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## Contents

Preface.....	7
LANGUAGE PLANNING	
ELEONORA SULEIMENOVA (ALMATY) The vitality of the Kazakh language and language planning.....	11
KUSSAIYN RYSSALDY (ALMATY) Problems of the Kazakh language as the state language in modern Kazakhstan...	27
LANGUAGE CONTACT	
JULDYZ SMAGULOVA (ALMATY) Language shift and maintenance: Primary language socialization in urban Kazakh families .....	37
LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY	
RUTH BARTHOLOMÄ (GIESSEN / FREIBURG) Between ‘duty’ and ‘prestige’: The Kazakh language in the discourse of contemporary Kazakhstan .....	53
AKSANA BRAUN & MONIKA WINGENDER (GIESSEN) Kazakhstan and Tatarstan – Building Identities in Russian-Turkic Speech Communities.....	69
LATINIZATION OF THE ALPHABET	
DAMINA SHAIBAKOVA (ALMATY) ‘Clothing or costume’? A further article on the graphics of the Kazakh language..	97
BARBARA KELLNER-HEINKELE & JACOB M. LANDAU (BERLIN / JERUSALEM) The issue of alphabet latinization in independent Kazakhstan .....	107

## TERMINOLOGY

KÖBEY KIIUSAIYN (ALMATY) New words in the modern Kazakh language.....	121
SHERUBAY KURMANBAIULY (ASTANA) The development of Kazakh Terminology, 1990–2010.....	129
GULMIRA MADIEVA (ALMATY) Language policy in the regulation of proper names in the communicative space of Kazakhstan .....	137
SALTANAT RAKHIMZHANOVA (GIESSEN) Terminology work in contemporary Kazakh .....	147

## VARIETIES OF KAZAKH

AYNUR ABISH & ÉVA Á. CSATÓ (UPPSALA) Language attitudes and linguistic habits of young Kazakhs in Xinjiang .....	159
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# Between 'duty' and 'prestige': The Kazakh language in the discourse of contemporary Kazakhstan

Ruth Bartholomä (Giessen/ Freiburg)

## 1. Introduction

In the years since the Republic of Kazakhstan obtained its independence, numerous laws were passed to help the active promotion of the Kazakh language. In these documents, as well as in the discourse on language policy led in public media (e.g., newspapers, journals and the internet), certain keywords and phrases are used that are nearly automatically connected with the Kazakh language. Among those, there are two terms that are used in the title of this paper and do not seem to have a lot in common at first sight, but are – especially in the last years – frequently used in connection with the Kazakh language: 'duty' and 'prestige'.

'Duty', according to the Duden (2003: 1204), denotes a task that accrues to a certain person as a result of ethic, moral or religious reasons and whose fulfillment cannot be avoided due to an internal need or a task incumbent upon somebody that is given to him as a request from outside and is mandatory for him. Dupré (2006: 292) describes this in a similar manner:

Duty is what is done because it has to be done, regardless whether it is done willingly or not. What has to be done is done, because law requires it, because you are aware of your responsibility, you cannot elude the demands of humanity; you gave your word or for whatever reasons are bound in conscience.

'Duty' is one of the terms already used in Kazakhstan in the 1990s in connection with the Kazakh language. Thus, for example, in the law 'On the languages of the Republic of Kazakhstan' there is the following phrase: 'Knowledge of the state language, which is a very important factor for the consolidation of the Kazakhstani people, is the duty of every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan.'<sup>1</sup>

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1 Preliminary remark: Newspaper and journal articles are cited with their original title and translation. Longer citations translated from Kazakh and/or Russian into English are given in original in footnotes.

'Қазақстан халқын топтастырудың аса маңызды факторы болып табылатын мемлекеттік тілді меңгеру – Қазақстан Республикасының әрбір азаматының парызы' (ҚР № 151 Заңы, 4-бап) and accordingly 'Долгом каждого гражданина Республики Казахстан является

In contrast, ‘prestige’ denotes, according to the Duden (2003: 1239), ‘reputation, standing of a person, group, institution or the like in public’. In the case under consideration, the attitude of an individual (or a group of individuals) toward a language is meant, e.g., the attitude of the citizens of Kazakhstan towards the Kazakh or the Russian language.<sup>2</sup>

The term ‘prestige’ cannot be found in older documents on language policy, but is used only in recent years. The following citation is taken from the project of the ‘language programme for the years 2011–2020’ which was presented in June 2010 and contains the following phrase: ‘The daily communication in the Kazakh language has to become prestigious and trendy, especially among young people.’<sup>3</sup> Apart from the fact that it is questionable if it can be dictated what is prestigious and trendy; the following question comes to mind: Which terms – besides ‘duty’ and ‘prestige’ – are connected with the Kazakh language in the discourse on language policy? What does the Kazakh language symbolize today, more than 20 years after independence?

## 2. Background

The present paper aims to present first results of the project ‘Majority or minority? Constructions of identity in the discourse about language policy in Russian-Turkic speech communities’.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the discourse on the Kazakh language is traced by a qualitative analysis of different sources, e.g., official documents on language policy are considered, as well as articles in Kazakh, particularly in the Kazakh-

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овладение государственным языком, являющимся важнейшим фактором консолидации народа Казахстана’ (Закон РК № 151, Статья 4).

- 2 The language contact between Kazakh and Russian (which already takes place on the territory of today’s Republic of Kazakhstan for quite a long time) is a main factor for the development of prestige. As Edwards (1996) pointed out, the prestige of a language mainly emerges through one speaker’s contact to another language and a subsequent comparison, or, as Edwards (1996: 704) writes: ‘wherever languages touch, they are compared.’
- 3 ‘Күнделікті өмірде қазақ тілінде сөйлесу дәреже саналып, әсіресе жастар үшін бедел белгісіне және сәнге айналуға тиіс’ (‘Қазақстан Республикасында тілдерді дамыту мен қолданудың 2011–2020 жылдарға арналған мемлекеттік бағдарламасы’ жобасы) and accordingly ‘Повседневное общение на казахском языке должно стать престижным и модным, особенно в молодежной среде’ (Проект ‘Государственная программа развития и функционирования языков в Республике Казахстан на 2011–2020 годы’).
- 4 The project is funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) and is being conducted at the ‘Gießen Center for Eastern European Studies’ (‘Gießener Zentrum Östliches Europa’, GiZo) at the Justus-Liebig-University Gießen (Germany). It is an interdisciplinary project that is being conducted at the Institute of Slavic Studies (project leader: Prof. Dr. Monika Wingender) and the Professorship of Turkology (project leader: Prof. Dr. Mark Kirchner) and takes into account the regions of Kazakhstan and Tatarstan from a slavistic as well as from a turkological point of view.

speaking press in recent years. By these examples first considerations will be presented: Which patterns of argumentation are used? In which roles is the Kazakh language constructed?

First of all, a short definition of ‘discourse’ as it is understood in the project shall be given. ‘Discourse’ is not – as, e.g., in the Anglo-American conversational tradition – understood as ‘talk’ or ‘conversation’. Instead, our understanding of ‘discourse’ is in accordance with the use of that branch of linguistic discourse analysis that is influenced by Foucault, and follows the definition of Jung (1996: 463) who understands ‘discourse’ as entity of relations between thematically associated statements (orig.: ‘Gesamtheit der Beziehungen zwischen thematisch verknüpften Aussagekomplexen’). ‘Statement’ in this context means, according to Jung (1996: 461), a certain, thematically defined proposition (orig.: ‘eine bestimmte thematisch definierte Behauptung’). A text can contain statements that relate to different discourses (Jung 2000: 25). It should be noted that in our project ‘text’ is understood in a broad sense and includes not only written, but also verbal statements. For our investigation, we developed an analytical framework that is based on the DIMEAN-model by Jürgen Spitzmüller and Ingo Warnke (see especially Spitzmüller/ Warnke 2011).

The present paper will focus on two fields: Firstly, the keywords that are used in connection with the Kazakh language will be looked at. On the other hand, the transtextual level will be considered, e.g., mainly phenomena of intertextuality: Which phrases occur in more than one text, and which themes are addressed? Are explicit quotations repeated, or are phrases recapitulated without naming the exact source?

Official documents on language policy served as sources for this paper, as well as statements that were made in public media (newspapers, journals, and internet). From the articles, mainly the headlines were under examination, because these have, as Sellner (1998: 33) pointed out, the general function to stimulate the reader’s interest for a certain article and to introduce in a concise manner into the content of a section. Therefore, the headlines have an important position.

### 3. The different roles of the Kazakh language in discourse

In the following passages, the different roles in which the Kazakh language is constructed in discourse will be considered in greater detail.

#### **3.1 Kazakh as the language of the Kazakh ethnic group (Қазақ ұлтының тілі/ Язык казахской нации)**

The construction of Kazakh as the language of the Kazakh ethnic group takes place less in official documents and statements, but rather in the Kazakh-speaking press. Especially in articles in the newspaper *Ana Tili*, which is financed by the government and can be called ‘moderately nationalistic’, this motive is found quite often.

Thus, e.g., a connection is established between the language and the ‘volksgeist’ or the ‘soul of a nation’ – concepts used in European countries in the 19th century. As examples different articles published in 2011 are cited, in which the Kazakh language was characterized as ‘sword of the volksgeist’, ‘foundation of the volksgeist’ or ‘soul of the nation’:

Домбай, Нұрперзент/ Абылайхан Қалназар/ Біләл Қуаныш: ‘Тіл – ұлт рухының алдаспаны’ [The language is the sword of the volksgeist] (Ана тілі, 21.01.2011)

Мұхамеджанов, Манарбек: ‘Ұлттық рухтың негізі – ұлттық тіл’ [The foundation of the volksgeist is the national language] (Ана тілі, 12.05.2011)

‘Тіл – халықтың қазынасы, ұлттың жаны’ [The language is the treasure of a nation, the soul of a nation] (Ана тілі, 29.09.2011)

At the same time, a tight connection between language and ethnic belonging is assumed. The Kazakh language is constructed – also from official side – as ‘mother tongue of all Kazakhs’, no matter how the actual command of language or the language use is. An example for this is the ‘Address from the President’ in 2005, in which is stated:

We also have to use the best efforts for the further development of one of the primary factors for the unification of all citizens of Kazakhstan – the state language of our country, native for all Kazakhs.<sup>5</sup>

By saying this, a conclusion is drawn that Kazakhs who do not know their mother tongue ‘cannot be patriots’, as suggested, e.g., in a statement of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, that he made on the 13th party convention of the party ‘Nur Otan’ in February 2011 and that became the headline of an article in the newspaper *Ana Tili*:

‘Өзіңнің тарихыңды, ана тіліңді, шығу тегіңді білмей нағыз патриот бола алмайсың’ [If you do not know your own history, your own language, your origin, then you cannot be a real patriot] (Ана тілі, 16.02.2011)

Once again, this aspect was taken up in June 2011 in the newspaper *Ayqin*; here the thesis was formulated first as a question: ‘Can those who do not know their mother tongue be patriots anyway?’ Nevertheless, the subtitle, a quotation of a statement made by the writer Смағұл Елубай, gave a non-ambiguous answer: ‘As long as we do not learn the Kazakh language, we cannot build up patriotism.’<sup>6</sup>

5 ‘Мы также должны приложить все усилия для дальнейшего развития одного из главных факторов единения всех казахстанцев – государственного языка нашей страны, родного для всех казахов’ (‘Послание Президента Республики Казахстан 2005’, 3.8).

6 Кошкенова, Айжан: ‘Ана тілін білмейтіндер патриот бола алмай ма? Смағұл Елубай,

The Kazakh language is referred to as ‘primarily necessary for the Kazakhs themselves’, thus, for example, in the headline of an article by Orazali Žaqsanov in the newspaper *Ana Tili* on June 5th, 2009.<sup>7</sup> The knowledge of the Kazakh language is connected here not only with the bare knowledge of the language, but it is charged with different additional meanings: For example, President Nursultan Nazarbaev expressed the opinion that knowledge of the language at the same time indicates knowledge about the history of the Kazakh people, its culture and its tradition.

The knowledge of the Kazakh language by all citizens – that is no ordinary slogan, but a word that means that they [the citizens, RB] will know about the history of our country, the history, the culture, the tradition of the Kazakh people beginning from the dawn of time up to today.<sup>8</sup>

In slightly shortened form, this quotation became the headline of an article in the newspaper *Ana Tili* on April 20th, 2011:

Тайғарин, Сұлтан; Исаева, Бейбітгүл: ‘Қазақ тілін білу – әншейін бір ұран емес, бұл – қазақ халқының тарихын, мәдениетін, дәстүрін білу деген сөз’ [To know the Kazakh language – that is no ordinary slogan, but a word that means to know the history of the Kazakh people, its culture, its tradition] (*Ана тілі*, 20.04.2011)

But while President Nazarbaev spoke explicitly of ‘all citizens’ (*Kaz. barliq azamattar*) and of ‘our country’ (*Kaz. elimiz*) and in this way included all citizens of Kazakhstan, no matter which ethnic group they belonged to, this part was lost in the newspaper headline, so that only the Kazakh ethnic group was mentioned – on the reasons for this one can only speculate. Nevertheless, it fits to the thesis that politicians pay attention in their official statements to appeal not only to the members of the Kazakh ethnic group, but to enclose all citizens of the country. In contrast, the authors of the newspaper *Ana Tili* have carried out a shortening for their headline, even if in the text of the article the entire quotation is reproduced.

In different articles that were published in the newspaper *Ana Tili*, not being able to speak the mother tongue is considered to be ‘a shame’, or speaking it fluently is named ‘a question of honour’. Hereby the motive of ‘duty’ (cf. chapter 3.5 of this paper) is already implied.

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жазушы: Қазақ тілін үйренбей, патриотизмді орната алмаймыз’ [Can those who do not know their mother tongue be patriots anyway? Smağul Eluwbay, writer: As long as we do not learn the Kazakh language, we cannot build up patriotism] (*Айқын*, 09.06.2011).

7 Жақсанов, Оразалы: ‘Қазақ тілі ең алдымен қазақтың өзіне қажет’ [The Kazakh language is primarily necessary for the Kazakhs themselves] (*Ана тілі*, 05.06.2009).

8 ‘Барлық азаматтардың қазақ тілін білуі – әншейін бір ұран емес, бұл – олар еліміздің тарихын, ерте дәуірден бастап бүгінгі күнге дейінгі қазақ халқының тарихын, мәдениетін, дәстүрін білетін болады деген сөз’ (‘Ұлтаралық қатынас нығая түседі’, *Ана Тілі*, 06.10.2011).

Уәйісов, Рүстем: ‘Ана тілінде сөйлемей – арыңа мін’ [Not to speak your mother tongue is a mistake to your shame] (Ана тілі, 29.09.2010)

‘Ана тілің – арың бұл...’ [Your mother tongue is your honour...] (Ана тілі, 25.02.2010)

All in all, it can be found that in articles of the Kazakh-speaking press, in particular in the newspaper *Ana Tili*, Kazakh is often referred to as the language of the Kazakh ethnic group. On the contrary, in official documents and statements Kazakh is rarely mentioned as the language of the Kazakh ethnic group without mentioning in the same sentence or passage the thought that Kazakh must become the basis of the Kazakhstani people (cf. on this chapter 3.4. of this paper).

### 3.2 Kazakh as state language (мемлекеттік тіл/ государственный язык)

Another keyword that is used in connection with the Kazakh language is that of the ‘state language’. This status is ascribed to the Kazakh language in all official documents, cf., for example, the Constitution of 1994, Article 7, Point 1: ‘The state language of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the Kazakh language’.<sup>9</sup> On the contrary, Russian does not have this official status, but is, according to Point 2, ‘used on a par with Kazakh in state organisations and organs of local self-government’.<sup>10</sup>

Hence, the Kazakh language takes – as the only language – the position of an official state language in the Republic of Kazakhstan. How closely, according to the opinion of some actors, the Kazakh language is tied together (or should be tied together) with the Kazakh state, becomes clear in cases where the language is constructed as a synonym for ‘independence’. This is the case, e.g., in an article written by Ömirзақ Aytbayulı, the president of the society *Qazaq Tili*, in the newspaper *Egemen Qazaqstan* on October 23rd, 2010, and was taken up in the same manner in February 2011 once again in a contribution of the chairperson of the Language committee of the region Žambıl, Qırǵızalı Tilewov, in the newspaper *Ana Tili*:

Айтбайұлы, Өмірзақ: ‘Қазақ тілі мен тәуелсіздік – егіз ұғым’ [The Kazakh language and independence – Siamese twins] (Егемен Қазақстан, 23.10.2010)

9 ‘1. Қазақстан Республикасындағы мемлекеттік тіл – казак тілі’ (Қазақстан Республикасының Конституциясы, 7-бап) and accordingly ‘1. В Республике Казахстан государственным является казахский язык’ (Конституция Республики Казахстан, Статья 7).

10 ‘2. Мемлекеттік ұйымдарда және жергілікті өзін-өзі басқару органдарында орыс тілі ресми түрде казак тілімен тең қолданылады’ (Қазақстан Республикасының Конституциясы, 7-бап) and accordingly ‘2. В государственных организациях и органах местного самоуправления наравне с казахским официально употребляется русский язык’ (Конституция Республики Казахстан, Статья 7).

Тілеуов, Қырғызәлі: 'Тіл мен тәуелсіздік – егіз ұғым' [Language and independence – Siamese twins] (Ана тілі, 24.02.2011)

### 3.3 Kazakh as a 'factor for unity' (бірліктің факторы/ фактор единства)

Another frequently repeated motive is the construction of the Kazakh language as a power with the help of which the unity of the country and its population can be guaranteed. In official documents on linguistic policy, this motive is found quite often, e.g., as early as 1997 in Article 4 of the Language Law where it is said that the state language is 'the most important factor for the consolidation of the people of Kazakhstan'.<sup>11</sup> In the 'doctrine of national unity' project which was introduced in November 2009, the 'development of the state language as a factor for the unity of the people of Kazakhstan'<sup>12</sup> was named as the task upon which the efforts of the state and the society should be concentrated. In the final version of the 'doctrine of the national unity' the knowledge of the state language was referred to as a 'key priority' and an 'important factor for the spiritual and national unity'.<sup>13</sup>

Explicitly, this point is also referred to in the language programme which was passed for the years 2011–2020: In it, it was formulated as one of the aims that the state language should be (or, perhaps better: should become?) 'the most important factor for the national unity'.<sup>14</sup> This aspect was repeated by the press after the presentation of the project for the language programme in July 2010 and was taken over as a headline for numerous articles, for example in two articles in the government's official newspaper Egemen Qazaqstan on July 31st as well as on August 3rd, 2010:

11 'Қазақстан халқын топтастырудың аса маңызды факторы болып табылатын мемлекеттік тілді меңгеру – Қазақстан Республикасының әрбір азаматының парызы' (ҚР № 151 Заңы, 4-бап) and accordingly 'Долгом каждого гражданина Республики Казахстан является овладение государственным языком, являющимся важнейшим фактором консолидации народа Казахстана' (Закон РК № 151, Статья 4).

12 'Қазақстан халқын біріктіруші фактор ретінде мемлекеттік тілді дамыту' ('Ел Бірлігі Доктринасы' жобасы: 'Негізгі міндеттер') and accordingly 'Развитие государственного языка как фактора единения народа Казахстана' ('Проект Доктрины Национального единства Казахстана': 'Основные задачи').

13 'Бұл – шешуші басымдық, рухани және ұлттық бірліктің негізгі факторы' ('Қазақстанның ел бірлігі доктринасы', Chapter III: 'Ұлт рухының дамуы') and accordingly 'Это ключевой приоритет, главный фактор духовного и национального единства' ('Доктрина национального единства Казахстана', Chapter III: 'Развитие национального духа').

14 'Максаты: Мемлекеттік тіл – ұлт бірлігінің басты факторы' ('Қазақстан Республикасында тілдерді дамыту мен қолданудың 2011–2020 жылдарға арналған Мемлекеттік бағдарламасы') and accordingly 'Цель: Государственный язык – главный фактор национального единства' ('О Государственной программе развития и функционирования языков в Республике Казахстан на 2011–2020 годы').

Есали, Айнаш et al. ‘Мемлекеттік тіл – ұлт бірлігінің басты факторы’ [The state language is the main factor for national unity] (Егемен Қазақстан, 31.07.2010)

Асанғазықызы, Оразкүл et al. ‘Мемлекеттік тіл – ұлт бірлігінің басты факторы’ [The state language is the main factor for national unity] (Егемен Қазақстан, 03.08.2010)

The connection that was made between the state language and the unity of the country was also picked out as a central theme within the scope of the yearly campaign ‘Support of the state language’ which took place October 2nd, 2011. The headlines of the newspaper articles that covered this campaign returned this motto in positive as well as in negative form:

‘Мемлекеттік тілді қолдау – ел бірлігін қолдау!’ [Supporting the state language means supporting the unity of the country!] (Жас Қазақ Үні, 01.10.2011)

‘Мемлекеттік тілді қолдамау – ел бірлігін қорғамау’ [Not supporting the state language means not defending the unity of the country] (Жас Алаш, 04.10.2011)

Дүйсенбайқызы, Анар: ‘Тілді қорғау – елдің бірлігін қолдау (Алматыда ‘Мемлекеттік тілді қолдау’ акциясы өтті)’ [To save the language means to support the unity of the country (In Almaty, the campaign ‘Save the state language’ was conducted)] (Ана тілі, 06.10.2011)

Another example is a conference carried out in March 2010 under the slogan ‘The state language is the guarantee for the unity of the state’ which was covered by numerous contributions, among others in the following articles:

Мәмет, Сүлеймен: ‘Мемлекеттік тіл – ел бірлігінің кепілі’ [The state language is the guarantee for the unity of the country] (Егемен Қазақстан, 20.03.2010)

Құл-Мұхаммед, Мұхтар: ‘Мемлекеттік тіл – ел бірлігінің кепілі’ [The state language is the guarantee for the unity of the country] (Егемен Қазақстан, 26.03.2010)

‘Мемлекеттік тіл – ел бірлігінің кепілі’ [The state language is the guarantee for the unity of the country] (Халықаралық ‘Қазақ тілі’ қоғамы, 26.04.2010)

The slogan of the conference was taken up several times since then, as for example in the following article:

Осман, Асылы: 'Мемлекеттік тіл – бірлік пен татулық кепілі' [The state language is the guarantee for unity and harmony] (Егемен Қазақстан, 01.05.2010)

... or, in a slightly modified form:

Мұхамеджанов, Орал: 'Бір тілде сөйлеу – бірлік бастауы' [To speak in one language is the beginning of unity] (Егемен Қазақстан, 26.03.2010)

### **3.4 Kazakh as the language of all Kazakhstanis (барлық қазақстандықтардың тілі/ язык всех казахстанцев)**

The Kazakh language is constructed, as shown before, as an important factor for the unity of the Kazakhstani people. Therefore, it is considered necessary that the whole nation has a firm knowledge of the language, and that concerns those citizens of Kazakhstan as well who do not yet know it, no matter for whatever reasons this is the case or which nationality these persons belong to. The fact that knowledge of the Kazakh language can contribute to the unity of all Kazakhstanis is also stressed by political authorities; an article by Dmitrij Pokidaev that was published in October 2006 in the newspaper *Izvestiya Kazakhstan* and reports about a meeting of the 12th conference of the 'Assembly of Kazakhstan's people'<sup>15</sup> may serve as an example:

Покидаев, Дмитрий: 'Государственный язык должен объединить казахстанцев' [The state language has to unify all Kazakhstanis] (Известия Казахстан, 25.10.2006)

In this article, a quotation of the State President Nursultan Nazarbaev is cited that shows that a connection between the Kazakh language and the Kazakhstani people is established and requested by the highest authorities:

Nursultan Nazarbaev noted that the state language is a symbol, just like flag, coat of arms or anthem, and that it 'is intended to unify all citizens of the state'. 'But we have to explain the essentials of the government's language policy to the society more thoroughly: In the world there are many multinational states, but can one live in these states and work without being able to speak the state language? Of course not', he explains.<sup>16</sup>

15 The 'Assembly of Kazakhstan's People' is a consultative organ directly under the control of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (see the official site under <http://www.assembly.kz/en> [last accessed 04/24/2014]).

16 'Нурсултан Назарбаев заметил, что государственный язык является таким же символом, как флаг, герб или гимн, с которых начинается Родина, и он «призван объединять всех граждан государства». «Но нам нужно глубже объяснять обществу суть языковой политики государства: в мире много многонациональных стран, разве можно жить и работать в этих государствах, не зная государственного языка? Конечно, нет», – считает он.'

### 3.5 Kazakh as ‘duty and obligation’ (парыз мен міндет/ долг и обязанность)

What can be concluded from this is that knowledge of the Kazakh language is regarded as the duty of every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as was already mentioned at the beginning of this paper. The motive of ‘duty’ is already to be found in many official documents, e.g., in the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan № 151-1 ‘On the languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan’, passed in July 1997, Article 4 of which says:

The knowledge of the state language which is an important factor for the consolidation of the people of Kazakhstan is the duty of every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan.<sup>17</sup>

However, in the project that was presented for the so-called ‘doctrine of the national unity of the Republic of Kazakhstan’ in the year 2009, ‘duty’ was not mentioned. Instead of that, it was stated that the knowledge of the Kazakh language had to be ‘the natural aspiration of every citizen’.<sup>18</sup> In the doctrine’s final version, passed in 2010, ‘natural aspiration’ is no longer mentioned, but instead every citizen’s ‘duty’:

This belongs, primarily, to the enlargement of the use spheres of the state language. The knowledge of it [i.e., the knowledge of the state language, RB] has to become the duty and obligation of every [citizen of Kazakhstan, RB], an incentive which determines the personal competitiveness and the active participation in the social life. This is a key priority, an important factor for the spiritual and national unity.<sup>19</sup>

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17 ‘Қазақстан халқын топтастырудың аса маңызды факторы болып табылатын мемлекеттік тілді меңгеру – Қазақстан Республикасының әрбір азаматының парызы’ (ҚР № 151 Заңы, 4-бап) and accordingly ‘Долгом каждого гражданина Республики Казахстан является овладение государственным языком, являющимся важнейшим фактором консолидации народа Казахстана’ (Закон РК № 151, Статья 4).

18 ‘Қазақ тілін меңгеру әрбір азаматтың табиғи ұмтылысына айналуы тиіс.’ (‘Ел Бірлігі Доктринасы’ жобасы) and accordingly ‘Овладение казахским языком должно стать естественным стремлением каждого гражданина. [В предстоящие годы все казахстанцы, особенно подрастающее поколение, должны овладеть государственным языком.]’ (‘Проект Доктрины Национального единства Казахстана’)

19 ‘Бұл, ең алдымен, қазақ тілінің мемлекеттік тіл ретінде қолданыс аясын кеңейтуге қатысты. Оны [мемлекеттік тілін] меңгеру әркімнің парызы мен міндеті, жеке бәсекеге қабілеттілігі мен қоғамдық өмірге атсалысудағы белсенділігін айқындайтын ұмтылысы мен ынталануына айналуы қажет. Бұл – шешуші басымдық, рухани және ұлттық бірліктің негізгі факторы.’ (‘Ел Бірлігі Доктринасы’) and accordingly ‘В первую очередь это относится к расширению сферы употребления государственного языка. Овладение им [государственным языком] должно стать долгом и обязанностью каждого гражданина Казахстана, стимулом, определяющим личную конкурентоспособность и активное участие в общественной жизни. Это ключевой приоритет, главный фактор духовного и национального единства.’ (‘Доктрина Национального Единства’)

In the language programme for 2011–2020 this formulation was repeated – with direct reference to the ‘doctrine of the national unity’:

In the doctrine of the national unity the state language was determined as a key priority, as an important factor for the spiritual and national unity. The knowledge of it [i.e., the knowledge of the state language, RB] must become the duty and obligation of every citizen of Kazakhstan, an incentive which determines the personal competitiveness and the active participation in social life.<sup>20</sup>

The concept of the ‘duty’ for all citizens to have a command of the Kazakh language or to acquire this knowledge is found not only in official documents, but was also articulated – more or less clearly – in several headlines of articles published during the last years in the newspaper *Ana Tili*, for example:

Жандәулетұлы, Нұркен: ‘Қазақ тілін білу – парыз әрі міндет’ [Knowledge of the Kazakh language – duty and obligation] (*Ана тілі*, 20.05.2010)

Серікқызы, Д.: ‘Мемлекеттік тілді меңгерту – міндетіміз’ [Knowledge of the state language is our duty] (*Ана тілі*, 30.03.2011)

Әбдіғаппарқызы, Бейбітгүл: ‘Мемлекеттік тілді білу – парызың’ [Knowledge of the state language is your duty] (*Ана тілі*, 01.09.2011)

By using possessive suffixes, like in the second and third example, the readers were addressed directly and reminded of their duty.

### 3.6 Kazakh as a language of ‘prestige’ (мәртебе, бедел/ престиж)

In contrast to the concept of ‘duty’ which has already been used in the discourse for quite some time, ‘prestige’ is a term that is connected to the Kazakh language only in newer official documents. In the language programme that was developed for the years 2001–2010, ‘prestige’ was not mentioned. Instead, merely the ‘expansion and

20 ‘Ел бірлігі доктринасында мемлекеттік тіл ұлттық және рухани бірліктің басты факторы, негізгі басымдығы ретінде айқындалған. Оны [мемлекеттік тілін] меңгеру әрбір Қазақстан азаматының парызы мен міндеті саналып, жеке өзінің бәсекеге қабілеттілігі мен қоғамдық өмірге араласуының белсенділігін айқындайтын ынталандырушы тетік болуға тиіс.’ (‘Қазақстан Республикасында тілдерді дамыту мен қолданудың 2011–2020 жылдарға арналған мемлекеттік бағдарламасы’) and accordingly ‘В Доктрине национального единства государственный язык определен ключевым приоритетом, главным фактором духовного и национального единства. Овладение им должно стать долгом и обязанностью каждого гражданина Казахстана, стимулом, определяющим личную конкурентоспособность и активное участие в общественной жизни.’ (‘Государственная программа развития и функционирования языков в Республике Казахстан на 2011–2020 годы’)

strengthening of the social-communicative functions of the state language'<sup>21</sup> were mentioned as one of the aims. On the contrary, the language programme project for 2011–2020 which was published in July 2010 contained the phrase that 'the daily communication in the Kazakh language has to get prestigious and trendy, especially among young people',<sup>22</sup> as already mentioned. Though this passage is not found in the final version which was passed in June 2011, nevertheless, after the presentation of the project in July 2010 it was regarded as a central point and repeated by the press particularly often in articles about the draft version of the language programme, as shown by the following examples:

‘Знание госязыка в Казахстане должно стать престижным – глава Минкультуры’ [Head of the Ministry of Culture: Knowledge of the state language must become prestigious in Kazakhstan] (ИА ‘Новости Казахстана’, 26.07.2010)

Кульшманов, Канат: ‘Повседневное общение на государственном языке должно стать престижным и модным – министр культуры РК’ [Minister of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan: The daily communication in the state language must become prestigious and trendy] (kazinform, 26.07.2010)

Гильт, Наталья: ‘Знать казахский язык должно быть престижным’ [To know Kazakh must be prestigious] (Известия Казахстан, 27.07.2010)

Теренсай, Галым; Фиерман, Уильям; Лоскутова, Оксана; Тургынбеков, Серик (2010): ‘Знать казахский – престижно’ [To know Kazakh is prestigious] (Казахстанская Правда, 28.07.2010)

Accordingly, in the language programme for the years 2011–2020, as adopted in 2011, one can find the phrase ‘Heightening of the prestige of the usage of the state language’<sup>23</sup> between the formulated tasks. The fact that the question of prestige for

21 ‘Мемлекеттік тілдің әлеуметтік-коммуникативтік қызметін кеңейту мен нығайту’ (‘Тілдерді қолдану мен дамытудың 2001–2010 жылдарға арналған мемлекеттік бағдарламасы’) and accordingly ‘Расширение и укрепление социально-коммуникативных функций государственного языка’ (‘Государственная программа функционирования и развития языков на 2001–2010 годы’).

22 ‘Мемлекеттік тілді кеңінен қолдануды көпшілікке тарату’ – екінші мақсатты іске асыру үшін мемлекеттік тілді қолданудың абырой-беделін көтеру жөніндегі жұмыстарды жүзеге асыру болжанады. Күнделікті өмірде қазақ тілінде сөйлесу дәреже саналып, әсіресе жастар үшін бедел белгісіне және сәнге айналуға тиіс.’ (‘Тілдерді қолдану мен дамытудың 2011–2020 жылдарға арналған мемлекеттік бағдарламасы’ жобасы’) and accordingly ‘Для реализации второй цели ‘Популяризация широкого применения государственного языка’ предполагается осуществление работы по повышению престижа употребления государственного языка. Повседневное общение на казахском языке должно стать престижным и модным, особенно в молодежной среде.’ (‘Проект ‘Государственная программа функционирования и развития языков на 2011–2020 годы’)

23 ‘Мемлекеттік тілді қолданудың мәртебесін арттыру’ (Қазақстан Республикасында

the Kazakh language is not solved yet is taken up quite frequently in the Kazakh-speaking press and is obviously a point of major concern:

Мұсабеков, Бақытқали: ‘Тіл мәртебесі – бәрінен қымбат’ [Prestige of the language is the most important] (Ана тілі, 22.03.2009)

Тойбек, Асылбек: ‘Қазақ тілі қашан өз мәртебесіне ие болады?’ [When will the Kazakh language have its own prestige?] (Жас Қазақ Үні, 14.10.2011)

### 3.7 Kazakh as ‘language of the future’ (болашақтың тілі/ язык будущего)

Kazakh as ‘language of the future’ is another motive which can be found in official statements as well as in the discourse. An excellent example for this is a statement by President Nursultan Nazarbaev, made in 2008 in the ‘Assembly of People of Kazakhstan’ (cf. note 15). With this statement the President particularly addressed parents to have their children’s future in mind and to make sure that they have a firm knowledge of the Kazakh language (quoted from Vorotnoj in *Izvestiya Kazakhstan*, 29.10.2008):

And then, within a certain time, all citizens of Kazakhstan will know it [the Kazakh language, RB]. The knowledge of the Kazakh language will be one of the major conditions for their personal competitiveness. Parents thinking about their children’s future will have to make sure that those know Kazakh.<sup>24</sup>

A connection between the usage or, respectively, the fate of the Kazakh language and the future of the country is also made:

Күлімбетов, Сексенбай: ‘Тілі жойылған елдің келешегі болмайды’ [A country whose language is destroyed has no future] (Ана тілі, 10.02.2009)

Шаханов, Мұхтар [et al.]: ‘Мемлекеттік тілдің тағдыры – ел тағдыры’ [The fate of the state language is the fate of the country] (Жас Қазақ Үні, 12.02.2011)

At the same time, a connection is made between Kazakh and the fate of the Kazakh ethnic group quite often, as the following examples show:

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тілдерді дамыту мен қолданудың 2011–2020 жылдарға арналған мемлекеттік бағдарламасы) and accordingly ‘повышение престижа употребления государственного языка’ (Государственная программа развития и функционирования языков в Республике Казахстан на 2011–2020 годы).

24 ‘И тогда через какое-то время его будут знать все граждане Казахстана. Знание казахского языка становится одним из важнейших условий личной конкурентоспособности. Родители, думая о будущем своих детей, должны позаботиться о том, чтобы они знали казахский язык.’

Ибраим, Самат: ‘Тіл болашағы – ұлт болашағы’ [The future of the language is the future of the ethnic group] (*Ана тілі*, 23.05.2009)

Шәуеев, Азат: ‘Тіл тағдыры қазақтың өз қолында’ [The fate of the language is in the hands of the Kazakhs themselves] (*Ана тілі*, 28.01.2010)

In the press, sometimes optimism is expressed in this context, e.g., in an article published in the newspaper *Ana Tili* in December 2009:

Күдеринова, Құралай: ‘Қазақтілді ұрпақ келе жатыр...’ [A Kazakh-speaking generation comes into being...] (*Ана тілі*, 03.12.2009)

This matches the fact that in official documents, e.g., in the language programme of the years 2011–2020, ambitious aims of the future are formulated: Thus, the portion of those among the adult population who know Kazakh should increase to 95%. In this way the Kazakh language is to be implemented as ‘language of the future’.

#### 4. Conclusion

As shown before, the Kazakh language is constructed in rather different roles and connected with different concepts. In official documents, an explicit ascription as ‘language of the Kazakh ethnic group’ is rather avoided, whereas the function of Kazakh as a factor for the unity of all citizens of Kazakhstan as well as language of all Kazakhstanis is emphasised. Knowledge of the Kazakh language is regarded as a ‘duty’, concerning all citizens; but whether the ambitious aims that were formulated in the current language programme can be reached as planned until the year 2020, seems at least questionable, if not more concrete measures are taken to support those who do not have this knowledge yet.

The connection of the Kazakh language with the concept ‘prestige’ has increased over the last years. Obviously, a problem that prevents a further spread of the Kazakh language among the Kazakhstani population was identified here. Nevertheless, in this regard as well, it remains to be seen whether the ascription of prestige to the Kazakh language can be reached through documents on language policy and through the official discourse and whether this contributes to a broader use of the language in different spheres, or whether other factors have to come into effect so that the Kazakh language – first and foremost in comparison to the Russian language – can gain prestige.

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