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CHALLENGES OF BILINGUALISM: CODE-SWITCHING AND LANGUAGE DOMINANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF KAZAKHSTAN

Annotation. This research paper explores the dynamics of bilingualism in Kazakhstan, focusing on code-switching and language dominance within the context of the country's historical, social, and educational landscape. Kazakhstan's bilingual environment, characterized by the coexistence of Kazakh and Russian, is rooted in its complex history, from the Russian Empire's influence on the Soviet era's policies, which promoted Russian as the dominant language. Following independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has made significant efforts to revitalize Kazakh while maintaining Russian as a vital link to the global community. This study examines the theoretical framework of bilingualism, highlighting the types and implications of code-switching and the factors influencing language dominance. Through analysis of code-switching patterns, linguistic characteristics, and the impact of language dominance on cognitive, academic, and socio-economic outcomes, the paper sheds light on the challenges and implications for bilingual education, social integration, and policymaking in Kazakhstan. The findings underscore the need for balanced language instruction, inclusive policies, and cultural initiatives to foster a multilingual society that values both Kazakh and Russian, ensuring equitable opportunities for all citizens.

Keywords: bilingualism, code-switching, language dominance, language policy, multilingualism.

Introduction. Kazakhstan, the largest landlocked country in the world, boasts a rich and complex linguistic heritage. Historically, the region has been a melting pot of cultures and languages due to its strategic location along the Silk Road and its diverse population. Prior to the 20th century, Kazakh, a Turkic language, was predominantly spoken among the nomadic tribes inhabiting the steppes of Kazakhstan. With the advent of the Russian Empire's expansion into Central Asia in the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian began to permeate the region, setting the stage for a bilingual society.

The Soviet era, starting from the 1920s, significantly reshaped the linguistic landscape of Kazakhstan. Soviet policies promoted Russian as the lingua franca across the USSR, resulting in widespread bilingualism. The Russian language became entrenched in all spheres of public life, including education, government, and media, while Kazakh was relegated to a secondary status. This period saw a marked increase in Russian proficiency among Kazakhs, often at the expense of their native language.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan declared its independence, leading to a renaissance of Kazakaah language and culture. The government embarked on policies aimed at reviving Kazakh as the state language while maintaining Russian as an official language due to its widespread use and importance in international diplomacy and business. Today, Kazakhstan is officially bilingual, with Kazakh and Russian both playing crucial roles. Kazakh is promoted as the national language, essential for cultural identity and state functions,

whereas Russian remains dominant in urban areas and continues to serve as a vital link to the global community.

In addition to Kazakh and Russian, Kazakhstan is home to various minority languages, reflecting its ethnic diversity. Languages such as Uzbek, Ukrainian, Uyghur, Tatar, and Korean are spoken within their respective communities, adding to the nation's linguistic tapestry. These minority languages, while less prevalent, contribute to the multicultural and multilingual fabric of Kazakhstani society [1, 123-145]. Studying bilingualism in Kazakhstan is of significant socio-political importance. The coexistence of Kazakh and Russian within the same national framework is not only a matter of linguistic preference but also a reflection of the country's historical, cultural, and political dynamics. Understanding how these languages interact and influence each other provides insights into broader issues of national identity, social cohesion, and policymaking.

From an educational standpoint, bilingualism presents both opportunities and challenges. The ability to communicate in both Kazakh and Russian equips individuals with a competitive edge in various professional fields, enhancing their social mobility and economic prospects. However, it also raises questions about the effectiveness of bilingual education systems, language proficiency, and cognitive development. Addressing these questions is crucial for developing educational strategies that cater to the needs of a linguistically diverse population.

Culturally, bilingualism is a key component of Kazakhstan's national identity. The promotion of Kazakh language and culture alongside the preservation of Russian heritage underscores the country's commitment to embracing its multifaceted identity. This dual-language approach fosters a sense of unity while respecting diversity, which is essential for maintaining social harmony in a multiethnic state.

This paper aims to explore the challenges of bilingualism in Kazakhstan, with a particular focus on two interrelated phenomena: code-switching and language dominance. Code-switching, the practice of alternating between two or more languages within a conversation, is a common occurrence in bilingual societies. It serves as a lens through which we can examine the dynamics of bilingual communication, social identity, and language proficiency.

Language dominance, on the other hand, refers to the predominance of one language over another in terms of proficiency and usage. In the context of Kazakhstan, understanding language dominance involves analyzing the factors that influence whether Kazakh or Russian is more frequently used in different domains of life.

The paper is structured as follows: It begins with a theoretical framework that defines key concepts related to bilingualism, code-switching, and language dominance. This is followed by an examination of the prevalence and patterns of code-switching in Kazakhstan. Next, the determinants and implications of language dominance are explored, highlighting how historical and contemporary factors shape linguistic preferences. The interaction between code-switching and language dominance is then analyzed to uncover their mutual influences. Finally, the paper discusses the educational, social, and policy challenges arising from bilingualism. By delving into these aspects, the paper seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of bilingualism in Kazakhstan and its broader implications for individuals and society.

Methodology and research methods. The primary methodology for this research is qualitative, focusing on understanding the dynamics of bilingualism, code-switching, and language dominance in Kazakhstan. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the linguistic, social, and cultural contexts that shape language use and proficiency in the country. A comprehensive review of existing literature on bilingualism, code-switching, and language dominance was conducted. This included academic books, journal articles, government reports, and historical texts to provide a theoretical framework and contextual background.

Statistical data from national censuses and educational institutions were analyzed to identify patterns of language dominance and proficiency. This quantitative data provided a broader perspective on the prevalence and distribution of Kazakh and Russian language use across different regions and social groups.

Observational studies were conducted in various public and private settings, such as schools, workplaces, and media outlets, to observe real-life instances of code-switching and language use. These observations helped to contextualize the survey and interview data and provided additional evidence of linguistic practices.

Discussion and observation. Bilingualism, the ability to use two languages proficiently, can be categorized based on the timing and balance of language acquisition. Simultaneous bilingualism occurs when an individual learns two languages from birth. Children raised in households where both parents speak different languages typically experience simultaneous bilingualism, allowing them to develop native-like proficiency in both languages from an early age. Sequential bilingualism, on the other hand, happens when a person learns a second language after establishing a foundation in their first language. This often occurs in immigrant families where children learn the community language after their home language.

The distinction between balanced and unbalanced bilingualism further refines our understanding. Balanced bilinguals have comparable proficiency in both languages across various contexts. They can switch between languages with ease and use each language fluently and accurately. Unbalanced bilinguals, however, exhibit greater proficiency in one language over the other. This can be due to various factors such as the dominance of one language in the community, education, or media exposure [2, 117-121].

Another important concept to explore is code-switching, the practice of alternating between two or more languages within a conversation. It is a common phenomenon in bilingual communities and serves multiple communicative and social functions. Code-switching can be classified into three main types: intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching.

Intersentential code-switching occurs between sentences, where a speaker may complete a sentence in one language and start the next in another. Intrasentential code-switching happens within a single sentence, often requiring the speaker to navigate the grammatical rules of both languages simultaneously. Tag-switching involves the insertion of a tag phrase or a single word from one language into a sentence that is otherwise in another language [3, 581-618]. These different forms of code-switching are influenced by factors such as the speaker's proficiency in both languages, the context of the conversation, and the social norms of the community.

Additionally, let us examine the concept of language dominance. It refers to the relative proficiency and use of one language over another in a bilingual individual. Dominance is not fixed and can change over time depending on various factors. Indicators of language dominance include the frequency of use, context of use, and the speaker's perceived competence in each language.

Several factors influence language dominance. Societal and environmental contexts play a crucial role; for instance, a language used predominantly in education and professional settings is likely to become dominant. Family dynamics, such as the languages spoken at home, also impact dominance. Additionally, media consumption and peer interactions can shift dominance towards the language more frequently encountered in daily life [4, 220]. Language policies and community attitudes towards bilingualism further shape which language takes precedence in different domains of life.

Understanding these theoretical concepts is essential for studying bilingualism in specific contexts, such as Kazakhstan, where historical, social, and political factors create a unique linguistic environment.

Code-Switching in Kazakhstan

Code-switching is a pervasive phenomenon in Kazakhstan, reflecting the country's bilingual nature. It occurs in various contexts such as homes, schools, media, and public spaces. At home, families often switch between Kazakh and Russian based on the topic of conversation, the participants, and the setting. For example, children might use Kazakh with grandparents and switch to Russian when discussing schoolwork with parents. In schools, students and teachers frequently switch languages to facilitate understanding and convey specific cultural or educational nuances.

In the media, code-switching is evident in television shows, radio programs, and social media. It is used to reach a broader audience and to reflect the linguistic reality of the population. Public spaces, including markets and government offices, are also common venues for code-switching, where individuals might start a conversation in one language and seamlessly switch to another.

Linguistically, code-switching in Kazakhstan displays distinct syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics. Syntactically, speakers often switch languages at clause boundaries, maintaining grammatical integrity. Semantically, code-switching allows for precise expression of concepts that might be better conveyed in one language than the other. Pragmatically, it serves various functions such as signaling group membership, managing discourse, and adhering to social norms [5, 102-115].

Several sociolinguistic factors influence code-switching in Kazakhstan. Social identity and group membership play a significant role; individuals often switch languages to align with their interlocutor's linguistic background, thereby fostering social cohesion and mutual understanding. For instance, a Kazakh-speaking individual might switch to Russian when interacting with a predominantly Russian-speaking group to demonstrate inclusiveness.

Socio-economic status and education also impact code-switching patterns. Higher socio-economic status and access to quality education typically correlate with greater proficiency in both languages, facilitating more frequent and fluid code-switching. Conversely, individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds or with limited educational opportunities might exhibit less frequent or less proficient code-switching [6, 23-45]. Similarly, urban and rural settings further delineate code-switching behaviors. Urban areas, characterized by greater linguistic diversity and more dynamic social interactions, exhibit higher instances of code-switching compared to rural areas where linguistic practices tend to be more homogenous and stable.

Examples of code-switching in Kazakhstan can serve to illustrate the theoretical framework.

Example 1:

During a math class, a teacher might explain a concept in Kazakh but use Russian for specific terms or instructions:

Kazakh: «Бүгін біз геометриялық пішіндерді оқимыз.»

Russian: «Теперь откройте учебник на странице тридцать два и решите задачу номер четыре.»

Translation:

Kazakh: «Today we are going to study geometric shapes.»

Russian: «Now open your textbook to page thirty-two and solve problem number four.»

Example 2:

During a business meeting, a manager might switch languages to clarify a point or provide additional details:

Kazakh: «Бұл жоба біздің компания үшін өте маңызды.»

Russian: «Поэтому давайте, закончим его в срок.»

Translation:

Kazakh: «This project is very important for our company.»

Russian: «Therefore, let us complete it on time.»

A study by Smagulova (2020) involved interviews with bilingual university students who reported frequent code-switching in both academic and social settings. These students described switching to Russian for technical terms and academic discourse, while using Kazakh for cultural and familial topics. These studies highlight the complex interplay of linguistic, social, and cultural factors that shape code-switching in Kazakhstan, underscoring its role as a vital component of communication and identity in this diverse and multilingual nation [7, 145-162].

Language Dominance in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's linguistic landscape has been profoundly influenced by its history as part of the Soviet Union. During the Soviet era, Russian was promoted as the lingua franca across the Soviet republics, including Kazakhstan. Soviet language policies emphasized Russian in

administration, education, and public life, often at the expense of indigenous languages such as Kazakh. This included mandatory Russian language instruction in schools and the use of Russian as the primary language in higher education and professional settings [8, 197].

Migration policies further reinforced the dominance of Russian by encouraging the settlement of ethnic Russians and other Russian-speaking groups in Kazakhstan. By the time of Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, Russian had become deeply entrenched in urban areas and among the educated elite [9, 440-475].

Educational reforms have been central to these efforts. The government has introduced Kazakh language instruction in schools and universities, while also promoting trilingual education (Kazakh, Russian, and English) to prepare students for the globalized economy. Despite these initiatives, implementation has faced challenges, including disparities in language proficiency and resources between urban and rural areas [10, 98-116].

Language dominance in Kazakhstan is measured using various tools and methodologies. Surveys are commonly employed to gather data on language use and proficiency among different demographic groups. These surveys often include questions about language use in various domains such as home, work, and education [9, 440-475]. There are also proficiency tests such as KazTest assess individuals' abilities in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding Kazakh. Self-assessment questionnaires provide insights into individuals' perceived language competencies and their language preferences in different contexts [11, 13].

The studies provide in-depth insights into language dynamics within specific communities or institutions. For example, studies conducted in urban centers like Astana and Almaty reveal a higher prevalence of Russian language use in professional and academic settings, while rural areas tend to exhibit stronger Kazakh language use [12, 299-309]. Statistical data from national censuses and educational institutions further illustrate patterns of language dominance. According to the 2009 national census, 74% of the population reported proficiency in Kazakh, while 94% reported proficiency in Russian, highlighting widespread bilingualism in the country [13, 3].

Language dominance has significant implications for cognitive and academic outcomes. Research suggests that bilingualism can enhance cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills. In Kazakhstan, students proficient in both Kazakh and Russian often demonstrate higher academic achievement and better adaptability to different learning environments [11, 13].

Language plays a crucial role in social integration and the formation of identity. Proficiency in Kazakh is often associated with national identity and cultural heritage, while Russian proficiency is linked to broader social and economic networks. This duality can foster social cohesion but also create tensions between linguistic groups.

Language dominance affects economic opportunities and mobility. Russian remains a key language in business, science, and technology, providing access to wider job markets and professional networks. Conversely, proficiency in Kazakh is increasingly important for public sector employment and political participation, reflecting the state's efforts to promote the national language.

In short, language dominance in Kazakhstan is shaped by historical influences and contemporary policies, with significant impacts on individuals' cognitive outcomes, social integration, and economic opportunities. As Kazakhstan continues to navigate its multilingual landscape, understanding these dynamics will be crucial for policymakers and educators.

Results. Code-switching is a prevalent phenomenon in bilingual societies like Kazakhstan. The influence of a dominant language on code-switching patterns can be observed through various factors, including lexical borrowing, syntactic structures, and the frequency of switches. Studies have shown that speakers tend to switch to the dominant language when discussing topics that require a more extensive vocabulary or technical terms, which are more readily available in Russian due to historical and educational influences [14, 166]. Moreover, the dominant language's grammar and syntax can influence the structure of sentences even when

the other language is used, demonstrating a deep integration of the dominant language into the bilingual speaker's cognitive framework.

Code-switching can significantly impact fluency and accuracy in both languages used by bilingual speakers. On the one hand, frequent switching between languages can enhance overall linguistic agility, allowing speakers to navigate complex communicative situations effectively. This linguistic flexibility can lead to improved cognitive abilities related to language processing and multitasking [11, 13]. However, it can also result in certain drawbacks, such as the potential for reduced proficiency in one language if it is consistently used less frequently or in more limited contexts.

In Kazakhstan, the impact of code-switching on language proficiency is particularly relevant in educational settings. Students who switch between Kazakh and Russian in their academic work might develop strong bilingual skills, but there can also be challenges related to maintaining high proficiency in both languages. For instance, the dominance of Russian in technical subjects might lead to stronger proficiency in Russian for those areas, while Kazakh might be stronger in cultural or national subjects [14, 180]. These dynamic highlights the need for balanced language instruction that promotes equal proficiency in both languages to avoid the dominance of one language over the other in academic and professional contexts.

Bilingual education in Kazakhstan faces several challenges, including disparities in resources and proficiency levels between urban and rural areas. Urban schools often have better access to qualified teachers and educational materials in both Kazakh and Russian, while rural schools may lack such resources, leading to uneven language proficiency among students [14, 185]. Effective teaching and learning strategies must address these disparities by promoting inclusive language policies and providing targeted support to under-resourced schools. This includes training teachers in bilingual education techniques, developing comprehensive curricula that balance both languages, and utilizing technology to enhance language learning [15, 299].

Language is a crucial component of identity and cultural preservation. In Kazakhstan, the interplay between Kazakh and Russian creates a complex social landscape where language can both unite and divide communities. Proficiency in Kazakh is often associated with national identity and cultural heritage, while Russian connects individuals to broader social and economic networks.

Maintaining a balance between these languages is essential for fostering interethnic relations and social integration. Promoting bilingualism can help preserve cultural identity while also ensuring that individuals have access to opportunities that require proficiency in both languages. Strategies for achieving this balance include cultural exchange programs, bilingual media, and community initiatives that celebrate linguistic diversity [9, 440-475].

Language policy and planning in Kazakhstan must address the challenges of bilingualism by promoting equitable language education and fostering an environment where both Kazakh and Russian are valued. The government and institutions play a critical role in addressing bilingual challenges. Policies that promote language equity, invest in educational infrastructure, and encourage cultural preservation are essential for supporting Kazakhstan's multilingual society. Collaborative efforts between government agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations can create a supportive framework for bilingualism that benefits all citizens [15, 299].

Conclusion. In conclusion, the linguistic landscape of Kazakhstan, characterized by its bilingual nature with Kazakh and Russian, presents a unique context for studying the dynamics of bilingualism, code-switching, and language dominance. This dual-language environment has led to prevalent code-switching, reflecting the dominance of Russian in certain contexts and highlighting the intricate balance between the two languages.

Code-switching in Kazakhstan serves as a lens to examine the impact of language dominance. It reveals how dominant language influences patterns of communication, with Russian often used for technical and formal discourse, and Kazakh for cultural and informal interactions. This practice affects language proficiency, enhancing overall linguistic agility but also presenting

challenges in maintaining equal proficiency in both languages, particularly in educational settings.

Educational challenges in bilingual contexts include disparities in resources and proficiency between urban and rural areas. Effective bilingual education strategies must address these disparities by promoting inclusive policies, training teachers, and developing balanced curricula. Social and cultural challenges revolve around maintaining a balance between Kazakh and Russian to foster social cohesion and cultural identity. Promoting bilingualism through cultural exchange programs and community initiatives is essential for preserving linguistic diversity and enhancing interethnic relations.

Policy implications for Kazakhstan involve creating a supportive framework for bilingualism. The government and institutions must collaborate to promote language equity, invest in educational infrastructure, and encourage cultural preservation. By addressing these challenges, Kazakhstan can support a multilingual society that values both Kazakh and Russian, ensuring that all citizens benefit from the opportunities that bilingualism provides.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАН КОНТЕКСІНДЕГІ ҚОСТІЛДІЛІК МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ: КОД АЛМАСТЫРУ МЕН ТІЛ ҮСТЕМДІГІ

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала елдің тарихи, әлеуметтік және білім беру ландшафтының контекстінде код ауыстыру мен тілдің үстемдігіне назар аудара отырып, Қазақстандағы қостілділіктің динамикасын қарастырады. Қазақ және орыс тілдерінің қатар өмір сүруімен сипатталатын Қазақстанның қостілді ортасы Ресей империясының ықпалынан бастап, орыс тілін үстем тіл ретінде насихаттаған кеңестік дәуір саясатына дейінгі күрделі тарихқа негізделген. Қазақстан 1991 жылы тәуелсіздік алғаннан бері орыс тілін дүниежүзілік қауымдастықпен бірге сақтай отырып, қазақ тілін жаңғыртуға айтарлықтай күш салды. Бұл зерттеу қостілділіктің теориялық негізін зерттеп, код ауыстырудың түрлері мен салдарын, сонымен қатар тіл үстемдігіне әсер ететін факторларды көрсетеді. Код алмасу үлгілерін, лингвистикалық сипаттамаларды және тіл үстемдігінің когнитивтік, академиялық және әлеуметтік-экономикалық нәтижелерге әсерін талдау арқылы мақала Қазақстандағы билингвалдық білім беру, әлеуметтік инклюзия және саясатты дамытудағы қиындықтар мен оның салдарын атап өтеді. Нәтижелер барлық азаматтар үшін тең мүмкіндіктерді қамтамасыз ететін, қазақ және орыс тілдерін бағалайтын көптілді қоғамды дамыту үшін теңдестірілген тіл білімінің, инклюзивті саясаттың және мәдени бастамалардың қажеттілігін көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: билингвизм, код ауыстыру, тілдік үстемдік, тілдік саясат, көптілділік.

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ПРОБЛЕМЫ ДВУЯЗЫЧИЯ: ПЕРЕКЛЮЧЕНИЕ КОДОВ И ЯЗЫКОВОЕ ДОМИНИРОВАНИЕ В КОНТЕКСТЕ КАЗАХСТАНА

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуется динамика двуязычия в Казахстане, уделяя особое внимание переключению кодов и языковому доминированию в контексте исторического, социального и образовательного ландшафта страны. Двуязычная среда Казахстана, характеризующаяся сосуществованием казахского и русского языков, уходит корнями в его сложную историю, от влияния Российской империи до политики советской эпохи, которая продвигала русский язык в качестве доминирующего языка. После обретения независимости в 1991 году Казахстан предпринял значительные усилия по возрождению казахского языка, сохраняя при этом русский язык как жизненно важное связующее звено с мировым сообществом. В этом исследовании рассматриваются теоретическая основа двуязычия, подчеркиваются типы и последствия переключения кода, а также факторы, влияющие на языковое доминирование. Посредством анализа моделей переключения кода, лингвистических характеристик и влияния языкового доминирования на когнитивные, академические и социально-экономические результаты статья проливает свет на проблемы и последствия для двуязычного образования, социальной интеграции и разработки политики в Казахстане. Результаты подчеркивают необходимость сбалансированного языкового обучения, инклюзивной политики и культурных инициатив для развития многоязычного общества, которое ценит как казахский, так и русский язык, обеспечивая равные возможности для всех граждан.

Ключевые слова: билингвизм, переключение кодов, языковое доминирование, языковая политика, многоязычие.

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