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# EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN LANGUAGE POLICY AS REFLECTION OF ETHNIC STATUS EVOLUTION OF THE TITULAR ETHNOS

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**Key words:** State language, language policy, titular ethnos

**Annotation:** Current article deals with the language policy and its role in the development of the nation. It defines the official status of Kazakh language, its practical implementation and significance in light of the society democratization.

National language policy is an important factor of reinforcing political stability in the polyethnic nation of Kazakhstan. In this regard the government deems it critical to facilitate the language policy. Enacted in 1997 the law "On languages in Republic of Kazakhstan" sets forth the legal basis of languages diversity in Kazakhstan, defines government's duties on providing suitable conditions for language skills acquisition and development, and ensures that all languages of 130 ethnicities of Kazakhstan are treated with due respect (LRK, 1997). Peculiarity of the Kazakhstan law "On languages" manifests in its referring to a number of languages: not just the titular language of the nation, but also Russian and others. Democratization of Kazakhstan society and ensuring harmony among many ethnic groups cannot be reached if state language is being repressed. Hence, current strategy of developing the state language is considered as a tool of regulation the state language performance in Kazakhstan (KT, 1998a).

Government programs for languages statuses and development (October 5, 1998 and February 17, 2001) (KT, 1998b; 2001) were created in accordance to the "functional principle of forming the linguistic field of the nation". These programs are directed toward language advancement in three strategic directions: expansion and reinforcement of socio-communicative functions of the state language; preservation of the cultural functions of Russian language; developing of other languages. Thus, the main goal of language policy lies in practical implementation of the official status of Kazakh language, preserving all the main functions pertinent to Russian language as per the Constitution, and development of languages of other ethnicities.

It should be noted that in his speeches, Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, repeatedly emphasizes the fact that Russian language is just as important to ethnic Kazakhs as their ethnic language is. At the same time, currently it is of paramount importance for the nation to ensure that Kazakh language is being given the prestige and status it deserves, as the state language and one of the flagships of our independence. "State language", in

this case, is the cornerstone of the nation's socio-communicative system, singled out as the official language, or state language, bearing ultimate importance for all citizens of the nation, permeating through all fields and activities. Definition of the official status of the Kazakh language in Kazakhstan is reached within the context of restoration of justice and democratization of the language affairs of the nation. At the same time, there are no indications of its "purification". Kazakhstan, as a multinational state, respects the phenomena of multilinguality (polylinguism) - functioning of several languages within a nation.

Government language policy is geared toward modifying the currently effective language hierarchy into such a system that prioritizes the development of state language.

In addressing the functional issues of the language, the sociology-linguistics-marketing approach is favored. Such an approach provides the means of control over the language processes, and directs the measures at the maximum satisfaction of the language needs of Kazakhstan people. In today's Kazakhstan, headed into XXI century, there is already a rise in number of people who can communicate in the state language. Functioning and functional development of the language is an eternal fundamental problem for every nation, and such a problem presents most strikingly during democratization of society.

Just how effective are the efforts taken within the framework of the government policy of "language Renaissance" in Kazakhstan? It's important to note the consolidated and systematized list (Baskakov, 1994) of primary objective properties of Kazakh language vitality, improving of which is the main aim of the policy of "language Renaissance".

a. Socio-political indicators, include the targeted language policy within status planning and corpus construction of Kazakh language, availability of government programs supporting the development of Kazakh language, availability of social infrastructure enabling proper functioning of the language

(educational institutions of all levels, press, radio, television channels and programs, book publication and so forth), etc.

b. Socio-demographic indicators, include the ratio of Kazakh language speakers to other language populations; number of Kazakh language speakers (on the level of a native speaker) as opposed to the total number of ethnical Kazakhs; number of Kazakh language speakers (as native) among minors; ratio of bilinguals (Kazakh-Russian) to monolinguals (i.e., purely Kazakh native speakers); types of mass bilingualism; Kazakh-Russian and Russian-Kazakh bilinguality ratio; etc.

c. Linguistic indicators, contain the availability of literature standard for Kazakh language; level of development and stability of language form as synergy of most consolidated, stable and obligatory realizations, infrastructural parameters (accelerated dissemination of lingual innovations, introduction of industry-specific terminologies, lexicon development dynamics, etc.), existence of dialects (number of dialects and degree of difference); and so forth.

d. Socio-functional indicators, measured by the number of social functions of Kazakh language, and intensity of their use at the most important fields of activity in society.

e. National cultural indicators, including traditional crafts, national arts, as well as theater, cinema, religion, existence of various types of literature (fiction, philosophical, religious, legal, educational, terminological, lexicographical, etc).

In order to form objective picture of the language situation in the country, one would have to consider the territorial-social as well as functional interaction of not just the languages (Kazakh and Russian), but also evaluate the functioning of the Russian language and the sphere of its usage within the context of Kazakh+Russian bilingualism. And vice versa - functioning of the Kazakh language and spheres of its usage within the context of Russian+Kazakh bilingualism. Only through this approach can one spot positive dynamics in the functioning of the Kazakh language.

In reality, Kazakhstan still harbors the situation of complex co-functioning of Kazakh and Russian languages:

a. from the standpoint of belonging to the ethnos, decrease in Kazakh language vitality led to the loss (change) of language, and transition of a fraction of Kazakh people to Russian language while maintaining ethnic self-awareness and ethnic genetic identification, or to employing the Russian language as means of national inter-cultural communication by part of urban Kazakh populace;

b. from the standpoint of existence of language, decrease in Kazakh language vitality still manifests itself as distortion of ratio of Kazakh native speakers to total number of ethnic Kazakhs, wide spreading of Kazakh-Russian hybrid in light of the advancement of

Russian-Kazakh bilingualism, insignificant number of monolingual Kazakhs (Kazakh language only).

c. from the standpoint of communicative space saturation, a tendency is maintained according to which the Russian is a favored language in the fields of public and business communication, science, mass media and education.

At the same time, acquisition of official status by the Kazakh language has contributed to favorable dynamics in the society, stimulation of the "language Renaissance": language normalization, settlement of the functional communication issues between Russian and Kazakh languages, restoration of functioning of Kazakh language in due extent in significant spheres of social activities, as well as the positive evolution of socio-linguistic situation and language environment of the nation. Modifications to language policy, socio-political and cultural reforms in Kazakhstan affected not only the functionality of Kazakh language, but also its corpus. Widespread and regular usage of the Kazakh language in public political sphere, advertisement, as well as propagation of science-technology knowledge have stimulated rapid and demonstrative within the corpus. Efforts are made to modernize the language, standardize and consolidate the terminology, expansion of the vocabulary through Turkic and dialectic lexicon, transition of Kazakh words from the passive vocabulary to the active one, as well as through creating new words using existing models, and via the means of the language itself.

Language Renaissance policy in Kazakhstan is the concentrated expression of the way government treats the problem of the Kazakh language vitality in all its scope, which allows one to get a better understanding of the main tendencies and successes of status and corpus planning of the state language over the independence period.

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