

HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN THROUGH KAZAKH MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

History of Kazakhstan through Kazakh as a Medium of Instruction (KMI): Russian-speaking university students' perceptions of their experience studying in Nazarbayev

Intellectual Schools (NIS)

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in

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October 2020

Dear Zannet Kassym


This letter now confirms that your research project entitled:

**History of Kazakhstan through Kazakh as a Medium of Instruction (KMI):
Russian-Speaking university students' perceptions of their experiences studying
in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS)**

has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of
Nazarbayev University.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing
your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely



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Abstract

History of Kazakhstan through Kazakh as a Medium of Instruction (KMI): Russian-speaking university students' perceptions of their experience studying in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS)

Considering the fact that in the framework of trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan, Kazakh history is taught through Kazakh as a medium of instruction (KMI), some Russian-speaking schoolchildren might meet difficulties with the learning process due to their weak Kazakh language skills. The purpose of this research, therefore, was to explore the perceptions of Russian-speaking students regarding the effectiveness of studying the history of Kazakhstan through KMI within the framework of the trilingual education curriculum. The research questions, constructed to achieve this aim, referred to students' opinions of using KMI to learn the content embedded in the history of Kazakhstan and their suggestions for improving KMI teaching and learning. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight Russian-speaking students who have studied Kazakh history through KMI at Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools. The most surprising finding of this small-scale research was the fact that a high competence in the Kazakh language was not a prerequisite to acquiring a solid knowledge of Kazakh history. Instead, the most pivotal aspect that really influenced the quality of instruction and learning was teachers' professionalism and enthusiasm, which enable the development of effective and interesting lessons and the application of translanguaging as a scaffolding pedagogic strategy. As for suggestions for improving teaching methodology, the respondents proposed diversified tasks to acknowledge every student's learning style preference and make the lessons more engaging. Together, these results provide important insights into the significance of introducing advanced teaching approaches, such as the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), with a view to increasing the number of well-trained teachers of Kazakh history for Russian-speaking learners. The limitations of this study imply that a larger-scale research with the inclusion of participants

from mainstream schools should be conducted in order to obtain a more accurate overview of Russian-speaking students' perceptions of their experiences of studying in KMI.

Андатпа

Қазақстан тарихын қазақ тілінде зерделеу: орыс тілді студенттердің Назарбаев зияткерлік мектептерінде (НЗМ) өз оқу тәжірибесін қабылдауы

Қазақстандағы үштілді білім беру реформасы шеңберінде Қазақстан тарихы қазақ тілінде оқытылатындығын ескере отырып, кейбір орыс тілді оқушылар қазақ тілін нашар меңгергендіктен оқыту процесінде қиындықтарға тап болуы мүмкін. Аталған зерттеудің мақсаты үштілді білім беру бағдарламасы шеңберінде орыс тілді студенттердің Қазақстан тарихын қазақ тілінде оқытудың тиімділігі туралы түсініктерін зерделеу болды. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін жасалған зерттеу сұрақтары студенттердің Қазақстан тарихының мазмұнын меңгеру үшін қазақ тілін қолдану туралы пікірлері мен осы пәнді қазақ тілінде оқытуды жақсарту жөніндегі ұсыныстары туралы болды. Сұхбат Назарбаев зияткерлік мектептерінде үш тілде білім беру бағдарламасы бойынша Қазақстан тарихын қазақ тілінде оқыған сегіз орыс тілді студенттермен жүргізілді. Осы шағын зерттеудің ең таңғаларлық қорытындысы қазақ тіліндегі мықты құзіреттіліктің Қазақстан тарихы туралы жақсы білім алу үшін іргелі болмағандығы болды. Оның орнына, алынған білім сапасына шынымен әсер еткен маңызды аспект мұғалімнің кәсібилігі мен ынта-жігері болды, ол оған тиімді және қызықты сабақтарды дамытуға, сонымен қатар транстілдесуді пайдаланатын педагогикалық стратегия ретінде қолдануға мүмкіндік берді. Оқыту әдістемесін жетілдіру бойынша ұсыныстарға келетін болсақ, респонденттер әр оқушының оқу стиліндегі қалауын ескеретін және сабақтарды қызықты ететін түрлі тапсырмаларды ұсынды. Жалпы, бұл нәтижелер орыс тілді оқушылардың Қазақстан тарихын қазақ тілінде тиімді оқуы үшін пәндік-тілдік кіріктірілген оқыту (CLIL) сияқты оқытудың озық тәсілдерін енгізудің маңыздылығын көрсетеді. Бұл зерттеудің шектеулері орыс тілді оқушылардың қазақ тілінде оқу тәжірибесін қабылдауына неғұрлым нақты шолу алу үшін негізгі мектептердегі оқушылардың қатысуымен неғұрлым ауқымды зерттеу жүргізу керек деп болжайды.

Аннотация**Изучение истории Казахстана на казахском языке: восприятие русскоязычными студентами университета своего опыта обучения в Назарбаев интеллектуальных школах (НИШ)**

Учитывая тот факт, что в рамках реформы трехязычного образования в Казахстане история Казахстана преподается на казахском языке, предполагалось, что некоторые русскоязычные школьники могут столкнуться с трудностями в процессе обучения из-за слабого владения казахским языком. Целью данного исследования было изучение представлений русскоязычных студентов об эффективности изучения истории Казахстана на казахском языке в рамках программы трехязычного образования. Вопросы исследования, составленные для достижения этой цели, касались мнения студентов об использовании казахского языка для изучения тематического содержания истории Казахстана и их предложений по улучшению преподавания этого предмета на казахском языке. Интервью в полупроизвольной форме были проведены с восьмью русскоязычными студентами, изучавшими историю Казахстана на казахском языке по программе трехязычного образования в Назарбаев интеллектуальных школах. Самым удивительным выводом этого небольшого исследования был тот факт, что сильная компетентность в казахском языке не была фундаментальной для получения хорошего знания истории Казахстана. Вместо этого самым важным аспектом, который действительно повлиял на качество полученного образования, был профессионализм и энтузиазм учителя, который позволял ему разработать эффективные и интересные уроки, а также применять трансязычие в качестве поддерживающей педагогической стратегии. Что касается предложений по совершенствованию методики преподавания, то респонденты предложили разнообразные задания, которые учитывают предпочтения каждого студента в стиле обучения и делают уроки более увлекательными. В целом, эти результаты подчеркивают

важность внедрения передовых подходов к обучению, таких как предметно-языковое интегрированное обучение (CLIL), для эффективного изучения истории Казахстана на казахском языке русскоязычными учащимися. Ограничения этого исследования предполагают, что следует провести более масштабное исследование с участием школьников из основных школ, чтобы получить более точный обзор восприятия русскоязычными учащимися своего опыта обучения на казахском языке.

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Introduction

In any country, as a result of a government's language policy, substantial changes are introduced to the education system, which, in its turn, brings about new developments and challenges to all stakeholders in education. In this regard, Kazakhstan is not an exception. The ultimate goal of Kazakhstan's language policy is to strengthen the positions of the Kazakh language as the state language, support the Russian language as a language of inter-ethnic communication, and promote the English language as a language of integration with the world community (Nazarbayev, 2007). One of the steps to reach this goal is to gradually introduce trilingual education in Kazakhstan in accordance with the Road Map for the Development of Trilingual Education for 2015-2020 as a component of the "Kazakhstan-2050" strategy. The main goal of the initiative is to develop a common standard for language learning in the context of a unified educational environment and modernization of curriculum content at all secondary schools, regardless of the language of instruction. This new model of education was first piloted in "an elite network of 20 state-funded Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" (Karabassova, 2020, p.3), and then the expertise needs to be disseminated to the mainstream secondary schools (Nazarbayev, 2012). As a result of this reform, the subjects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are to be taught in English, the History of Kazakhstan and Geography in Kazakh, and World History in Russian. Education is to be creative, active, and communicative, with the emphasis on a systematic approach to teaching and changing the role of a teacher from an instructor to a mentor. In other words, the teacher will be focused more on children's personality and their unique capabilities, support their development and give advice, rather than just lecture and control. It is believed that as a consequence of obtaining a trilingual education, students will not only be fluent in three languages, but also will increase their responsibility and self-learning ability due to the modernised curriculum structure and improved teacher-student cooperation (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Ministry of Culture and Sport of the

Republic of Kazakhstan, Ministry of Investment and Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015).

However, all these great expectations on the part of the government are not easily fulfilled in reality due to people's different levels of language fluency depending on the regions. For example, in the Northern and Eastern parts of Kazakhstan, people are mostly Russian-speaking, whereas Kazakh-speakers prevail in the Southern and the Western parts. In particular, the Russification policy of the Soviet government in Kazakhstan, which intentionally promoted the Russian language in education and other substantial public spheres, together with a comparatively smaller share of Kazakh population in the Northern part of the country resulted in a language shift from Kazakh to dominant Russian language in the region (Smagulova, 2008). As a result, the whole adult generation of Northern Kazakhs nowadays has a lower fluency in the Kazakh language as compared to Kazakhs from densely-populated Southern regions. As for other nationalities in the North of Kazakhstan, they mostly have no clear incentives to learn the Kazakh language as they could easily cope without it in their everyday lives (Smagulova, 2006). These factors have caused the region to be mostly Russian-speaking with low Kazakh language proficiency.

Considering the fact that in the framework of the modernised curriculum content two subjects are expected to be taught in the Kazakh language, the implementation of trilingual education in the Russian-speaking regions of Kazakhstan may be challenging. In other words, some students might meet difficulties with the learning process due to their weak Kazakh language skills and low motivation to learn Kazakh.

Statement of the Problem

It is popularly believed that as a part of their cultural identity, each citizen of a country should know their country's history and should be motivated to learn it due to patriotic feelings to their homeland. However, low proficiency in the Kazakh language of some of the mostly

Russian-speaking schoolchildren from the Northern Kazakhstan could cause their weak understanding of the “History of Kazakhstan” subject content taught in the Kazakh medium of instruction (KMI). Additionally, this might be the reason for their discouragement to study it more deeply in the future. Thus, the situation could lead to a considerable number of Kazakhstani citizens who do not sustain sufficient knowledge of their homeland’s history. Therefore, this research is aimed at exploring the phenomenon through the opinions of Russian-speaking former students of Nazarbayev Intellectual schools (NIS), where the trilingual education framework has been applied to the educational process since 2013 (AEO NIS, 2013). Being the direct stakeholders of the Trilingual Education reform, the former NIS students could provide adequate information on the state of its implementation process and share their attitudes about the idea of learning Kazakh History in the Kazakh medium of instruction. As a result, this research might provide a deep insight into both the quality and effectiveness of teaching methods, along with the modernised version of curriculum content in Kazakh.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of Russian-speaking students regarding the effectiveness of learning the History of Kazakhstan through Kazakh as a medium of instruction (KMI) in the framework of the trilingual education curriculum.

Research Questions:

1. Regarding their experience of studying in NIS, what are Russian-speaking university students' perceptions of using Kazakh as a Medium of Instruction to learn the curriculum content of the History of Kazakhstan?
2. What are their suggestions for improving KMI teaching and learning?

Significance of the Study

Since the trilingual education reform is at its initial stage, it may face many challenges in its practical implementation. Therefore, it is direly needed to learn about the perceptions of the students who have been affected by these changes in the education system. The findings of this study might contribute to the existing yet scarce research about the implementation of the trilingual education experiment in Kazakhstan from the point of view of students – the affected stakeholders of the reform. This research might expand the scope of scholarly knowledge of the phenomenon by adding information about the perceptions of Russian-speaking students on effectiveness of learning the History of Kazakhstan through Kazakh as a medium of instruction and reveal their suggestions for improvement, which might influence the introduction of more effective teaching techniques in the KMI.

Outline of the Study

The first chapter introduces the study context and overviews the background of the research problem by presenting the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. The second chapter provides the review of the existing literature relevant to the field of research, starting from definitions, concepts and theoretical framework as an analytical basis for this study, to then narrow down analysis to examples of multilingual language planning in other contexts. The third chapter is dedicated to explaining a methodology of the study by describing the research sample, data collection tools and procedures, as well as data analysis and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter demonstrates the findings of the study, whereas the fifth chapter focuses on the discussion of those findings in relation to the literature reviewed earlier. The final chapter presents the conclusions and implications of the study, both contributing suggestions for improvement and providing recommendations for further research.

Literature Review

This chapter presents the relevant literature that was reviewed and synthesised in order to obtain necessary theoretical and empirical knowledge in order to conceptually set up the purpose of this study. First, it provides a theoretical framework and the main definitions in the field of Language Planning and Language-in-Education Planning as general concepts, to then describe the current state of implementation of trilingual education in Kazakhstan. Since Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is the key educational approach underlying the Kazakhstani trilingual educational reform, the next paragraph is dedicated to CLIL. The concept of translanguaging as a teaching strategy within CLIL pedagogy concludes the theoretical part of the literature review for this study and gives floor to reviewing the empirical research; namely, case studies in similar contexts, such as the Canadian French immersion programs and multilingual education practice in Spain.

Language Planning and Language-in-Education Planning

In view of the purpose of this study, which is to explore the effects of one aspect of the implementation of trilingual education in Kazakhstan, the concept of language-in-education planning is taken as a theoretical basis to support this research. Due to the fact that language-in-education policy is the integral part of the language planning framework, it is believed that the definitions of language-in-education policies should be provided through the lens of language planning. Liddicoat (2013) states that language planning is one of the fundamental dimensions of government policies as it “serves a nation-building function” by determining “the linguistic repertoire of the society” (p.6), therefore, a careful analysis and critical assessment is needed before its implementation. Heath (1983) stressed the role of policy-makers, saying that language planning involves “what the government says and does through its laws and regulations to affect the use of one or more languages used by the people it represents.” (Heath, 1983a, p.56, as cited in de Jong, 2011).

Cooper (1989) identified three forms of language planning - status planning, corpus planning and acquisition planning – which influence different aspects of language use. Accordingly, through status planning the government grants an official or state status to a certain language in order to elevate its value and prestige. Corpus planning creates standards for a language, such as spelling, grammar, and new vocabulary, whereas acquisition planning deals with the methodology and teaching techniques of the language, therefore, according to Baldauf & Kaplan (2005), it is also called language-in-education planning (as cited in de Jong, 2011).

Language-in-education, or acquisition planning, refers to activities relating to “the teaching and learning of languages, especially at school” (Liddicoat, 2013, p.2). While language planning’s goal is to “affect the structure, function, and acquisition of languages, the most important aspect of language-in-education policy is “about the choice of the medium of instruction” (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004, as cited in Hornberger, 2008, p.3). Language-in-education policies “carry significant weight at local and societal levels” through their explicit and implicit language policies (de Jong, 2011, p.108). In other words, overt program models assign a higher status to those languages of instruction which are formally recognized and supported by governments, whereas covert language policies influence the language use by “informal daily language and literacy practices” which often depend on teachers’ personal preferences or their subjective interpretation of bilingual strategies. As a result, these policies develop either an additive approach through multilingual competence, or a subtractive approach as monolingualism in the societal language (de Jong, 2011, p.108-121). Therefore, language-in-education policies can be also defined as a form of human resource development planning (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, as cited in Liddicoat, 2013). Regarding this research study, this theoretical base shows the importance of choosing the right language-in-education policy, so that the risk of nurturing a poor-educated human capital will be eliminated or minimized.

Trilingual education in Kazakhstan

Education is a leading domain for introduction and development of language policy. According to Hornberger (2009), multilingual education creates opportunities for a “peaceful coexistence” of different ethnic groups and for the empowerment of languages with weaker status. In multilingual Kazakhstan, policy makers have chosen to adopt a trilingual education policy with the main goal to restore the position of the Kazakh language, which was historically oppressed by the Soviet regime, and at the same time to maintain inter-ethnic harmony among the country’s citizens by means of the Russian language, as well as to encourage global development through English (Nazarbayev, 2007). Therefore, the trilingual education in Kazakhstan promotes the proportionate use of the three languages as mediums of instruction and as separate language subjects (Nazarbayev, 2007). It was designed to be gradually implemented through the network of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS), which were expected to propagate their accumulated experience to other Kazakhstani schools after practical approbation of multilingual teaching techniques and educational innovations (AEO NIS, 2013; Shamshidinova et al., 2014).

CLIL as a key approach

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a pedagogical approach in which an additional language is used for learning and teaching curriculum subjects (Coyle, Hood, Marsh, 2010), and therefore, it could be efficiently applied in trilingual education practice. The CLIL approach has been taken as a fundamental program for implementation of trilingual education in Kazakhstan because it provides dual focus on both language and content “without an implied preference for either” (Coyle, 2007, p.545). The foundational principles of CLIL are formulated in Do Coyle’s 4Cs Framework, in which content, cognition, communication, and culture-related components are integrated within various contexts (Coyle, 2008). These contextualized blocks are inter-related in such a way that it becomes possible for students to make meaning of a content taught in a language different from students’ first language (Coyle, 2008; San Isidro & Coyle, 2020). In other words, students’ understanding of a subject matter and advancement in obtained

knowledge and skills trigger their cognitive development through communicative interaction, intercultural awareness, and shaping their own experiences (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011).

The reality of the 21st century demands for the development of special skills, such as communication, critical thinking, and creativity. They require teaching and learning approaches that are different from those that we used to have in the past; notably, a teacher-centered transmission of knowledge. Nowadays, a concept of integration is considered to be the most relevant to deal with the challenges of the modern world, because it “views learning and teaching in a holistic way and reflects the real world, which is interactive” (Shoemaker, 1989, p.9). In an integrated study, children’s education is developed in more than just one subject and is related to their own contexts (Humphreys, Post, Ellis, 1981, p.11). Contrary to the habitual educational practice of compartmentalized subject matter learning, most CLIL researchers believe that an integrated cross-curricular model is an educational approach that allows for development of the students’ skills and abilities demanded in the 21st century, as well as their abilities for lifelong learning. Therefore, CLIL seems to be one of the most successful strategies to deal with the expectations of the modern world as its integration concept allows for multilingual collaboration and meaning-making learning of a subject matter through creative teaching processes.

According to San Isidro and Coyle (2020), integrating content and language is a sophisticated process, which requires teachers to widen their habitual notion about content, cognition, communication, and cultural understanding when planning their lessons and developing teaching materials. Particularly, the teachers need to perceive content as “factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge (skills), and meta-cognitive knowledge (learner strategies)”, and make decisions about language choice and repertoire required for learners’ meaning-making (Anderson et al., 2001; San Isidro & Coyle, 2020). Factual knowledge provides the learners with the main tools for communication, such as specific details of factual information about events, people, dates, scientific terms and vocabulary, as well as special terminology and symbols. Conceptual knowledge deals with generalizing, classifying and structuring of a subject

matter, whereas procedural knowledge describes processes and algorithms, techniques and methods. Metacognitive knowledge concerns learners' awareness on their own cognition processes and their ability to manage them; in other words, it is about perceiving their personal strategy of learning and thinking (Anderson et al., 2001; San Isidro & Coyle, 2020).

Since the aim of CLIL approach is to integrate a meaningful content with languages in a cross-curricular model, it is important to create a logical connection between language contents and content topics of other subjects, and move from the concept of compartmentalized curricula with a monolingual perspective, to integrated curricula with a translanguaging perspective. To achieve that, the content of the lessons should be designed considering students' whole linguistic repertoire and considering cross-curricular connections in the educational framework (San Isidro & Coyle, 2020).

Consequently, the success of CLIL approach mainly depends on teachers' professional competence and language proficiency, and for those teachers who lack professional language qualifications it is difficult to maintain a balanced integration of content and language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Therefore, in such cases there is a high probability that teachers would diminish the complexity of subject content or avoid difficult tasks that require higher-order thinking skills and critical thinking.

With regards to the Kazakhstani context, the above-mentioned situation is not rare since the vast majority of Kazakhstani teachers are unfamiliar with the conceptualization of the CLIL approach and its educational intentions and pedagogic strategies (Karabassova, 2018, 2020). The concept of integration of content and language learning is not deeply comprehended by Kazakhstani teachers due to inadequate teacher training and misunderstanding of methodological proceedings of trilingual education by policy makers. According to Karabassova (2020), the government fell short in perceiving and explaining clear and coherent policies for trilingual instruction and neglected the level of teachers' language proficiency needed for its successful

implementation. Similarly, in several Asian countries, the term “policy dumping” was used to describe a phenomenon where teachers of English language faced difficulties in meeting high requirements for English language proficiency in the context of globalization, while having inadequate policy support and lack of skills and expertise (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). Likewise, Kazakhstani policymakers have not considered the needs of educational institutions and teachers for implementation of the Language Planning and Policy, thus, resulting in stalling of the trilingual education experiment (Karabassova, 2020).

To resolve the issue, there is an urgent need for competent training for teachers at all levels of education in Kazakhstan on the concept of integration under CLIL approach, as well as on the methodology for efficient lesson planning. The fundamental philosophy of CLIL implies that students need to “learn content meaningfully through a language of instruction that is not their own” in such a way that students understand content and feel motivated (San Isidro & Coyle, 2020).

Translanguaging as a Teaching Strategy

One of the ways to achieve this goal is to raise awareness of Kazakhstani teachers about the pedagogical value of translanguaging in CLIL as a scaffolding tool in multilingual education implementation. Translanguaging is a discursive language practice which is used by multilingual speakers for meaning making within different language boundaries (Garcia, 2009; Wei, 2011) and refers to the idea that multilinguals have a unitary linguistic repertoire and can benefit from the use of two or more languages simultaneously (Lin, 2020). In other words, information received in one language could be comprehended in one’s mind by the means of another language, so that it could be fully understood and absorbed by a learner (Lewis et al., 2012). Indeed, in order to adequately acquire new knowledge in a foreign language, people initially conceive the meaning of the obtained information in their first language in order to make sense of it in their minds. This is why translanguaging is said to change monolingual educational norms into a democratic and

legitimate use of students' whole linguistic repertoire to make the learning process easier and more effective (Gort & Sembiente, 2015).

Baker (2011, as cited in Lin, 2020) suggested that translanguaging helps students to develop complete and deep understanding of the subject matter and to improve the weaker language. Garcia and Wei (2014) support this idea by stating that translanguaging inspires practitioners to view languages more holistically, challenging the current hierarchic positions of dominant and majority languages. Also, Otheguy, Garcia and Reid (2015) defined translanguaging as the use of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without adherence to political and social boundaries imposed on the languages. It has been "deliberately breaking the ideological divides between languages" (Wei, 2018., p. 15) and empowers both the teacher and the learner to improve their classroom experiences in myriad ways, such as reading, discussing, signing, writing, and so on, in order to fulfill different purposes of teaching practice and to make the learning process meaningful and beneficial (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). Moreover, the global trend of focusing on multilingualism instead of supporting of the traditional language separation attitude (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011) as a result of so-called multilingual turn (May, 2013; Conteh & Meier, 2014), acknowledges the value and role of extensive linguistic repertoires in different contexts and includes translanguaging practices in CLIL implementation (Cenoz, 2017; Nikula & Moore, 2019; Otto & San Isidro, 2019).

Lin (2020) highlights the importance of correct planning and designing of application of translanguaging in the classrooms with the purpose to support students' learning and unveil the learners' strengths. Translanguaging, as a pedagogical tool in CLIL classroom, activates students' cognitive skills that promotes deeper understanding of a subject matter in an additional language, as well as allows for acquiring proficiency in all applied languages (Lewis et al., 2012). It relates to the systematic use of and change between two or more languages and intentional planning of the CLIL lesson in which those languages are combined within the same learning task (San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019).

In Kazakhstan, when planning their lessons, most teachers face challenges such as low language proficiency of students, lack of adequate teaching material and difficulties with finding the right balance between content and language (Kakenov, 2017; Bakytzhanova, 2018). Also, they misunderstand the conceptualization of CLIL, confusing it with teaching merely through another language (Karabassova, 2018, 2020), and have a rather ambiguous viewpoint on translanguaging as a pedagogical practice (Karabasova, & San Isidro, 2020). Specifically, school administrators expect the teachers to follow the “one teacher-one language” policy requirement within the school, i.e. to use exclusively the target language of instruction; however, in order to make content accessible to students, the teachers explain the subject matter in students’ first language at their own risk and employ translingual teaching methods with great caution (Karabasova, & San Isidro, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial for Kazakhstani teachers to gain adequate knowledge about translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy within the CLIL approach, for proper implementation of trilingual education reform across the whole country.

Canadian French Immersion Programs

Research studies conducted to evaluate the results of the implementation of Canadian French Immersion Programs for Anglophone students indicate the findings which might be used for consideration in this study. Similar to the situation with Russian-speaking students studying in Kazakh medium of instruction, the Canadian students from English-speaking families face difficulties while studying in French. One of the challenges is connected to the fact that they do not speak the French language like native speakers, despite the fact that students value French as one of the official languages of Canada (Roy & Galiev, 2011). Therefore, the French immersion programs have been focusing on different pedagogical strategies that support the students’ comprehension and communication (Swain, 1997). In his article “Rethinking pedagogical assumptions in Canadian French immersion programs”, Cummins (2014) suggests to apply bilingual teaching strategies.

Multilingual Education in Spain

Similar to Kazakhstan, Spain is a multilingual country which strives to respect the human rights of its citizens to speak their mother tongue despite historical repression of minority languages. Just like the Russification reform of the Soviet ideology empowered the status of the Russian language at the expense of other languages, the Franco dictatorial regime imposed the Castilian Spanish as a nation-building language and heavily suppressed the usage of different local languages, portraying them as “inferior and inconsequential” (Hernandez-Campoy & Vienna-Ponsoda, 2009, p.184, as cited in Lasagabaster, 2017). Reasonably, such linguistic repression has led to numerous social debates, thorny political situation and resistance, which eventually resulted in reviewing the language policies to revitalize Basque, Catalan, and Galician in their respective communities (Lasagabaster, 2017).

Nowadays, more than 40% of Spain’s population lives in officially bilingual regions and the Spanish government recognizes the status of minority languages, such as Galician, Basque, and Catalan, to be co-official in their respective autonomous communities together with the Spanish language, which is the official language for the whole State. With respect to language-in-education policy, the educational programs are designed with the aim of advancing multilingual education, in which the minority co-official languages are used as a means of instruction jointly with Spanish and English as the predominant foreign language in the world.

Remarkably, in Spain different linguistic programs are applied depending on the context. For example, Catalonia has implemented total immersion programs in the Catalan language, whereas Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) has chosen the educational system in which the use of Basque as a medium of instruction depends on three different linguistic models (Lasagabaster, 2017). The first model is for Spanish-only speakers: they have Basque as a subject taught 3-4 hours per week; the second model is for bilingual students as it uses both Basque and Spanish as means of instruction, and the third model is the total immersion in the Basque language,

with Spanish being taught as a subject for about 4 hours per week (Lasagabaster, 2017). In Galicia, nursery schools for children aged 0-3 are held exclusively in the Galician language as a reform against Castilianisation among young Galicians; schools follow a “trilingual decree” which implies equal distribution of Spanish, Galician and English in teaching school subjects; at the universities, at least 1/3 of the subjects should be taught in Galician, and the government’s further plan is to raise this share to 50% (Vilas, 2009).

However, educational authorities in the Spanish bilingual communities are concerned with the fact that although many students learn the minority language at school, they hardly make use of it outside the formal learning context (Lasagabaster, 2017). For example, in BAC, a study among 35,000 students of primary and secondary education (Uranga, 2013, as cited in Lasagabaster, 2017) revealed that “the older students become the less often they use Basque” (Lasagabaster, 2017, p.587). The research team of this study concluded that in order to solve the issue, it is extremely important to improve students’ proficiency in the Basque language, as well as to boost their motivation to learn and use the language.

In Galicia, despite of government’s efforts to revitalize Galician language, the surveys and interviews carried out by Galicia Bilingue revealed that the majority of modern Galician parents tend to choose Castilian as a language of instruction for their children for it being “more useful”, because it is spoken in the whole of Spain and in Latin America, unlike Galician that is used only in Galicia (del Valle, 2000; Galicia Bilingue, 2010). Castilian is associated with social mobility, job perspectives and prestige, while Galician is linked to rural life and to a lower status, therefore, for young Galicians the “usefulness” of the language is more important than the “language as a symbol of identity” (del Valle, 2000). Official language policies in Galicia “have failed to convert the large pool of potential speakers amongst the younger generation of Galicians into active language users” (O’Rourke, 2018, p.407, as cited in Dewaele & Diaz, 2018). The same situation could be observed in Kazakhstan, where in spite of the government’s decision of granting the

Kazakh language the highest official status and actions to empower its positions through language policy and planning, the de facto dominant language is still Russian.

However, according to Jessner (2006, as cited in Lasagabaster, 2017), researchers who explore students' language motivations should not consider languages "in isolation but rather as dynamically interrelated and interdependent" and delve into the analysis from a holistic perspective. The Spanish experience demonstrate that new speakers of Basque/Catalan/Galician position their motivation to speak the respective minority languages "within a discourse of linguistic human rights" (O'Rourke & Ramallo, 2015, p.157, as cited in Lasagabster, 2017) and support a cosmopolitan attitude for language learning motivation and multilingual education (Newman & Trenchs-Parera, 2015, as cited in Lasagabster, 2017).

Setting the Context

Since this research concerns perceptions of Russian-speaking students on their experiences of studying a content subject in Kazakh as a medium of instruction in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS), the context of this study will be set through the prism of NIS Trilingual Education Policy in relation to the language policy in Kazakhstan and historical factors that had led to its establishment.

To start with, it is important to highlight that due to political reforms of the Soviet government in the 20th century, the demographic situation in Kazakhstan changed dramatically making Kazakhs the minority in their own land and putting the Kazakh language at extremely high risk of a total language loss owing to the increase of Russian-speaking population (Smagulova, 2006). Forced migration of different ethnic groups such as Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Chechens, Koreans, Mordva, Tatars, Karachais, Poles, Dungans, Uigurs, and others to Kazakhstan (Smagulova, 2006), famine-genocide in 1930s, which resulted in the significant decrease of the population of Kazakhs from 5,114,000 in 1931 to 2,182,000 in 1937 (Kan & Shayakhmetov, 2012;

Masanov et al., 2001, p. 376), political repressions of Kazakh intellectual class, and political acts to lower Kazakh power (Zhumanova et al., 2016) are the causes of such unfortunate development.

These reforms were aimed at empowering of Russian at the expense of depreciating the value of Kazakh (Zhumanova et al., 2016). First step was to formalize the status of the Russian language in Kazakh Soviet Republic through the modification of Kazakh written script from Latin to Cyrillic alphabet in 1939 (Abdakimov, 1994). Next step was to make Russian the dominant language in secondary and higher education (Mehisto et al., 2014) and to eliminate the Kazakh language from education by closing Kazakh-medium schools (Zhumanova et al., 2016). As a result, Russian became the language of literacy for 90% of urban population of the country (Fierman, 2006) and the dominant language “in administration, politics and education” (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, p. 85), whereas the Kazakh language was associated with “backwardness and rural residency” (Smagulova, 2008).

In 1991, when Kazakhstan became independent, the government’s first intention was to revitalize the Kazakh language by granting it official language status, and mandating all schools to teach Kazakh (Iyldyz, 2017); however, despite of legal regulations aiming to increase the use of Kazakh, Russian was the dominant language (Matuszkiewicz, 2010). Therefore, the language policy of independent Kazakhstan was significantly influenced by the existed linguistic situation, which had led to the establishment of the language goals which considered the role of Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication and respected the language on par with Kazakh (Nazarbayev, 2007). For this reason, it was decided to use education to change the status of Kazakh from being “a language of the kitchen” to the actual state language (Landau & Kellner, 2001, p. 85) and to increase its prestige (Ferguson, 2006). Thus, the historical and socio-political context of the linguistic situation of independent Kazakhstan set foundation for the introduction of trilingual education policy in the country after its initial approbation in the network of NIS (MoES, 2010; AEO NIS, 2013).

The network of NIS, established in 2008, is designed as a model of multilingual education in Kazakhstan and offers trilingual programs under special curricula (MoES, 2010). Three policy documents form the conceptual base for Trilingual Educational Policy in NIS: Trilingual Education of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (AEO NIS, 2013a), The Trilingual Implementation Guidelines for the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (AEO NIS, 2013b), and 2020 Development Strategy (AEO NIS, 2013c). The goals of NIS Trilingual Education Policy fully reflect the government's language-in-education policy goals, i.e. to raise the status of Kazakh, to maintain the use of Russian, and to motivate for studying English, and at the same time to promote equally balanced use of the three languages to “develop a common Kazakhstani identity” (AEO NIS, 2013a, p.5).

With regards to the Kazakh language revitalization goal, NIS policy documents emphasize the value and special status of Kazakh by describing it “as state and heritage language of the nation” and encourage students to develop “an understanding and appreciation of the Kazakh culture” (AEO NIS, 2013b, pp. 4-5). Specifically, in NIS, it has been viewed through its development as a medium of instruction for teaching History of Kazakhstan and Geography, along with its deep learning as a language subject.

As for teaching strategies, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is used as a main approach of trilingual education in NIS, in which a teacher develops students' both content understanding and language skills and provides a multi-faceted assessment (AEO NIS, 2013a). NIS creates favorable conditions for students' “feeling safe and confident” (p.6) when using their whole linguistic repertoire and welcomes a “cross-curricular and cross-linguistic integration” of teachers (p. 8) (AEO NIS, 2013b), as well as students' “intellectual development”, which includes “capacity to be flexible, to think critically and creatively, to innovate, to co-operate cross-culturally, to build greater respect for self and others, and to learn yet more languages” (AEO NIS, 2013c, p. 13).

It could be concluded that, hypothetically, although Russian-speaking students may have low proficiency in Kazakh, they are provided with efficient multilingual teaching techniques and professional support to succeed in total comprehension of the subject matter taught in the Kazakh medium of instruction in NIS.

Methodology

This chapter is devoted to explaining the methodology used to conduct the different stages of this study. First, it justifies the reason why an interview was chosen as the research instrument of this study. Then, this chapter elaborates on the methodology used to collect data for the study by identifying the research site and sampling, and describing the data collection instrument and data collection procedures. Furthermore, it defines the data analysis procedures and, finally, concludes with a consideration of ethical issues.

Research Design

This study applied a qualitative research approach because it helped the researcher to understand and explore the central phenomenon of the study – the perceptions and suggestions of Russian-speaking students in relation to Kazakh as a medium of instruction during lessons of the History of Kazakhstan. The aim of this qualitative inquiry is to establish a comprehensive understanding and “exploration of a central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2014, p. 228). The research questions, constructed to achieve this aim, refer to students' opinions of using Kazakh as a Medium of Instruction (KMI) to learn the content of the curriculum of the History of Kazakhstan and to their recommendations for improving KMI teaching and learning.

One way to do that is by interviewing the target sample. In qualitative research, an interview with open-ended questions enables a researcher to collect valuable information which is not limited to any of the researcher's perspectives or past findings and allows for the freedom of an interviewee's options when responding (Creswell, 2014, p. 240). Therefore, an interview-based study was chosen to conduct this research because it allowed for the collection of information on students' opinions and their suggestions concerning the learning process used with Kazakh as a medium of instruction. A semi-structured interview was the most appropriate method for this research because it implied the use of open-ended questions for more comprehensive discussion and additional information that could be revealed during the interview. In other words, an

interview sets a favorable condition for interviewees to share their thoughts and voice their concerns and beliefs smoothly (Cohen et al., 2011).

Research Site

Due to the existing pandemic situation, the interviews with the participants were conducted online via Skype because this platform was the most convenient for them. All the interviews were recorded after receiving the participants' permission.

Sampling

This study employed a purposeful sample in which research participants were deliberately selected according to the researcher's exact criteria to achieve the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). Since the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Russian-speaking students who are the direct stakeholders of the trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan and might face difficulties in learning Kazakh history in the Kazakh language, the researcher had selected students of Nazarbayev University who used to study in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS). This sample was chosen because it represented Russian-speaking students who have studied Kazakh history in the KMI under the NIS trilingual education program. The rationale for choosing this particular sample was the assumption that these students were mature enough to self-assess the quality of their knowledge and determine the challenges that they might have faced during the learning process, and therefore, was believed to be the most informative and credible in terms of obtaining trustworthy data on learning perspectives.

According to Creswell (2014), participants with diverse characteristics or traits form a maximal variation purposeful sampling, which provides the researcher the opportunity to acquire rich data from different views. Therefore, this study recruited a maximal variation purposeful sampling of eight participants of different ages, gender, and NIS locations.

The following table shows the information about the participants of the study; however, in order to protect their anonymity and confidentiality rights, they were assigned pseudonyms and all potential identifiers were removed.

Table 1

Participants of the study

| # | Participant | Age | NIS location |
|---|-------------|-----|--------------|
| 1 | P1 | 19 | Kokshetau |
| 2 | P2 | 20 | Kokshetau |
| 3 | P3 | 22 | Astana |
| 4 | P4 | 23 | Kokshetau |
| 5 | P5 | 24 | Semey |
| 6 | P6 | 19 | Pavlodar |
| 7 | P7 | 23 | Astana |
| 8 | P8 | 19 | Kostanai |

Data Collection Instrument

Since this study applied a qualitative research approach, the interview was a suitable instrument to reach the goals of this research (Creswell, 2014). An interview is defined as a “conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information” (Cannel & Kahn, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p.411), and, therefore, it focuses on a specified content. In this study, the interview questions were focused on examining Russian-speaking students’ perceptions of their experience learning a content subject, namely, the History of Kazakhstan, in the Kazakh language, in which they were not perfectly fluent. Since all the interviews were conducted via video calls on Skype, it was possible to use multi-sensory channels, such as verbal and non-verbal, for analysis (Cohen et al., 2011). In other words, it allowed the researcher to not only obtain spoken information, but also to make observations on the participants’ nonverbal messaging from their body language and facial expressions.

The interviewing process was designed to enable the researcher to reveal the students’ opinions and suggestions on the effectiveness of their personal experience studying the content subject in their second language (L2). For this purpose, a semi-structured one-on-one interview

with appropriate open-ended questions was selected as an instrument for the data collection of this study.

According to Creswell (2014), one-on-one interviews are those where only one participant is interviewed at a time. One-on-one interviews were the most relevant for this study because they allowed students to share their thoughts independently and freely in such a way that their answers were not influenced by other people's opinions and provided a better understanding of each participant's replies to the researcher.

The interview questions were open-ended in order to provide participants the opportunity to share information regarding their experiences of studying Kazakh history in KMI. The semi-structured type of interview format provided a set of guiding questions and also encouraged the interviewees to elaborate on their thoughts and suggestions within the framework of open-ended questions, thus, the interviewer guided and directed the flow, and at the same time, "followed up interesting developments" of the interview (Dornyei, 2007, p.136).

Prior to conducting the interview with actual students, a pilot test was conducted with one of the researcher's groupmates in order to check the relevance and logical order of the questions asked (Creswell, 2014), as well as to ensure that they are designed to obtain sufficient and appropriate data and that the questions "do not dominate the flow of conversation" (Dornyei, 2007, p.137).

One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted via Skype at a time suggested by the participants, in December 2020. All the interviews allowed for face-to-face communication and a free flow of each conversation.

Data Collection Procedures

The initial condition for starting the data collection process was to obtain approval from the Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education (NUGSE) Research Ethics Committee, since this study dealt with research that posed "no more than minimal risk". For this, the CITI

Training Certificate representing the completion of training on the ethics of this kind of research was obtained by the researcher. Then, the possible risks and benefits of the research, as well as the research methods and purpose of the study was defined in the NUGSE Research Approval Application, and Informed Consent forms, which were sent for further consideration and approval to the NUGSE Research Ethics Committee. After the researcher obtained NUGSE Ethics approval, the actual work on this thesis began.

Data collection was processed following the five interrelated steps indicated by Creswell (2014). The first two steps were concerned with the “identifying of participants and sites” and “gaining access to these individuals and sites” (Creswell, 2014, p.227). The interviewees for this study were chosen among current students of Nazarbayev University who used to study at or graduated from Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS), by announcing to them the purpose of the study and asking fellow students to participate in the research. Particular attention was paid to the participants’ language competence, specifically, students with lower Kazakh language fluency were preferred. As a result, 11 students contacted the researcher; however, three of them did not meet the required selection criteria, as they were remarkably fluent Kazakh speakers. Consequently, the remaining eight participants were accepted for the interview process and formed a maximal-variation sample as they were of different ages, genders, and had studied at NIS in different regions of the country. Due to the existing pandemic situation, the interviews were conducted online; therefore, the step involving the “identification of sites and gaining access to these sites” was omitted.

The following three steps, as suggested by Creswell (2014), were to formulate the most appropriate questions that would best serve the research purpose, and at the same time, to design the interview protocol and to consider recording arrangements by paying “special attention to potential ethical issues that may arise” (Creswell, 2014, p.227). In pursuance of these recommendations, and before starting the interview process, the participants were presented with

detailed information about the research topic, purpose of the study and research questions, signed an Informed Consent Form, and were asked for permission to have the dialogue recorded.

When all the preparatory work was done, the actual interview started with warm-up questions which paved the way for the smooth communication with a student and for learning about their Kazakh language proficiency. The beginning of the interview was very important as it “set the tone” of the interview and created a trusting, relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for an interviewee to open up (Dornyei, 2007, p.137). Moving from these icebreakers, the conversation continued with content questions which were directly connected to the purpose of the study and were focused on students’ opinions, feelings, knowledge, and background (Dornyei, 2007). To encourage the interviewees’ disclosure of information, it was useful to apply various probes, such as “detail-oriented and clarification questions” when an interviewee needed to be requested to elaborate on the most pertinent word used by them, and a “contrast probe” when they could be asked to compare a certain aspect with a similar issue (Dornyei, 2007, p.138). Finally, the interview ended up with the closing questions such as “Is there anything else you would like to add?” This gave the participant the opportunity to open up about sensitive issues that had not been covered before (Creswell, 2014, Dornyei, 2007).

Data Analysis Procedures

In the data analysis, the following six steps suggested by Creswell (2014) were followed: first, preparing the data, second, coding the database, third, forming themes and describing findings, then reporting findings, interpreting the meaning, and finally, validating the accuracy of the findings. To prepare the data for analysis, the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed into written format. Since all the interviews were conducted in Russian, all the excerpts were translated into English for reader-friendly purposes. After the preparation stage, the data analysis was started by the exploration of the data and development of codes according to Creswell’s visual model of the coding process in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014, pp. 267-

271). To describe the data, the information was divided into four main themes – “language proficiency” (questions 1 and 2 of the interview protocol allow for the assessment of the Kazakh language proficiency of the participants with a possible correlation to their answers on the content questions of the interview); “effectiveness” (questions 3-6 of the interview protocol); “challenges” (questions 7-9 of the interview protocol); and “suggestions” (questions 10-11 of the interview protocol). Next, the ways to represent the findings were considered, the narrative discussion was prepared, and the findings were interpreted according to the literature review on this topic. Creswell (2014) stated that “qualitative research is interpretive research” (p.281); therefore, making sense of the findings was the main goal of this study. The final step of the data analysis was the validation of the credibility of the findings through a member checking strategy or by asking a person outside of the study to give feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the research.

Ethical Considerations

A crucial step in the data collection process of this study was to consider ethical issues and ensure that the interviewees’ confidentiality and anonymity were protected. Since the sample concerned Nazarbayev University students, all the participants were above 18 years of age. This research involved no more than minimal risk for human subjects, and therefore, was subject to approval by the GSE IREC Committee. To ensure the protection of the rights of the participants and the freedom of their participation, they were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the study, the research process and data collection procedures. After ensuring that this information was fully understood, the participants were asked if they were really willing to engage in the research process, as well as informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time. In order to protect the interviewees’ anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used instead of their real names in the interview protocols, and all the data will be kept safe and students’ identities will be untraceable. Thus, the stakeholders’ right of freedom to participate or not and their right to anonymity and confidentiality will be protected by the written consent form

acknowledging that their involvement in the interview process was voluntary, that they could choose to disengage from the study at any time, and ensuring that the information they provided remains confidential and anonymous.

Findings

This chapter presents findings of the small-scale research conducted with eight Russian-speaking students of Nazarbayev University who were direct stakeholders of the trilingual education reform while studying at Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS). The data for qualitative analysis was collected from one-on-one semi-structured interviews designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Considering their experience of studying in NIS, what are Russian-speaking university students' perceptions of using Kazakh as a Medium of Instruction (KMI) to learn the curriculum content of the History of Kazakhstan?
- 2) What are their suggestions for improving KMI teaching and learning?

Four broad themes emerged from the analysis of the interviewees' responses: language proficiency, effectiveness, challenges, and suggestions. These themes are expanded in the sections below and the findings are supported by the participants' evidence.

Language proficiency

Since this study concerns Russian-speaking students' experience in implementation of the trilingual education reform, in which they were obliged to study in KMI, their proficiency in the Kazakh language played a critical role for the purpose of obtaining relevant data for the analysis. Therefore, the researcher deliberately selected a sampling of students with low Kazakh language fluency and the first two questions of the interview protocol were devoted to finding out about the level of their knowledge of the Kazakh language. As a result, it was revealed that all of the participants communicated predominantly in Russian with their family members and friends, yet only one participant admitted that sometimes she could speak basic Kazakh with her grandmother.

Regarding their communicative competence in the Kazakh language, 7 out of 8 respondents reported that their writing skills are much better than their ability to speak freely in Kazakh,

therefore, they used to prefer writing tasks over speaking assignments while studying in NIS. Overall, they were dissatisfied with the level of their knowledge of the Kazakh language and would like to have more practice for oral communication both in familiar life situations and in school.

Effectiveness

Considering Russian-speaking students' perceptions of learning a content subject, such as history, in their L2, the researcher raised a question of effectiveness of teaching Kazakh history in KMI. After analysing the responses of the participants, it could be concluded that the majority of the sample believed that implementation of this aspect of trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan was meaningful and acceptable.

First of all, the overall response to the question whether it was useful to study the Kazakh history in the Kazakh language, was very positive. Six out of eight interviewees acknowledged that inclusion of Kazakh language as a means of teaching content subjects, regardless of the level of language competence of students, was a wise idea of the policy-makers. Surprisingly, over half of those surveyed reported that they would not like the history of Kazakhstan to be taught in a different language. For example, the following are the quotes of the students' replies.

Excerpt 1

Historic names are better to be comprehended in Kazakh, because it is better to get close to a nation's history through its language... I think it is wise to teach history of Kazakhstan in Kazakh, because everyone in Kazakhstan should know Kazakh language and Kazakh history, and to understand Kazakh mentality and spirit. So, I think it's a good idea to study Kazakh history in Kazakh language (Participant 5, December 26, 2020).

Excerpt 2

When you think in Kazakh, your inner Kazakh personality wakes up, it's like empathy towards Kazakh language.... I think learning Kazakh history in Kazakh language gave me some kind of patriotic feeling, and I liked feeling it (Participant 1, December 24, 2020).

Excerpt 3

It's one of the ways to use Kazakh outside of just language learning. Kazakh history in Kazakh language helped me to develop my Kazakh language skills. ... because I think that the fact that history was in Kazakh gave me motivation to learn Kazakh language (Participant 8, December 29, 2020).

However, some participants were not as enthusiastic as the other ones.

Excerpt 4

For me, it is better if it was in Russian, because in this case I would understand and remember more information and it would be more interesting to me to study it. Students should be given a choice in what language they prefer to study (Participant 4, December 26, 2020).

Excerpt 5

I have negative opinion about that. I think this brings a mess in a child's head. If you go to school, you should study in one language, the one that you know best. It could be Russian, or Kazakh, or English. But there is no need to mix those three languages.... I think that quality of understanding is more important than the fact that you study in Kazakh (Participant 6, December 27, 2020)

Secondly, despite their low competence in the Kazakh language, the majority of the respondents understood sufficiently the content of the subject. Only three out of eight participants

felt that they comprehended less than 50% of what they were taught during the lessons. To cope with their problems, they either sought help from a teacher or studied extra time at home. It should be noted that this study indicated that teachers successfully resorted to translanguaging to facilitate students' proper perception of the subject matter.

Excerpt 6

Some topics were really difficult to comprehend in class, therefore, I had to study at home a lot, looking for almost half of the words in the Kazakh-Russian dictionary (Participant 8, December 29, 2020).

Excerpt 7

Sometimes it was really difficult to understand everything, especially when the topic was new, but I asked a teacher and she always helped me by explaining in Russian. So, every time it became clear to me, and language was never an obstacle (Participant 3, December 24, 2020).

Excerpt 8

The teacher helped us to understand the content by explaining some topics in Russian, but she rarely allowed us to speak Russian in class, so most of the time we used Kazakh. However, she could do exceptions for those who had difficulties in expressing their thoughts in Kazakh to do that in Russian (Participant 4, December 26, 2020).

In addition, most of those surveyed (6 out of 8) found lessons of history of Kazakhstan interesting and all of the participants of this study unanimously attributed the interestingness of the lesson to the professionalism and personal qualities of their teacher. In other words, they assigned the most important role in the learning process to the teacher's part, that is, whether the lesson was interesting or not, depended entirely on the teacher.

Excerpt 9

It always depends from a teacher. One teacher's lessons were really boring, every time the same structure – repetition of past lesson, then the teacher read a text of new topic from our textbook, and at the end asked us questions about new topic. Other teacher used group assignments, it was interesting, we made discussions, presentations, collages.... I liked that 70% of her lesson's content was group work, therefore her lessons were very interesting (Participant 4, December 26, 2020).

Excerpt 10

Honestly, I didn't find lessons of Kazakh history very interesting, and it depended mostly on a teacher. Only one year we had a young teacher and he was very enthusiastic about history, he loved his job, I would say he was very devoted to teaching profession. He made his lessons very interesting, everybody in our class loved the history subject when we had that teacher. Unfortunately, other teachers were not as much devoted professionals of history as him... So, after him we had only boring lessons, it's very sad (Participant 8, December 29, 2020).

Excerpt 11

My teacher was an exceptional professional, she made our lessons very engaging. We watched historic videos, discussed it, wrote dates and events. Every lesson started from the questionnaire on the topic of the last lesson. She made mock exams during the lesson... Everything was individual tasks, no group assignments (Participant 6, December 27, 2020).

Finally, the majority (6 out of 8) were satisfied with the quality of their knowledge of Kazakh history obtained at school. It should be emphasized that this research explored specifically the experiences of former students of NIS, but not of a mainstream school, otherwise the level of

satisfaction with the knowledge attained in an ordinary school might be lower than that in NIS, due to advantageous initial standing of the latter.

Excerpt 12

I was lucky to have good teachers of history. I was lucky to study in NIS, because I think NIS had best teachers in Kazakhstan. Now I know that NIS network is the best schools in our country (Participant 6, December 27, 2020).

Excerpt 13

Over the last years in NIS we learned recent periods of history of Kazakhstan. “Kazakhstan in the modern world” – it was one of my favorite subjects. It was interesting to learn about Kazakhstan. We learned about Kazakhstan in modern times, about politics, law, human rights. At that time, I liked it very much and I was proud about Kazakhstan (Participant 1, December 24, 2020).

Nevertheless, despite exclusive conditions of studying in NIS, two out of eight interviewees responded negatively to the question about their contentment with their learning of the history of Kazakhstan in KMI. Remarkably, the reason for their dissatisfaction emerged not from their low Kazakh language competence, but from the professional abilities and personality of the teacher of this subject.

Excerpt 14

I am absolutely not satisfied. I don't know how the history of Kazakhstan could be taught at such a low level?! We only read textbooks and answered questions from it. Sometimes a teacher gave us a task to write a summary or to make a multiple-choice test, 10 questions with 3 options of answers. Very rarely we made a description of topics. We never repeated the material from a previous lesson. We had video presentations or games and competitions

only on special holidays or Olympiads or open lessons, when the teacher needed to show off in front of the school administration. (Participant 7, December 27, 2020).

Taken together, these results suggest that in the framework of implementation of the trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan, the effectiveness of learning a content subject in students' L2 depended predominantly on teachers' skills and talent. The teachers should not only apply appropriate teaching methods, including translanguaging, but also enthusiastically present instructional materials to the students in the most engaging way.

Challenges

The next section of the interview was concerned with challenges of Russian-speaking students during the lessons of Kazakh history being taught in the Kazakh language, as well as with their problems that might arise while preparing a homework.

When respondents were asked about which tasks were particularly difficult for them, two-thirds of participants (5 out of 8) answered that oral presentations were especially hard to perform due to their low speaking skills in the Kazakh language.

Excerpt 15

Oral presentations in front of the class were difficult for me, because I was unconfident person, and I was worried about what my classmates would think about me, because I have difficulties with expressing my own thoughts even in Russian, but there I needed to do that in Kazakh. That is why I usually kept silence and just wrote (Participant 1, December 24, 2020).

Excerpt 16

To describe a text in front of the class was the most difficult for me, because it was always a stress for me, because I needed to talk in Kazakh, therefore I tried to memorize texts (Participant 3, December 24, 2020).

Excerpt 17

I didn't like speaking in front of the classmates, first of all, because of the language barrier, because I felt myself uncomfortable to stand there and describe a topic in Kazakh, the language in which I was not very fluent, and secondly, because I am a shy person and I prefer written tasks over speaking assignments (Participant 8, December 29, 2020).

Other responses to this question included lack of information in the Kazakh language available in the Internet and personal difficulties with memorization process.

Excerpt 18

It was quite difficult to find necessary information in the Internet in Kazakh for making presentations, because there was few information in Kazakh. If we found information, it was usually in Russian, so we needed to translate it into Kazakh and that was time-consuming (Participant 4, December 26, 2020).

Excerpt 19

Remembering dates of historic events was difficult to me. On the one side, there were not so many dates to memorize, but I still often got confused with all the information. Honestly, I used to learn things by memorizing them, therefore, the knowledge is not long-lasting in my head... (Participant 2, December 24 ,2020).

In response to the question on how difficult it was for a student to do home tasks, the vast majority of participants (7 out of 8) admitted that it was easy, because usually they either did not

have much tasks assigned for homework, or there were mostly writing assignments, which were not as challenging as oral projects.

Excerpt 20

No, not difficult at all, it was rather interesting. Mostly, we wrote essays on how Kazakhstan could enter top 30 countries, we used critical thinking. I had good writing skills, so it wasn't difficult for me (Participant 1, December 24, 2020).

Excerpt 21

There was very few homework on history of KZ, usually we searched information in Internet and that's it. And it was tricky to find it in Kazakh, therefore, I found it in Russian and then translated in Kazakh. Usually we needed to find exact answer to teacher's questions, and not describing texts, and I liked it, because it was easier for me (Participant 4, December 26, 2020).

Overall, the findings of this small-scale study indicate that students experienced the greatest challenges when dealing with situations involving the use of their speaking skills, which were the poorest in their range of Kazakh language competences. The majority of those who gave oral presentations to their classmates or other people felt unwonted stress and insecurity, and tried to avoid this kind of practice. However, the students were not assigned speaking projects for their homework, therefore, home tasks were relatively simple and easy to complete; besides, there were very few of them.

Suggestions

In the final part of the interview, respondents were asked about suggestions for improving KMI teaching and learning of a content subject, such as the history of Kazakhstan, for Russian-speaking students.

The most striking observation to emerge from the data analysis was the fact that 100% of the participants strongly believed that the process of successful development of lessons of Kazakh history with Kazakh as a medium of instruction utterly depended on teachers. In particular, they assumed that the teachers' level of professionalism, enthusiasm and passion for their work would allow for emergence of their creativity and would increase opportunities for usage of advanced teaching methods and diverse and interesting assignments, which would make the transmission of knowledge more engaging and fulfilling, despite of learners' low competence in Kazakh. Below is one of the examples of the common opinion of the interviewees.

Excerpt 22

Everything depends of the teacher. Some teachers could teach very interesting, show visual materials, give creative tasks, but some are boring, and therefore gives no motivation to learn the subject. I personally didn't like history of Kazakhstan, but when one year I had a good teacher, I loved it, even participated in school Olympiads (Participant 2, December 24, 2020).

Further, respondents were requested to indicate essential characteristics of an outstanding and effective instructor. Four discrete aspects emerged from the analysis of their answers. First, teachers should require compliance with severe discipline, second, they should be flexible to learn new teaching methodology, third, they need to explain a topic in their own words, and finally, they should use translanguaging. The following excerpts from the interviews with the participants explicitly demonstrate the abovementioned views.

Excerpt 23

I think, teachers should be strict. This is the main principle... A student should understand that if you didn't do homework, it's bad. If you learn well, it's good. I think that with our mentality only this works, because we have very spoiled children, and they need to

understand that school is not the place where you can have moods (Participant 6, December 27, 2020).

Excerpt 24

I wish that teachers loved their job, because if they don't love what they do, the lessons are of bad quality and not interesting. Also, I would like them to learn from the experience of foreign teachers, to learn their methods, our teachers are accustomed to one system and do not want to change, but children want new methods that are more interesting (Participant 7, December 27, 2020).

Excerpt 25

A teacher should explain the subject content in their own words, but not just read a topic from a textbook. That way a student could comprehend information more naturally and see that it could be remembered. Otherwise students memorize without understanding, therefore, the information is soon forgotten (Participant 2, December 24, 2020).

Excerpt 26

To help those who are weak in Kazakh a teacher should explain some unfamiliar topics in Russian and allow students to speak Russian sometimes. (Participant 5, December 26, 2020).

Turning now to the question about improving teaching methodology, almost all of the respondents (7 out of 8) suggested the idea of diversification of assignments during a lesson of Kazakh history taught in KMI. One of the reasons for proposing this opinion was their belief that with various dissimilar projects, the instruction would be more captivating and the learning process would be easier and more natural, because students would never be bored with the same type of tasks.

Excerpt 27

For a successful learning, it is essential to change the approach of the teacher and to diversify tasks. The teacher should be enthusiastic and active, and pay attention to students. If the teacher sees that students are bored, he should change the lesson format and try another task. It would be good to have different format of tasks, not only reading and describing, something interesting like games, victorines, competitions, group assignments (Participant 4, December 26, 2020).

In particular, over half of the interviewees (5 out of 8) recommended for teachers to include more visual materials when they introduce a new topic, because they were not only entertaining, but also respected students' personal preferences for learning. For example, the following participants preferred a visual learning style, therefore, they would be more satisfied with the quality of obtained knowledge if their teachers would show more video materials in class.

Excerpt 28

I suggest watching more historic movies, to analyze them, to discuss where was true and where was fiction, something like that. Because most of children are visual learners. I personally would like to have more visual material, diagrams, charts, etc. If only I had more historic videos at my history lessons, I would know a lot more than now (Participant 5, December 26, 2020).

Excerpt 29

It would be more interesting, if we watched more historic documentaries and YouTube videos about Kazakhstan, short movies or extracts of movies, which were relevant to the topic. Nowadays, everything is so available, now it is not a problem to find interesting visual information about Kazakhstan, but during my times, it was quite rare, and I really missed that (Participant 1, December 24, 2020).

Other suggestions included creative projects that would require good presentation skills and more independence to choose interesting themes for learning, as well as autonomous working with information. For example, one participant shared with her insights after her 1-year study in the United Kingdom.

Excerpt 30

I had experience of studying in UK for 1 year in a college. I noticed that while teaching the history of UK they didn't give you much to read, instead they gave you tasks to find out the information by yourself. Every lesson was an oral presentation in front of a class. It's independent work, you can choose whatever topic that is interesting to you... Students would not only learn the subject, but also would improve their presentation skills, which are very important nowadays... It would be nice to include oral projects in Kazakhstani curriculum plan. For example, to prepare a presentation about a famous hero or a historic period, something that a child would like to learn about. To give a child a freedom to choose the topic, not limiting him with current themes. And this is not only a presentation, it's a project. Some could make a design model or a diagram. A student should be asked a wider question, to make them think. For example, what this person made to change the history, or why this particular historic period was remarkable? Give room for creativity, for research (Participant 6, December 27, 2020).

One interviewee suggested a very exciting type of speaking exercise, which could develop students' skills in articulating their own thoughts and defending their own beliefs. This task would not only develop learners' language competence, but also could reveal their personality.

Excerpt 31

I would like to have more freedom to express our opinions. For example, a teacher could organize debates on a particular topic in the history of Kazakhstan, divide us in groups so

that we discuss different points of view. In this case every child could express their own view in their own style. I was always astonished that in our schools there was no opportunity to express our opinions (Participant 7, December 27, 2020).

One of the respondents commented on the relevance of having more analytical tasks that ignite critical thinking skills and practice-oriented approach.

Excerpt 32

I would suggest more analytical tasks. For example, making a chart, or comparing data, or filling in a table, or diagram. Tasks that require thinking and comparing, it could be different historic periods, or different countries, or different heroes. Also, it would be nice to make comparisons and analysis of past periods with a contemporary Kazakhstan. In this case, students could acquire more practical knowledge and obtain additional skills that would be useful in their life or future job (Participant 8, December 29, 2020).

Another participant proposed a valuable suggestion to revise curriculum content, because it was designed ineffectively with repetition of the same topics after some years of the learning period.

Excerpt 33

As far as I remember, the curriculum contained too much repetition of topics, they should be diversified or new topics added, more creativity is needed in curriculum development. In the curriculum first, we learned everything in chronological order, and then we repeated what we had learned after 3-4 years. I think it was not right, it would be better to learn something new instead. Otherwise, it was boring to learn the same topic some years later (Participant 2, December 24, 2020).

In addition, one participant alluded to the notion that Kazakhstani government needs to improve motivation to learn history of Kazakhstan by different non-educational incentives, while the other respondent commented on young people's other fields of interest and insignificance of knowing history at a deep level.

Excerpt 34

Nowadays people search for benefits for their lives. Even if you love a language, you want to have benefits from its usage. If students would see real benefits of learning Kazakh history, it would be ideal (Participant 5, December 26, 2020).

Excerpt 35

History is more about memorization; it is just for your overall development. I think that following the current state of Kazakhstan's political and economic life is more useful than studying its ancient periods, even though politicians need to know history in order not to make mistakes of the past. I think that history is not necessary in all professions, only for those who are connected with history. For example, for cartographers and writers, history is important, because the quality of their work depends on a particular knowledge (Participant 3, December 24, 2020).

In summary, the most surprising finding of this small-scale research was the fact that a strong competence in the Kazakh language was not absolutely fundamental in acquiring a good knowledge of Kazakh history. The most important aspect that really influenced the quality of obtained education and motivation of Russian-speaking students was a teacher's professionalism and enthusiasm. A common view amongst interviewees was that teachers' personal traits and professional qualifications were pivotal in development of a successful and interesting lesson, and their use of translanguaging was particularly helpful.

As for suggestions for improving teaching methodology, the respondents proposed diversified tasks for acknowledging every student's learning style and for making a lesson more interesting. Together these results provided important insights into significance of introducing advanced teaching approaches, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), for nurturing of impassioned teachers of Kazakh history in KMI for Russian-speaking learners.

Discussion

This chapter focuses on the discussion of the findings obtained as a result of interviewing eight Russian-speaking students of Nazarbayev University who were direct stakeholders of the trilingual education reform while studying at Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS). Based on their past experience, the respondents were asked about their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of learning Kazakhstan's History in Kazakh as a medium of instruction in the framework of trilingual education curriculum. This small-scale study was guided by the following research questions:

- 3) Considering their experience of studying in NIS, what are Russian-speaking university students' perceptions of using Kazakh as a Medium of Instruction (KMI) to learn the curriculum content of the History of Kazakhstan?
- 4) What are their suggestions for improving KMI teaching and learning?

The goal of this chapter is to answer the above-mentioned research questions and discuss how the obtained results correspond to the literature reviewed on this topic.

With regards to the first research question, the following findings were identified from the semi-structured interviews with the participants of this study.

Finding 1. The majority of the sample believed that despite their low level of the Kazakh language competence, learning Kazakh history in Kazakh, as their L2, was a meaningful and beneficial aspect of the trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan. Moreover, the participants reported that they would not want the history of Kazakhstan to be taught in a language other than Kazakh, the reason for that being an increased motivation to learn the Kazakh language due to self-awareness of their national identity and awakening of their patriotic feelings. Most of the interviewees believed that everyone in Kazakhstan should know the Kazakh language and history, and that knowledge of Kazakh would help them to better conceive Kazakh mentality and spirit.

A possible explanation for these results might be an effective promotion of the Kazakh language revitalization goal in NIS, by which students were encouraged to develop “an understanding and appreciation of the Kazakh culture” and value the special status of Kazakh “as state and heritage language of the nation” (AEO NIS, 2013b, pp. 4-5). This rationale confirms the statement that language is one of the essential elements of state ideology, whereas “the choice of the medium of instruction” is the most important aspect of language-in-education policy (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004, as cited in Hornberger, 2008, p.3).

In general, these findings match those observed in earlier studies. For example, Sharipova’s (2020) nation-wide survey on perceptions of national identity in Kazakhstan revealed that vast majority of respondents believed that it is important to be patriotic (94%) and to know the history of the country (93%). It should be noted that “patriotism should be based on pride for history, culture, and perspectives for development of the Kazakh nation” (Abdygaliyev, 2013, as cited in Sharipova, 2020, p.10). Concerning the language aspect, Fierman (2005) in his article about prospects of the Kazakh language, referred to Kazakhstan’s first president’s statement, where he stressed the importance of teaching Kazakh to the younger generation rather than to mature adults of the Soviet background, and before demanding “members of other ethnic groups to learn the Kazakh language, Kazakhs themselves should learn it and use it” (Nazarbayev, 2003, as cited in Fierman, 2005, p.411). Likewise, Aitymbetov et al. (2015) concluded that “the language of the indigenous nation is considered as the main element of nation-building in Kazakhstan” (p.6).

Finding 2. The pivotal finding of this small-scale research was the fact that a strong competence in the Kazakh language was not fundamental in acquiring a good knowledge of Kazakh history. The most important aspect that really influenced the quality of the education received by Russian-speaking students along with their motivation was teachers’ professionalism, enthusiasm and personal traits. All of the participants of this study unanimously believed that a teacher had an ultimate role in making the learning process interesting and effective, and excluded

the influence of their low level of Kazakh language competence on their overall satisfaction with the knowledge obtained during lessons of history of Kazakhstan in KMI.

The majority of the interviewees found lessons of history of Kazakhstan interesting and attributed the interestingness of the lesson solely to the professionalism and personal qualities of their teachers. Only two out of eight participants responded negatively to the question about their contentment with the knowledge of history they obtained at school, and the reason for their dissatisfaction emerged not from their poor Kazakh language skills, but from the weak professional abilities and apathetic personality of teachers of this subject.

Taken together, these results suggest that in the framework of implementation of the trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan, the effectiveness of learning a content subject in students' L2 depended predominantly on teachers' skills and talent. This finding corroborates the ideas of Luk-Fong and Brennan (2010), who suggested that teachers offer tremendous personal impact on the reform implementation process and introduce their individual teaching experiences in order to carry out policy innovations according to their contextual realities. Likewise, Ornstein and Huskins (2013) noted that teachers, being primary stakeholders implementing educational reforms, initiate innovations to the updated curriculum and modify their practices to meet the requirements of policymakers. Also, this finding supports implications of Ryder and Banner (2013), who concluded that these innovations urge the teachers to change their habitual experiences of traditional transmission of knowledge to the new set of beliefs, which is a complicated process for teachers' professional identities. Since not all of the participants were satisfied with their teachers' enthusiasm and professional readiness, it might be assumed that some teachers did not possess sufficient level of flexibility to adhere to this transformation and continue using old methods of teacher-centered pedagogy.

Meanwhile, Cedefop (2010), San Isidro and Coyle (2020) pointed out that updated curriculum reforms imply using a set of new interactive methodology that aim at developing

critical thinking skills and communication, as well as promoting students' group work and individual learning. The respondents of this study argued that the teachers' level of professionalism and passion for work would allow for emergence of their creativity and would increase opportunities for usage of advanced teaching methods and diverse and interesting assignments, which would make the transmission of knowledge more engaging and fulfilling, despite learners' low competence in Kazakh. The teachers should not only apply appropriate teaching methods, including translanguaging, but also enthusiastically present instructional materials to the students in the most appealing way.

Remarkably, the majority of the participants pointed out teachers' rigor for compliance with severe discipline in class and strict implementation of home tasks as one of the essential characteristics of an outstanding and effective instructor. This finding supports previous research conducted by Hart and Nance (2003) who evaluated the preferences of supervision styles labelled as *directive teacher*, *supportive teacher*, *counsellor*, and *consultant* among 90 supervisors and 168 supervisees in the USA. The data collection revealed that students mostly preferred a higher degree of a supervisor's directive approach (Hart & Nance, 2003). With regards to the Kazakhstani context, it might be concluded that students' preference for a more guiding learning approach emerged as a consequence of a teacher-centered legacy of the Soviet education system.

Finding 3. Despite their low competence in the Kazakh language, the majority of the respondents acquired sufficient understanding of the content of the subject and were satisfied with the quality of their knowledge of Kazakh history obtained at school. Only three out of eight participants felt that they comprehended less than 50% of what they were taught during the lessons. To cope with their problems, they either studied extra time at home or sought help from a teacher, who successfully resorted to translanguaging to facilitate students' proper perception of the unclear subject matter. This finding supports the ideas of Canagarajah (2011), Swain & Lapkin (2013), Garcia & Wei (2014), Luk & Lin (2015), Moore & Nikula (2016), Cenoz et al. (2017) that

translanguaging is a naturally occurring phenomenon that teachers use as a scaffolding tool in the process of content-based instruction. Translanguaging is a discursive language practice which is used by multilingual speakers for meaning making within different language boundaries (Garcia, 2009; Wei, 2011) and refers to the idea that multilinguals have a unitary linguistic repertoire and can benefit from the use of two or more languages simultaneously (Lin, 2020).

Also, this finding agrees with the statement of San Isidro & Coyle (2020) that students need to “learn content meaningfully through a language of instruction that is not their own” in such a way that students understand content and feel motivated. Consequently, for those teachers who lack professional competence and language qualifications it is difficult to maintain a balanced integration of content and language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).

Finding 4. Students experienced the greatest challenges when dealing with situations involving the use of their speaking skills, which were the poorest in their range of Kazakh language competences. Almost all of the respondents reported that their writing skills were much better than their ability to speak freely in Kazakh, therefore, they used to prefer writing tasks over speaking assignments while studying in NIS. As for homework, the vast majority of the participants admitted that it was easy, because mostly they had writing assignments, which were not as challenging as oral projects. The majority of those who gave verbal presentations to their classmates felt unwanted stress and insecurity.

These results match those observed in the study of Tsui (1996) on reticence and anxiety in second language learning in Hong Kong secondary schools, in which teachers attributed student’s reluctance to speak to their low English language proficiency and fear of mistakes in front of their classmates. Similarly, the findings of the earlier studies of Horwitz et al. (1986) and Liu (1989) revealed the direct effect of students’ poor speaking skills on their unwillingness to engage in oral tasks and feeling nervous and confused when speaking in their language classes (Tsui, 1996). These findings mirror those from more recent studies, such as of Fauzan (2014, 2016) and Maulana

et al. (2016), in which the researchers indicated problems that students might face when producing a second language in spoken forms, such as “lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, difficulties to speak spontaneously, fear of teacher’s criticism and worry of being ridiculed by their classmates” (as cited in Hidayati & Ariani, 2016, p.215).

In relation to the second research question of this study, the participants made the following suggestions for improving teaching methodology.

Finding 5. Almost all of the respondents suggested the idea of diversification of assignments during a lesson of Kazakh history taught in KMI. One of the reasons for proposing this opinion was their belief that with various dissimilar projects, the instruction would be more captivating and the learning process would be easier and more natural, because students would never be bored with the same type of tasks. For example, some of the participants proposed to include more creative projects that would require good presentation skills, more independence to choose interesting themes for learning, and autonomous working with information. This task could provide more practice for oral communication, and as a result would improve their level of Kazakh language competence. One respondent suggested to initiate debates as an exciting type of speaking exercises which could develop students’ skills in articulating their own thoughts and defending their own beliefs, thereby contributing to the learners’ language mastery, as well as revealing their personality. Another participant commented on the relevance of having more analytical tasks with practice-oriented approach that ignite students’ critical thinking skills.

Taken together, these results provided important insights into significance of introducing advanced teaching approaches, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), for nurturing of impassioned teachers of Kazakh history in KMI for Russian-speaking learners.

According to San Isidro and Coyle (2020), the content of the lessons should be designed considering students’ whole linguistic repertoire and considering cross-curricular connections in the educational framework. In this regard, teachers in NIS successfully employed the CLIL

approach to develop students' both content understanding and language skills by encouraging the use of all languages they know (AEO NIS, 2013a). As a result, adequate mastery of CLIL pedagogy stimulated teachers to use their full potential to contribute to students' communication skills (Karabassova, 2020).

Also, NIS welcomed a “cross-curricular and cross-linguistic integration” of teachers (p. 8) (AEO NIS, 2013b), as well as students' “intellectual development”, which included “capacity to be flexible, to think critically and creatively, to innovate, to co-operate cross-culturally, to build greater respect for self and others, and to learn yet more languages” (AEO NIS, 2013c, p. 13). This concept is consistent with the statement of San Isidro and Coyle (2020) that integrating content and language requires teachers to widen their habitual notion about content, cognition, communication, and cultural understanding when planning their lessons and developing teaching materials. Particularly, the teachers need to perceive content as “factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge (skills), and meta-cognitive knowledge (learner strategies)”, and make decisions about language choice and repertoire required for learners' meaning-making (Anderson et al., 2001; San Isidro & Coyle, 2020).

Furthermore, the results of this study exposed the need for accepting every student's learning style preference when designing differentiated assignments. In particular, over half of the interviewees favored a visual learning style, therefore, they wanted for teachers to include more visual materials when explaining a new topic in class, so that it would be clearer and more engaging for their understanding. This suggestion supports the idea of Griffiths (2012) who defined the learning style as intuitively appealing way to make learning more interesting and successful and to acknowledge individual differences of learners rather than adopting a universal approach (as cited in Griffiths & Soruç, 2020). If teachers planned their lessons in accordance with students' individual cognitive needs, the learners would have “freedom to choose methods and materials which produce the best results and are most enjoyable for themselves” (Griffiths &

Soruç, 2020, p.97). Moreover, Dörnyei (2005) suggested that students who have the capacity of being flexible in a range of styles could become more effective learners (Griffiths & Soruç, 2020, p.102).

In summary, these findings provide some support for the conceptual premise of differentiation of tasks in the quality CLIL design that offers “different levels of intellectual challenge for students” in accordance with Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligence and Bloom’s different cognitive levels: remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and create (San Isidro & Coyle, 2020, p.16).

Conclusion

This chapter presents the main conclusions drawn from eight semi-structured interviews with former beneficiaries of the trilingual education reform in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS), who shared their past experiences regarding their study of Kazakh history in Kazakh as their second language (L2). The aim of the researcher was to explore general perceptions of these Russian-speaking students regarding the effectiveness of learning the History of Kazakhstan in Kazakh as a medium of instruction (KMI), and to analyze their suggestions for improving KMI teaching and learning.

To begin with, the majority of the respondents considered the study of Kazakh history in the Kazakh language as effective and purposeful in terms of achieving the political goal of reviving the Kazakh language through the activation of patriotism and a sense of national identity. Most of the participants reported that their studying of the history in Kazakh helped them to better conceive the Kazakh character and spirit and increased their motivation to learn Kazakh. Consequently, over half of the interviewees would not want the history of Kazakhstan to be taught in a language other than Kazakh.

Surprisingly, the most significant conclusion of this small-scale study was the fact that the students' poor command of the Kazakh language did not affect their acquisition of sufficient knowledge of Kazakh history. Rather, it was the professionalism and enthusiasm of the teachers that played a crucial role in the success of making the learning process interesting and effective. In particular, those students who found lessons of history of Kazakhstan interesting and were satisfied with the quality of their obtained education, attributed the effectiveness of the instruction solely to the competence and personal qualities of their teachers. Similarly, those who were unmotivated and bored in Kazakh history classes, criticized their teachers' apathetic attitude and low professional skills as the main reason for their general dissatisfaction with the obtained knowledge.

As for understanding the content of the subject, the majority of the respondents adequately comprehended the educational material, despite their weak knowledge of Kazakh. It happened specifically because their teachers effectively resorted to translanguaging in situations where students faced difficulties when working with unfamiliar words or terminology. In other words, the fact that teachers frequently used translanguaging as a scaffolding tool to facilitate the learning process, made it possible to eliminate the influence of students' poor Kazakh language skills on their overall understanding of the subject matter taught in KMI.

Regarding their language competences, almost all of the participants admitted that their writing skills were much better than their ability to speak Kazakh fluently, as a result, they experienced the greatest challenges when dealing with speaking projects and therefore, preferred writing assignments to avoid this undesirable stress. Since the homework consisted mostly of writing tasks, the vast majority of the participants revealed that this was easy to do.

However, all of the interviewees strived to be confident and fluent Kazakh language speakers with competent presentation skills. Therefore, one of the suggestions brought forward by the participants of this study was the development of more tasks that require verbal communicative practice. For example, creative projects on an independently chosen topic that would offer the students freedom to learn what they were really interested in, debates about the benefits of specific historic periods which could foster speakers' skills in articulating their own thoughts and defending their own beliefs, or analytical tasks via a practice-oriented approach that would ignite participants' critical thinking abilities. These kinds of speaking assignments might not only be exciting and enjoyable, but could also provide opportunities for improving learners' speaking skills.

Overall, almost all of the respondents suggested that for making the lessons of Kazakh history interesting and effective, teachers need to prepare various dissimilar assignments with a greater emphasis on group tasks and take into consideration students' individual learning style

preferences. They believed that with such diversified tasks, the instruction would be more engaging and the learning process more appealing because students would never be bored with the same type of tasks and could stretch their learning styles to become effective learners.

Limitations and Further Implications

The limitations of the study are mainly related to the unique characteristics of the participants, the small size of the sample, and the accuracy of the responses to the interview questions. First, given the fact that this research specifically explored the experiences of former students of NIS, but not of a mainstream school, it is impossible to generalise the results to the nationwide Kazakhstani context. Obviously, in comparison with other schools, the position of the NIS is more advantageous because the NIS teachers have more opportunities to complete various training programs and apply advanced teaching methodologies, while providing instruction to predominantly gifted students.

Second, since the interviews were conducted with only eight respondents, their perceptions on learning Kazakh history in KMI cannot represent the general opinion of all NIS students. Therefore, the small sample size could not provide an adequate view on the overall situation regarding the implementation of this aspect of trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan.

Finally, the trustworthiness of the responses of the interviewees may differ from the real situation nowadays because the participants provided information based on their past experiences of a few years ago, which might not be accurately remembered and might be different from the current context.

Taken together, these limitations imply that larger-scale research with the inclusion of participants from mainstream schools and actual schoolchildren instead of adults who finished school some time ago should be conducted in order to obtain a more accurate overview of Russian-speaking students' perceptions of their experiences of studying in KMI. In addition, the interview

questions could be more comprehensive and a multi-dimensional approach could be applied to take into consideration all the aspects of teaching and learning in students' L2. Studies with a wider range of research sites, an extended database and research design, as well as with current stakeholders of the trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan would allow for the collection of rich and adequate data and consequently, the acquisition of more reliable results.

Recommendations

The results of this study brought about some recommendations to educational policy makers, school administrators and teachers.

First, these results suggest that in the framework of the implementation of trilingual education reform in Kazakhstan, the effectiveness of learning a content subject in students' L2 depends predominantly on teachers' skills and enthusiasm. Therefore, it is crucial not only to maintain a high level of teachers' professionalism, but also to create the conditions for their self-realization, passion for work, and creativity.

Second, the findings of this research provide important insights into the significance of introducing advanced teaching approaches, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which would allow for the usage of progressive teaching methods, in particular, translanguaging, and diverse assignments in order to make the learning process more engaging and fulfilling.

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Appendix A: Consent Forms

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

History of Kazakhstan through Kazakh as a Medium of Instruction (KMI): Russian-Speaking university students' perceptions of their experience studying in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS)

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a research study on perceptions and suggestions of Russian-speaking students regarding the effectiveness of learning Kazakhstan's History in Kazakh medium of instruction. You will be asked to participate in one-in-one interview via one of the online platforms available to you (Skype, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom, etc.). The interview will be audio-recorded and the tapes will be used in the process of analysing the findings of this study. Within a period of one year after the completion of the study, the records will be deleted.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation in the interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The risk associated with this study is minimal and connected with a potential exposure of your identity as a participant. However, all the information that you give will be strictly confidential and anonymous, because a pseudonym will be used instead of your real name and all the data will be kept safe and protected by secure passwords, and will be totally untraceable with your personality. The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study include the contribution to the existing scarce research about the implementation of trilingual education experiment in Kazakhstan from the point of view of Russian-speaking students as the affected stakeholders of the reform. Also, your suggestions on improvement of learning Kazakh History in the Kazakh language might influence the introduction of more effective teaching techniques in the KMI. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your study at Nazarbayev University.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate.** You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work, Xabier San Isidro, xabier.sanisidro@nu.edu.kz, +7 (7172) 70-91-10.

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee at (gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz).

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;

- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

АҚПАРАТТАНДЫРЫЛҒАН КЕЛІСІМ НЫСАНЫ

Қазақстан тарихын қазақ тілінде зерделеу: орыс тілді студенттердің Назарбаев Зияткерлік мектептерінде (НЗМ) өз оқу тәжірибесін қабылдауы

Сипаттама: Сізге Қазақстан тарихын қазақ тілінде оқытудың тиімділігіне қатысты орыс тілді студенттердің ұсыныстары мен ұсыныстарын зерттеуге қатысу ұсынылады. Сізге қол жетімді онлайн платформалардың бірі (Skype, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom және т.б.) арқылы жеке сұхбатқа қатысу сұралады. Сұхбат осы зерттеу нәтижелерін талдау процесінде қолданылатын аудио жазбаға жазылады. Зерттеу аяқталғаннан кейін бір жыл ішінде бұл жазбалар жойылады.

Ұзақтығы: сіздің сұхбатқа қатысуыңыз шамамен 20-30 минутты алады.

Тәуекелдер мен артықшылықтар: осы зерттеуге байланысты тәуекел минималды және сіздің жеке тұлғаңызды қатысушы ретінде ашуға байланысты. Алайда, сіз берген барлық ақпарат қатаң құпия және жасырын болады, өйткені сіздің нақты атыңыздың орнына бүркеншік ат қолданылады және барлық деректер қауіпсіз жерде сақталады және сенімді парольдермен қорғалады, сонымен қатар толығымен иесіздендіріледі. Осы зерттеу нәтижесінде негізді түрде күтуге болатын артықшылықтарға реформаның мүдделі тараптары қозғаған орыс тілді студенттер тұрғысынан Қазақстанда үштілді білім беру бойынша экспериментті іске асыру туралы қазіргі қарапайым зерттеулерге қосқан үлесі жатады. Сіздің Қазақстан тарихын қазақ тілінде оқып-үйренуді жетілдіру жөніндегі ұсыныстарыңыз оқытудың неғұрлым тиімді әдістемелерін енгізуге әсер етуі мүмкін. Осы зерттеуге қатысу немесе қатысудан бас тарту жөніндегі сіздің шешіміңіз Назарбаев Университетіндегі оқуыңызға әсер етпейді.

Қатысушы құқықтары: сіздің осы зерттеуге қатысуыңыз ерікті болып табылады және сіз кез-келген уақытта айыппұл немесе жазасыз келісіміңізді қайтарып алуға немесе қатысуды тоқтатуға құқығыңыз бар. Қатысудан бас тарту-бұл сіздің таңдауыңыз. Сіз нақты сұрақтарға жауап беруден бас тартуға құқығыңыз бар. Осы зерттеудің нәтижелері ғылыми немесе кәсіби жиналыстарда ұсынылуы немесе ғылыми журналдарда жариялануы мүмкін.

БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:

Сұрақтар: Егер сізде осы зерттеу, оның процедуралары, қауіптері мен артықшылықтары туралы сұрақтар, алаңдаушылықтар немесе шағымдар болса, осы студенттік жұмыс бойынша магистрлік диссертацияның ғылыми жетекшісі Ксабьер Сан-Исидроға хабарласыңыз.. xabier.sanisidro@nu.edu.kz, +7 (7172) 70-91-10.

Тәуелсіз байланыс: Егер сіз осы зерттеудің қалай жүргізілетініне қанағаттанбасаңыз немесе зерттеуге немесе мүше ретіндегі құқықтарыңызға қатысты мәселелер, шағымдар немесе жалпы сұрақтар туындаса, Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары Білім Беру Мектебі зерттеу комитетіне хабарласыңыз (gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz).

Егер сіз осы зерттеуге қатысуға келіссеңіз, осы Келісімге қол қойыңыз.

- * Мен берілген ақпаратты мұқият оқып шықтым;
- * Маған зерттеудің мақсаттары мен рәсімдері туралы толық ақпарат берілді;
- * Мен жиналған деректер қалай пайдаланылатынын және кез-келген құпия ақпарат тек зерттеушіге көрінетінін және ешкімге жария етілмейтінін түсінемін;
- * Мен себептерін түсіндірместен кез-келген уақытта зерттеуге қатысудан бас тарта алатынымды түсінемін;
- * Жоғарыда айтылғандардың бәрін толық біле отырып, мен осы зерттеуге қатысуға өз еркіммен келісемін.

Қолы: _____ Күні: _____

ФОРМА ИНФОРМИРОВАННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

Изучение истории Казахстана на казахском языке: восприятие русскоязычными студентами университета своего опыта обучения в Назарбаев Интеллектуальных школах (НИШ)

ОПИСАНИЕ: Вам предлагается принять участие в исследовании представлений и предложений русскоязычных студентов относительно эффективности изучения истории Казахстана на казахском языке. Вам будет предложено принять участие в индивидуальном собеседовании посредством одной из доступных Вам онлайн-платформ (Skype, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom и т.п.). Интервью будет записано на аудиозапись, которая будет использована в процессе анализа результатов этого исследования. В течение одного года после завершения исследования эти записи будут удалены.

ПРОДОЛЖИТЕЛЬНОСТЬ: Ваше участие в собеседовании займет примерно 20-30 минут.

РИСКИ И ВЫГОДЫ: Риск, связанный с этим исследованием, минимален и связан с потенциальным раскрытием Вашей личности как участника. Однако вся информация, которую Вы предоставляете, будет строго конфиденциальной и анонимной, потому что вместо Вашего настоящего имени будет использоваться псевдоним и все данные будут храниться в безопасном месте и защищены надежными паролями, а также будут полностью обезличены. К преимуществам, которые можно обоснованно ожидать в результате данного исследования, относится вклад в существующие скромные исследования о реализации эксперимента по трехязычному образованию в Казахстане с точки зрения русскоязычных студентов как затронутых заинтересованных сторон реформы. Ваши предложения по совершенствованию изучения истории Казахстана на казахском языке могут повлиять на внедрение более эффективных методик преподавания. Ваше решение по поводу участия или отказа участвовать в этом исследовании не повлияет на Ваше обучение в Назарбаев университете.

ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКА: Ваше участие в данном исследовании является добровольным, и Вы имеете право отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любой момент без каких-либо штрафных санкций или наказания. Отказ от участия – это Ваш выбор. Вы имеете право отказаться отвечать на конкретные вопросы. Результаты этого исследования могут быть представлены на научных или профессиональных совещаниях, или опубликованы в научных журналах.

КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

Вопросы: Если у Вас есть какие-либо вопросы, опасения или жалобы по поводу этого исследования, его процедур, рисков и преимуществ, свяжитесь с научным руководителем магистерской диссертации по этой студенческой работе, Ксабьером Сан-Исидро, хабьер.санисидро@nu.edu.kz, +7 (7172) 70-91-10.

Независимый контакт: Если Вы не удовлетворены тем, как проводится это исследование, или если у Вас есть какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или общие вопросы по поводу исследования или Ваших прав как участника, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с исследовательским комитетом Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета по адресу (gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz).

Пожалуйста, подпишите это согласие, если Вы согласны участвовать в данном исследовании.

- Я внимательно прочитал(а) предоставленную информацию;
- Мне была предоставлена полная информация о целях и процедурах исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использоваться собранные данные, и что любая конфиденциальная информация будет видна только исследователю и не будет раскрыта никому другому;
- Я понимаю, что могу отказаться от участия в исследовании в любое время без объяснения причин;
- С полным знанием всего вышесказанного, я согласен(на), по своей собственной воле, принять участие в этом исследовании.

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

- 1) What language do you usually speak at home?
- 2) How do you evaluate your written and oral communicative competence in Kazakh?
- 3) Do you find it useful to study Kazakh History in Kazakh language? Why? (Why not?)
- 4) What percentage of the learning material during the lessons of Kazakhstan History did you understand well?
- 5) Are you satisfied with the quality of your knowledge of Kazakh history obtained at school? Why? (Why not?)
- 6) Did you find the lessons of the History of Kazakhstan interesting? Why? (Why not?)
- 7) How difficult was for you to do your homework on the History of Kazakhstan?
- 8) Which tasks were particularly difficult?
- 9) Would you like the history of Kazakhstan to be taught in a different language? Why?
- 10) What do you think should be done to make the lessons of the history of Kazakhstan more interesting for you?
- 11) What do you suggest for improving teaching methodology on this subject?
- 12) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Сұхбат сұрақтары:

- 1) Сіз әдетте үйде қай тілде сөйлейсіз?
- 2) Сіз өзіңіздің қазақ тіліндегі жазбаша және ауызша коммуникативтік құзыреттілігіңізді қалай бағалайсыз?
- 3) Сіз қазақ тарихын қазақ тілінде оқып үйренуді пайдалы деп санайсыз ба? Неліктен? (Неге жоқ?)
- 4) Қазақстан тарихы сабақтарында оқу материалының қанша пайызын Сіз жақсы түсіндіңіз?
- 5) Сіз мектепте Қазақстан тарихы бойынша алған білім сапасына қанағаттанасыз ба? Неліктен? (Неге жоқ?)
- 6) Қазақстан тарихы сабақтары сіз үшін қызықты болды ма? Неліктен? (Неге жоқ?)
- 7) Қазақстан тарихы бойынша үй тапсырмасын орындау қаншалықты қиын болды?
- 8) Қандай тапсырмалар әсіресе қиын болды?
- 9) Қазақстан тарихының басқа тілде оқытылуын қалайсыз ба? Неліктен?
- 10) Қазақстан тарихы сабақтары сіз үшін қызықты болуы үшін не істеу керек деп ойлайсыз?
- 11) Осы пәнді оқыту әдістемесін жетілдіру үшін не ұсынасыз?
- 12) Сіз қосқыңыз келетін тағы бір нәрсе бар ма?

Вопросы для интервью:

- 1) На каком языке Вы обычно говорите дома?
- 2) Как вы оцениваете свою письменную и устную коммуникативную компетентность на казахском языке?
- 3) Считаете ли вы полезным изучение казахской истории на казахском языке? Почему? (Почему нет?)
- 4) Какой процент учебного материала на уроках истории Казахстана Вы хорошо поняли?
- 5) Удовлетворены ли Вы качеством полученных в школе знаний по истории Казахстана? Почему? (Почему нет?)
- 6) Были ли уроки истории Казахстана интересными для Вас? Почему? (Почему нет?)
- 7) Насколько сложно Вам было выполнить домашнее задание по истории Казахстана?
- 8) Какие задания были особенно трудными?
- 9) Хотели бы Вы, чтобы история Казахстана преподавалась на другом языке? Почему?
- 10) Как Вы считаете, что нужно сделать, чтобы уроки истории Казахстана были для Вас более интересными?
- 11) Что Вы предлагаете для совершенствования методики преподавания этого предмета?
- 12) Есть ли что-нибудь еще, что вы хотели бы добавить?