

Gulayhan Aqtay

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3258-6520>

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

akgul@amu.edu.pl

DOI: 10.35765/pk.2025.5003.05

Kazakh Nouns and Adjectives Denoting Age

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to examine Kazakh words that denote age. These include nouns, adjectives, and words that can function as both. Adjectives denoting age are considered to be one of the primary semantic classes of adjectives. This study is limited to words which define or designate animate beings. Four stages of human life are distinguished: infancy, youth, adulthood, and old age. The article discusses semantic and pragmatic features of the words in question, while considering, where relevant, aspects of word-formation, etymology, and morphology. In a few instances, parallels to some other Turkic languages are drawn. The analysis is framed within Dixon's model. In addition, the article identifies which adjectives of the analyzed semantic class are present on the Swadesh and Haspelmath-Tadmor lists of basic vocabulary.

KEYWORDS: Kazakh, nouns, adjectives, age

STRESZCZENIE

Rzeczowniki i przymiotniki kazachskie określające wiek

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest omówienie kazachskich słów oznaczających wiek. Niektóre są rzeczownikami, niektóre przymiotnikami, a niektóre są używane zarówno jako rzeczowniki, jak i przymiotniki. Przymiotniki oznaczające wiek są uważane za jedną z podstawowych klas semantycznych przymiotników. To opracowanie obejmuje tylko słowa, które określają lub oznaczają istoty żyjące. W artykule wyróżniono cztery grupy wiekowe w życiu człowieka: niemowlęstwo, młodość, dorosłość i starość. Artykuł skupia się na semantycznej i pragmatycznej charakterystyce omawianych słów. W razie potrzeby brane są jednak pod uwagę również aspekty słowotwórstwa, etymologii i morfologii. W kilku przypadkach podane jest podobieństwo do niektórych innych języków turkijskich. Podstawą teoretyczną opracowania jest model Dixona. Ponadto artykuł pokazuje, które przymiotniki tej klasy semantycznej zostały ujęte na listach podstawowych słów Swadesha i Haspelmatha-Tadmora.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: kazachski, rzeczowniki, przymiotniki, wiek

Suggested citation: Aqtay, G. (2025). Kazakh Nouns and Adjectives Denoting Age. © ⓘ *Perspectives on Culture*, 3(50), pp. 35–47. DOI: 10.35765/pk.2025.5003.05

Submitted: 12.02.2025

Accepted: 02.06.2025

1. Introduction

1.1. Theoretical model and adjectives in Turkic studies

According to Dixon (1982, p. 16), age – alongside dimension, physical property, colour, human propensity, value and speed – is one of the seven basic semantic classes of adjectives. He illustrates this semantic class with three examples: *new*, *young*, and *old*. In a later study, Dixon (2006, pp. 3–4) argues that there are four core semantic types typically associated with both large and small adjective classes: dimension, age, value and colour. By contrast, the three classes shown in his former study, i.e., physical property, human propensity, and speed, are evaluated as medium-sized or large adjective classes belonging to peripheral semantic types. The exemplification of the class of age remains unchanged, i.e. *new*, *young*, and *old*. Therefore, in this approach, age is one of the four core semantic classes.

Two adjectives discussed by Dixon are included in the lists of basic words of the world's languages: *old* and *new*. On Swadesh's list of 100 words, *old* is ranked as item 94, and on the extended Swadesh list of 207 words as item 184; on Haspelmath and Tadmor's, so-called Leipzig-Jakarta list, it appears as word 74. *New* was ranked on the Swadesh 100 and 207 lists as word 96 and 183, respectively, and as item 53 on the Leipzig-Jakarta list. As is well known, English *old* applies to both animate beings and inanimate objects, while English distinguishes between animate and inanimate referents in the domain of smallness in age: while the former is expressed by *young*, and the latter by *new*. *New* is naturally also used for animate beings, including humans, but not in the sense of age, e.g., in *his new neighbour* (somebody who has just moved in). By contrast, Turkic languages generally employ different adjectives to express the meaning *old* for animate and inanimate referents. West Karaim constitutes an exception, since the word *kart*, which in other languages designates only animate beings, is also used for inanimate objects, e.g., *kart uprachtar* 'old clothes' (KRPS, 294, cited after Radloff's dictionary). In this respect, West Karaim resembles English, though in this case the usage results from a Slavic calque.

Turkologists have traditionally paid less attention to adjectives than to other word classes, especially nouns and verbs. This is largely because adjectives are considered easy, lacking morphological categories in attributive position, i.e., they do not show agreement in number, possession, or case. Recently, however, there has been an increasing number of studies on adjectives in Turkic languages. For instance, Johanson (2006) published an article on Siberian Turkic, Dobrynina (2012) authored a book on Altay adjectives denoting human properties in a comparative perspective, and Aqtay (2013; 2016) examined Kazakh adjectives. A general study on Turkic prototypical adjectives based on Dixon's (2006) model is provided by Károly (2016).

1.2. Are Kazakh adjectives easy or not?

In Aqtay (2016, p. 44), it is argued that Turkic adjectives have received little scholarly attention due to the belief that this word class is simple and shares the same categories as nouns. From a morphological viewpoint, this assumption is indeed correct (see above). However, from the point of view of semantic valency, that is, combinability with the words they modify, Kazakh adjectives are far from simple. For instance, the English adjective *quiet*, similarly to its Polish equivalent *spokojny*, can be used for a child and an area, e.g.,

(1) *a quiet child*

(2) *a quiet quarter*

In Kazakh, however, one has to use different adjectives, i.e.

(1a) *juwas bala*¹

‘a quiet child’

but

(2b) *tinis awdan*

‘a quiet quarter’.

As demonstrated in Aqtay (2016, p. 48), there are also certain morphological issues. For example, the noun *jas* ‘young’ which functions both a noun and an adjective, can be partially reduplicated, a feature typically adjectival. By contrast, a similar word *qart* ‘old’, which likewise functions as a noun and an adjective, does not allow such reduplication:

(3) *jas > jap-jas* ‘quite young’

but

(4) **qap-qart* ‘quite old’.

2. Some features of Kazakh culture as reflected in the use of words denoting age

Estimation, evaluation, and naming are not universal. In some European cultures in which youthfulness and its associated qualities such as beauty, prime, and vigour, are regarded as the highest values, elderliness is often marginalized or even excluded from public discourse. As a result, elderly people frequently attempt to conceal their age. For example, in Polish words as *stary* ‘old’, *starzec* ‘old man’, and especially *staruszka* ‘old woman’, are commonly avoided. Instead, terms derived from Latin are used, such as *senior* ‘elderly man’, *seniorka* ‘elderly woman’ and *senioralny* ‘adj senior’. The only expression that does not carry a strongly negative connotation is *starszy* ‘elder’ that is not felt inappropriate,

1 Examples with no references to the sources are provided from the author’s own data collection of spoken Kazakh.

mostly used in the compounds *starszy pan* ‘elderly man’, *starsza pani* ‘elderly woman’ and *starsi państwo* ‘elderly persons’, but even these forms are becoming increasingly rare in contemporary usage.

In Turkic cultures, old age is not regarded as something to be hidden or a source of shame. Elderly people typically live with their children, and terms such as *qart*, *käri* ‘old person, elder, elderly’ or *aqsaqal* ‘gray-bearded man’ are commonplace in everyday Kazakh discourse. Far from being pejorative, these expressions convey esteem and respect.

Naturally, this does not mean that Kazakh lacks age-related words with derogatory connotations. Such usage, however, typically arises when a person’s age is exaggerated or diminished in order to humiliate them, rather than a standard ageist characterization. In other words, nouns like *kempir* ‘old woman’ (< Pers.) or *şal* ‘grey-haired; old man’ (< Mong.) may be employed pejoratively to characterize somebody as older than they actually are, or to criticise somebody’s behavior as inappropriate for their age, e.g.,

(5) *baladaysıñ*

‘You are like a child’.

During the demonstrations of January 4–5, 2022, in many Kazakh cities the protesters shouted:

(6) *Şal, ket!*

grey go.away-2IMP

‘Old man, leave!’

demanding that Nursultan Nazarbayev disappear from Kazakh politics. Nursultan Nazarbayev, who, although he had stepped down as the president of Kazakhstan in 2019, was still an important figure in the country and retained the position of Chairman of the Security Council of Kazakhstan.

Words denoting age are frequently used instead of more general words like *man*, *woman*, e.g.:

(7) *Kempiriñizdi sağındıyız ba?*

old.woman-2POSS-POLITE-ACC long.for-2SGPAST INTERROG PART

‘Are you longing for the grandmother?’ (said by a grandson to his grandfather)

(8) *Şiyeliniñ bir kempiri Aqtawda ölgen.*

Shieli-GEN one old.woman-3POSS Aqtaw-LOC die-3PERF

‘A woman from Shieli died in Aqtaw’.

It is also common that an unfamiliar young married woman is referred to as *kelinşek* ‘young (married) woman’ rather than simply *äyel* ‘woman’ when her youth and marital status are evident, e.g., when she wears a traditional headscarf or has a child.

(9) *Kelinşekter balalarına qarap otır.*

young.woman-PLUR child-PLUR-3POSS look.after-CONV AUX3PER PROGR

‘Women are looking after their children’.

In a range of languages, the basic words of the semantic class AGE are adjectives, while nouns are derived from them. For example, Pol. *stary*² ‘old’ (adjective) > *starzec*, *staruszek*, *staruszka* (in Middle Polish also *starka* ‘old woman’ and *starek* ‘old man’, forms that have survived in some dialects, e.g., Sil. *starka* ‘grandmother’ and *starzik* ‘grandfather’). Although English *old* and *young* do not exhibit morphological markers of word class, it is evident that both function as adjectives. In contrast, the equivalent Turkic words may function as both adjectives and nouns, e.g., Kaz. *jas* ‘young’ and ‘young man’. Moreover, Kaz. *jas* may also denote ‘age’, e.g.,

(10) *jasıñ qanşada?* ‘how old are you?’

age-2POSS how.many-LOC

In non-equality comparison *jas* has the meaning of ‘year’, e.g.,

(11) *ol menen bir jas ülken*

s/he I-ABL one age big

‘s/he is one year older than me’.

There are two basic Kazakh words for ‘old’, *qart* and *käri*. *Käri* is clearly the older word, deriving from OT *qari* ‘old’. Its usage is evident in the compound *jas-käri* a collective word for ‘young and old’, while **jas-qart* is not used in this context. Both Trk. *qari* and Kaz. *käri* are directly related to OT verb *qari-* ‘to grow old’ and exemplify homophonous verbs and nouns. In contrast, *qart* is probably derived from the verb *qari-* with the suffix *-t* (ËSTJa, 1997, p. 315). Since the suffix *-t* does not form deverbal nouns denoting people, it is likely that the original meaning of *qart* was different, as the authors of ËSTJa suggest.

3. Stages of life and their lexicon

As noted above, the basic age opposition in Kazakh is expressed by *jas* ‘young’ and *qart* or *käri* ‘old’. It is noteworthy that some Turkic languages possess specific lexical items to designate the first- and the last-born child. In Kazakh, *tuñğıs* ‘first-born’ derives from *tun* ‘id’ + (< Mong. *ğıs*, cf. Jankowski, 2013), while *kenje* ‘last-born’ comes from Mong. *kenj* < Trk. *kenč*.

As far as the stages of age are concerned, there are differences between various Turkic languages. It seems that the Kazakhs distinguish four basic periods in a person’s life: (1) infancy or babyhood (from birth to childhood); (2) youth (from childhood to maturity); (3) adulthood; and (4) old age or elderliness. There are many words of narrower and broader meaning within these periods,

2 Etymologically it is assumed that Pol. *stary* < PSL **starb*, which comes from PIE **sthā-ro-*, originally meant ‘stable, strong’, later shifted into ‘of mature fullness, powerful’, and eventually developed the meaning of ‘in an advanced age, old’ (Boryś, 2005, pp. 575–576; Długosz-Kurczabowa, 2008, p. 623).

but some overlap and do not form sharp boundaries. Some are more neutral, while some are more marked. The terms for babies, children, and youth are often hypocoristic, whereas the terms for the elderly often evoke feelings of esteem, respect, and reverence. As in other languages, some terms may be used metaphorically.

In the following sections, I will examine the most frequent terms from Biyzaqov's dictionary of Kazakh synonyms. Although this dictionary has many shortcomings, it is nevertheless convenient for our purposes. When necessary, additional terms will be included and Biyzaqov's findings will be commented on. It is also interesting to note that a similar strategy is applied to livestock and other domesticated animals. Unfortunately, this question cannot be addressed in detail within the scope of this short article.

3.1. Infancy, babyhood, and childhood

This stage of life begins at birth and continues until approximately six years of age. The corresponding entry in Biyzaqov (2005, p. 486) is as follows: *säbiy, näreste, böpe, böbek, äldiy – jaña tuwğan, esymegen jas bala*, i.e., 'infant, baby, babe, tot, tiny tot – new born, immature, little child'. *Säbiy* (< Ar.) is a rather general term for a baby.

In Kazakh culture, this is a period of special care, during which the baby is not shown to the strangers. *Näreste* (< Per.) denotes an infant up to the age of one year. From the fortieth day of life to the end of lactation, babies are called *böpe* or *böbek*. Some Kazakhs use the former for girls and the latter for boys, but this distinction is not confirmed in any dictionary. There are also diminutive forms used regardless of sex, e.g., *böpeş, böpetay* and *böpejan* 'little baby, tiny tot, little one', cf. Tur. *bebek* and Kir. *böbök*. From the time of weaning until approximately six years of age, children are called *büldirşin*. This is a frequent term for children in preschool and for first year pupils of elementary school. All the words shown above are nouns and are used for both sexes, with the reservation mentioned earlier regarding *böpe* or *böbek*. An interesting noun is *äldiy*. It seems to be a back-formation from the compound *äldiy-äldiy*, which normally means 'lullaby' and is regarded by some as an onomatopoeic word, cf. Pol. *luli, luli* 'id'. The meaning of *äldiy*, in contrast to the compound, is 'little baby lullabied in a cradle' (Januzaqov, 2008, p. 86). Such a semantic shift is not attested in Kir. *aldey-aldey* (Judaxin, 1965, p. 49), nor in Uz. *alla(-alla)* (UTIL, 1, p. 40).

There are also words used symbolically or metaphorically for babies and little children, e.g., *balapan* 'nestling', a word frequently used when talking about or addressing children.

3.2. Youth (from childhood to maturity)

This stage of life can be subdivided into two subperiods: the first from about six to twelve, and the second from thirteen to twenty-five years of life. Every twelve years of life constitute a period called *müşel* (see below). Biyzaqov (2005, p. 260) provides the following terms and explanations for this stage: *jetkinşek*, *jasösprim*, *jas ulan*, *jas ören*, *bozbala*, *büldirşin*, *tülek* – *er jetip*, *eseyip qalğan bozbala*, *qız-bozbala*; *jas urpaq*, *jas buwın*, i.e. ‘adolescent, teenager, youngster, stripling, young boy, anybody in his/her youth – a boy or girl who is in the process of developing from a child into an adult; young generation, youths’.

Jasösprim, *büldirşin* and *tülek* are used for both sexes, while the remaining terms refer specifically to male youngsters. *Ulan* means ‘boy’, whereas *bala* means ‘child’, but it usually designates boys. Therefore, a girl in this period of life is called *qız bala*, also *qız-bozbala* ‘young girl, adolescent girl’.

As in the preceding group, all these terms are nouns, including the composite ones: *jasösprim*, *jas ulan*, *jas ören* and *bozbala*. In fact, *ören* is also used as a simple noun meaning ‘youth’. QS (p. 1036) glosses this word as ‘*jasösprim*, *jetkinşek*’, i.e. ‘youth, adolescent’. Another word for this period of life is *örim*, glossed by QS (p. 1039) identically as ‘*jasösprim*, *jetkinşek*’, along with its derivative *örimtal* ‘youth, adolescent’ (QS, 1039), which appears to be an adjective derived from the noun *örim*. Although *örim* is listed in the dictionary, it is rarely used, e.g., *örimdey qız* ‘a very young girl’.

Tülek, similar to *balapan*, also denotes a young bird or fledgling (QS, 1297), but older than *balapan*. In relation to birds of prey, it refers to a young bird up to the age of one year.

Biyzaqov’s synonyms do not cover the entire vocabulary, as noted above. Additional synonyms may be added, e.g., *jigit* ‘youth, teenager’, which is also used as *jas jigit*. *Jigit* refers to a young man under twenty-five years of age, while *qız* is a girl of the same age.

Another relevant adjective is *eresek* ‘grown up, pubertal’, e.g., *eresek bala* ‘boy grown up’, glossed in QÄTS (5, p. 341) as ‘boy aged thirteen–fifteen years’, *eresek qız* ‘girl grown up’ and *eresek jigit*, which is used rather metaphorically to mean ‘bold’ or ‘picky’ (QÄTS, 5, p. 341).

Between six and twelve years of age, boys are called *baldirğan* and girls *balawsa*. The former literally means ‘Heracleum’ (QS, p. 184), while the latter denotes ‘fresh grass’ (QS, p. 186). *Balawsa* is also used as a female name.

Following this period, from around ten or twelve to fifteen years, boys are referred to as *jetkinşek*, meaning ‘mature’, while a general term for both sexes is *jasösprim* (QS, p. 482) ‘lit. young sprout, young shoot’.

From approximately thirteen years of age up to adulthood boys are called *bozbala* (QS, p. 242) meaning ‘teenager, young boy’.

3.3. Adulthood

This period of life may also be subdivided into two subperiods: the first from about twenty-five to fifty years, and the second from fifty to sixty years of age. The first subperiod corresponds to middle age, called *orta jas* ‘middle age’, and those in this age are referred to as *orta jastağı(lar)* ‘middle-aged’. The second subperiod, following the *müşel* system, is called *egde jas*. In his dictionary, Biyzaqov does not provide synonyms for this period, probably because it is the least marked stage of life. A young man in this age group is called *boydaq* ‘bachelor, not married yet’, which functions as an adjective. There are also two terms emphasizing maturity, adulthood, and readiness for marriage: *boyjetken* ‘bachelor-girl, maiden, unwed (ready to be married)’ for a young woman, and *erjetken – kämeletke tolğan* ‘adult – he who is fully grown’ (Biyzaqov, 2005, p. 155) for a young man. Other dictionaries do not include the compound word *erjetken*, but QS (p. 419) lists its source verb *erjet-* ‘to grow fully, to grow up’.

Naturally, this age group also corresponds to the stage of life to which the words *erkek* ‘man’ (rarely *er* ‘id’) and, in the case of women *äyel* (< Ar.), formerly *qatın*, belong. At present, *qatın*, historically a widespread Turkic word for ‘woman’ (also a loanword), is rarely used in colloquial Kazakh because it is perceived as derogatory. However, it should be noted that some Kazakhs, especially in high-register contexts and literature, do still use it. Kazakh also has a special term *keliñsek* that designates a young, recently married woman. Occasionally, the collocations *jas ağası* and *sargidir äyel* are encountered, the former to men and the latter to women.

A woman who completed the first subperiod and entered the second, yet remains single or unwedded, may be called *käri qız* ‘old-aged bachelor-girl’, which corresponds, in relation to men, to *sür boydaq* ‘old-aged bachelor’. These terms do not indicate a precise upper age and are derogatory, so they must be used with caution.

3.4. Old age, oldness or elderliness

Old age begins after around sixty years of life. Biyzaqov’s (2005, p. 291) entry for this period, starting with the headword *käri*, is as follows: *qartañ, qartamıs, egde, mosqal, kekse, sargidir, laqsa, kitab. jasamıs – mosqal tartqan, jası jetken, ulğayğan*, i.e. ‘old, elderly, ageing, past one’s prime, bookish advanced in years – age-stricken, senescent’.

Some of Biyzaqov’s explanations require comments. Firstly, *laqsa* may only be used metaphorically. Moreover, according to QS (p. 879) it is a dialect word used in relation to old-aged animals, as is evident from its definition *tisi tüsip qalğan äbden qartayğan (it, at t.b)*, i.e. ‘very old, toothless dog,

horse, etc.’. Therefore, Biyzaqov’s example *laqsa käri* should probably be understood as ‘toothless codger’. Secondly, *kekse* and *sargidir* are adjectives used only in relation to women (QS, pp. 619, 1116). Thirdly, *jasamis* is qualified as ‘bookish’. Fourthly, the definition *orta jastan asıp mosqal tartqan, biraz jasqa kelgen* (Biyzaqov, 2005, p. 249), i.e., ‘past it, age-stricken, who reached old age’, suggests that in the entry beginning with the headword *jasamis*, followed by the synonyms *jasamal*, *jasamalı*, *qartamis*, there could be a fifth period of life, between maturity and old age, although *qartamis* also appears in the basic entry. *Jasamis* ‘lit. who has lived’, can be translated as ‘advanced in years’, whereas *qartamis* as ‘aged’. *Jasamis* is semantically close to Rus. *пожилый*, so it should be examined whether it is a calque from Russian. In any case, the first three words are derived from the verb *jasa-* ‘to live’. Fifthly, if there is *qartañ*, the first group should also include *balañ* ‘childish’.

A man between sixty and seventy years of life may be called *qarasaqal* ‘lit. black beard’) and a woman *qara kempir* ‘lit. black old woman’. After eighty years of life, a man is called *aqsaqal* ‘lit. white beard’, i.e. ‘grey-bearded’.

As in other Turkic languages, ‘old-aged’ may also be expressed by the adjective for ‘big, great’, in Kazakh *ülken*, and ‘young’ by the adjective *kіші* ‘little, small’, especially in combination with the word *jas* ‘year (of life), age’, e.g.,

(12) *jası kіші*

age-3POSS small

‘a young man’

(13) *jası ülken (kisi)*

age-3POSS great (person)

‘elder (person)’ (QS, p. 480).

As is well known, expressing the idea of ‘grandmother’ and ‘grandfather’ by composing the respective names from the words ‘mother’ and ‘father’ and the adjective ‘big, great’ is quite common in languages, e.g. English *grandfather* and German *Großvater*, as well as in some Turkic languages, e.g., Tur. *büyük anne*, Kir. *çоғ ene* ‘grandmother’ and Tur. *büyük baba*, Kir. *çоғ ата* ‘grandfather’. Although this strategy does not seem to be widespread in Kazakh, some similar compounds are attested, e.g., *ülken şeşe* ‘paternal grandmother’ (QS, p. 1348). It is common across the world’s languages to refer to a youngster as ‘little’, ‘small’, or ‘tiny’.

4. Twelve-year age periods (*müşel*, *müşel jas*)

In Kazakh culture, age is divided into twelve-year periods corresponding to the twelve-year animal calendar, though without reference to the names of the animals. This period is called *müşel*, a Mongolic word, cf. Kalm. *möcl* and Mong. *müčilgen* (Räsänen, 1969, p. 346; ÈSTJa, 2003, p. 91). It represents an

East Asian tradition adopted by Turkic cultures through the Mongols under the Chinggisids. The system is known among the Kazakhs, Karakalpaks and Noghays, and the word *müşel* (or *müşel*, etc.) is also attested in Uyghur, Uzbek, Tatar, and Yakut. The question of whether this tradition was fully integrated in these cultures requires further study. In practice, these twelve-year periods are not typically used in counting age but are recognized culturally and carry importance to all Kazakhs during the transitional years from one period to the next one. Such transitional years require special attention and adherence to prescribed customs.

However, this system is sometimes used not only in indicating age, but also for dating events, including relatively recent ones, e.g.

(14) *Osıdan tuwra üş müşel burın Barıs julında 1986 jılı KSRO-nıñ qabırğasın sökken qazaq*

...

‘Exactly three cycles before (i.e. 36 years before) in the Month of the Tiger when the

Kazakhs pulled down the wall of the Soviet Union ...’ (Bayğanin, 2022, p. 8).

This article was published on January 18, 2022, and the author had in mind the Kazakh mass protests of 16 December 1986.

The following twelve-year periods are distinguished in the life of a person: *er jete bastaw* ‘beginning of the process of developing into maturity’ (to 13 years), *jigittik şaq* ‘young-aged time’ (to 25 years), *aqıl toqtatıw* ‘reaching the age when one is wise’ (to 37 years), *orta jas* ‘middle-age’ (to 49 years), *egde jas* ‘advanced age’ (to 61 years), *qarttıq* ‘early old-age’ (to 73 years), *kärilik* ‘late old-age’ (to 85 years), *qaljıraw* ‘senescence’ (to 97 years), *şöpşek süyüw* ‘lit. kissing a great-grandchild’ (to 109 years) and *nemene süyüw* ‘lit. kissing a great-grandchild (in the sixth generation)’ (to 121 years) (Rısbayeva, 2000). It is noteworthy that in this system *qart* is not equal to *käri*; *käri* denotes an older age than *qart*.

As can be seen, there are ten twelve-year periods, which give an extraordinary upper age limit of 120/121 years of life. I cannot examine historical statistics, if they are available, to verify the reality and life expectancy, but there is some onomastic evidence for the longevity and vigour of certain Kazakh men, visible in a special group of male names. These names combine a numeral from fifty to ninety with the word *bay* ‘rich, wealthy’, a frequent element in male names, to indicate that a son was born when his father was fifty to sixty, sixty to seventy, seventy to eighty and ninety years and above. Examples include *Elüwbay* ‘fifty+rich’, *Alpısbay* ‘sixty+rich’, *Jetpısbay* ‘seventy+rich’, *Seksenbay* ‘eighty+rich’ and *Toqsanbay* ‘ninety+rich’. Although rare, these names are still occasionally used today.

The adaptation of the old system to the more convenient decimal arithmetic is well reflected in the *müşeltoy* ceremony ‘anniversary, jubilee’, celebrated

every ten years to begin with somebody's fiftieth birthday (Aqtay & Jankowski, 2011, p. 339; Januzaqov, 2008, p. 606).

5. Some lexical notes on the words expressing age

According to Quralulı's (2010) dictionary of Kazakh adjectives, the following words analysed semantically in this article are adjectives: *eresek* (p. 59), *jasamal*, *jasamus*, *jasañ* (p. 73), *käri* (p. 90), *kekse* (p. 92), *qartamus*, *qartañ* (p. 131), *mosqal* (p. 161), *ören* and *örimtal* (p. 165), and *sargidir* (p. 173).

A reliable method for verifying adjectivity is to test a word's ability to undergo partial reduplication, as shown in (3). Among the words just listed, the following may be partially reduplicated: *ep-eresek*, *jap-jas*, *käp-käri* (rarely used) and *kep-kekse*. *Jasañ* and *qartañ* cannot be partially reduplicated, since the suffix -Añ conveys the feature of the source nouns – in these cases *jas* 'young' and *qart* 'old'. This functions similarly to the English suffix -ish, i.e. *jas* + -Añ > *jasañ* 'youngish', *bala* + -Añ > *balañ* 'childish' and *qart* + -Añ > *qartañ* 'oldish'. A similar situation occurs with the suffix -tal (Janpeyisov, ed., 2002, p. 354),³ which is present in the adjective *örimtal*.

With regard to *jasamus* and *qartamus*, these words are adjectivized participles formed with the suffix -mIs. *Qartamus* is atypical, since the verb 'to grow old' is *qartay-*, not **qart-*, thus the expected form would be *qartaymus*. Despite the suspicion that *jasamus* may be a Russian semantic calque, the suffix -mIs in this meaning and function – i.e. forming participles – must be archaic, as in Modern Kazakh, unlike in Turkish, it forms nouns, e.g., *bolmus* 'being, entity' and *qilmis* 'crime'. Nevertheless, the history of this word and the reliability of its evidence should be examined. The adjective *jasamal* is also derived from the verb *jasa-*. *Mosqal* cannot be partially reduplicated either.

To express age, Kazakh often uses derivatives of the verbs 'to reach', 'to grow', 'to become mature', e.g., *jetkinşek* < *jet-* 'to reach' + -Kin + +şEK, (*boy*) *jetken* < *jet-* + -KEñ, *eresek* < *er-* 'to approach, to reach' -EsEK, and (*jas*) *öspirim* < *ös-* 'to grow' -Mİr + Im.

3 According to this grammar, the suffix -tal is not productive and occurs rarely, forming only five or six derivatives. The grammar provides six of them: *ösimtal* 'growing', *sezimtal* 'sensitive', *jağimtal* 'liked', *urimtal* '1. close. 2. easy', and *uğimtal* 'clever'. Interestingly, the suffix -tal in all the examples given is preceded by another suffix, -m. *Örimtal* is not included in this grammar.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ar. – Arabic	PIE – Proto-Indo-European
Kalm. – Kalmuk	Pol. – Polish
Kaz. – Kazakh	PSL – Proto-Slavic
Kir. – Kirghiz	Sil. – Silesian
Mong. – Mongol	Trk. – Turkic
OT – Old Turkic	Tur. – Turkish
Per. – Persian	Uz. – Uzbek

ÈSTJa – Blagova, ed., 1997; Dybo, ed., 2003
KRPS – Baskakov, Zajączkowski, & Shapshal, ed., 1974
QÄTS – Isqarov & Wäli (ed.), 2007
QS – Wäli, Qurmanbayuli, & Malbaqov, ed., 2023
UTIL – Ma'grufov, ed., 1981

REFERENCES

- Aqtay, G. (2013). Adjectives in Modern Kazakh. In: H. Jankowski (ed.), *Turkey, Kazakhstan and the Crimea. Ten Years of Turkology in Poznań*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 37–47.
- Aqtay, G. (2016). Kazakh Adjectives Denoting Human Properties. *Türk Dilleri Araştırmaları*, 26(1), 41–52.
- Aqtay, G. & Jankowski, H. (2011). *Słownik kazachsko-polski*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka.
- Bayganin (2022). Atameken kimniñ ata mekeni? *Zhas Alash*, 1.01.2022, 8.
- Biyzaqov (2005) *Sinonimder sözdigi*. Almaty: Arys baspasy.
- Blagova (ed.). (1997). *Etimologicheskij slovar' tyurkskikh yazykov*. Moskva: Yazyki russkoy kul'tury.
- Boryś, W. (2005). *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Dixon, R.M.W. (1982). *Where Have All the Adjectives Gone? And Other Essays in Semantics and Syntax*. Berlin: Mouton Publishers.
- Dixon, R.M.W. (2006). Adjective Classes in Typological Perspective. In: R.M.W. Dixon & A. Aikhenvald (eds.), *Adjective Classes: A Cross-linguistic Typology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–49.
- Łługosz-Kurczabowa, K. (2008). *Wielki słownik etymologiczno-historyczny języka polskiego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA.
- Dobrynina (2012). *Prilagatel'nye sovremennogo altayskogo yazyka, oboznachayushchie cherty kharaktera cheloveka (v sopostavitel'nom aspekte)*. Novosibirsk: Rossiyskaya Akademiya Nauk, Sibirskoye Otdeleniye, Institut Filologii.
- Dybo (ed.). (2003). *Etimologicheskij slovar' tyurkskikh yazykov*. Moskva: Izdatel'skaya firma "Vostochnaya literatura" RAN.

- Haspelmath, M. & Tadmor, U. (eds.). (2009). *Loanwords in the World's Languages: A Comparative Handbook*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.
- Israqov, A. & Wäli, N. (eds.). (2007). *Qazaq ädebi tiliniñ sözdigi. On bes tomдық. V tom D–Zh*. Almaty: Arys.
- Jankowski, H. (2013). Turkic *tün* ~ *tun*, *tunğuç*, *tunğut* ‘firstborn’; Kalmuk *tung, ũ* ‘woman who bore only one child; mare after the first foal’: An Attempt at Etymology. In: H. Şirin User & B. Gül (eds.), *Yalım Kaya Bitiği. Osman Fikri Sertkaya Armağanı*. Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 345–354.
- Johanson, L. (2006). Nouns and Adjectives in South Siberian Turkic. In: M. Erdal & I. Nevskaya (eds.), *Exploring the Eastern Frontiers of Turkic*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 57–78.
- Judakhin, K.K. (1965). *Kirgizsko-russkij slovar’*. Moskva: Sovetskaja ènciklopedija.
- Károly, L. (2016). Prototypical Adjectives in Turkic. *Turkic Languages*, 20, 74–89.
- KRPS (1974) = Baskakov, N.A., Zajončkovskij, A., & Shapshal, S.M. (eds.). (1974). *Karaimsko-russko-pol’skij slovar’*. Moskva: Izdatel’stvo “Russkij jazyk”.
- Ma’rufov (ed.). (1981) = Ma’rufov, Z.M. (1981). *Ўzbek tilining izohli lug’ati*. Moskva: Rus Tili Nashriyoti.
- Quralulı, A. (2010). *Qazaq tilindegi syn esimler men söz tirkesteriniñ tüsindirme sözdigi*. Almaty: Öner.
- Räsänen, M. (1969). *Versuch eines etymologischen Wörterbuchs der Türkssprachen*. Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura.
- Rısbayeva (2000). *Qazaq tili: Grammatikalyq anyqtagysh*. Almaty: Sözdik-slovar’.
- Swadesh, M. (et al.). (1972). What is Glottochronology? In: M. Swadesh, *The Origin and Diversification of Language*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 271–284.
- Wäli, N., Qurmanbaiuly, Sh., & Malbaqov, M. (eds.). (2013). *Qazaq sözdigi*. Almaty: A. Baitursynuly atyndagy Til bilimi instituty.
- Zhanpeisov, E. (ed.). (2002). *Qazaq grammatikasy*. Astana: Baitursynuly Atyndagy Til Bilimi Instituty.
- Zhanuzaqov, T. (ed.). (2008). *Qazaq tiliniñ sözdigi*. Almaty: Daik-Press.

Gulayhan Aqtay – obtained her PhD in 2007 at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. She is Assistant Professor at the Department of Central Asia, Institute of Oriental Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University. She is the author of *Eliyahu ben Yosef Qilc’a anthology of Crimean Karaim and Turkish literature. Critical edition with introduction, indexes and facsimile* (2009, a Turkish edition in 2021) and co-author of a few books, e.g., *A Crimean Karaim-English Dictionary* (2015) and *The Crimean Karaim Bible*. Vol. 1: *Critical edition of the Pentateuch, Five Scrolls, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah*. Vol. 2: *Translation* (2019). At the university, she teaches various subjects related to Kazakh and Kazakh culture.

