

Studying the process of trilingual education implementation at Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools



Arailym Magzumova
Center for Educational Programs



Objective

Investigate factors that have facilitated as well as factors that have impeded **implementation of trilingual education at Intellectual Schools** in order to make recommendations that build on current successes and address major obstacles or challenges being faced by the schools.

? Research questions

1. What factors impede successful implementation of trilingual education at Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools?
2. In what ways can these barriers be addressed to maximize the potential of the trilingual education policy implementation at Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools?



Literature review

- **“Trilingual education” concept review** (Cenoz, Hufeisen and Jessner, 2001; Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Coyle, 2007; Grin, 2005; etc.).
- **The advantages of trilingual education** (Cenoz & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015; Bialystok, 2007; Cenoz, 2003 etc.)
- **Barriers in implementation of trilingual education** (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2013; Tavares, 2015; Cenoz & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015 etc.)
- **Experience of evaluation of trilingual education implementation** (Genesee & Baetens Beardsmore, 2012; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1982; Cajo & Serra, 2002 etc.)
- **Key measurable characteristics of the “successful” trilingual education** (Henn-Reinke, 2014; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Montecel & Cortez, 2002; Berman et al., 1995 etc.)

Factors

Table 1. Macro-factors and interdependent variables for bilingual education, which form the over-arching framework of bilingual education policy (adapted from Baetens Beardsmore, 2009)

Situational factor	Operational factor	Performance factor
Learners a) Target learners б) Linguistic background in the country	Curriculum Subjects	Expected language objectives Literacy
Opportunities for language/-s use a) Geographical location б) Languages out of school	Evaluation Learning materials	Subject content matter
Status of languages	Teachers	
Attitudes	Language strategies Parental involvement Whole school	

Methodology

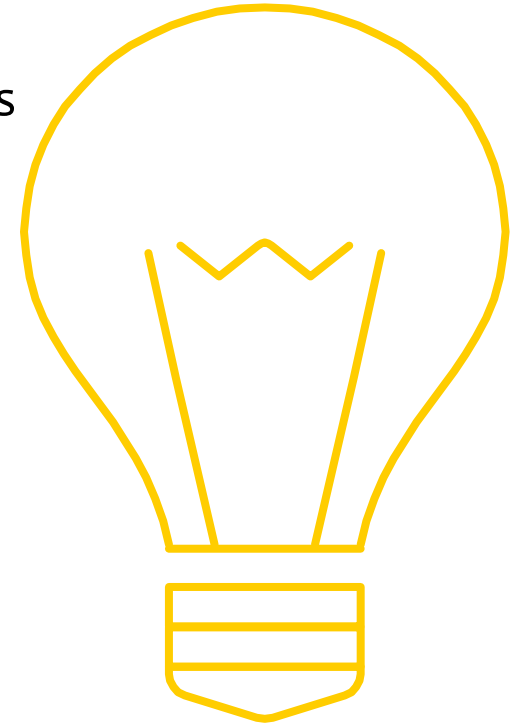
Focus	Learners and teachers of grades 10 and 12 4 schools
Documents analysis	(1) NIS Trilingual Education Policy; (2) NIS Trilingual Education Implementation Guidelines; (3) Integrated Educational Programs; (4) Subject programs; (5) AEO Development Strategy 2020
Online survey (19 schools)	3829 learners from grades 7-12 (31 %) 850 local teachers (37 %) 152 international teachers (57 %)
Interview	8 focus groups – learners 9 focus groups – local teachers 2 focus groups – international teachers
Lessons observation	20 lessons – language and non-language subjects



Results

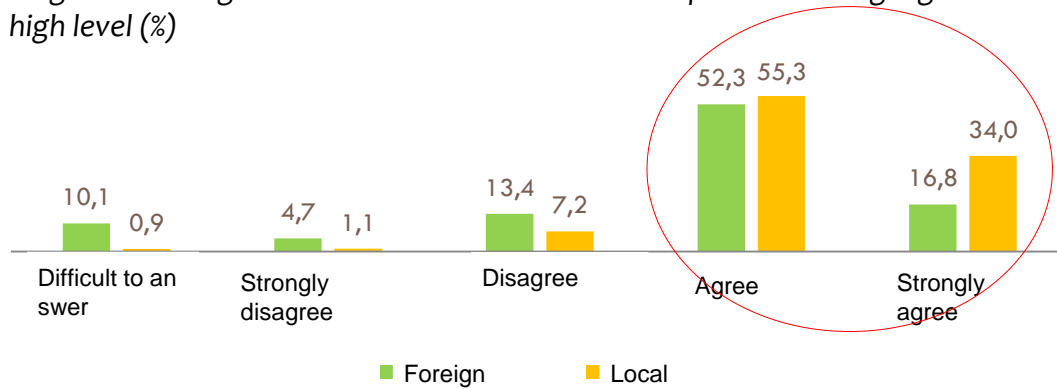
Application of the above-mentioned research methods helped to reveal that, except for certain cases, in general, implementation of the trilingual education model at Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools proceeds in accordance with the expected curriculum.

Nevertheless, several factors that directly or indirectly impede successful implementation of trilingual education have also been revealed.



Perception and attitudes of teachers and learners towards the trilingual education model

Diagram 1. Trilingual education model enables to acquire three languages at high level (%)

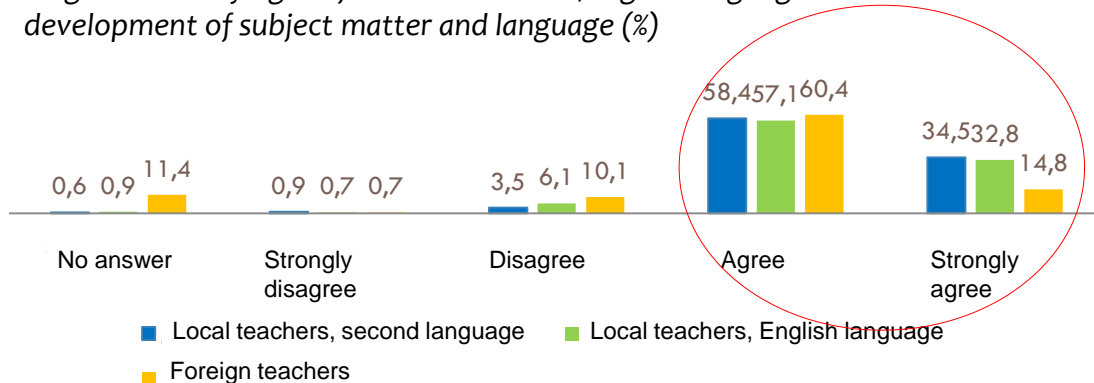


Analysis results show increasingly positive attitude of teachers and learners towards the trilingual education policy.

Respondents note the following positive aspects of trilingual education:

- Development of language skills in the course of language and non-language subjects;
- Access to information in several languages;
- Life and career perspectives.

Diagram 2. Studying subjects in the second/English languages contributes to development of subject matter and language (%)



Classes with Kazakh medium of instruction are more clearly differentiate the benefits of speaking three languages in various aspects of life and career.

Achieving expected outcomes (Kazakh L2)

“We trace a significant progress if we compare outcomes achieved in grade 7 and current ones in grade 10, there is a good progress. Learners that could not read and understand are now able to read and understand without teacher’s support” (History and KMW teacher).

“... even though they do not speak fluently, they have a good level of critical thinking, analysis” (History and KMW teacher).

According to teachers’ and learners’ opinion, as well as in the course of lessons observations, it was noted that, most of the time, despite the progress, learners do not reach “a high level” of language acquisition, including academic language.

“They speak, though in simple phrases, but you know, they are grammatically correct, i.e. we are able to understand them, they have a sentence structure, any way they are able to use endings” (Geography teacher).

“There are results, but they are ... not at the expected level. Graduating classes with Russian medium of instruction write sentences in simple phrases; even if their writing is readable and understandable, the academic language of the subject is missed. Particularly scientificity of language” (Geography teacher).

Achieving expected outcomes (Kazakh L2)

Main conclusions:

- (1) Progress in language skills development;
- (2) Achieving the language level sufficient to learn subjects in the second language;
- (3) However, it is not saying about “fluent” acquisition of language by all learners

“for example, when I studied in an ordinary school, I spoke almost no Kazakh. And within the last two years since I have been studying here, I speak Kazakh much better, not at the sufficiently high level, but it is enough for me to take high marks in subjects taught in Kazakh” (S-1-10-Rus).

Achieving expected outcomes (Russian L2)

Main conclusions:

- (1) Mastering language skills at a sufficiently high level by the majority of learners;
- (2) Achieving the language level sufficient to learn subjects in the second language;
- (3) Development of academic language.

Learners' interviews corroborates teachers' statement that learning Russian as a second language does not cause significant difficulties, regardless of the regional aspects:

“One of the main achievements is that we speak Russian more fluently now” (S-1-12-Kaz)

According to learners, it was rather novel and sometimes uncomfortable for them to learn materials in Russian. Moreover, “zero” or low level of acquisition of Russian as L2 has not been mentioned by learners with Kazakh medium of instruction unlike learners with Russian medium of instruction, who had major difficulties in learning Kazakh as L2.

Achieving expected outcomes (English L3)

Main conclusions:

- (1) Progress in language skills development;
- (2) Achieving the language level sufficient to learn subjects taught in English;

“for example, I do not translate from Russian into English any more. I immediately start speaking English. I even think in that language” (S-3-Kokshetau-12-Rus).

“having studied for a few years, I am now able to read in English and immediately understand its meaning” (S-2-Taldykorgan-10-kaz-female).

All learners generally note that today they are comfortable to get information in English rather than in other languages. It might be due to the scope and quality of available information in English in different areas.

Interviews of foreign teachers underline that there is still a certain percentage of learners at high school who has low level of English. In English, as well as in other two languages, the main difficulties rise from grammar, construction of correct sentences and writing skills development.

Pedagogy and teaching

According to the documents

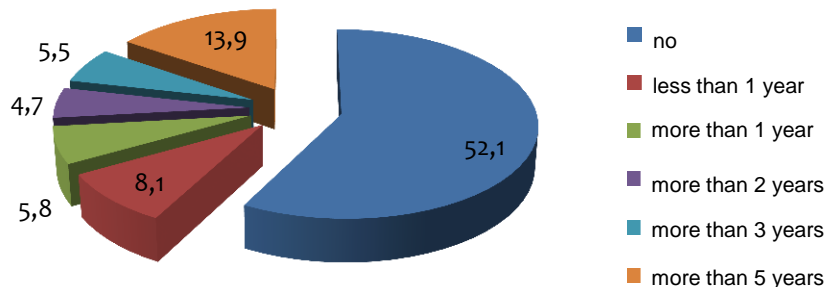
- Communicative approach in learning language subjects
- One teacher – one language
- Translanguaging
- Team teaching
- CLIL strategies

In practice

- Throwback to grammar focused approach (English)
- Distorted understanding of the trilingual education model
- Prompt interpretation practice
- Insufficient level of L3 among the local teachers
- Limited amount of CLIL strategies used, lack of confidence in using CLIL, limited use of CLIL in subjects in L3

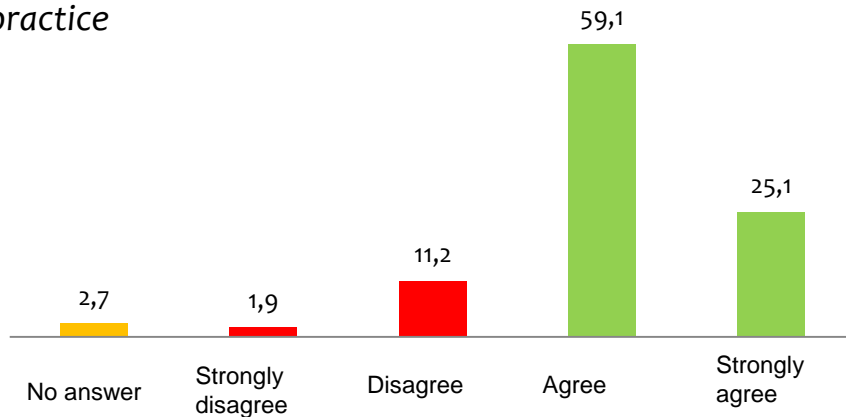
Pedagogy and teaching: CLIL

Diagram 3. Experience in teaching subjects in the second/third language before joining the Intellectual Schools



One of the potential reasons of difficulties in the use of CLIL might be **insufficient experience of teachers in teaching subjects in L2 and L3 and in use of CLIL**. Thus, before joining the Intellectual School, **52.1% of teachers had no experience in teaching subjects in L2/L3**.

Diagram 4. Workshops conducted by AEO within trilingual education framework contribute to improvement of my practice



Despite conducting various trainings and workshops, which quality satisfies the majority of local teachers (84.2%), **teachers still need support in using CLIL approach** (according to interviews and lessons observations).

Pedagogy and teaching: CLIL (foreign teachers)

Diagram 5. Participation in in-school and out-of-school CLIL trainings

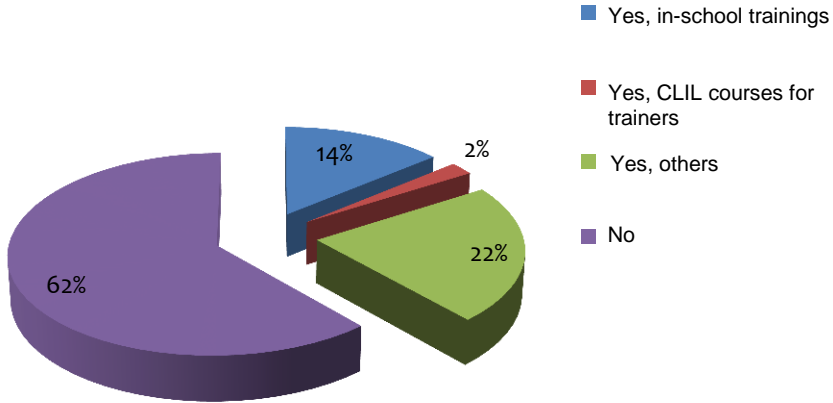
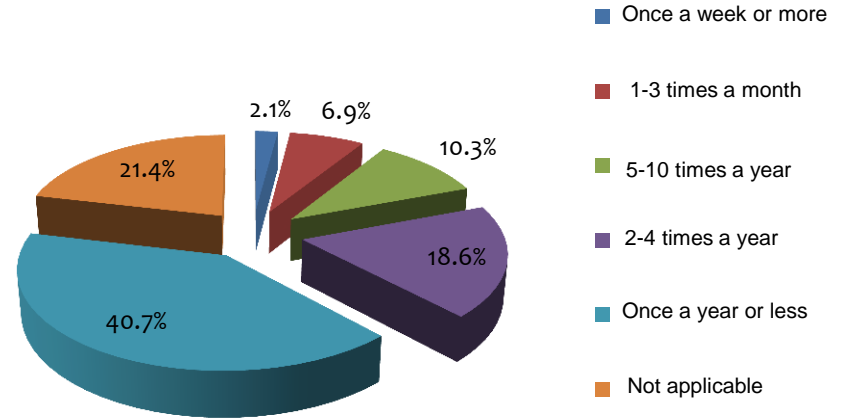


Diagram 6. Participation in in-school pedagogic trainings within trilingual education framework

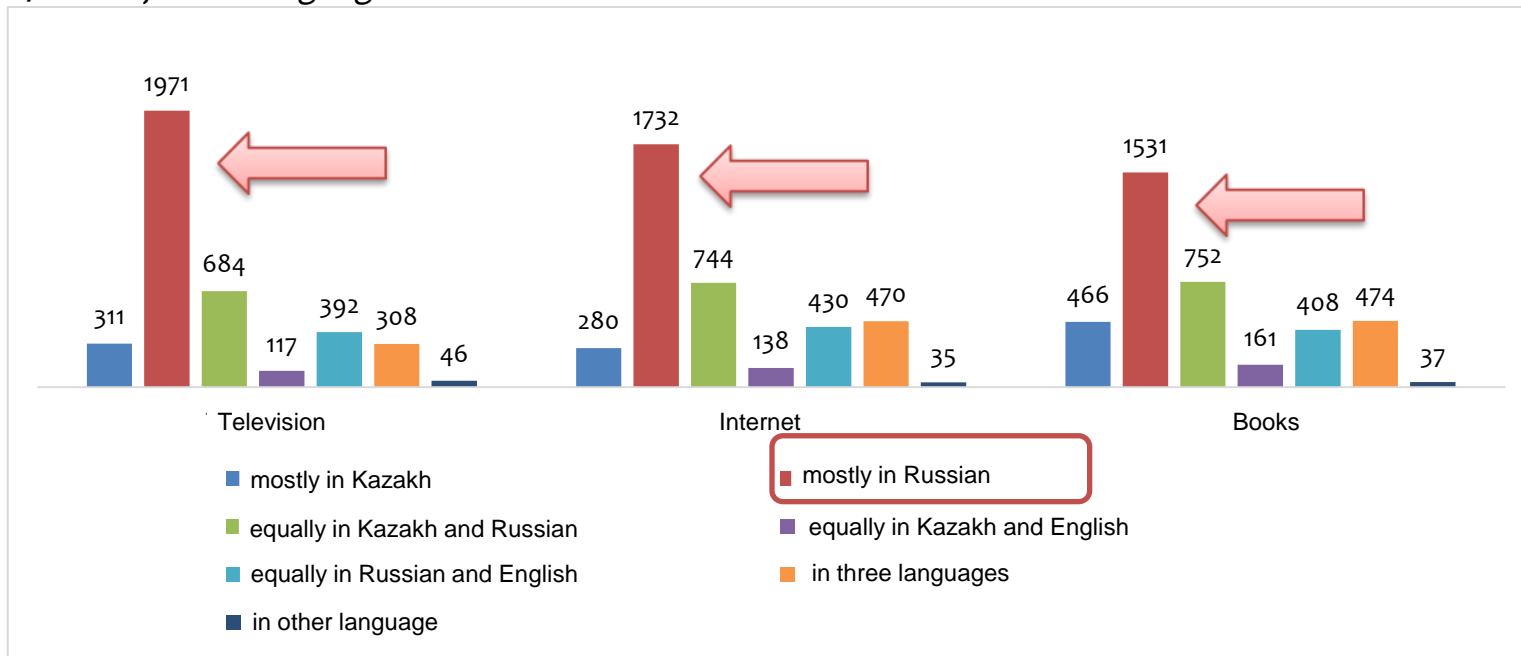


Majority of the foreign teachers (62%) employed at Intellectual Schools **have not attended CLIL courses**

60% of the foreign teachers rarely participate in in-school professional development courses within trilingual education framework

School environment

Diagram 7. Use of three languages



Russian still remains a dominant language even among learners with Kazakh as a native language



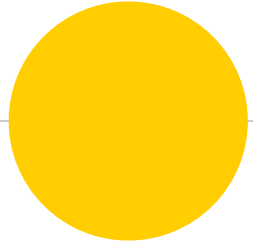
Other factors

- ◉ Motivation
- ◉ Assessment
- ◉ Need for constant language support
- ◉ Educational program
- ◉ Teacher collaboration
- ◉ Regional features
- ◉ Parents awareness, family support



Conclusions and recommendations

- Achieving the common understanding of trilingual education policy among local and foreign teachers;
- Developing support mechanisms for learners with low Kazakh L2 performing in grade 7 (for example, intensive Kazakh language courses before introducing subjects in the second language; summer courses);
- Increasing learners' motivation to learn Kazakh;
- Increasing L3 acquisition level among local teachers;
- Holding additional workshops on use of CLIL for all teachers;
- Active involvement of foreign teachers to courses conducted for local teachers;
- Seeking a balance between the use of three languages within the school environment;
- Development of monitoring mechanism of Kazakh and Russian language acquisition progress (CEFR)



Thank you!