

# Features and problems of implementation of trilingual system in the secondary school in Kazakhstan

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**Abstract.** This project considers a question implementing trilingual system in secondary school in Kazakhstan. There is background information how historical and political situation have effected to language situation in the Kazakhstan, before and after independence. The special attention has been posted on the features and problems of the implementing of a trilingual system in secondary school in Kazakhstan. Several problems were highlighted such as insufficient well-educated teachers and methodological and teaching materials, a low level of English knowledge of pupils and inadequate English environment which is obstacle to implementing trilingual system. Hence, there were given some possible solutions and implications of these challenges. This paper have also studied and analysed international experience where also implemented bilingual system.

## Introduction

The world lives in a time of profound change and faster development. This is new technological advances and globalisation of culture, rapid development of IT technologies and mobility of human resources. In order to be not left on the side of world trends, many post-soviet states have begun to reform the economy, politics, science and education [1]. The core of these reforms is education, because without sufficient knowledge, carry out reforms is difficult, sometimes impossible. For example, the leading economies of the world have prospered only by a high level of human capital that has a high level of intellect and knowledge. In these circumstances, the education system should be at the forefront of change. The Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan said that English is one of the main languages in the world: it is language of science, business and partnership. This is facilitated by new educational reform such as the implementing trilingual system in the secondary school in the

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Republic of Kazakhstan. The trilingual policy emphasizes equal acquisition of English as a third language in the bilingual (Kazakh and Russian) country [2]. It is supposed that via learning subject in three languages pupils or students will get access to additional information, novel prospects and an able to be more tolerant to other culture. In addition, the trilingual environment enhances student's potential, develop their flexibility, creative and critical thinking, and can increase willingness to learn new languages [3]. However, these innovations must not damage notional identity or weaken the level of education in general [4, 5]. While it is acknowledged that the proposed trilingual education system may bring many benefits to students, there remain a number of significant critical issues that have not yet been satisfactorily resolved, and as such, proposed implementing of the trilingual system should be postponed. In the project will consider impact of historical, political and economic development on the language situation and features and problems of implementation of trilingual system in the secondary school in Kazakhstan and possible solutions.

Kazakhstan gained independence in December 16, 1991. Astana is the capital city of Kazakhstan. The state language is Kazakh. Russian language has a status of official or interethnic language. The population of Kazakhstan is about 16.7 million people [6]. According to the national census (2009) the ethnic structure of Kazakhstan population:

“Kazakhs - 63,07 %  
Russians - 23,70 %  
Uzbeks - 2,85 %  
Ukrainians - 2,08 %  
Uygurs - 1,40 %  
Tatars - 1,28 %  
Germans - 1,11 %  
Others - 4,51 %” [7].

Kazakhstan is situated in the centre of Eurasia. The territory of Kazakhstan is ranked ninth largest in the world, about 2 million 724 thousand square kilometres. Kazakhstan is bordered in the north and west with Russia, in the east-south with China, in the south with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan [6].

## **Impact of historical, political and economic development on the language situation in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan before the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, in general was one national country. When Kazakhstan became a part of Soviet Union, commenced program a lingua franca politics, despite the approval of the idea of the founder of Lenin that the Soviet Union is an association of the Free states where all governments have the right to develop and to speak their native language. However, freedom of language worked only on official documents, in fact, the local tongue was under pressure [8].

The pressure on language was reinforced by the migration of people from western Russia to Kazakhstan. Besides the First World War, the civil war has led to that the number of ethnic Kazakhs by 1926 has fallen sharply from 91.4% in 1850 to 54.4%. The forced collectivization policy and deliberate destruction of national intelligentsia to 1930s took from 1.5-2 million lives ethnic Kazakhs. After industrialization, the Second World War and Virgin Lands campaign in 1962 share of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan was only 27% [9].

According to Khazanov [9], 1970s about 700 Kazakh schools had closed and many parents were forced to send their children to Russian-language schools. In addition, basically higher education was in Russian language. Hence, Russian became official language of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, but Kazakh language lost its position and necessarily, and

became just tool to speak at home and rural area. All of these reasons were prerequisite that Kazakhstan has become a bilingual country.

After being independent country Kazakhstan became the part of global world with an enormous ambitious. In 1997, President of Kazakhstan adopted a long-term development strategy "Kazakhstan 2030". The adoption of this document was a starting point in the rapid movement of Kazakhstan to build a prosperous nation in the coming years. In 2006, annual address of the President of Republic of Kazakhstan proclaimed the new strategy 'Kazakhstan's strategy of joining the world's 50 most competitive countries'. These aims gave an impetus to introduce trilingualism and it was announced by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in October 2006 at the XII session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan [6]. In 2007, in the next address to nation, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed to begin a phased implementation of the "Trinity of languages" cultural project, where President said: 'English - the language of successful integration into the global economy' [10]. The base of these political and economic reforms was adopted the new program 'State program of education development in the republic of Kazakhstan for 2011–2020' by Ministry of Education, where was concreted the steps of implementing trilingual system in the Secondary school in Kazakhstan.

## The implementation of trilingual system in the secondary school in Kazakhstan and the world experience

Kazakhstan is one of the first countries in the world where the government wanted to implement trilingual system in the secondary school, in 2019. The uniqueness of this program is the fact that students will be taught by three completely different languages. There are Kazakh which belongs to group of Turkic tongues. Russian ("East Slavic group of the Slavic branch of the Indo-European language family") and English belongs to the "West Germanic branch of the Indo-European family of languages" [11]. Features of implementing are in table 1.

**Table 1.** Features of implementing trilingual system in the Secondary school in Kazakhstan [12].

1-4 grades Kazakh classes Russian as subject	6-11 grades -World history In Russian	7-11 grades  IT Chemistry Biology Physics In English
1-4 grades Russian classes Kazakh as subject	6-11 grades History of Kazakh In Kazakh	
1-11 grades – English as a subject		

It is clear that English is language of science, world business and technology. If Kazakhstan wants to be at the head of, or part of the rapidly developing world, the state should implement this new program. Being trilingual provides good opportunities for young people to get information and read sources from the originals and the business can easily get into world trade [13]. Therefore, these opportunities may give to government to be competitive. However, there are several problems (insufficient well-educated teachers,

sources, books and the weak material and technical base of school and not readiness of students to receive information from foreign language) that will interfere for the full implementation of trilingual program. If the government wants the process of introduction of trilingualism will be painless to society as a whole, it should shift time of implementing trilingual system from 2019 to 2022-23, it may resolve the problems which has education system.

### **The problems of insufficient well-educated teachers**

The first problem is insufficient well-educated teachers. Teachers are main engine of reform in either education system. In 2019, Kazakhstan wants to improve number of trilingual schools from 33 to 700 [14]. It means that there will need for four subjects about 2800 teachers who not just know their subject in English, also who can teach. Nowadays, Kazakhstan does not have such number of teachers, even difficult to say that they will be prepared during the next two years, because the Ministry of Education have not a project to retrain them [15]. Ngonyani [16] Professor of Michigan State University claims that one of the causes of the failure of language (English) policy in Tanzanian school is the unqualified teacher. The base this, Kazakhstan should not, even does not have right to repeat others mistake. To solve this problem Kazakhstan has a good experience and mechanism to send students, teachers, scientists and government workers to abroad improve their knowledge and skills. By using this experience, 600 teachers should be sent every year during the next five years to developed countries to improve their English and specific knowledge, and by 2022 Kazakhstan may have about 3000 well-qualified tutors. It may take long time and huge amount of money, but without high level of teachers staff to implement trilingual system is impossible or it will be failure like in Tanzania.

### **Low quality of students who can acquire knowledge from foreign language**

The second challenge is low level of English knowledge of students. By 2019, they will ready to accept knowledge or not it is a big question. Zhetpisbayeva & Shelestova [13] assert that causes of inappropriate level of English among primary school students are lack of source books (69.3% of teaching materials are out of date) and teaching methods, also 65.9 % of English teachers' qualification is low. The primary school is main structure which prepares pupils to secondary school where they will be taught in English some subjects. In addition, South Korean bilingual education system also has problems such as lack of quality of bilingual classes and educators which restrain to develop bilingual system [17]. There are three possible solutions of these problems. Firstly, the Ministry of Education should improve quality of teaching materials for 1-6 grades learners by using international experience such as Canada and the UK. Secondly, administration of education will have to prepare students to easily get information from English. Hence, this year 6 years old young people will go 1st grade and they will study English as subject 2 hours a week how planned authority, by 2022 pupils will be appropriated to acquire knowledge by well-educated teachers. Finally, government should retrain as faster as possible the proficiency of English teacher's via inviting a well experienced experts and teachers from abroad. If these possible solutions will have realized that the implementing trilingual system will may be easier and comfortable for all participants of this reform.

### **The impotence of creating English environment for qualitative implementation of trilingualism**

Another challenge of implementing multilingual education system can be insufficient English environment where young generation can learn new language by daily routine. There are a few countries in the world which successfully implemented bilingual or trilingual education system. One of them is Luxembourg where medium of instruction is conducted in three languages such as Luxembourgish, German and French. After finishing high school Luxembourg student have a well knowledge about these languages. Therefore, in language profile, compiled by the Council of Europe's in 2005, experts suggest that Luxembourg is an example of "a successful and ambitious policy language". According to Hugo [18], successfully implementing trilingual education system in Luxembourg is contributed society where people could spoke in Luxembourgish, German and French. For example, in Luxembourg not only newspaper, magazines and journals are published in three languages, but also television is accessible in these languages [18]. In addition, most of parents know German and French in a high level, they also give additional help to learn new languages to young generation. The purpose of this section is to sharpen the government's attention that society play an important role to implement and develop a new language. If Kazakhstan want to more effectively implement trilingual system, the government should artificially create English environment via publishing special journal or newspaper in English for young people. Also, there are necessary to open several new channels in English like channel of cartoon, film, entertaining and educational etc. These novelties will might promote to the rapid and qualitative development of trilingual system. However, if the Kazakh government want a high quality results, expect well-educated teacher, a high level of methodological and teaching materials, which it need to at least create artificial society in spite of the high price of project [19].

## Conclusion

This project is discussed about impact of historical and political progress on language situation from past till now. How Kazakhstan has become bilingual country, and how government is implementing trilingual system in secondary school. This paper also considered about importance of implementing trilingual system in secondary school, especially English, because this language is wide range accepted tongue in the world which provides many opportunities to young generation to be competitive and knowledgeable. The problems which Kazakhstan may be faced during the introducing trilingual system is known because other countries like South Korea and Tanzania have met when they implemented bilingual system. Such problems as inadequate high qualified teachers, the low level of English knowledge among students, also insufficient methodical and training resource and lack of English environment are basic obstacle to implement and develop three language system [20,21]. There are also given possible solutions, such as the necessity of retrain English language teachers and special teachers who will teach subject in English, improve foreign language ability of pupils. However, if government want successfully implement this programme they should suspend project till 2022 while the problems will not resolve.

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