

Kazakh language skills of Kazakh-medium students in a trilingual education context

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Outline

- **Purpose and Objectives of the Research**
- **Literature Review**
- **Methodology**
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Purpose of the Research

To document and examine Kazakh language proficiency of Kazakh-medium students.

Objectives

- 1) What's the background of the Kazakh-medium students?
- 2) To what extent they are exposed to Kazakh language?
- 3) Is there a language transfer between L1/L2/L3 and its impact to Kazakh language skills?

Problem statement

- **First**, External Summative Assessment (ESA) reports (2016-2017 year) indicate the influence of Russian and English on the student' Kazakh language skills. However, the ESA reports do not provide figures on and do not determine the extent of such a language transfer.
- **Second**, during the monitoring of the NIS-Programme implementation some teachers express concern about the poor vocabulary of students in the Kazakh language. However, the they cannot specify the reasons for this phenomenon.
- **Third**, despite the high status and intended outcomes of the Kazakh language, some people express their concerns in social networks and certain Mass Media about the development and use of the Kazakh language within the trilingual education. However, there is a lack of research that argues the relevance of such concerns.

Literature Review

- Language Interdependency hypothesis (Cummins, 1979; 2000): high level proficiency in L1 positively impacts on second/third (L2/L3) language acquisition.
- Stephen Krashen (1982) argues that rich language exposure contributes to the development of skills and competencies in that language;
- Proctor and et al (2012) argue that students easily transfer their reading skills and lexical knowledge from L1 to L2.
- Weinreich (1953) describes a situation in which bilinguals can use both languages simultaneously, depending on the circumstances.
- Shatz (2017) and Lennon (2008) argue on positive and negative language transfer (when the structure of one language is transferred to another) among bilinguals.

Language transfer - applying knowledge from one language to another language in the speech of bilinguals/multilinguals as a result of knowing more than one language and which leads to deviations from the language norms.

Methodology

1204

Online survey

11-12 Grades students from 19 Intellectual Schools.

Quantitative method was used, consisting of **online survey with students, interview with students, lesson observations, writing an essay on certain topic.**

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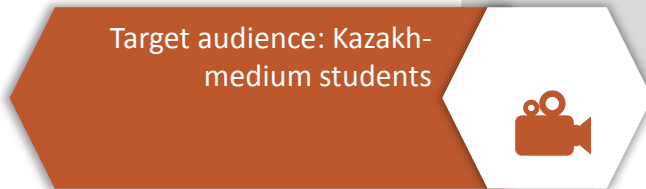
Lesson Observations

Language and Content subject delivered in Kazakh L1 at 2 Intellectual Schools.

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FG Interview

11-12 Grades students from 2 Intellectual Schools.



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Writing an essay

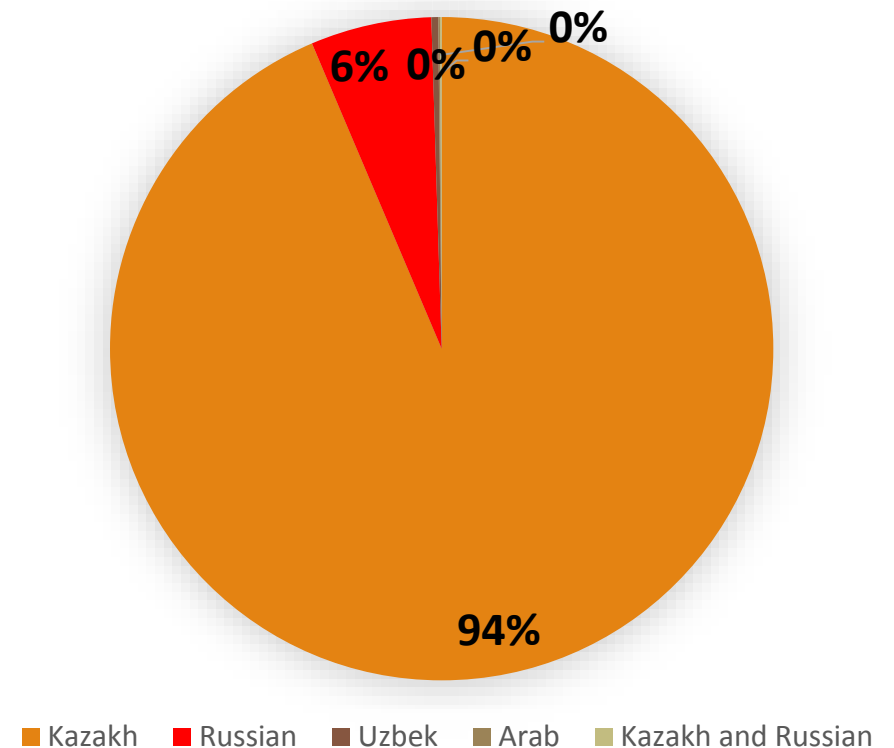
Writing assignment was aligned with the assignments in External Summative Assessment (ESA), and the assessment criteria were tailored to test specification of the ESA.

Two schools were chosen because of their geographical location and demographics, and based on the results of the ESA. According to ESA results for the Kazakh language (L1) for 2016-2017, one of the schools was among the best, and the other was among the lowest.

Results

- The findings of the online surveys demonstrate that Kazakh-medium students are not homogeneous at all in terms of Kazakh language proficiency and usage:
 - ✓ for 94% of respondents, Kazakh is the first language (L1),
 - ✓ for 6% - the Kazakh is second language (L2).
- The findings of the lessons observation at 2 schools correlates with the findings of the online survey, i.e. some students in Kazakh-medium classroom use Russian to discuss the lesson, when contacting the teacher and peers, and when they answer the teacher's question. The amount of such students can vary from 6 to 10%.

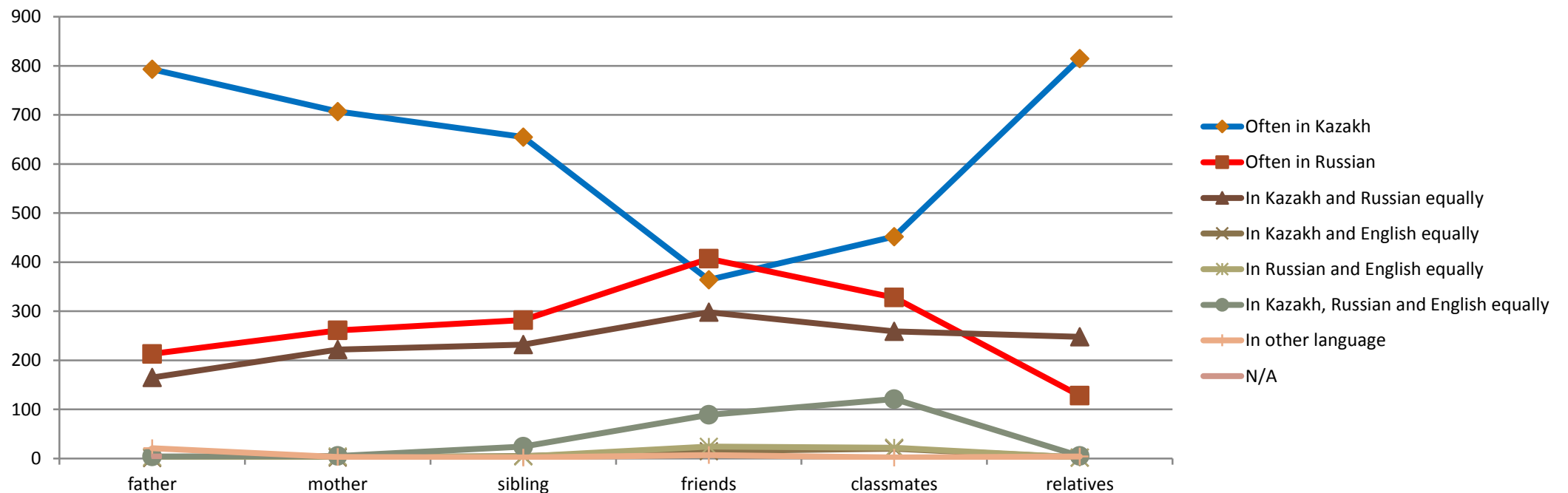
What's your first language?



Results

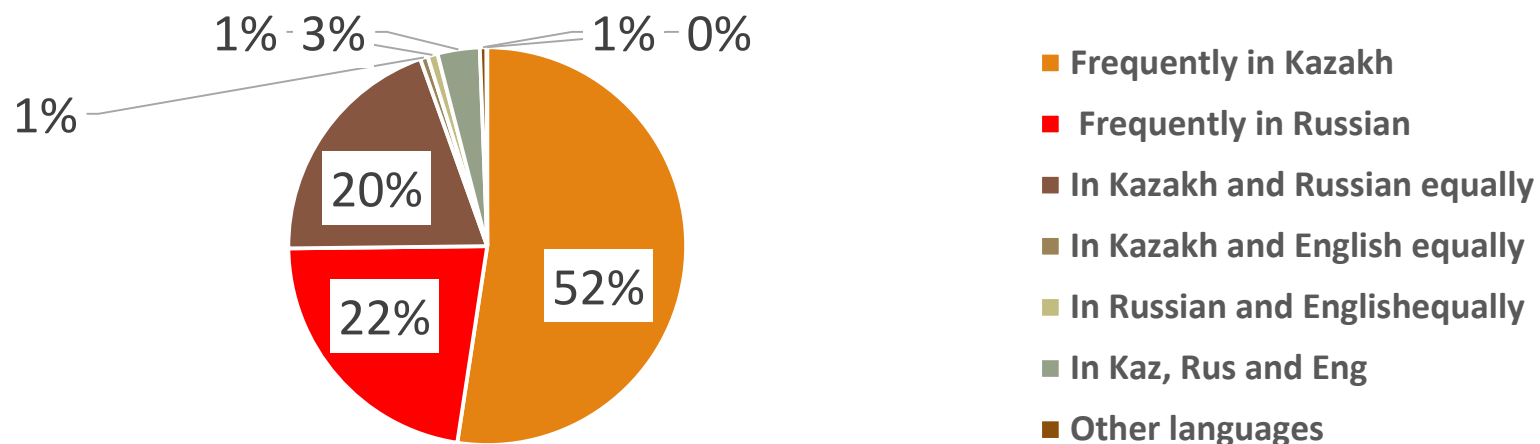
- Most of the respondents (from 54% to 68%) use the Kazakh language when interacting with their parents and relatives. Likely, the use of Kazakh by parents and relatives might provide a rich language exposure, that is, students have had rich input in Kazakh (Krashen, 1982).
- Such practice may root the misconception that “the Kazakh language is the language of elders only.” Therefore, it is necessary to avoid excessive folklorization of the Kazakh language, and show students that Kazakh is also a language of progress and modern technology.

What language/s do you usually use when you interact with the following people?



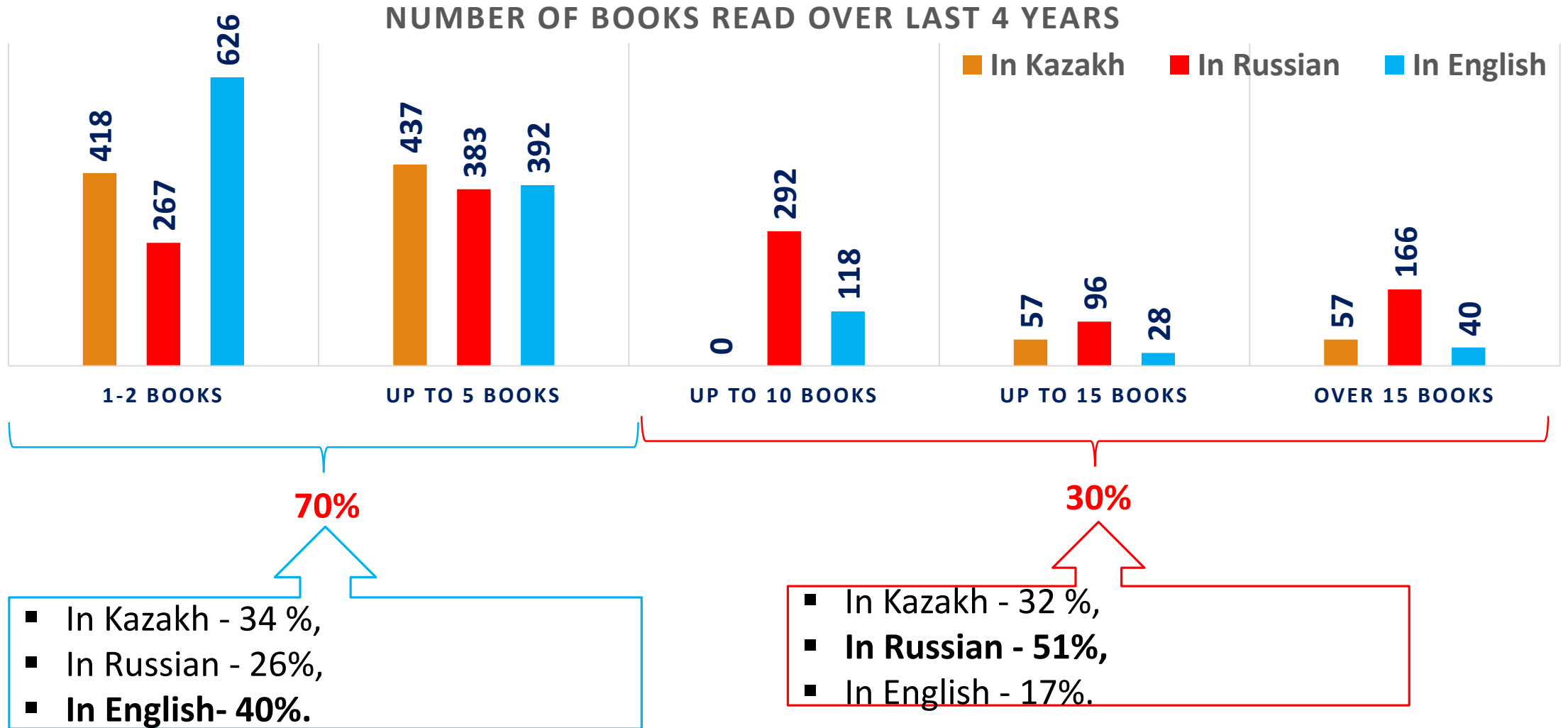
Share of languages use in communication

- On average, 20% (237) of respondents use Kazakh and Russian at the same time when communicating with their parents, relatives, friends and peers. Supposedly, the language transfer and interference might take place under such practice.



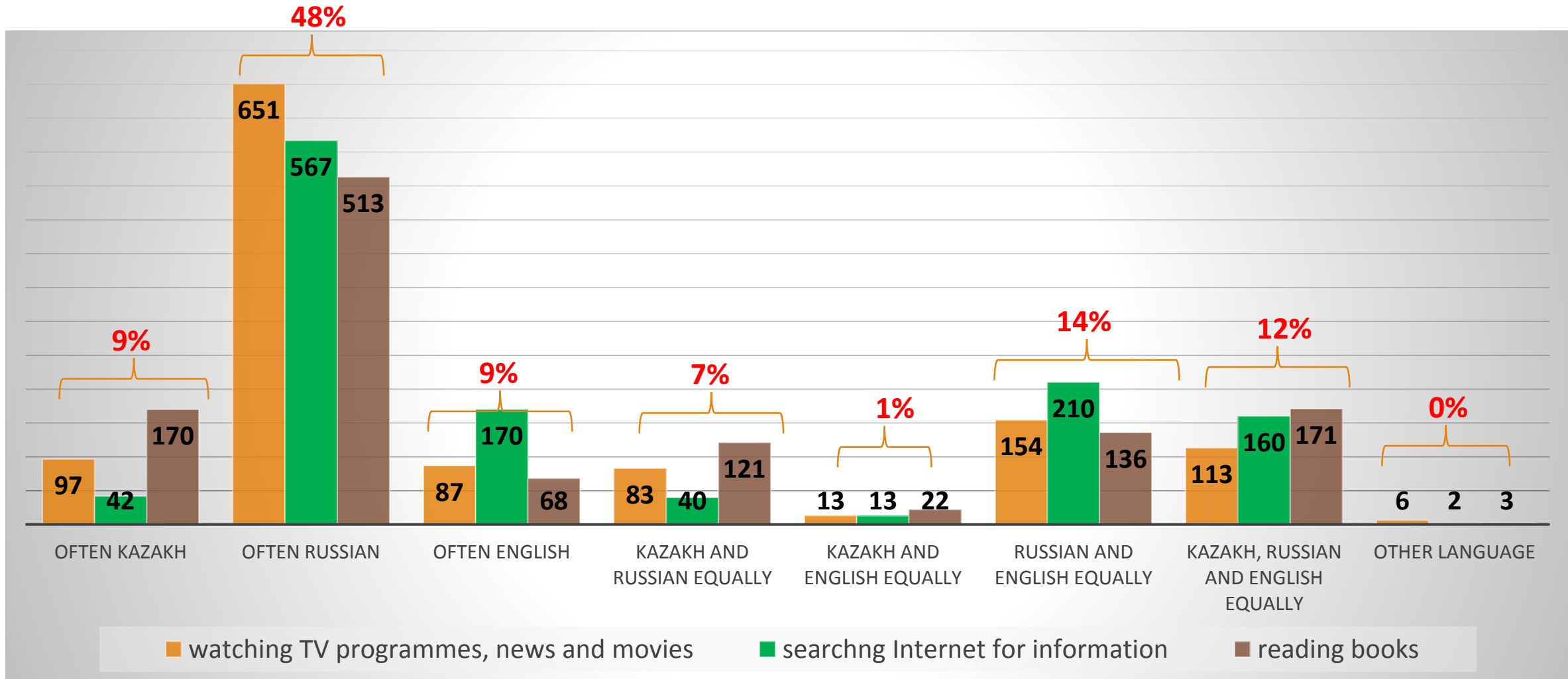
Share of languages use in communication

Survey and Interview results



Extensive reading positively impacts on developing language competence (Dalton, Gliessman, Guthrie, & Rees, 1966; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989).

What language do you usually use for the following everyday activities?



- The respondents use Russian frequently to obtain information in various life situations (48%).
- The participants justified their choice of books in Russian and English with the presence, availability and variety of genres in these languages.

Results of the written assignment

Examining the students' essay displays that almost all students are able to correctly express their thoughts, support them with arguments and present counterarguments.

There are examples of language transfer in the work of respondents, but it is too crucial. Language transfer is found in terms of vocabulary and set phrases. The approximate number of students who make language transfer is less than 6% of the respondents. Examples of the language transfer:

*Сол себептен, адамдардың көбісі ұялы телефондарды мектепте қолдануға қарсы, **басқалар** бұл технологияларды мектеп қабырғасында қолдануды жақтайды*

***Телефонның ішіне** кітаптарды.... емтихандарға дайындайтын құрал-саймандарды жүктеу арқылы өздерінің оқуға деген құштарлығын арттырады*

*Қорытындылай келе, смартфондар мен планшеттердің **қолданылмауын болдырмау керек.***

Lesson observations

Positive points

- both language and content teachers use the Kazakh language only in their classrooms – 100%;
- in most cases, students use the Kazakh language;
- positive learning environment has been created in schools and classes;
- teachers use active teaching methods and various forms of organization of educational activities – 100%;
- teachers actively use multimodals (texts, whiteboard, screen, presentations, audio and video, etc.) – 100%.

- Lack of feedback and feedforward on Language – 95%;
- Use of Dialectisms – 10%;
- Generally, teachers stick to the language aims presented in the mid-term plans – 100%;
- Majority of Content teachers focus on content only and ignore the development of language skills, including academic language – 80%;
- Teachers do not pay due attention to the development of communicative and sociolinguistic competence of students – 67%.

Negative points

Conclusions

- The research results demonstrate that students of Intellectual schools enter NIS as bilingual and/or multilinguals – 100%.
- In Kazakh-medium groups the students are homogeneous linguistically:
 - ✓ Kazakh language prevails in speaking – 52%
 - ✓ Russian for obtaining information – 48%
 - ✓ For extensive reading – Russian (26% - 51%), and English (17 % - 40%).
- Based on the research findings we can make the following assumption that students refer “Kazakh as the language of the family, and Russian or mixed language as a language for external communication”.

Conclusions

- Despite excellent knowledge of the Kazakh language by majority of the respondents, in everyday life they use the Russian language (48%).

- Reading books and searching information predominantly in Russian/English indicates that there is a lack of resources in the Kazakh language that meet the language levels and are in the interest of students.

- The facts of language transfer are confirmed (9%) in the writing of students.
- The language transfer occur in terms of vocabulary and language norms.
- The reasons, scope and typology of language transfers require further study.

Recommendations

Recommendations for language and content teachers

- Consider the students' Kazakh language proficiency levels when planning and delivering lessons;
- Ensure that the teaching resources meet the language and cognitive needs of the students.
- Visualize the academic language;
- Provide feedback and feedforward on Language;
- Watch out for phraseology and figure of speech;
- Avoid dialects;
- Focus on developing students' both communicative and sociolinguistic competence;
- Set language and content aims for the activities;
- Be both a content and a language teacher at the same time.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the
policymakers, programme and
textbook developers:

- To develop a comprehensive tool for assessing language skills in the Kazakh language at each stage of training;
- Develop a graded Kazakh language books;
- Focus on improving the content of (Internet, TV) resources in Kazakh;
- Study and develop vocabulary requirements (including phraseological units) and academic language proficiency.

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Thank you!

