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to make a single choice will prove the support of the united people of Kazakhstan and allow our president to more effectively implement policy where “any ethnic group, large or small, is an important part of Kazakh society. Its members get all the possibilities to satisfy their spiritual needs, to preserve their identity, to realize themselves by participating in the construction of the Kazakh state.” [11]

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PSYCOLINGUISTIC ASPECT OF THE KAZAKH LANGUAGE

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Nowadays, the importance and role of the Kazakh language have increased significantly. Kazakh people are trying not only to keep their mother tongue themselves, but also teach their children. Speaking about the development and strengthening of the Kazakh language, the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev said that “we should convey the history, culture, customs to our people only in our own language. Try to translate some Kazakh idioms or sayings from Abay in the Russian and English languages. That is rather difficult. Each language has its own unique features. And with the disappearance of the language these precious features may also disappear. No one is to blame for the fact that we are a multiethnic country. It happened this way historically. Our task is to preserve the unity of society.” [1] The government makes certain steps encouraging children to speak in Kazakh by creating special programs, courses, etc. However, despite all of these efforts, there are still some problems in learning the Kazakh language. Kazakh linguists identify five main difficulties in learning it.

Firstly, it is the lack of consistent language practice and a suitable environment for language learning. According to Umatova Zh. for twenty years of independence of Kazakhstan there were no spheres of activity where only state language has functioned completely. In order to make people speak in the Kazakh language, or at least start learning it we need a language environment.

Second problem is the established stereotypes about the Kazakh language in society. Ibraeva Zh. affirms that some part of the Kazakh people still live in the power of stereotypes. "Motivation is undoubtedly needed. But many Kazakhs still think that there is no good methods and technique in learning the Kazakh language starting from Kazakh kindergartens. Here we should mention the issues of ideology and status of the Kazakh language. Kazakhstani sociolinguistics observe the language shift in favor of the Kazakh language and they think that this process has already started," she said. [3]

Thirdly, there is no proper State motivation. Salimova S. claims that the motivation in learning the Kazakh language proposed by the government is absolutely wrong. She is confident that the transition of business to Kazakh language can not be considered as motivation for studying the official language. She is pretty sure that in this situation money will be a better motivation than the threat to lose their jobs due to the ignorance of the Kazakh language. [4]

The next problem that needs to be highlighted is the lack of language prestige. According to Umatova Zh. "It is necessary to raise the prestige of the official language but it depends on the improvement of the quality of education. If the prestige rises, many people will show the desire to learn the Kazakh language themselves, but if there is no decent level of teaching - it will not work." [2]

Finally, we should mention ineffective methods of teaching the Kazakh language. Salimova S. concluded that the methods of teaching Kazakh language are very inefficient. As soon as those methods improve, the desire to learn the language will raise and the language will no longer seem difficult [5].

These issues undoubtedly require consideration and immediate solutions and we know that the government takes some efforts in order to improve the situation and we can even see the results of their work.

However, there is also one aspect in studying Kazakh language, which is no less important and also needs to be taken into account. It is the psycholinguistic aspect.

In 2001 the training and experimental laboratory called "Kazakh language: psycho- and sociolinguistic research" was created in Al-Farabi Kazakh National University by professor Gregory Thompson (Alberta University in Canada) - a well-known expert on psycholinguistics and the theory of learning a second language.

Laboratory activities comprise psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic researches where the students, undergraduates and graduate students use modern computer programs for the synthesis and speech production and also collect sociolinguistic data. They use the method of language ontogenesis which deals with the study of children's speech and children's bilingualism. In the laboratory there are also many consultations and classes on second-language acquisition, statistical linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, etc. which carry out a series of psycholinguistic experiments aimed at identifying dependence on acquiring the Kazakh and the Russian languages according to their typological characteristics.

Professor Thomson identified some aspects of acquisition of inflectional categories by Kazakh and Russian groups of different language level proficiency. It is assumed that low level of acquiring the language is the result of complexity in the number and extent of numerous types and functions of the case system. He also noted that "if the degree of deviation from the principle of one-to-one is considered to be responsible for the low level of adoption of the case system, then in the study of a second Kazakh language where it is based exactly on the principle of one-to-one, the assimilation of the case system should be better".[6]

However, the case system of Kazakh language is not so easy to accept. One of the preliminary findings obtained in the course of the experiments is the fact that the sequences in acquisition of case systems of Kazakh and Russian as a second language are similar and the difficulties in learning

the Kazakh and the Russian languages are the same. Experiments on studying the assimilation of the case system of the Kazakh language are still continuing and it has involved young Kazakh scientists.

Speaking about the peculiarities of the Kazakh language we can also compare it with the English language in order to show the differences between these two languages, and also to show some difficulties that people face while learning the Kazakh language.

The main difficulty in acquiring the Kazakh language is the word order. It is difficult for both native speakers and non-native speakers. The Kazakh language, like all Turkic languages, has a basic Subject-Object-Verb word order. It employs postpositions (corresponding to English prepositions, but placed after the words they interact with) to specify and precise syntactic relations established by the grammatical cases. [7]

Compare "I go to school", "Мен мектепке барамын" and "Я хожу в школу". Although this example is very simple, the sentences in the English and the Russian languages have the same word order, while the sentence in the Kazakh language needs the verb to be put in the end. Due to this fact, it is much more difficult to translate from English to Kazakh than from English to Russian and it is also difficult to memorize this word order.

Another striking feature of the Kazakh language is the linguistic diversity or dialects. In spite of the great extension of the territory of Kazakhstan there is little regional variation, due to the traditional life-style of the Kazakhs (mainly cattle-breeders) and for historical reasons (deportations, migrations). Ethnologists divide the Kazakh language into three mutually intelligible groups according to dialect: Northeastern Kazakh dialect which serves as the basis for the standard language, Southern Kazakh, Western Kazakh. [8]

There is also a large amount of minor dialect differences. It limits the communication with the rest of the people. There are a lot of cases of misunderstandings between Kazakh people themselves, as they name the same object differently, for example a simple word "pants" is "шалбар" in the Northern Kazakhstan and "сым" in Southern Kazakhstan (which means "wire" in the Northern Kazakhstan). There are plenty of such examples in the Kazakh language. It makes this language difficult to learn and also with too many dialects in a single country, there is always a form of barrier within the language which may lead to 'language death'. In recent years, the issue of language death is under consideration, regional dialects are abandoned in favor of standardized forms and local native languages with few speakers are replaced by more dominant ones. We probably need the same reform in our country.

The last but not the least notable feature of the Kazakh language is the pronunciation and the system of vowel harmony. The pronunciation is also very important aspect which needs to be taken into account while doing the psycholinguistic analysis of the language. All Kazakh vowels can be classified as either front vowels or back vowels. In the Kazakh language, if the stem of a word contains a front vowel, then any suffixes for that word must also use a front vowel. Likewise, if there is a back vowel in the stem of a word, back vowels are used in any suffixes for that word. The only exceptions to this pronunciation rule are a few borrowed words from other languages.

For example, learning by Kazakh students the English sound [a:] is a difficulty. Students are apt to replace the English long back vowel [a:] (in the words of garden, star) qualitatively and quantitatively different from Kazakh vowels (a) (in the words of the kaz. bala – eng. child). Thus, the system of English vowels is marked the large number of contrasts than in Kazakh.

So, there is no similarity between Kazakh and English vowels:

- 1) the mixed sound of the front and back row
- 2) long and short. [9]

On the other hand, most Kazakh words are stressed on the final syllable which makes this language much easier to learn and to speak. The main difference of English diphthongs from similar Kazakh vowels is that the latter falls easily into two syllables and can be separated by a morphological boundary (e.g тай, та-ый; бой, бо-ый; бай, ба-уыр). In English, such phenomenon is excluded. English diphthongs can not split into two syllables. They are always pronounced together, i.e. one effort with an emphasis on the core. [10]

To conclude all mentioned above, we can clearly see that the Kazakh language needs to be investigated completely and thoroughly by the psycholinguists as there are many features of this language which make it a bit difficult to learn and to speak. Anyway, after making such investigations it will be probably easier to understand why the Kazakh language is not the most spoken language in Kazakhstan though it is a state language. The President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that "Kazakhstan is the only post-Soviet country that is still polylingual. Other Central Asian countries speak their native languages." He also emphasized the fact that "by 2020 or 2025, many people in Kazakhstan will speak Kazakh, as the modern generation learning it from the early age now will be grown by then. Only in this case the requirement to good knowledge of the Kazakh language would be appropriate". [11]

We hope that linguists and psycholinguists of our country will take matters into their own hands and that in the future all Kazakhs will speak their mother tongue.

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