

Reflection of the Language in the Historical Documents on Kazakhs Living in China

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1. Introduction

Currently, the number of people that belong to the Kazakh ethnic group in the world is 17 million, of which 11 million live in Kazakhstan, and more than 6 million in foreign countries such as China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Iran. The largest concentration of the Kazakh diaspora abroad is observed in China. Their language and writing characteristics are not the same as those in Kazakhstan due to different circumstances. For example, in Kazakhstan, Kazakhs currently use the Cyrillic alphabet, whereas the Kazakhs in China use the Arabic alphabet, created by A. Baitursynov, and finally the Kazakhs living in Turkey and Europe use the Latin alphabet. Because of the mismatch of the graphic basis, the alphabet and spelling rules are also different, which leads to distinct linguistic features. Even if we leave aside the alphabet and spelling, there are still several socio-historical reasons for the differentiation.

The search for solutions to the targeted problems of Kazakh dialectology, first of all, requires to identify individual characteristics of the dialects of the Kazakh language, their distinct and common features, as well as similarities and differences. Since the second half of the twentieth century, the study of regional features of the language of Kazakhs living in countries far from Kazakhstan has been the goal of research by many dialectologists.

This paper deals with the language of the eastern dialect of the Kazakhs of China. In addition to Kazakhs of China, this group includes the dialects of the Kazakhs living in Ust-Kamenogorsk and

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Ayaguz, located on both banks of the Irtysh River, the language of the Kazakhs of Mongolia (Bayan-Olgi dialect) and the language of the Koshagash Kazakhs, living in the Altai Mountains in Russia. Close language contacts, the proximity to the territory of residence of Kazakhs, and ethnic connections serve as the basis for naming their language as an Eastern dialect.

The study of linguistic problems began after the introduction of the “nationality recognition” policy in China in the 1950s. At the same time, dialectology began to develop in Kazakhstan as a separate branch of Kazakh linguistics.¹ These early works described the phonetic features, lexical and grammatical problems of dialects, but these issues have not become the specific object of research. The analysis of the ethnolinguistic nature of local language features peculiar to a certain region has not yet been carried out at the proper level in Kazakh linguistics. In recent years, there is increasing recognition of a need to consider regional word usage in close connection with the human factors, due to the tendency of adopting a more anthropocentric approach in linguistics studies in general. It is that the reasons for the appearance of features peculiar to this region can only be identified when determining the influence of extralinguistic factors on the formation of these language systems. In this regard, the work of M. Atabayeva “Ethnolinguistic basis of dialect vocabulary of the Kazakh language” should be particularly noted.² This work is an analysis of ethnolinguistic factors that are known through the language of an ethnic group.

The historical, cultural, ethnological character and lexical features of the Kazakh language in China should be the object of research from a historical-comparative, linguistic-geographical perspective because Kazakh speakers separated from the main group of Kazakh society while living in China and for some time, they distanced themselves both socially and linguistically. The social linguistic aspect of the lexical system of the language of a people who have long lived and mixed with the Chinese ethnic groups has particular importance. The topic is also particularly relevant with respect

¹ S. A. Amanzholov, *Вопросы диалектологии и истории казахского языка. (Questions of dialectology and history of the Kazakh language)*. (Almaty: Sanat, 2001), 608.

² Mereke Atabayeva, *Этнолингвистические основы диалектной лексики казахского языка (Ethnolinguistic basis of dialect vocabulary of the Kazakh language)*, (Almaty: Bilim, 2006).

to the problem of the state of the language of the repatriates who moved to Kazakhstan from China as their language changed as a result of the relationship with another language. In this regard, the paper comprehensively examines dialectisms collected from linguistic facts that are reflected in the ethnocultural character of Kazakhs living in China.

Scientific research on the language of Kazakhs living in China is reflected only in individual articles. This problem was discussed in a number of articles by Sh. Sarybaeva, Zh. Bolatova and Bafina.³ This issue was also discussed in the works of Chinese linguists and scientists. In Kazakh linguistics, the use of the Kazakh language in various geographical regions was considered through the concept of dialects from the standpoint of dialectology and did not go beyond intralinguistics. The present paper uses the concept of “language of the diaspora” in connection with the language of Kazakhs from China, which may also be considered within the framework of dialectology. But the concept of “diaspora language” also incorporates extralinguistic factors. In the research work, the language and culture of the diaspora are studied in relation to each other, and the analysis of language and biocultural integration is carried out in tandem. Not only speech features but also semantic features of the dialects are analyzed. Attention is also given to the influence of external and internal factors on semantics.

This research was conducted using the historical-comparative method as the main means of studying the history of the language. In order to achieve specific results, methods such as descriptive method, analysis of speech definitions, component, and semantic analysis, and areal analysis were also used. Additional sources include the findings and implications expressed in the works of domestic and foreign dialectologists who studied the written work in this area related to the middle ages, various etymological dictionaries based on the materials of the Kazakh language, and systematically developed dictionaries of general and specific branches.

This paper is organized as follows: The next section looks at the structure of the Kazakh language in general and Kazakh dialect

³ В. А. Вафин “Китайские элементы в языке казахов Синьцзяня” (Chinese Elements in the Language of the Kazakhs of Xinjiang) PhD Dissertation, (Almaty, 1973), 33.

in China from an intralinguistic perspective. This section also focuses on several approaches that explain the relationship between languages from the perspective of the extra-linguistic factors. The third section presents some examples from the Kazakh language in China and comparisons with the Kazakh literary language. The final section concludes the discussion and addresses implications of the research.

2. Kazakh Language and Presence in China

There were various socio-historical periods, during which the social situation of the Kazakhs has shifted dramatically, their suffering, and deep historical roots are no doubt reflected in their language.

The Kazakh diaspora is defined as the Kazakhs living abroad. After demarcation of the external border of Kazakhstan, the Kazakh diaspora spread to China, the other Central Asian states, Afghanistan, Iran, and beyond. The total population of the Kazakh diaspora is about 5 million. The diaspora is composed of those residents who moved to neighboring countries such as Russia, China, Uzbekistan as a result of various historical events or violent conflicts, and those whose historical homeland was annexed to these neighboring states.

The fact that Kazakhs have been living on modern Chinese land for a long time, is known from the history. In ancient times, several Turkic tribes such as Saki, Uisuni, Kanly, Alans, Kimaks, Kipchaks, Dulats, Turgeshes, Karluks, the Oghuz, Argyns, Naimans, Kereis, Uaks, Konyrats, Zhalayyrs, Alshins, and other tribes lived and roamed in the eastern regions of China, in the mountains of Altai, Tien Shan and the lowlands of Dzungaria, Jetysu and fields of the Syr Darya and the steppes of Deshti Kipchak, and took possession of these territories.⁴ In China, the Kazakh population living in their historical homeland is considered ethnic Kazakhs. Currently, the People's Republic of China officially recognizes only fifty-six nationalities living in the People's Republic of China. According to Russian sources, the Kazakh diaspora is one of the ten largest ethnic groups in China in terms of the number of people.

⁴ Zh. Samituly, *Kazakhs in China*. (Almaty: World Association of Kazakhs, 2000), 312.

Despite the fact that a lot of time has passed since the transfer of Kazakhs to China and six or seven generations have passed, the Kazakh diaspora living in China has preserved the main element of its national heritage - the native language- to this day. Despite certain changes in the language from phonetic, lexical, and morphological viewpoints, it did not separate from the Kazakh folk language as a whole. One of the reasons for this situation is the fact that the Kazakhs from China persist in preserving their national culture and honor it.

The main reason for the preservation of the language of Kazakhs in China is the connection between the process of resettlement of Kazakhs in China and the improvement of the literary language. A certain number of native Kazakh words that have passed into the category of obsolete and became out of use in Kazakhstan have been preserved in the language of the local Kazakhs in China along with other local features to this day. In addition, the expansion of the laws of internal development of both languages was facilitated by the belief that the preservation of the purity of the language was necessary for the preservation and longevity of culture such as schools, mass media, radio, theater, etc. Despite the preservation of the Kazakh language to the present time due to the above factors, it is impossible to negate the susceptibility of the language to change. Language, as a living organism, is a dynamic phenomenon, a process that is in a state of continuous development. Changing the lexical structure is a movement similar to changing the meaning of a word, which oftentimes increases the quality of the language. Research shows that the meaning of a word is updated as time passes, and sometimes its borders expand and other times they shrink.⁵ As the circumstances and time changes, the concepts that people use to understand and explain their world also develop and change. A word can be borrowed from another language, or a process of novel word-formation occurs. Sometimes new concepts are born by expanding the meaning of an existing word or changing its function.

On the grouping of languages, the diversity of their systems and differences, A. Baitursynov expressed the following views on the Kazakh language:

⁵ A. Koshanov and N. Nysanbayev, *Kazakh diaspora: present and future: scientific publication / General Ed.* (Astana: Capital, 2005), 352.

“The Kazakh language is one of the Turkic languages. The language of peoples in the world is mainly divided into three: 1) root language, 2) agglutinative language, 3) amorphous language. In the root languages, when using a word, the root does not change, such as Chinese, Japanese. In agglutinative languages, words are changed by attaching a suffix to the end of the word, such as Turkic and Finnish. In amorphous languages, the word changes from the root, such as Russian and Arabic. Since Kazakh is one of the Turkic languages, it belongs to the agglutinative languages. The Kazakh language changes not from the root, but through the addition of suffixes.”⁶

N. Ualiev stressed that the people leave their marks in the history of languages:

“The people know how to decorate their language within the framework of a small number of specific, valuable, succinct words that fit their beliefs, convictions, concepts, thoughts&fantasies, and daily life of the past era.”⁷

The scientist B. Sagyndykuly, who deeply studied the patterns of internal development of the lexicology of the Kazakh language, stated the following:

“According to our observations, initially the roots developed in three directions. They changed from the phonetic, semantic, and grammatical sides. Therefore, their variants, like other words, retain their external form, but the meaning of the root changes and they get a sound-morphological shade. If you analyze each word separately, its essence is revealed.”

Along with internal factors, external influences also played a decisive role in the development of the language. The external factor is the influence of the language of the neighbors, in other words, the influence of the geographical environment. Internal factor - specific features of the language, characteristic of its nature, generated by the laws of internal development. From these positions, one should be able to briefly describe how Kazakhs from China speak and explain

⁶ A. Baitursynuly, *Kazak Dil Biliminin Meseleleri* (Issues of Kazakh Linguistics), (Almaty: Abzal-AI, 2013), 640.

⁷ N. Valiev, “Lexical and Semantic Background of Some Ethnographisms.” Reports of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan. No.2 (2000).

the influence of various external factors on the language, as well as the situation that the language finds itself in this environment.

Speaking about the peculiarities of the language of Kazakhs from China, it is necessary to take into account various historical, socio-economic circumstances surrounding immigrants. First of all, for Kazakhs in China, relations with relatives became more complicated due to socio-political contradictions during the Soviet government. Secondly, there was an absence of schools and kindergartens, cultural institutions, mass media, and television in the Kazakh language. Thirdly, the alphabet was based on Arabic or Latin, which made it difficult to use the Cyrillic alphabet. Fourthly, the functions of the Kazakh language were limited as it was used only as a means of oral communication within the family. Fifthly, the native language was under the influence of the language environment in the place of residence, and there was a close relationship between the two languages. Nevertheless, despite such contradictions and actions, the diaspora kept strict rules of communication in their native language.

The preservation and development of one's own language in conditions of living outside one's own environment, among other language environments, is one of the important problems of social linguistics for any ethnic group. According to B. Khasanuly, "the study of the language situation of Kazakhs living in foreign countries is conducted only within the framework of traditional linguistics, namely dialectology, which is not enough."⁸ It is necessary to determine the forms of language activity in dialect regions, that is, the environment for using the Kazakh language in China. There are two environmental factors to consider: living as part of a multilingual society and bilingualism, and the relations and kinship with other communities.

The language situation of the local Kazakh people is closely related to the influence of various factors of multilingual society. Conducting research on the use of each language in a multi-ethnic state is currently one of the important problems in linguistics. Conclusions that researchers make about the language situation often do not

⁸ B. Khasanuly, *Ana tili – ata mura* (qazaq tilining zher zhüzi tilderi zhüiesindegi alatyn orny. [Native Language – Great Gift from Ancestors (The Role of the Kazakh Language in the System of World Languages).] (Almaty: Zhazushy, 1992), 272.

converge. Researchers in the field of social linguistics V. V. Avrorin, V. D. Bondaletov, A. Schweitzer, G. P. Stepanov, A. B. Nikolsky, and others explain this concept from different angles.⁹ According to the general concept that has been formed, when determining the language situation in a language group, the language system or language set is taken as the basis. In other words, by language situation, we mean the use of other languages in the aggregate (forms of language activity: territorial, social dialects, jargons) used by an ethnic community in a certain historical period. We call the language situation of Kazakhs living in China *bilingualism* since in the region where Kazakhs live, two languages are used – Kazakh and Chinese.

Bilingualism is a reflection of the language situation formed in the society. The term bilingualism was first introduced in 1953 by W. Weinreich on the basis of combining (contact) languages.¹⁰ According to B. Khasanuly, bilingualism means alternate or parallel use of two well-known ethnic languages by representatives in different circumstances. In the context of bilingualism, languages that are related by genetic characteristics, close by typological positions, or unrelated by genetic characteristics, distant by typological positions can be used. An earlier study presents the following main types of mutual influence of languages used simultaneously in the context of bilingualism: 1) the influence of unrelated languages; 2) the influence of languages with a distant degree of kinship; 3) the influence of closely related languages.¹¹

When speaking about the interaction of languages with different degrees of kinship, we should keep in mind the opinion of M. A. Borodina that the influence of closely related languages on each other is much less than the influence of languages that are not related to each other:

“The interaction of two languages of different systems is ultimately related to the need for communication, better understanding: it is easier to introduce some of your words, sounds, forms into a foreign language that is very difficult to

⁹ V. Avrorin, V. D. Bondaletov, A. Schweitzer, G. P. Stepanov, A. B. Nikolsky,

¹⁰ W. Weinreich

¹¹ B. Khasanuly, *Native Language-Atamura*. Almaty: Writer, 1992, 272.

understand and thus make it more accessible to yourself than to learn it as it is. In the case of two related languages that are very similar that they are mutually comprehensible with little practice, there is no need for such interpenetration."¹²

The Kazakh language is part of the Altai languages, and Chinese belongs to the group of Tibetan languages. If we compare, the migrants living among other Turkic peoples or neighboring ones learn the language of the neighboring people more easily such as Kazakhs living in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The majority of Kazakhs of China are well aware of the Han languages. Speaking their native language, Kazakhs often use words borrowed from Chinese. However, they do not possess the general quality of bilingualism. Most of those who speak Chinese are people with higher education, employees in the field of science, administration, school teachers, etc. Since Chinese is taught at school, school students also understand and can speak the language. As for the population as a whole, not all Kazakhs who moved to this region speak the language of the people on whose land they live. For this reason, the phenomenon of bilingualism among Kazakhs from China is referred to as group bilingualism. The main reason for the incomplete mastery of the Chinese language by local Kazakhs is the lack of kinship between the Chinese and Kazakh languages.

3. Examples

The vocabulary of the Kazakh language consists of four layers: 1) common Turkic; 2) Kipchak (middle Turkic) layer; 3) pure national layer; 4) borrowed words.

The basis of a pure national layer is native Kazakh words. Many differences in the use of native Kazakh words by Kazakhs from China can be observed. All the words in the Kazakh language, translated into Han languages were defined as international terms. This factor was also influenced by Chinese writing (hieroglyphs). For example, some words are overwhelmingly defined as an international term in a hundred languages and still have the same appearance. As an example, we give the word "context" This word is written in Chinese characters, this character is translated into Kazakh as

¹² M. A. Borodina, "Dialects and regional languages" (On the problem of the language situation in modern France). *Questions of linguistics*. No. 5, (1982): 29-38.

“language environment.” This international term was translated by Kazakh linguists and replaced with the Kazakh word “manmatin”, however, in our opinion, the artificiality of this equivalent is felt. It is obvious that native Kazakh words are not a concept, but it should be noted that in the language of Kazakhs from China, the equivalent becomes a native word created in accordance with the nature of the Kazakh language. This fact allows us to observe the use of international words without translation in the original form, which is rare among Kazakhs from China.

Each nation has common features in the knowledge and perception of the world, but in addition to commonality, there are specific features and differences. The life of a people in a certain environment or region influences its national character. Specific features of the national character and mentality of the ethnic group are reflected in the culture, and daily life. For example, we will try to compare the words used in everyday life:

Table 33.1. Word Comparisons between Literary Language and Language of Kazakhs from China

Literary Language	Language of Kazakhs from China
Таңдау	Талдау
Айырмашылық	Парық
Бөлек	Айырым
Тұжырымдау	Пайымдау
Некеге отыру	Некелену
Пойыз	От арба
Ғаламтор	Торап

The first observation about the Kazakh language in China is that the vast majority of words used in the language of Kazakhs from China are the same as the Kazakh literary language. For this reason, specific features can be found only in certain elements in the composition of the word. For example: *бүліншілік салу* corresponds to *бүлік салу* in the literary language; *шеке қарау* is *шекеден қарау* in literary language; *езіп малтау* is *малтасын езу*; and *көзайдан болу* is *көзайым болу*. On the other hand, one of the main features of the remoteness of the Kazakh language from China from the Kazakh

literary language and its other dialects is the abundance of words that came from other languages.

As can be seen from the above examples, the words used by Kazakhs from China are not so far from literary words, that is, they are widely used in the literary language. In our opinion, even the words that Kazakhs from China use to name modern concepts are quite worthy of introducing into the literary language for widespread use.

The majority of words in the language of Kazakhs from China related to cattle breeding is based on the literary language. However, there are some changes in the speech composition. *Бағымшылық* denotes caring for the cattle. Although this word is only used in the dialect, it is also comprehensible to native speakers of the literary language. In our opinion, compared to the term *мал шаруашылығы* (cattle breeding), it is more appropriate and rational.

Албыт жылқы means sick horse. This expression corresponds to the dialect in the eastern region of Kazakhstan. There is even a proverb: “*Албыт тиген ат*” In eastern areas of Kazakhstan, “Delbe” a very dangerous disease that occurs in horses, is called *Албыт*.

Ат сүмек болды -the horse was sweating, all covered with sweat. In the literary language, the meaning of “to sweat a lot” is used in expressive combination of *сүмектей терлеу*. In this sense, the word *сүмек* occurs in the literary language, but it is used as the verb *сүмектей*. The peculiarity of using this word in the speech of Kazakhs from China is because of its use as a root. It should also be shown that in the literary language the word *сүмек* is the basis of the phenomenon of homonymy.

Елнек ат is a fast horse. In this combination, the word that has a local meaning is *Елнек*. This word is also found in the literary language: the suffix *-ек* is added to the imitative word *Елн* and a nominal word is obtained. It means “unquestioningly fulfills what is said, obedient, nimble, agile.” The peculiarity of the usage of the word *Елнек* by Kazakhs from China is that this word is used as an adjective for a horse.

Балық қақпайды- the fish does not fall for the bait. The peculiarity of this phrase is the use of the word *қақпайды* in a different meaning, that is, within the framework of a dialect. It is enough to consider the combination within the boundaries of the phonetic dialect, since in the literary language it sounds like “*балық қаптайды*.” In the

phonetics of the Kazakh language, it refers to the phenomenon of metathesis, there is an alternation of п/к.

Атты қатыру– to groom the horse, to train her. For example, “Ауыл бәйгеге қосқалы ат қатырып жатыр” Dialecticism in this combination is in *қатыру*. The semantic equivalent is to reduce the feed supply as much as possible during horse training. Here the word is used from a pair of phraseological combinations *аштанқатыру (қатыру)* “to force to starve” in a modified form. Of course, there are polysemous words in the literary language, but the basic meaning is – “to freeze.” Despite the ambiguity of the word, it does not convey the meaning of “to train, care for.” Therefore, this expression can be attributed to the peculiarities of the Kazakh language from China.

4. Conclusion

Linguistics is one of the most valuable and important achievements of human civilization since this sphere is closely connected with the physiological nature, social development, national cultural growth, of human beings. In addition, today this sphere contributes to the strengthening of interdisciplinary continuity, and to the study of new theoretical attitudes. Linguistics, which has taken as a guide to action such conceptual combinations as man and the world, society and people, pays special attention to the features of the language of humanity as a whole, to its functions in social life, perceives language as the basis of human actions, describing all natural phenomena of the surrounding world.

The entire history of any nation, its way of life, activities, cultural heritage that has been formed over the centuries, and spiritual wealth finds its imprint, first of all, in the native language of the people, which was formed as a precious asset and passed down from generation to generation. Studying the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh diaspora abroad in particular, the study of the original language will contribute to the knowledge of the one face of the Kazakh language, which is the need generated by today’s requirements.

It is known that when representatives of one people live on the national territory of another people, borrowed elements are found in large numbers, based on which a specially mixed dialect appears.

Dialects as a variant of the modern national language are means of communication among their users. The language of Kazakhs from China is considered in the group of eastern dialects. The study found similarities between the dialect meanings of the language of Kazakhs from China and Kazakhs living in Kazakhstan due to geopolitical and socio-political reasons. This commonality is reflected in the local features of the language of Kazakhs living in Semey, East Kazakhstan, Almaty regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

The language of Kazakhs from China is characterized by a variety of local features. The article dealt with the problem of the everyday vocabulary of Kazakhs in China, features of their language, the reasons for the appearance of loanwords in the Kazakh language in China, and analysis of the ethnolinguistic nature of local language features. The article presents an analysis of one of the facets of the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh diaspora abroad - the dialect of Kazakhs living in China. The study of the dialect of the Kazakhs allowed us to come to interesting conclusions that in the territory where two languages are used, borrowed elements are found in large numbers, which together form a sedentary mixed dialect.

There is a need for not only a general study of a well-known language but also its research related to the extralinguistic factors such as civil history of one particular people, culture, worldview, traditions, customs, etc. For this reason, dialects and the language of the diaspora cannot be studied separately from the historical fate of the local population. In this regard, it is necessary to pay attention to the history of resettlement of Kazakhs to the lands of China, ethnic composition, and language situation. The reason for this is that language is not just a means of communication, it is a collection of all information about living conditions, life, customs and traditions. It embodies people's consciousness, serving as an archive of life practice, and provides the main direction of knowledge.

The language of the Kazakh diaspora in China reflects some grammatical features, which are found only in the language of Kazakhs from China. These dialectological phraseological units, are ready-made linguistic units which figuratively express meaning. Having been formed over a long time, they have a stable composition. They are associated with spiritual knowledge, life and activity, and the state of the geographical location of the local population.

Diglossia of the Kazakh language from China corresponds to the functional type of territorial dialect and literary language. In the process of language development, especially if the diaspora has close relations with the local people, then, changes in the lexical system of the language to a certain extent can be called a legitimate phenomenon.

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