"When the President Says 'Democracy'": Examining the Relationship Between Presidential Discourse and Democritizatsiia in Kazakhstan

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“WHEN THE PRESIDENT SAYS ‘DEMOCRACY’”:
EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESIDENTIAL DISCOURSE AND
DEMOCRATIZATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

A Thesis
Presented to
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Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Elena V. Pak
May 2005
“WHEN THE PRESIDENT SAYS ‘DEMOCRACY’”:
EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRESIDENTIAL DISCOURSE
AND DEMOCRATIZATSIIA IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Many expected that the fall of Soviet communism would result in the democratization of its successor states. The majority of the post-Soviet republics announced democracy as their new way of development; however, very few have evolved into democratization processes. Kazakhstan’s democratization has resulted in the formation of authoritative presidentialism, though with limited liberalization (Cummings, 2002, p. 9). Kazakhstan has neither established the anomalous democracy as its most influential neighbor in Eastern Europe, Russia, nor has become the extreme sultanism like its Central Asian fellow, Turkmenistan. According to Cummings (2002), Kazakhstan has shaped “a hybrid, transitional regime of part-authoritarianism” (p. 5). Although the political system has not proved to be democratic, Kazakhstan underwent through distinctive changes of “transitional regime.”

Scholars have applied various approaches to study a transition of post-communist states. Analyzing political speeches and discourse, linguists and rhetoricians have contributed in a general field of political science, but they have practically disregarded post-Soviet area. Scholars in political science have addressed democratizatsiia in Central Asia from different angles (Cummings, 2002; Dawisha & Parrott, 1997a; Olcott, 1995). The traditional perspective, which examines the fairness of presidential and political
elections, the government-media relationships, and human rights, has received their closest attention (Dawisha & Parrott, 1997a). Olcott (1995; 1997) has thoroughly observed the political transition in Kazakhstan specifically by providing a full overview of the political and social structure of the republic.

Scholars have never studied democratizatsiia in Central Asia from communication lenses. Specifically, no study on the presidential discourses and their connection with the democratization process in Central Asia exists so far. This study examines the relationship between democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan and the political discourse of its president, Nürsultan Nazarbaev. I consider the dynamic of presidential discourse development as an indicator of transitional changes in the political regime of Kazakhstan.

This work addresses the questions, what is the relationship between presidential discourse and democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan? This thesis asks: What role does presidential discourse play in the republic's transition from the Soviet totalitarian system? Does the discourse of Nazarbaev reveal the real political situation of the country? From the standpoint of the discourse, is Kazakhstan moving toward or away from democracy? I discuss these issues through content analysis of Nazarbaev’s speeches from 1984 to present. The thesis seeks to discover whether the governmental discourse of rule has changed over decades of democratizatsiia since the independence. The study of the presidential discourse complements the previous research on democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan and helps in better understanding the political situation of this country.
“Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

~ Winston Churchill

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Soviet Union encouraged many people to believe that its successor states would select the path of democratization. However, time has shown that this prediction was preliminary and mainly misleading (Cummings, 2002). Although the majority of the Soviet republics declared democracy as their new way of development, very few of them actually have evolved in democratization. Only Russia, Moldova, and Ukraine have been engaged into the democratization process (Roeder, 2003, p. 18). The recent events in Georgia and Ukraine indicate the significant shifts in the political lives of these states toward democracy. However, Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan remain far from a transformation from dictatorship into democracy (See Chapter II). Central Asia, the region with traditionally Muslim-nomadic background and Soviet history, has formed the old-fashioned autocratic style of political leadership under the new label of democratizatsiia. Similar to other Central Asian states, the Kazakhstani initial course toward democracy has resulted in the formation of authoritative presidentialism, although with limited liberalization (Cummings, 2002, p. 9). Kazakhstan, the largest state in Central Asia and
the second largest republic in the former Soviet Union, provides a fascinating study of post-Soviet political environment. The country occupies the vast territory between Eastern Europe and Central Asia, reflecting its neighbors’ political and economical changes as well as generating its own shifts in the political regime. Kazakhstan has neither grown to establish the anomalous democracy as its biggest neighbor, Russia, nor to become the extreme sultanism like its Central Asian fellow, Turkmenistan. According to Cummings (2002), Kazakhstan has created “a hybrid, transitional regime of part-authoritarianism” (p. 5). Although the political system has not been defined as democratic, “transitional regime” indicates changes, which continue to take place in Kazakhstan.

Scholars have used various perspectives to study democratization in post-communist states, starting from evaluation of economic and political reforms to analysis of social behaviors of citizens. According to Lee (2001), most theories on democratization have either a macro-factorial structural approach, which focuses on social-economic factors, or a micro-oriented individual approach, with a focus on individuals and their roles in politics. Hanson (2003) emphasizes the importance of the detailed and institutionalized approach to analyze democratization processes in the post-Soviet region. Dawisha (1997) and Parrott (1997) examine the extent to which democratization has developed in the post-Soviet countries through a detailed analysis of political participation and competitive elections.

Linguists and rhetoricians have contributed in the field of political research, analyzing language styles and examining political texts (Dallmayr, 1984; Lasswell et al., 1965). These scholars began to recognize the important role of discourse in politics a
relatively long time ago. Discourse constructs the relationships between governors and citizens; it reflects and affects the political reality (Anderson, 2003). Appreciating the significance of discourse, scholars seek to find fresh ideas in studying democracy from a non-traditional angle. However, very few studies exist on political discourse in the transitional democracies and non-democracies of the former Soviet Union. Anderson (2003) discusses the fact that discourse both impacts and reflects the political reality and offers the original research on political communication in Russia. Anderson (2003) argues that discourse explains why dictatorship falls and democracy appears (p. 97). Anderson (2003) proposes the discursive theory of democratization that places discourse at the center of political investigation of nations in transition. According to the discursive theory, linguistic markers define a governmental language as democratic or non-democratic. Political discourse indicates the course of transitional regimes toward or away from democracy (Anderson, 2003).

Very few scholars in political science have analyzed transitional nations of Central Asia (Cummings, 2002; Dawisha, 1997; Olcott, 1995b; Parrott, 1999). These researchers have mostly addressed democratization in Central Asia from traditional perspectives. The usual approach suggests examination of the fairness of presidential and political elections, the government-media relationships, and human rights. This method has received the scholars' closest attention (Dawisha, 1997; Parrott, 1997). Even fewer studies have thoroughly observed the political transition in Kazakhstan and Olcott's (1995a, 1995b, 1997) work deserves the most careful consideration. Olcott (1995b; 1997) provides a full overview of the political and social structure of the republic. Olcott (1997) has applied both macro and micro analysis. In addition to the detailed speculation of the
political system of the republic in general, such as the overview of political parties, institutions, and law, Olcott (1995b; 1997) observes Kazakhstan within its socio-cultural background, and highlights the history of the formation of Kazakh ethnicity.

Communication scholars have not reported studies of democratization in Central Asia. Specifically, no study on a presidential discourse and its connection with the democratization process in Central Asia exists so far. This thesis examines the correlation between the transitional processes in Kazakhstan and the political discourse of its president, Nursultan Nazarbaev. I consider the governmental language as an indicator of transitional changes in the political regime of Kazakhstan. This study addresses the question, what is the relationship between presidential discourse and democratization in Kazakhstan? This thesis asks: What role does presidential discourse play in the republic’s transition from the Soviet totalitarian system? Does the discourse of Nazarbaev reveal the real political situation of the country? From the standpoint of the discourse, is Kazakhstan moving toward or away from democracy? I discuss these questions through the analysis of presidential speeches since 1984. This thesis seeks to discover whether the political discourse of rule has changed over decades of democratization from 1989 to present. Anderson (2003) argues that if the discourse of politicians has changed toward more democratic, the country is moving toward democracy and vice versa. The present research seeks to find out if Anderson’s argument is applicable in the case of Kazakhstan. The present work does not intend to determine whether Kazakhstan is a democratic or non-democratic state. The previous studies have already defined the country as absolutely non-democratic (Cummings, 2002; Roeder, 2003; Dawisha & Parrott, 1997a). The current research looks for evidence of the
relationship between presidential discourse and political regime in Kazakhstan. The thesis seeks to find out whether the governmental discourse determines the overall direction of the republic’s political transition, whether Kazakhstan is moving away from dictatorship totally or just transforming into another form of totalitarianism. This research seeks to discover if the discourse has changed or remained practically the same since the dissolution of the USSR.

The study of presidential discourse complements the previous research on democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan and helps in better understanding the political situation of the country. This thesis considers the presidential discourse of Nursultan Nazarbaev in its relevance to the political transition of Kazakhstan since the formation of the state to present. The concept of iconic distancing, which provides a foundation for Anderson’s (1996, 2003) studies, serves as a theoretical framework for the current research. The linguistic markers identify the shifts in the political language and serve as a ground for new explanation of the political environment in Kazakhstan.

This thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter II consists of two sections. The first half of the chapter introduces to the readers the historical, political, and economical background of Kazakhstan. This part conceptualizes the terms of “democracy,” “democratization,” and “democratizatsiia.” The section determines indicators of democratic consolidation and projects them on the current political situation of Kazakhstan. This section also reviews the rise of Nazarbaev as a politician and presents the chronicle of Nazarbaev’s presidency. The second half of Chapter II discusses correlation between language and politics. This section defines discourse and explains how political discourse exposes governmental policies, revealing democratic or
undemocratic essence of the ruling elites. The chapter discusses Anderson’s discursive theory of democratization, which serves as a methodology for the present study. Finally, this section explains the concept of iconic distancing, a linguistic indicator of presidential speeches, that characterizes a change or immovability of the presidential discourse and identify the political position of the state from the communication perspective.

Chapter III describes the method and procedures of this research. First, this section explains how the time framework of the selected speeches was determined and how samples were selected. Next, the chapter explains Anderson’s model for the present study. This part also explains how the test’s reliability and validity were established.

Chapter IV presents the research findings along with a discussion of these results. This section explains how obtained results can shed light on the transitional processes in Kazakhstan. This section discusses the study’s implications and further research.

In conclusion, Chapter V revisits the thesis research question, methodology, and findings, and makes recommendations for the future research on this topic and suggests how the present study can be extended, acknowledging the importance of the political discourse in studying countries in transitions.
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

*Conceptualizing Democracy and Democratization*

The literature provides little agreement on a definition of democracy. Schumpeter (1947) offers one of the classical “minimalist” definitions of democracy as a system “in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (p. 269). Dahl (1971) considers a political regime as democratic if it is completely responsible to all citizens (p. 2). Dahl (1998) provides five standard criteria for a democratic process: 1) effective participation; 2) equality in voting; 3) gaining enlighten understanding; 4) exercising final control over the agenda; and 5) inclusion of adults (p. 38). Similar to the idea of communism, Dahl’s concept of democracy is essentially idealized and utopian because his definition of democracy includes all citizens. Parrott (1997) offers a more practical definition of democracy as “a political system in which the formal and actual leaders of the government are chosen within regular intervals through elections based on a comprehensive adult franchise with equally weighted voting, multiple candidacies, secret balloting, and other procedures, such as freedom of the press and assembly, that ensure real opportunities for electoral competition” (p. 4).

Even if one agrees to define democracy with set terms and clear characteristics, the same features do not apply to classify democratization (Whitehead, 2002). Whitehead
(2002) characterizes democratization as “a complex, long-term, dynamic, and open-ended process,” connecting complexity and durability with transition from the previous undemocratic regime, dynamism with rapid changes and open-endedness with broad understanding of democracy in general (p. 27). Linz and Stepan (1996) argue that democratic transitions may begin, but may never end regardless of the fall of the prior totalitarian system (p. 4). Dawisha (1997) offers several widely accepted indicators of democracies in transition, including civil liberties and political rights, fairness of elections, and extent of access to vote or compete for votes (p. 41). These markers help to identify the extent of democracy in a country at a specific period of time. According to Parrott (1997), scholars tend to distinguish elections as the most common criterion to classify a country as democratic or undemocratic.

Dawisha (1997) recognizes political rights and civil liberties as important indicators of democratic transition, “which must be present in order for a country to be classified as democratic” (p. 41). While definitely useful in measuring democracy as a stable or durable political system, these signs fail to grasp the dynamics of democratic changes or democratization. All democracies constantly move toward or away from more democracy. Every action and event in the political life of a country can be considered as a step forward or back from democracy. For instance, women’s gaining the right to vote moved the United States toward democracy while, on other hand, prohibiting citizenship to Asian Americans moved the country a step back from democracy (Anderson, n.d.).

Acknowledging the lively nature of democracy, scholars become uncertain on drawing a line between democracy and non-democracy. Confusion arises particularly during a country’s transitional phase from a totalitarian regime to a democratic polity. A country
does not turn into a democratic system right away, and it takes time to awaken its democratization process.

Dawisha (1997) focuses on democratic consolidation as a means to evaluate a political regime:

There are at least four distinct conceptual aspects of democratic consolidation, each of which could be observed by various measures: the two-turnover test, low public support for anti-system parties or groups, high public commitment to the fundamental values and procedural norms of democratic politics, and elite consensus about the desirability of institutionalizing and legitimizing democratic norms and values (Dawisha, 1997, pp. 43-44).

In proposing these four aspects, Dawisha (1997) denies democracy measurement from a single approach. The “two-turnover test” requires replacement at the second round of elections of the first winner (Dawisha, 1997, p. 43). However, this instrument does not work in all cases. This test fails, for example, in case of Tajikistan. The Tajik opposition party threw down the totalitarian power, and won the second elections. However, the emerged opposition has not turned the republic into a democratic state or less totalitarian. The new elections resulted from the tragic civil war and the new government established even more tyrannical than dictatorship during the Communistic times (Cummings, 2002).

Democratization occurs during transition toward democracy when the first signs of democracy emerge after the previous regime falls (Dawisha, 1997, p. 42). Democratization begins “when the first set of free and fair elections for national-level office takes place” (Dawisha, 1997, p. 42). When Gorbachev introduced the term
democratization (democratizatsiia) to the big screen of the Soviet politics; he essentially misled the Soviet people about the concept of democratization (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Gorbachev’s frequent use of the term democratizatsiia along with launching of perestroika and glasnost (reconstruction and freedom of speech) made no distinction between liberalization and democratization, often equating the two terms (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 378). However, a striking difference marks the two processes. Democratization requires free and fair election, while liberalization does not limit the elite from controlling the election procedure and results (Lee, 2001, p. 88). According to Qadir, Clapham and Gills (1993), political liberalization represents a process of political change controlled from the top, while democratization involves radical reforms. Democratization involves liberalization but represents “a wider and more specifically political concept” (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Since the ruling elite do almost everything to sustain its power, liberalization does not always lead to democratization. For the clarity of this research, I employ the term democratizatsiia to refer to the transitional era of Kazakhstan since the Soviet Union’s collapse.

In Kazakhstan, as in other Soviet republics, democratizatsiia began at the end of 1988 with Russian President Gorbachev’s new course toward liberalization. However, currently political dynamics appear frozen with democratization overly protracted. According to Hanson (2003), Central Asian countries have not conducted radical democratic reforms and have proven more despotic than democratic (pp. 142-143). Based on Linz and Stepan’s (1996) definition of non-democratic regimes, Kazakhstan falls into a category of “liberalized states” and has never engaged in democratization (Cummings, 2002). Despite some democratization reforms, the political regime of Kazakhstan has
been continuously defined as autocratic (Roeder, 2003, p. 16). Democratization in Kazakhstan exemplifies many of the problems that plague the process; it seems a clear model for democratization difficulties. Kazakhstan accommodates well with countries that Carothers (1998) described as places where the leader's rule becomes a balancing act in which they enforce enough repression to keep the opposition weak and retain their own control while adhering to enough democratic formalities, including regular elections, to gain international legitimacy. Olcott (1995b; 1997) analyzes the factors that have shaped Kazakh-Russian ethnical and political relationships since the first intrusion of Imperial Russia in Kazakh steppes. The researcher assumes multi-ethnicity as a primary obstacle to democratization. The titular mono-ethnicity of the ruling elite initially moves Kazakhstan away from the democratic course. Lukin (1999) includes Kazakhstan in the list of newly emerged dictatorships and places it on the same level with the Philippines, Algeria, Tajikistan, Georgia, Armenia, Croatia, and Bosnia (p. 108). Roeder (2003) also excludes Kazakhstan from even "anomalous democracies," which refers to Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova (p. 18). Roeder (2003) relates the political regime of Kazakhstan to a distinctive form of autocracy, in which political power belongs to a limited circle of individuals – an elite – with citizens consistently excluded from the electorate (pp. 14-15).

A Birth of Independent Kazakhstan

Historical and cultural background. Insufficiency of modern documents results in little consensus about the Kazakhs’ origin. The documented chronicle on the formation of the Kazakh nation primarily comes from the eighteenth-century records, when imperial Russia conquered the area (Olcott, 1995a, p. 3). The native Kazakhs have ethnical roots
from Mongol and Turkic nomadic tribes who migrated into the region in the thirteenth century (CIA, The World Factbook). Scholars agree that the Kazakh nation was formed in the mid-fifteenth century by Janibek and Kirai, sons of Burak Khan of the White Horde of the Mongol Empire. The brothers escaped from the rule of Abul Khair, the khan (tsar) of the Uzbeks, and established their own khanate (empire), occupying the vast territory in the heart of the contemporary Central Asia (Olcott, 1995a). Around the sixteenth century, the Kazakh khanate consisted of three zhuз (hordes), the Great Zhuz, the Middle Zhuz, and the Small Zhuz formed by consanguinity and led by three brothers, according to legends. The geographical location of the khanate and for the military-protection purposes offers explanation for this tripartite division of the Kazakhs (Olcott, 1995a). Surprisingly, the historical tri-zhuз model was informally reproduced, to some extent, in the post-soviet political organization of Kazakhstan (Olcott, 1997, p. 202). The individuals’ pride of belonging to a certain zhuz still exists in the contemporary native Kazakhs and continues to play a tacit, but distinct role in the matters of power.

The Kazakhs led a pastoral-nomadic life-style. Depending almost fully on natural conditions, they migrated four or five times a year from one pasture to another. “To be a Kazakh was to be a nomad, as the Kazakh language suggests” (Olcott, 1995a, p. 18). Several theories give possible versions of the origin of the term Kazakh, one of which suggests that it comes from the Turkish verb qaz (to wander). Another version is that it originates from the Mongol word khasaq (a wheeled cart that Kazakhs used to transport yurts, portable tents).

The Kazakhs’ worldview was mainly shaped by their nomadic economy and religion, a mix of Islam and totemism. Although the Kazakhs considered themselves
Muslims, very few actually practiced the religion limiting its influence to the basic acceptance of one god, Allah. The Kazakhs accepted the modified version of Shari’ a, the code of Tauke, which contained only some principles of the Muslim law. A complete absence of mosques and madrasahs (the Muslim schools) existed in the steppes of the eighteen-century Kazakh Empire with exceptions of several mosques in the cities (Olcott, 1995a). The political organization of the Kazakhs featured a very collectivistic society with familial and tribal values. The modern government replicates this model of the clan society was in certain ways.

The conquest by Imperial Russia. The first conquest by Russia under Peter I and Anna Ioannovna irretrievably altered the traditionally nomadic political structure of the Kazakhs. The first Kazakh-Russian connection started from the peaceful trade relationships under Peter I and continued under the leadership of Anna Ioannovna. In eighteenth century, the Kazakh khanate was weakened by endless invasions from Kalmyks and Jungars, the neighboring tribes that wanted to occupy the Kazakh land. First, the Small Zhuz asked the Russian Empress Anna Ioannovna for protection in 1730. With great trade interest in the Kazakh Khanate Russia promised the defense to the Small Horde, which became the first official mark of the Kazakh unification with Imperial Russia. The Middle Zhuz joined Russia in 1798, and the Great Zhuz was forced to follow the other hordes and seek Russian protection in 1820 as the result of the expanding threat from Kokand Khanate. Later the status of the Kazakh state changed from an equal trade partner and political ally to a colonial national. The history of the Kazakhs under the Russian Colonial Rule contains rich political, economical, and cultural reforms that transformed nomadic Kazakhs into settled peasants. The Land reforms cast out the
remaining herders into the few remaining pastures that dramatically changed the Kazakh traditionally rural economy. The decades of Russian colonization irreversibly transformed the Khanate’s ethnical homogeneity into a culturally diverse society. About three million Europeans migrated to the Kazakh state to coexist with less than five million Kazakhs (Olcott, 1995a, p. 96). Despite their growing discontent with the Imperial authorities, the Kazakhs found a common language with the Russian peasants who shared their art of farming. Under the Russian rule, the Kazakh steppes experienced the spread of Islam, the policy promoted by Empress Catherine to civilize the nomads. This policy resulted in the rise of overall education for boys and girls and the emergence of the Kazakh intelligentsia. Along with protests and rebellions of the Kazakhs against the tsarist colonial rule, the unification with Russia had positive economic and cultural outcomes for the Kazakhs.

Besides multiple poorly organized revolts of the Kazakhs, two major mass protests against Russian colonization took place, the steppe revolution in 1905 and the rebellion in 1916 that the tsarist forces cruelly suppressed. When the news about the 1917 February Revolution in Russia burst into the Kazakh steppe, the group of Kazakh intelligentsia formed the first national party called the Alash Orda (Olcott, 1997). The leaders of the party, fundamentally democratic, tried to establish the first independent Kazakh national government that ruled the steppe for less than two years until conquered by Russia for the second time, this time Soviet Russia.

*The conquest by Soviet Russia.* Despite the strong support of the 1917 Communist Revolution by the lower social class -- a group which constituted the majority of inhabitants of the Kazakh steppe -- the Alash Orda government severely fought against
Bolshevik forces. When Soviet communists finally defeated the Kazakh government, the Bolsheviks established the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1920 and full Soviet republic in 1936 (CIA, World Factbook; Olcott, 1995a; 1997).

Olcott (1995a) reports that Kazakhstan underwent many changes during the Soviet era. The communist regime utterly skewed the Kazakh ethnicity. The first flows of immigrants, mostly Russian, occurred during the Sovietization of the Kazakh aul (village) in 1925-1929 and during Stalin’s collectivization program in 1929-1938. Another wave of immigration into the Kazakhs steppe occurred during World War II, when Stalin deported thousands of “political suspects,” the remains of Russian aristocrats and intelligentsia, Kulaks (wealthy merchants), and national minorities to Central Asia. The largest immigration campaign took place during Khrushchev’s agricultural “Virgin Lands” program in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Soviet citizens were encouraged to help cultivate Kazakhstan’s pastures in the north (CIA, World Factbook). By 1989, Kazakhs represented 39 percent of the population of 16.7 million in comparison with Russians (37.8 percent), Ukrainians (5.4 percent), Belarusian (1.1 percent), and Russified Germans (5.7 percent). The Slavs with other Europeans constituted the majority of Kazakhstan’s population (Olcott, 1995a, p. 272). This influx of Russian speakers, along with the Soviet language propaganda, made Kazakhstan entirely Russian-speaking, moving Kazakh language into second place. The Soviet regime brought an extensive Russian school system into the Kazakh steppe, which dramatically increased the education equally of Kazakh men and women.

Kazakh Soviet Socialistic Republic (KazSSR) became more industrialized and urbanized, growing into the third largest economy in the Soviet Union after Russia and
Ukraine. The KazSSR was a major producer of petroleum, mineral resources, and agricultural products for the entire country (Olcott, 1995a, p. 272). The KazSSR government followed the general Soviet model. The communist Party of Kazakhstan, under the overall control of the USSR Supreme Soviet (Council), maintained the highest political organization level in the republic. Dinmukhamed Kunaev, the first secretary of the Party, led the KazSSR from 1964 to 1986 (Olcott, 1997, p. 204). Kunaev, the only and last Kazakh ever and one of two only Central Asian leaders who became full members of Politburo, enjoyed a close association and strong support from Leonid Brezhnev, the long-term Soviet leader. The Kazakh Communist Party, a very elite organization, represented only five percent of the population. Working well with Russians, Kunaev also noticeably increased the participation of the native Kazakhs in the government and assigned the ethnic Kazakhs many key positions in agriculture and education. Under Kunaev, the local elite managed to accumulate considerable control of local economies. Kunaev's power started shadowing away when the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, came to the power.

In December 1986, Gorbachev dismissed Kunaev (Vidova, 1998) and appointed Gennady Kolbin as the First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party. Kolbin, an ethnic Russian, had had no previous associations with Kazakhstan and was a complete stranger to the Republic. His unexpected appointment aroused a great discontent among the local elites and public. Kolbin resided in Kazakhstan less than three years as his designation gave rise to the rioting of the Kazakh students against the outsider in Alma-Ata (now Almaty) in December 1986. That dramatic event recorded more than 2400 arrests and two deaths among the protesters (Olcott, 1995a, pp. 252-253). The protest was organized
against Kolbin and Gorbachev but also politically directed against Kunaev. Kolbin returned in Moscow after another protest in June 1989. In the same month, Nursultan Nazarbaev, a new political figure on the big screen of the Soviet politics, became the First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party.

Nazarbaev’s emergence and the birth of independent Kazakhstan. Olcott (1995b) calls the political career of Nazarbaev a “Soviet success story” (p. 169). Nursultan Nazarbaev did not become a cattle herder like his parents and grandparents but Soviet education, ideology, and his own ambitions have made Nazarbaev what he is today -- a successful politician and the first and only president of newly born Kazakhstan. Born in 1940 in a small village near Alma-Ata, the territory that historically pertained to the Great Zhuz, he studied in the KazSSR and in Ukraine, where he completed a technical school. After graduation he came back to Kazakhstan to work at the Karaganda Metallurgical Combine in Temirtau, the industrial city in Central Kazakhstan (Olcott, 1995a; Vidova, 1998). In Temirtau, Nazarbaev started his political career, first joining Komsomol (literally, the Communist Youth Union) and later the local Communist Party. In 1970, he was elected the second secretary of the Temirtau city communist party (Vidova, 1998, p. 31). In 1979, Nazarbaev became the second secretary of the Karaganda regional communist party (Olcott, 1995b, p. 169), and in 1984, the chairman of Kazakhstan’s Council of Ministers, effectively second in authority to Dinmukhamed Kunaev (Cummings, 2002, p. 59). After Kunaev’s dismissal in 1986 and Kolbin’s callback in 1989, Nursultan Nazarbaev became the First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party.
Similar to Kunaev’s support of Brezhnev, Nazarbaev strongly supported Gorbachev’s politics, but at the same time he put forth maximum efforts to bring the republic’s administration under his control (Olcott, 1995b). During the first two years of his leadership, Nazarbaev managed to gain significant economical concessions for his republic from Moscow. His popularity steadily grew in Moscow and Kazakhstan. Later, Gorbachev even offered him the post of the vice-president of USSR (Sokolov, 2003). In March 1990, following Gorbachev’s example, Nazarbaev converted his chairmanship into the presidency verified by parliamentary elections (Cummings, 2002). While the USSR was moving toward its inevitable dissolution, Nazarbaev tried to save the vanishing country (Sokolov, 2004). In days and weeks after the August Coup in Moscow in 1991, all other Soviet republics started announcing their independence. Kazakhstan was the last republic to declare its independence a fortnight after Nazarbaev publicly won his presidency in an uncontested presidential election held in December 1, 1991 (Olcott, 1997, p. 209). Although Nazarbaev finally supported the idea of creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, he had remained loyal to the already nonexistent country until the end (Sokolov, 2004).

Nazarbaev’s presidency and the formation of contemporary Kazakhstan.

Independent Kazakhstan emerged by default as a consequence of the Soviet Union’s fall. When Russia declared its sovereignty in June 1990, Kazakhstan, of necessity, proceeded to its independence on December 16, 1991 (Olcott, 1995a, p. 265). Kazakhstan was the only Soviet republic in which the titular nationality was a minority (Cummings, 2002). Multi-ethnicity became very political, and this sensitive subject formed the first challenge for Nazarbaev to manage. Independence threatened the status of non-Kazakhs (mostly
Russians) with second-class citizenship when the Kazakhs started prevailing demographically over other ethnicities due to the outflow of Slavs from Kazakhstan. The ethnic Kazakhs became not only a national majority\(^1\), but also the ruling elite over the national economical and political systems (Olcott, 1997, p. 212).

Realizing the impossibility of mono-ethnicity of Kazakhstan and generally accepted by both Russians and Kazakhs, Nazarbaev contrived to satisfy the interests of both major ethnical groups to a certain extent. To the great satisfaction of Kazakh nationalists, Nazarbaev announced the state official language to be Kazakh in 1989 (Olcott, 1995b). However, he also recognized the fact that the majority of the population, including many Russified native Kazakhs, did not speak Kazakh, and assigned to Russian the nebulous status of “language of interethnic communication,\(^2\)" quelling the rising resentment of non-Kazakhs (Olcott, 1995b, p. 176). Although the president claimed an insignificant distinction between the statuses of two major languages (Olcott, 1995b, p. 176), the 1989 language bill launched Nazarbaev's hidden far-reaching nationalistic strategy. Although Nazarbaev’s policies favor the native Kazakhs, the president does not tolerate extreme nationalism from both Kazakhs and Russians (Olcott, 1995a). Constantly avoiding the direct address of issues of multi-ethnicity, Kazakhstan has managed to escape the large ethnic conflicts. Besides, Nazarbaev preferred concentrating on economic development of the country than solving the issues of multi-ethnicity.

The dissolution of the USSR and the breakdown in the Union’s constant demand of the republic's traditional heavy products ended in a short-term reduction of the

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\(^1\) According to the UNDP Human Development report (2004), Russian population decreased almost 8% from 1994 to 2004. However, Olcott (1997) reports that Russian emigration from Kazakhstan since independence was not so dramatic in comparison with other Soviet republics.

\(^2\) According to CIA World Factbook (2001), Russian language is used 95% of time in everyday and business communication.
economy in 1994 (CIA, World Factbook). Due to its huge geopolitical potential and quite skillful economic policies, the republic has managed to reinforce the economy better than its fellow states Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan (Cummings, 2002, p. 63). The country practically remained unscratched by the Russian financial crisis in 1998. Kazakhstan has enjoyed the consequent GDP’s growth rate of about nine percent since 2000 (CIA, World Factbook). Cummings (2002) reports that, unlike Russia, Kazakhstan has also repaid its International Monetary Fund debts ahead of time, and does not owe any payments to state workers and pensioners (Appendix A).

Cummings (2002) distinguishes the four main characteristics of the first ten years of the Nazarbaev’s presidency:

- A process of state- and institutional building;
- The absence of ideology in favor of a managerial type of leadership;
- A kleptocratic economy; and
- A strong personalism, supported by corruption, patrimonialism and venality (p. 216).

Nazarbaev’s initial focus on state-building made Kazakhstan’s regime most stable among other Central Asian republics (Cummings, 2002). The first constitution of Kazakhstan was adopted on January 28, 1993 (CIA, World Factbook). The constitution created a national parliament and a system of local governing. However, it also granted the president authority to make all-level appointments in the country and, therefore, made the government an intensifier of the presidential control (Cummings, 2002).

Although Nazarbaev has not created a cult of personality like Niiazov, the leader of Turkmenistan, or Karimov, the president of Uzbekistan, he has made conscious efforts
to strengthen his personal influence (Olcott, 1995b). As Cummings (2002) describes it, “the president is at the epicenter of all state- and institution-building efforts, and the presidential office and executive order have come to dominate all branches of government” (p. 63). Since independence, Nazarbaev has successfully centralized his power through institutional manipulation (Cummings, 2002). First, he dissolved the Soviet constitution-based parliament in December 1993, granting himself unlimited power until the next parliamentary elections in March 1994 (Cummings, 2002; Olcott, 1995b). According to the NDI pre-election report\(^3\) (1994), those elections had several serious shortcomings in achieving international democratic standards. About twenty-five percent of seats in the new parliament were appointed by the president. The candidates who did not represent the government party faced a short campaign period and a lack of financial resources. The dominance of the state-controlled news media in favor of pro-government candidates also indicated the undemocratic nature of the 1994 elections. In general, the NDI report (1994) concluded that the pre-electoral political environment in 1994 was excessively state-dominated.

The parliament elected in 1994 existed only for one year when the Constitutional Court, by unstated order of the president, declared the entire preceding year’s election illegal in March 1995, and scheduled the new elections for December 1995 (Cummings, 2002). Taking the strategically planned advantage of the parliament’s dysfunction, Nazarbaev extended his presidential term until December 2000, automatically canceling the forthcoming competitive elections in 1996, and adopted the new constitution that strengthened the president’s power. The constitution of August 1995 increased the

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\(^3\) NDI stands for National Democratic Institution for International Affairs that observed the parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan in 1994 and 2004.
presidential term from five years to seven years. By the old constitution, Nazarbaev’s presidency would have expired in December 1996. The term extension allowed Nazarbaev to avoid running against two other popular candidates at that time, when his own popularity appeared on a decline due to the economical stiffness in 1994-1995 (Olcott, 1997; Cummings, 2002).

Cummings (2002) reports that since 1997 Nazarbaev has increased state control over the media. The only independent newspaper “Karavan” in Central Asia became pro-government after the change in ownership. The state television company, headed by the president’s eldest daughter, Dariga, monopolized overall national television. Nazarbaev has surrounded himself with the selected group of close friends and relatives who occupy the major government and business positions in the republic, including Dariga’s husband, Rakhat Aliev, known for his role as the deputy head of Kazak State Security (KNB) responsible for the key Almaty region, where most foreign companies still headquarter. Before joining KNB in September 1998, Rakhat Aliev served as the head of the tax police at the Ministry of Revenues. Nazarbaev’s other son-in-law, Timur Kulebaev, chairs Kazakhoil, the state national oil company that in 1997 replaced the Ministry of Oil and Gas (Cummings, 2002, p. 65). People close to the president have shaped the existing business and political elite of the republic. The political life of present-day Kazakh society resembles the traditional zhuz-organization of pre-Soviet Kazakhstan. By default, this principle has also determined the elite’s mono-ethnicity.

Avoiding any possible opposition, Nazarbaev called for early elections in 1999, which did not prove democratic (Cummings, 2002, p. 65). The early election call did not give enough time to other candidates to prepare; only the president possessed both
financial and organizational resources. The only serious opponent to the president in that election was Akezhan Kazhegeldin, the former Prime Minister of Kazakhstan. In 1998 Kazhegeldin was accused of state money laundering overseas and, therefore, taken away from the political arena. Nazarbaev successfully won the 1999 elections without any real opposition and any threat to his power (Cummings, 2002).

The recent 2004 parliamentary elections have only proved the continuity of the Nazarbaev’s regime. Although the NDI delegation noticed some improvements in the recently amendment Constitutional Law on elections, the independent observers reported the media imbalance as the greatest obstacle to the democratic elections (NDI, 2004). Since Kazakhstan has often been criticized for its continuous repression of independent media. The president’s daughter continues governing the leading national media (Blua, 2003). Recently, Dariga has also become a leader of the pro-presidential party “Asar” (“Kazakh Media,” 2003). The Kazakhstani authorities have harassed journalists critical of the president (“Kazakh Media”). The president has also proposed a law limiting freedom of press and allowing the government to lobby information (Ellison, 2005).

Another shortcoming of the recent election represents official intimidation of political opposition. As NDI (2004) reports, one opposition leader is in prison and another is facing criminal and civil charges (p. 2). The opposition has overtly received economic and political attacks from the government. Recently, the government banned the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan party (DVK), the only real opposition, from all political activities. Officially, the DVK street protest after the 2004 parliamentary elections originated the ban. The party faced stubborn resistance from the government to register as the opposition party in those elections (“Kazakh Opposition,” 2005).
Researchers call Kazakhstan an absolutely undemocratic state, using democratic formalities as a façade for purposes of international society ("Election Law," 2004). While the democratization process remains paralyzed, the discourse, though locked-in and non-flexible, cannot remain the same and should reflect the invisible movements of the country’s political life (See Political Discourse). The analysis of the presidential discourse forms a novel way to explore the political transition in Kazakhstan, and to contribute to the previous research on democratizatsiia in the post-Soviet Central Asia.

Political Discourse

Language and politics. Language and politics always link together. The language-politics relationship emergent in various existing politically related actions like voting assists in improving understanding of politics (Dallmayr, 1984). Dallmayr (1984) examines how language and politics relate to each other and acknowledges their reciprocal relationships. Arendt recognizes the connection between language and politics, saying “whether the relevance of speech is at stake, matters become political by definition, for speech is what makes man [sic] a political being” (As cited in Dallmayr, 1984, p. 190). Edelman (1974) observes politics as a symbolic figure, considering every political action as a construction of linguistic icons. “Man [sic] creates political symbols and they sustain and develop him or wrap him” (Edelman, 1974, p. 1). According to Dallmayr (1984), traditionally, language has occupied a secondary role in politics, serving as a linguistic device for the major political events, such as voting or government decision-making. The functional role of language was considered through the ways it channels and regulates political communication. However, scholars such as Edelman, Dallmayr and Lasswell started looking at political language beyond its functional role,
and as a means for achieving political goals and infusing politicians’ views and choices.

Language has risen to the same level with politics, no longer considered within politics anymore, but with politics.

Language includes such premises as discourse and grammatology (Dallmayr, 1984, p. 19). Assard and Bennett (1997) consider discourse as interdependent with the political system. The authors assume that although language and communication mirror the influence of institutional changes on political organization, “there is no primacy of institutions over communication or independence of communication from institutions. There is a two-way causal relationship” (Assard & Bennett, 1997, pp. 44-47). Edelman (1974) claims that analysis of politics as a symbolic form is possible only when language and politics are treated equally and the reciprocity of these two elements is respected (pp. 2-3). I will take the position of reciprocity.

**Conceptualizing political discourse.** Beaugrande (1985) defines discourse as “a set of mutually relevant texts” and text, in its turn, as “a natural language occurrence in communicative setting” (p. 47). Written texts or speeches enact discourse since texts are produced to carry the general traits of the appropriate discourse (Anderson, 2003, p. 99). According to Peet and Hartwick (1999), discourse embodies language and everything communicated through it (p. 130). Seidel (1985) defines discourse as “a terrain, a dynamic linguistic, and above all, semantic space in which social meanings are produced or challenged” (p. 44). He argues that any kind of discourse, political texts or speeches, forms a field of struggle. Since politics always involves conflict of power, political talk also concerns power relationships between the speaker and addressee (Seidel, 1985, p. 44). Political discourse, as any other discourse, has a pragmatic dimension, interpreted

Lasswell et al. (1965) define a language style as a simple “arrangement of the elements of which communication is composed” (p. 21), referring to symbols and signs as to two major communication composites. Seidel (1985) interprets a language style as a speech genre, which also relates to a structural organization of language that language users choose according to a situation. However, a situation or social context usually determines an appropriate speech genre (pp. 44-45). Lasswell et al. (1965) recognize the most remarkable correlation between language style and polity with democracy and despotism.

*Discourse of democratic and non-democratic regimes.* In a totalitarian regime, despotic rulers demand full obedience from their subjects, do not tolerate undesirable changes of subjects’ behaviors, and allow only distant ruler-subject relationships. In contrast to despotism, democracy requires equality between leaders and citizens who share power (Lasswell et al., 1965, p. 29). Both regimes allow completely polar relationships between government and citizens. A dictatorship ordains the position of “power over,” and democracy allows the stand of “power with” (Lasswell et al., 1965, p. 29). Political discourse transmits these differences via different arrangements of communication elements, signs and symbols (Lasswell et al., 1965).

According to Edelman (1974), totalitarian governments, which usually suppress any unwelcome changes in their subjects’ behaviors and constantly exclude population
from decision-making, have a great need to communicate distance between them and masses (p. 9). When political leaders want to impact people’s behaviors, they act via communication means, such as political speeches or texts. In a despotic demand, political discourse demonstrates the striking differences between the ruler and subjects in the hierarchical order; in a democratic order, the political talk tends to eliminate these differences.

Beaugrande (2002) defines democracy as “a mode for human interaction of the basis of mutual equality and respect for human rights” (p. 7). According to Beaugrande (2002), discourse serves as a democratic action in a democratic society and as a non-democratic practice in the despotic regime. For instance, non-democratic discourse might exclude minorities. As an example, it was common for American texts to use only masculine pronouns, referring to a person in general, and to completely exclude the use of feminine pronouns. American women have fought against gender discrimination and have achieved, at least legally, the equality of rights with men, another step toward democracy. This action has been embraced into discourse and now, according to the American Psychological Association writing style, the use of both biological sex pronouns is a rule of writing.

In accordance with Sparrow’s research (2001), presidential discourse in American society reflects the political climate of the nation (p. 8). Many scholars in the United States have thoroughly studied presidential discourse, enacted in the speeches (Ryfe, 2001, p. 175). Speeches have become an important part of the discursive analysis of politics. The US presidential speeches do not only reflect but also produce institutional changes in Washington, which, in turn, affect overall strategy of presidential rhetoric.
Communication strategy, in the discourse of the American presidents, has been called “going public,” which moves the presidential discourse closer to the ordinary, public discourse (Ryfe, 2001, pp. 175-176). Lasswell et al. (1965) also explore this tendency of political discourse of rule. “As communities move toward the democratic end of the scale, effect-modeling takes the place of effect-contrast. Leaders reach out for the common speech, and adopt simple man-to man manners” (Lasswell et al., 1965, p. 31).

Lasswell et al. (1965) analyze language in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and conclude that officially authorized slang breaks despotic discourse (p.3). In more democratic societies, such as the United States, presidential speeches have become a generator of changes by promoting an ideal model of America (Sparrow, 2001, p.7). The US presidential discourse tends toward more commonality, close to a citizens’ language. “Languages change organically when the people who speak them change” (Lasswell et al., 1965, p. 33).

Few scholars have recognized the important role of discourse in studying totalitarian and democratic polities. Traditionally, they study democracy from institutionalized perspectives, which analyze democracy through the functionality of legislative procedures and other substantive measurements. Habermas (1996) argues that discursive theory embodies all sides of the earlier proposed approaches including legislative and socio-economical factors. All institutionalized indicators of democracy become united through the discourse and lose their significances. According to Habermas (1996), discourse and the rules of linguistic communication guide all constituents of democratic politics. Assuming democracy as grounded in law, Habermas (1996) analyzes
the legal discourse and he measures to what extent it embodies democratic or non-democratic principles. For Habermas, democracy means equal access for everyone to speak up, and discursive practices built according to democratic principles can provide people with this access (Habermas, 1996, pp. 297-299). Although criticized as excessively idealistic (Hohmann, 1998), Habermas’s theory deserves consideration for granting a leading role to a discourse in studying democracy.

Even fewer scholars examine political discourse in transitional democracies. Beaugrande (2002) analyzes discourse and transitional democracy of South Africa in terms of inclusions and exclusions of specific terms from language. The researcher asserts that theoretically and by nature language is all-inclusive (p. 4), but language users make language to favor one social group and disregard another. Beaugrande (2002) argues that undemocratic discourse constantly excludes outsiders by various means. For instance, exclusion of languages other than English in South African multicultural society will shape an undemocratic act toward non-English native speakers. Examining the corpus of South African English with regard to inclusions and exclusions of the term democracy, Beaugrande (2002) finds that even some meanings of democracy do not necessarily relate to equity and respect for human rights and discovers what social group the language favors and against which groups it discriminates. Anderson (2003) offers another approach, employing both classic quantitative and qualitative methods, to study democratization.

The discursive theory of democratization. Habermas’ discursive theory focuses on understanding law and democracy, assuming democracy in a more or less stable or durable condition, since Habermas considers law as a foundation for a democratic polity.
Anderson (2003) proposes a discursive theory of democratization, and studies
democratization in the case of Russia, where democratization officially started only in
1987 when Gorbachev announced the new political way under the slogan of
democratizatsiia (Roeder, 2003, p. 11). Anderson's (2003) theory starts from the political
identities of governments and citizens. It claims that an authoritarian elite cannot remain
integrated when its identity changes. Anderson (2003) states that the ruling identity
reshapes as a result of changes in political discourse of the government. Dictatorship falls
and democracy arises when political discourse transforms from the language that
separates elite from the public into the language that unites the elite with ordinary people.
Anderson (2003) argues that discourse serves as the reason why democratization does or
does not happen.

According to Anderson (2003), theories of democratization mainly focus on
causes of democratization, such as economic and cultural restraints, and are slow in
keeping up with the rapid changes in behaviors of politicians and citizens. Other theories
focus on conditions receptive to quick transformations, such as political organization or
elite alliances, but these theories do not take into consideration behavioral changes of the
main actors of democratization, politicians, and citizens. Most theories of
democratization accept the formation of political identities of politicians and citizens by
default and fail to explain why they appear in the first place.

Anderson (n.d.) defines democracy as a dynamic relationship toward or away
from which people shift. Perhaps not noticeable from the institutionalized approach, these
dynamics embrace rapid changes in the discourse of politicians and citizens, because
people articulate or simply talk about them. Theories that focus on electoral procedures or
human rights may help to examine democratization when the actions have happened: elections have passed or human rights violated. After the event, these theories can evaluate the relative proximity of these actions. Discursive theory allows not only tracking the past political events, but also perceiving the current actions and anticipating the future trends, because discourse remains reflective enough to capture institutionalized changes that have already happened, but it does not change too quickly (Anderson, 2003; 2004). Therefore, a study of political regimes in transition must focus on communication. Recognizing the important role of discourse, Anderson (2003) proposes a theory that explores democratization from the central point of communication. According to the discursive theory of democratization, authoritarian Russian language differs from democratic Russian by the distinct separateness with which its speakers communicate through written or verbal texts (Anderson, 2003). For instance, authoritarian Russian should transmit greater separateness between the speaker and receiver than transitional Russian. Lasswell et al. (1965), who analyzed a correlation between despotism and democracy and language styles, notes:

Since non-democratic elites demand superiority, they interpose barriers of “distance” and “height” between themselves and the rank and file.

Symbols and signs are among the instruments employed for the purpose of being “remote” and “above” (p. 29).

Seidel (1985) claims that a researcher can investigate political discourse through the use of symbols, codes, or user relations (p. 44). Linguistic means can measure despotic or democratic language through the mode of symbolization (Lasswell et al., 1965, p. 3). Anderson (2003) bases his approach to political discourse focusing on the concern with
actual language users, what language and semantic practices they use. He suggests that speakers use a discourse that emerges as a result of interaction of the speaker with others “to guide the composition and interpretations of future texts” (p. 99). Distance between language users can be measured through iconicity, originally a semiotic concept (Noth, 2000).

*Conceptualizing iconicity and distancing discourse.* Pierce’s theory of signs defines an icon in the framework of the relationship between the sign and its object (Noth, 2000, p. 18). Iconicity contrasts arbitrariness, where icon serves as a natural sign and the arbitrary sign is conventional (Noth, 2000, p. 18). Iconicity refers to a linguistic ability to represent the meaning of the object to be communicated by an utterance (Radwanska-Williams, 1994, p. 27). In other words, the same conceptual meaning can be conveyed in various linguistic ways, usually embraced in the grammatical structure of language (Radwanska-Williams, 1994, p. 28). According to Yokoyama (1994), the language systematically encodes a speaker’s perception of interlocutor distance. Yokoyama (1994) observes that in some communication events a language user may not use proper grammar rules depending on the relationships that he or she has with an interlocutor. Yokoyama (1994) examines iconicity in Russian and distinguishes an interlocutor relationship as an explanation for the “grammar restraint” or the “grammar closeness” (p. 83). When the speaker recognizes the distance between as great, the speaker tends to avoid any deviation from a ‘proper’ language (Yokoyama, 1994). Grammatical restraints produce monotony, orderliness, and lengthiness of utterances, revealing the controlled, distant position of the speaker toward receiver (Yokoyama, 1994, p. 84). When the relationships are perceived to be close, the speaker depends on
less grammatically restraints and tends to employ so-called Russian colloquial language, “the language spoken by literate speakers of Contemporary Standard Russian in an informal, relaxed environment” (Yokoyama, 1994, p. 84). Discourse contractions form the most familiar example of iconic closeness. For instance, English contraction, like *gotcha*, is quite common in informal communication. A speaker of literary English would never say *Gotcha* to the addressee unless the speaker feels adequately close to him/her (Yokoyama, 1994, p. 86). In Russian, similar to English, contractions may include omission of whole words. For instance, the verbs *est* (to be) is usually neglected in informal speech.

Anderson (1996) employs the study of iconicity in political discourse to identify differences between democratic and non-democratic polities. According to Anderson (1996), authoritarian speech promotes a distancing discourse since the totalitarian government demands control between the rule and ordinary subjects and tends to communicate a distance between the ruler and ordinary people. Democratic speech, on the contrary, seeks to attain public sympathy and tends to convey closeness between the speaker and the audience (Anderson, 1996). Therefore, iconicity serves as an indicator to observe the changes in transitional discourse.

Anderson (1996) states:

Icons of conceptual distance in political speech take at least three forms: variation in the length of clauses, variation in the expression of difference, and variation in the distance from the “deictic center,” i.e. from the pronoun representing the self of the speaker (‘I’ in English, ‘я’ in Russian) (p. 4).
Anderson (2003) considers many variables of iconic distancing in order to study the changes in discourse, including the ratio of nouns to verbs, ratio of copulative I to adversative No conjunctions, distance discourse ratio of you (vy) and I (ya), ratio of we (my) to I (ya), ratio of your (vash) to my (moi), ratio of our (nash) to my (moi), ratio of third person forms to first person singular form, ratio of possessives to personals, and other linguistic constituents.

Among the above means, Anderson (2003) distinguishes two major indices of the iconic distancing (pp. 114-116). The first index is the ratio of nouns to verbs. The authoritarian communist Russian was rich in nouns (Anderson, 2003, p. 114). When Russians feel distant from another person, they tend to use the correct Russian, following the established grammar rules. Several studies have shown that when people feel closer to another, they become flexible with grammar and they tend to eliminate some “unnecessary” verbs such as “est” (“to be”). Fielding and Fraser (1978) analyze the speaker-listener relationships embedded in the discourse and discover that when these relationships are close, the ratio of nouns to verbs is lower than when a speaker and listener do not share social roles and are distant from each other. The study’s results show that in close relationships, communicators tend to use shorter utterances. The experiment reports that in close in-family relationships, the research’s participants use a lot of “verby” sentences, which contain relatively more verbs and pronouns and fewer nouns than in the utterances of distant-related interlocutors (Fielding & Fraser, 1978, pp. 224-225). Brown and Fraser (1979) investigate how interpersonal relationships between the participants affect their choice of language and discover the same correlation between the ratio of nouns to verbs and interpersonal closeness.
The second index relates to conceptual distance. According to Anderson (1996), the conceptual distance increases with the ratio of nouns to verbs, with the frequency of the third person, second person, and first person plural relative to the first person singular, and with the frequency of possessive relative to personal pronouns. Collective pronouns, such as “we” and collective “you,” move the speaker to a more remote position from a democratic “I-Thou” relationship (Anderson, 1996, p. 7). According to Brown and Gilman (1960), the use of collective pronouns indicates the speaker’s tendency to dominate over an addressee. The use of Anderson’s (1996) analysis of the texts of Russian politicians, starting from Brezhnev’s times (1964-1982) until the end of Yeltsin’s leadership (1999), also provide evidence of declining iconic distance from communistic to electoral Russian.

Summarizing the above findings, this thesis employs the concept of iconic distancing to analyze the shift of the presidential discourse during the era of democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan. Previous studies reviewed above indicate that discourse and politics maintain close connections and interdependence. The discursive theory states that in undemocratic polities, political discourse equals to distancing. Lasswell et al. (1965) also claim that language changes only when people who use it change. Since the polity of Kazakhstan remains far from democratic, the present day political discourse should illustrate distancing, which will identify a wide breach between the political leaders followers and characterize the undemocratic spirit of the state of Kazakhstan. The analysis of the discourse of Nazarbaev since independence will demonstrate the steps toward and away from the democratization course.
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

I applied content analysis in order to determine the iconic distancing of the discourse presidential discourse. According to Seidel (1985), content analysis represents a leading method for analyzing political text in many disciplines (p. 43). Although Seidel (1985) argues that this type of analysis has little relation to any linguistic theories, the linguistic concept of iconicity, employed in the present study, extends the research beyond the traditional content analysis framework.

Periodization of democratizatsiiia in Kazakhstan

To observe the changes in the presidential discourse, I divided the examined time interval into six periods. Anderson (n.d.) identified the first two political periods. The first period was defined as authoritarian for the former Soviet Union. The authoritarian era started fading in 1988 and defined the first period in the research. The transitional era for Kazakhstan started with the appointment of Nazarbaev to be the First Secretary of the republic in March 1989 and ended in 1991. This era defined the second political period in the present study. Based on the state- and institution building in the republic, Cummings (2002) identified the following three periods and drew three distinct phases of Nazarbaev’s presidency since independence in 1991, during which he outlasted four governments, four parliaments and two constitutions (p. 64). Cummings (2002) defined the third period from 1991 to 1994 during which the first presidential elections took place.
in 1991, the republic adopted the first constitution in 1993, and the first parliamentary
elections were held in Kazakhstan (Cummings, 2002). The following phase -- period four
-- includes a period from 1995 to 1996, in which the new parliamentary elections took
place and the president extended his term until 2000. Cummings (2002) defined the fifth
period as “post-1996.” Since Cummings’ (2002) study did not include the last four years
of Nazarbaev’s presidency, I identified the time from 2000 to 2004 as the sixth political
period which includes the recent parliamentary elections in 2004. In summary, this study
distinguished six distinct time frames – political periods, -- in which I analyzed the
presidential speeches, compared the results with Anderson’s (2003) findings, and
evaluated the presidential discourse in the light of the institutional changes during
democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan (Table 1). The discourse would identify what political
strains (authoritarian, transitional or electoral) Kazakhstan reflected in each period.

Sample

The data were obtained from the speeches of Nazarbaev widely available to the
public. Since the authoritarian era of Kazakhstan coincides with the rest of the Soviet
Union’s time of dictatorship, I have analyzed one of Nazarbaev’s speeches in 1984 to
compare with Anderson’s results of authoritarian Russian. In the second phase, I
examined three speeches out of twelve accessible published speeches. From 1991 to
1994, there were approximately twenty issued presidential addresses; four of them were
available for the current research. The fourth phase also offers about twenty publicly
delivered speeches; I examined five of them. The fifth and sixth periods include around
thirty addresses each; I analyzed five speeches for each phase accordingly.
### Table 1:

*Summary periodization of democratization in Kazakhstan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>POLITICAL EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period I</td>
<td>Before 1988</td>
<td>National leaders chosen by Central Committee ratifying decision of Politburo and local leaders appointed by national leaders;[^4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period II</td>
<td>From 1989 to 1990</td>
<td>Nazarbaev’s appointment for the post of the First Secretary; the dissolution of the Soviet Union;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period III</td>
<td>From 1991 to 1994</td>
<td>Independence; the first presidential elections; the first constitution; the dissolution of the existing parliament;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period IV</td>
<td>From 1995 to 1996</td>
<td>The parliamentary elections; the presidential term extension; the second constitution;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period V</td>
<td>From 1997 to 1999</td>
<td>The second presidential elections;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period VI</td>
<td>From 2000 to 2004</td>
<td>The parliamentary elections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The speeches were not randomly selected due to the limited circulation of sources. One of the criteria for data selection was that the speeches were addressed to either Kazakhstani general or selected audiences, which represented the citizen population of the country. The addresses before 1991 were accessed from the newspapers; the texts from 1991 to 1996 were taken from the published reports and public addresses of Nazarbaev (1996); the speeches after 1996 were retrieved on February 28, 2005, from the official presidential website.5

A sentence represented a unit of analysis, which was randomly selected within each speech per period. I analyzed every sentence in the first political period, every second sentence in the second and third periods, every fourth sentence in the fourth period, every third sentence in the fifth period, and, finally, every fourth sentence in the last period. Table 2 demonstrates the selection process. According to Strijbos, Martens, Joghems & Broers (2004), scholars commonly use the sentence as a unit of analysis. I considered a final sample size of 1400 randomly selected sentences, which exceeded the appropriate sample size, according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) relationship between sample size and data.

5 See Appendix E to assess the source list of speeches.
Table 2:

**Sampling Procedure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Speech</th>
<th>Date of Speech</th>
<th>No of Sent./Speech</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total No of Sent.</th>
<th>Rand. Selected Sample</th>
<th>Selection Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dec-1984</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>every sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nov-1989</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dec-1989</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>every second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>May-1990</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct-1991</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dec-1991</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mar-1994</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>every second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jun-1994</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sep-1994</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>May-1995</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jun-1995</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sep-1995</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dec-1995</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>every forth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Apr-1996</td>
<td>323</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Aug-1996</td>
<td>258</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sep-1998</td>
<td>286</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Oct-1998</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Dec-1998</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>every third sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dec-1998</td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Jan-1999</td>
<td>289</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Oct-2000</td>
<td>306</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sep-2001</td>
<td>262</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Apr-2002</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>1389</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>every forth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Apr-2003</td>
<td>217</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mar-2004</td>
<td>412</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25 Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4211</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>4211</strong></td>
<td><strong>1400</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coding Instrument and Intercoder Reliability Tests

The initial research procedure started with creating a coding instrument. First, I coded several speeches to come up with the general rules of coding. Facing a difficulty for identifying the categories of nouns, verbs, and pronouns, I contacted Richard Anderson, the author of the discursive theory of democratization, who recommended to follow the rules of the frequency dictionary of Russian edited by Zasorina (1977). Based on Anderson’s suggestions and Zasorina’s (1977) dictionary I constructed the guidelines for coding. Next, I tested the reliability of the coding instrument. For this purpose, I ran the pilot study and engaged neutral coders to validate the coding instrument. Two independent professors of Russian and I, the principal researcher, independently coded three randomly selected speeches of Vladimir Putin in Russian. All three coders followed the same guidelines and used the identical coding forms (Appendix B). Intercoder reliability determines the extent to which two coders achieve the same coding results, working independently from each other (Brady, Tyndall & Thorson, 2004). The reliability of the instrument was computed based on the results of two coders who had the highest consistency in coding. Scott’s (1955) pi was employed to determine the method’s reliability. I calculated the pilot intercoder reliability coefficient on 73% of randomly selected sentences. Table 3 presents the performed results. With regard to coding guidelines and categories, the instrument proved reliable. The small portion of disagreement among coders, upon scrutiny, was attributed to a coder lack of concentration. In order to decrease the likelihood of this type of mistake, coded texts would be checked twice.
The intercoder reliability test for the actual research was applied on twenty-five percent of randomly selected sentences. Besides the primary researcher, a trained coder analyzed the data independently using the coding guidelines and form. Finally, Scott’s pi was applied to test the intercoder reliability in the same manner as in the pilot study. Overall intercoder reliability agreement was significant; the coders agreed on 88% of the coded texts. Table 4 displays the numbers for the intercoder percent agreement in the present study.

Coding Procedure

As discussed earlier, I needed to find the following ratios for evaluating the iconic distancing of speeches. First, I counted the number of nouns and verbs. Ratios were
computed by classifying parts of a sentence, the unit of analysis, in a random sample according to the rules provided in Zasorina (1977). The sum of nouns is divided by the sum of verbs and verbal participles with dependent words. Second, I measured the conceptual distance from the deictic center (distribution of Second Person, First Person Plural, and First Person Singular). I counted ratios of “you” (vy) to “I” (ya) and “we” (my) to “I” (ya) and ratios of “your” (vash) to “my” (moi) and “our” (nash) to “my” (moi).

Then I added an additional variable, which classified the speeches into two categories based on the audience. The first group of texts represented speeches that the president delivered to selected recipients during the Soviet Congresses, national conventions, and forums. The second group consisted of general public addresses.
Chapter IV

RESULTS

I used a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to observe changes in presidential discourse since the Soviet era. The null hypothesis, which would indicate no relationship between the political discourse of Nazarbaev and democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan, was not supported. The ANOVA revealed that changes in the presidential discourse occurred in a statistically significant way within the six identified political periods for at least three out of five variables: ratios of nouns to verbs, “we” to “I,” and “your” to “my.” Table 5 displays the cumulative results of the one-way ANOVA analysis computed for this study.

Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>NOUNS to VERBS</th>
<th>&quot;YOUR&quot; to &quot;MY&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;WE&quot; to &quot;I&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;OUR&quot; to &quot;MY&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;YOU&quot; to &quot;I&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I before 1984</td>
<td>4.079</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II 1989 - 1990</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III 1991 - 1994</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 1995 - 1996</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V 1997 - 1999</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.987</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI 2000 - 2004</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.003</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance: $P < 0.0001$, $P < 0.002$, $P < 0.042$, $P < 0.055$, $P < 0.089$

F-ratio: 7.69, 3.76, 2.31, 2.17, 1.91

Table 5: Ratios of Nouns to Verbs and the Distance from a Deictic Center

Vernacular$^6$: 1.6, 0.6, 0.4, 1.5, 0.5

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$^6$ Ratios for vernacular Russian, computed by Zasorina (1977), are retrieved from Anderson (1996).
The differences in ratios of “You” to “I” were not statistically significant, p<0.089. Marginal statistical significance should be noted in the ratio of “Our” to “My,” p<0.055. The even distributions of the means of “You” to “I” and “Our” to “My” within the periods serve as evidence and a logical explanation to these results (See Table 5).

*The Ratio of Nouns to Verbs*

To test differences between the political periods, two commonly used post hoc comparisons, Tukey’s and Bonferroni’s, were applied (Field, 2000). Both Tukey’s and Bonferroni’s tests disclosed great differences in the proportion of nouns to verbs in the first period with regard to all other phases. The first period had an average ratio of nouns to verbs of 4.079 (SD₁ = 3.13); the second period had a mean of 2.78 (SD₂ = 2.78); the third period reported an average number of nouns to verbs of 2.33 (SD₃ = 1.84). The fourth stage was also notably different from the first and fifth periods, but close to the last period. The fourth and sixth periods had almost the same mean of 2.5 (SD₄ = 1.45; SD₆ = 1.72). The fifth phase also extensively differentiated from other periods except the third one. This period had an average ratio of nouns to verbs of 2.11 (SD₅ = 1.34). The post hoc comparisons showed a declining iconic distance in presidential discourse from authoritarian time to the Soviet Union’s collapse. Since independence, President Nazarbaev’s discourse has not changed dramatically in terms of the proportion of nouns to verbs. Except for the first period, the means of nouns to verbs in other five periods varied within the range between 2.11 and 2.78 (See Table 5). Figure 2 illustrates changes in the ratio of nouns to verbs in all six periods, identified earlier.
The Deictic Center

The F test offered interesting results in exploring conceptual distance of the speaker, Nursultan Nazarbaev, to the audience. On the first sight, the ANOVA did not indicate any significant changes in ratios of collective "You" and "We" to "I" and "Your" and "Our" to "My." The means of "Your" to "My" ranged from 0.987 (SD = 0.126) to 1.06 (SD = 0.25); the means of "We" to "I" ranked from 1.00 (SD = 0.00) to 1.22 (SD = 0.509); the means of "Our" to "My" ranged from 1.06 (SD = 0.25) to 1.16 (SD = 0.455). These results pointed out that there had been no significant shift toward the self-reference of the speaker since the Soviet totalitarian system. However, the post hoc tests revealed that the ratios of possessive pronouns of "Your" to "My" and "Our" to "My" in the fifth period notably differed from the same ratios in other political periods. The fifth period
had the lowest mean of “Your” to “My” of 0.987 (SD = 0.126), but the highest mean of 1.16 (SD = 0.455). Taking into consideration the fact that the speeches do not contain a large number of pronouns in general, Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 (Appendix C) picture a noticeable decline in use of collective “You” and possessive “Your” and a significant increase of collective “We” and possessive “Our” on a micro-level.

To test the effect of an additional variable, the audience, the ANOVAs were computed to find out if the speech recipient had a noticeable effect on the presidential discourse. Except for one variable – the ration of “You” to “I,” – the assumption was generally not supported, statistical significance ranged from $p < 0.102$ to $p < 0.899$. 
Chapter V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study looks at presidential discourse as an indicator of political transition of Kazakhstan in addition to previously established signs of democratic and non-democratic regimes. This research questions whether the political discourse of President Nazarbaev has changed since 1984. It asks what relationship exists between the political language of the government and the process of democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan. Specifically, the present study asks about the role of the presidential discourse in the republic’s transition from the communist authoritarian system. Does the presidential discourse expose the real political situation of the country or does it work as a façade to create an appearance of democracy? And, finally, from the central point of the discourse, is Kazakhstan moving toward or away from democracy?

The results of content analysis indicate that the presidential discourse of Nazarbaev has changed since independence. Iconic distancing serves here as an index for recognizing democratic and non-democratic discourses. The present content analysis provides an evidence of the shifts in the political discourse over the past decades. All indices of iconic distancing distinguish the least authoritarian time in the period as from 1991 to 1994 and in the period from 1997 and 1999. The discourse actually demands closer attention to these dates and calls for explanation of this phenomenon. The research findings reveal that the significant shifts toward democratic discourse took place during
these intervals. The first period captures the dissolution of the Soviet Union, formation of independent Kazakhstan, and the first presidential elections – the distinctive steps toward democracy from the recognized perspectives (Parrot, 1997). The ratios of nouns to verbs in this period coincide with Anderson’s (1996) findings (Table D1). Anderson (1996) defined this period as transitional.

All linguistic indices identify the interval from 1997 and 1999 as the time of greatest movement toward democracy during the republic’s existence. Although Cummings (2002) reported an increase of state control in 1997, this period includes the second presidential elections in 1999, which explains the shift in the political language. Even though the international observers did not identify the 1999 elections as democratic (Cummings, 2002), Nazarbaev was still competing for a popular vote. As discussed earlier, the decline of nouns in the speech makes the discourse close to a common language that would increase citizen sympathy. The ratios of nouns to verbs also closely match Anderson’s (1996) results for electoral discourse.

The present study’s findings in distribution of pronouns differ from Anderson’s (1996) findings. Anderson’s (1996) study shows a consistent decline in the ratios of collective “We” and “Our” since authoritarian time (Table D2). According to Anderson (1996), the dominance of collective pronouns of “we” over “I” characterizes distancing discourse. Anderson (1996) provides two explanations to this pattern. First, he argues that the speaker wants to gain a political vote and tries to diminish the use of numerically superior pronouns of “We.” Second, Anderson (1996) explains that collective “You” in Russian serves as an indicator of polite and formal speech, which represents a distancing or non-democratic discourse. The current study obtained opposite results. The use of
pronouns “We” and “Our” practically replaces the polite and distant “You” and “Your.”

The study of verbal immediacy (e.g. Mehrabian, 1966; 1967; Wiener & Mehrabian, 1968) may provide an alternative explanation to this finding. Although the presidential speech does not prove to be democratic, the discourse has become more inclusive, than it was before. However, the ratios of “You” to “I” during the most “democratic” intervals still remain within authoritarian range, according to Anderson’s (1996) study.

The markers of distancing discourse also distinguish the most non-democratic stage in Kazakhstan since independence. This period entails the interval from 1995 to 1996, during which the president did the utmost efforts to sustain his power. The previous studies on democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan reported that Nazarbaev dissolved the parliament, which became rebellious to his policy, and lobbied the amendment in the constitutional law which extended the presidential term and cancelled the upcoming elections (Cummings, 2002; Olcott, 1995; 1997). Since iconic distancing, employed by Anderson (1996; 2003) and borrowed in the present study, represents a linguistic concept which deals with the distribution of the compulsive elements of speech, it seems unlikely that the presidential discourse serves as a façade for the appearance of democracy. The content analysis here works with the proportions of nouns to verbs and pronouns, which are unlikely to be controlled by a speaker on purpose. The linguistic markers of the present method do not deal with a content of texts – a part that is directly subject to a speaker’s intent – but with a custom of a speech delivery – a natural habit of a spokesperson that falls out of sight for determined manipulation. The discursive analysis supports the previous studies on democratizatsiia in Kazakhstan and answers positively to the second research question, whether the discourse reveals an actual political situation.
Interestingly, the ratios of nouns to verbs indicate a slight increase over the last five years. This shift may serve as a sign and prediction of the present governmental strategy to consolidate state control over the citizens and retain the presidential power regardless of the close end-date of Nazarbaev’s term. Dave (2003) reports on reduction of state power over the last several years. Still recognizing Kazakhstan as non-democracy, Dave (2003) speculates slow shifts toward less authoritarian polity. On the contrary, Cummings (2002) observes a steady movement away from democracy. The previous research studies (Cummings, 2002; Dave, 2003; Olcott, 1995b, 1997) analyze the political situation in Kazakhstan on the event that have already taken place and offer contradictory predictions about the country’s future. The discursive analysis points out a growing tendency of the president to engaging in more commanding talk. The consistent elevation of distancing, non-democratic discourse serves as evidence to this tendency. The ratios of nouns to verbs in the interval from 2000 to 2004 practically equalize with the scores for authoritarian discourse in Anderson’s (1996) study. Based on the current findings, the research shows that suggests that Kazakhstan is steadily moving away from democracy at the present time.

Based on the exceptional work of Anderson (1996; 2003) in the field of political linguistics in Russia, this thesis applies his established methodology and expands Anderson’s study beyond Russia to another post-Soviet republic, Kazakhstan. The research provides an original perspective on studying a political situation in this newly emerged republic. Among previously discussed reports on democratization in Kazakhstan (Cummings, 2002; Olcott, 1995; 1997), no single project has studied political discourse
and transition in Central Asia. This work represents original inquiry to examine politics of the second largest ex-Soviet republic from the communication perspective.

Due to the limited sample of speeches, I cannot generalize the findings with an absolute confidence. Also, involving more than two independent coders would help to strengthen the reliability aspect of the study. However, despite the acknowledged limitations, this analysis presents an interesting area for additional research.

This study requires further investigation on governmental discourse. The effects of combined variables, such as period and audience, present an interesting field for further research. The type of audience or speech recipients might actually influence the current findings. Although this assumption was not supported in the present analysis, the larger data, including equal and random sample of speeches within periods might change the results. Moreover, a comparison study on texts, designed for domestic and global audiences, might provide additional information on a role of presidential discourse in studying politics. The concept of verbal immediacy might also add another interesting perspective to the discursive approach on transitional democracies.

This study can be also expanded through a rhetorical analysis. A qualitative study might complement the present research with additional data on the content of political texts. The work could be replicated on a larger sample in another post-Soviet republic. A comparison study of presidential discourse between different countries would provide a fascinating area to emphasize the role of communication in examining these states’ political environments. In particular, research on political language in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, three former Soviet republics that have recently experienced the rise of political participation, offers an excellent data for discursive analysis. In addition, a
cultural variable may also complement the present research. Although the socialistic republics share the same communistic history, the pre-Soviet past may impact the shape of the post-Soviet political discourse.

The collapse of the USSR produced a formation of fifteen independent states that had to shape new polity almost literally from the scratch. The majority of these republics started toward democratization and then diverted from the initial course toward authoritarian regime. Contemporary scholarship offers different methods for investigating political transition in the former Soviet Union. Few researches have investigated democratization on post-communistic Central Asia. The previous works suggest explanation of the political situation in the Central Asian countries mostly based on state- and institution-building (Cummings, 2002; Olcott, 1995b; 1997), but they commonly disregard the role of a person in the procedural analysis of elections or legal issues. The discursive approach deals with people and human language. This method focuses on a person who produces speech and basically reflects and constructs the political reality of his or her country.

The present research provides an alternative insight to the few existing proposed studies of Kazakhstan in transition. The discursive analysis suggests and extends the prior investigations. This study discovers that the presidential discourse of Nazarbaev correlates with the political life of the republic. The findings indicate that the discursive analysis exposes the actual transitional past of Kazakhstan and depicts the present day political situation of the country. The discursive analysis displays the republic's continuous movements away from democracy and its steady course toward more authoritarian regime. The results show that linguistic variables work in identifying
transitional changes in Kazakhstan and deserve consideration among other existing characteristics of democracy and non-democracy.

A communication approach expands the previous studies on the post-authoritarian transition of Kazakhstan and offers an additional device to examine other newly born republics of the former Soviet Union. The research on the presidential discourse with its relevance to a political transition suggests promising contribution in the field of political science and political communication. Political linguistics brings democratization studies on a different level. A discursive approach helps in observing slight movements toward and away from democracy and speculating a country’s general direction of political development. Governmental discourse serves as a new phenomenon worthy of examination and employment in studying democratization, and the present study is the first attempt to compare this variable with transitional changes in Kazakhstan.
Appendix A

Basic Facts about Contemporary Kazakhstan

Capital: Astana

Polity: Presidential (Dominant Party)

Economy: Capitalist-statist

Population: 14,800,000

GDP per cap at PPP: $5,871

Private sector as % of GDP: 65

Ethnic Groups: Kazakh (53%), Russian (30%), Ukrainian (4%), German (2%), other (11%)

Figure 1. The Map of Present-Day Kazakhstan

From Dave (2003), p. 308.
Appendix B

Coding Instructions

A. Count the frequency of nouns, verbs, pronouns (“Vy,” “My,” “Ya”) and possessive
pronouns (“vash,” “nash,” “moi”) per sentence.

B. Ignore salutations (e.g. “Dear Comrades!” - Dorogie Tovarishi!).

C. Numerate sentences, starting from the first sentence after salutation(s).

D. Use the spreadsheet for coding.

E. You can write your remarks, questions or comments in the “comments” field.

NOUNS:

A. Count all common nouns (naritzatelnie imena).

B. Count abbreviations (e.g. TsK – central committee or Tsentralnyi Komitet ---
as one noun; KPSS – Soviet Union’s Communist Party or
Kommunisticheskaya Partiiia Sovetskogo Soyuza – one noun; therefore, Tsk
KPSS – two nouns)

C. Do not count proper nouns (sobstvennie imena) except:
   a. Personal Names (e.g. Mikhail Gorbachev – count as one noun)
   b. Titles of journals, books, organizations if they are used as common names
      (e.g., “Krasnaya strela” (a factory) is counted as one noun if the word
      “fabrika” is omitted. If a sentence contains a phrase such as “Fabrika
      ‘Krasnaya Strela’,” count only “fabrika” as one noun and disregard the title.
   c. Geographical names if they are used as common names. For example, in a
      sentence “Rossia nuzhdaetsya v strogom kontrole,” “Rossiia” is counted as a
      common noun because it is a main subject (podlezhaschee), but in
"Delegatsiia pribila v Moskvu, a zatem napravilas v Leningrad," Moskva and Leningrad are not counted because they serve as adverbial modifier of place (obstoyatelstvo).

VERBS:

A. Count participles (prichastiia and deeprichasitiia) if nouns are subordinated to them but not if the prichastie acts as an adjective. For example, "trudiashchiisia narod" would count as one noun and no verbs, but "rabotaiushchii nachal'nikom tsekha" would count as one verb and two nouns. The reasoning is that the second could have read "kotoryi rabotaet nachal'nikom tsekha" but the first could not be rephrased with kotoryi.

B. Past participles and modal verbs as well as modal predicatives (very important in Russian: "rad," "nuzhno," "nado," "mozhno", "dolzhen") are also counted but again not when they act as adjectives ("nuzhnyi," "neobhodimiy").

C. Don’t count impersonal predicatives if they are not convertible into verbs, but into adjectives (izvestno – izvestnyi; vazhno – vazhnyi); Please see Verbs, B. as for exceptions. Be aware of the short form of adjectives!

D. Count compound verbs as two verbs (e.g. "nachal iskat" – nachat, iskat).

PRONOUNS:

A. Count all cases of pronouns, including “vam,” “nam,” “nas,” “vas,” etc.

B. Vy (vam, vami, vas); My (nas, nam); Ya (mne, mnoi, men)
Appendix C

Figure 3: Ratio of "You" to "I"

Figure 4: Ratio of "We" to "I"
Figure 5: Ratio of "Your" to "My"

Figure 6: Ratio of "Our" to "My"
Appendix D

Table 1:

*Decrease in ratios of nouns to verbs*¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Text</th>
<th>Nouns to VERBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance

Authoritarian to Transitional: $F(1, 98) = 14.92$ $p<0.0001$

Transitional to Electoral: $F(1, 98) = 13.70$ $p<0.0002$

Authoritarian to Electoral: $F(1, 98) = 32.92$ $p<0.00003$

Table 2:

*Distribution of Second Person, First Person Plural, and First Person Singular*²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Text</th>
<th>&quot;You&quot; to &quot;I&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;We&quot; to &quot;I&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Your&quot; to &quot;My&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Our&quot; to &quot;My&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance

Authoritarian to Transitional:

"You" to "I"  
F (1, 87) = 13.39  
p<0.0002

"We" to "I"  
F (1, 96) = 2.92  
p<0.0454

"Your" to "My"  
F (1, 59) = 7.28  
p<.00046

"Our" to "My"  
F (1, 98) = 6.15  
p<0.007

Transitional to Electoral:

"You" to "I"  
F (1, 85) = 1.22  
p<0.1312

"We" to "I"  
F (1, 96) = 24.81  
p<0.00003

"Your" to "My"  
F (1, 63) = 2.10  
p<0.07513

"Our" to "My"  
F (1, 95) = 34.32  
p<0.00003

Authoritarian to Electoral:

"You" to "I"  
F (1, 88) = 18.80  
p<0.00003

"We" to "I"  
F (1, 98) = 39.44  
p<0.00003

"Your" to "My"  
F (1, 64) = 18.54  
p<0.00005

"Our" to "My"  
F (1, 95) = 49.99  
p<0.00003
Appendix E

List of Speeches


   *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, p. 3.


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