Language-in-education policy in the Central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

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1. Introduction

The Central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are relatively recently formed nations reaching their 25th anniversary of independence at the time of writing. They share similar histories within the Russian Empire and Soviet Union that have shaped them politically, linguistically and socially, but at the same time have taken different paths in language policy since becoming independent.

2. Historical background

The Central Asian republics took form as the result of the expansion of the Russian empire into Central Asian during the 18th and 19th centuries. The Russian advance into Central Asia began on the Kazakh steppe with the construction of a line of forts in the early 18th century. During the century, the Kazakh khans sought protection from Russia against raids from neighbouring groups, and by the middle of the century Russia had effectively established control over the region. There was resistance to Russian domination that led to a series of Kazakh uprisings which led Russia to suppress the remaining autonomy of the Kazakh khans still possessed so that by 1848 most of the Kazakh steppe was under permanent Russian control. In the second half of the 19th century Russia pushed further into Central Asia and after the fall of Tashkent in 1865 subsequently annexed the occupied territory as the Turkestan Oblast. The Oblast formed a base for further expansion into Central Asia incorporating territory in modern Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The majority part of what is today Kyrgyzstan was ceded to Russia through two treaties between China and Russia (the protocol for the Delimitation of the Sino-Russian Boundary, 1864, and the Sino-Russian Ili Treaty 1871) and the territory was formally incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1876.

The current Central Asian republics were a creation of the Soviet Union. Following the 1917 Revolution, the Communist government formed two republics in Central Asia. The Turkestan Soviet Federative Republic was established in in 1918 and became the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Turkestan ASSR) in 1920. The Kirghiz Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic was established in 1920 and was renamed the Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic in 1925. These two republics were later divided. In 1924, the Turkestan ASSR was divided into the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic(Turkmen SSR) and Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Uzbek SSR). In 1929, the Uzbek SSR was further divided to create the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic (Tajik SSR) in 1929.

The Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (Kyrgyz SSR) was separated from Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic in 1936. These progressive separations were based on the prevailing view of nations as ethnolinguistic groups:.

> Нация есть исторически сложившаяся устойчивая общность людей, возникшая на базе общности языка, территории, экономической жизни и психического склада, проявляющегося в общности культуры. [A nation is an historically constituted, stable community of people, formed in the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.] (Stalin, 1946, p. 296).

This view of the idea of nation was at the heart of the early Soviet policy of indigenisation (кореизация), which sought to recognise and develop ethnic identities, cultures and languages as part of the socialist agenda. In line with this approach, all five Central Asian republics were predominantly Muslim in religion and were linguistically based on Turkic languages, with the exception of Persian-speaking Tajikistan. The division of the Turkic-speaking republics appears to have been important in developing specific national identities and associated languages that would foster a sense of place within the Soviet world, in the place of a broader pan-Turkic identity that was seen as conflicting with Soviet aims (Grenoble, 2003).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, these republics became independent countries, each declaring independence in that year. The republics established by the Soviet Union continued their inherited ethno-nationalist identities and adopted policies to promote the status of the titular nationality and its language, with different republics giving different attention to minority ethnicities within their borders. The early history of the republics also saw large-scale emigration of ethnic Russians. As ethnic Russians constituted a sizable minority in Central Asia, this emigration often reinforced the demographic strength of the dominant titular ethnic majority (Pavlenko, 2008).

3. The language situation in the Central Asian Republics

The Central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are highly multilingual (see Table 1), in spite of the ethnolinguistic ideology of the nation that formed the republics during the Soviet era.

	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan
Languages with official status in Central Asia				
Kyrgyz	3,830,000	60,100	1,280	420,000
Tajik	42,300	6,380,000		1,260,000
Turkmen	1,200	13,700	3,430,000	149,000
Uzbek	773,000	927,000	317,000	21,300,000
Russian	482,000	40,600	349,000	4,070,000
Kazakh	22,400	440	88,000	992,000

Karakalpak				506,000
Large minority languages (communities over 10,000 speakers in at least one republic)				
Armenian	400	6,000	32,000	59,600
Azerbaijani	11,500		33,000	54,500
Balochi	4,840	4,840	28,000	
Bashkort	500	5,140	2,610	42,600
Belarusan	300		5,290	19,100
Bukharic (Tajik)				10,600
Dungan	56,300			1,600
Erzya	5,390		3,490	14,600
Kurdish	12,700		20,000	
Lezgi	2,400		10,400	3,700
Persian		50,000	8,000	30,400
Shughni		40,000		
Tartar, Crimean	38,000			150,000
Tatar	20,900	4,200	40,400	430,000
Turkish	16,200			130,000
Ukrainian	5,400	450	37,100	48,600
Uyghur	37,300	3,580		43,600
Wakhi		15,000		
Yagnobi		12,000		
Yiddish				44,900
Small minority languages (communities under 10,000 speakers in any republic)				
	Chechen, Dargwa, Georgian, German, Greek, Kalmyk-Oirat, Karachay-Balkar, Korean	Arabic (Tajiki), Georgian, Ishkashimi, Korean, Ossetic, Parya, Romanian, Yazgulyam	Dargwa, Georgian, Karakalpak, Korean, Lak, Lithuanian, Ossetic, Romanian, Tabassaran	Arabic (Uzbeki), Dargwa, Georgian, Karachay-Balkar, Lak, Lithuanian, Ossetic, Parya, Romanian, Tabassaran

Table 1: Languages spoken in the Central Asian republics (Source: Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2016).

The division of Central Asia intro republics in the Soviet era resulted in all of the principle ethnolinguistic groups (Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek and Kazakh) being divided between the republics, so that each group forms relatively large linguistic minorities in other republics. In addition, there are a number of smaller ethnolinguistic groups that constitute territorial minorities that were integrated into the republics and many immigrant groups largely resulting from internal migration during the Tsarist and Soviet periods. The most significant of these groups are ethnic Russians, who constitute a large minority in all of the republics.

4. Language policy in the Tsarist and Soviet eras

Historically, the languages of Central Asia had been written in the Arabic script, where they were written at all. Education in the region had been provided by Islamic schools, which taught Arabic, often solely for the purposes for Qu'ranic recitation but in some cases for more productive religious use of the language. Local language literacies were based on the practices taught in such Islamic schools rather being the specific focus of literacy teaching. Following the Russian annexation of Central Asia, there were some attempts by the Tsarist regime to introduce the use of Cyrillic, but these had little impact as they were limited to administrative functions and the teaching of state-controlled schools (Baldauf, 1993). In 1864, The Tsarist government enacted an education statute that required all teaching to be conducted in Russian (Korth, 2005). The forms of education adopted, however, were not well considered and literacy levels in Russian during the Tsarist period in Central Asia were low with the census of 1897 reporting literacy rates in the region at about 1% or less (Winner, 1952). These low levels of literacy continued until the revolution of 1917.

The revolution created largely favourable conditions for the development of local languages in public contexts and opened a number of domains to local languages that had previously been occupied by Russian (Iskhan & Ospanova 2014), but local conditions did not make the adoption of local written languages for official purposes an easy prospect. One key problem faced by the Communist government after the 1917 Revolution was the need to increase literacy levels. The initial approach of the Soviet government was to expand teaching in local languages and the need to establish local schools and recruit local teachers was central to the educational policy proposed by Stalin (1946). The Soviet educational program faced particular problems in Central Asia, where the lack of education in local languages during the Tsarist period was exacerbated by a lack of language standardisation and the need for orthographic development or reform (Winner, 1952).

With the creation of the Central Asian republics in the 1920s, the Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen, and Uzbek languages became official languages, alongside Russian. One of the first needs within these republics was the standardisation and codification of these new national varieties. One key issue in the standardisation process was the development of orthographies for each of the languages and up until 1934, the Soviet government invested considerable funding into language standardisation and terminology development. The standardisation of the languages of Kyrgystan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan represents the dividing up of a linguistic continuum of Turkic (Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Uzbek) and Persian (Tajik) languages that created new national varieties. At the time of the Revolution, Kyrgyz was essentially a non-literate variety and had no written standard or recognised orthography. The standardisation of Kyrgyz was based on the northern variety (Korth, 2005) and replaced Kazakh and Chagatai, which had been employed as literary languages by the Kyrgyz prior to the revolution. The other republics could however draw on established literary

traditions. Where this was the case, Soviet language planning preferred to adopt new varieties that separated post-revolutionary language practices from the past. Uzbeks had used Chagatai as a literary language since the mediaeval period, but a new literary standard was developed and implemented in 1923. A hybridised Turkmen literary language, incorporating elements of Turkmen and Chagatai, had begun to be used in the 18th century, but was replaced by a new Turkmen standard in 1922. Tajik is a Persian variety and the choice of a standard was less clear cut. The Persian of Iran, as a variety external to the USSR, was not considered as basis of a standard and historically and culturally important Tajik-speaking cities within the USSR such as Bokhara and Samarkand were was controversial choices as neither city lies within the borders of Tajikistan (they are both in the Uzbek SSR, from which the Tajik SSR had just separated) and were considered to have been overly influenced by Uzbek. Nonetheless, the Bokharan variety was eventually chosen as the standard. The selection of a variety from within the Soviet Union served to demarcate it from other Persian varieties. This separation was further reinforced during the Stalinist period, when the language was renamed *Tojiki* (Тоҷикӣ) to distinguish it further from the Persian/Farsi spoken in neighbouring countries. The process of standardisation during the Soviet period can then seen as one in which the language planners sought to distinguish between the new Soviet standards and other varieties as a way of creating distinct linguistic identities for the Soviet republics.

One feature of language planning in the Central Asian republics that became a key focus in the Soviet era was orthography, and there were a series of different policies implemented during this time. These policies were influenced by the political context and had implications for the implementation of mass literacy campaigns in Soviet Central Asia, which initially began in the 1920s using the Arabic script.

Immediately after the Revolution, anti-Russian sentiment in Central Asia fostered an attempt to revise and reform the Arabic script that had traditionally been used to write the languages of the region, especially during the years 1921-1923. However, this quickly gave way to a movement to introduce the Latin alphabet, which was favoured by Communist leaders as serving revolutionary purposes. In 1929, the use of Arabic script was banned for publications in the Soviet Union (Grenoble, 2003). In particular, the adoption of the Latin alphabet disrupted existing religious and linguistic relationships between speakers inside the Soviet Union and those outside who continued to use the Arabic script. The replacement of Arabic script with Latin script created a linguistic divide between the languages of the Soviet Union and those of the neighbouring states, which continued to use Arabic. It also created a separation between the Communist Soviet Union and the surrounding Islamic community, which also undermined the status and authority of Islamic scholars educated in Arabic, whose language capabilities now became less relevant (Isayev, 1977). The reform also cut off modern speakers from older texts, which were frequently religious in nature, and it isolated the tsarist elites, whose literate practices would no longer be of use (Baldauf, 1993; Bazarov, 1997; Simonato-

Kokochkina, 2003). The decision to introduce the Latin alphabet was taken in 1926 and the change was quickly adopted and a mass literacy campaign was begun in 1928 using the new alphabet. It is estimated that the literacy level had risen from around 12% in 1926 to around 68% by 1939 (Grenoble, 2003).

The policy of Latinisation, however, did not have a long existence and from the late 1930s, the policy of indigenisation gave way to one of Russification. In policy about script, this was manifested in a change from using the Latin alphabet to using Cyrillic. The change from Latin to Cyrillic took place in the context where Russian had come to be widely taught throughout the Soviet Union and it became pedagogically convenient to teach a single script for both the local language and Russian to facilitate acquisition of written Russian (c.f. Liddicoat, 2005). By 1940, the Cyrillic script had been imposed in all of the Central Asian republics. The move from Latin to Cyrillic created a separation between the Turkic languages of the Soviet Union and Turkish, which following the creation of the Turkish Republic had also been written using a Latin script (Isayev, 1977). The change of script in the late 1930s meant that literacy programs were slowed as both the programs and the newly literate themselves had to adjust to the new script, the second script reform in a decade.

While the languages of the various ethnic republics were the most significant local languages in the education system of the Soviet Union, other languages were also given a place in the educational system, beginning with a 1918 decree of national minority languages in schools that required education in local languages (Pavlenko, 2013). For example, in 1938, there were 20 languages of instruction in use in Uzebekistan in addition to Uzbek and Russian (Crisp, 1989). This multilingualism in education appears to have remained relatively consistent until at least the late 1950s (Lewis, 1972) and by the late 1950s, education in local languages was available for most languages in primary schools, in some languages also at secondary schools and in tertiary education. In tertiary education especially, ethnic languages were usually not treated equally with Russian and, in many cases, individual subjects or whole disciplines were taught only in Russian (Fierman, 1989). The use of Russian in tertiary institutions often created problems for students educated in ethnic languages at secondary schools and provides a disincentive for study in ethnic language medium schools.

Soviet policy for ethnic languages was essentially one of bilingualism which promoted local languages for local purposes, but which viewed Russian as the vehicular language of the Union, of industrial and technological modernisation and as the international language of communism. In Soviet thinking, however, the languages were never considered as equal, as Soviet language policy was predicated on the idea of слияние (*sliyanie*, merger), the eventual merging of languages and cultures into a common international language through the gradual voluntary adoption of Russian (Tsamerian, 1957). Linguistic diversity was thus considered to be an intermediary state in the evolution of international socialism. The policy of Russification of the 1930s thus involved an increased emphasis on the acquisition of Russian, which was to become, as Khrushchev asserted, the ‘second native

language' (второй родной язык) of all Soviet citizens (Korth, 2005; Lewis, 1972). In order to achieve this, Russian was made a compulsory subject for all non-Russians in the Soviet Union in 1938. The introduction of compulsory Russian was represented as a response from the centre to the 'request' of the people, and thus as a stage of the development of the socialist state (Orusbaev, 1980), thereby fitting increasing Russification into a narrative of voluntary adoption.

Education reforms in 1958-59 marked a key point in the changing emphasis of Soviet education policy (Pavlenko, 2013). The reforms made education in the mother tongue optional rather than compulsory for linguistic minorities, introduced Russian as a compulsory subject in all local language medium schools and sought the early introduction of Russian learning. The reforms also introduced a right for parents to decide on the language of instruction for their children, meaning that decisions about Russian-medium and local language-medium education were no longer uniquely decisions made by national governments. Further, in the 1977 constitution, access to education in a mother tongue was no longer guaranteed as a right, as it had been in the 1936 constitution, and the obligation of the state was only to provide opportunities for learning in such languages (Grenoble, 2003). One consequence of these reforms was to increase education in Russian at the expense of local languages, although the impact on the Central Asian republics seems to have been less significant than in other areas (Silver, 1976).

In Central Asia between the late 1930s and the 1970s non-Russians could choose education either in local language schools, where the titular language of the Republic was the medium of instruction and Russian was taught as a subject or in Russian medium schools where all subjects were taught in Russian. The two choices were not however equal, and only Russian medium education was considered suitable for advancement within the Soviet system, and especially in the areas of science and technology. The result was thus a two-tier education system in which monolingual education in Russian was considered superior to an education in a local language (Solchanyk, 1982). From the early 1970s, the use of Russian in schools increased, with an increased allocation of time to Russian in ethnic language schools, the expansion of intensive Russian classes, the introduction of Russian in pre-school programs and the establishment of mixed (i.e. bilingual) schools, which used both the local language and Russian as media of instruction, as an alternative to ethnic language medium schools, (Fierman, 1985; Solchanyk, 1982). One consequence of this was that some Central Asian shifted to Russian, especially in urban areas where the presence of ethnic Russians favoured the establishment of Russian schools (Orusbaev, 1980). However, in the 1979 census, less than half of the population of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan reported using Russian as a first or second language, with the use of Russian highest in Uzbekistan (49.8%) and the rest below 30% (Kirkwood, 1991). In part, the lack of uptake of Russian resulted from issues related to teaching quality and the Russian language knowledge of local non-native speaker teachers, especially in rural areas (Shorish, 1976).

With the arrival of *perestroika* in the mid-1980s, Soviet attitudes to language education began to change and advocacy for national languages began to strengthen. The dominance of Russian began to be contested in many parts of the Soviet Union, although there were also many in favour of preserving the status quo (Kirkwood, 1991). One key concern of advocates for ethnic languages was the shift from local languages to Russian in education and a resulting language shift to Russian. In part, this was attributed to the optional nature of education in ethnic languages and the right granted to parents in 1958-9 to choose the language of instruction for their children. In spite of opposition, this right way reaffirmed in 1988 and 1989 Plenums of the Central Committee of the Community Party. The 1989 Plenum did however allocated to national republics the right to make decisions about the official status of their titular languages, as long as such decisions did not discriminate against other languages. At the same time, it also recommended legal recognition of Russian as the official language of the Soviet Union. Through such decisions, the period of *perestroika* represented both an opening of space to ethnic languages and a re-articulation of the central role of Russian. The decisions of the 1989 Plenum however did not prevent some republics adopting new language laws, some of which did in fact favour the titular language over Russian (Kirkwood, 1991). Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan introduced language laws in 1989 designating the titular languages of the republics as official languages and Turkmenistan also did so in 1990. These laws acknowledge Russian as a language of interethnic communication in the republics but the laws in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan did not recognise an obligation to provide education in Russian. All of the laws did however require the use of the republic's titular language for government and some other public functions (Grenoble, 2003).

5. Language policy in the modern republics

5.1. Kyrgyzstan

In 1989, prior to independence, the Kyrgyz SSR adopted a language law (Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic, 1989) that declared Kyrgyz to be the official language of the Republic, with Russian given the status of lingua franca and provided for the free use of other languages of the USSR. It also gave a recognised place to Russian and other languages in education alongside Kyrgyz. This position is largely maintained in the 1993 constitution, which proclaimed Kyrgyz the official language but guaranteed equality and protection for Russian and other languages. Kyrygyzstan has also maintained the use of Cyrillic for writing Kyrgyz. The initial aim of the new Kyrgyz government was to switch to Kyrgyz from Russian as the normal language of government business by 1998, although in reality the change has proved much harder to implement and is not yet complete (Heuer, 2001). Policy to expand the use of Kyrgyz in a range of government contexts has been reformulated a number of times, with a 2000 policy pushing the timeframe out to 2008 (Orusbaev, Mustajoki, & Protassova, 2008) and a more recent 2014 policy extending this further until 2020 (Kyrgyz Republic, 2014). The increasing use of Kyrgyz in all public contexts, including education, was cited as one of the reasons for the

emigration of other ethnic groups, especially Russians, since independence. This prompted a change in policy, first announced in a presidential decree in 1994 that gave Russian official status along with Kyrgyz. This provision has since been enshrined in revisions to the constitution from 1999. Kyrgyz is designated the state language (мамлекеттик тил болуп, государственный язык) and constitutes a marker of national identity, while Russian is used as an official language (Kyrgyz Republic, 2010) and as a language of interethnic communication (Orusbaev et al., 2008). The other ethnic groups of Kyrgyzstan continue to have the right to maintain their ethnic languages and to provide for the use of the language in education.

The dual official languages and the recognition of minority ethnic languages has led to the development of a multilingual education policy and the education law in Kyrgyzstan guarantees a right to learning of both a mother tongue and Kyrgyz. In reality, however, only four languages – Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik and Uzbek have been approved for use in schools. The majority of schools, however, use Kyrgyz as the language of instruction, with Russian or bilingual medium schools making up a sizable minority and relatively few schools using Uzbek or Tajik (International Bureau of Education, 2011; Kyrgyz Republic, 2014). Kyrgyz and Russian are compulsory subjects in all schools from first grade until the end of secondary school. In Kyrgyz or Russian medium schools the other official language taken as a subject throughout schooling while in Uzbek and Tajik medium schools both official languages are taken as subjects. Although Russian has continued to be taught in all schools, the level of Russian language abilities has been declining (Heuer, 2001; Kosmarskaya, 2015; Orusbaev et al., 2008). Also, in spite of the increased emphasis on Kyrgyz, there has been limited success in developing the Kyrgyz language abilities of non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups.

The linguistic complexity in contemporary Kyrgyzstan was highlighted by the results of the language questions of the 2009 census (see Table 2). The census showed a substantial number of first language speakers of languages other than Kyrgyz, most notably Russian and Uzbek, and a very large population speaking Russian as an additional language. The large proportion of speakers of Russian as an additional language is not only the result of Russification in the Soviet era, but also of a continuing practical need for Russian among younger Kyrgyz speakers as Russian opens additional opportunities for employment both inside Kyrgyzstan and in other countries, including Russia (Korth, 2005; Kosmarskaya, 2015). A relatively small proportion of the non-Kyrgyz speaking groups report speaking Kyrgyz as an additional language. Almost half of those who reported speaking an additional language other than the three main languages reported speaking English (28,416).

Language	L1 speakers	Additional language speakers
Kyrgyz	3,830,556	271,187
Russian	482,243	2,109,393
Uzbek	772,561	97,753
Other languages	277,433	60,478

Table 2: Language results 2009 census (Source: Kyrgyz Republic, 2013).

The low levels of acquisition of Kyrgyz in non-Kyrgyz-speaking schools has been identified by the government as a significant problem as has the predominance of Russian in secondary and tertiary education, especially in the sciences (Kyrgyz Republic, 2014). The most recent language policy document has thus called for improvements in the teaching of Kyrgyz as an additional language in all schools and an increase in the proportion of the curriculum taught in Kyrgyz at secondary and tertiary levels (Kyrgyz Republic, 2014).

Mandatory foreign language learning was introduced in schools in Kyrgyzstan in the 1992 curriculum reform with English, French, or German beginning in grade one. In effect, this has however largely involved the teaching of English. Orusbaev et al. (2008) report that in 2005-2006, for example, 1,909 schools offered foreign language instruction: English was offered in 1,769 schools, German in 266 schools and French in 44 schools. Orusbaev et al (2008) also report that there is significant interest in learning Arabic and Turkish, the former for religious reasons and the latter from nationalistic connections to pan-Turkish identity. To date these languages play a limited role in schooling, outside Islamic education and specific Turkish schools, which teach the Turkish curriculum and include Kyrgyz, Russian and English as subjects (Demir, Balci, & Akkok, 2000). The teaching of foreign languages faces many problems, such as shortage of qualified teachers and lack of materials and resources, and the level of achievement in school language programs is generally not well developed (Orusbaev et al., 2008).

At tertiary level, the situation is complex, with universities offering a range of different languages of instruction. Kyrgyz and Russian are the most common languages of instruction, although Russian may be used more widely in some areas of education than Kyrgyz (Orusbaev et al., 2008). There is however evidence that the domains of use for Kyrgyz are expanding as the result of government policy efforts. Other languages have a limited role as languages of instruction at tertiary level although Uzbek is used in institutions with large Uzbek intakes. English, Arabic and Turkish are also sometimes used as media of instruction in Kyrgyz universities. Kyrgyzstan also has a number of universities with specific language foci. The American University of Central Asia and the University of Central Asia, which is also based in Tajikistan and Kazakhstan are English medium universities. The Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, which is jointly controlled by Russia and Kyrgyzstan, is a Russian medium institution, but has a department of Kyrgyz language. The Kyrgyzstan-Türkiye Manas University, which is a joint venture between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey uses Kyrgyz, Turkish and English as its main languages of instruction. These universities have courses in Kyrgyz and Russian even if these are not the usual media of instruction. A range of foreign languages are offered in universities, including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean and Turkish, but English is the main foreign language studied in tertiary institutions, as it is elsewhere in the educational system.

Language education policy in Kyrgyzstan has mainly focused on securing the place of the Kyrgyz language within the society. This has been an ongoing project since independence and is still far from completed. Alongside this, there is concern for the levels of achievement in both Kyrgyz and Russian as additional languages, which will continue to be an ongoing issue for education in the republic. These two issues, which affect the official languages of the nation, play out alongside an emerging focus on English as an additional language in the context of globalisation and internationalisation, which can be expected to continue to expand.

5.2. Tajikistan

Almost immediately after declaring independence, Tajikistan was thrown into a civil war among competing factions and clan groups. The civil war was partly resolved in 1992, and elections were called, but fighting still continued, and in spite of a further ceasefire in 1997, fighting still continues. One consequence of the civil war was massive disruption of all aspects of the society, and by 1992 about 1.2 million people were internal or external refugees. The civil war meant that the implementation of language education policy in the republic was delayed, funding for education was decreased and in many cases schooling was disrupted (Terrelonge, 2016). At the time of independence, Tajikistan was among the poorest of the Soviet Republics and as a consequence of the protracted civil war, the Republic has not developed economically. The difficult economic situation of the Republic has meant that little development has been possible and that education remains underfunded and is heavily dependent on international aid.

Language policy in Tajikistan has essentially continued the Language Law adopted in 1989 (Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic, 1989) while Tajikistan was still part of the USSR. This law was reaffirmed in the constitution of 1994 and in the Education Law of 2004 (Nagzibekova, 2008). In the 1989 law, Tajik was declared the official language with Russian given status as the language of interethnic communication. This situation was maintained in Article 2 of the 1994 Constitution, and the subsequent amendments, which also include a provision that speakers of other languages in Tajikistan may freely use their languages, but gives no further status to them (Republic of Tajikistan, 2003). Article 3 of the 1989 law recognised the specific situation of the Pamir languages in Gorno-Badakhchansky Autonomous Region, but these languages were not given a place in the Constitution. Although Russian is recognised in the constitution, it has a lesser role in the Republic than Tajik, which has become the sole language of government business (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001). In the revised language law of 2009 (Rahmon, 2009), Tajik is reaffirmed as the state language and all citizens are obliged to know Tajik but Russian is not mentioned. The only other languages mentioned are the Pamir and Yagnob languages, for which the law grants free use, protection and development.

Tajikistan has so far maintained the Cyrillic script for writing all of the ethnic languages of the Republic. However, the 1989 language law foreshadowed a move to using the Arabic script for Tajik

and some initial work was done in introducing Arabic, with support from Iran (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001). The shift to Arabic has not been pursued, largely because of the expense involved, but is still maintained as an aspiration in Tajik language laws and Arabic script is taught in primary schools (Khudoikulova, 2015; Rahmon, 2009).

Education in Tajikistan is guaranteed in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek but in regions with large concentrations of Kyrgyz and Turkmen speakers, provision is made for these languages in the form of minority language classes or streams (Nagzibekova, 2008). Tajik is the most widely used medium of instruction, with Russian in second position. Uzbek medium schools constitute roughly a quarter of all schools but the teaching of Kyrgyz and Turkmen is relatively restricted. All non-Tajik medium schools are required to teach Tajik from Grade 2. Russian medium education is not taken up solely by Russian speakers as other groups may select Russian medium education in preference to Tajik as they believe that Russian medium education is of higher quality and that a knowledge of Russian will give students access to work in Russia (Nagzibekova, 2008; Terrelonge, 2016). The Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Turkmen schools in Tajikistan used curricula and materials from the neighbouring titular republics until 2000, when the new education law required all schools to follow the Tajik curriculum (Karabaev & Ahn, 2016). This has created problems for schools in using materials produced in neighbouring republics, which is compounded in some cases by script differences. As Cyrillic is used for all languages in Tajikistan, the written forms of Kyrgyz and Turkmen taught and used in the Republic differ from those of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, which have shifted to the Latin script (Nagzibekova, 2008). The problems with materials and a lack of teachers qualified to teach in minority languages means that many ethnic minority students transfer to Tajik or Russian medium schools.

At tertiary level, education is available in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek, although the role of Uzbek is limited and Russian tends to dominate as a medium of instruction in some disciplines. Some universities, such as the Russian-Tajik Slavic University, the Tajikistan–Russian Modern University and Tajik campuses of Russian institutions offer Russian medium education (Nagzibekova, 2008), while the University of Central Asia and the American University of Istaravshan are English medium universities. The Tajik language is offered as a subject by all universities regardless of medium of instruction and Russian is widely offered but not everywhere; minority ethnic languages do not seem to have a presence at universities.

Following the shift to Tajik as the dominant language of the Republic and of its educational institutions, the lower level of Russian language abilities of students emerged as an issue (Shambezoda & Gusejnova, 2007). In 2004, the study of Russian was made obligatory in all schools from grade 2 to grade 11, but shortage of teachers means that this is not in fact the case in some schools, especially in rural areas (Nagzibekova, 2008). In 2014, the Tajik Ministry of Education announced the intention of increasing the hours of Russian language instruction in grades 10 and 11 (Ashurov, 2015). The requirement to learn Russian is also applied to minority language medium schools, in which case the

students begin to study two additional languages (Tajik and Russian) from Grade 2 (Karabaev & Ahn, 2016).

The same legislation that introduced compulsory Russian language study also introduced English into the Tajik school curriculum, starting in Grade 3. English language has developed particularly at tertiary level, where it has been supported by the US State Department, but at school level, the teaching of English is largely hampered by a lack of teachers. Although the teaching of English in Tajikistan is not yet well developed, English is starting to displace Russian as a desirable language to learn because of the impression that English conveys more opportunities than Russian (Michailovna, 2013). In addition to English, there is a small presence of Arabic, Chinese, German and Persian as foreign languages at Tajik universities.

Tajikistan's language policy has largely continued from the policy put in place prior to independence from the Soviet Union, although it has sought to diminish the role of Russian in Tajik society. It is mainly since the end of the civil war that further developments have taken place and these developments show the ambivalent policy position of Russian, which has been removed from government communication but is a compulsory language in schools, with recent increases in time allocations. The emergence of English in the early 21st century has produced a complex policy environment in which Tajik, Russian, local minority languages and English all vie for position.

5.3. Turkmenistan

In 1990, before independence, Turkmenistan adopted a new language law that declared Turkmen to be the official language of the Republic and Russian was given the status of a language for interethnic communication. This status continued into independent Turkmenistan, but the status of Russian was revoked in 1996. Article 21 of the constitution recognises only Turkmen as having official status, but guarantees a right for all citizens to use the mother tongues (Republic of Turkmenistan, 2016). Nonetheless, Russian remains widely used in Turkmenistan.

Since independence, Turkistan has been a totalitarian state that has largely been closed to the outside world and this has shaped the language policy of the Republic. In 1991, the President of the Turkmen SSR, Saparmurad Niyazov, became the president of the independent state establishing a dictatorship which ended only with his death (1991-2006). Since 2006, the new president, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, has largely continued the totalitarian state established by his predecessor. Niyazov used Turkmen ethnolinguistic nationalism to consolidate his power and created a national myth based on a personality cult and a vison of Turkmen identity expressed through his own writings (*Ruhnama*), which were made mandatory components of the curriculum (Clement, 2014). Niyazov promoted an ideology of Turkmen identity based on the ability to speak Turkmen, rather than on ethnic group affiliation. This worked in part to offset the growing reach of Russian during the Soviet era and also to provide a mechanism to assimilate non-Turkmen ethnic groups to a Turkmen identity (Clement, 2014).

The nation building agenda of Niyazov's regime has continued under Berdimuhamedov, although some aspects of the former regime have changed, in particular a reduced focus on the works of Niyazov in education.

The rule of Niyazov was a turbulent time for education policy in Turkmenistan. The total period of primary and secondary education offered by schools was reduced from ten years to nine, while university undergraduate programs were reduced from five years to two followed by two years of practical work before the degree was awarded. This policy was overturned after 2006 by President Berdimuhamedov and the school system reverted to the structure that existed before Niyazov's reforms (Merrill, 2009).

Niyazov's educational reforms declared Turkmen to be the sole medium of instruction in schools and universities. Non-Turkmen medium schools were closed and their teachers were dismissed. The law also changed the writing system for Turkmen from Cyrillic to Latin script. These changes represented a crisis for teaching as there few teachers who could teach content areas in Turkmen and few materials to support the teaching. The shortage of material was exacerbated by the script change, which meant that older materials could no longer be used. Ahn and Jensen (2016) report that in some cases, teachers resorted to teaching Cyrillic script in order for their students to access older materials.

The turbulence applied equally to learning languages other than Turkmen. In 1993, Niyazov adopted a 'three language policy' in education in which Turkmen became the medium of instruction and English and Russian were included as foreign languages (Clement, 2005). His policy both inverted the status of Russian and Turkmen, and promoted English, which had hitherto had little place in Turkmen society, as a vehicle for modernisation and internationalisation. However, in 1997, the place on foreign languages in the curriculum was reduced to increase the focus on Turkmen by relegating their teaching to specialised language schools and higher education institutions. In 2002, a decision was made that only some higher education institutions would be able to teach foreign languages. Foreign language education from this time was mainly delegated to the private sector and state education focused almost exclusively on Turkmen. Nonetheless, in 2003 a presidential decree made the teaching of Turkmen, Russian and English compulsory from pre-school. Thus policy was often contradictory, but as policy changes remained mainly at the level of rhetoric, the reality in practice was an increasing Turkmen monolingualism in education regardless of the policy discourse, as little support was given to implementing the changing decrees (Clement, 2005, 2014).

A similar reduction of linguistic diversity occurred in other aspects of policy. Some Russian medium schools had continued to operate after 1993, but the remaining schools were closed in 2002, and schools were limited to providing no more than one class in Russian (Kudoyarova, 2010). The change to Turkmen also affected Kyrgyz and Uzbek medium schools, all of which were closed. The only schools offering instruction in languages other than Turkmen have been prestigious private

schools such as the Turkmen-Turkish schools, the Turkmen-Russian School in Ashgabat, and the International School of Ashgabat, which teaches in English and Russian (Horak, 2013). The Turkmen-Turkish schools were multilingual establishments teaching Turkmen, Russian, English, Turkish and Arabic (Kuru, 2006), with Turkish and Turkmen as the main languages of instruction (Demir et al., 2000). These schools were accused of spreading Islamic teachings and began to be closed in 2011.

Berdimuhamedov's reforms re-established the earlier trilingual model of education in Turkmen, Russian and English, but this reform has not been implemented due to a lack of teachers and resources (Ahn & Jensen, 2016). For example, Horak (2013) reports that only 30 Russian programs existed by 2011 catering for less than one percent of students. English has been made compulsory from grade 1, but has received little support and is not readily available to most students because of a lack of teachers (Ahn & Jensen, 2016). The lack of classes in both Russian and English in combination with the focus on language education in private education has led to the creation of a small, wealthy, urban elite, who can access such classes while the bulk of Turkmens lack opportunities to learn these languages (Sartor, 2010). Given the lack of teachers of English, external organisations such as the US Peace Corps or US State Department English Language Fellows, constituted an important resource for English teaching, but these were suspended in 2012. English was largely taught in the Turkmen-Turkish schools by Turkish teachers (Sartor, 2010), but the closure of these schools is also limiting the number of teachers of English. Although the teaching of Russian and English is limited, there appears to be a strong desire among Turkmen people to learn both as they are seen as providing greater opportunities for work and study, although English seems to be emerging as the more popular language (Permanov, Protasov, & Golubeva, 2010).

The language policy in schools was also introduced in universities and Turkmen largely replaced Russian as a medium of instruction and the study of Russian was restricted to a small number of Universities (Kudoyarova, 2010). The International Turkmen-Turkish University was established in 1994 as a joint venture between Turkey and Turkmenistan and used Turkish and Turkmen as languages of instruction, but was closed in 2016. As with Turkish schools, the University was closed due to concerns about the Islamic focus of the institution. Recently, there has been a proposal to increase university language offerings, although there are few staff to teach these and the reforms have not been implemented (Ahn & Jensen, 2016). In addition, the Turkmen National Institute of World Languages was founded in 2009 to focusing on the teaching of foreign languages, including English, Russian and other European languages, Persian, Arabic, Chinese Japanese and Korean.

Language education policy in Turkmenistan has focused primarily on the development of Turkmen and has largely been closed to the teaching and learning of other languages, in spite of policy statements favouring trilingualism. Contradictory changes in policy and lack of follow-up in implementation mean that little has been achieved in response to policy decisions. Much language policy has focused more on excluding languages from education and even though recent policy

rhetoric supports the development of abilities in a range of languages, the educational reality is much more limited and school and university closures have further decreased the range of languages offered.

5.4. Uzbekistan

Prior to independence in 1989, Uzbekistan SSR enacted a law (Uzbek SSR, 1989) to declare Uzbek to be the official language. This language law is multilingually oriented giving Russian the status of language of interethnic communication. The law also recognised a right to use other ethnic languages within the republic and permitted the use of a range of languages in interactions with the state. In its provisions for education, this multilingual focus is continued and medium of instruction is made a free choice and specifically recognises Russian, Kazakh, Kyrghyz, Tajik and Turkmen as media of instruction in secondary education. However, the law also specifies that Uzbek shall be a medium of instruction at all levels and requires that all students study Uzbek if they attend non-Uzbek medium schools and similarly requires that all students study Russian (Fierman, 1995).

Following independence the language law was modified (Republic of Uzbekistan, 1991) and Russian is no longer included as a language of interethnic communication, although it and other languages do retain some cultural and academic functions and the freedom of choice of medium of instruction was maintained. The constitution of 1992 mentions only the official role of Uzbek and the principle of respect for other languages. The Republic of Karkalpakstan, which is an autonomous region within Uzbekistan, is officially bilingual with Uzbek and Karakalpak as official languages (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 1993).

The 1989 language law introduced the study of Arabic script, although Arabic was not ultimately adopted for the writing of Uzbek (Fierman, 1995; Uzbek SSR, 1989). In 1993, the Latin alphabet was formally adopted for the writing of Uzbek (Republic of Uzbekistan, 1993), but the transition has been slow with little progress until the late 1990s and even after two decades the Cyrillic script is still widely used in many contexts, including government publications (Spechler, 2007).

The Education Law of 1992 (Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992) gives parents the right to choose the language of instruction for their children (Article 30), but also states that the languages of education are governed by the language law of 1989 (Article 8). This means that although there is a right to choose the language of instruction, Uzbek is to be taken as the normal language of schooling, with Russian and the other language acknowledged by the 1989 law also being available. The 1997 Education Law (Republic of Uzbekistan, 1997), however, removes Article 30 and thus revokes the right to choose the language of schooling. The actual practice in Uzbekistan, however, appears to conform to the provisions of the 1992 law and Uzbek Russian, Kazakh, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Karakalpak medium schools all exist within the Republic (Bydanova & Rozmetov, 2014). Of these Russian is the second most widely used medium of instruction, especially in urban areas (Khruslov, 2006). In spite of the normalisation of Uzbek as the language of instruction, its implementation has

been challenged by a lack of qualified teachers and Uzbek language teaching materials. The availability of materials has been compounded by a rejection of the old ideologically driven Soviet era materials and the change of script, which mean that older materials can no longer be used in the school system (Bydanova & Rozmetov, 2014).

As a result of Uzbek becoming the sole official language of the republic, there has been a considerable increased emphasis on Uzbek within the education system. The increased use of Uzbek has often been at the expense of other areas, especially the Russian language (Hasanova, 2016). The hours devoted to Russian learning have decreased, although Russian remains in the curriculum as a foreign language (Spechler, 2007). The education system in Uzbekistan has been largely decentralised and this means that decisions to teach a particular language has been delegated to schools. Thus, schools make decisions about how much instruction in Russian will be offered and which foreign languages to teach. As a result of local decision-making many schools have chosen English but other languages are also taught. Hasanova (2016) reports that in 2004, the first foreign language was usually English, with small amounts of teaching of German, French and Hebrew, but that all schools also taught Russian. The focus on English has meant that many schools have reduced the overall number of hours devoted to the study of Russian in order to make space (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001). In a recent curriculum revision for teaching foreign languages from the 2013-2014 school year, the government has specified that foreign languages ares intended to be mainly the learning of English (*asosan ingliz tilini o'rganish*) (President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2012). This revision requires foreign language learning to begin from the first year of schooling. The state has thus intervened in local decision-making to some extent to normalise English as the foreign language of choice in schools.

Higher education functions in Uzbek, Russian and English, with Karakalpak being used in the Republic of Karakalpakstan. In some disciplines, it is also possible to study in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Turkmen (Pavlenko, 2008). At all institutions, Russian is mandatory and all students are also required to undertake foreign-language study, usually for between two to four hours a week. The foreign language studied can theoretically be chosen from English, German, French, or Spanish but many institutions require English language study, a policy that had begun as early as the 1990s in some cases (Hasanova, 2016). In addition to the Uzbek state universities, there are a number of branches of Russian universities that use Russian as the primary medium of instruction and of universities from other countries (UK, Singapore, Korean and Italy) that teach in English.

Uzbekistan appears to have maintained a multilingual approach to education since independence with Uzbek as the usual, but not sole, medium of instruction. Uzbek is a required subject for all students in non-Uzbek-medium schools, Russian is taught as a second language and foreign languages, normally English, are also required in the curriculum.

6. Future directions

In the 25 years since independence, in none of the Central Asian republics discussed here has the original educational goal of establishing the titular language been fully accomplished. Increasing institutional and public use of these languages, the development of curriculum materials and the training of teachers will continue to be a high priority. Even though most Republics have adopted primarily monolingual language policies, their official languages have not been fully consolidated, either in public use or in education. This to some degree attests to the success of the Russification policies of the later periods of the Soviet era and the erosion of the titular languages. The Soviet legacy of at least rhetorical support for minority languages appears to have continued and most republics, except Turkmenistan, have retained a role for some minority languages in education, although smaller languages appear to be completely excluded. The continued place of such languages in the education system does however seem fragile given on-going problems of teacher supply and materials development and the overall nation-building agenda based on the titular ethnic identity. Even where they are included in education, many minority languages already appear to show signs of marginalisation in the education system at least at higher levels such as universities and even secondary schooling.

All of the republics are dealing with the place of Russian in the society and in education and appear to have an ambivalent response to the language. As a former colonial language, Russian has lost ground in the wake of independence and has been subject to deliberate policies of de-Russification. At the same time, Russian has remained a significant language in public life and an important language in education, with Russian-medium schools often seen as preferable to those operating in the state language. The fortunes of Russian seem to have fluctuated with the political and economic state of the Russian Federation and its growing political and economic power seems to be reflected in a renewed interest in the language as a vehicle for employment outside the republics. The position of Russian is further supported by the foreign policy of the Putin era and its desire to exert soft power in the region by supporting the cultural and educational use of Russian (Teurtrie, 2004). The establishment of Russian universities in the region or joint ventures with local administrations can be seen as an example of this policy. A recent statement by a minister of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs ("Россия вышла на первое место", 2016) that Russian should be given a place in the constitutions of all states of the former USSR similarly indicates a strong place for support for the Russian language in Russian policy in Central Asia and elsewhere. It would seem that negotiating the place of Russian will continue as a sociolinguistic reality in all the republics.

English is a relative new comer to education in Central Asia but already has cemented a strong place within the education system because of the potential benefits it is seen as bringing for modernisation and internationalisation. It has already emerged as the dominant foreign language

although the teaching and learning of both European and Asian languages continues, at least at tertiary level. English, like Russian, is supported by foreign organisations such as the British Council and the US State Department as ways of increasing soft power and English medium universities have begun to be founded in the region. The place of English in the educational linguistic ecology appears to be bringing it into competition with other languages, notably Russian, which has often had to make place for time spent on English. When English has been made compulsory in education, it has often come as an additional linguistic demand on students being educated in minority languages, who may need to study three languages in addition to their own and this may create pressure on minority language medium schools in comparison the lesser demands of education in the state language or even Russian. English also appears to be competing with Russian in perceptions of its utility. While Russian opens employment opportunities in the Russian Federation or in other ex-Soviet states, English is seen as bringing the same benefits at a global level. It would seem that English is set to increase its place in Central Asian educational contexts.

Language education in the Central Asian republics would seem to be an ecology searching for balance and in which languages are in competition. The future language policy in the region will be significant for how these competitions play out and the final shape of the ecology.

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