Abstract

This paper investigates writing system reforms which occurred in Kazakhstan during the Soviet, Post Soviet periods and since the country gained independence. This paper will also focus on social and political factors of development and formation of current Kazakh writing system and will also deal with in-depth study of factual experience of Kazakh-Turkish High School system on providing education in four languages.

Keywords: multilingualism, trinity of languages, language policy,

1. INTRODUCTION

Kazakh (Қазақ тілі, Qazaq tili) is a language native to Kazakhstan, the Yili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture in Western China, as well as Kazakh communities in Mongolia, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Russia, and the Ukraine. Kazakh is a member of Kipchack branch of Turkic languages, closely related to Tatar and Kyrgyz, and more distantly Modern Turkish, and has been influenced over centuries by Mongolian, Tajik-Persian, Arabic, and Russian.

Turkish is the most widely spoken and published on Turkic language and shares most of its grammar and base vocabulary with Kazakh. Establishing a working knowledge of Turkish will ease your transition into
Kazakh, both in the sense of linguistic elements and better access to materials. It will also open you to the many bookshops across Turkey that carry a sizable array of books and resources on Turkic languages.

Russian, on the other hand, is the co-official language of Kazakhstan and is the inter-ethnic language of communication, education, and business throughout both Kazakhstan and the entire former Soviet Union where most Kazakh and other Turkic speakers live. Also, many Kazakh are more comfortable communicating in Russian in certain contexts (i.e. science, technology, news, etc.) and Kazakh in others (culture, music, daily life, etc.).

Moreover, Kazakh, like other Turkic languages has an extremely complex system of grammar and word formation:

- Kazakh has Subject Object Verb (SOV) sentence structure: Mary market-to went (Mary went to the market); John Frank-from old book bought. (John bought an old book from Frank).
- Kazakh observes agglutination: It strings suffixes together to form long words rich in meaning and syntax.
- Kazakh observes vowel harmony: A system whereby vowels have to agree with one other based on complex sound/phonology rules.

After several alphabet and language reforms the Kazakh language has been modified both in terms of national writing system and phonologic rules.

**Nomenclature**

A  Chronological formation of Kazakh writing system

B  “Trinity of languages” state programme

C  Factual study of Kazakh-Turkish High School experience

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### 2. Chronological formation of Kazakh writing system

Kazakhstan is geographically located at the junction of European and Asian continents containing multiethnic and multicultural society respectively. It also possesses a peculiar place in Central Asia as being a host for a number of Turkic, Asian and European cultural and political organizations and events.

Historically, Kazakhs have changed the alphabet several times and used different types one after another, i.e., Old Turkic writing (VIII c. – XIII c.), Kazakh writing based on Arabic letters (XI c.), Proposals of Kazakh alphabet based on Russian graphics (XIX c.), (Arabic) alphabet designed by A. Baitursynuly (1912 - 1929), Latin alphabet (1930 - 1940) and Cyrillic based Kazakh writing (1940 - ).

#### 2.1 Old Turkic writing (VIII c. – XIII c.)

Memorials with Old Turkic writing have been found in several regions of Kazakhstan like Talas, Karakorym, Taraz, Pavlodar, Essyk, Shemonaikha, Ertys and were mostly used for grave stelae, border signs or graffiti of all sorts. Old Turkic writing is more-or-less alphabetic, and is inscribed from right to left in rows running from bottom to top (Amanzholov 1998).

#### 2.2 Kazakh writing based on Arabic letters (XI c.)

This writing was adopted together with Islamic religion. People gained literacy in so called madrassah where religion-based teaching took place. Two types of writing were used later: Khadim (means old) – XVI-XVII, written literary works common for Turkic people, chronicles and documents with historical base belong to this type of writing. The second type of writing was called Jadid (means new) which was used in local newspapers of
that period “Turkistan ualayati (means Turkistan province)” and “Dala ualayati (means Steppe province)” (Mamyrbekova 2001).

Kazakh was first written with the Arabic script during the 19th c. when a number of poets, educated in Islamic schools, incited revolt against Russia. Russia’s response was to set up secular schools and devise a way of writing Kazakh with Cyrillic alphabet, which was not widely accepted. By 1917, the Arabic script was reintroduced, even in schools and local government. In 1927, Kazakh nationalist movement sprung up but was soon suppressed. At the same time the Arabic script was banned and the Latin alphabet was imposed for writing Kazakh. The Latin alphabet was in turn replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet in 1940 (Simon Ager, accessed March 14, 2013 at http://www.omniglot.com/writing/Kazakh.htm).

2.3 Proposals of Kazakh alphabet based on Russian graphics (XIX c.)

As the writing based on Arabic letters was used among Turkic people including Kazakh led to two different dimensions. Firstly, the Arabic letters represented Islamic religion; relatively it contradicted the Tsarist policy regime and later the Soviet regime consequently. Secondly, the Arabic letters were insufficient to represent some specific Kazakh sounds. This circumstance needed either further development of the current alphabet or alphabet change. The former was supported by some Russian linguists like: N.I. Ilminski (as in Table 1), V.V. Katarinski, A.E. Alektorov aiming at replacing the current alphabet by Cyrillic one with missionary purposes (Ilminski 1883). Relatively, the same idea was supported by Kazakh scholar Y. Altynsar with educational purposes. The latter was supported by some of Kazakh scholars like A.Baitursynuly (1912-1929), who proposed the project of improved Kazakh writing based on Arabic letters.

Table 1. Kazakh alphabet based on Russian letters proposed by N.I. Ilminski (1876)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8 vowels</th>
<th>a (ä), é (e); ŷ; ɪ; ə; õ; û, ſḥ.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 consonants</td>
<td>п, б, м, w, t, д, н, ж, з, ш, с, р, ʃ, й, f, нв.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 (Arabic) Alphabet designed by A. Baitursynuly (1912 - 1929)

A.Baitursynuly was the first Kazakh philologist who researched the sound system of Kazakh language and worked out his own alphabet on the basis of Arabic letters which had been used in Central Asia. He dedicated his valuable work to improve the Kazakh writing by means of clearing and protecting it from the influence of other languages and designed synharmonic national alphabet as a result. At the same time A. Baitursynuly’s writing was called Kazakh national writing as in Table 2. Later on, Arabic based letter was banned, even politically accused due to shift to Latin alphabet which impeded the progress of Kazakh national writing.

Table 2. A. Baitursynuly’s alphabet (1912)
2.4 Latin alphabet (1929 - 1940)

All Central Asian countries including Kazakhstan used very similar languages using Arabic letters and the differences could be interpreted as language dialects rather than separate nationalities. Fierman (2009) claims that during the period of using Latin alphabet as the main writing system, Central Asian countries, including Azerbaijan but not Tajikistan had the tendency to replace Arabic and Persian borrowings by Turkic words.

New Kazakh Alphabet based on Latin alphabet was officially adopted in 1930 (Table 3).

Table 3. New Kazakh Alphabet based on Latin alphabet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aa</th>
<th>Bb-Г</th>
<th>Cc-Ж</th>
<th>ÇÇ-Җ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dd</td>
<td>Ee-Й</td>
<td>Ëë-Я</td>
<td>Gg-Г</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qq</td>
<td>Hh-Й</td>
<td>Ыы-Я</td>
<td>Jj-Я</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kk</td>
<td>Ll-Й</td>
<td>Мм-Й</td>
<td>Nн-Й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nн</td>
<td>Oо-Я</td>
<td>Òò-Я</td>
<td>Pп-Й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qq</td>
<td>Rр-Й</td>
<td>Сс-Й</td>
<td>Тт-Й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uу</td>
<td>Vv-Й</td>
<td>Ыы-Й</td>
<td>Zz-Й</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb-Г</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year by year new words entered from Russian into Kazakh and initially all new words were spelled and pronounced according to Kazakh sound system, but then with the decision of Central Executive Committee the Russian words entered into Kazakh had to be spelled and pronounced genuinely as in Russian. This led to the entry of particular Cyrillic letters into writing system of Latin based Kazakh Alphabet. Additionally, (Sebba 2003) argues that

“trends toward closer relationships between the various Turkic-speaking groups - and particularly, links between the Turkic-speaking peoples of the USSR and Turkey itself – attracted suspicion in Moscow. The cultural link created by the simultaneous Latinisation of Turkey and Central Asian Communities of the USSR may have set alarm bells ringing in Moscow and turned the policy of the Communist Party in favour of Cyrillicisation, which followed almost as soon as Latinisation was complete.” (page 4)

2.5 Cyrillic based Kazakh writing (1940 - )

Several reasons led to replacement of Latin alphabet by Cyrillic one:
- Prevent integration of the USSR Turkic people with the Republic of Turkey, which followed different ideology and policy;
- Accusation of the founders of Kazakh writings based on Arabic and Latin letters as the ‘public enemy’ (T. Shonanuly, K. Kemengerov, K. Zhubanov, E. Omarov, O. Zhandosuly, N. Torekulov);
- Necessity of forming one state (USSR), common state writing (Russian language and writing) of peoples under one capital city (Moscow);
Mastery of new terms only through Russian language;
Diversity of written orthography.
Thus, Cyrillic based Kazakh writing was officially adopted upon improving its draft proposed by S. Amonzholov in 1940 (Table 4).

Table 4. Kazakh Cyrillic Alphabet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kazakh Cyrillic Alphabet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>А Ә Б В Г Ғ Ԫ Д</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Е Ѐ Ж Ӟ И Ӥ Ы Ӱ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>К Ӆ М Н Ӈ О Ӫ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>П Ҷ Р С Т У Ӱ Ӭ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ф Ӧ Х Ӳ Ц Ч Ш Щ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ъ Ӯ Ь Э Э Ю Я</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cyrillic alphabet has been used for more than 70 years in Kazakhstan. To certain extent the Kazakh language has been modified during this period with the impact of Russian language. Moreover, during the Soviet period the proportion of Kazakhs was not only less than a half of the overall population, but also the significant number of Kazakhs became Russian-speaking. As a result, the linguistic factor of the Cyrillic alphabet has led to weakening of the language and national identities of Kazakhs.

3. “Trinity of languages” state programme

The number of native Kazakhs has increased significantly with the President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s initiatives to encourage the return of Kazakhstanis living abroad to their home land since the country gained its independence (Smagulova 2008). The state language policy has also been discussed several times by the government and has been reflected in several state documents and papers. This has been considered separately in the national constitution and in the “Law on languages” (Smagulova 2008). Since 2007, a new dimension has taken its course in the state language policy which emphasizes “trinity in languages” issued as a project by Ministry of Culture, which considers using Kazakh, Russian and English languages as a medium of education in schools (Gaipov 2011). In this respect, 32 trial schools have been selected to adopt trilingual educational system. Since the adoption of “Trinity of languages” state program in 2007, it has widely been discussed in various domains like mass-media, conferences and other meetings of related experts. Respectively, though the system and strategy of tri-lingual education have not been specified in trial schools accurately, its framework has been proposed:

- The purpose is to form an individual who is able to communicate in Kazakh, Russian and English languages and is able to gain knowledge through these languages;
- Science subjects at trial schools have to be taught in English;
- Initially, the experienced science subject teachers from Kazakh-Turkish High Schools had to visit and cooperate with trial schools in order to share with their experiences;
- Kazakh, Russian and English languages are taught from the 1st Grade up to the 11th Grade in Kazakhstani Secondary Schools. Furthermore, Higher Education System is also considered to provide tri-lingual education, where students are given more opportunities to integrate with international educational institutions.

“Trinity of languages” state programme has been referred and emphasized in several official decrees and programmes. Particularly, “Functioning and developing languages in 2011-2020” state programme and the President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s message to the people “Kazakhstan-2050” define the aims and goals of “Trinity of languages” state programme pragmatically.

4. Factual study of Kazakh-Turkish High School experience

Kazakh-Turkish High Schools (KTHSs) established in 1992 on the agreement of presidents of Turkish Republic Turgut Ozal and the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and consequently co-funded by Kazakhstani State and Turkish Foundation have been providing education in four languages: Kazakh, English, Russian and Turkish under the coordination of Kazakh-Turkish Educational Foundation (KATEV – Kazak-Türk Eğitim Vakfı). Currently, to the best of my knowledge 32 Kazakh-Turkish High Schools function in different regions of Kazakhstan. 19 of KTHSs are purely boys’ classes, 7 KTHSs – purely for girls, 2 KTHSs – mixed (boys and girls together), 2 Nurorda International Schools (NISs) - mixed, 1 Kazakh-Turkish College of Economics (KTCE) - mixed and 1 Kazakh-Turkish Multi-profile College (KTMC) – mixed. 29 of KTHS educational establishments provide dormitories except for KTHS for girls in Astana and 2 NISs. Generally, pupils finishing the 6th Grade can apply to KTHSs and follow the admission procedure the rules of which was set by the Ministry of Education in 2010 (Ministry of Education order No: 399). Unlike standard KTHSs the primary school pupils can apply to NISs and can study for 11 years up to Higher Education level, whereas the former provide education from 7th to 11th Grades and takes 5 years. The KTCE and KTMC have different admission procedure from the other two types given that pupils who finished the 9th Grade can enter to this type of colleges.

4.1 Teaching process at Kazakh-Turkish High Schools

Due to its limited number of positions (places) pupils are selected on the basis of entrance examination’s results, which is unusual occasion in terms of general secondary system of Kazakhstan. First of all, all applicants have to take examination which is consisted of 100 multiple-choice based questions which measure applicants’ logical-thinking skills and language skills and abilities. The successful applicants are invited at the beginning of summer term vacation to stay at the dormitory of KTHS and study for a week. Math, Logics, Kazakh, English and Turkish are taught during the week, participants write daily quizzes and finally are interviewed by the admission board. In addition to classes, a monitor and group-advisor are appointed for each group in order to carry out social activities for participants, which give them opportunities to know more about participants’ behaviour, skills, abilities and personal characteristic peculiarities. Depending on results of daily quizzes and the interview the successful pupils are selected. Afterwards, parents of successful applicants who were admitted are invited to KTHS to introduce them with its education system. The curriculum of KTHSs is prepared by KATEV and approved by Ministry of Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is noticeable that there are two major languages distinguished in teaching two groups of subjects, i.e., science subjects are taught in English whereas social subjects are taught in Kazakh. Three significant points can be mentioned in this case, which are considered to be positive features of multilingual education:

1. Pupils acquaint with the second and third languages as medium of education at the age of twelve or thirteen where pupils build multilingual skills and knowledge on already formed first language identity;
2. The significant number of subjects are taught in the first language and provide the improvement of proficiency in first language which influence the positive development in second and third language acquisition (see Cummins, 1981);
3. The classification of subjects according to the language medium of instruction at KTHSs well matches with the ‘content-driven language programmes’\(^1\) developed by Met (1998);

As far as pupils are admitted from different schools both Russian-medium and Kazakh-medium classes in the 7th Grade the classes are devoted to English, Turkish, Kazakh, Russian, and terminology studies on the

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\(^1\) In these programmes, content is taught primarily or exclusively through the medium of the second language, and student mastery of content may share equal importance with the development of language proficiency (see Myriam Met - 1998).
second half of the year. The 7th Grade is likely the most important stage of education process both for pupils and their parents at KTHSs, because pupils have to stay in the dormitory and only at the weekends they go home as a rule. Moreover, 7-8 lessons are conducted a day, which seem to be a heavy load for pupils. However, if the education process taken as a whole and considered in details one may see how well the mental and physical development of pupils overlaps. Tutor and advisor appointed by the vice-principal for social affairs cooperatively provide guidance for pupils. Tutor is engaged mostly in dormitory and extra-curricular activities, and advisor deals with pupils’ school achievements, meeting with parents, arranging additional lessons or office-hours in case pupils show low achievement.

As mentioned before, KATEV maintains a centralized coordination of educational process at all KTHSs. Textbooks are also selected by KATEV. Before the educational year starts either in June or August KATEV organizes training-educational seminar compulsory for all rotation-based teachers for about 10 days. As a rule, the teachers are divided into groups due to the subjects they teach (E.g. Chemistry, Biology, English and others). The seminar programme is designed in a way that teachers exchange with their knowledge and experience, also professional teacher-trainers are invited for conducting sessions sometimes. Furthermore, all the teachers at KTHS take teachers’ knowledge examination once a year which includes TKT (Teacher’s knowledge test), Olympiad based questions, theory of education and the knowledge of English. During the educational process, 7th – 10th Grades pupils have to write centralized test of knowledge (GDS) by the end of each quarter. As a result KATEV makes the list of GDS results and send it to KTHSs. By doing so, every KTHS compete with each other. The pupils who reach the absolute 1st place among all KTHSs in Republic are provided grants, and they are not charged the dormitory and meal fees. Similarly, the 11th Grade pupils have to write Pre-Unified National Test (UHD) by the end of each quarter. The 7th-Grade pupils have to be successful in taking the final test (baraj) in order to succeed to the 8th Grade, otherwise in case failure he / she has to retake the course in summer and test in its turn.

4.2 Scientific work at Kazakh-Turkish High Schools

Scientific Olympiads and projects gain high importance at KTHSs. A responsible Olympiad coordinator is appointed among teachers in every KTHS. Olympiad coordinator designs schedule for Olympiad preparation classes and self-study hours. KATEV sends Pre-Olympiad Tests (ODS) in every two weeks and the Olympiad coordinator gives the exam to Olympiad studying pupils. The results of Pre-Olympiad Tests are sent to KTHSs by KATEV in the form of charts listed from up to down based on results. The Olympiad studying pupils are motivated to complete both as among the peers in KTHS and among other KTHSs. Preparation programme for Olympiad is fixed in academic calendar of KTHSs and held all year round. Eventually, School subject Olympiads are organized by Regional Educational Departments throughout the secondary and high schools all over the Kazakhstan in the 3rd quarter. Pupils from KTHSs usually demonstrate high level of achievement. KATEV, in its turn uses the results of these Olympiads as one of the indicator of achievements among KTHSs.

The successful winners of regional Olympiad are promoted to the next stage of the Olympiad, which is called Republican Scientific Olympiad. In most cases among the participants, KTHSs’ pupils contest with each other. The chart of Republican Scientific Olympiads are given from 1996 to 2009 in the Figure 1.

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2 Rotation-based – those teachers who are employed by KATEV with terms of rotation and given position at KTHSs.
3 GDS – (GenelDeneme Sınınavı) from Turkish means ‘General testing exam’.
4 UHD – (ÜniversiteHazırlıkDeneme) from Turkish it means ‘Preparation Test for University Entrance Examination’.
5 Baraj – From Turkish means minimum required level of test.
6 ODS (OlimpiyatDenemeSınınavı) – From Turkish means ‘Pre-Olympiad Test’.
7 Pupils selected for specific subject Olympiad due to his / her certain background, interests, skills and abilities.
The above graphics shows the process of 14 years in which the success of KTHSs in Scientific Olympiads particularly organized by the Ministry of Education grows gradually with some ups and downs in short-term periods of timeline but it seems to maintain a stable progress in respect to long-term period. On the other hand, Figure 2 shows the winners of World and International Scientific Olympiads from KTHSs.

The given graphics above shows the achievements of KTHSs in International and World Scientific Olympiads representing the Republic of Kazakhstan in an international arena. Unlike the results of Republican Scientific Olympiads in the World and International Scientific Olympiads the process neither is more stable, which reflects nor decrease neither increase in terms of progress for the last 10 years period. This can be explained by the fact that the number of finalists promoted to participate the World and International Scientific Olympiads are both small and limited which may result in static range of insignificant changes in the process.
5. Conclusion

The goal of this paper has been to provide separate study of Kazakh alphabets used one after another at different periods of time. Social, political and linguistic factors of changing and using several alphabets have been discussed. As a result, Kazakh sound system has undergone significant modifications due to several changes of alphabets. Because, different types of letters have been insufficient to present Kazakh peculiar sounds. This paper has also focused on factual study of KTHSs, attempting to describe total educational process at KTHSs as a whole and with some focus on its peculiar multilingual medium of instruction. Since, Kazakhstani Government has decided to develop multilingual educational system and set up multilingual schools the role of KTHSs needs consideration. However, this paper reflects more facts about peculiar features of KTHSs and it is essential to extend the scope of the research involving the pupils, parents and teachers at KTHSs in order to maintain more specific focuses on its characteristic points and aspects. Finally, the ideas discussed in this paper should serve as the initial step for further research of developing language and alphabet by improving state language policy and educational system in the context of globalization.

References


