

**Buying your way into Higher Education? Learning English in the Shadows and its
Impact on Admitting to a Highly selective EMI University in Kazakhstan**

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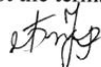
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You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely,

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Abstract

Buying your way into Higher Education? Learning English in the Shadows and its Impact on Admitting to a Highly selective EMI University in Kazakhstan

English private tutoring (EPT) has expanded rapidly in Kazakhstan, especially among students preparing for high-stakes university entrance exams. Despite this growth, empirical research on EPT in Central Asia remains scarce. This qualitative study addresses this gap by investigating the EPT experiences of first-year undergraduate students in Kazakhstan, drawing on Benson's (2011) four-dimensional model of out-of-class language learning: *location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy*. Two research questions guided the study: (1) *How are the four dimensions of location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy manifested in participants' EPT experiences?* (2) *What are participants' views on the future of Kazakhstan's private tutoring market?* Data were collected through narrative writing and semi-structured interviews with eight students enrolled at a highly selective English-medium instruction (EMI) university. In terms of *location*, findings revealed that most participants favored small-group EPT because it was more affordable and they obtained balanced personalized attention with peer interaction. Regarding *formality*, participants reported significant parental influence in the decision to pursue EPT, as parents regarded English proficiency as essential for academic advancement and preferred private tutors over schoolteachers for their focus on high-stakes exam preparation. In the *locus of control* dimension, students were driven by short-term goals, such as achieving high IELTS scores, alongside long-term ambitions like pursuing international careers. The *pedagogical* dimension highlighted the value of individualized attention, which helped students strengthen academic writing, grammar, and speaking skills. Participants also recognized inequalities in access to quality EPT, especially between graduates of elite schools and those

from mainstream schools. These disparities highlight the need to regulate the private tutoring sector to address tutor qualifications, pricing, and student safety in in-person and online contexts. The study concludes with recommendations for policy reforms, enhanced support within mainstream education, and further research on underrepresented groups, including rural students, parents, and tutors.

Keywords: Private tutoring, English private tutoring, higher education, inequality, Central Asia

Аңдатпа

Жоғары білімге жол сатып алуға бола ма? Ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлық курстары және олардың Қазақстандағы тандаулы ағылшын тілінде оқытатын университетке түсуге ықпалы

Қазақстанда ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлық қызметі, әсіресе жоғары бәсекелі университетке түсуге дайындалып жүрген оқушылар арасында, қарқынды түрде дамып келеді. Дегенмен, Орталық Азияда ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлыққа қатысты эмпирикалық зерттеулер әлі де жеткіліксіз. Осы сапалық зерттеу аталған олқылықты толтыру мақсатында Қазақстандағы бірінші курс студенттерінің ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлық тәжірибесін зерделейді. Зерттеу Бенсон (2011) ұсынған сыныптан тыс тіл үйренудің төрт өлшемінен тұратын моделіне сүйенеді. Зерттеуді екі негізгі сұрақ бағыттады: *1. Қатысушылардың ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлық тәжірибесінде қатысу форматы, мақсаты, формальділігі және педагогикасы сияқты төрт өлшем қалай көрініс табады? 2. Қатысушылар Қазақстандағы жеке репетиторлық нарығының болашағы туралы не ойлайды?*

Деректер жоғары талап қоятын ағылшын тілінде оқытатын университетке оқуға түскен сегіз студенттің нарративтік эсселері мен жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттары арқылы жиналды. Зерттеу нәтижелері бойынша, қатысушылардың көпшілігі шағын топтағы репетиторлықты қолжетімді бағасы, жекелей назардың берілуі және қатарластарымен өзара қарым-қатынастың үйлесімі үшін таңдаған. Сонымен қатар, ата-аналардың ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлыққа ықпалы айқын байқалды. Олар ағылшын тілін меңгеруді академиялық табысқа жетудің негізгі шарты деп санап, мектеп мұғалімдеріне қарағанда жеке репетиторларды артық көреді, себебі олар ұлттық және халықаралық

емтихандарға дайындыққа көбірек көңіл бөледі. Студенттер IELTS емтиханынан жоғары балл алуға бағытталған қысқа мерзімді мақсаттармен қатар, халықаралық мансап құру сияқты ұзақ мерзімді армандармен де ынталандырылған. Қатысушылар репетиторлықтың жеке көңіл бөлінуіндегі маңызын көрсетіп, оның академиялық жазылым, грамматика және сөйлеу дағдыларын дамытуға көмектескенін аңғарған. Сонымен қатар, қатысушылар сапалы ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлыққа қол жеткізуде теңсіздіктің барын мойындап, бұл айырмашылықтардың элиталық мектеп түлектері мен жалпы білім беретін мектеп түлектері арасында айқын байқалатынын атап өтті. Бұл теңсіздік репетиторлардың біліктілігі, баға саясаты және оқушылардың қауіпсіздігі сияқты мәселелерді ескере отырып, жеке репетиторлық нарықты реттеу қажеттігін көрсетеді.

Зерттеу нәтижесінде білім беру саясатын қайта қарау, жалпы білім беру жүйесінде қолдауды күшейту және ауылдық оқушылар, ата-аналар мен репетиторлар сияқты аз зерттелген топтар бойынша қосымша зерттеу жүргізу ұсынылады.

Тірек сөздер: Жеке репетиторлық, ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлық, жоғары білім, теңсіздік, Орталық Азия

Аннотация

Платный путь в высшее образование? Частное репетиторство по английскому языку и его влияние на поступление в престижный вуз с англоязычным обучением в Казахстане

Частное репетиторство по английскому языку стремительно развивается в Казахстане, особенно среди учащихся, готовящихся к вступительным экзаменам в ведущие университеты. Несмотря на данный рост, эмпирические исследования частного репетиторства по английскому языку в Центральной Азии остаются крайне ограниченными. Данное качественное исследование направлено на восполнение данного пробела путём анализа опыта студентов первого курса одного из высокоселективных вузов Казахстана с обучением на английском языке. Теоретическую основу исследования составила четырёхмерная модель внеклассного изучения языка, предложенная Бенсоном (2011), включающая: место, степень формальности, контроль и педагогический подход. Исследование опиралось на два основных вопроса: *1. Как проявляются четыре измерения (место, формальность, локус контроля и педагогика) в опыте участников, проходивших частное репетиторство по английскому языку? 2. Каковы взгляды участников на будущее рынка частного репетиторства в Казахстане?*

Данные были собраны с помощью написания нарративных эссе и проведения полуструктурированных интервью с восемью студентами, обучающимися в высокоселективном университете с англоязычным обучением. Результаты показали, что большинство участников отдавали предпочтение частному репетиторству по английскому языку в малых группах, поскольку такой формат был более доступным по цене и обеспечивал сбалансированное сочетание персонализированного внимания и

взаимодействия с одноклассниками. В аспекте формальности участники отмечали значительное влияние родителей на решение пройти частное репетиторство, поскольку родители рассматривали владение английским языком как ключ к академическому успеху и предпочитали частных репетиторов школьным учителям за их ориентированность на подготовку к высокоставочным экзаменам. В аспекте локуса контроля студенты были мотивированы как краткосрочными целями (например, получение высоких баллов на IELTS), так и долгосрочными амбициями — такими как построение международной карьеры. Педагогическое измерение подчеркнуло ценность индивидуального подхода, который способствовал развитию навыков академического письма, грамматики и устной речи.

Участники также отмечали наличие неравного доступа к качественному частному репетиторству по английскому языку, особенно между выпускниками элитных школ и учащимися общеобразовательных заведений. Эти различия подчеркивают необходимость регулирования рынка частного репетиторства с учётом квалификации преподавателей, ценовой политики и обеспечения безопасности студентов как в очном, так и в онлайн-форматах. В заключение в исследовании предложены рекомендации по реформированию образовательной политики, усилению поддержки внутри системы общего образования, а также направления для дальнейших исследований с участием малоизученных групп, таких как сельские учащиеся, родители и репетиторы.

Ключевые слова: частное репетиторство, частное репетиторство по английскому языку, высшее образование, неравенство, Центральная Азия

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Private supplementary tutoring (PT) is currently a widespread extracurricular learning activity across the globe (Bray, 20203; Zhang 2023). East Asian societies such as Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan have traditionally been regarded as the origins of private tutoring. This is mainly due to the cultural emphasis on learning beyond formal education and standardized testing, rooted in the Confucian tradition (Zhang & Yamato, 2018). Since then, private tutoring has expanded significantly and is now prevalent in nearly every region of the world, including Central Asia (e.g., Hajar et al, 2023; Silova, 2009). According to the 2012 PISA survey, private tutoring was reported among more than 50% of 15-year-olds in 20 out of 64 participating countries, including Kazakhstan (Entrich, 2021). Thus, PT has also become an essential part of economics (Bray, 2014) and provides extensive employment and additional income to schoolteachers, university students, and retirees (Bray & Hajar, 2023; Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014).

PT is often defined as paid instruction in academic subjects that takes place outside the formal school system (Bray, 2021). PT is metaphorically called 'shadow education' because the content of private tutoring largely imitates that of the school curriculum (Bray, 2023). In the literature, Marimuthu et al. (1991) in Malaysia and Stevenson and Baker (1992) in Japan are considered the first scholars who used the term shadow education in their writings (Bray, 2023). Private tutoring is often referred to as 'shadow education' due to its tendency to closely imitate the school curriculum (Bray, 2023). Stevenson and Baker (1992), for example, define it as a "set of educational activities outside formal schooling that are designed to improve a student's chances of successfully moving through the allocation process" (Stevenson & Baker, 1992, p. 2).

Therefore, Baker and LeTendre (2005) noted that shadow education is not intended to replace traditional education but to supplement or assist it.

English private tutoring (EPT) is a notable form of PT, and plays an influential role in shaping educational theories, instructional approaches, and policy decisions. However, research on EPT ‘is still in its infancy’ (Yung & Hajar, 2023: 2). Accordingly, the qualitative study presented in this chapter explores the experiences of a group of first-year Kazakhstani students who received EPT within the past 12 months to prepare for the IELTS exam, with a focus on how this shaped their access to higher education in Kazakhstan. In this regard, the issues of access and equity to win a place at EMI universities in Kazakhstan are particularly explored in this study.

This chapter provides contextual background for the study, highlighting the expansion of private tutoring globally and its emergence in Central Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan. It then addresses the research problem, outlines the study’s purpose and research questions, and discusses its significance. The chapter concludes by presenting an overview of the thesis structure.

Background of the Study

In today’s globalized world, English language proficiency has become increasingly significant, with individuals recognizing the need to attain high proficiency levels for academic, professional, and personal purposes (Liu & Hu, 2020). English is a popular choice for a second language (L2) or foreign language study and is often the most widely enrolled subject in countries where it is not the native language (Yung, 2019). Recognized as a critical linguistic asset, English plays a central role in facilitating both individual upward mobility and broader social development. Scholars have highlighted how proficiency in English can open up access to

education, employment, and global networks, underscoring its growing importance in a globalized context (Hamid, 2016; Erling & Seargeant, 2013). Policymakers' recognition of this role of English is evident in the increasing introduction of English in the curriculum at earlier stages in different parts of the world (Hamid, 2010). Thus, resources are being shifted to promote English language teaching and learning (Hamid et al., 2009). Since English is associated with power and privilege and provides opportunities for better employment and education, many parents and students invest in English private tutoring (EPT) (Yung & Zeng, 2021). In addition, neoliberalism, an ideology that supports state deregulation and privatization of educational services, places great importance on English proficiency as a crucial factor for individuals seeking access to elite English-medium schools, universities, and employment opportunities (Manan & Hajar, 2022; Hamid & Mahmud, 2023)

The rise of English as a prominent language in Kazakhstan is a comparatively recent development (Yilamu, 2018). Before gaining independence, the use of English in Soviet society was largely confined to state-regulated professional domains, particularly those linked to government activities such as diplomacy, foreign trade, international tourism, and foreign language education institutions, while its role in everyday domestic life remained minimal (Yilamu, 2018). Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, there has been a growing demand for English in Kazakhstan, similar to other Central Asian countries (Silova, 2010). The collapse of the socialist bloc in 1991 triggered a series of economic and market changes across Central Asia, including the implementation of educational reforms that prioritized English language acquisition (Silova, 2010). Education reforms that were driven by market forces emerged PT in Kazakhstan that reflected both the risks and benefits of the new market economy. On one hand, it is viewed as a tool to help students adapt to the new socio-political

landscape and cope with the changes brought about by the post-socialist transformation. On the other hand, it has been criticized for its potential to deepen social inequalities and contribute to corruption (Silova & Bray, 2006).

Kazakhstan is a country with a rich linguistic and cultural diversity, with over 126 ethnic groups and languages spoken (Hajar & Manan, 2022). Among Post Soviet countries, Kazakhstan is the first country to introduce the use of three languages in school curriculum (Karabassova, 2020). In 2007, Kazakhstan's first president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, introduced the national initiative “Trinity of Languages”, which prioritized Kazakh as the state language, Russian as a tool for interethnic communication, and English as a global language (Karabassova, 2020). The implementation of this project led to the designation of 33 mainstream schools in Kazakhstan as trilingual schools (Karabassova, 2020). In the scope of trilingual education policy, the Kazakhstani government established Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) in 2008 (Karabassova, 2020). The NIS uses Kazakh and Russian languages for instruction in grades 7-10 and teaches most subjects in English during the senior years (Karabassova, 2018b).

Another example of an attempt to develop the English language in education is the establishment of the highly selective Nazarbayev University (NU). The university was founded by the first President Nursultan Nazarbayev, in Astana in 2010 (Katsu & Saniyazova, 2018). NU represents an ambitious initiative aimed at establishing a world-class research institution that will lead educational reform and advancing research and innovation in Kazakhstan. The university aims to achieve this by global standards in teaching, research, and governance, positioning itself as a key hub for education and innovation (Bilyalov, 2017). Undergraduate programs at NU have two admission requirements: Nazarbayev University Entrance Test (NUET) and International English Language Test System (IELTS) with at least a 6.5 overall score (nu.edu.kz). Thus, the

applicants have to be proficient in English which creates a high demand for EPT in Kazakhstan (Hajar & Karakus, 2023).

Problem Statement

During the Soviet time, each university in the territory of Soviet countries, including Kazakhstan, had its criteria for selecting university applicants (Winter et al., 2014). However, after the collapse of the USSR, the National Testing Center introduced Unified National Testing (UNT) as the primary criterion for getting selected for almost all Kazakhstani higher education institutions (Kalikova & Rakhimzhanova, 2009). As per the UNT 2023 guidelines, there are a total of 120 questions distributed across five subjects ("Unified National Testing," n.d.). Among these subjects, three are obligatory, while the remaining two are considered profile subjects ("Unified National Testing," n.d.). Three obligatory subjects are Mathematical literacy, Reading literacy, and The History of Kazakhstan (testcenter.kz). Profile subjects consist of the combination of two subjects pertaining to specific areas of study aligned with the applicant's intended university program ("Unified National Testing," n.d.). For example, in the case of a student aspiring to gain admission to a medical school, it is advisable to opt for Biology and Chemistry subjects.

While the UNT is necessary for admission to most universities, highly selective institutions such as Nazarbayev University, Kazakh British University (KBTU), and the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics, and Forecasting (KIMEP) require the IELTS exam. Kalikova and Rakhimzhanova (2009) note that such centralized examination systems have fostered intense competition for university spots, thereby increasing the demand for private tutoring (as cited in Hajar et al., 2023). Moreover, Silova (2010) points out that the limited number of state grants governments provide for free higher education and its increasing demand

creates intense pressure on students. In 2018, the government of Kazakhstan allocated 30,000 state grants for higher education (NTC, 2018), as reported by Hajar and Karakus (2023).

However, a 2015 survey of 1,000 young people across 16 Kazakhstani cities revealed that 42% did not pursue higher education due to the high tuition fees, which ranged from 1166 USD to 1673 USD in public universities, with private institutions charging significantly higher fees (Chankseliani et al., 2020). As a result, many parents, in an effort to help their children succeed in the university entrance exams, often resort to coaching them themselves or hiring private tutors (Silova et al., 2006).

Despite the increasing popularity of PT to supplement formal education, there is a lack of research that specifically investigates the influence of EPT on students' performance in standardized tests such as UNT and IELTS. Yung and Hajar (2023) underline that despite its growing popularity and wide-ranging implications for youth development, economic progress, formal education systems, and sociocultural transformation, EPT remains in an early stage of development. Existing studies have focused primarily on the motivation behind attending PT. Therefore, Hajar and Abenova researched first-year undergraduate students in Kazakhstan to discover why they attended shadow education in 2021 (Hajar et al., 2021). They found that winning state grants to enter universities was the most influencing factor. Kalikova and Zhanar (2009) found through quantitative analysis that students in Kazakhstan who sought admission to highly selective universities were more likely to have received paid private tutoring.

Previous research on PT in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries has largely overlooked EPT. Therefore, this qualitative study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of Kazakhstani undergraduate students with EPT. It examines their motivations for seeking tutoring, its benefits and drawbacks, and its implications for access and equity in higher

education in Kazakhstan. The study also investigates students' perceptions of how EPT influences their chances of gaining admission to highly selective universities, particularly in relation to the IELTS exam.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This qualitative study aims to examine the nature, effectiveness, and implications of EPT on students' admission to a highly selective university in Kazakhstan. In this study, the undergraduate students' voices are considered because they represent the main customers of PT. This research aims to analyze the students' experiences in receiving PT, their perceptions of its effectiveness, and its impact on a broader society. The following research questions have been addressed to reach the goals of this study:

1. How are the four dimensions of location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy reflected in the participants' English private tutoring experiences in Kazakhstan?
2. What are the participants' perceptions about the future of Kazakhstan's private tutoring market?

Significance of the Study

This qualitative investigation holds significance for various stakeholders, including students, educators, policymakers, and researchers. Firstly, the study will provide valuable insights into students' perceptions of the influence of EPT on their performance in standardized tests. Understanding students' perspectives can inform educators and tutors in tailoring instructional approaches and support systems to address students' specific language learning needs, thus empowering students to make informed decisions about private tutoring and optimize their potential in the IELTS examination.

Additionally, the study's outcomes can contribute to developing evidence-based educational policies and guidelines pertaining to EPT and its impact on high-stakes examination performance. By comprehending the role and influence of private tutoring, policymakers can shape regulations that ensure the quality and effectiveness of PT services, thereby enhancing educational outcomes and promoting equitable access to language learning opportunities. Therefore, educators and tutors can benefit from the study's findings by gaining insights into students' perceptions and experiences regarding private tutoring. This knowledge can inform instructional strategies and approaches within formal educational settings, facilitating the optimization of language learning outcomes and better preparing students for the university entrance examinations. Additionally, educators can effectively integrate private tutoring as a complementary resource within the classroom to enhance students' language proficiency.

To sum up, this study fills a research gap by providing an in-depth qualitative investigation of students' experiences with EPT in the Kazakhstani context. By contributing to the existing body of knowledge on private tutoring and its implications for language proficiency assessment, this research might offer some implications for further scholarly inquiry in this area. Also, this study can help educators and policymakers In Kazakhstan to gain a comprehensive picture of the students' academic experiences inside and outside the formal settings; otherwise, these actors 'would only see a partial picture of [students'] real English-learning experiences and proficiency' (Lee 2010, p. 70).

Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the concept of private tutoring, providing background information and presenting the research problem, study purpose, research questions, and significance. Chapter 2 defines and conceptualizes E/PT, explores the

global and Kazakhstani demand drivers for private tutoring, presents the theoretical framework, and discusses the drawbacks, impact on standardized tests, and both the advantages and challenges of identifying the benefits of private tutoring. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, including research design, participant sampling, data collection and analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the qualitative data. Chapter 5 discusses these findings in relation to existing scholarly literature. The final chapter concludes with an overview of the study's findings, limitations, recommendations, and implications for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The previous chapter provided an overview of the background for this qualitative study, which aimed to explore the experiences of Kazakhstani undergraduate students with English private tutoring (EPT) over the past 12 months and its role in facilitating access to higher education. It also outlined the research problem, research questions, the significance of the study, and the structure of the thesis. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section defines and conceptualizes fee-based private supplementary tutoring (PT), examining its nature and the factors driving the demand for PT/EPT in Central Asia and globally. The second section explores the impact of PT on students' performance in standardized tests and their success in securing places at highly selective universities and schools. The third section discusses the advantages and disadvantages of PT for both students and tutors. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the theoretical framework guiding this study, which is based on Benson's (2011) framework.

Definition and Conceptualization of Private Supplementary Tutoring (PT)

Private supplementary tutoring (PT) is a widely prevalent phenomenon in the education landscape, encompassing a diverse range of practices and motivations. While a universally accepted definition remains elusive, PT is generally understood as providing individualized instruction outside of the formal school setting, typically for a fee (Bray, 2017; Foondun, 2002). PT commonly refers to the "paid service students used to supplement their learning of academic subjects at school outside school hours" (Yung, 2019a, p. 120). Commonly referred to as 'shadow education' in the comparative education literature, it functions alongside traditional schooling and often mirrors its curriculum and teaching methods to some degree (Bray & Hajar, 2023). This phenomenon is characterized by three critical dimensions illustrated in Bray's (1999) book:

- *Supplementation*: PT serves as an extension of the formal education system, providing additional learning opportunities outside of regular school hours.
- *Privateness*: This definition restricts the scope of PT to services offered by individuals or private entities for financial reimbursement. It does not include additional academic support offered for free by a student's family or relatives.
- *Academic subjects*: the focus is mainly on academic subjects that are part of the mainstream school curriculum (e.g., mathematics, physics, languages). It does not include paying money to receive training in sports and hobbies like playing basketball or piano.

The combination of these three elements defines the phenomenon of PT as paid supplementary instruction in core academic subjects provided outside the scope of regular schooling. However, the expanding scope of the sector of shadow education has prompted some researchers to redefine this term to encompass diverse aspects (Kim & Jung, 2021; Liu & Bray, 2020). For instance, some private tutoring services are offered free of charge by schools or non-governmental organizations under labels such as 'after-school tutoring,' 'strengthening classes,' or 'supplemental educational services' (Tan, 2017; Zimmer et al., 2010). These services are designed to support disadvantaged students in keeping up with their academic work and to offer free English language courses aimed at helping ethnic minorities and immigrants integrate into English-speaking communities (Bleistein, 2023; Bleistein & Lewis, 2015).

As the focus of this research is on EPT, it is defined as "out-of-class," "after-school," "extracurricular," or "extramural" English learning, "something that is supplementary to classroom learning and teaching" to achieve different purposes, mainly to succeed in passing high-staking exams (Benson, 2011, p. 9). EPT is especially common among school students in contexts where English is taught as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), largely because of

its importance for accessing higher education and improving employment prospects (Yung, 2019b). For example, in countries such as Bangladesh (Mahmud & Bray, 2017), Japan (Dierkes, 2010), South Korea (Kim & Park, 2011), China (Kwok, 2010), Kazakhstan (e.g., Hajar & Karakus, 2023a), and Hong Kong (Zhan et al., 2013), over half of secondary school students engage in EPT. The global prevalence of EPT highlights its significant role in out-of-school language learning. However, due to the unofficial nature of private tutoring, data in this area remains limited, as many tutors and families are hesitant to share information, particularly in contexts where PT is seen as an illegal educational practice (Bray, 2010; Hajar & Karakus, 2022). Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research on the relationship between EPT participation and admission to higher education, especially in English-medium institutions. This qualitative study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of Kazakhstani students with fee-paying EPT, particularly its impact on their ability to achieve the required IELTS score needed for admission to elite English-medium universities in Kazakhstan.

The Scale and Nature of E/PT in Central Asia and Beyond

The increasing popularity and participation of English learners worldwide have solidified EPT as a global phenomenon (Yung & Hajar, 2023). EPT has traditionally been more widespread in East Asia, particularly in Japan and South Korea, due to the influence of Confucian culture, which emphasizes education, hard work, social mobility, and elitism (Liu & Bray, 2020). Recently, however, EPT has expanded globally, reaching regions such as Africa (Bray, 2021c), the Middle East (Bray & Hajar, 2023), and Central Asia (Bray & Lykins, 2012; Silova, 2009). However, gathering accurate data on the extent and characteristics of PT remains challenging due to the reluctance of some students and their parents to disclose their involvement

in this practice, often perceived as an unfair competitive edge, hindering research efforts (Hajar, 2019).

Despite the hidden nature of PT in many countries, several researchers have attempted to understand the nature of PT across different settings. Mahmud and Bray (2017), for instance, found that participation in EPT was significantly higher in urban areas of Bangladesh, such as Dhaka (85%), compared to rural areas (61%). Similarly, research by Zhan et al. (2013) in 2013 revealed that 65.2% of secondary school students in Hong Kong received EPT. Furthermore, Si Mhamed et al. (2023) found that 81% of 200 Grade 12 students in Morocco participated in private tutoring, with 58% receiving English private tutoring. Many of these students sought EPT to secure a place at highly selective universities, and the study also highlighted dissatisfaction with the quality of education during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to KOSIS (2020), in 2019, 53.8% of middle school students, 36.6% of high school students, and 42.5% of general high school students in South Korea participated in EPT. In the United Kingdom, Holloway and Kirby (2020) reported that 26% of students from England and Wales received PT, and 51% of them received EPT, mainly to pass university entrance exams. In the context of Kazakhstan, which is the focus of the present study, Hajar (2023) explored the EPT experiences of 637 Grade 6 students aged 11-12 at five mainstream schools in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. He found that 52.75% of them were receiving EPT, mainly to obtain tangible benefits of EPT in relation to familiarizing themselves with the NIS exam and keeping up with their peers. These indicators reflect that receiving E/PT exists at multiple levels of education, especially at critical points in the education system where high-stakes exams affect the future of students, and hence, many parents are driven to invest in their children's education by enrolling them in private tutoring.

As shown in Table 1, the PT market has gained significant prominence in Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, particularly following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s (Silova, 2010). The growing dependence on PT in the post-Soviet period is credited to its perceived ability to effectively enable students to 'adapt to the new socio-political realities and cope with post-socialist system changes' (Silova, 2010, p. 328), particularly given the unfamiliarity of most students with the newly introduced test-based assessments as well as PT enabled schoolteachers to earn extra income.

Table 1

The scale of PT in Central Asia

Central Asian country	PT scale (students)
<i>Kazakhstan</i>	Kalikova and Rakhimzhanova (2009) surveyed 1004 first-year students and found that 64.8% of them received PT.
<i>Uzbekistan</i>	Khaydarov (2020) conducted research on 109 Grade 12 students and reported that 95% of the students attended PT to state university examinations.
<i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	Bagdasarova and Ivanov (2009) examined a total of 1100 first-year students from five different universities in 2005. They found that 52.5% of students attended PT during their last year of secondary school.

Tajikistan

A survey of 999 first-year university students revealed that 60% received PT in the last year of secondary school (Kodirov & Amonov, 2009).

Turkmenistan

Between 1991-2006, the PT market expanded, and unregistered and unofficial tutoring classes functioned parallel to mainstream schools (Silova, 2009).

As regards the modes of PT, Ireson (2004) differentiates three main types of PT: individual tutoring, small group tutoring, and large class tutoring. Individual tutoring specifically refers to one-to-one tutoring, which is mostly conducted in the homes of either students or tutors, in classrooms at schools, libraries, or public places (Bray et al., 2020). One-on-one tutoring typically commands the highest fees among all tutoring options, reflecting the personalized attention provided by tutors. Small group tutoring refers to groups that have a small number of students that allow tutors to devote enough time to each student (Bray & Silova, 2006). The number of students differs based on different contexts. For example, in Hong Kong, small groups are typically defined as consisting of two to seven students (Yung, 2021). Meanwhile, two to five students are enough for small groups in South Korea (Kim & Jung, 2019). Large classes are also called lecture-style tutoring in the classroom setting and the number of students is often more than 10 (Yung & Hajar, 2023). This type of tutoring is common in Asian contexts where tutors prepare students for standardized tests.

Notably, along with traditional forms of PT, online tutoring has become popular due to the increasing development of technology and the adoption of online education during the

COVID-19 pandemic (Yung & Hajar, 2023). As Zhang (2021) remarks, “COVID-19 increased the power of technology and capital in digital learning, and online tutoring greatly expanded the shadow space.” (p. 49). Likewise, Rowe (2022) points out that the use of online tutoring became more prevalent after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, resulting in the rise of “Zutors–Zoom tutors.” According to Kozar (2013), private tutors are increasingly embracing the Internet to establish their online presence and attract potential clients. This digital shift has led to the emergence of 'aggregator' websites, explicitly designed to bridge the gap between tutors and students (Kozar, 2013). These comprehensive platforms allow tutors to create publicly accessible profiles that detail their qualifications, experience, and tutoring fees. Potential students can then navigate the website and utilize various filtering options, such as subject area, location, and pricing, to identify the most suitable tutor for their individual needs (Kozar & Sweller, 2014). Therefore, online E/PT services are gaining more popularity due to their convenience of not requiring a specific place to study.

The diversity exists not only in the modes of E/PT but also in tutors' identities. To illustrate, schoolteachers may offer additional tutoring sessions, either to the students they teach in regular classes or to those enrolled in other schools (Bray et al., 2020). However, in certain countries like Singapore, Australia, and France, regulations prohibit regular schoolteachers from offering paid private tutoring in order to prevent potential conflicts of interest and reduce the risk of unethical practices associated with the tutoring industry. (Bray & Silova, 2006). Meanwhile, there are other contexts, such as Bangladesh and Cambodia, where it is expected to work as tutors who get paid for their services (Bray & Silova, 2006). Alternatively, university students also can offer E/PT services on an informal basis, mainly to generate income that can help them

pay the tuition fees of their education (Bray et al., 2020). Therefore, E/PT services may be provided by individuals, private organizations, and businesses.

The Drivers for Receiving PT/EPT Worldwide

The prevalence of PT is determined by a complex interplay of cultural factors, economic conditions, and educational contexts (Bray, 2003). According to Bray and Silova (2006), cultural factors play a significant role in shaping perceptions of effort and its contribution to academic success. In numerous Asian societies shaped by Confucian values, diligence and perseverance are highly valued, whereas Western cultures, particularly in Europe and North America, often prioritize natural talent and inherent ability (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996; Salili, 1999). Several studies have indicated that fee-charging PT is more prevalent in cultures emphasizing effort (Zeng, 1999; Foondun, 2002; Bray, 2003). Additionally, the level of competition within individual schools and broader society also influences the demand for PT. A similar argument has been proposed by Bray and Hajar (2023), affirming that the main driver for E/PT is social competition. They explain that since academic performance is a key merit in this competitive landscape, most supplementary tutoring is driven by the aspiration to achieve satisfactory results in examinations.

Concerns have been raised about how neoliberalism positions English as a key tool for promoting values like individualism and competition, both in education and in broader contexts such as the workplace. As a result, this has contributed to the growing dependence on fee-based private tutoring as a means of securing admission to prestigious universities (Hajar & Karakus, 2023a). Neoliberalism is a political and economic ideology that advocates for state deregulation, privatization of educational services, competitive market policies, and limited state interventions and social security (Holloway & Kirby, 2020). In many education systems globally, neoliberal

principles are put into practice by asserting that governments should not be solely responsible for financing and providing education (Addi-Racchah, 2019).

A similar situation can be found in the Central Asian context. According to Silova (2009), as higher education becomes more like a business in post-socialist countries, the competition to get into state-funded universities has become more intense. Governments in Central Asia, similar to many other countries, typically offer a limited number of grants, and students who can afford to pay can buy their way into additional study places. The rising demand for higher education and limited state-sponsored options create immense pressure surrounding school leaving and university entrance examinations. Regardless of whether the examination system is centralized or decentralized, students fear that poor results may make it harder for them to get into good universities and undermine their efforts to secure state-funded study places. Therefore, Hajar and Karakus (2023b) surveyed first-year undergraduate students and found that 55% of respondents' reason for attending PT was to prepare for university entrance exams during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, numerous students opt for private tutoring to enhance their prospects of gaining admission to publicly funded higher education institutions, thereby reducing the financial strain associated with covering tuition costs over a four-year period (Bray & Silova, 2006).

The second driving factor is economic factors. Economic factors, particularly the disparity in earnings between those with higher education and those without, influence the utilization of fee-paying PT (Kwan-Terry, 1991; Bray, 2003; Ireson, 2004). Research conducted across various countries has consistently shown that education yields substantial returns on investment, motivating individuals to extend their educational journeys (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004). For instance, a study in Singapore demonstrated how families can reap economic advantages

from private tutoring through extracurricular language lessons (Kwan-Terry, 1991). However, the disparity in socioeconomic conditions among individuals with varying levels of education is more pronounced in some societies, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, compared to those in Western Europe (Bray, 2003). This indicates that the benefits derived from higher levels of education and participation in private tutoring are more substantial in certain Asian contexts compared to those in Western Europe or Australia. The notion of the "rate of return to education" has held particular relevance for students in Central and South-Eastern Europe, as well as in former Soviet republics, where the economic hardships and increasing unemployment during the 1990s transition period made education a strategic investment (Bray & Silova, 2009). For numerous families, education is perceived as a vital tool for navigating the complexities of societal transformation, prompting them to turn to private tutoring as a means to ensure their children's access to higher education and secure, well-compensated employment opportunities.

The use of E/PT is also influenced by educational systems and their emphasis on high-stakes examinations (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Bray, 2023). Prakhov and Sergienko (2020) have noted that although university admission requirements differ from country to country, many of them include entrance exams. As a result, gifted students from disadvantaged backgrounds may struggle to gain admission to prestigious schools or universities, not due to a lack of academic ability, but because they cannot afford specialized exam coaching. On the other hand, students from wealthier families often benefit from such tutoring, which can help them secure spots in top-tier universities. In countries with fierce competition for educational and employment opportunities, private tutoring is often viewed as a crucial tool for improving academic performance and gaining access to better universities and career prospects (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Stevenson & Baker, 1992; Tansel & Bircan, 2006). This logic stems

from the notion that private tutoring serves as an "enrichment strategy" in contexts where education systems implement distinct, high-stakes assessments that play a decisive role in students' academic progression and future opportunities (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Silova, 2009). For instance, the crucial relationship between top-tier universities and job prospects in Taiwan, the exam-based link between secondary schools and elite universities in Greece, the highly competitive university entrance exams in Turkey, and the selective process for secondary school admissions in Japan all contribute to the widespread prevalence of private tutoring (Bray & Kwok, 2003; Stevenson & Baker, 1992; Tansel & Bircan, 2006).

In these contexts, high-stakes exams act as gatekeepers to both educational and employment opportunities (Baker & LeTendre, 2005). Additionally, in some post-Soviet republics, such as Georgia, lecturers at prestigious universities leverage their insider knowledge of entrance examinations to command high prices for private tutoring (MacWilliams, 2002).

However, the relationship between high-stakes examinations and PT is not always straightforward. Aurini and Davis (2004) noted that tutoring businesses thrive in Canada, even though the country lacks university entrance exams and the hierarchical university system typical of countries such as the United States and Japan. In a similar vein, Baker and LeTendre (2005) examined TIMSS data and found that the widespread use of private tutoring was not directly linked to the presence of national high-stakes exams. Given that the TIMSS study focused on 7th-grade students, and that preparation for high-stakes exams typically starts in the later years of secondary school (10th-12th grades), it makes sense that no clear connection between private tutoring and high-stakes exams was observed (Bray & Silova, 2006). It is evident that additional research is needed to explore the complex connection between high-stakes exams and private tutoring.

The Impact of E/PT on Standardized Tests in Kazakhstan and Beyond

Providing fair entry to higher education remains a primary concern for education policymakers worldwide (Hajar & Karakus, 2023a). Ensuring fairness during the transition from high school to university continues to be a challenge, even after five decades: “The question of the principles and processes of selection and admission to higher education is the crucial point where higher education touches most closely on the social structure” (Trow, 1973, p. 25). According to Prakhov and Sergienko (2020), a vast number of universities worldwide necessitate passing high-stakes examinations as the only criterion to enroll in higher education. As a result, talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds may be excluded from prestigious universities, not due to a lack of intellectual ability, but because they cannot afford private tutoring, which provides extra training and practice (Hajar & Karakus, 2023b). In this regard, students from wealthy families can use exam coaching to gain entry into higher education institutions, often receiving multiple offers. The high cost of private tutoring places a heavy financial burden on households, reinforcing and widening social disparities. As Zhang (2021, p.70) rightly points out, achieving equitable quality education is challenging without regulating the private tutoring market, as tutoring tends to be ‘exclusive and inequitable’.

The E/PT market takes advantage of the competitiveness of centralized university entrance exams in Kazakhstan (Hajar & Karakus, 2023a; Hajar et al., 2023; Kalikova & Rakhimzhanova, 2009). A similar situation can be observed in other contexts, such as Hong Kong (Yung, 2021), Russia (Loyalka & Zakharov, 2016), the Philippines. For instance, Loyalka and Zakharov (2016) report that the reason for the popularity of PT in Russia is the increasing competition for college admission. The key factor determining access to higher education is passing the Unified State Examination (USE), which serves as a school leaving and college

entrance examination in Russia (Loyalka & Zakharov, 2016). The results of Loyalka and Zakharov's (2016) study revealed that 47.9% and 54.6% of Grade 11 students received PT from Russian Language and Mathematics. They explain that these are the most popular subjects among students because the results from these subjects play an important role in college admissions. However, when Loyalka and Zakharov (2016) examined the impact of PT on the performance in USE, they found no significant impact.

The rise of PT in Central Asia stems primarily from the implementation of a standardized examination systems, the relatively low salaries for teachers in the public education system, and the increasing desire to gain admission to prestigious higher education institutions (Hajar & Abenova, 2021). However, there is a research gap in understanding how PT impacts performance on standardized tests (Hajar & Abenova, 2021). Nevertheless, Silova (2009) examined the percentage of students attending PT in Central Asia and reported that in Kazakhstan, a substantial majority of students (64.8%) reported receiving PT (Kalikova & Rakhimzhanova, 2009). Similarly, a significant portion of students in Tajikistan (60%) (Kodirov & Amonov, 2009) and Kyrgyzstan (52.5%) (Bagdasarova & Ivanov, 2009) engaged in private tutoring. In Uzbekistan, Khaydarov (2020) reported that 97% of students' reasons for attending PT were to prepare themselves for university state examinations.

In Kazakhstan, empirical studies on the impact of E/PT on standardized tests are scarce. However, one notable study by Hajar and Abenova (2021) explored the experiences of first-year university students who had attended fee-based private tutoring sessions during their last two years of high school. The study focused on how this tutoring prepared them for high-stakes university entrance exams in Kazakhstan. The results indicated that nearly 60% of participants (86 out of 144) had engaged in PT, demonstrating that a significant portion of students relied on

tutoring to secure their university admissions. In a similar vein, Kalikova and Rakhimzhanova (2009) conducted a quantitative analysis of 1,004 first-year students and found that 59.5% reported using PT as preparation for their university entrance exams. The study also identified the most popular subjects for private tutoring among students in Kazakhstan, with mathematics (67%), history (36%), physics (36%), and the Kazakh language and literature (17%) topping the list. These subjects were in high demand because they are required for the university entrance exams, particularly the history of Kazakhstan, mathematics, and the Kazakh language (Hajar & Abenova, 2021). The United National Test (UNT), a key university entrance exam in Kazakhstan, is structured into two sections: the first section includes the history of Kazakhstan, reading literacy, and mathematical literacy (Chankseliani et al., 2020). The second block consists of two subjects for the choice of applicants based on their future specializations. However, UNT is considered one of the university exams as some universities require applicants to have IELTS or SAT Subject Test (mathematics, physics, and biology) certificates (Hajar & Abenova, 2021).

While these empirical studies offer valuable insights into the factors driving the prevalence of in-person private tutoring in Kazakhstan and its influence on university admissions, there is still a need for further research on the link between PT and access to higher education, particularly concerning the nature and effectiveness of EPT. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing literature by exploring the experiences of first-year university students with EPT and examining how it helped them secure a place at a prestigious EMI university in Kazakhstan.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of E/PT

This section now describes the advantages and disadvantages of receiving PT. Supplementary tutoring is beneficial in several ways. First, parents, students, and teachers find

PT useful in poorly managed mainstream schooling where overcrowded classrooms and low teacher competence take place (Bray, 2017). Hence, PT can prove advantageous when it enhances students' understanding and enjoyment of their regular classroom instruction. De Silva (1994) noted that supplementary tutoring enables teachers to address the specific needs of individual students. In a similar vein, Yiu (1996) found that in the context of upper secondary classes in Hong Kong, teachers had favorable views of supplementary tutoring. They believed that while school teachers could concentrate on delivering essential content, tutors could play a valuable role in reinforcing and supplementing the material. Furthermore, EPT is seen as a solution to the inadequate English language instruction in mainstream schools, where the focus on rote learning and memorization fails to adequately develop students' listening and speaking skills (Mahmud & Bray, 2017).

Second, scholars in the domain of shadow education (Hajar & Abenova, 2021; Silova, 2009; Wang & Bray, 2016; Yung, 2017) highlight two strategies as the main advantages of PT: enrichment and remedial. If enrichment strategy refers to familiarization and preparing for university entrance exams, remedial strategy refers to assisting students with poor achievements in academic performance and improving their subject knowledge. Enrichment strategy was mentioned in Hajar and Abenova's study (2021), where they examined first-year undergraduate students and found that all eight interviewees were satisfied with the tutoring for university entrance exams, especially the IELTS and SAT Subject Tests. The participants of the study shared that their tutors helped them more in achieving their goal of getting accepted to highly selective universities. Similarly, Hong Kong secondary students, as reported by Kwo and Bray (2014), utilized PT as preparation for exams, as they perceived that school teachers prioritized general subject knowledge, while tutors placed greater emphasis on exam-taking skills.

A distinguishing feature of PT compared to mainstream schools lies in the teaching methodologies employed by tutors, which appears to be a significant advantage of PT. Due to time constraints and the impracticality of implementing individualized teaching approaches in a classroom setting, students often turn to private tutors to address their specific learning needs (Kwo & Bray, 2014). This finding was corroborated by Hajar's (2019) study, where Year 6 students in England reported receiving individualized attention from tutors and experiencing more conducive learning environments in tutorial sessions compared to school classrooms. Therefore, private tutors were perceived as more effective in maintaining noise control and discipline, primarily due to the smaller class sizes and the self-motivated nature of PT attendees, who typically enroll with specific learning goals (Kwo & Bray, 2014).

On the contrary, receiving PT can also have its drawbacks. According to Hajar and Abenova (2021), the high demand for PT services may result in social disparity, giving more privilege to high-income families compared to low-income ones. They discovered that some participants expressed that the cost of private tutoring was a financial strain on their families. Seven out of eight participants acknowledged that despite securing a place at a prestigious university, they would not have been able to achieve this without the support of private tutors. Additionally, some scholars highlighted that two of the interviewees raised concerns about the fairness of accessing private tutoring. However, Dang and Rogers (2008) argue that this may not necessarily be the case, as wealthier families already provide their children with various educational benefits beyond tutoring, such as greater access to books and opportunities for international travel, including study tours.

The last issue is the psychological and academic pressure on students. It is evident that children who simultaneously attend mainstream and supplementary classes are subjected to a

substantial amount of academic pressure. The phrase "Four hours' sleep for success, but five hours' sleep for failure" was a popular expression in Japan, reflecting the intense strategies believed to be necessary for excelling in college entrance exams (Tsukada, 1991, p.8). This phrase not only reflected but also contributed to the prevalent culture of supplementary tutoring in that country. In such societies, engaging in private tutoring can diminish a student's autonomy by encroaching upon their leisure time, which could otherwise be dedicated to activities of their choosing (Benckwitz et al., 2022). Additionally, the pressure to excel academically can be exacerbated by participating in a fee-based activity that is explicitly designed to enhance their performance (Bray, 2003; Hajar, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Benson's (2011) framework for language learning outside the formal classroom setting, which offers a helpful structure for understanding how students interact with English outside of traditional classroom environments. The framework is built around four dimensions, *location*, *formality*, *locus of control*, and *pedagogy*, which together allow for a more detailed look at English private tutoring (EPT) as experienced by students in Kazakhstan. Given the competitive nature of university admissions in the country, especially at English-medium institutions, these dimensions provide useful insights into why and how students turn to EPT as part of their educational journey.

The first dimension, *location*, refers to where learning takes place. In the case of EPT, students often attended lessons in various settings such as private tutoring centers, tutors' homes, or even cafés. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many have also shifted to online platforms like Zoom, which expanded accessibility and convenience. This variety of learning environments

reflects how flexible and adaptable EPT can be in response to students' needs and changing circumstances.

The second dimension, *formality*, explores the degree to which learning is structured and who is involved in supporting it. In this study, many students received tutoring from their own schoolteachers outside of regular hours, sometimes formally through licensed centers and sometimes informally. Parents also played a significant role, often organizing and financing tutoring to help their children succeed. This highlights how EPT is shaped by both formal structures and personal relationships.

The locus of control dimension looks at what motivates students to attend EPT. Some were encouraged—or expected—by their parents to take extra lessons, especially with university entrance exams in mind. Others were self-motivated, viewing EPT as a way to improve their chances of entering a prestigious university or preparing for future international study and careers. This mix of external pressure and personal ambition is an important part of understanding why students engage in EPT.

Finally, *pedagogy* focuses on the teaching methods used in EPT and how effective students found them. Many participants appreciated the personalized attention and targeted exam preparation, though some raised concerns about inconsistencies in tutor quality. Their reflections offered a balanced view of EPT as both helpful and, at times, limited in what it could offer.

Overall, using Benson's (2011) framework helped this study explore the complex realities of EPT in Kazakhstan. It also allowed for a deeper understanding of how tutoring serves as both a complement to and, in some cases, a replacement for learning that should ideally be provided in mainstream schools.

Chapter Summary

To sum up, this chapter delved into the definitions and conceptualization of E/PT, comprehensively exploring its nature and scale. The next section describes the drivers for the demand of E/PT. Furthermore, Chapter 2 focused on the impact of E/PT on standardized tests in Kazakhstan and beyond. Additionally, it dwelt upon the advantages and disadvantages of PT described by scholars. Lastly, this chapter concludes by introducing Benson's (2011) framework as a theoretical framework for this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The previous chapter focused on a comprehensive review of the literature related to the nature and scope of PT, with particular attention to EPT in Central Asia and beyond. It examined the factors driving the demand for PT, as well as the various modes and providers of E/PT, highlighting both its benefits and drawbacks. Additionally, Chapter 2 addressed the influence of E/PT on standardized tests and its role in facilitating access to highly selective institutions. The chapter concluded by introducing the theoretical framework that underpins this study, specifically Benson's (2011) model. To achieve the aims of this research, which seeks to explore the nature of EPT and its relationship with access to elite EMI universities in Kazakhstan, the following research questions, outlined at the conclusion of Chapter 1, need to be answered:

1. How are the four dimensions of location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy reflected in the participants' English private tutoring experiences in Kazakhstan?
2. What are the participants' perceptions about the future of Kazakhstan's private tutoring market?

Therefore, this chapter outlines the research design, explaining the rationale behind selecting a qualitative case study approach. It discusses the use of two research methods: narrative writing and individual semi-structured interviews. The chapter will also describe the research site and the sample of participants involved in the study. Furthermore, it covers the data collection procedures, the process of data analysis, and the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the course of this research.

Research Design

In this section, the research design of the current study is explained, and the chosen research methods are justified. The present study applied a qualitative research approach for

several reasons. Firstly, this approach enabled the researcher to obtain rich and deep information about the perceptions of first-year university students towards paid EPT and its impact on gaining admission to a prestigious EMI university, especially since this research topic is an under-researched area in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, which is the focus of this study. Secondly, the relationship between EPT and gaining admission to prestigious EMI universities is a complex phenomenon embedded in Kazakhstan's social and cultural context. Therefore, qualitative research is conducted in the natural setting, without any attempts to manipulate the situation, which is the most suitable for describing social phenomena as they occur naturally (Denzin et al, 2023; Dörnyei, 2007). Thirdly, the qualitative approach allows the researcher to capture participants' experiences, subjective opinions, and feelings towards the phenomenon under investigation (Dörnyei, 2007; Lichtman, 2023). Hence, the researcher can gain in-depth knowledge from the participants with first-hand experience of the given phenomenon. However, Dörnyei (2007) highlights that a researcher's personal biases can affect the results of a study. To mitigate this potential bias, the researcher in this study took several steps, including consulting with peers and the thesis supervisor. Additionally, the triangulation technique was employed by using two qualitative methods, narrative writing and semi-structured individual interviews, to improve the credibility and accuracy of the findings and their interpretation.

This study adopted a qualitative approach, utilizing a case study design. A case study is a type of qualitative research that involves gathering detailed and comprehensive information about a particular individual, program, or event to develop a deeper understanding of a topic that has not been extensively researched (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Giving voices to first-year university students about the phenomenon of EPT in this research, a case study can reveal the unique perspectives and experiences of the research participants, as a "case study entails the

detailed and intensive analysis of a single case" (Bryman, 2008, p. 52). One advantage of using a case study is that it allows for close collaboration between the researcher and the participants, empowering participants with opportunities to share their stories about the phenomenon they have experienced (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). By hearing these narratives, the researcher can gain a deeper insight into the participants' viewpoints and behaviors concerning the phenomenon being studied (Lather, 1992).

In this study, a multiple instrumental case study approach was employed to explore the phenomenon of EPT in Kazakhstan in greater detail. Although multiple instrumental case studies can provide a broader understanding by examining various cases, each individual case is also presented with its distinct characteristics and context (Shkedi, 2005). To investigate the intricate connection between EPT and access to highly selective EMI universities in Kazakhstan from diverse viewpoints, while recognizing the unique experiences of each student, the multiple instrumental case study approach was selected for this research. In terms of the triangulation techniques employed to improve the validity and objectivity of the data (Stake, 2008), the current study initially used a narrative writing method to gather background data on research participants in order to develop the interview questions and validate the findings from semi-structured individual interviews. This point is further explained in the coming section.

Research Site and Sample

This qualitative research is conducted in a highly selective English-medium university (EMI) with an international faculty and staff in Astana, Kazakhstan. It is an autonomous research-based university founded by the former President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in 2010 (nu.edu.kz). This university provides students with a number of educational grants determined by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MSHE) of Kazakhstan. For

instance, 553 grants funded by the government were offered in 2023 and distributed among applicants according to their scores on entry exams (nu.edu.kz). Moreover, according to Times Higher Education (THE) World University rankings (2024), this university is placed among the top 30% of international research universities in the world. Thus, there is a high competition to gain admission to this prestigious university.

The selection process for this university consists of four stages. The first stage is Aptis – a general English language assessment that evaluates applicants' reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills. It consists of 75 questions that should be solved within 55 minutes, and the minimum passing score is 37.5 (nu.edu.kz). However, applicants with TOEFL or IELTS certification with an overall minimum score of 6.0 (or equivalent in TOEFL) are not liable to take this test. The second stage is the Foundation Year Program Entrance Test, which assesses applicants' academic training in core subjects for studying at this university. The test consists of 60 multiple-choice questions from two subjects: mathematics and critical thinking skills. The third stage is taking the IELTS examination, an international standardized academic English proficiency test. It consists of four sections that evaluate applicants' reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills and requires an overall minimum score of 6.0 with subsections no less than 5.0. The last stage is considering the candidates' applications and selecting those who meet the requirements to study under the government's state grant or fee-paying basis.

The high level of competition among applicants and the complexity of university entrance tests creates a high demand for receiving EPT during high school in Kazakhstan (Hajar & Abenova, 2021; Hajar & Karakus, 2023) and in many other contexts (e.g., Allen, 2023 in Japan; Hamid and Mahmud, 2023 in Bangladesh; Zeng & Yung, 2023 in Hong Kong). Therefore, the applicants who secured a place at this EMI university in Kazakhstan had received EPT courses.

Thus, the participants in this study were first-year university students because their memories would most likely have fresh memory about the experience of receiving EPT in the past 12 months while preparing for the high-stakes university entrance exam, and hence they could recall the memories about this phenomenon (Hajar & Abenova, 2021).

This study employed non-probability purposeful sampling for the recruitment of participants for the narrative writing and individual semi-structured interviews because it is not intended to generalize but rather to address "qualitative problems" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). Using purposeful sampling, a researcher chose participants who fit the study's requirements and have experience with a particular phenomenon, such as English private tutoring, producing information-rich examples (Patton, 2014). This sampling technique is also time and money-efficient. With the above in mind, the researcher had specific criteria while choosing the potential participants in this qualitative study. First, the participants were at least 18 years old and in the first year of their undergraduate studies at the chosen university to have fresh memories about their EPT experiences in the previous 24 months. Second, all participants should have been willing to participate in the study and share their EPT experiences. Further, none of them was known to the researcher before the data collection process so as not to influence the participants' answers. Lastly, the potential participants should have been studying in the School of Science and Humanities at a selected university. This school was chosen because students are required to engage intensively with academic content in English across a range of disciplines. As such, their experiences with EPT are particularly meaningful for understanding how EPT supports language development and academic readiness in EMI contexts. By selecting participants from this academic setting, the study ensures that the data collected are closely

aligned with the research aim of exploring EPT as a tool for accessing higher education through the medium of English.

Due to the researcher's residence and increased chances of connecting with gatekeepers and recruiting study subjects, this university made a convenient research location for data collection. Hence, the researcher could save time and travel expenses by collecting the data from this university, which is regarded as one of Kazakhstan's highly selective EMI universities. In qualitative research, Stake (2006) recommends selecting between four to ten participants for a multiple case study design to ensure that the researcher can obtain comprehensive and in-depth insights from each participant. This sample size allows for a thorough exploration of the cases while still maintaining the focus on rich, detailed data. The goal is to capture diverse perspectives without overwhelming the study with too many participants, thus enabling the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Thus, the number of recruited participants was nine students who received EPT. All the participants were given pseudonyms, and some relevant information about them are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

№	Name	Age	Geographical background	Educational background	Modes of tutoring
1	Zhangir	18	Astana, North Kazakhstan	Mainstream School	Individual offline and small online group courses

2	Nursultan	19	Almaty, South Kazakhstan	Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS)	Large offline group courses
3	Aliya	19	Kokshetau, North Kazakhstan	Mainstream School	Individual offline courses
4	Yerulan	19	Oral, West Kazakhstan	Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS)	Large offline group and small online group courses
5	Bagdat	18	Kostanay, North Kazakhstan	Specialised school	Individual offline and small offline group courses
6	Diana	19	Shymkent, South Kazakhstan	Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS)	Small offline group courses
7	Medina	19	Atyrau, West Kazakhstan	Nazarbayev Intellectual School	Small offline group courses
8	Zhibek	18	Semey, East Kazakhstan	Specialised school	Individual online courses

Data Collection Instruments

To address the research questions, this study employed two qualitative research methods: narrative writing and individual semi-structured interviews. Narrative writing was used to gather background information about the participants, establish rapport between the researcher and the participants, and help generate follow-up interview questions (Barkhuizen, 2008). This data

collection method was first used by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) to study teachers' experiences and personal stories. Shacklock and Thorp (2005) describe narrative inquiry as a concern "with the production, interpretation, and representation of storied accounts of lived experience" (p. 156). According to Savin-Baden and Niekirk (2007), employing narrative inquiry is advantageous in terms of collecting data as "most people are pleased to share a story about themselves" (p. 466). Thus, through narrative essays, the researcher can delve into undergraduate students' experience attending EPT and their evaluation of its impact on access to the EMI university.

The researcher adapted eight open-ended questions to guide the research participants in writing their narrative essays. These questions were designed to unpack the drivers for the demand of receiving EPT for participants, the type and cost of EPT, and the duration of the period they attended EPT. Examples of these questions are "For what reasons did you decide to receive EPT?" or "What was the form and the cost of EPT?" (for a complete list of the essay questions, see Appendix B). These questions helped the participants express their thoughts in a written form and guided the researcher to make the questions flexible according to each person's experiences. Moreover, research participants were provided with a set of questions in three languages, allowing them to choose the language they are comfortable sharing their experiences (Kazakh, Russian, and English). The questions were sent to participants via email, and they had 7 to 10 days to write their essays before sending them back to the researcher.

This study also employed semi-structured individual interviews as the second qualitative research method. This research method allows the researcher to examine the opinions and ideas of the participants on the given phenomenon, and the probes can be used to elaborate on their answers (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher of this

study to narrow down the area of research while listening to participants' shared experiences about the given phenomenon (Rabionet, 2011). Since the researcher aimed to receive more detailed answers on how EPT can affect the enrolling process in the highly selective university and its impact on the whole society, the semi-structured interview format allowed the interviewer and the interviewee to exchange ideas, make clarifications, and change directions based on the responses (Galetta, 2013).

The interview protocol was developed based on the guidelines of interview question types (Dörnyei, 2007) that included a set of fifteen questions along with several probes. The main interview questions were partly borrowed from the study of Hajar and Karakus (2023)), where they studied the role of PT in admission to higher education. The participants were given a choice to conduct an interview in any language they preferred (Kazakh, Russian, English). Some examples of interview questions were: "Could you tell the reasons for receiving EPT in the last 12 months? What do you feel about the impact of EPT on the wider society?" (see Appendix C for a sample of the interview questions). These questions helped me to evaluate the participants' experience of attending EPT and their perspectives on its influence on the wider society. The answers from participants were audio-recorded after receiving their permission and signing the consent form. All the participants were interviewed once, and 25-35 minutes were allocated for each interview. All interviews were conducted in person due to the same residence of the researcher and participants. The researcher used empty spaces at the university for conducting the interviews, such as empty classes and library rooms.

Data Collection Procedures

After receiving ethical approval from the GSE Ethics Committee, the first step of the data collection process was testing the quality of interview questions with fellow students from

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education to ensure their quality. The next step was contacting a potential gatekeeper to ask for permission to access the site. This approach aligns with research ethics and access strategies outlined by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), who note the importance of negotiating entry and gaining trust when conducting fieldwork in institutional settings. A month prior to data collection, the gatekeeper was provided with detailed information about the study, including an invitation letter explaining the research objectives and procedures (see Appendix D).

After receiving permission, a recruitment letter was sent to the participants of the study via email, inviting them to take part in the study, which involved writing a narrative essay and participating in a semi-structured interview (see Appendix F). As Cohen et al. (2011) emphasize, the use of digital platforms for recruitment has become increasingly common in qualitative studies due to their accessibility and efficiency.

Participants were then provided with an informed consent form (see Appendix E), made available in Kazakh, Russian, and English. The form outlined the research purpose, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality assurances, and withdrawal rights—an ethical requirement in human research (BERA, 2018). Narrative prompts were also distributed in three languages (see Appendix B), ensuring linguistic inclusivity and enhancing participant comfort (Ryan et al., 2009).

Once narrative essays were submitted, individual semi-structured interviews were scheduled based on participants' availability. Interviews were held in person at the university premises. Prior to each session, participants were reminded of the research purpose and their right to withdraw at any point, reinforcing the ethical principle of informed voluntary participation (Wiles et al., 2008). Interviews were conducted in the language preferred by the

participant: two in English and seven in Russian; none opted for Kazakh. Language choice was encouraged to help participants articulate their views with clarity and ease, as supported by the work of Holmes et al. (2013), who highlight the importance of linguistic familiarity in qualitative interviews.

All participants were informed that interviews would be audio-recorded, in accordance with Wang and Geale's (2015, p. 197) assertion that "it is unethical to surprise participants with recording devices at the interview." Each interview lasted approximately 25–35 minutes and was conducted between October and December 2023. Participants were reassured that there were no right or wrong answers and were encouraged to express themselves freely in their chosen language.

Data Analysis

Following the collection of qualitative data through narrative essays and semi-structured interviews, the data were analyzed using the thematic analysis approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This analytical approach is well-regarded in qualitative research for its capacity to identify recurring patterns of meaning, known as "themes," which offer valuable insights into participants' experiences and viewpoints (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis was selected for this study due to its flexibility and suitability for capturing the nuanced, lived experiences of learners within informal educational settings, especially in relation to English private tutoring (EPT).

The analytical process followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase approach. The first step involved familiarization with the data. To achieve this, the researcher transcribed the audio-recorded interviews using the Otter.ai transcription software. Manual corrections were then made to ensure accuracy by comparing the transcripts with the original recordings. As Kvale (1996)

notes, transcription is not merely a mechanical task, but a critical stage of analysis where oral dialogue is translated into text for interpretive reading. The researcher repeatedly read the narrative essays and interview transcripts, engaging with the texts reflexively and critically, as recommended by Clarke and Braun (2013), to gain a deep understanding of the content.

In the second stage, the researcher undertook systematic coding of the entire dataset using an inductive, data-driven approach. This involved identifying meaningful features relevant to the study's research questions and assigning preliminary codes to segments of the text (Terry et al., 2017). All data were coded inclusively and comprehensively to avoid overlooking any potentially significant insights. These initial codes were later organized into broader thematic categories and subthemes through an iterative process of review, comparison, and refinement. This process allowed the researcher to develop a coherent analytical narrative that linked emerging themes back to the original research questions and theoretical framework.

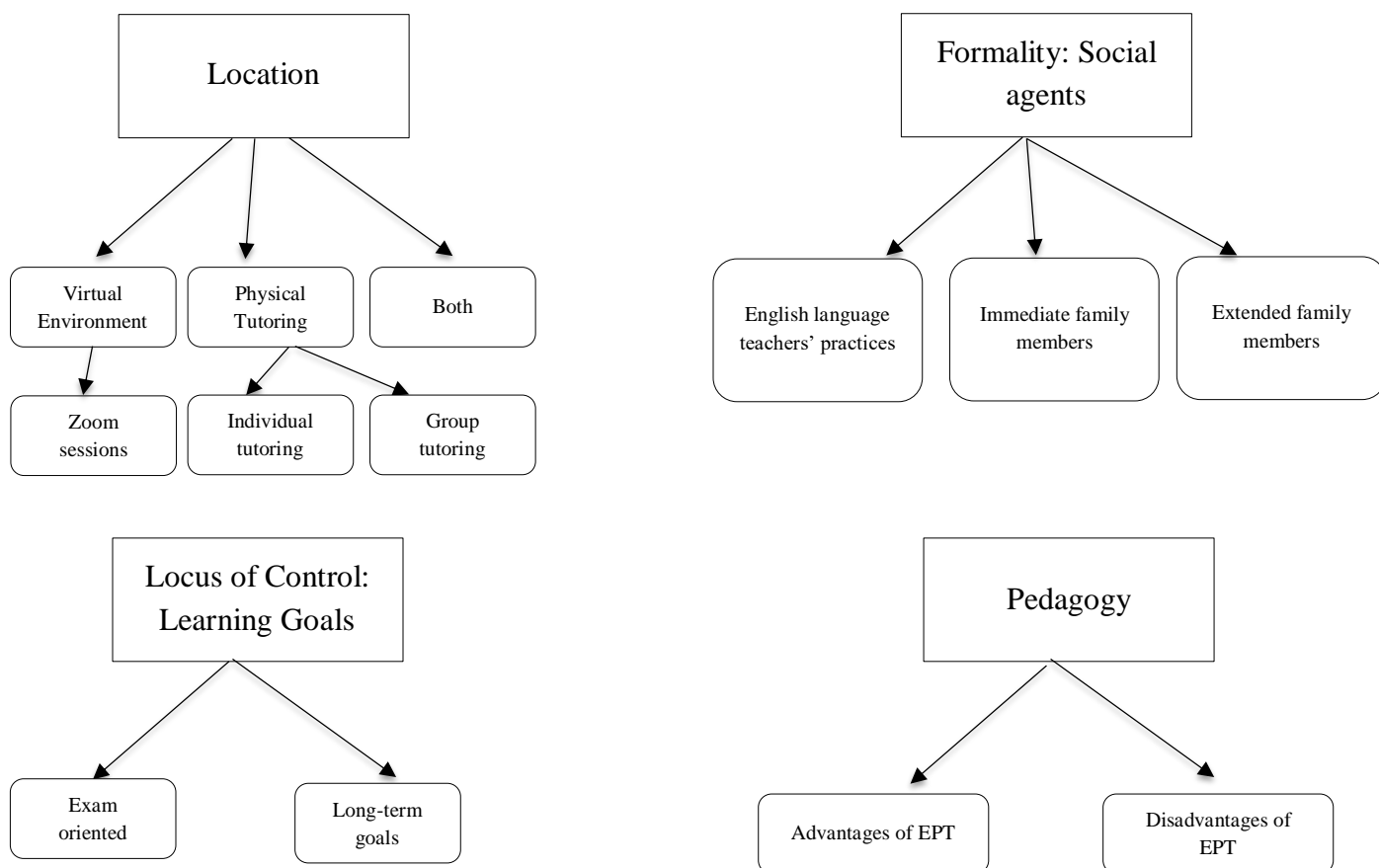
Table 3

Code Samples

Interview Extracts	Codes	Subthemes	Themes
I had to take private lessons because I knew I wouldn't be able to get the necessary IELTS score in school.	Inadequate school preparation for IELTS	Motivation to seek EPT	Locus of Control
My parents found the tutor and paid for the lessons. I just had to go.	Parental involvement in arranging EPT	Role of parents in EPT decisions	Formality
We had classes online. It was more comfortable than school.	Flexible tutoring environment	Learning location preferences	Location
Without my tutor, I don't think I would have gotten into this university.	Tutoring as essential for university admission	Perceived necessity of EPT for academic success	Pedagogy

Figure 1

Thematic Map based on the participants' EPT experiences



Note. The final thematic map derived from the first-year undergraduate students' data and compiled by the researcher.

Ethical Considerations

Wang and Geale (2015) suggest that researchers should consider ethical issues while collecting narrative stories as this method includes "responsibilities for the dignity, privacy and well-being of the participants" (p. 197). Hence, all ethical considerations are kept strictly according to the guidelines. Agreed participants of the study were informed about the purpose of the research, the length of the interview, the explanation of the data storage and analysis, and their rights to withdraw from the participation at any time without any consequences and refuse

to answer any question they find inappropriate before the interview takes place (Wiles et al., 2008). Prior to the narrative essays, the participants were informed that their writing would be used only for the research and would not evaluate their personal experiences. The researcher also explained to the participants that there would be no 'good,' 'bad,' 'right,' or 'wrong' answers.

Therefore, the participants were clearly informed that taking part in the study was optional and based on their own willingness before the start of data collection and throughout this process. Along with the written informed consent, the researcher obtained verbal permission from participants to record their responses. They were also informed that the audiotapes would be stored in personal software protected with a password to which only the researcher and her advisor would have access. The obtained interview data from research participants will be destroyed after two years of the data collection. This period is justified by the researcher's possibility to publish a paper based on this thesis or participate in a local/international conference based on her thesis in the future.

The obtained data was shielded from harm and maintained in an anonymous, confidential, untraceable manner. Although the researcher could not guarantee complete anonymity for the participants since the personal information was revealed to the researcher during the interview, she used pseudonyms for all participants and the research setting to keep confidentiality.

Since the participants' identities would not be revealed in the final report, the researcher guaranteed that there would be no dangers or harm to their professional and personal lives. Nevertheless, since it is hard to completely eliminate dangers, some interview questions might leave participants uncomfortable. For that reason, the researcher reassured the study's participants of their right to refuse to answer or stop participating at any time to reduce that danger and without any negative consequences (Dörnyei, 2007). Additionally, the researcher

ensured that no delicate subjects about politics, religion, or sexual orientation would be covered in the interview questions. As a result, there was no harm or psychological pain to participants.

All interviews were audio-recorded with the informed consent of participants, following the ethical principle that “it is unethical to surprise participants with recording devices at the interview” (Wang & Geale, 2015, p. 197). All audio recordings, digital transcripts, and narrative essays were safely stored on a password-protected personal computer, with additional backups saved on an encrypted external hard drive to ensure data security. Access to this data was limited strictly to the researcher. In alignment with ethical research practices and the GSE Ethics Committee guidelines, all collected data will be retained for a period of three years after the conclusion of the study. This period allows for the possibility of presenting the findings at academic conferences or publishing related journal articles. After this period, all data, including audio files, transcripts, and written narratives, will be permanently deleted to ensure participant confidentiality and data protection.

Chapter Summary

This chapter covered the information about the methodology part of this study, covering the description of the research design, the research site and sample, data collection instruments and procedures, and concluding with data analysis and ethical considerations guiding this research. Notably, this study employed an instrumental multiple case study that involved nine undergraduate first-year students who were selected through non-probability purposeful sampling. Therefore, this research used narrative writing and individual semi-structured interviews as data collection methods. The next chapter will present the main findings of this study.

Chapter 4: Findings:

This chapter presents the main findings from the qualitative data gathered from eight first-year undergraduate students studying at a prestigious EMI university in Astana, Kazakhstan. Using Benson's (2011) framework, which encompasses four dimensions of language learning beyond the classroom: location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy, the study investigates two key research questions, focusing on students' experiences with EPT over the past year.

1. How are the four dimensions of location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy reflected in the participants' English private tutoring experiences in Kazakhstan?
2. What are the participants' perceptions about the future of Kazakhstan's private tutoring market?

The chapter begins with biographical characteristics of each participant, compiled from their narrative essays, offering contextual insight into their backgrounds. Following this, the chapter presents an in-depth discussion of their EPT experiences, particularly in relation to language acquisition and pedagogical development outside formal classrooms. Benson's (2011) conceptual framework is employed to analyze these EPT experiences, supported by a thematic analysis that identifies key themes and sub-themes (see Figure 1 in Chapter 3). These themes include: (a) location (face-to-face vs. virtual EPT), (b) formality (referring to the mediating roles of both formal and informal actors), (c) locus of control (relating to language learners' motivations for pursuing EPT), and (d) pedagogy (concerning the participants' evaluations of the effectiveness of EPT).

Biographical Vignettes of the Participants

This section presents biographical snapshots of the eight participants, based on their written narratives about learning English, with a particular focus on their participation in EPT.

Zhangir

Zhangir, an 18-year-old first-year student at a highly selective EMI university, was born in a rural area but has resided in Astana since the age of two. He attended a mainstream school in the city. His father, a lawyer with academic credentials in Law and Economics, and his mother, a self-employed psychiatrist with a degree in Psychology, played a significant role in shaping his academic ambitions. Zhangir's decision to study English intensively began in the 8th grade, driven by his aspiration to apply to universities abroad, a goal strongly supported by his parents, who underscored the critical role of English proficiency in his academic and professional trajectory.

Zhangir undertook four years of EPT to enhance his English skills. The initial two years focused on advancing his language proficiency from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate levels. This was followed by a year of preparation for the SAT examination and another year dedicated to achieving a competitive score on the IELTS examination. During this period, he participated in both online and offline tutoring sessions, ultimately finding individual offline lessons to be the most effective in addressing his learning objectives.

Nursultan

Nursultan, a 19-year-old from Almaty, is a graduate of the Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS) in his hometown. His parents hold bachelor's degrees and are employed as government workers. Throughout his schooling, Nursultan consistently demonstrated strong English language skills, often surpassing his peers. This proficiency motivated him to further enhance his level of the English language.

Nursultan received two months of EPT courses in total during high school. Despite his aptitude, Nursultan did not attend supplementary English lessons during his school years, as it

was not deemed necessary. He highlighted the high qualifications of NIS school teachers who helped him boost his language skills. However, his aspiration to enroll at a highly selective EMI university during high school prompted Nursultan to attend EPT courses to prepare for the IELTS examination, a critical requirement for admission. The form of EPT courses that he attended were large group lessons offline with 12 students in a group. Despite the large number of students, he found these tutorial courses beneficial as he could receive feedback from his tutor via WhatsApp.

Reflecting on his experience, he noted that the two months of EPT courses were sufficient to prepare for the IELTS examination as a prerequisite to join one of the highly selective EMI universities. He also remarked that, with greater self-discipline and motivation, he could have achieved similar results through independent study. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that attending EPT was instrumental in sustaining his motivation and cultivating a strong work ethic, which he deemed critical to his success.

Aliya

Aliya, a 19-year-old student, was born in Kokshetau and relocated to the suburbs of Astana ten years ago. She completed her education at a mainstream school in that region. Both her parents hold bachelor's degrees: her father is an engineer, while her mother is an elementary school teacher. Aliya received four and a half years of EPT courses. She began attending EPT courses at the age of 11 when her mother emphasized the importance of the English language for future opportunities. Moreover, her motivation to learn English in-depth was driven by her aspiration to apply to a highly selective EMI university in Kazakhstan. At the age of 15, Aliya began her IELTS preparation with an English tutor, choosing individual offline courses as her preferred form of EPT. She valued this delivery mode of EPT for the personalized feedback and

focused attention it provided. Aliya attributes her success in passing the IELTS examination and gaining admission to Nazarbayev University (NU) to the support and guidance of her English tutor, emphasizing that this assistance was crucial to achieving her goals.

Yerulan

Yerulan is a 19-year-old from a rural area near Oral City in western Kazakhstan. He pursued his education in Oral, living independently from his parents while attending the NIS in the city. His father is an entrepreneur and his mother is a government worker. Yerulan's interest in learning English was inspired by his godmother, who emphasized the global significance of English proficiency. Initially, he lacked interest in learning the language and had to push himself to improve his skills. However, his attitude changed when he noticed progress and developed a better understanding of English. Thus, he was motivated to learn English as he believed in better career prospects with good English skills.

Overall, Yerulan enrolled in EPT courses at three different language centers over a year. The first two centers concentrated on enhancing his overall English language proficiency, while the third focused exclusively on preparing him for the IELTS examination. He participated in two offline courses and one online course, expressing a strong preference for offline sessions due to the practicality and effectiveness of face-to-face interactions with tutors. However, the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated his participation in online tutorial sessions.

Bagdat

Bagdat, an 18-year-old from Kostanay in northern Kazakhstan, studied at a specialized school in her hometown. Her parents have two degrees, a bachelor's and a master's, in medicine

and work as dentists. She developed a strong passion for the English language during elementary school, which fostered her motivation to study the language intensively.

Bagdat had seven years of experience in EPT courses at a language center, where she was engaged in both individual and small group tutorial lessons. She experienced two forms of EPT, recognizing the unique benefits of each. While attending a language center, Bagdat concentrated on improving her general language skills. However, during high school, her growing interest in pursuing higher education led her to engage a self-employed English tutor. She opted for individual offline tutoring sessions, which substantially enhanced her proficiency across all sections of the IELTS exam: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Bagdat highlights the pivotal role her tutor played in enabling her to achieve a satisfactory IELTS score, which she considers instrumental in her academic progress.

Diana

Diana, a 19-year-old from Shymkent in southern Kazakhstan, graduated from the NIS in Shymkent. Her father, a former policeman, now works as a lawyer, while her mother is a self-employed seller. Her mother played a significant role in developing Diana's interest in the English language. She wanted her daughter to study at NIS and hired a self-employed English tutor to assist with preparation for the NIS entrance test. Thus, Diana received two months of EPT lessons in a small group while preparing for this high-stakes test. She found this form of EPT beneficial due to the competitiveness in a group.

While studying at NIS, Diana realized the importance of English and began dedicating more effort to mastering the language. Her aspiration to study at an EMI university during high school motivated her to enroll in EPT courses to prepare for the IELTS examination. She chose to study in a small offline group, as individual lessons were more expensive than other EPT

options. Diana identified her primary reason for seeking EPT as her difficulty maintaining motivation and self-discipline when studying independently. She emphasized that the most valuable aspect of the EPT courses was the immediate feedback she received on her essays from the tutor, which she found to be instrumental in enhancing her English language learning experience.

Medina

Medina, a 19-year-old from Atyrau in western Kazakhstan, studied at the NIS in her hometown. Her mother, a professor at a university, and her father, a businessman, played significant roles in shaping her educational path. At the age of 11, Medina's mother encouraged her to apply to NIS, a decision that led her to attend EPT courses. She participated in small group sessions, which she preferred over individual lessons due to the competitive atmosphere they fostered. This environment motivated her to perform better and strive to surpass her peers. Even though Medina was eventually admitted to NIS, her English skills remained below the advanced level.

Overall, Medina undertook two years of supplementary English courses. Initially, she faced challenges cultivating an interest in the language due to her low proficiency. However, she gradually acknowledged the importance of English for gaining admission to a highly selective university in Kazakhstan. Although she enrolled in EPT courses, her focused preparation for the IELTS examination began just one month prior to the test. Medina attended small group sessions, which allowed her to practice her English with peers. She emphasized the pivotal role of her friends and her tutor in helping her achieve satisfactory results and securing admission to the EMI university.

Zhibek

Zhibek, an 18-year-old student, attended a specialized school in Semey, located in East Kazakhstan. Her late father was an entrepreneur and his mother is a research assistant. Zhibek recognized the importance of the English language when she was in the 7th grade. During this period, she transitioned from a mainstream school to a specialized one, where she realized that her English proficiency was lower than that of her peers. This awareness motivated her to devote more attention to improving her language skills.

However, she did not have experience attending EPT courses before high school when she decided to apply to a highly selective EMI university in Kazakhstan. To enhance the effectiveness of her IELTS preparation, Zhibek hired two English tutors. Her lessons were conducted in an online, individual format due to the tutors being located in different cities. She worked with them three hours a day, six times a week for three months. This focused preparation was sufficient for her to pass the IELTS examination and gain admission to the EMI university.

Interpreting the Participants' Experiential Accounts of Receiving English Private**Tutoring:**

This section reports the qualitative findings obtained from interviews with 8 participants reflecting on their EPT experiences. As previously stated, this qualitative study employed Benson's (2011) framework to analyze the participants' experiences with EPT. The framework includes four essential components: (a) location, (b) formality: Mediation by social agents, (c) locus of control: language learning motivations, and (d) pedagogy: advantages and disadvantages of EPT. The following section will discuss how the location impacted participants' choices to participate in EPT (see Figure 1 in Chapter 3).

Location: Virtual and Physical English language Tutoring

The analysis of interview data indicated that only one participant, Zhibek, engaged in individual online tutoring sessions through the Zoom platform. She favored this mode of EPT over alternative formats, as it was well-suited for remote learning. Due to the unavailability of a qualified tutor in her local area, Zhibek sought instruction from a teacher based in Astana who offered online lessons. The following interview extract exemplifies this point:

Extract 1:

I decided to seek individual online tutoring as I was dissatisfied with the qualifications of private tutors in my city. I found an English tutor on Instagram, and she had a credible profile showcasing evidence of her students achieving higher scores on the IELTS examinations. Although she was an undergraduate student, she significantly assisted me in achieving my academic goals. (Zhibek, November 2023).

The majority of participants (Aliya, Bagdat, Zhangir, Diana, Medina and Nursultan) received face-to-face EPT sessions. Three of them (Aliya, Bagdat and Zhangir) preferred individual tutoring over group sessions, whereas the others attended EPT tutoring in a group setting. According to the participants who attended individual EPT sessions, they favored this form of tutoring because it allowed them to receive personalized attention and detailed feedback from their English private tutors, especially to excel in the university entrance exam. Meanwhile, those who received group sessions mentioned that their decision was justified by the lower price, competitive atmosphere, and opportunity to discuss complex questions in a group. In addition, one participant (Nursultan) highlighted that group sessions helped him to make more friends and be more socially active. The following interview extracts illustrate these points:

Extract 2:

I initially considered attending group sessions, however, with 12 students in a one-hour session, personalized attention was limited. In contrast, individual tutoring allowed me to ask as many questions as I wanted and engage in more intensive training (Aliya, November 2023).

Extract 3:

The increased cost of individual tutoring was a major factor in making a decision on which form of tutoring to receive. Therefore, some of my classmates were also seeking group tutoring to prepare for the IELTS examination. It was an excellent opportunity to invite my friends to join group sessions to lower the price and be in the surroundings of familiar people. Thus, this form of tutoring was a more cost-effective option for me (Diana, November 2023).

Interestingly, one participant, Nursultan, expressed a divergent view regarding large-group tutoring. While others preferred individual sessions due to the perceived lack of personalized attention in group settings, Nursultan contended that he could still receive individualized support by maintaining contact with his English tutor through WhatsApp. The following extract elucidates this idea.

Extract 4:

I attended large group sessions with twelve students, which might typically limit individual attention. However, my English language tutor ensured a personalized learning experience by providing tailored feedback and additional support through WhatsApp after each session. This approach allowed me to address my specific challenges while benefiting from the dynamic group environment. (Nursultan, November 2023).

The interview extracts presented above illustrate students' diverse perspectives regarding their preferences for individual versus group tutoring. These contrasting viewpoints highlight students' decision-making processes' complex and multifaceted nature when selecting a tutoring format that best aligns with their learning needs, financial constraints, and motivations.

Aliya's preference for individual tutoring (Extract 2) underscores the significance of personalized attention in EPT. She explicitly states that in large group sessions with twelve students, the opportunity for tailored instruction was limited. This aligns with broader research indicating that individual tutoring allows for more focused teacher-student interaction, enabling students to receive immediate feedback and engage in targeted practice. Her reasoning suggests that students who value deep engagement with the tutor may perceive larger group settings as less effective in addressing their specific learning gaps.

Conversely, Nursultan's experience (Extract 4) challenges the conventional assumption that group tutoring inherently lacks individualization. He argues that despite the large group size, he was able to receive personalized feedback through WhatsApp interactions with his tutor. This reflects the evolving role of digital communication in education, where supplementary online platforms can compensate for perceived shortcomings of in-person group learning. Furthermore, his preference for group tutoring was not solely based on academic considerations but also on the motivational benefits of peer competition. The presence of peers motivated him to remain committed to his studies, reinforcing the idea that learning is not only an individual cognitive process but also a socially mediated one.

These opposing perspectives highlight that no single tutoring format is universally superior; rather, its effectiveness is contingent upon individual student preferences, contextual factors, and the extent to which supplementary resources (such as digital communication tools)

can enhance the learning experience. The findings suggest that private tutors and policymakers should adopt a more flexible approach to EPT by considering students' diverse needs and leveraging technology to create hybrid models that combine the advantages of both individualized and group learning experiences.

While the above extracts highlight the perceived benefits of specific tutoring formats that shaped participants' choices, one student, Yerulan, lacked such autonomy. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he was compelled to transition from offline to online tutoring. Despite his preference for face-to-face instruction, the pandemic necessitated a shift in delivery mode, which posed challenges for him. Extract 5 illustrates this experience.

Extract 5:

I prefer face-to-face instruction for its direct interaction and personalized feedback. However, quarantine restrictions forced me to switch to online learning, which posed challenges. Poor internet connectivity in my rural area made it difficult, and disengagement was common as students could mute themselves and avoid participation. Many attended without contributing, reducing the effectiveness of learning. Thus, I find online learning less effective for language acquisition. (Yerulan, November 2023).

Formality: Social Agents

Based on the first research question, the second dimension of Benson's (2011) model for language learners' experiences in learning the target language in informal settings is formality, which pertains to the impact of significant social actors on the process of learning the language. In the present study, some key figures influenced the participants' recognition of the importance of the English language and their decision to take EPT courses. The examination of interview

data revealed the influence of three main groups of agents: English school teachers, peers and family members.

The Mediating Role of English school teachers and peers

The analysis of data disclosed that the school environment shaped the perception of most participants (Diana, Medina, Nursultan, Zhibek and Zhangir) regarding the significance of the English language globally. Students emphasized the influence of their classmates and English teachers in fostering their awareness of the language's importance. Their classmates provided motivation through academic competition and peer encouragement, while their English teachers played a crucial role by highlighting the practical benefits of language proficiency and integrating engaging learning methods. Therefore, some students mentioned that their transition from a mainstream school to NIS encouraged them to improve their language skills in order to be on the same level as their peers. The following interview extracts demonstrate these ideas:

Extract 6:

The primary factor influencing my English language development was the educational environment in which I studied. After getting accepted to NIS, I found that English was essential for academic success, as key subjects such as Physics and ICT were taught in English. Additionally, the school environment required frequent communication in English, creating an immersive learning experience. Given these circumstances, I believe that without proficiency in English, completing high school would have been extremely challenging (Diana, November 2023).

Extract 7:

During elementary school, I was good at English among my peers, and I decided to apply to NIS. Upon transferring to this school, I experienced the competition in my class where

everyone desired to be the best student. I realized that English was still my weakest part, so I wanted to surpass others and began focusing on improving my language skills. As a result, I realized how important it was to be proficient in English as it creates better opportunities in the future (Medina, November 2023).

These extracts highlight the significant influence of the school environment on students' perceptions of English as a global language. Peer competition and teacher encouragement played a central role in shaping this awareness. The transition to Nazarbayev Intellectual School acted as a turning point for students like Diana and Medina, motivating them to improve their English proficiency to meet academic standards and keep pace with high-achieving classmates. In this particular setting, some students viewed English private tutoring as an additional resource to bridge gaps in their knowledge and enhance their language skills. The English-medium instruction and academic rigor of NIS positioned English not merely as a school subject, but as a critical tool for academic success and future mobility. These findings suggest that institutional settings and access to private tutoring opportunities can significantly shape students' language learning motivations and identity development.

Beyond peer influence and institutional demands, some students identified personal milestones and inspirational teachers as key drivers in their English learning journey. For these learners, transferring to NIS or encountering engaging English instruction deepened their appreciation of the language's global relevance and future utility. These experiences often motivated them to participate in EPT to strengthen their skills and enhance their chances of entering highly selective EMI universities. The following extracts illustrate these ideas.

Extract 8:

The changing point in my life was in the fifth grade when I transferred to NIS and realized that my English proficiency was significantly higher than that of my peers. This gave me a sense of confidence and motivated me to continue learning the language. However, I fully recognized the importance of English in my life only by the 11th grade, when I began to understand that English proficiency provided access to a wide range of educational and entertainment resources. Moreover, I realized that it significantly enhanced my career prospects. Therefore, I wanted to study in a highly selective EMI university for which I needed high score in the IELTS examination. Thus, I decided to receive EPT courses to higher my chances to get enrolled at Nazarbayev University (Nursultan, November 2023).

Extract 9:

In my school, we had a native English teacher who always made the learning process more engaging using different teaching methods. For instance, he would conduct speaking classes outside the classroom, provide us with YouTube videos to enhance our vocabulary, and show movies in English. Because of him, I have always liked English lessons, and it has helped me to focus deeply on studying this language. My teacher also widened our perception of the language, explaining its crucial role globally (Zhangir, November 2023).

The interview extracts underscore the influential role of the school environment in shaping students' English language learning trajectories. At NIS, EMI policies positioned English proficiency as critical for academic achievement, prompting students such as Diana and Medina to enhance their skills to match the performance of their peers. While competitive peer

dynamics served as a source of motivation for some students, they may have simultaneously exerted pressure on those with lower proficiency, potentially reinforcing educational disparities.

Teachers, particularly those identified as native English speakers, also played a pivotal role in fostering student engagement through innovative and interactive teaching methods, as exemplified in Zhangir's experience. However, the perceived superiority of native-speaking teachers raises important concerns about native-speakerism, which risks marginalising the contributions of qualified and experienced non-native instructors.

Nursultan's experience underscores the link between English proficiency and social mobility. His reliance on EPT for IELTS preparation highlights disparities in access to resources, as not all students can afford private tutoring.

Overall, while the NIS environment encouraged English learning, it reinforced academic competition and inequalities. Future research should explore how schools can create inclusive policies that support all learners, regardless of background or proficiency level.

The Mediating Role of Immediate Family Members

The analysis of interview data on students' experiences with EPT courses revealed that two participants (Aliya and Bagdat) identified family members as key social agents in shaping their recognition of the importance of the English language and their decision to attend EPT courses. There are two types of parental involvement: direct and indirect. Direct involvement refers to parents' active participation in their children's studies by assisting with homework, dedicating time to discuss progress and challenges, and providing guidance or additional learning resources to support their academic development. On the other hand, indirect involvement refers to assisting their children financially to pay for their education including covering tuition fees,

purchasing learning materials and enrolling them in supplementary courses. This present study found the indirect parental involvement that is discussed below in more detail:

Extract 10:

Initially, I began learning English with a tutor in the sixth grade. I already had good grades in English at school without additional support, so I did not understand the need for extra lessons. Fortunately, my mother insisted on tutoring and explained the importance of the English language for my future, as well as its dominant position in the world. In high school, she explained the necessity of studying in a highly selective university for which I needed a satisfactory IELTS result. My English proficiency was not sufficient for the IELTS exam. Moreover, I lacked knowledge of the exam structure, preparation strategies, and available study resources. I shared my concerns with my mother and she immediately searched for a tutor online, and paid for the lessons (Aliya, November 2023).

Extract 11:

My parents do not know the English language but they always remind me of the wider opportunities it can bring. They have never mentioned any financial difficulties in supporting my education. I recall them frequently encouraging me to focus on my studies without worrying about financial matters, emphasizing that my primary goal was to acquire proficiency in English. As I cannot speak on their behalf, I am unsure of the extent of the financial burden. Nonetheless, they recognized it as an investment in my future and education, understanding the long-term value of this financial commitment (Bagdat, November 2023).

The interview data reveal that family members, particularly parents, played a crucial role in shaping students' decisions to attend EPT courses. Aliya and Bagdat identified indirect parental involvement, financial support for tutoring, as instrumental in their English learning journey. Aliya's experience highlights how parental encouragement can influence academic choices. Initially skeptical about extra lessons, she was persuaded by her mother, who emphasized English's global significance and its necessity for university admission. Financial backing enabled her to access tutoring, bridging gaps in exam preparation. Similarly, Bagdat's parents, despite not knowing English, recognized its value and consistently prioritized his education. Their financial support, framed as an investment in his future, relieved him of financial concerns, allowing him to focus on language acquisition. These cases illustrate how indirect parental involvement fosters English learning by removing financial barriers and reinforcing the perceived importance of language proficiency for academic and career advancement. However, this raises equity concerns, as not all families can afford private tutoring, potentially widening educational disparities. Future research could explore how schools can support students from less privileged backgrounds in accessing supplementary language education.

The Mediating Role of Extended Family Members

Surprisingly, the data analyses found the influence of extended family member on one participant's (Yerulan) perception of English language importance and decision to take supplementary courses. He emphasized that living in a rural area limited access to opportunities, making it more challenging to consider broader future prospects. Therefore, Yerulan had no knowledge of the significance of English language or the need to master it. However, his

grandmother who had an urban background encouraged him to seek additional support from tutors to enhance English proficiency. The following extract exemplifies this point:

Extract 12:

My decision to take EPT courses was largely influenced by my grandmother, a well-educated and cultured individual who stressed the importance of English for future opportunities. She encouraged me to engage with English content—films, social media, and daily interactions—shaping my motivation to improve. Inspired by her advice, I immersed myself in the language, changing my phone settings and committing to practice. When I needed IELTS preparation, she found a private tutor, further supporting my learning journey. (Yerulan, November 2023).

Overall, the data analysis identified three groups of social agents influencing participants' educational goals: the school environment, family members, and extended family members. Each agent served as a significant mediator in shaping the interest of learning the English language and seeking for EPT lessons. All participants emphasized the positive impact of receiving EPT and recognized its significance in achieving their academic goals, particularly in gaining admission to a highly selective EMI university.

Locus of Control: Participants' Motives of Having EPT

The analysis of empirical data revealed that the participants articulated short- and long-term goals of receiving EPT. The short-term goals of participants' involvement in EPT practices are further illustrated in the following subsection.

Students' Short-Term Goals:

The findings of this study indicate that taking part in EPT was especially helpful for preparing for major language exams like IELTS and TOEFL. Since admission to competitive

English-medium universities often depends on achieving a high score on these high-stakes exams, most students viewed EPT as a practical step to reach their academic success. The participants of the study had to take the IELTS exam to win a place at a highly selective EMI university in Kazakhstan. The exam-oriented nature of the EPT sessions allowed them to get familiar with the structure of the IELTS exam and understand what was expected in each section. Participants found the experience both useful and engaging, particularly when it came to improving their speaking skills and grammar. Tutors supported this development by employing a range of instructional strategies to enhance students' vocabulary, communication skills, and grammatical accuracy, including speaking clubs, giving regular feedback on areas like pronunciation and fluency, and using interactive activities such as role-plays to boost students' confidence and communication abilities.

Findings from the interview analysis further indicated that participants consistently highlighted the importance of becoming familiar with the IELTS exam format through EPT courses. They appreciated the structured approach tutors used to cover each component of the test: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. This method allowed students to develop focused strategies for each section. Engaging with the components individually helped clarify expectations and reduced exam-related anxiety. Many students found particular value in practicing mock tests during lessons, as these simulations closely resembled the real exam environment and enabled them to monitor their progress. This targeted and systematic preparation enhanced their exam readiness and increased their confidence. The following extracts illustrate these points.

Extract 13:

Prior to enrolling in EPT courses, I found my English proficiency inadequate and was unaware of the exam structure. Following the recommendation of my mother, I found an online tutor who helped me understand the exam format and provided structured training. Focused practice on listening skills improved my ability to understand spoken English in an academic setting, which is crucial for the exam. (Aliya, November 2023).

Extract 14:

I was struggling with limited vocabulary, frequent misspellings, and a fear of taking the IELTS before taking EPT classes. However, my tutor implemented a technique using word maps to expand my vocabulary effectively. This approach significantly boosted my confidence in both the Speaking and Writing sections of the exam. (Medina, November 2023).

Extract 15:

Having strong English skills alone is not enough to succeed in IELTS; understanding the exam structure is equally important. I worked with a tutor who recreated real exam conditions through regular mock tests, which helped me feel more prepared and significantly reduced my anxiety on the actual test day. (Zhibek, November 2023).

These interview extracts suggest that while a solid foundation in English is important, it is the targeted, exam-oriented practice and personalised feedback offered through EPT that most effectively equip students for high-stakes assessments such as the IELTS. The narratives further underscore how EPT courses contribute not only to language skill development but also to increased learner confidence, achieved through structured instruction, strategic test preparation, and supportive tutor guidance.

Long-Term Goals of Receiving EPT

The data analysis further illustrates that two students (Aliya and Nursultan) found receiving EPT effective in developing their future opportunities, namely, earning a better career perspective and increasing their chances of studying abroad at internationally recognized institutions. They acknowledged the importance of the English language in succeeding as a key competency in both global academic settings and competitive job markets. By improving their English proficiency through EPT, they felt more confident in pursuing international education and career paths that require strong communication skills and familiarity with academic English. These points are illustrated in the following extracts:

Extract 16:

I took EPT classes because I planned to study abroad, and I knew that strong English skills were essential in a global academic environment. To achieve that, I needed to pass the IELTS exam and build a solid academic foundation to succeed at an international university. (Aliya, November 2023).

Extract 17:

I observed various examples of individuals who gained access to global opportunities and the international job market due to their proficiency in English. While it is possible to succeed within the CIS region using Russian, I recognized the importance of expanding my potential by becoming more proficient in English. (Nursultan, November 2023).

The extracts from Aliya and Nursultan emphasize how EPT courses helped them improve their English proficiency, which they saw as crucial for their future academic and career opportunities. Aliya highlights the importance of passing the IELTS exam and building a solid academic foundation for success at international universities, while Nursultan recognizes that

English proficiency opens doors to global career prospects. Both students view EPT as more than just exam preparation; it is seen as an essential step toward competing in a globalized academic and professional environment.

Pedagogy: Participants' Evaluation Receiving EPT

The findings of this study indicate that receiving EPT classes have both advantages and disadvantages, as perceived by the participants.

Advantages of Receiving EPT

The data analysis of the participants' experience showed that one of the advantages of receiving EPT is having a friendly environment, a caring tutor and being socially active. More specifically, four participants (Aliya, Medina, Nursultan, Yerulan) described learning in a group setting as a motivating and engaging experience. They highlighted the benefits of social interaction, such as building relationships with a tutor and peers, exchanging ideas, and fostering a sense of community within the learning process. Additionally, the group dynamic encouraged healthy competition, which further enhanced their commitment to their studies and helped them stay focused on their academic goals. The extracts 18-20 illustrate this point:

Extract 18:

Over six months, the learning environment became friendly and supportive, with the small age difference between the tutor and students fostering a peer-like relationship. Despite individualized lessons, interactions with other students created a sense of community, making learning enjoyable. This positive atmosphere continued after we entered university, maintaining ongoing communication. (Aliya, November 2023).

Extract 19:

I appreciated that the teacher made an effort to create a comfortable and relaxed learning environment for everyone. She would occasionally treat us to pizza or sushi, which made the sessions feel welcoming and stress-free. This friendly atmosphere helped us prepare for IELTS without pressure. (Yerulan, November 2023).

Extract 120:

Being in a group of 12 classmates made the classes enjoyable and socially engaging. Although I was initially unmotivated, seeing my peers' progress pushed me to study harder, which created a sense of healthy competition that kept me focused. (Nursultan, November 2023).

These extracts highlight several socio-emotional benefits associated with EPT, particularly in group settings. Participants emphasized the creation of a supportive and enjoyable learning environment, fostered by peer interactions, tutor encouragement, and informal social bonding. Such environments not only reduced the pressure often linked to high-stakes exam preparation but also contributed to sustained motivation, a sense of belonging, and continued peer support beyond the tutoring sessions. These findings suggest that the advantages of EPT extend beyond academic preparation, offering students a socially enriching context that promotes both emotional well-being and academic engagement.

Another advantage mentioned by the participants was receiving personalized attention and detailed, constructive feedback from their tutors. In this regard, three participants (Diana, Zhangir, Zhibek) mentioned that it was easier to observe their progress with a tutor compared to a school setting, as they could get an individualized approach from a tutor. In other words, individualized support allowed learners to identify their specific weaknesses, track their progress more effectively, and make targeted improvements in areas such as grammar, vocabulary, and

speaking fluency. They noted that the tailored guidance not only accelerated their learning but also boosted their confidence in tackling each section of the IELTS exam. Therefore, the next extracts will elucidate these points:

Extract 19:

The tutor provided consistent feedback on our essays, and over time, the reduction in comments on my work indicated clear improvement. Observing this progress was particularly rewarding and motivating. It clearly enhanced my writing skills. (Diana, November 2023).

Extract 20:

In school, I often left class with unanswered questions due to time constraints. But during EPT classes, the personalized attention from my tutor made a big difference. I could ask follow-up questions and receive detailed explanations, which really helped me understand and improve. (Zhangir, November 2023).

Additionally, EPT enabled students to build stronger motivation and self-discipline, as mentioned by two participants (Diana, Bagdat). This point is illustrated in the following extracts:

Extract 21:

Having a tutor who focused on my individual progress helped me stay motivated. Unlike in school, where there was limited time for personal feedback, I could always ask questions and receive guidance specific to my weaknesses. This constant support encouraged me to take responsibility for my learning and develop stronger self-discipline. (Diana, November 2023).

Extract 22:

The individualized attention I received in EPT classes made me feel more accountable for my progress. Knowing that my tutor was tracking my development pushed me to stay consistent with homework and practice. This structure not only kept me motivated but also helped me build a routine and improve my time management skills. (Bagdat, November 2023).

These extracts illustrate how EPT fosters motivation and self-discipline by offering personalised support and consistent feedback. The individual attention students received made them feel accountable for their progress, helping them build effective study habits, stay motivated, and take greater responsibility for their learning, key factors in preparing for high-stakes exams.

Furthermore, all participants indicated that receiving EPT highly helped them improve their scores on IELTS. Through structured lessons, targeted practice, and continuous feedback, they were able to address their individual weaknesses and develop exam-specific strategies. Participants noted improvements in all four sections of the test (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking) as well as increased familiarity with the test format. This not only enhanced their performance but also boosted their confidence, contributing to their overall success in achieving the required scores for university admission. These points are exemplified in the following extracts:

Extract 23:

Although I had a solid English foundation, I knew it wouldn't be enough to succeed in IELTS. Without EPT and the personalized support from my tutor, especially in Writing and Speaking, I would have scored no more than 6.5. The focused guidance helped me achieve a much higher result. (Bagdat, November 2023).

Extract 24:

I believe I wouldn't have achieved my current academic success without private tutoring. My writing skills were weak, but with my tutor's help, I improved significantly, scored 7.0 on the IELTS, and was accepted into a highly selective university. (Zhangir, November 2023).

Extract 25:

I wouldn't have achieved a high score on my own, as consistent feedback is essential. While online mock tests are helpful, they cannot replace a tutor's guidance—especially for Writing and Speaking, where personalized correction and explanation are crucial for improvement. (Zhibek, November 2023).

These extracts highlight the critical role of EPT in achieving high IELTS scores, particularly in Writing and Speaking. Personalised guidance, targeted feedback, and consistent support enabled students to address specific weaknesses and exceed their initial expectations

Disadvantages of Receiving EPT

The data analysis revealed that although EPT courses offer structured learning and targeted support, certain challenges within the program, such as balancing supplementary classes with schoolwork, financial pressure, lack of personal time, and unequal opportunities, can affect students' motivation to fully engage with EPT classes. More precisely, two participants (Aliya, Medina) reported that it was difficult to balance doing school homework and attending additional EPT classes. Moreover, they highlighted that their schoolteachers were not supportive when it came to extending the deadline or reducing academic workload. Additionally, one participant (Aliya) mentioned that her teachers were even opposed to her decision to take the IELTS exam instead of the Unified National Test (UNT), which serves as both a secondary school leaving

examination and an entrance exam for higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. The following extracts exemplify this point:

Extract 26:

It was difficult to manage schoolwork alongside EPT preparation, especially since my teachers weren't supportive. No one at my school was aiming for Nazarbayev University, and my teachers discouraged me from trying, suggesting I focus on the UNT like everyone else. Still, I was determined and chose not to prepare for the UNT at all. (Aliya, November 2023).

Extract 27:

I regretted taking EPT courses during 11th grade, as it was difficult to balance them with my school studies. I often had classes until 5 p.m. and had to continue studying afterwards, which made the schedule exhausting. I wish I had taken them during the summer instead. (Medina, November 2023).

These experiences illustrate how balancing EPT courses with regular school commitments posed significant challenges for students, particularly in their final year. As a result of these overlapping responsibilities, two participants (Bagdat, Diana) noted a considerable reduction in their personal time. The demanding schedules not only led to physical exhaustion but also limited opportunities for rest, leisure, and social activities, which they found difficult to manage:

Extract 28:

Balancing English with my hobby, playing the dombra, was challenging. English often took priority, especially with exam preparations, but I occasionally missed dombra lessons, which disappointed my teacher. I tried to manage by alternating between English

and extra lessons and made sure to explain my situation to both my language school and regular teachers, who were understanding. (Bagdat, November 2023).

Extract 29:

At the time, I found my tutor's demands tough, especially when she insisted I write essays and send speaking recordings while I was on vacation in Turkey. Although it felt exhausting, I now realize it was the right decision and ultimately beneficial. (Diana, November 2023).

Additionally, one participant (Zhibek) highlighted the emotional pressure that attending EPT courses caused her. She found her tutor overdemanding and strict, which made her stressed and anxious during the lessons. Although she later recognized the value of this discipline in her success, the experience initially impacted her emotional well-being and motivation. This point is illustrated in the following extract:

Extract 30:

There were moments when the pressure really got to me. Once, after being scolded, I turned off my camera because I was so upset. It felt exhausting. But closer to the exam, my tutor became more supportive and encouraging, which really helped me push through and regain confidence. (Zhibek, November 2023)

Another disadvantage highlighted by the participants is the cost of EPT courses. Two students (Nursultan, Yerulan) mentioned that the financial burden associated with these courses was a significant concern. While they acknowledged the value of receiving personalized attention and structured preparation, the price of these courses was often a barrier for some. This challenge was particularly evident for students who had to balance the expense with other educational and personal commitments. Despite these financial concerns, many participants felt

that the benefits of improved exam performance and better future opportunities outweighed the cost, underscoring the importance of investing in quality preparation for high-stakes exams like IELTS:

Extract 31:

From my experience, the cost of EPT courses was a challenge. While my family was able to cover the cost, some of my friends had to opt for self-study due to the unaffordability of EPT courses. I acknowledged their importance in helping me prepare effectively for IELTS, but the price was still a concern. It felt like a financial strain, but I also realized that investing in quality preparation could significantly impact my future opportunities, making it worthwhile in the end. (Nursultan, November 2023).

Extract 32:

If tutors raise their fees to reflect the quality of their service, that's understandable. However, when prices are increased just for profit, it creates unfair barriers for those who can't afford them. The tutoring market is largely unregulated, and some people charge high fees despite lacking proper qualifications, making it harder for others to access the help they need. (Yerulan, November 2023).

These extracts illustrate the challenges that come with the cost of EPT and its impact on access to quality exam preparation. Participants highlighted how the affordability of EPT courses influenced their ability to prepare effectively for exams like IELTS. While some participants, such as Nursultan, could afford the courses and recognized the benefits they provided, others, like his friends, were unable to access the same resources due to financial limitations. This disparity underscores the issue of unequal access to educational support, where financial constraints hinder some students' ability to benefit from structured tutoring.

Thus, the main disadvantage of receiving EPT is unequal access to education. According to the participants, the financial burden of private tutoring can be a significant challenge for many students, limiting their ability to access important preparatory support. However, while some participants believe that a higher price does not give the same opportunity for all, some of them believe that all the resources can be found on the Internet with free access to it for everyone. This point is illustrated in the following extracts:

Extract 33:

I don't believe that having the money for EPT gives someone a significant advantage. Determined students, even from small towns, can still succeed, as seen with those who passed exams and entered Nazarbayev University. While private tutoring can help, financial resources alone don't guarantee success. (Bagdat, November 2023).

Extract 34:

...On the other hand, while it may sound harsh, I think not being able to attend courses shouldn't be seen as an excuse. If someone truly wants to learn, there are plenty of resources available online. Platforms like YouTube, for example, offer valuable tools to practice speaking skills. (Zhangir, November 2023).

The data analysis reveals a complex relationship between the costs of EPT courses and access to quality preparation. While the financial burden of private tutoring was a significant concern for some participants, like Nursultan and Yerulan, they recognized its value in improving their IELTS performance and opening future opportunities. However, the high cost of tutoring creates a clear barrier for those unable to afford it, leading to unequal access to education.

Despite this, some participants argued that success in exams is not solely determined by financial resources. Students like Bagdat and Zhangir emphasized that with determination and the right mindset, students from smaller towns or those without the means for private tutoring can still succeed. Free online resources, such as YouTube, offer valuable tools for self-study, particularly for improving speaking skills. This suggests that while EPT courses provide structured support, they are not the only path to success, and resourcefulness can also play a significant role in overcoming financial barriers.

The Impact of PT on the Wider Society

The findings indicate that while EPT offers individual benefits, it also raises broader societal implications. On one hand, participants acknowledged that EPT can be a valuable tool for achieving academic goals, particularly in gaining admission to prestigious universities and improving chances of studying abroad. For some, it represented a crucial step toward upward mobility and personal success. On the other hand, concerns were raised about its contribution to educational inequality. Several students pointed out that access to quality tutoring often depends on financial resources, leaving those from disadvantaged backgrounds at a significant loss. As a result, EPT may unintentionally deepen the divide between students who can afford personalized instruction and those who must rely solely on public education. Therefore, many participants believe that there should be regulations on the EPT market, as illustrated in the following extracts:

Extract 35:

For me, EPT was the only way I could prepare efficiently for IELTS. It helped me understand the exam format and improve my weak areas. Without it, I don't think I

would have been accepted into my current university. It felt like an investment in my future. (Madina, November 2023).

Extract 36:

I know students who are just as capable but couldn't afford tutoring. They had to rely on free resources, which often lack structure or personalized feedback. It's unfair that success sometimes depends on how much you can pay, not how hard you work. (Yerulan, November 2023).

Extract 37:

I think the government should control tutoring prices or introduce quality standards. Right now, anyone can call themselves a tutor and charge high prices, which makes it harder for low-income students to access reliable help. That's not right. (Zhangir, November 2023).

These extracts reflect the dual nature of EPT's impact on society. While it plays a key role in helping motivated students reach academic goals and pursue international education, it also highlights systemic inequities in access. Financial barriers and a lack of regulation in the tutoring market contribute to widening the gap between students of different socioeconomic backgrounds. Thus, although EPT can be a powerful educational tool, it also underscores the urgent need for policies that promote more equitable access to academic support.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the key findings concerning students' views and experiences with English Private Tutoring (EPT). It began by introducing biographical vignettes of the eight participants, followed by a presentation of the results structured around themes and sub-themes derived from the data analysis (see Figure 1 in Chapter 3). These themes included: (a) location,

encompassing both physical and online environments; (b) formality, referring to both formal and informal learning sources; (c) locus of control, focusing on students' reasons for engaging in EPT; and (d) pedagogy, reflecting students' assessments of their EPT experiences.

The findings reveal a complex picture: while students largely view EPT as beneficial for targeted skill development, exam readiness, and access to global academic opportunities, they also express concerns about its broader social implications. Many participants emphasized the effectiveness of structured and exam-oriented instruction, appreciating the personalized feedback and motivational support provided by tutors. However, the emotional strain and intensity of such courses were also highlighted, particularly in cases where tutor expectations created stress or anxiety.

The high cost of EPT emerged as a prominent concern, raising critical issues around equity and access. While some students were able to afford private instruction, others depended on self-study or free online materials, highlighting disparities in educational support. Participants observed that such imbalances can exacerbate educational inequality, particularly in contexts where public schooling is viewed as inadequate. Several students called for greater regulation of the EPT sector to promote fair pricing and ensure quality standards.

In summary, while EPT can be a valuable resource for academic advancement, its largely unregulated and often costly nature introduces ethical and structural challenges. The findings point to the need for policy interventions that reduce these inequalities while preserving the pedagogical strengths that make EPT effective.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter presents a discussion of the key findings from the qualitative study, integrating them with the broader academic literature and Benson's (2011) four-dimensional model of language learning outside the classroom. It revisits the results from the previous chapter, which were derived from data collected through individual semi-structured interviews and narrative writing from seven first-year undergraduate students at a selective EMI university in Kazakhstan. As outlined earlier, the study sought to explore the nature and impact of EPT on access to prestigious EMI universities, while also addressing broader issues of equity and access in higher education in Kazakhstan and beyond. By revisiting the central research questions, this chapter links the participants' personal experiences with existing literature, providing insight into how EPT serves as both a tool for individual academic achievement and a reflection of larger societal issues surrounding equity and educational opportunity in Kazakhstan. The research questions are:

1. How are the four dimensions of location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy reflected in the participants' English private tutoring experiences in Kazakhstan?
2. What are the participants' perceptions about the future of Kazakhstan's private tutoring market?

The following sections of this chapter will analyze the study's findings through the lens of Benson's (2011) four-dimensional model of out-of-class language learning, focusing on the dimensions of location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy.

Revisiting the Theoretical Framework Adopted in This Study

As described in Chapter 2, this study draws on Benson's (2011) framework, which offers a useful lens for examining language learning beyond formal classrooms. The model comprises

four key dimensions: location, formality, locus of learning (i.e. motives for doing an activity), and pedagogy. In the context of Kazakhstan, these dimensions help unpack students' engagement with EPT as a strategy for gaining university admission. The location dimension captures the different types of EPT, including from face-to-face and online tutoring, particularly in response to infrastructural developments post-pandemic. The *formality* aspect highlights the mediating role of parents in their children's language education. It also involves the level of formality associated with the language learning process and the types of individuals who facilitate it. In the context of this study, students are often taught by schoolteachers who provide additional lessons after regular school hours, sometimes through licensed centers and sometimes informally. These individuals may vary in terms of their professional background and institutional affiliation, yet they all play a central role in shaping the students' English learning outside mainstream education. Locus of learning is explored by examining the balance between external pressures, such as exam demands and parental expectations, and students' own motivations to succeed academically. *Pedagogical practices* are assessed through students' views on the effectiveness of EPT in offering exam preparation, personalized instruction, and academic support. By applying Benson's (2011) model, this study investigates how EPT functions as both a supplement to and substitute for formal schooling in Kazakhstan's competitive educational landscape.

RQ1: How are the four dimensions of location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy reflected in the participants' English private tutoring experiences in Kazakhstan?

Location Dimension of Fee-charging EPT

Chapter 4 highlighted that while the majority of students received face-to-face EPT, two of them (Yerulan and Zhibek) attended online EPT, which reflects its growing popularity and acceptance among students and tutors in Kazakhstan as well as in other contexts, especially in

East Asian countries (Zhang, 2023; Yung, 2025). This trend was notably accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also mentioned in Zhang's (2023) research that the COVID-19 pandemic strengthened the influence of technology and commercial interests in digital education, leading to a significant expansion of online tutoring within the broader informal learning sector. Similarly, findings from Hajar and Karakus (2023) indicate that 81% of students in Kazakhstan had engaged in fee-based private tutoring during the pandemic, further illustrating how the global health crisis intensified dependence on supplementary educational services, especially the online mode. In this context, Zhang and Bray (2020) emphasize that while many traditional in-person tutoring businesses were forced to close alongside schools, technology-based distance learning platforms experienced a sudden and substantial surge, especially in East Asian countries. Together, these findings underscore how the shift toward online and private instruction during the pandemic was not only reactive but has since become an embedded component of the post-pandemic educational landscape.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a noticeable shift in how education was delivered, with online tutoring gaining significant traction. Traditional schools struggled to adapt to online learning, while private tutors were quicker to transition to digital platforms, offering more personalized and flexible support than what was available through school systems (Bray & Hajar, 2023). Although online learning has become common in PT practice, face-to-face group instruction remains the most preferred mode of receiving out-of-school lessons. As mentioned in Chapter 4, 50% of participants received offline group instruction due to its affordability compared to other forms of tutoring. This corresponds with findings from previous research of Hajar and Abenova (2021), which revealed that half of the first-year university students in

Kazakhstan opted for group private tutoring because it was a more financially accessible alternative to one-on-one sessions for most families.

Beyond cost, students often view group settings as beneficial for their learning environment. As mentioned by participants in Chapter 4, group instruction allows for peer interaction, collaborative problem-solving, and shared motivation, which can enhance engagement and reduce the sense of isolation that sometimes comes with self-study or individual tutoring. This finding aligns with several empirical studies on EPT conducted in Kazakhstan (e.g., Hajar, 2023; Hajar & Karakus, 2023) as well as in other contexts like Bangladesh (Hamid, 2009), Morocco (Ait Si Mhamed et al., 2023) and Uzbekistan (Hajar & Tabaeva, 2024). These studies showed that the small group mode of EPT tends to be the most favorite one among students and their families because it is more affordable than other EPT modes, along with the fact that it can foster a sense of academic community and friendly competition, encouraging students to stay committed to their learning goals. For tutors, group lessons are also more efficient in terms of time and income, allowing them to reach more students simultaneously, which further contributes to the widespread availability and popularity of this mode.

Formality Dimension of Fee-charging EPT: The Mediating Role of Social Agents

The analysis of participant narratives under the dimension of *formality* reveals that family members, particularly parents, played a significant role in shaping students' decisions to pursue EPT. For the majority of participants, parental encouragement, or in some cases, insistence, served as a primary motivator in seeking additional English language instruction outside formal school settings. This finding underscores the growing awareness among families in Kazakhstan of the instrumental role that English proficiency plays in accessing high-quality education, both domestically and abroad. This finding aligns with prior research showing that English is

increasingly perceived in Kazakhstan not just as a school subject, but as a form of cultural capital essential for social mobility, academic success, and global competitiveness (Zhunussova et al., 2022).

As English continues to function as a gatekeeping language in higher education, especially at elite EMI institutions, parents increasingly view EPT as a necessary investment in their children's academic and professional futures. Many participants indicated that their parents were not only supportive of their decision to receive EPT but also actively facilitated it by researching tutors, covering financial costs, and emphasizing the long-term value of English proficiency. This reflects a broader societal trend in which English is no longer perceived merely as a school subject, but as a critical life skill tied to socio-economic mobility, scholarship opportunities, and global competitiveness.

Furthermore, this parental involvement illustrates a shift in generational attitudes toward language learning, with many parents, regardless of their own English proficiency, prioritizing language education as part of a broader strategy to secure upward mobility for their children. In contrast to earlier decades, when foreign language learning may have been seen as supplementary or optional, today's parents often view EPT as an essential part of educational planning, particularly in competitive urban environments.

These findings align with prior research. For instance, Hajar and Karakus (2023) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, 75% of Grade 11 students in Kazakhstan engaged in private tutoring, with many families investing in EPT to enhance their children's chances of excelling in university entrance examinations and securing state grants at preferred universities. Additionally, Hajar et al. (2023) reported that 74% of fathers and 83% of mothers who organized

EPT for their children held university degrees, indicating a correlation between parental education levels and investment in EPT.

Furthermore, Hajar (2024) observed that both students and parents cited exam preparation and securing a spot in prestigious institutions as primary motivations for seeking paid private tutoring. In addition, some parents acknowledged the more intangible advantages of EPT, such as supporting students' social and emotional well-being. These studies collectively suggest that parental support does more than provide financial resources; it also contributes to students' motivation and sense of responsibility, reinforcing the perceived value of English learning as a shared family priority rather than an individual choice.

Beyond parents, schoolteachers also emerged as important yet complex actors in this landscape. Many teachers moonlight as private tutors, and their dual roles have implications for educational fairness. While some participants benefited from their teachers' insights in tutoring sessions, others reported disparities in classroom engagement, where teachers appeared less responsive during school hours, perhaps reserving their efforts for paid tutorial sessions. This aligns with broader concerns about the ethics of dual employment in unregulated private tutoring markets (Kobakhidze, 2014).

Crucially, almost all participants highlighted the inadequacy of school-based instruction in preparing them for high-stakes language proficiency tests such as IELTS. Many noted that their schoolteachers did not offer targeted IELTS training, nor did they provide personalized feedback or structured test practice. These findings are consistent with earlier research in Kazakhstan by Hajar and Abenova (2021), who reported that school curricula often fail to align with the demands of standardized exams, prompting students to seek private instruction. Similarly, Hajar and Karakus (2023) found that private tutoring in Kazakhstan frequently serves

as a de facto test preparation system, particularly for competitive entrance exams where English proficiency is critical. In contrast to mainstream schools, English private tutors were described as individuals who provided goal-oriented strategies, offering focused instruction on exam-specific skills such as writing structure, speaking fluency, and time management. This aligns with findings by Kobakhidze (2014) and Yung (2025), who observed in broader international contexts, including Hong Kong and Georgia, which private tutors often adopt exam-driven pedagogies, offering intensive practice and individualized strategies tailored to the demands of high-stakes assessments. Participants in the present study emphasized that private tutoring provided an academic space that allowed them to ask questions, receive frequent feedback, and develop test-taking strategies, features that were rarely available in overcrowded or under-resourced mainstream classrooms.

As a result, many students viewed EPT not simply as a supplement to school learning but as the primary means of preparing for university entrance exams. This perception underscores a growing reliance on private instruction for academic advancement, especially in contexts where mainstream education does not adequately meet the demands of competitive assessments. However, this trend raises serious equity concerns. While EPT may provide students with critical academic and emotional support, it remains accessible primarily to those who can afford it. This creates a stratified educational landscape, where students from wealthier families have a highly likelihood of gaining admission to universities, while those from rural or disadvantaged backgrounds are systematically excluded (see Bray, 2024).

These findings echo warnings in the broader literature that without regulatory oversight, private tutoring risks entrenching social inequality (Zhang, 2023; UNESCO, 2023). As such, although EPT functions as a vital resource for many Kazakhstani students, its growing

dominance in exam preparation points to systemic deficiencies in public education and challenges national commitments to inclusive and equitable learning opportunities.

Locus of Control Dimension: Motives for having EPT

All participants of this study received EPT during Grade 11. This is primarily to prepare for university entrance examinations, particularly the IELTS. This decision underscores a proactive approach by students to take control of their academic futures, recognizing the importance of English proficiency in accessing higher education opportunities.

The tangible benefits of EPT, as reported by participants, include improved test-taking strategies, increased familiarity with exam formats, and enhanced language skills tailored to the requirements of high-stakes assessments. These advantages not only boosted students' confidence but also contributed to higher performance levels, thereby increasing their competitiveness in university admissions processes. These findings align with the research of Hajar and Yung (2023), who observed that in various international contexts, students often pursue EPT to gain a competitive edge in English proficiency exams, which are critical for university admissions. Their study highlights that EPT serves as a strategic tool for students aiming to achieve specific academic goals, particularly in environments where English serves as a medium of instruction.

Furthermore, the study by Hajar and Karakus (2023) in Kazakhstan corroborates these motivations, indicating that a significant proportion of Grade 11 students engaged in EPT to excel in university entrance examinations and secure state grants at preferred universities. This trend reflects a broader recognition of the instrumental role that English proficiency plays in higher education access and the lengths to which students and their families are willing to go to attain it.

The use of English private tutoring as a strategic response to high-stakes examinations is not unique to Kazakhstan but is widely documented in various global contexts. In East Asia, for instance, private tutoring is deeply embedded in the educational cultures of countries such as South Korea, Japan, and China, where students rely heavily on supplementary instruction to prepare for national university entrance examinations (Bray, 2023). In Hong Kong, Yung (2022) reported that many students view private tutoring as essential for success in the English Language paper of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, particularly due to its perceived efficiency in teaching exam-specific techniques. Similarly, in Egypt and India, Hartmann (2008) and Bhorkar and Bray (2018) observed that private tutoring is often seen as indispensable for excelling in English and other core subjects tested in nationwide assessments, thereby improving chances of university admission and social mobility. These trends reflect a broader pattern in which the pressures of competitive exam systems incentivize students and their families to invest in EPT as a means of gaining a competitive advantage. This global evidence underscores how EPT operates as a parallel mechanism to formal education, offering targeted preparation that students may not receive in regular school settings, particularly in systems where access to higher education is determined by standardized testing.

In summary, the decision by participants to engage in EPT during Grade 11 was driven by a clear understanding of its tangible benefits in achieving academic objectives. This proactive stance illustrates a high degree of self-regulation and goal-oriented behavior, aligning with the *locus of control* dimension by demonstrating students' belief in their capacity to influence their educational outcomes through deliberate actions.

The pedagogy dimension of fee-charging EPT

One of the most prominent advantages of EPT identified by the participants was the opportunity to receive individualized and personalized instruction. All participants in this study emphasized that EPT allowed tutors to adjust the pace, content, and focus of lessons according to their individual strengths and weaknesses compared to mainstream school classrooms. This level of tailored support made students feel more understood and empowered, particularly when preparing for high-stakes assessments like the IELTS. For instance, participants mentioned that private tutors often concentrated on the exact sections of the exam that the student struggled with, such as improving coherence in writing or developing strategies for the speaking section. This method of teaching enabled learners to progress more quickly and gain more confidence in their skills.

Moreover, the students appreciated the safe, non-judgmental environment provided by EPT settings, which encouraged active participation and deeper engagement. Unlike in school, where students often hesitated to ask questions due to fear of embarrassment or time constraints, private tutoring enabled them to seek clarification without hesitation. Several participants shared that they felt more comfortable expressing confusion and asking repetitive questions during tutoring sessions, which significantly enhanced their understanding of complex grammar rules, vocabulary usage, and exam strategies. In this sense, EPT not only supported academic development but also offered emotional reassurance and motivation, reinforcing students' belief in their ability to succeed (Bray, 2023). The role of the tutor extended beyond that of an instructor to that of a mentor, guiding students not just through subject content but also through their anxieties and academic insecurities.

These insights are consistent with existing literature that underscores the pedagogical strength of EPT in offering customized feedback and scaffolding. For example, Hajar and Yung (2023) argue that EPT provides a space for students to engage in focused and meaningful interactions with tutors, allowing for more nuanced language development and exam preparation. They note that EPT sessions often go beyond content delivery to include personalized learning strategies, thereby fostering metacognitive growth among learners. Yung (2022) further highlights that individualized feedback in private tutoring, especially for language learners preparing for high-stakes tests, can significantly enhance learner autonomy and self-regulation. The pedagogical advantages reported by the participants in this study align closely with these claims, as students frequently attributed their academic improvement and growing confidence in English to the individual focus they received from their tutors.

However, some researchers also caution that the quality of individualized attention in EPT can be highly variable depending on the tutor's qualifications and teaching experience. In unregulated markets, such as Kazakhstan's, where there are few official standards for private tutoring, Bray and Lykins (2012) warn that some tutors may lack the pedagogical training required to provide meaningful individualized instruction. Despite this concern, the participants in this study consistently described their tutors as knowledgeable, experienced, and responsive to their needs. This suggests that, while systemic issues of quality control may exist in the broader EPT sector, students who actively seek out experienced tutors are more likely to benefit from the pedagogical strengths of private instruction.

Therefore, the findings indicate that the most valued pedagogical feature of EPT was its flexibility and personalization, which created a more effective and supportive learning environment than many participants experienced in mainstream education. This allowed students

to feel more in control of their progress, gain targeted support, and develop the specific competencies needed to achieve their academic goals. These advantages contribute to the growing reliance on EPT among students in Kazakhstan and strengthen its perceived function as an essential addition to formal education, especially when preparing for competitive university admissions.

While EPT offers pedagogical advantages such as individualized attention and tailored instruction, its benefits are not equally accessible to all students. A prominent concern raised by participants in this study revolves around the social and economic inequalities perpetuated by the privatized nature of the tutoring market. Access to EPT is largely determined by a family's financial capacity, placing students from lower-income households at a significant disadvantage when preparing for high-stakes university entrance exams such as IELTS. As a result, EPT, though beneficial in practice, operates in a way that restricts equitable access to higher education opportunities.

This issue is particularly pressing in Kazakhstan, where university admission, especially to prestigious EMI institutions, is highly competitive and often contingent upon performance in standardized assessments. Participants acknowledged that students from urban and financially secure backgrounds were more likely to engage in sustained private tutoring, giving them a distinct advantage in accessing limited state-funded grants. This trend is consistent with the findings of Hajar and Abenova (2021), who report that the majority of grant recipients come from urban areas and had access to PT to help them prepare. Given that only about 25% of students receive full or partial state funding (Chankseliani et al., 2020; OECD, 2017), PT acts as a gatekeeper, inadvertently marginalizing students from rural or low-income communities.

These patterns raise broader concerns about the alignment of private tutoring practices with global education goals. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal seeks to guarantee inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education by 2030 (UNESCO, 2017). However, without comprehensive regulation, the PT sector risks undermining this vision. As noted by Zhang (2021), the existing tutoring market remains largely "exclusive and inequitable," and failure to address these disparities could hinder national and international efforts to democratize access to education. Thus, although EPT may offer short-term academic gains, its unregulated expansion contributes to the reproduction of existing social hierarchies, calling into question its role in promoting long-term educational equity.

RQ2: What are the participants' perceptions about the future of Kazakhstan's private tutoring market?

Participants in this study consistently expressed concerns regarding the unregulated nature of Kazakhstan's PT sector. They observed that the absence of formal oversight has led to a proliferation of tutoring services of varying quality, making it challenging for students and parents to discern effective providers. This sentiment aligns with findings from Hajar and Abenova (2021), who reported that the rapid expansion of PT in Kazakhstan has outpaced the development of regulatory frameworks, resulting in a market characterized by disparities in service quality and accessibility.

The lack of regulation is not unique to Kazakhstan. Globally, many countries grapple with the challenges posed by burgeoning PT markets operating with minimal oversight. Kwo and Bray (2014) highlight that in numerous contexts, PT functions as a parallel education system, often referred to as "shadow education," which can exacerbate educational inequalities due to its

unregulated nature. This global trend underscores the need for comprehensive policies to ensure that PT contributes positively to educational outcomes without reinforcing existing disparities.

Participants also noted that the demand for EPT will be increased, driven primarily by the high stakes associated with standardized examinations such as the IELTS. The perception is that success in these exams is crucial for accessing higher education opportunities, both domestically and internationally. This belief is supported by Hajar and Yung (2023), who argue that the intensification of high-stakes testing has led to a surge in demand for EPT, as students seek specialized support to enhance their performance. Furthermore, the global emphasis on English proficiency as a key academic and professional competency has amplified the importance of EPT in educational trajectories.

The combination of high demand and lack of regulation raises concerns about the equitable access to quality EPT services. Without standardized qualifications for tutors or accreditation for tutoring centers, there is a risk that students may invest time and resources into ineffective or substandard instruction. This scenario not only undermines individual educational outcomes but also perpetuates systemic inequalities, as students from more affluent backgrounds are better positioned to access reputable tutoring services. UNESCO (2015) emphasizes the importance of regulatory measures to ensure that PT serves the public good, advocating for policies that promote quality assurance and equitable access.

In this regard, participants in this study consistently expressed the view that the EPT market in Kazakhstan is likely to expand further, particularly due to the growing demand for English proficiency in university admissions and international mobility. This anticipated growth is not limited to Kazakhstan but reflects broader trends across Central Asia, where private tutoring markets remain largely unregulated. Hajar and Tabaeva (2024) observed a significant

increase in EPT enrolment among primary school students in Uzbekistan, suggesting that shadow education is becoming normalized even at early stages of education. Similarly, Hajar and Karakus (2023) highlighted the rapid expansion of fee-based tutoring in Kazakhstan during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly through digital platforms. The proliferation of online tutoring has made private instruction more accessible across urban and rural regions, yet it has also complicated efforts to monitor service quality and tutor qualifications. Comparable concerns have been raised in other contexts, including China and India, where online platforms have outpaced regulatory frameworks, leading to uneven standards and concerns over student well-being (Zhang, 2023; Gupta, 2023). As the EPT market continues to evolve in Central Asia, particularly through digital modalities, participants emphasized the urgent need for comprehensive regulatory policies to ensure transparency, safeguard student interests, and promote equitable access to quality tutoring services.

In conclusion, the participants' perceptions highlight a critical need for the development and implementation of regulatory frameworks governing the PT sector in Kazakhstan. Such measures would aim to standardize service quality, protect students from exploitative practices, and ensure that the benefits of EPT are accessible to all learners, regardless of socioeconomic status. Addressing these challenges is essential for harnessing the potential of PT to enhance educational outcomes while mitigating its capacity to reinforce existing inequalities.

Chapter Summary

This chapter built upon the findings presented in Chapter 4 by interpreting them through the lens of existing scholarly literature and employing Benson's (2011) four-dimensional model of out-of-class language learning, location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy, as a guiding framework. Each dimension was examined in depth, revealing how participants'

experiences with English Private Tutoring (EPT) were shaped by both individual motivations and broader sociocultural dynamics. For example, the growing normalization of online tutoring, especially post-COVID-19, was discussed alongside global research highlighting technology's expanding role in education. Moreover, the study illuminated how family influence and high-stakes exams play a central role in students' engagement with EPT, with motivations often tied to academic advancement and social mobility.

The chapter also explored participants' perceptions of the future of Kazakhstan's EPT market, emphasizing concerns over the lack of regulatory oversight and the implications this may have for educational equity. These insights were aligned with international research that calls attention to the unchecked expansion of shadow education systems. By situating the participants' voices within broader academic debates, the discussion highlighted both the promise and the pitfalls of EPT in Kazakhstan's evolving educational landscape. The final chapter will reflect on the practical, policy, and pedagogical implications of these findings, address the study's limitations, and propose directions for future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The previous chapter presented the key findings drawn from this qualitative research, which aimed to explore how a group of first-year undergraduate students in Kazakhstan perceived and assessed their experiences with EPT over the preceding 12 months. The research placed particular emphasis on understanding the nature of EPT, evaluating its perceived effectiveness, and examining its broader influence on classroom learning and equitable access to competitive EMI universities in Kazakhstan. Chapter 5 contextualized the findings within existing literature on private tutoring, both within Asia and internationally, and was guided by Benson's (2011) four-dimensional framework for out-of-class language learning (location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy). The study gathered data from eight participants through two qualitative methods: narrative essays and semi-structured interviews. As outlined earlier, this research was guided by two main questions:

1. How are the four dimensions of location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy reflected in the participants' English private tutoring experiences in Kazakhstan?
2. What are the participants' perceptions about the future of Kazakhstan's private tutoring market?

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study while also assessing its strengths and limitations. Therefore, Chapter 6 outlines the possible implications for educational policy and highlights directions for future research.

Major Conclusions of the Study

This study explored the EPT experiences of first-year undergraduate students at a highly selective English-medium university in Kazakhstan. Drawing on Benson's (2011) four-dimensional framework of out-of-class language learning (location, formality, locus of control,

and pedagogy) the study aimed to understand the motivations, experiences, and outcomes associated with EPT, particularly in the context of preparing for high-stakes examinations such as IELTS. The research revealed several noteworthy findings that highlight both the personal benefits and broader social implications of EPT in Kazakhstan.

Firstly, in terms of *location*, the study found that while online tutoring has become increasingly common, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face group instruction remains the most preferred mode of learning among participants. Half of the participants reported attending in-person group classes, mainly due to their affordability compared to one-on-one tutoring. Online tutoring gained traction during the pandemic as students and tutors quickly adapted to digital platforms, filling the gap left by unprepared mainstream schools. This shift reflects the growing reliance on technological tools for informal language learning. However, despite the convenience of online learning, students continued to value face-to-face interactions, particularly for their perceived effectiveness and personal engagement.

In terms of *formality*, the study found that social agents, especially family members, played a significant role in students' decisions to pursue EPT. Most participants indicated that their parents encouraged and financially supported their tutoring. This reflects a broader trend of increasing parental awareness about the importance of English proficiency for academic and professional advancement. As English becomes more closely linked to social mobility and access to elite educational institutions, families are more willing to invest in private tutoring as a means of securing future success for their children. This aligns with the findings of previous studies, which emphasize the growing role of families in driving demand for supplementary education.

Regarding *locus of control*, participants' motivations for engaging in EPT were categorized into short-term and long-term goals. Short-term motivations were primarily linked to

preparation for high-stakes international exams, particularly IELTS, a critical requirement for admission to their chosen EMI university. Participants emphasized that EPT played a crucial role in familiarizing them with the exam's structure and typical question types. They outlined various advantages of EPT in this context, including practicing IELTS tasks with a tutor, receiving individualized feedback, completing mock tests, and acquiring targeted test-taking strategies. Special emphasis was placed on improving speaking and writing skills, which participants identified as the most challenging sections of the exam. Several also highlighted the importance of mastering English grammar rules to produce precise and coherent academic texts for the writing section. Moreover, students appreciated the supplementary resources provided by their tutors, noting that these materials contributed significantly to their progress in developing the language skills assessed in IELTS.

The long-term motivation for participating in EPT was closely connected to students' aspirations for future careers in international or English-speaking contexts. Several participants regarded EPT as a strategic means of enhancing their English proficiency, which they perceived as essential for accessing global employment opportunities. They believed that strengthening their language skills through sustained tutoring would increase their competitiveness in the international labor market and enable them to pursue professional roles where English represents the primary medium of communication.

Finally, concerning *pedagogy*, participants consistently emphasized the value of individualized attention in private tutoring settings. Many students reported that their English private tutors provided more personalized support, clearer explanations, and tailored feedback compared to their English language teachers at school. This was considered one of the most significant advantages of EPT, contributing to greater confidence and faster progress in language

acquisition. While this aligns with existing literature suggesting that EPT can be pedagogically beneficial, it also raises concerns about inequality, as such tailored instruction is often only accessible to students from more privileged socioeconomic backgrounds.

In addition to the benefits, the findings also highlighted some concerns regarding the unregulated nature of the EPT market in Kazakhstan. Participants expressed uncertainty about the qualifications and teaching quality of private tutors, as there is currently no formal oversight or standards in place. This echoes concerns raised in international literature about the lack of regulation in shadow education markets globally. Moreover, the growing reliance on private tutoring may further exacerbate educational inequalities, as students from lower-income families are less likely to afford such services.

In conclusion, the study indicates that EPT significantly impacts students' academic paths, especially concerning gaining admission to competitive universities. Although it provides notable benefits regarding tailored learning and exam readiness, its prevalent application also exposes deeper systemic problems, including disparities in access to quality education and the commercialization of language acquisition.

Strength and Limitations of the Study

The strength of the current study is that it contributes to a growing body of research on EPT, particularly within the context of post-Soviet Central Asia, where empirical investigations remain scarce. While EPT has been widely discussed in broader Asian contexts, its role in shaping students' educational trajectories in Kazakhstan has not been extensively examined. This study addresses this gap by exploring how EPT influences access to elite EMI universities, thus shedding light on the intersection of language learning, educational equity, and private tutoring. By focusing on first-year undergraduates' experiences with EPT in the year leading up to

university entry, this research offers a nuanced understanding of how private tutoring is perceived and utilized in preparation for high-stakes academic transitions.

Another notable strength is the study's robust methodological framework. The use of two qualitative methods, narrative essays and semi-structured interviews, enabled the collection of rich, first-hand accounts of students' experiences. Employing multiple data sources allowed for triangulation, which enhanced the credibility, depth, and reliability of the findings. Triangulation not only validated key themes by cross-checking data from different angles but also provided a more comprehensive understanding of how EPT operates within both informal and formal learning environments. This multi-method approach ensured that participants could articulate their views in varied ways, leading to more nuanced and multifaceted insights.

The study is also strengthened by its focus on first-year undergraduates who had recently undergone the transition to university. This focus allowed for fresh and detailed recollections of their EPT experiences, reducing the risk of memory decay and increasing the accuracy of the data. Additionally, the integration of Benson's (2011) four-dimensional framework provided a well-established theoretical lens, which added coherence to the analysis and positioned the findings within a broader scholarly conversation on out-of-class language learning.

Collectively, these methodological and contextual strengths make the study a valuable resource for language educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to understand the pedagogical and policy implications of EPT in Kazakhstan's evolving educational landscape.

Despite the valuable insights gained through this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First and foremost, the research was based on a small sample of eight first-year undergraduate students from a single highly selective EMI university in Kazakhstan. While the aim of qualitative research is to gain depth rather than breadth, the limited number of participants

means that the findings cannot be generalized to the wider student population in Kazakhstan or other educational contexts. Future studies with larger and more diverse samples would allow for a broader understanding of the phenomenon.

Another significant limitation relates to the methodological design of the study. While the use of qualitative methods, such as narrative essays and semi-structured interviews, enabled the collection of in-depth data, the lack of a mixed-methods approach constrained the scope of analysis. That is, the study did not generate quantitative data that could have captured measurable aspects such as the frequency of tutoring sessions, duration of engagement, and financial investment. Including a quantitative dimension would have complemented the qualitative findings by providing statistical patterns and general trends. This would have allowed for a more holistic portrayal of students' engagement with EPT. A mixed-methods approach could also have strengthened the study's ability to inform policy and practice by offering both depth and generalizability, thereby enhancing its practical relevance for stakeholders seeking to understand the broader scale and impact of private tutoring in Kazakhstan.

Additionally, this research focused solely on students' perspectives, which, although central to the study's aims, presented only one side of the story. The voices of other key stakeholders in the EPT ecosystem, such as private tutors and parents, were not included. Their insights could have enriched the understanding of how decisions around private tutoring are made, the pedagogical approaches used by tutors, and the financial and emotional investments made by families. Incorporating these perspectives in future research would provide a more balanced and comprehensive analysis of the private tutoring landscape in Kazakhstan.

Implications and Further Recommendation

The findings of this study reveal critical implications for education policy, particularly regarding equity in access to high-quality English education in Kazakhstan. One of the key insights emerging from the data is the disparity between graduates of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) and those from mainstream schools. Participants who graduated from NIS were more privileged in terms of their prior exposure to IELTS preparation, as this component is integrated into their English language curriculum. In contrast, students from mainstream schools reported receiving lower-quality education, with limited or no access to formal IELTS preparation at school. This structural inequality has led many students to rely on private tutoring as a compensatory tool, further reinforcing the divide between those who can afford supplemental education and those who cannot.

These disparities call for immediate policy attention. Policymakers should consider strengthening the English curriculum in mainstream schools to include exam-oriented instruction such as IELTS preparation, thereby reducing the dependence on EPT for academic advancement. In parallel, there is a pressing need for regulations governing the private tutoring market. Current practices in Kazakhstan allow for largely unregulated private tutoring, which raises concerns regarding the quality of instruction, pricing transparency, and the safety of learners, particularly in online settings.

In this context, regulating the PT market becomes increasingly important. At present, Kazakhstan lacks oversight mechanisms to ensure quality, safety, and fairness in the provision of PT. As Hajar (2024) notes, many parents remain uninformed about the qualifications of private tutors or the quality of services their children receive. Creating standardized frameworks for tutor certification and transparent pricing could help address socioeconomic disparities and ensure that

students from all backgrounds can benefit from PT. Regulatory measures might also include setting minimum qualifications for tutors and establishing student-to-teacher ratios in tutorial centers to avoid overcrowding and maintain instructional quality.

Given the rise of online tutoring, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, new challenges have emerged that require targeted oversight. Zhang (2023) warns that online tutoring platforms, while convenient, also present risks such as children being exposed to inappropriate or harmful content, which is often difficult to monitor. She notes that governments in countries like China have started to implement national and local systems for tutor registration, supervision, and content monitoring, with companies employing artificial intelligence to identify and report problematic interactions. Kazakhstan could look to such models for developing its own regulatory frameworks to ensure both the safety and educational quality of online EPT services.

Furthermore, regulation should extend to the qualification of tutors and the operational capacity of tutorial centers to maintain consistent standards. With many students receiving instruction from individuals whose teaching credentials are unclear, there is a risk that learners may be misinformed or underprepared, especially for high-stakes assessments like IELTS.

In addition to regulatory efforts, future research should aim to broaden the understanding of the EPT landscape in Kazakhstan. This includes incorporating the voices of other key stakeholders, such as parents and private tutors, to gain a more holistic picture of the motivations, expectations, and outcomes associated with private tutoring. Moreover, while this study focused on Grade 11 students, further studies should explore students in earlier grade levels to track how engagement with EPT begins and evolves. Another overlooked area is the experience of students in rural regions, where access to high-quality tutors is significantly

limited. Investigating the nature and availability of EPT in rural settings could help design targeted interventions to address educational inequalities across geographical lines.

To conclude, the process of writing this thesis was both demanding and rewarding, made significantly more manageable through the consistent guidance of my supervisor and the encouragement of my academic instructors. Their constructive feedback, expertise, and unwavering support were instrumental in helping me navigate the complexities of academic research. This journey not only enhanced my research and analytical skills but also deepened my understanding of the nuanced field of shadow education.

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Appendix A

Appendix A: AI Declaration Form



Thesis Title: Buying your way into Higher Education? Learning English in the Shadows and its Impact on Admitting to a Highly selective EMI University in Kazakhstan

Declaration of the Use of Generative AI

I hereby declare that I have read and understood NUGSE's policy concerning appropriate use of AI and composed this work independently (please check one):

- with the use of artificial intelligence tools, or
 without the use of artificial intelligence tools.


(If you have used AI tools as defined in the GSE policy document, please complete the rest of this form.)

During the preparation of this thesis/examination, I used Grammarly [NAME of TOOL] to check my work for academic errors [REASON]¹.

I also declare that I

- am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),
 have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,
 am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,
 have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work, and
 acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed NUGSE's guidelines regarding appropriate AI use.

Name: Azhar Yergazina

Signature: 

Date: 05.05.2025

¹ Examples: brainstorm ideas / find or select sources on a topic / paraphrase / structure and organize the written text / edit the text for clarity and grammar / ask for tips to improve coherence / cite and reference sources

Appendix B

Research tools: Prompts for narrative essay

Dear research participant,

Please, write an essay in Kazakh, Russian or English covering the following points:

1. Could you please write your name?
2. At what age did you begin learning English?
3. Can you please tell me at what point in your life did you realize the importance of English?
4. When did you start attending English private tutoring? For what reasons?
5. Could you tell the reasons for receiving English private tutoring in the last 12 months?
6. Could you please share how did you prepare for the IELTS examination?
7. What was the form of English private tutoring (face-to-face, online, one-to-one, small-group, large groups) in the preceding 12 months?
8. Did you experience any challenges related to balancing your academic studies at school and private tutoring sessions?

Инструменты исследования: Вопросы к повествовательному эссе

Уважаемый участник исследования,

Напишите, пожалуйста, эссе, которое охватывает следующие вопросы:

1. Не могли бы Вы написать своё имя?
2. Во сколько лет Вы начали изучать английский язык?
3. Можете ли поделиться с тем, когда Вы осознали важность английского языка в своей жизни?
4. Когда Вы начали посещать частные занятия по английскому языку? По каким причинам?
5. Можете рассказать о причинах по которым Вы решили заниматься с частным преподавателем английского языка за последние 12 месяцев?
6. Можете поделиться с тем, как Вы готовились к сдаче экзамена IELTS?
7. В какой форме проводились занятия с частным преподавателем английского языка (очно, онлайн, индивидуально, в малых группах, крупные группы) за последние 12 месяцев?
8. Испытывали ли Вы какие-либо трудности, связанные с совмещением учебы в школе и частные репетиторские занятия?

Зерттеу құралдары: Баяндама эссесіне арналған сұрақтар

Құрметті зерттеуге қатысушы,

Төмендегі сұрақтарды қамтитын эссе жазуыңызды сұраймын:

1. Сіздің аты-жөніңіз?
2. Ағылшын тілін неше жастан үйрене бастадыңыз?
3. Ағылшын тілінің өміріңіздегі маңыздылығын қашан түсінгеніңізбен бөлісе аласыз ба?
4. Ағылшын тілінің жеке сабақтарына қашан қатыса бастадыңыз? Қандай себептермен?
5. Соңғы 12 айда жеке ағылшын тілі мұғалімінен оқуға шешім қабылдауыңыздың себептерін айта аласыз ба?
6. IELTS емтиханына қалай дайындалғаныңызбен бөлісе аласыз ба?
7. Соңғы 12 айда жеке ағылшын тілі оқытушысымен сабақтар қандай формада өткізілді (бетпе-бет, онлайн, жеке, шағын топтарда, үлкен топтарда)?
8. Мектептегі оқу мен қосымша жеке репетиторлық курстарды біріктірумен байланысты қиындықтар болды ма?

Appendix C

Individual semi-structured interview protocol for undergraduate students on their perceptions of English private tutoring, their association between English private tutoring, and the impact of English private tutoring on their performance on IELTS

Interviewer: Azhar Yergazina, Master of Arts in Multilingual Education second year student at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

Interviewee:

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the perception of undergraduate students in the highly selective EMI university on receiving English Private tutoring and how this experience affected their scores on the IELTS examination.

Questions:

1. Can you tell me about your geographic background information? *Probe: Are you from an urban or rural area?*
2. How long did you receive English private tutoring?
3. How much did English private tutoring cost on average per month?
4. What were your reasons for receiving English private tutoring (especially IELTS)?
Probe: Was it caused due to improving academic success or your interest in learning English?
5. Was learning in English private lessons different from learning in class? Why and how?
6. Do you think that receiving English private tutoring had an impact on your IELTS examination score?
7. If yes, was this impact positive or negative? In what ways?

8. If it had a positive impact, how do you associate receiving English private tutoring with access to this university? **Probe:** *Do you think that you could not have met the admission criteria of university selection if you had not received English private tutoring?*
9. Was there anything that you liked the most in the experience of receiving English private tutoring?
10. Was there anything that you did not like about English private tutoring?
11. What do you feel about the impact of English private tutoring on the wider society?
Probe: *How do you think English private tutoring affects social inequality?*
12. What do you think can be done to address the negative impacts of English private tutoring on the wider society?

Протокол индивидуального полуструктурированного интервью со студентами бакалавриата по вопросам их восприятия частного репетиторства по английскому языку, их ассоциаций с частным репетиторством по английскому языку и влияния частного репетиторства по английскому языку на их успехи в IELTS

Интервьюер: Ажар Ергазина, студентка второго курса магистратуры по многоязычному образованию Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета

Интервьюируемый:

Цель данного качественного исследования - изучить восприятие студентами бакалавриата высокоселективного университета с английским языком как средство обучения занятий с частным репетитором по английскому языку и то, как этот опыт повлиял на их результаты на экзамене IELTS.

Вопросы:

1. Можете ли Вы рассказать о своей географической биографии?

Дополнительный вопрос: Вы из городской или сельской местности?

2. Как долго Вы занимались с частным преподавателем английского языка?
3. Сколько в среднем стоили услуги частного репетитора по английскому языку в месяц?
4. Каковы были причины, побудившие Вас обратиться к частному репетитору по английскому языку (особенно IELTS)? *Дополнительный вопрос: Было ли это вызвано улучшением успеваемости или Вашим интересом к изучению английского языка?*

5. Отличается ли обучение на частных уроках английского языка от обучения в классе? Почему и чем?
6. Как Вы считаете, повлияли ли занятия с частным преподавателем английского языка на Ваш результат на экзамене IELTS?
7. Если да, то это влияние было положительным или отрицательным? Каким образом?
8. Если это влияние было положительным, то как Вы связываете получение услуг частного репетитора по английскому языку с поступлением в этот университет?
Дополнительный вопрос: Считаете ли Вы, что не смогли бы соответствовать критериям отбора в университет, если бы не занимались с частным репетитором английского языка?
9. Было ли что-то, что Вам больше всего понравилось в процессе занятий с частным преподавателем английского языка?
10. Было ли что-то, что Вам не понравилось в занятиях с частным преподавателем английского языка?
11. Что Вы думаете о влиянии частного репетиторства по английскому языку на общество в целом? *Дополнительный вопрос: Как, по Вашему мнению, частное репетиторство по английскому языку влияет на социальное неравенство?*
12. Что, по Вашему мнению, можно сделать для устранения негативных последствий частного репетиторства на английском языке для общества в целом?

**Бакалавриат студенттерінің жеке ағылшын тілінен сабақ беру туралы түсініктері,
олардың жеке ағылшын тілінен сабақ алуымен байланысы және жеке ағылшын
тілінің IELTS нәтижелеріне әсері туралы жартылай жүйеленген жеке сұхбат
хагтамасы.**

Сұхбат алушы: Ажар Ерғазина, Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебінің көптілді білім беру мамандығының екінші курс магистранты

Сұхбат беруші:

Бұл сапалы зерттеудің мақсаты – жоғары таңдаулы ағылшын тілінде оқытатын университеттің бакалавриат студенттерінің жеке ағылшын тілі оқытушысымен тәжірибесі жайында түсінік және бұл тәжірибенің IELTS нәтижелеріне қалай әсер еткенін зерттеу.

Сұрақтар:

1. Географиялық өмірбаяныңыз туралы айтып бере аласыз ба? *Қосымша сұрақ: Сіз қаладан немесе ауылдансыз ба?*
2. Сіз жеке ағылшын тілі мұғалімінен қанша уақыт оқыдыңыз?
3. Ағылшын тілінің жеке репетиторының қызметі айына орта есеппен қанша тұрады?
4. Ағылшын тілінің жеке тәлімгеріне жүгінуге қандай себептер түрткі болды (әсіресе IELTS)? *Қосымша сұрақ: Бұл оқу үлгерімін жақсару үшін бе немесе ағылшын тілін үйренуге деген қызығушылығыңыздың арқасында болды ма?*
5. Жеке ағылшын тілі сабақтарының сыныптағы оқытудан айырмашылығы бар ма? Неліктен және немен?
6. Жеке ағылшын тілі мұғалімімен оқу IELTS емтиханындағы нәтижеңізге әсер етті деп ойлайсыз ба?

7. Олай болса, оң әсер болды ма, әлде теріс болды ма? Қалайша?
8. Егер бұл әсер оң болса, сіз жеке ағылшын тілі оқытушысының қызметін осы университетке түсумен қалай байланыстырасыз? **Қосымша сұрақ:** *Ағылшын тілінен жеке оқытушыдан оқымағаныңызда университет таңдау критерийлеріне сай болмас едім деп ойлайсыз ба?*
9. Ағылшын тілінің жеке мұғалімімен оқудың сізге ұнаған тұсы болды ма?
10. Жеке ағылшын тілі мұғалімімен өткізген сабақтарыңызда сізге ұнамаған нәрсе болды ма?
11. Ағылшын тілінен жеке оқытудың жалпы қоғамға әсері туралы не ойлайсыз?
Қосымша сұрақ: *Жеке ағылшын тілінен сабақ беру әлеуметтік теңсіздікке қалай әсер етеді деп ойлайсыз?*
12. Сіздің ойыңызша, ағылшын тілінде жеке репетиторлық оқытудың жалпы қоғамға тигізетін кері салдарын жою үшін не істеуге болады?

Appendix D

Gatekeeper E-mail/Letter

Dear [Gatekeeper Name],

My name is Azhar Yergazina and I'm currently beginning a research project for my Master's thesis at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education.

This study, approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University, involves a narrative essay and individual semi-structured interviews to explore the experiences of undergraduate students in highly selective EMI university attending English private tutoring and how they associate receiving English private tutoring and access to higher education.

I am writing to ask your permission to be allowed access to the students who study in your department for individual semi-structured interviews. The data collection should take a month in a period between November and December 2023. The interview can be conducted at any time convenient for the participants and university schedule within this period. All I need is to arrange a suitable time to conduct individual interviews with the undergraduate students.

All responses and results of the study are strictly confidential.

If this is possible, please could you e-mail me at azhar.yergazina@nu.edu.kz and send contact corporate emails of the students who are ready to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time and I hope for a prompt reply.

Yours sincerely,

Azhar Yergazina

Электронное письмо/Сообщение связующему

Уважаемый [Имя связующего],

Меня зовут Ажар Ергазина, и в настоящее время я начинаю исследовательский проект по подготовке магистерской диссертации в Высшей школе образования Назарбаев Университета.

Данное исследование, одобренное Комитетом по этике исследований Назарбаев Университета, включает в себя повествовательное эссе и индивидуальные полуструктурированные интервью с целью изучения опыта студентов бакалавриата высокоселективного университета с английским языком как средство обучения, посетивших частных репетиторов английского языка, и того, как они связывают получение частного репетиторства английского языка и поступление в высшее учебное заведение.

Я обращаюсь к Вам с просьбой дать разрешение на доступ к студентам, обучающимся в Вашем факультете для проведения индивидуальных полуструктурированных интервью. Сбор данных должен занять месяц в период с ноября по декабрь 2023 года. Интервью может быть проведено в любое время, удобное для участников и расписания университета в этот период. Все, что мне нужно - это согласовать удобное время для проведения индивидуальных интервью со студентами бакалавриата.

Все ответы и результаты исследования строго конфиденциальны.

Если это возможно, не могли бы Вы прислать мне на почту azhar.yergazina@nu.edu.kz контактные корпоративные электронные адреса студентов, готовых принять участие в данном исследовании.

Благодарю Вас за уделенное время и надеюсь на скорый ответ.

Искренне,

Ажар Ергазина

Делдалға электрондық пошта/хабарлама

Құрметті [Делдалдың аты],

Мен - Ажар Ерғазина, қазір Назарбаев Университетінің Жоғары білім мектебінде магистрлік диссертация бойынша ғылыми жобаны бастап жатырмын.

Назарбаев Университетінің Зерттеу этикасы жөніндегі комитеті бекіткен бұл зерттеу жоғары таңдаулы ағылшын тілінде оқытатын университеттегі бакалавриат студенттерінің жеке ағылшын тілінің оқытушыларымен тәжірибесін және олардың осы тәжірибесін жоғары оқу орнына қабылданумен қалай байланысатынын зерттейді. Бұл мақсатқа жету үшін осы зерттеу баяндалған эссе мен жеке жартылай жүйеленген сұхбаттарды қамтиды.

Мен сізден осы зерттеуге қатысушылардан, атап айтқанда сіздің факультетіңізде білім алатын студенттерден жекеленген жартылай жүйеленген сұхбат жүргізу үшін рұқсат сұраймын. Деректерді жинау 2023 жылдың қарашасы мен желтоқсаны аралығында бір айға созылуы керек. Өңгімелесу қатысушыларға ыңғайлы кез келген уақытта және сол кезеңдегі университет кестесіне сәйкес жүргізіледі. Маған тек бакалавриат студенттерімен жеке сұхбат өткізуге ыңғайлы уақытты ұйымдастыру мүмкіндігін сұраймын.

Барлық жауаптар мен зерттеу нәтижелері қатаң құпия болып табылады.

Егер студенттер осы зерттеуге қатысуға дайын болса, мүмкіндігінше, azhar.yergazina@nu.edu.kz электронды поштасына осы зерттеуге қатысуға дайын студенттердің корпоративтік электрондық пошталарын жіберуіңізді өтінемін.

Уақытыңызды бөлгеніңізге рахмет және жылдам жауап береді деп үміттенемін.

Құрметпен,

Ажар Ерғазина

Appendix E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

“Buying your way into Higher Education? Learning English in the Shadows and its Impact on Admitting to a Highly selective EMI University in Kazakhstan”

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a research study, undertaken by Azhar Yergazina, a second-year Master of Arts in Multilingual Education student at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education aimed at studying the relationship between receiving English private tutoring and university acceptance. You will be asked to participate in an interview to share your experience of receiving English private tutoring which will be audio-taped and transcribed with your permission to analyze the data. If you do not feel comfortable with recording your response, I will take notes during the interview. This interview consists of fourteen questions about your experience of receiving English private tutoring, your perception of English private tutoring, and its impact on the wider society. The interview is anonymous as the researcher will not audio-tape your name and will use pseudonyms. This study ensures confidentiality, anonymity, and non-traceability of personal information about you.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Before the individual interviews take place, you will be given 7-10 days to write a narrative essay. The individual semi-structured interviews will take approximately 25-35 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are minimal risks for participants of the study. In case if you may find some questions inappropriate for this study, you can skip that question or stop the interview without any negative consequences. To ensure your safety, I will use a pseudonym instead of your name and any names you mention during the interview on the interview transcript. The transcripts and the file linking the names with pseudonyms will be stored in a personal software which will be password-protected. No uncovering personal information about you will be used in the final version of the dissertation/written report.

You will not receive any kind of compensation or benefits for participating in this study. However, your response may help the researcher to study the contribution of English private tutoring to undergraduate students' academic achievement in Kazakhstan. Giving voice to undergraduate students helps to contribute to the literature of English private tutoring where little is known about students' experiences and aspirations.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand that 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 also be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Researcher: Azhar Yergazina

Master of Arts in Multilingual Education second-year student
Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

Phone number: +7 778 982 54 64

Email: azhar.yergazina@nu.edu.kz

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, Anas Hajar, via email anas.hajar@nu.edu.kz or telephone +7 747 323 15 62

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

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

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researcher 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.
- I give my permission to audio record the interview: Yes No

Participant

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ФОРМА ИНФОРМИРОВАННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

Платный путь в высшее образование? Частное репетиторство по английскому языку и его влияние на поступление в престижный вуз с англоязычным обучением в Казахстане

ОПИСАНИЕ: Приглашаем Вас принять участие в исследовании, проведенном Ажар Ергазиной, студенткой второго курса магистратуры по многоязычному образованию Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета, целью которого является изучение взаимосвязи между получением услуг частного репетитора английского языка и поступлением в университет. Вам будет предложено принять участие в интервью, чтобы рассказать о своем опыте получения услуг частных репетиторов английского языка, которое будет записано на диктофон и расшифровано с Вашего разрешения для анализа данных. Если Вы не хотите, чтобы я Вас записывала, я буду делать заметки во время интервью. Интервью состоит из четырнадцати вопросов, касающихся Вашего опыта получения услуг частного репетитора английского языка, Вашего восприятия частного репетиторства английского языка и его влияния на общество в целом. Интервью является анонимным, поскольку исследователь не будет записывать Ваше имя на аудионоситель и будет использовать псевдонимы. Данное исследование гарантирует конфиденциальность, анонимность и невозможность отследить личную информацию о Вас.

ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ: Перед проведением индивидуального интервью Вам будет предоставлено 7-10 дней для написания нарративное эссе. Индивидуальное полуструктурированное интервью займет примерно 25-35 минут.

РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА: Риски для участников исследования минимальны. В случае если некоторые вопросы покажутся Вам неприемлемыми для данного исследования, Вы можете пропустить этот вопрос или прекратить интервью без каких-либо негативных последствий. Для обеспечения Вашей безопасности, в документах, электронных файлах и самой диссертации я буду использовать псевдоним вместо Вашего имени и любых имен, упоминаемых Вами в ходе интервью. Все собранные данные, записи и документы, связанные с исследованием, включая формы согласия будут сохранены на персональном компьютере, защищенном паролем. Я также удалю любую идентифицирующую информацию из окончательной версии статьи и отчетов, чтобы Ваша личная информация не была идентифицирована после завершения исследования.

Участие в данном исследовании не подразумевает материальной компенсации или любой другой прямой выгоды от участия. Однако, Ваш ответ может помочь исследователю в изучении вклада частного репетиторства по английскому языку в академическую успеваемость студентов бакалавриата в Казахстане. Высказывание мнения студентов бакалавриата поможет внести вклад в литературу, посвященную частному преподаванию английского языка, где мало что известно об опыте и стремлениях студентов.

ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКА: Если вы прочитали эту форму и решили принять участие в данном проекте, пожалуйста, поймите, что ваше участие является добровольным, и вы имеете право отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время без штрафа или потери льгот, на которые вы имеете право в противном случае. Альтернативой является отказ от участия. Вы имеете право отказаться отвечать на конкретные вопросы.

Результаты данного исследования могут быть также представлены на научных или профессиональных встречах или опубликованы в научных журналах.

КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

Исследователь: Ажар Ергазина

Магистр гуманитарных и социальных наук в области многоязычного образования, студентка второго курса

Высшая школа образования Назарбаев Университета

Телефон: +7 778 982 54 64

Электронная почта: azhar.yergazina@nu.edu.kz

Вопросы: Если у Вас есть какие-либо вопросы, опасения или жалобы по поводу этого исследования, его процедур, рисков и преимуществ, свяжитесь с руководителем магистерской работы по этой студенческой работе Анасом Хаджаром по электронной почте anas.hajar@nu.edu.kz или по телефону +7 747 323 15 62.

Независимое контактное лицо: Если Вы не удовлетворены тем, как проводится это исследование, или если у Вас есть какие-либо опасения, жалобы или общие вопросы об исследовании или ваших правах в качестве участника, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с Исследовательским комитетом NUGSE по адресу gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму согласия, если Вы согласны принять участие в этом исследовании.

- Я внимательно изучил(а) предоставленную информацию;
- Мне была предоставлена полная информация о целях и процедуре исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использоваться собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь;
- Я понимаю, что могу отказаться от участия в исследовании в любое время без объяснения причин;
- С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я добровольно соглашаюсь участвовать в этом исследовании.
- Я даю разрешение на аудиозапись интервью: Да Нет

Участник исследования

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Исследователь

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

АҚПАРАТТЫ КЕЛІСІМ ФОРМАСЫ

Жоғары білімге жол сатып алуға бола ма? Ағылшын тіліндегі жеке репетиторлық курстары және олардың Қазақстандағы таңдаулы ағылшын тілінде оқытатын университетке түсуге ықпалы

СИПАТТАМА: Сізді Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебінің көптілді білім беру мамандығының екінші курс магистранты Ажар Ерғазинаның жеке ағылшын тілі бойынша репетиторлық қызметтерін алу мен университетке түсу арасындағы байланысты зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамын. Сізден жеке ағылшын тілінің репетиторлық қызметтерін алу тәжірибеңіз туралы сұхбатқа қатысу сұралады. Алынған деректер сіздің рұқсатыңызбен жазылады және транскрипцияланады. Егер әңгіменің жазылғанын қаламасаңыз, онда сіздің жауаптарыңыз сұхбат кезінде жазбаша түрде жазылып алынады. Сұхбат жеке ағылшын тілінен репетиторлық қызметтерді алу тәжірибеңізге, жеке ағылшын тілінен сабақ беруді қабылдауға және оның жалпы қоғамға әсеріне қатысты он төрт сұрақтан тұрады. Сұхбат анонимді, өйткені зерттеуші сіздің атыңызды аудиожазбаға жазбайды және лақап аттарды пайдаланады. Бұл зерттеу құпиялылыққа, анонимділікке және сіз туралы жеке ақпаратты қадағалау мүмкін еместігіне кепілдік береді.

ӨТКІЗІЛЕТІН УАҚЫТ: Жеке сұхбатқа дейін сізге баяндау эссесін жазу үшін 7-10 күн беріледі. Жартылай жүйеленген жеке сұхбат шамамен 25-35 минутты алады.

ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫНА ҚАТЫСУДЫҢ ҚАУІПТЕРІ МЕН

АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ: Зерттеуге қатысудың қауіпі өте төмен. Кейбір сұрақтар осы зерттеу үшін сізге орынсыз болып көрінсе, сіз бұл сұрақты өткізіп жібере аласыз немесе сұхбатты ешқандай теріс салдарсыз тоқтатуға болады. Құжаттарда, электронды файлдарда және диссертацияның өзінде сіздің қауіпсіздігіңізді қамтамасыз ету үшін мен сіздің атыңыз бен сұхбат кезінде ескерілген кез келген есімнің орнына лақап ат қолданамын. Зерттеуге қатысты барлық жиналған деректер, жазбалар мен құжаттар, соның ішінде келісім формалары құпия сөзбен қорғалған дербес компьютерде сақталады. Зерттеу аяқталғаннан кейін сіздің жеке ақпаратыңыз анықталмауы үшін мен мақаланың соңғы нұсқасынан және есептерден кез келген жеке ақпаратты алып тастаймын.

Бұл зерттеуге қатысу қаржылық өтемақы немесе қатысудан басқа да тікелей пайданы білдірмейді. Дегенмен сіздің жауабыңыз зерттеушіге жеке ағылшын тілін оқытудың Қазақстандағы бакалавриат студенттерінің оқу үлгеріміне қосқан үлесін зерттеуге көмектесуі мүмкін. Бакалавриат студенттеріне дауыс беру студенттердің тәжірибесі мен ұмтылыстары туралы ағылшын тілін “көлеңкеде оқыту” бойынша әдебиеттерге үлес қосуға көмектеседі.

ҚАТЫСУШЫНЫҢ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ: Егер сіз осы форманы оқып шыққан болсаңыз және осы жобаға қатысуды шешсеңіз, сіздің қатысуыңыз ерікті екенін және сіз кез келген уақытта ешқандай салдарсыз өз келісіміңізден бас тартуға немесе қатысуды тоқтатуға құқығыңыз бар екенін түсінесіз. Сіз қандай да бір сұрақтарға жауап беруден бас тартуға құқылысыз. Бұл зерттеудің нәтижелері ғылыми немесе кәсіби жиналыстарда ұсынылуы немесе ғылыми журналдарда жариялануы мүмкін.

БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:

Зерттеуші: Ажар Ерғазина

Көптілді білім беру саласындағы өнер және әлеуметтік ғылымдар магистрі, екінші курс студенті
Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебі

Телефон: +7 778 982 54 64

Электрондық пошта: azhar.yergazina@nu.edu.kz

Сұрақтарыңыз: Егер сізде осы зерттеуге, оның процедураларына, тәуекелдеріне және артықшылықтарына қатысты сұрақтарыңыз, алаңдаушылығыңыз немесе шағымдарыңыз болса, осы студенттік жұмыс бойынша магистрлік диссертация жетекшісі Анас Хаджарға anas.hajar@nu.edu.kz электрондық поштасы арқылы немесе электрондық пошта арқылы хабарласыңыз. телефон +7 747 323 15 62.

Дербес байланыс ақпараттары: Егер сіз осы зерттеудің жүргізілу тәсіліне қанағаттанбасаңыз немесе шағымдар мен жалпы сұрақтарыңыз болса, gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz мекенжайы бойынша NUGSE зерттеу комитетіне хабарласыңыз.

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.
- Сұхбаттың аудиожазбасына рұқсат беремін: Иә Жоқ

Қатысушы:

Қолы: _____ Күні: _____

Зерттеуші:

Қолы: _____

Appendix F

Recruitment Letter

Dear (name of the participant),

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study on the impact of receiving English private tutoring on getting admitted to a highly selective EMI university in Kazakhstan. My name is Azhar Yergazina, a second-year Master of Arts in Multilingual Education student at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education.

The aim of the research is to investigate the students' experiences in receiving English private tutoring and how their experiences helped them to obtain the required score from the IELTS examination to get enrolled at a highly selective EMI university in Kazakhstan. Therefore, this study examines the impact of paid private tutoring in the broader society as perceived by the participants.

If you have an experience of receiving English private tutoring in the last 24 months, then your participation is crucial for this study as you can help to gain a deeper understanding of how attending English private tutoring sessions may impact the way students get enrolled at EMI university. Also, it will help the researcher to understand more about students' experiences in receiving English private tutoring.

You will be asked to participate in semi-structured interviews that will last approximately 25-35 minutes. You have a choice to participate in an interview whether face-to-face or online.

Please be informed that all the information you provide will be kept confidential to ensure your anonymity and will be used only for research purposes.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me. I will be happy to receive any response from you. Therefore, do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Azhar Yergazina
Master of Arts in Multilingual Education second-year student
Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education
Phone number: +7 778 982 54 64 (WhatsApp, Telegram)
Email: azhar.yergazina@nu.edu.kz

Письмо приглашения

Уважаемый(ая) (имя участника),

Я надеюсь, что это письмо найдет вас в хорошем настроении. Я пишу, чтобы пригласить вас принять участие в исследовании, посвященном влиянию занятий с частным репетитором по английскому языку на поступление в один из самых престижных университетов Казахстана. Меня зовут Ажар Ергазина, я студентка второго курса магистратуры по специальности "Многоязычное образование" Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета.

Цель исследования - изучить опыт студентов в получении услуг частных репетиторов английского языка и то, как этот опыт помог им получить необходимый балл на экзамене IELTS для зачисления в один из самых престижных университетов ЕМІ в Казахстане. Более того в данном исследовании рассматривается влияние платного частного репетиторства на общество в целом, как его воспринимают участники.

Если у вас есть опыт получения услуг частных репетиторов по английскому языку в течение последних 24 месяцев, то ваше участие в данном исследовании крайне важно, поскольку вы можете помочь глубже понять, как посещение занятий с частными репетиторами по английскому языку может повлиять на поступление студентов в университет ЕМІ. Кроме того это поможет исследователю лучше понять опыт студентов в получении услуг частных репетиторов английского языка.

Вам будет предложено принять участие в полуструктурированном интервью, которое продлится примерно 25-35 минут. У Вас есть выбор участвовать в интервью очно или онлайн.

Привожу к Вашему сведению, что вся предоставленная Вами информация будет храниться в конфиденциальности, чтобы обеспечить Вашу анонимность, и будет использована только в исследовательских целях.

Если Вы заинтересованы в участии в данном исследовании, пожалуйста, свяжитесь со мной. Я буду рада получить от Вас любой ответ. А также Вы можете задавать любые вопросы об исследовании.

Спасибо, что рассмотрели мою просьбу. С нетерпением жду скорой встречи с Вами.

Искренне,

Ажар Ергазина

Магистр гуманитарных и социальных наук в области многоязычного образования, студентка второго курса

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Шақыру хаты

Құрметті (қатысушының аты-жөні),

Бұл хат сізді жақсы көңіл күйде табады деп үміттенемін. Мен сізді жеке ағылшын тілінен оқытудың Қазақстанның ең беделді университеттерінің біріне түсуге әсерін талдайтын зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамын. Менің атым Ажар Ерғазина, Назарбаев Университетінің Жоғары Білім Беру мектебінің Көптілді Білім Беру мамандығы бойынша екінші курс магистрантымын.

Зерттеудің мақсаты студенттердің жеке ағылшын тілі оқытушыларымен жұмыс жасау тәжірибесін және бұл тәжірибе оларға Қазақстандағы ең беделді ЕМІ университеттерінің біріне түсу үшін қажетті IELTS балын алуға қалай көмектескенін зерттеу болып табылады. Сонымен қатар бұл зерттеу қатысушылардың пікірінше, ақылы жеке репетиторлықтың жалпы қоғамға әсерін зерттейді.

Егер сізде соңғы 24 айда жеке ағылшын тілі бойынша репетиторлық қызметтерді алу тәжірибеңіз болса, онда сіздің осы зерттеуге қатысуыңыз өте маңызды. Өйткені сіз жеке ағылшын тілінен сабақ беру студенттердің ЕМІ университетіне түсуіне қалай әсер ететінін түсінуге көмектесе аласыз. Сонымен қатар бұл зерттеушіге студенттердің жеке ағылшын тілінен сабақ беру қызметтерін алу тәжірибесін жақсырақ түсінуге көмектеседі.

Сізден шамамен 25-35 минутқа созылатын жартылай құрылымдық сұхбатқа қатысу сұралады. Сіздің сұхбатқа жеке немесе онлайн қатысу таңдауыңыз бар.

Анонимділігін қамтамасыз ету үшін сіз берген барлық ақпарат құпия сақталатынын және тек зерттеу мақсатында пайдаланылатынын ескеріңіз.

Егер сіз осы зерттеуге қатысқыңыз келсе, маған хабарласыңыз. Сізден кез келген жауап алуға қуаныштымын. Сондай-ақ оқуға қатысты кез келген сұрақ қоюға бұлтартпаңыз.

Өтінішімді қарастырғаныңызға рахмет. Жақын арада кездесуді асыға күтемін.

Құрметпен,

Ажар Ерғазина

Көптілді білім беру саласындағы өнер және әлеуметтік ғылымдар магистрі, екінші курс студенті
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Appendix G

Interview Coding Sample (Excerpt)

Interview Extracts	Codes	Subthemes	Themes
<p><i>Interviewer:</i> So, you mentioned private tutoring is important for getting good grades. What else motivates you to seek EPT?</p> <p><i>Interviewee:</i> Well, I wanted to improve my English speaking skills because it was the most challenging part for me in school. I knew that good speaking skills were important for my future academic career.</p>	Improvement of speaking skills	Motivation for improving academic abilities	Locus of Control
<p><i>Interviewer:</i> You said your friends took private lessons. How did that influence your decision?</p> <p><i>Interviewee:</i> It influenced me a lot. They would talk about their lessons and the interesting things they learned. I realized that I was missing out on something. So, I thought that taking EPT would give me the same benefits.</p>	Influence of peers' experiences	Influence of peer networks on EPT participation	Motivation for EPT Participation
<p><i>Interviewer:</i> Do you think private tutoring is becoming more popular? Why?</p> <p><i>Interviewee:</i> Definitely. I feel like more students are taking EPT these days. They want to be more competitive, especially for university admission. Tutors can give personalized help, and that's something schools cannot provide.</p>	Increase in EPT demand	Growing need for personalized support in education	Factors Driving PT Market Growth
<p><i>Interviewer:</i> Do you think parents play an important role in your decision to take EPT?</p> <p><i>Interviewee:</i> Yes, definitely. My parents found a tutor for me. They were worried about my English, and they thought it would help me get a better score.</p>	Parental involvement in educational choices	Parental influence on private tutoring decisions	Formality and Influence