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## Maintenance of the Russian language in Kazakhstan: activity of Russia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian speakers who outnumbered the number of the speakers of the titular language of Kazakhstan became a linguistic minority within the newly-formed independent state aimed at derussification. The present paper addresses two research questions: (1) whether the aim of the new language policy of Kazakhstan is to limit the scope of using the Russian language, which, in turn, limits the linguistic rights of the Russian-speaking minority, and (2) if yes, which domains the Russian foreign policy in Kazakhstan would contribute to the maintenance of the Russian language. Thus, the first part of the present paper describes the position of the Russian language within the language policy of independent Kazakhstan according to the population, status and institutional support factors of the objective ethnolinguistic vitality model of Giles (1987). In the second part of the paper, the foreign policy of Russia implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its subordinate organizations aimed at the maintenance of the Russian language is described.

Keywords: language policy, minority studies, post-Soviet states, language maintenance

A Szovjetunió összeomlása után az oroszul beszélők azon csoportja, akik létszámukat illetően többséget alkottak a kazah nemzeti nyelvet beszélőkkel szemben, nyelvi kisebbséggé váltak az újonnan megalakult független államban, amelynek céljai között a deruszifikáció is szerepel. Jelen cikk két kutatási kérdéssel foglalkozik: (1) vajon Kazahsztán új nyelvpolitikájának célja-e az orosz nyelv használatának korlátozása, amellyel határt szab az oroszul beszélő kisebbség nyelvi jogainak is; és (2) amennyiben igen, melyik Kazahsztánban lévő, orosz külpolitikai testület jelölné ki feladatuként az orosz nyelv megőrzése érdekében szükséges intézkedéseket. A cikk első része az orosz nyelv helyzetével foglalkozik a független Kazahsztán nyelvpolitikájához igazodva, Giles objektív etnolingvisztikai vitalitás-modelljének (1987) lakosságra, státuszra és intézményi támogatásokra vonatkozó faktorai szerint. A cikk második része Oroszországnak az Orosz Külügyminisztériumon keresztül és az annak alárendelt szervezetek által megvalósuló, az orosz nyelv megőrzésére irányuló politikáját írja le.

### 1. Introduction

During the Soviet era, the state languages in the Soviet republics were taking second place after the Russian language which was a lingua franca and the first language in the Soviet Union. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the changes of the state borders caused changes in the status of the Russian language. The post-Soviet states were able to strengthen the titular languages and build the national states (Pavlenko, 2008: 2). The changes in linguistic legislation consequently affected the position of the speakers of the Russian language.

Kazakhstan was the latest country proclaiming its independence from the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the regime, it was the only post-Soviet state

where the titular nation did not make up the majority (O'Callaghan, 2004: 208). The Russian-speaking population who outnumbered the titular language speakers became a linguistic minority in the newly formed independent states.

The language policy of Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet era, as well as its effect on the position of the Russian language and the Russian-speaking minority living there, were the subjects of many studies within political and linguistic studies.

Karabec & Kotenko (2015) described the history of the migration of Russians to the territory of Kazakhstan. Based on the population census results held in the Russian Empire (1897), in the Soviet Union (1926, 1989) and independent Kazakhstan (1999, 2009), the authors traced how the proportions of Russian and Kazakh speakers were changing.

Pavlenko (2008) defined the main stages of language policy development in Kazakhstan (Nativization - support of the local languages in 1920s, Russification of 1930s-1980s, and later on, Derussification) to reveal how the Soviet era made Russian a lingua franca in the country and how the language policy of the independent state was formulated.

The language policy of independent Kazakhstan was investigated to describe a language shift in educational and public spheres, mass media and the governmental service from the Russian language to the titular one (Pavlenko, 2013; Dinh Lam, 2013; Aksholakova & Ismailova, 2013; Melich & Adibayeva, 2013; Kurovskaya, 2015; Kupriyanov, 2019). A national cultural project "Trinity of languages" as a course of new language policy of independent Kazakhstan was also the subject of research (Nurseitova et al., 2017).

The new language policy of Kazakhstan is viewed differently by the experts: some believe the strengthening of the Kazakh and the English languages will result in narrowing down the position of the Russian language (Borishpolets, 2014; Polovinko, 2018), others see it as a policy of protecting the titular language from a threat of Russian and English as more dominant languages (Zhumashev et al, 2017).

Since language policy is inseparably linked to political science, the position of the Russian language in Kazakhstan should be investigated in a context of political science and international relations between Russia and the other Post-Soviet states (Sagindikov, 2014, 2015).

Zatulin (2011) described the activity of Russia in maintaining the Russian language in the Post-Soviet states and explained why it is politically important for Russia: the book viewed Russian and its speakers as a factor of consolidation among the post-Soviet states which have priority in the geopolitical strategy of Russia.

Thus, the previous research comprehensively analyzed the position of the Russian language in Kazakhstan, however, the two main aspects remain debatable and formulate the research questions of the present paper:

(1) whether the aim of the new language policy of Kazakhstan is to limit the scope of using the Russian language, which, in turn, limits the linguistic rights of the Russian-speaking minority;

(2) if yes, which domains the Russian foreign policy in Kazakhstan would contribute to the maintenance of the Russian language.

Taking this into account, the present paper is aimed to fill the gap in this field of research relying on previous scientific research and a number of official sources:

1. Legal acts determining the foreign policy of Russia;
2. Documents reflecting the language policy of independent Kazakhstan;
3. Bilateral treaties and agreements between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan;
4. Statistics presented by the population census results of Soviet and independent Kazakhstan of 1989 and 2009 respectively;
5. Annual reports of the Russkiy Mir Foundation and Rossotrudnichestvo;
6. News sources related to the debates about the latest changes in the language policy course of Kazakhstan and the state of the Russian language there.

The qualitative research includes the objective ethnolinguistic vitality model of Giles (1987) as an instrument to identify the position of the Russian language in Kazakhstan concerning the three factors: status, demography, and institutional support and control. The given model presents a language vitality as a complex system and made it possible to analyze the state of the Russian language in Kazakhstan and the activity of Russia to maintain it according to the factors of the model.

The Giles model was an instrument in a number of studies on language maintenance: Yagmur (1999) examined the first language attrition among Turkish speakers living in Australia. Societal factors and subjective ethnolinguistic vitality perception reflected in speech behavior were studied based on this model. Hulsen (2000) also used the ethnolinguistic vitality model to investigate the interrelationship between the societal factors and language shift and language loss among Dutch migrants living New Zealand.

## **2. The position of the Russian language in Kazakhstan**

During the 20th century the ethnic composition of Kazakhstan changed dramatically: famine, failed revolts led to a massive death and emigration to the neighbouring China and Mongolia. The results of the population census revealed that the share of the titular nation decreased from 80% (1897) to 57% (1926) (Krasnobayeva, 2004: 19). In contrast, the share of Russians tended to increase: from 13% (1897) to 20% (1926) due to the resettlement policy of the Russian Empire and due to the possibility of the demographic mobility around the Soviet Union mostly among the Russians (Karabec & Kotenko, 2015: 72). Forced transfer of ethnic groups including Armenians, Uzbeks, Koreans, Germans

“whose loyalties [to the Soviet Union] were in doubt” (Brubaker, 1994: 107) to Kazakhstan made the country multinational with the reduced share of the titular nation (Melich&Adibayeva, 2013: 266).

By the time of the Soviet Union collapse, the percentage of Russians and Kazakhs were almost equal: 37.6% and 39.7% accordingly (Pavlenko, 2006: 87). In the regions bordering Russia, the Russian speakers constituted the majority – around 65% (Karabec & Kotenko, 2015: 72). Russian as a language of government, document management, science, culture, manufacturing was also the most spoken language in society: the population census results of 1989 showed that 75% of the entire population of Kazakhstan spoke Russian, including 2/3 of the ethnic Kazakhs; at the same time, only less than 1% of non-titular ethnic groups had command of the Kazakh language (Shustov, 2009).

The situation changed after the collapse of the USSR when 1.2 million Russians (around 14% of the entire population) emigrated from independent Kazakhstan to Russia (Karabec & Kotenko, 2015: 73). At the same time, the titular nation had positive population growth. As a result, the difference between the shares of Kazakhs and Russians became more than 20% (53% and 30% accordingly) (Population census results of 1999).

The results of the latest population census (2009) revealed that Russians are the second biggest ethnic group in Kazakhstan after the Kazakh (63.1%) and the biggest ethnic minority: the share of Russians is 23.7% while any other ethnic group makes up less than 3%: Uzbeks – 2.9%, Ukrainians – 2.1%, Uyghur – 1.4%, Tatars – 1.3%, Germans – 1.1% (Aksholakova&Ismailova, 2013: 1580-1581).

The Russian language in Kazakhstan is a native language not only for the ethnic Russians but also for Ukrainians, Germans, Tatars, and Koreans living there and also a lingua franca in the country. According to self-assessment report results, 84.8% of the entire population including 94.4% of ethnic Kazakhs claim that they have a strong command of the Russian language when the Kazakh language is fluently spoken by 62%, 11.7% possess the Kazakh language at the elementary level (Melich&Adibayeva, 2013: 265; Borishpolets, 2014: 64).

Predominantly, the Russian speaking population lives in the north and north-eastern areas of the country where their proportion varies from 22% (West Kazakh region) to 50% (North Kazakh region) of the population. They constitute a part of the population of Almaty, the biggest city of Kazakhstan and 20% of the population of the capital city in Kazakhstan (Population census results, 2009).

The language policy of independent Kazakhstan is characterized as a policy of Derussification and Kazakhization (Pavlenko, 2008: 296, 2013: 267). During the Soviet era, Russian was a language of government, document management, science, culture, manufacturing (Shustov, 2009). After the collapse of the Soviet Union the language policy of post-Soviet Kazakhstan was aimed at strengthening the position and expanding the sphere of usage of the Kazakh language. The first

step was made in 1995 when the constitution of independent Kazakhstan declared that only Kazakh is a state language. Although the constitution (Art. 7.2) proclaims that "in the state organizations and local governments, the Russian language is officially used alongside with the Kazakh language", an additional Resolution "On the Interpretation of the Law on Languages of 1997" clarified that the given constitutional norm does not mean giving the Russian language the status of a second state language (Section 2). The document recognizes the equality of Russian and Kazakh as the languages of addressing state bodies and local authorities and receiving information from them, as well as the "equal legal significance of texts of regulatory legal acts in Kazakh and Russian languages"(Section 1).

Indefinite status of Russian was a reason for a petition signed by 138 public figures in 2011 (Zatulín, 2011). The authors of the petition claimed that "Russian language illegally performs the function of the state language" and required to abolish the Article 7.2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan and to use exclusively the state language in state organizations and in office work. However, the petition was not supported by the general population of the country (Polovinko, 2018).

The position of the Russian language in Kazakhstan was defined by the cultural project "Trinity of languages" introduced by the president of the state in 2007. Within the project, the Russian language is given the status of the language of interethnic communication, whereas Kazakh is considered a national language, and "English as the language of successful integration in the global economy" (Nazarbaev, 2007).

The state program for the development and functioning of languages for 2011–2020 identified "the communicative-linguistic space" as a sphere of the usage of the Russian language. In the field of public administration, documentation, interstate cooperation, the legislative branch, and educational institutions, the Kazakh language should be used. The office work in state bodies should be gradually transferred from Russian to the Kazakh language (Shustov, 2009).

The state language knowledge became a requirement for high-ranking positions: the Constitution of Kazakhstan postulates that a candidate to the President position (Art. 41) and chairpersons of the Chambers (Art. 58) should have a perfect command of the state language, which is Kazakh.

The state program for the development and functioning of languages for 2011–2020 stated that civil servants and service workers (bank, trade service, etc.) should also possess the Kazakh language and defined minimum requirements to be able to perform the official duties with the Kazakh-speaking clients (Kurovskaya, 2015: 20). In order to assess the level of the Kazakh language proficiency, the national language test "Kaztest" was developed by the National Testing Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The test consists of 4 parts assessing listening, reading, writing and

lexical and grammatical knowledge. Every part has tasks of different levels from the beginning to advanced (Aksholakova&Ismaiova, 2013: 1582; Polovinko, 2018).

Although the state program for the development and functioning of languages for 2011–2020 ensures the presence of the Russian language in the informational field of Kazakhstan, it is limited by the Law on languages (1997) which postulates that "the volume of programs in the Kazakh language should not be less than total volume of the programs broadcast in other languages" (art. 18). At the same time, the state program for the development and functioning of languages for 2011–2020 established that the number of the programs in Kazakh should increase by 10% every year, which, in turn, will reduce the number of the Russian speaking programs broadcast on state television and radio. In the sphere of printed mass media, the Russian language remains dominant positions (Aksholakova&Ismailova, 2013: 1583; Grabelnikov&Mambetova, 2016: 25).

The new language policy also affected the design of banknotes and coins and excluded the Russian language from it: in 2018, the president of Kazakhstan signed a decree on a new conception for the design of banknotes and coins. According to the decree, the text of inscriptions will be presented in the Kazakh language. The previous version of coins and banknotes had inscriptions in Russian and Kazakh (Interfax, 2019).

Education is another domain of language policy and "a crucial factor in the maintenance and preservation of regional and minority languages (Cenoz & Gorter (2012: 193)

Despite Kazakh is the main language of education (more than 50% of schools have the Kazakh language of instruction) (Kurovskaya, 2015: 22; Dihn Lam, 2013: 130), Russian remains a strong position: in 2018, 17% of schools had the Russian language of instruction and 29% were bilingual (Kazakh and Russian) (Report of the ministry of education and science, 2019: 55). Russian, as well as the Kazakh language, are compulsory subjects in schools. Both languages are included in the unified national testing program (Vinogradov, 2009: 45).

However, the number of secondary education institutions with the Russian language of instruction is continuously decreasing (Zatulín, 2011: 177). In 2001, 2,403 schools with the Russian language of instruction were functioning in Kazakhstan (Vdovina, 2008). According to the report of the Committee of statistics of Kazakhstan (2019), in 2019, only 1,305 Russian schools remained. Thus, during the last 18 years, more than 1,000 Russian schools (41%) were closed or became schools with the Kazakh language of instruction, mainly in areas dominated by the Slavic population.

One such case happened in Temirtau in 2011 where the city's education department determined that the language of instruction in 2 lyceums would be Kazakh. Lawsuits of teachers working in these schools as well as parents of the students were denied by the court (Pritchín, 2011). As a result, 1,200 students of

the two schools on the eve of the start of the new school year had to either stay in their schools with the Kazakh language of instruction or look for other schools with the Russian language of instruction that were not located in that residential district.

Despite the fact that both Russian and Kazakh languages are compulsory subjects in school, lessons of Russian are conducted in Kazakh schools starting from the 3<sup>rd</sup> form, meanwhile Kazakh is an obligatory subject in Russian schools starting from the first year of studies. Furthermore, a different number of teaching hours are given to these languages: the number of teaching hours in Kazakh is twice as much as in Russian (Vdovina, Nikitina, 2013: 15). Also, in 2016, the minister of education and science of Kazakhstan Yerlan Sagadiyev, underlying the importance of mastering the state language, announced that during the next 12 years the amount of teaching hours in Kazakh conducted in Russian schools would increase by 300 hours (Tulindinova, 2016). In turn, this policy will decrease the number of hours with the Russian language of instruction. As a result, in Kazakhstan, proficiency in Russian as a native language is decreasing.

Also, Russian schools in Kazakhstan use textbooks written and published in Kazakhstan including textbooks on the Russian language and literature. The textbooks were criticized as being confusing and difficult for understanding phrases, usage of internet-neologisms, and words of informal communication as well as for factual and spelling mistakes (Weisskopf, 2017; Chalabov, 2018).

In the field of higher professional education in Kazakhstan, Kazakh is a predominant language. In 2016 the share of programs conducted in the titular language was 63%, in Russian – 34% (Nurseitova et al., 2017: 38). However, in 2001, the proportions were the opposite – 31% of higher education programs were held in Kazakh, 67% - in Russian (Vdovina, 2008). Moreover, the share of the Russian speaking programs does not reflect the share of ethnic Russian students in the universities: an analytical report on the implementation of the principles of the Bologna Process in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2018) revealed that only 6% of the total number of students are Russian, the majority (86%) are Kazakhs.

Kupriyanov (2019) claims that a policy of discrimination against ethnic minorities can be traced in Kazakhstan: the government provides university admission privilege for young people from rural areas where mainly the Kazakh population lives, ethnic Kazakhs living outside the state, even if they are not citizens of Kazakhstan, have privileges for admission to universities of Kazakhstan. Also, ethnic Kazakhs constitute the majority (98%) among holders of Bolashak scholarship for studying abroad (Isabaeva, 2015). Limited access to higher education causes the lower the starting opportunities in terms of gaining in the future a prestigious and well-paid job.

The named reasons resulted in educational migration to Russia mostly from the northern and eastern regions of Kazakhstan where a significant share of the Slavic Russian-speaking population remains. According to the statistical compilation

"Export of Russian educational services" (2018), more than 70,000 students from Kazakhstan studied in Russian universities in the 2016/2017 academic year.

In addition to the ethnic factor, the high demand for Russian education among ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan is explained by the fact that it can also be used for gaining Russian citizenship in simplified order (Kupriyanov; 2019).

### **3. Activities of Russia aimed at the mainaining the Russian language in Kazakhstan**

The foreign policy course of Russia is formulated in the National Security Strategy of Russia of 2015 and in the Concept of the Foreign policy of Russia of 2016.

According to the Concept, Kazakhstan, as well as other CIS countries, are defined as priority areas for cooperation and integration (Chapter 4, Art. 51).

Following the concept, Russia and Kazakhstan together with Belarus, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan founded the Eurasian Economic Union to create a coordinated policy in the economic sector. The Russian language serves as the working language of the organization. The Charter of the Union also postulates that the Russian language is used for "interpretations of international treaties and decisions" (Chapter 26, Art. 110).

Russian is also the official and working language of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (founded in 2002) where Russia, Kazakhstan as well as Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are the members (Charter, Art. 28).

Thus, the Russian language functions here as a language of international cooperation and integration.

The National Security Strategy defines the Russian language as "an integral part of world culture and an instrument of international and interethnic communication". Special attention is given to the maintenance of the Russian language abroad. The document formulates the following tasks for that: "to spread and strengthen of the position of the Russian language in the world; to protect the rights and legitimate interests of compatriots living abroad, to popularize the Russian education and science; to support and develop the system of Russian educational organizations abroad" (Section 1.3).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its subordinate structures (the Federal Agency for the Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and for International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) and the Russkiy Mir Foundation) are the main actors in implementation of the given tasks.

#### **3.1 Activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia**

One of the main activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Russia is the protection of the rights of compatriots living abroad.

In 1995 the countries signed the Treaty on the Legal Status of Citizens of the states permanently residing in each other's territory, which stated that Russia and Kazakhstan guaranteed protection and patronage of their compatriots (Art.3) (Sagindikov, 2014: 142; Sagindikov, 2015: 204).

A large-scale political document “Declaration between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Russia about eternal friendship and alliance, aimed at the XXI century” was signed in 1996. The document postulates that “countries will ensure equal rights for ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan and ethnic Kazakhs living in Russia” and considers the diaspora as “a factor in strengthening relations between the two countries”.

### **3.2 The activity of Rossotrudnichestvo**

The Federal Agency for the Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and for International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) was established in 2008. The agency is subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia. The activity of the agency includes promoting the Russian language and culture, cooperation with compatriots living abroad, improving the integration among the CIS countries, strengthening the position of the Russian language through Russian scientific and cultural centers. Also, its activity covers cultural, educational, and informational spheres (Regulations of the Federal Agency; Chapter 2).

In Kazakhstan, the scientific and cultural center of Rossotrudnichestvo is represented in the capital of the state Nur-Sultan ([rs.gov.ru](http://rs.gov.ru)).

Rossotrudnichestvo offers Russian courses as well as organizes professional training for teachers of the Russian language and literature (Report for 2018). The courses are conducted by specialists from Russia.

Rossotrudnichestvo organizes the delivery of textbooks, teaching materials, scientific books and journals on the Russian language, literature, and culture of Russia to Russian centers of science and culture as well as to libraries and associations of compatriots. For Kazakhstan for 2016, they amounted to 1795 copies (Report for 2017).

The agency also created the information portal "System for Supporting Russian Schools" which provides free access to 180 thousand e-books for educational organizations ([russchools.org](http://russchools.org)).

Every year the agency also organizes the Russian language Olympiad for the students of schools in Kazakhstan with the Russian language of instruction. Winners of the Olympiad get grants for studying in Russian higher educational institutions provided by the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia (Report for 2018).

The activity of the agency in the cultural sphere includes holding annual commemorative events, festivals and celebrations dedicated to the Russian culture and significant dates in the history of Russia (Report for 2017, 2018).

In 2018 the online broadcasting of performances from the leading Russian theaters, concerts, music and dance competitions, performances by famous cultural figures was established (Report for 2018).

### **3.3 The activity of the Russkiy Mir Foundation**

The Russkiy Mir Foundation was founded by the decree of the President of Russia in 2007 in order to popularize the Russian language and educational programs abroad as well as to facilitate the dissemination of the objective and reliable information about Russia (Charter, of the Russkiy Mir Foundation, Art.2.2).

The Russkiy Mir Foundation has a wide network: it cooperates with the government bodies of Russia (the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), leading scientific and educational organizations of Russia (Institute of CIS; International Research Agency "Eurasian Monitor"), organizations of Russian compatriots living abroad, news and cultural media channels ("Kultura", "PT"), publishing houses, and libraries (russkiymir.ru).

The foundation leads its activity in more than 100 states in the educational, scientific, and informational fields. In Kazakhstan, the Foundation has two centers located in the biggest city of the state Almaty at the Kazakh National University named after Al Farabi (opened in 2009) and in the fourth biggest city Aktobe at the Kazakh-Russian International University (opened in 2015).

In the educational sphere, the activity of the Foundation includes the production and distribution of Russian textbooks and dictionaries to Russian-language schools, universities, and libraries abroad; the development of training programs for students and teachers of the Russian language.

Also, the Foundation organizes seminars, scientific conferences, forums on the Russian language. In 2022 Kazakhstan will host the Congress of the International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature organized by the Russkiy Mir Foundation. The Congress agenda will include language policy issues, innovations in the field of teaching the Russian language, the functioning of the Russian language as a native, non-native and a foreign one.

The Russkiy Mir Foundation conducts its activity in the informational sphere as well. The charter defines the tasks for the organization as follows: to create and support Russian-language mass media and to cooperate and support the Russian-language media abroad (Art. 2.7). The result of the activity of the Foundation was the development of the website: russkiymir.ru.

Annually, the Russkiy Mir website is visited by more than 1.2 million users from 206 countries; Kazakhstan is in the top three countries in terms of visits (Report for 2017).

TV and radio channels and an online journal named after the Russkiy Mir Foundation are also available at the website of the organization.

The "Russkiy Mir" journal provides articles written by professional journalists, sociologists, historians, linguists about the history of Russia and the Soviet

Union, interviews of famous persons in the Post-Soviet countries (<https://rusmir.media/>).

TV- and radio channels broadcast programs about the Russian language, literature, cultural news, music, educational materials on the Russian language. The TV channel is mostly watched by viewers in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan (<https://www.ruskiymir.ru/media/radio2/>; <https://tv.ruskiymir.ru/>).

### **3.4. Activities of the Russian Orthodox Church**

Despite Russia is a secular state, the Russian Orthodox Church should be also considered as a subject of the Russian foreign policy which is active in the maintenance of the Russian language abroad.

It unifies the Orthodox churches in the post-Soviet countries. The Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church defines that the Orthodox Churches in Kazakhstan are under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate (Art. 1.3). This fact strengthens the awareness of affiliation to the Russian nation among the Orthodox parishioners living abroad (Persson, 2014: 27). In Kazakhstan, the share of the parishioners of the Russian Orthodox Church is 26.3% (population census results of 2009).

In 2005, the first Orthodox television channel was created in Russia, available on satellite tv as well as on the internet in Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet countries. The channel covers the activities of the dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church located both in Russia and in the CIS; and broadcasts prayers from Russian churches (Bukarskiy, 2012: 58).

## **4. Conclusion**

The first part of the present paper describes the position of the Russian language within the language policy of independent Kazakhstan. The objective ethnolinguistic vitality model of Giles (1987) presented earlier including status factor, demographic factor and institutional support and control factor was used. According to the first factor of the Giles ethnolinguistic vitality model, only the titular language of Kazakhstan has an official status and serves as the language of public administration, documentation, interstate cooperation, the legislative branch. The perfect command of the state language is the requirement for high-ranking positions such as President position and chairpersons of the Chambers. The state language possession is also compulsory for civil servants and service workers at the level necessary to perform the official duties with the Kazakh-speaking clients.

The Russian language does not have a status of the state or official language. The constitution postulates that it is officially used “in the state organizations and local governments”. The cultural project “Trinity of languages” defined the position of the Russian language in Kazakhstan as a language of interethnic communication.

Analysing the demographic status of the Russian language in Kazakhstan was based on the results of the population census of Soviet (1989) and independent Kazakhstan (1999, 2009) which revealed that the share of Russians in Kazakhstan decreased after the Soviet Union collapse and makes up 23.7% which makes them the second biggest ethnic group in the country after the titular nation and the biggest ethnic minority. On the regional level, the density of the Russian speakers vary from 22% (West Kazakh region) to 50% (North Kazakh region) of the local population. The self-report assessment results revealed that Russian is the most spoken language in the society among not only Russians, but also Kazakhs as well as other ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan.

Analyzing the institutional support and control factor covered mass media, educational, governmental, industrial, religious and cultural spheres. In the field of mass media, linguistic legislation strengthens the positions of the state language by increasing the total volume of the programs in Kazakh by 10% every year which, in turn, decreases the number of the programs broadcast in other languages including Russian. However, the Russian language remains dominant in printed mass media.

The linguistic restrictions also affected the education sphere: the law postulated that at least 50% of schools should have the Kazakh language of instruction. As a result, the number of Russian schools has decreased by 40% during the last 18 years. Nowadays, Russian is the language of instruction in monolingual Russian (17%) and bilingual Kazakh-Russian schools (29%).

The languages of instruction of higher professional education are the Kazakh (63%) and Russian languages (34%). However, only 6% of the total number of students are ethnic Russians, the majority of scholarship holders (86%) is constituted by Kazakhs which is viewed as the policy of discrimination against ethnic minorities.

Thus, in response to the first research question, the descriptive analysis shows that the language policy of independent Kazakhstan has an effect on the position of the Russian language: despite the presence of a significant Russian speaking diaspora and a strong command of the Russian language among the entire population, the sphere of the use of Russian is limited in the educational sphere, mass media, governmental service, and office work. Besides, it does not have an official or state status in the country. Also, Russian speakers face linguistic discrimination when applying for a job and studies.

In the second part of the paper, the foreign policy of Russia aimed at the maintenance of the Russian language is described. The policy is implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its subordinate organizations: Rossotrudnichestvo and the Russkiy Mir Foundation as well as the Russian Orthodox Church.

The activity of the Ministry of Foreign affairs includes cooperation with Kazakhstan in bilateral and multilateral formats where the Russian language is

given official status or the status of the working language. Thus, being unable to affect the status of the Russian language in Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Foreign affairs gave the status to Russian at the supranational level in the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization where Kazakhstan is a member-state.

Cooperating with the Russkiy Mir Foundation, Rossotrudnichestvo maintains the Russian language in the educational sphere: it offers Russian courses, professional training for teachers, produces and delivers dictionaries, textbooks, teaching materials on the Russian language to the Russian centers, schools, universities, libraries and associations of compatriots. It also provides grants for the Russians for studying in Russian higher educational institutions.

The agency also maintains the Russian culture in Kazakhstan: it holds events, festivals, and celebrations dedicated to significant dates in the history of Russia, broadcasts performances from the leading theaters of Russia.

The Russkiy Mir Foundation is active in the informational sphere. The website, TV and Radio channels [russkiymir.ru](http://russkiymir.ru) were created by the Foundation and serves as a source of programs about the Russian language, literature, news, music, educational materials on the Russian language.

The Russian Orthodox Church maintains the Russian language in the religious sphere and forms the affiliation of its parishioners to the Russian nation.

Thus, the second part of the present paper responded to the second research question: the activity of Russia aimed at the maintenance of the Russian language covers the support factor of the Giles model (1987). It includes educational, informational spheres where the presence of Russian in Kazakhstan is limited as well as cultural, religious spheres. Russia is not able to effect the position of the Russian language in the governmental service and office work neither its status in Kazakhstan; however, it gave special importance to the Russian language by proclaiming it as a language of transnational treaties and bodies where Kazakhstan belongs.

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