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The Impact of Kazakhization on Economic Outcomes: Language, Demographics, and Employment in Kazakhstan

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The Impact of Kazakhization on Economic Outcomes

Language, Demographics, and Employment
in Kazakhstan



**Universiteit
Leiden**
The Netherlands

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Abstract

This research investigates the increasing importance of the Kazakh language in Kazakhstan, a process referred to as Kazakhization, and its implications for employment opportunities and economic outcomes. The study highlights several key factors contributing to this linguistic shift, including governmental language policies, educational reforms, and the rising bilingual requirements in the job market. Concurrently, the study highlights that demographic shifts, particularly the decreasing proportion of ethnic Russians and the increasing share of ethnic Kazakhs, further bolster the use of Kazakh.

Contrary to earlier findings that suggested a significant income gap between Russian and Kazakh speakers caused by language proficiency in Russian, this research demonstrates that income disparities are more influenced by demographic and socio-economic factors such as age and regional economic conditions rather than linguistic factors.

I. Introduction

As Kazakhstan deals with its Soviet legacy, the shift from Russian to Kazakh as the official language takes place. Our study seeks to explore the enduring effects of language policies on the employment prospects and career trajectories of individuals in Kazakhstan. At its core, our research revolves around the comparison of language proficiency, specifically focusing on Russian and Kazakh, and its influence on economic outcomes. Our research question is: How does language proficiency, particularly when comparing Russian and Kazakh, impact employment opportunities and economic outcomes in Kazakhstan?

Kazakhstan, the world's largest landlocked country, has undergone significant transformations since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.¹ Under the long-standing leadership of Nursultan Nazarbayev (1991-2019), the country transitioned from a centrally planned economy to a market-based one, while maintaining tight political control.² In 2019, after nearly three decades in power, Nazarbayev stepped down, handing the presidency to Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. However, Nazarbayev retained substantial influence as "Leader of the Nation" and head of the Security Council.³

Kazakhstan's economy, Central Asia's largest, is heavily reliant on its natural resources. Oil, gas, uranium, and other minerals account for about 72% of exports.⁴ This dependence on raw materials has led to robust economic growth, with the GDP averaging 4.4% annually in the past decade, but has also caused vulnerability to commodity price swings.⁵ Despite this growth, Kazakhstan grapples with significant socio-economic challenges. Income inequality is high, with a Gini coefficient around 0.27-0.29 in recent years.⁶ Regional disparities are stark, as western oil-producing regions are wealthier than the agrarian south.⁷

Kazakhstan's relationship with Russia is complex. Historically, Kazakhstan was part of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union, resulting in deep cultural, linguistic, and economic ties.⁸ Even today, ethnic Russians constitute about 15% of Kazakhstan's population in 2021.⁹ The countries share the world's longest land

¹ Annette Bohr et al., *Kazakhstan: Tested by Transition* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2019), 10–12; Rico Isaacs, "Russia–Kazakhstan Relations and the Tokayev–Nazarbayev Tandem," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 248 (March 6, 2020): 3–4, <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000401980>.

² Bohr et al., *Kazakhstan*, 2.

³ Bohr et al., *Kazakhstan*, 10–12; Isaacs, "Russia–Kazakhstan Relations and the Tokayev–Nazarbayev Tandem," 3–4.

⁴ "Kazakhstan Export Data," TradelmeX, accessed June 4, 2024, <https://www.tradelmex.in/kazakhstan-export>.

⁵ Z. Torebekova and B. Urazymbetov, "Challenges with the Transition to a Research-Based Economy in Kazakhstan," *Vestnik KazUtb* 1, no. 22 (March 31, 2024): 352–54, <https://doi.org/10.58805/kazutb.v.1.22-290>; "Kazakhstan Real GDP Growth," CEIC, accessed June 4, 2024, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/kazakhstan/real-gdp-growth>.

⁶ "World Bank Open Data," The World Bank, accessed June 4, 2024, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=KZ>.

⁷ Andrei Roudoi, Julia Zislin, and Bruce Bolnick, "Kazakhstan Regional Disparities: Economic Performance by Oblast" (Nathan Associates Inc., May 2006), 3, 6–8, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadg258.pdf.

⁸ Bohr et al., *Kazakhstan*, 86–88.

⁹ "Perepis' Naseleniya 2021: Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami v Respublike Kazakhstan" (Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023), 5–7,

border and are key partners in organizations like the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.¹⁰ Yet, Kazakhstan has been cautiously distancing itself from Moscow's influence. This trend accelerated following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, with Kazakhstan not recognizing Russia's territorial claims.¹¹

Central to Kazakhstan's nation-building process since gaining independence has been its evolving language policy. During the Soviet era, Russian was the dominant language in government, education, and business. However, since independence, there has been a concerted effort to elevate Kazakh, the indigenous language. In 1995, Kazakh was declared the state language, while Russian was given the status of an "official language" used in inter-ethnic communication.¹²

This linguistic shift is part of a broader "Kazakhization" process, aimed at strengthening national identity after decades of Soviet rule. While prioritizing the promotion of Kazakh, Kazakhstan's language policy allows the Russian language to maintain its place in daily life and acknowledges the presence of Russian-speaking communities. Furthermore, education in Russian remains available.¹³ Unlike many other former Soviet countries, such as Ukraine and Estonia,¹⁴ which have pursued more aggressive language policies leading to tensions with Russia, Kazakhstan's approach is more gradual and inclusive.

<https://stat.gov.kz/upload/iblock/107/5zkn34tqn5atonvbhoob28p7ebnrbc19/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BD%D1%8B%D0%B9%20%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B2,%20%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5%20%D0%B8%20%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5%20%D1%8F%D0%B7%D1%8B%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B8%20%D0%B2%20%D0%A0%D0%9A.pdf>.

¹⁰ Bohr et al., *Kazakhstan*, 86–88.

¹¹ Ardak Yesdauletova et al., "Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy in the Context of Geopolitical Turbulence," *India Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (March 1, 2024): 152, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09749284231225683>.

¹² Bohr et al., *Kazakhstan*, 86–88.

¹³ President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "O Gosudarstvennoy programme funktsionirovaniya i razvitiya yazykov na 2001-2010 gody," Pub. L. No. 550, Decree (2001), https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U010000550_; President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "O Gosudarstvennoy programme funktsionirovaniya i razvitiya yazykov na 2011-2020 gody," Pub. L. No. 110, Decree (2011), <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U1100000110>; Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Ob utverzhdenii Gosudarstvennoy programmy po realizatsii yazykovoy politiki v Respublike Kazakhstan na 2020-2025 gody," Pub. L. No. 1045, Decree (2019), <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P1900001045>.

¹⁴ The Ukrainian Parliament, "Pro pravovyi status ta vshanuvannya pam'yati bortsiv za nezalezhnist' Ukrainy u XX stolitti," Pub. L. No. 314– VIII (2015), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/314-19>; Alec Luhn, "Ukraine Bans Soviet Symbols and Criminalises Sympathy for Communism," *The Guardian*, March 22, 2022, sec. Moscow, <https://archive.ph/CES11>; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "Law on Education," Pub. L. No. 2145– VIII (2017), <https://mon.gov.ua/npa/law-education>; The Ukrainian Parliament, "Pro zabezpechennya funktsionuvannya ukrainskoi movi yak derzhavnoi," Pub. L. No. 2704– VIII (2019), <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/go/2704-19>; "Estonia: Action Plan Approved for Transition to Estonian-Language Education," European Commission, December 16, 2022, <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/news/estonia-action-plan-approved-transition-estonian-language-education>; Sergei Zhuk et al., "Open Letter from Scholars and Experts on Ukraine Re. the So-Called 'Anti-Communist Law,'" *Krytyka*, April 1, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/12146188/Open_Letter_from_Scholars_and_Experts_on_Ukraine_Re_the_So_Called_Anti_Communist_Law_.

When a country adopts a more aggressive language policy, Russia often interprets it as discrimination against ethnic Russians, alleging that the government is treating them as second-class citizens.¹⁵ This perception can escalate tensions and serve as a pretext for Russia to annex territory or initiate military actions. While these reactions are more reflective of Russia's geopolitical interests than the actual intentions of the country implementing the language policy, they nonetheless pose significant risks. Kazakhstan's less aggressive and more inclusive language policy serves as a proactive measure prevent such tensions, reducing the likelihood of conflict escalation.

In 2014, the study of Aldashev and Danzer revealed that individuals proficient in Kazakh and individuals proficient in Kazakh and Russian tended to earn less than their monolingual Russian-speaking counterparts,¹⁶ underscoring the potential impact of language proficiency on economic outcomes. Given the ongoing transition towards "Kazakhization," we seek to examine how this shift has influenced economic outcome in Kazakhstan a decade after Aldashev and Danzer's study, providing insights into this transformative period.

First, the literature review in this thesis provides an overview of the contemporary knowledge on the topic. The body of the thesis is divided into two parts, which are each divided into subcategories, contributing to the analysis. The first body chapter considers historical language policies, modern language policies and historical demographics. The second body chapter focuses on the current demographic changes in Kazakhstan and the interconnections between these shifts and socio-economic outcomes amongst different language speakers in Kazakhstan. It begins with an exploration of contemporary demographics, followed by an exploration of language proficiency and education. The chapter then addresses regional income disparities and the role of language in daily life.

Together, those chapters give insights into the historical and contemporary dynamics of language policies in Kazakhstan, as well as the evolving demographic landscape and its impact on economic disparities between Kazakh and Russian speakers, which we will consequently analyse. In the final part of the thesis, the research question will be addressed and we will reflect on Aldashev and Danzer's study from 2014.

To address the research questions, both qualitative and quantitative data were utilized. The quantitative component involved the analysis of demographic and income data. The data used in this research was primarily sourced from official Kazakhstan government websites, in particular the results of the 2021 Population

¹⁵ "Rusland zet premier van Estland op lijst met gezochte personen," NU.nl, February 13, 2024, <https://www.nu.nl/buitenland/6301315/rusland-zet-premier-van-estland-op-lijst-met-gezochte-persoonen.html>; Egbert Fortuin, "'Ukraine Commits Genocide on Russians': The Term 'Genocide' in Russian Propaganda," *Russian Linguistics* 46, no. 3 (November 1, 2022): 325–26, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11185-022-09258-5>; Team of the Official Website of the President of Russia, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," President of Russia, February 22, 2022, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828>.

¹⁶ Alisher Aldashev and Alexander M. Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)? Evidence from Kazakhstan's Shift in State Language and Language of Instruction," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY, November 30, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2536267>.

Census.¹⁷ Variables included age, ethnicity, language proficiency, and income levels. Statistical analyses were employed to examine the relationships between bilingualism, ethnicity, and income disparities.

To ensure accuracy and reliability in the analysis, we restricted the analysis to the employed population. This decision was made to mitigate potential distortions in the average income, particularly for ethnic Kazakhs, which could arise from including individuals below the expected working age, such as children. Given the higher proportion of children in the Kazakh population compared to the Russian population, excluding non-working individuals prevents an unwarranted downward pull on the average income, ensuring a more accurate portrayal of income disparities.

In addition to census data, government statements and laws related to language policies were reviewed to gain insights into the official stance on the promotion of the Kazakh language and its potential impact on economic outcomes. This qualitative aspect aimed to contextualize the quantitative findings within the framework of government initiatives and regulations.

The qualitative component included analysing survey responses, conducting occasional interviews with survey respondents, and reviewing job advertisements. The survey responses were collected from a small survey conducted by the author. There were 8 responses of which 5 from the Kostanay region and 3 from the Zhambyl region. The survey questions were posed in English, Russian and Kazakh. The survey was distributed through several Discord servers,¹⁸ Facebook groups, and Telegram groups, including *Kazakhstan Universitetlar* and *Kazakhstan – Kom'yuniti, Gaidy, and Pomoshch*. Additionally, there was an attempt to distribute the survey through an Instagram channel aimed at the Zhambyl region. Although we contacted the owners of the channel, and they initially agreed to post the survey, they ultimately did not follow through despite multiple reminders. Although the number of responses was small, they provided valuable insights into personal experiences and perceptions related to bilingualism and economic opportunities. This qualitative information offers a ground-level perspective on the language situation and income disparities.

Interviews were selectively conducted with survey respondents whose answers warranted further exploration. These interviews enriched the understanding of individual experiences considering the language situation and the income disparity. Additionally, we reviewed job advertisements to discern market demands, employer preferences for particular language skills, and disparities in salary offers linked to language proficiency. To accomplish this, we collected comparable job listings with language prerequisites from the Enbek vacancy website, which is available in both Kazakh and Russian, making it accessible to the Kazakh population.¹⁹ This website was also recommended for job vacancies by one of the

¹⁷ Available at <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/national/2021/>.

¹⁸ Discord is a platform where people can create servers to bring communities together. In this case, we joined several servers dedicated to Kazakhstan.

¹⁹ "Electronic Labor Exchange: Jobs in Kazakhstan," vacancy website, Enbek, accessed June 5, 2024, <https://enbek.kz/ru>.

interviewees. The qualitative data was used to provide a real-world context to complement the statistical findings.

To offer a nuanced regional perspective, this study focuses on two specific regions: Zhambyl and Kostanay. These regions were selected for several reasons. First, the ethnic composition of these areas provides a distinct contrast. Zhambyl is predominantly inhabited by ethnic Kazakhs, while Kostanay has a higher proportion of ethnic Russians. This distinction allows us to investigate how the prevalence of the Russian or Kazakh language impacts economic outcome.

Second, both regions can be considered agricultural regions, in contrast to Kazakhstan's oil-extracting or non-oil industrial regions. In agricultural regions, agriculture is relatively important.²⁰ This means that the two regions are comparable.

Third, choosing regions with similar economic structures but different ethnic compositions ensures a more controlled comparison. Comparing two vastly different regions, such as an oil-rich area with an agricultural one, would introduce too many variables, making it difficult to isolate the impact of language proficiency on income disparities.

Our research on the impact of language proficiency, particularly the comparison between Russian and Kazakh, on economic outcome in Kazakhstan, holds significant relevance in the context of the country's evolving sociolinguistic landscape. While existing literature, such as Aldashev and Danzer's work, has extensively explored the economic implications of language proficiency during the transition period, our study aims to provide a contemporary analysis, approximately 30 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Additionally, our focus on specific regions, namely the Zhambyl region and the Kostanay region, offers a nuanced perspective by accounting for regional differences in economic outcomes and linguistic imbalances. Furthermore, our consideration of real reported salary rates and offers, as opposed to relying solely on self-reported data, addresses concerns about the accuracy of perceptions regarding language skills and their association with ethnicity and statehood. Consequently, our research will provide us with knowledge about the contemporary relation between bilingualism and economic outcome in Kazakhstan.

In this thesis, we analyse the impact of current language policies on economic outcomes and explore its relationship with the income disparities between ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians. This thesis argues that while the Kazakhization process is elevating the status and usage of the Kazakh language in Kazakhstan, particularly through governmental policies and educational reforms, this linguistic shift does not have a significant impact on economic outcomes. Instead, our research reveals that income disparities between Kazakh speakers and Russian speakers are more profoundly influenced by demographic shifts and socio-economic factors such as age, regional economic variations, and changing population dynamics.

²⁰ Roudoi, Zislin, and Bolnick, "Kazakhstan Regional Disparities," 3.

II. Literature Review

I. Bilingualism in Kazakhstan

One of the fundamental works for our study is the work of Aldashev and Danzer. Aldashev and Danzer's study focused on the economic implications of language proficiency in Kazakhstan during the transition from Russian to Kazakh as the official state language. Using two datasets from 1996 and 2010, consisting of self-reported surveys, they aimed to analyse the economic returns to language skills and bilingualism.²¹

In the 1996 dataset, which included 945 observations, they found that bilingual speakers and monolingual Kazakh speakers faced a significant wage penalty shortly after Kazakhstan gained independence. Bilinguals, especially those with Kazakh as their first spoken language, experienced lower earnings compared to monolingual Russian speakers. Bilinguals with Russian as their first spoken language often earned slightly more than Russian monolinguals and bilinguals with Kazakh as their first language.²²

Moving to the 2010 dataset, which included 1,211 observations from four major metropolitan areas, namely Almaty, Astana, Karaganda, and Pavlodar, Aldashev and Danzer continued to observe a strong negative effect of bilingualism on wages. Bilingual individuals, particularly those with Russian as the first spoken language, faced wage penalties of around 20-30% in comparison to monolingual Russian speakers. Notably, this negative effect extended to bilinguals with Kazakh as the first spoken language, although to a lesser extent.²³

II. Historical Context and Language Policies

According to Aldashev and Danzer, the observed economic disparities linked to language proficiency can be traced back to the historical context of the Soviet era, during which the Russian language gradually supplanted Kazakh.²⁴

Lee provides a historical overview of language policies in Kazakhstan, starting from the tsarist era through the Soviet period to the post-Soviet era. During the tsarist era, an imperialistic relationship existed between Russia and Central Asian countries. According to Lee, Kulzhanova, Kaiser and Martin, the introduction of *korenizatsiia* policies in the 1920s sought to encourage the use of the Kazakh language in administration, education, and cultural spheres.²⁵ However, Lee

²¹ Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?"

²² Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?" 7.

²³ Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?" 8.

²⁴ Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?" 2–3.

²⁵ Chaimun Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia: The Case of Kazakhstan," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 11, no. 1 (2004): 105, <https://doi.org/10.23071/jias.2004.11.1.101>; Robert J. Kaiser, "Nationalizing the Work Force: Ethnic Restrification in the Newly Independent States," *Post-Soviet Geography* 36, no. 2 (February 1995): 88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10605851.1995.10640981>; Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011),

argues that there was a notable shift towards Russification when the Soviet Union centralized power under Joseph Stalin in the 1930s.²⁶

Hirsch and Yekelchik add that in 1932, the Soviet Union shifted from promoting ethnic diversity to targeting specific nationalities, reducing the promotion of local languages and cultures. The mid-1930s saw the rise of Russian prominence, symbolized by Stalin's "Friendship of Peoples" idea in 1936. This emphasized Russian centrality in the Soviet Union while acknowledging other nationalities, which led to a decline in the influence of the Kazakh language.²⁷ The dominance of the Russian language continued into the post-Stalin period, with Russian being considered crucial for career success.²⁸ In the late Soviet period, Lee and Chong highlight attempts to address the negative consequences of Russification, with the indigenization process resurfacing in the late 1980s.²⁹ Fierman notes early measures, such as the 1987 resolution, addressing the importance of the Kazakh language to assuage Kazakh pride and foster harmonious ethnic relations.³⁰

According to Fierman, the 1989 Law on Languages marked a crucial milestone, designating Kazakh as the state language, but granting special status to Russian.³¹ Smagulova, however, highlights uneasiness among the Russian-speaking population due to paperwork transfer into Kazakh.³² According to Smagulova, this uneasiness led to concerns raised by various individuals about what they perceived as aggressive Kazakhization and reflects tensions and differing opinions on language policies within the country.³³ As a result, Fierman, Smagulova and Dave argue, the 1995 Constitution further elevated Russian to an "officially used" status alongside Kazakh, reflecting compromises to accommodate the linguistic preferences of diverse ethnic groups.³⁴

134–35, <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501713323>; Ainur Kulzhanova, *Language Policy of Kazakhstan: An Analysis* (LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2014), 6.

²⁶ Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 105.

²⁷ Francine Hirsch, "The Soviet Union as a Work-in-Progress: Ethnographers and the Category Nationality in the 1926, 1937, and 1939 Censuses," *Slavic Review* 56, no. 2 (1997): 264–76, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2500785>; Serhy Yekelchik, "Interpreting Russia's Imperial Dimension," ed. Mark R. Beissinger et al., *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 46, no. 3/4 (2004): 483, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00085006.2004.11092371>.

²⁸ Hirsch, "The Soviet Union as a Work-in-Progress," 264–76; Yekelchik, "Interpreting Russia's Imperial Dimension," 483.

²⁹ Jin Oh Chong, "Comparative Analysis of Nationalizing Processes in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan: Uzbekization, Kazakhization," *International Area Review* 10, no. 2 (September 1, 2007): 113–14, <https://doi.org/10.1177/223386590701000207>; Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 105.

³⁰ William Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan: Formulations in Policy Documents 1987–1997," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31, no. 2 (June 1, 1998): 175, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0967-067X\(98\)00005-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0967-067X(98)00005-1).

³¹ Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan," 175–80.

³² Juldys Smagulova, "Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use," *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 11, no. 3–4 (July 1, 2008): 451–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050802148798>.

³³ Smagulova, "Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use," 454–55.

³⁴ Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan," 175–80; Smagulova, "Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use," 451–55; Dave Bhavna, *Kazakhstan - Ethnicity, Language and Power*, vol. 1 (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 100.

Lee, Kirkpatrick, Liddicoat, Syzdykbayeva, and Marquardt argue that such compromises were essential to balance linguistic communities, fostering harmonious interethnic relations and defusing tensions. Nazarbayev's leadership played a pivotal role in this inclusive approach, promoting cooperation and understanding among Kazakhstan's diverse ethnic and linguistic groups.³⁵ Aksholakova and Ismailova note an emphasis on Kazakh proficiency in government sectors, with a significant policy shift in 2013, making Kazakh language test results mandatory for employment.³⁶

III. Demographics and Socio-Economic Development

Gang and Schmillen shed light on Kazakhstan's demographic shifts during and after the Soviet era, emphasizing the role of the internal passport system and propaganda in population movements. They note a decline in the indigenous Kazakh population from 1926 to 1959, accompanied by a rise in the share of the ethnic Russian population.³⁷

Rodionov further explores internal migration patterns within Kazakhstan, emphasizing distinctions between Kazakhs and Russians. The North, Centre, and East of Kazakhstan are regions with a relatively high proportion of Russian-speaking population. Historically, ethnic Russians tended to concentrate in Kazakhstan's major cities within these regions rather than relocating within the country. This demographic trend has contributed to depopulation and an aging population in these areas nowadays. In contrast, Southern and Western regions, dominated by ethnic Kazakhs, experienced positive natural growth and maintained a younger age structure.³⁸ Economic development in oil fields and major cities, according to Rodionov, prompted internal migration among ethnic Kazakhs but posed challenges for regional development.³⁹ Gang and Schmillen emphasize that this migration pattern, especially the departure of Russians after the collapse of the Soviet Union, led to changes in the demographic composition of cities and affected the age and education distribution of the remaining Russian population.

³⁵ Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 106–10; Andy Kirkpatrick and Anthony J. Liddicoat, *The Routledge International Handbook of Language Education Policy in Asia* (London: Routledge, 2019); Rizagul Syzdykbayeva, "The Role of Language Policies in Developing Plurilingual Identities in Kazakhstan," *NUGSE Research in Education* 1, no. 1 (June 2016): 15–19; Kyle L. Marquardt, "Language and Sovereignty: A Comparative Analysis of Language Policy in Tatarstan and Kazakhstan, 1991–2010," in *Identity and Politics in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2015), 44–45.

³⁶ Assem Aksholakova and Nurgul Ismailova, "The Language Policy of Kazakhstan and the State Language in Government Service," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 93 (October 1, 2013): 1580–84, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.085>.

³⁷ Ira N. Gang and Achim Schmillen, "Sometimes, Winners Lose: Economic Disparity and Indigenization in Kazakhstan," *Journal of Comparative Economics* 45, no. 3 (August 1, 2017): 607–8, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2016.11.002>.

³⁸ Viktor Rodionov, "Population Development of Kazakhstan: Geographic, Economic and Geopolitical Aspects" (PhD Diss., Prague, Charles University, 2011), 153–55, <https://dspace.cuni.cz/handle/20.500.11956/47348>.

³⁹ Rodionov, "Population Development of Kazakhstan," 153–55.

At the same time, the growing share of ethnic Kazakhs in Kazakhstan contributes to the growing importance of the Kazakh language.⁴⁰

The growing share of ethnic Kazakhs in the country is not only due to the outflow of other nationalities, but also due to the influx of ethnic Kazakhs returning to Kazakhstan after 1991, also called *Qandastar*, meaning compatriot. According to Aubakirova, Alimkhan, and Taldybayeva et al., as of February 1, 2021, over 1 million ethnic Kazakh people returned to Kazakhstan and were granted the status of "*qandas*." Working-age migrants make up a significant portion, while the numbers for those below working age and pensioners vary.⁴¹ Orazalyuly, Aubakirova, and Alimkhan point out that, although the majority of *Qandas* speak Kazakh, they sometimes do not know the Cyrillic alphabet and have a bad command of Russian, giving them a disadvantage in the work field in comparison to ethnic Kazakhs who grew up in Kazakhstan. In addition, they often have little English and computer skills, complicating their chances of finding a well-paid job.⁴²

Gang and Schmitten also investigated economic disparities between Kazakhs and Russians in terms of monthly earnings, employing regression-based decomposition analysis. They find that, despite having more favourable characteristics, Kazakhs earned less than Russians in 2010.⁴³ Howie and Atakhanova, however, argue that between 1996 to 2009, income inequalities decreased.⁴⁴

IV. Education in Kazakhstan

In their study, Aldashev and Danzer found a persistent economic disadvantage for Kazakh speakers in Kazakhstan, linked to lower-quality schools with Kazakh as the language of instruction. Despite the shift in the official state language, scholastic achievements remained lower for Kazakh-taught pupils.⁴⁵ Kulzhanova attributes this to historical Soviet education policies favouring the Russian language, leading to an overrepresentation of ethnic Russians in skilled positions.⁴⁶

In tandem, Fierman's and Smagulova's analysis focuses on the evolution of Kazakh-medium schools, noting a substantial increase in enrolment since the late Soviet era.⁴⁷ Factors contributing to the expansion of Kazakh-medium schools

⁴⁰ Gang and Schmitten, "Sometimes, Winners Lose," 607–8.

⁴¹ Dinara Taldybayeva et al., "Young Repatriates in Kazakhstan: Problems and Solutions," *International Society for Technology, Education, and Science*, 2021, 43; Sezim Aubakirova and Yenlik Alimkhan, "Homeland Integration: Assessing the Experiences of Repatriates (Qandas) in Kazakhstan and State Policies Associated with Them" (Master thesis, Astana, Nazarbayev University, 2023), 28, <https://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/7328>.

⁴² Sayat Orazalyuly, "Oralmans' Matters: A Complex View on Ethnic Kazakhs Repatriation" (Master Thesis, Prague, Charles University, 2010), 72–73, <https://dspace.cuni.cz/handle/20.500.11956/32541>; Aubakirova and Alimkhan, "Homeland Integration," 28.

⁴³ Gang and Schmitten, "Sometimes, Winners Lose," 607–8.

⁴⁴ Peter Howie and Zauresh Atakhanova, "Resource Boom and Inequality: Kazakhstan as a Case Study," *Resources Policy* 39 (March 1, 2014): 72–77, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2013.11.004>.

⁴⁵ Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)," 11–12, 14.

⁴⁶ Kulzhanova, *Language Policy of Kazakhstan*, 6–7.

⁴⁷ William Fierman, "Language and Education in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan: Kazakh-Medium Instruction in Urban Schools," *The Russian Review* 65, no. 1 (2006): 106–9, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467->

include demographic changes, where Kazakhstan became more ethnically Kazakh over the years. According to Orazalyuly and Nadirova, the expansion of Kazakh-medium schools is also due to the return of ethnic Kazakh people to Kazakhstan, as these people sometimes have poor command of Russian and often prefer to enrol their children in Kazakh-medium schools as opposed to Russian-medium schools.⁴⁸ However, despite the increase in Kazakh-medium schools, Fierman emphasizes that some Kazakh parents still choose Russian-medium schools for their children.⁴⁹

Aksholakova and Ismailova assert that, despite efforts to strengthen Kazakh-language education, Russian-medium schools remain predominant in urban areas, especially in Almaty.⁵⁰ According to Smagulova, this is attributed to parents' concerns about assisting with schoolwork due to limited Kazakh language proficiency and the perceived superior educational quality in Russian-medium schools.⁵¹ Fierman highlights challenges in the Kazakh-medium education system, including a shortage of teachers in urban areas, particularly in subjects like English and computer science. Lower academic achievements in Kazakh-medium schools, reflected in fewer academic Olympiad winners compared to Russian-medium schools, support this perception.⁵² The research of Mailybaeva et al. highlights a performance gap between Kazakh-medium and Russian-medium schools, as evidenced by the 2015 PISA test,⁵³ with a 50-point difference suggesting more than a year and a half of disparity.⁵⁴

Mailybaeva et al. also explore the urban-rural divide within the education system, revealing that rural students lag behind their urban counterparts by more than half a year. This disparity highlights nuanced challenges, hinting at potential systemic issues that contribute to varying levels of academic achievement within Kazakhstan's education system.⁵⁵ Zhenskhan and Alpeissova attribute the decline in education quality in rural areas to the lack of competition among the working population, stemming from population emigration to urban areas.⁵⁶

9434.2005.00388.x; Smagulova, "Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use," 455–58.

⁴⁸ Orazalyuly, "Oralmans' Matters," 72; Gulnar Nadirova, "New Educational Strategies in Demand," *Asya Avrupa* 10, no. 66 (2021): 47–48.

⁴⁹ Fierman, "Language and Education in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan," 106–9.

⁵⁰ Aksholakova and Ismailova, "The Language Policy of Kazakhstan and the State Language in Government Service," 1580–84.

⁵¹ Smagulova, "Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use," 455–58.

⁵² Fierman, "Language and Education in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan," 113–14.

⁵³ PISA stands for "Programme for International Student Assessment." It is a worldwide study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to evaluate educational systems across countries. PISA assesses the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, and science. The assessments are conducted every three years, and the results are used to inform education policies and practices globally.

⁵⁴ G. S. Mailybaeva et al., "The Efficiency of the Education System in Kazakhstan: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)," *Opción* 34, no. 85–2 (2018): 600–626.

⁵⁵ Mailybaeva et al., "The Efficiency of the Education System in Kazakhstan."

⁵⁶ D. Zhenskhan and Sh E. Alpeissova, "Socio-economic Development of Rural Areas of Kazakhstan," *Problems of AgriMarket* 0, no. 1 (March 23, 2021): 147–54, <https://doi.org/10.46666/2021-1-2708-9991.18>.

On the other hand, Tastanbekova claims that education in Kazakhstan is improving and outlines the evolution of education reforms in Kazakhstan. Triggered by poor performance in the 2009 PISA assessment, the "SPED for 2011–2020" programme was introduced, with a focus on 12 years of compulsory education and per capita education financing.⁵⁷ Notably, twenty Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) for gifted children were established, incorporating Kazakh, Russian, and English languages of instruction. These schools aim to disseminate international best practices to all secondary schools in the country. Tastanbekova acknowledges improvements in Kazakhstan's PISA 2012 performance but notes a gap with the OECD average. In response, the government launched "SPED for 2016–2019," aiming for equal access to quality pre-school and secondary education, with a focus on infrastructure modernization, content renovation, and system management. The goal is to address the long tail of educational underachievement.⁵⁸

V. The Importance of the Russian Language in Kazakhstan

According to Toybazarova, Nazarova, Zhappar, and Khaidzhu, Russian remains vital for communication in Kazakhstan despite the declining number of ethnic Russians.⁵⁹ Their studies indicate that Russian serves as a means of international communication in former Soviet countries, with about half of the residents considering knowledge of Russian useful in daily life. The communicative and humanitarian functions of Russian, including its role in literature and cultural exchange, contribute to its importance in Kazakhstan.⁶⁰ Kirkpatrick, Liddicoat, Sagatov, Kusheeva, and Smagulova support this view, pointing out that Russian is the business language of Kazakhstan, and highlighting the significant role of Russophones in Kazakhstan's economy.⁶¹ According to Dzhuraeva and Nazarova, who conducted a survey in Kazakhstan on bilingualism, the majority of the population of Kazakhstan believe that the knowledge of Russian is necessary to achieve high-quality education and a successful career.⁶² Pavlov emphasizes that

⁵⁷ K. Tastanbekova, "Teacher Education Reforms in Kazakhstan: Trends and Issues," 2018, 89, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Teacher-Education-Reforms-in-Kazakhstan%3A-Trends-and-Tastanbekova/697f65511c31fca410301e0dc10f6aeab163c5e3>.

⁵⁸ Tastanbekova, "Teacher Education Reforms in Kazakhstan," 89.

⁵⁹ Nagimash Toybazarova and G. Nazarova, "The Modernization of Education in Kazakhstan: Trends, Perspective and Problems," *The Bulletin* 6 (December 15, 2018): 122–23, <https://doi.org/10.32014/2018.2518-1467.33>; K. Z. Zhappar, "Russkyi Yazyk Kak Sredstvo Professional'noy Kommunikatsii V Kazakhstane" (Obuchenie Russkomy Yazyku i na Russkom Yazyke: Problemy i Perspektivy, Kazakhstan, 2020), 70–77, <https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=44731635>; Yuy Khaidzhu, "Sovremennoe Polozhenie Russkogo Yazyka V Gosudarstvakh Tsentral'noy Azii," *Postsovetskie Issledovaniya* 3, no. 3 (2020): 250–70.

⁶⁰ Toybazarova and Nazarova, "The Modernization of Education in Kazakhstan," 122–23; Zhappar, "Russkyi Yazyk Kak Sredstvo Professional'noy Kommunikatsii V Kazakhstane"; Khaidzhu, "Sovremennoe Polozhenie Russkogo Yazyka V Gosudarstvakh Tsentral'noy Azii."

⁶¹ Kirkpatrick and Liddicoat, *The Routledge International Handbook of Language Education Policy in Asia*; Smagulova, "Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use," 454–55; A. S. Sagatov and M. K. Kusheeva, "O Roli Russkogo Yazyka v Kazakhstane," *Voisk Military Institute of Material Support*, 2017, 9–12.

⁶² Madina N. Dzhuraeva and Aliya B. Nasyrova, "Dvuyazychie v Kazakhstane," *Filologicheskie Otkrytiya*, no. 6 (2018): 42–46.

Russian, beyond historical significance, maintains prestige in Kazakhstan,⁶³ while Sultan argues that Russian is the language of communication in Kazakhstan.⁶⁴ The status of Russian as the language of communication is exemplified by the language situation on the work floor. Fierman argues that even companies who on paper switched to using the Kazakh language as the main language, tend to use Russian on a day-to-day basis and use translators to translate their documents to Kazakh.⁶⁵

In 2003, Kuzhabekova criticized the Kazakh government's language policy for being ineffective in promoting Kazakh languages.⁶⁶ Kuzhabekova recommended a shift from a broad focus to targeted language promotion in specific communicative domains, such as education and workplace communication. Kuzhabekova also advocated prioritizing Kazakh language promotion among Russian-speaking Kazakhs to address potential language imbalances.⁶⁷ Another key proposal included the establishment of a standardized proficiency assessment system for the Kazakh language, aiming for balanced language knowledge dissemination. These measures aim to address the potential rise of Russian nationalism by ensuring a balance in language attitudes as Kazakh gains prominence.⁶⁸

Twenty years later, in 2023, Tlepbergen, Akzhigitova, and Zobrodskaia observe the Kazakh government's implementation of Kuzhabekova's recommendations. They emphasize the emergence of bottom-up practices and their impact on the dynamics of the Kazakh language in the Republic of Kazakhstan,⁶⁹ and highlight the role of social networks, particularly Instagram, in strengthening the status of the Kazakh language. Grassroots initiatives, such as *Kazaksha* tea-talk and *Batyl bol* clubs, contribute to a growing interest in learning and using the Kazakh language.⁷⁰

VI. Bilingualism in Other Countries

We may learn something from other countries with two state languages and a bilingual population. Examples of such countries are Belgium, in which Dutch is spoken in Flanders and French is spoken in Wallonia, and Canada, which has a

⁶³ A. S. Pavlov, "Status i polozhenie russkogo yazyka v Kazakhstane, ego rol' v sisteme obrazovaniya respubliki," *Kazachestvo*, no. 61 (4) (2022): 77–79.

⁶⁴ D.S. Sultan, "Osobennosti Obucheniya Kazakhskikh Shkol'nikov Russkomy Yazyku," *Mezhdunarodnyi Zhurnal Gumanitarnykh i Estestvennykh Nauk* 83, no. 8–2 (2023): 74, <https://doi.org/10.24412/2500-1000-2023-8-2-74-77>.

⁶⁵ William Fierman, "Reversing Language Shift in Kazakhstan," in *Language Policy and Language Conflict in Afghanistan and Its Neighbors* (Brill, 2012), 157–58, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004217652_006.

⁶⁶ Aliya Kuzhabekova, "Past, Present and Future of Language Policy in Kazakhstan" (Master Thesis, North Dakota, University of North Dakota, 2003), 184–95, <https://commons.und.edu/theses/3205>.

⁶⁷ Kuzhabekova, 'Past, Present and Future of Language Policy in Kazakhstan', 184–95.

⁶⁸ Kuzhabekova, 'Past, Present and Future of Language Policy in Kazakhstan', 184–95.

⁶⁹ Dinara Tlepbergen, Assel Akzhigitova, and Anastassia Zabrodskaia, "Bottom-Up Approach to Language Policy and Planning in Kazakhstan," *Societies* 13, no. 2 (February 2023): 43, <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13020043>.

⁷⁰ Tlepbergen, Akzhigitova, and Zabrodskaia, "Bottom-Up Approach to Language Policy and Planning in Kazakhstan," 12–13.

French speaking population in Quebec, and an English-speaking population in the rest of the country.

According to Williams, language proficiency is associated with significant differences in earnings.⁷¹ In Belgium, French is highlighted as the most common "second language" listed among workers. Williams' research indicates that the use of a second language, especially at work, has a positive and statistically significant relationship with earnings. Noticeably, the economic returns to language skills vary across occupations, with the highest returns typically observed in professional and managerial occupations.⁷² Van Herck, Vanmandere and Mazzacani, however, point out that people only receive a language bonus when they use two official languages in multilingual regions, which creates dissatisfaction among clerks in monolingual regions who are also required to be multilingual for their jobs but do not receive the bonus.⁷³

On top of that, Stoffi et al. point out that the PISA results of students attending schools in Wallonia are significantly lower than the PISA results of students attending schools in Flanders.⁷⁴ Varin claims that one of the reasons for a higher PISA score in Flanders has to do with the ways in which the Flemish and Walloon school operate. According to her, the education system in Wallonia is modelled on French schools, in which a policy of redoing a grade is common if their academic performances do not meet expectations. On the other hand, the policy of redoing a grade is uncommon in Flemish schools. Since the PISA scores are conducted by age, and not by grade, Flemish students are more likely to be in a higher grade than their Walloon peers, causing Walloon students to not have reached the same level of education and resulting in a lower PISA score.⁷⁵

In Canada, Christofides and Swidinsky highlight the economic benefits of bilingualism, with enhanced earnings in both Quebec and the Rest-of-Canada, either due to "ability" bias or practical utility in the workplace.⁷⁶ In the Rest-of-Canada, bilingual men working exclusively in English experience a 3.8% earnings increase, while those frequently using French see a 5.4% increase. In contrast, Quebec's results show Francophone men gaining a substantial 7% earnings premium for working exclusively in French, and a 20.9% premium for frequent use

⁷¹ Donald R. Williams, "Multiple Language Usage and Earnings in Western Europe," *International Journal of Manpower* 32, no. 4 (January 1, 2011): 372–93, <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437721111148513>.

⁷² Williams, "Multiple Language Usage," 379–86.

⁷³ Rebecca Van Herck and Dieter Vermandere, "When the Language Bonus Becomes an Onus: A Belgian Case Study," *European Journal of Language Policy* 8, no. 2 (2016): 191–207, <https://doi.org/10.3828/ejlp.2016.12>; Daniele Mazzacani, "A Comparative Evaluation of the Bilingualism Bonus Policy in the Public Administration," October 18, 2021, 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.35493.58081>.

⁷⁴ Falco J. Bargagli Stoffi et al., "Assessing Sensitivity of Machine Learning Predictions: A Novel Toolbox with an Application to Financial Literacy" (arXiv, February 8, 2021), 19, <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2102.04382>.

⁷⁵ Caroline Varin, "Education in a Federal System: A Case-study of Belgium" (Bachelor thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2006), 23–24, <https://repository.upenn.edu/handle/20.500.14332/8647>.

⁷⁶ Louis N. Christofides and Robert Swidinsky, "The Economic Returns to a Second Official Language: English in Quebec and French in the Rest-of-Canada," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY, June 24, 2008), 3, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1150720>.

of English at work. This indicates a clear economic return to the use of a second language at the workplace.⁷⁷

At the same time, Christofides and Swidinsky claim that language impacts the choice of industry and occupation rather than directly affecting wages within the same industry and occupation, causing bilingual individuals in the Rest-of-Canada to be over-represented in higher-paying occupations and industrial sectors. Christofides and Swidinsky also suggest that economic incentives significantly influence language acquisition decisions in Canada. The study highlights the low market value of bilingual skills in the Rest-of-Canada, potentially hindering bilingualism growth despite ongoing promotion efforts over the last three decades.⁷⁸ Pelletier's study adds a nuanced perspective, suggesting that bilingualism is valued for practical application or as a signal of desirable traits to employers because bilinguals tend to earn more even when they do not use a second language on the work floor.⁷⁹

VII. The Overarching Argument

The overarching argument presented by the collective body of research is that language proficiency, particularly in the transition from Russian to Kazakh in Kazakhstan, significantly influences economic outcomes, educational disparities, and employment opportunities. Aldashev and Danzer's study established a consistent wage penalty associated with bilingualism despite the contemporary shift towards Kazakh, emphasizing historical disparities rooted in the Soviet era.⁸⁰ The historical context, explored by Lee and Smagulova, further underlines the complexities of language policies in Kazakhstan, reflecting tensions and evolving dynamics between the Russian language and the Kazakh language.⁸¹

The educational landscape, as scrutinized by Kulzhanova,⁸² Fierman,⁸³ Smagulova,⁸⁴ and Mailybaeva et al.,⁸⁵ reveals the enduring consequences of historical language policies, contributing to disparities in academic achievements. Efforts to promote the Kazakh language in education, as highlighted by Tastanbekova, face challenges such as teacher shortages and lower academic performance in Kazakh-medium schools.⁸⁶ The continued importance of the Russian language, as outlined by Toybazarova, Nazarova, Smagulova, and Pavlov,

⁷⁷ Christofides and Swidinsky, "The Economic Returns to a Second Official Language," 14–26.

⁷⁸ Christofides and Swidinsky, "The Economic Returns to a Second Official Language," 14–26.

⁷⁹ Rachelle Pelletier, "The Impact of English-French Bilingualism on Wages in Canada" (Master Thesis, New Brunswick, University of New Brunswick, 2016), 35–37, <https://unbscholar.lib.unb.ca/handle/1882/14456>.

⁸⁰ Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?"

⁸¹ Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 105; Smagulova, "Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use," 455–58.

⁸² Kulzhanova, *Language Policy of Kazakhstan*, 6–7.

⁸³ Fierman, "Language and Education in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan," 106–14.

⁸⁴ Smagulova, "Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use," 455–58.

⁸⁵ Mailybaeva et al., "The Efficiency of the Education System in Kazakhstan."

⁸⁶ Tastanbekova, "Teacher Education Reforms in Kazakhstan," 89.

persists in various aspects of life and work.⁸⁷ Kuzhabekova's recommendations and,⁸⁸ consequently, Tlepbergen's Akzhigitova's and Zobrodskaia's observations,⁸⁹ however, suggest that the position of the Kazakh language in Kazakhstan is improving.

Drawing a parallel between Canada and Kazakhstan, we see the role of Russian similar to that of English in Quebec and the rest of Canada. Russian serves as a language of international business, especially considering Kazakhstan's economic ties with Russia, just as English serves as a language of international business. Meanwhile, Kazakh remains more regionally focused, like French in Quebec. This comparison emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of the roles and influences of languages in diverse socio-economic contexts.

In considering the impact of language policies on economic outcomes and educational disparities in Kazakhstan, our opinion aligns with the notion that the Soviet legacy, as highlighted by Kulzhanova, has contributed to a current scenario where Russians hold better positions.⁹⁰ This historical context, as explored by various researchers, creates a situation where higher salaries are observed for monolingual Russian speakers, as studied by Aldashev and Danzer in 2010.⁹¹ However, our perspective acknowledges that this economic disparity might be a transitional phase, and over time, Kazakh speakers should catch up as language policies take effect.

As of the last available survey data from Aldashev and Danzer in 2010,⁹² a mere 19 years have elapsed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. During this timeframe, individuals who directly experienced the language policy changes in their educational settings may not have reached working age, where the full impact of their educational experiences on economic outcomes becomes evident. The lag between the implementation of language policies and the emergence of a workforce that has undergone the reformed educational system is a critical factor to consider when evaluating the effectiveness of these policies.

Fast forward to the present, approximately 30 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, and the landscape may have evolved. Those who underwent the revised educational system, shaped by language policies, are now likely part of the working-age population. This shift prompts a re-examination of the initial assessments made in 2010. The long-term effects of language policies on education, and subsequently on economic outcomes, may now be more discernible.

⁸⁷ Toybazarova and Nazarova, 'The Modernization of Education in Kazakhstan', 122–23; Smagulova, 'Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use', 113; Pavlov, 'Status i polozhenie russkogo yazyka v Kazakhstane, ego rol' v sisteme obrazovaniya respubliki', 77–79.

⁸⁸ Kuzhabekova, "Past, Present and Future of Language Policy in Kazakhstan," 184–95.

⁸⁹ Tlepbergen, Akzhigitova, and Zabrodskaia, "Bottom-Up Approach to Language Policy and Planning in Kazakhstan," 12–13.

⁹⁰ Kulzhanova, *Language Policy of Kazakhstan*, 6–7.

⁹¹ Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?"

⁹² Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?"

Furthermore, Aldashev and Danzer did a country-wide study. The 1996 dataset does not mention regions, and while in 2010 their data differentiates the metropolitan areas of Almaty, Astana, Karaganda, and Pavlodar,⁹³ their research does not factor out elements like regional differences in economic outcomes that are aligned with linguistic imbalances.⁹⁴

Another aspect worth considering is the nature of the dataset used by Aldashev and Danzer, primarily relying on surveys and reported salaries.⁹⁵ The distinction between perceived and actual salaries is noteworthy, as mentioned by Aksholakova and Ismailova. They highlight the inherent doubt about the validity of self-assessment, particularly when language skills are intertwined with symbols of ethnicity and statehood.⁹⁶

To address this concern, we consider real reported salary rates and offers instead of relying solely on self-reported amounts. This distinction is crucial in ensuring a more accurate representation of the economic landscape, as perceptions and reported figures may not always align with real-world economic conditions. In addition, we perform a more regional study, considering salaries and language proficiency in the Zhambyl region and the Kostanay region. By making a comparative case of these regions, this approach will help factor out elements like overall level of economic development in Russian-language-dominant cities like Almaty.

⁹³ Aldashev and Danzer, “Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?,” 8.

⁹⁴ Aldashev and Danzer, “Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?”

⁹⁵ Aldashev and Danzer, “Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?”

⁹⁶ Aksholakova and Ismailova, “The Language Policy of Kazakhstan and the State Language in Government Service,” 464.

III. Language Policies and Historical Demographics

I. Historical Language Policies

In the early years of the Soviet period, namely the 1920s, the Soviet government introduced *korenizatsiia* policies,⁹⁷ aiming to promote the development of non-Russian ethnic groups within the USSR.⁹⁸ These policies were a result of the Russian revolution of 1917-1921, where the, primarily urban, proletarian, and Russian, Bolsheviks faced the challenge of legitimizing their power in a predominantly agricultural, multi-ethnic state. Recognizing the need for a 'Great Compromise' with peasants and non-Russian nationalities, the Soviet government enacted the New Economic Policy and formulated policies toward non-Russians.⁹⁹ *Korenizatsiia*, a key aspect of this approach, aimed to address structural issues in early Soviet society for non-Russians, such as high illiteracy rates and economic underdevelopment.¹⁰⁰

The key resolutions regarding *korenizatsiia* were adopted at the eight, tenth and twelfth Congresses of the Russian Communist Party, which were held in the years 1919, 1921, and 1923 respectively. These resolutions emphasized the development of indigenous institutions, including courts, administrative and agricultural organizations, and local government bodies, in the native languages of the nationalities. They also allowed for the establishment of press, schools, theatres, and cultural institutions in indigenous languages, with a focus on providing general and vocational education and accelerated training for native cadres in order for them to eventually control and administer the nationality areas.¹⁰¹ By promoting equality of non-Russian languages and cultures and encouraging the elevation of non-Russians into leadership positions, *korenizatsiia* sought to legitimize the urban-based revolution in a diverse and multi-ethnic Soviet state.¹⁰²

Moreover, these policies aimed to foster a sense of autonomy and cultural expression for non-Russian ethnic groups, empowering them to govern themselves through their own languages and institutions. The focus on bridging the gap between urban centres and the non-Russian countryside highlights the effort to address economic underdevelopment and cultural disparities, while the emphasis on accelerated training for native cadres underscores the intention to cultivate indigenous leadership within communities, ensuring their active participation in various spheres of society. Overall, *korenizatsiia* policies were meant to integrate non-Russian ethnic groups into the Soviet system while preserving and promoting their distinct languages and cultures.

⁹⁷ Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 105.

⁹⁸ Bernard V. Olivier, "Korenizatsiia," *Central Asian Survey*, January 1, 1990, 77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634939008400716>.

⁹⁹ George Liber, "Korenizatsiia: Restructuring Soviet Nationality Policy in the 1920s," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 14, no. 1 (1991): 15–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.1991.9993696>.

¹⁰⁰ Liber, "Korenizatsiia," 15–16.

¹⁰¹ Olivier, "Korenizatsiia," 78.

¹⁰² Liber, "Korenizatsiia," 15–16.

By the late 1920s, dissatisfaction had grown, especially in Central Asia, where non-Russian ethnic groups felt that despite holding prominent positions, Russians still directed governmental institutions. Native leaders realized that *korenizatsiia* offered only a "poor substitute for real political autonomy," exacerbating tensions between Russians and non-Russians and fostering local nationalism, which Moscow did not welcome.¹⁰³ At the same time, the Soviet political landscape had shifted with Stalin securing leadership, making support from non-Russian nationalities less crucial. Simultaneously, the new economic objectives favoured centralization, rendering *korenizatsiia* cumbersome and challenging to control. In the early 1930s, these shortcomings of *korenizatsiia* and the changed political landscape led to a silent discarding of the *korenizatsiia* policies.¹⁰⁴

By the mid-1930s, the *korenizatsiia* policies gradually gave way to the implementation of Russification strategies.¹⁰⁵ The shift in approach marked a pivotal moment in Soviet perception, as Russian culture, once marginalized, emerged as a unifying force capable of binding the diverse Soviet population. In December 1935, Soviet propaganda embraced a new narrative, promoting a "brotherhood of nations" with ethnic Russians being declared the 'first among equals' or the 'elderly brother,' with a special role assigned to them as the culturally superior group responsible for aiding the modernization efforts of "backward" peoples.¹⁰⁶

This new approach to Soviet nationality policy was underscored by Stalin's "Friendship of Peoples" doctrine introduced in 1936. This doctrine reinforced the central role of Russian culture and language, framing the Soviet federation around Russian centrality while acknowledging other nationalities as integral parts of the USSR, further increasing the influence of ethnic Russians.¹⁰⁷

Significant measures were taken to solidify the Russian-centric approach. Between 1938 and 1940 the Cyrillic script replaced the Latin alphabet throughout Central Asia,¹⁰⁸ the Russian language became the primary means of communication, the requirement for Russian officials to speak indigenous languages in leadership positions in indigenous regions was abolished,¹⁰⁹ and the teaching of the Russian language became compulsory in all non-Russian schools across the Soviet Union.¹¹⁰ Consequently, the landscape of education shifted, and by the late Soviet period, Fierman claims, only two Kazakh-language schools remained in Almaty,

¹⁰³ Liber, "Korenizatsiia," 20–21; Olivier, "Korenizatsiia," 93–95.

¹⁰⁴ Olivier, "Korenizatsiia," 93–95.

¹⁰⁵ Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 105.

¹⁰⁶ Andrzej Wierzbicki, "Ethnicity and Power in the Soviet Union," *Post-Soviet Issues* 4, no. 3 (October 24, 2017): 247, <https://doi.org/10.24975/2313-8920-2017-4-3-240-255>.

¹⁰⁷ Yekelchik, "Interpreting Russia's Imperial Dimension," 484; Jeffrey Brooks, "Stalin's Politics of Obligation," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 4, no. 1 (June 2003): 57–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14690760412331326078>.

¹⁰⁸ Ayse Dietrich, "Language Policy and the Status of Russian in the Soviet Union and the Successor States Outside the Russian Federation," *ASEES* 1–2, no. 19 (January 1, 2005): 1–2.

¹⁰⁹ Jiri Melich and Aigul Adibayeva, "Nation-Building and Cultural Policy in Kazakhstan," *Eurasian Multidisciplinary Forum, EMF*, no. 2 (2013): 268.

¹¹⁰ Dietrich, "Language Policy and the Status of Russian," 1–2; William Fierman, "Kazakh Language and Prospects for Its Role in Kazakh Goupness," *Ab Imperio* 2, no. 2005 (January 1, 2005): 402, <https://doi.org/10.1353/imp.2005.0065>.

highlighting the extent of linguistic and cultural transformation under the influence of Russification.¹¹¹

After Stalin's death, the Russian language was considered the most important language in Kazakhstan. At this moment in time, this caused the Russian language to be regarded as an important asset for a successful career, prompting indigenous parents to seek education for their children in Russian-language schools.¹¹²

The dominant era of Russification waned in the 1960s, leading to a shift in focus toward processes like indigenization or nationalization.¹¹³ Eventually in 1987, the Kazakhstan Council of Ministers and Kazakhstan Communist Party Central Committee jointly adopted a resolution on improving the study of the Kazakh language, publicly acknowledging the importance of the Kazakh language after years of focusing on teaching Russian. This was followed by the Law on Languages of 1989.¹¹⁴ While the Russian language retained its dominant role in daily life, Kazakh officially assumed the status of the first language, and Russian became positioned as a second language.¹¹⁵

Following the enactment of the Law on Languages, the Supreme Council of the Kazakh SSR initiated the "State Programme for the Development of the Kazakh Language and Other National Languages in the Kazakh SSR for the Period Until 2000" in 1990.¹¹⁶ This programme was crucial for language development aimed to promote the use of Kazakh and other national languages across institutions, businesses, and organizations.¹¹⁷ Additionally, the programme defined their roles in public education, culture, and the media while outlining key directions for scientific research on national languages.¹¹⁸

II. Modern Language Policies

In December 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed and Kazakhstan became an independent country.¹¹⁹ This was followed by the Constitution of Sovereign Kazakhstan in 1993,¹²⁰ which lays out nine core principles that form the foundation of the country's constitutional structure. The eighth principle considered languages in Kazakhstan:

¹¹¹ Fierman, "Kazakh Language and Prospects," 406.

¹¹² Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 105.

¹¹³ Kaiser, "Nationalizing the Work Force," 89; Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 107.

¹¹⁴ Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan," 175; Zhuldyz Moldagazinova, "Trilingual Education in Kazakhstan: What to Expect," *Voices On Central Asia* (blog), May 24, 2019, <https://voicesoncentralasia.org/trilingual-education-in-kazakhstan-what-to-expect/>.

¹¹⁵ Lee, "Languages and Ethnic Politics in Central Asia," 105.

¹¹⁶ Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan," 176; Ainur A. Baimyrza, "Influence of State Language Development Programs on the Formation of Language Identity," *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies* 18, no. 1 (2022): 252, <https://doi.org/10.52462/jlls.179>.

¹¹⁷ Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan," 176; Baimyrza, "Influence of State Language," 252.

¹¹⁸ Baimyrza, "Influence of State Language," 252.

¹¹⁹ "The Republic of Kazakhstan," Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, accessed March 7, 2024, https://www.akorda.kz/en/republic_of_kazakhstan/kazakhstan.

¹²⁰ Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan," 176–77.

Eighth. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the official language is the Kazakh language. The Russian language is the language of interethnic communication. The state guarantees the preservation of the scope of use of the language of interethnic communication and other languages and takes care of their free development. It is prohibited to restrict the rights and freedoms of citizens based on lack of proficiency in the state language or the language of international communication.¹²¹

The 1993 constitution designated Kazakh as the state language and Russian as the language for inter-ethnic communication, following the framework set by the 1989 Law on Languages of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic.¹²² This decision sparked debates between Russian and Kazakh nationalists, eventually resulting in the elevation of the status of Russian to an official language in the 1995 Constitution of Kazakhstan.¹²³ In article 7 of the constitution Russian is portrayed as an official language on an equal footing with Kazakh in state organizations and local self-government bodies:

1. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the state language is Kazakh. 2. In state organizations and local self-government bodies, Russian is officially used along with Kazakh. 3. The state takes care of creating conditions for the study and development of the languages of the people of Kazakhstan.¹²⁴

In June 1997, the Republic of Kazakhstan passed a new Law on Languages. In contrast to the 1995 constitution, the 1997 language law places a stronger emphasis on the development and international recognition of Kazakh. The 1997 language law emphasizes Kazakh as the language of public administration, legislation, and judicial procedures in Article 4. According to the law, the citizens of Kazakhstan are obligated to attain proficiency in the state language to foster unity among the people of Kazakhstan. Additionally, government bodies are charged with fostering the language's growth, elevating its global standing, and promoting proficiency among citizens and the law recognizes the importance of supporting the Kazakh diaspora in preserving their native language. The 1997 language law maintains continuity in its approach to the use of the Russian language, officially designating it on an equal footing with Kazakh in governmental

¹²¹ The original quote: "Восьмое. В Республике Казахстан государственным языком является казахский язык. Русский язык является языком межнационального общения. Государство гарантирует сохранение сферы применения языка межнационального общения и других языков, заботится об их свободном развитии. Запрещается ограничение прав и свобод граждан по признаку невладения государственным языком или языком межнационального общения." This quote can be found in Supreme Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Konstitutsiya Respubliki Kazakhstan," Pub. L. No. 2454 (1993), https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/K930001000_.

¹²² Juldys Smagulova, "Kazakhstan: Language, Identity and Conflict," *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 19, no. 3–4 (September 1, 2006): 311, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610601029854>.

¹²³ Smagulova, "Kazakhstan," 311; Fierman, "Language and Identity in Kazakhstan," 177.

¹²⁴ The original quote: "1. В Республике Казахстан государственным является казахский язык. 2. В государственных организациях и органах местного самоуправления наравне с казахским официально употребляется русский язык. 3. Государство заботится о создании условий для изучения и развития языков народа Казахстана" can be found in Supreme Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Konstitutsiya Respubliki Kazakhstan," Pub. L. No. 1, Vedomosti Parlamenta Respubliki Kazakhst (1995), https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/K950001000_.

organizations and local government. This provision reflects a continuation of the bilingual approach in specific administrative contexts.¹²⁵

In 1999, the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan issued a resolution outlining the regulations for monitoring compliance with language legislation, underscoring the increasing importance of the Kazakh language.¹²⁶ Additionally, another resolution from the same year established the "Republican Centre for Accelerated Learning of the State Language," emphasizing the growing significance of Kazakh by providing intensive language training for government officials. The centre's establishment reflects efforts to enhance proficiency in the Kazakh language, indicating its rising prominence in official spheres.

In the 2000s, the importance of the Kazakh language kept increasing in the country and the government kept reinforcing its commitment to the development of the Kazakh language. The growing importance of the Kazakh language was addressed through the implementation of the State Programme for the Functioning and Development of Languages from 2001 to 2010.¹²⁷ This programme had a dual focus: promoting the use and development of the Kazakh language while concurrently preserving linguistic diversity and ensuring equal language opportunities for all citizens. The programme specifically targets language education in schools. It seeks to improve the teaching quality, ensure access to educational materials in Kazakh, and encourage its use as the language of instruction as echoed in the decree:

It is necessary to take measures to ensure a systematic increase in the number of preschool institutions with the Kazakh language of education in all regions, primarily in rural areas, the number of hours of the Kazakh language in educational institutions of the republic, as well as improving the quality of education, the widespread study of the state language by civil servants, and other categories of employees of enterprises, institutions, and organizations.¹²⁸

In 2011, a subsequent programme was announced for the years 2011-2020.¹²⁹ The 2011-2020 programme maintained a focus on promoting and developing the state language, Kazakh, while introducing new elements such as the emphasis on teaching methodologies, infrastructure development, and strategies for enhancing

¹²⁵ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "O yazykakh v Respublike Kazakhstan," Pub. L. No. 151, Law (1997), https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z970000151_.

¹²⁶ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Ob utverzhdenii Polozheniya o poryadke kontrolya za soblyudeniem zakonodatel'stva o yazykakh," Pub. L. No. 1207, Resolution (1999), https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/P990000016_.

¹²⁷ President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, O Gosudarstvennoy programme funktsionirovaniya i razvitiya yazykov na 2001-2010 gody; Baimyrza, "Influence of State Language," 253.

¹²⁸ The original quote: "Необходимо принять меры по обеспечению планомерного увеличения числа детских дошкольных учреждений с казахским языком воспитания и обучения во всех регионах, в первую очередь в сельской местности, количества часов казахского языка в учебных заведениях республики, а также повышению качества обучения, широкому изучению государственного языка государственными служащими и другими категориями работников предприятий, учреждений и организаций" can be found in President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, O Gosudarstvennoy programme funktsionirovaniya i razvitiya yazykov na 2001-2010 gody.

¹²⁹ President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, O Gosudarstvennoy programme funktsionirovaniya i razvitiya yazykov na 2011-2020 gody.

the prestige and demand for the state language. Additionally, the new programme acknowledged the role of the Russian language in the communicative-linguistic space and emphasized the importance of preserving linguistic diversity in Kazakhstan. Additionally, in 2013 a Kazakh language test became mandatory for employment in government sectors in Kazakhstan.

The promotion of the Kazakh language in the public sphere has further been promoted in 2019. The "State programme for the implementation of language policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2025," declared in 2019, has outlined several goals to be reached before the end of 2025. The goals can be roughly divided into three groups. The first set of goals focused on modernizing the Kazakh language by transitioning to the Latin alphabet. The second set aimed to protect and enhance the position of the state language, Kazakh. The third set of goals centred on the development of the linguistic skills and capabilities of the citizens of Kazakhstan, including the development of the Russian Language in the Communicative-Linguistic Space.¹³⁰

In 2023, the previous programme was discontinued, and a new one spanning 2023-2029 was introduced.¹³¹ While it continues the efforts to enhance education in Kazakh and transition the language to the Latin alphabet, the updated programme places a greater emphasis on grassroots initiatives. Specifically, there is a heightened focus on expanding Kazakh-language content across various media platforms, supporting language projects, and introducing engaging elements like games and mobile applications in Kazakh. The initiative also includes plans for multiple seasons of the "*Aqyldy Tentekter*" project, the creation of an online platform for learning Kazakh, and measures to actively involve citizens in public life to advance the Kazakh language. Moreover, the programme aims to elevate Kazakh as a language of science, emphasizing its role in academic research, publications, educational materials, and scientific discourse. Additionally, it targets proficiency levels among graduates, civil servants, and employees of national companies to boost the overall utilization of the Kazakh language.¹³²

Interestingly, amid these language-focused policies, there is a notable absence of direct measures addressing the income gap between monolingual Russian speakers, monolingual Kazakh speakers, and bilingual speakers, as highlighted by Aldashev and Danzer in 2014.¹³³ This absence raises questions about the necessity of such policies and prompts a closer examination of the actual disparities present.

¹³⁰ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Ob utverzhdenii Gosudarstvennoy programmy po realizatsii yazykovoy politiki v Respublike Kazakhstan na 2020-2025 gody.

¹³¹ President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Ob utverzhdenii Kontseptsii razvitiya yazykovoy politiki v Respublike Kazakhstan na 2023-2029 gody," Pub. L. No. 914, Resolution (2023), <https://legalacts.egov.kz/npa/view?id=14488704>.

¹³² President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Ob utverzhdenii Kontseptsii razvitiya yazykovoy politiki v Respublike Kazakhstan na 2023-2029 gody.

¹³³ Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?"

III. Historical Demographics

The demographic landscape of present-day Kazakhstan has undergone significant transformations since the late 19th century. In 1897, during a period marked by substantial Russian migration to the Kazakh steppe, ethnic Kazakhs formed the largest portion, making up 81.8% of the entire population, while ethnic Russians already made up 11% of the population.¹³⁴ The total entire population at that time totalled 4.1 million.¹³⁵ Over time, extensive influxes of settlers from European Russia to the Kazakh steppes further altered the demographic makeup. At the time, push factors such as land scarcity and political constraints in European Russia, coupled with pull factors including the vast expanses of fertile land and promises of greater freedom and economic opportunity in the Kazakh steppes, drove waves of Russian migrants to Kazakhstan.¹³⁶ By 1917, this caused the population of ethnic Russians to increase to 29.6%, reducing the proportion of Kazakhs to 58.5%.¹³⁷ At this point, the lowering of the share of ethnic Kazakhs is explained by in-migration. The population of ethnic Kazakhs did not decline, Instead, the rapid growth of the Russian population outpaced that of the Kazakhs, leading to a decline in the latter's proportional representation within the overall population.¹³⁸

During the next years, a series of famines unfolded, beginning with the one spanning from 1919 to 1921. This famine stemmed from severe droughts, exacerbated by the implementation of the *Prodrazvyorstka* policy by the Soviet government, which was a policy of requisitioning grain from peasants, often at marginal prices, to supply the cities and the Red Army during the Russian Civil War and the subsequent period of War Communism. This caused the population of Kazakhstan to have less food for themselves.¹³⁹

The second famine took place between 1930 and 1933. In 1928, the Soviet authorities initiated a collectivization campaign aimed at seizing livestock from wealthier Kazakhs, referred to as *bai*. This campaign led to the deportation of potentially over 10,000 *bais*.¹⁴⁰ The acquisition of Kazakhstan's livestock and grain took place predominantly between 1929 and 1932, during which one-third of the

¹³⁴ Fierman, "Kazakh Language and Prospects," 403.

¹³⁵ Fierman, "Kazakh Language and Prospects," 403.

¹³⁶ Rebecca W. Wendelken, "Russian Immigration and Its Effect on the Kazak Steppes, 1552–1965," in *The Role of Migration in the History of the Eurasian Steppe: Sedentary Civilization vs. "Barbarian" and Nomad*, ed. Andrew Bell-Fialkoff (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2000), 71–72, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-61837-8_5.

¹³⁷ Fierman, "Kazakh Language and Prospects," 403.

¹³⁸ George Joseph Demko, "The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan: 1896-1916" (Ph.D., United States -- Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University, 1964), 196, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/302122885/citation/36E9A593E5774206PQ/1>.

¹³⁹ Evgeny Krinko, Alexander Skorik, and Alla Shadrina, "The Don and Kuban Regions During Famine: The Authorities, the Cossacks, and the Church in 1921–1922 and 1932–1933," *Nationalities Papers* 48, no. 3 (May 2020): 571–72, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2019.120>; Nelli Leonidovna Krasnobaeva, "Naselenie Kazakhstana v kontse XIX-pervoy chetverti XX veka" (Master Thesis, Barnaul, Vostochnii Kazakhstanskii gosudarstvennyi tekhnicheskii universitet, 2004), <https://cheloveknauka.com/naselenie-kazakhstana-v-kontse-xix-pervoy-chetverti-xx-veka>.

¹⁴⁰ Sarah Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 71, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501730443>.

republic's cereals were requisitioned, and between 1930 and 1931, a third of Kazakh livestock was seized and transferred to Moscow and Leningrad.¹⁴¹

The Kazakh population had already begun to decline due to the seizure of food sources, but, on top of that, the famine was further exacerbated by the 200,000 "special settlers" and Gulag prisoners that were sent to Kazakhstan, as the already inadequate food supply in Kazakhstan was partially diverted to these prisoners and settlers. Moreover, food aid was selectively distributed, favouring certain groups while excluding others deemed as class enemies.¹⁴² Many Kazakhs were denied food aid under the pretext of their perceived lack of productivity, while European workers in the country received preferential treatment.¹⁴³ These famines caused the population of ethnic Kazakhs to drop significantly. According to Cameron, Pianciola, Ohayan, Kindler, and Klohr, the famine reduced the Kazakh population by between a quarter and one third.¹⁴⁴ On top of that, the deportation of people to Kazakhstan in the 1930s and 1940s, and the Virgin Lands programme of the 1950s increased the number of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, influencing the ethnic composition.¹⁴⁵ Due to these developments, according to the 1959 Soviet census,¹⁴⁶ the share of ethnic Kazakhs declined to 30%, while the share of ethnic Russians rose to 43%.¹⁴⁷ After this period, the share of ethnic Kazakhs slowly started rising again. This is caused by the higher birth rate of ethnic Kazakhs compared to ethnic Russians.¹⁴⁸ In 1979, the share of ethnic Kazakhs was 36%, in 1989 it was 40% and in 1999 it rose to 53%.¹⁴⁹

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the decline of ethnic Russians in the region gained momentum, as many ethnic Russians migrated to other

¹⁴¹ Niccolò Pianciola, "Ukraine and Kazakhstan: Comparing the Famines," *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 3 (August 2018): 440–44, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777318000309>.

¹⁴² Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 99, 175.

¹⁴³ Robert Kindler and Cynthia Klohr, *Stalin's Nomads: Power and Famine in Kazakhstan*, 1st ed., Central Eurasia in Context Series (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018), 176–77.

¹⁴⁴ Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, 144; Pianciola, "Ukraine and Kazakhstan," 441–42; Isabelle Ohayan, "La Famine Kazakhe : À l'origine de La Sédentarisation," *Encyclopédie Des Violences de Masse*, 2012, 3; Kindler and Klohr, *Stalin's Nomads*, 158.

¹⁴⁵ Fierman, "Kazakh Language and Prospects," 403.

¹⁴⁶ Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1959. National Composition of the Population by Republics of the USSR," 1959, https://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_59.php.

¹⁴⁷ Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Ob Istarii Perepisei Naseleniya v Kazakhstane," accessed March 26, 2024, <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fstat.gov.kz%2Fupload%2Fmedialibrary%2F7dc%2Fhohqxtb4pb20c8d5ugfxl7n4zgyhsvtg%2F%25D0%259E%25D0%25B1%2520%25D0%25B8%25D1%2581%25D1%2582%25D0%25BE%25D1%2580%25D0%25B8%25D0%25B8%2520%25D0%25BF%25D0%25B5%25D1%2580%25D0%25B5%25D0%25BF%25D0%25B8%25D1%2581%25D0%25B5%25D0%25B9%2520%25D0%25BD%25D0%25B0%25D1%2581%25D0%25B5%25D0%25BB%25D0%25B5%25D0%25BD%25D0%25B8%25D1%258F%2520%25D0%259A%25D0%25B0%25D0%25B7%25D0%25B0%25D1%2585%25D1%2581%25D1%2582%25D0%25B0%25D0%25BD%25D0%25B0.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>.

¹⁴⁸ Fierman, "Kazakh Language and Prospects," 403.

¹⁴⁹ Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1979. National Composition of the Population by Republics of the USSR," 1979, https://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_79.php; Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1989. National Composition of the Population by Republics of the USSR," 1989, https://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_89.php; "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami."

former Soviet republics or back to Russia. By 2009, ethnic Russians comprised 23.7% of Kazakhstan's population, while 63.1% of the total population was ethnic Kazakh.¹⁵⁰ By 2021, the share of ethnic Russians had decreased significantly to 15.5% while the share of ethnic Kazakhs grew to 70.4%, reflecting both migration patterns and different birth rates between ethnic groups.¹⁵¹ These demographic trends show that Kazakhstan is slowly turning more ethnic Kazakh after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The overall demographic trend can be observed in Figure 1.

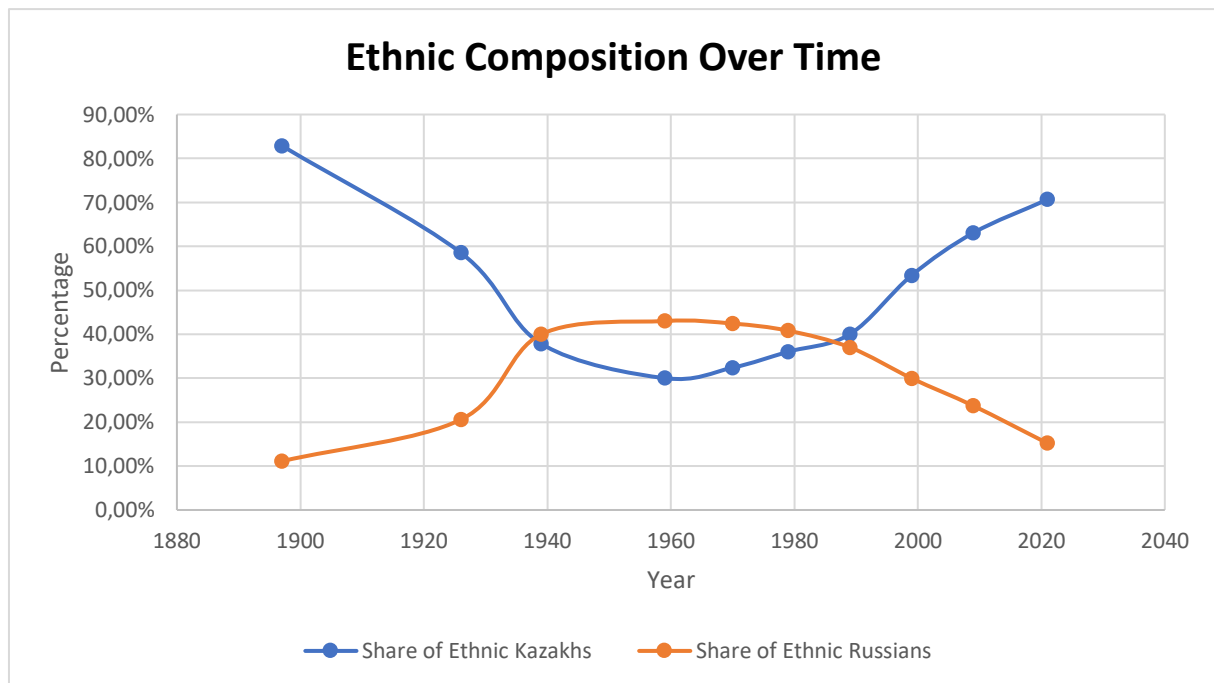


Figure 1: Ethnic Composition Over Time, showing the percentage of ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians from the years 1897-2021, and demonstrating a return to pre-Soviet demographics after 100 years. Calculated by the author based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan; see: "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyispovedanie i Vladenye Yazykami," 5-7, and several datasets from the Central Statistical Office of the USSR.¹⁵²

The evolution of language policies is tied to the demographic transformations that took place throughout Kazakhstan's history. From the early Soviet period, characterized by the *korenizatsiia* policies aimed at promoting non-Russian ethnic groups' development, to the subsequent era of Russification, where the dominance of the Russian language was emphasized, demographic changes played a pivotal role. The significant influx of ethnic Russians during the late 19th and early 20th

¹⁵⁰ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyispovedanie i Vladenye Yazykami," 5-7.

¹⁵¹ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyispovedanie i Vladenye Yazykami," 5-7.

¹⁵² Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1926. National Composition of the Population by Republics of the USSR," 1929 1928, https://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_nac_26.php; Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1959"; Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1939. National Composition of the Population by Republics of the USSR," 1939, https://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_39.php; Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1970. National Composition of the Population by Republics of the USSR," 1970, https://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_70.php; Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1979"; Central Statistical Office of the USSR, "All-Union Census of the Population of 1989"; Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Ob Istorii Perepisei Naseleniya v Kazakhstane."

centuries altered the linguistic landscape, leading to debates over language rights and preferences. Furthermore, famines and forced migrations during the Soviet era not only reshaped the ethnic composition of the population but also influenced linguistic assimilation and preservation efforts. As the ethnic Kazakh population gradually reclaimed majority status following the Soviet Union's dissolution, language policies underwent further revisions, reflecting the shifting demographic balance and aspirations for linguistic and cultural identity. Today, Kazakhstan's language policies continue to evolve in response to demographic trends, as the government seeks to balance the promotion of Kazakh as the state language with the recognition of Russian as a language of interethnic communication, all while accommodating the linguistic diversity present within the country. At the same time, the Russian language stays important due to the role it played in Kazakhstan's history.

IV. Ethnic Dynamics: Population Changes and Socio-Economic Implications

I. Contemporary Demographics

In 2009, Kazakhstan's population stood at 16,009,597 individuals. Among them, 63.1% identified as ethnic Kazakhs, while 23.7% were of ethnic Russian descent. By 2021, the population had surged to 19,186,015 individuals, marking a substantial growth of almost 20% compared to 2009.¹⁵³

This growth was accompanied by significant shifts in the ethnic composition of the country. The proportion of ethnic Kazakhs in the population increased to 70.4% by 2021, indicating a notable rise. Conversely, the proportion of ethnic Russians decreased to 15.5% during the same period.¹⁵⁴

Interestingly, this decline in the proportion of ethnic Russians was mirrored by a decrease in their absolute numbers. From 2009 to 2021, the count of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan dropped from 3,793,764 individuals to 2,981,946 individuals. This indicates not just a relative decline but also an actual reduction in the number of ethnic Russians residing in the country over this period, as can be observed in Figure 2.

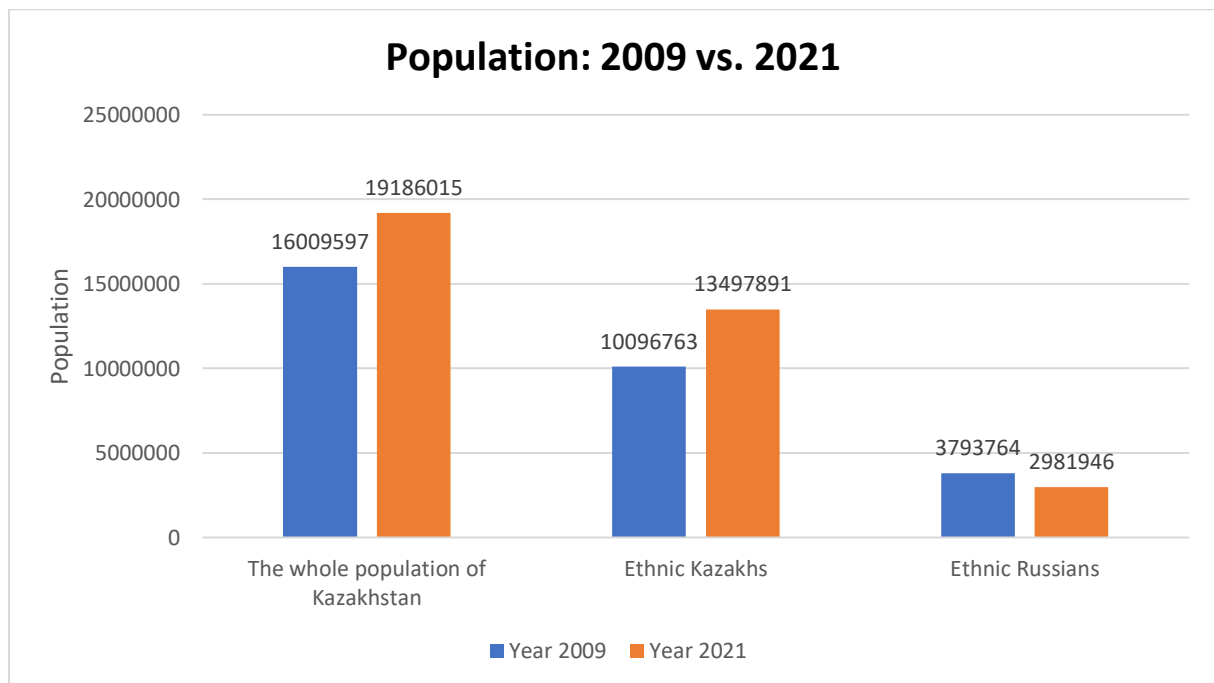


Figure 2: Population: 2009 vs. 2021. While the population of Kazakhstan increases and the number of ethnic Kazakhs increases, the decline in the proportion of ethnic Russians is mirrored by a decrease in their absolute numbers. Calculated by the author based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan; see: "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisповedanie i Vladenie Yazykami," 5–7.

The decline of the population of ethnic Russians could not only be explained by natural deaths and migration, but also by the variance in birth rates between ethnic

¹⁵³ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisповedanie i Vladenie Yazykami," 5–7.

¹⁵⁴ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisповedanie i Vladenie Yazykami," 5–7.

Kazakhs and ethnic Russians. Typically, ethnic Kazakh families tend to have a higher number of children compared to their ethnic Russian counterparts. This discrepancy becomes evident when analysing population pyramids or age distribution graphs.

As can be seen in Figure 3, for instance, in the year 2021, merely 1.3% of the ethnic Russian population falls within the age range of up to 1 year old. In stark contrast, this figure is twice as high for ethnic Kazakhs, with 2.6% of them being in the same age bracket. This doubling effect is indicative of the substantially higher birth rate within the ethnic Kazakh community.¹⁵⁵

Similarly, when scrutinizing the age bracket of 5 to 9 years old, the disparities persist. While 5.9% of the ethnic Russians falls into this category, the proportion is nearly doubled among ethnic Kazakhs, standing at 11.2%.¹⁵⁶ These statistics further underscore the trend of higher fertility rates among ethnic Kazakhs compared to ethnic Russians.

However, this demographic divergence extends beyond just early childhood. It is observable that ethnic Russians are, on average, older compared to ethnic Kazakhs. This is particularly notable when examining the age group of 34 years and older, up to those aged 70 and above.¹⁵⁷ In terms of percentage, the ethnic Russian population surpasses ethnic Kazakhs in these older age brackets.

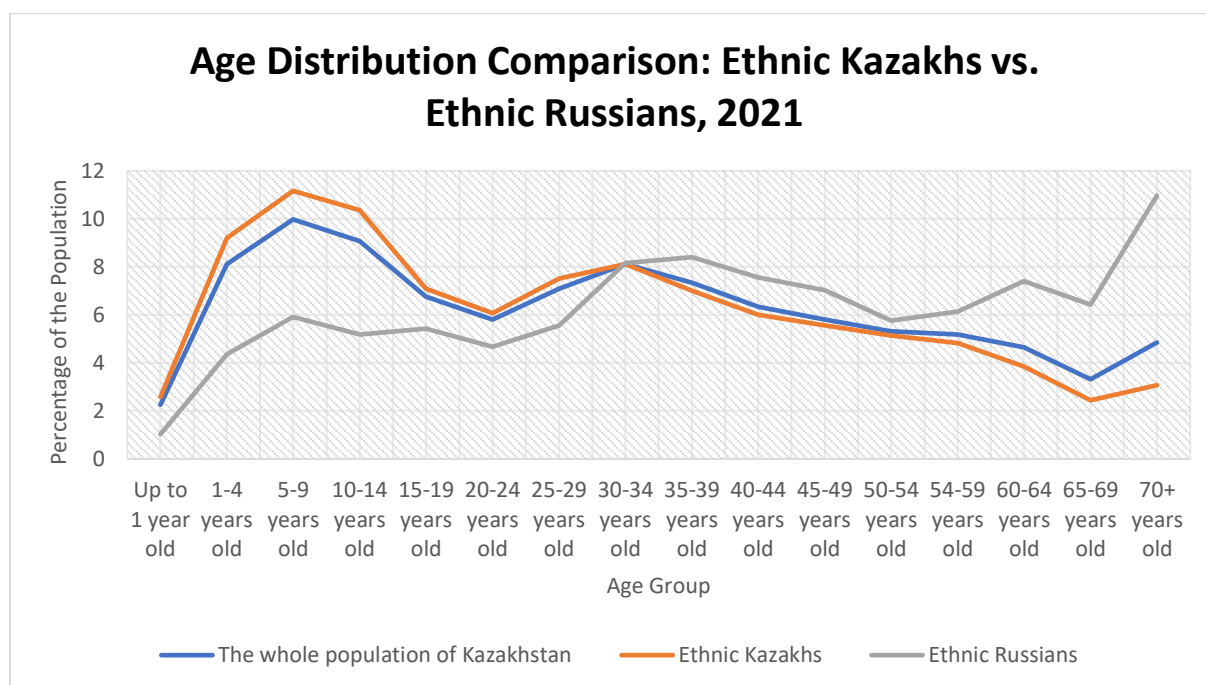


Figure 3: Age Distribution Comparison: Ethnic Kazakhs vs. Ethnic Russians, 2021. There are significant differences in age distribution between ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, highlighting higher proportions of young individuals among Kazakhs and an aging demographic among Russians. Calculated by the author based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan; see: “Natsional’nyi Sostav, Veroispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami,” 31.

¹⁵⁵ “Natsional’nyi Sostav, Veroispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami,” 31.

¹⁵⁶ “Natsional’nyi Sostav, Veroispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami,” 31.

¹⁵⁷ “Natsional’nyi Sostav, Veroispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami,” 31.

Consequently, this disparity in age distribution indicates a fundamental difference in the composition of the two ethnic groups. Ethnic Kazakhs skew younger, with a higher proportion of children and young adults, while ethnic Russians constitute an aging demographic. This demographic juxtaposition underscores the evolving dynamics within Kazakhstan's population, with implications for various societal and economic factors.

II. Language Proficiency and Educational Attainment

Upon examining the proficiency of ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians in the Kazakh and Russian languages, a clear pattern emerges: Ethnic Russians typically demonstrate mastery of their native language, Russian, while often lacking fluency in Kazakh. Conversely, ethnic Kazakhs exhibit a dual proficiency, possessing a strong command of Kazakh alongside competence in Russian, as is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4 shows that the vast majority of Kazakhs, approximately 99.62%, demonstrate a high level of proficiency in the Kazakh language across various domains. This proficiency extends to understanding spoken and written Kazakh, with over 99.6% understanding spoken Kazakh and 99.5% understanding written Kazakh. Additionally, a significant portion, around 91.17%, of Kazakhs freely speak Kazakh, while approximately 55% are capable of freely writing in the language.¹⁵⁸

Figure 4 also reveals a notable disparity in language proficiency among ethnic Russians. Only one fourth of the ethnic Russians demonstrate understanding of spoken Kazakh, and a similar proportion understand written Kazakh. Moreover, 24.3% and a mere 8.5% of ethnic Russians freely speak and write in Kazakh, respectively.¹⁵⁹

Conversely, the figure highlights the language proficiency of both ethnic groups in Russian. Here, ethnic Russians exhibit remarkably high levels of proficiency, with nearly 100% understanding spoken and written Russian. Moreover, a substantial majority of ethnic Russians, approximately 94.78%, freely speak Russian, while around 91.48% are capable of freely writing in the language.¹⁶⁰

Meanwhile, ethnic Kazakhs display a relatively lower level of proficiency in Russian compared to their proficiency in Kazakh. Approximately 79.53% of ethnic Kazakhs understand spoken Russian, while a similar proportion, around 79.27%, understand written Russian. Additionally, about 64.93% of ethnic Kazakhs freely speak Russian, and approximately 40.35% are proficient in writing in the language.¹⁶¹ Thus, while ethnic Russians tend to prioritize and excel in their native tongue, exemplifying monolingualism, ethnic Kazakhs exemplify bilingualism. Given that ethnic Kazakhs are statistically bilingual in both Kazakh and Russian, while ethnic Russians are statistically monolingual, speaking only Russian, we are

¹⁵⁸ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisповedanie i Vladenie Yazykami," 476, 482.

¹⁵⁹ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisповedanie i Vladenie Yazykami," 476, 482.

¹⁶⁰ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisповedanie i Vladenie Yazykami," 476, 482.

¹⁶¹ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisповedanie i Vladenie Yazykami," 476, 482.

utilizing the ethnic categories found in census data as indicators of language proficiency.

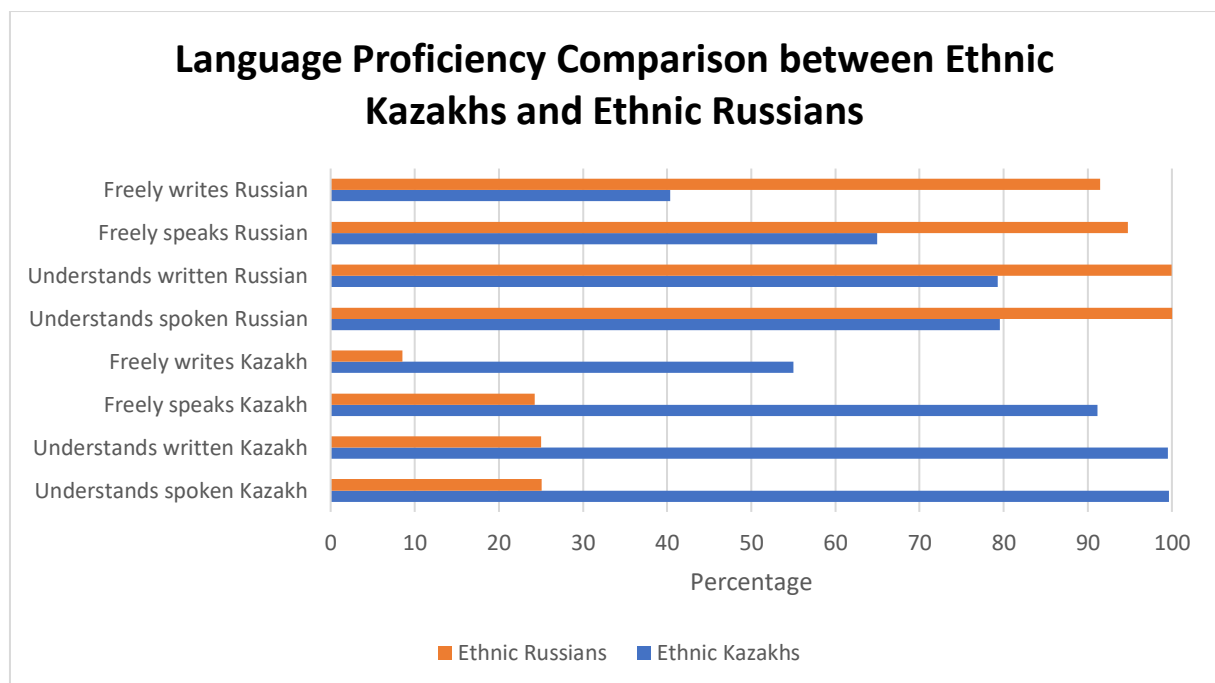


Figure 4: Language Proficiency Comparison between Ethnic Kazakhs and Ethnic Russians. Ethnic Kazakhs demonstrate proficiency in both Kazakh and Russian, while ethnic Russians excel in Russian but show lower proficiency in Kazakh. Calculated by the author based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan; see: “Natsional’nyi Sostav, Veroyisповедanie i Vladenie Yazykami,” 476, 482.

To assess the impact of language proficiency on educational outcomes, it is essential to compare the educational achievements of ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians with their respective proportions in the working population.

In an ideal scenario where language proficiency does not influence educational achievements, we would anticipate the distribution of graduates to mirror the ethnic composition of the working population. In other words, if ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians hold equal standing in society, we would expect the proportion of graduates from each ethnicity to align closely with their respective shares of the working population.

Notably, if any ethnic group is found to be underrepresented in education, it raises the possibility that language knowledge could be acting as a hindrance to their educational advancement. Language barriers, whether perceived or real, may impede access to educational opportunities, limit academic success, and perpetuate inequalities within the educational system. Underrepresentation of an ethnic group could lead to the same ethnic group having a lower income on average and is in such a way connected to our research.

When analysing the demographics of the working population within Kazakhstan, it becomes evident that a significant proportion of the workforce comprises ethnic Kazakhs. Out of a total working population of 9,188,013 individuals, ethnic Kazakhs constitute the majority, accounting for 6,305,971 people, which equates

to 68.63% of the workforce.¹⁶² Conversely, ethnic Russians make up a smaller portion, with 1,537,133 individuals, representing 16.73% of the working population. These numbers are similar to the proportion of ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians in the total population (i.e. 70.4% of the population is ethnic Kazakh, while 15.5% is ethnic Russian).¹⁶³ The small difference between these numbers can be caused by the fact that the ethnic Kazakh population has a relatively large number of children, who are not of working age and thus do not constitute of the working population, while the ethnic Russian population has a lower share of children, meaning that a bigger percentage of ethnic Russians are part of the working population.

Upon further examination of educational attainment within the workforce, it is notable that a substantial number of individuals possess higher education qualifications. Across Kazakhstan, a total of 2,831,043 individuals hold higher education credentials. Among them, 1,951,462 are ethnic Kazakhs, comprising 68.93% of the higher-educated workforce. This percentage slightly surpasses the proportion of ethnic Kazakhs within the total working population by 0.3%. In contrast, 468,319 ethnic Russians hold higher education qualifications, representing 16.54% of the higher-educated workforce, which is marginally lower (-0.19%) than the share of ethnic Russians within the total working population.¹⁶⁴

Delving deeper into educational achievements, it is noteworthy to examine postgraduate education levels. Across the nation, 101,650 individuals pursued postgraduate studies. Among them, 70,677 are ethnic Kazakhs, accounting for 69.53% of postgraduates, which exceeds the proportion of ethnic Kazakhs within the total working population by 0.897%. Similarly, 17,760 ethnic Russians are engaged in postgraduate studies, representing 17.47% of postgraduates, which is higher by 0.74% than the share of ethnic Russians within the total working population.¹⁶⁵ These findings suggest that neither ethnic Kazakhs, nor ethnic Russians are overrepresented in education.

Interestingly, despite the significant disparities in language proficiency between ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians, there appears to be no discernible influence of language knowledge on educational attainment or achievements in education. Regardless of their linguistic background, both ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians demonstrate comparable levels of success in higher education and postgraduate studies.

¹⁶² "Perepis' Naseleniya 2021: Zanyatost' Naseleniya v Respublike Kazakhstan, Pervyi Tom" (Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023), 33, <https://stat.gov.kz/upload/iblock/4f8/h1k9zs7u32fe0s1g0j3i9vewqqiz2p3x/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%8F%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F%20%D0%B2%20%D0%A0%D0%9A%201%20%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BC.pdf>.

¹⁶³ "Zanyatost' Naseleniya," 33; "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisповедание i Vladenie Yazykami," 5–7.

¹⁶⁴ "Zanyatost' Naseleniya," 68.

¹⁶⁵ "Zanyatost' Naseleniya," 68.

III. The Language Shift in Higher Education

As the younger generation becomes increasingly fluent in Kazakh, the linguistic landscape will naturally shift. Meanwhile, the older generation, many of whom were educated in Russian during a time when it was more dominant, may continue to predominantly use Russian.

The demographic shift is reflected in Kazakhstan's educational institutions. For this research, we looked at the best universities in the Kostanay region and the Zhambyl region. In the Kostanay region, the Akhmet Baitursynov Kostanay State University (KSU) demonstrates the growing importance of the Kazakh language. Analysing the educational programmes offered in the last few years, it is observed that out of 66 bachelor programmes,¹⁶⁶ the vast majority—54 programmes—are bilingual, catering to both Kazakh and Russian speakers. Additionally, there are seven programmes offered in Russian, Kazakh, and English, often within the fields of natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics. Notably, only language-specific programmes such as literature studies are instructed in their respective languages. Only two bachelor programmes are exclusively taught in Russian, namely Russian Language and Literature and Russian philology, and two other bachelor programmes are exclusively taught in Kazakh, namely Kazakh Language and Literature and Kazakh philology.

Examining the master's programmes, the trend persists with 49 programs, the majority of which are bilingual (41), followed by two programmes in exclusively Kazakh and one programme in exclusively Russian. Similar to the bachelor programmes, language-specific master's programmes are typically taught in their respective languages.¹⁶⁷

Moreover, it stands out that for every programme that is given in both Kazakh and Russian, Kazakh is given as the first language, and Russian as the second, as can be seen in Figure 5. This deliberate ordering, with Kazakh consistently placed before Russian in programme offerings and document sections, underscores the strategic prioritization of the Kazakh language. By positioning Kazakh as the primary language of instruction and communication, the Kostanay State University reaffirms its commitment to promoting and preserving the Kazakh language, aligning with broader national initiatives aimed at strengthening the role of Kazakh in various spheres of society.

Оқыту тілі/ Язык обучения/ Language of instruction	қазақ және орыс/казахский и русский/kazakh and russian
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Figure 5: The Prioritization of Kazakh. In programmes offered in both Kazakh and Russian at the Kostanay State University, Kazakh is consistently prioritized as the primary language of instruction. See: *Bachelor Programmes*, "The Akhmet Baitursynov Kostanay State University; *Master's Magistracy*, "The Akhmet Baitursynov Kostanay State University.

Turning attention to the best university in the Zhambyl region, the M. Kh. Dulaty Taraz Regional University, also known as Dulaty University, similarly emphasizes

¹⁶⁶ "Bachelor Programmes," The Akhmet Baitursynov Kostanay State University, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://ksu.edu.kz/en/educational-activity/obrazovatelnye-programmy/bakalavriat/>.

¹⁶⁷ "Master's Magistracy," The Akhmet Baitursynov Kostanay State University, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://ksu.edu.kz/en/educational-activity/obrazovatelnye-programmy/magistratura/>.

linguistic inclusivity. With 111 bachelor's and 60 master's programmes, the university's website offers information in Kazakh, Russian, and English. While the specific language of instruction is not explicitly stated on the website, each of the programmes outlines the competences a graduated student needs to have, of which one is being able to use Kazakh or Russian to talk about their area of studies.¹⁶⁸ Kazakh is mentioned first, while Russian is mentioned afterwards and between brackets. This implies that the focus is on Kazakh, but it is also possible to follow the programme in Russian.

These two major universities show that almost all bachelor's and master's programmes are available in both Kazakh and Russian nowadays, reflecting a departure from the previous dominance of Russian as the sole language of instruction.¹⁶⁹ This linguistic inclusivity means that students are no longer bound to receive their education solely in Russian.

Formerly, the limited availability of education in Kazakh meant that many individuals, particularly from ethnic Kazakh backgrounds, faced barriers in accessing higher education.¹⁷⁰ However, with the increasing availability of programmes in Kazakh, the educational landscape is becoming more accessible and inclusive. This shift holds profound implications for the linguistic dynamics not only within educational institutions but also in the broader societal context. As more individuals, especially younger generations, opt for education in Kazakh, it sets the stage for a gradual transition in the language used in professional setting.

Currently, Russian predominates as the language of business in Kazakhstan. However, as more individuals receive their higher education in Kazakh, there is a potential paradigm shift on the horizon. While this transition will not occur overnight, it is intertwined with the ongoing demographic changes in Kazakhstan. As younger generations, who are more inclined towards Kazakh language education, become the older workforce, the linguistic landscape of the workplace is likely to evolve. Over the coming decades, we may witness a gradual but significant shift towards Kazakh as a prominent language in professional settings.

IV. Ethnic Composition in the Kostanay and Zhambyl Regions

In analysing the Kostanay and Zhambyl regions, it becomes imperative to explore their ethnic compositions. Understanding the demographic makeup of these regions is crucial for comprehending the interplay between income levels, external factors influencing regional prosperity, and the distribution of ethnic groups within these areas.

¹⁶⁸ "Implemented Educational Bachelor Programmes," Dulaty University, accessed June 12, 2024, <https://dulaty.kz/en/study/implemented-edu-pro-en/bachelor.html>; "Implemented Educational Master Programmes," Dulaty University, accessed June 12, 2024, <https://dulaty.kz/en/study/implemented-edu-pro-en/magistracy-en.html>.

¹⁶⁹ Dina Kucherbayeva and Juldyz Smagulova, "Language Revitalization: Challenges for Kazakh in Higher Education," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 14, no. 2 (August 1, 2023): 166–78, <https://doi.org/10.1177/18793665231189326>.

¹⁷⁰ Kucherbayeva and Smagulova, "Language Revitalization."

For instance, certain regions may exhibit higher income levels due to a variety of external factors such as natural resources, industrial development, or proximity to economic centres. When a particular ethnicity predominantly resides in these prosperous regions, their average income is inevitably influenced. This can result in a skewed representation of average incomes, with the ethnic group predominant in affluent areas boasting higher average incomes compared to others less represented in these regions.

Firstly, focusing on the Kostanay region, it stands out with a significantly larger proportion of ethnic Russians compared to both the Zhambyl region and the national average. Among the 833,643 individuals in the Kostanay region, 44.2% identify as ethnic Kazakh, while a substantial 33.7% identify as ethnic Russian,¹⁷¹ as can be seen in Figure 6. This concentration of ethnic Russians in Kostanay significantly deviates from the national average, where ethnic Kazakhs constitute the majority at 70.4%, with ethnic Russians comprising only 15.5%.¹⁷²

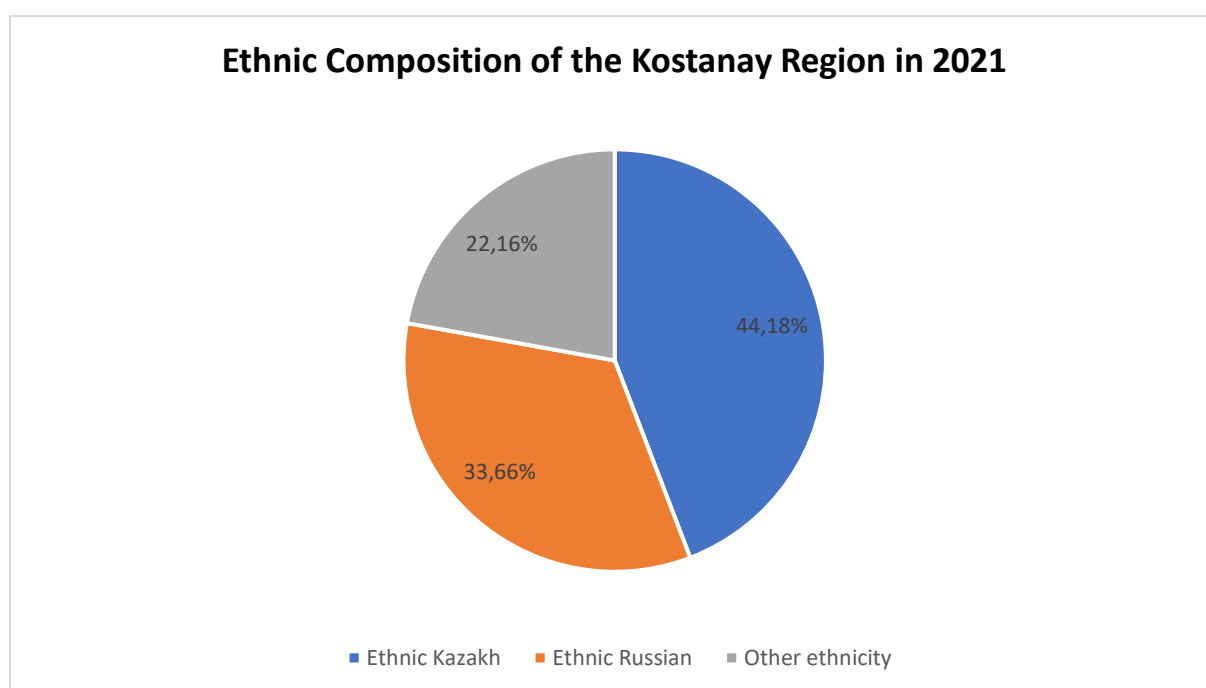


Figure 6: Ethnic Composition of the Kostanay Region in 2021. Calculated by the author based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan; see: “Kratkie Itogi,” 12.

In contrast, the Zhambyl region demonstrates a demographic makeup that is more aligned with the countrywide averages. Of the 1,199,259 individuals in the Zhambyl region, a significant majority of 74.3% identifies as ethnic Kazakh, while

¹⁷¹ “Perepis’ Naseleniya 2021: Kratkie Itogi” (Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023), 12, <https://stat.gov.kz/upload/medialibrary/e62/b1e0sokkht34a1iyu2qdmu30dayt6sz1/%D0%9A%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B5%20%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%B8%20%D0%9F%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%B8%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf>.

¹⁷² “Natsional’nyi Sostav, Veroispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami,” 5–7.

a comparatively smaller proportion of 7.3% identifies as ethnic Russian,¹⁷³ as can be seen in Figure 7. This distribution mirrors the countrywide average more closely, but has a smaller share of ethnic Russians, which is 15.5% countrywide.¹⁷⁴

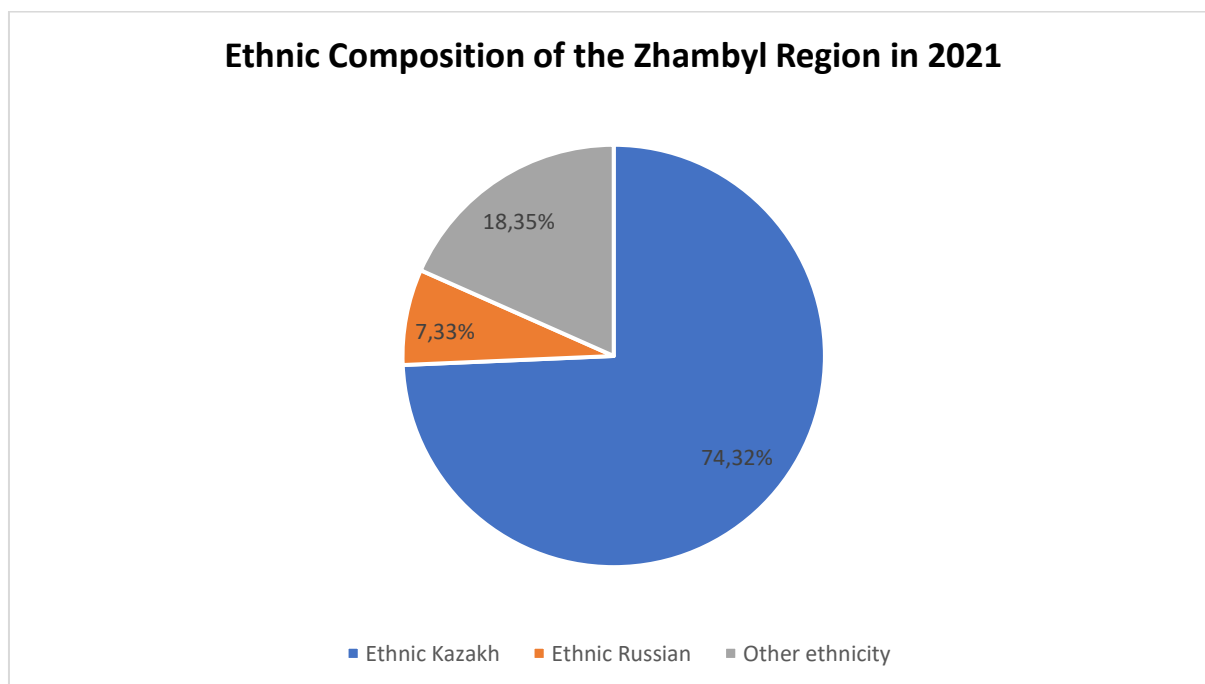


Figure 7: Ethnic Composition of the Zhambyl Region in 2021. Calculated by the author based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan; see: “Kratkie Itogi,” 12.

The discrepancy between the two regions underscores the regional variations within Kazakhstan, with the Kostanay region exhibiting a demographic landscape that significantly contrasts with both the national average and the demographic profile of the Zhambyl region.

V. Regional Income Disparities

Knowledge of the ethnic composition of these regions is necessary when examining regional income disparities. When calculating the average income of the Zhambyl region and the Kostanay region, we noticed that the average income in Zhambyl is significantly lower because a bigger share of the population has no income as can be seen in Figure 8. In the Zhambyl region, 37.5% of the population does not have an income, while in the Kostanay region, 21.1% of the population does not have an income. This can be explained by the fact that a bigger share of the population in Zhambyl is ethnic Kazakh, who tend to have more children than ethnic Russians. Because of this, a relatively large part of the population of Zhambyl is not of working age yet, and thus have no income, skewing the results.

We accounted for this by calculating the average salaries of the working population, for which we do not include those with no income as these are mostly

¹⁷³ “Kratkie Itogi,” 12.

¹⁷⁴ “Natsional’nyi Sostav, Veroispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami,” 5–7.

(ethnic Kazakh) children. By doing this, it is noticeable that the average income is only slightly higher in the Kostanay region compared to the Zhambyl region, standing at 103,079 tenge per month and 92,913.20 tenge per month, respectively. The distribution of income levels across the Zhambyl region and the Kostanay region can be found in Figure 8.

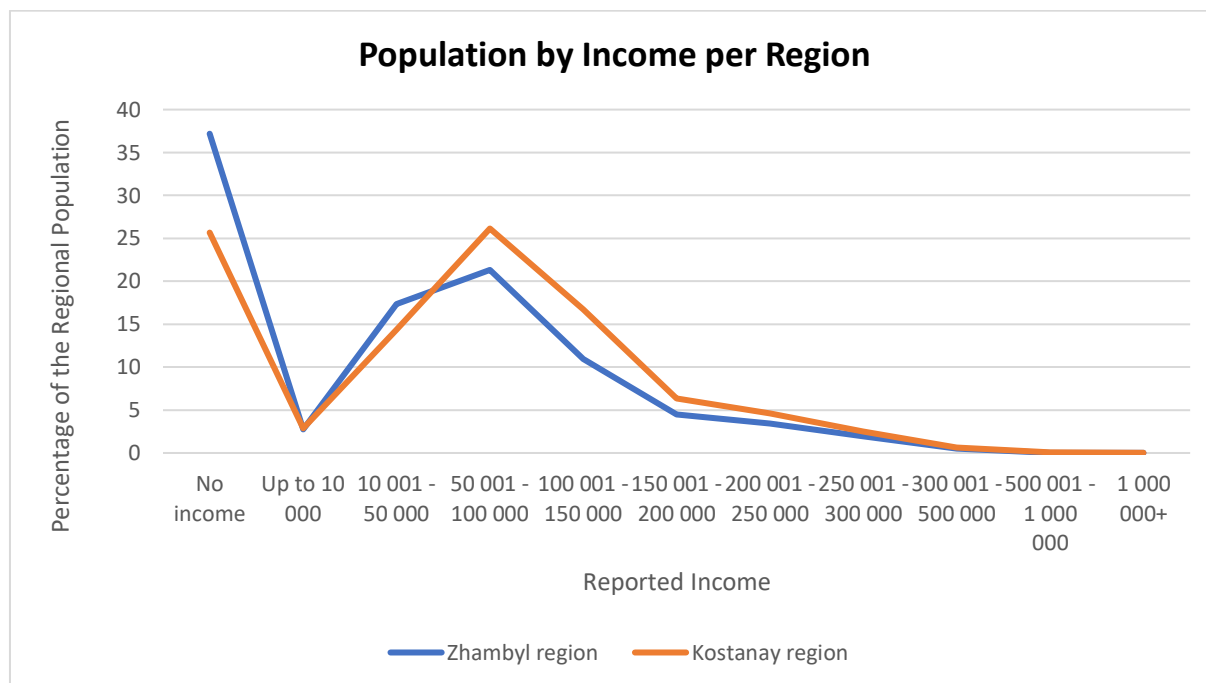


Figure 8: Population by Income per Region, illustrating the variations in regional income, highlighting that while differences exist, they are relatively minor. Calculated by the author based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan; see: "Dokhody i Istochniki," 295–97.

Further dissecting the data by nationality, we observe notable disparities in average income within each region. In the Kostanay region, the average income of ethnic Kazakhs is 101,787.27 tenge per month, whereas, on average, ethnic Russians have an income of 108,490.20 tenge per month.¹⁷⁵ This indicates that the monthly income of ethnic Russians exceeds that of ethnic Kazakhs by an average of 6,702.93 tenge. Similarly, in the Zhambyl region, the average income stands at 92,913.20 tenge per month. For ethnic Kazakhs, the average income is 91,748.86 tenge per month, while for ethnic Russians, it is 97,790.73 tenge per month.¹⁷⁶ Here, the income disparity is somewhat lower, with ethnic Russians earning an average of 6,041.88 tenge more than ethnic Kazakhs.

This consistent pattern suggests a general income difference between ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Russians, typically ranging between 6,000 and 7,000 tenge. In interviews conducted with residents of the Kostanay region and the Zhambyl region, an ethnic Russian residing in Kostanay emphasized that 7,000 tenge equates to roughly 14 litres of milk, emphasizing the perceived insignificance of

¹⁷⁵ For the Kostanay region, we used the formula: (Avg. income in the Kostanay region/Avg. income in Kazakhstan)*(Avg. income for Nationality X) = Avg. income for Nationality X in Kostanay. In our calculation, we leave out those with no income.

¹⁷⁶ For the Zhambyl region, we used the same formula as for the Kostanay region, but we used the numbers for the Zhambyl region instead of the Kostanay region.

this amount. She further noted that the cost of groceries for one week and for a two-person household far exceeds 7,000 tenge, amounting to around 25,000 tenge. This insight underscores the relative impact of income disparities on the daily lives.¹⁷⁷

Since we already established that education is not the cause for higher income for ethnic Russians, and ethnic Kazakhs also tend to know Russian, there must be another reason. To comprehend the situation, we need to investigate the average salary people make according to age and the composition of the ethnic Kazakh and ethnic Russian population.

In Kazakhstan, individuals tend to earn the most when they are between the ages of 35 and 39, with an average income of 127,127 tenge. Following closely behind are those aged between 30 and 34, as well as those between 40 and 44, both earning upwards of 125,000 tenge, but less than 127,127 tenge. Interestingly, individuals aged 45-49 and 25-29 earn approximately the same amount, averaging around 120,000 tenge. However, all older age groups, spanning from 50 to 70+ years, always have a higher average income than individuals younger than 24 years old, as is shown in Figure 9.¹⁷⁸

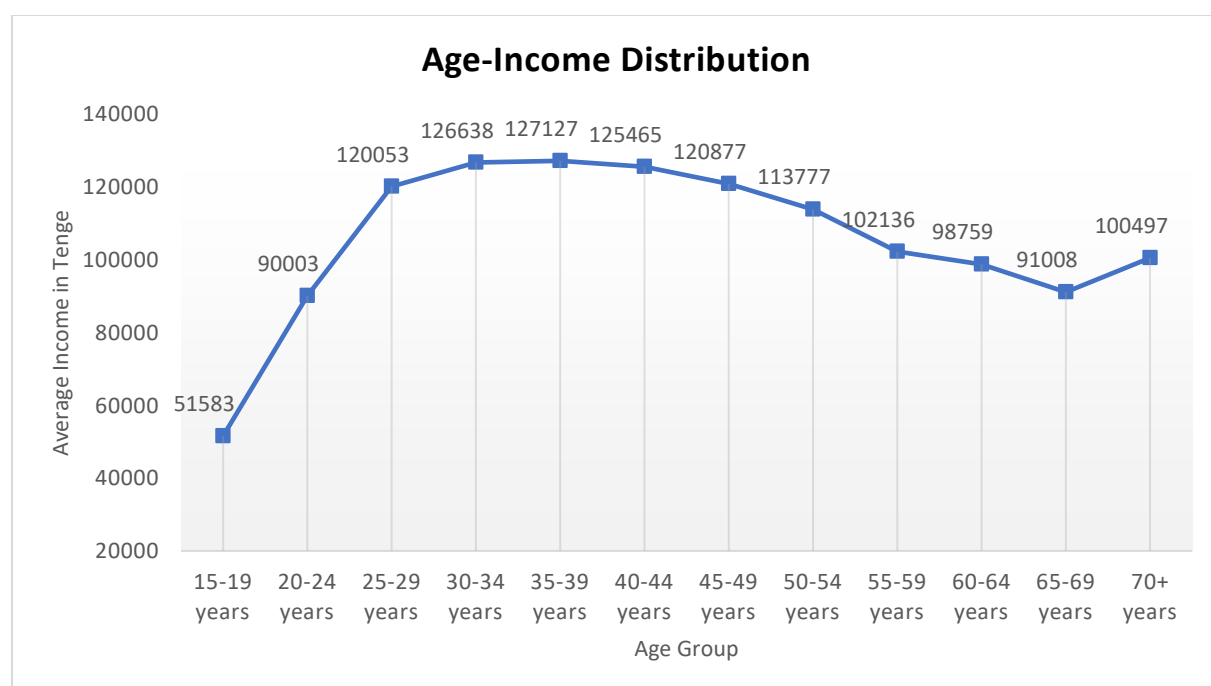


Figure 9: Age-Income Distribution. The average salaries for each age group. Calculated by the author based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan; see: *Dokhody i Istochniki*,” 159–61.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with an ethnic Russian living in Kostanay, Kazakhstan, Telegram, February 27, 2024.

¹⁷⁸ “Natsional’nyi Sostav, Veroyispovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami,” 31–40; “Perepis’ Naseleniya 2021: Dokhody i Istochniki Sredstv Syshchestvovaniya Naseleniya Respubliki Kazakhstan” (Bureau of National Statistisc of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023), 159–61, <https://stat.gov.kz/upload/iblock/6c6/d55qxopx7t9m5r5odz0jjax0vmxfvdf/%D0%94%D0%BE%D1%85%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%8B%20%D0%B8%20%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B8%20%D1%81%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%20%D1%81%D1%83%D1%89%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F%20%D0%A0%D0%9A.pdf>.

When examining the age distribution within these ethnic groups, as shown in Figure 3 in the subchapter "Contemporary Demographics" of Chapter IV, and combining this with data about age and income, we notice that before the age of 35, there are relatively more ethnic Kazakhs than ethnic Russians. To illustrate, 7.1% of the ethnic Kazakh population is between 15 and 19 years old, while only 5.4% of the ethnic Russians is the same age. However, beyond the age of 34, a shift occurs. While income generally rises after the age of 34, so does the proportion of ethnic Russians. For instance, 8.4% of all ethnic Russians are between the ages of 35 and 39, while only 7% of ethnic Kazakhs fall within this bracket.¹⁷⁹ This trend continues, indicating that although there may be a larger absolute number of ethnic Kazakhs due to their larger population, a greater percentage of ethnic Russians tend to find themselves in higher income brackets, as can be observed in Figure 10. This observation underscores a significant correlation between age, income, and ethnic composition within the population, and aligns with demographic patterns, particularly the lower birth rates among Russians, contributing to their smaller proportion among younger age groups in the population.

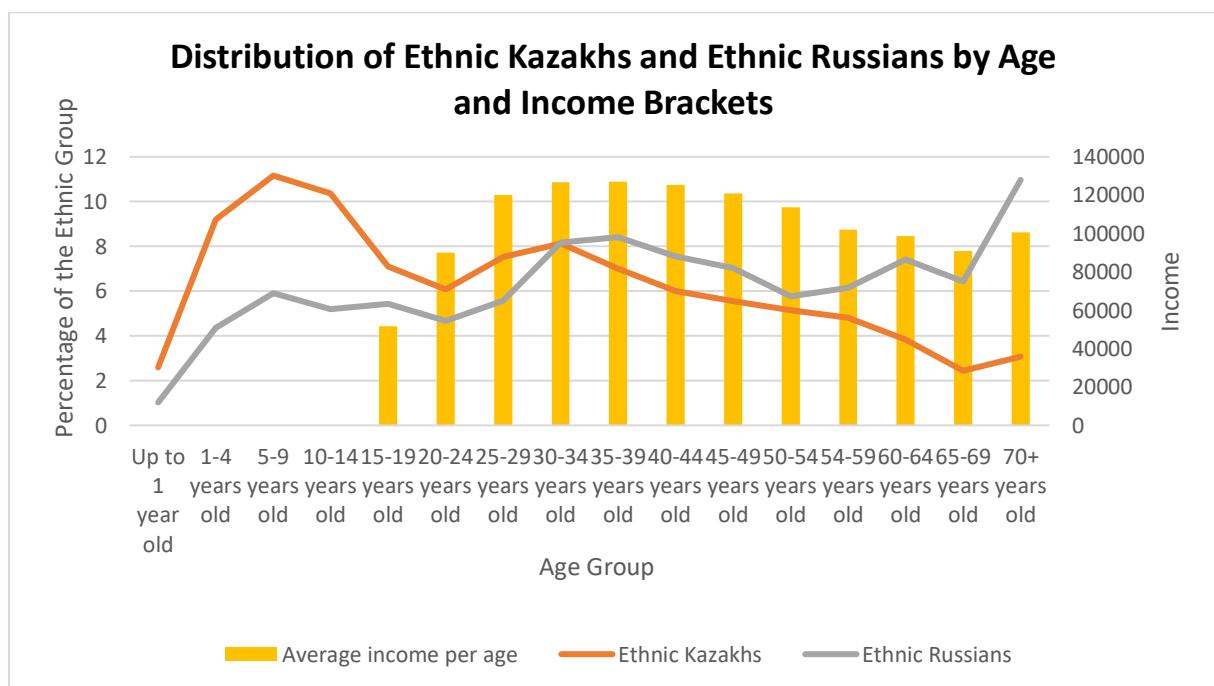


Figure 10: Distribution of Ethnic Kazakhs and Ethnic Russians by Age and Income Brackets, showing the correlation between age, income, and ethnic composition, showing that as individuals reach peak earning potential, there is a higher concentration of ethnic Russians within these age cohorts, indicating a trend towards higher income among ethnic Russians. Calculated by the author based on data from "Dokhody i Istochniki," 159–61, and "Natsional'nyi Sostav," 31.

Specifically, as individuals reach the age range associated with peak earning potential, we observe a higher concentration of ethnic Russians within these age cohorts. This phenomenon suggests that as ethnic Kazakhs generally comprise a larger proportion of the younger population cohorts, their presence is more pronounced in age groups where individuals are typically in the early stages of their careers or education and thus their income is lower. Conversely, the ethnic

¹⁷⁹ "Natsional'nyi Sostav, Veroyisovedanie i Vladenie Yazykami," 31.

Russian population, skewed towards older age groups, tends to be more prevalent in cohorts with higher earnings.

This demographic contrast significantly influences income disparities across age groups. Younger Kazakhs, entering the workforce or pursuing higher education, may have lower average incomes compared to older Russians who have accumulated more experience and seniority in their careers. However, as the ethnic Kazakh population ages and progresses through their careers, we may expect their income levels to rise, potentially narrowing the income gap between the two ethnic groups. The demographic shift towards a higher proportion of ethnic Kazakhs and a lower proportion of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan promises not only to equalize the income levels of both ethnic groups in the coming decades but also to foster a gradual increase in the prevalence of the Kazakh language.

VI. Language in Daily Life

The Kazakhization trend is also visible when looking at employment vacancies and their requirements. In this chapter, we looked at vacancies to discern the tangible effects of language requirements on economic outcome. However, interpreting these findings purely as statistical trends would be insufficient. We aim to present them as qualitative illustrations of the broader socio-demographic shifts identified in Kazakhstan. Thus, this chapter serves not only to present data but also to provide insights into how language and employment intersect in the daily lives of Kazakhstan's citizens.

Across both the Zhambyl region and the Kostanay region, the vast majority of high-school teaching positions require proficiency in both the Kazakh and the Russian language. For instance, out of 13 teaching vacancies in the Zhambyl region found in April 2024, two positions require Kazakh, four require Russian, and seven necessitate knowledge of both languages. Similarly, in Kostanay, out of 21 total vacancies, eight require knowledge of Kazakh, four require Russian, while nine require both languages.¹⁸⁰

This bilingual requirement is not unique to teaching positions but extends to other job sectors. For instance, when examining vacancies for lawyers found in June 2024, we find a similar trend. In the Zhambyl region, one out of two lawyer vacancies observed in June 2024 require knowledge of both Kazakh and Russian, while the other one demands proficiency in Kazakh alone. Similarly, in Kostanay, the two vacancies available require proficiency in both languages.

Even in more technical fields like driving, the bilingual trend persists. In the Zhambyl region, one out of two driver positions observed in June 2024 require both Kazakh and Russian, the other vacancy requires solely Kazakh, and none require only Russian. Meanwhile, in Kostanay, three out of seven positions require

¹⁸⁰ All vacancies referenced in this thesis were sourced from the Enbek vacancy website and are detailed in Appendix B. Appendix B includes the job title, region, offered salary, and a link to each vacancy. This encompasses not only teaching positions but also lawyer and driver positions.

proficiency in both languages, while three require proficiency in solely Russian and one requires proficiency in solely Kazakh.

Overall, the prevalence of bilingual requirements in job vacancies across both regions is evident. This consistent requirement of bilingualism in various sectors reflects a deliberate push towards maintaining both Kazakh and Russian languages as integral parts of the Kazakhstani identity. It also suggests that proficiency in both languages is seen as valuable.

Despite the widespread requirement for bilingual proficiency in job vacancies across Kazakhstan, there appears to be no discernible correlation between language proficiency and salary levels. This observation suggests that while language skills are valued, they do not dictate earning potential in the job market.

Examining the data reveals that music teachers, irrespective of the language they teach in, typically commence with comparable salaries of about 85,000 tenge. Conversely, STEM teachers generally command higher salaries than their music-teaching counterparts. However, within the STEM sector, there is no clear indication of an advantage for speakers of either Kazakh or Russian. Furthermore, vacancies necessitating bilingualism do not consistently offer higher salaries compared to those requiring proficiency in only Kazakh or Russian.

This lack of a language advantage is also evident in lawyer vacancies in Zhambyl. In the Zhambyl region, a vacancy requiring solely Kazakh offers the same starting salary of 85,000 tenge as one requiring both Kazakh and Russian. In Kostanay, the two available vacancies both require knowledge of Kazakh and Russian, offering starting salaries of 168,000 tenge and 169,436 tenge, respectively. Since these vacancies and one of the vacancies from the Zhambyl region require the same languages, language requirements do not seem to cause the difference in income. The difference in offered salary does not seem to be caused by other requirements either, as the two vacancies in the Kostanay region require one year of work experience and a higher education diploma, while the vacancy in the Zhambyl region requires the same diploma and two years of work experience, essentially requiring more than the vacancies in Kostanay. The only other difference between the vacancies is the place of employment. This indicates that, at least for some professions, salaries are higher in the Kostanay region than in the Zhambyl region.

When examining the salaries of drivers in the Zhambyl and Kostanay regions, language proficiency does not appear to correlate with differences in pay either. Car drivers, regardless of the region, tend to earn on the lower end, with starting salaries ranging from 85,000 to 100,000 tenge. Notably, two vacancies in Kostanay offer relatively higher salaries for car drivers; one requires proficiency in Kazakh and offers 160,000 tenge, while the other requires proficiency in Russian and offers 190,000 tenge. However, these instances are exceptions, as other car driver vacancies requiring the same languages do not offer similarly high salaries.

This shows that the disparity in salaries appears to be more closely tied to the nature of the positions available such as years of experience, level of qualification, skill shortage in a certain region and the nature of the job itself, rather than solely

determined by the linguistic abilities of the candidates. For instance, the higher salaries associated with STEM teaching positions likely stem from the specialized skill set required in these roles. However, the data does not reveal a consistent trend favouring speakers of a particular language. This indicates that while bilingual speakers do not hold an advantage over individuals proficient in only Russian or only Kazakh, the reverse is also true: Monolingual Russian or Kazakh speakers do not hold an advantage over bilingual speakers or each other. Essentially, individuals proficient in any language are treated equally in terms of employment opportunities. While previously Russian was the most important language on the work floor, Kazakh is slowly gaining importance.

It is notable that vacancies in areas with larger than average Russian populations, such as Kostanay, generally offer higher salaries compared to areas with a lower-than-average Russian population, such as the Zhambyl region, irrespective of the language requirements. This remaining salary boost is likely not related to language proficiency, but caused by Soviet-era legacies of educational benefits given to non-Kazakhs, as well as the remaining Soviet-era legacy of relatively high levels of industrialisation and economic development in Kazakhstan's northern regions.

In order to get a better picture of the language situation in the daily life in Kazakhstan, we conducted a small survey.¹⁸¹ One striking observation was the consistent surprise expressed by residents from Kazakhstan when we mentioned the scope of our research and Aldashev and Danzer's conclusion from 2014, encompassing that individuals who speak Kazakh tend to earn less than those who speak Russian and that ethnic Russians who learn Kazakh as a second language also experience a negative impact on their income.¹⁸² One of the people we interviewed exclaimed: "Is that true? I would have never guessed. I think all Kazakhs I know make more money than me."¹⁸³ Many other residents from Kazakhstan also expressed astonishment, stating they were unaware that ethnic Russians tended to earn more, and that they had not personally experienced this phenomenon.¹⁸⁴

The majority of responses we received were from the Kostanay region, with a few from the Zhambyl region. Nonetheless, these responses provide valuable insights into the everyday reality on the ground. The survey commenced by inquiring about the primary language spoken by participants. In both regions, respondents tended to speak Russian at home, even if they possessed a good command of the Kazakh language. A respondent from the Zhambyl region noted, "Compared to other regions of the country, most of our population speaks Kazakh. My family speaks

¹⁸¹ The survey questions can be found in the appendix

¹⁸² Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?"

¹⁸³ Interview with an ethnic Russian living in Kostanay, Kazakhstan, Telegram, February 27, 2024.

¹⁸⁴ This was not part of an interview, but while distributing the survey in several discord servers, looking for people living in the Zhambyl region and the Kostanay region, the research sparked a group discussion about the topic. In this discussion, several people from all over Kazakhstan voiced their surprise. Group discussion with several ethnic Russians and ethnic Kazakhs living in different regions of Kazakhstan, Discord, March 21, 2024.

Russian (at home), but everyone in our family is fluent in both languages." ¹⁸⁵ Another respondent from the Kostanay region shared that they primarily speak Russian and have basic conversational skills in Kazakh, but at home, Russian is the language of choice. ¹⁸⁶

Several respondents admitted to having little to no proficiency in the Kazakh language, aligning with data indicating that many native Russian speakers lack advanced knowledge of Kazakh, while Kazakh speakers typically have a strong command of Russian, as shown in Figure 4 in the subchapter "Language Proficiency and Educational Attainment" of Chapter IV

Moving on to language use in the workplace, responses varied. Some respondents stated that Russian was the sole language used, while others claimed to use Russian and Kazakh equally. This highlights the current diversity in workplace language usage. Although Russian remains predominant, Kazakh is gradually gaining ground, indicating a slow trend towards Kazakhization. Kazakhstan is currently in a transitional phase, gradually becoming more inclusive for Kazakh speakers as Kazakh gains importance alongside Russian.

Subsequently, we inquired whether the respondents encountered any challenges or advantages stemming from their proficiency or lack thereof in either Russian or Kazakh. Universally, respondents reported no significant issues thus far, though one of the respondents noted in passing that familiarity with Kazakh might make their work easier. Additionally, a few respondents mentioned that fluency in Kazakh is a prerequisite for employment in government institutions, but this requirement is not a concern for most individuals.

In addition, we queried the respondents regarding their perception of how language proficiency, particularly in Russian or Kazakh, may have impacted their job search or employment prospects. The majority indicated that language proficiency played a negligible role in their job search. However, one respondent highlighted that their command of Russian did influence their job search, noting that "some people do not know either Kazakh or Russian,"¹⁸⁷ suggesting that proficiency in either language confers an advantage over those who lack fluency in both. This observation aligns with the prevalent use of Russian and Kazakh in the workplace. Another respondent mentioned that their proficiency in Russian alone, without knowledge of Kazakh, influenced their job search, as they disregarded vacancies requiring Kazakh language skills. Nonetheless, as discussed earlier in this subchapter, it is improbable that language requirements significantly affect one's salary.

After this, we explored whether respondents perceive a preference for either Russian or Kazakh speakers in certain industries or job sectors, and if so, the reasons behind it. Some respondents noted the government's inclination towards

¹⁸⁵ Original quote: "По сравнению с другими регионами страны у нас большая часть населения говорит на казахском, у меня в семье говорят на русском, но в нашей семье все владеют обоими языками."

¹⁸⁶ Original quote: "Я знаю русский язык и разговорный казахский язык, дома говорим на русском языке."

¹⁸⁷ Original quote: "Да. Есть население которые просто не знают русский либо Казахский."

speakers of Kazakh, given its requirement for employment in governmental positions. Additionally, respondents indicated that, apart from governmental roles, there appears to be no significant bias towards either language in most sectors, although bilingualism is often favoured in education. The same can be noticed when asking the respondents about government-imposed language policies. While most respondents were unaware of any specific policies, some mentioned the government's efforts to elevate the status of Kazakh. One respondent noted: "The northern regions of Kazakhstan are predominantly Russian-speaking. It is extremely difficult for them to secure public sector jobs, especially managerial positions. I'm almost certain that if there are two specialists for one position, they will choose the one who speaks the Kazakh language."¹⁸⁸ This exemplifies how the government prefers Kazakh speakers in the government sector.

While the majority of respondents acknowledged that being bilingual provides a modest advantage in the job market, one respondent brought up a crucial point. They emphasized that aside from language skills, the influence of personal connections cannot be overstated. This respondent highlighted the significance of "who you know" in securing desirable jobs.¹⁸⁹ This phenomenon is also referred to as "*blat*" in Russian, a term indicating the use of personal connections to gain advantages in various aspects of life, including employment and may be more important than ones actual skills, including language skills.

Finally, we inquired about the changes in language use, particularly in the usage of Russian and Kazakh, over the past few years in Kazakhstan. The responses were intriguing. Every single respondent noted a change in the usage of Kazakh. Some mentioned that the Kazakh language is now more often used.¹⁹⁰ One individual suggested that Russian and Kazakh are now used equally.¹⁹¹ Additionally, two respondents mentioned that this shift in language usage has coincided with increased tension between Kazakh and Russian speakers. They described situations where ethnic Kazakhs insist on speaking Kazakh, while a significant portion of the population lacks proficiency in the language, resulting in conflicts.¹⁹² This again confirms that Kazakhstan is undergoing a gradual process of Kazakhization, with Kazakh gaining importance alongside Russian in various spheres of life. However, this transition is not without challenges, including tensions between language communities.

At the moment, Kazakh has yet to achieve equal usage across all facets of public life; however, there is a discernible trend towards its increasing significance in

¹⁸⁸ Original quote: "Северные области Казахстана русскоговорящие, им найти работу в государственном секторе (особенно руководящие должности) крайне проблематично. Практически уверен, что если будет два специалиста на одно место, то выберут того, кто владеет казахским языком."

¹⁸⁹ Original quote: "билингвист, думаю, будет более востребован на рынке труда. А еще, смотря чей он родственник."

¹⁹⁰ Original quotes: "Думаю, казахский язык стал использоваться чаще", "Стало больше казахского языка", and "Больше требования к изучению Государственного языка."

¹⁹¹ Original quote: "Пришло к равенству"

¹⁹² Original quotes: "Да, стало много недовольных людей, которые говорят, что ты обязан говорить на казахском языке, но в таких рамках это неэтично и разжигает межнациональные распри", and "Некоторые коренные казахи требуют общения с собой только на казахском языке. Часто переходят на конфликт."

daily life in Kazakhstan. While discrimination against Kazakh speakers was prevalent during the Soviet era, its lingering effects have largely dissipated in contemporary times.

V. Analysis and Conclusion

Firstly, this research shows that the Kazakh language is becoming increasingly important in Kazakhstan, a process also called Kazakhization. One of the most compelling pieces of evidence is the series of language policies implemented by the Kazakh government to promote the use of Kazakh. These policies include the promotion of classes in Kazakh, the requirement of Kazakh proficiency in governmental positions, and the promotion of the Kazakh language and culture in various public spheres. These actions demonstrate a clear commitment to elevating the status of Kazakh as the national language and fostering a sense of Kazakhstani identity.

Another indicator of the growing importance of the Kazakh language is the increasing number of Kazakh-medium schools and bilingual education programmes across the country. This reflects a recognition of the need to preserve and promote the Kazakh language among younger generations, especially in regions where Russian has historically been dominant. By offering education in Kazakh alongside Russian and by improving the quality of education, the government is ensuring that education is accessible to all citizens and that the status of the Kazakh language improves.

The prevalence of bilingual requirements in job vacancies across various sectors further highlights the importance of the Kazakh language. This indicates that fluency in Kazakh is increasingly valued in the workforce. Additionally, the survey conducted as part of the research reveals a gradual shift in daily language use towards Kazakh. While Russian remains widely spoken, there is a growing trend of using Kazakh. While people tend to mainly use Russian at the workplace, Kazakh is also slowly being introduced to professional settings. In the future, the usage of Kazakh will likely increase as more individuals, especially younger generations, opt for education in Kazakh. This sets the stage for a gradual transition in the language used in professional settings. As the younger population, of which a bigger share is educated in Kazakh, enters the workforce, the demand for Kazakh proficiency in the workplace will likely rise, further solidifying its importance.

Simultaneously, the Kazakh language is also increasing in importance because the share of ethnic Russians is decreasing and the share of ethnic Kazakhs is increasing. Kazakhstan has seen a decline in the ethnic Russian population since gaining independence in 1991. This decrease is partly due to emigration, with many ethnic Russians leaving Kazakhstan for Russia or other countries. The decreasing share of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan is also due to the fact that ethnic Russians tend to have fewer children compared to ethnic Kazakhs. This demographic trend contributes significantly to the shifting ethnic composition of the population. As a result, the proportion of ethnic Russians in the population has declined from around 37% in 1989 to approximately 15.5% in recent years.

This demographic change has implications for language use because Russian was historically the dominant language in Kazakhstan, especially among ethnic Russians. With the declining proportion of ethnic Russians, there is naturally a decline in the usage of Russian as well.

Moreover, as the ethnic Russian population decreases, there is a corresponding increase in the proportion of ethnic Kazakhs. The proportion of ethnic Kazakhs has increased from 30% in 1959 to 40% in 1989 and approximately 70% in recent years. Ethnic Kazakhs tend to use the Kazakh language more frequently than ethnic Russians, both in their daily lives and in professional settings. Therefore, as the ethnic Kazakh population grows, so does the prevalence and importance of the Kazakh language.

Secondly, the research suggests that the income gap between Russian speakers and Kazakh speakers, as identified by Aldashev and Danzer in 2014, is decreasing. The declining number of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan is a crucial factor in the narrowing income gap between Russian and Kazakh speakers. It is essential to recognize that the income gap does not necessarily stem from linguistic differences but rather from demographic and socio-economic factors. For instance, ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan are, on average, older, and seniors generally earn more than entry-level workers. This age-related income disparity is a common phenomenon globally, not unique to Kazakhstan. As the percentage of young ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan decreases due to the lower birth rate among ethnic Russians, the proportion of senior ethnic Russians automatically increases.

The older age of the Russian population means that a higher percentage consists of individuals who have higher earnings, typically seniors with more experience and established careers. Consequently, the ethnic Russian population tends to have a slightly higher income on average than the ethnic Kazakh population. This disparity is not inherently linked to language but rather to age-related factors. However, over time, as the ethnic Kazakh population also ages and more Kazakhs transition into senior roles, and as the ethnic Russian population continues to decrease, this income gap is expected to diminish. As more ethnic Kazakhs become seniors, they will contribute to balancing out the income distribution within their ethnic group.

Moreover, certain regions in Kazakhstan, particularly those with higher concentrations of ethnic Russians, tend to boast higher average incomes. Consequently, ethnic Russians, who make up a larger share of the population in these economically prosperous areas compared to ethnic Kazakhs, generally have slightly higher average incomes. However, it is essential to recognize that this income disparity is more a reflection of regional economic differences rather than a direct correlation between ethnicity and income. Regions with a higher concentration of ethnic Russians often have stronger economies and more developed infrastructure. Many of these areas, particularly those established during Soviet times, received more investment and development, making them economically more significant. The other side of the coin is that exactly because these areas were developed during Soviet times, many ethnic Russians live in these areas.

In this context, we can reflect on the research conducted by Aldashev and Danzer in 2014, in which the authors asserted that individuals who speak Kazakh tend to earn less than those who speak Russian and that ethnic Russians who learn Kazakh

as a second language also experience a negative impact on their income.¹⁹³ This finding may be explained by the fact that most ethnic Russians who have learned Kazakh reside in regions with a predominantly Kazakh population and fewer ethnic Russians. In these regions, there is a greater need for Kazakh proficiency because it is the primary language spoken, but they also tend to be less economically prosperous. Therefore, bilingual ethnic Russians who know Kazakh do not necessarily earn less because they know Kazakh, but because they live in regions where the economy is weaker, and Kazakh is more commonly used. In addition, Aldashev and Danzer's findings may have been partially true, if limited, in 2014, but the demographic situation since then has continued to move away from Soviet-era legacies, changing the overall linguistic landscape.

In addressing the research question: "How does language proficiency, particularly when comparing Russian and Kazakh, impact employment opportunities and economic outcome in Kazakhstan?", this research sheds light on the relationship between language, employment, and socio-economic factors in Kazakhstan.

There is a clear acknowledgment of the growing importance of the Kazakh language, termed as Kazakhization, evident through governmental policies, educational reforms, and the prevalence of bilingual job requirements. This suggests that fluency in both Kazakh and Russian is increasingly valued in the workforce, especially in sectors like teaching, office management, and technical fields.

However, despite the promotion of the Kazakh language, the research reveals that language proficiency alone does not significantly influence earning potential in the job market. While there were initial claims suggesting that Kazakh speakers earn less than Russian speakers, a deeper analysis shows that income disparities are influenced by various demographic and socio-economic factors. In essence, while language proficiency is essential, other factors such as age, regional economic disparities, and demographic changes have a more significant impact on income levels.

Over the next 25 years, it is likely that the process of Kazakhization will continue to intensify. The Kazakh government has shown a clear and consistent commitment to promoting the Kazakh language through various policies, and this trend is expected to persist. As more young people receive their education in Kazakh, the language will become more entrenched in both public and private spheres. This will likely result in a greater prevalence of Kazakh in professional settings, especially as the younger generation, educated primarily in Kazakh, enters the workforce.

Demographic trends also suggest that economic benefits will increasingly shift towards ethnic Kazakhs and Kazakh speakers. As the ethnic Russian population continues to decline, the economic advantage they previously held—rooted in older age demographics and historical Soviet-era investments—will wane. Moreover, regions traditionally dominated by ethnic Russians will likely see a gradual increase

¹⁹³ Aldashev and Danzer, "Economic Returns to Speaking the Right Language(s)?"

in Kazakh-speaking populations, further integrating Kazakh into economically prosperous areas and enhancing economic opportunities for Kazakh speakers.

Considering the gradually growing importance of Kazakh and the likelihood that it becomes even more important in the future, we consider Kazakhstan's state language policies to be successful. While some might advocate for a faster transition to Kazakh through more aggressive language policies, such as exclusive Kazakh-language education, we firmly believe that the current approach, though slower, is preferable. By avoiding forceful language replacement tactics, Kazakhstan's policy fosters harmony and cooperation between linguistic communities. This balanced approach not only promotes the resurgence of Kazakh but also acknowledges the significance of Russian, thus mitigating conflicts and tensions commonly observed in other countries undergoing similar language transitions, like Estonia and Ukraine.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Description and Questions

Survey description:

EN: For our thesis we investigate the correlation between language proficiency, particularly in Russian and Kazakh, and economic outcomes in Kazakhstan. We seek participants from the Kostanay region and the Zhambyl region to provide insights into their language backgrounds, experiences in the workplace regarding language usage, perceived challenges or advantages in career advancement related to language skills, and their perspectives on language policies' impact on employment dynamics.

RU: В нашей диссертации мы исследуем корреляцию между знанием языков, особенно русского и казахского, и результатами трудоустройства в Казахстане. Мы ищем людей из Костанайской и Жамбылской областей, чтобы предоставить информацию об их языковом происхождении, опыте использования языка на рабочем месте, предполагаемых проблемах или преимуществах в карьерном росте, связанных с языковыми навыками, а также их взглядах на влияние языковой политики на динамику занятости.

KK: Диссертациямызда біз тілдерді, әсіресе орыс және қазақ тілдерін білу мен Қазақстандағы жұмысқа орналасу нәтижелері арасындағы корреляцияны зерттейміз. Біз Қостанай және Жамбыл облыстарынан олардың тілдік шығу тегі, жұмыс орнында тілді қолдану тәжірибесі, тілдік дағдыларға байланысты болжамды проблемалар немесе мансаптық өсудің артықшылықтары, сондай-ақ тіл саясатының жұмыспен қамту динамикасына әсері туралы көзқарастары туралы ақпарат беру үшін адамдарды іздейміз.

Questions in English:

1. In what province of Kazakhstan do you live?
2. Can you provide a brief overview of your language background, including the languages spoken at home and your proficiency in Russian and Kazakh?
3. In your current or previous workplaces, how prevalent is the use of Russian and Kazakh?
4. Have you encountered any challenges or advantages in your career due to your proficiency (or lack thereof) in Russian and/or Kazakh?
5. Do you believe that language proficiency, specifically in Russian or Kazakh, has influenced your job search or employment opportunities?
6. Do you believe there is a preference for either Russian or Kazakh speakers in certain industries or job sectors? If so, why do you think this preference exists?
7. In your opinion, what impact do language policies imposed by the government have on employment dynamics in Kazakhstan?

8. Have there been any changes in language-related policies in your workplace, and how have they affected you or your colleagues?
9. If you speak both Kazakh and Russian, do you believe that being bilingual has provided you with an advantage in the job market?
10. In your opinion, which group do you think tends to have higher earning potential: someone who speaks only Russian, someone who speaks only Kazakh, someone who is bilingual in Kazakh and Russian, a combination of these groups, or do you believe that language proficiency does not significantly impact earnings?
11. Are you aware of any government initiatives or programmes aimed at promoting language proficiency, and have they had any visible impact on employment?
12. In your opinion, how is language use – and especially Russian and Kazakh use – changing in the past few years in Kazakhstan?

Questions in Russian:

1. В какой области Казахстана вы живете?
2. Можете ли вы предоставить краткий обзор вашего языкового образования, включая языки, на которых говорят дома, и ваше знание русского и казахского языков?
3. Насколько распространено использование русского и казахского языков на вашем нынешнем или предыдущем месте работы?
4. Сталкивались ли вы с какими-либо проблемами или преимуществами в своей карьере из-за вашего владения (или его отсутствия) русским и/или казахским языком?
5. Считаете ли вы, что знание языка, особенно русского или казахского, повлияло на ваш поиск работы или возможности трудоустройства?
6. Считаете ли вы, что в определенных отраслях или секторах труда предпочтение отдается носителям русского или казахского языка? Если да, то почему, по вашему мнению, существует такое предпочтение?
7. По вашему мнению, какое влияние оказывает языковая политика, проводимая правительством, на динамику занятости в Казахстане?
8. Произошли ли какие-либо изменения в языковой политике на вашем рабочем месте и как они повлияли на вас или ваших коллег?
9. Если вы говорите и по-казахски, и по-русски, считаете ли вы, что двуязычие дало вам преимущество на рынке труда?
10. По вашему мнению, какая группа, по вашему мнению, имеет более высокий потенциал заработка: кто-то, кто говорит только по-русски, кто-то, кто говорит только по-казахски, кто-то, кто двуязычен на казахском и русском

языках, комбинация этих групп, или вы считаете, что знание языка существенно не влияет на заработок?

11. Известно ли вам о каких-либо правительственных инициативах или программах, направленных на повышение уровня владения языком, и оказали ли они какое-либо заметное влияние на занятость?

12. По вашему мнению, как за последние несколько лет в Казахстане изменилось использование языка – и особенно использования русского и казахского языка?

Questions in Kazakh:

1. Сіз Қазақстанның қай облысында тұрасыз?

2. Сіз өзіңіздің тілдік біліміңізге, соның ішінде үйде сөйлейтін тілдеріңізге және орыс және қазақ тілдерін білуіңізге қысқаша шолу жасай аласыз ба?

3. Сіздің қазіргі немесе бұрынғы жұмыс орныңызда орыс және қазақ тілдерін қолдану қаншалықты кең таралған?

4. Сіз өзіңіздің мансабыңызда орыс және/немесе қазақ тілін меңгеруіңізге (немесе оның болмауына) байланысты қандай да бір қиындықтарға немесе артықшылықтарға тап болдыңыз ба?

5. Тілді, әсіресе орыс немесе қазақ тілін білу сіздің жұмыс іздеуіңізге немесе жұмысқа орналасу мүмкіндігіңізге әсер етті деп ойлайсыз ба?

6. Белгілі бір салаларда немесе еңбек секторларында орыс немесе қазақ тілінде сөйлейтіндерге артықшылық беріледі деп ойлайсыз ба? Олай болса, неге мұндай артықшылық бар деп ойлайсыз?

7. Сіздің ойыңызша, Үкімет жүргізіп отырған тіл саясаты Қазақстандағы жұмыспен қамту динамикасына қандай әсер етеді?

8. Сіздің жұмыс орныңызда тіл саясатында қандай да бір өзгерістер болды ма және олар сізге немесе әріптестеріңізге қалай әсер етті?

9. Егер сіз қазақша да, орысша да сөйлейтін болсаңыз, қос тілділік Сізге еңбек нарығында артықшылық берді деп ойлайсыз ба?

10. Сіздің ойыңызша, қай топтың табыс табу әлеуеті жоғары деп ойлайсыз: тек орыс тілінде сөйлейтін адам, тек қазақ тілінде сөйлейтін адам, қазақ және орыс тілдерінде екі тілде сөйлейтін адам, осы топтардың тіркесімі немесе сіз бұл топтардың бірігуі деп ойлайсыз ба? тілді білу табысқа айтарлықтай әсер етпейді?

11. Сіз Үкіметтің тілді меңгеру деңгейін арттыруға бағытталған қандай да бір бастамалары немесе бағдарламалары туралы білесіз бе және олар жұмыспен қамтуға айтарлықтай әсер етті ме?

12. Сіздің ойыңызша, соңғы бірнеше жылда Қазақстанда тілді қолдану, әсіресе орыс және қазақ тілдерін қолдану қалай өзгерді?

Appendix B: Job Listings by Position, Region, Language Requirements, and Offered Salary

This table is organized by type of position: teacher, lawyer, driver. It then lists entries by region: Zhambyl, highlighted in light green, and Kostanay, highlighted in light orange. Within each region, entries are further sorted by language requirements: green for Kazakh and Russian, yellow for Kazakh only, and blue for Russian only. Finally, positions are listed by offered salary in tenge, arranged from the lowest to the highest offered salary.

Position	Region	Language requirements	Offered salary in tenge	Link to the source
Teaching positions				
Music teacher	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	85 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/muzyka-zhetekshisi-0,5-zhykteme-uchitel-muzyki~3894246 Archived link: https://archive.ph/by0bG
Music teacher	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	85 000 - 150 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-muzyki-uchitel-muzyki~3870903 Archived link: https://archive.ph/HsiFc
Chemistry teacher	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	150 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-khimii-uchitel-khimii~3893397 Archived link: https://archive.ph/yOhvi
Math teacher (of the Russian classes)	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	150 000 - 200 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-matematiki-v-russkikh-klassakh-uchitel-matematiki-(algebra-i-geometriya)~3887892 Archived link: https://archive.ph/E4fzs
Teacher of Russian language and literature	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	150 000 - 200 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury-uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury~3887909 Archived link: https://archive.ph/TYeNw
Geography teacher	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	200 000 - 400 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-geografii~3886546 Archived link: https://archive.ph/Z3XAX
Math teacher (Teaching is required in Kazakh)	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	217 500 - 228 556	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-matematiki-s-kazakhskim-yazykom-obucheniya-uchitel-matematiki-(algebra-i-geometriya)~3857642 Archived link: https://archive.ph/VAAtP
Music teacher	Zhambyl	Kazakh	85 000 - 88 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/muzyka-zhetekshisi-uchitel-muzyki~3875759 Archived link: https://archive.ph/1QyxZ

Teacher assistant	Zhambyl	Kazakh	150 000 - 180 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/pomoshchnik-rukovoditelya-pomoshchnik-uchitelya~3883839 Archived link: https://archive.ph/VhRpt
Teacher of physical culture and sports	Zhambyl	Russian	85 000 - 200 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/dene-shynykturu-uchitel-fizicheskoi-kultury-i-sporta~3884762 Archived link: https://archive.ph/5Itwp
Teacher of the Russian language and literature	Zhambyl	Russian	100 000 - 120 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/mugalim-uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury~3880369 Archived link: https://archive.ph/IUo4M
Physics teacher	Zhambyl	Russian	100 000 - 150 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/fizika-pani-mugalimi-uchitel-fiziki~3896111 Archived link: https://archive.ph/pw2JA
Teacher of a foreign language	Zhambyl	Russian and English	150 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-inostrannogo-yazyka~3863236 Archived link: https://archive.ph/59Goo
Teacher of the lower classes	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	85 000 - 110 760	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-nachalnykh-klassov-uchitel-nachalnykh-klassov~3897111 Archived link: https://archive.ph/Wag9r
Physics teacher	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	90 000 - 100 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-fiziki~3901964 Archived link: https://archive.ph/zEVMa
Teacher of the Kazakh language and literature	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	95 000 - 110 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-kazakhskogo-yazyka-i-literatury-uchitel-kazakhskogo-yazyka-i-literatury~3897316 Archived link: https://archive.ph/AoRIv
Teacher of Russian language and literature	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	100 000 - 200 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury-uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury~3899623 Archived link: https://archive.ph/sNvzi
Technology teacher	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	150 000 - 200 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-tekhnologii-uchitel-tekhnologii~3894433 Archived link: https://archive.ph/JMOOK
Chemistry teacher	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	150 000 - 200 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-khimii-uchitel-khimii~3899624 Archived link: https://archive.ph/995ar
Math teacher	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	200 000 - 250 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-matematiki-uchitel-matematiki-(algebra-i-geometriya)~3886712 Archived link: https://archive.ph/q9opT

Teacher of Russian language and literature	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	200 000 - 250 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury-v-kazakhskikh-klassakh-uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury~3886713 Archived link: https://archive.ph/d1Z8R
Technology teacher	Kostanay	Kazakh	85 000 - 100 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-tekhnologii-uchitel-tekhnologii~3878765 Archived link: https://archive.ph/v3Yo0
Teacher of the lower classes	Kostanay	Kazakh	95 000 - 110 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-nachalnykh-klassov-uchitel-nachalnykh-klassov~3897332 Archived link: https://archive.ph/YPhQr
Teacher of arts	Kostanay	Kazakh	110 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-zhivopisi-i-rosivaniya-uchitel-izobrazitelnogo-iskusstva~3850014 Archived link: https://archive.ph/5PbQW
History teacher	Kostanay	Kazakh	117 906 - 136 023	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-istorii-uchitel-istorii~3883761 Archived link: https://archive.ph/b49U6
Chemistry teacher	Kostanay	Kazakh	117 906 - 136 024	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-khimii-uchitel-khimii~3860079 Archived link: https://archive.ph/SHNzU
Music teacher	Kostanay	Kazakh	150 000 - 250 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-muzyki-uchitel-muzyki~3894442 Archived link: https://archive.ph/WzIyk
Informatics teacher (for the Russian classes)	Kostanay	Kazakh	232 541	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-informatiki-russkikh-klassov-uchitel-informatiki~3878705 Archived link: https://archive.ph/nobL0
Teacher of math	Kostanay	Kazakh	250 000 - 280 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-matematiki-uchitel-matematiki-(algebra-i-geometriya)~3867657 Archived link: https://archive.ph/559sc
Teacher for the lower classes	Kostanay	Russian	85 000 - 90 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/s-russkim-yazykom-obucheniya-uchitel-nachalnykh-klassov~3844175 Archived link: https://archive.ph/qdrJJ
Teacher of Kazakh language and literature	Kostanay	Russian	150 000 - 200 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-kazakhskogo-yazyka-i-literatury-uchitel-kazakhskogo-yazyka-i-literatury~3876701 Archived link: https://archive.ph/4r2iN
Math teacher	Kostanay	Russian	200 000 - 300 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-matematiki-uchitel-matematiki-(algebra-i-geometriya)~3867801 Archived link: https://archive.ph/gXYq7
Russian language	Kostanay	Russian	200 000 -	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury-

and literature teacher			300 000	uchitel-russkogo-yazyka-i-literatury~3867797 Archived link: https://archive.ph/ogBvY
Lawyer positions				
Lawyer	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	85 000 - 90 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/yurist-yurist~3947896 Archived link: https://archive.ph/2vb42
Lawyer	Zhambyl	Kazakh	85 000 - 110 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/yurist-yurist~3968298 Archived link: https://archive.ph/PnNN0
Lawyer	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	168 000 - 205 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/yuriskonsult-yurist~3995193 Archived link: https://archive.ph/kerqP
Lawyer	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	169 436 - 204 389	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/yurist-yurist~3955670 Archived link: https://archive.ph/m3Hey
Driver positions				
Cash collector driver	Zhambyl	Kazakh and Russian	85 000 - 95 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-voditel-inkassator~3988670 Archived link: https://archive.ph/RUKHn
Car driver	Zhambyl	Kazakh	85 000 - 90 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-voditel-avtomobilya~3988760 Archived link: https://archive.ph/pSXch
Car driver	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	100 000 - 139 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-voditel-avtomobilya~3978650 Archived link: https://archive.ph/aGeTR
Ambulance driver	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	150 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-vs-voditel-sanitarnoi-mashiny~3946176 Archived link: https://archive.ph/Gzxnn
Truck driver	Kostanay	Kazakh and Russian	234 000 - 235 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-ekspeditor-voditel-bolshegruznogo-avtomobilya~3998839 Archived link: https://archive.ph/gDtTF
Car driver	Kostanay	Kazakh	160 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-avtomobilya~3968899 Archived link: https://archive.ph/mTrXP
Car driver	Kostanay	Russian	85 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-avtomobilya~3988949 Archived link: https://archive.ph/WEFpL
Fire truck driver	Kostanay	Russian	106 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-pozharnoi-mashiny~3985247 Archived link: https://archive.ph/FmC5X
Car driver	Kostanay	Russian	190 000 - 235 000	https://www.enbek.kz/ru/vacancy/voditel-avtomobilya-4-razryada-voditel-avtomobilya~4000001 Archived link: https://archive.ph/sZaLg

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