

**The Impact of Language Proficiency on Managing International Collaboration
Practices at Kazakhstani Public Universities**

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This letter now confirms that your research project titled “The Impact of Language Proficiency on Managing Practices in International Collaborations at Kazakhstani Public Universities” has been approved by the Graduate School of Education, pending the minor changes as specified by the reviewer with final official approval to be given by the advisor.

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

Yours sincerely,

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Abstract

The Impact of Language Proficiency on Managing International Collaboration Practices at Kazakhstani Public Universities

In response to growing internationalization efforts in Kazakhstani higher education, public universities are increasingly engaging in global partnerships and academic exchanges. However, the success of such initiatives relies heavily on effective communication, which is often hindered by language proficiency barriers. To explore how proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and English affects the management of international collaborations in public universities in Kazakhstan, a qualitative case study approach was employed to answer the following research questions that guided the study: 1. How does language proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and English among university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff affect the effectiveness of management practices in fostering international collaborations at Kazakhstani public universities? 2. How do university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff perceive the impact of their proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and English on their ability to manage international collaborations at Kazakhstani public universities? 3. What specific language-related challenges and barriers do university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff encounter in management practices related to international collaborations? 4. What strategies can be proposed to improve language proficiency and enhance management practices to support successful international collaborations? To explore the central phenomenon, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with university administrators and faculty involved in internationalization processes, alongside document analysis of institutional documents such as language policies and internationalization strategies. The findings revealed that limited English proficiency among faculty members often restricts participation in international collaborations, academic mobility, and research publishing. In addition, the use of Kazakh and Russian in internal documentation creates translation and standardization issues that further complicate international processes. Participants highlighted the need for targeted language training, clearer language policies, and institutional support structures. This study contributes to the understanding of how language shapes internationalization efforts in higher education, particularly in multilingual

contexts. Its findings may inform university leaders and policymakers seeking to improve language support and strengthen Kazakhstan's global academic presence.

Аңдатпа

Қазақстанның мемлекеттік университеттеріндегі халықаралық ынтымақтастықты басқару тәжірибелеріне тілдік құзыреттіліктің әсері

Қазақстандық жоғары білім беруді интернационалдандырудың күшеюіне жауап ретінде мемлекеттік университеттер халықаралық серіктестіктер мен академиялық алмасуларға белсенді қатысуда. Алайда, мұндай бастамалардың табысты жүзеге асуы көбінесе тиімді коммуникацияға байланысты, ал оған тілдік кедергілер жиі тосқауыл болады. Қазақ, орыс және ағылшын тілдерін меңгеру деңгейі Қазақстанның мемлекеттік университеттеріндегі халықаралық ынтымақтастықты басқаруға қалай әсер ететінін зерттеу үшін нақты жағдайларды зерделеуге сапалы тәсіл әдісі қолданылды. Зерттеу келесі сұрақтарға жауап іздеуге бағытталған: 1. Университет басшыларының, профессор-оқытушылар құрамы мен әкімшілік персоналдың қазақ, орыс және ағылшын тілдерін меңгеру деңгейі Қазақстанның мемлекеттік университеттерінде халықаралық ынтымақтастықты дамытудағы басқару әдістерінің тиімділігіне қалай әсер етеді? 2. Университет басшылары, оқытушылар мен әкімшілік персонал өздерінің қазақ, орыс және ағылшын тілдерін меңгеруінің Қазақстанның мемлекеттік университеттеріндегі халықаралық ынтымақтастықты басқару қабілетіне әсерін қалай қабылдайды? 3. Халықаралық ынтымақтастықты басқару процесінде университет басшылары, оқытушылар мен әкімшілік қызметкерлер қандай нақты тілдік мәселелер мен кедергілерге тап болады? 4. Табысты халықаралық ынтымақтастықты қолдау үшін тілді меңгеру деңгейін арттыру және басқару әдістерін жетілдіру үшін қандай стратегияларды ұсынуға болады? Аталған мәселені зерттеу үшін университеттің әкімшілік қызметкерлерімен және интернационалдандыру процестеріне қатысатын оқытушылармен жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттардың көмегімен деректер жиналды, сондай-ақ тіл саясаты және интернационалдандыру стратегиялары сияқты құжаттарға талдау жүргізілді. Зерттеу нәтижелері оқытушылар арасында ағылшын тілін шектеулі меңгеру халықаралық ынтымақтастыққа, академиялық ұтқырлыққа және ғылыми зерттеулерді жариялауға жиі кедергі келтіретінін көрсетті. Сонымен қатар, ішкі құжат айналымында қазақ және орыс тілдерінің қолданылуы аударма және стандарттауға қатысты мәселелер туындатып,

халықаралық үдерістерді одан әрі қиындатады. Зерттеуге қатысушылар мақсатты тілдік оқытудың, нақты тіл саясатының және институционалдық қолдау құрылымдарының қажеттілігін атап өтті. Бұл зерттеу тілдік құзыреттіліктің жоғары білім беруді интернационалдандыруға, әсіресе көп тілді ортада қалай әсер ететінін түсінуге ықпал етеді. Оның нәтижелері тілдік қолдауды жақсартуға және Қазақстанның жаһандық академиялық қатысуын нығайтуға ұмтылатын университет басшылары үшін пайдалы ақпарат бола алады.

Аннотация

Влияние языковой компетенции на управление практиками

международного сотрудничества в государственных университетах Казахстана

В ответ на усиливающуюся интернационализацию казахстанского высшего образования государственные университеты все активнее участвуют в международных партнерствах и академических обменах. Однако успех таких инициатив в значительной степени зависит от эффективности коммуникации, которой часто препятствуют языковые барьеры. Чтобы исследовать, как уровень владения казахским, русским и английским языками влияет на управление международным сотрудничеством в государственных университетах Казахстана, был использован качественный подход к изучению конкретных ситуаций. Исследование было направлено на поиск ответов на следующие вопросы, лежащие в основе исследования: 1. Как уровень владения казахским, русским и английским языками руководителями университетов, профессорско-преподавательским составом и административным персоналом влияет на эффективность методов управления в развитии международного сотрудничества в государственных университетах Казахстана? 2. Как руководители университетов, преподаватели и административный персонал воспринимают влияние своего владения казахским, русским и английским языками на их способность управлять международным сотрудничеством в государственных университетах Казахстана? 3. С какими конкретными языковыми проблемами и барьерами сталкиваются руководители университетов, преподаватели и административный персонал в процессе управления международным сотрудничеством? 4. Какие стратегии можно предложить для повышения уровня владения языком и совершенствования методов управления для поддержки успешного международного сотрудничества? Для изучения данного явления, были собраны данные с помощью полу структурированных интервью с административным персоналом университета и преподавателями, вовлеченными в процессы интернационализации, а также проведен анализ институциональных документов, таких как языковая политика и стратегии интернационализации. Результаты исследования показали, что ограниченное владение английским языком среди преподавателей часто препятствует в участии в международном сотрудничестве,

академической мобильности и публикации научных исследований. Кроме того, использование казахского и русского языков во внутренней документации создает проблемы перевода и стандартизации, которые еще больше усложняют международные процессы. Участники исследования подчеркнули необходимость целенаправленного языкового обучения, более четкой языковой политики и институциональных структур поддержки. Это исследование способствует пониманию того, как языковая компетенция влияет на усилия по интернационализации высшего образования, особенно в многоязычной среде. Его результаты могут стать полезной информацией для руководителей университетов, стремящихся улучшить языковую поддержку и укрепить глобальное академическое присутствие Казахстана.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces study examining the impact of language proficiency on international cooperation management practices in public universities in Kazakhstan. It begins with the background of the study, that helps to comprehend the significance of transforming higher education both globally and in Kazakhstan. The problem statement outlines particular issues related to management and language proficiency in Kazakhstan's higher institutions. The goal of the research is to examine the connection between proficient language use and effective administration in international collaboration. The research questions guiding the study are presented, highlighting key areas of inquiry. The significance of the research is discussed, and its potential contribution to academic and professional discussions on globalization and educational management is emphasized.

Background of the study

The internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan is a strategic priority, as evidenced by the adopted reforms and initiatives aimed at increasing global competitiveness and bringing the education system in line with international standards (Pogorelskaya, Troitsky & Pakulin, 2024; Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, National Center for Higher Education Development [MSHE RK], 2023). Key reforms include the introduction of a National Qualifications Framework adapted to European standards, the creation of independent university accreditation agencies, and the development of academic mobility programs. Since joining the Bologna Process in 2010, Kazakhstan has implemented a credit transfer system, academic mobility, and a three-tier education structure (Bridges, 2014). Bolashak program promotes the training of specialists abroad, strengthening international cooperation (MSHE RK, 2023)

The trilingual educational reform, which provides for the use of Kazakh, Russian and English languages, is aimed at strengthening national identity and global integration (Smagulova, 2008). However, its implementation is accompanied by difficulties, especially in universities. Study shows that administrative staff experience difficulties in international cooperation due to language proficiency barriers, such as limited access to specialized language courses, lack of multilingual documentation, and inconsistencies in terminology in official communications (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024). These factors make it difficult to negotiate, sign agreements, and conduct business correspondence with international partners.

Effective management of international cooperation requires high-quality communication, but language restrictions hinder this process. The administrative staff coordinates international agreements, conducts correspondence and interacts with foreign partners. The lack of united documentation standards complicates administrative processes (Zhumay et al., 2021).

According to the report of the MSHE RK (2023), National Center for Higher Education Development (2023), statistical data confirming the lack of professional programs and language training support for university staff are presented. This indicates a decrease in the involvement of teaching staff in trilingual education programs. In addition, there is a shortage of teachers teaching classes in English and a low level of English language proficiency among students and teachers. These factors hinder the effective implementation of trilingual education in Kazakhstan (MSHE RK, 2023). Differences in the implementation of language policy between universities lead to an uneven level of international cooperation (Gazdieva, 2013). Some universities develop language training programs, while others do not pay attention to this, which leads to imbalances in international activity (Zhumay et al., 2021)

To improve the situation, it is necessary to develop strategies to improve the language competence of administrative staff. University management should implement professional programs, standardize documentation, and create conditions for effective international cooperation (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Problem Statement

Despite the fact that internationalization is a strategic priority in Kazakhstan's higher education system, public universities continue to face significant challenges in managing international collaboration (MSHE RK, 2023; Pogorelskaya et al., 2024). One of the key obstacles remains the level of language proficiency of employees, both in English, which is necessary for academic and professional interaction at the international level, and in Kazakh and Russian, which play a crucial role in internal administrative processes and communication with government agencies (Smagulova, 2008; Jumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016; British Council, 2023).

Although the implementation of the State strategy for trilingual education and the development of international programs, the implementation of these initiatives at the institutional level remains uneven. Many universities lack stable language training programs for administrative staff, there is a shortage of qualified multilingual specialists and inconsistencies in the preparation of documentation and official correspondence (Zhumay et al., 2021; Gazdieva, 2013). According to recent reports, there has been a decrease in the number of teachers involved in trilingual education, as well as an acute shortage of English-language courses the number of teachers teaching English classes in trilingual education has decreased from 3,544 in 2022 to 1,950 in 2023, and the total number of students enrolled in such programs has decreased from 50,000 to 44,099 (MSHE RK, 2023). These figures indicate a decrease in activity in the implementation of

trilingual education and indicate the presence of a deeper systemic problem in the institutional support of language policy.

Research shows that university staff involved in international cooperation regularly face difficulties in negotiating, preparing reports, using specialized terminology, and providing bilingual or trilingual documentation (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024; Jonbekova et al., 2025). Language barriers slow down the process of agreeing partnerships, undermine mutual understanding and trust on the part of foreign partners, and limit access to international grants and research networks (British Council, 2023; Jonbekova et al., 2020).

Thus, this problem goes beyond individual language proficiency difficulties and points to broader organizational limitations and inconsistencies between the stated goals of national policy and the actual capabilities of universities. Without systematic approaches to managing multilingual communication and supporting staff development, Kazakhstani universities risk not fully realizing the goals of internationalization and weakening their positions in the international educational space. Solving these issues will contribute to the successful integration of Kazakhstani universities into the global educational field.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the level of proficiency in Kazakh, Russian and English languages on management practices within the framework of international collaboration at public universities in Kazakhstan. The study aims to explore the experiences and perceptions of university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff in order to identify specific language barriers that arise in the management of international collaboration practices. In addition, the work is aimed at developing strategies to improve the efficiency of administrative processes and strengthen the position of Kazakhstani universities in the global educational space. Addressing these issues plays a key role in

improving international cooperation and developing the internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan.

Research Questions

Main question: How does language proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and English among university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff affect the effectiveness of management practices in fostering international collaborations at Kazakhstani public universities?

Sub - questions:

1. How do university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff perceive the impact of their proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and English on their ability to manage international collaborations at Kazakhstani public universities?
2. What specific language-related challenges and barriers do university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff encounter in management practices related to international collaborations?
3. What strategies can be proposed to improve language proficiency and enhance management practices to support successful international collaborations?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it has the potential to advance academic research and real-world application in the fields of internationalization and higher education management, particularly in the specific context of Kazakhstan. This study examines how proficiency in languages affects the management of international collaboration in Kazakhstan's public universities, covering a number of significant topics.

Few researchers explicitly address this issue in the context of Kazakhstan's multilingual higher education system such as those by Bridges (2014), Jumakulov and Ashirbekov (2016), draw attention to the issues surrounding multilingualism in

Kazakhstani higher education, such as the coexistence of English, Russian, and Kazakh in the administrative and academic setting. Despite the substantial contributions of these studies, there remains a need for further study to explore how varying levels of language proficiency among university stakeholders influence the administration of international collaboration. This study contributes by examining the connection between language competency and the efficiency of international partnership management in Kazakhstan universities.

Second, policy makers and administrators of higher education in Kazakhstan can use the study's findings practically. The proposed research can help develop targeted language training programs and support mechanisms aimed at improving language proficiency among university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff by identifying specific language-related challenges and barriers that affect management practices (Jumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016; Smagulova, 2008). As a result, managing international cooperation more effectively overall and successfully internationalizing Kazakh universities are both possible outcomes.

Summary

The introduction chapter provides a justification for the relevance of a study on the impact of proficiency in Kazakh, Russian and English on the management of international collaboration at public universities in Kazakhstan. The chapter begins with a general overview explaining the structure and purpose of the study. The background of the study is outlined below, emphasizing the importance of the internationalization of higher education and the problems associated with multilingualism in the university management environment. The problem statement focuses on the existing barriers in administrative and academic activities caused by the insufficient level of language training of staff.

The purpose of the study is to identify how language proficiency affects the effectiveness of international collaboration management, as well as to develop proposals for improving the situation. The main and clarifying research questions were formulated. In addition, the importance of the study is discussed from both theoretical and practical points of view, both as a contribution to the scientific community and to the process of developing educational policy. The arguments presented serve as a basis for further exploration of the theoretical frameworks in the following chapter

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is devoted to a review of the literature and the formation of a theoretical and conceptual framework for the study. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the key concepts, theories, and empirical research needed to understand how the level of language proficiency affects the management of international collaboration at public universities in Kazakhstan.

First, the basic concepts are considered, including the internationalization of higher education, multilingualism, language policy and management features in the context of globalization. Next, the theoretical frameworks underlying the research are analyzed: the institutional theory of Scott (2008), Hood's (2007) model of state regulation instruments and Spolsky's (2004) concept of language policy. These theories make it possible to explain both the influence of external regulatory mechanisms of the state and the peculiarities of the internal organizational dynamics of universities.

Special attention is paid to existing research on language barriers, internationalization, and institutional differences in the management of international processes in the Kazakh higher education system. A critical analysis of the literature reveals existing gaps and contradictions between official policy and actual university practices, justifying the need for empirical research.

Key Concepts

This study uses several key concepts that form the theoretical framework of the study. An understanding of these concepts is necessary to analyze the impact of language proficiency on the management of international collaboration in Kazakhstani public universities. They are briefly presented in this section, and discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of the chapter.

Language proficiency in the context of higher education is interpreted not only as knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, but also as the ability to effectively use language in an academic and administrative environment. English is becoming especially important in the context of internationalization, as it is the main language of scientific communication (Graddol, 2006; Dearden, 2014). In addition, Kazakh and Russian languages are also important in the context of Kazakhstan, which is related to the trilingual policy in the education system (Smagulova, 2008).

Internationalization of higher education is understood as the process of integrating the international dimension into the mission, functions and strategies of the university (Knight, 2004). This includes academic mobility, international partnerships, joint educational programs, and publication activity. Internationalization requires not only organizational restructuring from universities, but also the linguistic readiness of staff and faculty to interact with foreign colleagues (De Wit, 2020).

Multilingualism in the educational environment reflects the need to use multiple languages within the same institution. In Kazakhstan, this practice is supported at the level of state policy, in particular, through the implementation of trilingual education. However, effective management of multilingual processes requires a well-thought-out language policy and institutional support mechanisms (Spolsky, 2004; Smagulova, 2008).

Management in higher education includes a set of administrative, organizational and strategic decisions aimed at the effective functioning of universities. In the context of internationalization, management takes on new features, including the need to coordinate international projects, prepare reports in foreign languages, and interact with foreign partners (De Boer, Enders, & Schimank, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is the institutional theory interpreted by W. R. Scott (2008), which allows us to explain how universities function in the context of a variety of external and internal requirements, formed not only by formal norms, but also by social expectations and cultural attitudes. In contrast to narrow management models, institutional theory considers the university as a social system influenced by regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive factors (Scott, 2008). This approach is especially relevant for analyzing the management of international collaboration in Kazakhstani public universities, where the processes of internationalization, language policy implementation and bureaucratic accountability are subject to multilevel pressure from the state, society and the internal university environment. Within the framework of institutional theory, Scott (2008) identifies three pillars that structure institutional fields: regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive.

The first pillar, the regulatory one, includes laws, administrative regulations, acts of ministries, and formalized procedures defining "what needs to be done" (Scott, 2008). In Kazakhstan, these include, first of all, strategic documents of the MSHE RK (2023), such as the State Program for the Development of Education, the Roadmap for the Development of Trilingual Education, as well as regulatory requirements related to participation in the Bologna Process and the internationalization of universities (MSHE RK, 2023). Universities are required to comply with the requirements for teaching in English, preparing reports on international agreements, implementing academic mobility programs and attracting international students (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024). However, as noted by Jonbekova et al. (2025), meeting these requirements is often hampered by a lack of resources, limited autonomy, and fragmented administrative support at the university level.

In addition to formal regulation, the activities of universities are also influenced by professional norms and values that form the normative pillar of the institute. It reflects the ideas of "what is considered right" in the academic environment (Scott, 2008). In the Kazakh context, the signs of professional competence of a teacher or administrator include participation in international projects, proficiency in English, publications in Scopus/Web of Science databases, and experience coordinating foreign programs (Altbach & Knight, 2007; De Wit, 2020). However, there is often a contradiction between expectations and actual conditions.: Employees are required to be internationally active, but they do not always provide the necessary language or methodological support. So, the study by Goodman et al. (2023) showed that graduate students and young faculty members of regional universities systematically face difficulties writing scientific texts in English, which reduces their willingness to participate in international grants and partnerships.

Along with regulatory and regulatory factors, the daily practice of universities is influenced by cultural and cognitive support. It includes deep beliefs, routine practices, and "self-evident" attitudes that determine participants' perception of reality in the educational process (Scott, 2008). In Kazakhstan, language acts not only as a means of communication, but also as a marker of identity and status. As noted by Smagulova (2008) and Zhumay et al. (2021), English is associated with academic success and global mobility, Kazakh with state legitimacy and national identity, and Russian with bureaucratic efficiency and administrative tradition. Such a multi-layered linguistic ideology creates internal tensions: young English-speaking specialists do not always confidently use Kazakh for official correspondence, while representatives of the older generation continue to perceive Russian as the main working tool in universities. These cognitive barriers make it difficult to implement language policy and complicate the activities of international offices (Zhumay et al., 2021; Pogorelskaya et al., 2024).

Thus, institutional theory provides a deeper understanding of why the implementation of formally defined language and international policies turns out to be fragmented and uneven. Different universities interpret and adapt regulatory norms in different ways, depending on their resources, cultural environment, and internal beliefs. As Bridges (2014) and Hartley and Ruby (2017) emphasize, management decisions in Kazakhstani universities are often determined not only by official documents, but also by internal informal logic, which makes institutional analysis particularly relevant.

The choice of institutional theory as a theoretical framework is determined by the purpose of this study — to understand how the level of language proficiency affects the administrative practices of managing international collaboration, which institutional barriers prevent this and how they are structured through normative, regulatory and cognitive elements. This theory provides tools for interpreting managerial decisions not as individual deviations, but as a consequence of the integration of universities into a complex network of formal and informal institutions.

Instruments of state regulation

For a deeper analysis of how the state influences the implementation of language policy and internationalization processes in universities, this study uses an instrumental regulatory approach proposed by Christopher Hood (Hood, 2007). This approach complements Scott's institutional theory interpretation, allowing us to reveal the mechanisms and tools of government influence on organizations not only through direct regulatory acts, but also through more flexible and indirect forms of influence.

Christopher Hood identifies four types of resources through which the state manages and regulates: information flows (Nodality), Authority (Authority), financial incentives (Treasure) and organizational structures (Organization). This classification is called the NATO model (Nodality – Authority – Treasure – Organization) and is proving

particularly useful for analyzing educational policy in Kazakhstan, where direct prohibitions and directives are increasingly complemented by indirect incentive and legitimization measures (Jonbekova et al., 2025).

The first element of the model is an information resource — nodality. In the Kazakhstani higher education context, it is implemented through the development and dissemination of strategic documents, government programs, roadmaps and methodological recommendations in the field of internationalization and development of trilingual education (Ministry of Education and Science RK, 2018; MSHE RK, 2023). Examples of such an impact are the introduction of requirements for teaching in English, the formation of indicators of internationalization (number of publications, international students, academic mobility). These information flows provide an idea of the "correct" trajectory of university development. However, as noted by De Wit (2020), in the absence of adequate institutional support, such standards are perceived as formal requirements that are not provided with real resources and practical implementation mechanisms.

The next element of the model is authority. These include laws, regulations, and mandatory requirements that the Government expects its subordinate organizations to comply with. In Kazakhstani higher education, this is reflected, for example, in the mandatory introduction of trilingual education, which is fixed in legislative and by-laws. Universities are required to develop programs in English, develop Kazakh as the language of science, and ensure functional trilingual in document management and reporting (Smagulova, 2008; MSHE RK, 2023). At the same time, studies by Zhumay et al. (2021) and Pogorelskaya et al. (2024) indicate that requirements are often not accompanied by effective control or sanctions mechanisms, and universities themselves do not always perceive them as a priority. This indicates that the authority element works to a limited extent without interacting with other components of the model.

The third important resource is treasure — financial incentives and constraints. These include such tools as the Bolashak program, financing academic mobility and international projects, as well as linking government assignments with indicators of internationalization and English proficiency among teachers (MSHE RK, 2023; Jonbekova et al., 2020). However, studies by Goodman et al. (2023) show that the allocation of financial resources remains opaque and unstable, especially in relation to regional universities, which increases institutional inequality and reduces the effectiveness of using financial instruments as a regulator.

The last element of the NATO model is organization — organizational structures and infrastructure. In the Kazakhstani context, these include Academic Mobility Centers, accreditation agencies, language centers at universities, as well as advanced training courses organized by the Ministry. Despite the existence of such structures, as noted by Zhumay et al. (2021), coordination between the ministry, agencies and the universities themselves remains weak. This leads to duplication of functions, the lack of uniform standards for paperwork and terminology systems, which complicates the integrated development of linguistic and international activities (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024).

Therefore, Hood's instrumental approach allows not only to analyze what is regulated in the field of language policy and internationalization, but also how this regulation is implemented. The application of the NATO model demonstrates that the effectiveness of public policy depends not only on the availability of strategies (nodality) and formal requirements (authority), but also on the degree of consistency of financial incentives (treasure) and organizational infrastructure (organization) with the real capabilities of universities. This approach allows us to uncover the mechanisms of institutional pressure and complement the institutional theory, creating a comprehensive

analytical framework for understanding the management of international cooperation in Kazakh higher education.

The relationship between regulatory instruments and the institutional environment

After considering the basic provisions of the institutional theory and the tools of state regulation in education, it becomes necessary to analyze in more detail exactly how state regulatory mechanisms affect the institutional structure of Kazakhstani public universities. Within the framework of this study, special attention is paid to the interaction of regulatory instruments according to Hood (2007) with institutional supports according to Scott (2008), since it is through this relationship that real management practices in the field of international cooperation manifest themselves.

It should be emphasized that the purpose of the theoretical framework of the study is not to confuse the concepts of "governance" and "management". On the contrary, the task is to analytically link the macro-level of government regulatory strategies with the micro-level of management decisions in the university environment. In the logic of institutional theory, this means investigating how external regulatory supports (rules, incentives, norms) affect internal normative expectations, cognitive attitudes, and organizational behavior of universities (Scott, 2008). In this context, Hood's tools make it possible to analyze the mechanisms of pressure, and Scott's institutional theory makes it possible to understand how universities respond to this pressure.

Information standards (nodality), legislative requirements (authority), financial incentives (treasure), and organizational structures (organization) identified in the Hood model form the external institutional environment, creating a framework for the functioning of universities. However, the impact of these tools is not straightforward. Their effectiveness is mediated through the normative values and cognitive representations of participants in the educational process. For example, the introduction of

internationalization indicators through government programs (nodality) sets formal guidelines, but the success of their implementation depends on how much the values of academic mobility are supported in the university environment (normative support) and how much employees perceive English proficiency as a prerequisite for professional success (cognitive support).

Hence, institutional theory makes it possible to see the gap between formal policy and actual university practice, and Hood's instrumental approach makes it possible to understand which specific mechanisms create this pressure or stimulate change (Hartley & Ruby, 2017; Smagulova, 2021).

The analysis of the Kazakhstani context confirms the existence of this relationship. Even with formalized requirements for internationalization and language training (authority and nodality), many universities demonstrate fragmented and selective implementation of these initiatives (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024; Zhumay et al., 2021). The reasons lie not only in a lack of resources, but also in the absence of internal regulatory legitimation: employees may perceive requirements as formal if they are not supported by career incentives or internal standards (Goodman et al., 2023). At the same time, successful examples, such as Nazarbayev University or KIMEP, show that with internal organizational support, clear procedures, and access to resources, it is possible to successfully transform external requirements into real management practices (Hartley & Ruby, 2017).

So, the integration of the theoretical approaches of Scott and Hood makes it possible to build a holistic analytical framework explaining why some universities actively develop international cooperation, while others limit themselves to formal compliance with requirements. This interaction of external regulation and internal institutional dynamics

directly affects the effectiveness of international project management and the implementation of language policy in universities in Kazakhstan.

Conceptualization of language policy based on the Spolsky model

In addition to Hood's institutional theory and instrumental approach, this study uses the conceptual definition of language policy proposed by Bernard Spolsky (2004). The Spolsky model allows for a deeper understanding of the features of multilingualism management at universities in Kazakhstan, where the formal policy of trilingualism is confronted with a variety of practical realities.

According to Spolsky, language policy includes three interrelated components: linguistic ideology (beliefs and values), linguistic practice (the actual use of languages in everyday life), and language management (formal and informal mechanisms for influencing behavior). This triad helps to understand why there is a gap between official guidelines and actual language practice in Kazakhstani universities. The use of the Spolsky model makes it possible to analyze how university staff perceive Kazakh, Russian and English, what is their actual language practice (for example, the dominance of Russian in administrative correspondence) and what management mechanisms (or lack thereof) promote or hinder the implementation of a trilingual policy (Smagulova, 2008; Zhumay et al., 2021; Zhumay et al., 2021; Pogorelskaya et al., 2024).

Thus, Spolsky's concept is closely intertwined with the cultural, cognitive and normative pillars of Scott's institutional theory, allowing us to reveal how expectations and practices of using languages within universities are formed under the influence of both external regulation and internal attitudes. It is important to emphasize that the Spolsky model in this study performs a conceptual rather than an independent theoretical function. It is used as a tool to clarify terminology and better understand the specifics of the

language environment, while the main analytical structure is based on a combination of institutional theory and the theory of regulatory instruments.

Language Proficiency and Multilingualism in Higher Education

The development of multilingual education in Kazakhstan is implemented through the state policy of trilingual education, which involves mastering Kazakh (the state language), Russian (the language of international communication) and English (the language of science and global communication). Since 2015, the Roadmap for the Development of Trilingual Education has been in effect (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018), within which English-language programs are being introduced at universities, language centers are being created and internal strategies for the development of language training are being developed.

However, as Smagulova (2021) notes, the policy of trilingual education is often implemented formally, without sufficient infrastructural, personnel and methodological support. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2023), the number of teachers involved in trilingual education programs decreased from 3,544 in 2022 to 1,950 in 2023, which may indicate a decrease in real policy coverage and a dysfunction of regulatory mechanisms.

From the point of view of Scott's institutional theory (2008), this situation illustrates the discrepancy between regulatory support (policies, strategies) and normative cognitive support at the university level. Despite the existence of formal documents (Hood's authority and nodality), there is no unified perception of the importance of language policy in the university environment, which undermines its implementation in practice (Zhumay et al., 2021).

The importance of language competence in the academic and administrative environment

English has become an universal means of scientific communication today, and Kazakhstan is no exception in this regard. English language proficiency provides access to international publications, grants, and academic partnerships (Graddol, 2006). However, according to the EF English Proficiency Index (2023), Kazakhstan ranks 104th out of 113 countries, reflecting the low level of functional language training, including among teachers and administrative staff. This deficit is particularly critical in the context of international cooperation.: Employees who do not speak English at the working level are unable to fully correspond, prepare reports, and coordinate projects (Jumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016; Bridges, 2014).

The situation is also aggravated by an internal language gap: young professionals often do not speak Kazakh enough to prepare official documentation, and representatives of the Kazakh-speaking environment have difficulty working with Russian-language document management (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024). This creates barriers in both administrative and project communication, which requires universities to provide a comprehensive institutional response — training, standardization, and organizational support.

Language barriers in the management of international cooperation

Insufficient language training of teachers and administrative staff directly affects the management processes of international programs. As Bridges (2014) notes, universities face delays in preparing reports, difficulties in concluding contracts, errors in terminology, and misunderstandings in correspondence with foreign partners.

A study by Pogorelskaya et al. (2024) confirms that even with the presence of external activity (signing of memoranda and agreements), internal processes suffer from a

shortage of qualified specialists who speak foreign languages at a professional level. This indicates a weak interaction between regulatory tools and cognitive support within the framework of Scott's institutional model, as well as the ineffective implementation of Hood's elements of nodality and organization.

The lack of a unified terminology base, approved translation standards, and trained specialists increases the risk of errors in documentation, reduces the trust of foreign partners, and complicates the integration of Kazakhstani universities into the global educational space (Smagulova, 2021; Goodman et al., 2023).

Practical difficulties in Kazakhstani universities

Kazakhstani universities demonstrate a high degree of heterogeneity in the implementation of language policy. Thus, Nazarbayev University, KIMEP and KBTU were initially built as English-speaking universities and were able to attract foreign teachers, introduce dual degree programs and systematically develop language training. In these universities, there is consistency between regulatory, normative, and cognitive pillars, which ensures the sustainability of internationalization practices (Hartley & Ruby, 2017).

At the same time, in most public universities, especially regional ones, the introduction of English-language programs is slow due to the lack of motivational and organizational support mechanisms for teachers and administrative staff (Zhumay et al., 2021). Here, regulatory pressure (authority, Hood's nodality) does not transform into sustainable management practices, since there is no institutional environment supporting the development of language competencies.

In addition, despite the fact that 65% of students study in Kazakh (MSHE RK, 2023), Kazakh is rarely used as a full-fledged language of scientific communication, especially in technical and natural science disciplines. This is due to both the lack of

developed academic terminology and insufficient regulatory support from the ministry and universities (Smagulova, 2008).

Therefore, language competence is not only a component of educational training, but also a fundamental condition for effective management of international cooperation in higher education institutions. Successful functioning in a multilingual environment requires a coordinated institutional strategy: the creation of sustainable training programs, the implementation of certification standards, and systematic support for teachers and administrative staff. Using the analytical framework of Scott and Hood, supplemented by the conceptual provisions of Spolsky, allows us to interpret language policy as a multilevel institutional phenomenon in which the effectiveness of management decisions depends not only on the availability of formal policies, but also on the real interaction of norms, perceptions and practices in the university environment.

Internationalization of Higher Education

Internationalization Strategies in Kazakhstani Higher Education

Internationalization was officially recognized as a priority area of Kazakhstan's educational policy in the early 2000s and enshrined in a number of strategic documents, including the State Program for the Development of Education and Science, the Concept of Academic Mobility, as well as international initiatives such as the Bologna Process and the Bolashak program (Ministry of Education and Science RK, 2018; Bridges, 2014). However, despite the extensive regulatory and policy framework, internationalization in Kazakhstani universities remains heterogeneous and subject to institutional constraints, which creates a significant gap between the stated goals and their actual implementation at the university level.

Institutional Disparities in Implementing Multilingual and Internationalization Policies

At the regulatory level, the internationalization policy involves the participation of universities in academic mobility programs, the development of joint educational programs, the integration of English-language education and the involvement of foreign teachers. However, as emphasized by Pogorelskaya et al., (2024), despite the formal inclusion of most Kazakhstani universities in international agreements, the level of their participation in real academic exchanges, joint research, and international educational initiatives varies extremely unevenly. Many universities sign memorandums of cooperation, which are then not implemented or are not accompanied by active joint activities. This practice forms the so-called "showcase internationalization", when institutions demonstrate external activity without integrating an international component into their daily educational and management practices (Smagulova, 2021; De Wit, 2020).

The difference in the levels of internationalization between universities is explained by a number of factors, including differences in institutional capabilities, financial and human resources, as well as in the level of managerial autonomy. Some universities, especially national or autonomous ones, have sufficient resources to implement English-language programs, invite foreign professors, and participate in major international grants (Hartley & Ruby, 2017). Others, mostly regional or departmental, experience limited staffing, weak support from international offices, and low motivation for teachers to participate in exchanges due to the language barrier and overloading of core responsibilities (Zhumay et al., 2021; Jumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016).

Institutional theory (Scott, 2008) makes it possible to understand why the proclaimed reforms often "stall" at the implementation stage. According to the theory, the successful implementation of institutional changes requires the consistency of three components: regulatory (formal norms and laws), normative (professional standards and

expectations) and cultural-cognitive (perceptions and values of the participants in the process). In the Kazakh context, the regulatory component of internationalization is well developed — regulatory documents have been developed, KPIs for attracting foreign students and teachers have been implemented, and reporting campaigns are being organized. However, the normative and especially cultural-cognitive components are less developed.: University staff do not always share the values of internationalization, and support mechanisms remain fragmented and unstable.

Management of international collaboration in higher education

The international internationalization of higher education in the modern world is characterized by the transition from formal agreements to the creation of sustainable institutional forms of cooperation. As Knight (2004) notes, successful internationalization requires the integration of an international component into the mission, strategy, management, academic and administrative activities of universities. In turn, De Wit (2020) emphasizes that the sustainable development of international cooperation is impossible without an ethical approach, transparency of processes, the availability of sustainable support mechanisms and ensuring equal access to international initiatives.

In the Kazakhstani context, the development of internationalization is supported at the level of government initiatives, including participation in the Bologna process, the implementation of the Bolashak program, the opening of branches of foreign universities and the expansion of academic mobility programs (MSHE RK, 2023; Bridges, 2014). However, as analytical reviews show (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024; Smagulova, 2021), there is a deep gap between official strategic goals and the actual practice of their implementation. From the point of view of Scott's institutional theory (2008), this gap is explained by the discrepancy between regulatory support at the macro level and normative cognitive structures at the university level. External requirements are often perceived as

formal reporting obligations rather than as an organic part of daily management practice. From the perspective of the Hood model, this indicates the inefficient implementation of the nodality and authority tools without proper support by organizational support measures (organization) and financial incentives (treasure).

A special role in the implementation of international initiatives is played not only by academic, but also by administrative structures — departments of international cooperation, program coordinators, lawyers, accountants, and academic mobility specialists (Altbach et al., 2009). In the context of the trilingual environment of Kazakhstan (Kazakh, Russian, English), their work is complicated by the need to speak three languages at the functional level (Smagulova, 2008). However, research shows (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024; Goodman et al., 2023), that most universities lack stable mechanisms for language training and support for administrative staff. This leads to delays in business correspondence, difficulties in completing documentation, and non-compliance with deadlines for international projects. A low level of language proficiency reduces the ability to effectively interpret and fulfill international obligations, which creates administrative disruptions even in the presence of external activity (Bridges, 2014).

One of the systemic problems is the dominance of the bureaucratic management model typical of most state universities in Kazakhstan. This model, which goes back to the classical concept of Weber (1947), assumes a rigid hierarchy, clear regulation of procedures, mandatory reporting and centralization of decision-making. In the management of international cooperation, this is reflected in a complex coordination system: signing agreements, preparing reports, and organizing visits require several levels of approval (Scott, 2008). However, in the international environment, such a model faces serious limitations, since the implementation of international projects requires flexibility, cross-cultural competence and operational interaction. The execution of agreements with

foreign universities requires legal expertise, competent translation and coordination of formulations, and with a shortage of human and language resources, this significantly slows down the processes (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024).

The study by Smagulova (2021) also indicates that the recruitment of foreign teachers to Kazakhstani universities often takes place formally: invited specialists give only one or two lectures, while receiving high remuneration, which causes tension among local teachers. This indicates a weak integration of international activities into the overall human resources and educational policies of universities, as well as an insufficient level of regulatory support for internationalization within organizations (Scott, 2008; De Wit, 2020).

Serious organizational problems also include the lack of qualified staff in international cooperation departments, the lack of standardized agreement templates, glossaries of terms, as well as centralized legal and language support. These deficits lead to inconsistencies between faculties and international services (Zhumay et al., 2021). In some cases, faculties conclude agreements directly, bypassing official structures, which creates internal conflicts, duplication of functions and increases fragmentation of processes (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024). Additionally, the difference in priorities between faculties leads to different levels of motivation to participate in international projects: some departments actively support transnational initiatives, while others perceive them as an additional burden (Hartley & Ruby, 2017). This indicates a weak normative and cognitive support for internationalization policy at the level of internal departments of universities.

Thus, the management of international cooperation at Kazakhstani universities is determined by the complex interaction of external regulatory pressure and the internal institutional environment. The dominant bureaucratic model requires adaptation to the conditions of global flexibility and intercultural interaction. Scott's institutional theory

helps explain why, even with a foreign policy of internationalization, its implementation turns out to be fragmented and selective. Hood's approach makes it possible to analyze exactly which regulatory tools are used by the state, and Spolsky's conceptual provisions make it possible to understand why the language environment becomes either a barrier or a catalyst for these processes. In this context, the key elements of effective management of international cooperation are not only staff training, but also the development of language competence, support for administrative structures, coordination between departments and consistency of procedures.

Institutional differences in the implementation of internationalization policy

Internationalization was officially established as a priority of the state educational policy of Kazakhstan back in the 2000s. This priority is reflected in a number of strategic documents, such as the State Program for the Development of Education and Science, the Concept of Academic Mobility, as well as in the framework of international initiatives, including the Bologna Process and the Bolashak program (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018; Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023). Nevertheless, as De Wit (2020) emphasizes, the presence of political will and strategies does not guarantee their successful implementation in practice. In the Kazakh context, there is significant institutional heterogeneity: some universities actively participate in international programs, while others are limited to formal compliance with the requirements (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024; Jumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016).

One of the characteristic features of the internationalization process in Kazakhstani universities has become the phenomenon of the so-called "showcase internationalization". Many universities sign memorandums of cooperation and publish reports on international activity, but in practice this is not accompanied by real academic projects, joint programs

or exchanges. This gap between external demonstrations of activity and internal actions reflects a superficial interpretation of international requirements (De Wit, 2020; Smagulova, 2021). From the point of view of institutional theory (Scott, 2008), this situation indicates the dominance of regulatory support — external pressure through performance indicators (KPIs) and standards — while normative and cognitive supports remain underdeveloped. Employees and departments do not always share the values of internationalization and are not motivated to implement them in practice. In the logic of the Hood model, this means a bias in the use of nodality and authority tools without effective support through treasure (financial incentives) and organization (institutional infrastructure), which significantly reduces the effectiveness of public policy.

Against the background of the general policy of internationalization in Kazakhstan's higher education, there is a pronounced institutional heterogeneity and resource asymmetry. The level of internationalization of universities varies depending on financial and human resources, degree of organizational autonomy, support from management and participation in global scientific networks. National and autonomous universities such as Nazarbayev University, Kazakh-British Technical University (KBTU), and KIMEP have access to English-speaking faculty, international grants, and dual degree programs. At the same time, regional and sectoral universities are experiencing difficulties even with the basic aspects of implementing internationalization policies: a shortage of teachers, weak international ties, and low motivation to participate in academic exchanges (Jumakulov & Ashirbekov, 2016; Hartley & Ruby, 2017). This institutional unevenness leads to the fact that some universities are able to institutionalize internationalization as an integral part of their development strategy, while others limit themselves to formal reporting on attempts to implement it (Smagulova, 2021). This once again underlines the

need to study not only the political declarations, but also the real institutional environment of each university.

One of the most serious challenges in the implementation of internationalization policy remains the gap between policy and practice at the level of normative and cognitive aspects. Many teachers and administrative staff do not perceive internationalization as a natural part of their professional identity. The lack of internal motivation, language and methodological barriers, as well as the lack of a clear explanation from the management of "why it is necessary" become factors that slow down the processes of internationalization (Sagintayeva & Hartley, 2018). In addition, in a trilingual environment, many teachers are not ready to teach courses in English, and the need for parallel documentation in Kazakh causes additional stress and strain (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023; Smagulova, 2021).

In terms of Scott's theory (2008), such difficulties indicate the weakness of normative and cognitive supports: even in the presence of external regulation, internationalization is not perceived as a "natural" or "necessary" process within the university environment. These observations are consistent with the findings of Brown and other researchers, who emphasize that successful institutional reforms are possible only if three pillars — regulatory, normative, and cognitive - coincide.

In conclusion, the internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan is faced not so much with a lack of political will, as with institutional heterogeneity and inconsistency of implementation mechanisms. Using the theoretical framework of Scott and Hood makes it possible to explain why internationalization standards only partially work, how differences in the institutional environment form unequal access to international interaction, and why language policy is becoming a key but vulnerable element of international development strategy. Overcoming these gaps requires not only

increased regulatory control, but also active support for the academic environment, the development of professional motivation, language training of staff, and increased organizational flexibility of universities.

Summary

In this chapter, the main theoretical framework necessary for analyzing the impact of language proficiency on the management of international collaboration at public universities in Kazakhstan were considered. The key concepts of the study were identified, including the internationalization of higher education, multilingualism, management in educational organizations, and the specifics of language policy in a trilingual environment.

The theoretical basis of the study is the institutional theory interpreted by Scott (2008) and the instrumental approach to Hood regulation (2007), as well as the conceptual model of language policy by Spolsky (2004). The mutual combination of these approaches has made it possible to build an analytical framework to explain how the external regulatory mechanisms of the state (laws, strategies, programs) interact with the internal regulatory, cognitive and organizational structure of universities. Particular attention was paid to the fact that even with clear policies of internationalization and trilingual education at the macro level, their implementation within universities remains fragmented and uneven due to institutional discrepancies, lack of resources, and insufficient normative and cognitive support.

An analysis of existing research has shown that the language training of administrative and faculty members directly affects the quality of international projects, the effectiveness of collaboration with foreign partners, and the success of implementing international strategies. Insufficient language competence, weak institutional support for language training and the formalization of internationalization processes create significant barriers to the integration of Kazakhstani universities into the global educational space.

Institutional theory has made it possible to interpret these barriers through the prism of the discrepancy between regulatory support (external requirements), normative support (values and standards of the profession) and cultural and cognitive support (perception of norms and attitudes) within organizations. Hood's model complemented this understanding by explaining exactly which regulatory instruments (information standards, legal requirements, financial incentives, organizational structures) are used by the state to influence universities, and why their implementation is limited in conditions of institutional heterogeneity. The concept of Spolsky, in turn, helped to uncover internal contradictions in the implementation of language policy, revealing the gap between the ideology of trilingual education and the real language practices of university staff.

Overall, the second chapter laid the theoretical foundation for further empirical study. The selected concepts and models will make it possible in the next chapter, Methodology, to justify the choice of a qualitative research approach, determine a strategy for data collection and analysis, and structure an empirical review of the theoretical assumptions put forward. Moving on to the third chapter, the study will focus on describing the methodology used to study language barriers, institutional factors, and management practices that influence the development of international cooperation at Kazakhstani state universities.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, methods of data collection and analysis used to study the impact of language proficiency on the management of international collaboration at one of the public universities of Kazakhstan. A qualitative case study approach was chosen as the main method, which made it possible to deeply and comprehensively reveal the participants' experience in a multilingual and internationalized educational environment. The chapter justifies the choice of case and participants, describes the tools and procedures for data collection, measures to comply with ethical standards, as well as methods of thematic analysis.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative methodology to investigate how language proficiency affected administrative practices and international collaboration in Kazakhstani public universities. A qualitative approach was ideal since it allowed for the collection of rich, descriptive data about the lived experiences and viewpoints of those involved in internationalization and the management of institutions. Qualitative methods were particularly effective for investigating the complex sociocultural and linguistic dynamics that shape communication and collaboration in higher education institutions. This methodological decision enabled a thorough understanding of how language proficiency influenced the actions, perceptions, and strategies of university stakeholders in real-world scenarios (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

This qualitative study examined language-related behaviors and challenges at a public institution in Kazakhstan. This method allowed for an in-depth and contextualized investigation of how language proficiency affects managerial practices and international collaboration in a specific institutional setting. The chosen institution was a small case study that provided a distinct environment with its own management structure, language

policies, and internationalization strategies. A case study was appropriate as it provided the opportunity to gain a rich and detailed understanding of how language dynamics impact decision-making and institutional management in a real-world setting (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the complexities associated with multilingualism in managing international partnerships at the selected university.

Case Selection

The choice of the institution where the analysis was conducted was critical to ensuring the depth and relevance of the findings of this study. While this study employed a single-case research method, the university was deliberately chosen based on features relevant to the research problem. The chosen institution was a public university in Kazakhstan with a strong internationalization program, multilingual management practices, and active participation in global partnerships, making it an appropriate and information-rich setting for examining the impact of language proficiency on international collaboration and management practices.

A variety of factors influenced the case selection. First, the institution had a well-defined trilingual language policy (Kazakh, Russian, and English), which was actively applied in both administrative and academic settings. This multilingual setting offers numerous opportunities to investigate how language proficiency affects communication, policy adoption, and partnership development. Second, the university established formal partnerships with foreign organizations such as Erasmus+, the European University Association (EUA), and other global academic networks. These collaborations required active language engagement and highlighted the necessity of language skills in maintaining international connections. Third, the university displayed a significant

commitment to internationalization through student and faculty mobility programs, collaborative research initiatives, and involvement in international projects.

The willingness of the institution to participate in the study also played an important role in its selection. Access to important stakeholders involved in international collaboration and multilingual policy implementation was critical for collecting rich, context-sensitive data. As Patton (2015) points out, the depth and trustworthiness of qualitative findings are strongly dependent on access to participants who are knowledgeable and reflective about the phenomenon under study.

Sampling and Participants

In accordance with the one-case study design, a purposive sampling was used to select participants. This method proved to be appropriate for qualitative research method, as it allowed for the deliberate selection of individuals with direct experience and knowledge related to the research topic (Patton, 2015). The participants were selected based on their involvement in the processes of internationalization and management within one Kazakh public university, selected as a case study. The sample included representatives of the highest administrative level — administrators from international offices, heads of language centers, and staff involved in designing and implementing language policies, international program instructors, and university administrators, as well as faculty members actively involved in international programs.: academic exchanges, joint research and partnership projects. This composition ensured that data was received from both strategic managers and practitioners directly involved in the internationalization collaboration. As Creswell and Poth (2017) emphasize, the inclusion of participants working at different levels of management contributes to a more complete reflection of the phenomenon under study.

A total of nine interviews were conducted. Initially, it was planned to interview a larger number of respondents, but during the analysis it became obvious that data saturation had been achieved — new topics and ideas did not appear in further interviews. This sample size proved to be sufficient for an in-depth understanding of the context and participants' ideas about the impact of language proficiency on managing international collaboration practices (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The participants were invited to participate in the study after receiving consent from that were sent by e-mail, followed by personalized appeals to increase the response. The terms of participation, confidentiality of data, and the right to opt out were clearly outlined. This transparent approach helped build trust and motivated respondents to share their experiences (Maxwell, 2013).

Data Collection Tools

During the study, I used two main data collection tools: document analysis and semi-structured interviews. These methods allowed me to study in depth how the level of language proficiency effects on managing international collaboration practices at the selected Kazakhstani public university. The combination of interviews with key participants and analysis of institutional documents provided a comprehensive and contextually informed approach to data collection.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with university representatives, including international office staff, faculty involved in international programs, heads of language centers, and administrative staff responsible for implementing language policy. This format gave me the opportunity to guide the conversation on key topics and at the same time allowed the participants to freely express their thoughts and share personal experiences. I followed a flexible script, so I could ask clarifying questions and deepen the

topics that arose during the conversation. This led to detailed and meaningful responses (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Prior to the interview, I developed an interview protocol based on research questions and literature on language policy and multilingualism in higher education. I have included open-ended questions to encourage participants to give detailed and reflective answers (Mason, 2010). To verify the clarity of the wording, I conducted a pilot test of the guide with two colleagues with international academic experience. After that, I made minor adjustments to the wording of the questions. I recorded the entire interview on audio with the prior consent of the participants, and then completely transcribed it for further analysis in order to preserve the accuracy and reliability of the answers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interviews were conducted both in person and online, depending on the preferences and capabilities of the participants.

In addition to the interviews, I also conducted an analysis of institutional documents to supplement and compare the collected data. I have studied the university's internal documents, including the language policy, internationalization strategy, reports on international cooperation, as well as individual agreements with foreign partners. In addition, I referred to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan regarding language requirements. I selected the documents based on their relevance to research issues and their ability to reveal university management practices of multilingualism (Bowen, 2009; Schreier, 2012). Comparing the data from interviews and documents allowed me to gain a holistic understanding of the problem under study.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure included consistent and thoughtful steps aimed at obtaining high-quality and relevant information about the impact of language proficiency on management practices at the Kazakh public University.

Before starting data collection, I received official approval from the ethics committee of my university. I have ensured compliance with all ethical principles, including obtaining informed consent from each participant, ensuring voluntary participation, as well as confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided. The research objectives, interview structure, and data processing conditions were explained in detail to each respondent, which contributed to the formation of trusting relationships and open dialogue (Schreier, 2012). At the preparatory stage, I have completed the development of data collection tools — an interview protocol and a system of criteria for analyzing documents. The interview protocol was compiled on the basis of research questions and relevant literature on the topic of language policy and multilingualism in higher education. To test its clarity and consistency, I conducted a pilot test with two colleagues with experience in international educational projects. Based on the test results, I made minor adjustments to the wording of the questions to make them clear, more open and encouraging detailed answers. For example, some of the questions included: “In your experience, how do your language skills in Kazakh, Russian, and English help you in managing international partnerships?”, “It is known that most universities maintain their documentation in three languages (Kazakh, Russian, and English), so how does the multilingual environment of this university influence your ability to effectively manage international collaborations?”, and “How do language-related challenges affect your ability to secure research funding or establish new international partnerships?” The complete interview protocol is provided in Appendix B. At the same time, I identified key criteria

for the selection of institutional documents: their importance for understanding language policy and management processes became the main guideline. In particular, the analysis includes documents regulating the use of Kazakh, Russian and English languages in the administrative and academic environment, strategic plans for internationalization, reports on international projects, as well as regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The data collection process itself included consistently establishing contacts with participants, conducting semi-structured interviews, and collecting institutional materials. During the interview, I followed a flexible script that allowed me to cover key topics and at the same time open up new avenues of conversation. I recorded all the interviews with the consent of the participants, and then transcribed them for further analysis.

Data Analysis

To analyze the collected qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and institutional documents, I used the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis allowed me to identify recurring themes, patterns, and significant semantic categories reflecting the impact of language competence on management (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To increase the reliability of the results, I used the triangulation method, comparing interviews with written sources. I also checked the participants' statements using the member checking procedure — I returned individual fragments of transcripts to the respondents to confirm the accuracy of the interpretation of their words (Saldana, 2016).

According to the approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), this method allows us to identify key patterns and gain a deep understanding of the participants' experiences, as well as the institutional context in which multilingualism and international collaboration are managed.

The data analysis included several successive stages. First, I got acquainted in detail with the transcripts of the interview and studied the collected documents. This allowed me to immerse myself in the content and begin to notice recurring ideas, statements, and contexts related to language competence and management practices.

Then I moved on to systematic data encoding. I manually selected the semantic units that were relevant to my research questions and assigned them the appropriate codes. Coding made it possible to structure voluminous material and highlight recurring ideas related to how language proficiency affects international interaction, decision-making, strategic planning, and institutional behavior. To increase accuracy, I used thematic coding, which focuses on identifying the links between codes and their meaning in a management context (Saldana, 2016).

In the next step, I conducted the classification and categorization of the codes. Similar or interrelated codes have been grouped into larger categories reflecting key areas in the management of language policy and international partnerships. I critically rethought the preliminary categories, checking them for internal consistency, as well as for compliance with the actual statements of the participants and the data of the documents (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, the code “Low level of academic English proficiency” was grouped into the category “Language Barriers and Insufficient Language Preparation”, which contributed to the formation of the broader theme “Language Unpreparedness as a Barrier in Managing International Collaboration”. Similarly, the code “Courses not aligned with professional needs” was placed under the category “Deficiencies of Current Language Programs and Training” later integrated into the theme “Deficiencies of Language Support Systems”. A broader version of the coding table, including codes, categories, and themes, is provided in Appendix D.

After the main topics were formulated, I analyzed their content, clarified the wording and structure so that they accurately reflected empirical data. I have made sure that each topic is related to research purpose and reflects the specifics of an institutional context. Next, I started describing the results of the analysis. Each topic was presented based on the statements of the respondents and excerpts from institutional documents, which made it possible to substantiate the conclusions and demonstrate the relationship between empirical data and the theoretical foundations of the study.

To increase the reliability of the analysis, I applied the triangulation method, comparing the information obtained from the interview with the content of the documents. This approach avoided one-sided interpretation and provided a more complete understanding of the problem under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Ethical Considerations

I have ensured that all ethical standards accepted in academic research are respected and have taken concrete measures to protect the rights and well-being of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Before starting data collection, I received approval from the Ethics Research Committee of Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University. Each participant was informed about the purpose, structure, and conditions of the study, as well as their right to withdraw at any time without explanation. Voluntary participation was recorded through the signing of an informed consent form.

To ensure confidentiality, I used pseudonyms and deleted all personal identifiers from the data. All audio recordings of the interview and text transcripts were stored encrypted on a secure Google Drive cloud service with limited access only for me as a researcher. This measure met the requirements for the protection of sensitive information outlined in the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (2017).

I created the most comfortable conditions for the participants during the interview and tried to minimize any potential psychological or emotional risks. Given the multilingual and multicultural context of the study, I respected the cultural background and professional experience of the respondents. This made it possible to ensure an accurate and ethically correct interpretation of their views and experiences, as well as to strengthen the credibility of the study as a whole (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

As a Master's student in the Educational Leadership program with a focus on higher education management, I have an academic interest in internationalization, language policy, and organizational management at Kazakhstani universities. My own experience of learning in a multilingual educational environment has shaped my awareness of the complexities associated with language barriers in academic and administrative activities. These features of my professional and educational path influenced my choice of research topic and increased my sensitivity to the practical aspects of language policy implementation. Aware of the possible impact of personal attitudes and expectations on the data interpretation process, I sought to minimize the risk of bias by applying systematic thematic analysis procedures, triangulating interviews with institutional documents, and using member checking to clarify the interpretation of participants' statements. Throughout the study, I maintained a reflexive position, realizing my dual position — as a participant in the Kazakh educational environment and at the same time an external observer striving for an objective analytical interpretation of the collected data.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the results of an empirical study aimed at identifying the impact of language proficiency on the management of international collaboration in Kazakhstani public universities. The analysis was based on nine semi-structured interviews with representatives of the administrative, teaching and management staff of one state university of Kazakhstan, as well as on the study of internal strategic documents of the institution.

The data was processed using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and codes and categories were manually allocated based on semantic units (Saldana, 2016). The coding process made it possible to classify the participants' statements by key problem areas related to language barriers, institutional conditions, and management practices. All the identified codes were subsequently grouped into broader categories, which, in turn, formed the basis of the five cross-cutting themes that form the structure of this chapter.

These topics reveal the key challenges and difficulties faced by university staff in implementing the tasks of international cooperation in a multilingual environment. In particular, the relationship between the level of language training and the effectiveness of administrative support for international projects was established, as well as institutional gaps in the management of language policy and its integration into international university strategies.

The interpretation of the data obtained is based on the theoretical and analytical framework of the study, including institutional theory (Scott, 2008), which allows us to consider the university as an organization operating under the influence of regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements, as well as on the model of state regulatory instruments according to Hood (2007), which reveals the mechanisms of influence from

the ministry and management structures. At some points, the interpretation includes elements of the conceptual model of language policy by Spolsky (2004), especially when analyzing the ideological and practical aspects of language management in the university environment.

Language barriers and insufficient language training

One of the most clearly manifested factors affecting the management of international cooperation in the university environment is the insufficient language training of staff, both faculty and administrative staff. According to institutional theory (Scott, 2008), such barriers are rooted not only in the individual level of competence, but also in the cultural, cognitive and normative components of the institutional field. In an environment where English is becoming the norm of international academic communication, and Kazakh and Russian continue to play a key role in management and regulatory processes, universities are under pressure from conflicting expectations, which creates multilevel language barriers.

Many participants in the study emphasized that English language proficiency at the level necessary for participation in international projects, preparation of grant applications and publication of scientific articles remains a serious challenge. As one of the respondents noted:

“To be published in a reputable journal, you not only need academic-level English proficiency, but also the ability to adapt your writing style, follow strict formatting rules, and use specific terminology”.

Another participant confirmed this, emphasizing:

“Writing academically in English is different from speaking it. It takes time to refine research articles and ensure they meet international publication standards”.

Gaps in academic writing limit the participation of Kazakhstani teachers in international projects and reduce the level of publication activity. This is also confirmed at the document level: the university's development strategy emphasizes the need to increase publication activity, but does not contain specific measures to support staff in the field of academic writing. From the point of view of institutional theory, this situation demonstrates the inconsistency between the normative and cultural-cognitive levels: employees are aware of the importance of English language proficiency, but do not feel systematic support from the institute. Additional difficulties are associated with the use of the Kazakh language in administrative work, especially in the preparation of official documents, orders and reports. As one of the participants notes:

“An order from the rector comes in Kazakh... I don't always fully understand it... especially the legal wording. And then I have to ask my colleagues for help”.

A similar difficulty was expressed by another respondent:

“I can understand it, I can read it, but writing official documents... that's really difficult for me”.

These quotes reflect the existing gap between the formal requirements of the regulatory environment (the mandatory use of the Kazakh language in official documentation) and the actual linguistic competence of employees, which creates administrative disruptions and increases dependence on informal assistance from colleagues. This also indicates a weak implementation of the "organization" and "nodality" tools in terms of Hood (2007): universities lack structured language development programs and access to high-quality educational resources, which exacerbates the difficulties of adapting to a multilingual work environment.

The participants paid special attention to the problems when applying for international grants. One of the respondents noted:

“If you don’t know how to write an academic proposal in English at a professional level, your chances of securing a grant or being accepted into an international research project are almost zero”.

Therefore, the lack of specialized training in academic writing and English legal terminology not only constrains institutional ambitions in the international field, but also forms barriers at the micro-level of managerial decision-making. These barriers undermine the managerial effectiveness of international projects, creating dependence on external translators, increasing the time required to prepare documentation and reducing the initiative of employees. Without overcoming these linguistic obstacles, the management of international cooperation remains fragmented and reactive rather than strategic.

Disadvantages of current language programs and trainings

Effective participation in international educational initiatives requires not only individual language training, but also institutional support in the form of systematic programs for the development of academic and business language proficiency. However, as the interview data and analysis of strategic documents have shown, the existing language programs at Kazakhstani universities are mainly student-oriented and do not consider the professional needs of teachers and administrative staff. This situation indicates a weak instrumental provision of language policy in higher education (Hood, 2007), as well as limited cognitive and normative institutional support (Scott, 2008).

The majority of participants note that the language courses offered by universities do not correspond to their real professional tasks, especially in the field of international administration and scientific activity. So, one of the study participants emphasized:

“There are language courses, and multilingual content is well-supported. But perhaps it would be beneficial to further develop professional journalism in Kazakh”.

Another respondent added:

“I attend courses—the university offers this opportunity. But honestly, they don’t help me much. Because they focus on general Kazakh, and my issue is specifically with business language, with legal terminology”.

Such comments reflect that existing courses cover basic language skills, but do not provide training for specialized tasks such as preparing official documentation, participating in international negotiations, applying for grants, or preparing publications. The limited availability of programs in this area indicates the insufficient use of the "authority" and "organization" tools in terms of Hood (2007) — there are no mandatory standards for professional language development and specially designed courses for administrative and teaching staff.

In addition, respondents emphasize the lack of specialized training aimed at developing academic writing and structuring scientific texts in English. For example:

“We really need workshops on research proposal writing for international grants. Training on structuring academic papers to fit global publication standards”.

The need for teaching presentation skills at international conferences is also mentioned:

“What we really need are ... sessions on delivering effective presentations in English at conferences”.

The need for mentoring and expert support in the preparation of publications is especially relevant for young faculty members and researchers, which indicates an institutional void in the development of scientific productivity in the context of internationalization.

An analysis of the university's strategic documents (2021-2025) and internal regulations on academic mobility confirmed that the development of staff language competence is not a priority goal of institutional policy. The main focus is on student

support, while teachers and administrative staff actually remain outside the scope of ongoing initiatives. In terms of Hood (2007), this indicates a weak implementation of the "nodality" tool: employees are not sufficiently informed about existing professional development opportunities or the available courses do not meet their professional objectives. From the point of view of institutional theory (Scott, 2008), this situation undermines the normative and cognitive support of language policy in universities: the development of language competence is perceived as an individual responsibility of employees, rather than as an integral part of a strategic institutional line. As a result, there is a decrease in motivation to develop language skills, limited participation in international initiatives, and formalized approaches to tasks within the framework of internationalization.

Difficulties with multilingual document management and translation

In the context of the internationalization of universities, document management requires simultaneous compliance with state language norms, standards of international partners and internal language policy. However, as the data analysis showed, Kazakhstani universities face systemic difficulties in translating, adapting and standardizing documentation in Kazakh, Russian and English. These problems undermine the effectiveness of administrative processes and reflect institutional and instrumental constraints.

Many employees note that the document translation process takes a disproportionate amount of time, requires several iterations, and is often accompanied by errors, especially in legal and administrative formulations. According to the study participants:

"We draft the response in Russian, then send it for translation... and that process takes several days".

“An order from the rector comes in Kazakh... I don’t always fully understand it... especially the legal wording. And then I have to ask my colleagues for help”.

Translations are often performed manually without professional linguistic support, which increases the workload of international office staff and administrative departments. At the same time, universities rarely have professional editors or specialized translation services:

“Universities often rely on internal staff whose language skills may not be sufficient for accurate translation.”

The lack of unified terminology glossaries and internal translation standards also exacerbates the problem. Respondents emphasize the need to create a single database of terms in Kazakh, Russian and English:

“We need some kind of internal glossary—a database of key terminology in all three languages”

Due to the lack of standardized procedures, part of the administrative time is spent not on substantive work, but on eliminating formal errors.:

“Instead of focusing on content and academic quality, we waste time on formalities”.

The analysis of the university's strategic documents confirms the absence of provisions on translation support or the development of uniform templates and glossaries within the framework of internationalization programs, which reduces the managerial stability of organizations.

In addition, the current organization of document management depends on the individual efforts of employees, and the use of automated translation systems is either minimal or not accompanied by the necessary editorial revision. This increases the risks of semantic and legal distortions:

“Maybe implement automated systems for translation.”

“We lost almost a whole day making corrections”

From the point of view of institutional theory (Scott, 2008), this situation indicates the weakness of normative and cognitive support: employees do not perceive the standardization of multilingual document management as part of the university's organizational culture. Although there are requirements for formal documentation in the Kazakh language (regulatory support), without the support of regulatory tools according to Hood (2007) — such as organization and coordination of information flows (nodality) — their implementation becomes formal, costly and ineffective. It is the lack of effective organizational support for translation and document management that reduces the quality of interaction with foreign partners, which contradicts the goals of internationalization of universities. With the dominance of the bureaucratic management model (Bridges, 2014), this problem only worsens, since without flexibility and procedural support, the management of a multilingual environment remains fragmented and reactive.

Institutional problems and management gaps

Despite political support for internationalization and multilingualism, the implementation of these initiatives in Kazakhstani universities is complicated by institutional fragmentation and weak internal coordination. The analysis of interviews and documents shows that the difficulties of translation and the lack of language resources are related not only to the individual level of training, but also to the lack of a systematic management approach to language policy.

Although the availability of language courses and individual initiatives, none of the respondents mentioned the existence of a clear, formalized language strategy covering the needs of both faculty members and administrative staff.

“There are language courses, and multilingual content is well-supported. But perhaps it would be beneficial to further develop professional journalism in Kazakh”

“Even if language isn’t currently a problem for me, there’s always room for improvement”

The University strategy (2021-2025) declares the goals of internationalization, but it lacks specific mechanisms to support employees in learning professional English or in preparing official documentation, which indicates a gap between regulatory support and cognitive practice. According to institutional theory (Scott, 2008), successful implementation of reforms requires consistency of regulatory, regulatory and cognitive elements, whereas in this case only the regulatory level dominates — orders, strategies, KPIs — without the real consolidation of these goals in the organizational culture.

Many respondents also note poor coordination between the faculties and the international office. Often, faculties independently sign agreements with foreign partners, bypassing the relevant departments of the university, which leads to duplication of functions, legal inaccuracies and administrative overloads.

“Sometimes departments sign agreements themselves without informing us. Then we have to revise everything again”

“Different faculties have different priorities... some want international projects, some see it as extra burden”

This disunity hinders the creation of unified document management procedures and makes it difficult to implement international initiatives at the institutional level. According to the Hood (2007) model, this indicates an insufficient use of the tool’s "organization" (coordination and support) and "nodality" (dissemination of information).

In addition, the results of the study demonstrate that in some cases internationalization is perceived only as an element of accountability, and not as an

intrinsic value of the university's development. Many agreements are formally signed and remain inoperative.:

“Some agreements look good in reports, but they’re not active”

This practice confirms the conclusions of the literature on the phenomenon of "showcase internationalization" in Kazakhstani universities (Pogorelskaya et al., 2024; De Wit, 2020), when external activity is not accompanied by real institutional changes. Thus, without addressing management gaps and strengthening regulatory and cognitive support, any reforms in the field of multilingualism and international cooperation risk remaining partially implemented. Universities continue to exhibit behavior "under external pressure" without deep internal transformation, which threatens the long-term sustainability of internationalization processes.

Practices and requirements of international cooperation

Participation in international academic cooperation requires universities not only to have strategies and signed agreements, but also to be ready for daily interaction with foreign partners at the level of administrative and academic practice. In this context, language proficiency becomes not just a means of communication, but an essential element of institutional trust, managerial maturity, and professional legitimacy. An analysis of interviews and institutional documents shows that specific language practices directly affect the development and success of international projects, and the lack of proper language training weakens the managerial stability of universities.

During the interview, the participants emphasized that English is the main tool for international cooperation and management functions. Correspondence, signing of agreements, organization of meetings and preparation of reports with foreign partners is carried out mainly in English, and requires not just basic knowledge, but a confident command of professional vocabulary in the legal, academic and administrative fields.

“If we’re working with partners from Russia or Kyrgyzstan, we communicate in Russian. With colleagues from Turkey, we sometimes use Turkish, but... but that’s rare. Mostly, it’s English”

“The main language we use is, of course, English. We handle all correspondence and negotiations in English”

“We have to send all the documents for EU partners in English and adapt them to their formats. It takes a lot of coordination”

These statements indicate that English de facto plays the role of the operational language of international activity. From the point of view of institutional theory (Scott, 2008), such practice forms a new normative standard: English proficiency is perceived as a "self-evident" professional skill, without which employees are excluded from the processes of international management. At the same time, as the instrumental theory of regulation (Hood, 2007) shows, the lack of specialized organizational mechanisms for preparing for such requirements — for example, trainings, business correspondence templates, internal reference books — weakens the potential of the "organization" and "nodality" tools necessary for effective networking and rapid information exchange.

Thus, managing international cooperation requires universities not only to plan strategically, but also to create flexible, competent, and multilingual teams. Insufficient institutional support in this area increases language barriers, increases the risk of errors and delays, and reduces the quality of partnerships. The language environment in modern Kazakh universities is becoming not just a background, but an active factor determining the success or failure of international projects.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the results of an empirical study based on nine semi-structured interviews and an analysis of university documents. The thematic analysis

revealed five interrelated areas that reveal the impact of language training on the management of international collaboration at the Kazakhstani public university.

The first important conclusion was the establishment of the role of language barriers as a serious factor limiting the participation of teachers and administrative staff in international initiatives. Insufficient knowledge of English, Kazakh and Russian makes it difficult to negotiate, prepare documentation and interact with foreign partners, which directly affects the effectiveness of international projects.

In the second direction, attention was focused on the shortcomings of existing language programs and trainings. The results showed that the current training infrastructure is not adapted to the professional needs of employees: courses are often focused on the basic level of language proficiency, while real practice requires specialized skills in academic writing, business communication and preparation of grant applications.

The third aspect was the difficulties associated with multilingual document management and translation. The lack of unified standards, the overloading of employees with manual translation, and the lack of digital solutions slow down administrative processes, increase the risk of errors, and reduce the quality of interaction with international partners.

The fourth direction revealed institutional and managerial gaps. The study showed insufficient coordination between faculties and departments of international cooperation, weak integration of language policy into strategic documents of universities and the prevalence of a formal approach to internationalization, which hinders the sustainable development of international relations.

Finally, in the fifth area, the role of language practices in managing international projects was analyzed. It turned out that English language proficiency is becoming an essential condition for professional legitimacy and trust in the global academic

environment. However, without institutional support, the development of the necessary competencies remains the task of individual efforts of employees.

In conclusion, the collected data demonstrate that language training at Kazakhstani universities is not only the individual responsibility of employees, but also an important institutional resource on which the success of the implementation of internationalization strategies depends. The lack of a systematic approach to developing language skills limits managerial flexibility, increases process fragmentation, and reduces trust from foreign partners. The findings form the basis for further discussion in the fifth chapter, where the research results will be interpreted based on the theoretical framework of institutional theory and an instrumental approach to regulation, as well as in the context of the development of higher education in Kazakhstan.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses the key findings presented in the previous chapter. The purpose of the chapter is to interpret the revealed data, analyze them based on institutional theory (Scott, 2008) and the conceptual model of language policy in the university environment (Spolsky, 2004), as well as to identify the significance of these findings for understanding the impact of language proficiency on managing international collaboration practices at Kazakhstani public universities

The discussion is organized according to the three research questions underlying this study. In each section, the relevant thematic categories identified as a result of the interview are analyzed and compared with existing research and theoretical concepts. The chapter ends with a brief summary of the main conclusions obtained from the analysis of three research questions. Thus, this chapter serves as a link between the empirical part of the study and the conclusion, which will provide recommendations and directions for future research.

The impact of language competence on international cooperation

An analysis of interviews and institutional documents showed that the perception of the level of language training directly affects the quality of administrative management, communication with foreign partners, decision-making and integration of the university into the global academic community.

All participants in the study unanimously recognize English as the main tool for establishing and maintaining international academic relations. It is used as a working language for negotiations, business correspondence, drafting contracts, participating in international conferences, applying for grants and publishing in foreign scientific publications. As noted by Altbach and Knight (2007), English has become the global language of science and higher education, and its proficiency is becoming a prerequisite

for academic mobility and international visibility of universities. These interviews confirm this: employees with a high level of English proficiency feel more confident, establish contacts with foreign partners more easily, and participate more actively in projects. At the same time, insufficient language training causes employees to feel insecure, limits their participation in negotiations, and reduces the university's initiative in the international arena. Although, De Wit (2020) emphasizes that the institutional development of internationalization is impossible without the linguistic readiness of staff, including administrative staff. Moreover, Jumakulov & Ashirbekov (2016) point out that even with international agreements, the lack of language training limits the depth and stability of partnerships between universities.

Internal administrative processes are mainly carried out in Kazakh and Russian languages. Russian retains the functions of the language of everyday professional communication and interdepartmental interaction, while Kazakh is used in official documentation, orders and reports sent to government agencies. The participants emphasize the difficulties with the Kazakh language, especially in the preparation of legal and regulatory documents, which leads to delays and the need for constant translation. As Smagulova (2008) rightly points out, the trilingual policy creates tension between the symbolic function of the Kazakh language and its actual use, which is also confirmed by data from more recent observations (Zhumay et al., 2021).

As a result, a fragmented language practice is formed, in which employees are forced to constantly switch between languages, adapting the style and content depending on the context. This leads to a loss of effectiveness, especially in international initiatives where a single and precise language of interaction is required.

From the point of view of institutional theory (Scott, 2008), the choice of language and behavioral strategies of employees are formed under the influence of three institutional

pillars: regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive. The regulatory framework is reflected in the state requirements for the use of the Kazakh language in official documentation. Normative is the expectation of English language proficiency from employees to participate in international projects. Cultural and cognitive — in the perception of English as the "language of academic success", Kazakh as a symbol of national identity, and Russian as a convenient language of everyday administrative practice. The choice of language in professional situations is determined by institutional norms and expectations, as well as adaptive strategies of employees. Interviews confirm that employees consciously adjust their actions depending on the language context: whether it's reporting, interacting with other departments, or negotiating with international partners.

In addition to the institutional theory, the concept of language policy by Spolsky (2004) allows us to consider the data from the point of view of the interaction of language ideology, language management and real practices of language use. The data obtained show that ideologically English is perceived as the main instrument of international cooperation. Language practice is based on the flexible and situational use of all three languages. However, language management remains fragmented: in most cases, there are no formalized and systematic mechanisms to support the language training of employees. This contradicts the recommendations of both the Spolsky model itself and more recent studies in the context of Central Asia, where the emphasis is on the need to institutionalize language infrastructure (Zhumay et al., 2021; Pogorelskaya et al., 2024). The perception and use of languages at the university is not an individual strategy, but an institutionally determined phenomenon. The influence of language competence can be traced both at the level of staff micro-practices and at the level of the university's strategic participation in global academic initiatives. That is why an integrated approach to managing the language environment is becoming a prerequisite for effective internationalization.

Language barriers and difficulties in managing international cooperation

This section answers the second research question: what language difficulties and barriers do university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff face when managing international cooperation? The analysis of interviews and institutional documents revealed a set of problems related to both the individual linguistic competencies of employees and the institutional conditions in which international activities are carried out.

One of the most acute problems identified by the study participants is the difficulty of writing scientific texts in English. Publications in international peer-reviewed journals require not only a general command of English, but also specialized academic writing skills, strict adherence to design standards and the use of terminology. Despite the high level of professional training in their subject area, many teachers and researchers have difficulty adapting to international requirements. This corresponds to the conclusions of Belyaeva (2022), who emphasizes that insufficient language training reduces scientific productivity and limits the participation of Kazakhstani scientists in global projects. From the perspective of institutional theory (Scott, 2008), these difficulties indicate a discrepancy between the regulatory pressure on publication activity and the lack of regulatory and cognitive support for the development of academic skills at the university level.

In addition to academic writing, serious difficulties arise in translating and adapting official documentation for international agreements, dual degree programs, and grant competitions. Interviews have shown that translation processes are often carried out by employees themselves without professional training, which leads to terminological inconsistencies, administrative delays and the need for repeated improvements. The lack of unified glossaries and translation standards makes document management difficult and reduces the quality of communication with foreign partners. This situation illustrates the

weak implementation of the "organization" and "nodality" tools in the Hood (2007) model, since universities do not create effective structures and resources to support multilingual management.

Functioning in the context of Kazakhstan's trilingual policy creates an additional level of complexity. Internal communications are mainly carried out in Russian, official documents require the use of Kazakh, and international projects require the use of English. In the absence of a unified language strategy and standardized procedures, employees are forced to adapt to the requirements on their own, which leads to overload and an increase in the number of errors. As noted by Spolsky (2004), a successful language policy requires constant institutional support, resource provision, and integration into management practice, which is often lacking in the Kazakh context.

The analysis of institutional documents additionally revealed a discrepancy between the strategic goals of internationalization and the actual mechanisms of staff support. English language courses are mainly aimed at students and do not cover teachers and administrative staff, for whom proficiency in academic and legal English is critically important. The lack of specialized training programs and mandatory standards for employees reinforces the gap between regulatory policy and daily practice, which is emphasized in the works of Jumakulov & Ashirbekov (2016).

The identified language barriers are not just a problem of insufficient training of individual employees, but a symptom of broader institutional deficits. From the standpoint of the theoretical framework of Scott (2008) and Hood (2007), these barriers reflect unilateral regulatory pressure without the appropriate development of a normative culture, cognitive attitudes and resource provision at the organizational level. In the absence of effective "organization", "nodality" and "treasure" tools, language policy remains formal,

and the management of international cooperation remains fragmented and vulnerable to failures.

Strategies for overcoming language barriers and improving management efficiency

This section answers the third research question: what strategies can be proposed to improve language training and international cooperation management at public universities in Kazakhstan. Based on the analysis of interviews and institutional documents, specific initiatives were identified that the study participants themselves consider as effective solutions to existing problems. These proposals cover both the development of language competencies and the improvement of the organizational infrastructure necessary to support international activities.

One of the most frequently mentioned areas was the creation of specialized courses in academic writing and professional English, aimed at teachers and administrative staff. The participants emphasized that the existing language courses offered at universities are mainly aimed at students and do not meet the professional needs of employees working in international projects. The skills of preparing scientific articles, conducting business correspondence, drafting legally relevant documentation, and conducting negotiations remain underdeveloped. This problem is especially relevant in the context of increasing internationalization, which corresponds to the conclusions of Jumakulov and Ashirbekov (2016), who emphasize the need for a practice-oriented approach in language teaching for university staff.

Another important proposal was the creation of an internal multilingual glossary of terms. Respondents noted that the lack of unified translation standards and agreed terminology leads to errors, bureaucratic delays, and a decrease in the quality of international projects. The availability of a database of key terms in Kazakh, Russian and English would speed up the documentation preparation process and improve the accuracy

of official correspondence. This approach is in line with the recommendations of the OECD (2017), which emphasize the importance of terminological standardization for the successful development of the internationalization of higher education.

An equally relevant development area is the initiative to introduce digital solutions for automating translations followed by professional editing. Manual translation of documents, as interviews have shown, takes a significant amount of time, requires high language skills and increases the risk of errors. The use of specialized digital platforms and machine translation systems with a post-editing function would increase the speed of document processing, reduce the burden on staff and minimize errors, which is especially important in conditions of a shortage of professional translators in universities. These technological solutions are consistent with the general trend of digitalization of management processes in higher education in Kazakhstan, outlined in the strategic documents of the MSHE RK (2023).

An analysis of the proposed strategies through the prism of institutional theory (Scott, 2008) allows us to consider them as a manifestation of institutional adaptation to external and internal challenges. In the face of increasing regulatory pressure, universities are striving to strengthen the normative and cognitive pillars of their activities by building new management practices and employee support mechanisms. Specialized courses, the creation of glossaries and the introduction of digital tools indicate attempts to form a stable language and administrative infrastructure aimed at improving the functional effectiveness of international initiatives.

From the perspective of Spolsky's concept of language policy (Spolsky, 2004), these proposals reflect the transition from the declarative level of trilingual policy to its real institutionalization. The formation of management mechanisms supporting the development of staff language competence indicates the transformation of linguistic

ideology into practical actions integrated into the personnel, educational and administrative policies of universities. This movement from the formal proclamation of goals to their real institutional implementation is a prerequisite for the successful internationalization of higher education.

In summary, the university staff proposed sound and practical strategies that can significantly improve the quality of international cooperation management and overcome existing language barriers. However, the implementation of these initiatives will require not only efforts at the level of specific universities, but also active support from government agencies, coordination between faculties and administrative structures, as well as the allocation of targeted resources for the development of language infrastructure. Only an integrated approach can ensure sustainable changes in Kazakhstan's higher education system towards effective integration into the global academic community.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of the main research results interpreted through the prism of Scott's institutional theory (2008), Hood's model of regulatory instruments (2007), and Spolsky's concept of language policy (2004). The analysis made it possible to answer in depth all three research questions identified at the beginning of the work.

First, the study confirmed that language competence has a significant impact on the management of international cooperation at Kazakhstani state universities. Language barriers related to academic writing, multilingual document management and the lack of systematic language support significantly complicate the implementation of international projects and reduce the effectiveness of cooperation with foreign partners. English language proficiency is increasingly becoming not an additional advantage, but a basic requirement for academic and administrative staff.

Secondly, institutional and managerial constraints have been identified, exacerbating language difficulties. The lack of specialized language programs for staff, the lack of standards and glossaries, poor coordination between faculties and international offices, and the formal approach to internationalization demonstrate the gap between regulatory expectations and actual organizational practices. These findings confirm that successful internationalization requires the coordinated development of regulatory, normative, and cognitive pillars within universities.

Thirdly, based on empirical data, strategies have been proposed to overcome the identified problems. The study participants emphasized the need to create specialized courses, develop an internal multilingual glossary, implement digital translation solutions, and raise staff awareness of existing language competence development opportunities. These initiatives reflect the desire for institutional adaptation and practical implementation of the principles of effective language policy.

Overall, the conducted research not only revealed the existing barriers, but also outlined the directions for overcoming them. These results form the basis for developing recommendations in the next chapter of the paper, which will propose concrete steps to improve the management of international cooperation in the multilingual environment of Kazakhstani universities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The previous chapter presented the main conclusions that are directly relevant to the purpose of this qualitative case study on the impact of language proficiency on the management of international collaborations at a Kazakhstani public university. This section presents the key findings of the study, its limitations, as well as practical and theoretical recommendations for further research.

The study aimed to study how the level of proficiency in Kazakh, Russian and English among university management, faculty and administrative staff affects the management of international partnerships. As part of a qualitative case study, semi-structured interviews with university representatives were conducted, as well as an analysis of institutional documents regulating language policy and internationalization processes.

This research was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does language proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and English among university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff affect the effectiveness of management practices in fostering international collaborations at Kazakhstani public universities?
2. How do university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff perceive the impact of their proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and English on their ability to manage international collaborations at Kazakhstani public universities?
3. What specific language-related challenges and barriers do university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff encounter in management practices related to international collaborations?
4. What strategies can be proposed to improve language proficiency and enhance management practices to support successful international collaborations?

The following section presents the main conclusions of the study, formulated on the basis of the theoretical framework of institutional theory (Scott, 2008) and the model of state regulatory instruments (Hood, 2007), as well as based on the conceptual provisions of language policy in a multilingual educational environment (Spolsky, 2004; Smagulova, 2008). These approaches allowed us to examine how external regulatory requirements, institutional norms, and cultural and cognitive attitudes affect international cooperation management practices at the State University of Kazakhstan. The use of an institutional and instrumental perspective made it possible to analyze language proficiency as a factor that is both an individual competence of employees and an institutional resource that is formed under the pressure of internationalization processes and national language policy.

Main Findings of the Study

The results of the study show that language proficiency, especially English, is a key factor in the effective management of international cooperation at Kazakhstani state universities. Despite the formal recognition of the role of English in internationalization, employees face systemic difficulties: insufficient academic writing, difficulties in translating official documentation, as well as the lack of sustainable institutional mechanisms to support the development of language competencies. This indicates a gap between regulatory policy and actual institutional practice, which confirms the conclusions of institutional theory (Scott, 2008).

The study revealed a number of language barriers that make it difficult to implement international projects. The most serious of them are related to the lack of skills in preparing scientific texts in English, the lack of uniform translation standards between Kazakh, Russian and English, as well as the overload of staff due to the underdevelopment of digital solutions and the lack of specialized translation services. These barriers indicate the weakness of cognitive and normative supports in the institutional environment.

Particular attention was paid to the shortcomings of existing language programs. The courses offered by universities are mainly student-oriented and do not meet the professional objectives of teachers and administrative staff. The lack of specialized training in academic writing, legal translation, and international negotiation reduces managerial flexibility and slows down the development of international relations. These conclusions are consistent with the observations of Jumakulov and Ashirbekov (2016) on the lack of human resources support for internationalization processes.

The multilingual environment proved to be an additional source of administrative difficulties. In the absence of unified glossaries, translation standards, and digital document management tools, employees are forced to resort to informal coping strategies, which increases the risk of errors and reduces trust from international partners. These problems reflect institutional and instrumental constraints associated with insufficient use of organizational mechanisms and networking (Hood, 2007).

Finally, institutional management gaps have been identified: the lack of a comprehensive language policy, poor coordination between departments, and the formal nature of the approach to internationalization. Instead of sustained structural changes, international activity is often reduced to the formal implementation of indicators, which weakens the real development of international relations.

In conclusion, the results of the study confirm that overcoming language barriers and increasing the effectiveness of international cooperation require not only individual competence development, but also systemic institutional support, comprehensive language policy and strengthening of all three pillars of the institutional environment — regulatory, normative and cognitive.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This study has a number of strengths that have made it possible to deeply uncover the problem of the influence of language proficiency on the management of international collaboration in the context of Kazakhstani higher education.

Firstly, the use of a qualitative method and the single case study method provided a deep immersion into the context of a particular public university. This allowed not only to identify individual perceptions and barriers faced by employees, but also to analyze them in relation to institutional practices and policies. This method provided a wealth of empirical material, which was supplemented by a documentary analysis of strategic documents, regulations and the official language policy of the university.

Secondly, the strength of the research lies in the use of two frameworks, institutional theory (Scott, 2008) and the language planning model (Spolsky, 2004), which allowed us to connect the macro—level (public policy, institutional norms) and the micro-level (individual language practices). This provided a holistic understanding of the phenomenon and made it possible to interpret the results not only as local difficulties, but also as a reflection of systemic contradictions and challenges.

However, the study has a number of limitations that must be considered when interpreting the results and summarizing them. First of all, the study is limited to one institution, which reduces the possibility of transferring conclusions to the entire system of higher education in Kazakhstan. The university chosen as the case study has its own specifics, including in terms of size, availability of resources, geographical location and level of internationalization, which affects the experience of employees.

In addition, the study participants were exclusively staff — faculty members and administrative staff, without including students, graduate students or representatives of the ministry in the sample. Although this limitation was recognized as part of the focus of the

study, it excludes important perspectives, in particular the perception of students as direct participants in international programs.

Also, despite the fact that elements of documentary analysis were used, the influence of external political and economic factors, such as changes in state language policy, budget financing, and international accreditation requirements, remained beyond the scope of deep analysis. These aspects could further shed light on institutional constraints in the implementation of language policy and interuniversity cooperation.

Finally, the study does not include a dynamic perspective of change: it is a cross-section at a certain point in time and does not allow tracking the development of language policy at the university in the long term.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the study provides a valuable empirical and analytical base that can be useful both for the scientific community and for university managers developing internationalization strategies in a multilingual environment.

Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Future Research

The results of this study allow us to formulate a number of practical and strategic recommendations aimed at eliminating language barriers and increasing the effectiveness of international cooperation in the higher education system of Kazakhstan. These recommendations relate to both the institutional and government levels, and also open up prospects for future research.

From the point of view of university practice, the key task is to develop specialized language programs focused on the professional needs of teachers and administrative staff. To date, universities mainly offer general English and Kazakh language courses, but the study participants emphasize the need for intensive short—term courses tailored to specific tasks, such as academic writing, official correspondence preparation, and legal translation. The lack of such programs limits the ability of employees to perform their duties within

the framework of international projects, reduces the quality of documents and makes it difficult to communicate with foreign partners.

One of the effective tools may be the creation of specialized language centers in the university structure. Such centers can serve as advisory, training, and coordination functions, providing support for translation, text editing, and preparation for publication in international publications. In addition, in order to standardize documentation, it is necessary to develop internal trilingual glossaries of terms, especially in the field of academic and administrative vocabulary.

The integration of language training into the university's internationalization strategy should be documented not only in strategic documents, but also in the system for evaluating the effectiveness of teachers and administrative staff. Language proficiency is not an optional skill, but an essential element of professional competence in the context of global education. In this regard, it is worth considering the possibility of introducing language indicators (KPIs) into institutional plans and reporting.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the implementation of digital solutions. The use of automated translation systems and platforms for collaborative editing of multilingual documents will speed up the process of agreeing international treaties, improve the accuracy of legal and academic texts, and reduce the burden on administrative staff.

At the state level, there is a need to develop national standards for translation and document management in a trilingual environment. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Kazakhstan should consider the possibility of creating regulations governing the work with official documentation in Kazakh, Russian and English. This will help to unify approaches to translation and simplify the interaction of universities with foreign partners.

Financial support for language initiatives is also an important public policy objective. These may include targeted grants for the creation of language centers, training in academic translation, academic writing courses, and the development of digital infrastructure. Special attention should be paid to regional universities, which, as a rule, have limited resources and need additional support.

From the point of view of scientific potential, this study sets the direction for further work. Future research may be aimed at comparing situations in different types of universities — national, private and regional — in order to identify institutional differences in the implementation of language policy. It seems promising to study the opinions of students and graduates, since their language training directly affects academic mobility and the international competitiveness of universities. In addition, an important area for future research will be the analysis of the effectiveness of existing language courses and the identification of the most effective teaching formats in the context of the Kazakh higher education system. A comparative analysis with the international experience of countries with multilingual educational systems, such as Canada, Switzerland or Belgium, is also of interest.

Therefore, the recommendations resulting from the results of the study emphasize the need for an institutional and state reassessment of the role of language training as a strategic resource in the context of globalizing higher education in Kazakhstan.

Reflection on Research Experience

Working on this study has become an important stage for me, not only in academic, but also in personal development. Diving into the topic of language proficiency, institutional policy, and international collaboration allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how management processes in higher education are intertwined with linguistic realities and cultural contexts.

At an early stage of my work, I was faced with a number of methodological issues, from choosing frameworks to justifying research design. Working with the theory of institutionalism (Scott, 2008) and the concept of language policy (Spolsky, 2004) has taught me to analyze everyday management practices more systematically and see the influence of regulatory structures, ideologies, and organizational pressures behind them. These theoretical approaches have become tools for me to interpret empirical data not only at the level of content, but also at the level of hidden meanings and institutional patterns.

The data collection stage was of particular importance. Conducting the interview turned out to be more difficult than I expected: I had to not only observe scientific ethics, but also establish trust with the participants, whose answers often touched on sensitive topics such as professional difficulties, language insecurity, and bureaucratic barriers. This experience has taught me to be more context-sensitive, to consider individual intonations, and to appreciate the nuances of speech in a qualitative study.

The process of data analysis and coding proved to be the most time-consuming, but also the most valuable in terms of developing research skills. I learned how to work with a large volume of texts, structure information by topic, cross-interpret data, and formulate conclusions based on real quotes and examples. This has strengthened my critical thinking skills and increased my confidence in using high-quality research methods.

In addition, this research project has shown how relevant the problems of language policy and internationalization are for Kazakh higher education. I realized that even one institutional story can shed light on the broader systemic challenges facing universities across the country.

Overall, this experience has not only enriched me as a researcher, but also inspired me to continue my research in the field of management in higher education, with a special focus on issues of language equity, politics, and sustainable international practices.

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Appendix A: AI Declaration Form



Thesis Title: The Impact of Language Proficiency on Managing International Collaboration Practices at Kazakhstani Public Universities

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 ChatGPT to proofread texts, suggest improvements for coherence and transitions between paragraphs, and to rephrase certain sentences to enhance academic style. I also used an online citation generator to check the formatting of references according to APA 7th edition standards.

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: Aitoty Tleukhan

Signature:

Date: 28.04.2025

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Aitoty Tleukhan, and I am a second-year Master's student in the Educational Leadership - Higher Education program at the Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University. I am conducting research on how language proficiency influences the management of international collaborations at Kazakhstani public universities. I'm particularly interested in your experiences with communication and language-related challenges in your work.

I am delighted to invite you to participate in my study, recognizing and valuing your extensive experience in managing international partnerships and your language proficiency in those interactions. Your unique perspective and insights will be highly valuable to my research. This interview is intended to last for 45-60 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. I would like to record our conversation to aid my note-taking. Access to your information is restricted solely to me, and your recordings will be discarded after they are transcribed. In addition, as noted in the consent document: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you again for agreeing to participate.

Set 1. For admin staff (Vice-President for International Relations and Partnership, Director of the Department of Internationalization, Managers, Specialists, Language Center staff)

Warm-up questions:

1. Could you tell me a bit about your role in managing international collaborations at the university? How long have you been in this position, and what does your day-to-day work involve?

Probs: - What motivated you to take on this role?

- What do you find most rewarding about your job?

2. How often do you interact with international partners? Which languages do you typically use in these communications, and what are the common topics of discussion?

Probs: - Are there specific partners or projects that you find particularly challenging?

- How do you ensure clarity in your communications?

Main questions:

1. In your experience, how do your language skills in Kazakh, Russian, and English help you in managing international partnerships?

Probs: - Can you provide a specific instance where language skills made a difference?

2. Could you share an example where your or your colleagues' language proficiency played a significant role in either facilitating or complicating communication with an international partner?

Probs: - How did this experience shape your approach to future communications?

3. It is known that most universities maintain their documentation in three languages (Kazakh, Russian, and English), so how does the multilingual environment of this university influence your ability to effectively manage international collaborations?

Probs: - Have you encountered any challenges due to the multilingual documentation?

4. Have there been any situations where language barriers or miscommunication caused delays or misunderstandings in international projects? If so, how were these issues resolved?

Probs:- What strategies did you implement to prevent similar issues in the future?

5. Have you participated in any language improvement initiatives provided by the university? How helpful were they?

Probs: - What specific improvements did you notice in your skills as a result of these initiatives?

Closing Questions:

1. What practical steps or strategies do you think could help overcome any language challenges in managing international partnerships more efficiently

Probs: - Are there any resources or support systems you feel are currently lacking?

2. Do you think additional language training or support would help improve your ability, or that of your colleagues, to manage international collaborations more effectively?

Probs: - What type of training do you think would be most beneficial?

Set 2. For faculty staff (Professors, Instructors, Research assistants involved in international cooperations: projects, research, classes)

Warm-up Questions:

1. Can you tell me a bit about your role at the university? Describe your daily tasks Probs: - What do you find most fulfilling about your role?

2. How often do you interact with international colleagues or partners? Which languages do you usually use in these conversations, and what are the typical topics you discuss?

Probs: - Can you recall a specific conversation that was particularly impactful?

- How do you prepare for these interactions?

Main Questions:

1. From your experience, how do your language skills in Kazakh, Russian, and English help you in collaborating with international partners? Do you feel these languages play an important role in your work?

Probs: - Can you share an example of a successful collaboration facilitated by your language skills?

2. In your view, does language proficiency—yours or your colleagues'—impact the university's ability to build strong international relationships and attract global collaborations?

Probs: - How have you seen this play out in your specific experiences?

3. The university operates in a multilingual setting with Kazakh, Russian, and English often in use. How does this environment affect your ability to engage in international research or teaching activities?

Probs: - Are there particular challenges or advantages you've noticed?

4. Have there been any moments where language differences or miscommunication affected your work with international colleagues? How did you or your team work through these challenges? Probs: - What lessons did you learn from these experiences?

5. How do you handle academic publications or presentations in foreign languages? Probs: - Have you faced any challenges in this area? If so, how did you address them?

6. How do language-related challenges affect your ability to secure research funding or establish new international partnerships?

Probs: - Can you provide an example of how this has influenced your work?

Closing Questions:

1. What are some practical ways you think the university could better support faculty in overcoming language-related challenges when working with international partners?

Probs: - Are there specific resources or initiatives you would recommend?

2. Do you believe additional language training or support for faculty members could make a difference in improving international collaborations and research outcomes at your university? Probs: - What types of training do you think would be most beneficial?

Post-Interview

Thank you for your time and valuable insights. Your input is critical to understanding how language proficiency impacts international collaborations in universities. As a reminder, your responses will be anonymized, and any identifying information will be removed from the final report."

Next Step: Inform the participant when the study's findings will be available and offer to provide them with a summary of the research results if they are interested.

Appendix C: Consent Forms

Informed Consent - Email letter (English version)

Introduction. You are invited to participate in a research study entitled “The Impact of Language Proficiency on Managing Practices in International Collaborations at Kazakhstani Public Universities”

Procedures. The purpose of this research is to investigate how language proficiency in Kazakh, Russian, and English influences governance practices in managing international collaborations at Kazakhstani public universities. This study will involve semi-structured interviews with university leaders, faculty, and administrative staff. The expected duration of the interview is approximately 45-60 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked questions related to your experiences with language proficiency and communication in international partnerships.

Risks. The potential risks of participating in this study include:

1. Mild psychological discomfort when discussing language proficiency or communication challenges.
2. The risk of breach of confidentiality, as your responses may reveal sensitive information related to institutional practices. However, measures will be taken to minimize this risk, including anonymizing your data.

Benefits. Participating in this research provides valuable insights into professional experiences, particularly regarding language proficiency and international collaboration. Participants may find the study beneficial for reflecting on your own practices, and the findings could contribute to improving institutional policies and support systems in your work environment.

Compensation. No tangible compensation will be given for participation. A copy of the research results will be available at the conclusion of the study upon request via email.

Confidentiality & Privacy. Any information obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the fullest extent possible. All efforts will be made to ensure that your personal information is protected. Data will be stored on encrypted, password-protected cloud storage accessible only to me. While total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, all identifiable information will be anonymized in the research findings to minimize risks.

Voluntary Nature of the Study. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and if agreement to participation is given, it can be withdrawn at any time without prejudice.

Points of Contact. It is understood that should any questions or comments arise

regarding this project, or a research related injury is received please contact:

The researcher - Aitoty Tleukhan - aitoty.tleukhan@nu.edu.kz 2nd year MSc student in Educational Leadership program • Graduate School of Education, The autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University

The supervisor - Alper Calikoglu - alper.calikoglu@nu.edu.kz Assistant Professor • Graduate School of Education, The autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University

GSE Research IREC (Institutional Research Ethics Committee) subcommittee gse.irec@nu.edu.kz • Graduate School of Education, The autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University

STATEMENT OF CONSENT.

I,

,

Give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

The researchers have clearly explained to me the background information and objectives of the study and what my participation in this study involves.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I can withdraw my consent at any time and without giving any reasons, and this will not have any negative consequences for myself.

I understand that the information collected during this study will be treated confidentially.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Researcher:

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Ақпараттық келісім - Электрондық хат (Kazakh version)

Кіріспе. Сізді «The Impact of Language Proficiency on Managing Practices in International Collaborations at Kazakhstani Public Universities» атты зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамын.

Зерттеу кезеңдері. Зерттеудің мақсаты – қазақ, орыс және ағылшын тілдерін меңгерудің Қазақстандағы мемлекеттік университеттерде халықаралық ынтымақтастықты басқару тәжірибесіне қалай әсер ететінін зерттеу. Зерттеу аясында университет басшылығымен, оқытушылармен және әкімшілік қызметкерлермен жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттар өткізіледі. Сұхбаттың болжамды ұзақтығы 45–60 минутты құрайды. Сұхбат барысында сізге халықаралық серіктестіктердегі тілдік құзыреттілігіңіз бен қарым-қатынас тәжірибеңіз туралы сұрақтар қойылады.

Тәуекелдер. Зерттеуге қатысу барысында келесі ықтимал тәуекелдер болуы мүмкін:

- Тілді меңгеру немесе қарым-қатынас қиындықтарын талқылау кезінде жеңіл психологиялық жайсыздық сезіну.
- Жауаптарыңызда мекеменің ішкі тәжірибелері туралы сезімтал ақпарат болуы мүмкіндігіне байланысты құпиялылықтың бұзылу қаупі. Дегенмен, бұл қауіптерді азайту мақсатында сіздің деректеріңіз анонимді түрде өңделеді.

Артықшылықтар. Бұл зерттеуге қатысу кәсіби тәжірибеңізді, әсіресе тілдерді меңгеру және халықаралық ынтымақтастық мәселелерін қайта қарап, талдауға мүмкіндік береді. Қатысушылар бұл зерттеуден өз тәжірибелеріне байланысты пайдалы қорытындылар жасай алады, ал зерттеу нәтижелері сіздің жұмыс орныңыздағы институционалдық саясат пен қолдау жүйелерін жетілдіруге үлес қосуы мүмкін.

Өтемақы. Зерттеуге қатысқаныңыз үшін материалдық өтемақы қарастырылмаған. Дегенмен, зерттеу нәтижелерінің көшірмесін зерттеу аяқталған соң электрондық пошта арқылы сұрау жіберіп ала аласыз.

Құпиялылық және деректерді қорғау. Зерттеу барысында алынған барлық ақпарат құпия түрде сақталады. Сіздің жеке ақпаратыңызды қорғау үшін барлық мүмкін шаралар қабылданады. Деректер шифрланған және құпия сөзбен қорғалған бұлтты сақтау жүйесінде (Google Drive) сақталады, оған тек зерттеуші қол жеткізе алады. Толық құпиялылыққа кепілдік беру мүмкін болмаса да, барлық

анықталатын мәліметтер зерттеу есебінде анонимді түрде көрсетіледі.

Зерттеудің ерікті сипаты. Бұл зерттеуге қатысу толығымен ерікті. Сіз кез келген уақытта ешқандай салдарсыз қатысудан бас тарта аласыз. **Байланыс тұлғалары.** Егер сізде осы зерттеу туралы сұрақтарыңыз немесе пікірлеріңіз болса немесе зерттеу барысында жарақат алсаңыз, келесі тұлғалармен байланысыңыз:

Зерттеуші – Айтоты Тлеухан, aitoty.tleukhan@nu.edu.kz, «Білім берудегі көшбасшылық» бағдарламасының 2 курс магистранты • Жоғары білім беру мектебі, Назарбаев Университеті, автономды білім беру ұйымы.

Ғылыми жетекші – Альпер Каликоглу, alper.calikoglu@nu.edu.kz, доцент • Жоғары білім беру мектебі, Назарбаев Университеті, автономды білім беру ұйымы.

GSE IREC зерттеу этикасы жөніндегі кіші комитеті (Институционалдық зерттеулер этикасы жөніндегі комитет), gse.irec@nu.edu.kz • Жоғары білім беру мектебі, Назарбаев Университеті, автономды білім беру ұйымы.

КЕЛІСІМ ТУРАЛЫ МӘЛІМДЕМЕ

Мен,

, осы зерттеуге қатысуға өз еркіммен келісімді беремін.

Зерттеушілер маған зерттеудің негізгі ақпаратын, мақсаттарын және қатысудың мағынасын нақты түсіндірді.

Мен зерттеуге қатысуымның ерікті екенін және кез келген уақытта еш себепсіз қатысудан бас тарта алатынымды түсінемін. Бұл шешім мен үшін ешқандай жағымсыз салдарларға әкелмейді.

Мен зерттеу барысында жиналған барлық ақпараттың құпия болатынын түсінемін.

Қолы: _____ **Күні:** _____

Зерттеуші:

Қолы: _____ **Күні:** _____

Информированное согласие - письмо по электронной почте (Russian version)

Введение. Приглашаю Вас принять участие в исследовании под названием «The Impact of Language Proficiency on Managing Practices in International Collaborations at Kazakhstani Public Universities».

Процедура. Цель данного исследования — изучить, как владение казахским, русским и английским языками влияет на управление международным сотрудничеством в государственных университетах Казахстана. В рамках исследования будут проводиться полуструктурированные интервью с руководством университетов, преподавателями и административным персоналом. Ожидаемая продолжительность интервью — примерно 45–60 минут. Во время интервью вам будут заданы вопросы о вашем опыте владения языками и коммуникации в международных партнерствах.

Риски. Возможные риски участия в этом исследовании включают:

- Легкий психологический дискомфорт при обсуждении вопросов, связанных с владением языком или трудностями в общении.
- Риск нарушения конфиденциальности, так как ваши ответы могут содержать чувствительную информацию о внутренних практиках учреждения. Однако будут предприняты меры для минимизации этого риска, включая анонимизацию ваших данных.

Преимущества. Участие в этом исследовании может предоставить ценные выводы о вашем профессиональном опыте, особенно в вопросах владения языками и международного сотрудничества. Участники могут найти исследование полезным для размышления о своей практике, а полученные результаты могут способствовать улучшению институциональной политики и систем поддержки в вашей рабочей среде.

Компенсация. Материальная компенсация за участие не предусмотрена. Копия результатов исследования будет доступна по завершении исследования по запросу, отправленному по электронной почте.

Конфиденциальность и защита данных. Вся информация, полученная в ходе исследования, будет храниться в строгой конфиденциальности. Будут предприняты все возможные меры для защиты вашей личной информации. Данные будут храниться в зашифрованном облачном хранилище, защищенном паролем (Google Drive), доступ к которому будет только у исследователя. Хотя

полную конфиденциальность гарантировать невозможно, все идентифицируемые данные будут анонимизированы в отчёте исследования, чтобы минимизировать риски.

Добровольный характер исследования. Участие в этом исследовании является полностью добровольным. Вы можете в любое время отказаться от участия без каких-либо последствий.

Контактные лица. Если у вас возникнут вопросы или комментарии по поводу данного исследования или если в ходе исследования будет получена травма, свяжитесь с:

Исследователь — Айтоты Тлеухан, aitoty.tleukhan@nu.edu.kz, магистрант 2 курса программы «Лидерство в образовании» • Высшая школа образования, автономная организация образования Назарбаев Университет.

Научный руководитель — Альпер Каликоглу, alper.calikoglu@nu.edu.kz, доцент • Высшая школа образования, автономная организация образования Назарбаев Университет.

Подкомитет по этике исследований GSE IREC (Комитет по этике институциональных исследований), gse.irec@nu.edu.kz • Высшая школа образования, автономная организация образования Назарбаев Университет.

ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ О СОГЛАСИИ.

Я,

даю свое добровольное согласие на участие в этом исследовании.

Исследователи ясно объяснили мне основную информацию и цели исследования, а также, что включает в себя моё участие.

Я понимаю, что моё участие в этом исследовании является добровольным. Я могу отозвать свое согласие в любое время без объяснения причин, и это не повлечет для меня никаких негативных последствий.

Я понимаю, что вся информация, собранная в ходе этого исследования, будет конфиденциальной.

Подпись: _____ *Дата:* _____

Исследователь:

Подпись: _____ *Дата:* _____

Appendix D: Coding Samples

Code	Category	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of academic English • Insufficient support in preparation for international publications • Insufficient support for publication activity • Lack of academic training • Lack of experience in structuring applications • Difficulties with legal English • Difficulties with legal Kazakh • Difficulties with official Kazakh • Difficulties in writing grant applications • Inability to self-publish • Gaps in knowledge of international requirements 	Language Barriers and Insufficient Language Preparation	Language Unpreparedness as a Barrier in Managing International Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to language courses • The courses do not meet professional needs • There is no adaptation of courses for administrative tasks • Inefficiency of current language courses • The need for specialized training • The need for a translation course • The need for mentoring in writing articles • The need for consultations on publications 	Deficiencies of Current Language Programs and Trainings	
<p>The transfer takes a long time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficiency of automatic translations without editing • Dependence on manual translation • Multi-stage document translation • It takes a lot of time to make edits after translation • The need for editorial assistance • Lack of a translation editing system • Difficulties in translating academic texts • Problems of terminological translation • Problems with the execution of agreements • Problems with the style and structure of scientific texts 	Difficulties with Multilingual Documentation and Translation	Systemic Challenges in Multilingual Documentation Management

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficiency of current language courses • The need for an internal glossary • Lack of translation standards and glossaries • Lack of a single database of terms • Lack of interlanguage standardization • Overloading employees with transfers • Delays due to legal and language expertise • Delays due to lack of editors 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak internal coordination • Fragmentation of language initiatives • Faculties bypass the international office • Formal approach to internationalization 	<p>Institutional Issues and Managerial Gaps</p>	<p>Institutional Constraints and Weak Coordination</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant negotiations with partners • Development of international partnerships • Multilingual versions of agreements 	<p>Practices and Demands of International Collaboration</p>	