



Norwegian Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs



# LANGUAGE POLICIES OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES





The author of this publication is *Nurbek Bekmurzaev, an independent researcher and security studies expert*. This policy brief outlines the formation of state languages in the Central Asian countries, analyzes their functioning alongside the Russian language, draws conclusions and forecasts for the future, and provides recommendations for improving language policies.

The publication is intended for young experts and consultants, researchers, decision-makers, as well as a wide range of readers interested in the policies of the Central Asian countries in relation to the state languages and Russian, their current status and development prospects. The editorial preparation of the publication was carried out by Nargiza Muratalieva, editor of the regional analytical platform CABAR.asia.

The opinions expressed in this document do not reflect the position of the analytical platform CABAR.asia. IWPR is an international non-profit organization that supports independent media and civil society in countries in transition. It works in 28 states and began operations in Central Asia in 1999.

© All rights reserved by IWPR. The material can be copied, downloaded and printed for personal study, research and for teaching for non-commercial purposes with the obligatory reference to the IWPR, which is the copyright holder.

This publication was made possible with the financial support of the Government of Norway. The opinions expressed in this publication do not reflect the official position of the Government of Norway.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>KAZAKHSTAN: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH BASED ON THREE LANGUAGES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>KYRGYZSTAN: PROBLEMS WITH THE LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TAJIKISTAN: A POLITICAL NATURE OF LANGUAGE POLICY</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TURKMENISTAN: AN ARTIFICIAL CHARACTER OF LANGUAGE POLICY</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>UZBEKISTAN: AN ONGOING LANGUAGE REFORM</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF THE STATE LANGUAGES AND RUSSIAN</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>CITATIONS</b>	<b>30</b>

# SUMMARY

The language policies of the Central Asian countries have come a long way from the Soviet times to the present days of independence. They are no longer formed by the central Soviet authorities, which used indigenous languages as an attribute of diversity and folklore, and Russian as a unifying factor of all peoples and the language of government, science, culture, and art. Indigenous languages have now become state languages, their role in public life has significantly increased, and the authorities began to actively use them as symbols of statehood.

After gaining independence, the Central Asian countries took different paths in relation to the development of the state and Russian languages. Some countries, like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, adopted the Latin script and began to distance themselves from everything Soviet in the process of building their states. The government of Tajikistan has also embarked on a de-Russification course and gradually began to introduce the exclusive use of the Tajik language in all spheres of life, in which the use of Russian was previously allowed. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan took a more loyal approach to the Russian language, giving it the status of an official language and allowing its widespread use along with the state languages.

Decisions in relation to language policies are still made by a small group of people, who use languages mainly to achieve their political goals and do not take into account interests of their peoples and native speakers. Thus, the current policies do not provide for all the nuances, reflect the local situation or meet the requirements and capabilities of native speakers. In this regard, this policy brief offers the following recommendations to improve language policies:

- 1.** Authorities should encourage linguists, sociologists, anthropologists and historians to explore the aspects of languages that are necessary to make empirically sound decisions about effective language policies.
- 2.** Decisions regarding the state languages and Russian should be made only after large-scale public discussions and even a referendum, when the issue of changing the script is on the agenda.
- 3.** Learning and spreading state languages should be stimulated rather than imposed. It is the compulsory nature of the language policies pursued by the Central Asian states that leads to the politicization of the problem under consideration.
- 4.** In the future, the linguistic picture of the region will continue to change. The area of use of the Russian language is decreasing. At the same time, studying in English attracts Central Asians more than in Russian.

# PREFACE

Government decisions in Central Asian countries are often characterized by a lack of sufficient analytical support throughout the all stages of developing and implementing policies. This is often due to the lack of quality analytical materials on issues at hand, and even if such materials are available, they are not presented in a way that is tailored to the needs and peculiarities of decision makers' work. Whereas all parties understand and acknowledge the need for thorough research and analysis for effective decision making, and the situation is gradually improving via the establishment of research and analytical centers, there is still an acute need in terms of generating targeted knowledge on important issues and communicating it effectively to decision makers.

The regional analytical platform CABAR.asia, which is created and run by the Central Asian Office of the Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), is an important initiative aimed at informing the public on the ongoing issues in Central Asia and providing key stakeholders, including relevant state agencies, with quality analytical materials and policy recommendations. The IWPR Office in Central Asia goes beyond supporting analysts and experts with the publication of their texts and organizes regional and national level meetings where experts can present their ideas to decision makers, exchange opinions, and receive feedback.

In 2019, the IWPR facilitated a public discussion on the state language policies through publishing a series of articles and organizing a regional expert meeting in Dushanbe on the role and status of the state languages and Russian in all five Central Asian countries. This contribution came amidst the relaunching of the long-going discussion on the legacy of the Russian language in Central Asia and development of the state languages – primarily after the Kazakh government decided to adopt the Latin script. The articles in the series explored political, social, cultural, and economic aspects of language policies, analyzed languages' roles in society, and provided recommendations on how governments in the region should develop and implement policies to ensure harmonious and optimal development of the state languages alongside Russian.

This policy paper follows up on the above-mentioned discussion, incorporates findings from the above-mentioned articles series and provides multilateral analysis of the situation, while synthesizing policy recommendations. It explores the current language situation in each Central Asian country with regards to the state policy towards the state languages and Russian and provides recommendations on what and how the governments can do to harness the possibilities provided by both the state languages and Russian to the fullest.

## INTRODUCTION

The Central Asian countries gained their independence in 1991, which was a result of the world geopolitical events that were far beyond their control. Having been part of the Soviet Union for more than 70 years, the local elites and the local population grew used to being on the receiving end of orders and laws regarding the language policies in the region. In their attempts to isolate Central Asia first from the Arabic speaking world and then from Turkey and the West, the Soviet authorities shuffled between Arabic, Latin and Cyrillic scripts until they finally settled for the Cyrillic in the 1940s.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to choosing the script, the Soviet authorities also created nation states with all the attributes, including unified languages. Prior to the annexation of the region by the Soviet Union, Central Asian people lived in small communities and spoke various dialects without ever bothering about creating one common unified state language. The current day Central Asian languages presented as true and proper examples of how Kyrgyz, Kazakh, or Uzbek people should speak is nothing but a Soviet invention.<sup>2</sup> Another lingual manipulation Central Asians were subject to was the mandatory study of the Russian language, which led to over 80 percent fluency of the population in 1989.<sup>3</sup> The study and spread of the Russian language came at a price though, and that price was edging out indigenous languages out from the scientific, cultural, political, and public spheres of life to be used mostly for domestic and folklore purposes.

***THE LOCAL ELITES BORE THIS  
IN MIND WHEN THEIR STATES BECAME  
INDEPENDENT AND UNDERSTOOD  
THE NEED TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR NEWLY  
FORMED NATIONS BY SEARCHING FOR  
AND PROMOTING SYMBOLS OF STATEHOOD  
AND NATIONAL IDENTITY.***

Whereas it was clear what to do with the indigenous languages, the role and status of the Russian language in the region was up in the air.

<sup>1</sup> Central Asian Analytical Network, "Kak menyalas pismennost v Turkmenistane: 1904-2014 gody [How the scripts changed in Turkmenistan from 1904 to 2014]," *Central Asian Analytical Network*, 2 June 2019, <https://caa-network.org/archives/9206>

<sup>2</sup> Aleksei Ulko, "Uzbekskiy – yazyk dlya uzbekov? Pochemu do sih por est problemy c gosudarstvennym yazykom [Is Uzbek language only for Uzbeks? Why there are still problems with the state languages]," *Hook*, 8 August 2019, <https://hook.report/2019/08/problema-uzb/>

<sup>3</sup> Denis Letnyakov, "Rol russkogo yazyka v postsovetsskoi Tsentralnoi Azii [Role of the Russian language in the post-Soviet Central Asia]," *Politiya* 4 (79): 2015, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/rol-russkogo-yazyka-v-postsovetsskoy-tsentralnoy-azii>



Routinely adopted laws on languages in 1989 and 1990 gave the Russian at least the status of the language of international communication and allowed its use alongside the state languages.<sup>4</sup> However, in practice, the Central Asian states went in different ways in terms of upholding and/or changing the balance between the Russian and state languages. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan immediately adopted the Latin script, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan gave the Russian language the official status, and Tajikistan temporarily removed any mention of the Russian from its legal space.

---

<sup>4</sup> Abdulla Daudov et al., "Problema transformatsii statusa natsionalnyh yazykov narodov SSSR na primere Sovetskogo i Postsovetskogo Tadjikistana v 1980-2010-e gg. [Problems of transforming the status of national languages of peoples of the USSR on the example of Soviet and post-Soviet Tajikistan from the 1980s to the 2010s]," *Obschestvo, sreda, razvitie* 4:91-99, 2015, [http://www.terrahumana.ru/arhiv/15\\_04/15\\_04\\_17.pdf](http://www.terrahumana.ru/arhiv/15_04/15_04_17.pdf)

# KAZAKHSTAN: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH BASED ON THREE LANGUAGES

By 2025, Kazakhstan plans to become the third Central Asian country to have switched to the Latin script.<sup>5</sup> It is home to the largest number of ethnic Russians and Russian speaking population in Central Asia, and the decision to change the script stirred a lot of discussions with regards to the future of the Russian language in the country and the necessity of this reform in the first place.<sup>6</sup> In her article written for CABAR.asia, Elena Kosolapova discusses the reasons why the Kazakh government decided to pursue this reform and quotes the former president Nursultan Nazarbayev's statement that the decision to adopt the Latin script was a requirement of the modern world and a step towards the integration into the common informational space and the global system of science and culture.<sup>7</sup> Through the comparison of adoption of Latin scripts in Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan, Kosolapova demonstrates that Kazakhstan's success will depend on strong and lasting commitment, as well as a comprehensive approach that emphasizes a gradual step-by-step and long-term measures. The foremost question is whether the adoption of the Latin script will damage or sustain currently well-functioning balance between the Kazakh and Russian languages.

The first step in establishing the current bilingual system came in 1989, when the Law on the Languages was adopted and defined the role of the Kazakh and Russian languages. The law elevated Kazakh to the status of the state language, where as Russian became the language of international communication.<sup>8</sup> This move was the result of the local elites' attempts to create a framework for the development of the Kazakh language as one of the key symbols of Kazakh nationality and statehood. Given the fact that ethnic Kazakhs remained a minority in their own country until 1996 and the majority of Kazakhs chose Russian over Kazakh, Kazakh language found itself in need of catching up with regards to gaining popularity and expanding its position with regards to the Russian. The 1995 Constitution laid foundations and set the directive for the development of the language policy. Kazakh became the state language, and Russian received official status.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Andrei Nikolaev, "Russkii yazyk ischet v Tsentralnoi Azii "pyatyi ugol"? [Is the Russian languages searching for the "fifth corner" in Central Asia?]," *Rosbalt*, 12 March 2018, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/world/2018/03/12/1687165.html>

<sup>6</sup> Oleg Molodov, "Russkii yazyk kak instrument ispolzovania "magkoi sily" v stranah Tsentralnoi Azii [Russian language as a soft power tool in the Central Asian countries]," *Diskurs Pi*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkiy-yazyk-kak-instrument-ispolzovaniya-myagkoy-sily-v-stranah-tsentralnoy-azii>

<sup>7</sup> Elena Kosolapova, "Latin Alphabet for Kazakhstan: Turkification, Westernization or Useless Initiative," *CABAR.asia*, 29 January 2019, <https://cabar.asia/en/latin-alphabet-for-kazakhstan-turkification-westernisation-or-useless-initiative/>

<sup>8</sup> Law of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic on Languages in Kazakh Socialist Republic from 22 September 1989, [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=1005765#pos=3;-104](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1005765#pos=3;-104)

<sup>9</sup> Inform Buro, "Vse chto nujno znat o yazykah i yazykovoi politike v Kazakhstane [Everything you need to know about languages and language policy in Kazakhstan]," *Inform Buro*, 28 April 2018, <https://informburo.kz/cards/vsyo-cto-nuzhno-znat-o-yazykah-i-yazykovoy-politike-v-kazahstane.html>





The usage of Kazakh became mandatory at state and municipal agencies; the usage of Russian in state structures was allowed as well. The 1997 Law on Languages outlined Kazakh as the main “language of public administration, law making, document management, which applies to all sphere of public relations on the whole territory.”<sup>10</sup> Knowing Kazakh became a duty of every citizen, and the Kazakh language was meant to serve as an important consolidating factor for all Kazakhstani citizens.

2011 saw the adoption of the National Program for the Development and Functioning of Languages for 2011-2019. The program was an ambitious initiative that aimed to introduce a full-scale functioning of the state language. It had three main goals: mastery of the state language, popularization and expansion of the state language, and raising the level of linguistic culture of Kazakhstanis.<sup>11</sup> According to the program, by 2019, 90 percent of adults had to be fluent in Kazakh, 90 percent fluent in Russian, 25 percent fluent in English, and 20 percent fluent in all three languages.<sup>12</sup> The English language indicators stem from the state educational program in Kazakh, Russian, and English languages, which was first launched in 2006. The official statistics stated that the program’s goals have been fully reached; however, a realistic assessment of the situation puts official reports under serious doubt.

For example, at the beginning of 2019, ethnic Kazakhs substituted 67.9 percent of the population, and given the fact that the urban Kazakh population either does not know Kazakh or has modest command over the Kazakh language, it is highly unlikely that 90 percent of the population has become fluent Kazakh speakers.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the program achieved three main results, according to Aiman Zhusupova from the World Economy and Politics Institute under the First President’s Fund. First, the majority of the population understood and accepted the need to learn the state language, eradicating indifference towards Kazakh. Second, children and youth have successfully mastered Kazakh, and kindergartens and schools with Kazakh as language of instruction are more popular than their Russian counterparts. Third, Kazakh is rapidly developing in the cultural sphere, especially in the mass culture. Songs, shows, movies, and other forms of entertainment in Kazakh are booming.<sup>14</sup>

The above-mentioned program received a continuation in the form of the State Program for the Implementation of the Language Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2025. This program sets to achieve three main tasks. The first goal is to modernize the Kazakh language based on the Latin script. The government plans that by 2025, with 50%

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Evgeniya Skalei, “Gosprogramma razvitiya yazykov v Kazakhstane: problemy i reshenia [National Programme for developing languages in Kazakhstan: problems and solutions],” *365Info.kz*, 21 April 2019, <https://365info.kz/2019/04/gosprogramma-razvitiya-yazykov-v-kazahstane-problemy-i-resheniya>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

of written communication being conducted on the basis on the Latin alphabet. The second goal is to strengthen the role of the state language as a language of interethnic communication. This measure should contribute to an even greater spread of the Kazakh language, especially among ethnic minorities and the Russian-speaking part of the population. The third goal of the program is to develop the language capital of citizens of Kazakhstan. This goal means the continuation of the introduction of the trilingual system at all levels of education, based on the experience of the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools, developing languages of ethnic groups and the regulation of the functioning of the Russian language in the communicative-linguistic space.<sup>15</sup>

Analyzing the Kazakh government’s language policy, it is fair to state that most of the efforts and resources have been directed at reviving and popularizing Kazakh and introducing it in public administration and social life. To achieve these goals, the government has already spent 35,101.5 million tenge (about 87 million USD) under the National Program for the Development and Functioning of Languages for 2011-2019.<sup>16</sup> Also, within the framework of the Program for the Implementation of the Language Policy for 2020-2025, 16,989.9 million tenge (about 41 million USD) will be allocated.<sup>17</sup> In this context, the Kazakh government’s policy towards Russian has been sustaining its legal status and allowing its wide usage alongside Kazakh. The authorities have held an opinion that the Russian language is not really in need of any special development program, since most of the population already knew it and used it in all spheres of life. The system of education in Russian has already been established and functions well.

**THEREFORE, AND ALSO IN THE LIGHT OF THE NATION-BUILDING STRATEGY, THE LEADERSHIP SET UP A BALANCE BETWEEN THE KAZAKH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES, WHEREBY THE STATE LANGUAGE RECEIVES MULTI-FACETED SUPPORT, WHILST ALLOWING RUSSIAN TO BE USED IN ALL SPHERES OF LIFE – ALSO NOT LEAST DUE TO THE SIGNIFICANT RUSSIAN POPULATION, AS WELL AS HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL TIES WITH RUSSIA.**

<sup>15</sup> Zakon.kz, “Programma po realizatsii yazykovoi politiki na 2020-2015 gody utverjdена v RK [The implementation programme for language policy for 2020-2025 is approved in Kazakhstan],” *Zakon.kz*, 14 January 2020, <https://www.zakon.kz/5002543-programma-po-realizatsii-yazykovoy.html>

<sup>16</sup> “State Programme for Development and Functioning of Languages in Kazakhstan for 2011-2019,” from the official website of the Prosecutor General’s Office of Kazakhstan, 4 October 2012, <http://prokuror.gov.kz/rus/dokumenty/gosudarstvennyy-yazyk/o-gosudarstvennoy-programme-razvitiya-i-funkcionirovaniya-yazykov-v>

<sup>17</sup> Zakon.kz, “Programma po realizatsii yazykovoi politiki na 2020-2015 gody utverjdена v RK [The implementation programme for language policy for 2020-2025 is approved in Kazakhstan],” *Zakon.kz*, 14 January 2020, <https://www.zakon.kz/5002543-programma-po-realizatsii-yazykovoy.html>

# KYRGYZSTAN: PROBLEMS WITH THE LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Kyrgyzstan followed the same path as other Central Asian countries, when the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic adopted the Law on the State Language in 1989, which officially bestowed upon the Kyrgyz language status of the state language.<sup>18</sup> Adoption of this law during the Perestroika period provided the Kyrgyz language with a much-needed push for its development. Prior to the adoption of this law, Kyrgyz has been relegated to the status of inferior language mainly used in folklore and for everyday life purposes. In his article written for CABAR.asia on the Kyrgyz and Russian languages, Ermek Baisalov analyzes development of the Kyrgyz and Russian languages in Kyrgyzstan and describes the local elites' lingual behavior in the early 1990s as "diglossia" whereby these languages were asymmetrically used in different functional spheres. Thus, important issues related to the state were discussed in the "high" Russian language, and personal and domestic issues were discussed in the "low" Kyrgyz language.<sup>19</sup> As the result of allocating Kyrgyz the inferior role during the Soviet Union, it lost prestige and popularity.<sup>20</sup> By the time Kyrgyzstan became independent, the Soviet language policy has created a major misbalance in favor of the Russian language in terms of being used in political, social, and cultural spheres.

Ever since Kyrgyzstan became independent in 1991, the government has been facing the dilemma of trying to tilt the above-mentioned disbalance in favor of Kyrgyz, whilst providing an equal footing for Russian. The 1993 constitution secured Kyrgyz a status of the state language; where as the legal status of Russian as the official language is guaranteed by the 2000 Law on the Official Language.<sup>21</sup> The 2004 Law on the State Language reinstated Kyrgyz and Russian as state and official languages respectively, and established a framework for their usage in different fields. The usage of Kyrgyz at state agencies became mandatory, where as Russian could be used when necessary. The 2010 constitution did not make any drastic changes in the sphere of language policy, except for switching from bilingual set-up to the multilingualism, whereby the state took the responsibility to provide citizens with opportunities to study a third additional language.<sup>22</sup> In her article written for CABAR.asia, Khanzada Zayirbekova analyzes pros and cons of multilingual education

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Kyrgyzstan is celebrating the Day of the State Language today," 22 September 2013, <http://mineconom.gov.kg/ru/post/134>

<sup>19</sup> Ermek Baisalov, "Russian and Kyrgyz languages: equal wings of one bird?" CABAR.asia, 18 March 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/russkij-i-kyrgyzskij-yazyki-ravnye-krylya-odnoj-ptitsy/>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



in Kyrgyzstan and concludes that the government has not moved much beyond declaring the right to receive such education due to the lack of financial and human resources.<sup>23</sup>

Another initiative aimed to spread the use of Kyrgyz from the 1990s includes the 1993 Government resolution to switch all document management to the Kyrgyz language by 1997, which failed due to unrealistic deadlines and poor coordination and organizational work.<sup>24</sup> 1998 saw the establishment of the National Commission on the State Language under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. Its main goal was the realization of the state policy in the sphere of developing the Kyrgyz language.<sup>25</sup> The Commission became “the main collegial body coordinating the activities of all state bodies and institutions working for the development and spreading of the Kyrgyz language.”<sup>26</sup>

Having seen the failure and lack of tangible results from the short-term and episodic programs, in 2001, the government adopted the Program for the Development of the State Language for 2000-2010. Its two main goals were the development of modern methodologies and technologies for teaching Kyrgyz and the full introduction of Kyrgyz as the language of document management at state agencies and in all spheres of public life.<sup>27</sup> The program was relatively successful in achieving the first goal, for it established several centers for studying Kyrgyz, institutionalized special days and week for popularizing Kyrgyz, and introduced electronic Kyrgyz-Russian dictionary. However, the program failed at the second and more ambitious goal of full-scale usage of Kyrgyz at state agencies and all spheres of public life. Thus, it received continuation in the face of the National Program for Developing the State Language and Enhancing the Language Policy for 2014-2020.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Kanzada Zayirbekova, “Advantages and Risks of Introducing the “Multilingual and Multicultural Education” Program in Kyrgyzstan,” *CABAR.asia*, 9 August 2019, <https://cabar.asia/en/advantages-and-risks-of-introducing-the-multilingual-and-multicultural-education-program-in-kyrgyzstan/>

<sup>24</sup> Ermek Baisalov, “Russian and Kyrgyz languages: equal wings of one bird?” *CABAR.asia*, 18 March 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/russkij-i-kyrgyzskij-yazyki-ravnye-krylya-odnoj-ptitsy/>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

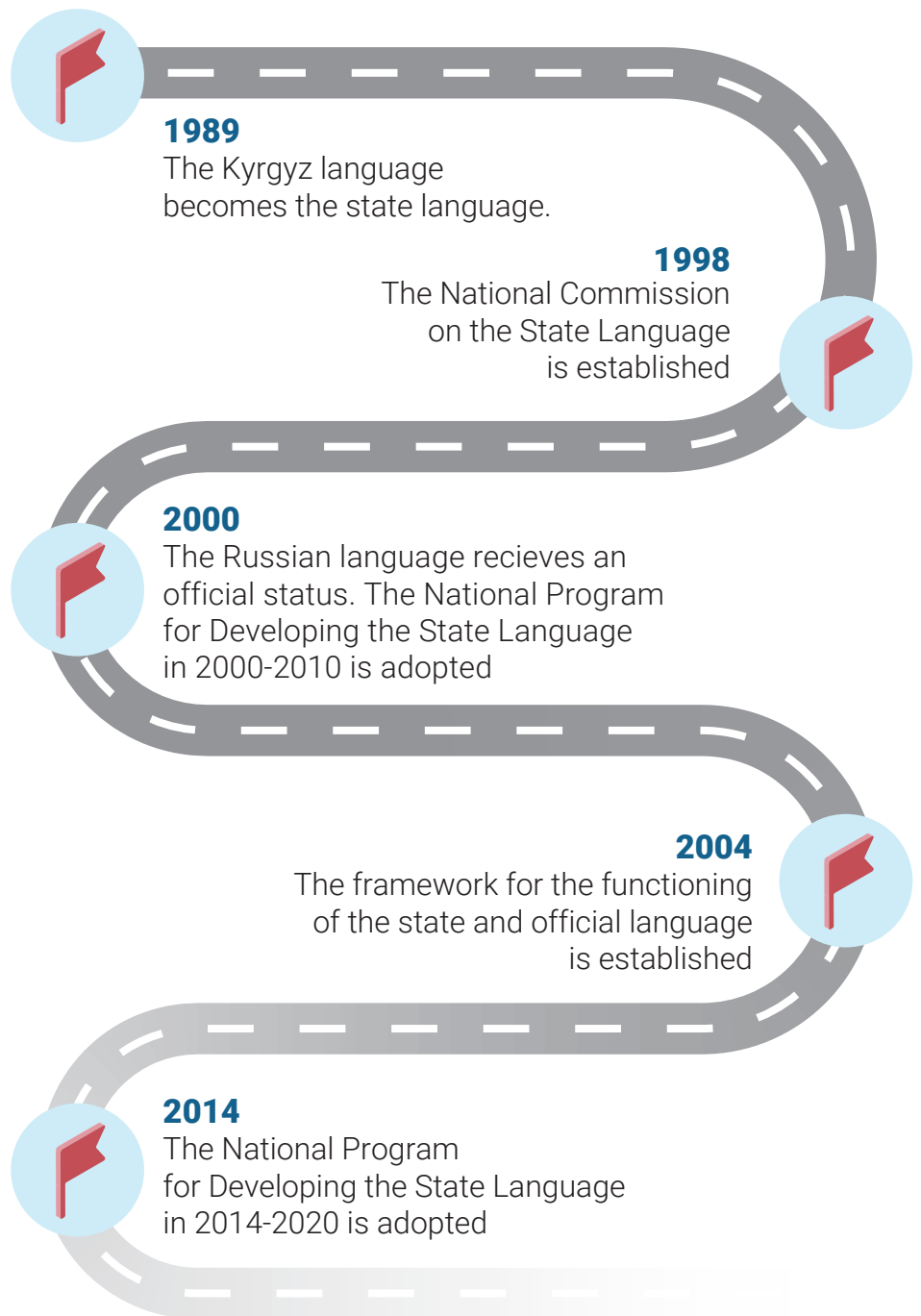
<sup>26</sup> Cholpon Chotaeva, “Yazykovaya politika Kyrgyzstana: prichiny, problemy, protivorechiya [Language policy of Kyrgyzstan: factors, problems, contradictions],” [http://elibrary.auca.kg:8080/bitstream/123456789/2225/3/Chotaeva\\_lazykovaia%20politika%20Kyrgyzstana\\_Prichiny%2C%20problemy%2C%20protivorechiia\\_article.pdf](http://elibrary.auca.kg:8080/bitstream/123456789/2225/3/Chotaeva_lazykovaia%20politika%20Kyrgyzstana_Prichiny%2C%20problemy%2C%20protivorechiia_article.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Ermek Baisalov, “Russian and Kyrgyz languages: equal wings of one bird?” *CABAR.asia*, 18 March 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/russkij-i-kyrgyzskij-yazyki-ravnye-krylya-odnoj-ptitsy/>

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*



**Picture 1.**  
**The timeline of important events in Kyrgyzstan's language policy.**



This program is a logical continuation of the previous one, and seeks to achieve full-scale functioning of the state language in all spheres of life as a consolidating factor for all citizens. The ambitious goal of the program, requiring all government and municipal officials to speak fluent Kyrgyz and Russian, was perceived by some as radical and unrealistic. The problem with this program is that it is not holistic enough for citizens and government officials to meet the 2020 requirements.



Among the achievements of the program, one can emphasize the development of “Kyrgyztest”, which allows assessing the level of knowledge of the Kyrgyz language, stationary and mobile testing centers, publication of professional and thematic literature, as well as training courses and seminars on document flow in the Kyrgyz language.<sup>29</sup> The completion of the development of the “Kyrgyztest” system made it possible to conduct large-scale testing of all state and municipal employees in order to identify their proficiency in the state language. “Kyrgyztest” became popular due to the requirement that all candidates for the presidency of the country take this test.

At first glance, it may seem that the government of Kyrgyzstan has been active and fruitful for all these years in the development of the state language: many laws, concepts, and programs have been adopted, and a specialized coordinating body has been created. However, in reality, the state language policy and its implementation still continue to suffer from poor coordination, lack of funds and political instability that lead to the failure of the state language development programs. The National Commission on the State Language “has not realized its potential as a single state body responsible for carrying out ethnocultural and language policy.”<sup>30</sup>

The education system, which was supposed to become the most important body in the implementation of language policy, is still experiencing acute problems associated with a shortage of teachers of the Kyrgyz language, the lack of textbooks and programs for teaching the Kyrgyz language in Russian schools. These problems are complemented by the fact that the library fund of schools and other educational institutions is rarely replenished with new textbooks, manuals and other necessary materials in the state language.<sup>31</sup> At the root of all these problems lies an acute shortage of funds allocated for the implementation of language policy. For example, only 493.66 million soms (about 6.4 million US dollars) were allocated for the implementation of the latest Program for the Development of the State Language for 2014-2020. A similar program in Kazakhstan for the next 5 years provides 6.5 times more funds. This kind of funding shortage translates into the fact that activities that require long-term funding and promise to have the most significant contributions are often ignored and/or delayed.

The analysis of the policy towards the Kyrgyz and Russian languages following the independence shows that the government has gradually increased efforts to enable the Kyrgyz language become equal to the Russian. Due to the fact that the government has been implementing

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Gulai Toktogonova, “Realizatsiya yazykovoi politiki v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike [Implementation of the language policy in Kyrgyzstan],” *Mejdunarodnyi nauchnyi jurnal “Simvol nauki”* №4, 2016, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/realizatsiya-yazykovoy-politiki-v-kyrgyzskoy-respublike/viewer>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid



a top-down, unrealistic, and non-comprehensive measures, the language policy has been perceived in some cases as an attempt to edge out Russian from the public life. However, political and economic ties with Russia, wide usage of Russian in scientific and cultural spheres, popular demand for education in Russian, and the popularity of Russian media and entertainment ensure the language a sizable footing in public, political and culture life of the country.<sup>32</sup> Among other things, Kyrgyzstan is a member of various political, economic and military alliances created and/or promoted by the Russian government. Membership in such integration organizations as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) strengthen the position of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan and hint that it will continue to be widely used in all spheres of life.

---

<sup>32</sup> Daniyar Mukambetov, "O roli i znachenii russkogo yazyka dlya Kyrgyzstana [On the role and importance of the Russian language for Kyrgyzstan]," *National Institute of Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic*, <http://www.nisi.kg/112-stati/467-o-rol-i-znachenii-russkogo-yazyka-dlya-kyrgyzstana.html>

# TAJIKISTAN: A POLITICAL NATURE OF LANGUAGE POLICY

In contrast to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan has taken a more radical approach in its language policy by adopting measures that blatantly favored Tajik and tried to edge out Russian from the public space. The first step in forming the language policy came in 1989, when the Soviet Tajik authorities adopted the Law on the Language.<sup>33</sup> According to this law, the Tajik language became the state language, whereas the Russian language would be used as the language of international communication. It was mandatory to use Tajik at state agencies and document management, but the law also allowed to use Russian, allowing citizens to use Russian in their interactions with the state. The Tajik leadership and intelligentsia of that time understood the role and importance of Russian in the political, social, and cultural life of the country and hoped to develop Tajik alongside Russian. Initially, the Tajik government had chosen bilingualism, which favored Tajik and did not attempt to eliminate Russian from the public space.

This balance was reshaped in 2009, when due to the worsened relations between Tajikistan and Russia the government adopted the Law on the State Language and removed any mention of Russian from the text.<sup>34</sup> The law obliges all Tajik citizens to know Tajik as a consolidating factor. More importantly, this law made Tajik the only language of document management at state agencies, courts, and other spheres of public administration. It also meant that citizens could interact with the state only in Tajik. Russian received its legal status as the language of international communication in 2011, but it was nothing but a symbolic move to please Russia, after the two countries mended their relations.<sup>35</sup>

However, the Russian language continues to be of high value in the educational and media spheres. In his article written for CABAR.asia, Muslimbek Buriev analyzes the current state of the Russian language in Tajikistan and argues that even though the level of knowledge of Russian is steadily declining, there is still significant public demand for Russian.<sup>36</sup> This is mainly due to the historic legacy of Russian being the main language in political, cultural and scientific fields, as well as the additional job opportunities the knowledge of Russian provides.

<sup>33</sup> Abdulla Daudov et al., "Problema transformatsii statusa natsionalnyh yazykov narodov SSSR na primere Sovetskogo i Postsovetskogo Tadjikistana v 1980-2010-e gg. [Problems of transforming the status of national languages of peoples of the USSR on the example of Soviet and post-Soviet Tajikistan from the 1980s to the 2010s]," *Obschestvo, sreda, razvitie* 4:91-99, 2015, [http://www.terrahumana.ru/arhiv/15\\_04/15\\_04\\_17.pdf](http://www.terrahumana.ru/arhiv/15_04/15_04_17.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Denis Letnyakov, "Rol russkogo yazyka v postsovetskoi Tsentralnoi Azii [Role of the Russian language in the post-Soviet Central Asia]," *Politiya* 4 (79): 2015, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/rol-russkogo-yazyka-v-postsovetskoy-tsentralnoy-azii>

<sup>36</sup> Muslimbek Bouriev, "How popular is the Russian language in Tajikistan?" *CABAR.asia*, 20 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/naskolko-russkij-yazyk-vostrebovan-v-tadzhikistane/>



**ALTHOUGH ONLY 2.4 PERCENT OF THE SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVE EDUCATION IN RUSSIAN, 20-25 PERCENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS CHOOSE TO STUDY IN RUSSIAN – THANKS TO THE PRESENCE OF THE RUSSIAN-TAJIK SLAVONIC UNIVERSITY AND THE LOCAL BRANCHES OF THE MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY AND OF THE MOSCOW INSTITUTE OF STEEL AND ALLOYS.<sup>37</sup>**

Thus, despite the fact that 70 percent of Russian speaking population has left Tajikistan in the early 1990s and the government has not done much to support Russian, the language continues to be popular and be held in high regard. This is reflected in another article published on CABAR.asia, in which citizens who received education in Russian believe it to be superior and view knowledge of Russian as an important social mobility instrument, which widens educational and further career prospects.<sup>38</sup> This has resulted in a situation whereby the number of schools that offer education in Russian does not match the public demand, and such schools are overstaffed with students. It is also worth mentioning that Tajikistan's friendlier approach to Russian is conditioned by Tajikistan's economic dependence on Russia. According to unofficial data, 1.5 million citizens (16.1% of the population) of Tajikistan are in Russia as labor migrants.<sup>39</sup> In 2019, labor migrants transferred 2 billion 579 million US dollars from Russia to Tajikistan, which is about a third of the country's GDP.<sup>40</sup>

Tajikistan's initial policy of balancing the Tajik and Russian languages has gradually turned to that of overzealous promotion of Tajik sometimes at the expense of Russian. As the result of the government policy to use Tajik as the exclusive language of document management and law making in the country, Russian has lost its presence in several important spheres. Nevertheless, despite the state efforts to push Tajik to the forefront of usage in all spheres of life, Russian continues to be the majority's preference in the scientific, cultural, and educational fields. This hints at the political nature of the language policy and reforms that are divorced from the situation on the ground, historical context, and public demand.

<sup>37</sup> Denis Letnyakov, "Rol russkogo yazyka v postsovetsoi Tsentralnoi Azii [Role of the Russian language in the post-Soviet Central Asia]," *Politiya* 4 (79): 2015, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/rol-russkogo-yazyka-v-postsovetsoy-tsentralnoy-azii>

<sup>38</sup> CABAR.asia, "School education: Tajik parents prefer Russian-language schools," *CABAR.asia*, 2 September 2019, <https://cabar.asia/en/school-education-tajik-parents-prefer-russian-language-schools/>

<sup>39</sup> Eurasia Daily, "Obem perevodov trudovyh migrantov v Tadjikistan prevyshaet gosbudget [The amount of remittances sent by Tajik migrants exceeds the state budget]," *Eurasia Daily*, 19 December 2019, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2019/12/19/obem-perevodov-trudovyh-migrantov-v-tadjikistan-prevyshaet-gosbyudzheth>

<sup>40</sup> Sarvinoz Ruhullo, "Obem denezhnyh perevodov iz Rossii v Tadjikistan za pervyi mesyats kvartal sokratilsya na \$103 milliona [The amount of remittances from Russia to Tajikistan in the first quarter has decreased by 103 million USD]," *Radio Ozodi*, 18 June 2020, <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/30677288.html>

# TURKMENISTAN: AN ARTIFICIAL CHARACTER OF LANGUAGE POLICY

According to Turkmenistan's first president, Saparmurat Niyazov, people of Turkmenistan would eventually be fluent in three languages: Turkmen, Russian, and English.<sup>41</sup> Almost 30 years have passed since the moment this statement was made, and it can be stated without any hesitation that the future has unfolded very differently.

The difference in the government's policies towards the Turkmen and Russian languages has been similar to the difference between day and night – much to the detriment of Russian, which found itself constantly pushed to the outskirts of public life. The beginning was somewhat promising, when on 24 May 1990, following its regional neighbors, the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic adopted the Law on the Language. The law elevated Turkmen to the status of the state language and gave Russian the status of the language of international communication, which was eventually taken away in 1996.<sup>42</sup> The constitution did not help either, for it did not mention Russian in the text at all. In 1991 Turkmenistan changed its script from the Cyrillic to Latin and became the first Central Asian country to do so.<sup>43</sup> This move was part of the wider program of “turkmenization” of the country, whereby everything Soviet and/or attached to the Soviet Union was removed from the public space and replaced with a hastily made Turkmen analogue. Language was a part of the Soviet legacy; thus, it was also subject to removal and substitution by the Turkmen language as a symbol of the national identity and statehood.

From all the Central Asian countries, Turkmenistan has the most mis-balanced policy in terms of supporting the state language and Russian and serves as the most extreme case of moving away from everything Russian, including the language. Only Turkmen is allowed to be used in public spheres of life, such as public administration, document management, and legislation. Education in Russian, both elementary and secondary, is almost non-existent in the country.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Central Asian Analytical Network, “Kak menyalas pismennost v Turkmenistane: 1904-2014 gody [How the scripts changed in Turkmenistan from 1904 to 2014],” *Central Asian Analytical Network*, 2 June 2019, <https://caa-network.org/archives/9206>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> CABAR.asia, “Turkmen paradox: de jure there is no Russian language, de facto it is necessary,” *CABAR.asia*, 25 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/turkmenskij-paradoks-russkogo-yazyka-de-yure-net-de-fakto-on-neobhodim/>

<sup>44</sup> Tatyana Kudoyarova, “Russkii yazyk v sovremennoi obrazovatelnoi srede Turkmenistana [Russian language is the contemporary educational sphere of Turkmenistan],” *CyberLeninka*, 2010, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkiy-yazyk-v-sovremennoy-obrazovatelnoy-srede-turkmenistana/viewer>



Turkmenistan now has a new generation of citizens that has a very limited knowledge of Russian. Russian schools have been gradually shut down, by first turning them to Turkmen-Russian schools and eventually turning them to all Turkmen schools with only 1 class taught in Russian. Thus, starting from 2002, all the remaining 49 Russian schools were transformed to Turkmen, where the language of education is strictly in Turkmen.<sup>45</sup> Since 2002 the higher education is available only in Turkmen, and the state has closed down university programs preparing Russian language and literature teachers in all except one pedagogical institute in Turkmenabad, which is responsible for the graduation of 5-6 Russian language teachers every year.<sup>46</sup> This policy of swift and radical change has left a large number of population illiterate and unable to access news and other forms of written media.

The hasty and artificial nature of the Turkmen government's language policy is well analyzed in an article published by CABAR.asia. The article shows that despite the government efforts to limit the influence of the Russian language and downgrade its status, it is still held in high regard among the population and remains popular due to providing opportunities for upward social mobility, being a tool for international communication, and serving as a bridge to the world of high culture, arts, and science.<sup>47</sup> Intense "turkmenization" of the country, including the introduction of the Latin script, large scale attempts to curb the Russian language's presence and usage in public life, and severely limiting educational opportunities in Russian, has not yet completely edged out the Russian language from the public space.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> CABAR.asia, "Turkmen paradox: de jure there is no Russian language, de facto it is necessary," CABAR.asia, 25 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/turkmenskij-paradoks-russkogo-yazyka-de-yure-net-de-fakto-on-neobhodim/>

# UZBEKISTAN: AN ONGOING LANGUAGE REFORM

In 1989, Uzbekistan adopted the Law on Languages, which granted Uzbek status of the state language, and Russian became the language of international communication.<sup>48</sup> However, after gaining independence the government took a derussification course and removed any mention of Russian from the constitution and the 1995 Law on the State Language.<sup>49</sup> In 1993, Uzbekistan attempted a language reform and switched from the Cyrillic to Latin script. In his article written for CABAR.asia, Bakhtiyor Alimdjanoev analyzes why the reform has not achieved its goal. First of all, it was never completed and remains in the process of implementation even today. Secondly, the change to the Latin script took place only in the educational sphere, whereas the Cyrillic script or its combination with the Latin script is still used in other areas, including in public administration.

Thus, there is a sensible rift between the intended policy of extending the use of the Uzbek language versus the situation on the ground when the top-down approach has not borne any tangible results and the Russian language is used more widely in many spheres of life. Alimdjanoev argues that this failure happened because the government did not apply a comprehensive approach to turn Uzbek into the language of science, culture, and public administration.<sup>50</sup> The case of Uzbekistan is an example of how legal favoritism, absence of commitment, and the lack of comprehensive strategy for the development of state language leads to failures.

In contrast to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan uses a more loyal approach to the Russian language, which can be seen from the level of its presence in the public space and use in different spheres of life. Its government is more receptive to the fact that it has a sizable Russian speaking population and the strong position Russian language occupies in educational, technical, and socio-cultural spheres. Although all the document management at the state structures is conducted strictly in Uzbek, it is later duplicated to Russian. Newspapers in Russian are widely circulated in the country, and Russian media and entertainment is popular among Uzbekistanis. Educational opportunities in Russian are still available both at the secondary and higher education levels.

<sup>48</sup> Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the State Language,” [http://base.spinform.ru/show\\_doc.fwx?rgn=770](http://base.spinform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=770)

<sup>49</sup> CentralAsia.Media, “V Uzbekistane russkii stal odnim iz samykh vostrebovannykh inostrannykh yazykov “Russian language became one of the most popular foreign languages in Uzbekistan],” *CentralAsia.Media*, 25 October 2017, <https://centralasia.media/news:1412342>

<sup>50</sup> Bakhtiyor Alimdjanoev, “Why Uzbek language has not become a language of politics and science,” *CABAR.asia*, 19 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/uzbekistan-pochemu-uzbekskij-ne-stal-yazykom-politiki-i-nauki/>



There are over 900 Russian schools with approximately half a million students, which is 10 percent of all students.<sup>51</sup> It is worth mentioning here that 80-90 percent of students at these Russian schools are ethnic Uzbeks, which again highlights prestige and popularity of education in Russian.<sup>52</sup> Almost all major universities across the country offer higher education in Russian, and almost all humanitarian universities have Russian philology faculties.

One of the factors of the government's softer approach towards the Russian language has been labor migration to Russia – similarly to the cases of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The country ranks first in terms of supplying workers to the Russian labor market. According to official data, 2.3 million Uzbek citizens (20% of the economically active population) are in Russia as labor migrants.<sup>53</sup> Uzbek labor migrants also contribute to economic development at home; remittances sent from Russia to Uzbekistan in 2019 amounted to USD 4.7 billion in 2019.<sup>54</sup>

In the meantime, the government policy towards the development of the Uzbek language has failed in many aspects. First, the ongoing language reform has created confusion and illiteracy among the population. The young generation has studied using the Latin script, but has found itself in need of learning the additional Cyrillic script to read and understand pretty much everything else in the country. The lack of translated literature in the Latin script only exacerbates the situation. The older generation can only read texts in the Cyrillic script, barring them from reading everything written using the Latin script. This is not to mention that three different versions of the Latin script have been adopted, with the last one coming in 2018.<sup>55</sup>

Second, the government has also failed at creating one unified Uzbek language. This problem has existed since the Soviet Union has merged different geographic, cultural, and lingual communities into one country that is Uzbekistan today and tried to establish one common language to be used by all citizens.<sup>56</sup> What makes reaching such a task challenging is the multiplicity of dialects and their – sometimes – drastic differences. For example, people from the Khorezm region have a very difficult time understanding people from the Ferghana Valley.

<sup>51</sup> CentralAsia.Media, "V Uzbekistane russkii stal odnim iz samykh vostrebovannykh inostrannykh yazykov "Russian language became one of the most popular foreign languages in Uzbekistan," *CentralAsia.Media*, 25 October 2017, <https://centralasia.media/news:1412342>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Sputnik Uzbekistan, "Stalo izvestno, skolko uzbekistantsev uehali na zarabotki v 2019 godu [It became know how many Uzbekistanis left the country as labor migrants in 2019]," *Sputnik Uzbekistan*, 6 December 2019, <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/migration/20191206/12958308/Stalo-izvestno-skolko-uzbekistantsev-uekhali-na-zarabotki-v-2019-godu.html>

<sup>54</sup> Spot, "Denejnye perevody v Uzbekistan iz Rossii dostigli pika za 5 let [Remittances from Russian to Uzbekistan have hit the highest point in the last 5 years]," *Spot*, 17 March 2020, <https://www.spot.uz/ru/2020/03/17/russia/>

<sup>55</sup> Bakhtiyor Alimdjano, "Why Uzbek language has not become a language of politics and science," *CABAR.asia*, 19 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/uzbekistan-pochemu-uzbekskij-ne-stal-yazykom-politiki-i-nauki/>

<sup>56</sup> Aleksei Ulko, "Uzbekskiy – yazyk dlya uzbekov? Pochemu do sih por est problemy c gosudarstvennym yazykom [Is Uzbek language only for Uzbeks? Why there are still problems with the state languages]," *Hook*, 8 August 2019, <https://hook.report/2019/08/problema-uzb/>



Third, in contrast to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan has not adopted any long-term strategies for developing and spreading the state language. The only achievement in this regard has been the establishment of the Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature in 2016. Its main goal is “the deep study and development of the Uzbek language and literature”.<sup>57</sup>

The country’s experience of removing Russian from any legislation and the current status-quo of relatively well-functioning bilingualism between the Uzbek and Russian languages indicate an interesting phenomenon and resilience of languages. In his article written for CABAR.asia, Yuriy Sarukhanyan analyzes how Uzbek and Russian languages have managed to develop and function in parallel in spheres, in which they have historically been used. His work concludes that even when heavily regulated and censored the language still finds a way to stay relevant in the spheres of life it has historically established itself in and keeps its position and role in those spheres due to a myriad of reasons, such as reluctance of elites to change, poor language reforms, and the historic legacy.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Bakhtiyor Alimdjano, “Why Uzbek language has not become a language of politics and science,” *CABAR.asia*, 19 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/uzbekistan-pochemu-uzbekskij-ne-stal-yazykom-politiki-i-nauki/>

<sup>58</sup> Yuriy Sarukhanyan, “Language Balance in Uzbekistan: an Acceptable Status Quo,” *CABAR.asia*, 10 May 2019, <https://cabar.asia/en/language-balance-in-uzbekistan-an-acceptable-status-quo/>

# THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF THE STATE LANGUAGES AND RUSSIAN IN CENTRAL ASIA

The current situation with the Russian language in the region is very different from what it used to be prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to the 1989 USSR census, 80 percent of citizens of the Soviet Union spoke Russian.<sup>59</sup> This success was the result of the long-term policy of the Soviet authorities for nation-building through language, which began in 1938, when the study of the Russian language became compulsory in all schools.<sup>60</sup> During the Soviet era, the Russian language was used in office work, in the army and law enforcement structures, books and newspapers were published in Russian, and the Russian language also served as an important resource for social mobility. This kind of monopoly of the Russian language could not but have negative consequences for the indigenous languages and resulted in the fact that the indigenous languages did not receive proper support from the authorities and gradually ceased to be popular among the population. Thus, the indigenous languages acquired a purely everyday character, went underground, and the area of their use was limited to folklore and mundane everyday use.

In 2020, the standing of the Russian language in Central Asia is no longer as unshakable as it was before the collapse of the USSR. The 2013 data shows that the number of Russian speakers in Central Asia has dropped significantly. The number of those who do not speak Russian exceeds 50 percent in all Central Asian countries, except for Kazakhstan, where this percentage is 84 percent. In Kyrgyzstan, there is a decrease in the number of Russian speakers to 50 percent. Only 41 percent of citizens of Uzbekistan and 33 percent of Tajikistanis speak Russian. The most deplorable situation is in Turkmenistan, where the number of Russian-speaking population reaches only 18 percent.<sup>61</sup> These figures show that the area of use of the Russian language is decreasing. This phenomenon is primarily associated with the fact of the departure of ethnic Russians and other Russian-speaking minorities. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the number of Russians in Kazakhstan has dropped by 43 percent, in Uzbekistan by 60 percent, in Kyrgyzstan by 61 percent, and in Tajikistan by 91 percent.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Denis Letnyakov, "Rol russkogo yazyka v postsovetsoi Tsentralnoi Azii [Role of the Russian language in the post-Soviet Central Asia]," *Politiya* 4 (79): 2015, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/rol-russkogo-yazyka-v-postsovetsoy-tsentralnoy-azii>

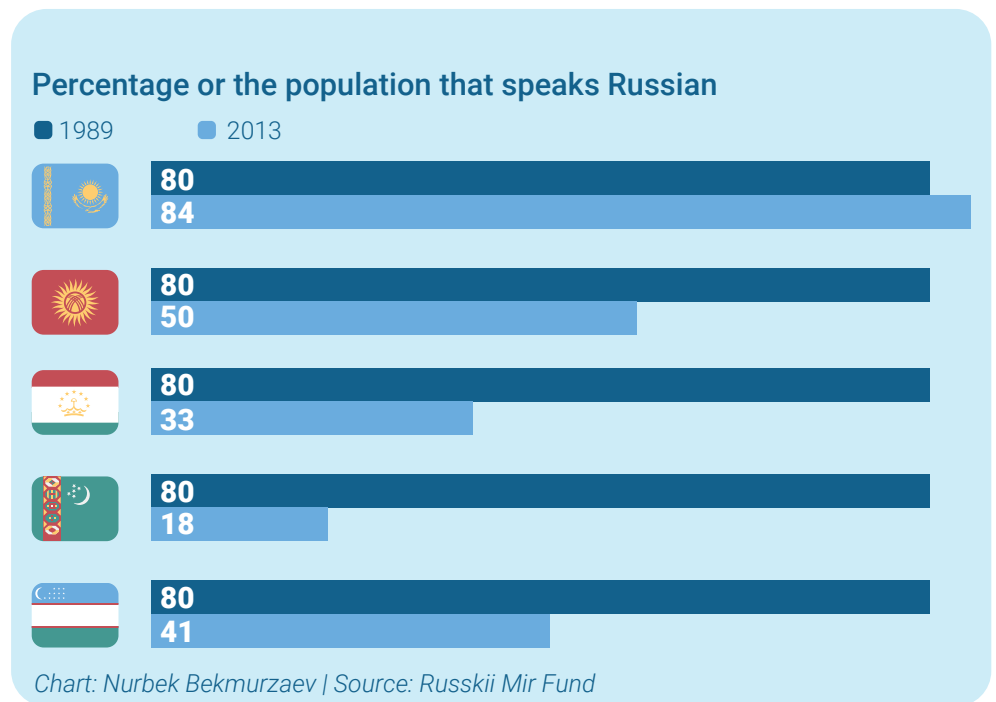
<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Alena Polskih, "Russkii yazyk v Tsentralnoi Azii luchshe vsego znayut v Kazakhstane [People in Kazakhstan are the most influent Russian speakers in Central Asia]," *Russkii Mir*, 11 December 2013, <https://rusскиymir.ru/news/48713/>

<sup>62</sup> Olga Sukharevskaya, "Russkie v Tsentralnoi Azii: Problemy i perspektivy [Russians in Central Asia: Problems and perspectives]," *IA Tsentr*, 24 September 2019, <https://ia-centr.ru/experts/olga-sukharevskaya/russkie-v-tsentralnoy-azii-problemy-i-perspektivy/>

However, the outflow of ethnic Russians from the countries of the region cannot fully explain the current situation in which the sphere of using the Russian language has significantly decreased, and now the state languages have become more and more popular. This phenomenon is explained by the following three factors.

**Picture 2. Comparison of the percentage of population in the Central Asian countries who spoke Russian in 1989 and 2013.**



First of all, the policies of the Central Asian states in relation to the development and popularization of the state languages has played a significant role in the formation of a modern mechanism for the coexistence of the state languages and Russian. The Russian language fell victim to the nation building projects in the region. The languages of the titular nations in five states played a key role in reimagining the past and future of the five Central Asian states.<sup>63</sup> They laid foundations for the newly independent countries to shape their new identities. The Central Asian states dug deep into their histories, leapfrogging the Soviet period, to the ancient and glorious past when they spoke their own tongues and practiced political autonomy. Kyrgyzstan used Manas epoch for these purposes, Uzbekistan turned to Amir Timur and his Timurid Empire, and Tajikistan dug out the Samanid Empire to serve as flagship elements in their nation building projects. There was simply no place for the Russian language in these nation-building projects.

In the context of promoting everything ethnic and pre-Soviet, the generally accepted rule became that proper Kazakhs should speak Kazakh, proper Uzbeks should speak Uzbek and so on.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the policy of linguistic nationalism has been pushing the Russian language

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.





out of the public space. Additionally, the growing negative perception of the Soviet past and colonial policies of the Russian Empire in Central Asia presents Russian as the tongue of the oppressors. There are increasingly more events being organized in remembrance of the tragic events such as the famine in Kazakhstan in 1932-33 and the 1916 uprising and flee of the Kyrgyz people to China.<sup>65</sup> These events claimed lives of several hundred thousand people and happened under the rule of the Soviet and Tsarist authorities. Thus, promoting the Russian language in this setting has become particularly unpopular. This is not to say that the Central Asian states have totally banished the Russian language, but to highlight how the nation building discourses have made it difficult to adopt policies in support of expanding education and entertainment in Russian.

Second, the current situation is the result of Russia's reluctant humanitarian cooperation with Central Asia. Russian has been over relying on the Soviet legacy and not prioritizing the cultural and social cooperation with the region. The Russian government does not have a long-term plan to strengthen the social and cultural cooperation with Central Asia in a way that benefits and involves people beyond the capital cities and other areas with populations that are already friendly towards Russia.<sup>66</sup> Thus far it has been mostly people in the capitals and regions like the northern parts of Kazakhstan that have been benefitted from the educational opportunities provided by the Russian soft power projects, such as schools and universities offering education in Russian. For example, educational institutions sponsored by Russia and aimed at promoting the Russian language and culture in Kyrgyzstan are all located in Bishkek.<sup>67</sup> However, this is not counting the branch of Moscow State University in Osh, which began to build at the end of May 2020, and it is not yet clear when it will open and begin accepting students.<sup>68</sup> The same holds true for the Tajik-Russian Slavonic University and the Russian Centre of Science and Culture, which are both in Dushanbe.

Russia's Federal Agency for the CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation, established in 2008, is one of the two relevant state bodies that are called upon to spread the Russian language and culture in Central Asia.<sup>69</sup> It has established Russian Centers

<sup>65</sup> Oleg Molodov, "Russkii yazyk kak instrument ispolzovania "magkoi sily" v stranah Tsentralnoi Azii [Russian language as a soft power tool in the Central Asian countries]," *Diskurs Pi*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkiy-yazyk-kak-instrument-ispolzovaniya-myagkoy-sily-v-stranah-tsentralnoy-azii>

<sup>66</sup> Denis Letnyakov, "Rol russkogo yazyka v postsovetsoy Tsentralnoi Azii [Role of the Russian language in the post-Soviet Central Asia]," *Politiya* 4 (79): 2015, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/rol-russkogo-yazyka-v-postsovetsoy-tsentralnoy-azii>

<sup>67</sup> Vechernii Bishkek, "V Bishkeke otkrylas shkola imeni russkogo pisatelya Antona Chekhova [A new school named after the Russian writer Anton Chekov has opened in Bishkek]," *Vechernii Bishkek*, 1 September 2016, [https://www.vb.kg/doc/346166\\_v\\_bishkeke\\_otkrylas\\_shkola\\_imeni\\_rysskogo\\_pisatelja\\_antona\\_chehova.html](https://www.vb.kg/doc/346166_v_bishkeke_otkrylas_shkola_imeni_rysskogo_pisatelja_antona_chehova.html)

<sup>68</sup> Sputnik Kyrgyzstan, "V Oshe nachali stroit filial MGU. Kak on budet vyglyadet – eskizy [The building of the branch of the Moscow State University in Osh has started. How it will look like – drawings]," *Sputnik Kyrgyzstan*, 30 May 2020, <https://ru.sputnik.kg/society/20200530/1048479109/osh-mgu-filial-stroitelstvo-ehskiz.html>

<sup>69</sup> Oleg Molodov, "Russkii yazyk kak instrument ispolzovania "magkoi sily" v stranah Tsentralnoi Azii [Russian language as a soft power tool in the Central Asian countries]," *Diskurs Pi*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkiy-yazyk-kak-instrument-ispolzovaniya-myagkoy-sily-v-stranah-tsentralnoy-azii>



It has established Russian Centers for Science and Culture in Bishkek, Dushanbe and Tashkent – three capitals. The number of Kyrgyz (21), Tajik (364) and Uzbek (695) citizens who studied Russian at these centers barely makes 1000 people mark.<sup>70</sup> The number of books on Russian language and literature provided by this agency also remains low and comes significantly short of the actual needs of the Central Asian states.<sup>71</sup> The second such body is the Russkiy Mir Foundation, which has chronic funding problems, and it translates into short-term and small-scale projects of an episodic nature.<sup>72</sup>

The legacy of the Soviet Union thus far allows the Russian language to reign supreme with regards to being the main bridge between the Central Asian states and the world information space.<sup>73</sup> The state languages are not developed enough to replace Russian as a highway to high culture, art, and science. The number of Central Asians who speak English, Chinese, or Turkish is too small for the regional governments to disregard Russian – they need it for proper functioning and development of their states.<sup>74</sup> One of the most important spheres where the Russian language is still of high value is the educational sphere – especially with regards to technical, medical and military education. The lack of educational materials and the poor quality of education in local languages have resulted in high demand for education in the Russian language. The low quality of TV and radio shows in local languages allows entertainment in Russian to remain in high demand, but these are all temporary phenomena. The problem lies in the fact that the current state of affairs with regards to the Russian language is mostly a legacy of the Soviet period.<sup>75</sup> Russia, which has vested interest for the development of the Russian language in the region, lacks a systemic policy and a clear understanding of its priority goals in this direction, in addition to the fact that this issue is not a priority for the Russian authorities.

Third, there is growing competition from the side of the English, Turkish and Chinese languages. This competition is a reflection of the wider geopolitical competition in Central Asia. “The days of Russia’s undivided domination in Central Asia are gone forever.”<sup>76</sup> Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the region became a subject of interest by the US, Turkey, China, Iran, Arabic and European states.<sup>77</sup> All these countries have sought to gain a foothold in the region, including through their soft power projects. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have adopted national programs on introducing education in three languages, adding English.

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Vladimir Starchak, “Obrazovanie na russkom yazyke v stranah Tsentralnoi Azii – chlehan SNG: problemy i puti resheniya [Education in Russian language in Central Asia – CIS countries: problems and ways for solutions],” *Problemy natsionalnoi strategii* №3 (4) 2010, [https://riss.ru/images/pdf/journal/2010/3/07\\_.pdf](https://riss.ru/images/pdf/journal/2010/3/07_.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> Denis Letnyakov, “Rol russkogo yazyka v postsovetsoi Tsentralnoi Azii [Role of the Russian language in the post-Soviet Central Asia],” *Politiya* 4 (79): 2015, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/rol-russkogo-yazyka-v-postsovetsoy-tsentralnoy-azii>

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

Turkey has built a network of elite schools and universities in the region where it plans to raise a new generation of national elites with a friendly attitude towards Turkey; cultural and religious provide Turkey with an advantage in this regard. China and the US have utilized their significant economic resources to tilt Central Asians in their favor. American/Western style universities with education provided only in English are present in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and enjoy huge popularity.

## **EDUCATION IN ENGLISH HAS MORE APPEAL TO CENTRAL ASIANS THAN IN RUSSIAN.**

For example, significantly more Kazakh students, who have studied abroad through Bolashak program, attended universities in UK (3,031) and US (2,287) than in Russia (741). Chinese has become the third most popular language in Tajikistan, after Russian and English.

The future of the state languages and Russian will largely depend on the three above-mentioned factors. First, the state policy in relation to the state languages and Russian will play the most important role in creating a mechanism for the use of the state languages alongside the Russian. It should be noted right away that the state languages will continue to receive government support, gain in popularity and become more widely used. At this stage, it is noticeable that in countries with a more friendly attitude towards the Russian language and where it has been granted an official and comparative freedom of use in public life (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), the Russian language continues to play an important role and is widely used in public life. But even in these countries, the Russian language cannot rely on the state in terms of its active promotion and development. In countries where the Russian language was and remains subject to legal discrimination and suffered as a result of the transition to the Latin alphabet and an unfavorable environment (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), there is a high resistance of the Russian language, which shows how deeply it is rooted in people's lives.

Second, the mechanism for using the state languages and Russian will depend on how actively Russia tries to use it as an instrument of soft power and influence in the region. The Central Asian states did not spend and will not spend resources on popularizing Russian in their countries. In this regard, there is a fact of a noticeable decrease in the use of Russian at the expense of the state languages. Only the intervention of the Russian authorities, through the development of long-term and comprehensive measures to popularize and spread the Russian language, can somehow affect the current mechanism of using the Russian language and expand the scope of its use. This scenario seems extremely

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

unlikely, especially in the short term, since the Russian authorities do not put the strengthening of humanitarian cooperation with the Central Asian countries on the list of their foreign policy priorities.

***THIRD, THE GROWING COMPETITION FROM OTHER FOREIGN LANGUAGES WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE OUT OF THE PUBLIC SPACE AND REDUCE THE SCOPE OF ITS USE.***

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian countries of the region chose a very pragmatic multi-vector form of foreign policy. This meant openness to all countries and a willingness to cooperate with all.

Central Asia will continue to be an object of geopolitical struggle among regional and world powers, which means that humanitarian cooperation with the United States, China, EU countries, Arab states, and Turkey will deepen and the languages of these countries will continue to compete with the Russian language as a guide to the world of science and high technologies. The popularity of English, Turkish and Chinese languages in the region is already noticeable, and this trend promises to grow. All this will certainly affect the current bipolar mechanism of the use of the state languages and Russian.

***THE STATE LANGUAGES WILL DEVELOP, THEIR PLACE IS GUARANTEED IN PUBLIC LIFE, WHILE RUSSIAN WILL LOSE ITS POSITION AND OVER TIME MAY TURN INTO ONE OF THE OPTIONS.***

Such a scenario is certainly unlikely, especially in the near future, but in the absence of state support, scant resources allocated by the Russian authorities and growing competition, the future of the Russian language in Central Asia does not seem very bright. Of course, other foreign languages cannot yet compete with Russian in terms of being a mass alternative. The cultural, political, economic and historical ties of the region with Russia will contribute to its presence and use of the Russian language, but at the same time it cannot be argued that in the current situation the Russian language will retain its position.

# CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are 3 main take-ways from the analysis of the language policies of the Central Asian states. First, there is very little evidence that suggests that these policies are based on extensive and quality research and analysis of the current situation with regards to what languages are used in different spheres and how they are used by different groups. Second, the Central Asian states have monopolized decisions concerning languages: they pass laws, change scripts, limit education opportunities in Russian without proper consultations with all the stakeholders. The governments' decisions carry political tone and rarely reflect needs and preferences of their citizens.

Third, the language policies aimed at developing state languages are limited to adopting state programs and conducting a small amount of activities that cover only certain aspects. The lack of comprehensive approach, political will and commitment, and the application of “coercion over incentives” principle is one of the main reasons why state programs aimed at developing the state languages fall short of their goals. Below are 3 recommendations for the Central Asian governments' more effective development and implementation of their language policies.

- 1.** It is clear that not much is clear with regards to how the state and Russian languages are used by the people in the region. Research that attempts to understand what roles the state and/or Russian languages play and what niches they occupy in society is almost non-existent in Central Asia. This is not to mention the lack of studies that would explore the differences between urban and rural populations or younger and older generations' usage of languages. The states need to stimulate linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians to study aspects of languages that are necessary for developing a well-informed and empirically grounded decisions as to what exactly do about the languages – how to administer them in a way that benefits all groups, consolidates people, and respects rights of minorities.
- 2.** Language is not a property of states. Thus, it cannot be manipulated by the government and made to serve exclusively interests of regimes. Decisions regarding both the state languages and Russian should be made only following wide-scale public discussions and even a referendum when the issue of changing the script is on the agenda. Such decisions affect the entire population, sometimes leading to high levels of illiteracy and isolation from the global systems of information and science. The governments should ensure that all stakeholders come to the table and discuss ways for the parallel and mutual development of native and Russian languages.



### 3.

The study and spread of the state languages should always be incentivized and never coerced. It is the coercive nature of language policies run by the Central Asian states that lead to the politicization of the issue at hand. Instead of enabling citizens with ways and environment to learn the languages, the governments in the region usually set unrealistic fluency requirements under the threat of demotion and/or firing, especially at state agencies. The issue of motivation is of particular importance in the education sphere and refers to the provision of training and adequate salaries for teachers. The principle of “incentives over coercion” should also be applied in relation to the provision of education in Russian. Limiting educational opportunities in Russian does not do any service to the state languages. Central Asian languages will grow in importance and its area of usage will expand only when it will become more comfortable for people to communicate and consume information in these languages – not under pressure from the constitution or the law on the state language.

# CITATIONS

1. Alimdjanoj Bakhtiyor. "Why Uzbek language has not become a language of politics and science." *CABAR.asia*, 19 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/uzbekistan-pochemu-uzbekskij-ne-stal-yazykom-politiki-i-nauki/>
2. Baisalov Ermek. "Russian and Kyrgyz languages: equal wings of one bird?" *CABAR.asia*, 18 March 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/russkij-i-kyrgyzskij-yazyki-ravnye-krylya-odnoj-ptitsy/>
3. Bouriev Muslimbek. "How popular is the Russian language in Tajikistan?" *CABAR.asia*, 20 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/naskolko-russkij-yazyk-vostrebovan-v-tadzhikistane>
4. CABAR.asia. "School education: Tajik parents prefer Russian-language schools." *CABAR.asia*, 2 September 2019, <https://cabar.asia/en/school-education-tajik-parents-prefer-russian-language-schools/>
5. CABAR.asia. "Turkmen paradox: *de jure* there is no Russian language, *de facto* it is necessary." *CABAR.asia*, 25 February 2019, <https://cabar.asia/ru/turkmenskij-paradoks-russkogo-yazyka-de-yure-net-de-fakto-on-neobhodim/>
6. Central Asian Analytical Network. "Kak menyalas pismennost v Turkmenistane: 1904-2014 gody [How the scripts changed in Turkmenistan from 1904 to 2014]." *Central Asian Analytical Network*, 2 June 2019, <https://caa-network.org/archives/9206>
7. CentralAsia.Media. "V Uzbekistane russkii stal odnim iz samyh vostrebovannyh inostrannyh yazykov "Russian language became one of the most popular foreign languages in Uzbekistan]." *CentralAsia.Media*, 25 October 2017, <https://centralasia.media/news:1412342>
8. Chotaeva Cholpon. "Yazykovaya politika Kyrgyzstana: prichiny, problemy, protivorechiya [Language policy of Kyrgyzstan: factors, problems, contradictions]." [http://elibrary.auca.kg:8080/bitstream/123456789/2225/3/Chotaeva\\_lazykovaia%20politika%20Kyrgyzstana\\_Prichiny%2C%20problemy%2C%20protivorechiia\\_article.pdf](http://elibrary.auca.kg:8080/bitstream/123456789/2225/3/Chotaeva_lazykovaia%20politika%20Kyrgyzstana_Prichiny%2C%20problemy%2C%20protivorechiia_article.pdf)
9. Daudov Abdulla et al. "Problema transformatsii statusa natsionalnyh yazykov narodov SSSR na primere Sovetskogo i Postsovetskogo Tadjikistana v 1980-2010-e gg. [Problems of transforming the status of national languages of peoples of the USSR on the example of Soviet and post-Soviet Tajikistan from the 1980s to the 2010s]." *Obschestvo, sreda, razvitie* 4:91-99, 2015, [http://www.terrahumana.ru/arhiv/15\\_04/15\\_04\\_17.pdf](http://www.terrahumana.ru/arhiv/15_04/15_04_17.pdf)
10. Eurasia Daily. "Obem perevodov trudovyh migrantov v Tadjikistan prevyshaet gosbudget [The amount of remittances sent by Tajik migrants exceeds the state budget]." *Eurasia Daily*, 19 December 2019, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2019/12/19/obem-perevodov-trudovyh-migrantov-v-tadzhikistan-prevyshaet-gosbyudzhet>
11. Inform Buro. "Vse chto nujno znat o yazykah i yazykovoi politike v Kazakhstane [Everything you need to know about languages and language policy in Kazakhstan]." *Inform Buro*, 28 April 2018, <https://informburo.kz/cards/vsyo-chto-nuzhno-znat-o-yazykah-i-yazykovoy-politike-v-kazahstane.html>
12. Kosolapova Elena. "Latin Alphabet for Kazakhstan: Turkification, Westernization or Useless Initiative." *CABAR.asia*, 29 January 2019, <https://cabar.asia/en/latin-alphabet-for-kazakhstan-turkification-westernisation-or-useless-initiative/>

13. Kudoyarova Tatyana. "Russkii yazyk v sovremennoi obrazovatelnoi srede Turkmenistana [Russian language is the contemporary educational sphere of Turkmenistan]." *CyberLeninka*, 2010, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkiy-yazyk-v-sovremennoy-obrazovatelnoy-srede-turkmenistana/viewer>
14. Law of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic on Languages in Kazakh Socialist Republic from 22 September 1989, [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=1005765#pos=3;-104](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1005765#pos=3;-104)
15. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the State Language, [http://base.spinform.ru/show\\_doc.fwx?rgn=770](http://base.spinform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=770)
16. Letnyakov Denis. "Rol russkogo yazyka v postsovetskoj Tsentralnoi Azii [Role of the Russian language in the post-Soviet Central Asia]." *Politiya* 4 (79): 2015, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/rol-russkogo-yazyka-v-postsovetskoy-tsentralnoy-azii>
17. Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic. "Kyrgyzstan is celebrating the Day of the State Language today." 22 September 2013, <http://mineconom.gov.kg/ru/post/134>
18. Molodov Oleg. "Russkii yazyk kak instrument ispolzovania "magkoi sily" v stranah Tsentralnoi Azii [Russian language as a soft power tool in the Central Asian countries]." *Diskurs Pi*, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkiy-yazyk-kak-instrument-ispolzovaniya-myagkoy-sily-v-stranah-tsentralnoy-azii>
19. Mukambetov Daniyar. "O roli i znachenii russkogo yazyka dlya Kyrgyzstana [On the role and importance of the Russian language for Kyrgyzstan]." *National Institute of Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic*, <http://www.nisi.kg/112-stati/467-o-rol-i-znachenii-russkogo-yazyka-dlya-kyrgyzstana.html>
20. Nikolaev Andrei. "Russkii yazyk ischet v Tsentralnoi Azii "pyaty ugol"? [Is the Russian languages searching for the "fifth corner" in Central Asia?]." *Rosbalt*, 12 March 2018, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/world/2018/03/12/1687165.html>
21. Polskih Alena. "Russkii yazyk v Tsentralnoi Azii luchshe vsego znayut v Kazakhstane [People in Kazakhstan are the most influent Russian speakers in Central Asia]." *Russkii Mir*, 11 December 2013, <https://russkiymir.ru/news/48713/>
22. Sarukhanyan Yuriy. "Language Balance in Uzbekistan: an Acceptable Status Quo." *CABAR.asia*, 10 May 2019 <https://cabar.asia/en/language-balance-in-uzbekistan-an-acceptable-status-quo/>
23. Skalei Evgeniya. "Gosprogramma razvitiya yazykov v Kazakhstane: problemy i reshenia [National Programme for developing languages in Kazakhstan: problems and solutions]." *365Info.kz*, 21 April 2019, <https://365info.kz/2019/04/gosprogramma-razvitiya-yazykov-v-kazahstane-problemy-i-resheniya>
24. Spot. "Denejnye perevody v Uzbekistan iz Rossii dostigli pika za 5 let [Remittances from Russian to Uzbekistan have hit the highest point in the last 5 years]." *Spot*, 17 March 2020, <https://www.spot.uz/ru/2020/03/17/russia/>
25. Sputnik Kyrgyzstan. "V Oshe nachali stroit filial MGU. Kak on budet vyglyadet – eskizy [The building of the branch of the Moscow State University in Osh has started. How it will look like – drawings]." *Sputnik Kyrgyzstan*, 30 May 2020, <https://ru.sputnik.kg/society/20200530/1048479109/osh-mgu-filial-stroitelstvo-ehskiz.html>



26. Sputnik Uzbekistan. "Stalo izvestno, skolko uzbekistantsev uehali na zarabotki v 2019 godu [It became know how many Uzbekistanis left the country as labor migrants in 2019]." *Sputnik Uzbekistan*, 6 December 2019, <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/migration/20191206/12958308/Stalo-izvestno-skolko-uzbekistantsev-uekhali-na-zarabotki-v-2019-godu.html>
27. Starchak Vladimir. "Obrazovanie na russkom yazyke v stranah Tsentralnoi Azii – chlehan SNG: problemy i puti resheniya [Education in Russian language in Central Asia – CIS countries: problems and ways for solutions]." *Problemy natsionalnoi strategii* №3 (4) 2010, [https://riss.ru/images/pdf/journal/2010/3/07\\_.pdf](https://riss.ru/images/pdf/journal/2010/3/07_.pdf)
28. "State Programme for Development and Functioning of Languages in Kazakhstan for 2011-2019." *from the official website of the Prosecutor General's Office of Kazakhstan*, 4 October 2012, <http://prokuror.gov.kz/rus/dokumenty/gosudarstvennyy-yazyk/o-gosudarstvennoy-programme-razvitiya-i-funkcionirovaniya-yazykov-v>
29. Sukharevskaia Olga. "Russkie v Tsentralnoi Azii: Problemy i perspektivy [Russians in Central Asia: Problems and perspectives]." *IA Tsentr*, 24 September 2019, <https://ia-centr.ru/experts/olga-sukharevskaya/russkie-v-tsentralnoy-azii-problemy-i-perspektivy/>
30. Toktogonova Gulai. "Realizatsiya yazykovoi politiki v Kyrgyzskoi Respublike [Implementation of the language policy in Kyrgyzstan]." *Mejdunarodnyi nauchnyi jurnal "Simvol nauki"* №4, 2016, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/realizatsiya-yazykovoy-politiki-v-kyrgyzskoy-respublike/viewer>
31. Ulko Aleksei. "Uzbekskiy – yazik dlya uzbekov? Pochemu do sih por est problemy c gosudarstvennym yazykom [Is Uzbek language only for Uzbeks? Why there are still problems with the state languages]." *Hook*, 8 August 2019, <https://hook.report/2019/08/problema-uzb/>
32. Vechernii Bishkek. "V Bishkeke otkrylas shkola imeni ruskogo pisatelya Antona Chekhova [A new school named after the Russian writer Anton Chekov has opened in Bishkek]." *Vechernii Bishkek*, 1 September 2016, [https://www.vb.kg/doc/346166\\_v\\_bishkeke\\_otkrylas\\_shkola\\_imeni\\_rysskogo\\_pisatelja\\_antona\\_chehova.html](https://www.vb.kg/doc/346166_v_bishkeke_otkrylas_shkola_imeni_rysskogo_pisatelja_antona_chehova.html)
33. Zakon.kz. "Programma po realizatsii yazykovoi politiki na 2020-2025 gody utverjdjena v RK [The implementation programme for language policy for 2020-2025 is approved in Kazakhstan]." *Zakon.kz*, 14 January 2020, <https://www.zakon.kz/5002543-programma-po-realizatsii-yazykovoy.html>
34. Zayirbekova Kanzada. "Advantages and Risks of Introducing the "Multilingual and Multicultural Education" Program in Kyrgyzstan." *CABAR.asia*, 9 August 2019, <https://cabar.asia/en/advantages-and-risks-of-introducing-the-multilingual-and-multicultural-education-program-in-kyrgyzstan/>



[@CABAR.asia](https://www.facebook.com/CABAR.asia)