Onomastic Space of Kazakhstan: Current Condition and Problems

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Abstract

Onomastic space of Kazakhstan is gradually returning to its national identity, freed from ideological nominations imposed by the communist ideology, which is characteristic of many post-Soviet CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) states. Twenty-three years of independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan have been a period of growth of the national onomastics as a branch of the Kazakh linguistics to a new level. However, another concern, which cannot be ignored, is that the growing process of globalization is reflected in the linguistic landscape of cities, large and small settlements of the country, where a lot of space is given to English-language information in advertising signs, in the names of boutiques, shopping, entertainment centers and even entire residential blocks, which appear in the European manner. One of the pressing issues at the moment is the standardization of onomastic names and their compliance with international standards.

To provide regulations on the implementation of undertaken tasks of national onomastics such as naming, renaming, transcribing, transliterating, and so forth, the Government has formulated its normative legal bases and regulatory enactments. In recent decades, Kazakh scholars are actively studying theoretical problems of language and onomastics in their linguo-cognitive aspects, which allow reconstructing axiological components of Onoma.

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Introduction

Onomastic names are one of the basic factors that determine the national language and national identity, beginning with the name of the state, place names, personal names and the names of its citizens. Kazakhstan is a huge country covering a territory equivalent to the whole of Western Europe, five times the size of France. It is a unique combination of a desert landscape and wooded plains, lake edges, highlands and boundless steppes. Spiritual, material culture, traditional culture, religion and other axiological components found bright and organic reflection in the Kazakh onomastic picture of the world.

State Onomastic Commission and local Onomastic Commissions function in Kazakhstan and they regulate the process of a new nomination, renaming, and restoring of historical names. According to the Language Committee of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, since the country gained its independence in 1991, hundreds of distorted names in different parts had their historical names restored. By the decision of the State Onomastic Commission 5 oblasts, 13 cities, 54 regions, 7 city districts, 119 railway stations, and hundreds of settlements changed their names, and Russian-language transcriptions of 6 oblasts, 12 cities, 14 districts, 76 railway stations, and more than 40 settlements were clarified. And a comparative analysis of dynamics shows that if until 1999, the names of 641 settlements, education, culture centers, etc. were changed, for the period of

2000-2009, 1221 settlements, 951 education, culture, sports, health care, and other centers were renamed (Rysbergen 2011: 300-302).

It should be noted that the toponymy of the Soviet and post-Soviet era is characterized by ample use of names of well-known personalities in the names of streets and settlements. In this regard, the government is taking active measures to normalize the nomination processes in place names, so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

The development history of Kazakh onomastics is divided into 3 major phases:

- **1st phase – 1950-1970** – Kazakh onomastics has started to emerge as a branch of linguistics.
- **2nd phase – 1970-1990** – At the beginning of this phase the Department of Onomastics was founded in 1971 at the Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly. A brief explanatory dictionary of toponymy of Kazakhstan was compiled by Ye. Koishybayev (1974) and A. Abdirakhmanov's book entitled *Toponymy and Etymology* was published (1975). T. Zhanuzak defended his doctoral thesis entitled *The Main Problems of the Kazakh Onomastics* (1976).
- **3rd phase – 1990-present** – This can be called a spiritual renewal period, because the late 1990s was a period of national reconstruction in the (former) Soviet Union republics, and political and cultural reforms began. And there is a special stage in this phase, that is 1991-2011 – factual base, theoretical and methodological foundations of the national onomasticon were well-developed, made more sophisticated by its theoretical and methodological approaches, the most effective and fruitful period (Zhanuzak and Kyzdarkhan 2004: 14-25).

The current study aims at providing descriptive analysis and presenting brief information about the 3rd phase of the development of onomastics of Kazakhstan beginning with the time the republic gained its independence in 1991, till the present day.

Legal Bases of Developing National Onomastics

Productivity measures for the implementation of the urgent tasks of development of national onomastics are directly related to their normative legal bases and regulatory enactments. Currently, legal and regulatory framework of onomastic work is based on the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan; the Law on languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 11 July 1997; the Concept of Language Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, approved by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated November 4, 1996 Oder No 3186; the Law on the Administrative-territorial System of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated December 8, 1993; the Regulation on the State Onomastic Commission at the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, approved by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated April 21, 1998, Decree No 368; the Regulation on Naming and Renaming of organizations, railway stations, airports, as well as physico-geographical objects of the Republic of Kazakhstan and changing the transcription of their names, approved by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 5, 1996, Decree No 281.

In order to further systematize and coordinate the work in the field of onomastics, due to democratic changes in the country, there emerged the need to develop a new normative document. In the result, the Concept of State Onomastics Operation in the Republic of Kazakhstan was approved by the Resolution (No 45) of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 21, 2005.

Later the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan about Amendments and Additions to Some Legislative Acts on the Issues of Onomastics was signed by President N. Nazarbayev, January 21, 2013, LRK No. 72-V. 'the regulation in the field of public relations, naming and renaming of administrative units, other physico-geographical objects of places and transcription of names will be achieved, according to the memorandum to the law' wrote BNews.kz, January 21, 2013, 19:47 (13:47 GMT).

Besides, the State Program of Development and Functioning of Languages of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 which has been adopted by the Decree of the President of Kazakhstan (No.110 dated June 29, 2011.) indicates, among many other indications, that Kazakhstan should achieve as a result of implementation of the State Program:

- increase of the population's satisfaction with the activities of onomastic commissions regarding observance of principles of transparency and public access to discussion of decision-making process to 60% by 2014, to 75% by 2017, to 90% by 2020;

A Period of Growth of the National Onomastics

Kazakh onomastics developed rapidly and actively in the late 1990s and in the years of independence. Basically, regional place names were focused on, and dissertations were defended in almost all areas of 14 regions (oblasts) of Kazakhstan. Also theses on ethno-linguistic problems of the Kazakh cosmonyms and oronyms were defended, which actively developed questions of historical onomastics based on Orkhon-Yenisey and other ancient and medieval written monuments.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, onomastics of the country, which had been using conventional methods of system-centered, semantics-centered, structural linguistics, began its new evolutionary stage of development in view of the new global scientific paradigm: anthropocentrism and cognitive linguistics. This approach is clearly characterized as anthropocentric, since a human stands as a coordinator of all values and of all existing things, that is, namely he/she is at the epicenter of the universe, for the space is 'animated' by human presence only, and it is treated and perceived by a person.

Twenty years of independence of Kazakhstan have been a period of growth of the national onomastics as a branch of the Kazakh linguistics to a new level. To a great extant scientific-theoretical issues of fundamental research expanded, enriching factual, methodological, scientific and empirical bases for the Kazakh onomastics. Defended theses aimed at studying different onomastic materials in close relationship with the ethnic culture, mentality, attitude, world outlook, ethno-psychology, and speech activity of the Kazakh people.

Here are the main works defended on onomastics in this period:

Doctoral theses (research theses defended in pursuing **the Doctor of Philological Sciences Degree):** A. Abdrakhmanov 'Historical Etymology of Place Names of Kazakhstan' (1991); Ye. Kerimbayev 'Ethno-cultural Foundations of the Nomination and the Functioning of the Kazakh Proper Names' (1992); V. Mahpirov 'Ancient Turkic Onomastics' (1998); V. Popova 'Structurally Semantic Nature of Names of Kazakhstan' (2005); B. Bektasova 'Toponymy of Northern Regions of Kazakhstan' (2005); G. Madiyeva 'Onomastic Space of Modern Kazakhstan: Structure, Semantics, Precedent, and Lemmatization, (2005); B. Tleuberdiyev 'Linguo-conceptological Bases of Kazakh Onomastics' (2006); A. Zhartybayev 'Historical and Linguistic, Ethno-cultural and Etymological Bases of Toponymy of Central Kazakhstan' (2007); K. Rysbergen 'Linguo-cognitive and Ethno-cultural Foundations of Kazakh Toponymy' (2010); S. Imanberdiyeva 'Historical Onomastic Space (based on Turkic Written Monuments of the 10-14th Centuries.)' (2010). In this dissertation onomastic field of historical poetonyms was discussed and for the first time theonym was explored as the concept, structural types were determined; linguistic-conceptual description of the Lord was identified on the basis of the associative experiment.

Regional studies on toponymy got their logical continuation as well: K. Sembiyev 'Toponymy of the Kyzylorda Oblast' (1992); G. Sagidoldagiyn 'Kazakh-Mongolian Toponymic Parallels' (1993); B. Tleuberdiyev 'Ethnolinguistic Particular Place Names in Southern Kazakhstan' (1995); U. Yerzhanova 'Ethnolinguistic Particular Place Names in Western Kazakhstan' (1998); B. Biyarov 'Oronyms of Southern Altai' (2000); A. Alimkhan 'Linguistic and Ethno-cultural Peculiarities of Southern Part of the East Kazakhstan' (2001).

Research theses defended in pursuing **the Candidate of Philological Sciences Degree** (closer to the western PhD) are as follows:

The theses here became more diversified and among them were works dedicated to the peripheral, so-called *marginal zones* of the national onomastics. Here are some of them: K. Aronov 'Ethnolinguistic Nature of Folk Cosmonyms in the Kazakh Language' (1992); K. Zhappar 'Aesthetic Function of Proper Names in O. Suleymenov's Poetry' (2000). Analysis of *pragmatonyms and ergonomics* (on the materials of cultural and entertainment facilities of cities of Kazakhstan) had been previously a completely unexplored problem, S. Imanberdiyeva's and M. Kakimova's theses were dedicated to these issues (2001). B. Koshimova touched on a new theoretical problem for the Kazakh onomastics: '*Deonym* and *Appellation* of Proper Names' (2001). A. Arysbayev in his dissertation examines the cumulative nature of Kazakh toponyms (2005). The dynamics of development of the toponymic system for the last hundred years on the materials of a specific region (South Kazakhstan) can be found in the work by Zh. Ismailova (2006); 'Arabic Borrowings in the Kazakh Anthroponymic System' discussed in the dissertation of Zh. Agabekova (2005); Mythopoeic thinking of the Kazakh people, reflected in place names, became the object of a research dissertation of S. Kerimbayeva (2005); The problems of spelling Kazakh Onomastic Names in English by means of transcribing and transliterating have found some sort of solution in the thesis by N.M. Rsaliyeva (2008). 'Phonologically Motivational Conditionality of Kazakh Toponyms' was considered in the work by A. Makulbekova (2008); 'Onomastic

Space in Works of Children's Writers' was the object of analysis in Z. Abdullina's dissertation (2008). In her work N. Asylbekova considered peculiarities of motivation of anthroponyms in historical and linguistic paradigm (2008). Toponymic myths and legends of Kazygurt, wonderfully echoing the myth of *The Deluge*, are reflected in the thesis of B.Taspolatova entitled 'Ethnolinguistic Features of the Kazygurt Region' (2010). The object of the dissertations of Ye. Orynbetova and E. Orazbayeva (2010) and many others was onomastic space of art works of Kazakh writers that address theoretical issues of unexplored artistic onomastics, paving way to a new direction so-called linguo-poetics in the field of national onomastics.[1]

Since 2011, Kazakhstan's higher education system has moved to the international European standards, a number of defended PhD theses have been dedicated to topical problems of the Kazakh onomastics in a growing globalization processes. They are mostly related to national-identifying and linguo-cultural aspects.

Defended PhD thesis (to name a few): K. Kydyrbayev's 'Scientific-Theoretical Bases of Transliterating Kazakh Onyms into Arabic' (2012); L. Nakhanova's 'Historical and Semantic Interpretation of Names in Orkhon-Yenisey Monuments' (2014); A. Aksholakova's 'Kazakh Onyms in Russian Speech: Norm, Adaptation, Variation' (2014).

Onomastics of Kazakhstan as an Integral Part of the Global Turkic Onomastic System

Onomastic space of modern Kazakhstan is an integral part of the global Turkic onomastic system. The genesis of the Kazakh onomasticon, being historically linked to many linguistic and extra-linguistic parameters with Turkic ethnic culture, has its own way of formation and development, uniqueness, and a number of specific characteristics. Besides, in the onomastic space a huge number of ancient place names with archaic language elements are found, dating back to the ancient Turkic language. Now actively functioning 'modern' historical place names are the living memory of the Turks, which is considered as a cultural phenomenon, linking eras and centuries.

For thousands of years the picture of the world of the Turkic peoples has been of exogenous origin. In the formation of their ethnic composition, starting from the Neolithic period, various ethnic components such as Saka, Massaget, Hun, ancient Turkic, Tatar-Mongol tribes and other nationalities have been involved for thousands of years. The exogenous nature of the culture of Kazakhs was predetermined by the duration of interaction with the cultures of the peoples of the surrounding areas: China, Russia, Iran, and the Arab East. Naturally, all this is reflected in the formation of the Kazakh onomastic picture of the world that has a distinct identity and originality.

Such ancient geographical names preserved on the map of modern Kazakhstan, as the Caspian, Otyrar, Yertis, Syr Darya, and many others, being the cradle of the birth of the Kazakh ethnic group, the time of occurrence, and, in general, in terms of humanities, can

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[1] The enumerated works above might not reflect the exact number.

stand in one row and are comparable to those ancient names of ancient civilizations, like the Nile, Euphrates, Rome, Hellas, and others. Thus, the ancient historical place names of Kazakhstan can be viewed as linguistic and ethno-cultural phenomenon of the Eurasian, global, and wider, holistic human culture.

Astana, the World's Youngest Capital City

The word *astana* means 'capital' in Kazakh. It is the second largest city (after Almaty) located in central north of the country on the Ishim River. Onomastic landscape of the capital city is continually expanding by building new facilities, streets, squares and others. If we consider that in 2030 the city will expand the infrastructure by half, one can imagine how many new names will appear on the map of Astana. According to the City Department of Architecture and Construction currently in Astana urbanonyms encompass 789 street names, 6 squares, 10 parks, 12 bridges, 4 main roads, etc. Linguistic grounds of the city urbanonyms are associated primarily with the *names* of such individuals who were actively involved in the history of formation of the Kazakh state, the city of Astana; the names of prominent personalities who have contributed to the establishment and strengthening of the Kazakh statehood; the names of public figures, figures of science, and the names associated with the spiritual, cultural, aesthetic and human values.

A Journal of Onomastics

In Kazakhstan since the year 2004 a special journal *Onomastikalyk Khabarshy*, whose literal meaning is 'Onomastic Announcer', has been issued to disseminate research results of current theoretical and practical problems of Kazakh onomastics (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. A Journal of Onomastics (photo by the author, N.R.)

The journal is a Bulletin of the Onomastics Commission of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the same time, and it distributes information concerning Onoma of the country.

The Department of Onomastics

Since 1971 (with a one-year break; in 1979 closed, in 1981 reopened) at the Institute of Linguistics named after A. Baitursynuly a Department of Onomastics functions (current head of which, since 2003 is prof. Rysbergen).

Top research priorities of the Department are as follows:

1. to focus on fundamental, theoretical and applied issues of research of the Kazakh Onomastics;
2. to take a leading role in making onomastic regulation measures aimed at development work in the country (the draft of normative legal documents such as onomastic concept, instructions on the spelling of names, etc.);
3. to prepare linguistic documents and certificates to meet the demands and desires on onomastic problems of governmental, non-governmental organizations and institutions and with respect to documenting the names of the citizens.

The participation of the specialists of the Department of Onomastics in drafting of normative legal documents on onomastics activities of the country:

1. The Concept of the State Onomastic Work in the Republic of Kazakhstan, approved by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, January 21, 2005, Decree No 45;
2. Manual of Transferring of Kazakh Geographical Names to Russian and Transferring of Russian Geographical Names to Kazakh. 2003, together with scholars of the Institute of Geography;
3. Manual of Transferring of Kazakh Anthroponyms (name and surname) to Russian and Transferring of Russian Anthroponyms to Kazakh. 2014-2015, currently in the process of approval.

The Department of Onomastics permanently develops fundamental and applied problems of onomastics, under awarded grants by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan on a competitive basis.

The Research Works Done and Being Done Under Grant-Supported Projects by the Department of Onomastics:

1. 'The Reflection of the National Idea in the Kazakh Onomastics' 2007-2009;
2. 'Research of Onomastic Space of the Kazakh Ethnic Group in the Ethno-cultural, Historical and Linguistic Paradigm' 2009-2011;
3. 'Onomasticsas a Major Factor in Ensuring the Spiritual Harmony in a Multicultural Area of Modern Kazakhstan' 2012-2014;

4. 'Research of Cultural-Historical and Linguistic Bases for the Kazakh Onomastics in the Common Turkic Context' 2012-2014;
5. 'Development of Scientific-Theoretical Principles of National and International Standardization of Place Names of the Republic of Kazakhstan' 2013-2015 (Principal Investigators: K. Rysbergen, N. Rsaliyeva).

Currently the department is exploring topical scientific issues of contemporary and historical onomastics.

Linguo-cognitive Aspects of Onoma as One of Current Research Interests

In recent decades, Kazakh scholars have been actively studying theoretical problems of language and onomastics in their linguo-cognitive aspects, which allow reconstructing axiological components of Onoma. The study of linguo-cognitive aspects of the nomination allows us to decipher ethno-cultural code, entire complex of public knowledge accumulated over centuries. In this regard, we have studied the spatial code, somatic code, and the specifics of metaphorical nominations of Kazakh geographical names (Rysbergen 2010). And ethno-ecological aspect of toponymics of Kazakh culture is being developed as well.

In the Kazakh toponymy the use of anatomical vocabulary is highly developed, although this onomastic feature is common to many other language families. More than 70 parts of the body, starting from the top of the head to toe were reflected in geographical terminology of the Kazakh people:

Bas (head), *kulak* (ear), *muryn* (nose), *auyz* (mouth), *moiyn* (neck), *kol* (hand), *ayak* (foot), *bauyr* (liver), *zhurek* (heart), *bel* (waist), *taban* (heel+arch+ball taken together), etc.

Rysbergen and Imanberdiyeva (2010) in their studies argue that the national cognitive base should be regarded as a universal unity of consciousness, which structures, stores, transmits and accumulates various toponymic information and knowledge encoded in geographical names. For the first time a comprehensive analysis of the nature of national precedent names and phenomenononyms which take a central place in cognitive base of the Kazakh people were performed. For the first time in the Kazakh onomastics within the new anthropocentric paradigm linguo-cognitive and psycholinguistic analyses of Kazakh personal and place names were held. It offered a completely new approach by applying research tools of the exact sciences in modelling 'virtual' pre-concept of cognitive algorithmic matrix of language (toponymic) concepts. Fundamental properties and parameters were worked out, and a within-hierarchy description of frame structures of national onomastic concepts was depicted.

We (Rysbergen 2011) offer a cognitive-algorithmic matrix of onomastic concepts such as *village*, *mountain*, *river*, *sea*, and so forth, by applying research tools of computational linguistics such as domains, modes, frames, slots, and so on. It is noteworthy that for the first time the concept of 'cognitive matrix' in linguistics was applied by an American scholar R.W. Langacker (1987) in onomastics, and in Russian onomastics N. Boldyrev used the concept of 'cognitive-matrix analysis' to create a semi-model of the

concept (Boldyrev 2007: 106). According to S.G. Vorkachev, 'Linguo-cultural concept is an open structure for both denotative and connotative interpretations, which is in a "standby" state, ready "to acquire" a specific "bodily incarnation", i.e. the very proto-concept' (Vorkachev 2004: 24).

Thus, it is impossible to discover and embrace all the available cultural information and knowledge even of one concept, and even within the same linguistic culture. Detailed information on any concept is usually given in dictionaries, encyclopedias, reference books, and the degree of how well they will be revealed in those sources highly depends on the result of investigation of the concepts under consideration.

The community of Kazakh scholars is very involved in on-going investigations in this area, and expects some more interesting results.

Standardization Issues

In 1959, at the Institute of Linguistics under the supervision of Prof. Donidze (from Moscow) 'Instructions for Transferring Kazakh Geographical Names of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic into Russian', was worked out, which was the first work on the standardization of Kazakh geographical names. A new more developed one was worked out in sovereign Kazakhstan in 2003, which is currently the main guide of transcribing geographical names for publication of various cartographic products, dictionaries, reference books, and encyclopedias.

The agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan 'The State Catalogue of Geographical Names of Kazakhstan' was created by the Republican State Enterprise 'National Cartographic-Geodetic Fund' and it is constantly updated with new data and renaming results.

S. Abdrakhmanov and A. Makenova, specialists of the Institute of Geography, write about this catalogue:

> Pursuant to the legislative authority, all cartographic services of the republic, on the basis of scientific and practical multi-volume work, 'State Catalogue of Geographical Names of Kazakhstan', which is of not only national, but also international importance, now actively correct their distortions on transliteration with publication of national, regional, topographic, tourist, educational and other types of maps. After the widespread introduction of 'State Catalogue of Geographical Names of Kazakhstan' into practice at national, provincial and district levels, the use of place names in Russian, and through it the other languages of the United Nations will unify and standardize, as required by the UN Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names (2013: 3).

At the present stage of development of sovereign Kazakhstan when the country has intentions to join the top 30 countries of the world, to move to Latin script, the problem of working out scientifically proven general rules of transliteration of Kazakh onomastic names in the English language is sharply raised. Kazakhstan now has actively entered into relations with

numerous world states in cultural, political, economic and other areas. Practically onomastic names of the country are reflected in a variety of intergovernmental documents, treaties, political, economic maps, reference manuals of various states of the world. Thus, national onomastics in its romanized form is already actively involved in the global communications space. However, the issues that pose a significant difficulty to citizens and foreigners is the spelling of names in English, for there are no accepted rules of transcribing Kazakh names to foreign languages or Romanization standards that could reverse back to the original sound of names. Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names states that: 'The best method to achieve international standardization is through strong programs of national standardization'. In this regard, a dissertation entitled 'Theoretical-Scholarly Bases for Transliterating Kazakh Onomastic Names in the English Language' submitted by us (Rsaliyeva 2008) is considered one of valuable studies on applied onomastics, the results of which may become a basis for the first grant to research the rules of spelling Kazakh names in English and their transliteration/transcribing into the English writing system. The set up rules are believed to facilitate the work of translators, domestic English-speaking authors, western scientists investigating the Kazakh history, culture, literature, the encyclopedia writers, bibliographers, Internet users, editors, lawyers, etc. The results of the research promote realization of Article 19 in 'The Law about Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan' (Ch. 4. Language in the Names of Inhabited Localities, Proper Names, Visual Information; Article 19. Procedure for Usage of Toponymic Names, Names of Organizations. 1997), where it states:

> Traditional, historically formed Kazakh names of inhabited localities, streets, squares, as well as of other physico-geographical objects should be reproduced in other languages in compliance with transliteration rules. Names of state organizations, and structural subdivisions thereof shall be given in the state and the Russian languages. Names of joint ventures, foreign organizations should be given with transliteration in both the state and the Russian languages.

At the moment the issues of standardization of onomastic names and their compliance with international standards are undertaken. Within the framework of Grant-Supported Projects the thesis entitled (mentioned above) 'Development of Scientific-Theoretical Principles of National and International Standardization of Place Names of the Republic of Kazakhstan' for the period 2013-2015 (Principal Investigators: K. Rysbergen, N. Rsaliyeva) is being carried out.

Westernization as a Concern

Economic growth promotes globalization. As is known, *economic globalization* has both positive and negative effects on cultural values. And the growing processes of globalization are reflected now in the linguistic landscape of the cities, and large and small settlements of Kazakhstan as well, where a lot of space is given to English-language information in

advertising signs, in the names of boutiques, shopping, entertainment centers and even entire residential blocks, which appear in the European manner.

European names are usually represented in two ways; in English and English words in Cyrillic. Figures 2 and 3 are examples of that.

Fig.2 Shopping Center in Almaty (photo by the author, N.R.)

Actually, *City Center* in Fig. 2 is not a city center; it is just a name of a medium sized trading complex, located in the western part of the city.

Fig. 3. Shopping Center in Almaty (Photo by the author, N.R)

In Fig. 3 we have focused on the top of the building, where English word *prime* and Spanish word *plaza* are written in Cyrillic letters. The owner of the Trading Complex could write it in English or in Spanish, but the idea behind this naming may be 'there is nothing against the language law of the country', where Kazakh is the state language, Russian is official, and both are in Cyrillic.

As we have said, this situation is noticeable in building names in cities and settlements, owners of which are usually one person. How this problem will find solution in the future is a matter of time. In the documents of the above mentioned State Program of Development and Functioning of Languages of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020, it is indicated (among many other indications) that Kazakhstan should achieve as a result of implementation of the State Program:

- increase of the share of the country's population speaking English to 10% by 2014, to 15% by 2017, to 20% by 2020;
- increase of the share of population speaking three languages (Kazakh, Russian and English) to 10% by 2014, to 12% by 2017, to 15% by 2020.

Looking at the figures, Westernization or Americanization seem to be inevitable as time passes. It is twice as hard to avoid Westernization when there is an increasing demand for the languages of the West to be known, via programmes implemented by the State. But we must not confuse Westernization with modernization. Any country preserving its cultural identity and uniqueness, maintaining sustainable development may flourish. And we consider the importance of preserving cultural and traditional values accumulated over centuries a non-disputable matter, for a simple reason that if the whole world turns into Europe, it will lose its natural color.

Conclusion

Thus, for more than half a century, onomastics of Kazakhstan has achieved significant results in the development of scientific-theoretical, and applied problems, relevant to topical onomastic issues of the whole world. Onomastics research theses have been defended by more than 60 candidates of sciences and 20 doctors of sciences (former educational system terms). Hundreds of scientific monographs, dictionaries, reference books and tutorials have been published.

The country has its strategic development plans for the foreseeable future. Students are taught Onomastics as a subject at university departments. Under supervision of prof. G. Madiyeva at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty there is a students' onomastic club, so-called *Zheruyk*, which means 'peaceful and prosperous home place' in Kazakh. What we can learn from this is if the youth is involved in the study of Onomastics, it will continue to develop.

At the end of our descriptive analysis, we would like to express the idea that the main objective of studies of linguistic sciences, onomastics, in particular, is to ensure secure harmonious co-existence of all cultural and linguistic communities, mutual understanding and tolerance of peoples and countries in our sophisticated world.

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