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Implementation and Impact of Language Policy

The Case of Kyrgyz Students

1. Introduction

1.1. Theoretical Background

Language policy (LP) consists of written (laws, decrees) and unwritten (implicit, covert ideologies) components (Spolsky, 2019). It may contain explicit or overt mention of language rights. It also can be of a covert type, "not mentioning any language in any legal document" (Schiffman, n.d., para. 1). Covert policies often lead to confusion in heuristic self-identification in postcolonial societies (LaDousa et al., 2022). A dominant language can "establish hegemony in language use" (Tollefson, 1991, p. 16) and win without written policies (Schiffman, 2002). Its success increases, especially in regions with ethnically heterogeneous communities (Agadjanian & Nedoluzhko, 2022).

LP can also be a source of controversy and conflict, particularly in multicultural and multilingual societies. Language planners may promote various types of LP, including the attempt "to kill a language; letting a language die; unsupported coexistence; partial support of specific language functions; adoption as an official language" (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1992, p. 153).

Citizens may have opposing ideas about the role of language in identity-construction and nation-building. In some countries, citizens identify with one language even though the state promotes a multilingualism policy, as in the case of Luxembourg (Horner & Weber, 2010). In other countries, heuristic self-identification must often be refined, as in contemporary India, where citizens often cannot simultaneously identify with their mother tongue and English (LaDousa et al., 2022). There is also an identity type in which part of the same ethnic group believes that the language of another ethnic group can be its mother tongue (DeLorme, 2005; Csernicškó and Fedinec, 2016; Tulum and Zubalov, 2022). In such cases, people may belong to two different ethnic and linguistic

communities, as was the case in the Soviet Union, where it was "difficult to separate ethnicity and language" (Das, 2011, p. 53).

LP that privilege one language over others can be seen as discriminatory or exclusionary, leading to resentment and division among different linguistic communities. Language is nested within culture, and "having a particular accent or mannerisms could have repercussions for both how we perceived ourselves and how others perceived us" (Savva & Nygaard, 2021, p. 169). In capital cities of some nations divided by languages and provincial dialects, some citizens often become victims of discrimination by linguistic and cultural purists.

Spolsky (2004) clarified that neither the number of speakers, physical isolation, nor linguistic or ideological adherence guarantee the preservation of a language and cannot prevent language shifts in the modern world. The success of language activists is impossible without political power and due attention of ethnic and religious forces. It can only be achieved by an ideologically supported movement willing to give up many of the comforts of modern life to preserve the language of a minority. He also argued that a successful LP must include healthy language attitudes, acceptable beliefs, and acceptable behavior (Spolsky, 1998). For example, the common perception that specific languages cannot perform a wide range of functions is unhealthy and stereotypical (Garrett, 2010).

The impact of LP will only be observed after a considerable period, often in subsequent generations (Nahir, 1998). National identity is created through the mass schooling of the first literate generation. Once a generation's literacy level passes a 50 percent threshold, the community will have durable national loyalties Darden (2013). It is essential to consider the long-term impact of LP carefully from the very beginning. Unlike simple linear systems, "a small variation in the initial condition leads to drastic changes in the stable eventually equilibrium attained" (Grin, 1992, p.71), while large ones may have only minor consequences (Civico, 2021).

The discrepancy between official policy and actual practice can serve as an underlying ideology built around the interests of a particular group (Kroskrity, 2010). The lack of correlation between the linguistic beliefs of citizens and the state administration of language demonstrates the existence of a gap between top-down and bottom-up politics (Mambetaliev, 2019). When an LP does not confirm to the values of a linguistic culture (Schiffman, 2002), it can run into serious problems leading to social tensions (Chen, 1999). It is dangerous for politically unstable countries with ideologically inconsistent policies (Johnson, 2013).

Demographic characteristics also may guide preferences for LP models. Awareness of one's socio-demographic identity often influences people's attitudes toward languages (Llamas & Stockwell, 2020). In some societies men favor vernacular norms, while women select prestigious languages and standard

varieties over local language(s) or dialects in public places (Martínez-Rivas & Lasagabaster, 2022). Often the role of women can be effective in preserving and spreading low-prestige languages and dialects, as in the case of Italian dialects among immigrants from Cameroon (Siebetchu, 2022).

Since LP explores different methodologies (Civico, 2021), it does not insist on one approach or another, allowing new methods and procedures to be used and implemented (Ricento, 2000). In some cultures, written rules may have less authority than oral traditions (Schiffman, 1996). In such situations, the impact of official LPs on language practices is not guaranteed, as their language authorities believe that a country can be built on unifying myths such as common ancestry, citizenship, values, and history (Johnson, 2013). Some studies also have warned of the risk of relying only on statistics in particular contexts (Landau & Keller-Heinkelle, 2012) due to the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* politics (Mambetaliev, 2019). Therefore, LP studies have already moved from large-scale censuses to other methods. Garrett (2010) identified three main approaches to studying the components of LP, including content analysis (or social treatment of language varieties), direct measures (large-scale surveys), and indirect measures (or speaker evaluation paradigm or matched-guise technique). Given these issues, multiple and mixed methods are used in many publications which in the last decade have included research using various sociological and textual methods (Hult & Johnson, 2015). They explored the top-down components of LPs by analyzing legal texts and interviews with experts to describe different types of LPs, including covert and overt.

LP is an essential tool for nation-building, but it must be designed and implemented sensitively to a given society's diverse linguistic and cultural realities. By recognizing the role of language in identity construction and promoting inclusive language policies, we can help build more cohesive and harmonious societies.

1.2. The Context of Study

Interpretations of the history of Kyrgyzstan's LP and identity construction often differ depending on the authors' demographic background. Some authors ignore that a dozen non-Kyrgyz politicians and professionals, including Jews and others, contributed to forming the Kyrgyz Republic as a separate political entity (Barshai, 2021). On the other hand, many people worldwide have received information about Kyrgyzstan and its languages from sources in Russian, which is often biased. For example, Korth (2005, p. 1) writes: "My Russian friends in Switzerland advised me not to learn Kyrgyz because they considered it a 'wild'

language.” In addition, some contradictions stem from geopolitical agendas between countries in different parts of the world (Ingram, 1980).

The territory of Kyrgyzstan always accommodated various ethnic and religious groups. Following the resettlement of the Volga Germans, on the eve of World War I, impoverished Russian peasants began to migrate en masse to Kyrgyzstan to colonize the valley lands of the semi-nomadic Kyrgyz (Sinor, 2021). Kyrgyzstan also underwent a significant sociolinguistic transformation due to the mass migration of some peoples from the Caucasus on the eve of World War II. The reverse outflow of some of these people began after the collapse of the USSR. Currently, non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups include Russians (5%), Turkic groups (18%), and non-Turkic ethnic groups (3%).

There is still no clear understanding of the difference between terminology related to national and ethnic identity. The terms "nation," "nationality," "ethnicity," and "citizenship" in dictionaries are translated differently. Often in the media, the word “ethnic Kyrgyz” denotes the descendants of those Kyrgyz who did not want to join Russia and the USSR, moved to other countries, and are now returning (see e.g., the website of the Ministry of Labor, 2022). Until recently, there was no “ethnicity” column in the Kyrgyz passport, but under pressure from some ethnic Kyrgyz, the government added “ethnicity” column. Now every Kyrgyz citizen can write in this column any nationality, even nonexistent. The concept of a "Kyrgyz Citizen" ("Kyrgyz jaran") was proposed by the Kyrgyz government as recently as 2020 (Ministry of Culture, 2020). The purpose of the concept is the development of a shared national identity.

Another significant characteristic of modern Kyrgyzstan is the regional features of culture and language. Until recently, some regions were also distinguished by tribal affiliation, which the Kyrgyz assimilated after the collapse of the empire of Genghis Khan (Mambetaliev, 2013). Moreover, in Soviet times, the Kyrgyz were usually divided into southern and northern Kyrgyz. The southern region has traditionally been the home of ethnic groups of Turkic and Persian origin. Before the formation of the USSR, the northern part of Kyrgyzstan was inhabited by Kirghiz, Dungans, Russians, Ukrainians, and Germans. After the construction of the USSR, the Kremlin resettled several ethnic groups of the Caucasus. Currently, Russian has become the dominant language in Bishkek, pushing all other local languages to peripheral regions (Mambetaliev, 2021; McDermott, 2017).

The number of university graduates in 2021 was about 36,000 people (NSKKR, 2022). In 2014, more than half of university undergraduate students were girls (Abdirazakova, 2014). According to the ADB report, the country has “a high level of education enrollment and a level of primary education close to gender parity” (Brody, 2019).

Kyrgyz is the state language of the Kyrgyz Republic and “the official language of the Kyzylsu-Kyrgyz Autonomous Region” (Tsong, 2014, p. 32) in China. Printed materials in Kyrgyz before Russian expansion into Central Asia included the *Manas* epic, which was published in 1861 by György Almásy and his Kyrgyz colleagues, who later in 1911 also published fragments of another Kyrgyz epic, *Semetei*, in the magazine *Keleti Szemle* in Budapest (Vasi Múzeumi Arcképcsarnok, 2011). The *Manas* epic consists of about half a million lines in poetic style, making it “20 times longer than Homer's *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* combined” (Levine, 1995).

Current linguistic and geographic distances between modern Kyrgyz and other Turkic languages of Central Asia, Turkey, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe do not correlate (Johansson, 2010). The Kyrgyz language was much closer to other Central Asian Turkic languages in the 19th century than it is today (Kokaisl, 2013). Currently, the Russian language is still the main competitor of the Kyrgyz language.

According to Akiyama (2015), the Kyrgyz elite contributed greatly to the dominance of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan. The dissenting Kyrgyz leaders were shot or emigrated abroad (Ornstein, 1959). For example, the *Basmachis* or *Turkistani National Liberation Movement* resisted Russia and the USSR until the World War II (Paksoy, 1991; Jantzen, 2009). During the Soviet time, the Kremlin controlled the language through phone calls to its high-ranking local agents (Ishemkulov, 2021). This confirms Grosjean's (1984) assertion that some minorities can be contributors to the derogation of their native language. In the late Soviet period asymmetric bilingualism became widespread when non-Russians learned Russian and Russians did not learn non-Russian languages (Smagulova, 2008). There is still no balanced bilingualism established since “bilingualism often naturally happens, but only when the titular language is secure and dominant in public” (Tarbox, 2016, p. 12).

1.3. Problem Statement

Despite the growing number of language issues in Asia, Africa, and South America, “the center of gravity of research remains geographically constrained to North America and Europe” (Stavans & Jessner-Schmid, 2022, p. 9). In addition, the field needs knowledge from local researchers, as numerous publications by outsider authors have a superficial understanding of the details of language issues and often “present misleading information by missing out some important facts, such as socio-historical and socio-cultural aspects” (Ehlert, 2008, p. 3).

Language activists in Kyrgyzstan also lament that LP policies are not based on quality research but are monopolized by the government (Bekmurzaev, 2020, p. 28). Finally, the LP is a cause or pretext for conflicts or wars in various countries.

However, in some nations, an open discussion of LP remains a sensitive topic. Nevertheless, discussing the pitfalls of LP is better than letting the problem provoke a violence conflict, as in some East European countries now (Mambetaliev, 2023). Understanding complex and covert sociolinguistic issues in countries such as Kyrgyzstan allows governments, activists, and international actors to understand better how local practices function (Mambetaliev, 2021).

1.4. Research Aim and Questions

This study aimed to identify and describe (1) the LP models and methods implemented in Kyrgyzstan; (2) the impact of the LP on current undergraduate students in prominent public universities. The following questions assessed the acceptability of this thesis and hypothesis: 1. What LP has been implemented in Kyrgyzstan? 2. How has LP affected the target group?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Methods and Data Sources

Tollefson's historical-structural approach was used to analyze Kyrgyzstan's language policies and practices. Historical documents included banknotes and archival newspapers. The textual analysis method was used to study LP in laws, constitutions, and interview transcripts. Statistical methods were employed to analyze the results of the survey questionnaire.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to clarify details of the answers to the research questions with LP experts, professors, and representatives of minority groups. The interview analysis was performed using a table with two columns. The interview transcription was placed in the left column, and the codes of different ideas were placed in the right column. Such a system made it possible to find ideas relevant to the corresponding section in transcription using standard MS Office functions. Note that the real names were replaced with pseudonyms.

In addition to legal documents, several other materials were considered, including banknotes, newspapers, and dissertation catalogs. First, all banknotes circulated in Kyrgyzstan in the early twentieth century were analyzed. Banknotes emphasized the status of languages with different locations, fonts, and mentions. Then all the newspapers available in the national library archives were analyzed. Continuously printed since 1924, the first Kyrgyz newspaper was the most informative. The transition from Arabic to Latin, then to Cyrillic, and changing its name following the ideological context most accurately reflected the entire history of Kyrgyzstan's LP. Analysis of Ph.D. dissertations defended in Kyrgyzstan provided the overall use of language in the higher education domain.

The analysis of the quantitative data included the following moments. Each record in the data set was randomly and independently sampled from the population. The sample size for most categories in this study was more extensive than 30, meaning the sample distribution approaches the standard normal distribution (Rice, 1995; Kwak & Kim, 2017). The analysis used statistical functions to calculate summary statistics, proportions, differences, and p-values. The multinomial logistic regression (MLR) test was also used to assess the relationships between several variables. The test does not assume "careful consideration of the sample size and examination for outlying cases," normality, linearity, or homoscedasticity (Starkweather & Moske, 2011), eliminating unnecessary data manipulation. The model fit was assessed using McFadden's coefficient, which is quite strict and requires the model to yield a result within the 0.2-0.4 limit to be reliable (McFadden, 1979). The results of the MLR test were interpreted based on relative risk ratios (RRR). An $RRR > 1$ shows that the risk of the outcome falling in the comparison group relative to the risk of falling in the reference group increases as the variable increases. On the contrary, an $RRR < 1$ indicates that the risk decreases as the variable increases (UCLA, 2022).

2.2. Participants

A total of 768 respondents comprised participants, including 10 experts in LP, 511 students, and 247 nonstudents. Most experts worked in government, headed language departments, and are the authors of publications on language issues. The target group (G1) was random undergraduate students at Bishkek's five most prominent universities. These universities have been chosen to represent all regions of the country as much as possible and to ensure that the profile of the average student represents different specialties, including medical, humanities, language, technical, and natural sciences. These universities were the Kyrgyz National University (KNU), the Bishkek Humanitarian University (BHU), the Arabaev Kyrgyz State University (KSU), the Kyrgyz State Medical Academy (KSMA), and the Kyrgyz State Technical University (KTU). Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the students that will be used in the statistical operations. Gender, linguistic identity (LinID), and regional identity (RegID) are essential variables for this study, so they are included in the table 1.

In the nonstudent group (G2), 8% were Russians, 8% were representatives of Turkic-speaking peoples, 7% were non-Turkic-speaking peoples, and 6% were representatives of Uzbek nationality. G2 was used to compare the target group (G1) with the most prominent context and to estimate the probability of attitude change depending on the dynamics of enrolment flow, which the university LP can regulate. As seen in the description, minorities can be considered outliers.

Still, they were not removed from the dataset since, according to Horn (2008), over 5% of outliers can be considered a part of society.

Table 1. Students' Demographic Characteristics

Identity	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	140	27
	Female	371	73
Linguistic	Kyrgyz speaker	367	72
	Russian speaker	136	27
	Na	8	1
Regional	Bishkek	111	22
	North	221	43
	South	132	26
	Na	47	9

Note. *N* = 511; Age: 20-22; Ethnicity: Kyrgyz (100%)

2.3. Reliability and Validity

This study also used triangulation of results, including data from legislative documents, historical materials, representation of languages in dissertation catalogs, and survey questionnaires. While doing so, it used textual, discourse-analytical, and statistical methods to produce descriptive and reflexive knowledge (Lin, 2015).

Quantitative data collection procedures were standardized, contact with participants was minimal, and the same research instrument was used across groups. The final version of the questionnaire went through proofreading procedures. After creating the database, basic exploratory factor analysis was performed to eliminate unreliable variables using built-in software functions. The outliers were then regrouped, and the values of some variables were coded and verified for reliability. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was checked using the standard function (Cronbach Alpha). Each variable that reduced the Alpha from the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7 was removed from further analysis.

3. Findings and Results

3.1. Content Analysis of Textual Data

The first constitution of the USSR of 1924 mentioned 'language' only twice: 1) to prescribe in which languages the legislative acts had to be published (Article 34), and 2) to list six languages in the design of the coat of arms (Article 70). The

second constitution of the USSR was adopted in 1936, where the word "language" was used nine times (in Articles 40, 110, 121, and 143). It listed the languages of the national republics in which government decrees and other legislative acts had to be published. It also allowed citizens to use their native language in legal proceedings and general education. The third constitution was adopted in 1977, which used the word "language" ten times (Articles 34, 36, 45, 116, 159, 169). It was used to prescribe the publishing of government decrees and other legislative documents in the languages of the national republics. In addition, it was used to describe the equality of citizens and languages, the right to speak any language of the people of the USSR, the right to education in their native language, and the right to use their native language in legal proceedings. However, a textual analysis of the constitutions found no clear statements about the status or function of languages.

Table 2 presents Kyrgyzstan's LP after independence. The first constitution after gaining independence (1993) included an article on the state status of the Kyrgyz language and articles guaranteeing the free functioning of all other languages (Articles 5, 15). It was planned to revitalize the Kyrgyz language as the state language of the independent Kyrgyz Republic. The following LP, including the constitution of 2010, laws, and decrees of the government of Kyrgyzstan, introduced official bilingualism, giving state status to the Kyrgyz language (Article 10) and official status to the Russian language (Article 13). The Russian language did not have such status even during the heyday of the USSR. However, the constitution and subsequent laws did not clearly describe the difference between the state and the official languages. Therefore, these laws contained vague and confusing terminology. Besides constitutions, several other documents were approved to support the state language after independence, including the Concept of the Development of the State Language. The concept described the Kyrgyz language as poorly developed for office work, science, and terminology. The following presidential decrees focused on developing bilingualism, creating a testing system, and training civil servants. After the 2010s, the word 'budget' became the most frequently used word in government regulations. The government also emphasized the function of the Russian language as the official and inter-ethnic language.

Table 2. References to Languages since Independence

Topics	1991-2010	2010-2021
Status	Kyrgyz L.	Kyrgyz L., Russian L.*
Language rights	Native Ls., Russian L.*	Native Ls.
LP in education	Native Ls.	Native Ls., Russian L., Foreign L.

Note. *More than two mentions

The Russian language stood out from the languages of other republics on banknotes issued between two main economic reforms before and after World War II. On the first banknotes of the Soviet Union, the number of words in Russian exceeded the number in other national languages at least 15 times. The Russian language was also different from other languages by location and font. The Kyrgyz language was represented by the common Turkic language of that time in Arabic script. In the banknotes after the 1960s (Fig. 1), the Kyrgyz language was represented in Cyrillic script. The proportion of the Russian language to the languages of other national republics remained the same as in the previous banknotes. After independence, the Kyrgyz language became the only language of the national currency (Csernicskó & Beregszászi, 2019).

Figure 1. A Banknote of the USSR



Source: <https://en.numista.com>

The titles of archived newspapers provide information on the position of languages in the language ecology of Kyrgyzstan. The first newspaper in the Kyrgyz language was published in 1924 in Arabic script (a successor of the Chagatai script, a common written language for Turkic languages of Central Asia before the USSR). As the title suggests (i.e., Erkin Too, translated as Free Mountains from the Kyrgyz language), the newly minted Kyrgyz communists promoted their type of LP, believing that "a new dawn has come" (a phrase in a Soviet-era Kyrgyz song) and that the "Kyrgyz Mountains" (i.e., Kyrgyzstan) are finally accessible. After WWII, the number of newspapers increased tenfold, and the number of Russian-language newspapers exceeded those in the Kyrgyz language. Fig. 2 shows the evolution of the development of the first newspaper in Kyrgyzstan, which reflects the dynamics of LP development from the early years of the emergence of the Kyrgyz Republic to the present day.

Figure 2. History of a Newspaper Title: The Issues of 1924, 1927, 1956, and 1993

Source: <http://kyrgyztuusu.kg>

Since the formation of the USSR, the analysis of constitutions and laws can be conditionally divided into the following periods with the corresponding LP models (Table 3). The first constitution approved by the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz Autonomous SSR assigned the state status overtly to both Kyrgyz and Russian languages. The second constitution approved by the Kremlin and the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz SSR in 1936 wholly removed any mention of the status or function of languages. Therefore, it was a type of covert policy. The third constitution and the language law of 1989, approved by the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz SSR, emphasized the need to revitalize the Kyrgyz language. The fourth constitution and decrees of the post-Soviet period (1993-2010) promoted bilingual policy. The constitution and laws after 2010 introduced the concepts of the state language and the official language without providing a clear distinction between them. Therefore, the LP since 2010 has been based on vague definitions of the main competing languages.

Thus, the de jure LP of Kyrgyzstan emphasized the Kyrgyz language only about six years since its inception as a political entity in 1929 (Table 8). Innovation in the last post-independent constitutions (2010, 2021) was the government's promise to create conditions for learning one of the foreign languages (Articles 45, 46). The constitution also required presidential candidates to have proficiency in the state language.

Table 3. LP Models in Kyrgyzstan's Constitutions

1929	1936-1978	1978-1993	1993-2010	2010-2021
Overt bilingual LP	Covert LP	Revitalization LP	Bilingual LP	Vague LP

Table 4 presents the language use among graduate students in Kyrgyzstan. It is based on the content of the database of PhD theses in the National Library. The collection contained dissertations of Soviet and post-Soviet authors. According to the library manager, a copy of each thesis defended in the country is sent to this database. Almost 99% of the authors were Kyrgyz, as the names on the title pages showed. A calculation of the ratios of languages on different topics showed

that the number of theses devoted to language problems was significantly higher in Kyrgyz than in Russian. However, on all other topics, the authors preferred Russian to Kyrgyz. Dissertations on laws, economics, humanities, and general sciences used Russian at least three times more than Kyrgyz. For the study of health problems, not a single dissertation in the Kyrgyz language was defended. The number of dissertations in Russian was found in the database 6.4 times more than in Kyrgyz.

Table 4. PhD Dissertations Defended in Kyrgyzstan by Languages

Topics	Kyr	Rus	Ratio	Topics	Kyr	Rus	Ratio
Health	0	1500	0	Kyrgyz language	109	20	5.5
Law, Economics	4	946	0.004	Pedagogy	150	348	0.43
Soviet literature	6	18	0.33	Linguistics	153	169	0.91
Languages	35	13	2.7	Sciences	202	668	0.30
Humanities	90	349	0.26	Other	234	1013	0.23

3.2. Analysis of Expert Interviews

Interviews with LP experts in the Kyrgyz Republic showed different preferences regarding LP models. Some experts believed that “as an independent country, Kyrgyzstan should have one state language, which should occupy the first dominant position” (e.g., Professor J). They believed the Russian language is an obstacle to revitalizing the Kyrgyz language (e.g., Businessman O). Some other experts were convinced that the Kyrgyz language is not ready to perform certain functions, so the Russian language is needed (e.g., Professor S). They considered it acceptable to maintain the official status of the Russian language, while the Kyrgyz language will not take the dominant position in the country (e.g., Professor T).

The experts also had different opinions about the urban/rural split among current students according to their languages. According to Professor N, urbanized Kyrgyz are searching for an identity but must be sufficiently motivated to learn the heritage language. He noted that although there is legislative support for the state language, it is challenging to implement it to increase the number of Kyrgyz speakers because of the weak public demand.

Professor T stated that most Russian-speaking students in Bishkek consider the Kyrgyz language part of their identity but perceive it as lacking instrumental value. According to Consultant J, Kyrgyz-speaking students from the periphery choose Russian "because of the lack of language contact and the weak outcomes of the educational system in teaching English, the most achievable goal remains the familiar Russian language." Administrator A, Admissions Committee

Member, said that many applicants from rural regions could not express their thoughts in any language.

Professor J noted that the Russification policy was carried out by the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan and continued by post-Soviet presidents. He got emotional when he said, "Our leaders were busy with flattery to the Kremlin. Their constant repetition, 'Russian is our second mother tongue,' completely brainwashed us."

Businessman O learned Russian not because he wanted to but because he was influenced by Soviet ideology. He said that "some people have no formal education but speak the Kyrgyz language. Therefore, they have access to the necessary networks and get rich."

Professor K acknowledged that "for some reason, when I see even one Slavic-looking person in the auditorium, I switch on to Russian." According to Professor J, this behavior results from the "brainwashing" of the Soviet era when some Kyrgyz considered that one cannot be well educated if he or she did not speak Russian. However, Professor T disagreed with this opinion, arguing that it is a marker of excellent education and politeness. Professor T added: "There is no escape from the Russian language because our historical destinies and roots are mixed up."

Most respondents blamed the national leaders for problems with the Kyrgyz language, accusing them of promoting the Russian language at the expense of the Kyrgyz language. Professor T believed that the children of most Kyrgyz leaders were Russian speakers. Growing up, they took the top positions and recognized Russian as the official language.

Professor A noted that discriminating against minority languages can cause a backlash and alienate minorities from the Kyrgyz language in favor of its traditional competitor.

3.3. Analysis of Survey Questionnaire Data

Quantitative data were used to assess the effect of previous LP on the perception of identity and language practices. The word "Kyrgyzstani" was perceived differently. Most participants understood it as someone living in Kyrgyzstan (20%) or born in Kyrgyzstan (14%). Approximately 7% perceived the term as patriotism and ethnicity (9%). In this study, LinID was also an essential factor. However, during data collection, it needed to be clarified. For example, some Russian-speaking Kyrgyz (Russkoiazychnyi Kyrgyz) claimed to have the Kyrgyz language as their first language (L1) while choosing the questionnaire in Russian or, having selected the questionnaire in Kyrgyz, filling it out in Russian. Such a language behavior shows that participants' self-identification might differ from their real attachment to a language. When a contradiction between declared and

actual L1 was found, the LinID was defined based on responses to the following questions.

- Q1. What is your L1 or language you can speak and write best?
- Q2. What was the language of instruction at your school?
- Q3. In what language do you usually count money?
- Q4. The language of the selected questionnaire: 1. Kyrgyz; 2. Russian.

Cronbach's Alpha detected that most answers were internally consistent across the questions, confirming the reliability of the questionnaire and the responses (Table 5).

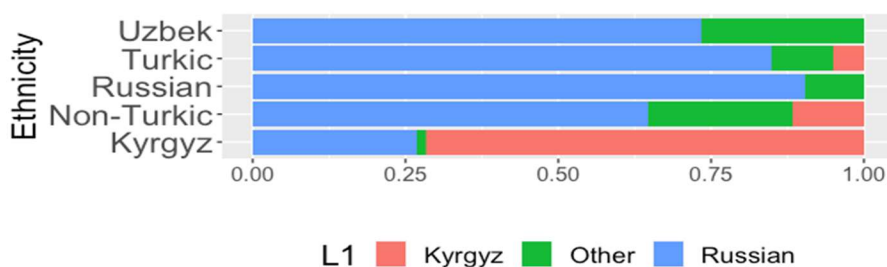
Table 5. Internal Consistency of Key Questions

Questions	α	CI	Questions	α	CI
Q1 & Q2	.78	73 - 82	Q2 & Q3	.75	69-79
Q1 & Q3	.75	69 - 80	Q2 & Q4	.71	63 - 74
Q1 & Q4	.71	69 - 78	Q3 & Q4	.71	65 - 74

Note. $N = 758$. CI: 2.5%-97.5%

Fig. 3 shows that many ethnic Kyrgyz consider Russian as their L1. Among the smaller ethnic groups, those who think so are even more so. Among minorities other than Russians and Uzbeks, many Kyrgyz citizens consider Kyrgyz as their L1 language. Most minorities do not consider their ancestral language their L1.

Figure 3. Participants' L1.



Pearson's χ^2 test detected that students' LinID did not significantly vary depending on their sex, $\chi^2(2, 503) = 2.77, p = .10$. However, it varied significantly depending on their RegID. A post hoc analysis using cross-tabulation showed that most Russian speakers were urban students, and most Kyrgyz speakers were rural students (Table 6).

Table 6. The Association of LinID with RegID

	Categories	Kyrgyz Speakers	Russian Speakers	n	df	χ^2	p	N
RegID	Urban (Bishkek)	.45	.56	110	2	66	***	460
	Rural (North)	.81	.19	219				
	Rural (South)	.86	.14	131				

Note. *** $p < .000$. Na's removed.

Table 7 shows the results of a Generalized linear models (GLM) test. There were no missing values in this data frame, the observations were independent, the sample size was large, and there was no correlation between the residuals (Durbin-Watson: DW = 1.93). Therefore, a GLM was used to examine the relationship between independent variables (demographic factors, language use, and universities) and the outcome variable (LinID), which has two values (Kyrgyz or Russian). Although the effect of gender on LinID was not significant ($p = 0.73$), the test found male students contributed negatively (-0.14) to the presence of the Kyrgyz language on campus (compared to female students). The effect of the language used on campus (PubL) and RegID was significant, i.e., rural students (especially from the South) increased Kyrgyz speakers on campus (compared to urban students). Furthermore, the test found that the current language ecology at some universities contributes to the decrease (negative values) in the number of Kyrgyz speakers (relative to the National University).

Table 7. A GLM Test Results: Relationships between Variables

	Category	Est. (Kyrgyz)	SE	z	p	Ref. Cat.
Sex	Male	-.14	.39	-.35	.73	Female
FamL	Kyrgyz	1.75	.46	3.83	***	Russian
PubL	Kyrgyz	2.20	.37	5.93	***	Russian
Region	Rural (North)	.66	.40	1.66	.09	Bishkek (urban)
	Rural (South)	.96	.48	2.01	*	
HEI	Arabaev Univ.	.34	.63	.53	.59	National University
	Medical Academy	-1.72	.49	-3.5	***	
	Humanitarian Univ.	-1.47	.57	-2.6	**	
	Technical University	-.55	.63	-.87	.39	

Note. $N = 355$; *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Ref. category of DV: LinID = Russian.

Pearson's χ^2 test showed that language discrimination was not based on sex. It was instead based on LinID and RegID. Table 8 shows that the highest discrimination occurs against Russian speakers, students from Bishkek, and the South.

Depending on LinID, the language behavior of students at home and on campus varied significantly (Table 9). Around 33% of the students who marked their home language as Kyrgyz used Russian on campus, while only 10% of the students who marked their home language as Russian used Kyrgyz on campus, showing that Russian speakers were more assertive of their L1 than Kyrgyz speakers. More frequent code-switching from Kyrgyz to Russian on campus was found among female students than male students.

Table 8. Students' Linguistic Discrimination Experience

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>N</i>
Sex	Male	1.79	.93	1.6	2	511
	Female	1.79	.94			
LinID	Kyrgyz speaker	1.63	.89	42***	2	503
	Russian speaker	2.24	.92			
RegID	Bishkek	1.94	.97	21**	4	464
	North	1.56	.85			
	South	1.91	.98			

Note. *** $p < .0000$; ** $p < .0003$; * $p < .05$; Na's removed.

Table 9. Students' Language Behavior at Home and on Campus

		PubL=Kyrgyz	PubL=Russian	<i>n</i>	<i>df</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>
FamL	Kyrgyz	.68	.33	394	1	81	***
	Russian	.10	.90	70			

Note. *** $p < .000$; $N = 464$ (with Na's removed).

The results of the MLR test based on the lowest Akaike and the highest pseudo R2 (McFadden) confirmed the reliability of the model's fit (Table 10). The coefficients represent the RRR (SD) explained in Chapter 3. The test detected that the effect of LinID on the beliefs is insignificant. The effect of all other variables was significant.

An increase in male students (vs. female students) weakens the belief in English and Kyrgyz languages (vs. Russian). An increase in rural students (vs. Bishkek) strengthens the belief in the Kyrgyz language. An increase in students in Humanitarian and Technical Universities strengthens the belief in the Russian language at the expense of the Kyrgyz language.

Minorities are an indispensable part of the current Kyrgyz society. This section assessed beliefs about minority languages. The beliefs were measured based on responses to the question: Should the government support minority languages? The responses received were coded as No - 1, Not Sure - 2, and Yes - 3. Participants who skipped the question and did not mark their identity (Sex, LinID, RegID) were excluded.

Pearson's χ^2 did not detect significant variation of the attitudes depending on students' SexID and RegID, $\chi^2(2,511) = 3.4, p = .18$ and $\chi^2(4, 340) = 3.7, p = .45$, respectively. However, the variation in attitudes in line with LinID was significant. Post hoc analysis using descriptive statistics showed that most Russian speakers supported the idea, while most Kyrgyz speakers did not (Table 11).

Table 10. The Effect of Demographic Factors and HEIs on Language Beliefs

	DV1: English	DV2: Kyrgyz	<i>p</i>	Ref. Cat.
Male Student	.39 (.34)	.44 (.36)	*	Female Student
Russian Speaker	1.7 (.37)	.11 (.52)		Kyrgyz Speaker
Rural Student (North)	.95 (.40)	3.9 (.48)	*	Urban Student (Bishkek)
Rural Student (South)	1.1 (.46)	3.0 (.53)		
Humanitarian University	7.3 (.71)	0	*	National University
Medical Academy	1.9 (.47)	2.4 (.48)	*	
Arabaev University	1.2 (.50)	1.1 (.48)	*	
Technical University	.71 (.57)	.94 (.55)	*	

Note. $N = 478$; * $p < .05$; McFadden = .22; DV3 (Ref.Cat. of the IV): Russian.

Table 11. Students' Attitudes toward Minority Languages

	Categories	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>df</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i>
LinID	Kyrgyz	1.92 (.92)	367	2	19	.000	503
	Russian	2.32 (.88)	81				

Over 75% of ethnic minorities identified themselves as Russian speakers showing that Russification among ethnic minorities was more robust than among students (who are ethnic Kyrgyz). Religion (Islam and Christianity) did not contribute to the difference between students and nonstudents (Table 12).

Table 12. A LinID Difference between Students and Other Participants

	Kyrgyz Speakers	Russian Speakers	Other L Speakers	n
Students	.72	.27	.02	511
Older Kyrgyz (Muslim)	.74	.23	.02	82
Older Kyrgyz (Christian)	.80	.20	0	66
Ethnic Minorities	.06	.76	.18	52

4. Discussion

4.1. *What LP is Implemented in Kyrgyzstan?*

Data suggest that the Kremlin maintained a covert type of LP that promoted Russification (Schiffman, 1996). Bilingualism with the Russian language had a positive effect at the beginning of the Soviet Union and a negative effect when the Soviet power strengthened and post-Soviet leaders reinforced it. The bilingual LP led to unequal language competition (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2012) and asymmetric bilingualism (Tarbox, 2016). It negatively affected linguistic diversity (Smagulova, 2008). The "equal rights" led to an "unequal yoke" for national languages under the dominant language. As a result, non-Russians started shifting to the Russian language in all national republics (Schiffman, 1996). The russification policy involved both Russian and Kyrgyz authorities, which confirms Akiyama (2015), who emphasized the primary role of the Kyrgyz elite in annexing the Kyrgyz tribes to the Russian Empire. However, not all leaders were happy with the Russian expansion, confirming Ornstein (1959), Paksoy (1991) and Jantzen (2009).

These details show that the early Kyrgyz nationalists were driven by the idea of retaining their ethnic identity by recreating the Kyrgyz people (albeit of a Soviet-type). In this sense, the political ideology of Kyrgyzstan oscillated between civic and ethnic nationalism.

No language was assigned a special status in the early Soviet constitutions (Section 2, para. 1). However, a surface inspection of the inscriptions on Soviet banknotes showed that the Russian language dominated all the others (Fig. 1). In the Constitution all citizens and languages were equal. However, the Russian language was exceptional on the banknotes, and many nonrepublican languages were not mentioned. The "equal rights" led to an "unequal yoke" for national languages under the dominant language. As a result, non-Russians started shifting to the Russian language in all national republics (Schiffman, 1996).

A competing ideology between Moscow and Bishkek was found in newspaper headlines (Fig. 2). For example, the headline of the first newspaper in the Kyrgyz

language was Free Mountains ('Erkin Too' in the Kyrgyz language), which was then replicated in Russian as Red Kyrgyzstan ('Qyzyl Qyrgyzstan' in the Kyrgyz language). Later, the title was changed to Soviet Kyrgyzstan, reflecting the real goal of the Kremlin's identity construction.

Repeated declarations that Russian is the language of inter-ethnic communication and Kyrgyz is the symbolic language (Professor J) motivated people to choose Russian for pragmatic reasons. This status and role gave Kyrgyzstan's citizens the moral and legal right to learn Russian since it was a convertible currency in all national republics from an economic point of view (Businessman O).

Analysis of legal documents, historical materials, and expert interviews suggests that the Kremlin maintained a covert type of LP that promoted Russification (Schiffman, 1996). Bilingualism with the Russian language had a positive effect at the beginning of the Soviet Union and a negative effect when the Soviet power strengthened and post-Soviet leaders reinforced it. It led to unequal language competition (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001) and asymmetric bilingualism (Tarbox, 2016) and negatively affected linguistic diversity (Smagulova, 2008).

Most authors in the previous literature presented Lenin's idea of teaching children separately by language to promote internationalism (Korth, 2005). However, this study asserts that this policy contributed to the alienation between ethnic minorities and the titular nationality. His call to observe minority rights primarily protected the Russian language because the early Russian settlers in the Union republics were a minority. Later, the policy deprived native languages of protection against the imperial language's demographic advantage and economic leverage. He also might hope that the mismatch between the official LP and nonofficial ideology eventually shall marginalize minority languages and melt them with the Russian language. However, the mismatch between propaganda and language behavior was a demoralizing factor for Russians and minorities by signaling that the gap between propaganda, laws, and behavior is acceptable.

According to Kyrgyz traditions, tribal and regional leaders play an essential role. The Kremlin exploited this tradition to promote its policy using local leaders for whom phone calls had more authority than laws (Ishemkulov, 2021). These leaders served Soviet imperialism rather than Kyrgyz nationalism even after the collapse of the USSR.

Post-Soviet Kyrgyz leaders increased nationalistic terminology in the general body of the constitution but did not extend the functions of the Kyrgyz language to critical domains of economics. By assigning the function of the language for interethnic communication to the Russian language, they removed the need to

learn the Kyrgyz language for non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups so that further identity construction would not be around the Kyrgyz language but the Russian language. Therefore, the LP of this Constitution promoted the Russian language.

The data show that the Kyrgyz leaders have swung from one extreme to another. Sometimes they humiliated the Kyrgyz language; other times, they hurriedly promoted the Kyrgyz language (Table 3). Such unhealthy and stereotypical attitudes (Garett, 2010) are reminiscent of the attitudes of African leaders, who were the primary obstacles to revitalizing native languages (Grosjean, 1984). As a result, the previous attempt to establish balanced bilingualism, which the Supreme Council of Kyrgyzstan had attempted in 1989, was canceled.

4.2. How LP in Kyrgyzstan Affected Undergraduate Students?

The data also support Schiffman's (2002) conclusion that Russians tend to be the most assertive in their native language. The results support reports by Darden (2013) that the dominance of Russian-language schools in Bishkek during the Soviet era left a mark on Bishkek's LinID. Many Kyrgyz schoolchildren who graduated from Bishkek schools have become Russian speakers.

Data are also consistent with findings by Landau & Kellner-Heinkele (2012) that regional identity is vital for Kyrgyzstan. The significant success of the Russian language in Bishkek compared to the periphery supports the idea of the spread of the dominant language, especially in areas with an ethnically heterogeneous community (Agadjanian & Nedoluzhko, 2022). The central region of Kyrgyzstan, where Bishkek is located, has been the home of various ethnic and religious groups since immemorial (Mambetaliev, 2018). It is also consistent with findings based on observations of the language landscape (McDermott, 2017).

Rural students are more likely to switch codes than urban students, which may be due to discrimination based on regional dialects, as confirmed by Savva & Nygaard (2021). Korth (2005) noted that some Kyrgyz hid fluency in their native language, considering that not knowing their native language as a sign of modernity or urbanity. A similar situation in the neighboring city of Almaty was reported by DeLorme (2005).

Code-switching in public has been found to occur more frequently among female students than among male students, confirming Martínez-Rivas & Lasagabaster (2022). This study adds that such linguistic behavior is not associated with discrimination, as shown in Table 8.

Although the relationship between gender and LinID is weak, more male students than female students have become Russian speakers, confirming previous reports that women contribute more to preserving their mother tongue than men (Siebetcheu, 2022). An analysis of post-Soviet laws, interviews, and

survey results shows that modern language ecology is supported by language managers, society, and supranational stakeholders, as confirmed by Spolsky (2004) and Korth (2005).

Interpreting and explaining some of the reasons behind this situation requires a multifaceted approach, including the views of local experts and previous publications. According to Professor T., Russification would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Kyrgyz leaders, who were close confidants of the Kremlin. The strong relationship between LinID and RegID in the target group shows that the current reason for the division among Kyrgyz is not Russians, but the dominant regional culture, since Russians today are a tiny minority. Schiffman (1996, p. 7) noted that "the fact that a language is diglossic is in actuality a feature of the linguistic culture."

As the results show, citizens living near capitals and administrative centers can be exposed to increased manipulation by supranational powers. For example, in Bishkek, Russian has become the dominant language, pushing all other local languages to peripheral regions (Mambetaliev, 2021; McDermott, 2017). Some Bishkek residents might believe that ethnicity is inherited through blood, not through language, since their LinID is Russian, though they consider themselves ethnically Kyrgyz.

The data show that the previous LP instilled an inferiority complex in the minds of many Kyrgyz individuals (Professor K, Professor J). On this occasion, Korth (2005) concluded that some Kyrgyz consider their native language inferior and provincial, which, according to DeLorme (2005, p. 17), is a Soviet legacy.

The sharp increase in internal migration after independence significantly changed Bishkek's linguistic and cultural ecology. Subsequently, Bishkek citizens are divided not by ethnicity but by linguistic and regional differences. Although Bishkek residents accused immigrants of lacking civility, rural students reacted with a backfire for abandoning the ancestral language. The difference between language behavior at home and on campus stems from the fact that most Bishkek families have little influence on planning their children's LinID (Table 7). It also shows the significant influence of public places in Bishkek on FLP, confirming previous findings on the transforming power of the country's central city (McDermott, 2017).

Table 7 shows that, compared to students in the central region (Bishkek), most rural students (from both the north and the south regions) remain attached to the Kyrgyz language. This study adds that conclusions based only on language behavior in public may not explain a community's language ecology. As the findings suggest, language practices at home and in public can differ.

Table 10 shows that the Kyrgyz language dominates in some universities and is not popular in others, suggesting that an increase in the number of students at

different universities can affect the students' language practices. The language practices also might depend on the availability of textbooks in the Kyrgyz language specific to the universities' academic specialization. Therefore, the campus language ecology and the Russian language's dominance in Bishkek's educational system may change students' LinID.

Another critical problem related to the consequences of the previous regimes is the deterioration of the communication skills of post-Soviet students (Administrator A). This situation can be felt even more strongly by ethnic minorities who want to preserve their native language. Therefore, learning a new language and curriculum subjects may impose a double workload on children, increasing dropouts or poor marks. Such systems create inequality in schools between children in minority language groups and children in the dominant language group. This study also adds that the decision of parents to send their children to schools where children are not taught in their native language is a consequence of trauma caused by previous totalitarian systems. For example, some Kyrgyz of the Soviet generation in rural areas dreamed of mastering the Russian language but did not become advanced Russian speakers during the Soviet era. They are trying to fulfill this dream through their children and grandchildren, sending them to Russian schools.

Data also suggest that the perception of citizenship, nationality, and ethnicity is still vague among students and nonstudents, including minorities. While holding Kyrgyz passports, some minorities associate their national identity with their kin-republics in Russia, showing that they face additional identity problems, including country-level (aka national) identity.

The discussed problems show the previous regime's incomplete construction of the intended identity, which yields disputes over identity titles. However, the appearance of some Kyrgyz speakers among ethnic minorities shows a positive trend for the state language regarding their integration with the country's indigenous people. Although a U-turn seems complicated among current Russified Kyrgyz, it may appear among minorities, as data suggest (Table 12).

Thus, it can be concluded that the past LP has divided Kyrgyz citizens into speakers of two languages. This division occurred in all non-Russian ethnic groups, especially among ethnic minorities. The results suggest that the effects of covert policy may persist for two generations.

5. Suggestions for Implementation of the Findings and Results

Tables 3, 7, and 10 provide ideas for improving LP in the higher education domain. Encouraging students to use the Kyrgyz language, accepting more

applicants from peripheral regions, and improving LP in some universities will help the government increase the number of Kyrgyz-speaking students. Focusing on language behavior on campus will help reduce language discrimination. Developing special programs can also raise awareness of languages' role in shaping an independent Kyrgyzstan's identity.

The author is convinced that Kyrgyzstan should consider the experience of the USSR, which showed that preserving the diversity of languages is the responsibility of the major group since it is unlikely that this depends on minorities. He also believes that support for minority languages can increase the confidence of minorities in the government and the titular nationality. The unilateral imposition of the state language on minorities can cause a backlash. Identifying problems in a local community and creating targeted programs are necessary.

It would be helpful to develop programs that raise awareness among Kyrgyz-speaking students about the usefulness and necessity of a positive attitude towards minority languages. The author rejects the opinion that “the death of a minority language might be a good thing, as it contributes to social stability and ethnic equality” (Tsung, 2014, p. 49).

Language planners should pay attention to the motivation problems of students whose primary language is Russian since their faith in the Kyrgyz language is much weaker than other students. Particular attention should be paid to urban students. It is also essential to study the weak interest of students in some universities in more detail. It is necessary to improve the educational base to teach the state language since the poor results of the educational system are, as Businessman V noted, that “Kyrgyz language textbooks are boring and uninteresting” (personal communication, January 2020).

Further language planning should consider the different levels of minorities' interests in the state language. The Kyrgyz authorities should develop targeted programs for Russian-speaking Kyrgyz and national minorities. The primary efforts to revive the state language should be directed at the ethnic Kyrgyz. Other minorities should have broad rights to preserve and develop their native language without limiting their access to learning the state language.

Finally, the country's location on the ancient Silk Road, which served as a business, cultural, and linguistic exchange between East and West before the Arab, Turko-Mongolian, and Russian intervention in Central Asia, seems to be again becoming an important factor influencing the region's linguistic ecology. Current discussions suggest that attempts to add English to the standard curriculum and increased contact with the English-speaking world may replace traditional language balance with balanced multilingualism.

6. Directions for Further Research

More research is needed to determine why Russian-speaking Kyrgyz, Russians, and some minorities do not see the need to learn the state language and why some participants believe it is unnecessary for their children. Other reasons may include (1) poor LP at the campus level; (2) students of some departments may consider the state language optional; (3) the need for qualified teachers; (4) along with the language culture or religion are being imposed.

As a direction for the future, it is proposed to study the language landscape of universities, which can provide additional data on the LP of universities. Furthermore, a comparative study of public and private universities and universities in the regions remains a research gap. It would also be interesting to explore how the experience of studying or internships in developed countries can affect language attitudes and beliefs.

Another valuable piece of information for students is how they relate to minorities in the country. Apart from Russia's soft power policy, it would be useful to investigate any evidence of such attempts by the Anglo-Americans, Arabs, and Chinese to influence attitudes towards the language in Kyrgyzstan.

7. Conclusion

A textual analysis of the USSR constitutions concludes that the Kremlin's LP maintains language rights and equality. However, the triangulation of data from legislative documents, historical materials, expert interviews, and survey questionnaires suggests that a more plausible description of the Soviet LP was a mismatch between the written (overt) and non-written (covert) language policies. A textual analysis of Kyrgyzstan's constitutions suggests Bishkek fluctuated between overt bilingual LP, covert LP, revitalization policy, and vague LP (Table 8).

The results show that the approaches of Bishkek and Moscow to LP differed on several key issues. The first constitution of the Kyrgyz ASSR in 1929 contained a transparent and overt LP, securing the status of state languages for the Kyrgyz and Russian languages. However, this constitution was not approved by Moscow. The second constitution of the Kyrgyz SSR did not explicitly indicate the status of languages. However, Moscow approved it, an indirect indicator that the Kremlin preferred the covert LP. Since then, Kyrgyzstan's LP has followed the nationwide LP model by removing any mention of planning statuses for languages. Such a policy led the Kyrgyz language to asymmetric bilingualism and diglossia. Closer to the collapse of the USSR, the Supreme Soviet of the Kirghiz SSR tried to pursue a policy of reviving the language by adopting a new language law. However, the government of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan brought back the Soviet model of bilingual LP. They also introduced semantically confusing terminology

that contained vague statements about the status and functions of the Kyrgyz and Russian languages. Thus, this study provides an operational definition of vague LP for post-Soviet constitutions.

The survey data show that LPs of the past contributed to the identity crisis among post-Soviet students, characterized by vague ideas about their national, ethnic, and linguistic identity. Approximately a third of the students turned out to be Russian-speaking. This phenomenon, called Russification, was even more common among ethnic minorities than among ethnic Kyrgyz. Furthermore, the hidden LP of the Soviet Union and the vague LP of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan intensified discrimination based on language and contradictions between regions and ethnic groups. Finally, the previous LP divided students, regardless of gender identity, into Kyrgyz and Russian speakers with mutually exclusive linguistic identities, values, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs.

The previous literature has not yet discussed why the national minorities in Kyrgyzstan (as well as in other ex-Soviet republics) switched to Russian, ignoring the language of the titular nationality. In addition, the ideas underlying the vague declarations of linguistic rights without mentioning specific languages and their statuses in language laws have not yet been encountered. This study argues that the obstacle to overt language planning led to the fact that the dominant language de facto displaced the Kyrgyz language from the capital to the periphery and contributed to the Russification of ethnic minorities, preventing their integration with the titular nationality.

Previous literature also failed to mention the consequences of Soviet practices, such as the linguistic segregation of students in Kyrgyzstan's education system. However, due to this practice, two groups of citizens grew up alienated from each other in terms of language and culture. The construction of isolated identities has become the basis for the emergence of various types of discrimination.

This study suggests that the effects mentioned by LP above were associated with national and Kremlin leaders. According to McDermott (2017), many ethnic Kyrgyz have also contributed to the unequal competition, causing the Kyrgyz language to give way to Russian in Kyrgyzstan.

The findings and results show that preserving a minority language is possible only when the government and the major ethnic group are committed to the values of a pluralistic society. Otherwise, the minority cannot retain their native languages due to demographic and economic factors unless it has a powerful neighboring sister state.

One of the main problems of the post-Soviet republics is that they continue to copy Soviet methods and approaches to LP. The only difference is that the Kremlin tried to impose its policy covertly, while the former republics tried to

impose the majority's language overtly. However, the crude imposition of the language of the majority on minorities, in many cases, only harms the socio-psychological atmosphere within the country. It would be better to look for ways that stimulate and motivate the acquisition of the state language voluntarily.

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Implementation and Impact of Language Policy: The Case of Kyrgyz Students

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Language policy is crucial to any society's cultural and political fabric, as it shapes how individuals and groups communicate, interact, and identify. Language policy has important implications for nation-building and the creation of national identity. Language policy can also significantly impact university students' sense of belonging. Overt and inclusive policies can provide opportunities for students to develop language skills and cultural competencies, enhancing their academic and professional opportunities. Covert and implicit policies can create barriers to interaction between different language groups, leading to social fragmentation, exclusion, and discrimination. Overt language policies are those that are openly acknowledged and implemented, while covert policies are those that are more subtle and may be hidden. Overt language policies that promote a single national language can unite diverse groups within a nation. However, these policies can also lead to the suppression of linguistic and cultural diversity within a nation, potentially undermining the cultural richness of that society. Covert language policies can also have significant impacts on identity and national unity. For example, language policies not openly acknowledged can lead to confusion or

mistrust among different language groups. These policies can reinforce power imbalances between language groups, perpetuating existing inequalities.

Considering these concepts, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What LP has been implemented in Kyrgyzstan?

2. How has LP affected university students? Information on the language policy implemented in Kyrgyzstan was necessary to answer the first question, which involved examining laws, banknotes, newspaper titles, and dissertation catalogs. It was necessary to gather data on how the language policy has affected the students to answer the second question. In addition, in-depth interviews with LP experts helped clarify both questions.

The collected information was analyzed using textual analysis and statistical methods. Data analysis showed that different models of language policy were implemented in Kyrgyzstan, including multilingualism, bilingualism, and monolingualism. Overt, covert, and vague LP were used to promote these models. These models and methods have formed segregated communities, language discrimination, and different linguistic identities within the same ethnic groups.

Keywords: *Overt and covert language policies, impact of language policy on national identity, top-down and bottom-up aspects, linguistic behavior, macro and micro level policies.*

Реалізація та вплив мовної політики: приклад киргизьких студентів університетів

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Мовна політика має вирішальне значення для культурної та політичної структури будь-якого суспільства, оскільки вона формує спосіб спілкування, взаємодії та ідентифікації індивідів і груп. Мовна політика має важливі наслідки для націєтворення та формування національної ідентичності, також може суттєво впливати на почуття приналежності студентів університетів. Відкрита та інклюзивна мовна політика може надати студентам можливість розвивати свої мовні навички та культурні компетенції, розширюючи академічні та професійні можливості. Прихована і неявна політика може створювати бар'єри для взаємодії між різними мовними (етнолінгвістичними) групами, що призводить до соціальної фрагментації, виключення та дискримінації. Відкрита мовна політика – це та, що відкрито визнається і впроваджується, прихована політика – це та, що є більш витонченою і може бути частково або повністю прихованою. Відкрита мовна політика, яка підтримує єдину національну мову, може об'єднати різні групи всередині нації. Однак така політика також може призвести до придушення мовного та культурного розмаїття всередині нації, що потенційно підриває культурне багатство суспільства. Прихована мовна політика також може мати значний вплив

на ідентичність та національну єдність. Наприклад, мовна політика, яка не визнається відкрито, може призвести до плутанини або недовіри між різними мовними групами. Така політика може посилити дисбаланс влади між мовними групами, увічнюючи існуючу нерівність.

Беручи до уваги ці концепції, це дослідження мало на меті дати відповіді на наступні питання:

1. Яка мовна політика була реалізована в Киргизстані?
2. Як ця політика вплинула на студентів університетів? Для відповіді на перше питання була необхідна інформація про мовну політику, що реалізується в Киргизстані, для чого було вивчено закони, банкноти, назви газет і каталоги дисертацій. Для відповіді на друге питання необхідно було зібрати дані про те, як мовна політика вплинула на студентів. Крім того, глибинні інтерв'ю з експертами з мовної політики допомогли прояснити обидва питання.

Зібрану інформацію було проаналізовано за допомогою текстового аналізу та статистичних методів. Аналіз даних показав, що в Киргизстані реалізуються різні моделі мовної політики, включаючи багатомовність, двомовність і одномовність. Для просування цих моделей використовувалися відкриті, приховані та нечіткі приклади мовної політики. Ці моделі та методи сформували сегреговані спільноти, мовну дискримінацію та різні мовні ідентичності в межах одних і тих самих етнічних груп.

Ключові слова: *відкрита і прихована мовна політика, вплив мовної політики на національну ідентичність, висхідний і низхідний аспекти, лінгвістична поведінка, політика на макро- і мікрорівні.*

A nyelvpolitika megvalósítása és hatása: A kirgiz diákok esete

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A nyelvpolitika minden társadalom kulturális és politikai szerkezetében alapvető fontosságú, mivel meghatározza az egyének és csoportok kommunikációját, kölcsönhatásait és azonosítását. A nyelvpolitika fontos hatással van a nemzetépítésre és a nemzeti identitás kialakítására. A nyelvpolitika jelentősen befolyásolhatja az egyetemi hallgatók hovatartozás-érzését is. A nyílt és befogadó politikák lehetőséget biztosíthatnak a hallgatók számára a nyelvi készségek és a kulturális kompetenciák fejlesztésére, javítva ezzel tanulmányi és szakmai lehetőségeiket. A rejtett és hallgatólagos politikák akadályokat állíthatnak a különböző nyelvi csoportok közötti interakció elé, ami társadalmi széttagoltsághoz, kirekesztéshez és diszkriminációhoz vezethet. A nyílt nyelvpolitikák azok, amelyeket nyíltan felvállalnak és végrehajtanak, míg a rejtett politikák azok, amelyek finomabbak és rejtettebbek lehetnek. Az egyetlen nemzeti nyelvet támogató nyílt nyelvpolitikák egyesíthetik a nemzeten belüli különböző csoportokat. Ezek a politikák azonban a nemzeten belüli nyelvi és kulturális sokszínűség elfojtásához is vezethetnek, ami alááshatja az adott társadalom kulturális gazdagságát. A burkolt nyelvpolitikák

szintén jelentős hatással lehetnek az identitásra és a nemzeti egységre. Például a nem nyíltan elismert nyelvpolitikák zavart vagy bizalmatlanságot okozhatnak a különböző nyelvi csoportok között. Ezek a politikák erősíthetik a nyelvi csoportok közötti hatalmi egyenlőtlenségeket, és állandósíthatják a meglévő egyenlőtlenségeket.

Ezeket a fogalmakat figyelembe véve ez a tanulmány a következő kérdésekre kereste a választ: 1. Milyen nyelvpolitikát hajtottak végre Kirgizisztánban? 2. Hogyan hatott a nyelvpolitika az egyetemi hallgatókra? Az első kérdés megválaszolásához a Kirgizisztánban megvalósított nyelvpolitikára vonatkozó információkra volt szükség, amely magában foglalta a törvények, bankjegyek, újságcímek és disszertációs katalógusok vizsgálatát. A második kérdés megválaszolásához adatokat kellett gyűjteni arról, hogy a nyelvpolitika hogyan hatott a diákokra. Emellett a nyelv tanulási szakértőkkel készített mélyinterjúk segítettek mindkét kérdés tisztázásában.

Az összegyűjtött információkat szövegelemzéssel és statisztikai módszerekkel elemeztük. Az adatelemzés kimutatta, hogy Kirgizisztánban a nyelvpolitika különböző modelljeit valósították meg, beleértve a többnyelvűséget, a kétnyelvűséget és az egynyelvűséget. Nyílt, rejtett és homályos nyelvpolitikát használtak e modellek népszerűsítésére. Ezek a modellek és módszerek szegregált közösségeket, nyelvi diszkriminációt és különböző nyelvi identitásokat alakítottak ki ugyanazon etnikai csoportokon belül.

Kulcsszavak: *nyelvpolitika, nemzeti identitás, felülről lefelé és alulról felfelé irányuló szempontok, nyelvi viselkedés, makro- és mikroszintű politikák.*