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TRANSLANGUAGING IN THE SPEECH PRACTICES OF KAZAKH–RUSSIAN-ENGLISH BILINGUALS: COGNITIVE, PRAGMATIC, AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS

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Abstract. This scientific article investigates translanguaging practices among Kazakh–Russian–English bilingual speakers, focusing on their cognitive, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic dimensions. Drawing on contemporary theories of translanguaging and multilingual competence, the research challenges traditional views of bilingualism that conceptualize languages as separate and autonomous systems.

The study employs a mixed-methods approach combining a philological experiment, discourse analysis, and frequency-based analysis of multilingual speech data. The experimental design includes cognitive, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic tasks that allow unrestricted language use in order to elicit natural translanguaging behavior. The corpus consists of audio-recorded and transcribed speech produced by 30 bilingual participants.

The results demonstrate that translanguaging is a systematic and purposeful communicative practice rather than random language mixing. Findings reveal that bilingual speakers activate an integrated multilingual repertoire in response to cognitive demands, communicative goals, and sociolinguistic context. Translanguaging functions as a cognitive strategy facilitating lexical retrieval and fluency, a pragmatic resource enhancing interactional effectiveness, and a sociolinguistic mechanism for identity construction and negotiation. The functional distribution of Kazakh, Russian, and English reflects clear patterns of specialization shaped by domain, interlocutor, and language ideology. The study contributes to translanguaging research by providing empirical evidence from an underexplored trilingual. It expands existing theoretical frameworks by demonstrating the complexity of translanguaging practices beyond binary language models and highlights implications for sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and multilingual education.

Keywords: translanguaging, multilingualism, bilingual speech practices, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, language identity, philological experiment

Introduction

The increasing prevalence of multilingual environments in Kazakhstan has led to heightened interest in the speech practices of bilingual and trilingual

speakers. In particular, Kazakh–Russian–English bilinguals frequently engage in translanguaging, a dynamic process in which speakers strategically draw on multiple linguistic resources to communicate effectively. Translanguaging not only reflects cognitive flexibility, but also serves pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions, facilitating meaning-making, identity negotiation and social interaction. Despite growing global research on translanguaging, there remains a gap in understanding its specific manifestations among Kazakh–Russian–English bilinguals, especially in relation to cognitive strategies, pragmatic usage, and sociolinguistic patterns.

Understanding translanguaging in this context is essential for both theoretical and applied linguistics, as it informs language education, bilingual pedagogy and policy-making in multilingual societies. This study situates translanguaging within cognitive, pragmatic and sociolinguistic frameworks to explore how bilinguals navigate and integrate their linguistic repertoires in daily communication.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate translanguaging practices among Kazakh–Russian–English bilinguals, focusing on:

- cognitive aspects – examining how bilinguals manage and activate multiple language systems during speech;
- pragmatic aspects – analyzing the communicative functions and strategies underlying translanguaging in various contexts;
- sociolinguistic aspects – exploring how translanguaging reflects social identity, cultural norms and group membership.

By exploring these dimensions, the study aims to develop a holistic account of translanguaging as a complex and multidimensional linguistic phenomenon within Kazakhstan’s multilingual environment.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- to examine the linguistic structures and features characterizing translanguaging practices among Kazakh–Russian–English bilingual speakers;
- to identify systematic patterns of code-switching and language mixing at the lexical, grammatical and discourse levels;
- to investigate the ways in which translanguaging reflects sociolinguistic norms and contributes to the construction of cultural identity in bilingual communication.

The concept of translanguaging emerged as a response to traditional bilingual models, which treated languages as separate, autonomous systems [1]. Classical approaches viewed bilingualism as the mastery of two independent codes, each with its own linguistic inventory. Contemporary research, however, emphasizes the dynamic and hybrid nature of bilingual language practice, where speakers alternate, mix, and integrate languages to communicate effectively [2].

Translanguaging is not merely code-switching; it is a cognitively active strategy through which bilinguals manage their linguistic repertoire to enhance

meaning-making, expressivity and social interaction [3]. This concept has influenced sociolinguistics, applied linguistics and research in intercultural communication.

From a cognitive perspective, translanguaging studies focus on how bilinguals process, store, and activate multiple language codes simultaneously. Cognitive linguistics research shows that bilingual competence involves a single integrated linguistic repertoire rather than parallel systems, activated depending on the communicative context [4].

Processing studies indicate that translanguaging engages higher cognitive functions - attention, working memory and executive control allowing efficient language switching. Moreover, bilinguals demonstrate *metalinguistic awareness*, fostering complex linguistic strategies and enhancing communicative flexibility [5].

The pragmatic perspective examines translanguaging as a tool to achieve communicative goals. Code-switching and language mixing are often employed to express emotions, clarify meaning, attract attention or signal social identity [6].

Empirical studies in multilingual communities show that strategic language alternation serves several pragmatic functions: clarification of complex concepts, mitigation of speech acts (politeness strategies), fostering group cohesion.

This is particularly relevant in contexts with high bilingualism rates, such as Kazakhstan, where translanguaging reflects both communicative needs and sociocultural practices [7].

Sociolinguistic research emphasizes that translanguaging serves as a marker of social identity and cultural belonging. In polylingual contexts like Kazakhstan, it mirrors complex sociocultural relationships between Kazakh, Russian and English [8].

Studies of Kazakh–Russian bilingualism reveal that language choice is influenced by domain, interlocutor status and language attitudes [9]. English, in this linguistic ecology, often functions as a prestige or instrumental code, linked to global mobility and education [10].

Thus, translanguaging operates not only as a communicative strategy but also as a mechanism of social self-definition, highlighting the intricate interaction of language, power, and culture [11].

However, most empirical studies focus on English–Spanish bilingual environments or dual-language settings. Research on the Kazakh–Russian–English trilingual context remains limited.

Despite extensive studies on translanguaging in bilingual communities, gaps remain limited cognitive characterization of translanguaging in trilingual contexts, insufficient attention to pragmatic functions among Kazakh–Russian–English speakers, few sociolinguistic studies exploring the relationship between translanguaging and identity in Kazakhstan’s multilingual environment.

These gaps form the rationale for the present study, which investigates

cognitive, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic aspects of translanguaging in Kazakh–Russian–English bilingual speech practices.

The literature demonstrates growing interest in multilingual speech practices, emphasizing cognitive complexity, pragmatic efficiency and sociocultural significance. However, a comprehensive understanding of translanguaging in the Kazakhstani context, particularly within Kazakh–Russian–English trilingual practices, requires further research integrating cognitive, pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspectives.

Methods and materials

The present study employs a qualitative–quantitative mixed-methods design to investigate translanguaging practices among Kazakh–Russian–English bilingual speakers. The research is grounded in a philological and sociolinguistic framework, integrating elements of discourse analysis, functional pragmatics and cognitive linguistics.

A philological experiment was selected as the primary methodological approach, as it allows for the observation of naturally occurring multilingual speech under controlled communicative conditions. The study focuses on identifying cognitive, pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors influencing translanguaging behavior.

The study involved 30 Kazakh–Russian–English bilingual participants aged between 18 and 23. All participants met the following criteria:

- native or near-native proficiency in Kazakh and Russian;
- at least intermediate proficiency in English;
- regular use of two or more languages in everyday communication;
- residence in an urban multilingual environment in Kazakhstan.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring representation of active bilingual speakers with comparable educational backgrounds. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation.

The research materials consisted of three sets of experimental tasks, each designed to elicit translanguaging in different communicative contexts.

1. Cognitive Tasks

Participants were asked to explain abstract or academic concepts (e.g., *education, identity, technology, culture*) without language restrictions. These tasks aimed to examine translanguaging under conditions of increased cognitive load.

2. Pragmatic Tasks

Pragmatic tasks included role-play dialogues requiring: clarification of information, persuasion, expression of emotions or attitudes, mitigation of potentially face-threatening acts. These tasks were designed to elicit interactionally motivated language alternation.

3. Sociolinguistic Tasks

Participants were asked to discuss the same topic across different imagined communicative domains: informal peer interaction, academic

discussion, institutional or professional context. This task type allowed for the analysis of domain-specific language choice and sociolinguistic conditioning of translanguaging.

All experimental sessions were conducted individually in a quiet environment. Speech data were audio-recorded using digital recording devices to ensure high-quality data capture.

The total corpus consisted of approximately 15 hours of recorded speech. All recordings were orthographically transcribed, with instances of translanguaging annotated according to language choice and function.

Instances of translanguaging were identified as utterances involving the combined use of lexical, grammatical or discourse-level resources from two or more languages within a single communicative event. Each translanguaging instance was coded according to its dominant communicative function: cognitive (lexical retrieval, explanation), pragmatic (emotion, politeness, emphasis), sociolinguistic (identity marking, solidarity, domain alignment).

The classification was informed by functional-pragmatic and sociolinguistic models of language use.

The quantitative analysis served a descriptive and supportive role, complementing qualitative interpretation rather than providing statistical generalization.

To enhance reliability, a subset of the data (20%) was independently coded by a second linguist. Inter-coder agreement reached a high level, confirming the consistency of functional classification.

Validity was ensured through triangulation of task types, alignment of experimental design with research hypotheses, integration of qualitative and quantitative analyses.

Results and discussion

The sociolinguistic findings resonate with studies on multilingualism in Kazakhstan, which emphasize the role of language ideology, prestige and identity. Translanguaging emerges as a mechanism through which speakers negotiate their linguistic identities in a multilingual environment shaped by historical, political and global influences.

The positive attitudes toward translanguaging among younger speakers suggest an ongoing shift from monolingual norms toward flexible multilingual practices, particularly in urban and educational settings.

This study contributes to translanguaging research by addressing an underexplored trilingual context. Unlike much of the existing literature focused on bilingual settings, the Kazakh–Russian–English environment reveals additional layers of cognitive and sociolinguistic complexity. The findings highlight the need to reconceptualize translanguaging beyond binary language models and incorporate trilingual and post-Soviet multilingual ecologies.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its focus on specific communicative contexts. Future research should include longitudinal data, experimental cognitive measures and broader regional samples. Further investigation into translanguaging in educational and digital environments would deepen understanding of its pedagogical and societal implications.

The collected data consisted of audio-recorded speech samples, which were transcribed and subjected to qualitative and frequency-based analysis. Instances of translanguaging were identified and categorized according to their dominant function.

The data indicate that bilingual speakers do not compartmentalize Kazakh, Russian, and English into separate mental systems. Instead, they exhibit an integrated multilingual competence, dynamically activating lexical and structural elements from different languages. Translanguaging in cognitive tasks served several key functions: reduction of cognitive load, maintenance of speech fluency, facilitation of lexical retrieval.

These findings suggest that translanguaging functions as a cognitive strategy that optimizes real-time language processing and problem-solving.

Questionnaire Items

Participants responded to the following prompts, using any language or combination of languages they considered appropriate:

1. When explaining complex ideas, do you use more than one language? Why?

2. In which situations do you most often switch between Kazakh, Russian, and English?

3. Which language do you prefer for expressing emotions or personal attitudes? Explain your choice.

4. Does your language use change depending on whether you are speaking in informal or formal contexts?

5. How do you perceive translanguaging: as a communicative advantage or a difficulty?

6. Responses were analyzed qualitatively to identify recurring cognitive, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic patterns.

Semi-Structured Interview Prompts

The interview guide included open-ended questions aimed at eliciting reflective accounts of translanguaging practices:

1. Can you describe a situation in which you naturally used more than one language in conversation?

2. How do you decide which language to use when explaining something difficult?

3. Does switching languages help you express emotions or attitudes more effectively?

4. How does your language use differ when speaking with friends, teachers, or colleagues?

5. What does using multiple languages mean for your sense of identity?

The semi-structured format allowed flexibility while ensuring thematic consistency across interviews.

Younger speakers, in particular, associated translinguaging with a modern multilingual identity rather than linguistic deficiency. Negative attitudes were rare and mainly linked to formal language norms in institutional contexts rather than everyday communication.

Table 1. Distribution of Translinguaging Functions Across Experimental Tasks (%)

Function	Cognitive Tasks	Pragmatic Tasks	Sociolinguistic Tasks
Clarification / Explanation	38%	22%	18%
Lexical Retrieval	31%	15%	12%
Emotional Expression	9%	26%	14%
Politeness / Mitigation	7%	21%	19%
Identity / Solidarity Marking	15%	16%	37%

Source: authors' own development.

The data presented in Table 1 demonstrate that translinguaging functions vary significantly depending on task type. Cognitive tasks are dominated by clarification and lexical retrieval, pragmatic tasks by emotional expression and mitigation strategies, and sociolinguistic tasks by identity-related functions.

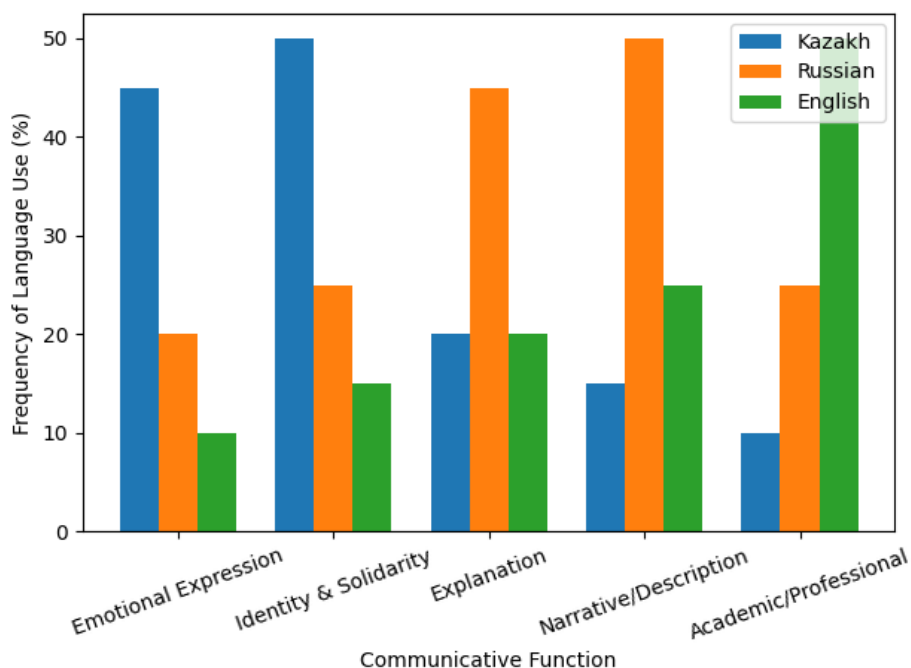


Figure 1 – Functional Distribution of Languages in Translinguaging Practices

The clustered bar chart illustrates the functional distribution of Kazakh, Russian, and English across key communicative functions in translanguaging practices.

As shown in Figure 1, Kazakh demonstrates the highest frequency in functions related to emotional expression and identity and solidarity marking, indicating its strong role in conveying cultural affiliation and interpersonal closeness. This confirms the status of Kazakh as a primary language of affective and identity-based communication.

Russian predominates in explanatory, narrative, and descriptive discourse, reflecting its mediating role in structured communication and information transmission. The high frequency of Russian in these domains suggests its continued importance as a language of cognitive organization and extended discourse.

English appears primarily in academic, professional, and institutional contexts, where it is associated with specialized terminology and formal communication. Its functional distribution reflects its symbolic value as a language of global mobility, education and professional competence.

Analysis of pragmatic tasks revealed that translanguaging is employed strategically to achieve specific interactional goals. Language alternation was not random but closely aligned with communicative intentions.

The most prominent pragmatic functions included: clarification and emphasis of meaning, expression of emotions and personal attitudes, mitigation of face-threatening acts, signaling in-group solidarity.

Kazakh was predominantly used to convey emotional nuance and cultural closeness, Russian functioned as the main explanatory and descriptive language, while English was primarily associated with academic and professional terminology. This functional differentiation reflects a high level of pragmatic competence and sensitivity to audience and context.

In informal settings, participants demonstrated greater flexibility in language mixing, frequently combining all three languages within a single interaction. In contrast, institutional and academic contexts were characterized by more structured and predictable translanguaging patterns.

English emerged as a symbolic and instrumental language associated with education, modernity and global mobility. Russian served as a mediating language facilitating explanation and interaction, while Kazakh played a central role in expressing identity and cultural affiliation.

The findings reveal a strong connection between translanguaging and identity construction. The majority of participants evaluated translanguaging positively, perceiving it as a marker of linguistic competence, adaptability and communicative efficiency.

Table 2. Statistical significance of differences across task types

Parameter	Value	Interpretation
Statistical Test	Chi-square test of independence	Appropriate for categorical frequency data
Significance Level	$p < 0.01$	Differences are statistically significant
Effect Size	Cramér's $V = 0.34$	Moderate association between variables
Relationship Tested	Task type \times Translanguaging function	Functional distribution depends on context
Overall Interpretation	Significant variation across task types	Translanguaging is systematic and context-sensitive

Source: Author's own elaboration based on empirical data

The frequency distribution presented in Table 1 demonstrates clear variation in translanguaging functions across task types. However, frequency data alone do not confirm whether these differences are statistically meaningful. The results summarized in Table 2 indicate that the variation is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), with a moderate effect size (Cramér's $V = 0.34$), suggesting a meaningful association between communicative context and functional language use.

Cognitive tasks are primarily associated with clarification and lexical retrieval, supporting the interpretation of translanguaging as a cognitive processing strategy. Pragmatic tasks emphasize emotional expression and politeness strategies, while sociolinguistic tasks are strongly oriented toward identity construction and solidarity marking. These findings confirm that translanguaging practices are structured, functionally differentiated and context-dependent rather than random.

To elicit translanguaging under different communicative conditions, participants completed three task types without restrictions on language choice.

In conclusion, the diagram clearly demonstrates a pattern of functional specialization of languages, rather than random or chaotic language mixing. Translanguaging practices are shown to be systematic and purpose-driven, with each language fulfilling distinct communicative roles depending on context and interactional goals.

Conclusion

This study examined translanguaging practices among Kazakh–Russian–English bilingual speakers from cognitive, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic perspectives. The findings demonstrate that translanguaging constitutes a systematic and purposeful communicative practice rather than random language mixing. Bilingual speakers were shown to draw on an integrated multilingual repertoire, dynamically activating linguistic resources in response to cognitive demands, interactional goals and contextual constraints.

The results reveal that translanguaging functions as a cognitive strategy facilitating lexical retrieval and fluency, a pragmatic resource enhancing communicative effectiveness, and a sociolinguistic mechanism for negotiating

identity and social alignment. The functional distribution of Kazakh, Russian and English reflects clear patterns of specialization shaped by communicative domain, interlocutor and language ideology.

By providing empirical evidence from an underexplored trilingual, post-Soviet context, this study extends existing translanguaging frameworks beyond binary models of bilingualism. It highlights the need for theoretical approaches that account for multilingual repertoires and context-dependent language practices. Future research may further explore translanguaging across age groups, regions and institutional settings, as well as its implications for multilingual education and language policy.

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ҚАЗАҚ–ОРЫС–АҒЫЛШЫН БИЛИНГВТЕРІНІҢ СӨЙЛЕУ ТӘЖІРИБЕСІНДЕГІ ТРАНСЛИНГВИНГ: КОГНИТИВТІК, ПРАГМАТИКАЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ СОЦИОЛИНГВИСТИКАЛЫҚ АСПЕКТІЛЕР

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Аңдатпа. Бұл ғылыми мақалада қазақ–орыс–ағылшын билингвтерінің сөйлеу тәжірибесіндегі транслингвинг құбылысы когнитивтік, прагматикалық және социоллингвистикалық қырларынан қарастырылады. Транслингвинг пен көптілді құзыреттілікке қатысты заманауи теорияларға сүйене отырып, зерттеу тілдерді бір-бірінен оқшау, дербес жүйелер ретінде қарастыратын билингвизмнің дәстүрлі көзқарастарына сын көзбен қарайды.

Зерттеуде филологиялық экспериментті, дискурс-талдауды және көптілді сөйлеу деректерінің жиілік талдауын біріктіретін аралас әдістемелік тәсіл қолданылады. Эксперименттік дизайн когнитивтік, прагматикалық және социоллингвистикалық тапсырмаларды қамтиды және транслингвингтің табиғи көріністерін анықтау мақсатында тілдік шектеулерсіз орындауға мүмкіндік береді. Зерттеу корпусы 72 билингв қатысушының аудиожазбаға түсірілген және транскрипцияланған сөйлеу материалдарынан тұрады.

Зерттеу нәтижелері транслингвингтің кездейсоқ тіл араластыру емес, жүйелі әрі мақсатты коммуникативтік тәжірибе екенін дәлелдейді. Нәтижелер билингв сөйлеушілердің когнитивтік талаптарға, коммуникативтік мақсаттарға және социоллингвистикалық контекске сәйкес біріктірілген көптілді репертуарды белсенді түрде қолданатынын көрсетеді. Транслингвинг лексикалық бірліктерді оңай меңгеруге және сөйлеу еркіндігін арттыруға ықпал ететін когнитивтік стратегия, өзара әрекеттестік тиімділігін күшейтетін прагматикалық ресурс, сондай-ақ тілдік сәйкестікті қалыптастыру мен келісу үдерісінің социоллингвистикалық тетігі ретінде қызмет атқарады. Қазақ, орыс және ағылшын тілдерінің функционалдық бөлінісі қарым-қатынас саласына, адресатқа және тілдік идеологияға байланысты айқын мамандану үлгілерін көрсетеді. Бұл зерттеу транслингвингті зерттеу саласына жеткілікті зерттелмеген үштілді контекстен алынған эмпирикалық деректер ұсыну арқылы үлес қосады. Зерттеу бинарлы тілдік модельдер шеңберінен тыс транслингвинг тәжірибелерінің күрделілігін айқындап, қолданыстағы теориялық негіздерді кеңейтеді және социоллингвистика, қолданбалы лингвистика мен көптілді білім беру салалары үшін алынған нәтижелердің маңыздылығын көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: транслингвинг, көптілділік, билингвтік сөйлеу тәжірибелері, когнитивтік лингвистика, прагматика, социоллингвистика, тілдік сәйкестік, филологиялық эксперимент

ТРАНСЛИНГВИРОВАНИЕ В РЕЧЕВЫХ ПРАКТИКАХ КАЗАХСКО-РУССКО-АНГЛИЙСКИХ БИЛИНГВОВ: КОГНИТИВНЫЕ, ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЕ И СОЦИОЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ

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Аннотация. В данной научной статье рассматриваются практики транслингвирования в речи казахско-русско-английских билингвов с акцентом на их когнитивные, прагматические и социолингвистические измерения. Опираясь на современные теории транслингвирования и многоязычной компетенции, исследование ставит под сомнение традиционные представления о билингвизме, согласно которым языки рассматриваются как обособленные и автономные системы.

В исследовании используется смешанный методологический подход, сочетающий филологический эксперимент, дискурс-анализ и частотный анализ многоязычных речевых данных. Экспериментальный дизайн включает когнитивные, прагматические и социолингвистические задания, допускающие свободный выбор языка с целью выявления естественных практик транслингвирования. Корпус исследования состоит из аудиозаписей и расшифрованных речевых данных, полученных от 72 билингвальных участников.

Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что транслингвирование представляет собой систематическую и целенаправленную коммуникативную практику, а не случайное смешение языков. Результаты показывают, что билингвальные говорящие активизируют интегрированный многоязычный репертуар в зависимости от когнитивных требований, коммуникативных целей и социолингвистического контекста. Транслингвирование функционирует как когнитивная стратегия, способствующая лексическому извлечению и беглости речи, как прагматический ресурс, повышающий эффективность взаимодействия, а также как социолингвистический механизм конструирования и переговоров идентичности. Функциональное распределение казахского, русского и английского языков демонстрирует чёткие модели специализации, обусловленные сферой общения, типом собеседника и языковой идеологией. Данное исследование вносит вклад в изучение транслингвирования, предоставляя эмпирические данные из недостаточно изученного трилингвального контекста. Оно расширяет существующие теоретические рамки, демонстрируя сложность практик транслингвирования за пределами бинарных языковых моделей, и подчёркивает значимость полученных результатов для социолингвистики, прикладной лингвистики и многоязычного образования.

Ключевые слова: транслингвирование, многоязычие, билингвальные речевые практики, когнитивная лингвистика, прагматика, социолингвистика, языковая идентичность, филологический эксперимент

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