

**Choosing between Kazakh and Russian: A Study of Young Ethnic Kazakhs'  
Language Choices through the Lens of Habitus**

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Dear Aidana Jumagaliyeva,

This letter now confirms that your research project entitled:  
**Choosing between Kazakh and Russian: A study of Young Ethnic Kazakhs' Language Choices through the Lens of Habitus** 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  
**Syed Abdul Manan**

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**CITI Training Certificate**

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This work is dedicated to the young Kazakhstanis who believe in the bright future of their motherland and people, and are concerned about the state of their national language. This study is the product of long and hard work which would not have been possible without the belief and support of the people to whom I would like to express my gratitude.

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**Abstract****Choosing between Kazakh and Russian: A Study of Young Ethnic Kazakhs'****Language Choices through the Lens of Habitus**

The russification policy of the USSR has significantly influenced the Kazakh language which was considered as a minority language in its own territory for a long period (Smagulova, 2008). Consequently, previous studies showed that Russian is still a dominant language in Kazakhstani society, especially among the younger generation. Therefore, this qualitative interview-based study explores the language choices of the Kazakhstani 18-25 year old youths between two officially equal languages: Kazakh and Russian, and aims to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the language choice patterns of the Kazakhstani youth across various domains? 2) Which factor(s) determine the Kazakhstani youth's language choice between Kazakh and Russian? This study is based on Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" in which the events of the past influence the present circumstances which lead to making certain choices (Bourdieu, 1991). Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, data was collected using semi-structured interviews via the online platform ZOOM. The target population of the study was eight ethnic Kazakh youths aged 18-25 who originated from four different parts of Kazakhstan: west, east, south, and north who received their education through Kazakh and Russian respectively. The collected data was analyzed using Clarke and Braun's (2012) thematic analysis which includes six steps of data analysis. The findings reported the strong dominance of the Russian language across various domains, such as friendship, workplace, social clubs, and media, whereas Kazakh is restricted to the family domain. Additionally, the results demonstrated that Russian still holds relatively more symbolic power in the society, influencing people to choose Russian over Kazakh for wider communication. Moreover, the study revealed that the growing power of English alongside with Russian is considered as "capital" in the market as

compared to Kazakh. From this study, status and prestige planning activities as well as the creation of demand in the capital are proposed, and directions for further research are recommended.

Key words: language choice, habitus, symbolic power



## Аңдатпа

### **Қазақ және орыс тілдерін таңдау: *habitus* призмасы арқылы жас этникалық қазақтардың тіл таңдауын зерттеу**

КСРО-ның орыстандыру саясаты ұзақ уақыт бойы өз аумағында азшылық тілі болып саналған қазақ тіліне айтарлықтай әсер етті (Смагулова, 2008). Демек, алдыңғы зерттеулер орыс тілі қазақстандық қоғамда, әсіресе жас ұрпақ арасында бұрынғысынша басым тіл болып табылатынын көрсетті. Осылайша, сұхбатқа негізделген бұл сапалы зерттеу 18-25 жас аралығындағы қазақстандық жастардың қазақ және орыс тілдері арасындағы тіл таңдауын зерттейді және зерттеудің келесі сұрақтарына жауап беруге бағытталған: 1) әртүрлі салалардағы қазақстандық жастар арасында тіл таңдаудың қандай модельдері бар? 2) қазақстандық жастардың қазақ және орыс тілдері арасында тіл таңдауын қандай факторлар анықтайды? Бұл зерттеу Бурдьенің "габитус" тұжырымдамасына негізделген, оған сәйкес өткен оқиғалар белгілі бір таңдауға әкелетін қазіргі жағдайларға әсер етеді (Бурдье, 1991). КОВИД-19 жаһандық пандемиясына байланысты деректер ZOOM онлайн платформасы арқылы жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбат арқылы жиналды. Зерттеудің нысаналы тобы Қазақстанның төрт түрлі: батыс, шығыс, оңтүстік және солтүстік бөліктерінен 18-25 жас аралығындағы этникалық қазақтар арасынан сегіз жас адам болды, олар тиісінше қазақ және орыс тілдерінде білім алды. Жиналған деректер Кларк пен Браунның (2013) тақырыптық талдауы арқылы талданды, оған деректерді талдаудың алты кезеңі кіреді. Нәтижелер достық, жұмыс, әлеуметтік клубтар және медиа сияқты әртүрлі салаларда орыс тілінің күшті басымдылығын көрсетеді, ал қазақ тілі отбасылық саламен шектелген. Сонымен қатар, нәтижелер көрсеткендей, орыс тілі әлі де қоғамда салыстырмалы түрде үлкен символдық күшке ие, адамдарды кең қарым-қатынас жасау үшін қазақ тілінің орнына орыс тілін таңдауға итермелейді.

Сонымен қатар, зерттеу көрсеткендей, ағылшын тілінің орыс тілімен қатар өсіп келе жатқан әсері қазақ тілімен салыстырғанда нарықтағы "капитал" болып саналады.

Осы зерттеу негізінде мәртебе мен беделді жоспарлау, сондай-ақ капиталдағы сұранысты құру бойынша іс-шаралар ұсынылады және одан әрі зерттеу бағыттары ұсынылады.

Түйінді сөздер: тілдік таңдау, габитус, символдық күш

### Аннотация

#### **Выбор между казахским и русским: исследование выбора языка молодых этнических казахов через призму *habitus***

Политика русификации СССР существенно повлияла на казахский язык, который долгое время считался языком меньшинства на своей собственной территории (Смагулова, 2008). Следовательно, предыдущие исследования показали, что русский язык по-прежнему является доминирующим языком в казахстанском обществе, особенно среди молодого поколения. Таким образом, это качественное исследование, основанное на интервью, исследует выбор языка казахстанской молодежи 18-25 лет между двумя официально равными языками: казахским и русским и направлено на то, чтобы ответить на следующие вопросы исследования:

- 1) Каковы модели выбора языка среди казахстанской молодежи в различных сферах?
- 2) Какие факторы определяют выбор казахстанской молодежью языка между казахским и русским?

Это исследование основано на концепции «габитуса» Бурдьё, согласно которой события прошлого влияют на нынешние обстоятельства, которые приводят к определенному выбору (Бурдьё, 1991). В связи с глобальной пандемией COVID-19 данные были собраны с помощью полуструктурированных интервью через онлайн-платформу ZOOM. Целевой группой исследования были восемь молодых людей из числа этнических казахов в возрасте от 18 до 25 лет из четырех разных частей Казахстана: запад, восток, юг и север, которые получали образование на казахском и русском языках соответственно. Собранные данные были проанализированы с помощью тематического анализа Кларка и Брауна (2013), который включает шесть этапов анализа данных. Результаты свидетельствуют о сильном преобладании русского языка в различных областях, таких как дружба, работа, социальные клубы и медиа, тогда как казахский язык ограничен семейной

сферой. Кроме того, результаты показали, что русский язык по-прежнему имеет относительно большую символическую власть в обществе, побуждая людей выбирать русский язык вместо казахского для более широкого общения. Более того, исследование показало, что растущее влияние английского языка наряду с русским считается «капиталом» на рынке по сравнению с казахским. На основе этого исследования предлагаются мероприятия по планированию статуса и престижа, а также создание спроса в капитале, и рекомендуются направления для дальнейших исследований.

Ключевые слова: языковой выбор, габитус, символическая сила

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

My personal everyday observation of people who choose to use the Russian language in spite of knowing the Kazakh language motivated me to choose the topic of language choice. Since I have started my Masters programme at Nazarbayev University, I realized that people consciously or unconsciously make choices. During the first year of study, we held a series of discussions on the topics of native language and language of choice. What I witnessed is that people can understand the importance of the Kazakh language as a mother tongue, however often they make a choice in favor of Russian language. In view of this, I became interested in studying the language choice patterns of ethnic Kazakhs between the two officially equal languages to explore systematically and to identify as to why this may occur.

### **Background Information**

Kazakhstan first joined the Soviet Union as the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1920, remaining its part until the collapse of the USSR in 1991 when it became an independent republic. During this period, the Kazakh language was oppressed whereas the use of the Russian language was declared as obligatory (Smagulova, 2006). After getting independence, the government of Kazakhstan took some steps in order to close those linguistic and cultural gaps. The first attempt was taken in the Constitution of 1993 in which Kazakh was declared as the only state language and Russian as the language of interethnic communication. Furthermore, the “Kazakhization” ideology supported by the Kazakh elite and government aimed at improving the status of Kazakh in relation to Russian. Its main principle was: “Kazakhstan is a land of Kazakhs who speak the Kazakh language” (Smagulova, 2008, p. 309). However, the Constitution of 1995 elevated the status of the Russian language to the official equalized to the Kazakh language. Therefore, currently, the formation of national identity in Kazakhstan appears to be facing challenges

related to people's self-identification. These challenges are connected with the usage of both Kazakh and Russian languages on an equal basis (Aitymbetov et al., 2015).

People's attitudes towards the Kazakh language were significantly affected by the historical background of Kazakhstan and the influence of the Russification policy during the Soviet era. During that time, the Russian language was associated with education and social status whereas Kazakh was associated with "backwardness and rural residency" (Smagulova, 2008, p. 7). As a consequence of the historical aspects and politicized ideologies of the USSR, the Russian language penetrated into all significant public spheres and education in Kazakhstan (Clement, 2008).

According to Smagulova (2008), the Kazakh language was "treated as a minority language in its own titular republic long enough" (p. 309). Therefore, the main goal of the language policy of independent Kazakhstan was to empower the Kazakh as a sole state language within the policy of Kazakhization (Smagulova, 2008). Although the government of Kazakhstan pursued the establishment of the Kazakh as the state language of the country, due to the historically multilingual background, the majority of the Kazakhstani population remained Russian-speaking as their native or second language (Smagulova, 2008). However, the policymakers realized that the implementation of the Kazakh-only language ideology contradicted the strategic development goals of the country. The government focused on building a good relationship with Russia and preserving the loyalty among the local Russian-speaking population and other minorities. Besides that, it endorsed bilingual ideology which could be perceived as a sign of democracy in the international arena. Thus, Kazakhstan has chosen "an identity which is more Russia and Europe oriented" (Smagulova, 2006, p. 309). Therefore, in 1995, the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan was amended with Kazakh declared as the sole state language and Russian was accorded the official status to make it equal to Kazakh (Smagulova, 2006).

Various policy documents were adopted and aimed at strengthening the state language such as Law of Languages of the Republic of Kazakhstan (1997), Decree on Expansion of the Usage of the State Language in State Bodies (1998), State Program of the Functioning and Development of Languages for the Years 2001-2010 (2001), and Principles of Extension of the Spheres of Use of the State Language (2006) (as cited in Smagulova, 2008, p. 449). Additionally, the following documents were created to improve the status of the state language: Principles of Formation of State Identity of the Republic of Kazakhstan (1996), the Order of Naming and Renaming of Entities, Organizations, Institutions, Railroad Stations, Airports, and Geographical Objects in the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Change in Their Spelling (1996) (as cited in Smagulova, 2008, p. 449). Even though such measures were taken, people still predominantly use Russian language. According to the latest studies made by Askarova (2019) and Kuzhabekova (2019) on “language use and language shift” the Kazakhstani people, especially the young generation, currently use Russian as the language for wider communication.

The focus of the previous research has mainly been on the concepts of language use (Fierman, 2006; Smagulova, 2008, 2016; Kuzhabekova, 2019) and language shift from Kazakh to Russian (Askarova, 2019). There is a range of studies conducted outside Kazakhstan on language choices (Mei et al., 2016; Michael, 2019; Mohochi, 2003; Othman, 2006; Suktiningsih, 2017). However, little is known about language choices in the context of Kazakhstan (Akynova et al., 2014; Rees, 2015). Moreover, the focus of some previous studies is on English language choice and languages as national identity politics. In view of the two equally official languages such as Kazakh and Russian, it could be useful for many people in Kazakhstan to explore how people make choices between the two languages in their routine social lives across domains, what motivates their choices, and in which domains those language choices occur more frequently.

As previously mentioned, many studies have revealed the predominant use of the Russian by people in Kazakhstan. In this backdrop, the present study seeks to understand how and why people think about languages, and how they act accordingly. The study uses Bourdieu's 'habitus' as a theoretical framework. Habitus is people's "ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being which captures how we carry within us our history, how we bring this history into our present circumstances, and how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others" (Maton, 2012, p. 52). Bourdieu theorizes that the present is shaped by countless events in the past (Maton, 2012). Thus, habitus as a conceptual frame can help in understanding as to how the language choices, language preferences, and their use patterns in different domains relate to the historical background of Kazakhstan and events in the past. Moreover, this study seeks to answer the questions as to how and why people make those choices the way Bourdieu addresses these issues in his works. Therefore, using habitus as a conceptual frame is expected to expand the body of knowledge about the sociolinguistic dynamics of Kazakhstan, and understand the underlying tensions between the Russian and Kazakh languages as rooted in history.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem being addressed in this study is the language choices of young Kazakhstanis aged 18-25 between the two official languages: Kazakh and Russian. Since 1995, the two official languages Kazakh and Russian are considered to be equal in terms of status; however, in practice, we witness the dominance of the Russian language in our society. People consider the Kazakh language as a part of their identity, while the Russian is a preferred language (Kuzhabekova, 2003; Smagulova, 2006, 2008; Belova, 2017; Askarova, 2019). Thus, many previous studies show that Russian is predominantly used by people in Kazakhstan. As there is a gap in empirical research about the language choices in the national context; therefore it is worth conducting research on the issue. The study aims

to provide an opportunity to identify the reasons for Russian being more dominant than Kazakh, and contribute to further successful strengthening of the status and prestige of the state language in the currently emerging linguistic landscape. To the best of my knowledge, there appears to be a gap in the literature in terms of the sampling of the population. I understand that it is important to investigate particularly the group of people aged 18-25 because they were born after the new status of the Russian language was established, and they managed to and finish their school education within this change.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the Kazakhstani 18-25-year olds' language choices between two equally official languages: Kazakh and Russian. Additionally, the study attempts to identify the factors that influence the language choice of youth across various domains.

### **Research Questions**

This research study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the patterns of language choice among the Kazakhstani youth across various domains?
2. Which factor(s) determine Kazakhstani youth's language choice between Kazakh and Russian?

### **Significance of the study**

The findings of the study can have implications at various levels. Firstly, based on the results of the study, concerned researchers and academicians will get to understand how the younger generation of Kazakhstan from different regions of the country thinks and negotiates their language choices. These findings are likely to highlight the perceived as well as real vitality of the Kazakh language vis-à-vis the Russian language. In the process, the study may also reveal clearly as to what constrains the youth to either prefer Russian or

Kazakh across different domains. This will also indicate to what extent has the governments' efforts of prestige planning affected the prestige of the Kazakh language in real practices. Thus, based on the findings of the study, policymakers and governmental officials who deal with language policies and strengthening the state language may be able to increase their understanding of the issue and plan future actions to increase the number of people making choices in favor of Kazakh language. Furthermore, due to the lack of in-depth empirical studies exploring the language choices of Kazakhstani young generation, especially those who are aged 18-25 in the Kazakhstani context, this study may fill the existing gap and provide opportunities to other researchers for conducting further investigations with future generations.

### **Outline of the Study**

The thesis consists of the following chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion. The introduction chapter provides an introduction and background information, presents the research problem, purpose, research questions, and its significance. The literature review chapter analyzes the most relevant literature on the central phenomenon, key concepts and theories, and presents the conceptual frame of the research. The methodology chapter provides the justification of research methodology, research design, selection of research site and sample as well as describes the data collection instruments, data collection and analysis procedures, and the ethical considerations. The findings chapter presents and analyses the collected data providing evidence. The discussion chapter discusses the results in relation to the existing literature and the conceptual framework. The conclusion chapter concludes the thesis summarizing the major findings, discussing the limitations, implications and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a review of the literature related to the language choice phenomenon through the prism of habitus. It begins with the description of the sociolinguistic profile of Kazakhstan and the statuses of languages in Kazakhstan. Then, it defines the Language Planning and Policy and its components such as Status Planning and Prestige Planning in relation to the context of the country. Furthermore, it defines the central phenomenon Language Choice and provides an analysis of the studies that have discussed and explored language choice in the international and Kazakhstani contexts. Finally, it presents Habitus as the theoretical framework which is further expanded and connected with Bourdieu's (1991) concept of Language and Symbolic Power.

### **Sociolinguistic Profile of Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is a multilingual and multicultural country with about "126 ethnic groups and languages" (Smagulova, 2006, p. 303). Article 7 of the Law of Languages and Article 14 of the Constitution protect the language rights of every citizen of Kazakhstan who has the right to use their native languages and choose any language for communication. Although the language rights are protected, the minority languages are used mostly in community activities (Smagulova, 2006).

Being a part of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan has been affected by the Soviet language policy. Dickens (1988) described Kazakhs as "the most Russianized of all Central Asians" as a result of the significant growth of the status of the Russian language (p.15). Russian was considered to provide opportunities for academic, political, and social growth as well as being mandatory in the public administration, technical and scientific spheres.



However, after Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991, it tried to maintain its national language Kazakh to gain it a higher status. According to the first Constitution of 1993, the Kazakh language was proclaimed the state language of the country and the Russian language as the language of interethnic communication (Qazaqstan tarihy, 2017). However, after two years, the status of Russian was uplifted from that of the language of interethnic communication to an official language of the republic.

Furthermore, while the government was trying to strengthen the Kazakh language but without refusing the Russian language, the former president Nazarbayev introduced a new direction for the country. It focused on the building of global competitiveness by promoting the English language. Starting from 2007, the country chose a new trilingual discourse under the project called the "Trinity of Languages" initiated by the former president Nazarbayev which is focused on the promotion of the three languages: Kazakh, Russian, and English (Karabassova, 2020).

### **Status of Languages**

Although the country took the first step and attached higher status as the state language to Kazakh, the bilingual citizens of the country were unprepared for this change resulting in a rapid emigration. Yet it seemed that the independent republic still could not increase the use of Kazakh as compared to Russian. Therefore, in the newly adopted Constitution, the statuses of languages have been updated. For instance, following points in Article 7 state:

1. The state language of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be the Kazakh language.
2. The Russian language shall be officially used on equal grounds with the Kazakh language in state institutions and local self-administrative bodies (1995, para. 5).

While the tension between the two official languages remained, another initiative was proposed, which caused challenges the sociolinguistic landscape of the country. As it was already mentioned, the project "Trinity of Languages" focuses on the promotion of

the three languages, Kazakh, Russian, and English. Moreover, each of these languages received the special status of “the state language, language of interethnic communication, language of integration into the global economy” respectively (Karabassova, 2020, p. 42). This project also presented the dual perspective of the country: on one hand, it aimed to strengthen the national identity and language; on the other hand, it sought the country to enter the global arena as a competitive nation whose people speak the three languages.

In order to achieve the successful implementation of the trilingual policy, the government projected to achieve some favourable results. The Kazakhstani government projected that 95% of the citizens will speak Kazakh by 2025 (Mehisto, 2014, p. 152). However, a 90% increase of Russian speakers and 20% increase of English speakers have also been targeted in the State Program of Languages Development and Functioning for 2011-2020 (MoES, 2011). It is evident that although the country aims to strengthen Kazakh, it also supports Russian and English almost equally.

### **Language Planning and Policy**

Language policy and language planning (LPP) are interrelated but at the same time different activities (Johnson, 2013). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) argued that language policy is a part of the process of language planning and defined it as a number of rules or laws established by an authoritative body. Additionally, they pointed out that language policy is not necessarily a top-down movement. Moreover, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) described the language policy as “multi-layered” in that it is not only related to official regulations or power, but is actually more about the production of language policy by human interaction. This definition was supported by Schiffman (1996) and Spolsky (2004) who stated that language policies exist across various layers or domains.

Tollefson (1991) defined language policy as an instrument of power which regulates the language hierarchies that empower dominant groups or languages and oppose equal access to resources. His later reformulation emphasized that language policies can create and combat inequalities. In the context of the Kazakhstani language policy, the language of the majority population is not placed at the top of the hierarchy, but is equalized with the other two languages. Although, language policy is an essential part of language maintenance, revitalization, or empowerment, in the context of our country it does not empower only the state language and therefore issues with its status or use occur.

Language planning is more complex than the language policy. The term was introduced in 1959 and defined by Haugen as “the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community” (as cited in Johnson, 2013, p. 27). In other words, language planning includes status, corpus, and acquisition planning as subcategories (activities), which help to implement the idea as suggested by the language policy. Further the significant components of the language planning particularly for this study are described.

### **Status Planning**

Kloss (1969) introduced the term “status planning” which regulates the status and functions of various languages in a society. In other words, it is language management (Spolsky, 2009). For example, status planning regulates which languages to make official or use in schools. Also, Bourdieu (1991) described status planning as the activity that focused on regulation of the power relationships between languages and their users in the social context (as cited in Kamwangamalu, 2016).

In the Kazakhstani context, as it was mentioned earlier, although Kazakh serves

as the state language, Russian was also elevated to the official language of the country. Moreover, both Kazakh and Russian languages are equally used as mediums of instruction. Thus, in the national context, the power relationship of these two languages must be equal at theoretical terms. However, studies showed that the Russian language is more dominant than Kazakh.

### **Prestige Planning**

Prestige planning is focused on raising the prestige of a certain language, which results in the members of a particular speech community developing a positive attitude towards the language (Kamwangamalu, 2016). Zhao (2011) called the responsible individuals to carry out prestige planning work as "people with powers" (p. 916). The prestige planning work aimed at promoting improvements in psychological states of recipients and influencing on their attitudes towards the target language (Kamwangamalu, 2016).

Haarmann (1990) argued that prestige planning must bring positive values to the language to ensure the involvement of those who are responsible for this planning, and the targeted users of the language (as cited in Kamwangamalu, 2016). Also, Kamwangamalu claimed that the attachment of an economic value to languages in the linguistic marketplace might change people's negative attitudes towards languages (2016). Additionally, Ager (2001) stated that the perceptions of the prestige of the language significantly impact stakeholders' attitudes towards both the language and its position in the educational system.

Kamwangamalu (2016) described the prestige planning in the African context, which has two main concerns which are very similar to the Kazakhstani context. First concern is the presence of powerful ideologies such as internationalization and globalization hinder the successful education of a mother tongue. According to him, in

order to make vernacular language education successful, policymakers need to attach an economic value to some indigenous languages in the African multilingual marketplace. This will encourage their speakers to view the language as a commodity to invest in, and hence, to be learned. Furthermore, Canagarajah and Ashraf (2013) noted that parents and students might shift their focus on languages with more value and capital if they see little or no benefits of less prestigious languages. Coupland (2013) argued that people make decisions on whether to invest in learning a language depending on the utility attached to the language. In addition to that, Vaillancourt (1996) described language as a form of human capital, explaining that people invest in acquiring language skills depending on the costs and benefits they represent. Likewise, Bamgbose (1991) compared language to currency, whose value in the linguistic marketplace depends on how much it can buy. That is to say, the more you can buy, the higher its value. This concern can also be witnessed in the Kazakhstani context, where the Russian language is associated with higher prestige as a result of the historical events. Moreover, this perception still prevails which influences people to make linguistic choices in favour of the dominant language.

Generally, language use in a social context is often perceived in two different manners. On the one hand, Bourdieu (1991) refers to economic concepts such as market to describe the social context. He supports the idea that linguistic market is related to the "language use indexes of social, political and economic inequality", among these multiple indexes of language use there is an inequality in terms of the degree of prestige at a certain period of time and context (Grin et al., 2010, p. 32). Bourdieu (1991) used the term "linguistic marketplace" to refer to the phenomenon when the market regulates and forms the value of languages as commodities and employment sources. On the other hand, the concept of a market is perceived by economists as means of "exchanging of a given good or service" in real or virtual contexts (Grin et al., 2010, p. 31). In other words, this term

presumes the existence of the functions of supply and demand for the appropriate good or service. Kamwangamalu (2016) used the concept of the linguistic market in both views. He considers the first as a by-product of the second, which means, if the skills of a particular language are not in demand on the market, the language will be much less prestigious compared to a language that is in demand in the market.

As Fishman et al. (1977) noted, people hardly acquire languages for their own sake, rather consider them as keys to the desired objects in life. Those desired objects mentioned by Fishman et al. (1977) include not just the desire to become employed, but also that of raising social status and identifying with the power elite and using the language which is considered to be prestigious and powerful by the elite (as cited in Kamwangamalu, 2003).

Second concern is related to the official recognition of languages which does not in itself equalize the opportunities provided for the users of a language. Therefore, planning the activities aimed at “assigning an economic value to the indigenous languages and the legislation must be done in a tandem” (Kamwangamalu, 2016, p. 162). These activities may include the creation of demand for a language in the labour market which will raise an interest for studying it, and furthermore will make it necessary for access to employment (Kamwangamalu, 2016). This concern also corresponds to the current situation with the Kazakh language. According to the Articles 4 and 5 of Law of Languages of the Republic of Kazakhstan (1997), it is stated that although Kazakh is the language of state and local organizations, documentation, and legislation, Russian is also officially used along with Kazakh. Although after the independence the areas of usage of Kazakh have been enlarged, yet Russian whose official usage is equalized to Kazakh is dominantly used (Karabassova, 2020).

### **Domains of Language Use**

The social context can be represented by the domains of language use (Tollefson,

2002). These domains were researched by Fishman (Fishman 1965, 1971, 1972), who proposed the domain theory. The domain theory has contributed worldwide to enhance an understanding of bilingualism and language choice (Fishman, 1965, as cited in Wei, 2007). According to Fishman's domain theory, a speaker's experiences in using a language in different social conditions, with different interlocutors in different situations influence people's language choice and use. Therefore, Fishman's (1972) domain theory is crucial for providing an in-depth understanding of people's language choices (as cited in Mei et al, 2016). In the case of this study, the domains of language use help to answer the first research question which focuses on the patterns of language choice among the Kazakhstani youth across various domains.

The domain theory refers to the notion of "who" communicates in "what language" addressed to "whom" and "when". Hence, the keywords are "who", "what", "whom", and "when". Meaningfully, who addresses the multilingual or bilingual speaker, what refers to one's linguistic repertoire, whom specifies interlocutors in different domains, and when is addressed to the domain of language use or its context (Mei, et. al., 2016, p. 20). This theory, originated in 1964, has been used by many scholars (Adams et al., 2012; Bond et al., 2011; Burhanudeen, 2006; Chaudhry et al., 2010; Dealwis, 2010; Namei, 2008; Nancy, 2011; Ting & Ling, 2013, as cited in Ryvenwald, 2019) to investigate language choice in their national contexts.

Fishman (1965) explained the "between-group (or intergroup) multilingualism", in which representatives of one population use two separate languages for communication (p. 67). As a consequence of bilingual practice, people can communicate in any of the two languages without experiencing significant difficulties. However, the habitual choice matters in this context because the "proper usage, or common usage, or both" impose the dominance of one language to be chosen by a particular speaker on particular occasions (p.

67).

In order to investigate language behavior Schmidt–Rohr (1963) suggested the following nine domains: “the family, the playground and street, the school (subdivided into language of instruction, subject of instruction, and language of recess and entertainment), the church, literature, the press, the military, the courts, and the governmental administration” (as cited in Fishman, 1965, p. 73). However, subsequent studies either increased or decreased the number of these domains, which seek to specify the main interactions that happen in various settings. Fishman stated that “multilingualism often begins in the family”, therefore, it has become one of the crucial domains to be used in many studies (Fishman, 1965, p. 76). In his theory, Fishman referred to the five most essential domains of family, friendship, religion, education, and work (Fishman, 1972 as cited in Ryvenwald, 2019). This study does not focus on the religious domain because it is considered to be highly sensitive while interviewing participants. Moreover, there is an additional domain suggested which is media. This domain has emerged as a result of globalization and digitization processes.

Also, Fishman (1965) defined three factors of language choice such as reference group membership, situation, and topic which help us to describe choice patterns. The first factor is the reference group membership which includes domains such as family, school / university / work, social clubs. People identify themselves by the various groups they belong to and tend to choose a particular language for different occasions. Moreover, these occasions may vary depending on the location or settings. The next factor is the situation which characterizes certain circumstances of communication where languages are considered as indicators of intimacy, informality, and equality (Fishman, 1965, p. 70). In this regard, people might discuss certain topics only in a particular language, for instance, they may share common experiences and viewpoints that can be explained and discussed in



one particular language, and therefore, they communicate in the language which represents their common intimacy. The last factor is a topic which regulates language use in a multilingual environment which means that some topics might be better explained in one particular language as opposed to another.

### **Language Choice**

Fishman (1972) refers to the concept of language choice as the language, variety, or code used in verbal communication by a particular community for specific purposes. Interestingly, in multilingual/bilingual communities, individuals must take an account of the person they are speaking and the situation to decide what language should be used. As a result, in multilingual and bilingual society individuals apply more than one language naturally and constantly make choices on what language to use.

One of the examples of international studies was conducted by Othman (2006) on language choice among Arabic-English bilinguals. He applied Fishman's (1965) theory of domains in his study. The study aimed to identify the language use patterns of the participants, overlaps between the two languages within the same domain. The findings showed that Arabic language was constantly used in the family domain and in communication with friends whereas English was used at university/workplace and in formal communication. The results of the study revealed that people make choices regarding the domain in which the language is used.

Another study on the language choice of 12-17-year-old bilingual youth and their attitudes towards the native language was conducted by Gomashie (2020). The study used a questionnaire which to identify students' language use with 21 different interlocutors and attitudes towards Spanish and Nahuatl languages. The study results revealed that Nahuatl was predominantly used in the family domain to communicate with grandparents.

However, the youth showed a positive attitude towards Nahuatl. The findings suggested

the need to expand the number of domains of Nahuatl usage.

In the context of Kazakhstan, a limited number of previous research studies explored the topic of language use and choice, and no research on participants aged 18-25 in particular. Research studies on youth language choice and use are focused on the two languages: Kazakh and Russian because they are officially equal languages, however one of them dominates in the society. One of the studies was conducted by Fierman (2006) who explored the language use of children from an urban school with mixed instruction: Kazakh and Russian. His study revealed that children preferred to use Russian outside the classroom. Moreover, he argued that this situation might negatively impact the promotion and strengthening of the Kazakh language.

Another study was conducted by Smagulova (2008) using a large-scale survey aimed to examine the impact of the Kazakhization policy on language attitudes and use. The study primarily focused on the language use of the older generation. Furthermore, Smagulova (2016) enlarged the sample population of her quantitative study including school children. Both studies revealed the domination and frequent use of Russian language in various communication spheres by the Kazakhstan people.

The recent study which was conducted by Kuzhabekova (2019) aimed to explore the differences in language use among students receiving instruction in Russian and Kazakh. This study also applied a quantitative research method. The main findings of the study include continuing dominance of Russian language and the use of the Russian language by Kazakh-speaking children in communication with peers. Hence, the above studies reveal that the language use and choice phenomenon was explored mostly by using quantitative research tools; therefore, given the need for an in-depth qualitative study on language choice, the present study is deemed necessary to fill the apparent gap for a qualitative study. Additionally, the previous studies used the population of school children

and adults; however, the age category chosen for this research has not yet been studied. Moreover, the crucial point is that Russian is still a dominant language in Kazakhstani society.

### **Conceptual Framework: Habitus**

The study is theoretically underpinned by the concept of “habitus” which was introduced by French scholar Pierre Bourdieu. Habitus as a conceptual framework was used by multiple scholars (Alexander, 2005; May, 2014; Manan, 2019) to study language policies and practices, and other related areas. Bourdieu himself considered habitus as the conceptual tool to use as a method in empirical research (Reay, 2004). He defined habitus as “a property of social agents that comprises a structured and structuring structure” i.e., “structured” by circumstances that are associated with individual’s past and present, for instance, family environment or academic background; “structuring” that are shaping individual’s present and future practices that are influenced by one’s habitus; a “structure” that is not random or patternless, but ordered systematically (Maton, 2012, p. 51).

Thompson (1991) described habitus as “a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways and generate practices, perceptions and attitudes” (p. 12). The dispositions reflect the conditions in which they were generated and obtained (Thompson, 1991, p. 12; Lizardo, 2004). Habitus is one’s means of acting, feeling, thinking and being, it reflects how individuals bring history into their present circumstances, and investigates the choices they make to act in certain manner and not the other (Maton, 2012). Bourdieu considered the present as a result shaped by countless events in the past (Susen & Turner, 2011). Thus, habitus reflects on the present shaped by particular past events which influenced the way our present circumstances are organized. The present is a “product of history” and the “source of practices and perceptions” representing that history (Thompson, 1991, p. 13). Those numberless events in the past result in a range of choices

we make.

People always act in specific social contexts. When talking about a particular social context, Bourdieu used the term “field”. Therefore, people’s perceptions and experiences should not be seen as the products of habitus, but rather the result of a relationship between the field and the habitus (Thompson, 1991). The habitus also guides people with a sense of “how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives; it orients their actions and inclinations without strictly determining them” (Thompson, 1991, p. 13). It gives them an understanding of what is appropriate or inappropriate in the current context. Making choices, therefore, depends on the currently available options and the dispositions, i.e. habitus (Maton, 2012). Therefore, Bourdieu (1991) called habitus as a “sense of acceptability,” which means having a sense of what is considered to be appropriate and in various social contexts (p. 77).

Bourdieu also linked habitus to an “individual history” (1990, p. 86). He believed that habitus that we acquire in the family domain establishes the basis of structuring the school experience; the habitus that is transformed by and affected through school interaction is itself diversified, and therefore, creates the basis for all future experiences from restructuring to restructuring (Bourdieu, 1972, cited in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Hence, every individual’s habitus is different from others’ because they can be influenced by many factors and contexts.

On the one hand, Bourdieu (1990) described habitus as “embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking and thereby of feeling and thinking” (pp. 69–70). On the other hand, Bourdieu also argued that habitus can change in the course of one’s life, thus it is temporary. Therefore, although the habitus is constructed by childhood experience and family relationships, it is constantly re-structured by gaining experience outside the family (Reay, 2004).

Bourdieu argued that people's linguistic practices are the results of political and social efforts to normalize these particular linguistic practices (Susen & Turner, 2011). In the case of the Kazakhstani context, during the Soviet era the usage of Russian as the main medium of instruction and language of wider communication has led to the marginalization of indigenous languages and language shift (Smagulova, 2008).

Bourdieu argued that individuals acquire social habitus in the early childhood context through socialisation which constructs their perceptions and actions by implementing structural features of their social context (Susen & Turner, 2011). However, as it was mentioned earlier, habitus is temporary and happens to change. Therefore, social agents develop such skills in order to become flexible in different social situations and meet constantly changing demands of their social context. In order to avoid constant adaptation to new schemes, individuals tend to acquire a social habitus which ensures a sense of how to react, perceive, and speak in different situations. This social habitus represents the dispositions, i.e. educational, economic, cultural etc. conditions in which the individuals have grown up. Hence, this social habitus is shaped by the social conditions and circumstances of that particular time (Susen & Turner, 2011). As a result of these adaptations and flexibility, individuals develop various skills which form different types of "capital" to be used in a particular field. Therefore, habitus can serve as an instrument which provides an opportunity for a successful social life in a particular context (Susen & Turner, 2011).

Bourdieu considered that habitus can be developed even before the use of any linguistic symbols. He believed that some aspects of everyday interaction including the ways people stand, look, sit, speak, etc. influence the formation of habitus (Susen & Turner, 2011). These everyday life aspects are full of powerful prohibitions which people cannot avoid. Thus, habitus can be influenced by any aspect of our lives, even insignificant

ones. This social habitus can be formed and influenced by any aspect of our lives, and further it creates the linguistic habitus, that is, the “way people speak and express themselves, and think with and through a language” (Susen & Turner, 2011, p. 288).

Bourdieu also considered the formation of habitus in a multilingual context which is influenced by socio-historical and socio-political processes and several linguistic markets (Grenfell, 2011). He analyzed the phenomenon of language shift from this perspective by stating that this shift happens over time when speakers of one language voluntarily shift to another language. This shift can be described as a voluntary or rational choice because it is a consequence of a range of social circumstances, prioritizing the majority languages, and suppressing the minority languages. Similar to this perspective, in the historical past Kazakhstan was significantly influenced by the Soviet language policy where Russian was prioritized whereas Kazakh was suppressed (Dickens, 1988). Bourdieu (as cited in May, 2014) also described this process as a misrecognition which furthermore leads to the formation of negative attitudes, i.e. habitus towards the suppressed / minoritized languages which results in language shift. Bourdieu's perspective has opened a new way of analyzing the current language shift issues where the historical events are no longer relevant whereas the current process of globalization and internationalization play a vital role in language shift processes.

One of the studies which used habitus as a conceptual framework was mixed-method research conducted by Manan (2019) in the context of multilingual Pakistan where English stands at the top while Urdu hold second position and is considered as a representation of national identity. The study focused on the stakeholders of 11 low-fee schools in Pakistan. The results revealed that the participants view their native languages as economically and culturally disadvantaged. Their dispositions are shaped by linguistic shaming and commodification. Moreover, they consider English-medium as an ideal

option. The context of this study is somehow similar to the Kazakhstani context which is why habitus can serve as an appropriate framework to analyze the data.

In order to better understand habitus, it is important to understand Bourdieu's other notion of field as these two concepts are interconnected (May, 2014). Bourdieu describes field as "a specific site of economic, cultural, and/or intellectual reproduction, with its own 'logic of practice'—which is "specific and irreducible to those that regulate other fields" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). In the field, significant role is carried by the intellectual, cultural, or economic capital which is acknowledged, rewarded, and appreciated within its field. Thompson (1991) also recognizes the field as spaces that are differentiated by their distinctive features and specific forms of capital. As a result, individuals engaged in one field compete with each other in order to receive higher advantage.

Fields shape individuals' actions and identities in their competition for any type of capital in the field and its social, intellectual, or economic status. Any individual or collective actions in the field affect others within the same field. Therefore, the fields and habitus of its individuals are interconnected (May, 2014). Fields participate in the formation of people's habitus by showing what is considered appropriate/inappropriate within this field.

### **Language and Symbolic Power**

Bourdieu's (1994) notion of "symbolic power" does not refer to a specific type of power but to an aspect of most power forms. Symbolic power is "an invisible power that suffuses all spheres of social life in such a manner that the very people who are subjected by it are actively complicit in their subjection" (as cited in Alexander, 2003, p.184). According to Thompson (1991), "symbolic power is that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject

to it or even that they themselves exercise it" (p.164).

According to Alexander (2003), symbolic power is not usually represented as a physical force, however, it is transformed into a symbolic form of power. Bourdieu emphasized the points about being "invisible" and therefore "misrecognized" which means people underestimate this power. Participants simply recognize this power without knowing the hierarchy it creates in which some agents benefit more than others.

According to Hua & Kramsch (2016), the symbolic power of a language is a game that social actors must play in order to remain alive in the society. Thus, it is an inevitable part of existence when social actors must accept or reject the game. However, Bourdieu (1991) claimed that people are not given any choice to play the symbolic game or not. These kinds of games take place in any context and at any time. Historically, when Kazakhstan was a part of the USSR, the Kazakhstani people had to accept and adapt to a new regime and language policy. During that time, the sociolinguistic functions of the Kazakh language were diminished and the status of Kazakh was significantly influenced by economic, political, and social factors. The part of the population which had the need for advancement in the society was required to acquire the Russian language; otherwise, they could not access the symbolic and material resources (Smagulova, 2008).

## **Conclusion**

Overall, this chapter provided information on the sociolinguistic profile of Kazakhstan and statuses of languages in Kazakhstan. It was highlighted that despite the fact that the Constitution protects linguistic rights of the population, only the three languages: Kazakh, Russian, and English are officially in use. Additionally, the chapter defined the language planning and policy and its essential components such as status and prestige planning which play a significant role in maintaining and strengthening the power of languages. Furthermore, it discussed the central phenomenon of the study language



choice and provided results of the international and national studies on language choice. Finally, Bourdieu's (1991) habitus which is used as the conceptual framework for data analysis of the study was defined. Also, the chapter discussed the related concept of symbolic power which will further help to explain the results of the study. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the study which consists of the research design, research site and sample, data collection tools and procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The previous chapter provided a review of the literature on the central phenomenon of the study. This chapter justifies the methodology used in the study in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the patterns of language choice among the Kazakhstani youth across various domains?
2. Which factor(s) determine Kazakhstani youth's language choice between Kazakh and Russian?

This chapter starts with the information on the research design as well as the description of the research site and sampling strategies. Next, the data collection instruments and procedures are thoroughly discussed, followed by a description of the data analysis procedures. The last part of this chapter discusses the ethical considerations related to the study.

#### **Research Design**

The methodological approach taken in this study is a qualitative approach based on the purpose of the study to explore Kazakhstani 18-25-year olds' language choices between two equally official languages: Kazakh and Russian. The qualitative approach was employed as it was recognized the most appropriate method for this research. As Creswell (2014) explains, it is "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p.4). Employing a qualitative mode of inquiry allows investigating the problem and illuminating an in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Thus, qualitative research enabled me to explore and identify the language choice patterns and the factors influencing the language choice of youth across various domains influenced by their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The qualitative approach of the study relied on interviews which is the most commonly used data collection tool of qualitative research (Saldana, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

### **Research Site**

It is technically challenging to clearly state the site of this research, as it is the whole country because the sampling requires participants to be from all the four regions of Kazakhstan: west, east, north, and south. Different regions of Kazakhstan vary in terms of their residents' historical and ethnic backgrounds which might have influenced their linguistic repertoires and language choices. According to Smagulova (2006):

a quarter of Kazakhs are monolingual Kazakh speakers, but the actual use of Kazakh varies significantly from region to region; it is used universally in the south and west; in the north and east, however, less than 50% of Kazakhs speak the language. (p. 304)

Hence, in some parts of Kazakhstan, it is considered that people speak predominantly Kazakh or Russian.

### **Research Sample**

For sampling, the study used a maximal variation sampling strategy, targeting from among Kazakhstani 18-25-year olds. Following Creswell's (2014) description of maximal variation sampling, "the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait" (p. 229), three main characteristics for respondents have been identified: Kazakh ethnicity, study through Russian and Kazakh medium of instructions (MI), and different geographical origins. Overall, there were eight ethnic Kazakhs, two from each of the four regions: west, east, north, and south. In addition to that, from each of these regions, there have been two participants who went to Kazakh MI and Russian MI respectively. For recruitment of the participants, the researcher used social networking sites such as Instagram recruitment letters.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

In order to collect qualitative data on language choices of Kazakhstani 18-25-year olds, an interview was chosen as the instrument for data collection. This research used the interviews as a data collection tool which is according to Saldana (2011) “an effective way of receiving information on people’s perspectives, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about their personal experiences and social world, in addition to factual information about their lives” (p. 32). Furthermore, Patton (2015) explains that the interview helps to define things that “we cannot directly observe” and that the purpose of interviewing is “to enter into one's perspective” (p. 426). Thus, by conducting an interview-based study, an in-depth knowledge of the topic and insights about the language choices of the participants could be effectively gathered.

Although physically it was not possible to meet a variety of participants from different regions face-to-face, this would become even more challenging due to the global pandemic COVID-19. Therefore, all interviews were conducted online because they provide an opportunity for real time communications which can be both anonymous and timely convenient for participants (Cohen et.al., 2017). Additionally, in case of this study it enables researchers “to contact hard-to-reach groups and individuals” (Cohen et.al., 2017, p. 242).

The design of the interviews was semi-structured. These were designed because they allow the interviewer not only to ask pre-set questions, but also to be able to probe the answers in an open-ended format in order to receive further elaboration (Dörnyei, 2007). In other words, the semi-structured interviews do not require word by word correspondence with the interview protocol (see Appendix A). According to Cohen et.al. (2017), semi-structured interviews include prompts which serve for clarification of any topics or issues and probes which enable to ask for more extended, elaborated details of respondents’ answers. In other words, the probes can simply be in the form of the follow-up 'why'

questions including the repetition of the question or repetition of the answer in a questioning tone, request to provide clarification or example (Cohen et.al., 2017). Thus, the researchers are able to be more flexible and ask for elaboration of significant ideas and details while using the semi-structured interviews.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The study was conducted among the youth belonging to different parts of the country, therefore it was not realistic to interview them face-to-face. Moreover, due to the circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research was conducted by interviewing the participants of the study via the online platform ZOOM which is most frequently used lately.

At the initial stage of the data collection procedure, it was essential to receive permission to conduct a study from the NUGSE Research Committee by submitting the Research Application Form. Once the permission had been received, the preparation was started. Before conducting an actual interview, the data collection instrument was tested with Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education (NUGSE) students. The sample of this study required interviewing youth from different geographical regions and of different ages between 18 -25, therefore there was no need to have a gatekeeper. Modern technologies and social media provide an opportunity to recruit participants online.

After the volunteers willing to participate in the study had been found, the potential participants were contacted and asked several questions to identify their relevance to the selection criteria. After identification of their relevance to the research sample, all eight recruited participants received an electronic copy informed consent to become familiarized with the purpose of the study, and to sign the form accordingly (see Appendix B). The participants were informed in advance that their participation was voluntary. Additionally,

the details of the interview such as date and time were negotiated according to their preferences (Saldana, 2011).

The participants were contacted one day before the interview via a message to remind them about interviews so as to check if the participants needed to reschedule the interview (Saldana, 2011). The data collection took place in the last two weeks of December and first week of January. The languages of interviews were discussed at the beginning of each interview. They were suggested the three languages: Kazakh, Russian, and Kazakh, and all interviews were conducted in the language preferred by the participants. Each interview lasted between thirty minutes to fifty minutes which allowed receiving answers to the main questions. Although during the online interviews, slight delays occurred and some messages were broken, these minor issues did not hinder the researcher from grasping the main ideas. The verbal permission for audio recording was obtained during the recruitment process and was recalled once again at the beginning of each interview. The answers of each respondent have been recorded and stored on a laptop and an online cloud, protected with a password known only to the researcher. The participants were also informed that their names and other personal information would remain anonymous and replaced with pseudonyms.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The next step after collecting the data was to transcribe the audio-recorded interviews. The interviews were transcribed using the Google Documents' function which allows transcribing audio into words. After that, all eight interview transcripts (see Appendix C) were analyzed using the six phases of Braun and Clarke's (2012) thematic analysis. Thematic analysis (TA) is "a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). In other words, the thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify and

understand the commonalities present in the data. Braun and Clarke's (2012) thematic analysis include the following six phases:

1. Familiarizing yourself with the data.
2. Generating initial codes.
3. Searching for Themes.
4. Reviewing Potential Themes.
5. Defining and Naming Themes.
6. Producing the report. (pp. 60-69).

In order to become familiarized with the data, all audio recordings were listened to and interview transcripts were read and reread (Braun & Clarke, 2012). At this stage, it was essential to "read the words actively, analytically, and critically, and start to think about what the data mean" and ask questions like "How does this participant make sense of their experiences? What assumptions do they make in interpreting their experience? What kind of world is revealed through their accounts?" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 61). After that, the potentially relevant pieces of data were coded. Furthermore, these codes were reviewed, converted and grouped into themes according to areas of similarities between codes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Furthermore, the potential themes were reviewed with a supervisor in order to finalize themes and agree on their relevance to answer the research questions of the study. Overall, this process resulted in the generation of main themes and subthemes which were relevant to decipher youth's language choice patterns and the factors which determine their language choice. These themes will be explained and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As Creswell (2014) states, certain ethical considerations must be followed in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents and familiarizing them with

potential risks. Although this study was conducted completely online, there were no key differences between face-to-face or online study because it followed the same ethical procedures.

To minimize the potential risks and ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, as it was suggested by Jonbekova (2018), informed consent has been used and the process of keeping respondents' anonymity and confidentiality has been explained to the participants. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained the purpose, benefits, and risks of the study. The participants were assured that their names and any other personal information will remain confidential and will be stored in a secure place.

In order to provide the anonymity and full confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were used during the data collection and data analysis. The recorded audio files were stored on a personal laptop which is protected by a password and accessible only to the researcher. Notably, the potential risks of the study were very minimal because of keeping the full confidentiality of any information that could lead to the identification of the participants.

The participants of the study are people originating from different parts of the country who therefore have been interviewed via the online platform ZOOM and a WhatsApp call. Due to conducting interviews online, the consent forms have been collected via email. Conducting the study via ZOOM platform provided an opportunity to switch off the camera if participants wanted to remain even more confidential. Seven participants chose not to switch off their cameras. Only one respondent chose to answer via the WhatsApp call due to technical issues with the ZOOM platform. In order to build trust and positive relationships with the participants, some verified information about the researcher has been provided.

## **Conclusion**



This chapter provides all the required details about the methodology of the study on ethnic Kazakh youth's language choices between the Kazakh and Russian languages. It provides explanation of research design, research site and sample, data collection instrument, data collection and data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. Particularly, the study applied a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews. Eight young ethnic Kazakhs from four different parts of Kazakhstan participated in the study. To protect the rights of the participants, nearly all standard ethical considerations were followed. The ethics approval from NUGSE Research Committee was received in November 2020. The following chapter will present the main findings of the study.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **Introduction**

This chapter unveils the primary findings from eight semi-structured interviews that aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the patterns of language choice among the Kazakhstani youth across various domains?
2. Which factor(s) determine Kazakhstani youth's language choice between Kazakh and Russian?

The obtained data was analyzed adopting Braun and Clarke's (2012) six-phase approach to thematic analysis. It starts with the familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, review of the themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The findings drawn from the thematic analysis includes the core themes and subthemes explaining the participants' language choice patterns and the factors that influenced them. This chapter begins with respondents' biographical information followed by a detailed analysis of the data. The above-mentioned research questions were used to organize the findings of the study.

### **Respondents' Biographical Information**

This section presents the biographical background of the participants. As has been already mentioned, to explore the Kazakhstani youth's language choices between two equally official languages, data for this study has been collected from semi-structured interviews with 18-25-year old young people. The study involved eight participants in total. They were selected from four different parts of the country. The participants consisted of two males and six females aging between 20 and 25. Complete details of the respondents' biographical information are provided in the table below.

**Table 1***Interview Participants' Biographical Information*

№	Participant	Age	Region of origin	Medium of Instruction
P1	Dauren	25	East	RMI
P2	Kamilla	20	West	KMI
P3	Samal	21	East	KMI
P4	Zhanar	21	North	KMI
P5	Madina	24	South	RMI
P6	Indira	20	West	RMI
P7	Assem	24	South	KMI
P8	Abylai	25	North	RMI

*Source: compiled by the author based on the obtained data*

The above table provides information on the participants' age, region of origin, and medium of instruction. The rationale for including these variables is that they provide essential background information about the participants. In the context of this study, it is important to explain the link between the participants' educational background, place of origin, and age with their present linguistic repertoire and language choice patterns.

### **Research Question 1: What Are the Patterns of Language Choice among the Kazakhstani Youth across Various Domains?**

This section seeks to provide more in-depth information about the language choice patterns of the Kazakhstani youth in various domains. From the thematic analysis, the four main themes emerged: the preference of the Russian language in communication, bilingual

speech practices, Kazakh as a home language only, the dominance of the Russian content over Kazakh. Each of these themes is expanded below.

***Russian as a Preferred Language for Day-to-Day Communication***

According to the results, specific patterns of language choice do not vary significantly across domains. One of the primary themes that emerged from analyzing the data is related to the participants' preferences of the Russian language for communication with others. To begin with, six out of eight respondents chose Russian to answer interview questions that showed their language preferences from the very beginning. For instance, Indira said that "Russian is the most convenient language" (December 27, 2020) showing confidence in her decision. Moreover, some of the respondents hesitated to choose Kazakh despite knowing it. For example, Assem thought about mixing the two languages "Kazakh and Russian I think. Can I choose both? Ok, Russian" (December 29, 2020) while Samal chose Russian although she also could answer in Kazakh "I can answer either way. Ok, we can continue in Russian" (December 25, 2020). On the contrary, Zhanar preferred Kazakh despite her uncertainty "I can answer in both languages, maybe mixed ... Actually I speak Kazakh, but being in Astana for a long time, depending on the environment I am used to not speaking Kazakh. But let's try in Kazakh" (December 25, 2020). Thus, it is evident that most participants preferred Russian rather than Kazakh, also some of them showed uncertainty in Kazakh speaking skills.

The theme of Russian as a preferred language for day-to-day communication consists of the two subthemes: adjustment for Russian-speaking interlocutors and lack of knowledge of the Kazakh language. Overall, preference for Russian was indicated by all eight participants in one way or another. Significantly, Russian is predominantly used in such domains as friendship and social clubs. Thus, the environment outside their homes is Russian-speaking. The evidence is provided in the subsections below.

**Adjustment for Russian-Speaking Interlocutors.** Based on the results, most of the respondents usually adjust their language to Russian because of having predominantly Russian-speaking friends and peers. For instance, Samal said “I have a lot of Russian-speaking friends, and I speak to them in Russian more frequently than in Kazakh” (December 25, 2020). Likewise, Indira stated “My environment consists of people who predominantly speak Russian”. For example, if we talk about the ratio, then there will be more of those who understand Russian (December 27, 2020). Additionally, Assem described a similar situation: “I speak Russian with my husband's friends because they all studied completely in a Russian school and if I say something in Kazakh, they will not understand me” (December 29, 2020) likewise Abylai “I also speak Russian with friends. I have friends who speak Kazakh perfectly, but they communicate with me in Russian” (January 16, 2021). These quotes demonstrate that currently youth have more Russian-speaking friends and they try to adjust their language to make their friends comfortable. Thus, in our national context Russian serves as the language of wider communication (LWC) which was described by Brutt-Griffler (2006) as “a language that provides a mutually intelligible medium for speakers in multilingual societies” (as cited in Berns, 2012, p.1). According to the results of the National Census of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2009, there are representatives of around 120 nationalities in Kazakhstan which makes it multilingual and multicultural. Moreover, during the Soviet era, also the Russian language was a main language for them. In addition to this regard, Zhanar stated:

I can speak both Kazakh and Russian well. I can adjust to what people are comfortable with. The representatives of other nationalities do not know Kazakh similarly to some Kazakh people. Because of not knowing their histories, when I meet people, I start speaking Russian first. Then if they know Kazakh, I will switch to Kazakh. If I start a conversation with the Kazakh language, and the people don't speak Kazakh, it will cause inconvenience to them. Living in one country, we all need to respect each other. (December 25, 2020)

This extract demonstrates that youth usually shows tolerance to people's linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, it is clear that the representatives of other ethnic groups influence people to choose Russian over Kazakh. Although, people usually start conversations in Russian then can switch into Kazakh; it also happens that in spite of knowing or understanding Kazakh, people do not stop using Russian. That may be observed in Kamilla's following statement:

I think speaking Kazakh is not quite developed in our university because everyone speaks Russian at NU. At the very beginning, I used to speak Russian to make them understand. But after some time I realized that they generally understand Kazakh. Therefore, I started to speak Kazakh. In case they don't understand something, I try to translate and explain it in Russian. (December 25, 2020)

Except for the friendship domain, the majority of respondents noted that predominantly Russian is also used in social clubs because of having mostly Russian-speaking members. Six out of eight respondents shared their past and current experiences of being members of social clubs. They stated that all members adjust to Russian because that is what the majority prefers. For example, Dauren said "I guess the last time it was a game club, because of quarantine we couldn't visit the university. Therefore everything was online. Also, we communicated mostly in Russian" (December 25, 2020). Same as Dauren, Samal shared her past experience and said "Unfortunately, not involved at the moment. But before I was a member of a book club for one or two years. It was in Russian. That was a university club" (December 25, 2020). Interestingly, the above mentioned past experiences took place during university years which demonstrate the youth's linguistic preferences during their studies. However, the situation does not seem to have changed because Kamilla expressed a similar idea about her current experience of being in two university clubs at the same time: "I am a member of two student clubs and have leadership positions in both of them. I try to speak Kazakh with members but there are many people who do not understand. Therefore, we communicate in Russian or English" (December 25, 2020).

**Low Level of the Kazakh Language.** Another reason why the participants prefer Russian is the low level of the Kazakh language skills which creates some uncertainty. Moreover, it usually happens when they communicate with friends and peers. When the participants were asked about the language of communication in the friendship domain, they noted that usually their low level of Kazakh does not allow them to speak confidently in Kazakh which usually results in speaking Russian. For example, Dauren stated the following: “I use Russian with friends because they basically speak Russian, and I hardly ever use Kazakh. If my interlocutor is a Kazakh-speaking person, of course, I try to adjust, but because of my low skills, I cannot fully speak Kazakh with them” (December 25, 2020). Interestingly, the previous extracts showed that people use Russian to make their interlocutors comfortable, but when it comes to Kazakh, they cannot fully switch into Kazakh. Thus, youth seem to be more proficient in Russian than Kazakh. However, the participants noted that they let their interlocutors keep speaking Kazakh if they are comfortable with it. In this regard Madina stated the following:

In Russian because the level of my Kazakh does not allow me, although I have Kazakh-speaking friends who may feel more comfortable speaking Kazakh, but my level does not allow me to constantly speak freely. But it always happens mixed. And I always tell my friends that if it is convenient for them to speak Kazakh, then okay, but I will probably answer in Russian. (December 27, 2020)

### ***Bilingual Speech Practices***

Another major theme that emerged from the data analysis indicates the presence of bilingual speech practices in Kazakh families. The respondents noted that both Kazakh and Russian languages can be mixed when they communicate to family members. For example, it can be seen in the quote from Samal: “At home mostly in Kazakh, but we certainly have some phrases and sentences in Russian, they periodically appear with all family members” (December 25, 2020); likewise, Zhanar quoted: “We speak both languages, mostly Kazakh, but still Russian is added. But it is not because we do not know, it became a habit. Some

words have no translation” (December 25, 2020). It is evident that family members use the Russian language at home in spite of Kazakh being the more dominant home language. We can notice here two issues: firstly, using Russian has become a habit and people might unconsciously use it on a daily basis without paying attention to it; secondly, some things can be better expressed in Russian than in Kazakh because of the lack of the corresponding word in Kazakh.

However, along with Russian, Kazakh can also be added into a daily speech in Russian-speaking families. For example, Madina stated: “Basically in Russian, but we also insert some Kazakh words. If mom curses, then in Kazakh” (December 27, 2020). Unfortunately, although there were multiple Russian-speaking families described by the participants, only one respondent noted the presence of Kazakh in a Russian-speaking home environment.

### ***Kazakh Restricted as a Home Language***

According to the results, five out of eight respondents indicated that they use mainly Kazakh as a home language to communicate with their family and relatives. Interestingly, all five respondents emphasized the key point of speaking to their parents and grandparents primarily in Kazakh. This phenomenon resonates with Fishman’s (1990) view of a family as “the building block of intergenerational transmission of a language... it is in the family that a peculiar bond with language and language activities is fostered, shared and fashioned into personal and social identity”(p. 29). Hence, the family plays an important role in fostering the attitudes towards a mother tongue and building identities. In this regard, Kamilla stated the following:

We speak Kazakh at home and with relatives. We do not speak Russian at home. Although my relatives studied through the Russian medium of instruction, we still speak Kazakh at home. There is no Russian language. Sometimes, if there are no translations of the Russian terms, we mix some words, but generally, we speak Kazakh. (December 25, 2020)



Additionally, Samal shared a similar situation emphasizing the role of not only parents but also grandparents with whom they seem to have a very close relationship:

At home mostly in Kazakh, but we certainly have some phrases in Russian, and sentences in Russian periodically appear with all family members. Yes, it turns out that my mother only finished school in Russian. Then both mom and dad graduated from the university in Kazakh. And we always have Kazakh, always always. And plus our grandmother and grandfather come to us very often and with them purely in Kazakh. (December 25, 2020)

Similar to Samal, who mentioned the use of some Russian periodically, Zhanar also noted that in her family some usage of Russian takes place:

There are 5 people in my family, my parents, a brother and a sister. We still speak both languages, mostly Kazakh, but still Russian is added. When talking to my parents, of course, you often speak Kazakh fluently. (Zhanar, December 25, 2020)

However, it is important to note that Indira and Assem stated that their parents encouraged or somehow demanded them to use Kazakh. For example, that may be observed in Indira's following statement:

I want to note that before, I spoke exclusively in Russian with adults in the family: they asked a question in Kazakh, and I answered in Russian. From the outside, it seemed unusual at least. Now I try to answer in Kazakh because I want to keep the conversation going in the language they speak. Firstly, my dad asked me so. Previously, I did not pay attention to this, but now I understand that this is at least respect for my language and I at least want to understand what I am asked about and what they are talking about in my native language. (December 29, 2020)

This quote represents the positive changes in the respondent's attitude towards her native language and the family language. However, another respondent Assem herself a mother, a wife, and a daughter-in-law mixes multiple languages, but still is demanded to speak Kazakh with her family of birth:

With my child in Kazakh and English, with my husband and mother-in-law in Russian, and with my own family I speak only Kazakh because my dad and mom do not approve of the use of English at home. Therefore, they strictly say: "You need to speak in your mother tongue, native language". And if I tell them that I speak Russian at home, they will swear too. Therefore, I communicate with my family only in Kazakh. (December 29, 2020)

In this exact situation, it is important to highlight Assem's occupation as well as her father's. She is an English teacher who teaches kids while her father is a History teacher.

Assem's linguistic orientations from other mothers' because she teaches English her kids from their early childhood. Conversely, being the History teacher, her father is very strict and demanding about the native language in order to respect and value the mother tongue. Although Assem realizes that, she also acknowledges the modern world's requirements where English serves as a global language and provides many opportunities. However, it seems that she tries to hide the fact of speaking English from her family of birth. This phenomenon indicates the elders' linguistic and identity consciousness and their sense of the perceived vitality of the Kazakh language. Nonetheless, it is evident that the English language is penetrating the Kazakhstani families despite the older generation resisting it.

These responses showed the essential role that parents play in building a Kazakh-speaking family environment and managing family language policy. However, a significant role is also played by the elders of the family shaping language policy, and sometimes resisting languages as in the case of English. The reason behind this may be the historical events of the past, when the current elder generation lived under the strict language policy with a dominant language, therefore, do not want the same thing to happen again.

Also, it is important to mention that unfortunately Kazakh language use is present mostly in the family domain compared to other domains. Smagulova (2021) described the current state of Kazakh and Russian as follows: "Kazakh is a state language and it is the language of a majority of the population. Yet we are observing persistent social inequality running along language lines. Kazakh speakers are more likely to be less well-educated and more likely to be socially disadvantaged in comparison with their Russian-speaking compatriots. Russian proficiency is linked to higher income while the lack of Russian proficiency appears to act as an economic penalty" (p. 266). Hence, the Soviet legacy

where the Russian language covered all the domains and served as the main language, still exists in the Kazakhstani society.

On the contrary, the other three respondents stated that they have Russian-speaking families. Notably, they see the link between parents' and their own current linguistic practices. For example, Abylai noted that his parents' choices affected him to choose Russian as well:

We speak Russian at home. Parents sometimes speak Kazakh, but this is very rare. When I was little, my parents spoke to me in Kazakh, but after moving to the city, they also began to speak Russian. But when we moved just to the city, I didn't know Russian, my parents knew, so we spoke Kazakh at home. (January 16, 2021)

Additionally, another respondent Dauren emphasized that his parents hardly ever speak Kazakh: "At home, I mostly speak Russian, with everyone. Because everyone at home speaks Russian. Actually, this is the only language in which we all understand each other well. Parents do not usually use Kazakh either" (December 25, 2020). Thus, from two opposite above-mentioned examples, it is noticeable how parents' language choice can also affect their children's language practices.

### ***Preference of the Russian and English Media Content over Kazakh***

Another finding was related to the respondents' preference of the Russian and English content in the media. It turns out, it is not only a matter of a preference of a language but also of quality and content. All of the respondents supported the idea that there is much less quality content in the Kazakh language compared to Russian and English. Moreover, according to the responses, the Russian content is more dominant in the Kazakhstani context. That may be observed from the following quotes. For example, Kamilla stated: "I mostly receive content in Russian. Many people try to explain in Russian because bloggers create media content in Russian so that they take into account the preferences of the major part of an audience. And if I like it, I will watch it in any language. But now mostly in Russian" (December 25, 2020). Similarly, Assem said:

“Russian is now of better quality even if we compare the number of bloggers who broadcast in Russian” (December 29, 2020). Likewise Zhanar noted: “In fact, most Instagram bloggers write in Russian because you understand Russian faster. And when you read Kazakh information, they use words that you don't use every day, you don't understand” (December 25, 2020). Additionally, Samal said: “It seems to me that what Instagram recommends to me always comes across in Russian, in Kazakh it is very rare and somehow even if I try to listen to them, it sounds differently and it seems to me more convenient to listen on Instagram in Russian” (December 25, 2020).

According to these quotes, it is evident that Russian content is better in quality and it is in demand. It is also important to mention that Russian is considered as a daily communication language because it is more convenient for understanding the content. However, obviously, we know that the internet recommends what people usually search for or prefer. Therefore, we can also say that people may unconsciously prefer the Russian content.

Same as Russian, the English content is also popular in our national media space.

For example, Samal stated the following:

Most often I listen to podcasts, I try to listen in English because there is more material there, as for me, or materials that are interesting to me are found more in English. By the way, I also watch Youtube most often in English. In Russian, there seem to be very few bloggers there. On Instagram, Russian or Russian-speaking Kazakhs are bloggers, but not very often, and I only watch stories, I don't read posts. (December 25, 2020)

Notably, there seems to be division in terms of the social networking sites which produce more Russian or English content. Also, conversely, this quote states the dominance of the English content among the three languages. Madina shared a similar point of view:

English language 100%. Because all the innovations come from the English-speaking world. This is the language of globalization. Therefore, it is even more convenient to perceive information on it. It is easier for me to perceive in English than in Russian, not to mention Kazakh, because my academic Kazakh is very weak. (December 27, 2020)

Two respondents noted that content in the Kazakh language is currently emerging and they are pleased about this development. For example, Kamilla said: “I don't think we have much developed content in Kazakh. It is only now developing” (December 25, 2020). Additionally, Zhanar also mentioned a similar trend: “.. but now I notice that there are more and more bloggers with Kazakh content. I think it's a good thing. In general, it is very interesting to have Kazakh content. I used to think that no one would make Kazakh content anymore, because most of them speak Russian and will never switch to Kazakh. But now it's interesting that even food bloggers are switching to Kazakh” (December 25, 2020). In addition to this point, Indira and Abylai shared that they both have modern Kazakh songs in their playlists, namely singer Moldanazar's songs. That can be observed in Abylai's following statement: “I have in my playlist a number of songs in Kazakh, for example Moldanazar, also some national songs” (January 16, 2021). This is also a representation of an emerging modern quality of the Kazakh content.

This part presented the four main patterns on youth's language choice across various domains. The majority of the participants showed their preference of Russian over Kazakh across such domains as friendship, social clubs, work, and media. However, the findings showed that the Kazakh language is restricted to a home language only. Although Kazakh seems to dominate in the family domain, the bilingual speech practices also present. The data analysis revealed that the respondents adjust their language to what interlocutors prefer; moreover, it is also usually the Russian language. Overall, it is evident that although the participants appreciate their mother tongue, they still prefer using Russian for day-to-day communication across domains.

**Research question 2: Which Factor(s) Determine the Kazakhstani Youth's Language Choice between Kazakh and Russian?**

This section provides an overview of the factors that influence the Kazakhstani youth to choose between the Kazakh and Russian languages. It is significant to identify such factors because they can help to identify the issues of the current language planning and policy as well as areas for further improvements.

### *Context of Communication*

One of the key factors that determine language choice is the context of the communication, in other words, where the communication happens and to whom. The participants' answers demonstrate that the residents of particular geographical regions of our country have linguistic preferences. It was mentioned above that this study includes two participants from each geographical region. Two of the respondents who are from the western regions of Kazakhstan shared that west is a more Kazakh-speaking region. For example, Kamilla stated the following: "...In addition, almost everyone in Mangistau speaks Kazakh. Other nationalities also speak Kazakh" (December 25, 2020). Also, Indira said:

It seems to me that the fact I was born in the west influences the fact that we can use Kazakh. Because Atyrau, Uralsk are noted as cities where the Kazakh language predominates. It seems to me that this is interconnected because the predominance of the Kazakh language plays a role. For example, Almaty residents speak only Russian and it even happens that they cannot understand Kazakh. (December 27, 2020)

Conversely, two respondents noted the Russian-speaking nature of Nur-Sultan city located in the northern part. For instance, Kamilla who is studying at a university in Nur-Sultan said: "It seems that Kazakh language is not very developed at our university, because in any Telegram group, even when they come to [my university], everyone speaks Russian" (December 25, 2020). Also Abylai who moved to Nur-Sultan (which was named Astana until 2019) in his childhood from a rural region stated:

When I was little, my parents spoke to me in Kazakh, but after moving to the city, they also began to speak Russian. Since I lived in Astana and there the population

is Russian-speaking, or the absolute majority knows Russian, so I had no problems at work. (January 16, 2021)

However, we cannot claim that it is common for everyone because other respondents noted that most of their friends who originated from different regions know and speak Russian. For example, Dauren stated: "All my friends mostly speak Russian, but they are not only from Oskemen, but from different cities. They are from the south, west. And yes, some speak mostly Kazakh. And they all mostly know Russian in one way or another. So we communicate somehow" (December 25, 2020). It is interesting to note that in our society exactly these two regions, namely west and south are considered to be relatively more Kazakh-speaking than other regions. Also, the two major cities such as Nur-Sultan and Almaty were mentioned as predominantly Russian-speaking environments.

### ***Language Prestige and Demand***

Overall, there have been several trends identified. Firstly, Russian is still considered more prestigious and used in communication at work places. It can be seen from Dauren's statement: "Everyday interaction at work was mainly in Russian and there were no problems with that" (December 25, 2020). Similarly, Samal stated: "Right now more often you need to know Russian rather than Kazakh". Moreover, some respondents noted that interviews at national companies are usually held in Russian which means that Russian still holds the stronger status. It can be observed from Assem's statement: "Unfortunately, the Kazakh language does not have such prospects, I do not see such prospects because when you come for an interview, they mostly conduct them in Russian" (December 29, 2020).

Interestingly, some international companies adjust to local conditions and use the local dominant language as a means of communication. In this case it was Almaty which was also previously mentioned by another respondent to be a Russian-speaking city. In this regard, Assem said:

Before, I worked in the oil industry for a company. There they spoke Russian, it was an international Chinese company. The Chinese people speak Russian well in Almaty, they are not newcomers, they have been in Kazakhstan for more than 10 years. They speak Russian, speak and everyone in the office, in principle, speaks Russian. I do not know why. (December 29, 2020)

Secondly, it seems that demand for Kazakh is increasing and its value and importance get realized in domains other than family. As Zhanar said: “Of course, in the first place now the Russian language, and then the Kazakh language is now added, because many people resent that employees do not know Kazakh. Whether they like it or not, they try to hire Kazakh-speaking people who know both Kazakh and Russian” (December 25, 2020), there is a growing demand, and it is a nuanced perspective about the Kazakh language because traditionally, Kazakh was associated with homes / families only. However, from this perspective we witness that people are starting to demand it resulting in the appearance of it in the market. Despite its growing demand, the knowledge of Kazakh is not still a primary requirement. In this regard, Assem stated: “... they indicate in their vacancy that if you know the Kazakh language, this will be an advantage. But this is optional. Well, I don't know why knowledge of the Kazakh language is not particularly valued in the labor market” (December 29, 2020). Thus, Russian is more valued in the labour market than Kazakh. Bourdieu (1991) used the term “linguistic market” to refer to the similar phenomenon where the logic of the market determines and shapes the value of the languages as economic commodities and sources of employment.

Thirdly, knowing English opens up more opportunities to get hired by international companies as well as requiring a higher salary. In this regard, Zhanar expresses her point of view about English:

English is a big advantage. Everyone respects and appreciates someone who speaks English. However, if you do not know English, it is not like you will not get a job at all. Just knowing English is good for you and for the company that hired you. It's a plus for you. Also, in schools, English has reached the level of Kazakh and Russian. (December 25, 2020)



This quote demonstrates that the knowledge of English language is well respected and it seems to be prestigious. Additionally, as Assem stated: “when you come for an interview, if it is an international company, then it will be held in English. If you know English, you can ask for a higher salary. Unfortunately it is true” (December 29, 2020), English provides more financial opportunities in a labour market. According to Cameron (2012), the recognition of a vital role of the English language in the modern society may lead to some consequences including the reinforcement of the English language’s status globally. This may lead to the consideration of English as the most valuable commodity in the linguistic marketplace, thus creating incentives for a range of stakeholders to invest in it.

However, this trend is not common for all workplaces, as Abylai said: “I worked before. Since I lived in Astana and there the population is Russian-speaking, or the absolute majority knows Russian, so I had no problems in my work. But English was not required there” (January 16, 2021). Conversely, some respondents expect positive changes in the labour market. For example, Samal said:

It seems to me at the moment and in the future, knowledge of both languages Kazakh and Russian will be very important. But I would like to see Kazakh in the future for people, and for those who are hiring. (December 25, 2020)

Only one respondent, Madina, shared her experience of being required to know all the three languages: “Now it seems to me all three languages because you even look at the requirements of any work. For example, academically, in general, or the progressive universities of Kazakhstan, all positions require knowledge of the Kazakh language, at an equal level. Now it is not enough just English, Russian, you need to know Kazakh. Basic by the way, as they say” (December 27, 2020). Anyways, it still seems that Kazakh is undervalued compared to the other two languages.

### ***Negative Attitudes towards Kazakh***

According to the respondents' answers, one of the key factors for people choosing Russian more than Kazakh is their attitudes. Some of the respondents emphasized that the Kazakh language is still considered as a representation of a lower status. This attitude is correlated with the Soviet policy when the Kazakh language was associated with backwardness while the Russian language was considered as a language of the elite (Smagulova, 2008). According to Assem:

Mainly our Kazakh-speaking Kazakhs, usually if people speak Russian, there is such an attitude as if they speak some kind of Malay or Sanskrit. Everyone is surprised at this and considers it to be some kind of coolness, well, at school, usually among schoolchildren - which is not right. If you speak Russian, you are cool, and if you speak Kazakh, you are not so cool. I do not know why. And when someone wants to speak Kazakh, he is Kazakh - he sincerely wants to speak Kazakh, but he will be laughed at. This is the attitude. (December 29, 2020)

Furthermore, there is an attitude of correcting mistakes or requiring the perfect Kazakh language which seems to demotivate people to learn or use Kazakh as Assem added:

When our people speak Kazakh, Russians do not laugh at Kazakhs, oh, you forgot a soft sign, put the stress incorrectly; they simply will not pay attention to it. Just as many Indians in the world speak such broken English, but nobody cares about it in the States or in England, they don't correct it, they just let it go. And if someone speaks broken Kazakh, at least tries to do something, our Kazakhs will shame that person pointing out mistakes. They immediately correct him and thereby take away the desire to speak this language. (December 29, 2020)

In addition to that, there seems to be a lack of interest or willingness to speak Kazakh.

Once again, the regional difference also influences this kind of attitude. According to Abylai:

People are not interested in speaking Kazakh. In the north, people speak Kazakh less, but how I came across a lot at work, among friends and acquaintances, people from southern regions speak Kazakh. People themselves do not want or cannot speak the Kazakh language, well, for example, like me. (January 16, 2021)

This kind of attitude might be caused by different factors. Firstly, people might be ashamed of using Kazakh as in the past it was associated with rural life and low level of education. Therefore, people might be willing to avoid such a kind of association. Secondly, it can be considered as the legacy of the Soviet language policy which focused on the domination of

the Russian language by suppressing other languages. Thirdly, there can be some inferiority complexes in terms of language proficiency. As it was indicated by the majority of the respondents, their Kazakh language proficiency levels are lower compared to the Russian language. Thus, such factors can lead to the lack of willingness to speak, or even formation of negative attitudes towards Kazakh.

Interestingly, one respondent Zhanar raised an important point about the nation's unity and respect to the mother tongue stating the following:

Maybe because of people who think it's easier in Russian or why we need Kazakh. There are people who think differently, which is probably why we are not all the same. For example, Uzbeks have a great respect for their language, they do not speak Russian to each other or the Georgian people - their language is the oldest, but they still preserve, speak and respect all their traditions. This is the unity of the nation, thinking in one direction. And possibly after the Soviet past and other historical situations, our minds were divided. Some think it's important, some don't. (December 25, 2020)

This quote represents the dual perspective of the country set by the government and the former President. Our country does not only aim to strengthen the state language and national identity, but also to enter the international arena with a multilingual population which speaks three languages. Moreover, the two of them, Kazakh and Russian are officially equalized. Additionally, Kazakhstan is a country which was the most influenced by the Soviet policy which certainly resulted in changes in its population's perspectives and perceptions.

This part presented the major factors that influence youth's language choice between Kazakh and Russian. It was revealed that the context where the communication happens is one of the factors which can influence the language choices. The findings suggest that there are some geographical differences such as predominantly Kazakh speaking in western and southern regions and predominantly Russian speaking in eastern and northern regions. Secondly, the prestige of a language and demand in the labour

market play a significant role in making choices in favour of a language. The findings revealed that the prestige and demand for the Russian and English languages outweigh the Kazakh language. Thirdly, the findings revealed that having negative attitudes towards a language affect people's choice of language.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the primary findings on the Kazakhstani youth's language choice between two languages: Kazakh and Russian which were revealed through eight semi-structured interviews. The language choice patterns across various domains and factors determining language choices were analyzed. The findings illustrate that the linguistic backgrounds of the participants vary, however, the patterns of language choice and factors are quite similar.

The findings show that currently predominantly Russian is used across various domains such as friendship, social clubs, media whereas Kazakh is restricted to family usage. The key factors which determine the language choice suggest that people's attitudes towards Kazakh still need to be improved. However, in terms of the regional distinctions, Kazakh is more used in western and southern regions. To conclude, the research findings presented in this chapter will be further explained in relation to the theoretical framework and literature in the discussion chapter that follows next.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

The preceding chapter presented the primary findings from eight semi-structured interviews with the 18-25-year-old Kazakhstani youth. The present chapter provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature and theoretical framework. The purpose of this study was to explore the language choices of the Kazakhstani 18-25-year olds between the Kazakh and Russian languages. In particular, the study aimed to identify the language choice patterns of youth across various domains and factors that influence their language choice. Hence, the following research questions needed to be answered:

1. What are the patterns of language choice among the Kazakhstani youth across various domains?
2. Which factor(s) determine the Kazakhstani youth's language choice between Kazakh and Russian?

This chapter is organized in accordance with the major findings devoted to the two research questions of the study. The first two findings in the section below discuss the findings that answer the first research question, while the subsequent findings address the second research question. The discussion of the findings is provided below.

### **The Dominance of the Russian Language across Domains**

One of the major findings revealed by the study is the Russian language domination across various domains such as friendship, work, social clubs, and media. All the participants suggest that they use predominantly Russian outside the family domain. To be more precise, all of the respondents who have ever taken part in any social clubs, noted that the language of communication has been Russian. Additionally, they all stated that they choose Russian to communicate with friends offline and online. This phenomenon is

also explained by the adjustment to the interlocutors' choice of the language. Overall, the respondents choose Russian as a means of communication because firstly, their interlocutors mostly speak Russian; secondly, they believe that Russian is the language of a wider communication which is understandable for the majority of the population. This result seems to be consistent with Bourdieu's concept of "Habitus" which means "a set of dispositions" which persuade people to act and react in specific ways (Thompson, 1991, p. 12). This finding confirms that youth use predominantly Russian because the people and things surrounding them are like these dispositions which make them speak Russian. Moreover, it is not only about the oral language, but also includes the written or visual communication. The respondents have relatively more Russian-speaking friends, attend social club events whose members communicate in Russian, and receive Russian media content in the national context.

This finding seems to be consistent with previous studies conducted by Fierman (2006), Smagulova (2008, 2016), and Kuzhabekova (2019) which focused mostly on children's language use. These studies showed that children use Russian as the main language of communication outside their families. Although the current study focused on a different age group, it was revealed that Russian still remains the primary language of communication.

This finding may further be correlated with Bourdieu's concept "Symbolic Power" which is "an invisible power that suffuses all spheres of social life in such a manner that the very people who are subjected by it are actively complicit in their subjection" (Alexander, 2003, p. 184). The dominance of the Russian language in many spheres of our daily lives proves the existence of its symbolic power. Moreover, it explains how predominantly Russian-speaking people influence others to act the same way. Therefore,

referring to the results, it can be concluded that people continue to strengthen the symbolic power of Russian language by using it and preferring it over Kazakh.

### **Shrinkage in the Use of the Kazakh language**

The findings of this study showed that the Kazakh language holds roots in a family domain and is restricted as a home language compared to the Russian language which has a wider use across different domains. Additionally, the findings showed that respondents do not always choose to speak Kazakh voluntarily, but sometimes they are demanded to do so by their parents or relatives. According to five out of eight respondents, the Kazakh language is most frequently used to communicate with their parents and grandparents within the family domain. It is in line with Fishman's (1990) concept of "intergenerational transmission" where the family domain plays a crucial role in transmitting a mother tongue from the elder generation to the younger one. Fishman emphasized that a strong relationship between a language and speakers is built in the family. Therefore, it can be concluded that the only domain which transmits the Kazakh language is the family domain.

According to Smagulova (2020), there is currently an inequality among languages in Kazakhstan where Kazakh-speaking population is treated as less advantageous compared to Russian-speaking ones. Therefore, in order to be more advantageous, youth seems to use Russian more. According to Bourdieu (1986), these advantages form a capital which is a "power and it extends from the material/economic to the cultural and social" (p. 46). The economic aspect refers to money; cultural aspect refers to knowledge and educational credentials, and social aspect refers to communication. In the case of this study, the Russian language holds all three aspects of capital compared to Kazakh being the language of wider communication, being used for job interviews and within the work environment for communication; also, being preferred language for receiving content and media resources.

Bourdieu described people's habitus as "ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being" which demonstrate the reflection of the past history in the present days, and also the ways we make choices on acting in a particular way (as cited in Maton, 2012, p. 52). He viewed the present as a result of a myriad of events that happened in the past. Hence, the present circumstances where the Kazakh language is restricted to a usage in a family have been developed by the historical events of the Soviet era when Kazakh was suppressed. Currently, despite independence and Kazakh being the state/national language for many years, it has not expanded to most domains outside home because its attached status of backwardness and low prestige still exist in the society. Additionally, the lack of economic value in the linguistic marketplace hinders the Kazakh language to strengthen its status and expand the area of usage.

Previous studies conducted on language choice and use have noted that a similar phenomenon happens around the world. This finding is consistent with that of Gomashie's study (2020) in the Nahuatl-speaking community of Tlaxco in Mexico which revealed that bilingual youth used the mother tongue predominately with grandparents but showing their positive attitude towards the language. Similarly, although the use of the mother tongue is shrunk in terms of use across different domains, we can conclude that the participants of this study have a sense of the importance of their ethnic language which gives us a hope for future development.

The three major findings below discuss the factors determining youth's language choice between Kazakh and Russian languages.

### **Regional Differences**

Most of the respondents stated that there are regional differences in people's language use which is considered as one of the factors determining language choice. In other words, residents of different regions can speak predominantly Kazakh or Russian



because of their birth in a particular region or city. The respondents stated that the residents of different geographical regions have particular linguistic preferences either Kazakh or Russian.

While living in a particular area, a person's habitus of using a language develops. However, as Bourdieu (1991) argues, habitus is not permanent, and it changes throughout one's life. This is true for some of the respondents because as they moved from a Kazakh-speaking region or city to a Russian-speaking, their language choice and use patterns have accordingly changed. Hence, regardless of one's experience of linguistic habitus, it can easily be adapted to a new one. Moreover, it is usually the Russian language dominating in most populated and larger regions of the country. This means that regardless of having Kazakh-speaking background, youth adapt to a new language with a symbolic power as well as the language of wider communication.

### **Language Prestige and Demand**

In the Kazakhstani context, Kazakh and Russian are official languages on an equal basis, although Kazakh is also the state language. Both languages are used as the medium of instruction in schools. However, according to the respondents, Russian is a more dominant language because it provides more opportunities. This finding shows two trends: firstly, Russian is valuable economically and socially because it is used at workplaces in both oral and written forms more than Kazakh; secondly, the English language is also considered economically advantageous in terms of opportunities to receive higher positions or salary. This phenomenon can be viewed in relation to Bourdieu's (1991) symbolic power. Currently, in the national marketplace we witness the increasing symbolic power of the English language. Moreover, it is perceived as a positive trend and considered as a responsibility for the respondents to acquire this language. The symbolic power of the

language appears to have formed people's habitus based on their positive attitude and imagined/perceived advantages.

Moreover, it was mentioned by the respondents that sometimes Kazakh is considered as an optional language, not a valuable one. This means that there is no demand in the economic field for the Kazakh language. This notion is in line with Bourdieu's concept "linguistic market" where languages are called "commodities" because of having a "market" where languages have an economic value (Cameron, 2012, p.352). According to the results of this study, English and Russian are on the top of the hierarchy whereas Kazakh is at the bottom.

### **Attitudes to the Acquisition of Kazakh**

During the Soviet era, the Kazakh language was not associated with prestige compared to the Russian language. The fact that the past experience is still present in our society constitutes Bourdieu's Habitus which is also related to socio-historical and socio-political processes in the past which significantly influence multilingual people's choices. It is relevant here to show a correlation of habitus and the phenomenon of language shift. While the language shift can be viewed as a "voluntary" or a "rational choice"; in case of this finding it is viewed as a result of the historical events where the Russian language was valued more whereas the Kazakh language was less prestigious. This process is a result of what Bourdieu called "misrecognition", a key factor of language shift, when speakers develop a negative attitude towards a language (as cited in May, 2014, p. 148).

According to Kamwangamalu (2016), prestige planning can be considered successful when the members of a community have a positive attitude towards a language. In the case of this study, it was found that some respondents have a negative attitude towards speaking the Kazakh language. This resonates with Kamwangamalu's (2016) argument that people's negative attitudes towards languages can be changed through

attaching an economic value to the languages in the linguistic marketplace. All respondents mentioned the importance of an economic value attached to a language in order to raise its social status. Also, they noted that currently, in the national linguistic marketplace, the Russian and English languages have relatively more economic value. Additionally, English is valuable due to being a global language of economy and opportunities whereas Russian is dominant not only in oral but also in written communication. Hence, it is evident that there is a sign of the language shift towards English language due to the processes of internationalization and globalization.

Despite the fact that some respondents shared their negative attitudes towards choosing Kazakh, they also challenged the current policy and suggested some possible alternative solutions which can raise the social status of the Kazakh language and motivate youth to use and choose it over other languages. The respondents suggested that the Kazakh language related policies and requirements must be made stricter and demanding. In other words, the knowledge and use of the Kazakh language must be required in the society, especially at workplaces. For example, making the knowledge of Kazakh a mandatory requirement, not optional.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to discuss the main findings of the study in relation to the existing literature and theoretical framework. The discussion of the findings has demonstrated that Bourdieu's concepts such as habitus and symbolic power are helpful in explaining the language choice of youth in our national context. In line with the reviewed literature, people prefer predominantly Russian as a means of communication, yet they use Kazakh as a family language. It has been found that people's social habitus is based on certain dispositions such as people, practices and events surrounding them. The participants' perceptions about the opportunities and prestige attached to Russian and

English languages express these languages' strong symbolic power which makes them choose these languages over Kazakh. Moreover, Russian and English are dominant in the linguistic market of Kazakhstan. Hence, prestige planning activities need to address the issues of status, economic value, and demand. The next chapter summarizes the main findings of the study and provides the limitations of the study, implications as well as recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapter provided the discussion of the main findings of this study based on the qualitative data gathered from eight semi-structured interviews. The study was conducted with eight young ethnic Kazakhs from four parts of Kazakhstan: west, east, north, and south. This chapter presents the main conclusions of the research. The purpose of the study was to explore the language choices of the Kazakhstani youth aged 18-25 between two equally official languages: Kazakh and Russian and to identify the factors determining the language choice of youth across various domains. To achieve the purpose of the study, the following research questions needed to be answered:

1. What are the patterns of language choice among the Kazakhstani youth across various domains?
2. Which factor(s) determine Kazakhstani youth's language choice between Kazakh and Russian?

The final chapter of the study presents the main conclusions drawn in this study, followed by the limitations of the study. Finally, further implications and recommendations are discussed.

### **Main Conclusions of the Study**

This qualitative study represents the first study in Kazakhstan which focused mainly on language choice of 18-25 year old youth between Kazakh and Russian languages. The study was based on Bourdieu's concept of habitus which focuses on "how linguistic habitus shapes stakeholders' dispositions towards a monolingual view in a diverse multilingual society, and how it cultivates a fundamental myth about the uniformity of languages, cultures, and identities in a multicultural and multiethnic setting" (Manan, 2021, p. 130). As it was already mentioned, although there are few studies related to the

topic in the national context, the existing studies revealed the domination of the Russian language in use. Hence, this study attempted to identify the current situation on language choice patterns across domains, particularly that of the youth's choices. Although the previous studies adopted different approaches, none of them used habitus as a theoretical framework.

The first language choice pattern revealed by the present study is that the Kazakhstani ethnic Kazakh youth prefer to use Russian as the primary language of communication to interact with their friends and colleagues in various domains such as in social clubs, in social media and while they receive media content. Although the participants were not against the use of Kazakh, they revealed that the low level of Kazakh proficiency did not allow them to speak it. Additionally, the interlocutors' choice of a language, which is also Russian, influences them to make a choice in favour of Russian rather than Kazakh. Moreover, the findings suggest that Russian is considered as the language of wider communication.

The second language choice pattern is related to the shrinkage of the Kazakh language across various domains. While Russian is used in most of the domains, Kazakh is restricted to the family domain only. It is important to note that elder relatives or family members play an essential role in influencing the youth to speak or use Kazakh. Hence, the intergenerational transmission takes place in the Kazakhstani families. It appears that because of past events, people tend to consider speaking Russian as the more advantageous and prestigious language choice to make. This is a manifestation of how their habitus and language socializations have shaped their choices.

The study finds that one of the noticeable factors which determines youth's language choices is related to their place of birth. Regarding their place of birth, it is found that youth can speak predominantly Kazakh or Russian. However, this situation can be

changed once people move to other regions and be influenced by that particular habitus that they find themselves in. Hence, this suggests that people's habitus can be temporary and it can be influenced by other factors too such as migration.

Another factor is the prestige of languages in the national context. Russian language is considered as the more advantageous in terms of financial and social opportunities compared to Kazakhs. In addition to Russian, the English language is also treated as an advantageous language due to being a global language of economics and communication.

One more important factor is related to the negative attitudes towards the Kazakh language use resulting from its historical status as a less prestigious language. Moreover, this appears to have led to a shift in people's choices. Therefore, at the current stage, Kazakh is not attributed significant economic value as compared to the Russian and English languages.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Admittedly, the study has certain limitations. The limitations are related to the number of participants and a research method. Firstly, the findings of this study cannot be generalized on the particular part of the country or the whole population as it is a small-scale research. With only two representatives of ethnic Kazakh youth from each part of the country, their language choice patterns cannot represent their regions of birth or the country. Secondly, this study used only one research instrument, a semi-structured interview to collect data. According to Saldana (2011), "the limitations of one data-gathering method can be addressed by using an additional method" (p. 76). I assume that the use of observations or an ethnographic account of the people's languages would have revealed more insights about their language choices, and the factors that shape these choices.

Thus, using more than one research tool would have ideally provided more in-depth insights and information into the issue. Thirdly, due to the current global pandemic COVID-19, the study had to be conducted fully online via an online platform ZOOM. During the data collection process, some issues with the connection caused some slight delays and occasional broken messages. Therefore, online interviews could be replaced by face-to-face interviews. Nonetheless, this study has attempted to provide some new insights into language choice experiences of the ethnic Kazakh youth between Kazakh and Russian.

### **Further Implications**

The topic of language choice certainly needs to be further studied in the national context as there is a question of the language status and language use. Therefore, it is suggested that in order to identify the patterns of language choice of the ethnic Kazakh youth and factors determining them, a larger number of populations may be targeted. Additionally, potential sampling may be expanded and enlarged that may include not only youth, but also other age groups. However, this research can serve as a baseline for future studies. Besides, for the methodological base of the research triangulation which is “using more than one method or source of data” (Bryman, 2012, p. 392) can be used to gather richer data. Moreover, future research could be focused on the exploration of language choice of three languages as the findings revealed that youth make choices in favour of English too in addition to Kazakh and Russian.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the main findings and conclusions of the study, some recommendations to the main stakeholders such as language policy developers and educational policy makers may be proposed. Firstly, based on the findings, we may conclude that the current language policy does not attach economic opportunities to the Kazakh language. Language policy



developers who regulate the language related activities need to pay attention to the prestige of the Kazakh language in order to correspond to its status of the state language. As mentioned above, youth do not see incentives to use Kazakh or develop their proficiency. Therefore, it is suggested measures may be taken in this direction to improve the prestige of the Kazakh language.

Educational policy makers could pay attention to the teaching methodology and content as provided in Kazakh language teaching practices. Based on the results, respondents want to view Kazakh as a modern and developing language as well as the language used in media and communications. However, currently the situation seems to be the opposite. Therefore, it is recommended to improve current educational programmes in order to meet the modern generation's needs.

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**Appendix A**

## Interview Protocol

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Researcher: Aidana Jumagaliyeva

Participant:

Questions:

1. In which language do you prefer to answer my questions?
2. To begin with, could you tell me some background information about your place of birth, family, and study?
3. Do you work or study?
4. What languages do you know and speak?
5. What language/s do you use to speak at home?
6. What language/s do you feel comfortable to speak with friends?
7. Which subject did you like most at school: Kazakh language or Russian language?

Why?

8. In which language do you prefer receiving content? By content I mean listening to music, watching films, reading books, surfing the net, etc.
9. Which language do you relate to job opportunities and prospects? Why?
10. How do you communicate with people who speak with you only in Kazakh? Why?
11. What language do you relate to your National Identity? Why?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Сұхбаттасу хаттамасы

Сұхбат уақыты:

Күні:

Откен орны:

Зерттеуші:

Қатысушы:

Сұрақтар:

1. Сіз менің сұрақтарыма қай тілде жауап бергенді жөн көресіз?
2. Сіз өзіңіздің туған жеріңіз, отбасыңыз және біліміңіз туралы негізгі мәліметтер беруден бастай аласыз ба?
3. Сіз жұмыс жасайсыз ба немесе оқисыз ба?
4. Сіз қандай тілдерді білесіз және сөйлейсіз?
5. Сіз үйде қандай тілде сөйлейсіз?
6. Сіз қай тілде достарыңызбен сөйлескенді ұнатасыз?
7. Сіз мектепте қай пәнді жақсы көрдіңіз: қазақ тілі немесе орыс тілі? Неліктен?
8. Сіз контентті қай тілде алғанды қалайсыз? Контент дегенде мен музыка тыңдау, фильм көру, кітап оқу, интернетті пайдалану және т.б. нұсқаймын.
9. Сіз қай тілді жұмыс істеу мүмкіндіктерімен және перспективаларымен байланыстырасыз? Неліктен?
10. Сізге тек қазақ тілінде сөйлейтін адамдармен қалай байланыс жасайсыз? Неліктен?
11. Ұлттық ерекшелігіңізге қай тілді жатқызасыз? Неліктен?
12. Тағы не қосқыңыз келеді?

## Протокол интервью

Время интервью:

Дата:

Место проведения:

Исследователь: Айдана Джумагалиева

Участник:

Вопросы:

1. На каком языке вы предпочитаете отвечать на мои вопросы?
2. Не могли бы вы для начала рассказать мне некоторую базовую информацию о вашем месте рождения, семье и учебе?
3. Вы работаете или учитесь?
4. Какие языки вы знаете и говорите?
5. На каком языке вы разговариваете дома?
6. На каком языке вам комфортно разговаривать с друзьями?
7. Какой предмет вам больше всего нравился в школе: казахский язык или русский язык? Почему?
8. На каком языке вы предпочитаете получать контент? Под контентом я имею в виду прослушивание музыки, просмотр фильмов, чтение книг, использование интернета и т.д.
9. Какой язык вы связываете с возможностями и перспективами трудоустройства? Почему?
10. Как вы общаетесь с людьми, которые говорят с вами только на казахском языке? Почему?
11. Какой язык вы относите к своей национальной идентичности? Почему?
12. Что еще вы хотели бы добавить?

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Choosing between Kazakh and Russian: A Study of Young Ethnic Kazakhs'

Language Choices through the Lens of Habitus

**DESCRIPTION:** You are invited to participate in a research study on the language choices of the Kazakh youth between Kazakh and Russian languages. You will be asked to participate in an online interview containing 10-15 questions in English, Kazakh, or Russian depending on your preference. If you agree, the interview will be recorded. Your name will be anonymous in all documents, electronic files, and the thesis itself. All the collected answers and the recording will be stored on a personal computer or a laptop which are all secured by passwords and accessible only to the researcher. All written and printed documents, including consent forms, will be kept in a private place.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation will take approximately 30-45 minutes.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** The risks associated with this study are minimal.

The participants' names will be replaced with pseudonyms during data collection and interpretation. The recorded audio files will be stored on a personal computer or a laptop which are protected by passwords and accessible only to the researcher. Any information that might lead to the identification of the participants will be changed. The time of the interview will be negotiated with each participant individually regarding their preferences; therefore, it will not affect their studies or work.

The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study are becoming aware of and understand the concept of choosing a language and share personal experience. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your status, grades or work.

**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, Associate Professor Syed Abdul Manan at [syed.manan@nu.edu.kz](mailto:syed.manan@nu.edu.kz).

**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](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_

## ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫ КЕЛІСІМІНІҢ АҚПАРАТТЫҚ ФОРМАСЫ

Қазақ және Орыс Тілдерін Таңдау: Habitus Призмасы арқылы Жас Этникалық

Қазақтардың Тіл Таңдауын Зерттеу

**СИПАТТАМА:** Сіз қазақ және орыс тілдері арасындағы қазақ жастарының тілін таңдау тақырыбына бағытталған зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға шақырылып отырсыз. Сізге өз қалауыңызға байланысты ағылшын, қазақ немесе орыс тілдерінде 10-15 сұрақтан тұратын онлайн-сұхбатқа қатысу ұсынылады. Егер сіз келіссеңіз, сұхбат жазылады. Сіздің атыңыз барлық құжаттарда, электронды файлдарда және диплом жұмысының өзінде жасырын болады. Барлық жиналған жауаптар мен жазбалар жеке компьютерде немесе ноутбукта сақталады, олар құпия сөзбен қорғалады және зерттеушіге ғана қол жетімді. Барлық жазбаша және басылған құжаттар, соның ішінде келісім формалары қауіпсіз жерде сақталады.

**ӨТКІЗІЛЕТІН УАҚЫТЫ:** Сіздің қатысуыңыз шамамен 30-45 минут уақытыңызды алады.

### ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫНА ҚАТЫСУДЫҢ ҚАУІПТЕРІ МЕН АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ:

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысудың қауіптері минималды. Мәліметтерді жинау және түсіндіру кезінде қатысушылардың аты-жөндері псевдоним аттармен ауыстырылады. Жазылған аудио файлдар жеке компьютерде немесе ноутбукта сақталады, олар құпия сөзбен қорғалады және зерттеушіге ғана қол жетімді. Қатысушыларды анықтауға әкелуі мүмкін кез-келген ақпарат өзгертіледі. Әңгімелесу уақыты әр қатысушымен олардың қалауын ескере отырып жеке-жеке келісіледі; сондықтан бұл олардың оқуына немесе жұмысына әсер етпейді. Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуыңыздың келесідей артықшылықтары болуы мүмкін: тілді таңдау тұжырымдамасын түсіну және жеке тәжірибелерімен бөлісу. Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісім беруіңіз немесе бас тартуыңыз сіздің мәртебеңізге, бағаларыңызға немесе жұмысыңызға әсер етпейді.

**ҚАТЫСУШЫ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ:** Егер Сіз берілген формамен танысып, зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға шешім қабылдасаңыз, Сіздің қатысуыңыз **ерікті** түрде екенін хабарлаймыз. Сонымен қатар, **қалаған уақытта айыппұл төлемей және сіздің әлеуметтік жеңілдіктеріңізге еш кесірін тигізбей зерттеу жұмысына қатысу туралы келісіміңізді кері қайтаруға немесе тоқтатуға құқығыңыз бар.** Зерттеу жұмысына мүлдем қатыспауыңызға да толық құқығыңыз бар. Сондай-ақ, қандай да бір сұрақтарға жауап бермеуіңізге де әбден болады. Бұл зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері академиялық немесе кәсіби мақсаттарда баспаға ұсынылуы немесе шығарылуы мүмкін.

### БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:

**Сұрақтарыңыз:** Егер жүргізіліп отырған зерттеу жұмысының процесі, қауіп мен артықшылықтары туралы сұрағыңыз немесе шағымыңыз болса, келесі байланыс құралдары арқылы зерттеушінің магистрлық тезисі бойынша жетекшісімен хабарласуыңызға болады: профессор Syed Abdul Manan [syed.manan@nu.edu.kz](mailto:syed.manan@nu.edu.kz).

**ДЕРБЕС БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТТАРЫ:** Егер берілген зерттеу жұмысының жүргізілуімен қанағаттанбасаңыз немесе сұрақтарыңыз бен шағымдарыңыз болса,

Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары Білім беру мектебінің Зерттеу Комитетімен көрсетілген байланыс құралдары арқылы хабарласуыңызға болады: электрондық поштамен [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz).

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісіміңізді берсеңіз, берілген формаға қол қоюыңызды сұраймыз.

- Мен берілген формамен мұқият таныстым;
- Маған зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты мен оның процедурасы жайында толық ақпарат берілді;
- Жинақталған ақпарат пен құпия мәліметтерге тек зерттеушінің өзіне қолжетімді және мәлім болатынын толық түсінемін;
- Мен кез келген уақытта ешқандай түсініктемесіз зерттеу жұмысына қатысудан бас тартуыма болатынын түсінемін;
- Мен жоғарыда аталып өткен ақпаратты саналы түрде қабылдап, осы зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға өз келісімімді беремін.

Қолы: \_\_\_\_\_

Күні: \_\_\_\_\_



## ФОРМА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

Выбор Между Казахским и Русским: Исследование Выбора Языка Молодых  
Этнических Казахов через Призму Habitus

**ОПИСАНИЕ:** Вы приглашены принять участие в исследовании по выбору языка казахской молодежи между казахским и русским языками. Вам будет предложено принять участие в онлайн-интервью, содержащем 10-15 вопросов на английском, казахском или русском языках в зависимости от ваших предпочтений. Если вы согласны, интервью будет записано. Ваше имя будет анонимно во всех документах, электронных файлах и в самой диссертации. Все собранные ответы и записи будут храниться на персональном компьютере или ноутбуке, которые защищены паролями и доступны только исследователю. Все письменные и печатные документы, включая формы согласия, будут храниться в защищенном месте.

**ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ:** Ваше участие потребует около 30-45 минут.

**РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА:** Риски, связанные с этим исследованием, минимальны. Во время сбора и интерпретации данных имена участников будут заменены псевдонимами. Записанные аудиофайлы будут храниться на персональном компьютере или ноутбуке, которые защищены паролями и доступны только исследователю. Любая информация, которая может привести к идентификации участников, будет изменена. Время собеседования оговаривается с каждым участником индивидуально с учетом их предпочтений; следовательно, это не повлияет на их учебу или работу.

В качестве ожидаемых преимуществ в результате исследования можно рассматривать осознание и понимание концепции выбора языка и возможность поделиться личным опытом. Ваше решение об участии в этом исследовании не повлияет на ваш статус, оценки или работу.

**ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКОВ:** Если Вы прочитали данную форму и решили принять участие в данном исследовании, Вы должны понимать, что Ваше участие является **добровольным** и что у Вас есть право **отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время без штрафных санкций и без потери социального пакета, который Вам предоставляли**. В качестве альтернативы можно не участвовать в исследовании. Также Вы имеете право не отвечать на какие-либо вопросы. Результаты данного исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в научных или профессиональных целях.

### КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

**Вопросы:** Если у Вас есть вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, процедуры его проведения, рисков и преимуществ, Вы можете связаться с руководителем магистерского тезиса исследователя профессором Syed Abdul Manan [syed.manan@nu.edu.kz](mailto:syed.manan@nu.edu.kz).

**Независимые контакты:** Если Вы не удовлетворены проведением данного исследования, если у Вас возникли какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или вопросы, Вы можете связаться с Комитетом Исследований Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета, отправив письмо на электронный адрес [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz).

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если Вы согласны участвовать в исследовании.

- Я внимательно изучил представленную информацию;
- Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь;
- Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин;
- С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен принять участие в исследовании по собственной воле.

Подпись: \_\_\_\_\_

Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix C

#### Transcription Sample of Interview 6 (English translation)

**Researcher:** In what language do you prefer to answer my questions?

**Participant:** Russian is the most convenient language

Researcher: First, could you tell me some basic information about your place of birth, family, and education?

**Participant:** We have a large family, that is, seven: counting three adults, parents and grandfather, four children. As a child, there were no small two children, so we were with our parents and with our grandparents. And they all speak Kazakh. Our family is mostly Kazakh-speaking. That is, inside the house, it is customary for us to communicate in Kazakh. Only I communicate in Russian. Russian Russian-speaking teacher in kindergarten, I was in a Russian group, and she talked to us and taught in Russian. And accordingly, I went to school with the Russian language. The class was Russian-speaking, and I think that's why I got used to being surrounded by people who speak Russian. It was all in Kulsary, because I lived there until I was about 13. Then she moved to Atyrau, entered the Daryn school, then NISH. I studied in the Russian class both here and there. As far as I know, my mother helped me to go to the Russian class, it was her choice. But there you know the catch was that then I still communicated in Kazakh. That is, I could switch between the two languages.

**Researcher:** Are you working or studying?

**Participant:** Study only

**Researcher:** What languages do you know and speak?

**Participant:** I know and speak 3 standard languages: Russian, Kazakh, English. Recently, I started to learn French, but still an elementary level.

**Researcher:** What is your level of proficiency in Kazakh and Russian in the four skills?

**Participant:** In Russian, I would not say that there are any problems. As a child, I read a lot of books and thanks to this, I developed a strong vocabulary base. Writing and speaking in Russian is not a problem for me. But in Kazakh, it seems that the most difficult letter will be. Compliance with the rules sometimes, spelling - how to write, endings, and so on. The strong part in Kazakh, I think, is colloquial speech, because we don't follow the rules there in the main.

**Researcher:** What language do you speak at home? (in what language, to whom, and why)?

**Participant:** Russian language: I would like to note that I used to speak exclusively in Russian with adults in the family, that is, they asked a question in Kazakh, and I answered in Russian. From the outside, it seemed unusual at least. Now I try to answer in Kazakh, because I want to keep the conversation in the language they speak. First of all, my dad asked me to do this. I didn't pay much attention to it before. And now I understand that this is at least respect for my language and I want to understand on the contrary when they ask me what they are talking about in their native language.

**Researcher:** What language / s do you feel comfortable talking to your friends in? Why?

**Participant:** My environment consists of people who mostly speak Russian. If for example we talk about the ratio, then those who understand Russian will be more. There are a couple of guys who speak Kazakh in everyday life, and I try to speak Kazakh with them, but they are not enough. So we mostly speak in Russian, and sometimes in English, there is something like that. I think the fact that I was born in the West affects the fact that we can use Kazakh. Because Atyrau, Uralsk are marked as cities where the Kazakh language prevails. I think it is interconnected because if we had a different environment, completely different friends, we would communicate in Kazakh with them. Because the

predominance of the Kazakh language plays a role. For example, Almaty residents speak only Russian and even sometimes they can't understand Kazakh.

**Researcher:** Are you a member of any social clubs (volunteering, dancing, sports, etc.)? In what language do you communicate with other participants? Why?

**Participant:** I wouldn't say that. Maybe at school, but not at the moment.

## Образец транскрипции интервью 6 (Оригинал)

**Исследователь:** На каком языке вы предпочитаете отвечать на мои вопросы?

**Участник:** Русский самый удобный язык

**Исследователь:** Для начала не могли бы вы рассказать мне некоторую базовую информацию о вашем месте рождения, семье и образовании?

**Участник:** У нас семья большая, то есть семеро: считая троих взрослых, родители и дедушка, четверо детей. В детстве маленьких двух детей не было поэтому мы были с родителями и с дедушкой-бабушкой. А они все разговаривают на казахском. Семья у нас в основном казахоязычная. То есть внутри дома для нас привычно общаться на казахском. Только я вот общаюсь на русском. В детском саду я была в русской группе, преподавательница была русскоязычная, общалась с нами и преподавала на русском. И соответственно в школу я пошла с русским языком. Класс был русскоязычный и мне кажется именно из-за этого я привыкла к тому что меня окружают люди которые разговаривают на русском. Это все было в Кульсары, потому что я там жила где-то до 13 лет. Потом переехала в Атырау, поступила в школу Дарын, потом НИШ. И там и тут я училась в русском классе. Насколько я знаю, тому что я пошла в русский класс поспособствовала мама, это был ее выбор. Но там знаете загвоздка была в том, что тогда я еще общалась на казахском. То есть я могла между двумя языками switch.

**Исследователь:** Вы работаете или учитесь?

**Участник:** Только учеба

**Исследователь:** Какие языки вы знаете и говорите?

**Участник:** Знаю и владею 3 стандартными языками: русский, казахский, английский. С недавнего времени начала учить французский, но еще начальный уровень.

**Исследователь:** Каков ваш уровень владения казахским и русским языками по четырем навыкам?

**Участник:** В русском я бы не сказала что есть какие-то проблемы. В детстве я читала очень много книг и благодаря этому развилось сильная база vocabulary. Писать и разговаривать на русском для меня не составляет проблем. А вот на казахском самое сложное это кажется письмо будет. Соблюдение правил иногда, spelling - как писать, окончания и тд. Сильная часть в казахском я думаю это разговорная речь потому что там правил не соблюдаем в основном.

**Исследователь:** На каком языке вы разговариваете дома? (на каком языке, кому и почему)

**Участник:** Я хочу отметить что раньше я со взрослыми в семье разговаривала исключительно на русском, то есть они задавали вопрос на казахском, а я отвечала на русском. Со стороны это казалось необычным как минимум. Сейчас я стараюсь отвечать на казахском, потому что я хочу поддерживать разговор на языке, на котором они говорят. Во-первых, меня папа просил так. Раньше я как-то не обращала на это внимание. А сейчас я понимаю что это как минимум уважение к своему языку и я хочу наоборот понимать когда меня спрашивают, о чем говорят именно на родном языке.

**Исследователь:** На каком языке / ах вам комфортно разговаривать с друзьями? Почему?

**Участник:** Мое окружение состоит из людей, которые преимущественно разговаривают на русском. Если например говорить о соотношении, то тех кто понимает русский больше будет. Есть парочка ребят, которые в повседневной жизни говорят на казахском, и с ними я пытаюсь говорить на казахском, но их мало. Поэтому мы в основном говорим на русском, а иногда на английском, там бывает

что-то такое. Мне кажется то что я родилась на западе влияет на то что мы можем использовать казахский. Потому что Атырау, Уральск отмечаются как города где преобладает казахский язык. Мне кажется это взаимосвязано потому что если бы у нас было разное окружение, совершенно другие друзья, мы общались бы на казахском с ними. Потому что преобладание казахского языка играет роль. Например вот Алматинцы разговаривают только на русском и даже бывает такое что они на казахском не могу понимать.

**Исследователь:** Являетесь ли вы членом каких-либо социальных клубов (волонтерство, танцы, спорт и т. Д.)? На каком языке вы общаетесь с другими участниками? Почему?

**Участник:** Я бы не сказала. Может в школе, но на данный момент нет.