

Seven Ways to Talk About Kazakh: A Digital Discourse Analysis of Sociolinguistic Research

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Abstract—This study focuses on the discussion of language attitudes, ideologies, and general discourse patterns surrounding the Kazakh language in sociolinguistic research. Additionally, the research aims to determine how and in what contexts different subfields of sociolinguistics approach Kazakh from their own contextual perspectives. The discourse analytical approach used is the Seven Building Tasks. The findings demonstrate varied approaches to Kazakh in sociolinguistic research discourse in general and across specific subfields. The analysis of twenty scholarly articles revealed the recurring patterns in how Kazakh is linked to policies and identity issues. The structured framework for linguistic attitudes and ideologies demonstrates predominantly positive scholarly attitudes towards Kazakh, as it was recognized as vital for national development. The results of this study contribute to the development of the fields of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis in Kazakhstan by providing an in-depth exploration of how the Kazakh language is discursively constructed in academic literature.

Index Terms—Seven Building Tasks, language ideologies, language attitudes, context, Kazakhstan

I. INTRODUCTION

Foundational studies have traditionally examined the sociolinguistic landscape of Kazakhstan by primarily focusing on Kazakh, including topics of identity, language conflict, and language shift (Smagulova, 2006, 2008, 2012), code-switching (Akynova et al., 2012) and language planning (Akzhigitova & Zharkynbekova, 2014). Other early studies typically only mentioned Kazakh while focusing chiefly on the language situation in some or all Central Asian countries (Schlyter, 2003, 2004), language use and language policy in Central Asia (Aminov et al., 2010), and the role and status of Russian in post-Soviet states (Pavlenko, 2008, 2009).

More recent studies have explored a wide variety of topics, ranging from the functions of the state language (Mongilyova, 2015), the acquisition of Kazakh (Smagulova, 2016), and the use of Anglicisms (Baidrakhmanov & Doszhan, 2015) to the alphabet reform (Kadirova, 2018). The most recent studies have focused on topics connected with the dynamics of language shift (Terlikbayeva & Menlibekova, 2021), national identity (Zhumadilova & Koptileuova, 2022), language ideologies in social media (Kamalova, 2025), and speech behavior of Kazakhstani youth (Zharkynbekova et al., 2025).

These studies have their unique methodologies, approaching the Kazakh language and related topics using a variety of approaches and tools that include sociolinguistic surveys, ethnographic fieldwork, content analysis, interviews, and participant observation, among others. While these studies appear to have covered a broad range of topics and implemented a wide variety of methodologies, there remains an important gap. There is a lack of studies that would (1) focus on the discourse of sociolinguistics itself using a specific discourse analysis framework and (2) synthesize the general patterns in the discursive conceptualization of Kazakh. More work is clearly needed in this area, as well as in the broader sociolinguistics of Kazakh and Kazakhstan. The present study is a meaningful step toward addressing that gap.

The main purpose of the paper is to explore how the discourse around Kazakh is constructed in general sociolinguistic research and how this language is approached by specific subfields of sociolinguistics.

The present study is guided by the following research questions:

(1) *How is Kazakh discursively constructed and represented in sociolinguistic research from 1990 to 2025, as interpreted through Gee's Seven Building Tasks? What language ideologies and attitudes toward Kazakh are reflected in sociolinguistic discourse during the selected period?*

(2) *What are the differences in how Kazakh is discursively constructed and represented across a number of subfields*

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of sociolinguistics?

In the field of sociolinguistics of Kazakh, our study demonstrates a new approach of the analysis of scholarly narratives and highlights the ways in which these narratives can be utilized as valuable methodological insights for sociolinguistics. First, the *Lens* (<https://www.lens.org/>) platform was applied to search for potential journal articles that would be relevant to the topic of the study. The searches were narrowed down by specific keywords, such as Kazakh, Kazakh language, and sociolinguistics, which were helpful in finding specific articles on our topic.

Second, a number of research articles were collected to explore how the term Kazakh is discursively constructed and represented in sociolinguistic research from 1990 to 2025; what language ideologies and attitudes toward Kazakh are reflected in sociolinguistic discourse during the selected period, and to identify the differences in how Kazakh is approached in the discourse of a number of subfields of sociolinguistics. To facilitate all of these interpretive procedures, an initial article database was constructed and analyzed using J.P. Gee's *Seven Building Tasks* approach.

By applying this approach, we were able to interpret the specific data from the articles systematically and clearly. This approach was useful in answering our research questions, as it described and explained language in relation to seven different tasks of "building" reality and constructing discourse. As a result, the application of the Seven Building Tasks helped demonstrate how the discourse around Kazakh is constructed in general sociolinguistic research, and how the language is approached by specific subfields of sociolinguistics.

The given paper consists of an introduction, a theoretical framework section, a methodology section, a results section, and a discussion and concluding remarks section.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *The Development and Current State of Sociolinguistics in Kazakhstan*

Sociolinguistics plays an important role in exploring the role of language in society, so in order to grasp the knowledge about the development of sociolinguistics in Kazakhstan, this section will provide an overview of this process. According to Zharkynbekova and Agmanova (2016), sociolinguistics in Kazakhstan is an actively developing field that reflects the nation's complex linguistic process and evolving identity. The field is becoming popular in recent decades, focusing on the issues of language use in society, preserving ethnic languages in the multilingual state, cross-cultural environment, and ethnolinguistic adaptation to social and political changes in the country. The multilingual policy in the modern Kazakhstani sociolinguistic space makes the process unique as one of the important factors for social and economic modernization by promoting the idea of multilingualism among citizens of Kazakhstan (Zharkynbekova & Agmanova, 2016).

Sociolinguistics in Kazakhstan emerged during the Soviet period. In the early 20th century, a demographic catastrophe occurred when the share of Russians in the total population left Kazakhs a minority in their own land (Smagulova, 2017). According to Zbrodskaja and Ehala (2015), a Russification language policy made knowledge of Russian a crucial element of participation in the Soviet community. Even though Kazakh was the official language of the Kazakh SSR, it was the language of rural Kazakhs, whereas Russian was the dominant language of the government, education and urban domains (cited in Smagulova, 2017). After gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan's sociolinguistics field was associated with government actions to language planning measures as status, corpus, and acquisition in order to re-establish Kazakh as the official and national language. However, competing attitudes between the Kazakh and Russian languages continue to influence language choices.

Critical analysis of sociolinguistic consequences of language reforms reflects that there is a limited number of sociolinguists who have done research on Central Asia and Kazakhstan, which is going through socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic changes (Smagulova, 2021). In Central Asia, there is a lack of local researchers focused on sociolinguistics; current research is based on structural methodology and few data are counted as legitimate sources of information (Smagulova, 2021).

Contemporary sociolinguistics of Kazakh and Kazakhstani sociolinguistics are represented by a number of seminal works. One of such works is the study by Smagulova (2008), which explores the linguistic policies in Kazakhstan and the focus of the analysis is located on the repositioning of Kazakh and Russian languages in the period after Kazakhstan gained independence. It defines the language policies of "Kazakhization" and its impact on language attitudes and usage in Kazakhstan.

Ethnic and linguistic identities represent a major area in recent Kazakhstani sociolinguistic research. A major work by Bokayev et al. (2012) conducted one of the most comprehensive mixed-method studies in Kazakhstan on this topic between 2009-2010 that belongs to sociolinguistic analysis with some intersections of ethnic identity research and language policy analysis. The authors examined how ethnic Kazakh repatriates adapt linguistically and culturally upon returning to Kazakhstan from different countries. According to the authors, despite significant isolation of ethnic Kazakhs abroad, a significant part of the Kazakhs still maintained their ethnic identity through preservation of Kazakh linguistic traits. The study offers valuable insights for defining the "Kazakh" identity for the general public and policy makers and demonstrates how historical and sociopolitical contexts influence linguistic identity and skills of repatriates.

Among many other topics, sociolinguistics projects in Kazakhstan also frequently explore the status and roles of individual languages in the country. For instance, a recent paper by Jarlhøj and Valijärvi (2024) examined the evolving

role of the Russian language in Kazakhstan across three historical periods: Soviet, early independence, and the present and changing roles of modern language policies. Their findings reveal that Soviet-era policies firmly established Russian linguistic dominance, while efforts made after gaining independence to revive Kazakh were slowed down by ineffective policies and pedagogical issues.

B. Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis

Sociolinguistics and discourse analysis are interrelated aspects of studying language in use. They have common foundations, examining language use from both theoretical and applied perspectives. According to Boutet and Maingueneau (2005), these fields have overlapping and converging approaches in terms of the interdisciplinary study of language and language use. Sociolinguistics and discourse analysis are similar in that they focus on analyzing language not only to construct knowledge, but also to solve practical and methodological problems. They are also interconnected through interactional sociolinguistics, where the two fields overlap in focus and approach (Jaspers, 2023). This includes the construction of meaning, discourse frameworks, and power relations in language. Because communication is context-dependent, speakers rely on contextual knowledge to interpret meaning. Interactional sociolinguistics adopts a constructionist view, treating language as a tool for shaping social realities and identities, while acknowledging that broader social structures both enable and constrain these processes (Jaspers, 2023).

Sociolinguistic studies focusing on the languages of Kazakhstan employ various discourse analysis approaches. Thus, for example, Ten (2024) uses the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD) framework developed by Keller (2011) to discuss public discourses on Kazakh and Russian. Ten's (2024) study aims to determine how competing views and knowledge about the sociolinguistic reality are constructed and reconstructed in terms of discourse, and how certain social groups may legitimize such views and knowledge. Ten considers language conflict as an evolving discourse-based process of constructing, configuring, and organizing knowledge, which reflects the cultural values, language attitudes, and identity perceptions of Kazakh and Russian language users.

Studies also focus on certain types of discourses related to various social aspects of language use in Kazakhstan. One such project focuses on the discourse of trilingual education in Kazakhstan (Yessenova, 2018). According to the author, public discourse analysis, especially if it focuses on different perspectives of diverse social groups, and if these perspectives are examined in relation to each other, can offer valuable insights. Therefore, a sociolinguistic exploration of public discourse and its various components (and the interplay between them) can help uncover how different social groups perceive and negotiate identity, policy, and language use strategies.

Analyzing the perception and negotiation of these sociolinguistic concepts becomes urgent when it comes to interpreting ongoing sociopolitical and cultural events influencing certain language use patterns in the country. Thus, for example, Kamalova's (2025) study focuses on language ideologies and how they are constructed in the context of Kazakh and Russian language use after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Kamalova's findings highlight how online discourse can reflect social hierarchies, ideological boundaries, and broader sociopolitical processes.

Similar to the studies discussed above, the current study also explores a topic that connects discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. We also apply a discourse analysis framework, but do so in relation to the academic contexts situated within the sociolinguistic research discourse itself. The framework implemented is the Seven Building Tasks (Gee, 2014). It is commonly regarded as a useful set of discourse analysis tools.

According to Gee (2014), there are certain areas of social reality that are constructed whenever people produce spoken or written language. These are the "Seven Building Tasks," including Significance, Activities, Identities, Relationships, Politics, Connections, and Sign Systems and Knowledge. These areas of reality can often be activated or constructed simultaneously via the same utterances or actions. Gee argues that these tasks are not only useful in terms of "building" areas of social reality through language and actions, but can also be used as tools for analyzing how discourse itself is structured (Gee, 2014).

Gee's building tasks have been applied in various studies due to their methodological advantages. Mohamad and Al-Rubai (2019) emphasize that the approach focuses on how speakers construct meaning through language use. Its flexibility allows for analyzing diverse types of texts, and it is supported by a detailed toolkit with examples (Gee, 2014). Zahra et al. (2023) also found it valuable for addressing both syntactic and contextual aspects of discourse, enabling deeper analysis of sociocultural meaning. Similarly, Summers (2021) used the building tasks to examine how participants construct social realities, with particular attention to the task related to relationships.

III. METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain data to answer the research questions, we used the Lens (<https://www.lens.org/>) platform to search for journal articles. Using this platform, we narrowed down our searches using the following criteria:

Keywords: Kazakh; Kazakh language; sociolinguistic; sociolinguistics

Range: 1990-2025

Document type: Journal article

Article selection criteria: open-access articles; downloadable

As a preliminary result, we found 119 scholarly articles published between 1990 and 2025 containing the keywords "Kazakh", "Kazakh language", and "sociolinguistics." The articles found were mostly open access, but there were still a

number of restricted articles. The majority of these articles were published between 2010 and 2025. The first decade, 1990–2000, was not represented by any results. However, we included this decade in our analysis because it was part of our research question. Even though no publications were found from that period, we initially wanted to see how many search results would appear, particularly given that 1990 marks the beginning of Kazakhstan’s formative stage as an independent country.

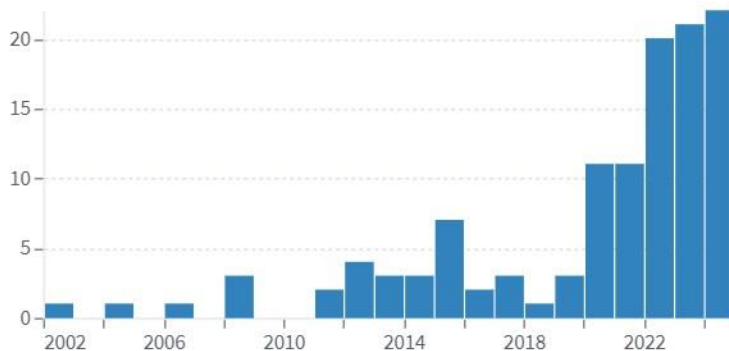


Figure 1. Chronological Distribution of Articles Connected With the Topic on Lens.org

One of the major methodological challenges encountered in terms of this research was the limited access to certain articles and databases due to paywalls and restricted accessibility. Journals such as *Issues of Sociolinguistics* and *Language Policy* provided only limited digitized versions of the articles, in that most articles were presented in the form of abstracts on their official websites. Public availability of several articles was also complicated and posed an additional challenge during the research process. Due to this fact, a considerable amount of data related to the research focus was impartially presented in the actual paper. It should be stated that the exclusion of articles and materials from restricted or paywalled academic sources, particularly articles from subscription-based journals, was one of the acknowledged limitations of this study. However, it is understood that the inclusion of such specialized articles, representing in-depth sociolinguistic analysis, could have significantly enriched the findings.

The initial database containing 119 articles was reviewed through a thorough cleaning procedure to ensure the quality and relevance of the data to the topic of the study. The main criteria used during this cleaning procedure were (1) whether the article content was in fact related to the field of sociolinguistics in Kazakhstan, and (2) whether that content explicitly included usage of the term “Kazakh (language)”. After a closer inspection and reading of each article in the database, a significant number of items had to be deleted as they did not correspond to our criteria.

Although the original *Lens* search settings were configured to focus specifically on *journal articles* that were open access, downloadable, and, most importantly, related to our topic via keyword use, the initial database still contained a significant amount of irrelevant material that had to be deleted. As part of the cleaning procedure, we applied additional criteria to determine which articles to retain and which to exclude. Apart from being irrelevant to the topic, deleted articles were either (1) written in a language other than English (such as Russian or Kazakh), (2) restricted-access, or unanalyzable due to non-textual format limitations.

The main discourse analysis approach that we used is James Paul Gee’s *Seven Building Tasks*. We applied it to be able to interpret the data obtained from the articles in a consistent way. Gee’s approach is very applicable to our research questions, since it describes and explains language and language use based on seven different tasks of “building” reality and constructing discourse. After applying the discourse analysis framework of the Seven Building Tasks, all article content was analyzed in relation to the presence of ideas connected with language attitudes and ideologies. The goal of this procedure was to identify and describe text excerpts containing such ideas that help construct sociolinguistic discourse surrounding the main focus term.

Subsequently, all articles were grouped into five categories representing different subfields of sociolinguistics. These subfields include general sociolinguistics; language policy; education; national and linguistic identity; and bilingualism and multilingualism. The categories were created by reading each article and analyzing how it described Kazakh and its use based on seven different tasks of “building” reality and constructing discourse. We sought to understand how the perspectives of articles differed from each other based on the subfields of sociolinguistics. The Results and Discussion sections will outline the subfield-based article summary matrix of reviewed articles as the main product or finding of this study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Introduction

The collected data has been analyzed and interpreted in several ways. Specifically, three data analysis procedures are employed in this study to examine the data obtained from the research articles focusing on the sociolinguistics of Kazakh and Kazakhstan.

The first procedure was connected with developing the Summarized Article Database, which is the first main product of this study. The first research question, repeated (partially) below, was answered through this procedure. Importantly, this database was subsequently used in further analytical procedures.

(1) How is Kazakh discursively constructed and represented in sociolinguistic research from 1990 to 2025, as interpreted through Gee's Seven Building Tasks?

The second analytical procedure focused on answering the second part of the first research question using the Summarized Article Database. A collection of ideas found in the database and related to language attitudes and Ideologies is the second main product of our study (the Language Attitudes and Ideologies Profile). It was created in order to identify the language attitudes and ideologies that are present in sociolinguistic discourse. This allowed for a closer examination of the nature of discursive representation of Kazakh and the understanding of the role and status of the language in sociolinguistics. This sub-research question is provided below for ease of reference:

What language ideologies and attitudes toward Kazakh are reflected in sociolinguistic discourse during the selected period?

The third and final interpretive procedure was based on developing the third main product of our study, the Subfield-based Article Summary Matrix. Articles contained in our Summarized Article database were grouped based on the subfields of sociolinguistics to which they pertain based on their keywords and overall content. The second research question, provided below, was answered through this procedure.

(2) What are the differences in how Kazakh is discursively constructed and represented across specific subfields of sociolinguistics?

B. Summarized Article Database

In our article database, containing articles that we decided to keep as the most relevant to our topic, we carried out searches for the term “Kazakh (language)” and identified relevant examples and excerpts that illustrate its use in all Building Task contexts. Focusing on the main search term, we looked for the following keywords in each article using the dedicated search system to identify text elements (individual sentences or paragraphs) connected with each of the Seven Building Tasks.

Provided below is a table containing a condensed collection of keywords that we used to identify Seven Building Task-related ideas in the article text. Importantly, the list provided below is not exhaustive, as it contains only sample nouns and adjectives that we relied on for this goal.

TABLE 1
LIST OF SAMPLE KEYWORDS RELATED TO THE SEVEN BUILDING TASKS

Tasks	Keywords
1) Significance	important, relevant, meaningful, notable, salient, essential, central, significant, crucial, legitimate
2) Activities	action, behavior, practice, process, engagement, participation, routine, performance, execution, operation
3) Identities	individual, collective, personal, social, role, status, representation, self, positioning, category
4) Relationships	interaction, connection, affiliation, bond, hierarchical, reciprocal, social, power, relational, cooperative
5) Connections	link, bridge, association, correlation, network, interdependent, integrated, connected, related, embedded
6) Politics (Distribution of Social Goods)	power, authority, access, equity, hierarchy, privilege, control, resources, dominance, regulation
7) Sign Systems and Knowledge	language, symbol, discourse, text, code, representation, literacy, communication, semiotic, conceptual

Thus, in terms of our search procedure, we entered the term “Kazakh (language)” in the search bar in our PDF readers when working with each article. After that, we highlighted all relevant examples where this term was used. Subsequently, we looked at the surrounding contexts and identified the Seven Building Task in question using our prepared lists of keywords. Thus, our main data included sentences or short paragraphs containing the term “Kazakh (language)” and focusing on a certain Building Task, which would be identifiable from the context and the use of keywords.

At this stage, we also reviewed our database and removed additional articles that were irrelevant to the topic. While these articles were initially considered as related to the topic based on the original list of keywords used for the *Lens*

article searches (Kazakh; Kazakh language; sociolinguistics), a more in-depth reading and inspection of article content revealed that they were, in fact, unrelated to our topic. Thus, the final list of articles whose content we analyzed included 20 articles. These articles are included in the references section of this paper.

The analysis of the 20 research articles included identifying Building Task-related text segments or quotes, which represented our main data, and using them to write short summaries in relation to how the discourse surrounding Kazakh is constructed in this field. We used the following template to analyze our data.

TABLE 2
THE SEVEN BUILDING TASKS-BASED ARTICLE ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

ARTICLE # __/20	CITATION (author & year)	MAIN FOCI
Building task 1: Significance		
Building task 2: Activities		
Building task 3: Identities		
Building task 4: Relationships		
Building task 5: Politics (distribution of social goods)		
Building task 6: Connections		
Building task 7: Sign Systems and Knowledge		
Summary		

For each article, there was a completed summary form like the one provided above. Relevant article text segments or quotes that, in our interpretation, represented a certain Building Task, were inserted into the table row corresponding to that Task. We decided to insert text excerpts from the articles directly into the corresponding Building Task rows without providing a direct interpretation underneath each excerpt. Instead, we wrote a comprehensive summary for each article by using, i.e., coordinating, all ideas from the excerpts at the bottom of our summary form. The main, though intermediate, product obtained as a result of this analytical procedure was a database containing all 20 summary forms for each article that we reviewed (the Summarized Article Database).

Addressing the first research question, each article was analyzed using the Seven Building Tasks approach, which revealed a lot of engaging information in the summaries. Mainly, each article had extensive content in relation to all task components, which was very useful in exploring how the discourse surrounding the Kazakh language is constructed with practical evidence. The Summarized Article Database will subsequently be utilized as an analytical approach in the development of further sections. Further, the given database will be examined from the perspective of language attitudes and ideologies profile in relation to the discourse of the Kazakh language.

C. Language Attitudes and Ideologies Profile

With the purpose of answering the sub-part of the first research question, this subsection aimed to present an analytical investigation of all twenty articles from the perspective of two interrelated concepts, language attitudes and ideologies. A specific framework was developed and used to identify article ideas connected with language attitudes and ideologies (Figure 2).

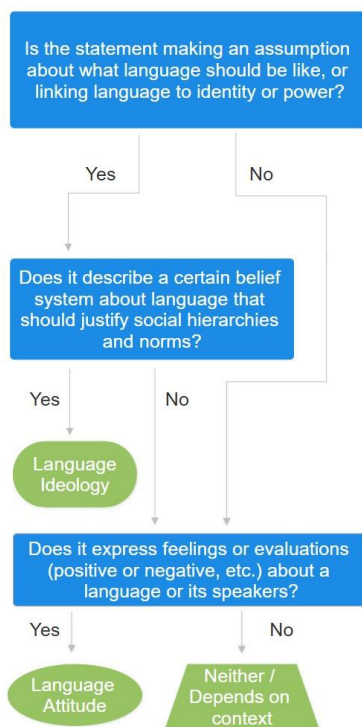


Figure 2. The Language Attitudes and Identities Framework

The process started with analyzing the summary from each article, following the questions, and further leading answers in Figure 2 from the Summarized Article Database. This framework was very helpful in identifying attitudes and ideologies connected with language, and also enabled us to distinguish between narrow specifications of these concepts.

The overall analysis of the revised twenty articles revealed positive attitudes towards the Kazakh language and its speakers. Notably, willingness to promote the role of the Kazakh language, positive expectations about the scope and availability of content in Kazakh, and the general hopes for the future strengthening and expansion of Kazakh in the lives of people. The overall analysis of attitudes indicated a noticeable positive change in the language attitudes regarding the importance of the Kazakh language in the contemporary Kazakhstani society. In particular, the younger generations demonstrate a strong expectation that the Kazakh language should occupy a central role in public and daily life. Compared to the previous generations, the young Kazakhstanis are more sensitive to the issues surrounding language proficiency and supportive of the wider use of the language. A number of sociolinguistic studies show that this sentiment has transferred to the field of multilingual education in the past few years in Kazakhstan. Likewise, the increasing importance of Kazakh is associated with the preservation of cultural and historical identity. Since gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has achieved notable improvement in the promotion and presence of the Kazakh language in most spheres of society.

In general, the language ideology reflects a trajectory of development chosen in the state: increasing commitment to the expansion and promotion of the Kazakh language as an important factor of national identity. Such reinforcement and emphasis on the centrality of the role of Kazakh in society is believed to be a justified measure. The government-led initiatives in multilingual or trilingual education are designed to prioritize Kazakh, while still supporting Russian and English, which may intrinsically affect the balance of representation and the risks that one language could be potentially overshadowed by the others.

There are more reasons discussed in the studies that support the idea that the Kazakh language should be retained and reinforced as a central pillar for national ideology. It could be explained by the deprioritization of formerly imposed or legacy languages and shift to international markets, thus diminishing the role of the Russian language and growing role of English.

However, to a certain extent, an ideological contradiction is evident in society and state, as many Kazakh families that lack language proficiency in Kazakh rely on Russian in domestic and educational contexts. Moreover, in terms of cultural and historical contexts, many Kazakhs, motivated by convenience and politeness, prefer to switch to the Russian language when interacting with Russian speakers. This again underpins a perception of Russian as the default language and undermines efforts to make Kazakh a widely accepted and public means of communication.

Many language identity choices are mostly driven by rational and pragmatic motives such as language prestige, career prospects and other practical needs. As evidence for this, while both Kazakh and Russian are used interchangeably in professional contexts, English is increasingly preferred by university students for academic purposes, reflecting the utilitarian view of language.

The overall answer to this sub-research question is that both attitudes and ideologies are fundamental aspects of language that are interconnected and both share the goal to promote the role of the Kazakh language.

D. Subfield-Based Article Summary Matrix

The final analytical procedure examined how different subfields of sociolinguistics discursively approach Kazakh and, by extension, the ideas connected with its role and status. The twenty articles in our Summarized Article Database were grouped according to the subfields of sociolinguistics they best fit, based on their overall topic, keywords, and primary focus.

The choice was not always straightforward. When articles seemed related to more than one subfield of sociolinguistics, we categorized them based on two considerations: (1) the extent to which their topic, keyword use, primary foci, and findings aligned with a particular subfield; and (2) the need to distribute articles roughly evenly across the subfields in order to maintain balance in our analytical approach. When the choice was particularly difficult, we assigned those articles to a separate category: “general sociolinguistics (no specific subfield or more than one subfield combined)”.

As a result, the subfields that we were able to identify include: (1) general sociolinguistics, (2) language policy, (3) education (multilingual education), (4) national and linguistic identity, and (5) bilingualism and multilingualism. Importantly, it is understood that these groupings may not always be considered or referred to as *subfields*, *subfields of sociolinguistics*, or subfields of sociolinguistics *alone*. As subfields, they may not be large enough to be considered entire subfields; as subfields of sociolinguistics, they may not be connected to sociolinguistics as much as to other fields; and as subfields of sociolinguistics alone, they may also be closely related to a number of other disciplines.

Therefore, we took a more liberal approach to these definitions. Our goal was to identify and distinguish between large clusters of sociolinguistic topics, even if they are not commonly recognized as distinct subfields within this field. We still considered these clusters significant enough to be included in our analysis and generally referred to them throughout this paper as “subfields of sociolinguistics”.

The main product of this section and the given study overall is the Subfield-based Article Summary Matrix. This matrix was developed with a view of answering the second research question guiding our project:

(2) *What are the differences in how Kazakh is discursively constructed and represented across specific subfields of sociolinguistics?*

The twenty articles in our database were distributed evenly across the subfields, with four articles representing each subfield. Due to space constraints, we decided to include a condensed version of the Subfield-based Article Summary Matrix. The following discussion focuses on each subfield and illustrates how they address the concept in question using selected examples from the matrix.

The articles included in the *General sociolinguistics* subfield focus on the evolution of Kazakh and its use across various social domains. Other languages, such as Russian and English, are discussed in relation to Kazakh, highlighting their dominance over Kazakh in certain domains. Promotion and increased use of Kazakh are discussed as important goals within general sociolinguistics.

According to the articles representing the *Language policy* subfield, Kazakh may be at risk of being overshadowed by other languages. Historical influences and language status may be connected with this phenomenon. There are still certain concerns connected with the weakening of the role of Kazakh in connection with multilingualism. In this regard, language policies play a crucial role in shaping how citizens acquire and use languages, including Kazakh.

The articles representing the *Education (and multilingual education)* subfield focus on the younger generation’s identities and attitudes toward Kazakh, highlighting their strong expectations regarding its use. Multilingual education, on the other hand, is framed as a response to recent social and linguistic challenges. While this subfield places less emphasis on Kazakh, it still highlights its importance as an essential component of a multilingual education system.

The articles pertaining to the *National and linguistic identity* subfield discuss the adaptation of Anglicisms in Kazakh as one of the factors that influence linguistic identity. Authors identify connections between the construction of linguistic identity and social factors. Historical events have also had a major influence on the development of the national and linguistic identity of Kazakhs.

The final subfield, *Bilingualism and Multilingualism*, includes articles that focus on the evolution and distribution of Kazakh across multiple domains. The titular language mainly interacts with Russian and English in the context of bilingualism and multilingualism (trilingualism), respectively. Authors also discuss child bilingualism, highlighting interference features in the use of Kazakh and Russian. As Kazakh, Russian, and English have different status in the country, speakers’ attitudes to these languages may depend on different sociolinguistic factors.

The second research question can be best answered with the bottom row of the matrix, which contains condensed information from all articles for each subfield. The following table presents a reformatted version of the bottom row of the matrix, containing this information is provided below. This table can be analyzed to reveal how specific subfields of sociolinguistics approach the study of Kazakh and the sociolinguistics of Kazakh and Kazakhstan.

TABLE 3
SUBFIELD-BASED ARTICLE SUMMARY MATRIX (CONDENSED)

#	Subfield	Summary
1	General sociolinguistics	The development of Kazakh and the establishment or reinforcement of its status depend on policy-making efforts and reforms. Expanding the application of Kazakh to multiple spheres of social activity is an important action leading to the promotion of this language. Regional and ethnic distribution of language use and preference patterns is an important aspect to take into account. The government supports trilingualism, but micro-level factors like parental preference of Russian and other-language media and schools affect mostly Kazakh.
2	Language policy	According to state policies, trilingualism is a norm. However, there are concerns that Kazakh may become overshadowed by multilingualism. Multilingual education faces challenges, especially in regard to the influence of the other languages on Kazakh. Structured support and qualified teachers are required in order to improve and properly balance the trilingual policy effectively.
3	Education (multilingual education)	The younger generation expects full adoption of Kazakh as the main language of the state. Language is considered closely connected to culture and national prosperity. Ethnic identity among multilingual students is based on their parents' background, while linguistic identity is more flexible. One of the goals of the multilingual education system is to address social and linguistic issues, which can be solved through the improvement of student performance and e-learning tools. Code-switching is generally regarded as a positive phenomenon, but there is a lack of awareness of its nature, purpose, and benefits in educational contexts.
4	National and linguistic identity	There is an impact of globalization on linguistic identity, which is reflected in the adaptation of Anglicisms into Kazakh. Identities are shaped by the patterns of use of the three languages: English is considered globally valuable, Russian is dominant in private sector communication, and Kazakh plays an important role in national integration. Russian also remains dominant in public life, which reduces the role of Kazakh. Governmental strategies for the stronger promotion of Kazakh should be developed and implemented in order for it to act as a true state language.
5	Bilingualism and multilingualism	The use of Kazakh has expanded from household contexts to public life, but this language is still closely connected with Russian and its status and influence. The roles of Kazakh, Russian, and Kazakh-Russian bilingualism differ in terms of age, occupation, and background. Kazakh is still connected with household use, while Kazakh-Russian bilingualism is an advantage in the context of employment. Russian remains preferred online due to a lack of resources in Kazakh. Finally, politeness strategies may also dictate language choice: if a speaker of Russian is present, the conversation may be switched to accommodate them.

It can be inferred that Kazakh is discursively constructed across different subfields of sociolinguistics in varied yet interconnected ways. In general sociolinguistics and language policy, Kazakh is considered as a national resource that requires institutional and policy-based support, taking into consideration the dominance of Russian and English over Kazakh in certain domains. Educational perspectives focus on Kazakh as an important and relevant medium of instruction. At the same time, there are ongoing complexities connected with pedagogical approaches and the influence of a limited understanding of the roles of code-switching in the educational context. From the national and linguistic identity perspectives, Kazakh is closely connected with cultural heritage and statehood. On the other hand, the status of Kazakh is affected by the popularity of Russian and English in a majority of contexts. Finally, in discussions of bilingualism and multilingualism, Kazakh is regarded as constrained to certain domains, while bilingualism and multilingualism are considered advantageous. Overall, Kazakh shifts between serving as a national symbol, educational tool, policy instrument, and an important aspect of identity development and communicative practices. This varied discursive representation of Kazakh reflects the complex, multilayered nature of contemporary Kazakhstan's sociolinguistic landscape.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examined how Kazakh is discursively constructed in sociolinguistic research using twenty selected articles from an online database. Each of the twenty articles was analyzed using this approach, which helped us ensure a comprehensive review and summarization of the scholarly ideas on Kazakh in sociolinguistics articles. As a result of this procedure, we assembled the Summarized Article Database. This database helped us describe how the discourse surrounding Kazakh is conceptualized in the academic discourse. This result represents a significant contribution to the field of sociolinguistics of Kazakh and Kazakhstan, as it provides a systematic account of discursive patterns of representation of the language in scientific literature.

Overall, the study offers a novel, discourse-based analysis of a familiar topic. Unlike other studies, the current study has focused on the discourse of the field of sociolinguistics itself, offering a unique perspective on the discursive presentation of Kazakh, its role and status, and attitudes and ideologies connected with it in this field and its subfields.

This study had some limitations. First, only open-access articles were included, excluding paywalled sources due to issues with accessibility and replicability. Second, the analysis focused primarily on English-language articles, which may differ significantly from studies published in Kazakh or Russian.

For future studies, topics related to the construction of discourse surrounding Kazakh could be further explored by employing different methodological approaches, choosing alternative time periods and considering the roles of other languages such as English and Russian.

APPENDIX

This list includes the articles analyzed for the study, with those cited in the paper also appearing in the References.

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