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CULTURE SHOCK: THE RUSSIAN MEDIA'S SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE KAZAKH ALPHABET SHIFT

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Abstract. This paper addresses the historical background of three Soviet-era tropes – loss of culture, loss of literacy, and loss of intergenerational and interethnic harmony – commonly used in the Russian media's discussions of the Kazakh alphabet shift from Cyrillic to Latin. I seek to prove, here, that mainstream Russian publications still maintain a deeply Soviet worldview when discussing issues of language in the former Soviet republics, relying heavily on the notion that the USSR "gave" them a number of "gifts," namely the culture, literacy, and harmony that they now perceive Kazakhstan to be losing. I will analyze each trope from both a historical and a literary perspective, beginning each sub-section by placing each trope in its Soviet linguistic context and proceeding to analyze its usage in contemporary mainstream Russian publications.

Keywords: post-Soviet, Central Asia, media studies, Kazakhstan, Soviet history, Russian media, culture, alphabet.

Introduction

Alphabet shifts are a common occurrence in Central Asia. Over the course of the past century alone, Kazakhstan has switched alphabets three times (Arabic, Latin, and Cyrillic, respectively) – with another imminent shift (to Latin) [1, 2]. Unsurprisingly, this decision has faced a variety of reactions, at home and abroad alike. Kazakhstani publications have tended to view the shift as a modernizing measure, while their Russian counterparts often view the shift with marked negativity, believing it to be a move away from the political and social order of yore where the Russian language and ethnicity were prioritized. This paper will build on previous scholars' work describing governments' motives for alphabet and language shifts in Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet re-

publics in providing a historical and literary analysis of three Soviet-era tropes used in the Russian media's coverage of the Kazakh alphabet shift, all of which suggest its adherence to a Soviet-era frame of mind – and its fear that Kazakhstan is abandoning it (increasingly relevant in the wake of the massive social and political upheavals in the post-Soviet space following Russia's invasion of Ukraine).

History of Alphabet Shift and Language in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is the most Russified post-Soviet Central Asian republic. Dave writes, for example, that Kazakhs became a (slim) majority in their own titular nation only in 1999, making up 53.4% of the population. In 1989, however, they made up only 39.7% – and in 1959, they made up "a mere 30 percent of the population, [with] the Slavic and European nationalities together forming nearly 60 percent of the total" [3, p.5]. Slavic and European nationalities emigrated to Kazakhstan en masse during the Virgin Lands campaign in the north of the country, which worked in tandem with the 1930-33 famine and the deportation of entire "ethnic groups believed to be potential collaborators of Japan and Nazi Germany" to create a multiethnic state with a Russian/Slavic plurality and a Kazakh minority [4, 5, 6, p. 244]. Unsurprisingly, Russian became the dominant language: the number of Kazakh-medium schools dwindled across the country, and Kazakh-medium courses of study in universities were severely limited [5, 6]. Socially, the stigma against speaking Kazakh publicly was high, with "Kazakhs reprimanded for speaking Kazakh in public places… and [having] to ask permission to speak it publicly" [5, p. 308].

The legacy of the Russian language, then, was hard to cast off, even in the wake of perestroika and independence. In 1988-89, for example, 52.4% of all schools in Kazakhstan were Russian-medium, with an additional 14.6% using mixed languages of instruction: even in the final days of Soviet power and during the attendant awakening of "national consciousness," Russian-medium education was dominant, although this was surely in some part due to the availability of Russian-medium materials and Russophone employees [7]. This situation has since changed, however: in 2004, Kazakh-medium schools constituted 56% of all schools in the country, with the number rising steadily since [7]. There have been numerous other efforts to promote linguistic Kazakhization, which include, for example, laws mandating a minimum amount of Kazakh media to be broadcast on television [5, 6, 8]. Nevertheless, Russian is still predominant in Kazakhstani society.

The persistence of the Kazakh Cyrillic alphabet is inextricable from the prevalence of the Russian language. While Soviet language policy mandated the role

and position of the Russian and Kazakh languages, it also mandated the alphabet in which the latter would be rendered. While Turkic peoples had used a runic script in such documents as the Orkhon, Yenisey and Talas manuscripts, which date back to periods between the fifth and seventh centuries [9], Kazakh stories, literature, songs, and poems were largely passed down orally [10]. In the 19th century, Kazakhs adopted the Arabic script [10, 11], although it lacked certain sounds unique to the language and maintained several others present in Arabic but superfluous to Kazakh.* In the early twentieth century, Ahmed Baitursynuly reformed the Kazakh Arabic script, which was taught in schools until 1930 [9, 12].

It was around this time, however, that the Arabic alphabet, reformed though it may have been, came under fire. By 1924, the Azerbaijani SSR had already adopted the Latin alphabet [13, p. 115], and the other Turkic republics (and some non-Turkic republics, such as Tajikistan) were soon to follow. At the 1926 First All-Union Turcological Congress in Baku, the Latinization became official, leading to the creation of the New Turkic Alphabet (NTA), "basically the standard Latin alphabet with a few supplementary letters and diacritics" [12, p. 102]. The Congress "acknowledge[d] the superiority of the new Turkic [Latin] alphabet in relation to the Arabic and reformed Arabic alphabets and the enormous cultural, historical, and progressive importance of the new alphabet compared to Arabic" [1, p. 136]. NTA was quickly implemented across the Turkic-speaking regions of the USSR.

The reasons for the switch to Latin were myriad, although chief among them was the notion that Kazakhstan and the other Soviet Muslim republics needed to be brought out of "backwardness." According to Martin, "latinization [sic] represented an indigenously sponsored project of cultural revolution," allowing Kazakhstan to "revolt" against the "backwardness" that Arabic symbolized, much in the style of the Bolshevik Revolution (and Lenin, to whom the benediction "Latinization is the great revolution in the east" is attributed) [14, p. 191]. Another aspect of the Arabic alphabet's "backwardness" was its alleged difficulty in learning, i.e. "the largest factor in widespread illiteracy among the 'eastern peoples'" [15, p. 74]. This idea of "Eastern backwardness" was further supported by the Arabic script's association with Islam [16]. Finally, some believed that "the Moslem [sic] world needs an international alphabet," i.e., Latin [17, p. 136]. In actuality, however, the term "international" might suggest a turn toward the USSR and Russian culture: while the word "international" originally referred to Western Europe after the Bolshevik Revolution, it had come to mean "Soviet" and even "Russian" by the 1930s, soon after the Congress [18].

* Notably, however, Kadirova argues that Kazakhs had adopted the Arabic alphabet in the tenth century, albeit not as a representation of the Kazakh language but as Chagatai, "a common language for all Turkic-speaking people of Central Asia" [9, p. 12].

There were also some logistical reasons, some more realistic than others, for the switch: Clement notes that "the script was written from right to left while numerals were written from left to right, making their simultaneous usage cumbersome" [15, p. 174], and Winner notes that "the unsuitability of the Arabic script to the Turkic languages had been stressed before the Soviet revolution by a number of educators both in the Turkic-speaking areas and in the West… "as a material of a typically Semitic structure", i.e., lacking vowels critical to Turkic grammar constructions relying on vowel harmony [17, p. 135], a deficiency that has been noted by a host of scholars [9, 19, 20, 21]. Together, these ideological and logistical reasons for the use of the Latin alphabet addressed the "central concern of explaining and overcoming eastern backwardness, to a context of Bolshevik hegemony" through an alphabet shift [14, p. 191].

This effort to help the Turkic peoples modernize, however, gave rise to fears of pan-Turkic unification, leading Stalin to switch the Kazakh alphabet yet again, this time from Latin to Cyrillic. While Latinization revolved around bringing the Turkic peoples "out of backwardness," so to speak, Cyrillization revolved around fostering a new political reality: it "was about facilitating the Central Asian peoples' learning of Russian and their assimilation to Russian culture" [12, p. 103]. Indeed, Kirkwood notes that supporters of the Latin alphabet believed that children would be more successful academically if they only had one alphabet to learn: the Russian one [22, p. 24]. The Russian language and culture replaced the "internationalism" in the pre-1930s sense of the term and became a priority for the Soviet government: "by the late 1930s, the Soviet government's position was that knowledge of [local languages] held value only insofar as it facilitated Russian's dominance… [and] Russian language and culture became increasingly represented as the most progressive and civilized, and, as such, the endpoint towards which non-Russian languages and their speakers should seek to evolve" [16, p. 125]. Per Tanayeva, "the Cyrillic script became a symbol of the commitment to the Soviet [state]: standard, modern, literate, and Russified" [2, p. 79]. In 1940, Kazakhstan switched to the Cyrillic alphabet, still in use today.

After independence, the idea of switching the Kazakh alphabet to Latin once again hung in the air, although Kazakhstan was hardly alone in this regard: Azerbaijan was, yet again, the first to switch alphabets in 1991, followed by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Moldova soon thereafter. Only in 2007 did then-president Nursultan Nazarbayev "announce a 'gradual transition' of the country to the Latin alphabet" [1, p. 138]. Both he and Tokayev, the current president, have noted that this transition is not political, and that it is, rather, part of the effort to "bring the Kazakh language to an international level," while continuously stressing importance of the Russian language [23]. Nazarbayev

has also mentioned that switching to the Latin alphabet is in the "spirit of the times," as knowing it helps to learn English, an "international language" [24].

Implementation, however, has gone on for some time. Nazarbayev announced in 2017 that the country "would complete the transition from the current Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin alphabet system by 2025" [11], although there have since been several proposed alphabets, with one as recent as January 2021 [25]. Kadirova writes that "there exist more than 100 versions of the Latin alphabet prepared by various language scholars since the beginning of the Independence period in Kazakhstan" [9, p. 57]. The timeline for full implementation of the change was originally 2025, although the government now envisions it as taking place from 2023 to 2031 [26].

Introduction to the Media and the Russian Response

Russian media's negative response to the alphabet shift is hardly without precedent. Consider, for example, Tatarstan's attempt to switch the Tatar alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin. After Tatarstan began teaching it in 2000, the Russian government outlawed it "as a threat to national security and mandated that all official languages of the Russian Federation be written in Cyrillic" [16, p. 110]. In Faller's words, Tatarstan's alphabet shift:

> "immediately sparked a vociferous negative reaction from Moscow, most apparent in disparaging press coverage… a September 1999 article published in the Moscow newspaper Izvestiya [sic] provides a quintessential example of Russian media coverage of the issue. The article's title -- 'Iazychniki: 'Iazykovaia reforma' [sic] zadumannaia vlastiami Kazani, mozhet possorit' russkikh i tatar' - is a play on words. Literally translated, it means "Heathens: the 'language reform' thought up by the authorities in Kazan may make Russians and Tatars quarrel." Used as a pun here on the Russian word for language - iazyk, "iazychnik" means both 'heathen' and 'language person,' thus implying that people who focus on language questions are barbaric. The article's byline lists Gayaz Alimov, a staff journalist who regularly reports on foreign affairs (and whose Arabic-derived Tatar name means 'Lucid Scholar') and Maksim Iusin, Izvestiya's Editor of International Affairs. Its co-authoring by an apparent Tatar and an apparent Russian both symbolizes ethnic solidarity and implies that negative reactions to latinization are not the product of Russian nationalism" [16, p. 130].

It may seem odd that the Russian media would care such a great deal about Tatarstan's alphabet – just as it does about Kazakhstan's – but Faller offers an

explanation: "historically… adopting Russian's Cyrillic alphabet as a model for the alphabets of the Soviet Union's other languages illustrates one way in which the Soviet states forced non-Russians to live with Russian linguistic and cultural hegemony" [16, p. 110]. Replacing it, then, represents a rejection thereof. Notably, the Russian language and its alphabet are so inextricably linked, that, for example, Isaev, the great theorist of Soviet alphabet policy, among others, repeatedly refers to Cyrillic as the "Russian alphabetic base [russkaia graficheskaia baza]" – not the Cyrillic one [27].

Ultimately, however, differences between individual scripts – as politicians and media sources discuss them – are not as great as many make them out to be: Alpatov sagely writes that "usually when somebody speaks about the linguistic advantages of the Latin or Cyrillic alphabet for some Turkic (or other) language, such arguments are only a formal cover for political or extra-linguistic issues… by nature, an alphabet is to a greater or lesser degree a system of conventions, and its correlation to a given language is determined by usage" [19, p. 10]. The political connotation behind alphabet shifts is fairly universal throughout the former Soviet Union (and even in Soviet satellite states, such as Mongolia): Clement says that "it is noteworthy that the desire to push back from Soviet culture was expressed by so many different peoples through the symbolism of script replacement" [15, p. 175].

The Russian media is keenly aware of the connotations surrounding alphabet shifts. Cyrillic and Cyrillization are, per Faller's argument and the *Izvestiia* article she cites, inextricable from the Russian language and the social and political movements that have accompanied its entry into such territories as Kazakhstan and Tatarstan. The Russian media's response to Kazakhstan's alphabet shift echoes its response to Tatarstan's analogous decision, albeit some twenty years later.

Methodology

In that vein, its reactions to Latinization appear to concern themselves more with territories' (e.g., Tatarstan and Kazakhstan's) rupture with the Soviet past than with the realia of Latinization itself. This article, then, will address the expression of this trope with regard to Kazakhstan's alphabet change. As Faller, Tanayeva, and others illustrate, the Russian media's broader frustration with the script shift is how it signals a departure from what Cyrillic symbolizes: the Soviet order, Russian language, and Russian hegemony. The condemnation of Kazakhstan's alphabet shift, of course, is in many ways similar to the coverage of Tatarstan twenty years ago – but Kazakhstan, unlike Tatarstan, is a sovereign state. Nonetheless, the Russian media still attacks Kazakhstan, and relies on a variety of variations on the theme (trope) of rupture with the Soviet past to do so.

The three most common "sub-tropes" within this category are loss of culture, drop in the level of education/literacy, and interethnic and intergenerational divide.[*] Some of these concerns are legitimate – but, per Alpatov's comment before, none of them truly makes one alphabet superior to another, and all of them assume that the author/reader believes in the positive legacy of the Soviet past and its Cyrillic alphabet. In each case, I will discuss the historical background of each trope and then analyze its use in two different articles from the mainstream, largely conservative Russian media (with the exception of *Eurasia Daily*, which is independent). My hope is to see the connection between the contemporary use of these tropes and their Soviet-era roots.

1. Sub-trope Analysis: Loss of culture

The Soviet idea of "culture" [*kul'tura*] includes within it the idea of *kul'turnost'* (cultured-ness), which, in translation, mean something closer to "refinedness" and "refined," respectively. The ideal Soviet citizen was supposed to be "cultured," which Boym describes as "bring[ing] a bouquet of yellow mimosas to your high school teacher on International Women's Day and a bottle of 'Red Moscow' perfume to your aunt… keep[ing] the precious hardcover editions of … Cooper, … London, …. Pushkin, … and Dumas," which begins to illustrate the weighty role of literature in Soviet "culture" [28, p. 102].

Indeed, she goes on to write that "in the nineteenth century culture is often synonymous with literature, and Russians are defined less by blood and by class than by being a unique community of readers of Russian literature" [28, p. 103]. The case of "culture" in Soviet Kazakhstan, however, concerns neither the nineteenth century nor Russians, at least not exclusively so: in the Soviet era, "culture" went beyond the 19th-century idea of literature to include the qualities of the individual who consumed it. Boym notes, then, that it was in the 1920s that discussions of "cultural revolution" "became the advocacy of kul'turnost', which "include[d] not only the new Soviet artistic canon but also manners, ways of behavior, and discerning taste in consumer goods. Culturalization is a way of translating ideology into the everyday," now especially for those who were not ethnically Russian [28, p. 105].

Such ideology, naturally, had to be adapted to the individual republics. In Kazakhstan, a largely oral society prior to its incorporation into the USSR, for example, much of this "culture" needed to be canonized, if not crafted. As Kaplan points out, "culture" covers a seemingly endless variety of topics, and

[*] This paper does not address any of the media's mentions of logistical concerns relating to the cost and duration of implementation, etc., although they are, of course, prevalent in the Russian media's discussions of the subject.

"being cultured" (i.e., *kul'turnyi*) "denot[es] the 'proper' level of cultivation in all spheres of life, from knowledge to comportment and appearance" [29, p. 6]. Like Kaplan, however, I use the term "culture" to refer "to expressions of artistic creativity, and 'national culture' to artistic products that are generated by members of the national group and/or that express national identity" [29, p.6]. These "artistic products" or "national cultures" needed to be defined by the Soviet state such that they remained a "'form' of nationhood that did not conflict with a unitary central state'" [14, p. 9-10]. For example, Kaplan cites Commissar of Enlightenment Anatoly Lunacharskii as describing national theater as follows:

> "a striving to create theater in its own language, in a style defined by the history of the people; then, a striving to rise above narrow national content and be inflamed by the fire of proletarian ideology, and, finally, not to disavow the theater of other nations but to look at its own national theater as one strand of world theatrical fabric" [29, p. 14].

In the case of Kazakhstan, then, creating "national culture" meant crafting a canon of Kazakh national literature (among other things, such as theater, music, etc.) that reflected Kazakh history and culture while enshrining Soviet ideology. Kudaibergernova references the instruments used by the Soviet regime to create this "national imagination": a (Cyrillic) vernacular, newspapers, and "vast amounts of published books" [30, p. 842]. These books constituted the canon of Soviet Kazakh national literature, often written by such individuals as Abay Kubanbayuly and Ibrai Altynsarin (who predate the Soviet era but were included in the canon), as well as Soviet-era writers such as Dzhambul Dzhabaev, Saken Seifullin, Sabit Mukanov, Gabit Musrepov, and Mukhtar Auezov, many of whom were members of the Union of Writers of Kazakhstan, the body that determined Soviet Kazakh literary culture.[*] Kudaibergenova (2017) cites an anonymous expert on Kazakh literature to describe how "the Writers' Union of Kazakhstan was formed [after the Stalinist repressions in 1937], where primarily socialist realism was used as a trend 'for such writers as Sabit Mukanov… and Gabit Musrepov… They wrote about 'Party! Plenum! Soviets!' – it was Soviet colonial literature [emphasis author's],'" perhaps in a partial reference to the hegemonically symbolic alphabet it was printed in or to the ideological content inherent to its content [30, p. 843]. McGuire, for example, discusses how Mukhtar Auezov's seminal 1942 book *Abay Zholy* (The Path of Abay) "marr[ied] the conventions of socialist realism with a literary

[*] Perhaps Dzhabaev's most "Soviet" poems included such Kazakh-language works as "Leningradites, my children!" and "At the hour when Stalin calls," later translated into Russian.

genealogy in which Abay was at once the heir of Kazakh oral literature and the forefather of Soviet Kazakh literature," helping to create a national Kazakh Soviet literary culture, as Boym describes it [31, p. 3].

Iurii Bogdanov's article "Elbasy is Switching to Latin" in *Izvestiia*, however, is not primarily about the loss of "national culture" – it concerns itself, rather, with the logistical issues of Kazakhstan's alphabet shift [32].* Indeed, its subtitle is "the decision of the former President Nazarbayev to shift from Cyrillic to Latin will have an impact on the country's budget" [32]. In it, Bogdanov interviews two pundits, both of whom believe that the negative repercussions of the shift outweigh the positive ones. Yet despite his article's focus on the logistics of the switch, Bogdanov discusses "[the shift's] negative impact on the development of the humanities, as well as the possibility of access to literary and scientific heritage" [32]. After a lengthy discussion of Kazakhstan's integration into Eurasian Economic Union, Bogdanov cites Bulat Sultanov, the director of the Institute for International and Regional Cooperation at the Kazakh-German University, in a short but separate paragraph, as saying that "during the Soviet years, a solid mass of literature was formed in Kazakhstan – and it was all translated and published in Cyrillic. All of this will be lost for future generations" [32].

Although Sultanov does not explicitly credit the USSR with creating modern Kazakh literary culture, he comes remarkably close by noting that a period of great literary creativity and formation of literary heritage (i.e. "national culture") was during the Soviet era – during which it was produced in Cyrillic. He does not, for example, refer to the period when Baitursynuly's reformed Arabic alphabet was used to print Kazakh texts or the period during which many Kazakh stories, legends, songs were orally preserved, long before the Soviet era. Bulatov's – and thus, Bogdanov's – emphasis is specifically on the creation of a printed body of national Kazakh literature in Cyrillic, which took place in the Soviet era during the post-Latin period of Russian superiority and dominance. This "solid mass of Kazakh national literature" must, then, necessarily bear the mark of Russian or Soviet hegemony in perpetuity, as Bulatov, Bogdanov, and likely the publishers of the right-wing *Izvestiia* fear.**

Kazakhstan's new Latin alphabet, then, becomes the allegorical opponent of (the Soviet era of) the development of "national culture" and attendant literary creativity. According to Bulatov, the new script destroys the accessibility

* The word "elbasy" means "head of the nation" in Kazakh and is commonly used to refer to former president Nursultan Nazarbayev.

** Discussion of *Izvestiia*'s political stance lies beyond the scope of this paper, but I must note that it was an official newspaper of the Soviet government, expressing the viewpoint not of the Party but of the government itself. Since the USSR's collapse, it has been known to be close to the government.

(and thus relevance) of the Soviet-created literary canon for posterity, as he believes either that books will either not be published in Latin or that the youth will not know Latin or Cyrillic well enough to read them, whatever alphabet they are published – or both. This, in turn, means that future generations of Kazakhs would be unable to be fully cultured or engage in their "national culture," per its Soviet definition. In this paradigm, the Cyrillic alphabet is clearly linked to Soviet hegemony, which, in turn, is inextricable from "culture," as it is consumed by young Kazakhs. In the Soviet era, "culture" would give these youth "manners, ways of behavior, and discerning taste in consumer goods," in addition to literature, per Boym, which now will disappear with the advent of the Latin alphabet [28, p. 105].

Nikita Mendikovich speaks at greater length about the impact of the alphabet shift on Kazakh "national culture" in "Hatred for the Language Leads to Bigotry: Why is Kazakhstan Forbidding Education in Russian, Which Millions of Citizens Speak?" in *Lenta.ru* [33]. The article opens by claiming that "yet another attack on the Russian language and Cyrillic is unfolding in Kazakhstan," reinforcing the inextricable relationship between the Russian language and Cyrillic alphabet discussed previously. In the following paragraph, Mendikovich quotes Askhat Aimagambetov, the Minister of Education, as saying that "education in the state language [Kazakh] should be dominant," followed by an explanation of the timeline of the alphabet shift. Within that timeline, Mendikovich writes that "the minister has promised that there will be no repressions [*repressii*] against those who wish to study in Russian" [33]. The author uses notably violent language to describe Kazakhstan's process of alphabet shift: he uses the word "attack" [*nastupleniie*] to describe the republic's departure from the Soviet past, as well as the word "repressions [*repressii*]" to describe alleged denials of Russian-language education. Interestingly, the word "repressions" is a word often used in the Soviet context – and in claiming that Kazakhstan is leaving its Soviet past behind, he is making the claim that it, in fact, becomes barbaric, engaging in the kind of behavior for which the USSR is often criticized, albeit not in this article.

In any case, Mendikovich makes it clear that Kazakhstan's "national culture" will only be corrupted by this alphabet shift and the language shift he associates with it: "in reality, Minister Aimagamembetov's motives in speaking out for the Kazakhization of schools are fairly clear and have little to do with concern for the national language or national culture" [33]. Its sub-section titled "the Russian word of Kazakhstan" [*russkoie slovo Kazakhstana*], for example, makes it clear that Kazakhstan's level of "national culture" will drop following Latinization. "The Kazakh language," Mendikovich says, "enjoys a secondary status in the public spaces of Kazakhstan. According to national libraries' sta-

tistics, only 35% of all books, 42% of newspapers, 20% of magazines are in the state language [Kazakh], while the rest is largely in Russian" [33]. He then goes on to state how most television programs are in Russian, how the Internet is Russified, and how the Kazakh language itself has become impoverished – and, in a sense, lacking "culture." He notes that "the Kazakh language has practically stopped being used in literary or academic texts," given its "use in a narrow and specific linguistic environment" [33]. Within the Soviet worldview, if the language is not being used in literary texts, the language cannot sustain "national culture," as discussed by Kaplan, Kudaibergenova, McGuire, and Martin above. The author, then, presents Russian as the superior "language of culture," so to speak, given its dominance in the sphere of the printed word. Consequently, Cyrillic must necessarily reign within it. According to Mendikovich, the "secondary status" of the Kazakh language precludes it from attaining the Russian language's prestige – meaning that the Cyrillic alphabet will remain culturally superior, even after the alphabet shift, as long as Russian remains dominant in Kazakhstan's literary and media sphere.

Indeed, the author quotes the Kazakhstani philologist Dastan El'desov immediately following this discussion as saying that "instead of the language of Abay and Auezov, we have the language of newspaper journalism [*publitsistika*] and social media, in which it is very hard to write texts on philosophical, legal, academic, and other subjects" [33]. In that one sentence, Mendikovich juxtaposes two versions of the Kazakh language: "the language of Abay and Auezov," both of whom were canonized within Soviet Kazakh literary "culture," and the "language of newspaper journalism and social media," the latter of which did not could not have existed in the Soviet era. The "language of Abay and Auezov" is rendered in Cyrillic, given that their writings were largely canonized after the second alphabet shift in 1940, while the "language of newspaper journalism and social media" is increasingly rendered in Latin.[*] The former is considered "cultured," as it represents the peak of Kazakh literary culture; the latter is not, as it cannot discuss "philosophical, legal, academic, and other subjects," representing the alleged content of the Soviet-era, Cyrillic Kazakh literary world. Mendikovich laments the degradation of a language and alphabet that, in his view, represented the peak of Kazakh literature and, consequently, "national culture."

2. Sub-trope analysis: Drop in level of education and literacy

In order to be "cultured," however, one must also be literate – and, presumably, educated. Clark has written extensively about the efforts to "mobilize

[*] This is especially true of social media, where the English language often dominates.

literate people" in the earliest years of Bolshevik power [34, p. 22]. This was a massive enterprise, much of whose work was carried out by the Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy, the scope of which is too expansive to cover here. Indeed, the results of the Soviet campaign against illiteracy were massive: Soviet historian Kumanev writes that, for example, 99.5% and 99.4% of Tajiks and Kyrgyz, respectively – he provides no data on Kazakhs – were illiterate prior to the Bolshevik Revolution [35]. One can assume that the Kazakh statistics were not far off. The Soviet alphabet theorist Isaev claims that by 1937, illiteracy had been completely eradicated in the USSR [27]. Indeed, in 2010, Kazakhstan's literacy rate was 99.782%, an achievement which, in large part, is due to the efforts of the Commission and the Soviet government [36].

As time went on, the target audience of the campaign against illiteracy adults to children, the next generation of Soviet citizens. At a 1926 congress of the ODN (the volunteer literacy society), Lunacharskii – the very same Commissar of Enlightenment who defined "national theater" above – "stressed that the illiterate person not only stood outside of politics but also stood outside of culture… [he] emphasized that basic schooling – that is, of children – was what the countryside needed to ensure that no one stood outside of politics or culture" [34, p. 68]. Literacy, then, became the foundation of culture and politics: if one was literate, one gained access to the world of culture, which, as Boym pointed out earlier, was a method of ideological transmission. But, perhaps in a more audacious claim, literacy was foundational to participation in and creation of culture – in this specific case, national literature. Kumanev writes that

> "victory over the age-old darkness of millions of workers in our country is a most important condition for the cultural revolution as a natural phenomenon in the epoch of socialism. Without the realization of universal literacy, the blossoming of Soviet culture would have been unthinkable" [35, p. 5].

Literacy, then, becomes a precondition for the "cultural revolution of Latinization" that Martin describes or the subsequent "blossoming of Soviet culture," in Kumanev's words, that took place "under Cyrillic." Such growth in the sphere of culture naturally led to a change in ideology and everyday life: Kumanev, for instance, describes literate Kazakhstan as follows: "the kolkhoz *kul'tkomissia* [cultural commission] for the Urzhar district [Urdzhaiskii raion – near the border with China] of Kazakhstan wrote 'day and night, kolkhozniks come to us to ask – give us alphabet primers, declarations, books.' Such incidences were far from one-off" [35, p. 235]. Kumanev is suggesting a fundamental change in the character of these kolkhozniks living on the outskirts of

the republic: thanks to their newly acquired literacy, they hungered for books: they hungered for culture, given that they, per Lunacharskii, "no longer stood outside of it."*

Bogdanov's very same *Izvestiia* article, "Elbasy is Switching to Cyrillic" acknowledges this Soviet "gift" of literacy, albeit not as explicitly as it did the legacy of the Soviet "gift" of "culture" to Kazakhstan. Bogdanov's other interviewee, Dmitry Aleksandrov, the head of Central Asian Studies at the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISI), says that "[the alphabet shift] is significant for society itself and especially for the younger generation. All of the [Kazakh] national literature and all of the textbooks are written in Cyrillic. Now they must re-publish everything. It is inescapable that the youth, who already reads little, will know Kazakh literature even worse" [32].

This conception of literacy is, of course, closely tied to the idea of culture itself, given that the primary aim of the Soviet literacy campaign was to create a cultured society, one which engaged in literature and art produced by Dzhabaev, Auezov, and other authors and artists in the national canon. If culture relies on literacy, then, according to Alexandrov, the youth's learning materials – textbooks, now published in Cyrillic – will have to be re-published. The younger generation – the one learning to read and write – stands at risk of "standing outside of culture" if these textbooks are of poor quality or do not teach the new alphabet properly, legitimizing Lunacharskii's focus on youth. This comes in stark contrast to Kumanev's descriptions of the Kazakh kolkhozniks in the Urjar district learning to read and write: as their level of literacy became higher, their love of and desire for culture deepened. In this case, however, Kazakhstani youth, whose level of literacy Alexandrov believes will go down as a result of the alphabet shift, will become even less attached to and participatory in a literary culture in which they allegedly already have little interest.

Alexandrov's logic is as follows: education relying on textbooks republished in Latin will cause a decrease in the youth's knowledge of national literature. It is unclear whether this is because they will not learn the new alphabet (or know the old alphabet) well enough to read – or because the number of materials published in the new alphabet will be smaller. Ultimately, Alexandrov may believe that both are true. In any case, in his view, the "gift" of Soviet-created national culture, i.e., canonized national literature published in Cyrillic, will disappear, either because youth will not learn the new alphabet well enough to read literature in it (if this literature is published in Latin at all) or because they will not be able to read great Kazakh literature published only in

* Interestingly, in Kazakh-language and Russian-language books alike, I have even seen "writing" referred to as *zhazu madenieti* (Kazakh) and *kul'tura pis'mennosti*, which translate to "writing culture," suggesting to what extent these Soviet policies have influenced the languages themselves [37].

Cyrillic. Both of these situations come in stark contrast to the idea of a cultured Soviet society, where everyone is literate and has access to the great works of literature, be they of their own national or the greater Soviet canon, even in the areas as remote as Urjar.

In this vein, one can also consider the article "Because of the Latin Alphabet an Outflow of Students from Kazakh Schools Has Begun – [Says an] Expert" in *Eurasia Daily* by an unnamed author [38]. The very title suggests the failure of the Latin alphabet to create a society literate in Kazakh – and thus, its failure to create a "cultured" Kazakh society as well. Interestingly, this article also quotes Dastan El'desov, whom Mendikovich cited in the previous section. This *Eurasia Daily* article, however, nearly immediately launches into a quote from El'desov's social media postings in which he compares Kazakhstan's alphabet shift to Uzbekistan's:*

> "… a significant segment of the [Uzbekistani] population was unable to master the Latin alphabet and continues to use the Cyrillic one; lately, Russian classes and schools have been getting bigger. Since 1993, [their] Latin alphabet has been in an unfortunate state, and sometimes, there are discussions on rejecting it. Our [Kazakh] linguists didn't create a new alphabet – they just copied the Karakalpak Latin alphabet [the language of an ethnic minority in western Uzbekistan] and added accents and digraphs. Do we [really] need to say that this [Kazakh] Latin alphabet will lead to an outflow of students to Russian schools (it already has) and will be an impediment to the learning and development of the language?" [38].

El'desov here says that Kazakhstan will follow Uzbekistan's path. Just as Uzbekistan's alphabet shift was not well planned, leading to widespread illiteracy and a subsequent preference for Russian, he believes that Kazakhstan's Latin alphabet is also subpar, now leading to an outflow of students to Russian schools and consequent lack of familiarity with the Kazakh language and alphabet. This *Eurasia Daily* article relies only on El'desov's point of view, leaving the factuality of his claim regarding the outflow of students to Russian schools uncontested. In this way, the reader is under the impression that the alphabet shift is causing widespread illiteracy in Kazakh, restricting students' access to the canon of Kazakh literary culture. Following the quotes from El'desov, the unnamed author gives a brief overview of alphabet changes in Kazakhstan. "Of course," the article says

* Uzbekistan was among the first Soviet republics to shift to Latin after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Its transition is widely considered to have been relatively unsuccessful, as both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets are widely used some thirty years after the switch.

> "very few people today are able to read what was written in Kazakh one hundred years ago in Arabic script or in Latin. A layer of culture was lost. And now, the Kazakh language is switching to another – fourth – version of the alphabet" [38].

Interestingly, the article admits that there was a loss of "literary culture" following the implementation of the Soviet government-mandated shifts from Arabic to Latin or Latin to Cyrillic, without explicitly mentioning that the latter "loss of culture" stemmed from the Soviet-mandated shift to Cyrillic. In this way, Eurasia Daily protects the Cyrillic alphabet from criticism, perhaps even suggesting that whatever cultural loss came from prior alphabet shifts was rectified by the great Soviet-era output of "culture" in Cyrillic.

Further, the inclusion of this background information suggests that a loss of Kazakh culture will happen again following the shift from Cyrillic to Latin, much like Bogdanov and Mendikovich suggested in section one. However, *Eurasia Daily*'s author does this while reminding the reader that "because of the Latin alphabet, an outflow of students from Kazakh schools has begun" [38]. As a result, even in the unlikely event that "national culture" is restored, as it was in the Soviet era, according to those like Bogdanov, few individuals would be able to read it, leading to the creation of a largely illiterate population with no access to its national literature or, subsequently, culture.

3. Sub-trope analysis: Interethnic and intergenerational divides

Besides the youth, there are two other societal groups, who, according to Izvestiia columnist El'nar Bainazarov, will be heavily affected – even isolated – by the alphabet shift: non-Kazakhs and the older generation. The Soviet government touted Russian as the "second mother tongue" of the whole Soviet populace during Khrushchev's tenure and the "common language of all Soviet citizens" during Brezhnev's, as well as calling it the "language of interethnic communication." The obvious advantage, of course, is that all citizens would be able to communicate with each other [39]. This transformation in attitudes toward the Russian language over time was equally influenced by growing policies of Russification: Kirkwood, for example, notes that "Western authorities are inclined to argue that Soviet policy represents a major departure from Lenin's original scheme [of encouraging the development of national languages] and owes much more to Stalin and Khrushchev... There is general agreement, however, that the [as of 1989] current aim of the Soviet authorities is to promote a particular kind of bilingualism among its citizens, namely mother tongue plus Russian" [40, p. 18].

At the landmark 1979 Conference on "Russian – the Language of Friendship and Cooperation of the Peoples of the USSR," S. Shermukhamedov, the Minister of Enlightenment of the Uzbek SSR, calls the Russian language "the language of interethnic communication, the language of the great Russian people, the language of the genius, Lenin'" [41, p. 127]. This quote suggests that Russian's status as "the language of interethnic communication" presupposes its "greatness," given that the two epithets are equated within the given citation. Shermukhamedov (1979) adds that

> "care for the Russian language … is also care, as the great Lenin said, for every national language, care for the development of the material and spiritual potential of every nation, nationality, each union and autonomous republic, and each economic region in the country both individually and as a whole. This is care for the peace, friendship and prosperity of the peoples of our homeland" [41, p. 127].

In the Soviet paradigm, then, Russian binds people of all ages and nationalities together into one Soviet people, ostensibly a "cultured" one, ensuring the success of national languages, and, in doing so, promotes the success of national cultures (and literacy) as well. If we accept Faller's paradigm that the Cyrillic alphabet is integrally linked to the Russian language, it then becomes the "mother alphabet of all Soviet citizens" and the "alphabet of interethnic communication," too. Isaev, for example, writes that, after late-1930s-era legislation requiring the instruction of the Russian language in non-Russian schools, shortly after which Cyrillic became the alphabet of nearly all non-Russian languages, "Soviet ethnic groups needed time in order to realize and feel the completely new content and meaning of the Russian language and Russian alphabet as a method of communication with the older brother [a euphemism for Russian nationality] and in the unified socialist family of equal peoples" [27, p. 261]. Cyrillic clearly becomes both a unifier of all peoples in the USSR, as well as a mark of reverence for the Russian language, people, and culture.

But with the fall of the USSR, Russian stopped being a "common language"– and Cyrillic a common alphabet, especially in countries which immediately switched to Latin, such as Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. Kazakhstan, however, maintained both Russian as an official language and Cyrillic as the official alphabet of the Kazakh language, meaning that Russian still could be considered the "common language" of its citizenry and Cyrillic its unifying alphabet. But Nazarbayev said that "the shift to Latin is not a whim, it's [in] the spirit of the times. When I talk about an employable government, I am referring to employable citizens. You need to know the international lan-

guage – English – since all progressive things rely on it" [24]. Just as the USSR implemented Cyrillic to facilitate the learning of Russian, Kazakhstan is now implementing Latin to facilitate the learning of English, signifying its change in priorities and alignment.

Consequently, once Cyrillic is removed as the alphabet of one of the two national languages, it can no longer unify the populace – and, by extension, neither can the Russian language. This concerns many non-Kazakhs, many of whom now believe that they will not be able to learn Kazakh with the new and unfamiliar alphabet.[*] Similarly, journalist El'dar Bainazarov claims that the older generation, largely considered "too old" to learn a new alphabet (and having spent much, if not most, of their lives in the Soviet system), will not be able to adapt to Kazakhstan's script shift. Such beliefs clearly indicate a fear of departing from the Soviet past, where everyone spoke – or at least knew – the same language and used the same alphabet.

Bainazarov clearly expresses these concerns in his article "In Alphabetical Order [literary translation – the original title is *V bukvar'nom smysle*]: The Shift to Latin Will Be Delayed" in *Izvestiia* [42]. Just before quoting an unnamed source from the Kazakhstani government, Bainazarov adds commentary that "teaching the Latin alphabet to the older generation of Kazakhstanis will be exceptionally difficult, and the process may take ten years longer than planned" [42]. Then, he goes on to quote his anonymous source as saying that "even though people studied German and the Latin alphabet in Soviet schools, the overwhelming majority of the population over 65 years of age does not know the Latin alphabet at the necessary level" – and that, on a more personal note, his own parents "worry about how they are going to live in a world without Cyrillic" [42].

This makes sense: even if they learned German in school, they lived in a world that was Cyrillic-dominant. The unnamed source's fear about how his parents "worry about… a world without Cyrillic" is equally telling: in the Soviet paradigm that they ostensibly grew up with and learned German in, a world without Cyrillic "stood outside of politics and culture," in Lunacharskii's words. The idea that they might not be able to consume their own national culture or take part in nation goings-on is a frightening one indeed.

Bainazarov goes on to quote a young Kazakh-speaking woman named Zhanar who notes that her parents and grandparents find the new alphabet interesting and "are learning the Kazakh Latin alphabet like some kind of new language" [42]. In their minds, perhaps, the Kazakh Latin alphabet is a kind of new language, one stripped of the connotations that it has borne for about a century. Zhanar goes on to say that

[*] Notably, Bainazarov ignores the fact that many, if not most, non-Kazakhs do not speak Kazakh, meaning that the alphabet in which it is written should hardly affect them.

> "my grandmother still remembers how, when she was a child, her mother and father would write using Arabic script… but if they need to deal with serious documents, i.e., paying utility bills or taking out a loan in a bank, I think they will have serious problems" [42].

Indeed, within the paradigm that Bainazarov creates for his reader, a memory of Arabic script is just that – a memory. Zhanar's grandmother herself never knew how to write in Arabic because she was a product of the Soviet system, knowledge of whose lingua franca and "alphabet franca," so to speak, allowed her to accomplish nearly any task. It is important to note that Bainazarov earlier quotes Zhanar as saying that her family is from Shymkent, a largely Kazakh-speaking city in the south of the country [42]. Not knowing the new Latin alphabet make elderly individuals' daily Kazakh-language routines more complicated, in contrast to the way that they were able to get alone with ease in a Cyrillic-based Kazakh alphabet, according to Bainazarov. This would be a significant issue in an area whose population speaks little Russian in the first place.

Bainazarov's article goes on to discuss the issue of interethnic divide as well, under the sub-heading "Russians, don't fear" (*Russkiie, ne boites'*) [42]. Bainazarov's interviewee is a computer programmer named Oleg, who is never labeled as an ethnic Russian, although there is enough evidence in the text to support this assumption: his name is Oleg (a name used often though not exclusively by ethnic Russians); he lives in Pavlodar, a heavily ethnically Russian and Russophonic city in the north; and Bainazarov notes that "his parents came to the republic from the neighboring Omsk oblast [in Russia] in order to till the Virgin Lands [*podnimat' tselinu*] and decided to stay" [42]. In this way, Russian-speaking Oleg from the north is cast as the opposite of Zhanar, who is Kazakh-speaking and from the south.

Nevertheless, Oleg also expresses that his elderly (presumably ethnically Russian) parents, like Zhanar's grandparents, fear the alphabet shift, suggesting the universality of this apprehension. He says that "[his] mother is thinking about moving back to Tiukalinsk, which is near Omsk… the older generation associates the [alphabet] shift with a break from Russia, from the Russian world. They are afraid that there will be oppression of Russian culture following the Latin alphabet" [42]. Unlike Zhanar's grandparents, Oleg's parents do not fear the logistical barrier that the new Latin alphabet presents; instead, they fear its symbolism. They grew up in the Soviet era, hence their having come to Kazakhstan to "till the Virgin Lands." When they came to Kazakhstan, there was no need for them to learn Kazakh, given that Russian functioned as the "language of interethnic communication" – and, by Shermukhamedov's formulation – the "language of the great Russian people" (ostensibly the language of

their own "great people"). Further, the Russian language was associated with the Cyrillic alphabet, to which many "national" languages were transferred in order to facilitate the learning of Russian.

Bainazarov here is implicitly suggesting a connection between these two associated worldviews: when ethnic Russians (especially elderly ones) see the Cyrillic alphabet disappearing, they see the Russian language disappearing – and if the Russian language is disappearing, so, too, must be the reverence toward the "great Russian people," for decades considered the "older brother" of other nationalities, as Isaev mentions.[*] This could also be considered, per Oleg's quote, an exit from the "Russian world," a trope regarding the world of the Russian culture and language, which Eisenberg discusses at length with relation to the Kazakh alphabet shift [43].

Oleg notes that he himself does not anticipate problems with the new Latin alphabet, given that "we speak at home, text on messaging apps, read the news – completely in Russian" [42]. Bainazarov goes on to quote the Deputy Director of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Roman Vasilenko, as saying that "Russian has an official status; this is fixed in the Constitution" and that "our goal is for 95% of the population to be proficient in Kazakh by 2025, for an analogous percentage to be proficient in Russian, and for at least 20% to be proficient in English… there is nothing to worry about" [42]. But for much of the population, i.e., the group which grew up believing that the Russian language was spoken everywhere and that it unified everyone in their (former) country, the notion that there is "nothing to worry about" disrupts decades of Soviet beliefs to the contrary, bringing fears of social upheaval and a change in the ethno-social order.

Alekseeva's article "A Barrier Between Generations: How the Kazakh Alphabet Shift Will Turn Out for Kazakh Society" in *RT* also aligns itself with the belief that the alphabet shift will lead to divides in a population previously united the (Russian) "language of interethnic communication" [24]. Nevertheless, Alekseeva makes noticeable strides to emphasize that the Kazakhstani government has made clear that the Russian language's status in the country will not be affected by the alphabet shift, quoting several of Nazarbayev's speeches on the topic. Immediately following Nazarbayev's quotes, Alekseeva switches to quoting and, in some cases, paraphrasing an interview with Andrei Grozin, the director of the Central Asia section at the Institute for CIS Countries. She paraphrases his opinion to say that "the changes [in the alphabet] will partially affect the Russian-speaking population – after all, all schoolchildren will now need to learn the state language [Kazakh] with a new alphabet" [24]. But im-

[*] This is also a commonly used trope in the Russian media's coverage of the Kazakh alphabet shift, as it covered by Eisenberg [43].

mediately afterward, she quotes Grozin's exact words to qualify his point: "it's true that the level of Kazakh language instruction in the country was not high before, and ethnic Russians don't know it very well. So for Russian-speaking citizens of Kazakhstan, in reality, any changes won't be very noticeable" [24]. In this way, Alekseeva concedes a point that Bainazarov did not explicitly make: the alphabet shift may not cause an interethnic divide for some members of the population, because Russian remains the "language of interethnic communication" insofar as it is the only language that they speak. (He does, however, allude to this in his discussion of Oleg.)

Nevertheless, Alekseeva does quote Grozin as saying that this will cause an inter-generational divide: "the experience of other countries has shown that not only are the elderly unable to learn a new alphabet, but also people aged 40-50… as a result, their collected knowledge will remain with them [i.e., and not be transmitted beyond them]" [24]. This is strikingly similar to the idea of the disappearance of "national culture" as a result of the alphabet shift in the first section; here, though, the elderly and middle-aged generations become bearers of the disappearing Cyrillically-rendered "national culture."

This comment is naturally followed by the final paragraph, which makes an explicit reference to the destruction of national literary "culture": "this is about a rejection of the Soviet past. It's no secret that most of the literature of the Central Asian republics is related to the Cyrillic period" [24]. But juxtaposed immediately after the discussion of inter-generational divide, the "rejection of the Soviet past" and of "literature of the Cyrillic period" takes on a new meaning: it refers to the rejection of the elderly generation, educated in the Soviet era and in the Soviet canon of Kazakh literature, and the knowledge and experiences that they carry with them and, for the most part, will not be able to transmit into Latin for the coming generations.

Conclusion

The three tropes discussed in this work rely on the idea of a rupture with the Soviet past, with its literature, system of education, culture, interethnic harmony, and orientation toward the Russian language and culture. And Russia – a sovereign nation – seems distraught by this purported loss of culture in Kazakhstan, another sovereign nation. Kazakhstan, closely economically and politically tied to Russia, has been been under its control, in multiple forms, for over a century – and is now abandoning one of its most visible outward symbols of its Soviet experience. Consequently, the Russian media relies on tropes that extol the "gifts" of the Soviet era to Kazakhstan: the USSR gave the Kazakh people culture, literacy, and unity (both generationally and ethnically). This is now a

worldview rooted in upholding conceptions of the Soviet past to which Kazakhstan is expected to conform long after the USSR's collapse. Sebba's words on Tatarstan's language shift are just as applicable to Kazakhstan's:

> "far from being 'neutral technologies,' scripts have symbolic power which transcends language itself. We can see this in nearly every dispute over alphabets, orthography or spelling reform. Orthographies readily become symbolic of national or group identity… In the case of the Tatar alphabet changes, the two systems have come to stand in symbolic opposition to one another" [12, p. 119].

Indeed, Cyrillic represents the Soviet past, while Latin represents the future, whatever it may hold. And the Soviet past can lay claim, as the authors discussed in this work do, to a particular positive legacy, as many of the journalists in the Russian media aim to demonstrate. My analysis of the Russian media in this work is hardly comprehensive, but it should give the reader an idea of the ideas surrounding the Russian media's general rejection of Kazakhstan's alphabet shift. The Russian media fundamentally posits that Kazakhstan is leaving its Soviet past behind, even if doing so entails a risk to its literacy, culture, and unit – an ever-greater possibility following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and disruption of the post-Soviet order.

According to such authors as Bainazarov and Mendikovich, in rejecting the Cyrillic alphabet, Kazakhstan appears to suggest that the "negatives" outweigh the "positives" – and that in order to truly assert independence from Russia, it believes it must create a new society: one that is literate, unified, and cultured according to a new – Latin – alphabetical paradigm. A frightening notion for Russia and its media indeed.

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Леора Айзенберг

Мәдени шок: қазақ әліпбиінің өзгерісіне Ресей БАҚ-тарының кеңестік жауабы

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада қазақ әліпбиін кириллицадан латынға көшіру туралы ресейлік БАҚ-та жиі айтылып жүрген кеңестік дәуірдегі үш әдеби құралдың – мәдениеттің, сауаттылықтың жоғалуы және ұрпақаралық және ұлтаралық келісімнің – тарихи қайнар көздері қарастырылады. Мен ресейлік танымал басылымдар бұрынғы Одақтас республикалардағы тіл мәселесін талқылағанда әлі күнге дейін кеңестік көзқарасты сақтап, КСРО оларға мәдениет, сауаттылық, келісім «берді» деген ұғымға қатты сүйеніп отыр деп дәлелдеуге тырысамын. Мен әрбір әдеби құралды тарихи және әдеби тұрғыдан талдап, оның кеңестік лингвистикалық контекстіне тоқталып, оның қазіргі ресейлік басылымдарда қолданылуын талдаймын.

Түйін сөздер*:* посткеңестік, Орталық Азия, БАҚ, Қазақстан, КСРО тарихы, Ресей БАҚ, мәдениет, әліпби.

Леора Айзенберг

Культурный шок: советский ответ российским СМИ на смену казахского алфавита

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются исторические источники трех литературных приемов советской эпохи – утрата культуры, грамотности и межпоколенческого и межэтнического согласия, которые часто используются в обсуждениях в российских СМИ о переходе казахского алфавита с кириллицы на латиницу. Я пытаюсь доказать, что популярные российские издания по-прежнему сохраняют советское мировоззрение при обсуждении языковых проблем в бывших советских республиках, в значительной степени полагаясь на представление о том, что СССР «преподнес» им культуру , грамотность и гармонию. Я проанализирую каждый прием как с исторической, так и с литературной точки зрения, освещая его советский лингвистический контекст и анализируя его использование в современных российских публикациях.

Ключевые слова: постсоветское, Центральная Азия, медиа, Казахстан, история СССР, медиа России, культура, алфавит.