

**ТІЛДІҢ ЖӘНЕ ӘДЕБИЕТТІҢ ОҚЫТУ ӘДІСТЕМЕСІ**  
**МЕТОДИКА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ЯЗЫКА И ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ**

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**THE ROLE OF MULTILINGUALISM IN THE ACADEMIC AND CAREER GROWTH OF YOUTH IN KAZAKHSTAN**

*This article analyzes the role of multilingualism in the educational and professional sphere of the life of Kazakhstani. Kazakhstan is a polylinguistic society, where, according to statistics, people who speak more than one language make up the vast majority. The purpose of the study was to identify the advantages of youth proficiency in two or more languages to achieve academic and career growth in Kazakhstan. To achieve this goal, a sociological survey (questionnaire and interview) was organized among bachelor's and master's students of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. The choice of the survey participants was determined by the purpose of the research – bachelor's and master's students participate not only in the educational process, but are already starting to build their careers. This feature of the target audience allowed obtaining objective data that were analyzed. As a result of working with theoretical sources and sociological survey data, conclusions were drawn on the representation of multilingualism that was formed among the survey participants; the degree of influence of multilingualism on education and professional growth; on the employer's preferences for candidates with knowledge of more than one language; on the specifics of mastering another culture through learning the language of this culture and on the role of this knowledge in academic and professional achievements. It should be noted that the conclusions obtained in this research represent the initial stage of a large study in this area.*

*Key words: language, multilingualism, multiculturalism, academic achievements, professional growth.*

**MAIN PROVISIONS**

Multilingualism has been long recognized as an important direction of human development. It is difficult to imagine a country where people speak only a single language. Kazakhstan is no exception. Being a multinational state, it paves the way for the formation of bilingualism and multilingualism.

Contemporary young people in Kazakhstan demonstrate interest in languages from the very start of their studies. Very often they choose to learn a language unless they achieve its recognized proficiency. This fact is supported by their understanding of the pivotal role the languages have for their academic growth and career promotion.

Being multilingual opens up superb opportunities and potential to achieve set goals not only for applicants seeking highly paid or entry-level jobs but also for employers who often give preference to hiring young people that are multilingual.

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, characterized by continuous societal progress, the ability to comprehend multiple languages is regarded as both an opportunity and a necessity. Statistically, there are more people who speak more than one language. Thus the modern society can definitely be identified as bilingual and multilingual – as we have a growing tendency of “mixed cultures”, where people of various cultural backgrounds live and use more than two languages. Kazakhstan is known for being one of multicultural countries, so bilingualism and multilingualism are common in Kazakhstan and its residents can be rightfully called multicultural.

According to Michael Clyne, the word “multilingualism” can be applied to either a use of a language or competence, or to the linguistic situation in a whole nation or a community. Individually, though, it is commonly referred to as “bilingualism”. The reasons for this are different: there are definitely more bilinguals the world over, and not as many individuals are believed to use more than two languages on a regular basis [1, 301].

Multilingualism is proved to bring a number of benefits which are in the list of requirements of XXI century skills that every modern global citizen is expected to acquire. The role of languages in our quickly-developing reality is undeniable, and learning on how we can benefit from knowing numerous languages can motivate learners and promote diversity. In this regard, the purpose of the current study is to identify the benefits of young people who are proficient in two or more languages to achieve academic and career growth in Kazakhstan.

The most recent researches of Kazakhstan’s linguistic status-quo have investigated the characteristics of bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as the potential of language formation and stabilization of the country’s linguistic situation. Scholars have therefore identified an ambiguous linguistic situation in modern Kazakhstan, where the official language is not yet completely functional as a state language, while the zone of the English language use is rapidly growing.

Multilingual education is becoming a new standard due to the expansion of the linguistic world by more and more global citizens learning foreign languages. According to UNESCO, the definition of “multilingual education” offers the use of at least three languages: native, regional or national, and international. There are already encouraging signs of progress in the establishment of multilingualism in the educational system. In global reality, substantial study on topics linked to multilingualism and multilingual education is being carried out.

The English language is known to have a significant role in modern education, serving as a bridge for internationalization, despite the fact that its level among educators and learners is at times not irreproachable. Translingual behavior patterns in university student communication have been found to be a successful method for maintaining privacy, avoiding misunderstanding, and making their meanings apparent. Furthermore, learners’ language use reflects the way they socialize in a multilingual and multicultural society, resulting in the integration of global and local resources together with the formation of multilingual identities.

It is important to state that multilingual education encounters challenges in its development. The early stage of integrating multilingualism in higher education institutions is experiencing such problems as students’ varying levels of language comprehension, their anxiety when studying particular subjects in a foreign language, educators’ lack of English teaching expertise, etc. All these factors make it possible to realize the need for more research on multilingualism, multilingual education and the role of multilingualism in the lives of the Kazakhstani youth.

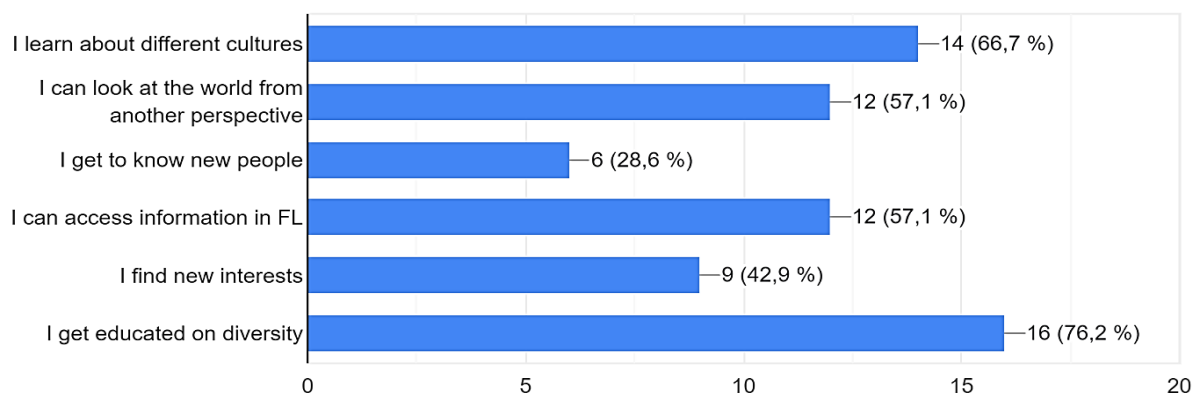
## MATERIALS AND METHODS

*Design.* The authors of the article used the quantitative research approach via a cross-sectional survey for data collection. For this purpose, the research survey was conducted online (accessed by

the URL link) and the instrument applied for it was an anonymous questionnaire that was developed to identify multilingualism benefits.

*Participants.* The survey participants were composed of 21 bachelor's and master's students of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Besides, it was essential to establish that the participants were well-informed of the terms “multilingualism” and “multicultural”, so the definitions were included. The selected participants are also ethnically diverse – the list includes Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek, Azerbaijani, Uighur, Tatar, Chinese, Korean individuals.

*Instrument.* A brief questionnaire was developed based on the literature review. As the participants were all students with a major in English teacher training, it was decided to conduct the survey in English. Respondents were offered questions of different types – open and closed types,



with multiple choice of answers and several answers from several options.

Students were given a questionnaire comprising 8 questions including multiple-choice questions, general questions and open-ended questions to reveal students' knowledge of multilingualism and its benefits in life.

*Data collection.* The study used a questionnaire designed to answer the research question of how beneficial multilingualism is. The list of participants consisted of bachelor's and master's students of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. As the questionnaire was conducted online using Google Forms, the link was sent to group chats where the participants are the members. Recipients were requested to complete the questionnaire and were preliminarily informed that participation in the study was voluntarily and they were under no obligation to participate.

*Data analysis.* The data of the current research was analyzed using data available from the Google Forms, descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests. The descriptive statistics were used for overall scores of various investigated variables. The independent sample t-tests were used to compare bachelor's and master's students in addition to comparing the benefits of multilingualism for each group.

## RESULTS

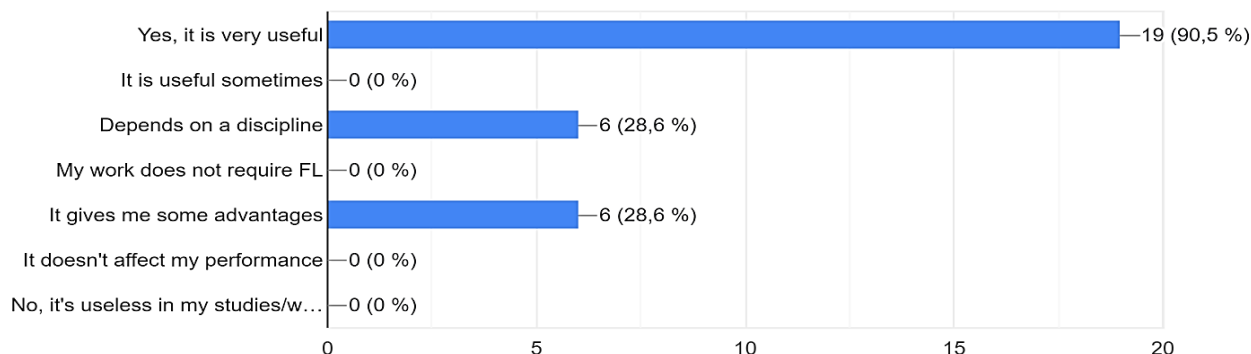
As can be evidenced from Chart 1, the responses of participants suggest what the benefits of being a multilingual are. The option that gathered most votes (76.2 %) was “I get educated on diversity”. The purpose here was to identify the positive impact of multilingualism in participants' lives. The results demonstrate the fact that multilingual students mostly benefit from their proficiency in several languages at some point of their lives. It can also be observed from the responds that multilingualism helps students learn about different cultures, look at the world from another perspective and access information in FL, as these are the variants that also obtained lots of votes.

Chart 1. The worldview of multilingual individuals

Chart 2 illustrates the results of how useful multilingualism in participants' academic performance and workplace is. Most of them (90.5 %) chose the option that it is very useful. The

rest (28.6 %) agreed that multilingualism gives them advantages. Here it can be concluded that multilingualism has a generally good impact on students' academic performance and on their workplace. We stand by the opinion that multilingualism lets students obtain higher grades and further in the future climb the professional career ladder.

Chart 2. The impact of multilingualism on students' academic performance and workplace



Multilingualism, as a requirement, plays a big role for employers, and it can be observed in Figure 1 as 90.5 % of responders agreed that a multilingual specialist is more likely to be hired in case of being just as professionally competent as their monolingual competitors. Proficiency in several languages is a great advantage for a candidate, since only 9.5 % of responses inform that a monolingual specialist is more likely to find a job. Figure 2 shows that multilingualism impacts students' communication skills, as 95.2 % of students agreed that it makes them feel more confident. As the recipients were all multilingual, in general, they feel confident speaking the languages they know. However, it was demonstrated that 5.8 % of students revealed that they can't express their ideas. This can be explained by the anxiety and fear of making mistakes as errors occur in speech from time to time.

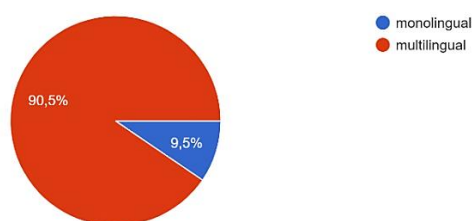


Figure 1. Chances of an employer hiring a multilingual candidate over a monolingual candidate

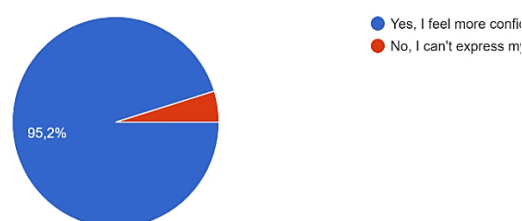
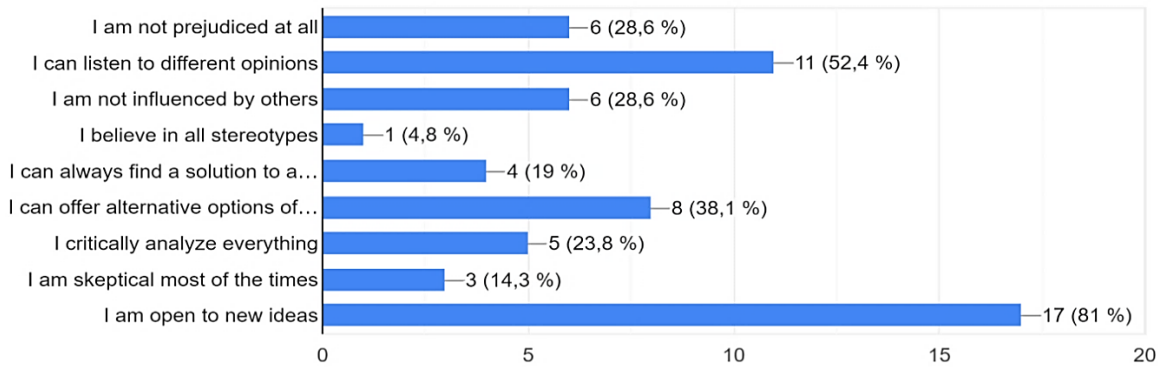


Figure 2. The impact of multilingualism on students' communication skills

Mind flexibility is also one of the benefits that come with multilingualism and it is demonstrated in **Chart 3**: students are vastly open to new ideas. The second option, which received 52.4 % of votes, means that students can listen to different opinions, and based on that we assume, that they are not restricted with their own worldviews. The third option conveys the idea that students can offer alternative options of decisions and that can be interpreted as their ability to elaborate new patterns of the problem solution. Another top answer (28.6 %) exposes the fact that students are not prejudiced, which suggests that multilingualism makes them more open-minded and able to accept unusual concepts.

Chart 3. Parameters of multilinguals' mind flexibility



The hypothesis of multilingualism improving students' multi-tasking skills was proven and illustrated in Figure 3. The majority of participants admitted that they can perform several actions at the same time. Multilinguals are accustomed to using several languages and switching from one to another when needed, so multitasking is not a new term for them. There is a theory of language learning being easier for multilinguals and in Figure 4 it can be seen that recipients admitted the fact that language learning for them is either “not that hard” or is “moderately hard”. The respondents learned English as their third language and mostly agreed that learning the third, and then the fourth language was less challenging for them. With proficiency in their mother tongue and a second language, it is easier for them to acquire the language patterns of a new language. As a bridge, the languages that were already learned and securely stored in a multilinguals mind, will develop a skill that helps to learn languages faster and with fewer complications.

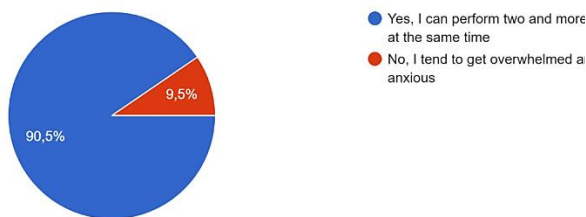


Figure 3. Multilingualism and multi-tasking

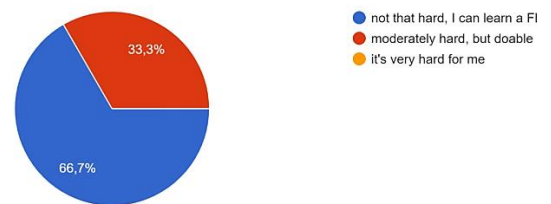


Figure 4. The impact of multilingualism on FL learning

The participants' awareness of the term “multicultural citizen” is revealed in Figure 5. The parallel between the terms “multilingual” and “multicultural” was pinpointed in Figure 6 where we can see these terms appear interrelated for the responders. 95.2 % of them denoted that a multilingual citizen can, in fact, be identified as “multicultural”. The reason for this is that culture and language are interrelated; the language cannot be fully acquired without acquiring its culture.

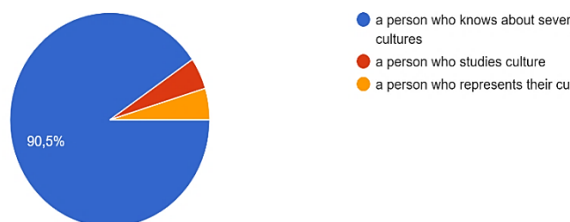


Figure 5. The definition of multicultural citizen

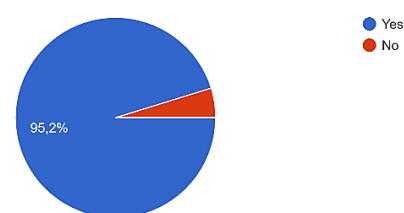


Figure 6. The proximity of a multilingual citizen being multicultural

The proximity of multilingualism to boost learners' confidence is demonstrated in Figure 7. Being linguistically superior can obviously give learners a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment which also affects their confidence as a result. We deem that multilingual students tend to feel more comfortable speaking foreign languages than monolingual FL learners. Participants have admitted that being multilingual boosts their confidence towards speaking FL and helps them to communicate their thoughts and needs more freely. The reason for that might be the natural and effortless flow of using the languages that they have in their repertoire.

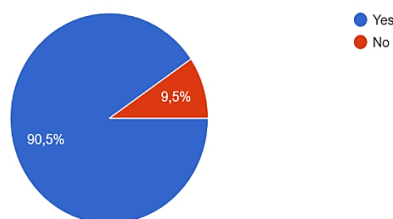


Figure 7. Multilingualism as a confidence booster

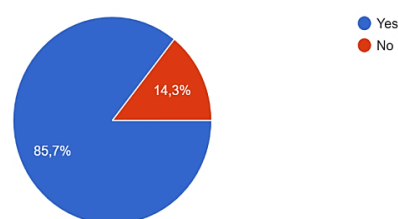


Figure 8. Multilingualism as a tool for spreading cultural awareness

According to Figure 8, multilingualism can potentially be used to spread cultural awareness. As it is mentioned above, culture and language are interwoven. Being aware of cultural specificities means avoiding misunderstanding and resolving conflicts in a tolerant way. 85.7% of survey participants shared their opinion that multilingualism can be used to spread cultural awareness. By learning a new language students also obtain a chance to interact with the culture of that language.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the survey results demonstrated above, this section discusses the research findings. The results show that the bachelor's and master's students who took part in the survey are generally familiar with the concept of multilingualism, since they are bilinguals and multilinguals. It was established from the answers that multilingualism in many ways provides the respondents with advantages both in the academic and career perspective. At the end, the respondents were asked to answer the question: ***How does being multilingual benefit you personally?***

1. *If you are a multilingual person, it means your worldview is different. Multilingualism can help people have broader horizons.*

2. *Nowadays, when we are experiencing globalization, being aware of several cultures is an ordinary concept. I can use different ways to obtain relevant information, but language always greatly impacts a person. When one knows different languages, they can communicate with different communities, and it also has its own influence on shaping one's mindset.*

3. *Being a multilingual person gives a person an opportunity to enhance their communication skills.*

4. *As a multilingual I can obtain higher scores at university and I can communicate with representatives of other nationalities and cultural backgrounds.*

5. *I am confident that having different opinions or points of view, having access to new information in different languages are some of the advantages of being multilingual.*

6. *The more languages you know, the more powerful you are. Moreover, I think it will make it easier for me to be hired in an international organization.*

7. *Multilingualism makes me more tolerant, open-minded and overall; it provides me with a better position anywhere.*

8. *I can tell that I am more of an open-minded person and that helps me make friends with people the world over.*

The responses of participants summarize such benefits of multilingualism as career success, access to new information, exposure to diversity, etc. However, researchers agree that there is more

than that. Various studies demonstrate the fact that speaking more than two languages greatly influences an individual's personality, health and success [Ошибка! Источник ссылки не найден., 18].

Diversity is known to be a popular area for research and it is discussed a lot in numerous (if not all) cultures so multilingual students have access to and can participate in discussions held in different languages, which in turn creates a chance for them to look at the situation from inside out. Multilingualism gives a lot of opportunities to explore the world and find new ways of viewing the surroundings and situations.

Individuals who are proficient in various languages are better at assessing their surroundings and identifying false information. Perhaps this is due to their better suppression abilities, which makes it possible for them to focus on pertinent information while filtering out everything else. This demonstrated that multilingual persons are watchful observers of their surroundings, as well as more skilled at recognizing and accurately understanding the subtext of a situation and comprehending the social context. Those who speak many languages are more responsive as a result; a talent that develops when dealing with an unfamiliar social or cultural setting in a second language [3, 332].

According to the research, learning different languages improves communication abilities. The recent studies show that children raised in a multilingual environment are better at comprehending other people's points of view, which is a driver of successful communication. Multilingualism can also increase sensitivity to cultural awareness. Learning other languages opens up interaction with individuals from other cultures and allows learners to speak directly to people from diverse nations and backgrounds, which enhances their intercultural communication skills. According to the research, multilingual education in Kazakhstan is facing problems and has prospects, which makes us conclude that there is still much to be done in this field of FL education [3, 56].

Learning a foreign language challenges the brain to convey comparable concepts in various ways, which leads to an increased cognitive flexibility in multilingual individuals. This results in enhanced creativity and problem-solving abilities, as well as the ability to interpret circumstances in novel ways. Multilingual people tackle complicated issues in a more imaginative manner than their monolingual counterparts, regardless of the type of challenge as is previously displayed in the results of the research survey [5].

People that are proficient in various languages perform better in a variety of situations. It has been discovered that multilingual persons who can bounce languages are better at multitasking than monolinguals [6, 367], since multilingual individuals are accustomed to transitioning among diverse patterns of speech and grammar; they are able to more quickly switch among numerous activities. That might be one of the reasons why multilingual people are in a greater demand by employees – they are more tolerant, capable and trainable (open to experiences and renovations).

It has been proven that after learning a second language, people learn the third and fourth languages better. Multilingualism is considered one of the modern education priorities in Kazakhstan. Moreover, learning languages is not that challenging for the Kazakhstani people as they already speak at least two languages [6, 374]. Each extra language that a person learns fluently makes it easier to begin speaking another language rapidly. Bilingual education programs promote brain development, increase learner focus, and minimize the amount of time necessary to move between the tasks. These individuals can immediately grasp the pattern of any language and readily comprehend how it might be employed [8].

Learning a new language may be a fascinating and fulfilling experience that provides a person with a feeling of accomplishment and boosts their self-esteem. Also, being able to interact well with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds provides a learner with a greater confidence and capability. Multilingualism is now widely spread around the youth and it deserves more studies, for example, on how learners mix several languages in one context or conversation. Discovering communication patterns if there are any would be fascinating and very useful for language teachers

to understand how to effectively teach their multilingual students, regarding all peculiarities and using them for a benefit of learning a foreign language [9, 146].

## CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to identify the impact of multilingualism on students' lives. For that purpose, the survey results were analyzed and interpreted in a way to expand on the benefits that come with being a multilingual and multicultural global citizen. Multilingualism has become a frequent phenomenon in a world where cultures mix with each other and coexist as a result and as a representation of diversity. Identifying oneself as a multilingual person guarantees more opportunities for academic and career development and progress in society [9]. It plays a crucial role in Kazakhstan due to the country's diverse linguistic landscape and historical context. Our society is a multicultural and multiethnic country located in Central Asia, and it is home to more than 100 ethnic groups, each with its own language and cultural identity.

It is general knowledge that multilingualism in a global context refers to the situation where multiple languages are spoken and used by individuals, communities, or societies within a specific region or across the world. It is a common phenomenon in many countries and regions due to historical, cultural, economic, and social factors. In a globalized world, multilingualism has become increasingly prevalent and significant. According to this fact, in our research we have made an attempt to study multilingualism phenomena in different contexts in our country. The meaning of multilingualism in Kazakhstani society can be understood through the following key points: Linguistic Diversity, Communication and Interaction, Cultural Exchange, Challenges and Benefits, Education and Empowerment, Language Policies. In this study, special attention is paid to multilingualism features to achieve educational goals and career growth.

When the role of multilingualism is discussed in achieving educational and career goals, we certainly refer to the ideas of linguistic diversity and cultural exchange. With over 7,000 languages spoken worldwide, multilingualism reflects the rich linguistic diversity that exists across various regions and cultures. There are at least three languages in our country that are used in all spheres of life. Cultural exchange is very important for Kazakhstani youth to achieve their goals. We know that multilingualism facilitates cultural exchange and understanding among people. It allows accessing literature, movies, music, and other forms of art from numerous cultures, broadening our horizons and fostering mutual respect.

Analysis of the obtained data showed that in Kazakhstan as well as in the global context, promoting multilingual education can empower individuals by providing them with a broader range of opportunities, improved cognitive skills, and enhanced intercultural awareness. Moreover, multilingualism can present challenges in terms of language barriers, miscommunication, and translation issues. However, it also offers numerous benefits, such as improved cognitive flexibility, empathy, and a greater sense of global interconnectedness.

The question of national policy is closely related to all spheres of people's life. Kazakhstan implements language policies to manage the coexistence of different languages, promoting language learning, and ensuring equitable access to education and public services. Although more than two languages are in use, it is crucial to mention the role of the state language – Kazakh. FL can be surely utilized for any intercultural communication agendas and international relations, however, it is constitutionally obligated and motivated for every citizen of Kazakhstan to speak Kazakh fluently.

In the prospect of our further research, we propose to consider the issues of Communication and Interaction. Multilingualism enables individuals from different linguistic backgrounds to communicate and interact. In international business, diplomacy, tourism, and various other fields, the ability to speak multiple languages is seen as a valuable asset.

The next idea, which, in our opinion, requires close attention, is the question of Identity and Inclusivity since multilingualism is closely associated with cultural identity. It allows expressing



oneself in the native language and preserving indigenous languages thus contributing to the protection of cultural heritage.

In examining these and other aspects of multilingualism, we should proceed from the fact that multilingualism remains the cornerstone of Kazakhstan's identity and plays a pivotal role in shaping its future as a diverse and dynamic nation.

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### **Қазақстандағы жастардың академиялық және қызметтік өсудегі көптілділіктің маңызы**

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*Бұл мақалада қазақстандықтардың білім беру және кәсіби өмір салаларындағы көптілділіктің рөлі талданады. Қазақстан-статистикаға сәйкес, бірнеше тілді меңгерген адамдардың басым көпшілігін құрайтын полилингвалдық қоғам. Зерттеудің мақсаты Қазақстанда академиялық және мансаптық өсуге қол жеткізу үшін жастардың екі және одан да көп тілді меңгеруінің артықшылықтарын анықтау болды. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университетінің студенттері мен магистранттары арасында элеуметтанулы сауалнама (анкетация және сұхбат) ұйымдастырылды. Сауалнамаға қатысушыларды таңдау біздің жұмысымыздың мақсатына байланысты болды – студенттер мен магистранттар тек білім беру процесіне*

қатысып қана қоймай, мансап құра бастайды. Мақсатты аудиторияның бұл ерекшелігі талданған объективті деректерді алуға мүмкіндік берді. Теориялық дереккөздермен және социологиялық сауалнама деректерімен жұмыс нәтижесінде сауалнамаға қатысушылар арасында қалыптасқан көп тілділікті ұсыну туралы тұжырымдар жасалды; көптілділіктің білім беру саласына және кәсіби өсуге әсер ету дәрежесі; бір тілден артық білімі бар кандидаттарға жұмыс берушінің қалауы туралы; осы мәдениеттің тілін зерделеу арқылы өзге мәдениетті меңгерудің ерекшелігі туралы және осы білімнің академиялық және кәсіби жетістіктердегі рөлі туралы. Айта кету керек, бұл жұмыста алынған тұжырымдар осы саладағы үлкен зерттеудің бастапқы кезеңі болып табылады.

*Кілт сөздер:* тіл, көптілділік, көпмәдениеттілік, академиялық жетістіктер, кәсіби өсу.

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### **Роль полиязычия в академическом и карьерном росте молодежи в Казахстане**

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*В данной статье анализируется роль многоязычия в образовательной и профессиональной сфере жизни казахстанцев. Казахстан – это полилингвальное общество, где, согласно статистике, людей, владеющих более, чем одним языком, составляет подавляющее большинство. Целью исследования было выявление преимуществ владения молодежью двумя и более языками для достижения академического и карьерного роста в Казахстане. Для достижения этой цели был организован социологический опрос (анкетирование и интервью) среди студентов и магистрантов Евразийского национального университета им. Л. Н. Гумилева. Выбор участников опроса был обусловлен целью нашей работы – студенты и магистранты участвуют не только в образовательном процессе, но и уже начинают строить карьеру. Такая особенность целевой аудитории позволила получить объективные данные, которые были проанализированы. В результате работы с теоретическими источниками и данными социологического опроса были сделаны выводы о представлении мультилингвализма, которое сформировалось среди участников опроса; степени влияния многоязычия на сферу образования и профессионального роста; о предпочтениях работодателя к кандидатам со знанием более одного языка; об специфике овладения иной культурой через изучение языка данной культуры и о роли этих знаний в академических и профессиональных достижениях. Необходимо отметить, что выводы, полученные в данной работе, представляют собой начальный этап большого исследования в данной области.*

*Ключевые слова:* язык, многоязычие, поликультурность, академические достижения, профессиональный рост.

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