

# The Spread of English Language Elements During the COVID-19 Period

Merey Balabekova

Faculty of Philology, E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, 100028 Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Nadezhda Khan

Faculty of Philology, E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, 100028 Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Yeldos Tuite

Faculty of Philology, E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, 100028 Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Sayan Kenzhegaliev

Faculty of Philology, E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, 100028 Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Zamzagul Zuyntayeva

Faculty of Philology, E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, 100028 Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Bektursun Kaliev

Faculty of Philology, E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, 100028 Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Zhandos Smagulov

Faculty of Philology, E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, 100028 Karaganda, Kazakhstan

**Abstract**—The global pandemic COVID-19 has made a large difference in our minds and lives. Changes related to COVID-19 have had a significant impact on the Kazakh linguistic community as well. This paper considers the emergence of new concepts associated with greetings, color, education and linguistic changes in Kazakh linguistic society during COVID-19. The main purpose of this study is to show that some concepts related to greeting, education and learning, and ways of using colors have new content and a new quality. The research findings revealed that new words related to greetings, colors, and education had come into the language by the calque (translation-loan) method, and the elements of the English language indicate the flexibility to update the language structure. The study showed the emergence of new calque phrases caused by COVID-19, such as *shyntakpen amandasy*, *kyzyl aymak*, *sary aymak*, *zhasyly aymak*, *ZOOMga shygu*, and *ZOOMmen otkizu*; some of them have new semantic characteristics.

**Index Terms**—COVID-19, English language, borrowings, phrases, changes

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since English is the main language of economics, science, business and trade, it definitely has a major impact on other languages. We can say that the integration of English elements into other languages began in the first quarter of the 19th century. Previously, scientists asserted that foreign words, in contrast, had come into the English language. For example, the English dictionary contains 70% of borrowed words from 84 languages, most of which are French borrowings (25%) (Bielenia-Grajewska, 2009).

Furthermore, such words as *dollar*, *groat*, *guilder* and *mart* from Dutch in formal style (Jackson & Ze Amvela, 2002), *algebra*, *almanac*, *amber*, *camphor*, *orange*, *saffron*, *syrup* from oriental languages (Arabic, Persian Farsi, etc.) related to sciences and trade were borrowed (Carter et al., 2001).

In addition, elements of the Japanese, Spanish, African, German, and Greek languages can be found in English (Jackson & Ze Amvela, 2002). However, this influence has waned since the 19th century. In contrast, the English language begins to dominate. English is a very practical language. It also proved to be a flexible language during COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on every aspect of our lives. The pandemic has radically changed our way of living. Those changes have left their mark on the language. In particular, in Kazakhstani society, along with COVID-19, many elements and new concepts from the English language have spread widely. Not only has it become widespread, but some have even come into vernacular use in everyday life. Our goal in this paper is to show that some concepts related to greeting style, the use of colors, education and learning have new content and a new quality. Concepts related to COVID-19 and borrowed elements help enrich the vocabulary,

add new concepts that do not exist in the language, and indicate that the English language is a very flexible language to perform such functions.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Linguistic studies related to COVID-19 have addressed various aspects. Currently, there are many hypotheses about the spread of the virus in language studies related to COVID-19. The results of the study of Asadi et al. showed that some vowels (e.g., /i/) produce more particles than others (e.g., /a/), and voiced plosive consonants (e.g., /b/) produce more particles than voiceless fricatives (e.g., /f/). Abkarian and Stone's study found that the *sounds* /b, d, p, t/ produce a lot of saliva. Inouye, Georgiou and Kilani believe that aspirated consonants increase the spread of COVID-19. They divided 26 countries into two groups: the first one – the language of which often uses aspirated consonants, and the second one – the language of which does not use them at all. In the study, the spread of COVID-19 was observed in languages that use aspirated consonants. Inouye et al. (2021) hypothesized that languages that frequently use the /p/ sound could easily transmit the virus.

There are various fake reports about the spread of coronavirus infection. The media landscape was especially full of alarming false news. Additionally, many linguistic works have focused on this topic. For example, Tan (2020) identified the 'FEAR' association and construction in fake news. Rahim, in his article 'COVID-19 as it happens: insights from language corpora' (2020), stated that many people after COVID-19 became familiar with the following words and phrases: 'virus', 'coronavirus', 'epidemic', 'pandemic', 'new coronavirus', 'novel coronavirus', 'flatten the curve', 'stay home' and 'work from home'. In his article, the researcher emphasizes the frequent use of these words and gives the following interesting information: "Interestingly, the frequency of 'pandemic' is more than 10 times the frequency of 'epidemic' in total, although the term 'pandemic' did not appear in the corpus until mid-March when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that COVID-19 is a pandemic. The term 'pandemic' began to spike at 1,258.05 per million words by the third week of March and peaked, as shown in the table in the second week of May". Additionally, in this study, 'flatten the curve', 'stay at home' and 'work from home' began to emerge, apart from other terms such as 'quarantine', 'panic buying', 'vaccine', 'social distancing', 'mask', 'frontliners', 'unemployment', and 'donations'. In today's Kazakhstani media space, we can often see such words and phrases in connection with general pandemic topics.

One group of authors (Allihei et al., 2021) sought to study Shelley Frankenstein's manipulation and reproduction in the COVID-19 journalistic discourse. A corpus of 542 editorial articles and opinions in 83 newspapers was created, which included articles and comments written only in English. "The results showed that Frankenstein's Gothic motifs are manipulated and reproduced in COVID-19 journalistic discourse to depict the chaos and destruction caused by an extremely powerful and catastrophic virus/monster that began to rule the world" (1129 p.).

In a recent study (Al-Salman S., Haider), a body of neologisms associated with COVID-19 was developed. Word-formation techniques such as affixation, contamination, and acronymy have been shown to be effective in creating new words, and the creativity of the English language in making up new words has been demonstrated. Another study of neologisms states that new words related to COVID-19 are used in the form of nouns, adjectives, and verbs in social media and briefings. Another semantics study found that men often used adjectives about the effect of COVID-19 (Nurbayani & Dede, 2022).

This work discusses the use of new words in Kazakh society in the ways of greetings, symbolism of colors, and in the sphere of education.

## III. METHOD

### A. Data

All materials in this study were taken from the newspaper "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda". This is the main pro-government source of information about the news in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Russian language. "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda" publishes decrees and orders of the President of Kazakhstan, Parliament, Government resolutions, new laws of the republic, announcements of reshuffles of the highest authorities. State documents will come into force after publication in the newspaper "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda". The newspaper covers all important events in the country and abroad. Extensive information on the situation in Kazakhstan, including analytical materials on issues arising in society, is provided by its staff correspondents (Abisheva et al., 2017). New words about COVID-19 can also be seen in the newspaper, and it became one of the newspapers that provided accurate information about the pandemic.

The origin and meaning of English words are taken from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) – printed and online versions. This is the largest reference book in English today. More than 600 words are covered all over the world. All new words on COVID-19 are registered here. We will take the names related to COVID-19 from this dictionary and analyse them.

### B. Data Analysis

Language forms are capable of expressing multiple meanings. This ability is an inexhaustible source of semantic ambiguity in vocabulary, the number of examples of which, as Kharitonchik (1992) writes, in English, as well as in

other languages, is unlimited: in the procedural aspect, semantic ambiguity is the result of semantic changes when one meaning arises on the basis of another. Bloomfield (1968) gives the following definition of semantic changes: “Innovations affecting not so much the grammatical function of a particular form as its lexical meaning are defined as changes in meaning, or semantic changes” (p. 465). Thus, semantic changes occur at the lexical level due to the modification of the semantics of already existing words. According to Trubachev (2004), changes in values over time are an indisputable fact. According to him, “all changes in the meanings of words (even the so-called ‘occasional’ ones) are natural in their own way, it’s all about our knowledge or, more often, ignorance of the entire semantic context, which consists not only of linguistic but also cultural links”. The main reasons are of an extralinguistic order: various historical, social, economic, technological and other changes in people's lives generate the need for new names (Khassenov et al., 2021; Khassenov, 2021).

Currently, lexical innovations are penetrating Kazakh linguistics, and we see that this process has increased even more during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have deliberately chosen a descriptive method in accordance with the purpose of this work. For thousands of years, the descriptive method has been the leading method in the study of linguistic facts, then embodied in scientific and educational literature, in numerous dictionaries and encyclopedic publications (Kothari, 2004). The descriptive method is so universal that it is easier to identify the boundaries of its use by specifying where it is not used. The descriptive method is used to study the facts of a language at the level of its main tiers in a synchronous aspect in extraspacial, nonfunctional, idioethnic, and nonquantitative (except for rough assessments such as ‘always’, ‘often’ or ‘rarely’) aspects (Moskvin, 2015).

#### IV. RESULTS

Our research results show that COVID-19 has significantly affected our communication. Table 1 shows a word that has acquired other semantic qualities. These lexical units before COVID-19 had different meanings.

TABLE 1  
NEW WORDS

lexical innovations	translation
shyntakpen amandasy	elbow bump
qyzyl aimaq	red zone
sary aimaq	yellow zone
zhassyl aimaq	green zone
zoomga shygu, zoommen ätkizu	tutoring/conducting a lesson

New concepts related to greeting, color symbols, and educational processes can emerge due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Greeting is a matter of etiquette. The ancient Kazakh tradition of “greeting” made clear the social origin, wealth, and position of the saluter and saluted person. In ancient times, a khan or a great sultan received a visit from a lower-class representative, and the latter put both hands on his chest and bent down and greeted. In addition, if sultan thrusts out his hand as a sign of mercy, then a man of a lower class has to kneel down and take sultan’s hand with both hands. While a man of an average social status did not put his hand on his chest but bowed his head as a sign of greeting, the khan, or a powerful ruler, would put his hand on the shoulder of his guest in response to the greetings or even shake his hand to show his respect. When a person meets khan or sultan on his way, he was supposed to stop and wait for him to pass, bow his head, put his hand on his chest and greet him loudly. When the people’s representative greeted the sultans, he often knelt down and shouted “Aldiyar taksyr!”. Although the rulers and sultans, who did not have power, did not get all the respect from aside, the rules of greetings were strictly obeyed (Alimbay, 2011).

People of equal rank, but not close acquaintances, greeted each other only by shaking hands, and acquaintances (men) give each other two hands and then hug each other shoulder to shoulder or, conversely, hug each other on the chest. Such actions are made during the meeting. Women also had to follow generally accepted rules of meeting. Women of equal social status do not shake hands (never kiss) when they meet; only one simply bends over. If ordinary women meet the wives of the elder sultan, ordinary women bow their heads and show respect. However, while meeting a princess or a famous sultan's wife, the representative of people should greet them with his face down, bow and caress his face. A young woman greets her older relatives bowing (Alimbay, 2011). In general, shaking hands in Kazakh society is very rare. Hands shaking was considered unhygienic. That is why in ancient times they did not shake hands. We can suppose that this tradition entered Kazakh society during the Soviet Union period. During COVID-19, a new phrase greeting with an elbow – elbow bump (*shyntakpen amandasy*) appeared. This is a linguistic calque from the English language. Meaning of the English phrase *elbow bump* (*shyntakpen amandasy*) has changed from the one in 1981: Gene Banks of the Duke basketball team speaks of the *hand slap*, *high five*, *elbow bump* and other varieties of shaking. The word *elbow bump* meant ‘giving five/high five’ (bes beru/dai pyat’). The 2020 edition of the OED provides the following definition: *elbow bump* *n.* (a) a blow with or to the elbow; an injury resulting from this; (b) a gesture (usually of greeting or farewell) in which two people lightly tap their elbows together as an alternative to a handshake or embrace, esp. to reduce the risk of spreading or catching an infectious disease (<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/60163?redirectedFrom=elbow+bump#eid1305595900>). Here, we can see the emergence of a new method of greetings due to human security measures in the COVID-19 pandemic period. In the

Kazakh language, a new 'temporary' phrase for greeting *shyntaqpen amandassy is created*. In the article “‘Salam’ pod zapretom. Zaklyuchyonnih v Kazakhstane nauchat pravil’no zdorovat’sya” (“Salam” under a ban. Prisoners in Kazakhstan will be taught to greet each other correctly) we can see next:

“When meeting with employees of institutions, persons authorized to control and supervise the behavior of convicts and other officials visiting institutions, they have to stand up or stop, put their feet together, hands at the seams and greet them ‘Salemetsiz be’ or ‘Hello’, in this case, the handshake is not allowed, - states the proposed version of the legal regulation” (“Pri vstreche s sotrudnikami uchrezhdenij, licami, upolnomochennymi na osushchestvlenie kontrolya i nadzora za povedeniem osuzhdennyh i drugimi dolzhnostnymi licami, poseshchayushchimi uchrezhdeniya, osuzhdennye, vstayut ili ostanavlivayutsya, nogi raspolagayut vmeste, ruki po shvam i zdorovayutsya s nimi ‘Salemetsiz be’ ili ‘Zdravstvujte’, pri etom, rukopozhatie ne dopuskaetsya, – govoritsya v predлагаемой redakcii NPA”) (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 4 June, 2020). That is, due to precautionary measures, the greeting pattern was changed during COVID-19.

“The football association expressed warnings that players could be in danger during matches. It is believed that an outbreak of a new Chinese infection could occur in the football field. It is noted that the ban applies not only to handshakes between opponents but also between football players and referees, reports Deita.ru” (“V futbol’noj associacii vyrazili opaseniya naschet togo, chto futbolistam mozhet grozit’ opasnost’ vo vremya matchej. Predpolagaetsya, chto vspyshka novoj kitajskoj infekcii mozhet proizojti pryamo na futbol’nom pole. Otmechaetsya, chto zapret rasprostranyaetsya ne tol’ko na rukopozhatiya mezhdru sopernikami, no i mezhdru futbolistami i sud’yami, peredaet Deita.ru) (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, March 11, 2020).



Figure 1 Greeting by Handshake (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, March 11, 2020)

In other words, in the past, greeting without a handshake was a sign of lack of culture, but now, because of security measures, it has become the norm, and people have become accustomed to it. The concept and phrase greeting *shyntaqpen amandassu* is based on the phrase *elbow bump*, which spread with the virus in the Kazakh media, giving rise to a new regular expression.

It can also be assumed that historically, in past Kazakh society, people knew that the infection could be spread through hand touch and contacts (handshakes). Additionally, the second meaning of the phrase *clenching the fists* (*zhudyryk tuistiru*) began to refer to greetings. This word is mainly used for boxing. For example, when two boxers fight, the concept *zhudyryk tuistiru* means a fight, a boxing. In addition, in the COVID-19 period, it became a sign of greeting and received new meaning.

Color symbolism has a special place to indicate the risk of spreading coronavirus infection. In the newspaper, we find the following example:

V «krasnoj» zone: gg. Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Akmolinskaya, Aktyubinskaya, Almatinskaya, Atyrauskaya, Karagandinskaya, Kostanajskaya, Mangistauskaya, Pavlodarskaya oblasti

V «zheltoj» zone: SHymkent, Vostochno-Kazahstanskaya, ZHambylskaya, Kyzylordinskaya, Zapadno-Kazahstanskaya, Severo-Kazahstanskaya oblasti

V «zelenoj» zone: Turkestananskaya oblast' (In the 'red' zone: cities Nur-Sultan, Almaty, and Akmola, Aktobe, Almaty, Atyrau, Karaganda, Kostanay, Mangistau, Pavlodar regions; In the 'yellow' zone: Shymkent city, and East Kazakhstan, Zhambyl, Kyzylorda, West Kazakhstan, North Kazakhstan regions; In the 'green' zone: Turkestan region) (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, September 17, 2021).

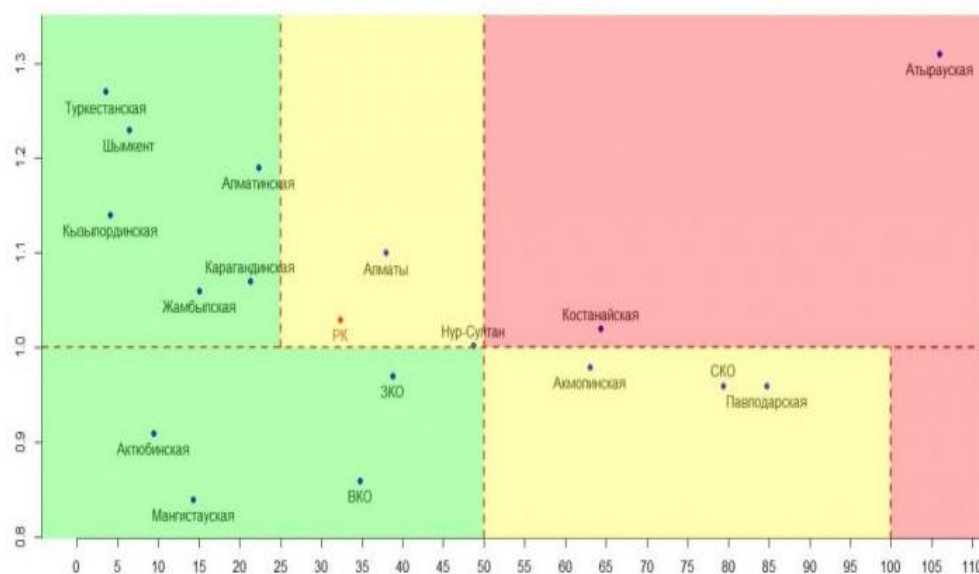


Figure 2 Epidemiological Situation in Kazakhstan on December 29, 2020.

Phrases such as *red zone*, *yellow zone*, and *green zone* (*krasnaya zona*, *zheltaya zona*, *zelenaya zona*) are pure linguistic calque from the English language. The same is used in the Kazakh language. If we pay attention to the research on color, we see that colorative vocabulary means a certain area. Here, however, the colors are used in relation to the direction. For example, *black* means *north*, *white* means *west*, *blue* means *east*, and *red* means *south*. These three colors have different meanings and uses. Red has meanings of “time”, “season”, and “beauty”; yellow has meanings of “anxiety” and “duration”, but the word *green* does not occur in regular expressions (Kaskatayeva et al., 2021). Instead, the word *blue* is often used. For example, the Russian phrase “green market” (*zeleniy bazar*) is translated as the *blue market* (*kāk bazar*). In the Kazakh and other Turkic languages, concepts such as *red zone*, *yellow zone*, and *green zone* have never existed before. It is now common to use linguistic calque phrases such as *qyzyl aimaq*, *sary aimaq*, *zhassyl aimaq* in reports about the spread of coronavirus infection.

According to Wild (2020), who listed keywords in the Oxford Corpus, “In April, there is a continued focus of vocabulary around the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, including lockdown, social or physical distancing, and - following the introduction of the UK’s Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in late March - furlough. As millions of people adapted to communicating remotely, references to the video-chat application Zoom became widespread, including use as a verb. Mask and covering are also keywords in April, May, and June, reflecting continuing discussions of when and where face coverings should be worn». The word *zoom* has been used in the newspaper “Kazakhstanskaya Pravda” since April 2 (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, April 2, 2020). The word Zoom in English means ‘zooming’ (increased size), ‘zoomed’ (increased scale) (<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/89154773?>). While the word Zoom was originally just the name of an ordinary platform, it has become an active word in the information space since July, creating new phrases. This can be seen in many examples:

While the Ministry of Healthcare offers to switch to online format on the polyclinic level, application developers are ready to provide a platform for this. At the Zoom press conference, the iDoctor.kz platform for online consultations with doctors developed by the Ministry of Healthcare, the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry and the medical service for finding doctors was presented (Poka Minzdrav predlagat perevod meduslug na urovne polikliniki v onlajn-format, razrabotchiki prilozhenij uzhe gotovy predostavit' dlya etogo platformu. Na Zoom-press-konferencii byla prezentovana razrabotannaya Minzdravom, Ministerstvom cifrovogo razvitiya, innovacij i aerokosmicheskoy promyshlennosti i medservisom poisku vrachej iDoctor.kz platforma dlya onlajn-konsul'tacij s vrachami) (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, July 1, 2020).

The pandemic disrupted all plans but did not prevent wedding. Kokshetau, Nur-Sultan, Almaty, South Korea - guests from all over the country and abroad congratulated the newlywed couple through a zoom platform (Pandemiya narushila vse plany, no ne pomeshala sygrat' svad'bu. Kokshetau, Nur-Sultan, Almaty, YUzhnaya Koreya – gosti so vsekh ugolkov strany i zarubezh'ya pozdravlyali molodyh posredstvom zoom-platformy) (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, July 18, 2020).

The meeting of the head of the MISD with representatives of the Presidential Reserve was held in the format of a Zoom conference (Vstrecha glavy MIOR s predstavitel'yami Prezidentskogo rezerva proshla v formate Zoom-konferencii) (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, August 17, 2020).

It is known that the education system under COVID-19 has changed its format to a distance learning type. In Kazakhstan, the Zoom platform has proven its effectiveness. Many universities now conduct lectures via Zoom. New phrases with the word ZOOM have appeared in the everyday use of students, teachers, and professionals in various

fields: going to the zoom, conduct a lesson/conferencing via zoom (*zoomga shygu*, *zoommen äkizu*). In the modern Kazakh language, these words have become used in everyday life. For example, lectures at Karaganda University are still conducted via Zoom because this platform is very easy and convenient for demonstration, and its time limit and subscriptions can be changed. The lesson usually lasted 40 minutes. However, you can prolong it by getting a monthly plan. In general, Zoom is a convenient platform for both university teachers and students. *Zomen äkizu* has become synonymous with *tutoring/conducting a lesson*; *zoomga shygu* has become a new form of meeting, conferencing or online gathering in the classroom; thus, a new phrase has appeared in the language.

## V. DISCUSSION

Borrowing is an element of a foreign language that is taken from one language to another in the course of interlingual communication. Language convergence occurs both in the direct contact of people and in its absence; it is an important part of the indirect communication of cultures (Mazhitaeva et al., 2014a; Mazhitaeva et al., 2014b). One of the important consequences of cultural convergence is the acquisition of linguistic units in the process of perceiving cultural values (Azharbekova et al., 2020). Elements of a foreign language began to perform their function in other sociocultural environments as needed. Borrowing has a special role in supplementing the names that do not exist in the language of the nation, enriching the vocabulary. For example, it is known that in the 19th century, many words of Arabic and Russian origin came into the Kazakh language. At that time, the Kazakh language was enriched with new terms related to school, law, cadastral records (*nizam*, *mektep*, *zakon*), etc. One of the peculiarities is that almost all the words of that time were pronounced according to the law of vowel harmony of the language. For example, *käshir* – *coachman*, *bodan* – *national*, *country subject*, etc. This trend continued until the middle of the 20th century, when many words had come into Kazakh as they were used in the Russian language. That is, the phonetic features were the same as in the Russian language. We can say that it was the influence of the politics and language policy of that time. A clear proof of this is the fact that many English words borrowed via Russian are accepted on the basis of Russian language rules. It is also important to note that the change in the semantics of words was perceived by the Russian people's way of thinking and their mentality. The concepts associated with COVID-19 are no exception. However, it is important to note that in recent years, the process has been direct. This is due to the growth in the number of English-speaking people in Kazakhstani society. For example, according to world rankings, Kazakhstan has increased to 8 positions about the use of the English language (Informburo, 2020).

New words that appeared because of the COVID-19 pandemic have spread all over the world. In particular, these new words spread quickly in the Kazakhstani medical community and became a part of life. It is impossible to imagine today's society without these new words. No matter where you go, you will come across the phrases about COVID-19 restrictions, warnings, and vaccination information.

After COVID-19, English words and concepts began to appear in Kazakhstani newspapers and various information portals. In this paper, we considered the division of regions into red, green, and yellow zones of COVID influence; changes in the way of greeting; and the borrowings of education-related terms. For example, in ancient times, in Turkic languages, color symbolism was associated with the four parts of the world, but today, it indicates the spread of the disease. This can be proven by word collocations such as the *red zone*, *yellow zone*, and *green zone* (*qyzyl aймаq*, *sary aймаq*, *zhassyl aймаq*) in the study.

We also notice that the English concepts of greetings, such as *shynraqpen amandassu* and *zhudyryq tuistiru*, were taken from the English language in the COVID-19 period, and phrases such as *zoomga shygu* and *zoommen äkizu* began to become regular expressions. All these concepts are linguistic calque from English, which shows that English is a language that can withstand any situation.

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**Merey Balabekova** is a doctoral student at the Faculty of Philology of E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, Kazakhstan. Her research area is linguistic convergence, semantics, lexicology, and the influence of the English language on society.

**Nadezhda Khan** is a candidate of Philological Sciences. She teaches Russian at E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, Kazakhstan.

**Yeldos Tuite** is a candidate of Philological Sciences. He is the dean of the Faculty of Philology of the E.A. Buketov Karaganda University. Teaches cognitive linguistics, has been engaged in psycholinguistics for several years.

**Sayan Kenzhegaliev** is the head of the Department of Kazakh Linguistics of the Faculty of Philology of the E.A. Buketov Karaganda University. He is the author of several works on psycholinguistics and has the H-index of 3.

**Zamzagul Zuyntayeva** is a candidate of Philological Sciences. Her area of interest is historical linguistics. She has several works on historical linguistics.

**Bektursun Kaliev** is a candidate of Philological Sciences. His area of interest is phonetics, morphology, semantics. He teaches at E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, Kazakhstan.

**Zhandos Smagulov** is doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor. He teaches at E.A. Buketov Karaganda University, Kazakhstan. He is the author of several books on the history of philology. He has a book dedicated to the Kazakh intelligentsia of the 20s of the 20th century.