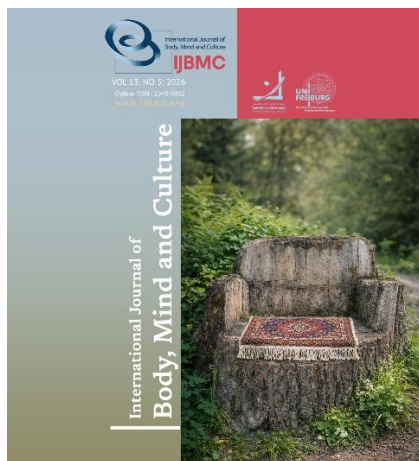


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Children's Radio Broadcasting in Soviet Kazakhstan: Cultural Transmission, Historical Memory, and Ideological Formation

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examined the historical development, cultural significance, and ideological functions of children's radio broadcasting in Soviet Kazakhstan.

Methods and Materials: This theoretical-historical study employed a qualitative approach drawing on archival, audio, oral history, and published sources. Materials included documents from Kazakhstani state archives, personal archival collections, phonodocuments preserved by Kazakh Radio, and interviews or memoirs of radio professionals. Qualitative content analysis was used to examine program structures, thematic priorities, narrative forms, editorial practices, and the relationship between all-Union Soviet broadcasting policies and local Kazakh cultural content.

Findings: Children's radio broadcasting in Soviet Kazakhstan developed as an age-oriented educational and cultural medium. Programs such as Baldyrgan, Zhaukazin, Grandpa Yerden's Tales, Pioneer's Sputnik, Oylap, tap!, and children's radio theatre combined entertainment, moral education, language development, and cultural transmission. Archival evidence showed that Kazakh Radio preserved approximately 350 fairy-tale broadcasts, including nearly 100 versions of recurring children's programs. Dedicated editorial offices and trained announcers supported children's broadcasting, while centralized censorship shaped ideological content. The findings indicate that children's radio simultaneously transmitted Soviet values, promoted collective memory, and preserved Kazakh oral traditions, national language, and cultural identity.

Conclusion: Soviet-era children's radio in Kazakhstan functioned as both an ideological instrument and a culturally adaptive educational medium. Its historical experience remains relevant for contemporary media policy, especially for developing age-specific, culturally grounded audio content for children.

Keywords: Radio, Child, Mass Media, Cultural Transmission, History, Kazakhstan.

Introduction

The stages of development of national radio in the period under study are interrelated with the stages of evolution of Soviet radio broadcasting as a whole. Radiofication of the KazSSR was one of the primary tasks in the 1920s, and the population was informed about it by newspapers (Palmer, 2016). It is known that since the 1920s, radio programs have enjoyed great popularity among the younger generation in the Soviet Union, contributing to the formation of values and moral attitudes, as well as expanding their outlook. Since the Orenburg period, the KazTsIK officials had been promoting the idea of radio broadcasting (TsGA, #7). One of the phenomena in the evolution of Soviet (and Kazakh) radio broadcasting after the war was the active expansion of children's radio programs. The program schedules restored those programs and rubrics that had been broadcast in the pre-war years, and many new programs across various forms and genres were created for children's audiences. In fact, communist radio broadcasting helped schools transform 'unorganized children' into 'an organized whole: a fraternal, friendly, pioneer family' (Chelysheva, 2013).

It turned out that the creation of a broadcasting grid for children in the USSR was approached not only with creative and educational purposes but also with psychological ones. Thanks to social and psychological features, radio could interest a child. As a consequence, he was not only a listener but also an active participant in the broadcast program.

Children's radio programs, radio newspapers, and radio magazines first appeared on the air in 1925: 'Radiopioneer', 'Radiooktyabrenok', later 'Utrennaya Zorka' (later 'Pioneer Zorka'), 'Masha-Rasteryasha', and others. Such programs were broadcast before the war and marked the start of children's radio journalism.

By 1930, there were about 300 such programs on Soviet radio. That was an interesting period when the color of the Union's intelligentsia came to the radio to record speeches, including poems for children. Alas, those recordings have not survived for many reasons, including technical ones.

The wartime trials affected children's education, but children's radio continued to operate, albeit for a limited time. The educational functions were supplemented by the cultivation of patriotism and courage in the younger

generation (Rudenko, 1984). In the development of children's radio broadcasting, experts identify at least two stages during the Great Patriotic War: propaganda (1941-1943) and educational and enlightening (1943-1945) (Assymova et al., 2025).

The first period, to a greater extent, was aimed at teenagers who had an idea about the war and the front. Children could go on air to share an interesting story. A little more than two hours of airtime was allocated for children's radio broadcasting. In this form, children's radio existed from 1941 to 1943. During the educational, enlightening phase (1943-1945), after the resumption of the children's radio broadcasting department, the age-category division was reinstated. Since 1946, the Soviet radio has launched the game 'Ugadai-ka', and children have been happy to participate in the program. The issue of the famous radio program 'Pioneer Zorka' of 10 May 1945 was fully dedicated to the great Victory Day.

The transition to a peaceful life changed the content of children's radio programs. Attention was paid to reviving arts radio programs and radio theatre. Role-playing scenes, voice-overs, and plots were entertaining and distracted children from their traumatic experiences.

However, post-war broadcasting was gradually pushed into a censorship framework; almost 95% of broadcasting was now recorded on film. The events of the 20th Party Congress and the exposure of Stalin's 'cult of personality' also led to changes in radio. In 1956, it was decided to divide the editorial staff into children's and youth. Various columns appeared, designed for different age audiences: pre-school, school, and students. Thus, in 1962, the radio station 'Yunost' for the younger generation was born (Yudin & Keith, 2003). The program 'Youth about Classical Art' covered works not only from national but also from world literature.

The years of the so-called 'stagnation' were also characterized by the specifics of radio broadcasting. In the 1970s, the main goal of Soviet radio broadcasting was the moral education of children. Radio plays requiring analysis were staged more often. The radio program 'In the Land of Literary Heroes' offered children the chance to have dialogues with the heroes of literary works. With the help of favorite fairy-tale characters, it was necessary to convey certain ideals to the young

listeners. Radio in the 70s aimed to develop intellectual and informational control not only for the adult audience but also for children (Kazarina, 2022).

In the 1970s, the USSR radio allowed topics to be discussed with listeners that had never been thought of before: religion and the church, child and juvenile delinquency, and others. Children of preschool age listened to the radio program ‘We did not go through this’, in which they communicated with the presenters using a question-and-answer format.

It is widely acknowledged that radio broadcasting in the Soviet Union and its Union republics sought to promote the education and moral development of younger generations. However, this objective was pursued within clearly defined ideological and institutional constraints. For instance, radio programming did not include references to books or films banned in the USSR, nor did it feature individuals who lacked approval from official Soviet and Party structures.

Children of different age groups were systematically introduced to educational and cultural content; however, this material was carefully curated to shape specific social attitudes and communicative norms. In particular, ideologically charged concepts—such as “bourgeoisie” and “capitalist”—were consistently framed in negative terms, contributing to the formation of a prescribed worldview. At the same time, editorial oversight and censorship mechanisms extended to monitoring audience responses, including children’s feedback, thereby allowing for centralized control over content production and dissemination across the Union republics.

In this context, critical perspectives highlighting the ideological nature of Soviet radio broadcasting cannot be dismissed and should be considered part of a balanced analytical framework.

The main body of this article presents the results of an independent study based on a diverse range of sources, including archival materials and phonodocuments preserved by Kazakh Radio, which are treated as primary evidence of historical broadcasting practices.

Methods and Materials

Study Design

This study is based on a combination of archival, audio, and oral-history sources, which are systematically analyzed to establish a clear connection between empirical evidence and interpretive claims regarding children’s everyday experience and the formation of historical memory.

Archival Sources

The primary documentary base includes materials from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (TsGA) (F. R-196, Op. 1, D. 74), the Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation of the Republic of Kazakhstan (TsGA), and the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (AP RK). These collections contain administrative records, policy documents, and transcripts related to the development of radio broadcasting, particularly the process of radiofication in the 1920s and subsequent decades.

Special attention is given to personal archival funds, including those of S. U. Dzhandosov (F. 202-NL), a key figure in Soviet-era broadcasting administration, as well as the collections of M. K. Kozybaev (F. 163-NL) and G. K. Belger (F. 152-NL). These materials include transcripts of radio speeches, editorial correspondence, and program documentation, which are used to reconstruct institutional practices and the role of intellectual elites in shaping children’s programming.

Phonodocuments and Audio Materials

A central component of the source base consists of archival recordings preserved by Kazakh Radio.

These phonodocuments are treated as primary evidence of broadcast content rather than merely illustrative materials. The departmental audio collection includes thematic series such as *Däuir üni*, *Atadan qalğan asyl söz*, *Batyrlyr jırı*, *Än öneri*, *Küi*, *Salt-dästür*, and *Ertegi* (Fairy Tales).

The *Ertegi* section, in particular, contains approximately 350 recorded broadcasts, including around 100 versions of recurring children’s programs (e.g., *Yerden atanyñ ertegilery*, *Zamzağul äjeniñ ertegilery*). These recordings are analyzed using qualitative content analysis, focusing on narrative structure, thematic motifs, and linguistic strategies that convey cultural values and behavioral norms. This allows the study to link specific broadcast content to broader

claims about the construction of children's cultural environment and collective memory.

Oral and Supplementary Sources

The analysis is complemented by semi-structured interviews and conversations with former radio professionals based in Almaty, as well as their published memoirs and scholarly works. These sources provide contextual insights into editorial practices, audience targeting, and institutional constraints. Secondary literature by domestic and international researchers is used to situate the findings within broader historiographical debates.

Analytical Approach

To ensure methodological transparency, the study distinguishes between evidence and interpretation. Archival documents are used to reconstruct institutional frameworks and policy intentions, while phonodocuments are analyzed to identify recurring patterns in content and messaging. Oral testimony is used cautiously to supplement, rather than replace, documentary evidence.

Interpretive claims about children's daily life and historical memory are derived through triangulation of these sources: archival records (institutional intent), audio materials (actual content), and oral accounts (production context).

This multi-source approach allows for a more reliable reconstruction of how children's radio programming functioned as a medium of cultural transmission in Soviet Kazakhstan.

Findings and Results

Foreign studies on the origins of radio are available on the departmental websites of well-known radio companies, particularly in the USA. Modern Internet opportunities allow us to familiarise ourselves with the history of radio, individual projects, and popular children's shows in America. Thus, it is known that in the United States, from 1920 to 1950, it is considered the 'golden age' of radio, because in this period, cinema was not available to everyone and not regularly, the press was not interested in all categories of American citizens, but radio broadcasting literally covered everyone. According to the data, 82 out of 100 Americans were radio listeners (Russo, 2024).

New formats have emerged, namely radio shows, detective series, even soap operas, quiz shows, talent shows, daytime and evening entertainment programs, sports broadcasts, children's shows, cookery shows, and many more.

Then, in the 1950s, TV supplanted radio as the most popular broadcast medium, prompting commercial radio programming to shift to narrower formats: just news, talk, sports, and music. In parallel, there are so-called public, religious, and college radio stations, whose budgets come from sponsors and listeners.

In the American content of radio programs for children in the 1940s, the following formats were used: (given that during the Second World War, the United States was hardly involved in military campaigns, except in 1944, when the 'second front' in Europe was opened): News. Music programs. Comedies. For years, radio actively recruited the most talented humorists from vaudeville and Hollywood. Soap operas—children's programs. The latter were broadcast in the afternoon, and under contract with sponsors, these programs often sold souvenirs, i.e., were commercial in nature (Golden Age of Radio).

Although outwardly this situation looked quite harmless, the 'American way of life' and the 'American dream' were instilled in teenagers: to get rich quickly and easily, the cult of the golden idol and showmanship saturated children's information field.

Researcher G. Ibrayeva paid attention to the radio broadcasting of Kazakhstan in her book on national television (Ibrayeva et al., 2012). Republican children's radio broadcasting has a long history, she writes. In the early years, its programs were differentiated only by nationality. Later, the differentiation became more pronounced: the peculiarities of children from towns and auls, as well as those of different age groups, were taken into account. This contributed to radio broadcasting reaching a wide audience of children. The programs 'Baldyrgan' ('Baby'), 'Zhaukazin' ('Snowdrop'), and 'Grandpa Yerden's Tales' were organized for children, introducing them to fairy tales of the peoples of the world in dramatizations, poems, cursive words, games, charades, and songs. For a long time, the program for schoolchildren 'Oylap, tap!' existed on the Kazakh radio. ('Think and find!') in the form of a radio game. The purpose of the game is to learn new things in science and technology and to solve everyday problems.

The literary radio magazine 'Shynar' ('Rainbow') told about new books published by the republican youth publishing house 'Zhalin'. There were regular interviews with Kazakhstani writers and poets; their new poems were recited, and authors shared their creativity. The 'Club of interesting meetings' was created for Kazakhstani schoolchildren-radio listeners, where recordings with artists and advanced workers in the republic's production were organized. 'Radio theatre for children' aired original plays and radio dramatizations in 1970-1980 (Kozybaev, 1979).

The radio magazine 'Pioneer's Sputnik' informed about children's studies and pioneer concerns, about schoolchildren engaged in clubs, young technicians' and naturalists' stations, about young singers, artists, and sportsmen. These programs aroused the desire to compete and achieve results. The columns of the radio magazine broadcast informative stories and debates. Another children's program, 'International Friendship Club', was very popular; it introduced IFC's work in schools across the republic.

An interesting find was on Kazradio: when children from brotherly republics spoke at the microphone, they sent radio letters recorded on film. The program also talked about the lives of children abroad.

The radio club 'Orender' ('Teenagers') was very popular in Soviet times, in the 1970s and 1980s. It covered the topics of studies and school Komsomol work. In the rubric 'The future begins today,' reported on new buildings and the work of enterprises in Kazakhstan. The issues of choosing a life path, career guidance, and related topics were also discussed.

A whole series of programs for schoolchildren in Kazakhstan was broadcast in Russian, for example, 'Salute, Pioneers!' about the participation of the republic's pioneers in the labor paratroops of the tenth five-year plan. There was also such a program, abbreviated 'SHTIM' ('Timur's Staff'), about schoolchildren helping war and labor veterans, the elderly, and the lonely (Ibrayeva et al., 2012). Such a movement was spread throughout the Union. 'SHTIM' constantly reported on military-patriotic work in schools, the creation of museums of military glory, and red pathfinders—all of which involved children in learning about the nation's history and heroic past.

Also, in the children's and youth broadcasts of Kazradio, there was coverage of the republican

programs: 'Pioneers of Kazakhstan - to the builders of BAM', 'Turksib-BAM - roll call of five years', and similar programs. Nowadays, such stories are perceived ambiguously, as large-scale projects like BAM did not really achieve great results.

Personnel potential of Kazakh children's radio broadcasting.

Returning to the early days of national radio broadcasting, it is important to dwell on the personnel issue. Working with a children's audience was one of the most difficult jobs in radio: it was not easy to enthuse a child with a voice-over. It was necessary to select personnel whom the commission chose. G.Zh. Ibrayeva relies on the history of the Union broadcasting when she writes: '...In 1920, publications for children and teenagers were singled out: pioneer newspapers, magazines, and radio broadcasts. Differentiation of the children's audience was first observed in the practice of all-Union radio, whose programs were addressed to children on social grounds, separately to urban and peasant children. Then, publications and radio programs began to take into account children's age differences (Ibrayeva et al., 2012).

There are practically no materials about the first decade of KazRadio's work. We managed to generalize materials on the staff potential of Kazakh Children's Radio (1934 - 1991). In the mid-1930s, the central radio broadcasting center of the Kazakh Republic broadcast children's programs three times a week. This is an extremely interesting fact because at that time there was no television or other mobile means of communication, and the country's inhabitants received information mainly through newspapers, magazines, and radio. There were newspapers 'Druzhnye rebyata', 'Pioneer', magazine 'Baldyrgan', union children's magazine 'Murzilka', but preschoolers could not yet read, for example, and they loved the radio. Radio receivers were in every home, and any child could listen to children's programs at certain hours, feel part of a huge country, imagine other girls and boys like them, empathize with them, make plans together, and share small victories.

Among the first children's radio journalists, Kazakhstanis know Mina Seitova, a veteran of the industry, as an announcer of children's radio programs in 1934. As a fifteen-year-old schoolgirl, Mina Seitova won a recitation contest and was invited to participate in the programs. Fate did not spoil the future prima Kazakh

radio: Mina Seitova was born in a distant village № 9, Karabalyk district, Kostanay region. Mina (Muslima) lost her parents early; she was brought up together with her sisters and brothers by her uncle Korganbek. At the end of the 1920s, fleeing from hunger, her uncle moved to Alma-Ata with his large family. Here, Mina studied at Boarding School No. 12 and participated in amateur art. At one such concert in the mid-1930s, she was noted by the jury, which included Akhmet Zhubanov, Evgeny Brusilovsky, and Beimbet Mailin. She remembered these names well and was worried when, in 1937, many of them were persecuted and repressed.

Mira Seitova graduated from boarding school in 1937, and from that year she began working in radio permanently. It is not surprising that Mina Seitova became the leading announcer of Kazakh radio; for 44 years, her soulful voice was the backdrop to the lives of Kazakhstani people, especially children. With all responsibility, she took up the task; then she began to train young colleagues and pass on her rich experience. During the war years, writers evacuated from Russia worked at Kazakh radio - a whole constellation of names: Mikhail Zoshchenko, Samuil Marshak, Konstantin Paustovsky. Konstantin Simonov and Olga Forsh were frequent visitors. Marshak, the author of children's poems, was especially loved to listen to (Galkina, 2014).

At her spouse's place of service, she had the opportunity to work on the radio in the 1950s in the Taldy-Kurgan region, and upon returning to the capital of the Kazakh SSR, she continued working on the radio and traveled to seminars in Moscow, where she learned new things. Mina Seitovna Seitova - Honored Worker of Culture of the Kazakh SSR, Honored Radio Operator of the USSR, holder of the Order 'Badge of Honor', medals 'For Labor Valor', 'For Valorous Labor in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945'. Interestingly, her name and surname at birth sounded as Muslima Seitovna Yerzhanova (Seitova, 2024).

The workers of the republican radio maintained warm relations with outstanding Soviet announcers Y.B. Levitan, O.S. Vysotskaya, V.B. Hertsik, V.N. Chizhov, V.V. Panfilov, E.I. Shashkova, and many other colleagues from the Union republics. The leader of the Kazakh Republic, D.A. Kunayev, respected radio journalists and, before his radio speeches, necessarily consulted with them not just to read the text but also to convey the right emotions. During the period under study, the leadership of the

republic maintained control of such an important industry as radio.

The personnel growth of the republican radio during the Soviet era bore fruit. Among the pupils of M. Seitova's students are a large group of famous cultural workers who later became famous: People's Artist of the Kazakh SSR Anuarbek Baizhanbaev, People's Artist of the USSR Ermek Serkebyev, People's Artist of the Kazakh SSR Zamzagul Sharipova, famous Kazakh writer and poet Mukagali Makatayev, People's Artist of the USSR Bibigul Tulegenova, Mambet Serzhanov, Gennady Maryukhin, Honored Artist of the Republic of Kazakhstan Sauyk Zhakanova, and many others (Bekisheva, 2014).

The personnel potential of Kazakh children's radio broadcasting in the years that historians today call 'stagnation' (1965 - 1985) was quite solid, because the color of the national intelligentsia was invited to edit texts, and radio programs were conducted under the patronage of experienced directors. Thus, in the history of children's radio of the republic entered such personalities as: writer, winner of the State Prize of the Kazakh SSR Muzafar Alimbayev, editors of children's radio programs in 1940-1960, veterans of the industry Nadezhda Popova, Roza Ivanovna Pankratova, Emilia Gavrilovna Vorotnikova, and many others. They were followed by a young generation of national journalists, graduates of the journalism faculty of the Kazakh State University named after S.M.Kirov (now Al-Farabi KazNU); among them, in the mid-1980s, Laura Barlybayeva, then editor of the radio program 'Sputnik Pioneer', proved herself well.

Laura Khatiyatovna Barlybaeva, one of those who devoted many years to work on children's Kazakh radio, is now an honored worker of education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, winner of UNESCO prizes, International Eurasian Prize, Union of Journalists of Kazakhstan, writes books, articles, publishes in the periodical press, and shares what she has seen and experienced. Her materials deeply reveal the industry's inner, tense life, and memorable meetings, when, with the beginning of 'perestroika' in 1985, it became possible to talk about the experience. L. Barlybaeva shares her memories in the pages of the republican press. Thus, an experienced radio journalist recalls that the guest on the radio was a famous Kazakh poet, publicist, and public figure, Gafu Kairbekov (Barlybayeva, 2016: 33).

She writes books, so she presented a new book, 'Funtik and Kuka', written especially for children, about the lives of her pets. The book is written in two languages - Russian and Kazakh. The presenter of Kazakh radio, Laura Barlybayeva, is already known to the Kazakh public for the book 'Glorious Sons of the Fatherland'. Over many years of work on the radio, Mrs. Barlybaeva has carried out numerous interesting projects, including programs in the radio-film genre.

Professor N. Omashev, a veteran of the journalism industry, praised the work of Kazakh radio in the last decades of the 'stagnant' period: '...As a researcher in this field, I would suggest the work of Kazakh radio in the 70s and 80s as an example for today's radio journalists. Radio journalists then worked in a great mood, achieved creative results, and competed with each other (Omarkhankyzy, 2021). This praise also applies to the work of journalists from the children's studio of Kazakh Radio.

The end of the Soviet era at Kazakh Radio renewed the personnel and ideology of work in general. Nurzhan Mukhamedjanova, who graduated with honors from the Faculty of Journalism at KazSU (now Al-Farabi KazNU), began working here. For 13 years, she worked at Kazradio as an editor, head of department, and editor-in-chief of the children's and youth editorial office. She is currently the head of the Almaty TV channel.

Infrastructure of Kazakh Radio editorial offices during the Soviet era

In general, the following thematic divisions were represented on Kazakh Radio in 1970-1980: 'Announcers', 'Directors', 'Main Editorial Office of Latest News', 'Propaganda Department', 'Shalkar' programme, 'Main Editorial Office of Literary and Dramatic Broadcasts', 'Main Editorial Office of Radio Broadcasting of Children and Youth', 'Sport', 'Rural Life', 'Own Correspondents', 'Main Editorial Office of Foreign Broadcasting', 'Dostyk', 'Main Editorial Office of Music Broadcasting', 'Golden Fund', 'Technical Department'.

In this 'constellation', the Main Editorial Office of Radio Broadcasting for Children and Youth took its well-deserved place. This is where real masters of their craft, enthusiasts who worked for Kazakh and Russian-speaking audiences, polished their talents. Among them: Kasymkhan Ersarin, Nurakhmet Jorabekov, Kemelbek Shamatai, Latipa Akhmetova, Kudiyarbek Agybaev, Marua Burzhymbaeva, Imanbai Zhubaev, Sabit

Suleimenov, Katira Jalenova, Kenzhebai Zharmukhanbetov, Bakhyt Dosymov, Kymbat Abilda, Laura Barlybaeva, Karshygy Esimseitova (Brown et al., 2017).

Children's radio programs on Kazakh Soviet radio

The children's radio program of Kazakhstan in the Soviet times included such programs as: 'Pioneer's Sputnik', 'Grandpa Yerden's Tales', 'Evening Fairy Tale', and others - in total about twenty very different programs - very interesting, fascinating (Mason, 1988). A peculiarity of the Soviet stage of radio development, including children's radio, was 'feedback' through the mail; letters signed by pioneers and junior schoolchildren flew across the country to Kazradio's address. Moreover, program editors found time to read and respond (on air or by letter) to the young listeners' requests. The topics of the letters were typical: the Timur movement, participation in the harvest, the work of school libraries, new books, and children's idols. This was a very important part of the work - correspondence from young listeners.

Fairy tales, a form of folk oral heritage, foster in listeners a love of fantasy and imagination, especially among children, and contribute to their cognitive growth and resourcefulness. These programs in the archive of Kazakh Radio are a valuable asset for generations who grew up in the Soviet era. The Kazakh radio has broadcast fairy tales without interruption since 1959.

The titles of the radio programs 'Grandpa Yerden's Tales', 'Grandma Zamzagul's Tales', and 'Evening Tales' were recognizable to the children's audience. Depending on the genres of the fairy tales broadcast on the national radio, there were many animal tales and fantasy stories. All these amazing works were broadcast on the radio by famous Kazakh announcers, including Anuarbek Baizhanbayev, Zamzagul Sharipova, Kasym Zhakibayev, Tanat Zhaylybaev, Saulet Zhakanova, Akyl Kulanbayeva, Zuhra Iskakova, Sabit Orazbayev, Bibiza Kulanbayeva, Makil Kulanbayev, Abdrakhman Asimjanov, and Sholpan Baigabylova (Kazradio, 2023).

The analysis indicates a significant decline in dedicated children's programming within contemporary national broadcasting. Testimonies from experienced practitioners, particularly Laura Barlybayeva, highlight a shift away from literary and dramatized formats that previously characterized children's radio. According to her professional assessment, current radio content lacks

both thematic depth and age-specific orientation, reflecting a broader transformation of broadcasting priorities toward rapid information delivery rather than educational and cultural engagement. This observation is consistent with the study's archival findings, which demonstrate that earlier programming was explicitly structured around pedagogical goals, narrative complexity, and the cultivation of imagination. The contrast suggests a structural reorientation of the media landscape, in which children are no longer treated as a distinct and prioritized audience.

Transformation of Media Consumption and Cognitive Engagement

A key theme emerging from the interviews concerns the changing nature of children's media consumption. Barlybayeva emphasizes the cognitive value of audio-based formats, arguing that the absence of visual imagery in radio fosters imagination and interpretive engagement. In contrast, contemporary visual media—particularly television and digital platforms—are perceived as providing “ready-made” images that limit imaginative participation. From an analytical perspective, this distinction points to a shift from interpretive to passive modes of reception, with important implications for cognitive and cultural development. Radio, as evidenced in historical programming, functioned not only as an informational medium but also as a tool for developing narrative thinking and emotional sensitivity.

Changing Institutional Priorities and Editorial Practices

The findings also reveal a transformation in institutional priorities within the broadcasting sector. Whereas Soviet-era radio maintained specialized editorial departments for children and youth, contemporary programming appears to prioritize speed, accessibility, and mass appeal over targeted educational content. The absence of dedicated children's programs, as noted by practitioners, reflects a broader reconfiguration of media production driven by market-oriented and technological factors. This shift has led to the marginalization of formats that previously combined entertainment with moral and cultural education. As a result, the integrative function of children's radio—linking storytelling, language development, and value transmission—has been substantially reduced.

Discussion and Conclusion

The topic of Soviet broadcasts for children and adolescents in the media (print, radio, television, cinema) is considered ambiguous in the modern context. While some authors in the post-Soviet space continue to defend the humanity of Soviet radio broadcasts, quoting from the works of the leader of the world proletariat, V.I. Lenin, and N.K. Krupskaya. Foreign experts Melissa Chakars (2015) and anthropologists Jeff Sahadeo & Zanca (2007) find evidence that the purpose of Soviet broadcasts for the younger generation was to educate a loyal person who piously believed in communist ideology. This situation is especially acute in the study of radio content for children and adolescents, as exemplified by the national autonomous and union republics of the former Soviet Union. This paradigm is evident in the bibliography on the topic and reflects the state of the ideological component of media work under conditions of globalization.

A researcher from Russia, Y. Kazarina (2022), believes that children's radio programs are an undeservedly neglected area of radio journalism, as they are rarely found in the modern broadcasting grid. It is difficult to disagree with the scientist's opinion, as it reflects the situation on Kazakh radio. Indeed, in the modern world, with the advent of commercial radio broadcasting, children's programs gradually disappeared from the airwaves. This only proves the relevance of addressing the problem under study.

The theoretical basis for this study was provided by works on the history of Soviet radio broadcasting (Roth-Ey, 2020). A valuable source was theoretical works on children's journalism, particularly on radio broadcasting, by Tejkalova et al. (2023); Chelysheva (2013); Ibrayeva et al. (2012); Kamzin & Saubayev (2014); Kozybaev (1979); Rudenko (1984), and others.

Kazakhstani media researcher, Professor G.J. Ibrayeva, states that ‘...The first radio programs for children, which began to be broadcast from April 1925, were strongly influenced by the press, its ways of presenting material, its genres and forms (Ibrayeva et al., 2012). Gradually, radio journalism began to rethink its specificity and develop its own expressive means and genres, as noted by radio researchers (Roth-Ey, 2020).

Applied research on Soviet radio content reflects the industry's goals in an accessible way. For example,

Melissa Chakars, a foreign historian from the University of Philadelphia, USA, studies the history of twentieth-century Buryatia with a focus on education, media, and socio-economic development. She has studied Soviet radio and TV, particularly programs for children and youth, using Buryatia as an example. Her findings that party ideals were imposed on this age group through the media apply to other Soviet regions (Chakars, 2015). Her article analyzes radio and television programs for children, adolescents, and youth in the Buryat Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in the last decades of the Soviet Union. It argues that four themes are most common in such programs: the value of improving the mind and body through educational activities and sports; the importance of being useful members of society; the encouragement of loyalty, patriotism, and a sense of belonging; and learning to distinguish right from wrong. Melissa Chakars argues that authorities developed these themes to create thoughtful, useful, and diligent citizens who supported state goals, understood and valued their individual roles in society, and Buryatia's position in the Soviet Union.

A similar approach to Soviet media content is characteristic of the publications of M. W. Hopkins (1970) and of contemporary anthropologists Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca, authors of an essay on Central Asia (Sahadeo & Zanca, 2007). Through a historical and anthropological study of contemporary Central Asian citizens' opinions, the authors argue that the collapse of the Soviet Union opened new opportunities for social mobility and cultural expression. They interviewed ordinary residents of the region about how they and their children navigate changing historical and political trends (Sahadeo & Zanca, 2007). The stories of Turkmen nomads, Afghan villagers, Kazakh scientists, Kyrgyz border guards, a Tajik strongman, and custodians of religious shrines in Uzbekistan have attracted interest far and wide, not the least of which is radio broadcasting, as noted in the questionnaire.

It should be stated that audio broadcasting is transforming in the context of globalization: for example, the Alice format (developed by Yandex, Russian Federation) is popular in Kazakhstan: Alice has practically replaced the 'baby monitor', when children independently choose and can ask to switch on a musical recording, play 'cities', etc. On modern radio, there is an opportunity to create audio versions of fairy tales in

Kazakh, which is relevant. This aspect requires development on the experience of previous stages of radio development in the republic. The research topic is of interest to international organizations, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is no coincidence that in 2023, a study, 'Kazakhstan Kids Online' on the role of digitalization in the lives of children in Kazakhstan was conducted.

This study has demonstrated that children's and youth radio broadcasting in the USSR, including within Kazakh Radio, was systematically oriented toward a clearly defined audience—primarily "organized children," encompassing preschool and school-aged groups within institutional and family frameworks. The near-universal accessibility of radio across urban and rural contexts ensured its effectiveness as a mass medium for cultural transmission and education.

At the institutional level, children's broadcasting was supported by dedicated editorial structures and carefully selected professional staff, reflecting the state's prioritization of youth audiences. At the same time, this system operated within strict ideological boundaries: content was centrally regulated, and censorship mechanisms limited editorial autonomy. Thus, Soviet children's radio should be understood as both an educational tool and an instrument of ideological formation.

However, the analysis also reveals that within these constraints, radio practitioners developed strategies to preserve and transmit national cultural content. In particular, genres such as fairy tales played a key role in embedding moral values, cultural narratives, and linguistic traditions in accessible forms. These programs functioned as a bridge between official discourse and local cultural heritage, contributing to the formation of children's moral and imaginative worlds.

The study further highlights the uneven nature of the source base. While archival gaps—especially for the early Soviet and wartime periods—limit full reconstruction, the available phonodocuments and documentary materials from the later Soviet decades provide sufficient evidence to trace the evolution of programming and its functions.

In broader terms, the findings suggest that Soviet-era children's radio in Kazakhstan cannot be reduced solely to ideological control; it also represented a complex

communicative system that combined education, cultural adaptation, and professional innovation. This historical experience remains relevant for contemporary media development, particularly in addressing the current lack of age-specific programming and in reconsidering the role of broadcasting in promoting national values and cognitive development among younger audiences.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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