

VOLUME 1



KAZGUU LIBERAL ARTS DIGEST

JUNE 2021



KAZGUU LIBERAL ARTS DIGEST

Information about the journal



"K L A D" IS A STUDENT JOURNAL FIRST PUBLISHED AT M. NARIKBAYEV KAZGUU UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS. THIS JOURNAL IS AIMED AT ENHANCING STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT INTO SCIENCE AND RESEARCH.

"K L A D" JOURNAL ADMITS FOR PUBLICATION VARIOUS TYPES OF ARTICLES: ORIGINAL RESEARCH, REVIEW ARTICLES, SHORT REPORTS OR ESSAYS, REFLECTIONS, CASE STUDIES, METHODOLOGIES AND CASES IN ENGLISH; CONTAINING THE RESULTS OF FUNDAMENTAL AND APPLIED RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF PHILOSOPHY AND IDENTITY, HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN, PEDAGOGY, LINGUISTICS AND METHODS OF TEACHING LANGUAGES, TRANSLATION, AND TOURISM.

JUNE 2021

M. NARIKBAYEV KAZGUU UNIVERSITY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH ARTICLES

“TERMINOLOGY SOLUTIONS FOR KAZAKH TRANSLATORS IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY” <i>V. Sidorenko</i>	4
“FEATURES OF HOUSEHOLD REALIA TRANSLATION IN LITERARY TEXTS” <i>Zh.A.Kunayeva</i>	11
“WHAT FACTORS THE RESEARCH METHODS I STUDENTS CONSIDERED WHILE CHOOSING THEIR FIELD OF STUDY?” <i>Russalina Akhmerova, Rakhat Eslyan, Aiarys Nursapa</i>	19
“WHAT DIFFICULTIES DID KAZGUU UNIVERSITY’S SECOND YEAR STUDENTS ENCOUNTER DURING ONLINE LEARNING?” <i>Kuatova K., Makartseva A., Uraztayeva A.</i>	27
DO BILINGUAL PEOPLE THINK IN TWO LANGUAGES? <i>Malika Zhandarbek</i>	34
“KAZGUU STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUALISM IN THE PROBLEM- SOLVING EXPERIENCE” <i>Rakhmetova Aidana, Nagornyyak Natalya, Shakhmarova Tomiris</i>	38
WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE ON PEOPLE’S IDENTITIES? <i>Russalina Akhmerova</i>	41
“FACTORS AFFECTING THE FINAL DECISION OF SPECIALTY CHOOSING: CASE OF KAZGUU UNIVERSITY” <i>Vesselskaya Kristina, Nikolayev Aziz, Saduakas Tursynzhan</i>	45
“THE IMPACT OF A FAILED ACADEMIC COURSE ON STUDENTS’ OVERALL WELL- BEING, FURTHER MOTIVATION, AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE” <i>Yergaliyev Akbar, Aubakirova Zhibek, Nuranova Ayazhan</i>	56
“KAZGUU UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES OF GENDER STEREOTYPES” <i>Yermekkyzy Assem, Zhamantayeva Assiya, Khamzin Aslan</i>	67
“PECULIARITIES OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE” <i>Beysembekov Yerzhan</i>	74
“FUNCTIONS OF INTERJECTIONS IN THE MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE” <i>Vesselskaya K. V.</i>	84
“THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC-RELATED STRESS ON STUDENTS” <i>Dilyara Temirbulatova, Tomiris Lee, Bayan Rymkhan</i>	96
“ONLINE EDUCATION AND THE EFFECT ON STUDENTS’ STRESS LEVEL” <i>Bazarbekov Timur, Kabzhanova Karina, Ondassynova Gulnur</i>	106
“THE PROBLEM OF BRAIN DRAIN IN KAZAKHSTAN” <i>Kuldin D. Pavlovich, Abdilmanov Abilmansur, Akbarov Nursultan</i>	114
“THE NEED OF SEX EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN” <i>Aruzhan A. Nurtaza, Gulsezim Zh. Nagi, Perizat A. Mazhitova</i>	119

LITERATURE REVIEWS

“WELL-BUILT CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT AS A SOLUTION FOR THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURES AMONG EMPLOYEES IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS” <i>Nazira Dauletova</i>	136
“RE-EDUCATION CAMPS IN CHINA: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS” <i>Ayupov Dinmukhamed</i>	138
“BINGE-WATCHING: ADDICTION OR ENTERTAINMENT” <i>Mukhitova G. Mukhitkyzy</i>	141
“CAUSES OF MISMATCH BETWEEN JOB CHOICES IN KAZAKHSTAN” <i>Nagi Gulsezim</i>	144
“MENTAL EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN” <i>Otesh Tomiris</i>	147

STUDENTS' ESSAYS

“SHOULD WE CONTINUE READING E-BOOKS INSTEAD OF PAPERBACKS?” <i>Karina Kabzhanova</i>	152
“WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF GLOBALIZATION?” <i>Kazhgaliyev S. T.</i>	154
“SHOULD FAMOUS PEOPLE IN THE SOCIETY GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS?” <i>Manapova G.</i>	156
“WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF GROWING UP IN POVERTY?” <i>Perizat A. Mazhitova</i>	158
“WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF GLOBALISATION?” <i>Ormantayeva A.</i>	160
WHO AM I? <i>Berikkara A.B.</i>	161



Research Articles

KAZGUU Liberal Arts Digest

June 2021

M. NARIKBAYEV KAZGUU UNIVERSITY

“KAZGUU UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES OF GENDER STEREOTYPES”

Yermekkyzy Assem, Zhamantayeva Assiya, Khamzin Aslan

Introduction

The topic of gender stereotypes is one of the most discussed ones in such emergent contexts like Kazakhstan. Gender stereotypes are a generalized view or preconception about the roles of men and women that is imposed by society. The majority of people are exposed to them from early childhood, starting with the choice of toys and colors. In most cases, this has negative consequences and underestimation of women’s roles is one of them. Since childhood, listening to the voice of society, some people continue to live in created roles. For instance, in Kazakhstan, it is common trend for males to be leaders in the workplace, whereas females usually do not hold high positions. It is claimed that men earn money, women give birth. Such stereotypes affect self-esteem, since the created roles of the sexes are closely related to the confidence and understanding of the human mind, which can break the person himself or vice versa. However, gender stereotypes lose their relevance every year, as young people begin to deny these generalized views.

The purpose of this study is to find out and study the influence of gender stereotypes on students' self-esteem depending on their experience. KAZGUU University was chosen as the site for data collection. Undergraduate students were chosen as a target audience to explore their different experiences as the latter vary from person to person.

Research question:

How KAZGUU undergraduate students describe their experience encountering gender stereotypes?

Sub-questions:

What suggestions are to be made by KAZGUU undergraduate students to reduce the spread of these gender stereotypes?

Methodology**Participants**

The participants of the basic qualitative study were six KAZGUU undergraduate students. Among them were four girls and two boys. Participants in the qualitative study were selected with a convenience sampling strategy. The researchers were making selective decisions relying on their own judgments. Even though, convenience sampling does not seem to be a scientific strategy, due to lack of time devoted to the study, it has been chosen as one of the most suitable options in current conditions. However, it has its own benefits in terms of depicting a general picture of the situation.

Data collection instruments

In order to collect qualitative data, the researchers conducted interview with the research participants. The interview questions were targeted to fully investigate the given topic and were divided into ice-breakers and grand-tour questions.

Procedures

Prior taking interviews each research participant was lead through informed consent procedure and provided his/her voluntary consent to participate in this small-scale study. Interviews were conducted via video telephony and online chat software. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face interview were difficult to be organized. Each interview lasted for about 15-30 minutes.

Data analysis

The three-step procedure was applied to analyze the interviews. Firstly, we coded the interviews into open codes, then developed axial codes, and at the final stage of data analysis we integrated axial codes into three thematic codes.

Anonymity and Confidentiality procedures

The information collected during interviews is used only for research purposes. We assure, that the names of the respondents will be never divulged. In order to keep the information safe, we asked the respondents to use pseudonyms.

Qualitative findings

The basic qualitative study aimed at answering two main qualitative questions, such as "How KAZGUU undergraduate students describe their experience encountering gender stereotypes?" and "What suggestions were made by KAZGUU undergraduate students to reduce the spread of these gender stereotypes?" with which we were able to complete our research by pre-recording their responses on a voice recorder. To do this, each member of the group took two respondents, and then independently transcribed them in a table provided, after which we shared our work with each other to determine thematic codes using "Jamboard" online platform. The coding table helped identify the three main topics found in all six interviews: gender-biased statements for women, gender-biased statements for men and thirst for change.

Gender-biased statements for women. Participants demonstrated concern that gender-biased statements are harmful to women's personal development including both career and lifestyle. Participant 2 claims that she encounters gender stereotypes every day. She shares her experience:

Especially words like a woman should cook, clean, well.... do all the chores around the house, as this is her duty. My parents and relatives use these words so often that sometimes I don't feel at ease in my mind. Also, I have a brother, but he doesn't do anything and no one says anything and I think it's unfair..... I don't understand why we should listen to these words related to gender stereotypes. I mean that they destroy my freedom.

Participant 4 also mentions that women stereotypically are poorer leaders than men and women's success is not always conditioned by their hard work:

I even remember hearing that some of our students discussed how a certain girl bought a car and arrived at our university parking lot, and they were like: "Well, it is clear how, she bought it." That is, again, gender stereotypes that a woman cannot achieve anything except through the bed.

Participants also mention that gender stereotypes influence people's perception of self-image. Three of them mentioned that they personally were judged for the way they were dressed. Participant 4 shares her experience of such attitude and her emotions about it:

It was not nice, it offended me, because this is my body, because I do not dictate what you wear. For some reason, they dictate this to us, simply because we were born as women.

Only one Participant 4 mentioned effect of gender stereotypes, particularly objectification of women, on self-esteem:

Consumer attitude influenced my self-esteem. That is, when some canons are imposed on us. That is, if you are a product, then you must have a price tag.

Despite women's lifestyle gender stereotypes can also affect their career opportunities. 2 of 6 participants mention such phenomenon as "glass ceiling" and the difference in payments for men and women.

Gender-biased statements for men. Men are considered to encounter gender stereotypes less than women. However, this judgment is often false. Gender stereotypes can significantly complicate their life as well. All the respondents talk about responsibility that men and the fact that this responsibility is often too difficult to them to carry. Participant 4 mentions the problem of pressure exerted on men:

That is, for example, the same thing that a man does not cry. How many situations we have are stressful enough, but a man must hold on. Or the stereotype that a man must work, support his family, they also have a certain responsibility.

If talk about the effect on men's behavior, Participant 5 notices, that society's judgments affected them in a certain way:

Well I've become more closed... and I never show my emotional reactions. I keep it myself and society inspired me that.

Moreover, and we find it particularly interesting, Participant 3 claims that this attitude can lead to different mental problems amongst men:

And as a result, if I'm not mistaken, clinical depression is more often revealed in men, right? Life expectancy of men is shorter. Because society imposes too much responsibility on men.

Thirst for change. Although all participants sought to change these gender stereotypes, their idea is to speak out or show the negative impact of gender stereotypes and promote the idea of equality. Participant 6 suggests gender equality to be discussed in education sphere, using such words as "seminars, attendance and additional courses on gender equality". Participant 2 finds more fundamental solution of the problem:

It is necessary to analyze their gender policy and actions to implement them in our country. Also, different projects and campaigns could be launched to spread information on modern vision of people. Young generation must know that old misconceptions are not dominating and it is crucial for society to stop constructing new stereotypes.

All the participants believe that entertainment sphere and social media should spread ideas of gender equality "That is, my concrete solution to the problem is to popularize it through films" (Participant 4). Participant 3 supports this idea "If you are faced with gender inequality, then you need to talk about it, do not being shy".

Summary

In the course of qualitative research, we interviewed people with different experiences. Having different experiences of gender inequality, all participants demonstrated a good knowledge of this subject, with which we were able to find answers to two qualitative questions: "How KAZGUU undergraduate students describe their experience encountering gender stereotypes?" and "What suggestions were made by KAZGUU undergraduate students to reduce the spread of these gender stereotypes?".

The reasons for gender stereotypes could be traditions, upbringing, and old-fashioned views of society. Based on the participants' responses, we concluded that our peers experience both female and male specific gender stereotypes by being exposed to gender-biased statements in their everyday lives. Moreover, society's perception of gender stereotypes negatively affects research participants, which was evidenced in their responses. For women, gender stereotypes are usually bad for their personal development, as society uses words such as women should cook, clean and this restricts their freedom. For men, this affects their mental health, as they have to take responsibility and be what society represents them to be. In other words, stereotypes usually treat both sexes differently and therefore have different consequences. However, their reasons are mostly similar.

The study participants sought to change the problem of gender inequality, as in many cases they were dissatisfied, and offered to solve it by educating people about gender stereotypes in educational institutions as well as through popular culture, for example, through social networks, and movies.

The experiences of KAZGUU freshmen students living in a bilingual environment
Ayaulym Zhenisova, Tokzhan Yessengali, Aidana Kabassova, Dias Kalikhanov

Introduction

Bilingualism is the ability of a person to speak in multiple languages. This skill is most common among teenagers or teen adults in Kazakhstan due to the trilingual policy that was adopted on the state level. Bilingualism surrounds Kazakhstani people everywhere from the signs on the road with caution written in three

languages (Kazakh, Russian, English) to the educational program that is created to teach the pupils in three languages. However, the main motivation to learn a new language appears by the influence of the family, exactly, the household environment. Nowadays knowing more than one language opens up various opportunities in education and career pathways.

Given current concern of bilingualism, this small-scale research aims to investigate the students' understanding of bilingualism and opinions about bilingual environment. We chose KAZGUU University as a research site because we think that this university is a good example of place where trilingual policy is being followed. The participants are freshmen students who have been living in the bilingual environment for more than ten years and continuing living in such environment provided by university. Investigating the students' insight about bilingualism can help to find the root of the influence and motivation to learn new languages for them and study more about social bilingualism in the educational environment at the university campus.

To achieve the aim of this research, the following research questions were developed:

- What are the experiences of the KAZGUU freshmen students living in a bilingual environment?
- How those experiences are reflected in KAZGUU freshmen students' academic and social lives?

Methodology

This chapter is about the set of actions we have done to conduct this study. The basic qualitative study was conducted to find the answer to the research question. The study focuses at the experiences of the KAZGUU freshmen students living in a bilingual environment. The main tool of this study was semi-structured interview, which consists of 12 prepared questions and additional probing questions.

Overall five freshmen students were recruited for this study following purposive sampling strategy. The inclusion criteria involved: being first-year student, being bilingual, and having experience of living in a bilingual environment. Moreover, they were suitable participants for us because they could share information about their shift to a new bilingual environment, in this case, KAZGUU University.

The interviews were conducted via online platforms (WhatsApp, Telegram, and ZOOM). The duration of each interview did not last for more than 25 minutes. The participants had to answer 12 prepared questions to explore their insight concerning bilingualism in specific spheres of their life, their understanding of this phenomenon, and their opinion about it. All five interviews were conducted in English.

All the students participated in the research voluntarily. At the beginning of each interview, we have informed each interviewee about the consent form and their rights during this research work. They were able to withdraw from the study at any time. In addition to this, their personal information (real names, phone numbers) were not included in the study, and their real names were replaced by pseudonyms. Moreover, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of our research participants, the data was stored at the researchers' personal computers protected by individual passwords.

Data analysis was conducted following the method of open, axial and thematic coding (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative findings

The qualitative part of the research aims to answer main qualitative question: What are the experiences of the KAZGUU freshmen students living in a bilingual environment? Pre-recorded, semi-structured, and open-ended interviews that used interview protocol were transcribed manually verbatim. The "JamBoard" helped to identify our main topics grounded in all five interviews. These topics include "Bilingual background", "Motivation", "Benefits of bilingualism" and "KAZGUU as a bilingual environment".

Bilingual background. Each of the respondents speak at least two languages, one participant informed us that he is now in the process of studying fifth language. When questions about languages used in different environments (family, friends and university), some patterns were noticed: five out of five respondents use

Kazakh language with their parents, but use Russian with their siblings. This pattern can be explained with the fact of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet Union belonging that made Russian language one of the most used languages in our country, sometimes replacing Kazakh language. Nowadays parents are trying to teach the importance of the native language with banning foreign languages, except Kazakh in the household. Last assumption was based on the respond of Participant 1:

My mom does not want us to mix languages and when she is near, we try to speak only Kazakh, but we often fail and end up getting lecture about native language's importance and that we don't appreciate it enough.

The next patterns noticed are that five out of five respondents are studying at KAZGUU in English language and also that different participants use different languages with friends. Here Participant 4 asserts that he uses not Kazakh and Russian, as it can be thought beforehand: "Friends...(thinking) it's kinda semi-Russian, semi-English...". Additionally, Participant 2 mentioned that his friends speak three languages: English, Kazakh, and Russian.

Moreover, during the interviews, it was discovered that Kazakh language is considered dominant amongst other languages by four participants and only one thinks that Russian is dominant for him. It can be explained by the nationality of the respondents. This assumption was based on the response of the Participant 3 "Kazakh dominates the most, because I am Kazakh".

Motivation. All participants in one way or another were motivated to learn additional language, in the case of Participant 5 it was not his direct motivation, but of his parents and non-direct country's influence. Participant 5 asserts:

In Kazakhstan, if you want to live, uhm, work, you have to know at least two languages. (Thinks for a while). So yeah, my mom thought so and put me in Russian-speaking environment and sent me to courses to improve my English. So, it is my mom's work (laughs a bit).

Basically, this respondent became bilingual mostly due to the environment where he was put by adults, this assumption was held by another participant too. In this case, Participant 3 did not even notice the process of becoming bilingual "It happened natural to me that I don't even...you know...I didn't understand what happened". To add, studying a new language from small age is not always decided by parents. Here Participant 2 shares that she wanted to learn English because of her desire "I started learning English at the very young age(pauses) I was 7 years old. I had some courses and I had the DESIRE to study and learn new language". Another motivation could be peer pressure as it was reported by Participant 2 "My classmates were my main motivation, I wanted to reach their level of in all languages. I studied hard, plus practices with classmates".

To summarize, the participants acknowledge the direct and non-direct motivation, specifically, the parents desire, influence from outside world and self-motivation, helped them to start learning languages.

Benefits of bilingualism. Another topic identified during the interview is bilingualism's positive influence on different aspects of students' lives: preparing for lectures, making friends, etc. All respondents praised the usefulness of bilingualism. Turns out knowing multiple languages helps Participant 1 to prepare for the lectures and is very effective ability in university:

It boosted my essays and preparing to debates, also when writing essays, I focus on essay structure and just knowledge, not on translation of task, then translating my ideas. Overall, I spend less time for preparing for some lessons.

The most surprising thing to mention is that participants resonated uniquely why they consider bilingualism a positive skill. Whilst the previous speaker explained the benefits of bilingualism in the academic aspect, Participant 4 assured that bilingualism helped him to make more friends, those friends already made his student life that started a few months ago "Cool", as respondent on his own referred to in his answer. Another respondent also shared interesting thought "It is very interesting to know about culture of other countries, other people. You can touch this culture (laughs)" (Participant 3). This participant claimed that he can interfere with other cultures

due to the bilingual environment at KAZGUU campus because there he got to meet representatives of other nations.

KAZGUU as a bilingual environment. This topic was identified as all five respondents shared their experiences of studying at KAZGUU. Five out of five participants share the same idea of KAZGUU being a good place for learning new languages. Participant 4 shared:

Umm at this moment yes, I think that university is best place for learning and gaining knowledge. (short pause). Especially learning foreign languages. Because I am also learning French language here. Umm It is best thing I like now in university.

Most of the interviewees said that KAZGUU is a good place for not only learning new languages but also for practicing learned languages. All of them mentioned that except for English, students try to improve their Kazakh and Russian speaking skills. Participant 3 emphasized:

But also, I noticed one thing: most of the students speak in Russian, so it's a great chance for others who don't speak Russian to develop and practice Russian language.

Here respondents shared that they learn theories and apply them in practice very often in different classes at KAZGUU. They also explained that thanks to these classes they can improve their bilingual skills. Participant 5 said:

Yeah, I totally agree. Every lesson has a lot of both practice and theories at the same time that improve our skills. Here I have disciplines in English and Kazakh, I am able to participate to different debates, I mean, languages (uncomfortable laughter) I have a chance to develop not only my knowledge and my language skills, I just have a chance to develop as a (stopped for few seconds) professional. Sounds as some type of advertisement (laughs), but yeah, it is true, I enjoy studying in my university and the chances it gives me to boost my skills. Now I speak more English, like, more freely and at the same time I am able to improve my native language skills too.

In addition to this, two participants shared that they have some problems with the incomprehension of teachers' English during classes. One interviewee said that it is more difficult to study at university after college because of the difference between English taught in both places. Thus, Participant 2 elaborates:

...when we do not understand in class, teacher is like: okay, let me do it in Russian (laughs). So, it is fun. Officially we speak English, but when we are in a hurry, teachers and even students seem to use Russian, Kazakh rarely.

Participant 3 holds the same opinion about English misunderstanding problem and reasons to improve English language "Maybe we need more practicing in foreign language than Russian, and in we use English for the purpose of studying and learning and doing different projects and homework".

The answers to the question "Do you think that KAZGUU is a good place where students can develop their bilingual skills?" were similar in all five participants' interviews. So, they considered KAZGUU as a good place for bilingual students. Along with this, two participants shared that they have noticed differences between their English language levels before and after the study at KAZGUU. Also, these two participants mentioned that teachers and students mainly use the Russian language as the language of explaining some things to each other.

Conclusion

After conducting qualitative analysis, we were able to find answers to qualitative questions of our study: "What are the experiences of the KAZGUU freshmen students living in a bilingual environment?" and "How those experiences are reflected in KAZGUU freshmen students' academic and social lives?" It was found out that our participants became bilingual due to several factors like family and friends influence and mostly environment. All participants agree that bilingualism is really helpful in both university life and spare time. Participants shared their experiences living in a bilingual environment. It can be concluded that most of them are positive about bilingualism in their lives. The answer to the first question is the common experiences of our

interviewees concerning the bilingual environment: “having bilingual environment in both university and family life”, “realizing the benefits of bilingualism in their lives” and “improving their bilingual skills at KAZGUU.” The second qualitative question is about the reflection of these experiences in our participants’ lives. All participants see good sides of bilingualism such as meeting new people, knowing something new about another culture, and improving their class performance. Overall, these experiences of living in a bilingual environment have a positive reflection in five interviewees’ academic and social life.

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