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THE STATE LANGUAGE USE BY THE STUDENT COMMUNITY

The article is devoted to the research of the state language among the students of the Aqmola region in Kazakhstan. The purpose of the research was to identify Kazakh language proficiency among the younger generation, as well as factors influencing the evolvement of the state language. In order to achieve goals, the authors implemented quantitative method with the survey instrument. 1000 students were questioned in the region in 2023. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, cross tabulation, chi-square tests. According to the research results, the majority of the respondents claimed Kazakh language as their mother tongue, while the Russian language preserved its high functional significance among the respondents. The results also demonstrated the widespread developing tendency of Kazakh - Russian bilingualism particularly in families. Moreover, the majority of youth are involved in studying foreign languages, among which English takes a leading position. As for the self-evaluated language proficiency skills of the Kazakh language, most participants noted receptive skills such as reading and listening as easiest ones.

Key words: state language use, language proficiency of students' community, descriptive statistics, bilingualism and multilingualism, self-assessment.

INTRODUCTION

When developing the Concept of the language policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029, the recommendations of the complex social and analytical research on language policy issues, the tasks of the Address to the People of Kazakhstan “Strategy ‘Kazakhstan-2050’: a new political course of the established state” were considered.

Expanding the sphere of application and increasing the status of the state language in all spheres of society directly contributes to the development of the Kazakh language.

The State Program for the implementation of language policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2025 (hereinafter - the State Program) provides implementation of the tasks set by Head of State K.Tokayev in his Address to the People of Kazakhstan dated September 2, 2019 “Constructive public dialogue - the basis of stability and prosperity of Kazakhstan”. The Head of State noted the need to strengthen the role of the Kazakh language as a language of interethnic communication, based on specific measures and creating conditions for the development of language and culture of ethnic groups in the country.

The state program is also the basis for creating favorable conditions for the development of language and culture of ethnic groups, including increasing the linguistic capital of citizens of the country. The main directions of the state program are modernization of the Kazakh language based on the Latin graphic alphabet, strengthening the role of the state language as a language of interethnic communication, development of the linguistic capital of the citizens of Kazakhstan.

Various language competencies of citizens are being formed in Kazakhstan. In particular, Kazakh-speaking, Kazakh-Russian-speaking, Russian-speaking, ethnic-Kazakh-speaking, ethnic-Russian-speaking or ethnic-Russian-Kazakh-speaking who know three languages, and Kazakh-Russian-English-speaking who know three languages.

According to the Concept based on census results showing that 80% of the population aged 5 above had proficiency in the state language, it was proposed to increase the share of the population proficient in Kazakh to 81 starting from 2023 to 84% in 2029.

Furthermore, national census results show significant regional disparities in the everyday use of the Kazakh language, with higher rates in southern and western regions and considerably lower rates in Kostanay, Aqmola and North Kazakhstan regions, highlighting the need for strong measures to expand the use of the state language. Another issue mentioned in the Concept is the currently established “translation-based” function of the Kazakh language negatively affects societal demand for its use and limits its development and effective functioning across various domains, hindering the formation of Kazakh as a fully developed state language with an independent official style.

So based on the concept we formulated research questions:

1. What is the level Kazakh language proficiency among the student community in Northern Kazakhstan?
2. To what extent and in which domains is the Kazakh language used by students in Northern Kazakhstan?

MAIN PROVISIONS

This study examines the functioning of the state language among young people in the Aqmola region. The main theoretical directions in this scientific article will be the previous work carried out by domestic scientists on the topic of the functioning of the state language and language policy. In the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Languages, 1997 the state language is defined as follows: “The state language is the language of public administration, legislation, legal proceedings, and office work, applicable in all spheres of public relations throughout the entire territory of the state.” [1].

The sphere of state language in Kazakhstan has been repeatedly examined by the following scientists: U. Fierman; J Smagulova; E. Suleimenova; Sh. Zharkynbekova. According to U. Fierman cited in the research article of Zhumanova et.al the status of the Kazakh language increased significantly and highlights its importance and necessity for future career. Research devoted to the language situation examines issues of implementing the language policy program of Kazakhstan, regulatory documents and concepts for the development of the state language [2]. Based on the research of J. Smagulova, the following conclusions can be drawn: Kazakhstan is experiencing a process of linguistic transformation, which reflects the transition from a Russian-centric model to a multilingual society. Despite the dominance of Russian in a number of areas, the position of Kazakh is strengthening, especially among young people and representatives of high-income classes, making it an important symbol of independence. At the same time, the prestige of the Kazakh language is growing, increasingly perceived as the key to economic prospects, and knowledge of English is becoming an important tool for professional growth. At the same time, the Russian language retains its functional significance, being an integral part of education and access to information resources. Multilingualism is becoming a key ideological focus, but social tensions remain, particularly among ethnic Kazakhs who face internal conflicts between linguistic identity and personal interests. To fully understand linguistic change, it is important to combine quantitative and qualitative research methods, which will allow for a deeper analysis of real practices and the mechanisms by which linguistic beliefs are formed. As a result, Kazakhstan stands on the threshold of a sustainable multilingual society, where Kazakh is strengthened as a symbol of national identity, Russian retains its practical significance, and English facilitates global integration [3].

The article by E. Suleimenova examines the problem of the vitality of the Kazakh language in the context of the state language policy of Kazakhstan. The work identifies objective and subjective indicators of vitality – socio-political, demographic, functional and linguistic. Particular attention is paid to issues of status and corpus planning, intergenerational language transmission, bilingualism and the influence of Russian-Kazakh language interactions. Based on statistical data and census results, the author demonstrates the positive dynamics of the spread of the Kazakh language in official and educational spheres, while noting the persistent problems of uneven proficiency and

functional imbalance between the Kazakh and Russian languages. The article concludes that it is necessary to further improve the language policy in order to increase the vitality of the Kazakh language and its full functioning in all spheres of public life [4].

The article by Sh. Zharkinbekova examines the features of the functioning of the Kazakh, Russian and English languages in the multicultural space of Kazakhstan. Based on sociolinguistic research methods—questionnaires and interviews—an analysis was conducted of the language preferences of citizens and the factors influencing the choice of language in various areas of public communication. Particular attention is paid to the use of languages in business, the Internet, and visual texts in Astana. The study's results showed that the Kazakh language is strengthening its position in official and government institutions, Russian maintains a leading role in business and everyday communication, and English is gradually becoming the language of international cooperation and professional growth. An analysis of visual texts revealed an uneven distribution of languages, which indicates the need to develop clear norms for regulating language policy in urban spaces. The author emphasizes the importance of language management and marketing as tools for implementing state language policy aimed at developing multilingualism and the harmonious coexistence of languages. The conclusion notes that further strengthening the position of the state language and supporting linguistic diversity require a comprehensive approach that includes government, educational, and public initiatives [5].

Also, some scientists have devoted a number of works to the topic of regional development and the functioning of the state language in the regions of the country. The study by Kuderinova et.al [6] is aimed at identifying the level of multilingualism, features of language use and attitudes towards the current state of the Kazakh language among students of Nazarbayev University (NU) and Satpayev University (SU). The results showed that NU students are mainly proficient in Russian and English, while SU students use Kazakh and Russian equally. The need to enhance the status of the Kazakh language is supported by the majority of students. They place particular emphasis on developing language skills, noting the importance of using Kazakh clubs, literary works, and online resources to improve their language skills. Although they sometimes struggle to fully express their thoughts in Kazakh, students strive to improve their language proficiency and oral communication skills. Students cite singer D. Kudaibergen, as well as famous politicians and artists, as role models. The study highlights the importance of educational and social measures aimed at developing and expanding the use of the Kazakh language. The findings can serve as a basis for understanding the linguistic development of young people and improving language policy [6].

One significant study by Bayandina et.al [7] contributed to the study of the population's proficiency in the state language, Kazakh. An analysis of the language situation in Kazakhstan as of January 1, 2021, shows that 80% of the country's population speaks Kazakh. However, in the northern regions (Aqmola, Kostanay, Pavlodar, and North Kazakhstan), where 21.6% of the country's population live, the level of proficiency in the state language is significantly lower—an average of 66.3%. This figure is inflated by the city of Astana (88.1%). Excluding Astana, Kazakh language proficiency in the four northern regions is only 57.3%, and its use in everyday life is only 35%. Specifically, in the Aqmola Oblast, of the 723,289 people, 63% speak Kazakh, but only 33.8% use it in everyday life. Moreover, 36.4% of the region's population does not speak the state language, reflecting the existing linguistic asymmetry. A similar situation is observed in other northern regions, where Russian remains dominant in everyday, professional, and educational communication [7]. One more research for this case, by Terlikbayeva et.al [8] came to conclusion that the government supports mostly the trilingual regime, because of economic reasons. It means that trilingualism creates a competitive workforce for foreign investment (English), maintains ties with CIS markets (Russian), and strengthens national identity for stability (Kazakh), which is critical for economic growth, as noted in studies. In addition, authors noted that despite the support of the Kazakh language on legal documents to strengthen its status, the Russian language competes effectively with the Kazakh language in almost every field.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the goal of this study and acquire the responses to the main research questions, the given research applies to the implementation of purely quantitative method of exploration. This method allows gaining accurate and reliable research findings.

In the frame of quantitative method, this study resorts to the utilization of a survey as a research instrument which covers three fundamental directions such as language use, identification of language proficiency and self-assessment. The questionnaire consisted of 28 items of which 24 directly related to the research objectives while 4 items collected respondents demographic information, including gender, ethnicity, age and place of residence (urban or rural). However, not all questionnaire items were used in the present study, as the analysis focused specifically on addressing two research questions. The questionnaire included different types of questions, such as multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale items, and self-assessment questions related to students language proficiency and language use across different domains. The questionnaire was self-developed for the previous research where students self-reported on their three language proficiencies. No formal pilot testing was conducted; however, the questionnaire items were reviewed and revised to ensure clarity and relevance to the research objectives. Data collection was conducted only through printed paper-based version, which were distributed to the participants. Data collection covered only the students of the northern region of Kazakhstan, mainly the regional and local higher education institutions with the sample size (n= 1000).

This study utilized a snowball sampling method and recruited only the 3rd and 4th year university students of different ethnic groups. The sample is composed of young respondents aged 18-20 (87.1%) with a slight female majority (55.1%). Ethnically, the sample is largely Kazakh (71.5%), but also reflects a diverse multilingual environment with representation of Russian (13.5%), mixed ethnic backgrounds (5.3%), German (2.5%), Ukrainian (1.8%), Tartar (1.2%), Ingush (0.6%), Korean (0.5%) and other ethnic groups (one representative each). The majority of respondents come from urban areas (62.5%), although a substantial proportion represents rural backgrounds (37.4%).

All the participants were well informed and explained with the ethical features. Informed consents were delivered to the participants for granting them anonymity and volunteering. Data analysis was conducted through the SPSS software using mainly descriptive analysis, JASP.0.19.3 for cross tabulation and chi-square analysis.

RESULTS

1000 respondents took part in the questionnaire, the research team offered to the students to choose the language of the questionnaire. Of all the answers received, 47.6% of respondents chose the questionnaire in Kazakh, while 52.4% chose the questionnaire in Russian (Table 1). The choice of questionnaire language reflects the current language situation in the region, where Russian remains widely used along with Kazakh. It should be noted that the choice of questionnaire language could be related to several factors, including the level of language proficiency, educational background of respondents and language policy in the society.

Table 1. The choice of language of the questionnaire

	Percentage (%)
The questionnaire in Kazakh	47.6
The questionnaire in Russian	52.4
Total	100.0

Table 2. What is your L1?

	Percentage (%)
Kazakh	72.7
Russian	24.2
Uyghur	0.1
Uzbek	0.9
Ukrainian	0.6
Other (Azerbaijani, Armenian, Bulgarian, Ingush, Kyrgyz, German, Tartar, Turkish, Chechen)	1.5
Total	100.0

Table 2 shows the proportion of native language proficiency (Kazakh, Russian, Uyghur, Uzbek, Ukrainian and other) among respondents. The table shows the percentage values for each level of language proficiency depending on the native language. According to the data obtained, we can say that Kazakh is the native language for the overwhelming majority of respondents (72.7%). This indicates its prevalence in the region among student youth, which possibly reflects demographic trends and cultural heritage of the region. In addition, the prevalence of Kazakh as L1 may correspond to its status as a state language. The data in the table show that Kazakh is the dominant mother tongue among respondents, while Russian is the second most common (24.2%). The other languages (Uyghur-0.1%; Uzbek-0.9%; Ukrainian-0.6%), although representing a small proportion, testify to the cultural and ethnic diversity of the region. These results emphasize the importance of maintaining and developing the Kazakh language, as well as the need to consider and respect the linguistic rights of minorities.

Table 3. How many languages do you know?

Category	Description	Percentage (%)
No response	Did not specify languages	32.3
Monolingual	One language (mostly Russian)	7.6
Bilingual (Kazakh-Russian)	Kazakh -Russian	18.1
Bilingual (other combinations)	Russian-English, Kazakh-English, others	4.2
Trilingual (Kazakh-Russian-English)	Core trilingual group	21.9
Trilingual (other combinations)	Other three language combinations	2.1
Multilingual (4+languages)	Four or more languages	13.8
Total		100.0

According to the data obtained, a large proportion of respondents (21.9%) indicated knowledge of Kazakh, Russian and English languages. This indicates the tendency of trilingualism as a widespread phenomenon among respondents, which may be related to educational policy and the requirement to speak several languages. Also, 18.1% of respondents indicated knowledge of only Kazakh and Russian, which also emphasizes bilingualism as an important characteristic in the region. In addition to the combination of Kazakh, Russian and English, knowledge of Kazakh, Russian and English together with German and Chinese is also observed. Other language combinations such as Kazakh, Russian, English and other languages (e.g. Uzbek, French, Arabic, Turkish and Korean) are less common, but still show linguistic diversity among respondents. The data in the table shows that a significant proportion of respondents speak more than one language, with the most common combination being Kazakh, Russian and English, indicating the importance of multilingualism in modern society. Also according to the data in Table 3, the role of English among student youth can

be noted, which was often indicated as the third language after Kazakh and Russian, which emphasizes its importance to society, possibly in the modern educational and professional context.

In Table 4, it is shown the domains of the state language use where Kazakh (55.3%) prevails in school, Russian (39.6%) is used as secondary language in educational institutions and family domain following Kazakh. Bilingualism (Kazakh-Russian) has been particularly evident in family communication, 20.4%. Other languages (Uzbek, Mongolian, English, German, Ingush, Tartar, Turkish, Chechen, and Ukrainian) in communication were identified by respondents in combination with Kazakh and Russian, as well as in monolingual contexts. The results point a societal bilingualism, characterized by the dominance of Kazakh in institutional settings and the persistence of Kazakh-Russian bilingual practices at home.

Table 4. Language use in Family Communication and Preschool Education

Category	Languages	Family Communication (%)	Preschool Education (%)	School (%)
No response	-	2.9	6.7	0.7
Not applicable	Did not attend kindergarten	-	14.8	-
Kazakh	Kazakh only	43.5	45.8	55.3
Russian	Russian only	31.0	29.5	39.6
Kazakh-Russian	Bilingual (KZ-RU)	20.4	2.7	3.3
Kazakh-Russian-English	Trilingual	0.2	0.1	0.5
Kazakh-other	Uzbek, Mongolian	0.2	0.1	0.1
Russian -other	English, German, Ingush, Tartar, Turkish	0.7	-	0.1
Other languages (monolingual)	Chechen, Ukrainian, Ingush, Uzbek	1.1	0.2	0.4
Unknown	-	-	0.1	-
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

The respondents' answers in Table 5 on the distribution of communication across domains reveal noteworthy patterns. Russian is predominantly used in communication with friends (36.2%), at work/study 40.7%, in public places (41.6%) and in the mass media is 41.4%, representing the highest indicator across all domains. Notable results are also observed in bilingual (Kazakh-Russian) communication, particularly with friends and in public places (36.1%), where it closely follows Russian. Kazakh is reported as being used more evenly across domains, particularly with friends (25.1%) and at work/study (27.5%), as well as showing relatively balanced usage in public places and media. Findings indicated a stable dominance of Russian in public and institutional communication domains, alongside with a strong presence of Kazakh-Russian bilingualism in informal and semi-public interactions.

Table 5 Language use across communication domains

category	Languages	Friends (%)	Work/Study (%)	Public Places (%)	Media (%)
No response	-	1.3	1.1	2.4	2.5
Kazakh	Kazakh only	25.1	27.5	19.2	19.7
Russian	Russian only	36.2	40.7	41.6	41.4
Kazakh-Russian	Bilingual (KZ-RU)	30.6	25.6	36.1	24.1
Trilingual (KZ-RU-EN)	Core trilingual	2.4	1.9	0.3	3.0
Kazakh-other	English, Uzbek, etc.	0.6	0.6	-	0.4

Russian-other	English, German, etc.	2.8	1.9	0.2	7.7
Multilingual (4+languages)	Complex combinations	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.4
Other languages (mono)	Uzbek, English, etc.	0.2	0.2	-	0.6
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6 presents the distribution of language learning engagement and the range of languages studied by respondents. The majority of respondents (70.2%) reported that they are currently studying at least one foreign language, while 28.8% indicated no engagement in language learning. English clearly dominates as the primary language. Among language combinations, the most common are English paired with German (5.9%), Chinese (4.7%), Kazakh (5.9%) and Russian (2.9%). When considering aggregate language presence, including combinations, English remains overwhelmingly dominant (approximately 55-60%). Findings highlight a clear orientation toward global languages with English occupying central position in students learning trajectories. Another trend has been noticed it is learning other languages such as French, Spanish, Arabic, Korean, Japanese, Turkish, etc.

Table 6. Language learning engagement and distribution of languages studied

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Language learning engagement	yes	70.2
	no	28.8
	No response	1.0
Primary language studied (single response)	English	28.8
	Kazakh	1.0
	Russian	1.2
	Other	69.0
Major language combinations	English-German	5.9
	English-Chinese	4.7
	Kazakh-English	5.9
	Russian-English	2.9
Aggregate language presence (including combinations)	English (total)	~55-60
	Kazakh (total)	~7-8
	Russian (total)	~4-5
	Chinese (total)	~7-8
	German (total)	~7-8
Other languages (each<1 %)	French, Spanish, Arabic, Korean, Japanese, Turkish, etc.	<1 each
Non-specified (languages specification)	Not specified	33.2

Table 7 demonstrates how respondents' self-assessment of their Kazakh language proficiency across four skills: Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening. Approximately half of the respondents (~48,2%) evaluate their overall proficiency as excellent with the highest scores observed in reading (52.3%) and listening (51.4%). At the same time, lower levels of proficiency are more evident in speaking, a combined 31,7% of respondents rate their speaking skills as very poor, poor, or satisfactory. This indicates a noticeable gap between receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills, particularly speaking. The findings reveal an imbalance in language proficiency, where receptive skills are significantly stronger than productive speaking abilities, suggesting limited opportunities for active language use in everyday communication.

Table 7. Self-assessment of the Kazakh Language Proficiency by skills (%)

Proficiency Level	Speaking (%)	Reading (%)	Writing (%)	Listening (%)
Do not know	4.1	1.7	2.0	2.6
Very poor	7.5	1.8	2.6	3.4
Poor	8.1	3.5	4.7	6.3
Satisfactory	12.0	10.3	11.3	11.3
Good	15.7	18.3	18.7	13.1
Excellent	40.7	52.3	48.4	51.4
No response	11.9	12.1	12.3	11.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The results in Table 8 demonstrate that respondents primarily use Kazakh academic and educational writing (44.6%), while its social media is lower (28%). In terms of listening, respondents most frequently engage with music in Kazakh (42.8%), followed by news (34.1%) and to a lesser extent audiobooks (11.2%). Reading practices appear more limited: only 31.2% of respondents read fiction in Kazakh, while a notable 24.8% report not reading in Kazakh at all. Overall, the data suggest that Kazakh is more actively used in formal and passive contexts than in everyday reading practices.

Table 8. Language activities in Kazakh: reading, writing and listening (%)

Category	Reading (%)	Writing (%)	Listening (%)
Fiction/literature	31.2	-	-
Academic/educational materials	18.8	44.6	-
Periodicals/News	16.9	-	34.1
Social media/online content	-	28.0	-
Music	-	-	42.8
Audiobooks	-	-	11.2
Personal communication (letters, messages)	-	15.7	-
Other	8.3	3.5	3.3
Do not engage	24.8	8.2	8.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The data presented in Table 9 show that 38% of respondents reported acquiring Kazakh from birth within the family environment. A larger proportion of students (52.6%) indicated that they began learning Kazakh during childhood, either at preschool (28.4%) or early school age (24.2%). Only a small share of respondents 5.5% reported late acquisition of Kazakh after the age of 10. Overall, the findings indicate that Kazakh is predominantly acquired early in life, either within the family or through early education, confirming its role as a foundational language both home and institutional domains.

Table 9. Age of onset of Kazakh language acquisition (aggregated)

Category	Description	Percentage (%)
No response	Did not answer	3.7
Early acquisition (birth/family environment)	From birth, since childhood, as soon as I started speaking	38.0
Preschool age (1-6 years)	Ages 1-6, kindergarten	28.4
Early school age (7-10 years)	Ages 7-10, start of schooling	24.2
Late acquisition (11+ years)	After age 10. Adolescence/adulthood	5.5
Unclear/ other	Do not remember, unclear answers	0.2
Total		100.0

In response to the question about difficulties in learning Kazakh, 51.2% reported that they did not experience any difficulties. At the same time, a considerable proportion identified specific challenges, including grammatical (5.5%), lexical (approximately 5%) and speaking difficulties (4.5%). Some respondents also pointed to pronunciation issues related to specific phonetic features of Kazakh (3.0%) and comprehension difficulties, particularly in understanding rapid speech (3.0%). In addition to linguistic factors, 5.0% of respondents reported a lack of practice or limited opportunities to use Kazakh. A smaller proportion identified educational barrier such as fear or lack of motivation (1.5%), as well as the influence of a predominantly Russian-speaking sociolinguistic environment (3.0%).

Table 10. Reported difficulties in learning Kazakh

Category	Description	Percentage (%)
No difficulties reported	Respondents did not experience difficulties	51.2
No response	Did not answer	12.6
Lexical difficulties	Limited vocabulary, difficulty memorizing words	~5.0
Grammatical difficulties	Grammar, sentence structure, suffixes	~5.5
Speaking difficulties	Expressing thoughts, fluency issues	~4.5
Pronunciation/accent	Phonetics, specific sounds (e.g., Һ)	~3.0
Comprehension difficulties	Understanding speech, especially fast speech	~3.0
Lack of practice/language environment	Few opportunities to use Kazakh	~5.0
Educational barriers	Fear, shyness, lack of motivation	~1.5
Sociolinguistic environment	Dominance of Russian-speaking environment	~3.0
Total		100.0

The results presented in Table 11 show that approximately 30 % of respondents believe that every day communication plays the most important role in the development of the state language. Around 12 % of students identify the education system as a key factor, while 10% emphasize the role of media and digital environment. The factors, such as motivation and attitudes (8%), language policy (7.0%), cultural influences (7.5%) and the broader language environment (7.0%), were mentioned less frequently. A notable proportion of responses (18.5%) were unclear or not provided. Overall, the findings highlight that students perceive the development of the Kazakh language as driven primarily by everyday practice rather than institutional or policy measures.

Table 11. Factors contributing to the development of the state language (students' perspectives)

Category	Description	Percentage (%)
No response/unclear answers	Did not answer/ Do not know	18.5
Everyday use (communication)	Speaking Kazakh in daily life, family, public spaces	30.0
Education system	Schools, universities, teaching quality, early learning	12.0
Media and digital environment	Social media, films, music, online content	10.0
Motivation and attitudes	Interest, patriotism, personal responsibility	8.0
Language policy and regulation	Law, requirements, institutional enforcement	7.0

Cultural factors	Literature, traditions, national identity	7.5
Language environment	Surrounding language use, community practices	7.0
Total		100.0

Table 12. Contingency tables

Contingency Tables

kz1	kz01		Total
	1	2	
1	453	274	727
2	14	228	242
3	9	22	31
Total	476	524	1000

Note. Each cell displays the observed counts

Chi-Squared Tests

	Value	df	p
X ²	237.006	2	< .001
N	1000		

Note. Continuity correction is available only for 2x2 tables.

Nominal

	Value ^a
Phi-coefficient	NaN
Cramer's V	0.487

^a Phi coefficient is only available for 2 by 2 contingency Tables

A chi-square test revealed a statistically significant association between students' native language and their preferred questionnaire languages, $X^2 (2, N=1000) = 237.006, p < .001$. The effect size measured by Cramer's V was 0.487 indicating a moderately strong association between two variables. The findings indicate that students generally preferred the questionnaire language corresponding to their linguistics background. However, a substantial proportion of students with Kazakh as their native language also selected the Russian version, which may show the Russian language usage in the academic and everyday communication in the Northern Kazakhstan.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study are generally consistent with the findings of other scholars studying the language situation in Kazakhstan. For example, W. Fierman notes the growing status of the Kazakh language, predicting the future of the Russian language for twenty years evidenced by the results of the questionnaires [9]. At the same time, as J. Smagulova points out, Kazakhstan is moving towards a multilingual society, which is also reflected in our data: the Kazakh language is gaining ground, but Russian retains an important role in everyday, educational, and media communication, while English is gaining increasing importance.

The results of the research show that the student population in the Aqmola region is predominantly composed of L1 speakers of the state language, while also reflecting significant ethnic and cultural diversity. This diversity contributes to the formation of multilingual environment in which bilingualism primarily Kazakh-Russian is a stable and widespread practice. At the same time, English emerges as the most commonly learned foreign language, indicating a clear orientation toward global communication. Furthermore, cross tabulation and chi-square analysis showed a statistically significant association between students' native language and their preferred

questionnaire language. The findings suggest that Kazakh is used across multiple domains, including family, education, public spaces and media, alongside Russian, which continues to play a strong complementary role. The findings demonstrate that the state language is typically acquired early in life, and most respondents report high level of proficiency across speaking, reading, writing and listening. Notably, more than half of the students do not perceive any significant difficulties in using Kazakh and a large proportion assess their language competence as good and excellent. At the same time, linguistic repertoire of students extends beyond the dominant languages including both widely spoken and less common languages that reflects an expanding multilingual landscape. Patterns of media consumption further confirm the functional presence of Kazakh, as students report listening to music, news, and audiobooks in the state language.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the current research show that students associate the development of Kazakh language proficiency not with formal instruction alone, but with active, everyday communication. This highlights that it is important to use the state language in natural settings as a primary driver of language maintenance and development. Furthermore, cross tabulation and chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between students' native language and their preferred questionnaire language suggesting that while students generally choose the language corresponding to their linguistic background, Russian is also widely used by many students in academic settings and everyday life.

Future research should focus on a more detailed analysis of reading practices in Kazakh among young people, as well as on how these practices are transforming in the context of digitalization and the increasing integration of artificial intelligence into learning and communication environments.

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Студенттер қауымының мемлекеттік тілді меңгеруі

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Мақала Қазақстандағы Ақмола облысының студенттері арасында мемлекеттік тілдің меңгеру тақырыбын зерттеуге арналған. Зерттеудің мақсаты – жас ұрпақтың қазақ тілін меңгеру деңгейін, сондай-ақ мемлекеттік тілдің дамуына әсер ететін факторларды анықтау. Мақсатқа жету үшін авторлар сауалнама құралымен сандық әдісті қолданды. 2023 жылы Ақмола облысында 1000-ға жуық студентке сауалнама жүргізілді. Зерттеу нәтижелеріне сәйкес респонденттердің басым бөлігі қазақ тілін ана тілі деп санаса, респонденттердің арасында орыс тілі өзінің жоғары функционалдық маңыздылығын сақтап отыр. Нәтижелер сонымен қатар қазақ-орыс қостілділігінің, әсіресе отбасында кең тараған тенденциясын көрсетті. Сонымен қатар, жастардың басым бөлігі шет тілдерін оқиды, олардың арасында ағылшын тілі жетекші орынға ие. Қазақ тілінің өзін-өзі бағалайтын тілдік дағдыларына келетін болсақ, қатысушылардың көпшілігі оқу және тыңдау сияқты рецептивті дағдыларды ең оңай деп атап өтті.

Кілт сөздер: мемлекеттік тілді қолдану, студенттер қауымындағы тілді меңгеру деңгейі, сипаттамалық талдау, қостілділік және көптілділік, өзін-өзі бағалау.

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Использование государственного языка студенческим сообществом

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Статья посвящена исследованию государственного языка среди студентов Акмолинской области Казахстана. Целью исследования было выявление уровня владения казахским языком среди молодого поколения, а также факторов, влияющих на развитие государственного языка. Для достижения целей авторы использовали количественный метод с применением анкетного инструментария. В 2023 году в Акмолинской области было опрошено 1000 студентов. По результатам исследования, большинство респондентов назвали казахский язык своим родным языком, в то время как русский язык сохранил свою функциональную значимость среди респондентов. Результаты также продемонстрировали широко распространенную тенденцию развития казахско-русского двуязычия, особенно в семьях. Кроме того, большинство молодежи занимается изучением иностранных языков, среди которых лидирующие позиции занимает английский. Что касается самооценки уровня владения казахским языком, большинство участников отметили, что наиболее легко владеют рецептивными навыками, такими как чтение и аудирование.

Ключевые слова: использование государственного языка, уровень владения языком в сообществе студентов, описательный анализ, билингвизм и многоязычие, самооценка.

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