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FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE: PRAGMATIC ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSLANGUAGING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract. This study examines the pragmatic acceptance of translanguaging practices among secondary school teachers in Kazakhstan, highlighting a notable gap between official language policy and classroom realities. Although policy mandates monolingual instruction in Kazakh-medium schools, in practice, teachers frequently incorporate Russian and English to support student comprehension and address challenges related to Kazakh language proficiency and limited teaching resources. Drawing on interviews with nine teachers as agents of ‘micro-language implementation’ within broader ‘macro-language policies’ (Baldauf, 2006) and employing the critical framework of language choice and ideologies (Blackledge & Creese, 2010), the research examines language use strategies and ideologies among secondary school teachers. The findings reveal that despite formal education in Kazakh, some teachers rely on Russian for certain social functions, reflecting ongoing reverse language shift dynamics. This study underscores the need for more inclusive language policies that reflect multilingual realities and calls for further research into classroom pedagogies in educational institutions. The insights aim to inform policymakers and educational stakeholders about effective language development, planning, and the implementation of reforms in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, Kazakh, Russian, language ideology, language policy, translanguaging

Introduction

Education is seen as a site where knowledge and practices are both endorsed and contested (Winter & Pauwels, 2003), especially regarding language. As Spolsky (2009) notes, schools inherently participate in language management by defining which linguistic forms are recognized as appropriate. This process often creates a disconnect between the home language and the official school language. Since teaching predominantly occurs in a codified and officially approved “correct” language, school systems tend to favor standardization, which can marginalize or discourage the recognition of plurilingualism. As Spolsky observes, “monolingual education in the national official language is an unmarked case” (2009, p. 91), and it reflects “the ideological position of those who control them,” states Spolsky (2009, p. 104). Teachers serve as crucial mediators within this context. They bring personal beliefs and values about language, which are shaped by their professional training and social backgrounds, and often view the official language of instruction as naturally superior. Labov’s (1966) insight (cited in Spolsky 2009, p. 110) that teachers tend to come from social groups favoring linguistic standardization helps explain their focus on correctness and purism. However, teachers’ beliefs do not always match their classroom actions (Amara, 1988). In class interactions, they often see themselves as enforcers of linguistic standards, correcting or silencing non-standard forms, while students are seen as individuals whose language use and ideologies should be aligned with institutional norms (Spolsky, 2009, p. 91).

Teachers are generally expected to adhere to the designated language of instruction, reinforcing monolingual norms. Within this framework, switching between languages has traditionally been frowned upon in educational institutions (Blackledge & Creese, 2010, p. 203), despite evidence that code-switching can be an effective pedagogical resource in classroom interactions. This tension has often led both teachers and students to experience guilt when engaging in bilingual practices (Blackledge & Creese, 2010, p. 203). Some teachers feel that languages should be kept strictly

separate; mixing them may be perceived as inappropriate or even morally wrong (Zentella, 1981), a careless habit (Shin, 2004), poor pedagogical practice, or a sign of insufficient language proficiency (Martin, 2005).

While using both a local language and the official language of instruction is common in classrooms, it often faces criticism: it's frequently labelled as 'bad practice,' blamed on teachers' limited language skills, or simply ignored (Martin, 2005, p. 88). More generally, Ferguson (2003) suggests that code-switching is viewed negatively by government officials and education policymakers, despite its widespread use. Consequently, classroom code-switching often lacks official recognition and is marginalized (p. 38), rather than acknowledged as a valuable communication tool. Nationally, this attitude reflects a preference for the "correct and desirable" forms of specified languages over more adaptable multilingual approaches, revealing ongoing discomfort with descriptive over prescriptive language perspectives.

In this study, a clear distinction is made between *code-switching* and *translanguaging*, although both are discussed in relation to multilingual classroom practices. *Code-switching* is used in its traditional sense to refer to the alternation between two distinct linguistic systems (e.g., switching between Kazakh and Russian within interaction) (Ferguson, 2003). In contrast, *translanguaging* is understood as a broader pedagogical and sociolinguistic process that conceptualizes bilinguals' linguistic resources as an integrated repertoire rather than separate systems, involving flexible and strategic meaning-making across languages (García & Li, 2014; MacSwan, 2022). Accordingly, *code-switching* is used to describe observable language alternation, whereas *translanguaging* is used to refer to pedagogical practices and holistic language use in teaching and learning. This distinction is maintained throughout the manuscript to ensure conceptual clarity.

Spolsky (2021, p. 27) observes that instances in which teachers draw on children's linguistic varieties and where schools are open to home languages are often described as translanguaging practices. Originating in classroom research, "translanguaging" refers to the deliberate use of multiple linguistic resources in interaction. In educational contexts, García & Kano (2014) define it as a process in which teachers and students engage in "complex discursive practices that include all the language practices of all students in a class" (p. 261). They argue that such practices develop new language practices and sustain old ones, communicate and appropriate knowledge, and give voice to new sociopolitical realities by interrogating linguistic inequality. From a pedagogical perspective, translanguaging offers several advantages. Baker (2011) notes that it can promote a deeper understanding of the subject matter, support the development of weaker language skills, strengthen home-school connections, and integrate learners with differing levels of language proficiency. In practice, translanguaging allows for flexible movement across languages; for example, teachers may present information in one language while students respond in another. Rather than treating languages as separate systems, this approach views them holistically, without rigid boundaries in the learning process.

Recent research expands the concept of translanguaging beyond classroom interactions. Lewis & Simons. (2010, p. 1) characterize it as a process that improves understanding of language in use, allowing bilinguals to create meaning and influence experience, communication, and language production. In this context, translanguaging is viewed as a pedagogical strategy that enables learners to utilize their full linguistic repertoires, helping to bridge the gap between formal school language policies and everyday language practices (García & Li, 2014; MacSwan, 2022). This view reflects a broader shift toward considering translanguaging as a form of bilingual pedagogy that leverages the pedagogical potential of code-switching. García (2009) advocates for moving away from monoglossic ideologies toward more flexible understandings of language use, while López (2008) highlights that languages are not used in isolation but are interconnected in daily life. Likewise, Cummins (2006) promotes bilingual teaching methods, and Blackledge and Creese (2010) contend that language switching in linguistically diverse contexts is both natural and educationally beneficial. Collectively, these perspectives support incorporating adaptable bilingual practices into classrooms, recognizing their wider sociopolitical and historical influences.

These pedagogical and ideological shifts are reflected in empirical studies across diverse sociolinguistic settings. Chen and Rubinstein-Avila (2018) document attitudinal tensions between language policies and classroom practices in post-colonial contexts (e.g., Africa and Asia). Their study shows that code-switching functions as an effective interactional and pedagogical strategy for achieving learning outcomes. In Malaysia, Martin (2005) finds that classroom code-switching in rural communities is often regarded as a “safe” and functional practice, with instruction effectively operating in a bilingual mode that blends the official language with other linguistic resources. At the same time, such practices can signal a degree of disengagement from formal language policies, as teachers and students rely on available repertoires to facilitate understanding. Where policy frameworks fail to align with classroom realities and do not produce desired outcomes, they may ultimately be reconsidered or withdrawn, as illustrated by subsequent policy changes reported in Chen and Rubinstein-Avila (2018).

As advocates of bilingual pedagogy, Blackledge and Creese (2010) argue that multilingualism should be recognized as a normative resource in schools, rather than subordinated to monolingual instructional models. In practice, however, code-switching is rarely institutionally endorsed and is more often used pragmatically in response to local classroom conditions (*ibid*). This tension is evident in Lin’s (1996) analysis of Hong Kong, where prohibitions on classroom code-switching can disadvantage students with limited English proficiency by restricting their access to symbolic capital and, ultimately, social mobility. From this perspective, code-switching emerges not as a deficiency but as a pragmatic response to the dominance of English, with the potential to support the development of balanced academic bilingualism, particularly among socioeconomically disadvantaged students navigating English-medium education.

In Kazakhstan, translanguaging has yet to gain full recognition or institutional support as a valuable bilingual teaching strategy, highlighting a critical gap between language policies and classroom realities. In light of these dynamics, this study aims to explore the gap between official language policies and actual language practices within Kazakhstan’s educational settings. By examining teachers’ language choices, beliefs, and translanguaging strategies, the research seeks to reveal how language ideologies are negotiated in practice and how they impact language maintenance and shift. Understanding these complexities is essential for developing more inclusive and effective language policies that reflect the multilingual realities of schools and support the linguistic rights and identities of all students.

Research context

Kazakhstan was among the countries most affected by the Russification policies of the Russian Empire and the Soviet regime (Schatz, 2000a; Sharipova, 2020). These policies, together with broader social and political dynamics, shaped the extent and character of Kazakh–Russian language contact. Within the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan stood out for the high level of Russian proficiency among its titular population. By 1979, 52.3% of ethnic Kazakhs reported speaking Russian as a second language, a higher proportion than among Ukrainians (49.8%) and second only to Belarusians (49.0%) (Simon, 1991). By the late 1980s, many urban Kazakhs spoke Russian at near-native levels, whereas rural populations remained predominantly Kazakh-speaking (Fierman, 2006). This linguistic divide was closely tied to social stratification, with Kazakh associated with rural life, backwardness, and poverty (Dave, 1996; Smagulova, 2008). Despite a substantial language shift toward Russian among urban Kazakhs during this period, 85-90% of rural Kazakhs continued to use Kazakh in everyday communication. At the same time, Russian dominated key institutional domains, including education, mass media, governance, science, and the workplace (De Lorme, 1999; Schatz, 2000a; Fierman, 2012, p. 126). These dynamics were also reflected in the education system. The proportion of students enrolled in Kazakh-medium secondary schools declined sharply, from 75% in 1958 to 34.4% in 1991 (Smagulova, 2008; UNDP, 1992), underscoring the broader shift toward Russian as the primary language of upward mobility and institutional participation. Russians disproportionately occupied prestigious and well-remunerated positions and exerted significant influence over intellectual and institutional life. These asymmetries, combined with the limited availability of

Kazakh-medium education, contributed to a substantial language shift toward Russian among urban ethnic Kazakhs (Smagulova, 2008).

By 1989, over 60.5% of ethnic Kazakhs reported high levels of Russian literacy and oral proficiency, yet 97% still identified Kazakh as their mother tongue (Schwartz, 1991). However, as Fierman (1989, p. 174) points out, labeling Kazakh as a “native language” often reflected ethnic identity more than actual language ability. Similar trends were seen among other non-Slavic groups such as Germans, Koreans, and Tatars, many of whom were more proficient in Russian than their heritage languages. After the Soviet Union's collapse, efforts to establish Kazakh as the official language have been cautious. De Lorme's (1999) ethnographic study shows that educational authorities aim to strengthen Kazakh linguistic and cultural identity without alienating the large Russian-speaking population (Baldauf, 2006, p. 155). Despite rising enrollment in Kazakh-medium schools, Russian has retained a central role in independent Kazakhstan and remains the primary language among urban schoolchildren, even among those in Kazakh-medium education (Fierman, 2006; Kuzhabekova, 2019; Smagulova, 2016).

In the context where Kazakh-medium schools are viewed as safe spaces for Kazakh revitalization, educational discourse remains strongly shaped by monolingual norms despite students' multilingual repertoires and translanguaging practices. Although translanguaging is not formally recognized as a pedagogical approach in Kazakhstani schools, it is widely practiced informally, with teachers drawing on both Kazakh and Russian to facilitate instruction.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews with secondary school teachers from Kazakh monolingual schools in Astana. Participants were recruited through a “friend-of-a-friend” sampling method, leveraging existing social networks to identify and invite teachers willing to share their experiences. This approach is commonly used in qualitative research when accessing relatively specific or less readily available populations, particularly where trust and insider networks facilitate participation (Noy, 2008). While snowball sampling enabled efficient access to participants with relevant teaching experience, it may introduce sampling bias, as participants are likely to be drawn from overlapping social or professional networks, which may limit the diversity of perspectives. To mitigate this, participants were recruited through multiple initial contacts across different schools in Astana to broaden the participant pool. In addition, variation in teaching experience, school subjects, and school contexts was actively sought.

The study included nine participants (T1–T9) from three schools in Astana (Schools A–C), selected to ensure variation in teaching experience, subject areas, and school context (Table 1). The sample comprised six females and two males, aged 24 to 65, representing both early-career and experienced teachers. Participants taught a variety of subjects, including English, Informatics, History of Kazakhstan, Physics, Mathematics, and Kazakh language, enabling a broad range of disciplinary perspectives.

Table 1

Information on the Interview Participants

Respondent's Code	Gender	Age	Occupation	Subject
T1	Female	28	School A	English language
T2	Female	29	School A	English language
T3	Male	24	School A	Informatics
T4	Male	26	School A	History of Kazakhstan
T5	Female	50	School B	English language

T6	Female	65	School B	Physics
T7	Female	59	School B	Mathematics
T8	Female	40	School C	Kazakh language
T9	Male	24	School C	Informatics

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process. Prior to the interviews, both verbal and written informed consent were obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study and their rights, including the option to withdraw at any time. To protect participant privacy, all personal data were anonymized, and any identifying information was removed from transcripts and reports to maintain confidentiality.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in an open-ended format to explore teachers' language-use strategies in classroom practice. An interview guide ensured consistency while allowing flexibility, covering themes including professional background and linguistic repertoire, classroom language-use patterns, translanguaging practices, recent shifts in Kazakh use, and the influence of language policy. The interview questions addressed key areas, including how teachers select and alternate between languages in instruction, their use of translanguaging strategies, approaches to supporting students with diverse language proficiencies, and factors shaping changes in their language practices, including institutional and policy-related constraints. Participants were also invited to reflect on their beliefs about multilingual education, the perceived benefits of translanguaging, the challenges they face in multilingual classrooms, and the types of support they consider necessary. Example questions included: "What languages do you typically use during your lessons and why?", "In what situations do you switch between languages?", and "Do you intentionally combine multiple languages when teaching?". Interviews were conducted in Kazakh, Russian, or a flexible bilingual Kazakh–Russian mode, depending on participants' preferences and linguistic comfort, and participants frequently code-switched during the discussions, reflecting their natural communicative practices. This flexible linguistic approach facilitated nuanced responses regarding classroom language strategies and translanguaging practices.

The interviews were audio-recorded and lasted approximately 30-60 minutes each, with variation across participants. In total, this amounted to around seven hours of recorded data across the nine participants. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim to create textual data suitable for detailed analysis.

A reflexive thematic analysis approach was employed following Braun & Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis involved familiarizing oneself with the data through repeated readings of transcripts, followed by initial coding of meaningful segments related to language use and translanguaging practices. Both inductive and deductive coding were used: inductive codes were generated from the data to capture emerging patterns, while deductive codes were informed by existing concepts such as language policy and classroom language practices. Codes were then reviewed, grouped into broader themes, and refined to ensure coherence and consistency with the research questions. Themes such as language choice, translanguaging strategies, and the relationship between policy and classroom practice were ultimately identified.

Interview excerpts, presented in this study, were translated from Kazakh, Russian, or bilingual Kazakh–Russian into English by the first bilingual author and back-translated by the second. Discrepancies were resolved through consensus to ensure accuracy.

Results and discussion

This section outlines the study's key findings, organized around three interconnected themes: language choice, translanguaging strategies, and the link between policy and classroom practice (Table 2). The analysis reveals that teachers' decisions about instructional language are mainly influenced by the availability of subject-specific resources, with Russian and English often used due to a lack of academic materials in Kazakh. To overcome communicative challenges, teachers employ flexible translanguaging techniques, mixing Kazakh, Russian, and English to enhance student

understanding, especially when facing language barriers or unfamiliar terms. Nevertheless, these classroom practices frequently conflict with official language-in-education policies, which specify Kazakh as the only medium of instruction. This disconnect underscores the persistent dominance of Russian in students' linguistic repertoires and illustrates teachers' focus on ensuring comprehension rather than strict policy compliance.

Table 2

Emerging Themes on Language Practices in Kazakh-Medium Classrooms

Theme	Description	Representative quotations
Language choice	Teachers' selection of instructional language is shaped by availability of resources, subject-specific terminology, and student comprehension needs. Russian and English are frequently used due to limited accessibility of Kazakh-language academic materials.	<i>"I write articles first in Russian, then translate them into Kazakh... because I receive information only in Russian and English." (T5)</i> <i>"In Kazakh some information is not available... I am looking for material in Russian, it is easier to find." (T5)</i>
Translanguaging strategies	Teachers flexibly employ multiple languages (Kazakh, Russian, and English) to facilitate understanding, particularly when students experience language barriers or when terminology is difficult to convey in Kazakh.	<i>"I allow children with a language barrier to speak... even in three languages... If a student asks in Russian, it means the learning process is going on." (T4)</i> <i>"We try to explain in Kazakh, and for students who do not understand Kazakh, we explain in Russian." (T2)</i>
Relationship between policy and classroom practice	Although Kazakh is the official language of instruction, classroom practices often diverge from policy due to students' dominant use of Russian and teachers' need to ensure comprehension, creating tensions between policy expectations and instructional realities.	<i>"We do not have Russian classes... but they all speak Russian... then you must explain it all in Russian." (T1)</i> <i>"I try not to mix languages, but I end up speaking 'half-Kazakh'... this is certainly not correct." (T6)</i>

Note. Quotations are taken from semi-structured teacher interviews.

Theme 1 - Language choice. The interviewees also reported that information comes from Russian-language sources or is available in Russian. For example, in *Excerpt 1*, one of the secondary school teachers, who is currently a postgraduate student at the local university, stated that when she writes her articles, she first writes them in Russian and then translates them into Kazakh because the information she obtains is normally from Russian or English sources.

Excerpt 1 "I receive information only in Russian and English"

На казахском я статьи пишу сначала на русском, потом перевожу на казахский, к сожалению, потому что информацию я получаю только на русском и на английском [...] все

книги, буквально, пишутся на русском, потому что бывает так, что информацию, буквально, на казахском не получишь. Вот, приходится получать на русском.

[I write articles first in Russian, then I have to translate them into Kazakh, unfortunately, because I receive information only in Russian and English [...] all books are, literally, written in Russian because you can't get information, literally, in Kazakh. So you have to get it in Russian]. (Transcript, T5)

In *Excerpt 2*, the respondent, who teaches math in a Kazakh-medium school, faces challenges in obtaining information in the Kazakh language. She said that information in Kazakh is either unavailable or the wording needs to be more specific. When preparing teaching materials, she first searches for them in Russian because she believes it is easier. She stated that some video materials (e.g., on YouTube) are in Kazakh. However, these are limited, and the quality of the materials is different from those in Russian.

Excerpt 2 "In Kazakh some information is not available"

Бывает, что на казахском некоторая информация недоступна, какие-то слова, некоторые слова я могу не понять [...] даже прям вот сейчас у меня математика в казахском классе есть да, в 7 классе, я ищу материал на русском языке. Их легче найти, быстрее нахожу. А на казахском языке мне труднее найти [...] Я смотрю учусь чему-то у казахов. Тоже смотрю, но редко. Их мало, есть. Но их мало. Намного меньше, чем на русском языке. И по качеству тоже, подача на русском языке намного... там, получается, больше.

[It happens that in Kazakh some information is not available, some words I cannot understand [...] even right now I teach Maths in the Kazakh class, yes, I am looking for material in Russian, it is easier to find them, I find them faster, while in the Kazakh language it is more difficult for me to find [...] I watch (YouTube videos), and I learn something from Kazakhs; I also watch them, but rare, there are few of them, but there are few of them, but much fewer than in Russian, and in terms of quality and delivery, there is more information in Russian]. (Transcript, T5)

In their interviews, teachers described situations where students spoke Russian among themselves during school breaks. One teacher was disappointed to see Kazakh-speaking students, instead of conversing fluently in their native language, Kazakh, choose to communicate in Russian (*Excerpt 3*).

Excerpt 3 "Kazakh speaking kids talked in Russian"

[...] мысалы звонокта отырғанда балалармен любой темаға сөйлесіп кетеміз, класстан басқаша темаларға. Соны бір күні тілге сөйлесіп кеттік. Өздерінің арасында дискуссия болып жатыр - бәрі қазақтың балдары қап-қазақша келген, қазақша сөйлеп жатқан балдар. Сыртынан қарап, просто жалко, знаешь, маған зрелище болып көрінді, "жалкое зрелище" болады ғой. Қазақтың балдары қиналып орысша сөйлеп бір бірімен.

[...] for example, during the break, we discuss different topics with children, on topics different from the class material. And one day, we started talking about the language. There was a discussion among them (students); all the Kazakh-speaking kids talked in Russian with difficulty. It was like "a sorry sight" to see how they tried to use Russian regardless of their limited language proficiency"]. (Transcript, field notes)

Another teacher also complained, expressing bewilderment that students used Russian during breaks, even though they are in a Kazakh-medium school (*Excerpt 4*).

Excerpt 4 "The children used the Russian language more among themselves"

Я вот не понимаю тоже. Я работала получается в трех школах в Астане, и везде, так вот - были чисто казахские школы, где я работала, но даже в чисто казахских школах, где нет русскоязычных классов, почему-то дети применяли русский язык больше. Вот между собой, на переменах.

[I don't understand either. I worked at three schools in Astana and everywhere, so there were purely Kazakh-medium schools where I worked, but even in purely Kazakh schools with no Russian-speaking classes, for some reason, children used the Russian language more among themselves during breaks]. (Transcript, T5)

Likewise, Heller (2006) reported on the tension in a French-language minority school between expectations to make it a monolingual space and students' language practices, as they used other languages rather than French when speaking among themselves. Although the school expressed resistance to using English in a French-language minority school and attempted to eradicate it entirely, English remains a prevalent language among students.

In *Excerpt 5*, another teacher who previously worked at two schools in Astana said that students' use of Russian largely depends on the area where they live and their families' socioeconomic status. For example, at one school in an Astana suburb (on the right bank), students are mostly Kazakh-speaking; during class and breaks, they speak Kazakh. Students at another school in Astana's business area on the left bank are primarily Russian-speaking. They cannot fully express their thoughts in Kazakh.

Excerpt 5 "Many children speak Russian"

Бұл жақта қазақ сыныбында оқитын балалар, қазақ тілінде де сөйлейді, переменада да өз тілінде сөйлейді. Орыс сыныбындағы - орыс тілінде сөйлейді. Ал менің алдыңғы жұмыс істейтін мектебім, өзі толы қазақ мектебі болса да, бірақ көп балалар орысша сөйлейді. Мүмкін олардың отбасыларына байланысты шығар, себебі олар көбі левый берегта тұрады да, оларға сабақтарда да, былай кезде де, көбінесе орысша сөйлейтін. Біз жақта көбі балалар қазақша сөйлейді, қарапайым отбасына байланысты, сөз елпетіне. Көбі оқушылар қазақ болса да, қазақшаны түсінбей отырады оқушылар [...] мүмкін қалалық адамдар да сол жақта көбі солтүстіктің адамдары, жұмыс жасау да орталары олардың орыс тілдеі болды, сондықтан олар үйде көбінесе орысша сөйлейді [...] қазақ тілінде көбі ойын жеткізе алмайды ұзақ сұрақ қойса.

[Here (in this school), children studying in the Kazakh class speak the Kazakh language, and during breaks, the students speak their language. In Russian class - they speak Russian. In the school where I worked previously, although it was a Kazakh medium school, many children speak Russian. Maybe it's because of their families, because they mostly live on the left bank, and Russian was spoken to them in classes. In this school (where I am currently working), many children speak Kazakh because their families are ordinary. Although most of the students in the school are Kazakhs (I previously worked), they don't understand Kazakh [...] Maybe they are urban residents and are originally from the North. Their working environment is like Russian, so they often speak Russian at home [...]] (Transcript, T9)

Theme 2 - Translanguaging strategies. In interviews, teachers reported that they may explain concepts or prepare materials in Russian to support students' comprehension when students do not understand them in Kazakh.

In *Excerpt 6*, a secondary school teacher of Computer Studies stated that he uses Russian in a Kazakh-medium classroom because many terms and definitions in Informatics are borrowed from English. He believed that terminology related to computer studies is more readily explained in Russian than in Kazakh because Kazakh translations of these terms are incomprehensible to secondary school students.

Excerpt 6 "Many terms come from the English language"

Информатика пәні менде. Бізде сабақты қазақша түсіндіргеннен көрі орысша түсіндіргені ыңғайлырақ [...] себебі терминдер бізде көп ағылшын тілінен келгеннен кейін, оларды қазақшаға аудару түсініксіз болып жатады, сондықтан біз барынша орысша түсіндіру, беруге тырысамыз балаларға. Бірақ сабақ жүз пайыз жүрмесе де, ортасындағы терминдерді орысша айтып отырамыз балаларға.

[I teach Computer science. It is more convenient for us to explain the subject in Russian than in Kazakh [...] the reason is that many terms come from the English language. It isn't easy to translate them into Kazakh, so we try to explain them in Russian as much as possible. But even if the lesson is not taught in the Kazakh language, 100% we use Russian to explain the terminologies in class. (Transcript, T9)

Likewise, a teacher of the history of Kazakhstan allowed students to answer in three languages (Kazakh, Russian, and English) in the classroom when students faced language barriers (*Excerpt 7*).

The teacher believed that the most important thing is students' involvement and participation in classroom activities, regardless of the language students use to answer or ask questions, even though it is a Kazakh-medium school and the Kazakh language is supposed to be used as the sole official language of instruction.

Excerpt 7 "The learning process is going on"

Балаларға бұл жерде пәнді түсіндіру үшін көп жағдайда тілдік барьері бар балаларға *тіпті үш тілде де сөйлеуге рұқсат беремін. Негізі өйткені бұл жерде сабақты түсіну жүз пайыз [...] оқушы сұрақ қойып отырса, ол оқу процессі жүріп жатыр деген сөз. Егер ол орысша сұрақ қойса, оқу процессі жүріп жатыр деген сөз, білім алу процессі [...] менде қазіргі кезде өзімде телефонда дәл осы Қазақстан тарихы кітабін бесінші сынып орыс тіліндегі PDF форматын өзіне жүктеп алған балалар бар, оларды мен толықтай қолдаймын, өйткені олардың ата-аналары орысша сөйлеген, айнала қоғам орысша болған. Бірақ қазақша сөйлеп қазақ тіліне баулға тырысамын.*

[I allow children with a language barrier to speak in classroom, even in three languages, mainly because (the goal of the lesson is to make students) understand the lesson one hundred percent. [...]. The learning process continues if a student asks a question. If a student asks a question in Russian, it means that the "learning process" is going on [...] I currently have students who have downloaded the book "History of Kazakhstan Grade Five" in Russian in PDF format on their phones, and I fully support them because their parents speak Russian. The environment they grew up in was Russian. However, I am trying to instill in them the Kazakh language knowledge as well]. (Transcript, T4)

In *Excerpt 8*, an English-language teacher at a Kazakh-medium school also stated that she uses three languages: English, Kazakh, and Russian. She believes that explaining English materials only through the Kazakh medium is challenging. The teacher stated that, even though using Kazakh in English is challenging, she does her best to incorporate it. For those who need help understanding the learning materials in Kazakh, she switches to Russian.

Excerpt 8 "It is difficult to explain in the Kazakh language"

Когда объясняешь английский язык, (смешение языков) - это вообще нормально, потому что на казахском языке объяснять тяжело, *бірақ оның өзінде де біз қазақша түсіндіреміз, қазақша түсінбеген оқушыларға - орысша түсіндіреміз.*

[When you explain English language, it (switching between languages) is normal practice, because it is difficult to explain (concepts) in the Kazakh language. But we try to explain in Kazakh, and for students who do not understand Kazakh, we explain in Russian]. (Transcript, T2)

Theme 3 - Relationship between policy and classroom practice. This is not always the case when bilingual strategies are welcomed in teaching in Kazakh-medium classrooms. For example, in *Excerpt 9*, the teacher stated that when she taught her subject in Kazakh, secondary school students spoke Russian during class sessions and responded in Russian, even though it was a Kazakh monolingual school. As an adherent of language purism and monolingual ideology in school settings, she encountered conflicts with students and their parents; they complained that they did not understand the class materials compiled in Kazakh. The teacher then provided students with Russian translations to resolve the issue. She further stated that providing them with Russian translations was challenging because she needed to learn to translate some Kazakh words and consult dictionaries.

Excerpt 9 "They all speak Russian"

У нас нет русских классов, как вы знаете, казахские классы. Но они все говорят на русском. Можете просто прислушаться на каком языке они говорят. Они все говорят на русском. Вроде казахский класс, и на уроке отвечают таким же способом. Ну зачем врать? Такова картина сейчас, получается, в Казахстане. Бывает так, в прошлом году у меня был класс, и они что-то не понимали на казахском. Мы часто конфликтовали с ними, и с родителями. Получается, я потом пошла на контакт, и сказала: "Если вы что-то не понимаете на казахском, пишите мне!" И они стали мне писать. Потом я как смогла, старалась, ну я объясняла кое-как. Но бывали и такие слова еще встречались, я даже сама не понимала. Я прям искала по словарям, есть же всякие словари, толковый словарь [...] вот этот класс, получается,

который попался мне - они полностью русскоязычные. Вот объясняешь им тему какую-то на казахском, они скажут не понимают. И потом приходится объяснять это все на русском. И они потом понимают. У нас были еще всякие конфликты такие.

[We do not have Russian classes, as you know, Kazakh classes. But they (students) all speak Russian. You can just listen to what language they speak. They all speak Russian. It seems like a Kazakh class, but in the classroom, they answer in Russian. Well, why lie? This is the picture we now have, as it appears, in Kazakhstan. It happened that last year, I taught students who didn't understand the class materials in Kazakh. We often had conflict situations with them and their parents. And then I decided to solve the issue and said: "If you don't understand something in Kazakh, text me!" And they began to text me. Then I did my best, tried, well, I explained somehow. But there were also such words that I did not even understand. I just looked for their translations in dictionaries; there are all sorts of dictionaries, an explanatory dictionary, and so on [...] this group of students that I came across - they are entirely Russian-speaking. When you explain some topics in Kazakh to them, they will say they don't understand. And then you must explain it all in Russian. And then they understand. We've had all sorts of conflicts like this]. (Transcript, T1)

The excerpt above shows that teachers, as implementers of macro-policies, encounter practical issues when teaching subjects in Kazakh-medium schools. First, teachers need help explaining the concepts in Kazakh because the translations of borrowed English words into Kazakh, or definitions of some Kazakh words, are incomprehensible. The teachers noted that many terms originate from English, making translation into Kazakh difficult. Some words are hard for them to understand, and explaining English concepts through Kazakh poses challenges. Additionally, students' limited proficiency in Kazakh hampers their ability to grasp learning materials in the language.

In the interviews, the Kazakh teachers, likewise, the teachers at Bengali complementary schools in the United Kingdom (Blackledge & Creese, 2010), believed that during class sessions, code-switching between languages is inappropriate (*Excerpt 10*) and that languages should be preserved and kept from contamination by other linguistic resources.

Excerpt 10 "I'm talking in "half-Kazakh," even during the lesson"

Потому что мы біз нақты айтып кете алмаймыз, поэтому некоторые мысли мы быстро выражаем на русском. Өзім де шала сөйлеп кетемін зой сабақтың үстінде де, дәл сабақтың үстінде айтып келе жатамын да, мыслим мы на русском языке, бұл, конечно, дұрыс емес.

[Because we cannot talk clearly (in Kazakh), some thoughts are quickly expressed in Russian. I'm talking in "half-Kazakh," even during the lesson, I'm talking in it right during the lesson, we think in Russian, this is certainly not correct] (Transcript, T6)

In *Excerpt 11*, another teacher who supports language purism believes that people should speak in a pure language. She believes that people need to speak in the language they are addressed to, and it is not correct to mix languages.

Excerpt 11 "Code-switching is wrong"

Это неправильно. Если ты начал на английском, будь добр, до конца на английском говори. И если надо на русском, ты же, в принципе, видишь на каком языке человек разговаривает, если ты владеешь этим же языком, ты можешь обращаться в повседневной жизни. Я стараюсь так и делать, если ко мне обращаются на русском - я отвечаю на русском. Если ко мне обращаются на казахском - то есть я тоже отвечаю на казахском. Для меня это не составляет сложности, и я стараюсь не смешивать язык, мне это не нравится.

[It (code-switching) is wrong. If you start in English, please do a favor, and speak English until the end. And if you speak Russian, you can, well, see in which language a person speaks, if you speak the same language, you can communicate in everyday life. I strive to do the same. If they speak to me in Russian - I answer in Russian. If they speak to me in Kazakh - then I also answer in Kazakh. For me, it is not complicated, and I try not to mix the language, I don't like it]. (Transcript, T1)

This pattern is in line with findings from previous studies on code-switching in classroom settings, where such practices are discouraged. As Williams (2011) argues, there should be a distinction between the language of instruction and the language of learning. The socio-political and historical contexts in which bilingual classroom practices are embedded should be considered

(Blackledge & Creese, 2010). The excerpts in this study showcase practical examples in which teachers, while officially working in Kazakh-medium schools, resort to using Russian to ensure comprehension among students, particularly when it comes to specialized terminology in subjects like Computer Studies and History. Pragmatic acceptance of translanguaging pedagogy among teachers facilitates better understanding when students face difficulties with the Kazakh translations of specialized terms, especially those borrowed from English. As teachers note, some Kazakh words are incomprehensible because they are borrowed from Russian or English. With this in mind, to prepare classroom materials, they have to look for sources in the Russian language or prepare handouts in the Russian language. If students complain that they do not understand the class materials in Kazakh, teachers may encounter conflicts with students and their parents. Despite the prevalence of translanguaging in practice, teachers, positioned as both implementers of national language policy and proponents of monolingual, purist norms, often express concern that Kazakh is not consistently used by students even in Kazakh-medium schools. This concern reflects a perceived mismatch between policy expectations and everyday linguistic behavior. As the data indicate, the continued availability and visibility of Russian in educational materials, literature, and media reinforce an enduring sense of its dominance, a legacy sustained from the Soviet period.

The findings indicate that secondary school teachers express frustration when Kazakh-speaking students preferentially use Russian in peer interaction. Several teachers also questioned the coherence and force of the existing language policy, noting the absence of clear mechanisms to promote the development and modernization of Kazakh or to require functional proficiency among professionals. In their view, the prestige of Kazakh has not yet reached a level at which it can fully operate as a language of science, education, and media.

Conclusion

Effective classroom pedagogy is central to the development of fluent Kazakh speakers, and this depends in part on the availability of high-quality textbooks and instructional materials in Kazakh. As Spolsky (2021, p. 24) notes, language instruction in schools is a “powerful predictor of whether a language will continue.” At the same time, the institutionalization of a language as a medium of instruction presupposes its codification and standardization (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018, p. 261), with corpus planning ideally preceding the implementation of medium-of-instruction policies (Ferguson, 2022).

The findings of this study, however, suggest that these conditions remain only partially met. Teachers report persistent gaps in scientific and technical terminology in Kazakh, resulting in subjects such as science and mathematics being often taught through a de facto bilingual approach, even in formally Kazakh-medium schools. Kazakh is the official language of instruction, but Russian is commonly used in classrooms to aid understanding, clarify concepts address gaps in Kazakh-language resources, and facilitate communication between teachers and students. Although these bilingual approaches are frequently employed, their educational significance is neither officially acknowledged nor systematically incorporated into policies or training programs. This creates uncertainty among school stakeholders, who must deliver Kazakh-medium instruction while navigating a context in which Russian remains a vital language of learning.

In this study, we reported on the link between language choice, language practices, and language ideologies in a Kazakh-medium school setting. The findings indicate that, despite an official preference for monolingual instruction, translanguaging is widely employed in practice. Teachers draw on both Kazakh and Russian to compensate for gaps in Kazakh-language teaching materials and underdeveloped subject-specific terminology, and to address the needs of Russian-dominant students enrolled in Kazakh-medium schools. Crucially, teachers prioritize students’ comprehension, participation, and engagement over strict adherence to the prescribed language of instruction. From their perspective, effective learning outcomes depend less on maintaining a rigid monolingual framework than on ensuring that students can access and actively engage with the content.

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САЯСАТТАН ПРАКТИКАҒА: ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ОРТА МЕКТЕП МҰҒАЛІМДЕРІНІҢ ТРАНСЛИНГВИЗМ ПРАГМАТИКАЛЫҚ ҚАБЫЛДАУЫ

Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы орта мектеп мұғалімдерінің трансллингвизм тәжірибесін прагматикалық тұрғыдан қабылдауын талдайды және ресми тіл саясаты мен сыныптағы нақты жағдай арасындағы елеулі алшақтықты анықтайды. Ресми деңгейде қазақ тілінде монотілді оқыту жүргізілсе де, іс жүзінде мұғалімдер оқушылардың материалды жақсы түсінуі үшін қазақ тілін меңгерудегі қиындықтар мен шектеулі оқу ресурстарын жеңу мақсатында жиі орыс және ағылшын тілдерін қолданады. Зерттеудің негізі ретінде «макро тіл саясаты» аясындағы «микро тіл енгізу» агенттері (Baldauf, 2006) ретінде қарастырылған тоғыз

мұғаліммен жүргізілген сұхбаттар алынған. Сонымен қатар, тіл таңдау мен идеологияларға қатысты сыншыл теория (Blackledge & Creese, 2010) қолданып, орта мектеп мұғалімдерінің тіл қолдану стратегиялары және тілдік идеологиялар жан-жақты зерттелді. Нәтижелер ресми түрде қазақ тілінде оқытылса да, кейбір мұғалімдердің әлеуметтік кейбір функцияларды орындау үшін орыс тілін жиі пайдаланатынын көрсетеді, бұл тілдің кері ауысу үрдісінің әлі де жалғасып жатқанын білдіреді. Зерттеу көптілді шындықты ескеретін, баршаға қолжетімді тіл саясатын әзірлеудің маңыздылығын ерекше атап өтеді және білім беру мекемелеріндегі сыныптағы тілдік практикаларды тереңірек зерттеуді ұсынады. Жиналған мәліметтер Қазақстандағы тіл саясатын дамыту, жоспарлау және реформаларды табысты жүзеге асыру үшін саясаткерлер мен білім беру саласындағы мүдделі тараптарға маңызды ақпарат ұсынуға бағытталған.

Түйін сөздер: Қазақстан, қазақ тілі, орыс тілі, тілдік идеология, тілдік саясат, транслингвизм

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ОТ ПОЛИТИКИ К ПРАКТИКЕ: ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКОЕ ПРИНЯТИЕ ТРАНСЛИНГВИЗМА СРЕДИ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ СРЕДНИХ ШКОЛ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

Аннотация. Данное исследование посвящено прагматическому восприятию практик транслингвизма среди учителей средних школ в Казахстане и выявляет существенное расхождение между официальной языковой политикой и реальной ситуацией в классах. Хотя официально в казахскоязычных школах предполагается моноязычное обучение, на практике учителя часто прибегают к использованию русского и английского языков, чтобы облегчить понимание материала учениками и справиться с трудностями, связанными с недостаточным уровнем владения казахским языком и ограниченными учебными ресурсами. В основе исследования лежат интервью с девятью педагогами, которых рассматривают как агентов «микровнедрения языка» в рамках более масштабных «макроязыковых политик» (Baldauf, 2006). Применяя критическую теорию языкового выбора и идеологий (Blackledge & Creese, 2010), исследование анализирует стратегии использования языка и связанные с ними идеологии, реализуемые учителями в средних школах. Полученные результаты демонстрируют, что несмотря на формальное обучение на казахском языке, часть учителей использует русский язык для выполнения определённых социальных функций, что свидетельствует о продолжающейся динамике обратного языкового сдвига. Исследование акцентирует внимание на необходимости разработки более инклюзивной языковой политики, учитывающей многоязычную реальность, и призывает к углублённому изучению педагогических практик в образовательных учреждениях. Выводы исследования нацелены на информирование ключевых участников образовательного процесса с целью содействия эффективному развитию языковой сферы, планированию и успешной реализации реформ в системе образования Казахстана.

Ключевые слова: Казахстан, казахский язык, русский язык, языковая идеология, языковая политика, транслингвизм

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