growing evidence of the respondents’ knowledge of the native language. The Kazakhs of Western Siberia know the Russian language at high level. For instance, 95.6 % of respondents are fluent in Russian. This situation is typical for all age groups, except for the group “60 years or more”. The smallest figure of fluent Russian is obtained in the age group “60 years or more” and it is 36.3 %, the highest rate of proficiency in the Russian language is obtained in the age group “25-29 years” and it is 95.5 %. The older the respondents, the higher the level of the Kazakh language and, consequently, lower the level of proficiency in Russian.

Considering the fluency level of Kazakh in relation to education, it should be noted that the decline occurs with increasing education level of respondents. The current situation is characterized in the study area as a whole. 42.6 % of the respondents of Western Siberia are fluent in Kazakh. But the data is rising, when the researchers look at the exponent of conversational Kazakh. For instance, “can speak” Kazakh 74.3 % of respondents. As already noted, the Kazakh language is supplanted by the Russian language to the household sphere. Good knowledge of the Kazakh language in Western Siberia is obtained by the people who finished elementary school in Kazakh. The percentage of individuals who speak Kazakh fluently in this group is 56.3%. The lowest percentage is in the group of incomplete higher education, it made up 23.4 %. In general, our findings reflect the situation. As already stated, the increase in the degree of the Kazakh language proficiency in the study area depends on the growth of the age of the respondents. Respondents with primary education in Kazakh belong to the age group “60 and over”, in contrast to respondents with incomplete higher education of the age group “before 25 years”.

The level of the Russian language proficiency depending on education in the studied area is 94.8%. In Western Siberia 100% Russian language skills are obtained in the groups of persons with vocational training, incomplete higher education and higher education. The smallest exponent of fluency in Russian is observed in the group with primary education and it is 74.6%.

To analyze the degree of the use of the Kazakh or Russian languages in respondents communication, the researchers have considered the following areas of communication: production, with friends, neighbors, parents, spouse, children. Considering the extent of use of the Kazakh and the Russian languages in various fields, it should be noted that in Western Siberia the Russian language dominates the Kazakh language. Respondents usage of Kazakh and Russian in the process of communication, confirm the data of fluent use of both languages Kazakh and Russian.

In the industrial sector, 53.4 % of respondents of Western Siberia use the Russian language, utilization of the Kazakh language is 4.7 %. In addition, respondents note bilingualism. For instance, the data of bilingualism is 13.1 %. As can be seen from the data the Russian language dom-

inates in the industrial sector. This is a reflection of the language situation in the country. The state language in Western Siberia is the Russian language. When communicating with friends 77.5 % of respondents of Western Siberia use Russian, the Kazakh languages use 20.5% and 39.4 % of respondents use bilingualism. When communicating with neighbors 96.3 % of respondents of Western Siberia use the Russian language, 20.3% - the Kazakh language and 25.1 % of respondents - bilingualism.

In communication with parents 22.6 % of respondents of Western Siberia use the Kazakh language, 38.8 % of respondents – the Russian language and 17.8 % of respondents - bilingualism. When communicating with spouse 25.8 % of respondents of Western Siberia use the Kazakh language, 45.1 % of respondents – the Russian language and 25.9 % of respondents - bilingualism. When dealing with children, 61.4 % of respondents use the Russian language, 19.0 % of respondents - the Kazakh language and 25.4 % of respondents - bilingualism. As can be seen from the data, the Kazakhs of Western Siberia also use the Russian language at the household level. According to the opinion of Kertzer and Arel (2009) “the Soviets decided that “nations” (Kazakh, Uzbek, etc.) were contained within these linguistic communities and that the language of these new nations had to be standardized. The Soviet census policy was thus a nationalist’s dream come true. Several surveys conducted in the 1990s have shown that Russian is used as the main home language by about half of Ukrainian citizens”.

About 54.5% respondents consider that, they prefer to watch and to listen to television broadcasts, concerts and shows in Russian, 27.3% of respondents would like to watch and listen to programs both in the Kazakh and Russian languages. Only 18.2% preferred the Kazakh language. In Western Siberia, the largest percentage of the selected gear in the Kazakh language is obtained in the age group “60 and over” and is amounted to 52.5%, the lowest is obtained in the age group “25 - 29 years”, it is 4.0%. The age group “before 25 years” prefers transmission in the Russian language and it constitutes 86.5%, the lowest is in the age group “60 and over”, it is 24.5%. The largest data of bilingualism obtained in the age group “50 - 59 years” and it constitutes 41.1%, but the lowest data is obtained in the age group “before 25 years”, it is 9.4%. The

researchers attribute this fact to the language environment of respondents, as well as current development of the Kazakh language. Many respondents in Western Siberia noted that they poorly understand literary Kazakh language. Child from birth is surrounded by Russian-speaking environment.

Considering respondents preference of the language in mass media according to their education, we got the following data. Respondents who finished school in the Kazakh language prefer to watch and listen to the both languages. Data on bilingualism is 40.7%. Respondents who finished school in Russian, prefer to watch and listen to the transmission in Russian. The Russian language data is 62.1%. The researchers think that respondents who finished school in Russian, do not speak Kazakh, and respondents who finished school in the Kazakh language are bilingual. The number of people who identified the Kazakh language as their native language in Western Siberia is 90.6 %. Respondents who identified the Russian language as their native language studied at school in Russian.

### DISCUSSION

Regarding the development of linguistic processes in Western Siberia, the researchers agree with the forecast of Akhmetova (2002), who notes that “in the near future we can face the threat for losing the Kazakh language, given that young and middle-aged generations pass into the following age groups. Higher level of proficiency in Russian and its predominance in almost all spheres of life are reflected in linguistic assimilation”. Currently, language assimilation of Kazakhs happens in the territory of all Russia, not only in Western Siberia (Tashpekova 2014). Mendikulova (1997) researcher, examined the development of the Kazakh Diaspora in several countries, notes that “for the younger generation of the Kazakh Diaspora the Kazakh language became the language of their nationality, native is in fact became the language of the host country”. Thus, the Kazakhs of Western Siberia are characterized by the same processes that can be traced as a whole in the Kazakh Diaspora: assimilation of the native language by the state language of the host country.

Linguistic assimilation explained by the fact that the Kazakhs are a subdominant group in Western Siberia. As Mchitarjan and Reizenzein

(2013) said, “contemporary social scientists often define minorities, not primarily in terms of characteristics such as language, religion, traditions, or even size, but in terms of their power relationship to other groups. According to this definition, a minority is a low-power subgroup of a society”.

### CONCLUSION

In Western Siberia the use of Russian exceeds the use of the Kazakh language in all spheres of respondents communication. The Kazakh language has maintained its position in the countryside. The researchers attribute this to the geographical factor: the presence of mono-ethnic communities in rural areas, which leads to a vicious and mono-ethnic character of communication. Omsk Kazakhs, in contrast, live in a multi-ethnic environment, daily liaise with representatives of various nationalities, respectively, use the Russian language in communication. For instance, we have listened to the conversation of Omsk Kazakhs born in 20-30 years of twentieth century we noticed that sentences has half Russian and half Kazakh words. Also, Kazakhs pronounce Russian and Kazakh words according to the rules of the Kazakh or Russian languages.

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