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**Do Russian and Kazakh influencers differ in their impact upon public opinion in Kazakhstan? Influential frames in cumulative opinion formation**

Today, academic research shows that the nature of impact cast by social media influencers may vary depending on the language-based communicative culture. We use frame analysis in bilingual Kazakhstani social media discussions to trace differences in the impact of influencers’ framing and, thus, potential impact upon cumulative public opinion.

Keywords: public opinion, framing, Kazakhstan, social networks, cumulative deliberation

Framing analysis is, largely,a method used to analyze how people understand situations and events [4]. The concept of framing is based on the assumption that a person makes a decision depending on the form in which information is presented: ‘Framing is the context of consideration of any thing, with the help of which you can change the nuances of perception of this thing’ [3]. Framing allows for highlighting the message core, cut off what may interfere with the intended perception, and offer information in a light favorable for given actors. In this vein, the impact of social networks on public opinion [1] occurs via frame creators who create keywords, metaphors, identity markers, etc. Many scholars hint to the differences in how social media framing works various language cultures, but this remains under-explored.

We look at Russian-speaking and Kazakh-speaking publics, including ethnic Russian, Kazakh, Uzbek, Uygur, and Kyrgyz groups, affect the public opinion in respective language communities in Kazakhstan. We have selected the most resonant discussions on the Kazakhstani segment of Facebook[[1]](#footnote-1) in 2014 and 2024, which made it possible to conduct comparative analysis and show the evolution of the impact of the discussions on this social network upon the Kazakh publics. Of 20 resonant topics relevant for both years, nine were selected based on the frequency of their mentions. Comments in both Kazakh and Russian were selected. We qualitatively assess both the sentiment and framing in user talk, making conclusions on the differences and their potential impact upon opinions in the respective communities.

Our results show that, first, trigger events are interpreted very differently in the five communities. More precisely, the bulk of the analyzed comments in the Kazakh language were of positive sentiment, while they were largely negative in Russian. Comments by Uzbek, Uygur, and Kyrgyz netizens were neutral in content. Second, the dominant (and differing) sentiment in the respective communities to a large extent depends on the impact of language-bound influencing, which includes both institutional and personalized influencers. Thus, in the Russian-speaking discussion clusters, opinions from Russian media sites predominate, often bringing on sharp negativity. In Kazakh publications, influential cultural and public figures become a counterweight to the opinions of the Kazakh audience and help the Kazakh-speaking publics lean towards positive assessment of the events under scrutiny. However, it was not only the sentiment that differed in the two communities, but also the framing that varied. Third, framing was key to turn opinion cumulation into hybrid deliberation [2], as it clearly affected the decision-makers: As our analysis of their socially-mediated speech shows, they changed the rhetoric under the impact of the ongoing discussion, not vice versa.

References

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1. Организация признана экстремистской на территории Российской Федерации. Facebook belongs to Meta recognized as extremist in Russia. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)