ABSTRACT
of the thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
«Language and Ethnolinguistic Situation in the Western Region of the Republic of Kazakhstan», performed by Utegenova Assel in the educational program «8D02304 – Philology»

General description of the work: Changes in global spatial relationships and border openings have not only altered the content and structure of socio-economic ties but have also impacted the spheres of language use. While international languages are widely adopted and actively used in the conditions of globalization through virtual communication, there is a deliberate effort by the public in post-Soviet countries, after gaining independence, to resist the trend of replacing national languages with international ones. Thus, in the context of globalization, each country, alongside its economic development, strives to strengthen its national language and traditions, preserving the national identity of the state-forming ethnicity. Amid such significant changes, breakthrough steps are being taken in the linguistic life of the Republic of Kazakhstan. A language policy is being implemented aimed at strengthening the state status of the Kazakh language – the language of the state-forming Kazakh nation – and preserving and developing the native languages of the country's ethnic groups. Today, in the «Concept of Language Policy Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029», adopted as a vivid reflection of the country's innovative language policy, the importance of the state language is emphasized: «The Kazakh language is considered a language to which the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan has granted state status and, as the language of the titular nation, it possesses special value. The Kazakh language serves as a unifying factor for all ethnic groups residing in Kazakhstan and is the source of all spiritual treasures of the country. Therefore, proficiency in the Kazakh language, communication, and service in this language create conditions for free mutual understanding among all citizens, fostering a sense of patriotism, and promoting respect for the history and culture of Kazakhstan». The goal of the program aimed at developing interethnic relations is defined in the mentioned document as follows: «The state program serves as the basis for the development of language and culture of ethnic groups, including creating favorable conditions for increasing the linguistic capital of the country's citizens» [1].

One of the changes in the linguistic life of our country is the cultural project «Trilingualism», first mentioned in 2007 and implemented in 2009. The aim of the project was to introduce trilingualism into the country's linguistic situation and promote its development. In connection with this, in 2010, the «Concept of Language Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan» was adopted, and in the same year, the educational standard «State Compulsory Standard Trilingualism (Kazakh, Russian, English). Higher Education» was developed and implemented [2]. The goal of this concept and standard is to harmonize a universal system of language education based on the trilingual component (Kazakh, Russian, English) through a unified scientific-theoretical platform and models of domestic and international education. Today, based on this concept and standard, higher education institutions are actively implementing multilingual education aimed at training specialists proficient in three languages. The

goal of the language policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is to ensure the full functioning of the state language and support for national languages in the country.

Nowadays conditions have been created for the development of native languages of all ethnic groups in our state. The core of the language policy is the definition of the field for the development of language and ethno-linguistic situations. Conducting systematic research on language and ethno-linguistic situations can serve as a scientific-methodological basis for developing necessary language measures. At first glance, it may seem that the language and ethno-linguistic situation in Kazakhstan has a uniform character. However, there are differences in the number of ethnic groups in different regions of the country, their spatial distribution, the spheres of language use, and their quality. The language and ethno-linguistic situations of the five regions of the country (Southern, Northern, Eastern, Western, Central) have their distinctive features. Currently, there are few sociolinguistic studies that take into account the peculiarities of these regions. Among them is the oil-rich region of the country, an economically developed region where a mining and smelting plant ranks second in the world in chromium production. This region also has distinct socio-economic and geographical characteristics, providing the country with a maritime route with international borders on the Caspian Sea and a port. The modern language and ethno-linguistic situations of the western region (Aktobe, Atyrau, West Kazakhstan, Mangystau regions), characterized by its historical and cultural nature, with differences in the distribution of ethnic groups and language use, have not been the subject of special sociolinguistic research.

The relevance of research. The study of linguistic and ethno-linguistic situations is multifaceted. This issue involves determining the linguistic life of the ethnic groups in the region, the hierarchy of social language use, types of bilingualism and multilingualism in the region, as well as linguistic competencies of the population in direct contact with all socio-economic conditions and ethno-demographic structures of the specific region. Examining the linguistic and ethno-linguistic situation, which is one of the significant problems affecting the political and socio-economic situation of the country, requires defining the social function of languages, taking into account the evolving nature of interethnic relations, meeting the linguistic needs of each ethnic group, and ensuring a constructive and competent protection of the linguistic rights of each nation. This will serve as the foundation for its peaceful implementation without leading to disputes. Sociolinguistic study of the linguistic and ethno-linguistic situation in the western region, which is the largest and an important part of Kazakhstan, reveals the real picture of interethnic relations in the region, allows for a scientific evaluation of language relationships, establishes the authority of the state language not only statistically but also based on its actual use by the population, and provides a general understanding of the socio-political situation.

The object of research: the linguistic and ethno-linguistic processes in the western region of Kazakhstan.

The subject of research: the current state of linguistic and ethno-linguistic processes in the western region of Kazakhstan, the interaction of languages in a multilingual situation in the region, and their influence on each other.

The aim of the research work is to describe the contemporary linguistic and ethno-linguistic situation in the western region of the Republic of Kazakhstan, specify its features, and formulate scientifically-practical recommendations aimed at balanced implementation of linguistic and ethno-linguistic processes.

To achieve the intended aim, the study provided for the solution of the following **tasks**:

- based on contemporary theoretical insights, define the multifaceted typology and classification of linguistic and ethno-linguistic situations as a sociolinguistic phenomenon and demonstrate that only the use of languages in social spheres confirms their viability, social prestige, and communicative power;

- characterize the linguistic and ethno-linguistic situation in the western region of the Republic of Kazakhstan at present, highlighting its features, identifying types of bilingualism and trilingualism, and multilingualism in the region. Determine the spectrum of use of Kazakh, Russian, and English languages in social spheres and provide an analysis of the trend in trilingualism development among the population. Conduct a structural-content analysis of the epigraphy of cities in the western region to identify priority aspects of languages in epigraphy;

- evaluate the sociolinguistic landscape of the linguistic situation in the western region of Kazakhstan through a sociolinguistic analysis of the peculiarities of code-switching and code-mixing processes in the oral speech of the region's residents. Identify the dynamics of Kazakh, Russian, and English language usage among the population;

- conduct a sociolinguistic analysis of multilingual education (Kazakh, Russian, English languages) implemented within the cultural project «Trinity of Languages». Address the topical issue of Kazakhstani language policy, draw conclusions about its prospects, determine the structural-content features of its current state, and formulate scientifically-practical recommendations for its regulation considering the linguistic and ethno-linguistic situation in the western region of Kazakhstan.

Theoretical and Methodological framework of research work: the research is based on works of scholars who delve into the sociolinguistic essence of linguistic and ethno-linguistic situations in the fields of sociolinguistics and language relations (C. Ferguson, V.A. Avrorin, V.A. Vinogradov, N.B. Mechkovskaya, L.B. Nikolsky, A. Pavlenko, G.V. Stepanov, A.D. Schweitzer, E.G. Tumanyan, Yu.D. Desheriev, A.N. Bitkeeva, and others); foreign researchers in the sphere of global bilingualism and translanguaging studies (J. Androulsooulos, J. Blommaert, O. Garcia, S. Kanagaraja, V. Lee, A. Pennikuk, A.A. Rivlina, E. Schneider, and others); linguistic landscape (P. Backhaus, E. Ben Rafael, R. Bourhis, R. Landry, and others); and domestic scholars specializing in Kazakh-Russian and Russian-Kazakh bilingualism, language situation in Kazakhstan (B. Khasanuly, A.E. Karlinsky, M.M. Kopylenko, Z.K. Akhmetzhanova, Sh. Kurmanbayuly, B.Zh. Kurmanova, K.Tekzhanov, A. Kumarova, A. Abassilov, D.Kh. Akanov, O.B. Altynbekova, Zh.S. Smagulova, E.D. Suleimenov, M.T. Tezekbaev, S.A. Shunkeev, A.R. Zhikeev, D.B. Akynova, N.Zh. Shaimerdenova, A.Zh. Suynbayeva, A.Sh. Akzhigitova, and others).

Sources of research:

- data from the National Census of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 1999, 2009, and 2021;

- survey data conducted among the population of the western region between 2021-2024, with participation from 1456 respondents and 400 sociolinguistic survey respondents from among students of multilingual education programs at leading universities in four regions of the western region;

- audio recordings of spoken language, totaling 125 minutes, containing 496 segments related to the use of Kazakh, Russian, and English languages by the student youth of the western region of Kazakhstan;

- data from 30 short interviews to determine the transitions between languages by students in spontaneous speech practices;

- official information about ergonyms (place names) of four cities in the western region of Kazakhstan obtained from the 2GIS online database (https://2gis.kz/).

Research methods: theoretical methods: analysis, accumulation method, comparison, generalization, classification; specialized sociolinguistic methods: survey, interview, observation, linguistic landscape method; linguistic description method; mathematical and statistical data processing method.

Scientific Novelty of the research: the contemporary linguistic and ethno-linguistic situation in the western region of Kazakhstan has been theoretically analyzed, and the processes and features of their development have been identified. A classification of the ethno-linguistic situation in the western region of Kazakhstan has been developed. For the first time in domestic linguistics, an analysis of translanguaging and transcribing practices as new phenomena of linguistic and ethno-linguistic situations has been conducted, identifying the processes of the emergence of translanguaging in the western region. Features of the use of Kazakh, Russian, and English languages in the urban space of the western region have also been determined, along with establishing that each language plays its symbolic and semantic role in naming objects.

Theoretical Significance of the research: the general theoretical conclusions developed in the dissertation play an important role in considering the linguistic situation, multilingualism, and issues of language interaction in the region. They also contribute to the further development of sociolinguistics.

Practical Significance of the Research: lies in the application of its results in teaching disciplines such as «Introduction to Linguistics», «General Linguistics», «Social Linguistics» and «Psycholinguistics». The scientific-practical recommendations made during the research can serve as a foundational tool in implementing language policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Additionally, the 125-minute audio recordings of spoken language containing 496 segments related to the use of Kazakh, Russian, and English languages by the student youth of the western region of Kazakhstan can supplement the materials of the oral subcorpus of the National Corpus and serve as a basis for other studies.

Structure and Volume of the Research Work: the dissertation consists of an introduction, three main sections, a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices. The research results are illustrated with 38 tables and 41 figures. The list of references includes 194 entries. The total volume of the scientific work is 193 pages.

The findings for the final research defense:

1. The language situation as the primary issue of sociolinguistics is multifaceted. Its components include the languages used in a specific administrative-territorial unit and the hierarchical organization of their usage in social spheres, bilingualism and multilingualism, translanguaging. Ethnolinguistic situation components include the number of ethnic groups in the administrative-territorial community or region and the native languages they use. Ethnolinguistic classification criteria constitute indicators of intra-ethnic cohesion, starting from linguistic diversity in the region.

2. The relationship between the language situation and the ethnolinguistic situation can be vertical (language situation) and horizontal (ethnolinguistic situation). The language situation is shaped by languages and their social application, while the ethnolinguistic situation represents the placement of ethnic groups in a particular space, the sphere of their native language functioning, and intra-ethnic processes.

3. The language situation in the western region of Kazakhstan is characterized as having two predominant languages (Kazakh and Russian), widely used in multicomponent, unbalanced, exoglossic, multipolar, heterogeneous, and social spheres. The ethnolinguistic situation in the western region of Kazakhstan is polyethnic and consists of the languages of various ethnic groups, similar and different in genetic relation and connections.

4. Sectoral analysis of the priority given to Kazakh and Russian languages and the English language involved in the language situation revealed that the demographic power of the Kazakh language prevails over the mentioned languages, and its social usage and communicative strength are strengthening. Evidence of this is the choice of the Kazakh language as a native language by representatives of other nationalities in the region (Tatars, Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, Uighurs), indicating the strengthening of the Kazakh language.

5. The functions of Kazakh, Russian, and English languages are most vividly manifested in the urban space. The daily use of Kazakh, Russian, and English by urban residents is evident in the names of local commercial objects in the city's epigraphy. Special interviews with commercial object owners revealed that the choice of Kazakh language elements in multilingual names reflects local peculiarities, emphasizes national feelings and pride, serves as a guarantee of beauty and confidence, and reflects Kazakh culture and national traditions. If the use of English in multilingual names of urban commercial objects serves as a means to increase attractiveness, an indicator of modernity, high quality, innovation, technical progress, status, then the presence of Russian elements indicates stability, honesty, friendship feelings, and some established common traditions.

6. Multilingual education, as one of the directions in the education sector, introduces a new aspect of multilingualism into the language situation in the region. Evidence of this is the simultaneous use of Kazakh, Russian, and English by students in the western region of Kazakhstan, which is the result of the trilingualism policy in education aimed at preparing competitive specialists proficient in these three languages. Multilingual groups, including those that are multilingual, with one of the components being the English language, are rapidly developing in the education sphere as a relatively new phenomenon for Kazakhstan, becoming a source of the emerging

phenomenon of translanguaging. This phenomenon can be proven through translanguaging analysis of spontaneous conversational speech of students.

The validity and credibility of the conclusions drawn in the dissertation are ensured through the application of a comprehensive research methodology, thorough theoretical material on the considered problem, various analyses, expert assessments, and representative language materials.

Approbation and publication of research results. Five works on the main part of the research work have been published:

An article published in a journal included in the international scientific database Scopus:

1. Multilingual Practices in the Students' Microcommunity // International Journal of Society, Culture & Language (IJSCL). – 2023. –Vol. 11, Iss. 1. – P. 146-159. Percentile 83%, Q1 // ISSN:2329-2210

Articles published in publications recommended for publication based on the results of scientific activities by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

1. Trends in the development of the language situation in Aktobe region (on the material of the language skills level among population) // «Bulletin of Ablai Khan KazUIRandWL», series «Philological Sciences». – 2022. – No.4. – P. 153-162.

2. Forms of Existence of Kazakh and Russian Languages in the Language Situation of the Aktobe Region // Bulletin of the Eurasian Humanities Institute. –2022. – No. 3. – P. 50-61.

3. Social-Linguistic Aspect of Language Use in the Western Region of the Republic of Kazakhstan // «Bulletin of Toraighyrov University. Philology Series». – 2023. – No.2. – P. 318-335.

Monograph published by the decision of the University Academic Council:

1. Language and Ethnolinguistic Situation of the Aktobe Region. – Monograph. – Aktobe: PrintA, 2023 – 194 p.

The dissertation research work was prepared in accordance with the following **State Programs of the Republic of Kazakhstan**:

- Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan: adopted at the republican referendum on August 30, 1995 (with amendments and additions as of September 19, 2022);

- Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan": July 11, 1997, No. 151 (with amendments and additions as of December 20, 2004, No. 13; January 21, 2013, No. 72-V; April 30, 2021, No. 34 VII; November 24, 2021, No. 75-VII; December 29, 2021, No. 94-VII; April 19, 2023, No. 223-VII);

- Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Education": July 27, 2007, No. 319-III (with amendments and additions as of October 24, 2011, No. 487-IV; July 3, 2013, No. 121-V; July 4, 2018, No. 171-VI; December 27, 2019, No. 294-VI; June 27, 2022, No. 129-VII; February 23, 2024, No. 64-VIII);

- State Program of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the implementation of the language policy for 2020-2025. Government resolution of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated December 31, 2019, No. 1045;

- Concept for the development of language policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029. Government resolution of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated October 16, 2023, No. 914;

- Concept for the development of higher education and science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029. Government resolution of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 28, 2023, No. 248;

-Concept for the development of preschool, secondary, technical, and vocational education of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029. Government resolution of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 28, 2023, No. 249;

- "Kazakhstan-2050 Strategy: a new political course of a developed state". Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan - Leader of the Nation N.A. Nazarbayev to the people of Kazakhstan dated December 14, 2012;

- "A Look into the Future: Modernization of Public Consciousness". Program article by the Head of State N.A. Nazarbayev dated April 12, 2017;

- "Constructive Public Dialogue – the Basis of Stability and Prosperity of Kazakhstan". Address of the Head of State K.K. Tokayev to the people of Kazakhstan dated September 2, 2019;

- "Just State. United Nation. Prosperous Society". Address of the Head of State K.K. Tokayev to the people of Kazakhstan dated September 1, 2022;

- "State Compulsory Education Standard of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Higher education. Languages trinity (Kazakh, Russian, and foreign languages)" (Kunanbayeva S.S.) GOSO RK 6.08.085-2010 Almaty, 2010.