# ABSTRACT

## of the dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty "6D021300 – Linguistics" by Baimyrza Ainur Amangaliqyzy on the topic: "Linguistic Identity and Multilingualism of Youth"

**The relevance of this dissertation research** lies in the need for a comprehensive analysis of the processes shaping the linguistic identity of multilingual youth within the current linguistic context of Kazakhstan. Studying this issue contributes to a deeper understanding of sociocultural processes in the country, the harmonization of interethnic relations, and the development of recommendations for optimizing language policy aimed at building a competitive multilingual society.

The State Program on the Implementation of Language Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020–2025 includes objectives such as the modernization of the Kazakh language using the Latin script, strengthening its role as a language of interethnic communication, expanding its functions in education, improving the culture of its use, regulating its application in culture, media, service, and business sectors, developing the linguistic capital of citizens, supporting the Russian language in the communicative environment, and promoting the languages of ethnic groups. The Concept for the Development of Language Policy for 2023–2029, approved by Government Resolution No. 914 of October 16, 2023, emphasizes the importance of national linguistic identity and multilingual education. This confirms the relevance of the research topic in the context of state programs.

**Object of the research** – the linguistic identity of youth and the multilingualism situation.

**Subject of the research** – the sociolinguistic parameters of the interrelation between the linguistic identity and multilingualism of university students.

**Purpose of the research** – to determine the interrelation between university students' linguistic identity and the level of multilingualism through sociolinguistic parameters, and to model students' linguistic identity in a multilingual context. To achieve this goal, the following objectives have been set:

- to reveal the essence of the concept of "youth linguistic identity" by defining the theoretical foundations of its study;

- to analyze the sociolinguistic characteristics of the phenomenon of multilingualism in Kazakhstan and determine its influence on the linguistic identity of youth;

- to identify quantitative indicators of university students' linguistic identity and level of multilingualism based on census data, official statistics, and the Greenberg Index and describe the relationship between them;

- to propose a typology of students' linguistic identity in a multilingual environment;

- to develop a structural model of students' linguistic identity in the context of multilingualism.

**Research methods.** Theoretical analysis was applied to review domestic and foreign scholarly works and to clarify the conceptual and terminological framework. The observation method was used to understand the linguistic characteristics of youth and the overall linguistic situation. The sociolinguistic survey method was applied to determine the linguistic identity and multilingualism level of university students. The questionnaire included questions about language choice, attitudes toward language, linguistic behavior in communicative situations, and the relationship between mother tongue and ethnic identity. The semi-structured interview method was conducted to deepen the analysis of survey results and to reveal students' value-based and emotional attitudes toward language. This method made it possible to better understand the inner motivation and linguistic experience of young respondents. Statistical and index analysis methods were used to determine the quantitative level of multilingualism. The comparative-analytical method allowed the identification of regional and cultural differences in students' linguistic identity and attitudes toward language across various social groups and regions.

**Research Material.** The research material consists of a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative materials include data from the 2009 and 2021 national censuses of the Republic of Kazakhstan provided by the Bureau of National Statistics, official statistics on linguistic composition and multilingualism levels, as well as regional and age-based indicators used to calculate Greenberg's multilingualism index.

Additionally, the study used the results of a pilot survey conducted in 2018 at the Faculty of Philology and World Languages, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, with 100 student participants, and a large-scale survey conducted in 2024 involving 500 respondents.

The gender composition of the pilot survey participants was as follows: 39.2% male and 60.8% female. Ethnic composition: 60.8% Kazakhs, 35.2% Russians, and 4% representatives of other ethnic groups (Uzbeks, Tatars, Uyghurs, etc.). Participants were aged 18–24 – a socially and linguistically significant age group, as linguistic identity is actively formed during this stage.

The main large-scale survey covered first-year students from five universities across different regions of Kazakhstan (100 students from each city): Astana – L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Petropavl – M. Kozybayev North Kazakhstan University, Shymkent – M. Auezov South Kazakhstan University, Aktobe – K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University, Ust-Kamenogorsk – S. Amanzholov East Kazakhstan University.

The respondents were mainly aged 17–19. Gender composition: 55% female, 45% male. Ethnic composition: 83.6% Kazakhs, 9.6% Russians, 6.8% other ethnic groups (Uzbeks, Germans, Ukrainians, Tatars, Koreans, etc.). Language of instruction: 65% study in Kazakh, 35% in Russian. This sample was chosen to allow for comparative analysis of regional characteristics, differences between urban and rural students, and because census data from 2009 and 2021 indicate that

young people are the most multilingual socio-demographic group in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted as part of focus group sessions, totaling 2.5 hours of audio recordings.

**Theoretical and methodological framework.** The study is based on the works of domestic and foreign scholars in the fields of sociolinguistics, language policy, language planning, language ideology, linguistic attitudes, linguistic identity, multilingualism, and bilingualism. Among Kazakhstani researchers, the works of the following authors were analyzed: A. Kaidar, O.A. Aitbayev, R. Syzdyk, N. Uali, B.Kh. Khasanov, Z.K. Akhmetzhanova, E.D. Suleimenova, S.Yu. Son, O.B. Altynbekova, N.Zh. Shaimerdenova, Sh.K. Zharkynbekova, D.D. Shaibakova, Zh.S. Smagulova, D.Kh. Akanova, G.A. Dosmukhametova, G. Isimbayeva, A.M. Fazylzhanova, N. Kekilbekova, A.M. Dosanova, A.M. Abasilov and others.

Among international researchers: V.M. Alpatov, A.N. Baskakov, V.I. Belikov, V.N. Belousov, U. Weinreich, K. Zamyatin, M.I. Issayev, L.P. Krysin, G.D. McConnell, V.Yu. Mikhalchenko, K. Musaev, A. Mustajoki, V.P. Neroznak, A. Pavlenko, E.Yu. Protasova, V.M. Solntsev, G. Khruslov, Ho Sun Chol, as well as Sh. Akiner, B. Anderson, C. Baker, D. Bhava, A. Blackledge, S. Crisp, V. Dickens, J. Edwards, W. Fierman, J. Fishman, P. Garrett, E. Goodman, N. Grant, F. Grosjean, S. Hall, E. Haugen, S. Iskanius, B. Norton, and others.

**Theoretical significance of the study.** The dissertation contributes to theoretical advancements in sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, and language contact studies. The findings related to linguistic identity formation among multilingual youth deepen our understanding of the relationship between language and consciousness, language and ethnicity, and language and civic identity.

**Practical significance of the study.** The key results can be applied in the development and teaching of elective courses in general and social linguistics. The sociolinguistic data are of practical value to linguists, sociologists, translators, education administrators, and government agencies involved in youth policy and language planning.

**Scientific novelty of the research.** The scientific novelty of this dissertation is reflected in the following aspects:

- The theoretical foundations for studying the linguistic identity of youth were identified, and the meaning of the concept "linguistic identity of youth" was clarified. The linguistic identity of young people was characterized as a complex sociolinguistic category consisting of internal and external layers.

- The sociolinguistic nature of multilingualism in Kazakhstan was analyzed, and its influence on the linguistic identity of youth was revealed. Multilingualism in Kazakhstan was described as a sociolinguistic phenomenon based on the interaction of Kazakh, Russian, English, and other national or foreign languages, and its interdependent relationship with youth linguistic identity was scientifically substantiated.

- Using population census data, official statistics, and the Greenberg Index, quantitative indicators of university students' linguistic identity and multilingualism levels were identified, and the relationship between them was examined.
- The types of linguistic identity among students in a multilingual environment were scientifically classified. The types of linguistic identity were categorized into two major groups based on the native language and the second language.
- The linguistic identity of students in a multilingual environment was presented in the form of a structural model. This model provided a systematic representation of the sociolinguistic relationship between youth linguistic identity and multilingualism.

**Main findings to be defended:**

1. Linguistic identity of youth is a complex and dynamic sociolinguistic category composed of an external layer – defined through self-identification with a particular linguocultural group – and an internal layer, manifested through linguistic competence, linguistic experience, and attitudes toward language. This category comprehensively describes a young person's linguistic behavior, language choice, orientation within a multilingual environment, self-perception as a member of a particular ethnolinguistic group, as well as their value-based positions regarding language. Youth linguistic identity is shaped and constantly renewed under the influence of macrosocial factors such as state language policy, demography, national ideology, socio-economic relations, and the digital sphere, as well as microsocial factors including educational institutions, family, and peer groups.

2. Multilingualism in Kazakhstan is a sociolinguistic phenomenon characterized by the ability to master and use Kazakh, Russian, English, and other national or foreign languages in various social and communicative contexts. It is based on the interrelation between linguistic competence and cultural adaptation. The linguistic identity of young people is formed within this multilingual environment and directly depends on multilingual experience. The relationship between multilingualism and linguistic identity is reciprocal: on the one hand, multilingualism functions as an external socialization mechanism shaping linguistic identity; on the other hand, linguistic identity serves as the internal motivational and value-based core of multilingualism.

3. The quantitative indicators of students' linguistic identity are determined based on its multilayered structure (internal and external layers. The external layer is measured through the "native language" category used in population censuses: the language a student identifies as their native language serves as an indicator of this external layer. Quantitative indicators of the internal layer are defined through linguistic competence (the level of language mastery) and linguistic experience (frequency and domains of language use). The number of languages a student knows and uses, as well as their proficiency levels, constitute the main parameters of the internal layer. Since multilingualism is similarly grounded in linguistic

experience, students' linguistic knowledge and usage form a shared quantitative indicator of the internal layer of linguistic identity and the level of multilingualism.

4. In the multilingual environment, five types have been identified based on the relationship between students' linguistic experience and their ethnocultural orientations: holistic national identity, culturally dominant identity, integrated Kazakh-language identity, and polylingual identity. In terms of the internal layer of linguistic identity, the following types were distinguished: active, crisis, potential, limited, and neutral. This typology is conditional, as linguistic identity is a dynamic phenomenon, and its types are variable and lack fixed boundaries.

5. The linguistic identity of students formed in a multilingual environment represents a complex structural model consisting of three levels: the cognitive-communicative level, the emotional-evaluative level, and the socio-cultural level. The cognitive-communicative level encompasses the sum of a multilingual individual's linguistic knowledge, speech experience, and ability to use languages effectively in specific communicative situations. The emotional-evaluative level reflects the youth's internal attitude toward language, their emotional connection, and value orientations. The socio-cultural level represents the link between an individual's linguistic experience, social context, and ethnic identity.

**Approval of the study.** The main scientific results and conclusions of the study have been published in national and international academic outlets and presented at both national and international theoretical conferences in the form of 12 scientific articles. Of these: 3 articles were published in journals indexed in the Scopus database; 2 articles appeared in proceedings of international conferences held abroad; 1 article was published in a foreign academic journal; 2 articles were included in the proceedings of international conferences held in Kazakhstan; and 4 articles were published in journals listed by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Sphere of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**Structure of the dissertation.** The dissertation consists of an introduction, three main chapters, a conclusion, a list of references, and three appendices.