

TRILINGUAL EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN KAZAKHSTAN: TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

L. B. Iyldyz*

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education, Astana, Kazakhstan; *leila.iyldyz@nu.edu.kz

Introduction. Trilingual policy is actively pursued by authorities in Kazakhstan in response not only to sociolinguistic and political factors but also economic factors. The main site for implementing the policy is educational institutions (with an initial focus on the first stage of secondary schools). The overarching purpose of this qualitative PhD study is to examine the debate on the issue of trilingual education in Kazakhstan, to place that debate in a meaningful and useful context based on the international literature related to educational language policy and to contribute to policy, research, and practice in this area within the context of Kazakhstan.

Methods. The research aims to explore how secondary school teachers interpret language policies in general and trilingual education policies in particular, and how their views and understanding are reflected in their classroom practices. Therefore, the study will employ individual interviews with teachers and classroom observation of the lessons they teach. The sample will include ten subject teachers (two teachers in each of the five selected schools).

Results and discussion. Since this is PhD dissertation work in progress, there are no specific findings and conclusions at this stage. The empirical research will take place in January-March 2015. However, Mehisto, Kambatyrova, and Nurseitova (2014) argue that local educators find the trilingual initiative challenging to implement in the current conditions. This leads us to suspect that views and practices can differ substantially. Borg (2003) notes that research suggests that teachers' theories and beliefs are among the factors affecting their practices. If we believe that teachers can and should exercise their agency at the policy interpretation stage, this means that we should take into account their beliefs about the policies and the ways their beliefs affect implementation in classroom practices. I posit that the lack of voice as to how teachers understand the policy and how they translate that understanding into their classrooms can negatively impact the effectiveness of implementation. Therefore, there is a need to study their views in a more academic way to further inform the formulation of implementation plans at a higher decision-making level.

Conclusions. The issue of the language policy in education involves not only the matters of policy formulation by the authorities but also policy interpretation and appropriation by teachers as educational institutions are the main vehicles of language policy delivery. This study will help to better understand how trilingual policy in education in Kazakhstan works and how teachers make sense of the policy and its implementation.

References.

1. Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36, 81-109.
2. Mehisto, P., Kambatyrova, A., & Nurseitova, K. (2014). Three in one? Trilingual policy and education practice. In D. Bridges (Ed.), *Educational reform and internationalisation: The case of school reform in Kazakhstan* (pp. 133-151). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.