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Multilingual Family Language Policies: The Role of Translanguaging in Kazakhstan

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the translanguaging phenomenon, delving into the language repertoire of bilingual and multilingual children in Kazakh families, specifically within the context of family discourse. The primary objective is to investigate the everyday translanguaging practices embedded in family communication. The research is grounded in the theoretical framework of Family Language Policy, as proposed by Spolsky, focusing on key concepts such as language ideology, language management, and language practice, while also exploring the influence of cultural identity, bilingualism, and multilingualism on the language use of children from Kazakh families. This study investigates translanguaging behaviors in family interactions through three components. Language ideology looks at family members' beliefs about language use and how these beliefs shape interactions and language choices. Language management examines family decisions on language use in daily communication, education, and recreation. Language practices explore how translanguaging manifests in these contexts, especially in daily interactions. The research sample consisted of 16 children, ranging from six to fourteen years old, from families linked to Kazakhstan's "Bolashak" international scholarship program, which facilitates higher studies and professional development overseas, emphasizing English proficiency. The results demonstrate that children utilize language in a variety of ways, but parents use their mother tongue to preserve cultural continuity. Children automatically translanguage in family relationships, changing languages according to the situation. By improving knowledge of the variables influencing bilingualism and multilingualism, this study aids researchers in reaching more accurate results. In

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summary, the study provides a thorough analysis of translanguaging in family discourse.

Keywords: Translanguaging; Family Language Policy; Multilingualism; Ideology

1. Introduction

The rise of multilingualism is increasingly evident in response to global shifts in politics, economy, culture, and education[1], contributing to a growing number of multilingual families and greater acceptance of multilingual child-raising practices. While this trend is global, its manifestations differ across sociocultural contexts, underscoring the need for more localized studies.

Within this evolving landscape, Family Language Policy (FLP) has emerged as a significant area of inquiry. Scholars such as King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry[2] define FLP as the interplay of beliefs, practices, and management strategies regarding language use within the family. This conceptualization draws on multiple fields of study, including language policy, child language acquisition, and language socialization[3]. However, while these studies offer foundational insights, they tend to focus on Western or Anglophone contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how FLP operates in less-represented multilingual settings such as Kazakhstan.

Further, there is a growing interest in the concept of translanguaging, which García[4] defines as the fluid and strategic use of linguistic resources by multilingual speakers. While some scholars, such as Cenoz and Gorter[5], emphasize its emancipatory and pedagogical dimensions, others, including Karpava et al.[6], question its applicability outside formal education settings. In our study, we adopt García's[4] view, yet we critically consider how translanguaging functions in family interactions and contributes to children's language development in Kazakh-speaking households.

This study adopts an FLP framework to examine translanguaging practices in bilingual and multilingual Kazakh families, particularly focusing on children of "Bolashak" international scholarship recipients and alumni. By investigating how children engage in translanguaging based on their communicative needs and how parental ideologies shape language use at home, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on multilingualism.

Similar to other emerging economies, Kazakhstan has recognized the connection between human capital investment and long-term economic prosperity. In line with this vision, the Bolashak International Scholarship was launched on November 5, 1993, by the President of Kazakhstan to support the education of high-performing Kazakhstani students and professionals abroad, primarily at top global universities[7]. The scholarship offers full financial support for Master's and PhD programs, as well as internships in critical sectors such as engineering, medicine, and education, under the condition that recipients return to Kazakhstan and contribute to national development for a minimum of five years. English proficiency has since become one of the key prerequisites for studying abroad and for eligibility for the Bolashak scholarship, reinforcing the importance of English in Kazakhstan's evolving linguistic and educational landscape[8].

Over the past three decades, Bolashak has become a symbol of academic excellence and professional advancement, with its alumni playing active roles in the development of education, health, culture, and science across the country[9]. While this study does not investigate the scholarship program itself, it centers on the children of Bolashak alumni, exploring how temporary migration, exposure to diverse linguistic environments, and transnational experiences influence language practices and parental ideologies in the home. Therefore, the findings offer insights that extend beyond the specific institutional context, contributing to broader discussions on FLP and multilingualism in global mobility settings.

This study aims to analyze how translanguaging practices among children in bilingual and multilingual Kazakh families interact with and shape FLP within the Kazakh context. The research addresses the following key questions:

- How do Kazakh multilingual families shape and negotiate language *ideologies* within the family context?
- How do multilingual families *manage* FLP strategies to build children's language awareness?
- What specific factors determine language *practice* in multilingual families?

The research contends that FLP and child-directed translanguaging can play a pivotal role in supporting, expanding, and enhancing dynamic bilingualism. The structure of

the article includes background information on the language policy of Kazakhstan, elucidation of the terms 'translanguaging' and 'family language policy', and a comprehensive analysis of translanguaging practices among bilingual/multilingual Kazakh families.

1.1. Kazakhstan: Background Information and Language Policy

Kazakhstan, the largest landlocked country and the northernmost with a predominantly Muslim population, is located at the crossroads of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. It is the ninth-largest country by area and has a diverse population of over 20 million[10]. Kazakhs make up about 70% of the population (13.5 million), while ethnic Russians constitute around 15.7% (3 million)[11]. Other significant groups include Uzbeks (3.2%), Ukrainians (2.0%), and smaller minorities like Tatars (1.1%), Germans (1.2%), and Uighurs (1.5%), with the remaining 5.3% from various ethnicities[12]. This diversity is shaped by historical migration trends and has fostered a unique social and cultural environment. According to the National Statistics Bureau, in 2022, the country saw 403.5 thousand newborns, and 128.5 thousand new families were formed. In this multicultural context, interethnic marriages are prevalent, with over 22.3 thousand Kazakhstanis entering such unions in 2022[13].

Aligning with its language policy and constitutional mandate, Kazakhstan designates Kazakh as the sole state language, while Russian enjoys both de jure and de facto official status[14]. Additionally, the country has strategically prioritized the development and usage of English, evident in initiatives like the 'Trinity of Languages' project since 2007. English is specifically emphasized as the language of integration into the global economy.

1.2. Family Language Policy

Family language policy (FLP) links studies of child language acquisition and early second language learning and bilingualism with the field of language policy[15]. FLP focuses on language use and choice within the family, examining how family members manage language policy[16].

The language balance in the family context as a whole, as opposed to only the child's language abilities, is the main focus of FLP, in contrast to psycholinguistic methods to bilingualism research. However, this study specifically emphasized interviewing children. According to FLP, parents usually control language use in the home, which is impacted by a number of factors, and is viewed as a system of collaborative action. It explores child language learning as influenced by parental ideologies, decision-making, and strategies, within the broader social and cultural context of family life[17].

FLP is defined as explicit planning of language use within the home[18]. Curdt-Christiansen and Lanza[19] note that FLP is shaped by language ideology and beliefs about supporting family members' goals. The impact of parental ideologies and external influences on language attitudes and planning is key topic in FLP discussions[20].

Seppik and Zabrodskaja[21] note that family and its language are some of the most important domains in regard to acquiring a language as a mother tongue. Acquiring a language in early childhood is already a complex process in itself; it becomes even more complex when there is more than one language to acquire. The challenges become even more pronounced in the context of migration, where families must navigate cultural adaptation in a new sociolinguistic environment, further complicating language learning.

Translanguaging helps with linguistic and cultural adaptation, as shown in Yelenevskaya and Protassova's[22] study on Russophone migrant women. Despite pressures to assimilate, translanguaging allows families to preserve and pass on their cultural identity. Migrant families prioritize their mother tongue, seeing language as key to both cultural heritage and individual identity.

Dam[23] explores how Vietnamese families employ translanguaging as an adaptive strategy influenced by sociocultural factors and practical needs. Unlike the Kazakhstani context, where government-led programs like Bolashak frame language strategy, Vietnamese families demonstrate a more organic approach to language adaptation, responding flexibly to their community's linguistic demands. This contrast underscores the variability of FLP across different sociolinguistic settings and highlights the diverse strategies families use to maintain their linguistic heritage while integrating into new linguistic environments.

To understand the nature of language policy in various domains, Spolsky[24] proposes a framework that distinguishes between three interrelated components of language policy: language ideology, language practices, and language

management. Language ideology comprises "beliefs about language and language use". Language practices are regular and predictable language behaviors and choices in a speech community. They differ from language beliefs in that they are "what people actually do" rather than "what people think should be done". Language management refers to "the explicit and observable effort by someone or some group that has authority over the participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs"[19].

Spolsky's framework is particularly relevant to inquiry into language policy issues in the home domain[25]. Furthermore, Spolsky is convinced that family structure, assimilation, parental education, language action, and cultural identity also have an influence on FLP. Considering family structure, he means that if there are older siblings in the family, then they will most certainly have an effect on younger children's language[24]. Zhu adds that when older siblings penetrate mainstream society, then, willingly or not, they affect younger children's fluency and motivation in relation to their heritage language[26].

Regarding assimilation, it has been shown that when parents introduce children earlier to the mainstream language and culture in their sociolinguistic environment, they are more inclined to assimilate. Then, the culture starts to play a role for parents who have a strong connection to, awareness of, and pride in their heritage language could even slow down children's assimilation to mainstream language[27].

Parental education also plays a large role in FLP Spolsky believes that the success of FLP, i.e., parents being able to effectively transmit the heritage language, is influenced by parents' language awareness[28]. Parental language awareness is an important part of language policy that practically influences children's language acquisition[29]. Finally, under language action, parents literally need to take action to transmit a language.

1.3. The Concept of Translanguaging

According to this study, translanguaging is the deliberate and adaptable application of linguistic resources from a speaker's whole repertoire as opposed to alternating between independent language systems. Bilinguals utilize characteristics of several languages to create meaning, communicate successfully, and satisfy communicative demands in certain sociocultural contexts, as explained by García[4]. As a so-

ciolinguistic and psycholinguistic theory, translanguaging significantly enhances our understanding of bilingual language use by prioritizing bilingual performances rather than solely monolingual ones. As a pedagogical practice, translanguaging leverages the fluid language use of learners in ways that deepen their engagement and comprehension of complex content and texts[30].

In addition, translanguaging pedagogy develops the languages involved in bilingual instruction by treating them as part of a unified, horizontal continuum, rather than as distinct and hierarchical systems[31]. The term translanguaging is commonly used in line with code-switching in the literature. Translanguaging is similar to code-switching in that it refers to multilingual speakers' shuttling between languages in a natural manner[32]; speakers adjust their language according to who is in the conversation, what the topic is, and the context in which it occurs.

As Treffers-Daller explains, code-switching has traditionally been understood as movement between two autonomous linguistic systems with clearly defined boundaries. Translanguaging, by contrast, treats languages not as separate entities but as integrated components of a speaker's unified linguistic repertoire. In this view, linguistic boundaries are flexible or even dissolved allowing speakers to draw freely on all available semiotic resources[33].

Translanguaging is thus a more comprehensive approach that emphasizes the seamless integration of multiple linguistic resources to successfully navigate a variety of communicative contexts, whereas code-switching usually entails switching between distinct language codes, frequently with the goal of conforming to particular cultural or linguistic norms[34].

Recent studies have explored the implications of translanguaging in multilingual family settings. Karpava et al.[6] investigate its role in the transmission of Russian as a heritage language, focusing on the tension between maintaining strict FLP and the multilingual demands of daily life. They explore how families balance their desire to preserve Russian with the practical need for proficiency in other languages. Similarly, Reichmuth[35] discusses the conflicts that arise when parental aspirations for linguistic and cultural preservation clash with the dominance of global languages. Unlike the Kazakh study, it emphasizes the inherent conflicts between cultural preservation and global language dominance, which can cause tensions within families.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Context

This qualitative research, based on semi-structured interviews, focuses on exploring the experiences, perspectives, and linguistic backgrounds of multilingual children. A purposive sampling method was used to select participants, with Telegram and WhatsApp serving as the primary recruitment platforms. Recruitment efforts were specifically directed at group chats such as "Bolashak Students in the USA" and "Bolashak Students in Boston." Invitations to participate in the research were disseminated through these group chats, prompting interested parents to respond via direct messages.

Detailed explanations about the purpose and context of the study were provided to ensure transparency about its nature and objectives. Upon successfully securing consent from the parents, the next step involved scheduling interview sessions. Special consideration was given to the availability of the multilingual children, aiming for convenience and cooperation.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which provided the flexibility to explore how children seamlessly used multiple languages in their responses. The semi-structured interview format allowed for the observation of spontaneous language shifts, where children could naturally alternate between several languages. The analysis focused on key aspects such as the natural blending of languages, contextual adjustments based on topic, and self-reported language preferences.

We conducted semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth and flexible responses from participants. This method allowed the interviewer to follow a set of predetermined questions while also exploring new topics as they arose, providing richer and more nuanced data. Zoom was chosen for its accessibility and user-friendly interface, allowing us to connect with participants regardless of location. Its reliable audio and video quality enabled us to capture both verbal and non-verbal cues, which were crucial for analyzing the children's linguistic and cultural experiences.

Each interview began with a discussion with the parents about the children's home language practices and their progress in learning English or other languages. The interviewer then engaged directly with the children, using language that encouraged open expression. The interviews lasted about an hour and were recorded for accurate transcription and analysis. The interview protocol included 25 questions across three sections: Section 1 focused on language proficiency and cultural backgrounds, Section 2 explored the children's language preferences in various contexts, and Section 3 examined language dynamics in the participants' living environments. This structured approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the children's multilingual experiences.

Participants were included in the study based on the following purposive selection criteria: (1) being a child from an ethnic Kazakh family; (2) aged between 7 and 15 years; (3) residing either in Kazakhstan or temporarily abroad as part of a family where at least one parent is a current participant or graduate of the Bolashak scholarship program; and (4) able to participate in a conversational interview and share their everyday language experiences.

2.2. Data Analysis

The data analysis process encompasses the transcription of all participant responses captured during the interviews. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The transcription process preserved key discourse features, including code-switching, pauses, and fillers, as these were relevant for analyzing pragmatic and multilingual aspects of speech. Transcripts were carefully reviewed multiple times for accuracy and completeness. To protect participant anonymity, all names were replaced with neutral labels (Child 1, Child 2) and any identifying details were removed from the transcripts. These transcriptions constitute the primary dataset for thorough examination and interpretation. While no formal coding framework or qualitative software was employed, the analysis was guided by the structure of the interview protocol. Participants' responses were examined holistically and interpreted in relation to the key themes emerging from the three interview sections. This interpretive approach, grounded in Spolsky's model of language policy, enabled a nuanced understanding of multilingual practices, language ideologies, and management strategies within each family context.

The results were represented in accordance with Spolsky's methodology, which consists of three interrelated language policy components: language management, language practices, and language ideology. Language practices en-

compass the real-world application of languages in daily interactions. In contrast, language management refers to the deliberate efforts of family members to rectify inappropriate usage. Family members' innate attitudes and views about language, known as language ideology, shape their decisions and affect how languages are used at home. To improve the clarity and presentation of linguistic elements within the responses, a visual differentiation method has been adopted. In the provided excerpts, Russian is italicized, Kazakh is bold, and their English translations are denoted with either italicized underlining or bold underlining, respectively. This formatting strategy was implemented to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the multilingual expressions and nuances present in the participants' responses during the analysis phase. The transcription and preliminary analysis were carried out by one of the authors, while the interpretation of findings was reviewed and discussed collaboratively among all co-authors. This process helped ensure consistency, reduce potential bias, and strengthen the credibility of the analysis.

2.3. Ethical Considerations

In conducting the qualitative interviews for this study, we strictly adhered to research protocols grounded in principles of research integrity, as outlined in the ALLEA (All European Academies) Code of Conduct for Research Integrity[36].

Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from the parents of all participants, who received clear information about the aims and procedures of the study to ensure their voluntary decision-making. Participant anonymity and data confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process. Interviews were conducted in quiet and familiar settings chosen by the participants to ensure comfort.

Parents were initially present to discuss general family language practices but were asked to step aside or remain passive observers during the child interview segment to reduce adult influence. The interviewer used child-friendly language and actively monitored for signs of discomfort. Children were informed that they could decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

2.4. Study Participants

A total of 16 children participated in the interviews, including 7 children from Kazakh families living in Kazakhstan and 9 children from Kazakh families currently residing in the United States as part of their parents' academic assignments through the Bolashak program. The age of the participants ranged from 6 to 14 years old. Although this age range and the difference in living contexts may seem wide, such diversity was intentionally included in the study to identify how ideologies and practices of family language are perceived by children at different stages of cognitive and linguistic development, as well as in different sociolinguistic settings. This approach is consistent with the principles of qualitative research, which emphasize in-depth analysis of individual experiences and contextual variation rather than statistical generalizability[37]. It is vital to note that the participating families have a profound educational background and are internationally mobile, which may result in sampling bias. These families often have more socioeconomic capital, which allows them to access global educational resources and move around freely. Such positioning not only increases the acquisition of multiple languages, but also demonstrates a purposeful and intentional commitment to developing multilingual competencies in their children. As a result, the FLP behaviors identified in this study may not be applicable to families with limited access to international experiences or language resources. **Tables 1** and **2** provide detailed profiles of the participants in each group.

Table 1. Interviewed Kazakh children living in Kazakhstan.

Child	Age	Speaking Language	Preferable Language	Language Understands	The Period of Stay in the USA	The Period of Living in Kz after Returning
1	8	English	English	Kazakh	7 years	5 months ago
2	10	English, Kazakh	English, Kazakh	Russian	7 years	2 years ago
3	11	Kazakh, English, Russian	Kazakh	-	5 years	3 years ago
4	12	Kazakh, English, Russian	Kazakh, English	Turkish	5 years	3 years ago

Table 1. *Cont.*

Child	Age	Speaking Language	Preferable Language	Language Understands	The Period of Stay in the USA	The Period of Living in Kz after Returning
5	12	English	English	Kazakh, Russian	7 years	4 months ago
6	12	Kazakh, English, Russian	Kazakh, English	-	5 years	5 years ago
7	14	Kazakh, Chinese, English, Russian	Kazakh, Chinese, English	-	3 years	2 years

Table 2. Interviewed Kazakh children from families currently living in the USA.

Interviewee	Age	Speaking Language	Preferable Language	Language Understands	The Period of Living in the USA
8	6	Russian, Kazakh	Russian	English	5 months
9	7	Kazakh, English, Russian	Kazakh, English	Spanish	1 year and 6 months
10	7	Russian, English	Russian	-	1 year and 6 months
11	8	English, Russian, Kazakh	English	French, Spanish	5 months
12	8	Russian, Kazakh	Russian	English	4 months
13	9	Russian, Kazakh	Russian	English, Ukranian	1 months
14	9	Kazakh, Russian	Kazakh	English	5 months
15	11	Kazakh, English, Russian	Kazakh	Spanish	1 year and 6 months
16	12	Kazakh, English, Russian	Kazakh, English	Portuguese	1 year and 6 months

Child 1's family, originally from Kazakhstan, includes a 38-year-old mother and a 39-year-old father, both born and raised there. They moved to Boston when the child was one and lived there for seven years before returning to Kazakhstan five months ago. Though the interview was in Kazakh, questions were asked in English to match the child's language preference.

Child 2 is also from Kazakhstan and returned to home country two years ago. Both parents and children from this family were born and raised in Kazakhstan, with the mother and father aged 36 and 37, respectively, at the time of the interview. The interviewee, having moved abroad at the age of one, primarily used English for communication and had proficiency in Kazakh.

Child 3 returned to Kazakhstan three years ago and currently lives in Almaty. The parents, both born and raised in Kazakhstan and holding master's degrees, had moved to San Francisco when the child was three. The interviewee is now fluent in Kazakh and English, attending Zerdesh Innovation School with a strong interest in science.

Child 4 returned to Kazakhstan three years ago. The parents, aged 39 and 35, were both born and raised in Kazakhstan. The 12-year-old interviewee was born in Kazakhstan but raised in Florida, USA. Due to five years spent in London, the interviewee primarily thinks in English, but is fluent in Kazakh, English, Russian, and Turkish.

Child 5 returned to Kazakhstan four months ago. The family consists of a 36-year-old mother and a 38-year-old father, both born and raised in Kazakhstan. The 12-year-old interviewee moved to Boston with the family when he was 5 years old, residing there for 7 years. While the interview commenced in Kazakh, the child struggled to comprehend the questions, prompting a switch to English.

Child 6, who returned to Kazakhstan five years ago, had spent five years in London. The parents, aged 36 and 37, were born and raised in Kazakhstan, both holding Master's Degrees. Currently residing in Astana with four children, the eldest, the interviewee, moved abroad at the age of 5, resulting in fluency in Kazakh as the primary language of communication within the family.

Child 7, who moved to Kazakhstan from China five years ago, has a father and mother, aged 45 and 42 at the time of the interview, both born and raised in China. The father holds a PhD, and the mother has a Master's Degree. The interviewee, currently fluent in Kazakh, Chinese, English, and Russian, demonstrates the family's multilingual proficiency.

Child 8, originally from the USA, is now living in Boston. The parents, aged 38 and 43, moved five months ago after the father received a Bolashak scholarship. Though recent arrivals, both parents are proficient in Kazakh, Russian, and English. The 1st-grade interviewee uses translanguaging,

learning everything in English.

Child 9, also residing in Boston. The family consists of a 39-year-old mother and a 41-year-old father. The family has been in Boston for 1 year and 6 months, facilitated by the mother's studies through the Bolashak program. The 7-year-old interviewee is fluent in Kazakh, English, and Russian, with a rudimentary understanding of Spanish.

Child 10, currently residing in Boston, USA, has parents aged 37, born and raised in Kazakhstan. Pursuing master's degrees through the Bolashak program, they have been in Boston for 1 year and 6 months. The 7-year-old interviewee prefers Russian and English for daily communication, influenced by the content watched, mostly in Russian, and the English-taught school.

Child 11, located in Philadelphia, USA, has parents aged 32 and 34, who studied in France for their Master's degrees. Concerned about their daughter's mother tongue, they returned to Kazakhstan for a year before moving to Philadelphia through the Bolashak program. In just 5 months, the daughter speaks Kazakh, French, and English, with limited proficiency in Russian.

Child 12 moved to Boston, USA, four months ago for parents' studies. Aged 39 and 37, the parents, born and raised in Kazakhstan, aim to maintain their child's mother tongue, with no observed mixing of English or Kazakh words during the interview. A follow-up after a year is planned.

Child 13, recently relocated to Rocklin near San Francisco, has parents aged 35 and 36. The boy predominantly spoke Russian during the interview, prompting a follow-up after one year to explore the impact of extended living abroad on language acquisition.

Child 14, in Boston, has parents aged 37 and 43, born and raised in Kazakhstan. The multilingual family plans a follow-up in a year to monitor language development. The younger sibling speaks Russian, while the interviewer preferred Kazakh.

Child 15, also in Boston, features parents aged 35 and 37, pursuing a master's degree under the Bolashak program. Residing in the US for a year and a half, the 12-year-old girl speaks Kazakh with her father, Russian with her brother, and English with her mother, occasionally mixing all languages.

Child 16, a 12-year-old in Boston, has 40- and 41-year-old parents who moved for studies and were interviewed after 1.5 years in the US. The family speaks Kazakh at home and is fluent in English. The child also knows Russian, basic Spanish, and Portuguese, raising questions about multilingualism's impact on language acquisition and cognitive development.

3. Results

In this section of the study, we present the findings on family language ideology, family language management, and family language practices among the interviewed children.

To provide an overview, the table below summarizes the key themes and representative excerpts for each component of FLP, based on Spolsky's model. **Table 3** serves as a preview of the more detailed analysis that follows in the subsections, where each component is explored individually and supported with extended discussion and examples.

Table 3. Spolsky's FLP Model: Components and Examples.

No.	FLP Component	Key Features	Illustrative Examples
1	Family Language Ideology	• Beliefs about language use and transmission; • Attitudes to Kazakh, Russian, English; • Influence of birthplace and mobility; • Multilingual identity and language choice.	Child 3 considered Russian most useful, but chose Kazakh if Russian was excluded, as English was rarely used. - **Егер мен орыс тілін білгенде, ең тиімдісі орыс тілі болушы еді. Себебі, көбісі орысша сөйлейді. Ал егер орыс тілін санамасақ, онда қазақша. Өйткені ағылшын тілі онша көп қолданылмайды ғой. (If I knew Russian, it would be the most effective language, because most people speak it. But if we do not count Russian, then Kazakh since English is not used that much);** Child 5 used Russian but expressed a deliberate intention to speak more Kazakh: - Russian. But Kazakh should be used here. I usually try to use Kazakh.

Table 3. *Cont.*

No.	FLP Component	Key Features	Illustrative Examples
2	Family Language Management	• Parental language management; • Educational and school policies; • Home language strategies; • Media and leisure language input.	Child 3 studies in a Kazakh-English school, highlighting parental support for bilingual learning: - Zerdesh Innovation school. **Негізгі ол қазақ – ағылшын мектебі. Бізде кәдімгі ағылшын тілі бар, онда ұстазымыз қазақша біледі және** native speaker **ол кісі қазақша білмейді.** (Zerdesh Innovation school. **In fact, it is a Kazakh – English school. We have English with a teacher who knows Kazakh and** a native speaker, <u>he does not speak Kazakh).</u> Child 10 uses Russian and English media, showing flexible language management at home: - Playstation **ойнаймын.** TV-ді *на русском* **қараймын. Сосын менде** Disney **бар.** *И* **мен** Disney-**да ағылшынша қараймын.** (I **play** Playstation. **I watch** TV *in Russian.* **And then I have** Disney. <u>*And I watch*</u> Disney <u>in English).</u>
3	Family Language Practices	• Language use across home and school; • Context-based language preferences; • Everyday translanguaging.	Child 11 used Kazakh, Russian, English, and French depending on context: - **Кейде орысша,** English **сосын** French. **Қазақстанда қазақша сөйлеймін. Мұнда** sometimes **сөйлеймін қазақша.** (Sometimes Russian, English <u>and</u> French. <u>In Kazakhstan I speak Kazakh. Here I sometimes speak Kazakh);</u> Child 15 showed flexible language use, shaped by everyday family interaction: - Mixing **болады.** *Сложно ответить на такие вопросы. Потому что,* **мен деген былай жасай алам:** Good morning, mum *и дальше* **қазақша деген сияқты.** (**I** mix **languages.** *It is difficult to answer for such questions. Because* **I can say:** Good morning, mum and *add something* <u>in Kazakh).</u>

3.1. Family Language Ideology

The family model of language use may be a reflect broader beliefs and practices related to language(s), as well as of parenting styles and perspectives on bilingualism.

The ideological aspect of FLP is addressed in the first research question, which asks: How do Kazakh multilingual families shape and negotiate language ideologies within the family context? To explore this inquiry, we meticulously examined various factors, including the social background of each child participant—such as their place of birth, family composition, and the language used within the family—and its impact on the children's language preferences and behaviors. Furthermore, we analyzed the FLP strategy adopted by each family and the rationale behind their choices. All interviewees were from Kazakh families. The children were asked to describe, in simple terms, the discourse strategies, such as daily language used for communication, study, play, and discussion, in simple terms. The question of birthplace is pertinent to family language ideology because it significantly influences a child's language development, given their tendency to use the language spoken in their immediate environment. For instance, Child 11, born in Astana,

Kazakhstan, moved to France with her family at the age of one. During their time in France, the family primarily spoke French, and after five years, the child became fluent in French. Concerned about their daughter's proficiency in her mother tongue, the family returned to Kazakhstan, where the child became fluent in Kazakh. However, after a year, the family relocated to Philadelphia, USA. During the interview, it was observed that language-related issues were absent, and the child fluently spoke Kazakh, Russian, French, and English. Consequently, the child naturally and effortlessly engaged in translanguaging, demonstrating the profound impact of their living environment on language behavior and habits.

Which languages do you consider more useful to live in your city?

Child 3: **Егер мен орыс тілін білгенде, ең тиімдісі орыс тілі болушы еді. Себебі, көбісі орысша сөйлейді. Ал егер орыс тілін санамасақ, онда қазақша. Өйткені ағылшын тілі онша көп қолданылмайды ғой.** <u>'If I knew Russian, it would be the most effective language, because most people speak it. But if we do not count Russian, then Kazakh since English is not used that much'.</u>

Child 5: Russian. But Kazakh should be used here. I usually try to use Kazakh.

Do you think you shift from a language to another when speaking? Even when speaking to the same person?

Child 11: **Иә, әрине**. Very often. '<u>**Yes, of course**</u>, very often'.

These examples highlight the crucial role that birthplace and environmental factors play in shaping a child's language development. Additionally, they provide insight into how translanguaging can occur naturally in multilingual children's speech.

Moving on to our inquiries regarding family language ideology in relation to (2) family members, (3) language usage within the family, and (4) its potential influence on children's language preference, we posed the following questions:

1. How many people live in your family?
2. Which language or languages do you use in the family?
3. Do you speak the same language to everybody in the family?
4. Is it possible for you to use only one language while you are sitting with your family in the evening?

Responses to these questions shed light on the extent of family members' impact on a child's language choices and behaviors. Out of the 16 children from Kazakh families interviewed, 10 families have 5 members, 4 families have 6 members, and 2 families have 4 members. Despite being Kazakh families, children often communicate with their parents and siblings using multiple languages, reflecting a dynamic and fluid language environment.

Regarding the second question, several examples of responses were provided.

Child 1: Usually English. My mum does speak in Kazakh, also in English. Sometimes Kazakh.

Child 10: На русском. *'In Russian'*.

Child 15: **Отбасыммен мен деген** *любой* **language-та сөйлесе берем**. '<u>**I speak with my family in** *any* language</u>'.

It is worth noting that in the last answer, "*любой*" is a Russian word and "language-та" is an English word with a Kazakh ending. The grammatically correct sentence would be: "Мен отбасыммен кез келген тілде сөйлесе беремін" (I speak with my family in any language). These responses vividly illustrate translanguaging, demonstrating how chil-

dren blend Kazakh, Russian, and English at grammatical, lexical, and stylistic levels. They also emphasize the freedom children feel to choose languages naturally in everyday interactions.

In conclusion, the study explored how multilingual families shape language ideology and influence children's upbringing. It found that children's language development is strongly influenced by their birthplace and environment, often leading to fluency in multiple languages. In Kazakh families, children frequently engage in translanguaging, adapting language use to context. The findings emphasize the flexible and adaptive language practices in multilingual families, supporting a dynamic multilingual upbringing.

3.2. Family Language Management

The second question regarding language management sought to comprehend how multilingual families implement their chosen FLP. This included an examination of children's leisure activities (e.g., languages used for watching TV programs or YouTube videos), the type of schools they attend, and the overall language dynamics within the household. An analysis of children residing in Kazakhstan unveiled a pattern where they either enrolled in private English schools, exemplified by Child 1, 2, 3, and 5, or attended state schools incorporating English lessons, as observed in Child 4, 6, and 7. This pattern suggests a deliberate effort by parents to cultivate an artificial language environment, especially for Kazakh children with exposure to English-speaking countries, indicating a commitment to enhancing their children's language proficiency.

What type of school do you attend? In which language or languages do you study?

The answers of participants were as follows:

Child 2: Binom. **Қазақ тілі. Мен қазақ сыныбында оқимын**. But, **көп сабақ ағылшынша**. 'Binom. <u>**Kazakh language. I study in a Kazakh class.**</u> But **most lessons are in English'.**

Child 6: **Қазір Бурабайдаға** IT **Білім инновация лицейінде оқимын**. '<u>**Now I am studying at**</u> IT **Bilim Innovation lyceum in Burabay'.**

Child 3: Zerdesh Innovation school. **Негізгі ол қазақ – ағылшын мектебі. Бізде кәдімгі ағылшын тілі бар, онда ұстазымыз қазақша біледі және** native speaker **ол**

кісі қазақша білмейді. 'Zerdesh Innovation school. **In fact, it is a Kazakh – English school. We have English with a teacher who knows Kazakh and** a native speaker, **he does not speak Kazakh'.**

Concerning language management, the study scrutinized language preferences in various situations and the frequency of their utilization. The children's responses revealed a blending of Kazakh, English, and occasionally Russian words in their speech, exemplifying the phenomenon of translanguaging.

The study was also interested in children's free-time activities and their language choice when watching TV programs or YouTube videos.

Child 4: **Мен көбіне ғылыми арналар қараймын.** Ted Talks **қараймын. Идеялары өте қызық. Көбіне барлығын ағылшын тілінде қараймын. 'I mostly watch scientific channels. I watch** Ted Talks. **Its ideas are very interesting. I mostly watch in English'.**

Child 6: **Қазір** World Cup **қарап жүрмін. Маған көбіне орысша және ағылшынша** content **ұнайды. 'I am watching the** World Cup **now. I mostly like Russian and English** contents'.

Child 10: Playstation **ойнаймын.** TV-ді *на русском* **қараймын. Сосын менде** Disney **бар.** *И* **мен** Disney-**да ағылшынша қараймын. 'I play** Playstation. **I watch** TV *in Russian.* **And then I have** Disney. *And* **I watch** Disney **in English'.**

The responses highlighted a distinct inclination towards English, accompanied by instances of translanguaging. Specifically, Child 4 and Child 6 express a preference for English and occasionally Russian content on social networks and YouTube, while Child 10 leans towards Russian and English content. This comfort in using English is attributed to the implementation of FLP and its artificial or non-native strategy. Family language management examines how multilingual families implement their chosen FLP. It explores children's leisure activities, the languages used when watching TV or YouTube, and the type of schools they attend. The study found that Kazakh children often enroll in private English schools or state schools with English lessons, reflecting parents' efforts to create an artificial language environment. Additionally, children's preference for English in leisure activities reflects broader FLP strategies and exposure patterns shaped by parents' language management decisions.

3.3. Family Language Practice

The third question, focusing on family language practices, sought to identify the language preferences of children in bilingual and multilingual Kazakh families and the reasons behind those preferences. Child 1 and Child 2 share similar backgrounds—both born in Kazakhstan but relocated abroad at the age of one. Child 1, three years in an English kindergarten followed by attendance at an English school resulted in English becoming his primary language. Despite his family primarily conversing in Kazakh, his parents endeavored to maintain a Kazakh language environment at home. Nevertheless, after six years, Child 1 is now fluent in English and expressed a preference for English during the interview. Child 4 was born and raised in Kazakhstan, where the household language is Kazakh, and the school environment is primarily Russian and English. This linguistic blend has significantly shaped Child 4's multilingual practices. Specifically, Child 4 is enrolled at the IT Bilim Innovation lyceum in Burabay, where the predominant language of instruction is English. When asked about the frequency of language mixing during the interview, Child 4 provided the following response:

Шамамен күніне 20–30% шығар. Өзіңе ойында бірдеңе айтып жатқанда қазақша айтпаймын. Мысалы, далада өзің келе жатқанда, қазір мынадай істеймін деп, идея ойласам, оны ағылшынша ойлаймын. I am going to do to this, do that... **деп. Негізі қазақша да ойлай алам, бірақ ағылшынша ойлаған тезірек, тиімдірек. 'Probably about 20–30% per day. I do not speak Kazakh when I'm saying something to myself. For example, when walking and think of an idea to do the following things, I think of it in English.** I am going to do to this, do that... **In fact, I can think in Kazakh, but I think in English faster and more efficiently'.**

Nine families live in the United States, including Child 8, Child 12, Child 13, and Child 14, who relocated within the past year, having spent between 1 and 5 months in the country. Three children's responses were in Kazakh, and two in Russian.

Which language or languages do you use in the family?

Child 11: Кейде орысша, English **сосын** French. **Қазақстанда қазақша сөйлеймін. Мұнда** sometimes **сөйлеймін қазақша. 'Sometimes Russian**, **English and French. In Kazakhstan I speak Kazakh. Here I some-**

times **speak Kazakh.'**

This response illustrates a context-dependent use of multiple languages, shaped by geographical location and family environment. It highlights the child's flexible language practices and active engagement in translanguaging.

Child 15 is multilingual, fluent in Kazakh, Russian, English, French, and Spanish, and enjoys reading in all these languages. Her family has lived in the United States for about 1 year and 6 months. While her parents do not actively control language use, she had a theoretical English background before moving and became multilingual through practice with native speakers and her parents' supportive strategy.

Which language do you usually use to communicate in everyday life?

Child 10: Mixing **болады.** *Сложно ответить на такие вопросы. Потому что,* **мен деген былай жасай алам:** Good morning, mum *и дальше* **қазақша деген сияқты.** '**I** mix **languages.** *It is difficult to answer for such questions. Because* **I can say:** Good morning, mum and *add something* **in Kazakh'**.

How often do you mix languages (English or Russian words) in your speech?

Child 16: **Жиі** *наверное.* I don't know. Maybe a lot. Not a lot. It's like in the middle. I don't think that every second word is mixed in my speech. '*Probably* **often.** I do not know. Maybe a lot. Not a lot. It is like in the middle. I do not think that every second word is mixed in my speech'.

Which language do you find useful or comfortable to speak in Boston?

Child 15: Ну это какой человек. Типа **кіммен және қандай** *языкта.* **Сол Нью-Йорктағы** *лучший* **подружкам қазақша білмейді.** *Но* **ағылшынша** *тоже* **біледі мен сияқты.** *Вот,* **мммм... Біз деген онымен** *в целом* **орысша сөйлейміз.** *Но когда* **біз** *какой-то* **фразачка айтқан кезде, мысалы** no problem **деген сияқты біз ағылшынша жазамыз.** *Хотя если мы можем это сказать на русском.* '*Well, it depends on a person.* **With whom am I speaking and in what** *language? My best friend* **in New York does not speak Kazakh.** *But she also* **knows English like me.** *Well,* **mmmmm... We speak** *in general* **in Russian with her.** *But when* **we** *say some phrase,* **for example** no problem, **we write in English.** *Although if we can say it in Russian'.*

This unit explores how multilingual Kazakh families

manage language practices and their children's language preferences. The findings reveal that children often adopt English as their primary language after exposure in schools abroad, despite efforts by parents to maintain Kazakh at home. Translanguaging is a common phenomenon, with children blending Kazakh, English, and Russian words in daily speech. The study highlights the flexibility and adaptability of language use in various contexts, influenced by practical utility and comfort.

4. Discussion

The findings reveal a nuanced interplay between language knowledge, usage, and family dynamics, offering insights into the strategies families employ to foster multilingualism. The analysis uncovers a range of language behaviors among the participating families, with a prominent trend of integrating both Kazakh and English. This conscious decision to maintain Kazakh cultural heritage while embracing the global use of English aligns with language ideology theories[24], which emphasize the influence of language attitudes on FLP. The participants' attitudes towards English underscore its perceived necessity, particularly in digital communication and peer interactions, echoing the assertions of Schwartz and Verschik[17].

Family structure is a key factor in language development, with older siblings shaping younger children's linguistic environment[26]. The language preferences of multilingual Kazakh children are influenced by factors like family background, place of birth, home language, and parents' education. For example, in one case, the father favors a monolingual Kazakh approach, while the mother promotes bilingualism for English proficiency. Another family prefers English but incorporates Kazakh and French due to the mother's influence as a French teacher. These cases highlight the flexibility of FLP, adapting to family needs and the specific sociolinguistic context.

FLP effectiveness is influenced by external sociolinguistic factors. For Kazakh families, trilingual education creates consistency between home and school, while migrant families often face a disconnect between home language ideologies and societal expectations, leading to varied outcomes. The rise of digital media offers both opportunities and challenges. Kazakh children favor English content, enhancing

global competence but reducing engagement with Kazakh culture. Similarly, digital platforms support linguistic diversity but contribute to language shift in migrant families.

Translanguaging, as understood in this study, is the deliberate and adaptable use of linguistic resources from a speaker's entire repertoire, allowing bilinguals to seamlessly incorporate multiple languages in their interactions to meet communicative needs and navigate sociocultural contexts. This definition aligns with García's[4] perspective and is particularly relevant to understanding how multilingual children naturally blend languages in everyday communication. Parents' deliberate efforts to cultivate multilingual environments, such as choosing schools that emphasize both English and Kazakh, demonstrate the practical application of translanguaging theory. Furthermore, the results of the interviews indicate that children prefer to use English during their leisure activities, such as watching TV programs or YouTube videos. The findings underscore the crucial role of supportive family environments and structured language practices, such as reading and social interactions, in fostering multilingual competencies. The children's ability to fluidly incorporate Kazakh, English, and occasionally Russian into their communication underscores the efficacy of these practices. Thus, the evidence supports the conclusion that families strategically manage FLPs to enhance their children's linguistic awareness.

The study highlights how parental proficiency, educational approaches, and societal integration affect language choice in multilingual families. Children's value of family language emphasizes the role of social environments in language development. Parents' multilingual backgrounds shape children's language choices and translanguaging practices, aligning with theories on language management and dynamic language use[24]. Intentional family language use preserves cultural ties and equips children for global citizenship, particularly among families of one nationality, as seen in 16 families in Kazakhstan and the USA.

Kazakhstan's state-driven multilingualism, exemplified by the Bolashak program, offers a structured framework for language outcomes, unlike places like Australia or Europe, where family language practices emerge organically. Kazakh families benefit from policies supporting trilingualism, providing resources and opportunities for Kazakh, Russian, and English. However, this centralized system may overlook families with unique needs, raising concerns about the flexibility of state-led FLP initiatives.

The study confirms translanguaging's value as a tool for navigating multilingual contexts, offering children a means to fluidly integrate their linguistic repertoires. However, global comparisons suggest two critical concerns. First, in Kazakh families, the emphasis on English proficiency, driven by global demands, risks diminishing the dominance of Kazakh as the mother tongue. Similar patterns are observed among Russophone migrants, where children adopt the dominant societal language at the expense of their native tongue. Second, translanguaging thrives in flexible, adaptive environments, yet tensions may arise when parental aspirations clash with children's language preferences – a phenomenon documented in both Kazakh and migrant families.

Thus, while translanguaging fosters communicative efficiency, its unregulated use in home environments may hinder the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage. This discussion highlights the interplay between state policies, family dynamics, and external sociolinguistic factors in shaping multilingual outcomes. It reinforces the need for a nuanced understanding of FLP and translanguaging, one that respects cultural identities while embracing the opportunities of global interconnectedness.

5. Conclusions

FLP decisions are shaped by parental background, the home environment, and economic resources. Parents with higher educational attainment, linguistic proficiency, and strongculturally supportive values are more likely to implement effective FLPs that promote multilingualism. A nurturing home environment and access to comprehensive educational resources further enhance children's bilingual and multilingual development, providing a crucial foundation for robust language acquisition and use. Understanding the role of FLP in society can be enhanced by interdisciplinary methods that examine the hybridity of language practices within the broader processes of language change and multilingual development.

One of the key findings across contexts is the balance between fostering multilingualism and preserving cultural identity. For Kazakh families, the structured promotion of Kazakh as a state language aligns with cultural preservation

goals, yet the growing emphasis on English underscores the broader global shift toward linguistic pragmatism. Similar tensions are noted in Russophone families [22], where parents often prioritize dominant languages to ensure children's future opportunities. However, these findings challenge the assumption that bilingual or multilingual proficiency automatically equates to cultural preservation. Instead, they underscore the need for intentional strategies that emphasize heritage language use alongside global languages.

Future research could address the limitations of this study by expanding the sample size and including children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how translanguaging practices evolve over time and the long-term impacts on language proficiency and cultural identity. Additionally, research should explore how children's translanguaging practices shape the language varieties used outside their homes, making children's role in shaping FLP a critical focus. By integrating insights from linguistics, sociology, education, and other fields, future studies can offer a more comprehensive understanding and support for bilingual and multilingual children in Kazakhstan and beyond.

While this study is theoretically grounded in linguistics and centers on translanguaging practices among children from Bolashak families, its findings offer meaningful insights for broader FLP research. The data illuminate how children's language practices are co-constructed within specific sociocultural settings shaped by mobility and educational programs. Although educational policy was not the primary focus, the patterns observed may inform future discussions around heritage language support in similar multilingual environments.

5.1. Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study demonstrate that despite being immersed in English-dominant environments, Bolashak families intentionally manage their home language practices. By prioritizing the use of the Kazakh language within the family, these parents actively resist language shift and foster intergenerational language transmission. This highlights the central role of the family as the primary domain for maintaining heritage languages, particularly in post-Soviet and trilingual contexts where multiple language ideologies and societal pressures intersect. The home, in this context, serves as the key space where the native language is preserved, negotiated, and practiced, even under strong influence from dominant societal languages.

This highlights the central role of the family as the primary domain for maintaining heritage languages, especially when external environments offer limited support. The home, in this context, serves as the key space where the native language is preserved, negotiated, and practiced, even under strong pressures from dominant societal languages.

These insights can inform language policy in other translingual settings, emphasizing the importance of empowering families as active agents in heritage language maintenance. Future policy measures could support such families through targeted resources, culturally responsive educational programs, and access to digital tools that facilitate native language use at home.

5.2. Limitations

The paper underestimates external factors like peer groups and educational settings, which often surpass parental influence, especially in adolescence.

While translanguaging fosters multilingual fluidity, it can also risk fragmenting linguistic development, particularly in environments with weak institutional support for heritage languages.

The unique socio-political factors in Kazakhstan, such as the Bolashak scholarship program and its trilingual agenda, limit the study's applicability to less centralized or more diverse multilingual contexts.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, A.A. (Aizhan Abilkassymova); methodology, A.A. (Aizhan Abilkassymova) and A.A. (Assel Akzhigitova); validation, A.A. (Assel Akzhigitova) and A.Z.; formal analysis, A.A. (Aizhan Abilkassymova); investigation, A.A. (Aizhan Abilkassymova); resources, A.A. (Aizhan Abilkassymova); data curation, A.A. (Assel Akzhigitova) and A.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, A.A. (Aizhan Abilkassymova); writing—review and editing, D.T.; visualization, A.A. (Assel Akzhigitova) and D.T.; supervision, A.A. (Assel Akzhigitova) and A.Z.; project administration, A.A. (Assel Akzhigitova) and A.Z. All authors have read and

agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

Data are available from the authors upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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