

Multilingual Identity Construction Among High School Students in Uzbekistan

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This letter serves as confirmation that **Perizat Urazmetova's** research project entitled "**Emergence of High School Students' Multilingual Identity in English Language Classrooms in Uzbekistan**" has been reviewed and approved under the Full Board category by the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee (NU IREC).

This approval is granted in accordance with the NU IREC's established procedures and is subject to the conditions and duration specified in the NU IREC Policies and Procedures. The researcher is responsible for adhering to all applicable ethical guidelines and for submitting any required progress reports, amendments, or continuing review applications as outlined.

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Abstract

Multilingual Identity Construction among High School Students in Uzbekistan

The growing significance of English as a global lingua franca has enabled individuals to engage with different cultures and perspectives, developing flexible, multilingual identities (Benzehaf, 2021). Although Uzbekistan is a multilingual country where Uzbek, Russian, and English are integral to daily life, research on how this multilingual nature and linguistic experiences shape identity is limited. This qualitative phenomenological study explores how multilingual English learners perceive and engage with their linguistic repertoires within a globalized and multilingual environment. Using the multi-theoretical framework proposed by Fisher et al. (2018), this study examines students' multilingual identity construction through sociocultural, psychosocial, and poststructuralist perspectives. Based on semi-structured interviews with 12 students—eight from Presidential Schools and four from a Kazakh-medium mainstream school in Uzbekistan—the findings showed that English dominates STEAM instruction and is considered an essential tool for academic and career growth. In contrast, Uzbek, Kazakh or Tajik, the native languages of the interviewed participants, remain fundamental in familial and emotional aspects. Therefore, students reported engaging in pragmatic multilingualism, strategically using English to develop personally and professionally while attempting to preserve their heritage languages. The study also has three key findings: translanguaging, maintaining heritage languages, and using English as a psychological space for self-reflection. Informed by the findings, the following implications and recommendations are given: (1) developing and promoting high-quality educational content in students' native languages, (2) implementing translanguaging practices, and (3) integrating critical language awareness into curricula. This study contributes to the growing literature on identity, language practices among youth, and the role of English in social and professional advancement.

Keywords: language practices, multilingual identity, lingua franca, pragmatic multilingualism, language policy, critical language awareness

Аңдатпа

Өзбекстандық жоғары сынып оқушыларының көптілді тұлға ретінде қалыптасуы

Ағылшын тілінің жаһандық лингва франка ретіндегі маңызы күн сайын арта түсуде. Бұл тіл әртүрлі мәдениеттер мен көзқарастарды тануға мүмкіндік берумен қатар, икемді және көптілді тұлға ретінде қалыптасуға да жағдай жасайды (Бензехаф, 2021).

Өзбекстан—өзбек, орыс және ағылшын тілдері кеңінен қолданылатын көптілді мемлекет. Алайда көптілділіктің жеке тұлғаның қалыптасуына әсері туралы ғылыми зерттеулер саны шектеулі. Осы сапалы феноменологиялық зерттеу көптілді меңгерген оқушылар тілдік репертуарларын қандай жағдайларда және қандай мақсатта қолданатынын, сондай-ақ бұл тәжірибе олардың көптілді тұлға ретінде қалыптасуына қалай ықпал етеуін зерттеуге бағытталған. Фишер және т.б. (2018) ұсынған көптеориялық құрылым негізінде бұл зерттеу оқушылардың көптілді болмысын социомәдени, психоәлеуметтік және постқұрылымдық көзқарастары арқылы қарастырады. Зерттеу жалпы 12 оқушыны қамтыған жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттарға негізделді: олардың сегізі—Өзбекстандағы Президенттік мектептерден, ал төртеуі—қазақ тілінде білім беретін мектептен іріктеліп алынды. Алынған нәтижелер ағылшын тілінің STEAM пәндерін оқытуда жетекші рөл атқаратынын және оқушылар бұл тілді академиялық әрі кәсіби даму құралы ретінде пайдаланатынын көрсетті.

Сонымен қатар, зерттеу барысында оқушылардың ана тілдері, яғни өзбек, қазақ немесе тәжік тілдері, көбінесе отбасылық қарым-қатынас пен эмоциялық жағдайларда қолданылатыны анықталды. Осылайша, оқушылар «прагматикалық көптілділік» стратегиясын қолдана отырып, ағылшын тілін даму құралы ретінде тиімді пайдаланып, өз ана тілдерін сақтауға ұмтылады. Зерттеу барысында үш негізгі бейімделу стратегиясы анықталды: (1) транслингвизмді қолдану, (2) ана тілін саналы түрде

сақтау, және (3) ағылшын тілін ой жүгірту мен өзіндік рефлексия жасау кеңістігі ретінде пайдалану. Зерттеу нәтижелері негізінде келесі практикалық және педагогикалық ұсыныстар тұжырымдалды: (1) оқушылардың ана тілдерінде сапалы әрі мазмұнды оқу материалдарын әзірлеп, оларды оқу бағдарламасына енгізу; (2) транслингвизм тәжірибелерін оқу үдерісіне жүйелі түрде енгізу; (3) тілге деген сыни көзқарасты дамытуға бағытталған мазмұнды оқу бағдарламасына қосу. Бұл зерттеу жастардың тілдік тәжірибелері мен көптілді тұлға ретінде қалыптасу ерекшеліктерін сипаттай отырып, ағылшын тілінің әлеуметтік және кәсіби даму жолындағы рөліне қатысты ғылыми әдебиетке өз үлесін қосады.

Түйін сөздер: тілдік тәжірибелер, көптілді болмыс, лингва франка, прагматикалық көптілділік, тіл саясаты, тілге сын көзбен қарау

Аннотация

Формирование многоязычной идентичности среди старшекласников в Узбекистане

Возрастающая значимость английского языка как глобальной лингва франка позволяет людям взаимодействовать с различными культурами и перспективами, способствуя формированию гибкой и многоязычной идентичности (Бензехаф, 2021). Несмотря на то что Узбекистан является многоязычной страной, где узбекский, русский и английский языки активно используются в повседневной жизни, влияние языкового опыта на формирование идентичности по-прежнему остаётся недостаточно изученной областью. Данное качественное феноменологическое исследование направлено на изучение того, как учащиеся, изучающие английский язык в многоязычной среде, воспринимают и используют свои языковые ресурсы в условиях глобализации. В качестве теоретической основы используется многоаспектная модель, предложенная Фишером и др. (2018), включающая социокультурные, психосоциальные и постструктуралистские подходы. Исследование опирается на данные полуструктурированных интервью с 12 учащимися—восемью из Президентских школ и четырьмя из общеобразовательной школы с казахским языком обучения в Узбекистане. Результаты показали, что английский язык доминирует в преподавании STEAM-дисциплин и воспринимается как важнейший инструмент для академического и профессионального развития. В то же время родные языки студентов—узбекский, казахский и таджикский—продолжают играть важную роль в контексте семейных и эмоциональных взаимодействий. В таких условиях учащиеся осознанно практикуют прагматическое многоязычие: используют английский язык для личного и профессионального роста, при этом стараясь сохранить родные языки. В исследовании выделены три ключевые стратегии адаптации: (1) использование транслингвизма для

смыслового перехода между языками, (2) осознанное сохранение родного языка и (3) применение английского языка для внутренней рефлексии. На основании полученных данных выделены три направления педагогической практики: (1) обеспечение учащихся качественными учебными материалами на их родных языках; (2) интеграция транслингвизма в образовательный процесс; (3) развитие критического языкового мышления посредством учебных курсов. Результаты исследования вносят значимый вклад в расширение научных представлений о формировании языковой идентичности, особенностях многоязычия среди молодёжи и функционировании английского языка как инструмента социального и профессионального продвижения.

Ключевые слова: языковые практики, многоязычная идентичность, лингва франка, прагматическое многоязычие, языковая политика, критическое осознание языка

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents the study's focus on multilingual identity formation among high school students in Uzbekistan. It outlines the research problem, purpose, and questions, highlighting the significance of exploring how students navigate and integrate multiple languages within a multilingual context. The chapter concludes by detailing the researcher's rationale for conducting the study, including its potential to inform language policy and pedagogical practice.

1.1 Background Information

Uzbekistan, one of the highly populous countries in Central Asia and home to over 130 ethnic groups, faces the ongoing challenge of balancing its postcolonial legacy, global integration, and national identity formation. Its ethnic composition includes a majority of Uzbeks (80%), followed by Russians (5.5%), Tajiks (3%), Karakalpaks (2.5%), Kazakhs (2%), and other minority groups (2.5%) (World Population Review, 2025). As part of its derussification efforts to assert linguistic and cultural sovereignty (Pavlenko, 2008), the Uzbek government enacted the On Official Language law on October 21, 1989, designating Uzbek as the sole official language and mandating the replacement of Cyrillic with the Latin script to strengthen a distinct national identity (Djuraeva, 2022). Nevertheless, although Russian does not hold an official status, it continues to serve as a lingua franca for interethnic communication and is spoken by approximately 55% of the population (Rossotrudnichestvo, 2023). Meanwhile, English has emerged as a key language of globalization and modernization and has been institutionalized in schools as a compulsory foreign language (Hasanova, 2016).

Although Uzbek is the official titular language, Uzbekistan's education system is shaped by the country's multilingual reality. Instruction is delivered in seven languages across over 10,000 schools: Uzbek, Karakalpak, Russian, Tajik, Kazakh, Turkmen, and

Kyrgyz (Karimov, 2025). In response to linguistic diversity, the Ministry of Public Education in Uzbekistan has implemented a mother-tongue-based multilingual education model, allowing students to start their education in their native language before transitioning to additional languages. This approach facilitates foundational literacy and promotes inclusion among students. Notably, Russian is the second most widely used language of instruction after Uzbek, with the number of schools offering education in Russian has grown to 836 (Kayumov & Abdulkhakimova, 2022). Its continued influence is due to its role in higher education, where 25–30% of graduates opt for Russian-medium programs to gain enhanced academic and professional opportunities, including access to quotas at Russian universities or branches of international institutions (Kiselyov, 2024).

Concurrently, over the past decade, the role of English has considerably grown in Uzbekistan's education system. This growth is consistent with the global patterns in other non-Anglophone countries, where increasing English instruction reflects its socioeconomic value, including opportunity expansion, international competitiveness, and modernization (Jenkins & Panero, 2024; Phillipson, 2018). Building on this global rationale, Uzbekistan has institutionalized this approach through enacting concrete policy measures. The government's legislative framework states that foreign language education leads to the nation's international integration, providing entry "into the world community and [the ability to] communicate effectively on a global scale" (Valiyeva, 2019, p. 214). Some examples of the implementation strategies include the following measures: (1) incentivizing teacher qualifications through salary supplements if they have at least CEFR B2 certification; (2) making B2-level English proficiency, verified by international certificates, mandatory for university admissions; and (3) establishing 14 specialized Presidential schools in each region that offer English-medium instruction under direct

presidential mandate. Together, these initiatives represent a comprehensive, multi-level strategy to position English as a facilitator of educational and economic transformation.

Although multilingual education policies in Uzbekistan, which include a strong strategic emphasis on English acquisition, are implemented to promote educational advancement and economic modernization, they also complicate identity negotiations for students. From sociocultural perspectives, identity is understood as relational, mediated, and contextually situated, while poststructuralist theories conceptualize it as dynamic, shifting, and multiple. These theories view identity as a “default epistemological stance” (Block, 2006, p. 34). In this context, language is a fundamental element in mediating this process, which allows individuals to navigate cultural boundaries and “become flexible global citizens with multiple identities” (Benzehaf, 2021, p. 1145). Therefore, the concepts central to this present study, elaborating on the relationship between languages, identity, and multilingual identity construction, will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Given the multilingual nature of schools and the broader sociolinguistic context in Uzbekistan, students’ identities are shaped by educational institutions. As Hamid and Jahan (2015) note, identity is influenced by language, with education being a key environment for its construction. Language classrooms are dynamic spaces where students reshape and negotiate their identities (Fisher et al., 2018). In these contexts, identities and beliefs are constantly co-constructed and transformed through language (Kramsch & Zhang, 2018) because identity is not innate or fixed; it evolves continuously, based on environmental and linguistic experiences (Norton, 2013).

Complementing the understanding of identity formation in educational settings, the concept of linguistic identity is further explained by theories that discuss in-depth students’ attitudes toward the languages they acquire. According to Norton (2013), three interrelated theoretical constructs come into existence through the learner’s imaginative ability: the

concept of investment (Bourdieu, 1991) in language learning to access both material and symbolic resources; imagined identities, which represent learners' aspirations for their future selves; and imagined communities, reflecting the social affiliations learners desire to be part of. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) further expand on this model, explaining how learner investment and motivation contribute to identity transformation and influence power dynamics in classroom interactions. Kramsch (2009) develops this idea by analyzing the dual symbolic nature of language, which serves as a system to represent social reality and a medium for personal meaning-making. This duality creates tension between the need for social integration and the desire for individual expression, resulting in emotional responses that shape identity development.

For multilingual individuals, this process of identity negotiation brings agency in language choice, where they can select a language that promotes more meaningful self-expression (Pavlenko, 2014). However, Kramsch and Huffmaster (2015) argue that navigating the intersectional space between multiple languages involves the emotional and cognitive complexities of multilingual identity. In multilingual environments like Uzbekistan, where students frequently shift between multiple languages across academic, social, and personal contexts, these theories become particularly salient. Considering Uzbekistani students' linguistic diversity, it is essential to incorporate multilingual identity into intercultural understanding. This approach encourages critical reflection on students' linguistic repertoires and improves engagement with diverse cultural perspectives (Fielding, 2021).

1.2 Problem Statement

Multilingual identity is a complex construct, formed through the interaction of multiple languages in a learner's social and educational life. In Uzbekistan, as already outlined, Uzbek, Russian, and English are typically part of most students' everyday

linguistic practices. They often navigate between their native languages and a postcolonial language. In addition, English has increasingly become a part of their lives, raising important questions about language ownership and its influence on students' sense of identity and belonging.

The lack of local insight on the matter of multilingual identity development poses three main challenges. First, it can cause a misalignment between national language policies and students' lived experiences, which may lead to disengagement or resistance to language learning, especially when students perceive their native languages as undervalued (Djuraeva, 2022; Norton, 2013). Second, many students may face identity fragmentation, as they attempt to reconcile the symbolic roles attached to Uzbek, Russian, and English without sufficient institutional support for navigating these tensions (Kramersch, 2009; Pavlenko, 2014). Finally, the lack of teacher awareness about students' multilingual identity emergence can lead to overlooking the emotional and cultural dimensions of language learning, thereby limiting the effectiveness of English-medium instruction (EMI) programs (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). These challenges can cause disengagement among students and disrupt psychological well-being, which can hinder an inclusive and culturally responsive environment.

While significant research has been conducted on multilingualism policies and their outcomes within the Kazakhstani context (Smagulova, 2016; Suleimenova et al., 2021; Wheeler, 2017; Yeskeldiyeva, 2015; Zharkynbekova et al., 2025), studies focusing on the Uzbekistani context (Djuraeva, 2022; Nakamura, 2025; Isaeva et al., 2018; Zhao, 2022), particularly those examining the impact of multilingual environments on the development of students' identities, remain scarce. Specifically, there is a research gap on how high school students in Uzbekistan integrate their multilingual identities within EMI

classrooms, where linguistic choices represent negotiations between national identity, post-Soviet influences, and imagined selves.

This research gap is significant because of the dynamic and evolving nature of identity construction in response to Uzbekistan's shifting sociopolitical and educational landscape. Uzbekistan's recent language education reforms, including the promotion of mother tongue-based multilingual instruction and the proliferation of elite English-medium schools (Yuldashev, 2025), require a new scholarly perspective on how students experience and respond to these ongoing changes. Therefore, by studying students' lived experiences through sociocultural, psychosocial, and poststructuralist lenses, the present study aims to address the aforementioned research gaps and provide insights with implications for educational policy in Uzbekistan and beyond.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how high school students in Uzbekistan, those enrolled in EMI programs and those who speak multiple languages, develop and construct their identities as multilingual individuals. Furthermore, the study aims to explain how these language practices contribute to the emergence of multilingual identity in students. It also seeks to explore how students engage and integrate multiple languages academically and socially.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions were developed:

1. How do high school students in Uzbekistan navigate the use of multiple languages in their academic and everyday social lives?
2. How does engaging with multiple languages in Uzbekistan affect students' psychological well-being, behavior, and identity formation?

3. What role do imagined communities and imagined identities play in developing students' multilingual identities in Uzbekistan?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This qualitative study has potential implications for students, educators, and policymakers in Uzbekistan's education system and in other multilingual contexts globally. As one of the first in-depth empirical studies on how school students manage and apply multiple languages in both academic and social contexts, the present study can contribute to the existing literature by: (a) raising awareness among students about their evolving linguistic identities, (b) informing inclusive and responsive teaching practices, and (c) offering direction for policy improvements in language education that better support multilingual individuals and reinforce students' identity-building processes in a globalized world.

Firstly, once students are critically aware of how their identity is developed, they can easily reflect on their agency, which leads to intercultural competence, improved motivation in language learning, and deeper engagement with both language and culture. This awareness enables them to embrace different contexts and cultures, recognize identity shifts, and make informed decisions about their language use.

Secondly, educators can also benefit from this study in terms of adjusting their teaching methods to address the diverse linguistic backgrounds and identity needs of the learners. This, in turn, can bring about positive identity development, active engagement, and create an inclusive learning atmosphere. The notion of identity education, described by Schachter and Rich (2011), presents the intentional involvement of teachers in helping students through identity-related content and processes. In this sense, teachers act as key agents not only in language learning but also in cultivating students' identity.

Lastly, the present study can be beneficial for policymakers in Uzbekistan and similar multilingual contexts. As the country continues to implement ambitious language education reforms, there is a need for policies that are grounded in the lived realities of students. This study can inform more equitable policy development by offering insights into how students experience and make sense of these reforms. Specifically, it can help policymakers better understand the identity-related challenges and aspirations of multilingual learners, and the kinds of institutional support necessary to foster their academic success and psychosocial well-being. In doing so, the study aims to provide an evidence-based foundation for rethinking how identity, language policy, and pedagogy intersect within the broader context of Uzbekistan's multilingual educational landscape.

1.6 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study's context, presenting the research problem to be addressed. Further, the rationale behind this research was elaborated, along with the research questions that the study seeks to address. The chapter also discussed the significance of the study, highlighting its potential to improve students' engagement in language learning, the role of teachers in shaping and guiding identity development, and the increased awareness of policymakers regarding the lived realities shaped by the policies they enact. The next chapter will review relevant studies pertinent to the central topic and research questions.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis studies the linguistic identity construction of high school students through six chapters. Following Chapter 1, Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature and key studies using Fisher et al.'s (2018) multi-theoretical framework, which contains psychosocial, sociocultural, and poststructural perspectives to propose an integrated conceptual approach for analyzing multilingual identity. Chapter 3 details the

methodological design, including the research site, participant selection, data collection procedures, analysis strategies, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents the key findings of this qualitative study, while Chapter 5 interprets these findings in relation to existing research and the theoretical framework. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the study, aligning it with the research questions and objectives, acknowledging the study's limitations, and offering potential implications and recommendations for future research and educational policy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The previous chapter provided an overview of Uzbekistan's multilingual landscape and examined its influence on shaping high school students' multilingual identities. It also outlined the research problem, research statement, and research questions, highlighting the study's significance for research into multilingualism, identity, and language use. This chapter reviews relevant literature on multilingual identity development, focusing on the linguistic experiences of high school students in Uzbekistan.

The chapter begins by delineating the key terms and concepts central to this study, providing a foundational understanding. It then presents the theoretical framework, which forms the core of the research and guides the analysis of multilingual identity. Building on the multi-theoretical framework proposed by Fisher et al. (2018), the study incorporates sociocultural, psychological, and poststructural perspectives to explore the process of identity construction. In the subsequent sections, these perspectives will be used to organize a critical review of the literature on multilingual identity, including both international and local studies. Finally, the last section identifies gaps in the existing literature, setting the stage for the purpose and direction of this study and its potential contributions.

2.1 Main Concepts

It is essential to begin the literature review by clearly outlining the key concepts central to the study, as they define the study's focus, guide the literature search, and provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the research's significance (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Therefore, this section is structured into two key subsections that expand on the main concepts integral to the present study: 1) Identity and Language; and 2) Multilingualism, Identity, and Translanguaging.

2.1.1 Identity and Language

Identity is a complex construct broadly discussed in various contexts and disciplines. Norton (2013) defines identity as “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is shaped across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (p. 45). Buckingham (2008) acknowledges that the definition of identity has expanded across different disciplines, associated with constructs like ethnicity, class, gender, culture, and political or religious affiliations. De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012) claim that identity, unlike the static notion of the self, is more dynamic and socially constructed, formed through interactions within family, community, and educational settings. Du Gay and Hall (1996) take the notion of dynamism, further describing it as “a process never completed—always in process” (p. 222), highlighting its fluid and socially driven nature influenced by linguistic and cultural practices.

The strong relationship between language and identity has been widely recognized, particularly in multilingual settings (e.g., Joseph, 2004; Norton, 2013). Globalization, alongside economic and political shifts, has led to a significant rise in the number of multilingual individuals, where English serves as a lingua franca. Norton (2013) notes that language plays a crucial role in shaping identity, acting as the medium through which individuals think, communicate with the world, express themselves, and relate to others. She also claims that learning a new language is closely associated with identity (re)construction, with each language building on layers to an individual’s sense of self, along with broadening their social and cultural identities. Du Gay and Hall (1996) further assert that language shapes how we are represented and how we become, rather than defining who we are or where we come from.

2.1.2 Multilingualism, Identity, and Translanguaging

Aligned with the multilingual turn in SLA (May, 2014), there is a growing interest in exploring the connections between multilingualism and identity in foreign language learning, particularly in language learning motivation (Henry, 2017; Thompson, 2019; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). Rather than using the term linguistic identity, which typically refers to how individuals identify with each language in their repertoire, for the present study I adopt the term multilingual identity as a broader, more inclusive concept. This concept captures individuals' recognition and self-awareness as speakers of multiple languages (Fisher et al., 2018; Henry, 2017).

Multilingual individuals navigate between languages and cultures, creating a third space that enables them to “hybridize their cultural identities” (Benzehaf, 2021, p. 1145). The notion of third space, coined by Bhabha (2012), refers to developing identity through education, where different cultures come together and learn from each other. This process results in dynamic in-between areas where hybrid identities are formed through dialogue and negotiation between cultures. Similarly, Kramsch's (1993) concept of the third place in foreign language learning claims that language classrooms function as intercultural spaces, where learners actively engage in constructing and reconstructing their identities while absorbing a foreign culture and participating in the construction of meaning through intercultural communication.

The concept of multilingual education was officially recognized by UNESCO during its General Conference in 1999 (Polatova et al., 2020). According to UNESCO, the term refers to an educational model that provides instruction in at least three languages: the learner's first language, a regional language, and an international language. García et al. (2006) offer a broader interpretation, defining multilingual education as “education where more than two languages are used as the languages of instruction in subjects other than the

languages themselves” (p. 16). There is an increase in the number of countries that are adopting policies that integrate a third language into their educational systems, and Uzbekistan is no exception.

The concept of translanguaging has become pivotal in understanding multilingual identity, challenging traditional notions of rigid language boundaries. Baker (2021) defines translanguaging as the process of engaging with content in one language (e.g., through reading or speaking) and producing output in another (e.g., writing), thereby enhancing cognitive depth and comprehension. Expanding this view, Canagarajah (2013) introduces the term translingual practice, arguing that language functions alongside other semiotic resources to co-construct meaning. García and Wei (2014) further develop this idea, framing translanguaging as a dynamic process where multilingual speakers fluidly use their entire linguistic repertoire, blending languages to express complex ideas.

This process, as Wei (2018) claims, is central to identity construction, enabling individuals to navigate and negotiate cultural, social, and political contexts. Furthermore, this claim is supported by empirical research, such as Noguerón-Liu and Warriner (2014) who observed how Latino communities in the U.S. use translanguaging to foster belonging and identity. Meanwhile, Creese and Blackledge (2015), in their review of recent scholarship on language, identity, and education, claim that translanguaging empowers students by leveraging their identities and reshaping traditional teacher-student power dynamics. In support of this view, both Canagarajah (2013) and García & Li (2014) claim that translanguaging disrupts the one language=one identity paradigm, claiming that meaning and identity are constructed across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The previous section outlined the key terms and concepts for the present study. This section presents the multi-theoretical framework proposed by Fisher et al. (2018),

which integrates sociocultural, psychosocial, and poststructural perspectives. Given that identity is a complex and multifaceted construct, it cannot be fully understood through a single theoretical lens. Therefore, these perspectives are explored both for their points of convergence and divergence. Fisher et al. (2018) argue that identity construction is a dynamic process shaped by three interrelated dimensions: social relationships, individual psychological development, and historical context, as presented in Figure 1. This framework also emphasizes the role of language in identity formation, acknowledging the active role of learners in negotiating and forming their multilingual identities.

This section on the theoretical framework is divided into three subsections, each focusing on a key perspective—psychosocial, sociocultural, and poststructural—in relation to the construction of multilingual identity. Each subsection discusses the core concepts of the relevant perspective. Finally, the study’s theoretical framework for participative multilingual identity will be presented to demonstrate the interplay between individual, social, and contextual factors in identity construction.

2.2.1 Sociocultural Perspectives on Identity

Sociocultural perspectives view identity as fluid and constantly evolving, shaped by ongoing social interactions. Vygotsky (1978), regarded as the father of sociocultural theories, asserts that identity is not merely focused on personal development. Instead, he claims that identity is socially constructed through relational dynamics, social engagement, and contextual factors. This theory suggests that “individual mental functioning can be understood only by examining the social and cultural processes from which one is constructed” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 220). Lave and Wenger (1991) further argue that identity development is associated with community participation, which is necessary for identity formation. Vågan (2011) and Park (2015) argue that sociocultural perspectives in educational settings are instrumental, claiming that classroom interactions and social

participation form knowledge and facilitate identity development and belonging. Joseph (2004) accentuates the value of language in navigating multiple identities across different sociocultural environments, highlighting that language is a tool for the continual construction and reconstruction of identity.

2.2.2 Psychosocial Perspectives on Identity

The present study draws on Erikson's (1968) identity theory, which is part of his broader psychosocial framework, viewing identity formation as a complex, multidimensional process, shaped by both psychological development and social-contextual factors. This theory emphasizes the dynamic interaction between individual growth and societal influences, providing a foundation for understanding how identities are constructed and negotiated throughout the lifespan. Erikson argues that individuals may develop multiple identities based on social groups, roles, and relationships, which integrate into a cohesive core identity that evolves, linking the past and future. According to him, this core identity provides continuity, helping individuals navigate life changes while maintaining a consistent sense of self. Erikson affirms that this core identity guides our future vision, acting as a "goal post for current action and interpretive lens for making sense of experience" (Oyserman & James, 2011, p. 117). Applied to students, whose self-knowledge and values are still developing, this process of emerging identity reflects both personal growth and social influences. From a psychosocial perspective, language plays a crucial role in this process, acting as both a medium of expression and a tool for navigating social contexts. Erikson suggests that individuals adopt varying linguistic styles based on their social affiliations, demonstrating the close connection between language and identity. He cautions against oversimplifying this dynamic by reducing identity to fixed traits or categories, instead emphasizing that language both reflects and contributes to the ongoing development of identity, allowing alignment between linguistic choices and evolving self.

2.2.3 Poststructural Perspectives on Identity

Poststructuralist perspectives view identity as fluid, dynamic, and constantly changing, rather than fixed or stable. These perspectives reject the notion of a singular, core identity, instead seeing identities as “constantly becoming” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 221) and “contradictory” (Fawcett, 2012, p. 667). According to Block (2007), identities are negotiated “at the crossroads of the past, present, and future” (p. 27), while Norton and Toohey (2011) argue that identity is “context-dependent and context-producing, particularly in historical and cultural circumstances” (p. 420). The poststructuralist perspectives assert that identity cannot be fully understood through psychological or sociological lenses alone; it requires consideration of an individual’s “complex social history” (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 9) to study their attitudes toward learning. Language functions as a site of power where individuals negotiate their identities in relation to societal norms. These perspectives recognize that individuals express multiple identities through varying linguistic practices, reflecting the complexities of their lived experiences. By emphasizing the dynamic nature of identity, poststructuralism fosters a deeper understanding of how language serves both as a tool for expression and a means of social positioning.

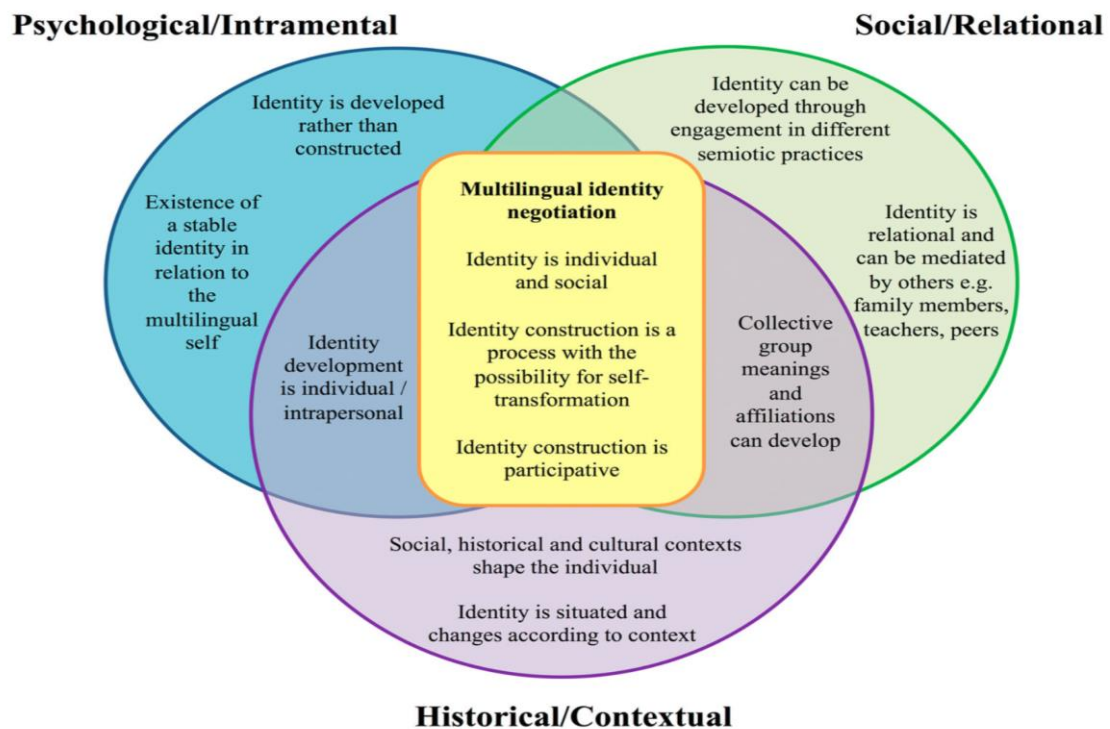
From a poststructuralist perspective (Norton, 2013; Pavlenko, 2012), language is a symbolic resource that individuals use to empower themselves and assert their agency in society, which are fundamental elements in identity construction. In shaping these identities within social groups, individuals exercise agency—the ability to influence and navigate their identity construction by making choices, such as investing in the language they want to learn or access (Bourdieu, 1991; Norton, 2013). Norton (2013) introduced the concepts of imagined communities and imagined identities, originally introduced by Anderson (1991), as part of a “creative process of producing new images of possibility and

new ways of understanding one's relation to the world that transcend more immediate acts of engagement" (pp. 163–164). According to Norton (2013), individuals' engagement in language learning is shaped by their imagined identities, which reflect their aspirations and envisioned futures. This refers to the need to consider both the current and future aspects of learners' identities when evaluating their language learning commitment.

This study will apply Fisher et al.'s (2018) multilingual identity framework, which conceptualizes the intersections of three theoretical perspectives (Figure 1), while rejecting the idea of confining the analysis to a single theoretical or methodological perspective. This approach aligns with Omoniyi's (2006) view of identity research as "multi-theoretical and multidisciplinary" (p. 14) and Kostoulas and Mercer's (2016) argument that integrating different perspectives enables a deeper understanding of identity construction.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for Participative Multilingual Identity



Note. Adapted from "Participative Multilingual Identity Construction in the Languages Classroom: A Multi-Theoretical Conceptualisation" by L. Fisher, M. Evans, K. Forbes, A. Gayton, & Y. Liu, 2018, *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 17(4), p. 455.

This theoretical framework will guide my exploration of the construction of students' multilingual identity. First, identity is both individual and social, as its construction is influenced by both personal lived experiences and external social factors. Second, identity is a dynamic, contextual process shaped by historical semiotic practices, while also allowing for stability that connects the past, present, and future. Finally, multilingual identity is a “participative process” (Fisher et al., 2018, p. 9), in which individuals must reflexively engage with their multilingual selves.

The forthcoming sections will focus on unveiling three main themes, corresponding to three major theoretical frameworks: psychosocial, sociocultural, and poststructural perspectives. These frameworks will guide the analysis and synthesis of the relevant studies.

2.3 Analyzing Multilingual Identity Development Through a Psychosocial Lens

Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory suggests that identity formation is shaped by affective and cognitive processes, which are integral components of an individual's psychological sense of self. Regarding language learning and identity, scholarly work indicates that bilingual and multilingual speakers establish psychological connections with each language in their linguistic repertoire (Dewaele, 2011; Pavlenko, 2012). Henry (2017) suggests that the identities associated with each language unite within the broader concept of the ideal multilingual self. The following paragraphs will further explore: 1) the emotional dimensions of multilingual identity, and 2) the relationship between language proficiency and emotional engagement.

2.3.1 Emotional Dimensions of Multilingual Identity

The relationship between language and emotion is important to understand the nature of multilingual identity (De Costa, 2016; Pavlenko, 2013; Prior et al., 2016). As Dewaele (2011) explains, multilinguals' choices for emotional expression are significantly

influenced by their previous experiences with the languages they speak and various socio-biographical and psychological influences. In support of this, the language in which a memory is encoded is likely to become the medium through which related emotions are expressed most naturally (Dewaele, 2011; Pavlenko, 2006; Schrauf & Rubin, 2000). Building on this, Wierzbicka (2004) attributes the emotional specificity of languages to unique emotional vocabularies that shape how speakers convey their feelings. Similarly, Pavlenko's (2012) findings on emotional vocabularies suggest that linguistic and cultural differences, learning environments, emotional associations, and proficiency levels contribute to multilingual experiencing a sense of different selves when speaking different languages. This notion is further supported by Wilson's (2008) quantitative study of participants in the UK, which revealed that speaking another language results in changes in body language, mannerisms, and voice, where participants likened this process to wearing a mask or adopting a new role.

Research has shown that native and acquired languages have distinct psychological and emotional significance for learners (e.g., Hayakawa et al., 2017; De Costa, 2016; Hadjichristidis et al., 2015; Lewis & Tierney, 2013; Pavlenko, 2006). Native languages, typically learned in emotionally rich, immersive environments (Ivaz et al., 2015), evoke deep cultural attachments and anxieties (Amati-Mehler et al., 1993). In contrast, foreign languages, acquired through formal instruction, provide psychological distance that enables detachment from traumatic experiences or restrictive cultural norms (Pavlenko, 2006). This has been shown in reduced emotional intensity when using second languages for risk assessment (Hadjichristidis et al., 2015) and moral reasoning (Hayakawa et al., 2017). De Costa (2016) claims that learner emotions are discursively constructed through classroom dynamics, while Lewis and Tierney (2013) conceptualize emotions as dynamic actions that shift across contexts.

2.3.2 Language Proficiency and Emotional Engagement

Language proficiency is one of the critical factors in determining the extent of emotional connection to a particular language, where distinct learners at different competence levels experience distinct psychological changes. High-proficiency speakers typically develop stronger affective ties to their L2, reporting personality shifts such as increased extraversion or openness (Chen & Ho, 2020). This phenomenon exemplifies improved emotional granularity—the capacity to articulate nuanced feelings, which flourishes in a speaker’s dominant language (Colbeck & Bowers, 2012; Puntoni et al., 2008). Conversely, low-proficiency learners frequently perceive their L2 as emotionally shallow, lacking the visceral resonance of their L1 (Baumeister et al., 2017; Caldwell-Harris, 2015). This difference indicates the role of linguistic proficiency in providing deeper emotional and cognitive engagement with a language.

Another factor in regulating these emotional shifts is the environment in the language classroom. While traditional pedagogy prioritizes linguistic competence over affective engagement (Garrett & Young, 2009), modern approaches advocate for unified learning experiences that integrate emotion and identity (Kramersch, 2006). Positive emotional experiences, such as collaborative learning, can boost motivation and foster investment in multilingual identities (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2017; Forbes et al., 2021). Nevertheless, Dewaele (2011) claims that foreign language classroom anxiety can disrupt this process when learners perceive a mismatch between their emerging multilingual selves and institutional expectations. Neurobiological research further elaborates on this connection, showing how the amygdala and orbitofrontal cortex evaluate linguistic stimuli based on novelty, self-image, and social relevance, thereby directly influencing motivation and emotional responses (Schumann, 2001).

Ultimately, emotional engagement serves as the foundation for effective multilingual identity development. Without it, the concept of possible selves, learners' idealized future identities, stays abstract and motivationally inert (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2017; Miyahara, 2015). As Forbes et al. (2021) propose, pedagogical interventions can nurture emotional connections, transforming language learning from a cognitive exercise into a holistic process of identity construction. These studies conclude that proficiency, emotion, and learning environments interact dynamically to construct multilingual selves, whereby affective factors may act as both catalysts and barriers to linguistic growth.

While this body of research offers valuable insights into the complex relationship between emotions and multilingual identity development, research on the long-term impacts of emotional and cognitive challenges on identity formation remains scarce. Moreover, the cultural and sociopolitical contexts of language learning, particularly the global dominance of English, merit further attention.

2.4 Analyzing Multilingual Identity Development Through a Sociocultural Lens

The sociocultural perspective is important to understand how multilingual identities are constructed through ongoing interactions between individuals and surrounding social and cultural contexts. Based on Vygotsky's foundational theory, this approach claims that "individual mental functioning can only be understood by examining the social and cultural processes that construct it" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 220). Three closely related theoretical theories inform this lens: language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and the concept of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This perspective explains how learners internalize linguistic tools and cultural norms through interactions, progressing from object-regulation to self-regulation while functioning within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.4.1 Classrooms as Sites of Identity Negotiation

According to this perspective, classrooms are not only sites for language instruction but also dynamic spaces to construct and negotiate identity. Pomerantz's (2008) study of advanced Spanish learners at a U.S. university revealed that students strategically deployed their L1 to foster peer solidarity while using the L2 to perform their academic or aspirational identities during collaborative tasks. His findings suggest that lexical choices are shaped by communicative needs and the desire to shape socially meaningful selves. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) suggest that the classroom acts as an interactional marketplace, where learners can position themselves through discourse, power dynamics, and institutional structures.

Other related empirical studies have shown that translanguaging can be a pedagogical and identity-affirming practice. In Moses et al.'s (2021) study on two first-grade, bilingual classrooms (Spanish/English), translanguaging practices facilitated learners to draw on their full linguistic repertoires to express complex identities, resist deficit views, and engage in meaning-making. Similarly, García and Sylvan (2011), in an 18-month ethnographic study of 42 Spanish–English emergent bilinguals across three English-dominant high schools in New York City, found that students established covert translanguaging spaces in hallways and digital platforms. These informal spaces enabled learners to reject English-only assessment and sustain cultural connections through practices such as Spanglish memes and texts.

2.4.2 Post-Soviet Case Studies: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan

In post-Soviet contexts, the sociocultural construction of multilingual identity is closely linked to national language policies, globalization, and the symbolic capital of English. Following independence in 1991, both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan made deliberate efforts to elevate their titular languages as markers of national identity, while

simultaneously incorporating English as a prestigious language associated with educational advancement and economic opportunity (Djuraeva, 2022; Zhilbayev et al., 2019).

Kazakhstan's trilingual education policy (Kazakh–Russian–English) was critically examined by Parra and Abdiyeva (2021) in a qualitative study involving students from Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and mainstream institutions. Their findings showed that while Kazakh was framed as a national heritage language, English was widely regarded as a gateway to modernization, global connectivity, and upward mobility, especially among urban youth.

In the Uzbek context, Zhao (2022) conducted a qualitative study with 32 secondary students, revealing that English was closely associated with scholarships, career advancement, and international mobility. In contrast, Uzbek maintained strong associations with family, tradition, and cultural rootedness.

Expanding the regional lens, Shermatova (2020) explored linguistic identity among 80 young people in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, examining how code-switching and digital practices reflect the negotiation of hybrid identities. Her study found that Russian signaled access to urban and professional spheres, while Kyrgyz remained an ethnic and cultural anchor—highlighting the tension between official language ideologies and the translingual realities of youth, discussed by García and Wei (2014).

Overall, these studies show how language choices in post-Soviet societies are not only sociopolitical acts but also key instruments in the construction of fluid, multilayered identities shaped by both global aspirations and local affiliations.

2.4.3 Critical Perspectives and Marginalized Voices

While the existing literature primarily focuses on aspirational identities, other studies reveal how multilingual learners may face exclusion or marginalization. Ahn and Smagulova's (2023) survey of 2,954 students from 29 schools in Almaty revealed that the

medium of instruction (MOI) reinforces ethnic and socio-economic divisions, with Kazakh MOI associated with the stereotype of rural, low-income students, whereas Russian MOI is associated with more affluent, urban populations. In a similar vein, a qualitative study conducted by Marginson (2014) with 290 international students in Australia and New Zealand revealed how learners exercise agency to navigate hybrid and layered identities, showing deficit-based views of adaptation and self-formation through cultural multiplicity and resilience. Regarding other postcolonial contexts, Chimbutane's (2023) study on post-colonial African countries explored how language policies adapted from colonial regimes continue to marginalize indigenous languages, thereby constraining learners' identity options and restricting their agency in schools.

Although valuable contributions have been made to the sociocultural literature on multilingual identity, several gaps still remain. In particular, there is a growing need for research on digital communities of practice, where learners construct and negotiate identities beyond the classroom—through platforms such as social media, online gaming, and digital activism—representing an emerging and underexplored area in identity research. Additionally, there is a noticeable lack of studies focusing on the lived experiences of students navigating the multilingual landscape of Uzbekistan, limiting our understanding of identity development in this unique sociolinguistic context.

2.5 Analyzing Multilingual Identity Development Through a Poststructural Lens

The poststructuralist theories define identity as fluid, multifaceted, and often contested, constantly negotiated within unequal power dynamics (Norton, 2013). Hence, identity is not fixed but constantly shifting where language and identity intertwine with each other (Butler, 2011; Pavlenko, 2001). Poststructuralism also challenges the structuralist perspective of language having a fundamental structure, arguing that language is ambiguous and unstable. It highlights the strong intersection and connection between a

speaker's identity, the language they speak, and their community. From a poststructuralist perspective, language is seen as a medium through which social and identity differences are constructed, influenced by power relations, discourse, ideology, and societal conventions. Research on second language identity suggests that identity construction is a dynamic process, influenced by current social practices, past cultural identities, and future aspirations (Joseph, 2004; Kanno & Norton, 2012). Poststructuralism views L2 learners as active agents who take control of their learning, unlike psychological theories that see them as passive recipients (Ros i Solé, 2007).

Weedon (2011) further develops this framework by defining subjectivity as a dynamic and contradictory process, shaped by conscious and unconscious thoughts, emotions, self-perception, and an individual's sense of their place in the world. Subjectivity is formed through an individual's alignment with specific discursive settings, prospering over time and across various social settings. In line with this, Gu (2010) explored how Chinese English learners navigate complex identity construction processes, where they balance tensions between national pride and global identity, reconciling the differences between Chinese and English cultures to assert legitimacy in both local and global contexts.

Identity is also developed through negotiated experience, where individuals form their identities through social participation by selecting from various identity options (Wenger, 1998). Scholars such as Norton Pierce (1995), and McKay and Wong (1996) note that this process can involve conflict. For example, in McKay and Wong's (1996) study, the participant rejected being positioned as an ESL student by deciding not to participate in the prescribed exam topics and instead writing about his hobbies, which better aligned with his self-perception. Furthermore, Norton and Toohey (2011) and Barkhuizen (2017) argue that identities are constantly negotiated through discourse, with

power dynamics playing a significant role in determining access to language-learning communities. Schreiber (2015) demonstrated this through an analysis of digital translanguaging, where students used platforms like Facebook to express different facets of their identities depending on their audience. This highlights how individuals undergo social negotiations to shape identities that resonate with them.

Similarly, Kim et al. (2010) examined how multilingual Malaysian students balance English dominance with their cultural heritage in postcolonial contexts. Their study shows that multilingual identity is not just about language proficiency but involves navigating social expectations, power structures, and cultural affiliations. Poststructuralist scholars argue that learners actively resist or conform to these structures as part of their identity construction, as Fielding (2021) found in her research on intercultural stances in language learning. However, while poststructuralist analysis provides a robust understanding of identity as dynamic and performative, there is still a gap. Further research is needed to explore how specific power dynamics—such as race, gender, and economic disparities—intersect with multilingual identity, particularly in under-researched regions and marginalized communities.

2.6 Summary

Comparing these three perspectives, it becomes clear that while psychosocial approaches highlight the emotional and motivational components of identity, sociocultural frameworks emphasize the relational and community-based aspects, and poststructural theories foreground the fluid, power-laden nature of identity construction. Each approach provides valuable insights into how multilingual learners form their identities in educational contexts. When considered together, however, they complement each other, offering a more holistic understanding.

When synthesized, these perspectives reveal a comprehensive picture of multilingual identity development as a multifaceted and dynamic process. Emotional connections, social interactions, and power dynamics are interwoven in shaping learners' identities, highlighting that language learning is not merely a cognitive endeavor but an inherently emotional and social experience. The psychosocial perspective explains the importance of emotional engagement, suggesting that learners' self-perceptions are closely tied to their emotional experiences with language. In contrast, the sociocultural perspective highlights the significance of community and context in shaping identity, where language learners navigate their identities through relationships and cultural practices. Meanwhile, the poststructural perspective critiques static notions of identity, emphasizing the fluidity and complexity of identity negotiation within varying social dynamics.

Together, these perspectives illuminate how multilingual identities are constructed through a confluence of emotional, social, and cultural influences, ultimately providing a richer understanding of how individuals experience and navigate their multilingual selves. They reveal that multilingual identity development is a relational process, where learners actively engage with their languages and communities, continuously negotiating their identities in response to shifting emotional landscapes and social contexts, as presented in Figure 1.

2.7 Research Gap

Despite these insights, significant gaps in research exist. In particular, more empirical studies exploring the experiences of multilingual identities in the Central Asian context are needed to understand how learners navigate their identities in different educational and social environments. Additionally, more nuanced analyses of how power dynamics, such as race, gender, and economic status, intersect with multilingual identity construction are crucial, particularly in under-researched regions and marginalized

communities. It is also necessary to explore how learners reconstruct emotional and linguistic categories when acquiring new languages, offering deeper insights into the relationships among language, identity, and culture in an increasingly globalized world. This exploration can improve our understanding of the complex dynamics that influence multilingual identity development, informing pedagogical practices that foster inclusive and supportive language learning environments.

This study aims to contribute to addressing these gaps by conducting a qualitative study on multilingual identity construction within the Uzbekistani context, applying the Fisher et al.'s (2018) multi-approach theoretical framework (see Figure 1). Through this study, this study seeks to explore how learners in Uzbekistan navigate their multilingual identities in order to offer insights into the unique multilingual landscape of the region. By examining identity formation in this specific context, the research aims to provide valuable data on how global and local factors shape multilingual identity in specific regions, informing future pedagogical practices to support learners in multilingual environments.

The next chapter will discuss the research methodology, including sections on research design, methods, sampling, data collection strategies, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. Furthermore, it will justify the rationale behind selecting specific instruments and methods.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The previous chapter reviewed relevant literature on multilingual identity formation, analyzing how language shapes self-perception, cultural belonging, and social power dynamics. It also presented the multi-theoretical conceptualization proposed by Fisher et al. (2018), and Norton's (2013) imagined identity and community concepts. Additionally, the literature review chapter identified gaps in research on how Uzbekistani students negotiate multilingual identities in practice, particularly in balancing competing linguistic loyalties.

In this chapter, the following research questions guide the study's methodology and explore key aspects of multilingual identity among Uzbekistani students:

1. How do high school students in Uzbekistan navigate the use of multiple languages in their academic and everyday social lives?
2. How does engaging with multiple languages in Uzbekistan affect students' psychological well-being, behavior, and identity formation?
3. What role do imagined communities and imagined identities play in developing students' multilingual identities in Uzbekistan?

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology employed in the study. Structured into eight key sections, it provides a systematic framework for how the research was conducted and analyzed. It begins by describing the research design and methodology, followed by detailed explanations of the methods, research site, sampling strategies, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. The chapter concludes with discussions of ethical considerations and the researcher's positionality. Each section is designed to ensure transparency and rigor and is based on what the research sought to achieve.

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopted a qualitative research design for three main reasons. First, a qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to better study and observe how students navigate their identities, going beyond surface-level observations, and “interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). Second, qualitative methods were used because of this study’s exploratory nature. Unlike quantitative research, which seeks empirical generalizations, this approach prioritizes in-depth interpretation of students’ lived experiences. It, in turn, allows to study complex, personal experiences, and identity formation, which require understanding context and meaning rather than simply identifying patterns (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Finally, the flexible and naturalistic perspective of qualitative research allowed the use of multiple data collection methods. Creswell (2014) emphasizes that qualitative research “enables the collection of multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents” (p. 45), which provides the researcher with the opportunity to gather rich, detailed data from various sources.

Cohen et al. (2018) suggest that the choice of research design is primarily influenced by the type of study, the research questions, and the objectives of the research. Considering the present study’s aims and questions, the phenomenological approach was specifically chosen, a method well-suited for exploring individuals’ lived experiences and gaining deep insights into their experiences from participants’ perspectives (Husserl, 2012), offering a systematic approach to exploring how individuals perceive and make sense of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). For the present study, this method is particularly suitable for examining how students’ multilingual identities are shaped by their interactions with and experiences of speaking multiple languages, providing deep insights into the personal and social dimensions of identity formation.

Specifically, the present study adopts a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Hatch, 2023) to achieve two critical aims: (1) moving beyond the neutral description of multilingual behaviors to interpret how students actively construct meaning from their linguistic background; and (2) co-constructing with participants their narratives of identity negotiation. Unlike descriptive phenomenology, this approach explicitly acknowledges the researcher's role in analyzing how participants reflect on their experiences, which is essential for capturing the agentic, socially embedded process of the identity construction process in a multilingual environment.

3.2 Sampling

This study employed two types of sampling: convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Due to unexpected difficulties in securing site approval, the research relied on convenience sampling as a practical alternative. This approach aligns with Creswell's (2014) recommendation for studies where participant accessibility and willingness are prioritized, particularly under time or access constraints. Participants were recruited through social media, voluntarily expressing their interest in the study. However, to ensure the study's integrity, all participants were required to meet the predetermined selection criteria. Therefore, purposive sampling was used to involve students with rich first-hand experiences or specific characteristics relevant to the study focus (Ball, 1990). More specifically, the study used criterion sampling, prioritizing the selection of participants with recurring patterns related to the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2013), aiming to gather detailed data for a comprehensive exploration (Cohen et al., 2018). For the present study, data were collected from high school students in grades 9–11 studying at Presidential Schools (PS) and a Kazakh-medium mainstream school (KMS) in Uzbekistan. According to the research objectives, rich data were sought from students whose level of English proficiency was high, which would allow the researcher to obtain meaningful

insights into identity construction. Therefore, specific sampling criteria were set and applied. In the end, 12 students were selected who met the following conditions: (a) spoke more than two languages, each at B2 level or higher; (b) were enrolled in grades 9–11; and (c) were currently taking English classes at school.

There were three primary reasons for the selection of high school students from specific schools. First, I recruited participants from the Presidential Schools—the first public multilingual EMI schools in Uzbekistan to implement the Cambridge A-level curriculum, which means students tend to possess high English language proficiency. Since my research also explored students' social exposure to English, this school was an ideal site, as students are regularly involved in events, clubs, and extracurricular activities conducted in English. Second, to add more diversity of perspectives to my study, one-third of the students were recruited from a Kazakh-medium mainstream school, which was also highly multilingual, where, along with Kazakh, other languages such as Russian, Uzbek, and English are taught as mandatory school subjects. Specifically, I attempted to engage those students with adequate English proficiency to compare how multilingual identity is constructed in different school environments and explore whether similar identity patterns emerge in a non-EMI, yet multilingual context. Finally, the focus on high school students in this study was due to their several years of experience in a multilingual learning environment. This extended exposure helped me gain deeper insights into how their multilingual identities have been shaped continually. Furthermore, high school students were selected because older students are usually believed to possess greater cognitive and linguistic maturity, which enables them to reflect on and articulate their experiences more effectively. This makes them particularly suited for studying complex phenomena such as identity construction (Duff, 2012).

Table 1 presents the key characteristics of the participants recruited for this study. These participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. Overall, the selected students are multilingual speakers, with Uzbek, Russian, English, Korean, Kazakh or Tajik included in their linguistic repertoires.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

№	Name	Gender	School types	Grade	Linguistic repertoire	English proficiency and years of learning
1	Ilhom	Male	Navoi Presidential School	11	English, Uzbek, Russian, Tajik	English (C1) 4 years
2	Shakhlo	Female	Namangan Presidential School	11	Russian, English, Uzbek, Tajik	English (C1) 6 years
3	Akbar	Male	Tashkent Presidential School	10	English, Uzbek, Russian	English (C1) 6 years
4	Shirin	Female	Tashkent Presidential School	10	Uzbek, English, Russian, Korean	English (C1) 11 years
5	Sevinch	Female	Namangan Presidential School	11	English, Uzbek, Russian	English (C1) 6 years
6	Kamilla	Female	Namangan Presidential School	11	Uzbek, Russian, English, Korean	English (C1) 6 years
7	Dana	Female	Kazakh-medium mainstream school	11	Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek, English	English (B2) 4 years
8	Ayana	Female	Kazakh-medium mainstream school	11	English, Uzbek, Russian, Kazakh	English (B2) 2 years
9	Nazokat	Female	Namangan Presidential School	11	English, Uzbek, Russian	English (C1) 5 years
10	Muzaffar	Male	Jizzakh Presidential School	9	Russian, English, Uzbek	English (C1) 8 years
11	Aruzhan	Female	Kazakh-medium mainstream school	10	English, Uzbek, Kazakh, Russian	English (B2) 6 years
12	Zhanar	Female	Kazakh-medium mainstream school	10	English, Uzbek, Kazakh	English (B2) 2 years

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative research includes several methods, including participant observation, interviews, document analysis, and focus groups. From this list, this phenomenological study employed semi-structured interviews to collect data. According to Creswell (2014), an interview is a process of co-constructing knowledge through interaction and dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. By conducting interviews, I obtained detailed, descriptive insights essential for understanding the complexities of individual differences and unique experiences (Yilmaz, 2013).

3.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

DeMarrais (2004) describes a research interview as a “conversational process” between a researcher and a participant, centered around questions relevant to the study (p. 55). In the present study, semi-structured interviews were employed due to their flexibility, allowing the researcher to adapt and adjust the focus if significant issues relevant to the study emerged (Bryman & Cramer, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Unlike structured interviews, this approach promotes the use of a pre-established interview protocol while also enabling follow-up questions to clarify responses or encourage participants to elaborate further (Dörnyei, 2007).

To gain detailed insights into how students view their identities as multilingual agents, the interview questions were formulated to be open-ended, with pre-prepared questions and prompts guiding the conversation (see Appendix E). The interview questions were formulated based on Fisher et al.’s (2018) multi-theoretical framework explained in Chapter 2, which involves sociocultural, psychosocial, and poststructural theoretical perspectives. The research questions aligned with these perspectives and had additional prompts and follow-up questions. To accommodate the linguistic preferences of the participants, the interview questions were offered in three languages: Uzbek, Kazakh, and

English. Individual sessions and one-on-one interviews were conducted to create a comfortable atmosphere so that the participants could provide honest and unbiased views. Each session lasted an average of 27 minutes, during which open-ended questions encouraged participants to provide detailed insights into their experiences. Before beginning each interview, participants were asked for their consent to record the session. Upon approval, the interviews were recorded using a digital device, allowing them to be transcribed later for analysis (Creswell, 2014).

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Before collecting data, I piloted the interview protocols in line with the advice of Bell (2005) to ensure their effectiveness, minimize errors during interviews, and address potential complexities in question phrasing. Merriam and Tisdell (2009) claim that the “best way to tell whether the order of your questions works or not is to try it out in a pilot interview” (p. 104). Therefore, I conducted a pilot interview with a peer, recording it to assess how well the questions addressed the topic. Afterward, I asked for feedback on the clarity and comfort of the questions and revised a few based on her suggestions. The pilot interview adhered to the intended length of about 25-30 minutes.

After obtaining approval from the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee (NU IREC), I contacted the school administration online to gain access to participants. As McFadyen and Rankin (2016) argue, gatekeepers influence access to participants based on assumptions and institutional policies, so understanding their perspectives was crucial given the sensitive nature of involving high school students. The recruitment process took place online, as the research site was in Uzbekistan while I was in Astana. In my initial email, I outlined the focus, aims, and expected contributions of my research to Uzbekistan's education sector. The email was clear and concise, and provided in Uzbek, Russian, and English for accessibility.

The school administration explained their limited authority to permit data collection and referred me to the Agency for Presidential Educational Institutions for further authorization. After reaching out to a specialist at the agency, I was invited to discuss the research, but ultimately, they turned down my request due to bureaucratic constraints and strict regulations on external research. Consequently, I had to use two alternative methods to recruit participants. First, I used social media, particularly Instagram, and my network to share a recruitment letter, receiving several responses. Many participants were recruited through my followers. Second, I contacted an English teacher at a Kazakh-medium school in the Tashkent region, who assisted with recruitment.

Following Creswell's (2013) recommendation for a phenomenological study with three to 15 participants, I initially aimed to recruit 10 students. I successfully recruited 12 participants: eight from four Presidential Schools in Navoi, Tashkent, Namangan, and Jizzakh, and four from a Kazakh-medium mainstream school in the Tashkent region. After contacting them, I explained the study's nature and benefits and sent a recruitment letter with the research objectives, encouraging participants to review it before deciding to take part (see Appendix D). After confirming their participation, I provided more details through a Telegram chat, resolving any questions they had. Assent letters for students and consent forms for parents were then distributed to ensure transparency and ethical compliance (see Appendices B and C).

The interview mode—online or offline—was decided based on participants' preferences. Out of the 12 participants, eight were interviewed via Zoom, and four in person in a quiet classroom. Before starting, I introduced myself, explained the study's objectives, and sought consent to record the session (see Appendix E). I also asked about their language preferences. 10 students chose English, one chose Russian, and one chose Kazakh, reflecting varying levels of linguistic confidence and the influence of English on

their multilingual identities. The interviews began with pre-screening questions about their multilingual experiences and exposure to English, easing the transition to the main topic. After each interview, I thanked the participants and concluded with an open-ended question asking if they had any questions about the study. Some participants inquired about the study's nature and publishing date.

Though I initially planned to conduct classroom observations for richer data, challenges in obtaining school approval led to the study being limited to semi-structured interviews, conducted between January and February 2025.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative data analysis involves several phases, from organizing the data to identifying themes through coding and ultimately sharing the findings. The first step in this process was transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews using the TurboScribe website. After the transcription, I carefully reviewed the transcripts for accuracy to ensure reliability, as this is essential to maintaining the integrity of the data.

Once the data was organized and ready, I engaged in open coding, which involved segmenting and labeling portions of text (Cohen et al., 2018) to assign meaningful labels and identify emerging patterns (see Appendix F). I transcribed the interviews manually, which allowed me to become deeply familiar with the data, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013), who argue that manual transcription is crucial for gaining an intimate understanding of the material. For the coding process, I used two types of coding as described by Saldana (2021). The first was *in vivo* coding, which involved using the participants' own words to capture key ideas and preserve their authentic voices. The second was descriptive coding, which helped me summarize the main points of each

response. As presented in Table 2, this initial set of codes was then carefully examined, compared, and refined as themes started to emerge.

Table 2

Sample of Coding

Interview excerpts	Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Speaking in different languages, especially in English, makes me more <u>confident</u> and makes me sound more <u>powerful</u> . I become braver and <u>stronger</u> , like a more <u>independent woman</u>	English boosts self-confidence and personal empowerment	Confidence and empowerment	The influence of English on students' identity, emotions, and perspectives
English gives me more <u>confidence</u> . Even if I'm younger than others, knowing and speaking English can make me <u>intelligent</u> ...	English makes one an academic weapon	Intellectual value of English	The influence of English on students' identity, emotions, and perspectives
When some Uzbek children ask me to explain or teach some stuff from their coursebook, I don't think I really can do well. So, yeah, that's the point as well. I can somehow explain and like to <u>teach scientific terms in English better</u>	Better academic content expression in English	English – knowledge dissemination	The influence of English on students' identity, emotions, and perspectives

Note. The underlined words in the interview excerpts highlight key codes for analysis.

The process of theme development was cyclical: after grouping the codes into broader themes, I revisited the data multiple times to ensure each theme accurately reflected the content and was fully supported by the transcripts. This iterative process continued until I reached a point of saturation (Creswell, 2012), where no new themes or insights emerged from the data. As the themes became clearer, I organized and refined them to ensure they were distinct and coherent. To enhance the validity and reliability of

the findings, I also considered member checking, though this was not explicitly carried out in this case, it could have been a useful next step for further confirmation of the themes with the participants.

Finally, the emergent themes were organized into three key areas, which will be explored in the findings chapter: (1) Language Use and Distribution in Social and Academic Settings, (2) The Impact of Learning English on Psychological Well-being, Behavior, and Identity, and (3) Imagined Identities and Multilingual Identity Development. This thorough and cyclical approach to data analysis ensured a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics, informed consent, and ethics committee review are significant components for maintaining the credibility of the research process and researchers' taking responsibility for their participants (Flick, 2017). To align with these principles, I meticulously followed the interview procedures set forth by Creswell (2014), ensuring a thoughtful approach to organizing the research design, sampling, methods, data collection, and analysis, considering the ethical implications of the study.

Before the data collection process, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program course online, where I learned how research is conducted according to ethical standards. This training improved my understanding of the procedures taken in conducting ethical research involving human participants. Having passed the training course, I applied to the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee (NU IREC) and received formal ethical clearance. As the study included participants under 18, these procedures were of great importance to guarantee the rights of all participants (Nazarbayev University, 2019).

Following approval, I distributed assent forms to participants to confirm their voluntary participation in the study (see Appendix C). I also sent parental consent forms to the student's parents, clearly stating the purpose of the study, procedures, and possible risks involved (see Appendix B). The forms were written in clear and accessible language so that students and their parents could fully comprehend what the study involved. Before their direct involvement, I informed the participants that they could withdraw at any stage of the data collection without any negative consequences. To foster transparency, I ensured that the data gathered would be used only for research purposes and would not be evaluated or graded. Students were also reassured that there were no right or wrong answers and that their personal experiences and reflections were valued as they were.

Confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the study. All participants were allocated pseudonyms to protect their identities in the report. Even though complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed, I took all reasonable precautions to secure participants' information and reduce any foreseeable risks (Dörnyei, 2007). Regarding data security, all audio recordings and transcriptions were stored in a password-protected cloud folder, available only to me and to my academic supervisor. Following the data retention policy of Nazarbayev University, these materials will be securely stored for three years and then deleted.

3.7 Positionality

It is essential to consider a researcher's positionality during the research process as it is also one of the crucial ethical components (Hopkins, 2007). It indicates how one's identity and real-life experiences influence the way the participant's experiences and answers are interpreted.

My interest in this study is embedded in my journey as a multilingual learner and an EFL tutor. Being a multilingual speaker with exposure to multiple languages expanded

how I saw the world and shaped my sense of self. However, I did not realize how multilingualism has shaped my identity over time. This motive encouraged me to study how students shape and navigate their emerging identities. As someone with a similar background, I approached this research as an insider. This shared experience helped establish trust and encouraged participants to share their stories more openly, enriching the data I obtained. At the same time, it brought my attention to the role of ongoing reflexivity, particularly in recognizing how my lived experiences contributed to the research process and interpretation of findings.

3.8 Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology, including the chosen design, participant selection, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. Employing a qualitative phenomenological design, the research focused on 12 high school students purposefully chosen through convenient and purposive sampling. Data collection relied on individual semi-structured interviews. The next chapter will discuss the main findings of this study.

Chapter 4: Findings

The previous chapter outlined the present study's methodology, including research design, participant selection, data collection tools, analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. This chapter presents and synthesizes the findings from semi-structured interviews with 12 high school students from Presidential Schools (PS) and a Kazakh-medium school (KMS) in Uzbekistan. Using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2019), the study explored the experiences of participants in constructing their multilingual identities and aimed to address the following research questions:

1. How do high school students in Uzbekistan navigate the use of multiple languages in their academic and everyday social lives?
2. How does engaging with multiple languages in Uzbekistan affect students' psychological well-being, behavior, and identity formation?
3. What role do imagined communities and imagined identities play in developing students' multilingual identities in Uzbekistan?

Given the students' multilingual linguistic repertoire, the first section examines their language use and distribution across both social and academic settings. Framing English as a medium of knowledge dissemination, this section explores the extent to which EMI environments shape students' linguistic choices and preferences. The second section reports the findings on how learning English affects students' psychological well-being, behavior, and identity, affecting their self-perception, confidence, and social interactions. Finally, the third section explores how students' imagined identities shape their multilingual identity development. Throughout these sections, this chapter sought to answer the research questions, analyzing students' interviews to provide well-supported findings.

4.1 Language Use and Distribution

In response to the first research question, this section examines how high school students in Uzbekistan navigate and integrate multiple languages into their social and academic lives. It also explores their linguistic repertoire, focusing on their rationales behind language distribution and preferences. Data, collected from two distinct sources: the students from PS and a KMS, allow room to compare language use and choice. This section is structured into three subsections: (1) Academic Language Use; (2) Social Language Use; and (3) Translanguaging Practices.

4.1.1 Academic Language Use

Given that all participants in the study are multilingual (see Table 1), their language use varied across academic and social contexts. Among the eight participants from four regional Presidential Schools (PS), the core STEAM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) are taught in English by international teachers as part of the Cambridge program. This is paired with the national curriculum of Uzbekistan, which includes subjects such as the Uzbek language and the history of Uzbekistan, taught in Uzbek. For instance, one PS participant shared that they have “extra classes in English after school” to improve their proficiency (Shirin, PS, January 2025).

In contrast, the remaining four participants attended a Kazakh-medium school (KMS), where Kazakh is used for most subjects, and English, Russian, and Uzbek are taught as separate languages. These participants reported fewer opportunities for English immersion during regular lessons, as one KMS student explained that to improve her English, she attends private tutoring, as she feels “school lessons are not enough” (Dana, KMS, January 2025). This contrast highlights the different approaches to English instruction in the two educational settings.

While students in PS received structured academic exposure to English through STEAM subjects, students in KMS experienced a more fragmented approach, with English taught primarily as a separate subject. As a result, KMS students sought additional resources, such as private tutoring, to enhance their English proficiency. These findings illustrate the coexistence of multiple languages—Uzbek, Kazakh, Russian, and English—within different educational environments, where the role of English varies significantly depending on the medium of instruction.

Another interesting finding was the effect of this English curriculum on knowledge attainment outside the class. Ilhom, Shirin, and Sevinch from the PS elaborated how the school environment impacted their academic habits:

In the classes our curriculum is in English. Therefore, our discussions with international teachers have to be in English and all of the content I read, or I watch, maybe on YouTube or different platforms, are in English because this has kind of become the most convenient language for me while watching or reading something. (Ilhom, PS, January 2025)

Shakhlo added that she preferred English more for academic purposes because her academic skills in English are stronger:

I think usage of multiple languages depends on the vocabulary and the context I use them for. For the fact that I studied English for a longer time, English is more convenient for me because I know words, I learn words, I still learn them. In Russian, I usually read and try to use them in real life. But in Uzbek, I rarely read, like, literature, novels, or some research. So, I guess Uzbek is less convenient for me just because I don't know it well enough. So, informal Uzbek but not formal one. (Shakhlo, PS, January 2025)

As outlined above, several participants noted that they preferred English for academic purposes due to greater exposure and a larger vocabulary, while Russian was typically used in everyday contexts for reading literature. Shakhlo mentioned that she did not actively use Uzbek, as it was less prevalent in the literature and research she engaged with. This finding illustrates how proficiency and domain-specific usage influence language preference.

The findings also show that students tend to show critical language awareness while navigating and adjusting their language use based on the linguistic backgrounds of their teachers.

As our teachers are Uzbek, and most of them might have problems with English, [so] we communicate in Uzbek. But during the regular classes, we have co-teachers from different countries, so we use English. This way, they don't feel isolated if we speak Uzbek, as they wouldn't understand, and that would be uncomfortable for them. (Shakhlo, PS, January 2025)

Specifically, this finding reveals that the participants predominantly used English with international teachers as a sign of respect and inclusivity, while switching to Uzbek with local teachers with limited English proficiency to establish more effective communication and comfort. This demonstrates their awareness of how language choices influence classroom dynamics, considering linguistic adaptability and intercultural sensitivity.

Moreover, the students from the PS stated that expressing complex thoughts and certain themes is much easier in English because they had acquired this complex content in this language and associated it with academic discourse. They reported having English as a tool for intellectual engagement and scientific discussions.

When it comes to science sessions, I do know more terms in the English language than Uzbek because we study in English. For example, I don't know math or chemistry and biological terms and vocabulary in Uzbek. And when some Uzbek children ask me to explain or teach some stuff from their course book, I don't think I really can do well. I can somehow explain and teach scientific terms in English better. (Akbar, PS, January 2025)

Building upon the previously mentioned points, Kamilla's account below of her struggle to express academic concepts in Uzbek demonstrates the impact of limited exposure to subject-specific discourse in one's native language. This suggests that when education is primarily in a foreign language, native-language proficiency in technical fields may weaken, reinforcing English as the dominant medium for intellectual engagement and as a knowledge dissemination tool.

For expressing complex thoughts, I would choose English because I don't even know the translation of terms in physics in Uzbek. If they ask me to explain in Uzbek, I don't even know what that is. They say it's in the books, like Uzbek subjects or something like that, and I should learn it. But I can't even understand Uzbek terms in physics—even if it's math or computer science. However, I can explain it to other students in English. (Kamilla, PS, January 2025)

4.1.2 Social Language Use

While academic language use was dominated by English in PS and as the medium of instruction in KMS, this subsection explores more inclusive social language use, where all the languages in students' linguistic repertoires are used to certain extent. Each language is analyzed separately in terms of its use, discussing the students' translanguaging practices.

4.1.2.1 English for Social Use. In this use, students' choices of language differed based on context and convenience. Some favored English for its practicality and broader discussion scope. For instance, Ilhom (PS) described English as a "convenient language" while Shakhlo (PS) highlighted the opportunity it gives to "discuss anything." Furthermore, participants reported using English as a lingua franca, treating it as a means of exchanging ideas and learning about other cultures from their international peers.

Through English, I could communicate with them [international peers], expressing my thoughts about interesting topics and exchange new ideas. So, I had more information about their countries' culture like their own language and, we had some chats about politics. This kind of thing made it very easy for me to communicate with others. (Ilhom, PS, January 2025)

Interestingly, Sevinch (PS) mentioned using English with her Uzbek friends as well because she finds the language more fluid and attractive:

I often prefer speaking or writing in English when I communicate with people who I got recently introduced to or international people or texting my friends in English. Even if they know Uzbek or prefer speaking in Uzbek, I feel like writing in English looks better and even the pronunciation sounds better. (Sevinch, PS, January 2025)

Overall, these findings reveal that the practicality, global reach, and intercultural communication brought by English exert a substantial impact on developing participants' multilingual identities.

4.1.2.2 Russian for Social Use. Like English, Russian also played a role in networking and intercultural communication, as explained by Akbar (PS):

I use the English language outside of school for social media communications and maybe in my daily life, like speaking with my friends. I have an international

network. For example, Central Asian youth, so I speak with them in Russian or in English. (Akbar, PS, January 2025)

In addition to recognizing the value of English, Akbar pointed out the significance of Russian in promoting cross-cultural understanding in the Central Asian context.

However, some students' interviews revealed a gap between comprehension and active use of Russian, as many understand the language but struggle with speaking due to limited practice, as illustrated by Shirin:

Actually, everyone understands Russian, but not all of us can speak it fluently. It's a bit difficult sometimes. I personally don't use Russian for daily conversations.

However, in urban areas you can meet a lot of people who speak Russian, for example, in Tashkent. (Shirin, PS, January 2025)

Muzaffar supported this point, explaining that he and his fellows Russian speaking skills declined due to the school environment, where Uzbek and English were predominantly used. However, their exposure to Russian content online helped maintain their reading and listening skills. He further elaborated on the generational shift toward English, claiming that many students today are more fluent in English than in Russian, a trend he had observed across various schools.

To conclude, the findings presented in this subsection suggest that Russian is not as widely used as English in intercultural communication, likely due to reduced exposure, lower proficiency, and changing social preferences. While Russian is widely used, a generational shift toward English is evident, with younger students showing greater fluency in English than in Russian.

4.1.2.3 Native Language for Social Use. No participant denied that their native languages bring comfort and a sense of belonging, familiarity, and inclusivity. Among others, four participants (Ilhom, Shirin, Dana, and Muzaffar) pointed out the significance of their

native language for personal interactions, tradition, and emotional connection. Ilhom, for instance, expressed a strong attachment to using Tajik in his hometown:

I use the Tajik language when I go to the village to visit my relatives and grandparents. I use it to communicate with them, even though they know Uzbek and Russian because it is like a tradition for us to use the Tajik language in our village. (Ilhom, PS, January 2025)

Similarly, Muzaffar shared a similar pattern in his language use, saying he uses English the most in “academia or watching content” while he prefers Uzbek for “better communication.” In support of these points, Shirin noted using Uzbek in social interactions within her circle of friends, as she believes it fosters a sense of closeness and cultural belonging:

I feel more comfortable speaking Uzbek with my friends because it’s our native language, and I feel closer to them when I speak in Uzbek. I can get my point straight to them and it feels so comfortable when we use Uzbek with each other. (Shirin, PS, January 2025)

This sentiment was also echoed by Dana and Ayana from a Kazakh mainstream school, who reported speaking exclusively in Kazakh with friends and family.

Basically, since I’m Kazakh, I speak in the Kazakh language. It’s easier for me to speak and explain. It is more convenient. When I chat or talk to my friends and relatives, all the texts are sent in Kazakh language. School is also in Kazakh. But I struggle to express my thoughts in English. (Dana, KMS, January 2025)

This subsection examined the participants’ language use across contexts. While English and Russian are valued for broader opportunities and networking, most participants still prefer their native languages for everyday communication, demonstrating a strong cultural and emotional connection.

4.1.3 Translanguaging Practices

While the students primarily used English for academic purposes and other languages contextually for social interactions, their language use remained flexible. The interview analysis revealed that participants' language use is affected by mixing languages, known as translanguaging habits (García & Wei, 2014) in both formal and informal contexts. This practice is used to explain ideas and fill in language gaps in certain situations. It is evident in Ilhom's excerpt:

I mix everything. For example, my parents usually make me speak Tajik so that I wouldn't forget about this. So, when I speak Tajik, I use Russian or English to replace some words, but not Uzbek. When I want to discuss some topics with them in Uzbek, I mix up languages because I don't know enough words to express it in Uzbek. That's why I add some Russian, some English, so it's four languages at once. (Ilhom, PS, January 2025)

A similar pattern appeared in several participants' interviews, including those of Shirin and Kamilla, who described the difficulty of explaining science-related concepts to family members when such knowledge had been primarily acquired in English. Conversely, they also faced challenges recalling English equivalents for everyday terms rooted in their native languages. This led to the natural integration of English terms into native-language conversations and vice versa, according to Shirin:

Choosing a language is not about one being harder than another. It's more about a mix of languages. Sometimes I can't find the exact words in either English or Uzbek. For example, when I'm talking to my parents, I sometimes struggle to explain concepts related to my studies or science. At school, we use English for these terms, and I don't always know the Uzbek translation. That makes it difficult to explain things to them. When speaking English, I don't often have difficulties,

but there are times when I forget the translation of certain words. (Shirin, PS, January 2025)

Another pattern is the participants' use of translanguaging in written communication. To elaborate, Akbar and Nazokat reported strategically combining languages, selecting words based on convenience, audience, or personal preference.

For writing, I prefer to mix languages. I choose whichever word is shorter in either Uzbek or English. For example, if a word is shorter in Uzbek, I will write it in Uzbek, and if it's shorter in English, I will write it in English. I don't like writing that much, so I mix the languages. (Akbar, PS, January 2025)

On the other hand, these translanguaging practices also often occurred subconsciously, with students not immediately realizing they were using English terms in their speech. Sevinch described instances where she unintentionally responded in English before translating back into Uzbek.

Sometimes I automatically respond in English and then realize it, translating back into Uzbek. But when I am with my parents or close relatives or friends, I mostly use English terminology, and it takes me like 15 to 20 minutes to explain what it means. (Sevinch, PS, January 2025)

In stark contrast, although the students fluidly mix languages in informal settings, they reported that they tend to adhere to monolingual norms in structured academic environments. Some students said that they consciously avoided translanguaging in the classrooms, perceiving it as a threat to academic formality:

When I am using English in the classes, I don't mix it with Uzbek or Russian because it's formal, so I have to speak formally. But when it comes to my other activities, like participating in the program or talking to my friends, I can sometimes mix languages. (Kamilla, PS, January 2025)

Overall, in this analysis of findings on language use and distribution, we can witness how students adopt a flexible approach: English is preferred for academic purposes, English and Russian for intercultural communication, and native languages for personal interactions. While English is perceived as a global communication tool, native languages maintain the students' cultural identity. Despite the popularity of Russian, its active use is declining, with a generational shift toward English in Uzbekistan. The students navigated linguistic spaces through translanguaging, yet adhered to monolingual norms in academic settings, highlighting the complex relationship between language, identity, and education.

4.2 Feeling in One Language, Thriving in Another: The Psychological Effects of Multilingualism

The previous section focused on the students' use of language in social and academic contexts, and how these languages function as resources for expression and communication. In response to the second research question, this section presents findings related to how students behave, feel, and perceive the role of each language in shaping their behavior, psychology, emotions, and personality. While some participants associated the presence of English in their lives with becoming more “confident,” “bold,” and “open-minded,” others described it as a language for personal reflection, self-expression, and an expanded worldview. However, there were a couple of students from the KMS who did not feel a strong emotional connection to English, mainly due to their low English proficiency and its limited use in their lives. Despite the numerous psychosocial benefits associated with English, for most students, the native language remained an irreplaceable medium for deep emotional connection and authentic self-expression.

This section is divided into four subsections: (1) The Effect of English on Students' Behavior, Emotions, and Worldview; (2) Labeling Uzbek Language as Conservative; and

(3) Native Language for Deep Emotional and Personal Expression; and (4) Using English for Personal Privacy and Reflection.

4.2.1 The Effect of English on Students' Behavior, Emotions, and Worldview

The data analysis revealed noticeable changes in the participants' behavior after being introduced to the English-speaking world, as reported by six participants of the study (Aruzhan, Shakhlo, Kamilla, Dana, Sevinch, and Nazokat). A thorough analysis of all interviews identified a recurring theme—the association of English with “confidence”—which emerged in 11 out of 12 interviews. Additionally, students frequently described a shift in their personality, expressing that they felt “powerful,” “extroverted,” and “authentic” when using English. For instance, Dana (KMS) and Nazokat (PS) shared similar opinions on feeling confident and powerful while speaking English, especially with an American accent. Dana elaborated on how her voice and sense of self seem to change, giving her a feeling of empowerment that she has not experienced with other languages.

I get nervous when I don't know the person. But when I speak English, something changes. I think even my voice sounds different. And my confidence changes too. I also know that I have an American accent, and that makes me feel confident, like a foreign person. I love English because it gives me a feeling that other languages don't, like confidence and other emotions. When I speak English, I feel really powerful. (Dana, KMS, January 2025)

Additionally, Akbar mentioned that speaking English is seen as a status symbol, making him feel confident and intelligent as for having an ability to speak English. He elaborated on the global status of English and its high value within his community, emphasizing its positive impact on his self-perception about himself:

The English language is one of the seven most spoken languages, and therefore, it gives me somehow more confidence. And also, I feel like even if I'm younger than

others, knowing and speaking English can make me feel more intelligent because it's not for everyone to learn a language. (Akbar, PS, January 2025)

Furthermore, several participants revealed that learning English has influenced their worldview, introducing open-minded perspectives. Among them, Dana shared that her understanding, and worldview have expanded with the presence of English in her life:

I can also see that my worldview is quite different from that of my parents and others in my community. For instance, in my culture, people often criticize those who wear revealing or unconventional clothing, saying it's inappropriate. But after learning English, I don't see it that way. I believe people should wear whatever they want, and no one has the right to judge them. Negative comments can affect someone's confidence and mental well-being, so we should respect personal choices. (Dana, KMS, January 2025)

In addition, Aruzhan (KMS) mentioned how her style and attitude toward life have been influenced, while Nazokat (PS) shared that her career aspirations and sense of empowerment have also changed, reflecting the psychological impact of multilingualism on their identities and well-being.

To sum up, this subsection reveal that students generally feel more confident, empowered, and intellectually engaged when using English. Their worldview, self-perception, and outlook on life have been shaped by the inclusion of English in their linguistic repertoire and the cultural as well as Western perspectives it introduces into their lives.

4.2.2 Labeling the Uzbek Language as Conservative

Eight out of 12 students reported that while Uzbek remained the dominant language in their daily lives, it often felt limiting in terms of personal expression. They

stated that they found English a liberating force, that offered them an alternative space for self-expression and identity exploration.

The most impressive thing was that I began focusing on myself, my emotions, personality, and preferences. Before learning English, I only knew Uzbek, and in that language, I wouldn't say, "I want this one" or "I like this one." I never used expressions focused on my true personality. But English gave me many opportunities to redefine myself and think about my personality. When I started learning or speaking in English, people started asking me, "What do you like?" and "What do you prefer?" In Uzbek, I would receive questions that weren't focused on me. (Sevinch, PS, January 2025)

Similarly, in the following excerpt, Akbar expresses his desire for a single unifying language in the world, describing Uzbek as a language that can limit personal development. His reported conversation with his teacher highlights the complex relationship between language, identity, and belonging, revealing the tension between embracing English and preserving cultural heritage:

Once in a global perspective lesson at school, I said there should be only one nation, one language all over the world. But some of the teachers and students alternatively told me, "Well, how about your tradition, culture, and language?" ... I think if the discussion is only about language, I wouldn't prefer to stay with it because I don't want to connect everything in culture, society, or a country to language, specifically the Uzbek language. Knowing only Uzbek can border and limit people. That's why we learned English in the first place—that's the purpose of learning English for Uzbeks. (Akbar, PS, January 2025)

Shirin shared another similar point when reflecting on stereotypical views embedded in Uzbek culture. She described how learning other languages and engaging

with different cultures broadened her perspective, allowing her to critically evaluate her own cultural norms and find a balance between values.

From the beginning, I wasn't entirely okay with certain aspects of Uzbek culture, like the expectations placed on girls or some stereotypes ... But after learning about other cultures, I started connecting elements of my culture with others and finding a middle ground. For example, there's a stereotype in our culture that you shouldn't talk back to adults, even if you're just trying to express your feelings or opinions. I used to think this was universally accepted. But after talking to my international teachers, they were shocked to hear that this is considered disrespectful here. My international teachers explained that, in many cultures, it's completely fine to express your feelings, even if they differ from those of adults. (Shirin, PS, January 2025)

This excerpt is a pertinent example of how these students adopted a new way of thinking, gaining a broader understanding, and breaking away from stereotypes and conservatism through English. Another participant, Sevinch, also acknowledged that her transformation was not solely attributed to learning English but also influenced by adolescence and exposure to English-speaking media. For her, English enabled her to explore different aspects of herself, instilling in her open-mindedness and self-expression, at the same time, maintaining her cultural roots.

It wasn't just English. It's a combination of English and maybe being a teenager as well. The English community also influenced me. I used to watch high school movies from America or European films in English. They didn't change who I am, though. Watching those movies made me reflect on myself, and I didn't try to imitate their behavior. In terms of behavior, I didn't imitate Western culture; I simply became more open-minded, but I remained an Uzbek girl at heart. English

allowed me to express myself more freely, but I didn't let it change who I am culturally. I embraced it without losing my own identity. (Sevinch, PS, January 2025)

Overall, this subsection reveals how English, or exposure to other languages and cultures, serves as a catalyst for self-exploration, critical reflection, and the questioning of traditional norms.

4.2.3 Using English for Personal Privacy and Reflection

Based on the data analyzed, another function of English emerged: its use as a private language for self-expression, allowing participants to create personal space and emotional security. According to Nazokat, journaling in English helps her create a safe space where she is neither judged nor constrained by societal expectations, allowing her to express her thoughts more freely and objectively.

In writing, if I am not asked by a native [Uzbek] language teacher to write an essay in Uzbek, I always use English to write. I do journaling in my diary in English. Sometimes, I write my feelings and thoughts in English on Telegram. (Nazokat, PS, January 2025)

Equally, Sevinch emphasized that she prefers using English to express her feelings and daily experiences because her siblings do not understand it, making it “more appropriate for keeping secrets.” Moreover, Dana also reported speaking in English around her family “because they don't understand me [her], allowing me [her] to express my [her] feelings fully without any restrictions.” Ayana further substantiated this claim, shedding light on the use of English as a private emotional outlet:

Mostly, I cannot show my emotions to anyone. I keep my emotions to myself most of the time. When I am happy, nervous, or sad, I mostly speak in English because

no one understands me. My family, siblings, or others cannot judge me. (Ayana, KMS, January 2025)

In essence, these responses exemplify how English serves as a protective linguistic barrier, enabling participants to express their emotions freely without fear of judgment or interference from family members. This may stem from the fact that their native languages, as previously discussed, are more intertwined with cultural conservatism, limiting the space for open emotional expression and personal privacy.

4.2.4 Native Language for Deep Emotional and Personal Expression

Although the participants demonstrated behavioral and psychological identity shifts brought by learning English, many emphasized the crucial role of their native languages, particularly Uzbek and Kazakh, for deeper emotional expression and meaningful conversations. Several participants explicitly identified Uzbek as their “comfort language” for communicating deep emotions, especially during moments of anxiety, distress, or personal struggles.

I was studying in English, and I had of course some difficulties and at those times, I had my brother. We were very close friends, so this took about like two hours, and I explained all the things and, he asked me in Uzbek which I kind of made our conversation deeper and he also gave me his own advice on how to study, how to cope with the challenges in academics. I think that if we used English, this conversation wouldn't be that deep and that personal because I kind of only use academic English in my everyday life. (Ilhom, PS, January 2025)

Additionally, Kamilla reinforced the importance of native languages for emotional expression. Her response reminded me of a famous saying by Nelson Mandela: “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.” The following excerpt illustrates how deep and profound

emotions are embedded in one's native language compared to the relatively limited emotional depth when communicating in a foreign language:

I can say that excitement in Uzbek is better than in English. I don't know why, but I'm more into Uzbek when it comes to expressing emotions. Even when I am excited, I will say it in Uzbek, not in English. English is a good language when it comes to motivation and something like that. But expressing your true self is something in your heart. So, the first thing in my heart will always be Uzbek, and I will always express myself in Uzbek, even if it's excitement or sadness or something like that, especially with my relatives and parents. (Kamilla, PS, January 2025)

The findings also reveal that some participants' emotions and behaviors were not strongly influenced by English, as they did not use it in emotional context. Some participants attributed this to their limited expressive vocabulary and lack of idioms in English. Specifically, Kamilla emphasized the richness of Uzbek vocabulary, which allows for a more natural and expressive way of conveying emotions:

I think I become more formal when speaking English and freer in my native language. I feel like English is not as emotional as Uzbek. For instance, Uzbek has more emotions and a richer vocabulary, in my opinion. In literature lessons, for example, we read poems written in old Uzbek. They are very emotional and use colorful, expressive words. But when I read poetry in English, it doesn't feel as emotional or vivid to me. (Kamilla, PS, January 2025)

Similarly, Ilhom acknowledged that he is not at a high enough level to express himself in English fully while Dana noted that she tends to use more academic English, highlighting the limited opportunities to develop emotional expressiveness in English.

Although Kazakh is a minority language in Uzbekistan, it remains actively used in some regions. Despite exposure to Uzbek through media and social interaction, Kazakh participants expressed a strong preference for Kazakh in emotional and behavioral expression. This preference demonstrates the unique connection to one's native language, which, even in a minority language community, holds a deeper significance in self-expression than the broader linguistic landscape.

Kazakh is my native language. If my native language is strong, I can express my thoughts in my native language. For example, we have a lot of Kazakh conversations at school and at home. Uzbek and Russian could be also easier, but Kazakh is more convenient and expressive for me. When I am not in the mood, I can complain in Kazakh, interact with my loved ones in Kazakh, or even joke in Kazakh. I know only Kazakh jokes if that counts. (Zhanar, KMS, January 2025)

The ability to convey humor in one's native language is a clear example of its deep emotional connection and omnipresence in everyday life. As Zhanar expressed it, Kazakh is the language she uses when joking, complaining, or connecting with loved ones, showing the level of comfort and authenticity it carries in her life.

Overall, this subsection demonstrates that native languages like Uzbek, Kazakh, or Tajik remain essential for emotional expression and personal authenticity. The participants consistently turned to their first languages in moments of stress, joy, or connection, reflecting their emotional depth and cultural grounding in everyday life.

To summarize this section, the findings analyzed in this section addressed the second research question on the effect of each language in a student's repertoire on identity building, self-expression, and behavioral change. A majority of participants expressed a positive attitude toward English as a tool for empowerment, helping them become more independent, outspoken, and expressive. They attributed this to the influence

of Anglophone culture, through movies, online content, and social media, contributing to shaping students' perspectives, attitudes, and personal development. Another functional aspect of English stressed by the participants was its role in creating a space for open-mindedness and self-reflection. However, no participant denied that Uzbek and Kazakh, the two native languages of the participants, remain deeply tied to cultural identity and emotional expression. Although some associate Uzbek with conservative views, rather than abandoning their roots, students are reshaping what it means to be multilingual by blending languages to navigate both local and global spaces.

4.3 The Distribution of Languages in the Imagined Identities of Students

The following findings examine how students' imagined identities, and imagined communities influence their multilingual identities over time. While most students anticipated a gradual shift from Uzbek to English due to increased exposure through education, relocation, and career aspirations, the findings also reveal a strong desire to reconnect with their native culture and language. This section explores the effect of students' imagined identities on developing multilingual identities in parallel with their commitment to preserve their native linguistic heritage. This section is organized into two subsections: (1) Students' Imagined Selves in Relation to English Communities; and (2) Maintaining Uzbek: Striving for Balanced Multilingualism.

4.3.1 Students' Imagined Selves in Relation to English Communities

This section examines how students perceive their identities in relation to English-speaking communities, focusing on English as a tool for academic, professional, and personal growth. It explores two key themes: English as an instrument for advancement and its role in shaping a global identity.

4.3.1.1 English as an Instrumental Tool for Academic and Professional Advancement.

In 10 out of 12 interviews, participants described English as an instrumental tool, using

phrases such as “access to resources,” “educational opportunities,” and “valuable content.” Given the more prestigious opportunities available in English, the majority of participants mentioned that access to educational opportunities was their main motivation for learning English, as illustrated in Ilhom’s statement:

I think that English was a cornerstone for me to improve my knowledge further and my mother also said that an interesting thing is by learning English and learning math in the English language, you can participate in International Olympics. This was the main reason I chose to apply and after the first stage of the exams, which were about math. I was even more motivated to be included in the top 24 students of the region and my father promised me to give a reward for this and this was my motivation as well. (Ilhom, PS, January 2025)

Similarly, three participants (Shakhlo, Akbar, and Sevinch) equally emphasized the role of English in granting access to valuable resources and content that are either unavailable in Uzbek or Russian or are considered “incomparable” in quality, therefore bridging gaps in knowledge availability and expanding their learning opportunities.

I can literally say learning English can open opportunities for everyone ... But like when I learned the English language, I didn’t know what I could do. I would do these kinds of huge things or like education in English, and I can research independently on the Internet. But if you do not know the English language and like just Uzbek or Russian, there is really limited information and resources on the Internet, especially for students. (Akbar, PS, January 2025)

While these participants outlined the availability of rich reliable information online, Nazokat mentioned the high chance of participating in qualification programs as most of them are held in English.

English exposed me to more valuable content both physically and virtually.

Besides, all the programs I have attended were held in English, and if I didn't know the language, I could not seize all those opportunities and the people that came along with them. (Nazokat, PS, January 2025)

Beyond access to content and resources, participants mentioned English as a crucial asset in shaping their future academic and career trajectories. It emerged as a priority in their aspirations, influencing their education, professional opportunities, and social integration, as stated by Muzaffar:

If I study abroad, for example, in the Ivy League or top universities in the USA, I will do my education in English. I will make friends who speak English. And naturally, I think my first language will be English. And I do my research in English. And also, even if I start an internship or my career, it would be in the English language. English language is a global thing. So, I would put the English language as the top priority. (Muzaffar, PS, January 2025)

These findings illustrate students' idealized imagined identities, where their aspirations are closely tied to integration into an English-speaking environment. They emphasized that pursuing academics in such a setting guarantees a "successful future," enabling them to collaborate with international organizations, expand their networks, and engage in professional and global discourse.

4.3.1.2 English and the Development of a Global Identity. Another major subtheme that emerged was the concept of global citizenship, which the participants frequently noted. As English ranks second in the world by the number of speakers, many participants described how learning the language shifted their local worldview into a global worldview, making them more open-minded, flexible, and critical thinkers.

English connects me to the global community. If you look at Europe or the United States or at the information on the internet, you can see that lots of things are in English, and lots of books are also written in English. So, we can read the books in their original language, not just the translated ones, because the translated books will not express fully what the writer wants to give you. So, English will give you opportunities to understand other cultures, and it will improve your global perspective, your critical thinking skills. (Akbar, PS, January 2025)

Similarly, Dana reflected on how English shaped her identity, values, and ambitions:

After learning English and being exposed to different ideas, I started thinking more about building my own career first. Maybe after 25, I'll consider marriage, but only with someone who shares my values and ambitions. It has helped me develop a more open-minded perspective on life. I started taking it seriously, and my perspective changed. I began thinking about traveling, studying abroad, and applying to prestigious universities. Learning English has given me the confidence to dream bigger and explore new opportunities. (Dana, KMS, January 2025)

These imagined identities are closely connected with students' personal values, shaping not only their linguistic aspirations but also their social and relational choices. Many participants expressed a desire to find partners who share a similar multilingual identity and global perspective, further strengthening their connection to a broader, English-speaking imagined community. The phrase "dream bigger" represents how their ambitions and future aspirations are closely aligned with English as a gateway to expanded opportunities, personal growth, and global integration.

At the same time, Nazokat and Aruzhan highlighted the gap of knowing only one language which could limit their choice as well as knowledge:

My aspirations changed in a significant way. When I knew only Uzbek, I used to dream of becoming a primary school teacher. But after having learned English, my dream career changed to becoming a person in medicine, who will bring initiatives to Uzbekistan’s healthcare and work closely with the Ministry of Health (Nazokat, PS, January 2025).

Overall, the findings analyzed suggest that English functions as a powerful instrumental tool, shaping students’ identities by providing access to knowledge, educational opportunities, and future career prospects. Their motivation to learn English is driven not only by personal ambition but also by broader societal factors, particularly the limited availability of quality resources in Uzbek or Russian. English, therefore, acts as a “passport” to global opportunities—granting access to academic success, professional advancement, and international mobility. In doing so, it significantly broadens students’ horizons, encouraging them to reimagine their futures beyond local boundaries. While remaining grounded in their Uzbek identity, English empowers them to dream bigger, break barriers, and engage with the world in more expansive and meaningful ways.

4.3.2 Maintaining Uzbek: Striving for Balanced Multilingualism

This section explores how students navigate the challenge of maintaining their native language, Uzbek, alongside their increasing proficiency in English. The following subsections highlight students’ efforts to reconnect with and preserve Uzbek, their strategies for balancing both languages, and the significance of this balance in shaping their multilingual identities.

4.3.3.1 Desire to Maintain and Reconnect with Uzbek. While many students view English as a powerful tool for shaping their future and expanding opportunities, they also feel a strong desire to stay connected to their native language. Constant exposure to English-driven content and career prospects reinforces its dominance in their lives, often

pushing Uzbek into the background. However, students recognize the importance of preserving their mother tongue and express a commitment to maintaining it through reading novels and seeking greater exposure.

Shakhlo reflected on her evolving relationship with her native language:

In the future, I really want to reconnect with my own language. As I said before, I don't know my language enough. I'm still trying to read Uzbek novels and understand Uzbek philosophy. So, I guess it's going to be vice versa, Uzbek is going to help me find myself, not English. (Shakhlo, PS, January 2025)

Similarly, Muzaffar noted the importance of maintaining Uzbek while studying abroad while Shirin stressed the role of family interactions in language preservation:

I think I'll call, at least I will try to call my family every day because they won't be comfortable with me being so far away. Of course, I'll speak to them in Uzbek. So, I don't think I'll have trouble maintaining the language. (Shirin, PS, January 2025)

These perspectives demonstrate that multilingual identity is dynamic, shaped by personal, societal, and global influences. While English expands access to knowledge and international opportunities, Uzbek remains a core part of participants' identities, fostering cultural continuity and personal connection.

4.3.3.1 Balance Between English and Uzbek. The findings reveal that students consciously navigate their languages, striving to balance them to prevent the marginalization of their native language. Shakhlo shared how English and Uzbek are intertwined in daily life, coexisting harmoniously.

For instance, when I draw sketches or designs, I try to infuse our natural, traditional elements. So, I really try to combine Uzbek and English. I guess it's also reflected in my real life. English helps me support my viewpoint, advocate for people around me, and uplift vulnerable communities. (Shakhlo, PS, January 2025)

Furthermore, Sevinch highlighted the societal pressure to maintain a strong Uzbek identity, emphasizing the need to strike a balance, while Nazokat expressed her desire to contribute to improving her country by taking the advantage of resources available in English.

English, as I said before, makes me more intellectually strong. I can't just leave the situation as it is. I want to improve myself and return to make things better. So, in that sense, English brings me closer to my community—not because everything is already good, but because I want to contribute to its improvement. (Nazokat, January 2025)

Overall, these findings demonstrate that, rather than creating distance from their community, the use of English actually strengthens the participants' connection to it by providing them with the knowledge and confidence to drive meaningful change. Both English and native language hold essential roles in their daily lives, where two languages can coexist harmoniously, each enriching their identity without undermining the other.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the key findings on multilingual identity construction, with a particular focus on the role of English among 12 high school students in both EMI and mainstream schools in Uzbekistan. First, students' multilingual linguistic repertoire was examined in terms of their language use and distribution across social and academic settings. The second section explored how learning each language influences students' psychological well-being, behavior, and identity, shaping their self-perception, confidence, and social interactions, with a particular emphasis on the role of English. The third section examined how students' imagined identities contribute to the development of their multilingual identity. These findings are further analyzed in the next chapter in relation to the theoretical framework and previous research on the topic.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The previous chapter presented the findings of this qualitative phenomenological study, which explored the construction of multilingual identities of students in Uzbekistan. The findings revealed how students distribute and navigate multiple languages within their linguistic repertoires, shedding light on their language practices and identity formation. It also revealed the role of English in shaping students' imagined identities and explored how they intend to navigate the tension between global and native languages. This chapter interprets and discusses the findings presented in the previous chapter in relation to the study's theoretical framework and the relevant literature, in relation to the study's research questions:

1. How do high school students in Uzbekistan navigate the use of multiple languages in their academic and everyday social lives?
2. How does engaging with multiple languages in Uzbekistan affect students' psychological well-being, behavior, and identity formation?
3. What role do imagined communities and imagined identities play in developing students' multilingual identities in Uzbekistan?

5.1 Revisiting the Theoretical Framework

This study applied Fisher et al.'s (2018) multi-theoretical conceptualization, integrating sociocultural, psychosocial, and poststructural perspectives to examine students' multilingual identity formation. First, from a sociocultural perspective, the study draws on existing literature on identity emergence to analyze how students construct their linguistic identities through participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Second, from a psychosocial perspective, the theory explains how students develop psychological connections with different languages. Finally, the poststructuralist

perspective explains how students' multilingual identities emerge and shift in response to their linguistic, educational, and sociocultural environments.

The poststructuralist perspective in the theoretical framework incorporates Norton's (2013) concepts of imagined communities and imagined identities, as well as García's (2009) theory of translanguaging, to explore the evolving and context-dependent processes through which multilingual identities are formed. Norton defines imagined communities as social groups that are formed through imagination rather than direct interaction, while he uses imagined identities to refer to the way language learners envision their possible future selves concerning the communities they aspire to join and the roles they hope to occupy. These concepts are relevant to addressing the third research question because they offer a lens to examine how learners visualize engaging with the target language and its speakers. Another concept stemming from poststructuralist theory is translanguaging practices, which provide a valuable framework for analyzing students' language practices. Baker (2011) defines translanguaging as the process of receiving information in one language and expressing it in another, which enhances cognitive engagement. Expanding on this idea, Canagarajah (2013) argues that meaning is co-constructed not solely through language, but also through a range of semiotic resources.

Applying these perspectives and concepts, this study aims to explore how multilingual high school students in Uzbekistan navigate language use, identity, and future aspirations across academic and social contexts. The rest of this chapter is organized into three main sections, each corresponding to one research question and situating the findings within the relevant literature.

5.2 RQ1: How do high school students in Uzbekistan navigate the use of multiple languages in their academic and everyday social lives?

The findings revealed that students fluidly and flexibly engaged with and integrated multiple languages within their linguistic repertoires, strategically adjusting their language use depending on context, as shown in three cases. First, in a formal educational context, they primarily relied on English because of its institutional dominance in academia, research, and global knowledge acquisition. Second, in terms of social interactions, English was recognized for its wider communicative reach and utilitarian function as long as the Russian language acted as an intercultural communication tool within the Uzbekistani context. The third context, where the participants' native languages (Uzbek, Kazakh, and Tajik) were primarily used as the main mediums, involving the cultivation of deep personal relationships and expressing emotions. The following subsections examine these findings in light of the study's theoretical framework and relevant scholarly literature.

5.2.1 English as Knowledge Dissemination

Both mainstream (KMI) and Presidential school (PS) students reported using English to obtain information and read content, pointing out its importance to access up-to-date information and useful resources. Analyzed through Fisher et al.'s (2018) multi-theoretical conceptualization, the participants' active reliance on English to access and improve knowledge aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which views language as a primary cognitive tool that mediates learning and facilitates engagement within communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, this dependency reflects the linguistic hierarchies critiqued by Phillipson (2018), who argues that English dominance in academia marginalizes local languages and knowledge systems. While English empowers students to participate in global discourses (Norton, 2013), its

hegemony may inadvertently constrain epistemic diversity (Canagarajah, 2013). Therefore, students' use of English for knowledge acquisition represents both an agentic choice, as shown in Macaro's (2022) research, and a consequence of structural inequities in education resourcing, claimed in Chimbutane (2023), and Zhao (2022).

From a poststructuralist perspective, English operates as a dominant discourse shaping educational power dynamics. The participants' perceptions of academic English as a tool for mobility—calling it a gateway to international competitions and prestigious universities—reflects Norton (2013) concept of identity investment. By privileging English for academic purposes, students construct identities as competitive knowledge agents, striving to join their imagined communities (Norton, 2013). However, this comes at a cost: The more students invest in English-dominant networks, the greater the likelihood their linguistic identities shift from Uzbek to English, as illustrated by one participant's admission that she no longer engages with Uzbek texts due to a lack of vocabulary and institutional deprioritization. This aligns with critiques by Gabriëls and Wilkinson (2020) and Lê Ha (2013), who demonstrate how English's hegemony in knowledge production systematically displaces local languages. Further corroborating this, Goodman and Kambatyrova (2022) document similar patterns of linguistic marginalization across post-Soviet educational contexts. Thus, paradoxically, while English enables inclusion in global academic networks, it simultaneously reinforces linguistic hierarchies that relegate the participants' native languages to a subordinate role. This aligns with the poststructuralist view of identity as fluid yet constrained by discursive power structures, where English is perceived as a tool for attaining mobility and privilege (Norton, 2013).

5.2.2 English and Russian as Communication Tools

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the students' social language use reflects both pragmatic functions and identity negotiations, shaped by their proficiency levels and

communicative contexts. While Russian served as the default language for local integration, particularly in urban areas (Pavlenko, 2008), English functioned as the medium for establishing wider global communication and practicing language skills through target-language interaction. This bifurcation aligns with instrumental motivation theory (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), as students consciously developed their English skills through social interactions to enhance their proficiency.

However, this instrumental use of English coexists with more complex sociocultural realities. Although students reported perceiving English as a “convenient linguistic tool” (Jenkins, 2014, p. 6), this perception contrasts with findings among Vietnamese students, who often resisted using English as a medium of socialization, revealed that this reluctance stemmed from cultural identity concerns, fear of miscommunication, and a preference for Vietnamese in personal interactions. This discrepancy reveals how linguistic markets (Bourdieu, 1991) assign differential values to languages depending on context. Notably, students with limited Russian proficiency strategically employed English as a compensatory social tool within linguistically mixed peer groups, reflecting the adaptive multilingualism observed in post-Soviet educational spaces (Karabassova, 2020).

These practices simultaneously functioned as identity performances (Norton, 2013), with students using Uzbek, Russian, and Kazakh to signal local belonging while deploying English to construct global identities. Such findings align with research on transnational students negotiating competing language norms (e.g., Dovchin, 2020), suggesting that language choices in multilingual contexts always operate at the intersection of communicative utility and symbolic positioning.

5.2.3 Deep Personal Connections

Although students strongly preferred Russian and English for functional communication, they often privileged their native languages (Uzbek, Kazakh, or Tajik) for expressing authentic emotions and personal experiences. This phenomenon aligns with Fisher et al.'s (2018) multi-theoretical framework, particularly its psychosocial dimension, as Pavlenko's (2006) seminal work demonstrates how individuals report feeling fundamentally different—less emotionally reactive—when operating in foreign languages compared to their native tongue. The emotional resonance of language varies fundamentally by acquisition context: native languages develop organically through effectively rich childhood interactions (Dewaele & Pavlenko, 2002; Pavlenko, 2008) and become deeply tied to identity formation, whereas foreign languages like Russian and English are typically acquired through structured educational settings, fostering more cognitively based, emotionally neutral associations (Harris et al., 2003; Schrauf & Rubin, 2000). Consequently, the participants found it easier to convey their deep thoughts, emotionally rooted in their identities in their native language, which was acquired during childhood within an emotionally rich linguistic environment.

In summary, the students used their languages strategically depending on the context: English was the tool for academic success, whereas Russian and Uzbek facilitated broader communication. Their native languages remained connected to emotional expression and personal identity. Furthermore, this discussion highlights both agency in language choice and structural pressures favoring dominant languages. That is, while English and Russian provide opportunities, they also risk marginalizing native languages in formal domains.

5.3 RQ2: How does engaging with multiple languages in Uzbekistan affect students' psychological well-being, behavior, and identity formation?

Regarding the third research question, the analysis in Chapter 4 identified three overarching themes: (1) English as confidence and empowerment; (2) emotional duality between English and Uzbek; and (3) negotiation of multilingual identity.

5.3.1 English as Confidence and Empowerment

The findings indicated that most participants felt different when speaking different languages (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2011; Pavlenko, 2006; Wilson, 2008), perceiving English as a tool for confidence, boldness, and a globalized self-image that enabled liberation from conservative cultural norms. This suggests multilingual speakers often perceive distinct versions of themselves depending on their language use, with emotional connections, cultural associations, and proficiency levels shaping these identity shifts (Pavlenko, 2006). The students' reports of personality changes through exposure to foreign media and cultural perspectives find support in Ramírez-Esparza et al.'s (2006) study, which documented language-dependent personality variations corresponding to the cultural frameworks activated by each language.

Most participants reported increased self-confidence and reduced introversion, aligning with cross-cultural studies suggesting Western cultural contexts tend to foster higher levels of extraversion and openness but lower neuroticism (Chen et al., 2009). According to the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), students' psychological and linguistic development emerges through dynamic interactions across multiple systems. Their exposure to English-language media (exosystem) and communication with international peers (mesosystem) provides authentic cultural contexts that shape both their emotional relationship with English and their evolving multilingual identities.

5.3.2 Private Self-Expression

The findings also revealed that students used English for private self-expression, journaling in English specifically to prevent family members from understanding their thoughts. This suggests that adopting a foreign language enables freer articulation of thoughts and emotions, potentially due to the psychological distance it creates from native cultural norms, as noted by Pavlenko (2012) and Dewaele (2018), who found that multilingual individuals often use second languages as tools for emotional detachment and self-exploration.

The findings of the present study support Fisher et al.'s (2018) argument that English (L2) functions as a cognitive-emotional buffer, allowing students to express intimate thoughts without experiencing the visceral shame associated with their native language (e.g., first-person narratives felt safer in English). This phenomenon corresponds with research on linguistic distancing (Pavlenko, 2006), where multilinguals perceive L2 as less emotionally charged. Consistent with Wierzbicka's (2004) claims on language shaping emotional repertoires, students reported that English enabled them to articulate emotions and self-perceptions that felt constrained in their native tongue.

A key factor in this behavior may be the students' conservative social environment in Uzbekistan, where writing in a local language carried greater risk due to potential judgment if their journals were discovered. This implies that English serves not merely as a communication tool but also as a protective barrier, facilitating authentic self-expression while ensuring privacy. However, not all students developed emotional connections to English. A few participants, particularly mainstream school students with limited English exposure, reported perceiving the language as emotionally shallow. This aligns with research by Baumeister et al. (2017) and Caldwell-Harris (2015), which suggests that low-

proficiency speakers are less likely to form neither emotional nor personality connections with their L2.

5.3.3 Conservatism Embedded in Uzbek Language

The findings reveal that students in Uzbekistan, particularly women, often distance themselves from their mother tongue due to its perceived association with cultural conservatism and restrictive gender norms. This linguistic distancing reflects a complex negotiation of identity, where multilingualism (particularly Russian or English proficiency) serves as both a tool for mobility and resistance. These patterns appear to align with Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions theory, which might categorize Uzbekistan as a high uncertainty avoidance society that values tradition and predictability over innovation and individualism.

The female participants in the study described how speaking Uzbek silenced their personal preferences and constrained self-expression. This finding resonates with Kamp's (2011) and Malikov and Djuraeva's (2021) research on gender studies in Uzbekistan, which documents how cultural expectations limit women's self-expression. These findings imply that language rejection is not uniform; rather, multilingual identities in Uzbekistan exist along a spectrum of resistance and accommodation.

While participants used English and Russian for self-expression, their native language remained emotionally central to their identity. This aligns with Pavlenko's (2012) finding that L1 maintains stronger emotional resonance than L2—a pattern also observed in Puntoni et al. (2008), and Colbeck and Bowers (2012). Notably, since most participants learned English through formal instruction rather than immersion, their weaker emotional connection to it supports Dewaele (2011) and Degner et al.'s (2011) claim that classroom-based acquisition limits emotional depth. Ultimately, these findings reflect principles of episodic memory (Hintzman, 1986), encoding specificity (Tulving &

Thomson, 1973), and language-dependent recall (Marian & Kaushanskaya, 2008): emotional ties to language emerge from contextual use.

Overall, students' complex linguistic identities demonstrate that while English plays an important role in empowerment and fosters positive psychological traits, deeply rooted values, personality traits, and emotional connections remain embedded in their first language, through which related emotions are expressed most naturally (Dewaele, 2011; Pavlenko, 2006; Schrauf & Rubin, 2000).

5.4 RQ3: What role do imagined communities and imagined identities play in developing students' multilingual identities in Uzbekistan?

This question explored how participants' envisioned future affiliations influenced their multilingual identity development and language choices. In response to the third research question, two key themes emerged: (1) English as a gateway to global opportunities, and (2) Hybrid identity negotiation.

5.4.1 English as a Gateway to Global Opportunities

The findings reveal that the primary factors influencing students' imagined communities were educational opportunities, career advancement, and aspirations for international mobility (Norton, 2013). This demonstrates the intrinsic relationship between language and identity, wherein learners invest in target languages anticipating both symbolic and material returns that enhance their "cultural capital and social power" (Norton, 2016, p. 476). These strategic linguistic choices exemplify what Kramsch (2013) terms multilingual subjectivity, a dynamic negotiation of belonging across linguistic and cultural spheres.

These findings align with Zhao's (2022) study, which found that Uzbek students viewed English as crucial for realizing their future goals, frequently expressing aspirations to "study in Britain or the USA" (p. 4). Notably, Zhao documented participants

maintaining emotional connections to Uzbek in personal domains, illustrating Park's (2020) concept of compartmentalized multilingualism, where languages assume distinct identity roles. Similarly, three quarters of the current study's participants—eight participants out of 12—reported choosing English-medium instruction (EMI) schools and taking IELTS examinations primarily to qualify for international university applications. Their stated motivations included accessing world-class education and learning from globally renowned professors, seeking to enhance their career prospects. This parallels findings from Mendoza's (2000) study on how international students' educational investments reflect their cultural and social capital, along with their capacity to navigate imagined identities in host environments.

To sum up, the aspiration to study abroad through English-medium education represents not merely strategic linguistic investment but also an identity transformation influenced by global neoliberal dynamics. As Ives (2015) contends, global capitalism and English's dominance as a lingua franca disrupt conventional national identities and linguistic hierarchies. Within this framework, English transcends its communicative function to embody mobility, modernity, and global citizenship. For the majority of participants, English proficiency development correlated with cultivating a forward-looking identity that complemented, rather than replaced, their local and national affiliations, aligning with global academic and professional aspirations.

5.4.2 Hybrid Identity Negotiation

This subsection discusses the complexities the participants faced in balancing their multilingual identities, particularly the push and pull between global aspirations and local cultural connections. Sevinch's (PS) statement that she remains an Uzbek girl at heart contradicts Zhao's (2022) findings, which suggest that global mobility may weaken emotional ties to one's first language. Her assertion instead supports the view that Uzbek

students can retain strong emotional connections to their L1. She expressed that she remains loyal to her culture and upbringing, preserving the values that her parents had instilled in her. This aligns with Bhabha's (2012) theory of hybrid identity, or the "third space," where diasporic individuals negotiate competing cultural affiliations by balancing globalization and localization.

The participants also demonstrated a conscious awareness of the importance of maintaining their native languages. For instance, statements such as "I'll call my family every day, so I don't forget my language" and "What scares me the most is the possibility of forgetting Uzbek" reflect what Pavlenko (2012) defines as affective language socialization—the emotional attachment tied to language use and identity. These insights can also be explained by Bicultural Identity Integration Theory (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), which emphasizes both cognitive components (e.g., perceptions of cultural blendedness) and affective elements (e.g., feelings of harmony) as central to shaping integrated multilingual identities (Huynh et al., 2011). The spontaneous use of blending, hybridizing, and alternating strategies to reconcile multiple cultural identities has been observed in a qualitative study by Stuart and Ward (2011).

The presence of opposing perspectives suggests that alternating identities may inherently involve challenges, characterized by inner conflict, compartmentalization, and negative emotional outcomes (Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Yampolsky et al., 2016). Although participants expressed a strong desire to balance their languages and identities, the potential challenges they may encounter remain uncertain. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the complexities associated with the alternating identity style.

In summary, this section examined the influence of students' imagined identities and communities on their multilingual identity development. The analysis revealed a desire to maintain hybrid identities, balancing pragmatic L2 use with deep emotional

connections to their L1. However, tensions surfaced between global aspirations and local belonging, demonstrating the complex negotiation of language and identity in an increasingly globalized world.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter interpreted the study's findings through Fisher et al.'s (2018) multi-theoretical framework, translanguaging theory (García, 2009), and Norton's (2013) concepts of imagined identity and imagined community, emphasizing how high school students in Uzbekistan navigate and integrate their multilingual identities. While English emerged as a powerful tool for academic mobility, empowerment, and global belonging, the students' first languages remained central to emotional expression and identity anchoring. The analysis demonstrated that the students' multilingual practices are both agentive and influenced by structural hierarchies, reflecting complex negotiations between linguistic aspirations and sociocultural realities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The preceding chapter discussed the main findings of the study in relation to the relevant literature, exploring how high school students navigate and integrate multiple languages into their lives, shaping their multilingual practices and identity formation. Employing Fisher et al.'s (2018) multi-theoretical framework, García's (2009) translanguaging theory, along with Norton's (2013) imagined identity and imagined community concepts, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do high school students in Uzbekistan navigate the use of multiple languages in their academic and everyday social lives?
2. How does engaging with multiple languages in Uzbekistan affect students' psychological well-being, behavior, and identity formation?
3. What role do imagined communities and imagined identities play in developing students' multilingual identities in Uzbekistan?

This final chapter outlines the study's main conclusions, strengths, and limitations. It also proposes further recommendations for multilingual education policy and classroom practice and makes recommendations for future research.

6.1 Main Conclusions of the Study

This study was grounded in Fisher et al.'s (2018) multi-theoretical framework, allowing the researcher to explore the participants' navigation and integration of multiple languages in their lives, and analyze how the sociocultural, psychological, and poststructuralist forces shape their linguistic choices. In addition to this framework, the study adopted García's translanguaging theory and Norton's (2013) concept of imagined identity to explain how learners align their language practices with the aspirational identities and imagined communities they hope to belong to, thereby shaping their multilingual identity. Specifically, the findings indicate that participants' multilingual

identity construction is shaped by personal aspirations, peers and family interactions, institutional language policies, and the perceived value of English in both local and global contexts. These intersecting forces influence how students positioned themselves within their linguistic repertoires and imagined their future multilingual identities, as illustrated in Chapter 4 and further discussed in relation to the existing literature and theoretical framework in Chapter 5.

One of the key findings concerns the context-dependent language hierarchy shaping participants' linguistic practices. English dominates academic settings, reflecting its institutionalized power as the “global lingua franca of knowledge” (Phillipson, 2008, p. 34), with participants associating it with academic mobility and access to transnational discourse (Jenkins, 2014). Meanwhile, Russian and English function as interethnic lingua francas, illustrating post-Soviet linguistic hybridity (Pavlenko, 2008). In contrast, native languages persist in emotional and familial domains, reinforcing Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic habitus as deeply tied to cultural identity. This suggests that rather than existing in isolation, languages interconnect dynamically, serving distinct yet complementary roles in students' lives. However, the present study concludes that the lack of academic necessity to advance in native languages leads students to adopt and integrate other languages into their identities, reflecting a pragmatic adaptation to global and local linguistic markets.

Another significant finding is the transformative effect of language learning on personality and self-perception. The participants reported increased confidence and empowerment through acquiring new languages, showing that strong exposure and proficiency results in identity shifts. This is in line with research showing that language learners often adopt new cultural behaviors and cognitive frameworks (Pavlenko, 2012). Notably, some students preferred English for personal expression, such as diary writing as

this language gave them the feeling of safety because it was not understood by their families or peers. This suggests that foreign languages provide psychological distance from native cultural norms, enabling freer articulation of thoughts and emotions, particularly in contexts where conservatism restricts self-expression in Uzbek.

Ultimately, the study concludes that multilingual identity development is shaped by a tension between pragmatic aspirations and emotional attachments. While participants invest in English for global mobility and career advancement (Norton, 2013; Kramsch, 2013), they simultaneously maintain deep affective ties to their native language, exemplifying hybrid identity negotiation (Bhabha, 2012) and bicultural identity integration (Huynh et al., 2011). This duality presents that multilingual identity is not static but an evolving process of adaptation, where learners continuously negotiate belonging across linguistic and cultural spaces.

6.2 Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the data collection tools were more restricted than expected, as the research initially intended to include classroom observations to capture identity shifts in real time. However, permission to conduct observations at school sites was not granted, limiting the depth of contextual insights. Second, the participant pool was limited in both size and diversity. A majority of participants were recruited from Presidential schools in four regions in Uzbekistan—an institution accommodating high-achieving students—which may not represent the broader Uzbek student population. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all language learners in different educational or socioeconomic contexts. Finally, the gender distribution was not equal, with only three male participants out of twelve. This imbalance made it impossible to analyze how linguistic identity development may differ across genders. Future research should address these limitations by incorporating a more diverse

sample, multiple data collection methods, and a balanced gender representation to enhance the validity and applicability of the findings.

6.3 Further Implications and Recommendations

Uzbekistan, a multilingual nation with diverse ethnic and linguistic communities, has increasingly prioritized English language acquisition as a key driver of human capital development, economic competitiveness, and global integration. However, only a few studies have examined how these language policies shape the identity formation of youth, who must navigate multiple cultural and linguistic norms simultaneously. This study fills this gap by revealing how students strategically adopt, resist, or hybridize languages, using English for global mobility while preserving native languages for cultural belonging.

The findings have implications for educational policymakers, teachers, and curriculum designers in Uzbekistan. The educational stakeholders can benefit from this research in terms of balancing language policies. While there is a need to foster English as an economically strategic tool, fostering strong multilingual identities in Uzbek, Russian, and English can prevent cultural alienation. Creating academic tools and opportunities in Uzbek can motivate students to balance their academic identity between English and Uzbek.

As for practitioners as well as teachers, this study has insights, and encourage them to incorporate identity-reflective practices, that can encourage students to explore self-expression across languages. This study also recommends considering organizing teacher training to improve educators' understanding of how to address the emotional and cognitive challenges of multilingual identity negotiation.

Additionally, this study points to several critical areas requiring further investigation in the Uzbek context. Future studies should investigate how non-dominant languages (e.g., Karakalpak, Tajik, or regional dialects) interact with Uzbekistan's

trilingual landscape in shaping young learners' identities. By examining these questions, researchers can help policymakers design more inclusive multilingual education that values all linguistic repertoires—not just those tied to economic power.

The subsequent step forward would be to examine how young people in Uzbekistan cognitively process and emotionally reconcile the multiple linguistic influences surrounding them. Particularly, it would be valuable to have ethnographic research capturing how students naturally employ translanguaging in different social contexts, offering insights into whether such practices represent confident multilingual competence or reflect underlying tensions between competing linguistic identities. Furthermore, we also need to understand how both students and teachers perceive translanguaging practices in classroom settings. Such insights could prove crucial for developing pedagogies that leverage rather than suppress students' full linguistic repertoires.

Further research on the above-mentioned recommendations can provide a more comprehensive understanding of language-identity dynamics in contemporary Uzbekistan. Such knowledge can inform educational policies that nurture both global competitiveness and cultural continuity—helping youth thrive as multilingual citizens without abandoning their linguistic heritage.

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Appendix A: AI Declaration Form



Thesis Title: Multilingual Identity Construction Among High School Students in
Uzbekistan

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 and ChatGPT to rephrase awkward sentences, generate synonyms for paraphrasing, and proofreading for punctuation and grammatical mistakes.

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: Perizat Urazmetova
Date: 29.05.2025

Signature: 

Appendix B: Parental Informed Consent Forms

Introduction. Good day! My name is Perizat Urazmetova, a 2nd year graduate student in the Multilingual Education program at Nazarbayev University. I would like to invite your child to take part in my research study. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary.

Study Aim. This study aims to explore how high school students in Uzbekistan perceive and develop their multilingual identities while learning English, and how this influences their language use, social interactions, and emerging identity.

Procedures. I will invite your child to an 20-30-minute-long interview. I will ask your child to express his/her opinion about their English lessons and its usage in academic and social settings. You and your child can choose the format of the interview. It can be online or face-to-face.

Risks. The risks of being in this study are minimal. Your child is likely to expect some psychological discomfort while being interviewed. Your child can let me know if he/she feels any discomfort during the interview or even can refuse to answer any question. I will not share your child's answers with their classmates or teachers. Your child's answers will not affect their grades.

Benefits. There are no personal benefits that your child will get from this study. However, your child's participation is important to develop research in Uzbekistan, leading to improved language teaching methods, better educational policies, and enhanced language learning experiences for future students.

Compensation. There will be no compensation. You will be able to see the study results at the site of the NU Repository (<https://nur.nu.edu.kz/>).

Confidentiality & Privacy. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms. Information about your child, including interview recordings, will not be shared with anyone. I will keep your child's answers on my computer and protect them with a password. At the end of my research, the interview recordings will be deleted.

Voluntary Participation. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You or your child may decide to quit the study at any time. There will be no penalty. Your child may choose to answer or skip questions. Your child also may stop the interview at any time.

Contacts. Contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study. My contacts are: +7(771)3129337 or email me at perizat.urazmetova@nu.edu.kz.

If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please write an email to IREC at resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Statement of Consent.

I, _____
—,

Give my voluntary agreement to my child's participation in this study. The researcher clearly explained to me the information and aim of the study. I know what my child's participation in this study involves. I understand that my child's participation in this study is voluntary. I can withdraw my consent anytime if I want to leave the study. I understand that this will not negatively affect my child. I understand that the information collected during this study will be kept confidential.

I give my permission to audio record the interview: Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Форма информированного согласия родителей

Введение. Здравствуйте! Меня зовут Перизат Уразметова. Я являюсь магистранткой 2-го курса программы Полиязычного Образования в Назарбаев Университете. Я приглашаю вашего ребенка принять участие в моем исследовании. Участие является полностью добровольным.

Цель исследования. Цель данного исследования — изучить, как учащиеся школ в Узбекистане воспринимают и развивают свою полиязычную личность в процессе изучения английского языка, а также как это влияет на их языковую практику, социальное взаимодействие и формирование личности.

Процедуры. Я приглашаю вашего ребенка принять участие в интервью с длительностью 20-30 минут, где он или она сможет рассказать о своем опыте изучения английского языка. Мы обсудим, как занятия английским влияют на формирование его/ее личности. Интервью будет проходить в удобном для вас формате: ваш ребенок может выбрать, чтобы оно состоялось онлайн (например, через Zoom) или лично в удобном месте, например, в школе или кафе. Это будет неформальная беседа, и ваш ребенок сможет свободно делиться своими мыслями и чувствами о языке.

Риски. Риски участия в данном исследовании минимальны. Ваш ребенок может испытывать некоторый психологический дискомфорт во время интервью. Если он или она почувствует дискомфорт, то сможет сообщить мне об этом в любой момент или отказаться отвечать на конкретные вопросы. Я гарантирую, что ответы вашего ребенка останутся конфиденциальными и не будут разглашены его одноклассникам или учителям, а также не повлияют на его оценки.

Преимущества. Хотя ваш ребенок не получит личных выгод от участия в этом исследовании, его вклад важен для развития научных исследований в Узбекистане. Это может привести к улучшению методов обучения языкам, образовательной политики и общему качеству изучения языка для будущих студентов.

Компенсация. Участникам исследования компенсация не предусмотрена. Результаты исследования будут доступны на сайте репозитория НУ (<https://nur.nu.edu.kz/>).

Конфиденциальность и приватность. Вся информация, полученная в ходе исследования, будет храниться в строгой конфиденциальности. Для защиты личных данных будут использоваться псевдонимы. Информация о вашем ребенке, включая записи интервью, не будет передана третьим лицам. Все данные будут храниться на защищенном паролем компьютере, а по завершении исследования записи будут удалены.

Добровольное участие. Участие в исследовании является полностью добровольным. Вы или ваш ребенок можете в любой момент отказаться от участия без каких-либо последствий. Ваш ребенок может отвечать на вопросы или пропускать их, а также остановить интервью в любой момент.

Контакты. Если у вас есть вопросы, комментарии или опасения касательно исследования, пожалуйста, свяжитесь со мной по телефону +7(771)3129337 или по электронной почте perizat.urazmetova@nu.edu.kz.

Если вы хотите задать вопросы о своих правах как участника исследования или если вы хотите озвучить какие-либо проблемы или опасения, которые у вас могут возникнуть в связи с исследованием, кому-либо, кроме исследователей, напишите электронное письмо в IREC по адресу resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Согласие участника.

Я,

даю добровольное согласие на участие моего ребенка в данном исследовании. Исследователь подробно объяснил мне информацию и цель исследования. Я осознаю, что участие моего ребенка в этом исследовании является добровольным и могу отозвать свое согласие в любое время без негативных последствий для него. Я понимаю, что информация, собранная в ходе исследования, будет храниться в тайне.

Я даю свое разрешение на аудиозапись интервью: Да Нет

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Исследователь:

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Ota-onalardan Olingan Rozilik Shakli

Kirish. Salom! Mening ismim Perizat Urazmetova. Men Nazarbayev universitetining Ko'p tilli ta'lim yo'nalishi 2-kursi magistrantiman. Men sizning farzandingizni tadqiqotimda ishtirok etishga taklif qilaman. Ishtirok etish butunlay ixtiyoriydir.

Tadqiqot Maqsadi. Ushbu tadqiqotning asosiy maqsadi O'zbekistondagi maktab o'quvchilari ingliz tilini o'rganish jarayonida o'zlarining ko'p tilli o'ziga xosligini qay tarzda shakllantirish va rivojlantirishi, shuningdek, bu ularning til amaliyoti, ijtimoiy o'zaro munosabati va o'zlikni shakllantirishga qanday ta'sir qilishini o'rganishdan iborat.

Protsepturalar. Avvalambor, farzandingizni 20-30 minut davom etadigan intervyuda ishtirok etishga taklif qilaman. Interview jarayonida farzandingizga ingliz tilining shaxsi rivojlanishga ta'sirini haqida savollar beriladi. Suhbat farzandingizning xohishiga bog'liq onlayn yoki oflayn formatda o'tkaziladi. Bu norasmiy suhbat bo'lganligi uchun farzandingiz til haqida o'z fikrlari bilan bo'lishishi so'raladi.

Risklar. Ushbu tadqiqotda ishtirok etish xavfi minimaldir. Suhbat davomida bolangiz ruhiy noqulaylikni boshdan kechirishi mumkin. Agar farzandingiz o'zini noqulay his qilsa, istalgan vaqtda menga xabar berishi yoki savollarga javob berishdan bosh tortishi mumkin. Farzandingizning javoblari maxfiy bo'lib qolishi, shuningdek, ularni sinfdoshlari yoki o'qituvchilari bilan bo'lishmasligiga kafolat beraman.

Afzalliklar. Farzandingiz ushbu tadqiqotda ishtirok etishdan shaxsan foyda ko'rmasa-da, uning ishtiroki O'zbekistonda ilmiy tadqiqotlar rivojiga katta hissasini qo'shadi. Bu til o'rgatish usullari, ta'lim siyosati va talabalar uchun til o'rganishning umumiy sifati yaxshilanishiga o'z ta'sirini ko'rsatadi.

Kompensatsiya. Tadqiqot ishtirokchilariga kompensatsiya berilmaydi. Tadqiqot natijalarini NU repository veb-saytidan (<https://nur.nu.edu.kz/>) topishingiz mumkin.

Maxfiylik. Tadqiqot davomida olingan barcha ma'lumotlar qat'iy maxfiy saqlanadi. Shaxsiy ma'lumotlarni himoya qilish uchun taxalluslar qo'llaniladi. Farzandingiz haqidagi ma'lumotlar, jumladan, suhbatlardan olingan yozuvlar uchinchi shaxslarga berilmaydi. Barcha ma'lumotlar parol bilan himoyalangan kompyuterda saqlanadi va tadqiqot tugagandan so'ng yozuvlar o'chirib tashlaniladi.

Ixtiyoriy Ishtirok Etish. Tadqiqotda ishtirok etish butunlay ixtiyoriydir. Siz yoki farzandingiz istalgan vaqtda hech qanday oqibatlarsiz ishtirok etishdan bosh tortishingiz mumkin. Farzandingiz istalgan vaqtda savollarga javob berishdan bosh tortishi yoki suhbatni to'xtatishi mumkin.

Kontaktlar. Tadqiqotga oid savollaringiz, fikr-mulohazalaringiz yoki tashvishlaringiz bo'lsa, +7(771)3129337 telefon raqami yoki perizat.urazmetova@nu.edu.kz elektron pochta orqali men bilan bog'laning.

Agar siz tadqiqot ishtirokchisi sifatida o'z huquqlaringiz haqida savollar bermoqchi bo'lsangiz yoki tadqiqot bilan bog'liq muammolar yoki tashvishlaringizni tadqiqotchilardan

boshqa birovga bildirmoqchi bo'lsangiz, IRECga resethics@nu.edu.kz elektron pochta orqali xat yozing.

Ishtirokchining Roziligi

Men,

—,

farzandimning ushbu tadqiqotda ishtirok etishiga ixtiyoriy rozilik beraman. Tadqiqotchi menga tadqiqot va uning maqsadi haqida batafsil ma'lumot berdi. Farzandimning ushbu tadqiqotda ishtirok etishi ixtiyoriy ekanligini hamda salbiy oqibatlarsiz istalgan vaqtda ishtirok etishdan bosh tortish mumkin ekanligini bilaman. Menga tadqiqot davomida olingan ma'lumotlar maxfiy saqlanishi haqida tushuncha berildi.

Men intervyuni audioga yozilishiga o'z ruxsatimni beraman: - Ha - Yo'q

Imzo: _____

Sana: _____

Tadqiqotchi:

Imzo: _____

Sana: _____

Appendix C: Student Assent Forms

Introduction

Good day! My name is Perizat Urazmetova, a 2nd year graduate student in the Multilingual Education program at Nazarbayev University. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

What is this study about?

This study aims to explore how high school students in Uzbekistan perceive and develop their multilingual identities while learning English, and how this influences their language use, social interactions, and emerging identity.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

Please discuss with your parents before you decide to participate. We will also ask your parents to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if your parents say “yes”, you can still decide not to do this.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

- You will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview either online or offline.
- The questions will be mostly based on your usage of English in an academic and social life.

The interview will last for approximately 20-30 minutes.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

The risks of being in this study are minimal. You are likely to expect some psychological discomfort while being interviewed. You can let me know if you feel any discomfort during the interview or even refuse to participate or answer any particular question.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

There will be no direct personal benefits to you. However, your participation is important to develop research in Uzbekistan, which may lead to improved language teaching methods, better educational policies, and enhanced language learning experiences for future students.

Will I receive any payment if I participate in this study?

There will be no payment for participation.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that identify you will remain confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms. Information about you, including interview recordings, will not be shared with anyone. I will keep your answers on my computer and protect them with a password. At the end of my research, interview recordings notes will be deleted.

Withdrawal of participation by the investigator

You may have to withdraw from the study if your parents decide against your participation. This can happen because you are under 18, and your parents are responsible for your participation in the study.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You may withdraw your assent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty or loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may leave the study at any time without consequences of any kind. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can answer questions I might have about this study?

Contact me if you have any questions, comment, or concerns about the study. My contacts are: +7(771)3129337 or email me at perizat.urazmetova@nu.edu.kz.

If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please write an email to IREC at resethics@nu.edu.kz.

I give my permission to audio record the interview: Yes No

ФОРМА СОГЛАСИЯ УЧЕНИКА

Введение

Здравствуйте! Меня зовут Перизат Уразметова, я являюсь магистранткой 2-го курса программы Полиязычного образования в Назарбаев Университете. Я приглашаю Вас принять участие в моем исследовании. Ваше участие полностью добровольное.

О чем это исследование?

Цель данного исследования — изучить, как учащиеся школ в Узбекистане воспринимают и развивают свою полиязычную личность в процессе изучения английского языка, а также как это влияет на их языковую практику, социальное взаимодействие и формирование личности.

Что произойдет, если я приму участие?

Пожалуйста, обсудите свое участие с родителями, прежде чем принять решение. Нам также потребуется разрешение ваших родителей для вашего участия в исследовании. Однако даже если родители согласятся, вы все равно можете отказаться.

Если вы решите участвовать добровольно, от вас потребуется следующее:

- Принять участие в интервью, которое пройдет либо онлайн или офлайн, в зависимости от вашего предпочтения.
- Вопросы будут касаться того, как вы используете английский язык в учебе и в повседневной жизни.

Интервью продлится около 20–30 минут.

Существуют ли какие-либо риски или неудобства?

Риски участия в этом исследовании минимальны. Возможно, вы испытаете некоторый психологический дискомфорт во время интервью. Если в любой момент во время интервью или наблюдений вы почувствуете дискомфорт, вы можете сообщить мне об этом, отказаться отвечать на вопросы или полностью прекратить участие в исследовании.

Есть ли выгоды от моего участия?

Прямых личных выгод вы не получите. Однако ваше участие может внести важный вклад в развитие исследований в области образования в Узбекистане. Это, в свою

очередь, может помочь улучшить методы преподавания языков, образовательную политику и опыт изучения иностранных языков для будущих поколений студентов.

Получаю ли я оплату за участие в исследовании?

Нет, участие в исследовании не предполагает оплату.

Будет ли информация обо мне конфиденциальной?

Да, вся информация, которая может идентифицировать вас, останется конфиденциальной. Я использую псевдонимы для защиты вашей личности. Все записи интервью и заметки останутся в безопасности и не будут передаваться третьим лицам. Они будут храниться на защищённом паролем компьютере, и после завершения исследования все записи будут удалены.

Что будет, если я не смогу участвовать?

Если ваши родители не согласятся на ваше участие, возможно, вам придется отказаться от исследования, так как до достижения 18 лет вам потребуется их разрешение.

Каковы мои права при участии в исследовании?

Вы имеете право в любой момент отказаться от участия без каких-либо последствий. Вы можете покинуть исследование в любое время, не объясняя причин, и это никак не повлияет на ваше будущее. Также вы можете пропустить любой вопрос, на который не хотите отвечать, и при этом продолжить участие в исследовании.

Кто может ответить на мои вопросы об исследовании?

Если у вас возникнут вопросы, замечания или опасения, свяжитесь со мной. Мои контакты: +7 (771) 312-9337, электронная почта: perizat.urazmetova@nu.edu.kz.

Если вы хотите задать вопросы о своих правах как участника исследования или если вы хотите озвучить какие-либо проблемы или опасения, которые у вас могут возникнуть в связи с исследованием, кому-либо, кроме исследователей, напишите электронное письмо в IREC по адресу resethics@nu.edu.kz.

Я даю свое разрешение на аудиозапись интервью: Да Нет

O'QUVCHI RIZOLIGI FORMASI

Kirish

Salom! Mening ismim Perizat Urazmetova, Nazarbayev universitetining Ko'p tilli ta'lim yo'nalishi 2-kursi magistrantiman. Sizni tadqiqotimda ishtirok etishga taklif qilaman. Sizning ishtirokingiz butunlay ixtiyoriydir.

Ushbu tadqiqot nima haqida?

Ushbu tadqiqotning asosiy maqsadi O'zbekistondagi maktab o'quvchilari ingliz tilini o'rganish jarayonida o'zlarining ko'p tilli o'ziga xosligini qay tarzda shakllantirish va rivojlantirishi, shuningdek, bu ularning til amaliyoti, ijtimoiy o'zaro munosabati va o'zlikni shakllantirishga qanday ta'sir qilishini o'rganishdan iborat.

Agar men qatnashsam nima bo'ladi?

Qaror qabul qilishdan oldin ota-onangiz bilan ishtirokingizni muhokama qiling. Tadqiqotda ishtirok etishingiz uchun ota-onangizning ruxsati ham kerak bo'ladi. Ammo, ota-onangiz rozi bo'lgan taqdirda ham, siz ishtirok etishdan bosh tortishingiz mumkin.

Agar siz ixtiyoriy ravishda ishtirok etishni tanlasangiz, sizdan quyidagilar talab qilinadi:

- Onlayn yoki oflayn formatda o'tadigan intervyuda ishtirok etish.
- Interview savollari ingliz tilini darslar davomida, shuningdek, kundalik hayotda foydalanishingizga bog'liq bo'ladi

Suhbat taxminan 20-30 daqiqa davom etadi.

Xavf yoki noqulayliklar mavjudmi?

Ushbu tadqiqotda ishtirok etish xavfi minimaldir. Suhbat davomida siz ruhiy noqulaylikni boshdan kechirishingiz mumkin. Agar suhbat yoki kuzatishlar davomida istalgan vaqtda o'zingizni noqulay his qilsangiz, menga xabar berishingiz, savollarga javob berishdan bosh tortishingiz yoki tadqiqotda qatnashishdan butunlay bosh tortishingiz mumkin.

Mening ishtirokimdan foyda bormi?

Siz to'g'ridan-to'g'ri shaxsiy imtiyozlarni olmaysiz. Biroq, sizning ishtirokingiz O'zbekistonda ta'lim sohasidagi tadqiqotlar rivojiga muhim hissa qo'shishi mumkin. Bu, o'z navbatida, til o'qitish uslublari, ta'lim siyosati va chet tilini o'rganish tajribasini yaxshilashga yordam beradi.

Tadqiqotda qatnashganim uchun to'lov olamanmi?

Yo'q, tadqiqotda ishtirok to'lovni o'z ichiga olmaydi.

Men haqimda ma'lumotlar maxfiy bo'ladimi?

Ha, sizni aniqlashi mumkin bo'lgan barcha ma'lumotlar maxfiy holatda saqlanadi. Men sizning shaxsingizni himoya qilish uchun taxalluslardan foydalanaman. Barcha intervyu yozuvlari va eslatmalari xavfsiz bo'lib qoladi va uchinchi shaxslar bilan baham ko'rilmaydi. Ular parol bilan himoyalangan kompyuterda saqlanadi va tadqiqot tugagandan so'ng barcha yozuvlar o'chiriladi.

Agar men ishtirok eta olmasam nima bo'ladi?

Agar ota-onangiz ishtirok etishingizga rozi bo'lmasa, siz 18 yoshga to'lguningizcha ularning ruxsati kerak bo'lganligi sababli tadqiqotda qatnasha olmaysiz.

Tadqiqotda ishtirok etishda qanday huquqlarim bor?

Siz istalgan vaqtda hech qanday oqibatlersiz ishtirok etishdan bosh tortish huquqiga egasiz. Siz tadqiqotni istalgan vaqtda sabab ko'rsatmasdan tark etishingiz mumkin va bu sizning kelajagingizga hech qanday ta'sir qilmaydi. Shuningdek, siz javob berishni istamagan har qanday savolni o'tkazib yuborishingiz mumkin.

Tadqiqot haqidagi savollarimga kim javob bera oladi?

Agar sizda biron bir savol, sharh yoki xavotir bo'lsa, iltimos, men bilan bog'laning. Mening aloqalarim: +7 (771) 312-9337, email: perizat.urazmetova@nu.edu.kz.

Agar siz tadqiqot ishtirokchisi sifatida o'z huquqlaringiz haqida savollar bermoqchi bo'lsangiz yoki tadqiqot bilan bog'liq muammolar yoki tashvishlaringizni tadqiqotchilardan boshqa birovga bildirmoqchi bo'lsangiz, IRECga resethics@nu.edu.kz elektron pochta orqali xat yozing.

Men intervyuni audioga yozilishiga o'z ruxsatimni beraman: - Ha - Yo'q

Appendix D: Recruitment Emails

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Multilingual Identity Research

Dear 9-10-11 graders,

My name is Perizat Urazmetova, and I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Multilingual Education at Nazarbayev University. I am conducting research to explore how multilingual identities develop in students within English language classrooms. Given your high level of English proficiency and frequent exposure to the language, I would like to invite you to participate in my study. As part of the research, each participant will be interviewed **once** for 20–30 minutes. The interviews can be conducted either online or in person, based on your preference. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Please, note that there is no direct financial benefit but your involvement will contribute to advancing educational research in Uzbekistan.

If you are interested in taking part in the study or have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Kind regards,

Perizat Urazmetova

Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University

[NU Website](#)

Email: perizat.urazmetova@nu.edu.kz

Phone: +77713129337

Тема: Приглашение к участию в исследовании многоязычной идентичности.

Дорогие ученики 9-10-11 классов!

Меня зовут Перизат Уразметова, магистрант в области полиязычного образования в Назарбаев Университете. Я провожу исследование, чтобы выяснить, как многоязычная личность развивается у учащихся на уроках английского языка. Учитывая ваш высокий уровень владения английским языком и постоянное воздействие с ним, я хотела бы пригласить вас принять участие в моем исследовании.

В рамках исследования каждый участник будет опрошен один раз продолжительностью 20–30 минут. Собеседования могут проводиться как онлайн, так и оффлайн, в зависимости от ваших предпочтений. Ваше участие полностью добровольное. Обратите внимание, что прямой финансовой выгоды нет, но ваше участие будет способствовать развитию образовательных исследований в Узбекистане.

Если вы заинтересованы в участии в исследовании или у вас есть какие-либо вопросы, пожалуйста, свяжитесь со мной.

С уважением,

Перизат Уразметова

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Mavzu: Ko'p tili o'ziga xoslik bo'yicha tadqiqotda ishtirok etishga taklif.

Hurmatli 9-10-11-sinf o'quvchilari!

Mening ismim Perizat Urazmetova, Nazarbayev universitetining ko'p tili ta'lim yo'nalishi magistranti. Men ingliz tili darslarida o'quvchilarda ko'p tili shaxs qanday rivojlanishini aniqlash uchun tadqiqot olib bormoqdaman. Ingliz tilini yuqori darajada bilishingiz va u bilan doimiy ravishda tanishishingizni hisobga olib, sizni tadqiqotimda ishtirok etishga taklif qilmoqchiman.

Tadqiqotning bir qismi sifatida har bir ishtirokchi 20-30 daqiqa davomida bir marta intervyu oladi. Suhbatlar sizning xohishingizga qarab onlayn yoki oflayn rejimda o'tkazilishi mumkin. Sizning ishtirokingiz butunlay ixtiyoriydir. E'tibor bering, to'g'ridan-to'g'ri moliyaviy foyda yo'q, lekin sizning ishtirokingiz O'zbekistonda ta'lim sohasidagi tadqiqotlarni rivojlantirishga hissa qo'shadi.

Agar siz tadqiqotda qatnashmoqchi bo'lsangiz yoki savollaringiz bo'lsa, iltimos, men bilan bog'laning.

Hurmat bilan,

Perizat Urazmetova

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Appendix E: Data Collection Instruments

Interview Protocol

Opening Script:

Thank you for meeting with me today! The purpose of this interview is to explore the development of multilingual identities among students in Uzbekistan, particularly how learning English influences their sense of identity. You were chosen for this interview because of your experience in an English language classroom, and we believe you have valuable insights into how multilingualism shapes your language learning journey.

Our online/offline interview will be recorded to create a transcript, while ensuring your anonymity by replacing your name and any names or places you mention with pseudonyms.

If at any point you want to stop participating in this interview or choose not to answer any specific questions for any reason, you are free to do so without judgment. Before we begin, feel free to ask any questions.

This interview is expected to take 25-30 minutes. Before conducting the interview, you will be asked to sign and send me the assent form.

Are you willing to start the interview and be recorded now?
[Wait for response, and begin recording]

Okay, I've started recording. Let's begin with the first question.

A. Interviewee Background:

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself? What is your name, and what grade are you in?
2. How long have you been learning English?
3. Besides English, what other languages do you speak?
4. How often do you use English in your daily life? Do you also use it with friends, online, or while watching content?

B. Language Practices and Integration of English:

1. How often do you choose to use English over your other languages, either in speaking or writing?
2. How does speaking English influence how you see yourself in your community compared to using your other languages?
3. In what ways does English help you connect with others or fit into different groups?

C. Psychological and Behavioral Effects of Learning English:

1. How do your emotions or personality change when speaking different languages? Can you give examples?
2. Are there times when it's easier or harder to express certain feelings or ideas in one language compared to another? Why do you think that is?
3. Has learning new languages affected the way you see yourself or how you connect with people?

D. Imagined Communities and Identities:

1. How has learning English influenced the way you see your place in society?
2. How do you manage the tension between your cultural identity and the expectations when speaking English?
3. How does your use of English impact your sense of belonging to local or global communities?
4. How do you think English will shape your future opportunities, and does that affect how you identify with the language?
5. Do you think learning English has changed your goals or dreams? How?

Closing Script:

That's all the questions I have for you today. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me. Do you have any questions before we finish?

Thank you once again! Your answers are very important for my research.

Протокол интервью

Вступительный текст:

Спасибо, что согласились на интервью! Цель сегодняшнего интервью — изучить, как формируется полиязычная личность у студентов в Узбекистане, и как изучение английского языка влияет на развитие их личности. Мы выбрали вас для участия в интервью благодаря вашему опыту изучения английского, и нам важно узнать ваше мнение о том, как полиязычие влияет на ваше обучение.

Наше интервью, будь то онлайн или офлайн, будет записано для создания транскриптов. При этом ваша анонимность будет полностью сохранена: ваше имя, а также любые упомянутые вами имена или места будут заменены псевдонимами.

Если в какой-то момент вы решите прекратить участие или не захотите отвечать на какие-то вопросы, вы можете сделать это без каких-либо последствий. Пожалуйста, не стесняйтесь задавать вопросы, если у вас они возникнут, прежде чем мы начнем.

Интервью займет около 25–30 минут. Перед началом беседы я прошу вас подписать форму согласия и мне ее отправить.

Вы готовы начать интервью и даете согласие на запись?

[Дождитесь ответа и начните запись]

Хорошо, запись начата. Давайте начнем с первого вопроса.

А. Информация о собеседнике:

1. Можете немного рассказать о себе? Как вас зовут и в каком классе вы учитесь?
2. Как давно вы изучаете английский и на каких других языках вы говорите?
3. Как часто вы используете английский вне школы? Например, общаетесь ли на нем с друзьями, смотрите видео или что-нибудь в интернете?

В. Восприятие полиязычной личности:

1. Как вы относитесь к тому, что говорите на нескольких языках, включая английский? Меняет ли это ваше самовосприятие?
2. Как вы думаете, изменил ли английский язык то, как вы воспринимаете себя или как вас воспринимают другие? Каким образом?

С. Языковая практика и интеграция английского:

1. Помимо занятий, где и как вы используете английский в повседневной жизни?
2. Насколько часто вы выбираете английский вместо других языков, когда говорите или пишете?

3. Как вы считаете, поможет ли знание английского в будущем, например, в учебе или карьере?

Дополнительный вопрос: Какие возможности, по вашему мнению, открывает знание английского? (например, путешествия, учеба за границей, карьерные возможности)

D. Психологические эффекты изучения английского:

1. Как вы себя чувствуете, когда говорите по-английски? Чувствуете ли волнение, нервозность или что-то еще?
2. Меняет ли изучение английского ваше поведение или то, как вы взаимодействуете с другими людьми? Как?
3. Легче ли вам выразить свои мысли и чувства на английском по сравнению с другими языками? Если да, то почему?

E. Воображаемые сообщества и личности:

1. Как фильмы, сериалы или онлайн-контент на английском языке влияют на ваше восприятие самого языка и культуры, которую они показывают?
Дополнительный вопрос: Можете привести пример фильма или сериала, который повлиял на ваше восприятие английского языка или англоязычной культуры?
2. Представляете ли вы, что будете использовать английский для конкретных целей в будущем, например, для учебы за границей, путешествий или работы в международной компании?
3. Изменило ли изучение английского ваши жизненные цели или мечты? Как?

Заключение:

Это все вопросы, которые я хотела задать вам сегодня. Большое спасибо за то, что поделились своими мыслями и опытом. У вас есть какие-нибудь вопросы перед тем, как мы закончим?

Еще раз спасибо! Ваши ответы очень важны для моего исследования.

Suhbat protokoli

Kirish matni:

Suhbatga rozilik bildirganingiz uchun rahmat! Bugungi suhbatimizdan maqsad O‘zbekistonda talabalar o‘rtasida ko‘p tilli shaxs qanday shakllanayotgani, ingliz tilini o‘rganish ularning shaxsi rivojlanishiga qanday ta’sir qilishini o‘rganishdan iborat. Biz sizni ushbu intervyuga ingliz tilini bilish darajangiz yuqori bo‘lganligi uchun tanladik. Ko‘p tillilik til o‘rganishingizga qanday ta’sir qilishi haqidagi fikringizni eshitishni xohlaymiz.

Bizning intervyumiz (onlayn yoki oflayn) tarzda o‘tkaziladi va undan transkript yaratish uchun yozib olinadi. Shu bilan birga, sizning anonimligingiz butunlay saqlanib qoladi: ismingiz, shuningdek, siz tilga olgan har qanday ism yoki joylar taxalluslar bilan almashtiriladi.

Agar ishtirok etishni to‘xtatishga qaror qilsangiz yoki savollarga javob berishni xohlamasangiz, hech qanday oqibatlersiz intervyudan bosh tortishingiz mumkin. Iltimos, biz boshlashdan oldin savollaringiz bo‘lsa, bemaolol so‘rang.

Suhbat taxminan 25-30 daqiqa davom etadi. Suhbat boshlanishidan oldin sizdan rozilik blankasiga imzo chekib, uni menga yuborishingizni so‘rayman.

Suhbatni boshlashga tayyormisiz va yozib olishga rozimisiz?

[Javobni kuting va yozishni boshlang]

Yaxshi, yozib olish boshlandi. Birinchi savoldan boshlasak.

A. Suhbatdosh haqida ma'lumot:

1. O'zingiz haqida bir oz gapirib bera olasizmi? Ismingiz nima va qaysi sinfda o'qiyasiz?
2. Qancha vaqtdan beri ingliz tilini o'rganasiz va yana qaysi tillarda gaplash olasiz?
3. Maktabdan tashqari ingliz tilidan qayerlarda foydalanasiz? Masalan, do'stlaringiz bilan muloqot qilish, video tomosha qilish yoki internetda biror narsa qilish uchun foydalanasizmi?

B. Ko‘p tilli o‘ziga xoslikni idrok etish:

1. Ko'p tillarda, jumladan, ingliz tilida gapirishga qanday munosabatdasiz? Bu sizning o'zingizga bo'lgan munosabatingizni o'zgartiradimi?
2. Sizningcha, ingliz tili sizning o'zingizga bo'lgan munosabatingizni yoki boshqalar sizni qanday qabul qilishini o'zgartirdimi? Qanaqasiga?

C. Til amaliyoti va ingliz tili integratsiyasi:

1. Darslardan tashqari, kundalik hayotingizda ingliz tilidan qayerda va qanday foydalanasiz?

2. Gapirish yoki yozish uchun ingliz tilini boshqa tillardan ustun qoyasizmi?
3. Sizningcha, ingliz tilini bilish kelajakda, masalan, o'qish yoki karyerangizda sizga yordam beradimi?

Qo'shimcha savol: Sizningcha, ingliz tilini bilish qanday imkoniyatlarni ochadi? (masalan, sayohat, chet elda o'qish, karyerada ko'tarilish imkoniyatlari)

D. Ingliz tilining psixologik ta'siri:

1. Ingliz tilida gaplashganda o'zingizni qanday his qilasiz? Sizda hayajon, asabiylik yoki boshqa emotsional o'zgarishlar bo'ladimi?
2. Ingliz tilini o'rganish sizning xulq-atvoringiz yoki boshqa odamlar bilan munosobatlaringizga o'z ta'sirini ko'rsatadimi? Qanaqasiga?
3. Fikr va his-tuyg'ularingizni ingliz tilida ifodalash boshqa tillarga qaraganda osonroqmi? Agar shunday bo'lsa, nimaga unaqa deb o'ylaysiz?

E. Tasavvur qilingan jamoalar (Imagined community) va o'ziga xosliklar:

1. Ingliz tilidagi film, teleserial yoki onlayn kontentlar sizning ingliz tili va ingliz madaniyati haqidagi tasavvurlaringizga o'z ta'sirini ko'rsatadimi?

Qo'shimcha savol: ingliz tili yoki ingliz madaniyati haqidagi tasavvuringizga ta'sir qilgan film yoki serialni misol keltira olasizmi?

2. Sizningcha, kelajakda ingliz tili sizga chet elda o'qish, sayohat qilish yoki xalqaro kompaniyada ishlashda asqotadimi?
3. Ingliz tilini o'rganish hayotingizdagi maqsadlaringiz yoki orzularingizni o'zgartirdimi? Qanaqasiga?

Xulosa:

Bugun sizga bermoqchi bo'lgan savollarim shulardan iborat edi. Fikr va tajribangiz bilan bo'lishganingiz uchun minnatdorman. Sizda savollar bormi?

Yana bir bor rahmat! Sizning javoblaringiz tadqiqotim uchun juda muhim.

Appendix F: Data Analysis: Transcript and Coding Samples

Uzbek as a comfort zone	<p>was very hard for me because this was the first time that I was learning, I was studying in English and I had of course some difficulties and at those times, I had my brother, especially Izzatulla like who gave you my contact. We were very close friends so this took about like two hours and I explained all the things and also he asked me in Uzbek which I kind of made our conversation more deep and he also gave me his own advice on how to study, how to cope with the challenges in academics. I think that if we used English, this conversation wouldn't be that deep and that personal because I kind of only use academic English in my everyday life. So that's why I cannot express my emotions fully.</p>	Close ppl around who know English
English for academic usage	<p>Interviewer: Perfect! Uzbek is deeply rooted in your emotions, as far as I see. Yes, good and the next question is I will skip it because you have already answered. It was like what language is better to express your feelings in. The next one is: has learning new languages affected the way you see yourself and how you connect with other people? I have already asked this question but I will ask another one. As you mentioned, you said you try to use English in a formal context, most of the time Uzbek for informal conversations and how about other languages you mentioned like Tajik, Russian or other languages. How about those languages?</p>	
Native lang. to connect with relatives	<p>Interviewee: So, I use the Tajik language when I go to my village because my hometown is Nurata where Tajik is a native language. So, I use it to communicate with my relatives, even though they know, of course, Uzbek and Russian. But it's like a tradition for us to use the Tajik language in our village. So, this is the only case or maybe, I can meet some kind of people from Nurata in the city or if I go to another city of my country. So, in this case, I will use Tajik and also Russian when I meet, of course, Russian people and in the Russian classes. So, I'm not that proficient in this language, that's why I don't want to use it. You know, I don't want to use it a lot.</p>	
Heritage lang. maintenance	<p>Interviewer: okay! I got it. Thank you! The next question: how has learning English influenced the way you see yourself in your society? How do you feel, for example, in Uzbekistan many people started learning English because it has some prestige right? and how do you feel as a person who knows English?</p>	
Russian used when needed	<p>Interviewee: I mean, the person who knows English is kind of a global citizen because you know the traditions of different countries like the USA or England or some European countries, different from our Uzbek traditions. By learning language, they</p>	
Lang. proficiency= Lang. preference		
Global citizen		